

LEADING SAINTS

Creating Space for Those We Lead | An Interview with Thomas Wirthlin McConkie

January 16, 2021

00:00:00 - 00:05:01

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 also 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 four seven four seven four seven or visit leading saints dot org slash. Subscribe again text. The word l. e. a. d. two four seven four seven four seven or visit leading saints dot org slash subscribe. So you don't miss any future leading saints content. I'm with a monte. How're you monty. And where are you from. And tell us about your experience leading saints. Great kirk from california came upon your podcast a couple years ago through a listening to another podcast and just really enjoyed. The content leading saints does provide in just a different perspective In mike in healthy in others just you know for further the work in different ways that i think is positive positive. Brothers goal of. Why do you support leading saints. What what is it about courtly saints. Because i appreciate the opportunity to hear. Different perspectives on different marginalized in the church Specially lgbtq with those. That have had some crisis. I think there's a lot of good good support out there especially individuals that you've had interview lenz a lot of help to others to stay within the church or at least how we can be more price like in loving as the savior was to those two individuals and recognize that. There's all types of individuals in the church and we'd love for them to be with us and different ways we can. We can make that happen. Welcome back to the leading saints. Podcast my name is kurt. Franken your host. This is the second time. I've done this introduction because i went way long the first time. So let's see if i can keep this concise. Now you knew to leading saints. We are five a one. C three nonprofit organization dedicated to helping latter day saints. Be better prepared to lead and we do that

through content creation and publishing. And this like this podcast right. We have thousands of articles on our website leading saints dot. Org we send out a weekly newsletter with unique content there and We just hope that. If you found us you'll subscribe and really dive into this content because it's blessed not only my life but many other lives of leaders in individual latter day saints across the world now in this episode. I interview thomas wirthlin kanchi. A man is love. Thomas i actually. I met him and interviewed him back in november of two thousand fifteen. So we've known each other for quite a few years. I've loved following his journey. He has a remarkable story which we don't go into in detail in this episode. I encourage you will link to that episode back in november. Two thousand fifteen also. The cultural hall did a great interview with him as well goes into details of his story really inspiring. He's the grandson of land. And i believe the great nephew. If i'm remembering right of bruce armor kanchi as though that's where the woodland makaki come from and just a phenomenal story and what he's doing in. The church blessing lives through his mindfulness practice and thought connecting it to the gospel. He's actually worked with the faith matters organization and other great nonprofit organization and they've put together a course called transformations of faith. And that's what we're going to talk about in this interview. Which i love so much. I hope you love it as much as i do. The transformation of faith is a contemporary expression of timeless wisdom as understood to the lens of the restored gospel. So that's sort of the summary of what this course is and i'll be honest. I'm afraid maybe some traditional orthodox latter day saint leaders are listening to this and thinking as to you know. We're not buddhist. We don't need this meditation. Mindfulness stuff but hang with me. Okay listen discussion. I promise or we don't take in a weird direction or anything and i've gone through every minute of this Transformations face course. And it is the five stars. I mean just awesome. I my wife went through it. She loved it. This can add so much to your faith. Experience in our latter day saint tradition that in the restored gospel that can't encouraging enough and the end the the episode. We're going to give you a discount code if it's something that you want to jump into because we want as many people experiencing this so all right. I did much better about half the time on this intro.

00:05:01 - 00:10:00

So let's jump into it. So here's my interview. With thomas worth akaki gary m in salt lake city with thomas. Mcconnachie are you. thomas occurred. I'm doing well good to see you here. Well i'm glad we've had conversations in the past. I'm always looking forward to our conversation and you recently have a new course. Masterclass class what he call on this thomas. We've called the different things. It's an online course. It an on demand. You can watch a five minute video ten minute video whenever you have time but it's thirteen hours of online content around the topics we're gonna explore the that's right and what. How do you explain it. Like mindfulness meditation How would you introduce it to a an orthodox soliciting audience. I would say to. This ought to our audience. I build on the concept of transfiguration. The we see in the scriptures the the greek term is metamorphosis sometimes just in modern like you know parlance transformation like how do we change. How do we continue to grow and develop being. I've taken my passions of meditation as well as the field of developmental psychology and Just different bits of wisdom. I've gleaned over the years from mentors and teachers and really applied them specifically to the restored gospel. So that's that the courses about transformations of faith. That's about how were asked to become even as christ. That's a process and we can

participate in that process willingly knowingly and so this is where to start here is what's intriguing to me. Is you know the listening audience. A very leaders in the church or those who are maybe more mature and have been in the orthodox traditions that we have for years and years and right now like you know meditation. Mindfulness is sort of becoming more of a thing in the secular world in just everyday life where we have these head space apps. Calm apps people. Are you know. The research is really evident obvious as far as like meditation and in our church. We sort of feel like we'll know we sort of have our model that works. I don't need to go home in the corner. Because i have my scripture study where i sit and read and and contemplate their so. How do you like build that bridge between the two or or just show that. There's really not much difference. There like how you introduce that orthodox crowd to what you're saying rather than thomas guy's got a weird out there sounds that sounds you ag turned. Yeah isa's the turnouts. That's what here i mean to me. We can sit in a really simple way like right now. You and i are having a conversation. There's talking there's listening right now. i'm talking you're listening in a moment you'll be talking. I'll be listening. That's relationship every relationship. Involves that action and that receptivity. I noticed in my prayer life when i was younger that there was this whole world of pike receiving of listening like just listening. Like when you're with a good friend and like if you're both so present together that it doesn't even matter who's talking anymore because you're both talking and listening is the same thing. I got really interested in that mystery. And i realized like you know i've been talking when i pray but like it's fallen flat from sick of hearing my own voice. I'm sick of hearing my own thoughts. And then when i stopped for five seconds to listen to something i can't really hear anything because my head so full of stuff i've been thinking. Yeah and i think people have that experience. I realized like there's a way to elect really go so deep that what's been called in christianity. The prayer of quiet is there's a way to go so deep into the quiet that what we start to fill in the silences this profound intimacy with god. This profound presence of the spirit and instructs us beyond any language can put words to how profound the messages but it converts our hearts than it inspires us to do things that our minds would not have thought of. Yeah right in feeling. So much like we have such a strong orthodox tradition and you mix that with human nature things become suddenly very routine then. It's like okay. I'm a stripper. Study okay that for fifteen. As i'm gonna pray go down. Thank you for this. This and now moving on i gotta get to that meeting in now. We're in this meeting. And so then we we lose space for that quietness. We forget that. There's even value there. That's right There's a bit of a i mean you know i don't wanna be alarmist here but like at a cultural level It's a bit of a catastrophe if you look at the way. The role of stillness and silence has kind of faded into the background and the foreground. There's just this frenetic. Pace of information coming from every direction the life of the soul flourishes in stillness and silence. And i think as latter day saints we have an opportunity to really take a stand this radical stand of just silence and seeing you love.

00:10:00 - 00:15:03

Thomas mertens phrase. He writes sentence seeds of contemplation. He essentially says sit still and let god do some work on you. So what would you say to an individual. Who's been in our faith tradition for so long and they just sir like i get the science thing but i don't. I don't see the reason for it. Why you're why. Do i need to make space for stillness. I read my scriptures. I feel that inspiration. So what's the what would be the the argument. They're saying he gives us a

shot or and what does that even look like to give it a chance totally. Will i do this for a living. I just work with students. And groups. On sunday schoolteacher too. I mean seven days a week. I'm like you know offering teaching some form of this. I would challenge anybody. Who makes that claim. And there's a really simple test for this like look at your day to day life. And when you're at the grocery store and the cleric slowly and clumsily and you just want to get home because you're tired from work you're tired from kids or you're just tired. You feel that kind of that quality of like restlessness in patients whether whether it's like driving to your next appointment taking the kids to the doctors needing to cook dinner. Whatever like if we're honest throughout the day were feeling a little bit hurried. Were feeling maybe a little bit ragged. We're feeling perhaps disconnected from ourselves disconnected from the divine. I've never met a human being who doesn't really vividly have that experience every day in modern life. So the the practice that we're talking about today that i get into a lot of depth and transformations of faith. It's it's making more room for connecting deeply with the best of ourselves and all of the blessings that god is just eager terrain down a if we'd make room for it if we're like actually receive it in and even in the everyday bland moments like talked about just standing in the grocery line right. Knee is the father of a six year. Old boy like the simplest task of you know before. And even i have my moments. Now were bedtime can be such a high stress thing. Because it's like. Just put the pajamas on like your whole. And let's do lists you know but it's like this this process it. It would take me three minutes to do what it takes you to do thirty. But now i'm just finding myself. I'm just going to be uber. Present with my son as he goes through this process. You know and there's a meditation aspects so it's not always what i've learned is not always that you have to be in a quiet room and hunting and silence but it's just finding that presence in everyday life right totally. I mean we have our exercises. The help us access silence. That stillness doesn't mean we withdraw from life and mike our new professionals. Oh i sit still eight hours a day means like we just we learn to touch into it. We created channel. We open a portal into this quality of stillness of presidents where we are more likely to receive a message that god is eager for us to receive. But then we're out serving than we're living our lives right. It's true stillness movement. When we're actually like led by the spirit There's a profound stillness in our movement. Yeah in in those experiences with my six year old son. There's been those moments where i just like crate space and be present with him during that bedtime bedtime process and time. I hear things like look how much you love him. Like i love you that much and more you know like there's just this connection with the divine but also connected with my son. Mike mike pod. Now i love him even more because now i'm relating to my the love that my father ask for me you know. And as you say that i feel the like spirit of it and the energy of inequality of it like it's a a moment that's a a moment of contemplation in your life. Not because you decided you're going to set your timer and be mindful for five minutes. Yes that has its place. But it's like when you're attuned to that frequency and you realize like you are an acting the same relationship with your son as god is an acting with all of his children. Yeah yeah and these practices that are talked about in transformations of faith. I think they just make it more likely. I've found in my life and with you know in my students lives that if we do some simple practices it makes it more likely that will receive those divine messages like the one. You just write beautifully share. Nf found that as you sort of apply these things in everyday life in those simple fill like blend moments when it comes time for the structured scripture study were near in your office alone reading. The scriptures that contemplation is sort of already has some

momentum to go to a deeper level. Absolutely you know what i found when jesus talks about the kingdom of heaven is among us. One way i translate that is there are no ordinary moments in creation itself. Human life itself this whole station we find ourselves is extraordinary.

00:15:04 - 00:20:05

And you know the more we open ourselves to this channel of divine light. The more we realized the most moment is utterly extraordinary. And my sense is that's how god raises up. That's how he prepares spirits for eternity by saying you know you think this is amazing. You're just learning to like withstand this much divine light in a wait till there's more yeah and we're sort of moving into a conversation about presence here but like those you know seeing ordinary moments as as very diviner extraordinary like one one practice. I've i've started doing that. As far as get me in a in a mindset of presence is. I don't know if you ever look at like a a photo thirty years ago. And it's just a random photo but you're more intrigued about like the background like. Oh yeah like. I remember when we had that tree there or cynical grocery store like how different the products look as if i mentioned safeway drank. I and i often like think if i was an a time machine thirty years in the future and it was in this moment like what would i notice like what look how do couches now or like the paint how. There's no holograms here. Whatever it is but if forces me to be like yeah. If i was from the future what would i appreciate this right now. That's i don't know it's the crazy practice. What do you think it's a lovely practice. I mean anything that calls us to be more. Given to the present moment at the present moment is titus philosophers described. The present moment is the fountain ever on this gushing forth of divine creativity. And we're just kind of out in our like what's next checklist. Kind of mode in life. Everything seems like a burden like it's getting in our way but when we move into that kind of way of seeing like you were describing our senses become very clear everything becomes very vivid and intense. Translucent greenfield Animating yeah and so. Why is that important. Why is it important to be present like if some of the thing. I don't see the big deal. Like why do. I need to focus on the here and now you got some good things coming up or eternal life is coming up. Yeah it depends on. Who's asking who's asking you know. Why should i be more present. Why should i be more mindful. If it's a church leader. I would have you know some and he gets. I'm just coming from a traditional orthodox latter day saints whose You know it's just thursday or friday. I'm just going to the store. Like why do i need to be present in this moment. Why can't i just look forward to the time. I'm going to have with my family tonight. Totally i love that. I love that question. What comes to my heart when your stat is both individual and collective on an individual level. I would say we need that because we all need forgiveness we all need grace and we all need christ tournament and when we really slowed down and make space ourselves we allow the spirit too. I really heal. Our wounded are fallen humanity so to be present for me and my world and my language. It's to participate more fully in the atonement in this moment. Yeah and that's a profound experience but as soon as we have that experience we realize everyone around me just like me like their disturbances. Their pain their upsets their grief. Their loss their dislike me. And to the extent that i can be a little bit more whole by participating in the tone meant i can become a channel for them to remind them that they have the same access to the atonement that i do. Yeah so any. True healing. We received from participating in the atonement. we spontaneously relies. We have an opportunity in service to remind other people the good news. One thing i learned from that is just that even when you are in the grocery line like taking the time to be present and

realized that crisis there with you even in the grocery line and that there's so much grace as you say that comes from that moment an additional opportunity to connect with divine even in the most simplistic location. That's right. I mean you know that person working the cash register. Maybe the like ten people before you felt kind of impatient and frustrated and that person just getting that energy all day like man can't hurry up and then all of a sudden kurt walks up and he's like open and there's some there's a flavor of stillness in him and that person just received it as a gift like even if he or she doesn't say there's like nine. Thanks for not being in a hurry and thanks for telling me. I'm not doing a good enough job. Just thank you. Yeah there's grayson that yeah. It's a tender mercy. Yeah absolutely and the gospel context Here that have like be christ like like be loving and at may mean to you. Know love the grocery line. But i'm one of those people's like don't talk to me like i'm just doing the the cashiers like talking about what you're buying.

00:20:06 - 00:25:03

Listen lady i don't. I'm not here for the conversation about what i'm buying but you can't get there right and so he's like i should be more christ like talk all right but but by going. This man might vilasrao like you're constantly preparing yourself so that win. That does congress saying oh she needs. She's actually looking for deeper grace through human interaction totally. I'm in a place where i can give that a huge just to that absolutely and let me just say something. That's coming up in the moment. Yes the lovely kurtinaitis dancing here. Lovely over here police for my home for him but You know the more we connect with ourselves more. We just connect with spirit connect with the fullness of life to moment the more we realized that all wherever doing for each other are are over whom were commanded to love is ourselves. All we're doing is offering them of being whatever words we say to them. Whatever service we're doing for them or not. It's like if our quality of being isn't there. If i break my neighbors leaves because it's a commandment than and i'm supposed to but i'm kind of in a hurry and i don't stop and look them in the. I'm just trying to get to the next thing. My quality of being will be the service. But if i come with like a full heart and i'm just overflowing with love and mike thank you for being my neighbor. It's just a joy to like. Be in your life a little bit. It's not like raking their leaves. This is a totally arbitrary example by the way although someone did rake my leaves recently and it may have been different. And and that is and he listened to this podcast. Thank you so if you will now shout you will not be named because you know. But i know he's on a treadmill writer he's always takes me from the anyways. Continue on this really the direct. My we've done like the gift of it was his quality of being right. I was relieved. I actually covert positive at the time and really sick. Yeah but it was like this guy's heart. I could feel and it went deeply because it wasn't like oh i would have never been able to rake the leaves. You probably could have gotten around. The i coulda called another neighbor. Right could take could have paid for someone at the leaves. Weren't that thing. But it's like pack to this like simplicity any time we're with our fellow man woman neighbor. It's our quality of being that is the conversion. That is the atonement and we're deeply available for we become a conduit channel vessel for it or were somewhere else. Yeah and that's what. I started transitioning to the leadership. Context is these roles as leaders can be so administrative. You know what's the next meeting. Sacramento starts in ten minutes. I gotta get there. What about that. Details as the sacraments setup and and then you want that connection you want to share that the state of being with others and uplift them

and so typically. You're like you turn into mr plastic. And he turn you told my big right but you're really not present. You're sort of trying to throw happiness at them and hope something changes within them. This is a very human response. It's actually an intelligent human response. Here's what i mean. We live in an age of overwhelm. There's too much stuff to do. There's too much coming at us every one of us many times a day. If we pay attention we realize i'm overwhelmed. There's too much coming in. there's too much to do. So we disconnect from ourselves. We shut a lot of ourselves down because it's just too much information. It's too much sensation. I gotta disclose down and the moment disconnect from ourselves we turn on like you just did like the personality. Yeah i'm gonna play a part that i'm supposed to play but i'm actually disconnected from myself and when i can't feel myself i can't fill somebody else. And the power of our like potential communion our relationship. It can't come through. Yeah those type. deeper in. The context of leadership is in partnership with this concept of presence. Yeah being present because we should define that word the presence. It's not a word that we use like a lot. I would say you know our latter day saint culture Do you mind if i something like grounded. One of the most beautiful doctrines to me in restoration. Theology in our church is the doctrine of incarnation than you know. Y other branches of christianity. Talk about the fall and we talk about the fall as an ascent like you know to actually fall from the garden was to ascend. Our godly hood are godliness to have a physical body. It's actually a greater fullness of joy to take on the body and join it with the spirit right so to me when i talk about presence. It's actually embodying all of us. It's being fully present in my body. It's being fully present my emotions fully present in my thoughts fully present in the intelligence. That is my spirit. Like all the parts me that constitute my uniqueness on my fullness. that's all right here right so it's a divine doctrine to like really inhabit these bodies temples.

00:25:03 - 00:30:02

Not just the physical body but like our emotional being. Our mental being are for energetic. Being all of that is part of our divine inheritance and we can exercise it right. That's what i mean by presence and so is there to me in that processes. I think a lot of people who not familiar with these practices are topics that they like. So i just. I'm just here. You know i feel it. And it's almost if incorrectly from wrong but there's almost this level of of acceptance of all that ride saiga. Maybe you are a little overweight. And you're you're going to accept that for the moment realized that you're a spiritual being that is loved by an eternal creator and i mean is the acceptance play a role in of accepting the present state. Is that your to off the rails here not at all. I mean i would say that the virtue of christian virtue comes to mind for his forgiveness. Because if we're honest with ourselves if we become really president right now on this moment kind of notice how am i doing right now. He how my phone in my body. I feel in my heart and so forth. If i'm honest there's no question there will be like some form of disappointment like how this relationship by men like. This is a lot harder than i wanted it to be all my career. It's not my family. There's things that don't go the way we want them to. And part of being present is like really forgiving conditions for not being what they hoped they would be and as we forgive ourselves and as we forgive the conditions of life. We get a glimpse. I've gotten glimpses into like all like when when christ is in gaza mini and he's saying that will be done talk about a condition that i wouldn't like you know i'm in my thirties. I got my friends. I got my you know my posse but oh it's time to like do that thing. You came here to do and and crisis like i wish this pat

does cup. Good pass but that will be done so to me. Yeah yeah acceptance like my translation of that in like christian doctrine is die will be done and when we practice like really practice. That prayer by we'll be done a thousand times a day man. Life is full of alomar grace than we notice and that example because obviously because it's an example of christ where he took a moment to recognize that feeling in him it was obviously wasn't sinful it wasn't a weakness feeling but it was a feeling on the lesson. He recognized human. Of course he wanted to cut the past. How many cups do we want to pass. Every single day yeah ryan acknowledging is allowed him to fill it and move through it thrown and do what he was saying exactly powerful and to give the sort of a maybe a real life Leadership example. i. I know you know my time serving as bishop. Sometimes as i was hurrying to get to the church that evening for a list of appointments may be short with my family in a rush maybe my wife and i sort of had a bit of a disagreement arguments. She was frustrated. I was leaving there. She was with the kids and now in the bishop's office. Somebody's coming into her with me. Something so personal to their heart and their experience and steal like wrestling somewhere my mind with this conflict with my wife and then just to feel and be like you know. I wish that cup would go away. I wish it would pass for me but it's okay it's there i recognize it and now i'm going to try and connect with this person. Perfect example and mike is there. Is there a bishop or a church leader on the planet that hasn't had a thousand experiences like that where they show up to a meeting to fulfill their calling. And it's like oh. I don't feel relaxed as i was would be optimal. I don't fill as president. I don't feel as inspired. I don't those loving is would be optimal. But here i am but this is what it is and actually make some room for that like i connect with yourself like oh manner just fill fill in the blank and then that next step of now that i'm connected myself i can actually feel make contact with this other person and maybe i'm inspired to say look like man. I'm feeling a little rushed right now. Maybe we could just take a moment to settle in and fill the spirit together. We can ask for something. We need them. That facilitates the magic. That could happen between us. If there was room for exactly and i remember several times is like a okay. Might six thirty points over okay. You know her husband's leaving her okay. That's traumatic oh this person just walked in three seconds later and he's addicted to porn and it's like almost to just take three minutes. Shut the door by yourself and just breathe throwing a moment and just be like okay I give this to god. I'm just and that's sort of the traditional meditation practice. You're always sort of bringing back right back to the center. You're doing that in real life right. Total in those lists appointments just bringing back centering and then trying to engage in that space. Yeah no i. I said fills reinspired and just like so practical as an example like this is like this is human life.

00:30:02 - 00:35:08

We run into these challenges all the time. I like the metaphor of digestion. It's like when we eat too much too fast or meals to frequently. How does your gut feel. This never happens in our neck. We all we all know that. It's like oh yeah. When i ate too much i feel awful for the next few hours. What we're not as sensitive to is at the level of sensory experience. What we hear what we see what we feel what we speak. That's actually its own kind of like nutrition. That's like moving through our soul. Our spirits digestive tract and were not as sensitive to knowing like i over eaten at that subtle level motionlessly mentally. And like like you said in that example. When i am overwhelmed when i've eaten too much when i just got a walker because someone came to the door and brought a lot of suffering. That's fine but to give myself space for that. And

like acknowledged like whoa. That was a lot. Let me take that. And let me digest. And then when it's time the next meal i'm ready for and it's nourishing but if we overeat overeating causes cancer. Yeah yeah in running back to leadership. It's that i remember especially as if you're so anxiously engaged right. You're like so in it. I mean and it's it's a ride right in. Its its spiritual. Ec people's lives change. It's remarkable. i remember the few weeks after. I was released as a bishop. I like came this realization. Like oh. I didn't realize how exhausted i was on sunday. It's like it was just you know after five years of doing this. It just became part of the routine. And i didn't realize that right and so i had sort of over eaten the spiritual experience and to just be able to step back in and let it digest on some level. And that's what this mindfulness creating space and this is sort of what you're you're totally is a story often share when we're talking about being present with each other and right now we're talking about in the context of the gospel and service really like truly loving our neighbor. I had a colleague that i worked with for years and as we were first working together i noticed that when we're on the phone he would say something like. Hey i'm just like going out the door right now getting in the car and you know just letting you know and or come on the highway right now or like my son. Mike come in in the next thirty minutes just to give a heads up. And like i remember having a conscious experience of ike Like i literally thought like how. It's kind of weird by every time anything's happening in his environment is telling me about it and then i realized after i got to know him he was actually practicing. Presence just through his actions he was saying you are utterly important to me. If i'm even five percent not president of wanna let you know and my intention is to come back full presence and i can't always be fully present because it's live but i want you to know that you matter to me and so i'm going to be president just just our undivided president. Anyone who's raised. The child knows that like the kid knows you're faking it when you're fifty percent present and when you're a hundred percent present there's a there's a nourishment that happens between the two of us that we i don't think science really understands fully what's happening there. But at the level of the soul were feeding each other and were redeeming each other. And i feel like your friend like acknowledging that it's sort of lays the ground for a deeper connection in that conversation right you can imagine like at released. Decided president rushing to the church to do a list of ministering interviews and for her to just be vulnerable. Foreman's be like crazy day the i it's important for me to be present here to to understand what you're dealing with. Can we just pray for a minute in that. 'cause it before we sort of wanted to present ourselves as as our best selves we think are like i'm here like how are you doing. So that's where that feeling of fakeness comes in exactly the feeling vagueness we could have a whole podcast series on this because we meanwhile like that feeling of famous it actually is. It's me compensating for. I'm so overwhelmed. But i still love you and i'm doing my best but like i don't know how to be more president so many kind of fake it a question. I love to ask like when. I sit down with a student or when i sit down with a big group of people to facilitate disaster like. Is there anything up for anybody's there. Anything present like an emotion and experience a feeling in the body anything that would prevent you from being more present and you know most of the time not everybody says something but almost every time at least one or two people so i yeah like like you. The example. Give a moment ago like i. You know felt stressed in my marriage. Because i had to leave my wife home with the kids if we can just volunteer that each other like hey. I'm so happy to be here. And i to be truthful on philo a little stress because there's a situation at home and i don't want that to like take from our time together and how you know. I just saying that i actually

feel more relaxed already like the and settle. You know little shifts like this help really make space for power to come through our interactions and i think that's what we want.

00:35:08 - 00:40:01

As latter day saints we want every encounter with every human being to be dude with that divine quality and leaders in the church. Have a special calling in that way. I think it's especially important when leaders have those skills. And you're going back to that concept of fakeness i mean oftentimes. I'll hear the judgment with leaders. Like oh my relief society president. She just seems so. Fake to me. Or i don't feel like people are real at church but to step back in a moment of grace and say wow. Maybe they're overcompensating for some type of conflict or friction. I wonder how i can engaged to find that and then get passed in. Connect with them totally. Yeah or like maybe. I'm not creating a safe enough space for that. Release society where where they select. That can be more honest. Relax and be themselves. Yes so you see how like these little the when we shift our attention one degree and we ask a new question it allows for a whole new relationship to arise in again moment. Yeah and i appreciate. What i'm learning here is when you talk about mindfulness or stillness. It doesn't mean a doesn't always mean quiet right doesn't mean you need to start every interview saying why don't we take three minutes and be quiet and then just like awkward for three minutes like ari dunya code with your picture of five year old birthday party. At the pool it can be like fr- presence can be that boisterous and it should be when appropriate and then other times like stillness in the chapel and we're taking the sacrament but we're not here to talk about the preciousness of like oh on being mindful speaking with my library voice right now about being fully embodied fully human and really receiving the divine gift of our lives and i have to talk about this concept of an i keep defaulting to the example of an interview scenario but it. It's something that's very routine in the life of leader. When because i've had these ministering interviews right sit down with a member of the elders. Cormorants dislike the jump in. Like will our your families. And i'm like well bill. They're good i go in. It's been thirty singling. I guess we're done here right. Oftentimes i've found that if you can figure out a way to connect spiritually doesn't have to be connected what you're talking about displaying moment with the divine this morning of reading the script for can i just read it to you. Can we just ponder this firm and dennis later. Then you get into your howard. The joneses doing again. You're creating space right. The mindfulness space. Right out for dutiful than i am a good good grasshopper. I'm learning. you're on a roll out. I'm not see. I'm going through. The transformations of faith have been through the whole course and so a lot of what. I'm reflecting on his. We talk some of these things. These points that you discuss in there which were so helpful was beautiful to hear your learning. Because i have not had the experience being a bishop and to see you applying these principles to a new area in life like. That's my dream. Like i can only be who i am and have the experience that i have but when leaders like apply these principles its power. Phone away that. I'm just learning from you and so excited that it's making its way under this new part of the church part of our culture. Yeah i wanna talk about in your course you talk about sort of follow the first principles of the of the gospel right. Faith repentance what are what are they faith. Faith repentance baptism. Goes type thing touch on things. i mean. that wasn't actually conscience conscious of the time. I got to give credit to adam miller atom motorcycle. Beautiful he's parlor horse switch and that was that was his i did. He went through the chorus. And he's like thomas would would he think about boom boom boom.

Let's like really like take the like the major principles of our religion and apply it to those mike which i thought of that. Yes i that was a great contribution from adam. Yeah and so one thing. I want to take him as this concept of repentance and sin because it is such a sticking point in our mortal journey of sin and we all sort of are dissatisfied with the fact that we sin. And we know that okay. Well i'm not perfect. But like every time i do it especially those sins that are made more stigmatized you know the individual who just keeps going back to the pornography or whatever it is. It's like what is wrong with this and then began so uncomfortable. You just want to fix it. You don't want to create space. You just want to fix it. So kurt leaders especially bishops. Were so involved in this process of of repentance and try and understand sin and helping people through this work we start there on understanding that concept. This is one of my favorite aspects of the chorus. Then you know. I've been interested in meditation contemplation. Things of this nature for over twenty years now and as i have realized how deeply it applies to the gospel. It's it's really opened up a new life for me. It's changed the way. I think about repentance. It's changed my own relationship.

00:40:01 - 00:45:18

The send mike capacity to be kind to myself and others you know amongst their struggles. So the topic i love and may be one thing i would say to kick it off. Is that when we act out when we do something that's either harmful to ourselves or others or both. I mean that that might be a good kind of blanket devotion of sin when we do something that's harmful to ourselves or others where in sinful territory there is. I wanna say. Virtually always some underlying suffering. There's an experience that i'm having that you're having we're having where i i don't wanna feel this and so i'm gonna do that and this is where your beautiful experience a bishop comes in. You can think of like the the kinds of problems and challenges. You saw coming through your door and like different. People have different coping mechanisms right but to understand that like we all have our coping mechanisms some of them more sinful than others. Some of our coping mechanisms are healthy and adaptive. And they lied to you. Know more healthy life than spirit and others tickets down a different path if we can make space in our relationships to see like this person is suffering and to not rush to fix it behaviorally but actually just be in company. Give companionship to the person who's suffering to me. I find that's often the first step in the healing process at least like from my discipline and from my point of view to like actually be with somebody like in the in the very experienced that they don't wanna feel at all costs when somebody especially leader dignifies a like i. I can just sit with you on this pain all of a sudden the next time they wanna act out. It's like now. Like i have that experience of kurt sat with me and this pain and actually in this moment i realized i can just be with myself. I don't have to abandon myself in this pattern. I can just be here. Yeah it that changes everything. Yeah and so. An this of course isn't meant to be overly tactical or here's the three staff that but it becomes taxing at times people keep coming to you and they're just like i keep doing this or this is a problem. It won't go away. It's easy to default to like well. Let's the internet filter. Let's look at your or retinal. Maybe wake up early exercise or scripture study or let me read you these three scriptures. And this'll like how do you help. Somebody just approach being present with that person as church leader like where do we even begin with. This is a really good question. I love how you wanna like. Go slow here because it feels really important to me The examples give about the internet filter. Yeah like should somebody with the pornography addiction work with

their filter. Probably but working with the filter were already like eight steps removed from like the highest leverage point. Like if i'm fiddling with my filter i mean the chances are like i'm on the back foot and i'm gonna lose battle after battle after battle. I nothing wrong with the filter but to me like my intention and mike starting to bring principles of contemplation. Mindfulness presence to our our relationships in the church to sin to repentance is to go to what i've found to be the highest leverage point and the whole process which is human life can be overwhelming human. Life can be overwhelmingly painful when we're overwhelmed by pain. We do something to cope often. What we do to cope with overwhelming pain leads to sin or his sinful already. So how do. I cultivate the capacity to stay present with my pain and realized that i actually have the divine shoot of presence. Presence is a divine. It is god's very light is the light with which christ created the universes and when we realized that were made of that light and that we can bring that very light to bear on our deepest suffering. I'd start to develop what i call. Divine confidence psych. No matter what. I'm feeling at any moment i can be present with an. It's okay and i can act out of agency choice. Fullness as opposed to driven this and compulsion that is the highest leverage point. I know in the hierarchy of sin. And i've seen this in my own life and i've seen it with many people have worked with that if we can be very present with that part of ourselves that we tell ourselves now. I can't be present with that. I can't fill it. I gotta get away gotta fill something else if we can do the opposite and actually be there with it. It heals us. It redeems us and we're less given to send the next time around. Yeah yeah so it you know talking going back to the individual may come to you and say i've i've done something terrible and we often respond over going to do something about that ripe and that's not creating space that's more reactivity it's like oh you reacted to your pain and then did something harmful.

00:45:18 - 00:50:07

Let's react to that reactivity and do something else and we mean well. But what we're doing is just reacting. It's just like dominoes all the way up. All the way down forever. How do we like when you take one. Domino out of the stack. It's like you know it disrupts the fall disrupts the apple and and i'm basically they're coming saying i'm coping this way and you say we'll know less cope this way and is your coping. No want the the surrender their. That's right from like you know my testimony. My experience is that from the standpoint of god's divine light we are utterly worthy and lovable beings. So there's nothing to do. Yeah and because there's nothing to do will now. It can do something it's a it's a paradox. We can do something because we don't have to. We're not driven to do it. We're not doing it out of a sense of lack fear. Or i should be better for doing it because we're free and we're here to be free. We're human to be free and we have agency and like when we see somebody act on that agency like truly a free act. That is god and car noted in this world and it's it's amazing that's awesome And i'm just thinking nyc the concept of creating space with an individual whether it's a bishop's office or maybe it's a parent child relationship like it's so easy to respond with your coping mechanism of this could behavior. And maybe if you just get a good hobby that that bad behavior will go away right. Let's fill it up but creating space just like stepping back in just saying again coming from the standpoint of there's a wound there it's not the behavior it's the wound that's there and they are begging someone to say. Will someone recognized that. This really hurts. Will you tell me it hurts you right and so helping them. See how that hurts. Beautiful as right dutiful. Yeah i couldn't have said it any better. That's perfect and i love. I'm just noticing kurt. You're using this word space in a way. I

haven't been in this conversation and it feels really inspired like in a sense it starts simple like first step like make space for whatever it is that we need to make space for. I love it. It just feels right. Yeah and because it really is that space where the saviour then enters the fray. It's not like we just need empty. Space have empty space. But we need to like. Why don't we create some space for for these savior to enter. And i feel like we're talking to like high level. I think people are picking up on. But it's like you know. Were there for the atonement. But we don't know like there's no manual that says right step one you do this step to this and so i was like you have to help create space so then the saver can with whatever step he wants next. Yeah i love the yet. Nah i mean as far as i can tell. The atonement will never be manual is. Yeah there's a there's a mystery in it but there are ways that we can make are. There are ways that we can get out of our own way. Yeah and you know to me. The work i do in the community work done on this course. It's like thousand different ways to get out of your own way. There's another way to look at it. Yeah any other thoughts around this concept again. I don't wanna make overly tactical The here's the steps that tom's mckie says to help somebody great space with somebody but anything else you'd have this like engaging with people who are experiencing trauma or who are of trapped in their routine of sin any other advice you'd give as far as creating that space and being present in that space with them well. I don't know if i would say anything new in this meaning. What's coming up for me is something we touched on earlier but i want to reiterate a new moment maybe in a new way one of the hardest things about being a leader of any sort and i imagined for people who are bishop stick. Presidents and or leaders of any capacity in the church were leaders. You know we could. Let's let's put it that way as as leaders and latter-day saints working with people's difficult. Why because when other people are in pain and having difficulty like like piano strings vibrating. That pain will resonate with our pain. And if. I'm not master of my own domain. If i haven't already committed to my own experience i can be present with myself the moment i feel anybody's paying around me it's going to start to resonate with me and i'm gonna fill overwhelmed feeling overwhelmed. I'm going to try to speed up that piano string. You know three strings over from brought from from vibrating. Because it's disturbing me so to me like a lot of this. Practice is learning how to deeply connect with ourselves to practice an unconditional time towards ourselves. And then as we do that we see tremendous suffering in the world. You know people we serve in the church and not in the church and they're suffering doesn't agitate me. They're suffering doesn't overwhelming the in fact like the more they're suffering the more present i can become so it's taken care of ourselves.

00:50:07 - 00:55:04

It's taking really good care of ourselves and acknowledging that we're affected by their people's pen and we actually have our own numbing strategies for not doing other people's pain and one of our favourite numbing strategies for not feeling other people's pain is to give him a solution. Oh if you did this yeah this worked for me right for you and mike back can be well meaning and sometimes it's fair inspired but at worst it's like the it's like my unconscious processes could talk it saying like your pain is too painful for me right now. I need to do something about your pain to mute it so that i'm not in pain with you right now. Yeah and that's the deep work we want to do. So they were really truly hewing to. Yeah as let's talk about that deep work on a more general level as far as we've talked about in the context of like somebody sinning and there's maybe a lot of stigma with that sin and you know the bishops involved. The confession takes place and

then he's be handled other repentance. Process needs be encouraged forward. But what about on like a general ward level because a lot of people are numbing or coping ways than aren't necessarily stigmatized or or even sinn fault maybe there. They bury themselves in their work because then they don't have to feel the pain that's in their marriage at the moment or you know. There's other ways of coping that way through. How can one help a general audience sort of create space for that stillness so that they can recognize it. Oh that's that's not healthy. The relationship i have with my work is not healthy. I'm avoiding other things any any thoughts on that for someone like when we do this work. There's a difference between repetition and redundancy. The reason i says because like if i think in this conversation up till now maybe we've talked about three things but we've talked about them one hundred different ways. Yeah and when we've talked about a hundred different ways at a certain point. The mind conceal. Like i heard that he said be present like really like. It's not redundant to point to a thousand more times because the concept is very different than the embodied experience presence right. so that's my disqualifier as i Or my disclaimer. As i like start to repeat myself again. What to say about the question. You ask like in the wards scenario. If i'm really embodied in other words if i'm really committed to my own experience as it is it's it's okay. I'm not as famous as i wished. I was at this age. I'm not as wealthy. I'm not as respected. I'm not as healthy on whatever we all have. The alio have reasons to not be more committed to like. This is what it is but as we really commit to. This is my life as who i am. This is my body. this is my heart my mind. These are the conditions the more committed. I am to the more people around us. Say like man that kirk guy. He seems like seems pretty relaxed and he seems pretty non judgmental and actually. When i'm around. Kurt i feel like i don't have to put on a show i can just kinda like let hang out a little bit. That's what i found. We're not sharing this so practice with words. It's our quality of being. Yeah that's what i would say. So as we're more sensitive to ourselves we start to notice people in the world. Like oh i can. This is an eckhart totally phrase if anyone knows tolis work but the pain body. It's like when. I'm really sensitive and president. I can fill that person's pain body more than the other person's meaning that like they're carrying pain around with them like a millstone. If i'm sensitive to i can be more present with nick space for it. Be kind to it and do all that without saying a word. Yeah that's when the best teaching happens when there's not a word spoken about what i learned from that is it's not necessarily because i'm sort of i guess maybe unconsciously i've sort of looking for the answer like well you should have a fifth sunday less about visa three. I'm dan. i'm not playing this but it's almost like it's not about what you go out and say warder what you go out and how you organize the next chili cook off or how you do sacra meeting. But it's about how you are like how you become as an individual and just going through this this practice yourself and sort of creating space in your own way like you. Naturally you begin to receive grace so then you can then reflect that grace on others and just be a better person. That's going to do more than total than like. Oh well let's bring thomas into this sunday's he's local here. Let's get him in here. He can come talk to the word. Mindfulness experts your talk about being more mindful. And but that's sort of our jerk reaction in our traditions like in on it. I've touched on other contexts. where the bishop's he's a problem. So let's have a fifth sunday lesson about problem because we're going to fix the problem but it's like no no you just you just be totally right. What i'm learning in this conversation with you. Which i'm really enjoying his that like in a sense the gospels about freedom It's about happiness but it's it's also about freedom and a life in the gospel is a life of freedom and when we're free we're free to choose.

00:55:05 - 01:00:01

Were free to act. Were free to be totally present in this moment and respond to it with as much love as humanly and divinely possible. Princeton repeat. Yeah keep doing that man. He's good place. Oh in again. Just sort of a summary the repeating things in different ways but again not to get too tactical but one thing. I've just found so refreshing my own. Mindfulness practice is. I've been so conditioned of you know I say my prayers before I go to bed is but it's like the equivalent of brushing. My teeth is like something I do and it's like okay. Brush the teeth. And now I fall to my knees and I rattled off some things but instead to take a moment and maybe if I need a you know some something to drown out the noise another part of the house but just taking a moment just like sitting with God and not addressing each other but just like. I'm just gonna take a moment to be here like engine that that helps me develop as an individual so that I can then go provide or or give more grace other people right totally. I love that. It's another example of like where we can introduce space in towards the. Yeah and that's really. I think we're just like creating that space that presence. That's what this conversation has been about right. One of many Thomas talks about of course transformations of faith. What are we missing any other direction before we wrap up. I mean there's there's so much. I have notes from going through the course of the so many directions but as we wrap up any direction or point maybe you wanna make sure we touch on intending to be present right now just noticing like is there anything left unsaid. Is there anything we didn't cover and one thing is coming up. What came to me is a kind of revelation distant my life. The life of discipleship. Was this awareness. That I was defended against God and that even say that sounds kind of funny. We talk about talk about God or relationship with divine. Mike Batt but I realized that actually. I'm defending myself. And in a moment ago you talked about like the prayer. I love how you said like saying prayers. Sometimes as routine is brushing her teeth in this language. I'd say that's a way of defending yourself and ways. I defend myself like sometimes. I often let me back up often. I pretend the no more than actually no. And I saw this pattern in my life. It really struck me. It'll take me a whole life to improve upon it. But I realized like in moments when I'm pretending to no more than actually no. I'm actually defending against a deeper truth. That scares me. It's like it's too much divine light. It's too much truth that it's the truth burns when we let so much of the truth then so to me like this conversation. We're having yet another way to talk about. It is can we notice the ways in which we cover up windows with these thick curtains to keep the light out and other subtle ways in which we can let a little bit more life and it turns out there are. It would be really arrogant and presumptuous to suppose like our tradition is an already full of beautiful ways of pulling the curtains open. Letting more light on. But I also think you know as a latter day saint were encouraged to take part actively in the restoration. And I believe in this day and age we know more about the human body the human psyche the human spirit that has ever been revealed. So we're learning new ways of letting down our defenses against the divine and living a more godly virtuous life. Yeah so. I think you know the best is yet to come. And some amazing what knowledge we've been given in order to transform to transfigure to change at the deepest level. So let me let me make sure. I understand this defending concept of It's almost like we're defending against God as far as like we don't want Him fully into who we are else. I want to be in charge of my life. I'm running the show. Not God I'm running. Gajah yeah yeah and whether leadership context. I'm going to be a super awesome. Bishop that does goes above and beyond

like there's a sense of that that that's that's great like we need a good bishop or whatever so you know we. We thought maybe overcompensate with some of these righteous behaviors in an attempt that maybe. If i do this. I won't have to show god or others who i really am. That's really uncomfortable. Broken wounded totally. Sometimes we defend against god to obedience. Ironically it's like if i'm if i'm super obedient if i'm perfectly obedient. God's got nothing on me but when we investigate our motivations for being obedient on actually afraid. Yeah i'm just afraid of not being worthy of not qualifying for blessings. You know. yeah when we take a closer look at ourselves and our motivations that can be really sobering like why we do it we do. Yes you know when in reality.

01:00:01 - 01:05:15

God just wants all of us. He wants one hundred percent he knows who we are and he just wants us to hand that over to just be as we are being busy. You mentioned this a moment ago. Being busy i think is all of our defense mechanism to the divine life of. I'm busy have time to be more god. Labs busy of the later. I'll do it when i die. You know we don't want to be. I don't mind because that's the devil's workshop is like delicious. Yeah yeah so anyway. Lots of different perspectives and lots of territory to cover. But but i. I feel the spirit of it. When i when i talked to drill through. It's been really fun. Enlightening and and again. I thank you for this. This course it really has bust my life. And i'm not i'm not trying to be overly promotional or anything but i sincerely has been awesome. I'll return to timing. So if people do want more information about transformations of faith were to access it. Engage with it where where we send boots god its own website transformations of faith dot org big shoutout and thank you to. The faith matters foundation. Andy great work that helped produce the course and kind of conceived of the course and You know gave me the opportunity to create. Yeah that was really rewarding partnership with them. Yeah perfect will definitely talk with. At some connections. Faith matters that to see if we can work out a deal for some leaders out there that want to experience this on a deeper level so that was great. Thanks for the leaders who feel called for. I hope fill have ready access to the material. Perfect so final question. I have is just as you. Have you been across the world sort of in this world of of mindfulness and your quest for this around the subject of mindfulness and stillness in presence. And how how is that helped. You become a better follower of jesus christ better disciple of him. I think comes up from now on you ask it is You know if you if you change scenery once you start to learn the ways of a new village newtown a new culture if you change scenery twice you see like these people do even differently than those people did it. But i changed sooner like twenty times from the time i was eighteen or so. The you know my early thirties before i moved back and settled in salt lake city. And i think changing scenery so many times and moving through different cultures different languages different human histories all that. I really sought a lot of diversity. It it keeps the pattern that there's a there's a universal yearning underneath at all. There's the surface expression of the culture. Is what i can see with my eyes and here with my ears. But then there's like the yearning. I feel in my heart and that he earning i found to be universal and when i recognize that it connected me deeply to you know the teachings i learned when i was five years old i learned all i needed the know like the really good stuff in primary school like people are yearning for the heart of christ. They're they're yearning for divine love their yearnings fraternity. And i think after. I you know like toward the world a couple times over. I realized like everything's different but everything's the same ones. I

was able to tune into that sameness. I was really able to love the diversity of the world. But i saw that concludes my interview with thomas worthy mcconnell. A shout out to him so grateful for his wisdom his perspective his journey that he got on his life that resulted in him bringing so much knowledge to to our faith community again. I can't stress enough to go checkout transformations of faith dot. You can go to the course. They have like a introduction to the course video you can watch sort of get a feel of it and see the outline the things the type of concepts he. He covers again. That that includes i think five or six different interviews with between him and adam miller and two so just solid. Now if you use the code leading saints twenty five all one word leading saints twenty five to twenty five percent off again. I can't stress it enough to go. Check it out and and take a for role right like look at these concepts. Consider them ponder over them. And i promised to. Your faith will be expanded and benefit from the perspective and knowledge of thomas. Worse than the cocky 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 did came as a result of the position of leadership which was imposed upon us by the god of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of jesus christ and when the declaration was made concerning the only true and living church on 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 which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.