

LEADING SAINTS

Solidarity Over Service | An Interview with Jana Spangler

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Hey a quick note before we jump into this episode here leading saints. We're trying to do more. How i lead interviews now. What's it how. I lead interview. You've probably heard him before. It's where we find everyday leaders around the world who are serving in one capacity or another. Maybe an elder score president cited president ward mission leader. High councilor stake presidency counselor so many different callings of leadership that we have in our faith tradition and we'd like to sit down with them one and just say how is it that you lead. Give us a few principles. Put it into perspective. What's your area like and these turn into phenomenal resources of best practices and it's always fun to hear what the other guy is doing. So if you know somebody who we could interview on how i lead segment regardless of their calling. We would love to connect with them. Go to leading saints dot org slash contact and send us the information. Maybe give them a heads up and we'd love to reach out to them. Connect and see if we can get them on the leading saints podcast for one of our how i lead segments again. Go to leading saints dot org slash contact and send us the information. Alex i'm here with alex Tell us alex. Where're you from. Who are you. And what is leading saints mean to you and why do you support us. Hey kurt i alex. I live down in in mesa arizona Currently serving as bishop. And i love leading saints Because it is a source of revelation for me. It helps me learn about myself. It helps me recognize inspiration. I get from the word council and seeing the wonderful potential. I have in the word. I just really thankful for all that you do. It's a great cause. Thank you welcome. Back to the leading saints podcast. My name is kurt. franken your host. And i'm excited to share another episode with you. If you're new to leading saints were glad you found us. We hope you stay subscribe join our newsletter which you probably heard about earlier this recording and hope you benefit from this content leading saints is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping latter day saints. Be better prepared to lead and we do that through content creation and publishing and so this podcast is a good example of that. We have a virtual summits that we

produce we have thousands of articles leading saints dot org encouraging her leading saints dot org slash about to really hear the depth of our mission and our purpose and so we hope that you subscribe stay awhile and benefit from this content. Just like today's episode. Now in today's episode i interviewed janice spangler and actually interview janna for the questioning saints virtual summit. She did a phenomenal presentation there. Which i strongly recommend if you go to leading saints dot org slash questioning the details about how to access that content. And i believe it was after the interview. She brought up Some thought or idea that she has been a wrestling with in the context of being latter day. Saint and that is this concept of service. You know very good at serving people but we're not so good maybe a being in solidarity with them. Now when she said that. I probably had a similar reaction. You like solidarity. What on earth like. What are we talking about right. And so she talks about in this interview. We have a great discussion between the difference between solidarity and service and when to service look like what solidarity looked like via solidarity more effective in our faith community and how it can have a more unifying effect just phenomenal phenomenal discussion. This is a raw discussion a real discussion. And so i hope you'll give us a lot of grace as we try and talk through some of these principles especially myself but then the less just a a very important discussion. That i feel like a lot of latter day saints can benefit from as they're engaging in in ministry right that's such a strong tradition in our faith and Sometimes we don't know what to do. Sometimes the people don't give us any any way to serve them where we just feel like we're bothering them and all these things so we she gives some great advice perspectives. That can really help us be more focused on solidarity rather than just service which service is great and it needs to continue but it can be very superficial at times and but we need to dive deeper. So here's my interview with jenny. Spangler today i'm in holiday utah in the home of jenny. Spangler how are you. I'm doing well good now. You were recently recently. Interviewed you for the questioning saints. Virtual summit was a phenomenal discussion of people. Haven't heard it they need to Go check it out and a lot to learn there. And i don't know if it was before or after our conversation you brought up this idea and i think it may be inter woven into our discussion and i thought oh my goodness that sounds awesome. And it's around this concept of solidarity verse service yet but before we jump into that maybe just give us a brief background of who you are and why you even have anything to sail topic. Okay so my name is janice spangler. I live in holiday with my husband and three kids. I am a life coach and i work for symmetry solutions and we are a group of therapists and coaches.

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Who help people with a variety of things but my specialty is in working with people who are having challenges to their faith people who have doubts and questions and it's causing all kinds of problems with their identity in their relationships and and they work with a lot of mixed eighth couples people whereabouts rocking their world when it comes to their marriage and other things. So that's the work. I do and another thing about me. I am a graduate of the living school which is a program run by the center for action and contemplation and the director of that. School is richard rohr. He's a catholic priest and basically there. I studied all about contemporary of christianity. The roots of christianity christian thought and how it affects our walk through the

world and how we engage with the world and to do good and to do the work of christianity. So that has really influenced the way that i look at a lot of things and giving me some unique perspectives. Yeah i think just your history and also your own personal faith journey. Yes the you went through and now you've not that it's all over. Always all of us are sort of navigating faith to subject areas now arrival. Point haven't is for you but nonetheless you're definitely at a point where you've you've you you're in the church you're active you're encouraging on latter day saints in and helping and i'm so glad people like you are out there that because when somebody does go through you know what we probably misnomer the faith crisis when they go through that could that they have individuals who may be exposed himself in coastal to that so absolutely. Everyone needs to be heard. That's my my biggest mantra in all of this is everyone needs the right to be able to do their faith journey the way that that god is calling them to do it and so when that gets messy and complicated were not always equipped knowing how to help people through it. Yeah and so. I'm offering a space where people can work through that and be honest and bring all of the good bad and ugly and have a place to work through that has it's been really beneficial to my life and i just thrilled to offer that to other people. Yeah so let's the ship into this topic of service and solidarity. Let me maybe set up a hypothetical and is one that we're all familiar with you. Know we have a strong tradition of service church. That's christianity rights. No surprises part of our ladder. Saint faith and even our ministering program the teaching visiting teaching type of program where were signed to families. We started their on paper. Like we get it like okay. What if they're sick were there if they need something were there. We'll go visit them so every so often and check in with them see if they need anything and it's one of those things like There's a brilliant program like why aren't more churches sort of organize this way and then it just becomes awkward in the application at times where you know. Okay the ministering brothers or here come on in and sort of this awkward exchange and then the famous words of is there anything we can do for you and they all know we're fine you know even though maybe your marriage is on fire. Whatever you know and and it's just this awkward exchange at times. Where like i really wanna help you. But i don't know how you don't seem to let me in and another example i. share that i've shared before as a few years ago. My mom win for screening and they found a the beginning of of some breast cancer and was really early on. I mean thank goodness. She did other things going to check ups and required minor surgery. It was done and and choose on her way. And i remember having this conversation of like she. She intentionally didn't. Maybe i should make anonymous. My mom's going to mandate here but she initially didn't notify her ministering sisters not that she didn't want to but you know she has four children in the area. We were more than enough support. And she didn't want to cause other people to fuss about her in her situation she was she really was and she's been good ever since right. And so there's this dynamic where we sort of feel obligated to tell people like i'm going through this thing i guess you're supposed to do some form even if i don't need it and even for myself my own life i know i'm rambling here but i'm gonna point but in my own life i sort of. I don't need the in person visit even once a month twice a month or every other month he just doesn't do much for me but nonetheless i sort of feel obligated sort of our faith tradition. Yeah come on and let's have a conversation. Whatever the interview screaming but whatever you know so start us off your what do you need understand about what is solidarity. And what is service and How do they contrast yeah so just to back up a little bit this this kind of started to on me at a living school because they talk a lot about this these ideas of solidarity versus service or charity and and how

that works were were trying to help people on the margins right but as i learned these concepts started thinking about these situations that you're talking about rate and how awkward it can be in ministering and and one of the things that came to me was just the awareness that everyone in the church we love especially in relief society.

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We love to serve and we hate to be served albeit tasks role any day of the week. And right so right right. Yeah and we love it and we feel so good when we're able to give the casserole when we're able to know i mean i can guarantee that the ministering sisters were assigned to your mother when they find out that this thing had happened. Well why didn't you tell us. It's this missed opportunity for us to bring the casserole right and another thing that brought this to my attention is just going through a really dark time of heavy questions about church myself and my own journey. I felt so alone in that. And so there's this dichotomy were so good when someone has something we can see when they lose someone to you know just illness or you know someone passes away when someone is going through a hard time to some extent you know even financially but that's typically only the dish the nose or you know whatever but when we're going through some really physical hard times we were we're so good this is where the strength of our networks come like it's amazing and you do wonder why don't more churches do. This is amazing. The support we give to another. The downside is when you're going through marital problems when you do have a porn addiction when you are going through countless other problems face trials whatever you name it. Yeah we don't want anyone to know that we don't want people to know when we're depressed. We don't want. We do not want people to know these things. And so as i learned about solidarity versus service and this distinction that they were making in school i saying i started to started to dawn on me. This is an awareness that could be so helpful us as lonnie saints. Because i've never even really. I mean i've heard the word solidarity. Not not on sunday in typical conversation in which we don't talk about which is interesting because it is so quarter the gospel. Yeah it is so course. I wanna just kind of talk a little bit about wet solitaire when i need it. Let's impact what. Am i talking about when i talk about solidarity there. Couple of ways to look at this and they are both christ-centered so you know the the first thing i would say about solidarity is that it is it. Is this move of being one with another person. So you know we get this. This invitation in the new testament where jesus says in in his intercessory prayer in john. Seventeen twenty one he talks about. He says that the reason that he's doing what he's doing is that they may be one as thou father art in me and i in the unifying effect which which has been part of this mormon vision from the very start and you'll have to forgive me. I use the word. Mormon i just do. I apologize joe vein to offend anyone. We're here with you in solidarity. Thank you. I just always. I grew up as one. And i will always think y Anyway so i apologize. that it is very court tar. Tradition right of cour- know just thinking of being zion community building the body of christ. This is what we want. now that doesn't imply uniformity but it doesn't unity. It implies bringing all of our strengths. Oliver differences and being one with one another our model for service and this is true beyond the walls of her church. This is at thing in society. This this is very much part of our american society and leaks into other christian faiths as well is we we do serve us more often than do solitary and what i mean by that

service is a top to bottom kind of a move. I'm in a good position. You are suffering in some way. You have trouble in some way you were at the margins of society in some way and so i need to go help you give you hand up. Give you a hand up and it's it comes from a very good impulse. I'm not here to bash on people wanting to do the survey discouraging service purging service. This is very important. And i think brings on a whole new dimension of trying to be run with one another and with the mission of what christ was here to tell us to do if we can do it in a more horizontal fashion knee a broken individual. I'm an in this with you. Who are also broken in many ways and through our solidarity in this we recognize that neither of us are broken that we are doing exactly what we are meant to do.

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As human beings that there are good reasons for us to be where we are and that there is so much of our culture that gets in the way and this kind of a move and like i said i'm not i don't wanna bag on anyone. I don't want bag on the way that we've done things a really just want to open up a new possibility of the way of seeing these things that could enhance the way that we do leadership callings certainly the way we do ministering the way we been compassionate service and i'm a compassionate service leader my words so this is narender my heart yet you you take it to a level of mortal to mortal yes and so you know it's oftentimes we look towards. Maybe the bishop for help and but we kind of see the bishop on a different level. you know. he's his life is more put together and that's why he is the bishop right and whether the bishop intended that or anybody intended that that's sort of the natural place we go and so we go to the bishop looking for help like a hand up right like and so naturally that service kicks in so that oh you need help and look i have. I have fast offering funds. I have you know connections like yeah. I can help you. We should but then we skip over that solidarity of being like i'm gonna come down to your level and connect and understand and and more with you as were were s to do and what you're mentioning that. The hierarchy of our church is a blessing curse right hierarchy is. It has helped us. So i mean the organization of the church is amazing. It works so well because of hierarchy the downside of hierarchy is what we're talking about there is embedded in it. I don't care how compassionate the bishop is. There is always some sort of feeling on some sort of level unless you grew up with the dude and you played basketball with him every week. Then you'll have a different view of the guy but by and large you are coming in feeling like you are on a different level. And i remember the as bishop several times whether said directly or not individuals. Look me like but you will never understand what i'm going through and i'm like i never claimed i would understand. I'm just trying to help you. Don't like and any sort of feel helpless as a leader. Because you think. I want to understand i to get on level but but they it's that here is supposed to get it out of the way you can't reach that solidarity at times. I mean just have to recognize that right. We have to recognize that that is thing it's an inherent thing gutter bad rid of it. Were just saying it's there. It's there and we need to deal with it but it automatically puts us in this place of service and it makes it brings up all of these feelings for the person who has to ask for help. There are always conscious or unconscious questions to that person of what did i do wrong to. Bring me to the place where i need this. We see it as something that we've done wrong. Yeah yeah wow which always brings that shame cycle in.

Yeah right and it's an unintended shape cycle absolutely and do you know how i know. It's a shame cycle because you know in the worker. Bruna brown does so much. Good research on shame and vulnerability and all of this. You can tell when your kids for instance are feeling shameful about something because they don't tell you about it shame is always thrives in the dark and we live in a soup of it in this church whether we know it or not on a cultural level. I don't mean to dramatize that that there are so many things we don't want to bring forward and let her neighbors know and that is shame. Shame cannot abide the light of day. Shame goes away as we're able to just be ourselves and let people into that and again. This isn't some issue with doctrine that's created this. A lot of its tradition. You know the just the the idea of you know the of repentance to the bishop is a great concept but then there's the store that shot it's behind that door. Let's not bring up. Let's not bother other people with. Let's get this handled and move on and so naturally over time. We think oh. I can talk about this in the bishop's office but i it is inappropriate to bring up an elder score. Anything why we want to connect and be in solidarity with you as much as the bishop does all right and in the elders corm. There's less of that here archy. I'm just your brother next score absolutely that. I think it's important. One of the things that i think could really serve us all inhumanity but i think it plays a particular part in in our. Lds culture is being aware of our ego needs recognizing we all have them and they are always informing us that we need to be separate superior on top of things admired right and it's amazing to see how that plays out in so many ways in our culture and we can't get rid of that.

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It's actually a good thing. It it it helps us discern and it it keeps us safe. It does does a lot of really good things we need but we would be. Well served to pay attention to how it is getting in the way of our christian journey. Yeah yeah and other comes to mind. Is this tradition and again. I don't know it comes from per se but you know that you know obviously the bishop has keys for the repentance process and so if i remember the vanilla corn president early site president in a ministering interview and naturally this person just says i'm really struggling with pornography or i'm really my marriage is a mess right but there's this feeling of saying what will you can't tell me that you have to tell the bishop and the but again. The bishop is in charge of repent. It's not about hearing confessions. We can confessed anybody and reach solidarity there. And oftentimes we sorta confuse the. Obviously the bishop is who can facilitate repentance. But he's not the one that facilitate solidarity that can be done between any two mortals absolutely absolutely right and one of the things that complicates hierarchies. We're talking about. Is that the people who are chosen for leadership by and large do tend to be the people who seemed to have it together right and because you want some level of stability you want some level of stability and what comes along with that. I'm just going to come out and say it is often those kinds of people who at least show to the world. They have it all together. Art as practiced at living into uncertainty are not as practiced at being emotionally raw. And letting letting other people in to see their dirk sites this is an inherent barrier to solidarity because solidarity is a two way relationship. It is not just the minister. Who comes in and takes care of you when you're down and never shows that they have ever had a problem. That is a killer to solitary. You can't even if you know as minister that you have been through the heart things is you. Don't talk to the

other person about that if you don't let them into that if you don't access the part of you that has really hurt in the past so that you can sit and mourn with this person who mourns than you are not doing solitaire and this is like tricky and confusing for leaders. Because they think well. So am i just supposed to stand in for my ward and lift off my sins. And even if they did that they probably don't have very many shocking sins. Sure there's probably that the bishop that has some issues that party that needs to need some help with but in general. It's you know how. I don't really struggle. You know i don't have cancer. I don't have a porn issue. You know so. I don't know what to say to them. And i don't think even if i did is appropriate for me to do that. And that's where it's tough right. It absolutely and it takes two cernan. It takes wisdom and again. In brown's research she she talks about. This vulnerability is not over sharing. It's actually the opposite of ability typically when we are over sharing there is some element of trying to manufacture a connection That's that's usually where it's coming from. We're trying to manufacturer connection with you and it ends up doing the opposite. And so when we're thinking of what we wanna share you do have to use discernment rene talks about. How want to only share with people who have earned the right to hear your story. If you are laying out all of your sense from the pulpit. I can guarantee that. There are many many many many people in that congregation. Who can't hold what you just said right. And they're almost repelled by it absolutely they have not earned the right to hear your story like generally typical work on a general level. But maybe one to one that can work. It's more potent absolutely. You have to see the the time and place. You have to be wise with this. Are there times when it can be really powerful for a teacher or a leader to get up and say something and be vulnerable in front of her group absolutely and a an example when i was having states struggles and i had been just doing this all by myself for a whole year. An i imagined in my head. But i'm the only person still sitting in the pews. That has this label questions about this about this church. And and what triggered this for me was my daughter had an injury and my wonderful ward was testing and praying for my daughter and i was feeling the sollidarity in that well but it also made so clear to me how alone i was in this deep thing that no one could see was going on and i wasn't about i had been dealing with for year and hadn't told the soul and i'm a very foolhardy person.

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I am not advocating this for people. Because it's not like it was a one hundred percents smooth sailing when i did this but i got up in happen to be fast and testimony day when they were fasting for my daughter and the injury had just happened and i got up and thanked everyone and just in the course of that. I said you know what we're so good at this. We're so good at this. When i got my daughter has an injury but i've been dealing with something inside me for so long and i'm just so aware that i could've used this kind of i didn't use the word solidarity. 'cause i didn't have that in my vocabulary at the time but i could use that solidarity around questioning and i just said i just want any of you out there to know who are dealing with these kinds of things you're not alone. And something miraculously happened. I mean people came out of the woodwork. That i would've never dreamed had questions themselves that now. I'm a safe place right right. And i think going back to that that moment of striving for solitary doesn't mean again connected with sharing you don't have to over share on the details. You didn't have to come out

and stand up and say well. I have the issue with this church history thing and that and did you know this right but you just said i am wrestling with faith however he said it. Yep and that alone is enough for people to say. Oh okay i lean into that absolutely and it was important that i didn't do that with the intent to have people rally around me. I did it with the intent to hopefully let someone else not know that they're not well. Yeah exactly and they did that and because of that it was it was positive now it opened up a whole new can of worms in my journey that other people knew i was struggling with my faith. Yeah and i'm i'm grateful for it because now i know what it feels like to be marginalized and know what it feels like to be mistrusted when i was trusted in a certain way and i'm not that's value. It was very hard to go through that. I've learned some things. Yeah and i think that's another important point about solidarity is that doesn't mean when you move that direction things don't get even more messier. It can even get more out of control right and intended consequences all over the place and i would say if more of us were able to make that move inappropriate ways that are not over sharing but our purpose to the situation appropriate. What we're trying to accomplish. It would invite a deeper solidarity. And i will say i have experienced a deeper solidarity from that vulnerability in my work than i ever had before that point in other example this in my own life that it may be applies here is a lot of people know this but in so i'm the youngest of four kids. I have two older brothers. All three of the boys when in the family we were bishop at the same time and they have teenage kids. You can imagine the unintended pressure. This may be a family win. These kids show up to sunday. Dinner and their father and two uncles are bishops at there and naturally we think. I think that's what you're supposed to do to be successful in the strict triton. Obviously nobody's fault. Nobody antenna that. And i remember if that's what they feel but i sort of recognize this part right so we have a family home evening as a extended family and i'm teaching might take an opportunity to share the fact that as a youth i had multiple visits with my bishop to confess some things that i messed up. Bright and it just takes a moment to say. I'm not the bishop like that's my title but that doesn't mean i'm perfect like in your when i was your age like i wrestled with some things much like you are so there's no shame if you have to go there and i think that's like for individuals going back to leaders who are struggling with you know missiles to sustained up a chair my sins or whatever oftentimes. You don't even have to share what you're going through today if you don't know how to put words to it but if any parent out there that's had had to go to the bishop at some point in their life. Why haven't you shared that with your children because that's only going to help. You can't see how that could go wrong for the most part. Yeah i think it's a. It's both and i'm the both and girls. There's value in both because if we only ever feel comfortable talking about the things that we've gotten licked we've taken care of it. It's all good. I'm on those straight and narrow. Now it is still giving that impression and one of the things that i wish we could do as a culture truly is make more friends better friends with our humanity that to recognize that an and unfortunately again it's fraught an i'm just pointing out how it is thought i. I'm not saying anything is right wrong. Whatever but it is fraught when our actions are tied to worthiness and talk of worthiness.

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And i know we really try. We really try to talk about worth being separate from worthiness but sometimes. That's a distinction. Without a difference to be honest. It's hard as people per our brains to really take that in and so it's the whole. I just think it's important to note that it's important to note that we have problems with our own humanity even though it is inevitable and it is part of all of us. Yeah and this is the soup that you referenced like. It's we're just in the soup of unintended. Shame and things that nobody meant to be there and this is still distort ospel but it's it's messy and we need a point at recognize it and then say are we reach more solidarity and frankly we want our spiritual practice and our religion to make us feel good. This is what most people want us. We come to church on sunday to feel good. Yeah right and the equation works. I did a b c and d comes along pat myself on the back. The problem is that that is actually not the christian message to just feel good right like that is not the example of jesus. Jesus didn't come here to show us how to have comfortable lights right. He did not he. He showed us how to descend into the very abyss of what's difficult about humanity whether goal There's no surrender in feeling. Good now there's no reason to reach for the savior when oh likes good like. I'm glad you're there savior. But i'm good and there's no growth in it and there's no empathy in it. There's no growing of compassion for other people. If we're just keeping ourselves above it so one of the things that is hard one of the big barriers. I see to. This is our narrative of if i feel uncomfortable inside the spirit has fled because guess what when someone is being messy. It's going to make us feel a little uncomfortable. And if we're ever going to move toward more of a solidarity model we are going to have to tolerate some discomfort and recognize that sometimes when things are new they are uncomfortable sometimes when our insides just want to stay happy we contend toward a toxic positively. I think sometimes in her culture. That sure i have some bad things. But why is great. I have the gospel. i can repent. I can have the atonement. Where i don't have to really suffer with that but i think that the move and the invitation of mature christianity is to hold all the grief in one hand and the gratitude in another hand and let them inform one another. It is not in running away because if you just stay in the grief that's going to be heavy if you just stay in the the gratitude of things and the bright side of things become saccharin. You actually become less empathetic. Keep become a helpful. You become more judgmental. We have to hold the grief as well. And it's something we're not we haven't talked about it. We don't talk about it openly as an invitation that you even on a sunday. Even in an elders palmer relief society last time. It's okay to be a little challenge donor comparable. That's a really great. Point is because it's natural now some razor hand in sunday school they state something that's vulnerable and open and i feel uncomfortable so they must be over sharing and sometimes you can misinterpret what over sharing is because i think well obviously overshirt because i feel uncomfortable that they way too detailed. Isn't that thing and and we shouldn't keeps happening. Maybe we should make an adjustment or a. Let the bishop. No or whatever absolutely and there's a an i will just also point out. There's a generational component to this for shore. I know when i was released. Teacher bless my relief society. Like i'm not the easiest person. And and i noticed i definitely noticed that i was more of a polarizing character because i do tend to say things as they are as i see them and and what i noticed was it need the older sisters not all of them but a lot of them very uncomfortable and i needed to talk and to write while the younger ones were texting me. They you thank you. Thank you for saying it. You know there is a. There is a generational component where the younger people coming up in. The church are actually needing an aching. Were this kind of solidarity and burner ability. An

extra point that as you reach for solidarity or trying critic culture of solidarity. Don't just assume that it's going to be refreshing to everybody in the room. There's gonna be some resistance to it some pushback and that may take leaders. Say i get. I hear what you're saying. Yes we love jonah. I think it's important that she's stay there. And i'm okay with these season make rightly absolutely and and to recognize that there's wisdom in both stances like there is something to the stiff upper lip that are you know the the older people in our church have at my mother's generation have that boy i could use some of it and so could make see it right so it takes all of us right. There's we don't want to marginalize those ads.

00:35:02 - 00:40:00

We don't just ship the marginalization ship them off beta. But we all need to be invited into a little bit of discomfort little bit discomfort. One of my favorite quotes from joseph smith was by proving. Opposites is truth made manifest. And i love that because there is wisdom in all stances we tend to. We tend toward a way of speaking in the church. Things are good and bad right and wrong you know rather than you know what there's good in that stance there's good and bad stance this one hold. Hold us back. That one holds us back. you know. i think there's there's great wisdom in taking the wisdom of always of doing things. That's why we need us all to the body of christ so i feel like if i take off the outline at all or guided you jumped down hole. So we're we're to do to next so i think we've talked about some of the things that kind of come in the way of this. Which maybe i'll just mention a couple of others but this the mentality. I just spoke up. That i'm saying is wonderful. Which is the pull up your boot straps on your shoulder to the wheel and you know held out. Then we've got going which is such a blessing is not be answer for everyone all the time and so we just need to keep that in mind that we do need to pay attention to the separately do need to let it in and we do need to know about it in other people the other barrier that we have in this and this is enriching out in solidarity not just to our neighbors and word members but to maybe our people other people in the neighborhood who are not of our face one of the things that can get in the way. Is this idea that we are right. We are the one true we write about everything. And i have nothing to learn from you right. And i think it's one of the biggest downfalls we haven't missionary work is that we assume that other people don't have something to teach us so again key to solidarity in a back and forth it is. I'm here to help you. Your hair helped me. I have something to learn from you. You might have something to learn from me. Yeah and really having that with. I mean because that's where the that's how you sort of get to that level of mortal to mortal is saying like we're on equal ground here. I have something to teach you. You have something to teach me and together we can you know. Have god teach something even greater in. Oh absolutely and viewing one another with just deep dignity putting on that lens when you approach another person to try to see them the way they got sees them yeah is integral to thus to have it and the other pitfalls or whatever. Yeah i we definitely do have some pitfalls. I think it can be a problem that we have a lack of mutual accountability in a lot of our systems in the church because of our hierarchy again and we would it be by mutual candidates. Well we're accountable to you know to the bishop for how we're doing our faith journey. We don't get that same thing that oh yeah yeah we and there's very people we go to for help. This is why we all feel like crap needing to pay it. you know. it's like if i

have something going on in my life. I feel like. I've got to go to the relief society president and the bishop and i don't want anyone else to know right and that will never let us into each other's frailties in that way and the leaders feel like you know i had an amazing amazing. She was my visiting teacher at the time. When i was going through really dark part of this journey and i remember my testimony of his impeaching going through the roof because of the support and love that she gave me and i did notice and i talked to her about this over time after a year of being in that struggle. It started to feel painful to me. Because i didn't know anything about her struggles. And you start to feel nearly you start to feel like something. I'm the broken run. You're the one that has it all together. We don't have many opportunities for mutual accountability mutual sharing. And it's one of the things i have tried to. I made one little suggestion to the way. We're doing compassionate service to try to bring more of the back and forth there. I when someone needs is having babies when someone is having a surgery needs meal. This is what we do well as it can. We at least not. Just call the ministers of that person that are assigned to them. Can we also call the people they ministered to. Let's give them an opportunity for reciprocity. Give them an opportunity to give back meal. Now when i'm in a place of weakness so that we're having some sort of mutual connection there where it's not just one way the thing about our hierarchy as it goes one way. Yeah yeah and. I remember that feeling as bishop where a certain individuals you know.

00:40:00 - 00:45:02

They keep coming back. 'cause like this is an improving like i'm still struggling. Obviously is typically around some type of thinning or whatever and i sort of got to a point as a leader like okay. I shared all the scriptures. I have around this issue. I've shared those three articles. I always share like i'm an inside. I'm thinking i'm out of stuff to give you like. I don't know and i can see from that. Side of the desk can be very frustrating. I keep coming. I'm sharing sharing sharing. I'm getting nothing from you but just links to articles and this and that i'm getting none of you right and again not that. The bishop needs to have that duty of giving giving him. That's why it's so important for him to say. Why don't we put you connect you with this circle of people and together you can be real and find solidarity. It doesn't always have to be the bishop or the hierarchy right absolutely and this is another really important distinction right. If you're the bishop it's not like you have to say. Oh yeah now. Let me tell shirts with you. That's not what i'm suggesting is exactly right but what i am suggesting is that we lean more into empathy than sympathy. This is another distinction. That brown makes is really important. Sympathy is that top down kind of thing and there can be this feeling whether intended or not Pity of oh you know and it it at some of the examples she gives phrases that come from that are like oh bless your heart or the yeah wanna sandwich or like oh just like oh the at least at least you have this going for you. At least you have that going for you or just trying to jump straight to gratitude or jump straight to something else. We're not just really. What people really need is empathy. And i think this is a really important part of pastoral care that i would hope that leaders want to offer to people who are suffering which is empathy is actually getting down in the hole with the other person and it doesn't require you to share your stuff with them but what it does require is requires you to reach a part of yourself that understands the painter in it's a vulnerable mu and it

is not about fixing it. Were such a fixing people. Have an answer for everything. Some times all a person needs to be witnessed and to be validated. That what they're going through his heart and this is very difficult to do at time because of because you also don't necessarily want to go to the point of saying like. Oh well i have a cousin's wife is dealing with this. And i you know. I empathize with where you're at and you thinking like no. That's not how did this become about you. And so anything more. We consider better getting in the hole with them empathizing. So it's like this is one of the brunei brown quotes had left. Rarely can a response makes something better. What makes something better is connection. What you can do is make a connection with that person and one of the things that can look against man. I don't even know what to say. I'm just glad you told me. That's one of the phrases she offers. You don't have to fix it. The human soul just wants to be witnessed. That's all it wants. It wants to know that it's not learn that it's not crazy that it's not evil that it is that we all want to narrow that we're valued that we belong that we can be as broken as we are and still be warranted in association. Yeah that's powerful and i know like in the bishop's office setting were you know stating things like. I don't care how many times this happens. You're always you can come back to this office as many times as you need. And i'll be here every time. And or i know it was price so difficult for you to call and set this appointment. But you're here. And i think that's great and we can celebrate and let's see where we go from here right rather than okay. I understand what you're going through. And here's a three step process and call me in a week and we'll see where you're you know and that sorta win. It misses the the empathy. It does because we don't feel heard and understood and if you don't know what to say you can even respond with a what i'm hearing you say is. Did i get that right if you do that. And then ask if you got that right. That person can say yes and then they feel heard and it's wonderful or they can say no. I've got a little more. Yeah yeah in a lot of times especially in the context of somebody confessing like opening the door of saying you know i realize is probably gonna be really hard for you every detail out in this meeting and we can do this. We can have five meetings if that's what it takes but you know just whatever you feel the strength to get through the stylists. Let's do that right and not putting all the pressure on absolutely. I think something. I've learned through my own coaching business. Because i'm here to help. People get through their stuff too and this is what i do. But what i've noticed is that without people being witnessed and heard and validated.

00:45:02 - 00:50:19

That move is what turns on the healing resources that come from within a person that they're the only healing resources that can actually help and it comes from this. Move of lebanon thirty. Yeah 'cause it's ns audacity when they can finally say understood. I will now turn to the savior. And by the way i'm worth that. You're you're worthy of turning turning to the savior. And then i can let that in as nc the the divinity within ourselves and this is really where we start to make big differences in our lives is where we are we are worth it and unfortunately our word. The culture fights that fights the very thing that can help us attached to daytona inexperienced healing. Yeah any other. Pitfalls are things before. I took drum last one that comes to mind is our culture of self-reliance Again principle fantastic. You've got a lot of wheat. No basement i in the basement. But i wish we had for every lesson we have on self reliance. We also go and really steady like

king benjamin about how. We don't judge people in their need that. If you do that this is yours right like we do have an again. This is very american and because a very conservative republican kind of culture permeates the church in america and in utah in big big ways conservative republicans. So i'm how therapy with people. Yeah absolutely they're dirty. I again i am not. Yeah i i just like tiptoeing into this. I i i mean i. I'm not saying anything is wrong with any of it but we do need to recognize recognize it. we've got to recognize. We have to to look at ourselves. We have to wear so powerful. I'm here in if christianity comforts the afflicted and bricks the comfortable. I'm the one that gets to afflict the comfortable. And i'm sorry it's it's just kind of what i'm called to in life but that viewpoints the downfall danger is that we can start to blame people and think we know their story. They're the reason the reason they are in this problem and if they would just do what i'm doing they would be successful and they are obviously making a choice for themselves. It's easier lazy. We have a lot of stories. We tell and i'd had these stories. I am not immune from this. I have had these stories that if that person would just do what i do. They wouldn't be sad about this when i have absolutely no idea what they're light. Circumstances are and what. I recognize the more. I work with people and have a unique opportunity in coaching with people. Because people are very vulnerable with me people do tell me the good bad and ugly of where they are when you lean in and get to know another person you are steam them only goes up you really if you can put yourself in another person's shoes. Brunei has another really great quote about this in order to empathize with someone's experience. You must be willing to believe them as they see it and not how you imagined bear experienced two. Oh so good so crucial so crucial. You can't putting yourself in someone else's shoes not well. If i had that problem that they had this is how i would handle it. And you see this service. In the faith faith faith crises the psych year just reading the wrong stuff and that's not what joseph's meant at that time like no. You're looking it wrong plane. This t you polygamy is going to make perfect sense to you right. Yeah no. I promise you. It won't person. I often use the example of if someone was come to you as an individual and say i am terrified. I can't sleep at night because aliens came in a ducted me in your logical brain. You're thinking okay. Something's off air aliens but if aliens did that would be very scary and so go with them to that place like whoa that. Did they experience that. They interpreted that way and that experience for them was real. We gotta stop talking people out of their experience right right stop. Talking people out of their feelings initially wanted to convince them. That didn't come and we convince them. This all goes away but these are real feelings even though there may be based some other issues one hundred percent so if someone is struggling in some and they continue to struggle in some way we get very uncomfortable with this because and it's part of what fuels the shame in ourselves why we don't want to reach out to someone else for help. Because if i i'm not being self reliant. I'm doing something wrong. I don't have the right resources. I should be going to my family member. I what you don't know. Is that my family. Member is not equipped to help me with this or their deeper problems with that or whatever the story is you know someone story it allows i mean brunet i heard her say it this way she said what if if you think about someone who you don't think doing their very best you think they could do better right.

00:50:20 - 00:55:03

Imagine that person. Hold them in your heart and then imagine that god came to you and said that person is doing their very best. What would that mean to you shift. And she said that people are crying when she asked him that question. Because oh i have to totally deal with him in totally different way. Now if that's their best an f. y. i. My best is looking pretty bad in some other way with that. We know we don't look in the moment but i do notice that in our culture we are very uncomfortable weakness and that that's american culture. That's bic we are very uncomfortable with weakness and we don't want it attached to us. Yeah so really helpful and drift on going to touch on this a little bit as far as like solidarity as it relates to sin because if someone in the ward is diagnosed with cancer. There's something about that. It's easier to sit with and show solidarity in its intrigue because we don't go to their house and think hand if he just would have avoided the processed foods your life and exercise more you know like why did you get yourself in this situation. Right and we. We don't go there with cancer but when the individuals like keeps returning to the porn. We're just like what is wrong with you know and sometimes getting solidarity as it relates to sin is is much more difficult any any thoughts on that airy. I mean just just validate that like it is very hard to get our minds in into that place and this is what i would say. Yes we have. Free will and free choice in this life. We do one hundred percents big believer in free agency. Of course we do and sometimes what we see is the possibilities for the choices we can make. Our limited by our experience are limited by personality. They are limited by where what we have been raised with and you have no idea what that person stimulus and until you are willing to sit and just deeply deeply listen to somebody without judgment. You have to withhold judgment from that person. You can still hold your ideals that you need to withhold your judgement from that person and really listen to their story. I promise you there is a very good reason that has nothing to do with a lack of character. A lack of trying a lack of whatever we imagine is going on with them. There is a very good reason that twitter keeps popping up in their line and white star. Will you know. I remember when individual is. I was bishop. That i've worked with often and we're about the same age and we often over and over again with different issues. He was dealing with and remember one time talking with a another friend. Just feeling like this just feels like a crapshoot like this guy. He did nothing different than what i did. But his marriage ended in divorce which cascaded into these other issues. And it's like. I was probably. There's probably people i dated back in the day that if i married one of them that it could have gone in the same direction at so. It's like you realize it's like halts. Nothing nisar that i've done. We're just in on different paths and in different parts of mortality and that really helped me realize like a. You're not problem. I know this is hard for you but let's keep going. You know helped me reach solitaire a little bit easier. So maybe a good rule of thumb in places like that are to have the self awareness that if you have not been through that you have no standing to have an opinion about it right right. I mean really when you haven't been touched by a particular difficulty in life. You probably shouldn't be telling someone else how to do it right but you also shouldn't that shouldn't like keep you away from that but that's the dow. Yeah but what it means. Is you know you've got two years now. You need to shut up. You need to shut up when someone is in pain and especially if it's something you have not been through you just need to listen. Listen listen listen and make sure that person feels heard. that's it. that's your job period because you are investigation mode and it's kind of like i wish i could remember the the exact phrase but it's like the idea that i had a million theories on how to raise kids right up until i had them write and you have a million theories of how did parent teenagers

while my kids are eight right. I mean it's the truth. We do a lot of damage when we think we know better because it's working for us. Yeah as powerful so any other principle before we wrap up that we haven't hit on that need to give you a chance to do then a few more questions.

00:55:03 - 01:00:05

So i mean the only other thing that i would say that i i just wanted to talk about is. How do we actually do this. Yeah that's like we've sort of time. We've impacted process. So where do we go from here. That's what i love talking about all the problems. What i'm good at. So this is what i would say in your own sphere of influence. I would. I think that he are entitled to their own inspiration to figure out exactly how to invite this in but think outside the box with how we do this and how we might encourage. If you're a leader bahira release study president of europe asia before whenever and you think that solidarity might be something that would help people in your area through the struggles that they are going through perhaps think of get creative about ways that you can people up with one another to talk about their things. That actually do know what's going on. There are reasons why we have support groups for cancer survivors or people who've lost people cancer or people who have lost a child or people who've gone through things because there is this solidarity that comes from understanding on alone so i don't know we could find some way to figure out what other people have been through and connect people to another. Yeah and i think this is really crucial especially for bishops. Who naturally are just exhausted. I mean they have a lot of responsibility lot on their plate. But i remember sort of feeling like okay this person's engaging with me they've confessed something or they're going through time. I need to continue to work with them. And if sure we'll bring in the therapy or whatever. That's needed. But i felt like i didn't i couldn't ask their permission or encourage them to go find solidarity elsewhere ran right and maybe this individual who struggling with an addiction. Well i know three other people who are further down the road than them. And maybe they'll find some deeper solidarity there and again. I'm not running off and telling them without their permission but but to start that stimulating that culture of saying like. There's three people that i need to introduce you to. Here's what i want you to do. You know yep get together often or whatever it is and then let's talk in six months absolutely another thing. We might be able to do on fifth sunday or just in a in a lesson sometime. Start having conversations about this start. Having conversations about vulnerability start having conversations about our christian walk being inherently messy that we can be a little uncomfortable reflector normal. Is that experience for the people in your word and you can delegate that that's not everybody's cup of tea perhaps you know in your particular area you decide to do this. Innocent a school where people can opt in or on a you know a group that meets. I don't know in somebody's home or doing firesides or there. A million ways to do this right but start thinking outside the box of how you can welcome in these ideas of solidarity and learn about what it is to be empathetic. This is so in line with the gospel. Christ like this is not some weird tangent on this is radical program this is deepening into being gripes. Like and this is like one thing. I don't want to be too prescriptive here again. It's up to everybody's inspiration this. But i found that if you can find a venue to each other story and one thing i did in a an award is i'm a podcast or by profession and i've the equipment so i told the bishop it was in holiday here. You know plenty of plenty of people to do. Whatever calling

was in the word very saturated areas for latter day saints. And so i said you know. I've got podcasts equipment. Why don't i go around. I'll just like interview people. And we'll hear their stories and then created a a free podcast feed and and it was remarkable for me to sit down like like this. And just say tell me about your mission. I didn't start it with okay. We're gonna discuss your favorite since and your favourite trials and how you overcame all that and it was just like tell me about like a time when your faith was tested in the stories that came out of it naturally brought the word together now typically in a sunday school class nosecone. There's not enough time to really do that. Effectively and so finding a way to share each other story the simplest stories and that humanizes people and brings together absolutely. We have to understand if there is someone who really challenges you like you. It drives you crazy when they speak court like oh. Nearly cited president of that person is coming again for whatever wienand lean in because the more you get to understand that person more than make sense to you. The more their stories will change you. The more you will being rich enriched and i just think it's really important especially for leaders to understand that.

01:00:05 - 01:05:01

Yes you have keys. Yes you have mantles and we need to know the limits of that that you do not have everybody's answer for them you can be there to guide you can be there to listen but ultimately we need to be trusting and people you know. We're dealing with a lot of adults when people were adults. They need the dignity of having their own answers and sometimes they just need a safe place to find. It just really summoned to sit with as they sort of go on. There's this journey of finding that that answer after that your experience was like it wasn't something that a bishop say presents said to you know it was it was your journey that led you closer to the vine that tie you perhaps re and the structure and the people all wonderful empathetic people who were both helpful and road blocks in my journey. Heal what. I was experiencing about a tradition. The quakers have where they have like a committee of people that an individual can go to to talk through some difficulties. But the only thing is. You can't give that that the group can't give you advice. They can only ask questions that maybe prod you to think deeper about certain things or produce in a certain way that were maybe dance will come to you on. Your own is a great model to to approach things other faith traditions. Ah discipline called the spiritual director. That often does that as well. It's not a committee person but they are trained to hold that space and ask you the questions about your spiritual journey. That will help you. I mean if i could wave a magic wand i would say let's have a stake spiritual director that does not do temple recommends that does not is not responsible for our callings. So we're safe to be able to just say what we need to say in how those questions asked us because often say things just because you're processing not because you've come to some conclusion thing right hillary and You know we have that again. It's there it's just hard to turn the engine on at times absolutely will what have we missed if we covered everything. We've solved the world's problems. Yes well this is. This is just hopefully the beginning of a discussion. Because i'm one person. And i just thought about. This is the thing that i think that this solidarity could bring to us is. I have seen magic happen. In you. know i've i've facilitated groups and retreats for people who are deeply questioning their faith and when a group can get together and can appropriately for the purpose

share what is on their heart and their difficulties. Not just what we see. But what's inside. And when they can experience safety for that. There is a magic that happens. That is where i have tasted like. Whoa this is a zion community right here. This is a little piece of heaven this little piece of the slush kingdom happening right here in this room where we are just valuing and seeing another person and so i just feel like there could be such benefit from allowing this idea to kind of percolate and see how we can apply that in our different spheres and hopefully recognize that vulnerabilities a choice. It's you know empathy is choice. Empathy is vulnerable twice. But we can learn how to do this responsibly. In a way that builds connection. And i think that is really wet. Salvation is all about. Why seal anyone to anyone for the next life. If it's not all about connection yeah absolutely. So it's like a at the root of our doctrine it absolutely and again this concept of solidarity with licking its solidarity next service and understanding it to like just the concept in general worth the price of mission of this and people may listen and say i don't necessarily agree with janna here there and whatever but that's fine but by step back and say how like i can see the contrast. Now how can i like better apply the prince of solidarity rather than just defaulting to the service casserole again and again add which is great it. There were missing. Maybe be a portion of the gospel that could really blessing sanctify one hundred percent. And the way that you know you have successfully brought some solidarity. Is that the person being served. Says that you're in solidarity. It's not because you don't think you've done a bit. You don't get to define what they need or if you've done a good job it requires dialogue. It requires being in deep conversation with other people and being willing to be real and not just the who in fine. No really. I want to help you know i'm fine. You know like the okay to not be fine but then also that person opportunities to serve back so there were not just pigeonholing people as the needy people. This is not helping anybody. So when you get the i'm fine everything's okay we're great and maybe we've we've hit on this already but any advice you'd get like how do you like.

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What if you are the ministering brother sister and you're just like i want to get in solidarity people but they're not letting me. Yeah right absolutely working to what he beats not a good point breath. You're ministering assignment right a little bit. You know i understand the need for signing these things. I would encourage people to dive more into natural. Fits for ministering silence and sticking with them and talking to people about what's working. What's not working. What do you need what you need in your ministering assignments so that's part of it but the other part is these things take time right and sure. Maybe you don't want to have someone coming over to your house once a month but maybe you need to be willing to explore that car that and do it in a new way. This is not just you checking up on me and seeing where. I'm you know maybe this is where we can just joined in friendship and have a mutual conversation and accept your rebuke battle and maybe uncomfortable. But maybe that's what it takes to get a solid area getting to know people right. So maybe that's the focus and maybe when they say. Now what do i need. We've got to be better a learning what we need. We focus so much on other people's needs in this church that we don't know what we need your true. We need some times. I don't know what i need. And if you don't know at the time it's okay to say no i i don't

even know. That's a great response. I don't know what i need right now. I am so glad to know that you care and if something occurs to me i will let you know. You know and if someone is telling me. I don't need anything i'll say. Yeah you can say. I get it. It's hard to know what we need now. And i love the concept of disorder looking. Just mix it up a little bit. And and i can see in the future maybe instead when i sort of tired of them just coming and visiting once. Not what we like. You know what we could do next month. Why don't my wife doesn't enjoy going to movies. I love going to movies. You come to a movie with me as what we're going to do and then there might just a different context and may spark something. I think this is the magic of administering. The switched ministering brought home teaching a visiting teaching that. We're missing out on your the freedom to do it. The way that serves us and that's why it can become ministering because we're actually doing reminding those needs in a different way right. Let's go for a walk. Let's do something we don't have to sit and do it in a living room anymore so if somebody wants to connect with you learn more about what you do where would you send them so right now. While i'm still constructing my website. I would say i'm on facebook jenna johnson spangler and sosa message. We can connect that way you can find me professionally at symmetry. So l. s. dot com. And you can connect to me from coaching services and other things there but if you're interested in i'm totally open in the salt lake city area the wasatch front if you want to have become talk to a group Fireside do firesides about doubts and questions. And i do it about just connecting and relationship and and these kinds of issues and just deepening our christian journey. That's kind of my wheelhouse so less cushioning have it's probably too much of a softball but it's sincere question. But how has your quest of understanding solidarity made you better disciple follower of jesus. Christ yeah in so many ways you know solidarity is something bed invites. It's not a solitary journey anymore. It's not just about me right. And that's the beauty of christianity. The beauty is that it's not just about me. It gets me outside myself which gets me outside of my own little suffering my own little life and gets me into something connection with something bigger. That's inspirational and so with solidarity. It has completely changed the way that i see service in the church personally because i always have this on my mind to say how can i were deeply. Honor this person. How can i get to know them. Get outside myself on my own ways of seeing things and meet someone where they are and that does nothing but bring me more connection in my relationships more meaning in my relationships and creates a space. Where both of us were me. And the people that i'm working with uncertain can feel more readily probe loves adverse savior. That concludes my interview with janna spangler. Lots of thoughts of perspectives. On this right and i would be willing to bet. There's probably some angles or points of view that were shared here that maybe you don't fully embrace erred. Maybe disagree with a little bit. And that's okay. These discussions are worth having their worth exploring and seeing what we can learn. I hope you've learned something. I'd love to hear from you. What perspective you have around this concept of solidarity or service. How can we better get to this point. Is it necessary. Or maybe services just enough. I'd love to hear from you can go to leading saints dot org slash contact or leave a comment on the post on the leading saints dot org website.

01:10:04 - 01:11:25

And let's keep this discussion going. Because i think there's some rich some rich flavor in in a discussion that may be can help us expand our efforts as latter day saints. You know of anybody else that we should reach out to an interview. I'd love to hear it. So go to leading.saints.org slash. Contact sends a message. Maybe a prep the person that you're volunteering that you're putting their name in so that we can more easily start that conversation and i would love to have more conversations like this to see how we can better lead as latter day saints and remember if you know someone who'd be a great fit for the how i lead segment go to leading.saints.org slash contact and submit your suggestion. It came as a result of a position of leadership which was imposed upon us. I the god of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of jesus christ when the declaration was made concerning the own and 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 to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.