

LEADING SAINTS

Leading Those with Special Needs | An Interview with Stan Beagley

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Role as latter day saint leaders. We face very difficult conversations that put us at risk of saying the wrong thing that can do more harm than good. Many of these conversations relate to lgbtq latter day saints. Have you had a fellow. Horde member come out to you about their. Lgbt identity. Have you had lgbt neighbors. And you just don't know what to say to them so you ignore them instead. Have you wrestled with bouncing love for your fellow men while still respecting the doctrines of the restored gospel. In order to help leading saints is put together the lgbt saints library with more than twenty presentations featuring individuals who have unique perspective or expertise around this topic. Three of the most popular sessions are available now to watch simply text. The word lead to four seven four seven four seven to start watching now or visit leading saints dot org slash. Lgbt welcome back to another how i lead segment which is part of the leading saints. Podcast my name. Is kurt franken. I'll be your host and get the awesome opportunity of interviewing some incredible people if you noodle eating saints. We are a nonprofit organization. Dedicated to helping latter-day saints be better prepared to lead and we do that through content creation. We have this podcast. Which i hope you subscribe to. Maybe leave a review. We also have the website with thousands of articles related to leadership topics leading saints dot org who have virtual summit a newsletter that you should definitely not miss out on and That's it so in this episode. This how i lead segment. We talked withstand bigly. Who's actually a bishop. And a father of the special needs son named jake and he reached out to me because he has a great project. He's worked on a podcast. Called the navigating autism podcast which sorta got blindsided with his calling as bishops so something he's keeping up on right now but in the future he hopes to have time and they have some great episodes there that You may want to check out and we wanted to do a how at least segment around this concept of leading those in award with special needs. How can we minister to him. How can we help them. Feel comfortable at church. Or how can we help the parents all these interesting angles and thoughts that. I'd never considered before and it was so helpful to talk to stand and ask them some of these questions solid advice and also there's this calling called the disability specialist.

It's in the handbook folks. And I would guess most wars. I can't think of award. I've had one. At least I didn't know of but this is a calling that the church has created resources for that. We should definitely leverage in us to help our warts in this way so check it out. We talk about in this episode. Let's get to it. Here's my interview with stand. Legally alongside me is stand bigly. How're you stand. good stand. is our resident expert. Here maybe staying give us a background. Not that you're at you know quote unquote an expert. But you definitely have some life experience here. So where's that life experience. Come from so we a degree in of stuff. I just learned from zohar awesome. We have a twenty three year. We have four children. Our youngest is twenty three and he has the hottest fairly severe who doesn't speak and so we just gone through this kind of difficult process for our experienced. From in those days you had come an expert. Not as as there was a lot of a lot of word sorely. All ideas in my wife is all come from our experiences. We're just regular people salsa and then maybe how did the maybe tells the transition into that that sort of life you know parents expects it and Asian was he when he found out in what What was that transition of in your day-to-day life including your church life pretty brutal of you know. He was two years nine months and he was he was running normally and then he started arrest. Law saul speech before third birthday as really tough for us. A one of the things. That I like is francis than I appreciate now as you can have to go through a period of mourning because when you have a child like this you have this life the expect for them and policy simply different you know and you think you can finish your denial. Go through a lot of the things you do. You know if you to lose his child because a life you expected for them loss. Yeah yeah you lose a child in a different way right. The expectations of what that child's life will be like. And you know what will little league thing you know.

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They build a college. I mean all these questions. You sort of assume will happen suddenly. Fb reevaluated everything that we do our culture where we a beige of pay or the age of paul is not bad highs while we baptize will understand what that means is every time eight year old kids are getting clients should and will yan twelve year old and mission age. Solve hard or tough. Yeah yeah and then so. Is this something that did you pick up on. Something wasn't right Few years or had the diagnosis going to be times. Kids will learn develop normally when it Grass just lost. All of the speech started new. Self stimulatory His hands or morocco and things like that unsolved Schoolteacher said he need to go with him checked out. Of course we looked on the internet trying to figure out what was going on recovery off of leads. Is that way but you know so it was. It was a process in spite of us. Yeah again not that you're the peachy expert here but I'm just curious from what you teach us about. You know. they talk about autism spectrum in in in as far as like how asperger's fits into all that like. How would you explain that dynamic question things actually wanted to talk about. Was this spectrum or every all these disabilities in our world now. We have a little diets in a wheelchair. In every every case is different. Not just autism looks you know cerebral palsy. Other things like that kids house just on autism spectrum the more higher functioning kids you can talk about. How social issues. They used to diagnose them with asphalt syndrome. I actually not too much. They don't use the term. I know many wars Two more on the spectrum go anywhere so close to being normal but they just seem to some. That

can't walk. that are less hyphen. tonight is my son. can't speak at all. He does sign language but he doesn't speak at all and he's skills are finding run job. And you know you might hear in. The background is trampling the base. Nice that that and that's interesting. I didn't realize Asked for is not necessarily a taboo term is not generally used. Or i don't know why is it so much anymore. It's offer kind of the characteristics of offers was they would at nine or ten or eleven twelve and usually regular autism Wanna call atas is more diagnosed. Younger interesting. use the term autism plus if they have autism. Another another diagnosis like anxiety or sociology. Year things like yeah interesting. in asperger's you know now known as the high functioning autism. It's amazing. I've met several people my life who i've known for years and then they share with me that they have asked burgers are high functioning autism. And i'm just like man. I couldn't i wouldn't have guessed right over us like being in crowds iphone. We took 'em to church for a lot of his life and we don't take him anymore. Is the warren and all that all the speaking in conversations going i just give him real anxiety so we are taken to the church for the last few years. Yeah so it should be mentioned. We've mentioned already but you have recently been called as a bishop of your ward and so you you're now seeing things on this issue from that standpoint As i remember as a bishop. There's this autistic boy you know. He was born in our award Diagnosed and everything. And you know we are aware of him and we. I kinda thought. I was doing a decent job making sure you advertising needs and then his mother came to me at one point and just sort of expresses her frustration disappointment of how her son was being treated in the war and i thought like i was trying to be mean. I was really trying. You know so when it comes to like just ministering to the family or helping them have a positive experience a church all these things like. Where do you even begin to help. In that realm. It's not hard because we've had a lot of experience now where he's twenty three years old now so we have a lot of things at work for us and we have attics where i think maybe a bishop or else congratulated release citing. President doesn't know what to do. How so it is kind of you know they just kinda freezing. Ignore norm a little bit or stick awesome parents. What can we do to help you. Say all right. We're good we're not because it's it's harder is allowed time. These people that want help serve all the time they don't want how you will serve sir out the servino story for we.

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Have you doing a lot of people would say. How can we help one of the characteristics autism asleep disorders like our sun is a horrible secret to this day. He does not sleep. Well sometimes he's out in the morning he's up for gallup and he's wrong and other types of sleep gels seven twenty. Wake him up or slow. So it's all over the place we were going through this the person and we have people say well enough. I can help nomi one 'cause friend who said we're gonna come common sleep outside. His door take turns. My wife and i sleep outside your sleep and that was so cool because that is a specific solution was just about beyond earth italian. We were on survival mean. It was like heavenly father told me make it through today just today and my wife and i we we have a lot of cheers for years just is driving down a freeway. Just start know. Just start ryan. Because i was hurting so bad for that specific plan to help us was really cool. The honest have to get beyond the non good. Because that's what we wanted everyone to think

that we were good when the nationality we were just hanging on by reds. Yeah you know you mentioned that. Just being in survival mode that breaks anybody's There's other contexts of mortality were individuals around survival mode. And that's not a good place for anybody to be right. So i mean the old home. Teaching question are interesting. Question of is there anything we can do for me. Obviously you've never said well. Can you come to my house and sleep outside by son's door and maybe you should have. Who knows but i mean how do you begin to and this is sort of my problem. We're going to experiences of bishop. Like i didn't even know how to perceive the need let alone step forward in. Fill it you know. So what guidance could you give us their on. Perceiving the need of these families as like. Oh it's like some of the things that i with house bishop. It's like you all. I dunno to insert yourself a little bit. I don't want to force myself on people but people if they really run through the shell and asked us you know our sawyer dinar caned your house and they will see that we were really threaten. The interesting thing is my wife. And i handled it differently. I was gonna fixing. And i was going to do anything like there. A solution out there. No one spouse. I had all that weight. So i figured out a way i was going to be able to do that. And my wife decided those important we take our other three kids and roundly going so it's a hard thing as a leader to of insert yourself. I guess i would just say that if you think they're doing okay and especially of the diagnosis on the first year. They're probably not. Yeah yeah so is that i mean the first few years source crucial years benji sort of figure out routines and what works. And what doesn't you know down the road but it was the survival mode mainly in those for years was for us because we are going to be life on disability in fact my wife called me the other day the she wandered for those few years. You ever feel happy if she would. So it's provable. Get just just because of the demand. I mean the constant care that it's needed for a young child like that different to us as our families are. All out of the house is separate and as our family's grown in our appearance of nassar's you know we still have a a basically two and a half year old. That's sow join. It looks like he's jumping on traffic making sounds so different than all of our friends saw but luckily we found a great france. Soup have been able to kind of phrases. We have people come with him on sundays. So that my wife and go to church. That's something that were both of our words. Our new Where they said he went our in our in our previous were there were five or six calls would come to our all on sundays with him so we go to church with covid spro out here our really now. That people are ministering brother different family in the war of seer. They just concept with them so teaching church. What about this. Sometimes as i'm around you know. Autistic people specially with severe autism sorta. Like i don't know how i'd like do. Does he want me to sit by Does it help. If i put my arm around him. Like how do you introduce him. And i know every autistic individuals sort of different or has their quirks of sometime.

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Like gonna bite me or hit me or these types of things you know. So what's way of approaching that so that at least you know. Even when we're just together with friends. I can help you know the the individual feel comfortable while in there or whatever so. The general has agreed questions. A general rule. I think visuals likely to rake in their world. All the they call it autism for reason they want to be by themselves rather just in the corner by themselves but if you make

eye contact with them and look at getting get on their level generally they lack they freak out obviously should doubt. But i'll tell you that's one way of doing yourself with the parents is if you we we our word that seventeen the every time i see him at church tackle up yours have and i i just i because i have experienced this because lifespan drawn him related to him. I'm even with covid asking how he's doing smiles. Happy tries to get away from me but his parents. I believe you know really you. Try to break into their world Wife if you're with don't ignore them because you don't want to do. just try. make an extra effort in emma even say. Would you mind if i came over an hour week in just for the next few weeks and it got to know you know your center. Whatever you to him for a walk around the block. I think he probably makes the long privately if you will. I should've asked really. What's the what's your son's name. His name is jake. Jake okay and in because you make some great points because it is easy like engaged with the parent you know. The the autistic individual wants to be alone essentially in so. It's easy to norm. And just think they're just sitting there while i'm talking with their parents but to really push yourself to engage in those little moments breath goes a long way a way but if you get if you get down in their and and so you could force it a little bit. I mean again depending on the individual but interesting that's great and then what about Let's talk about this concept of callings in the ward is far as in a lotta people we try and be in the handbook as much as possible but there is a an outline calling in the handbook called the disability specialists. And how you used that calling in. And what recommendation would you have for for others. So i'm still working through that this specialists and i just ask them to be involved families. There's a lot of things that families don't know for instance you can get government help for his kids any in utah. There's division services for people with disabilities that will pay respite care or be on a waiting list for a while before they all on situation but a talking about that. They're just like talk about for their survival up. You know when they become adults depending on the functionality level they can qualify for disability income so that the earnings are gone they can be less the financial burden on people. So if you look at disabilities not reviews price dot or there's a whole section on disabilities. There's an outline for the latest specialists again. Where every case is different. I would say it's going gonna take certain kind of it's not a i don't know it's a little bit more abstract because not everyone has the same type of disability. Yes you have to conform to whatever those needs are just the parents knowing that you have someone that is worrying about you. His is ask you about how their duty is just as meaningful. Yeah so sounds like rain step one and simply call a disability specialist inner ward right like even if they all well. There's nobody autistic in my words. I must not need but now there's we are mortals. Folks sitting there are disabilities somewhere larger smart or some that are hidden. You know the mental health that goes on in the needs. I mean there's something right and to have somebody that the war knows represents that calling. It's remarkable maybe the some of the needs little come out or people that approach them and whatnot and to know than step. Two is getting award council on this disabilities website that the church has disability specialist website. And then making sure that this new disability specialist calling is aware of it in from there they can know of the resources that are available to. I think that i would be shocked. Her in a war in most faces in the united states didn't have some forum autism alsu or at all. I mean the numbers in utah. Right now i believe one. In sixty six boys have autism Skyrocketing so it's a big number and i can't remember i've literally just three words in the last three years i can.

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I have individuals in each work as laws others about mental health. Issues are hard to see. You see some just fine but there For sure and with autism is typically more common in males right affordable Boys girls interesting. And let's talk about the the effects especially children have on their siblings and peers. Because that's a whole 'nother dynamic especially with those teenage years. Maybe is interesting time. This is something that my wife. And i agree on these kids have special spirits and one thing that i would say to leader or anybody. That listens is don't allow to a person with a noxious seek son or daughter and say you know kids like j to the very because i know their families. That aren't doing surgery but it's kind of their way of. I don't know how i'm gonna make you feel better the and tried to comfort you in all the wrong ways. I had experience in the bishop repeal work before when he called a special needs primary and we tell them it's just one year we got three autistic two ways one with wine and so we have three kids in this class and i only saw oh man. I'm dreading the call this or we would release them after year exaggerating they would cry because they miss kid so much because there is a special feeling i think prince my son. I'm gonna a little over. My son was very sick when he was more. He was in the icu for among us and for ten days it doesn't make it or not as after he recover. I started thinking okay. What's his purpose in life. You know after after the okay. Why is he still here. And i'm convinced and we've had a cocktail. We're convinced that his mission in life is to affect other people and to teach sound to law into the battle. No clue people that are the same as them. Because we i remember to your time. We call system letter releasing her from her calling after year and she's just brought tears of yellow with not in with him every sunday. It's going to be some of the draft but ends up being actually and my three. Typical children are with special needs. They're kind of the the champion of the of the downtrodden with champion of the under off. So it's just really happen. Facts on people and there are some fathers was choice dirt so he he's around people he has an effect on even though he can't be scissor. Much of i would imagine with your other kids. I mean obviously this year a special needs child needs so much attention to they. Kinda feel left out. Or how did you. Balance that or mitigate that clary the woman who was really smart and she by me but she kept our family together. And i think if you ask them they would say that they thought they were being raised level. Care for me. But i i was obsessed with curing his awesome Choose stable not to keep our family together for us. So interesting i just. There's nothing wrong with that. You know as a father. Naturalists sort of nature. We want to fix this thing. This thing's hurting our child. It feels like i'm going to remove it you know. And so that's that's interesting. Probably comment right. I would imagine with other couples. I would think that turned me on realize not broken. He's just different. I appreciate you saying that. He knows that thing not to say that You know the they send these spirits to families or there's sort of this sort of this feeling that its doctrine that before this life. They chose this or made they were special spirit and so that's why they had come with a disability in i would guess that that's a pretty loose doctrine if anything drew this could be true idol anybody's ever said it's ok at this point in their life. We just kinda appreciate eagle making the effort. It's okay but it's not helpful. So is there anything else like getting as far as on the don't say or do say lists that the we'll the don't say lists than anything else you've heard over the years. It's like i know you're

trying to help. But that is not helping us to a lot of your podcasts. Or you know things. You don't try to the best thing i think is just kinda really are you guys.

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This has got to be really tough. I you know people saying what we really admired. That's not our try to explain it in a way that are not helpful. The you just remembering people would save for church leaders. Oh that we experienced Families i mean. I think that a lot of times church leaders looked at my wife and i as having tremendous challenge and so they steer clear of calling big callings. You know i was one of my questions yeah. The she was in the state women's presidency and the sega president asks for her two or three times and the leaders. Where like this other thing. I was so loud that she finally was able to do that because so so meaningful her to take her. She was able to do something because she needs that. She needed that as much as anybody. If not worse. Yes because it is a form of like like your your life purposes so much a part of your child's day to day existence right and so for someone to say. Hey you know we have this other purpose that you could engage with and and it's sort of like this break from that thing in the like you want to be involved in. I go to this meeting. And yeah we'll get that other stuff covered. But i love being involved and having other purpose in life and even though we have a challenge. Were you know were capability you know for her. I had a couple of key been individual bracket and stay home. I'm not saying too much. Ever want to stay friends. The bishop's would have jake preclude you from serving as the bishop and i said it would be really hard. I don't think it would preclude be not so the freshly with I think in our case with my wife. I mean i think having some kind of meaningful calling is good for her when she said that she probably leaders thinking that they're actually helping her because she's so rounder probably probably missed time or two and so. I'm just curious like how later maybe how you'd maybe coach elite on approaching that 'cause it don't just ignore it knack like recalling years released sipe resident and we're not going to mention anything about your special needs child right like i mean maybe is bringing up in the as you're extending that calling or a gives them time to think about it. You know maybe we need to pray about this or whatever anything you'd add to that not just like any calling me. Think if you rely on inspiration of the Spirit Get i think that you know. I mean i. I don't know if. I want to be a huge calling the first year or two after dealing with the once we were finding ways down after all of that and i will say it's easy now but we saw into what our new life is is like. It's so if anything else as far as like the in calling for for parents of special needs children that's worth mentioning cut treating them just like any other. I mean already showers sobriety. And when you where you're able to deal with it. I think you can do this just like someone who may be dealing with. I don't know a medical condition are a divorce or anything like that. A lifetime specific. We sometimes we overlook people and max saying people. Will you know. And i think that a lot of times calling can be beneficial equal the situation. You're awesome. I feel like breeze. Best too quickly. The disability specialists calling anything else we have mentioned about that calling your had health succeed or anything like that to say really. I mean it's like a lot of things in the church. It's up to us. You know up to us. One thing that i struggle with is whether adam report to me or the for president recite president. I see what the reaction is there. But just seeing aware of them's i mean. Our families are warm.

Now no we have especially a disability. Specialist tickets is meaningful fernando because we realize the bay Realized a special challenge and we want to be there for the research now and then i wanna make sure we before we wrap up as far as a youth you start your own podcast about being a parent of But it's been put on hold a little bit with your calling his bishop but gives us a plug their or what. What's the intent there. And what can people find if they go to that. Bot guests minute my purpose is talking to you. Today was haven't done for there are there are assaults and really cute with my three. My three typical children were around the table and discuss what it was like a special needs child so anywhere.

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You find a podcast. The navigating autism now is that is that a term. Typical children is that like define. Your others is that like a common phrase servings down syndrome would call it down syndrome. We look at some of the other words. People use you say normal trial. I don't really have any normal children. I have two children. I am not just job. Those words kind of some kind of sensitive to people you know. Yeah yeah and anything else. As far as the the titles in words in phrases that are used it would be. Because i've never even considered that that term typical children which is would be helpful while we don't use terms like retarded anymore or anything like that. It's it's her whole is seen to be able to see a child especially as childlike. My son that he understands exactly what you're saying recited way which is perfect his expressive languages. Basically not the. He does sunshine but just really careful. Not to talk in front of kids with disabilities sammy. I've had people say old. He's racing rather will. What does he think but it you know. Does he saying or you know. Just don't talk if you need to talk to parents about child with disabilities. I talk to them individually not with the child right there understand more eating dome. It's still just a matter of courtesy. Yeah that's really helpful it gives again. They're not engaging with you verbally so you assume that they can't understand you break right but that's not the case usually so awesome any what else anything else. We've missed that you are. Make sure we we cover before we wrap up. I think if i just told harris divided how parents of children autism is delays. I would probably just tom hanging in there. Because it gets the point. Where i was in the other day and jay was by my side and i kind had his arm and he was making noises and rock and a little bit and the lady looked at and said well. That must be really hard. And i said what and she goes. We'll just as though. I'm okay with it wasn't i didn't even recognize what she was saying. She was talking about from minnesota. Where you're you're able isolate through the grace of the savior as economy. Something like beneath fights where the burns burden weren't taken away. But they were made stronger town. And i just think out Courage parents hang in there especially the first few years because better and last question. i have That are typically ask. Is you know this is a form of leadership being a parent and obviously being a bishop off with a disability specialist in. Not but how is. Your time is apparent to attic son. Helped you become a better follower. Of jesus christ awesome. I was afraid of asking. He's just made me realize how how how someone is different than us. I don't think i would have sought out this live curb. I don't think i would have been an advocate for special. Needs kids or anything without experiencing that some people do it naturally in her drawn to kids like this. I don't think i would have may be more exciting. A people that are different and and try to include everyone. It's

always easy to when you go to the young man's activity to hang out kid. Who's the aycell horseback. But the kid is in a wheelchair is a little more difficult. Takes a little bit more more effort. So i think it's made me more accepting more able to reach out to people like that. That concludes my interview with stand. Bakley big shadow to him and his son. Jake really appreciate him sharing his perspective. Here to the leading saints audience. I would love to know. Obviously we didn't cover it all in thirty minutes. I mean this is just one experience right. There's more content that we could create around this topic. And so whether you are a parent of a special needs individual or a disability specialist in your ward or award. That's really figured out how to do that. Well i would love to hear from you. So go to leading saints dot org slash contact and send a message. Let us know who else we should interview about this topic. Where even like an expert who are the. Phd's out there individuals who've done the research to better help us make a place for special needs individuals in our wards in our church in our worship in our communities. Whatever it is. I'd love to hear from you about that as well and remember text. The word lead to four seven. Four seven four seven in urge to access the three free sessions of the lgbt saints. It 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 own and 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.