

LEADING SAINTS

Why Your Ward Should Wander | An Interview with Dan Duckworth

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Has 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 or 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 has 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. A welcome. back to the leading saints podcasts. Leading saints is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping latter-day saints be better prepared to lead. We do that through content creation. Much like this podcast. We have articles at leading saints dot. Org you should check out a weekly newsletter. You should subscribe to also has unique content. So let's jump into this week's episode. It came as a result of the position of leadership which was imposed upon us by the god of heaven who brought for a restoration of the gospel of jesus christ when the declaration was made concerning the all and only true and living church on the face of daughter we were immediately put in a position of loans loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor run away and which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability. Today i'm in salt lake city utah with dan. Duckworth fellow board member of leading saints. Are you dan good kurt. Thanks and You don't just you know. Being a board member of leading states isn't quite a fulltime job so we do some other things right some other things on the side and when people ask you what you do what are you doing. I tell them that. I've got an online community. For what i call change makers and then they say what's a change maker so i talked to him about that and then you know what i really do is is. I'm

making leadership development accessible to people outside of the business context and it's been awesome. I've been involved in a lot of the lot of the. I don't know what you call them. The the programs or things that you put together the content. It's been awesome and seeing the the community online. It's inspiring people all over the world chatting and sharing ideas and and it's been awesome so yet one of the interesting things about it is it's primarily members of the church of jesus christ of latter day have joined so far but not everybody and so we get a we get some other people who were mixing in there and actually had one guy right a an after being a couple of days in the communities at so's us an lds community. I what what is this. And so we had some conversation back and forth and he's now one of our most involved members he's heavily involved. Uncle kinda got over his initial culture. You know shock. Yeah and he liked it. Yeah and you're currently working on this The purpose workshop. That is four week workshop that you're gonna do july on around the concept of purpose and You chat to me as far as whether this will be topic honestly dan. You're the doors wide open to dan. Duckworth on the podcast. I think that so many people enjoy the content that shared here and so lifts have been to purpose and i'm intrigued. You wrote a small book. I read it in about forty forty minutes. I mean it's not heavy but nonetheless has the concepts in there truly think about purpose differently. So what what like pushed you towards. Don't just randomly grab a leadership topic. That's not your style and just dying. Well we'll talk about this. So what what was it about purpose. That push you to write the book. Stop asking why well the interesting thing so purposes very cliché finished right. People are always talking about it. There's a thousand books about it. And i've taught purpose in leadership workshops for a number of years but i really don't like the way that we teach it and over the years i got more and more sort of you know just having a struggle with with the way that we teach this and just recognizing that doesn't really lead to great change so i kinda stopped. I gave it up and yet people were always asking me about purpose. And what about my purpose are bringing up purpose. I gotta find my purpose and that was always the answer to every problem. Well if i just knew my purpose and so it just kept coming up over and over again. And i was thinking about this the other day because i'm not exactly sure where i where i went from resisting this topic to saying i'm going to embrace this.

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I'm going to write a book about it. i'm gonna make videos about. I'm going to host a workshop about it. Like where did that transition point come. And i remembered sitting spring. Break in florida joins grandma. She's ninety or ninety one. I think and she lives in a trailer in a trailer park in central florida. Now this is a lady who probably never leaves her trailer. Maybe once a week she might walk three doors down to her sister's house or something like that right. Just great lady salt of the earth so we get there on a sunday and she's not a member of our church but she is christian and we said so. How's your morning. She says. I just been listening to my weekly church show on tv. Which is how she gets her church and we said well how was it is an all is so good of so amazing but now i got this problem like what's the problem. She said. Well the pastor said that everybody needs a cause. And if you don't have a 'cause you can't be happy of course she's just like everybody else in this world. She's ninety one years old she's been a widow for. I don't know seven or eight years now you know. She lives in an area of the country where her

family is very difficult for us to get there. She's in search of meaning. She's in search of purpose. Associate looks as he says. I don't know what my cause is. What's my cause and that hit me a couple of different ways. The first way is that is crazy. That a ninety one year old lady is still looking for a cause for meaning right. You never just sit back and go. I'd lived my life. Yeah right. I'm just kind of enjoying the golden years would ever know. She's ninety one and still looking for cost. The second thing that hit me was what's hit me. Repeatedly with the way leadership gurus teach purpose. Which is we are not helping people because we set them up and we say you have to find your purpose but we set them up for something that cannot be answered. We asked the question that can't be answered. And then they sit there and churn over and over again and they feel broken because everybody else apparently has their purpose like some kind of bumper sticker on the back of their car. And i'm like where's my bumper sticker whereas my purpose and so i sit around and ninety one year old grandma shows exactly the same way that fifty year old executive or twenty five year. Old upstart that. I've been working with the exact same way. Yeah yeah so. Would you say there's About like vision as well i is it synonymous purpose synonymous with vision or these words so well the are just words right so this is all swirling around purpose mission vision values all the keywords are the buzzwords right and the truth is i didn't really have a good handle on the distinction of these things. That's why when. I decided to do this. This was not a minor thing for me as like this. I'm going to be reading aristotle. And i'm going to be like going deep into the trying to really understand. What is the distinction like. What are we talking about when we throw these words around and and so. That's what i've been doing for the last three months. Yeah yeah so what do you hope as you know wade into this world of purpose and teaching on it and talking about it. What do you hope you hope. People walk away like a statement of purpose. Or what do you hope. The people want wahine this so actually the exact opposite. I'm going to give you the statement. We give away the content and the workshop for free so the e is free. We don't we don't need to sell you that because the workshop is doing the work i went. We're not selling you the tools we're going to actually say come to our workshop and use the tools the ideas of the tools. So as i'm doing all this research and having some ideas come to me about the nature of purpose and what his purpose and so forth like all sudden ages hits me and there's a story behind that but i know that we need to share that here but it just hits me. I'm like i know what the purpose of life is. I'm not the only person that knows but like and it's the same for everyone. The purpose of life is to wander. And that's what we're here to do. We're here to wander from situation to situation in search of meaning and the problem with the search for the holy purpose statement which is the way that the leadership industry teaches at now. Problem was sending people out on the search for the holy purpose statement. Is it tells them. That wandering is bad and that we're trying to eliminate wandering and if you're wandering you must be you must have a problem and so you need to go find your purpose and you can stop wandering but what i realized through research and design thinking like no all the great fingers. Get it it's to wander. You're not here to fulfil some grand assignment. It's not about your vocation it's about you learning how to make meaning in every situation that you find yourself in and you have so much less control over that than you like to think. And especially that the leadership gurus want you to think so star and book about this concept of monastery trap and this relates to some things you've already said but Wha what does when it comes to to purpose like how do we what were does this traveling.

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And what does it look like so being denies it. Yeah this comes from a phrase that. I started saying you know years ago when i started resisting the way we teach purpose in the industry is i would say man. You just want me to go up into the mountains. You want me to seclude myself in a monastery. And you want me to meditate there until a single hippie statement materializes in my mind and that single pithy statement is gonna after govern every choice in my life across every aspect of my complex for the rest of my life. And that's just insane to me. When i stop and think about that right so that idea of going up into the monastery it's metaphorical. I mean. there are definitely opportunities to go and seclude yourself in some of these programs and things that are offered. But the monastery is your psyche. And when i was reading viktor frankl man's search for meaning. He started to talk to this more clearly. And that's where. I understood what i was about when i was talking about the monastery trap was your psyche and the site the psyche does not hold your purpose. Your purpose exists. It is your purposes to wander. And if you wanna go make meaning you have to get out of your psyche and you have to go in the world and start living your life because we typically look for purpose deepens in our soul type of thing. Like it's part of our dna in for steph uncover that and then we can go deeper so put this in like introduced in the context of of being latter day. Saint i mean because we you know the purpose of life. I know exactly what. I want to rattle off to you. Dan is like over. The person's life is come here into game body and understanding and progressing become like our father avenue. Right so put this concept of purpose in in the context of being latter-day actually have a whole chapter in the book about god versus man and discussions about the the religious connotations the faith-based connotations of some of these arguments i think what happens a lot as a latter day saint as you grow up in the the message that you and i were hearing as fifteen year. Old members of the church is the same message that is being told to our children as fifteen year old members. And that is you are special your distinct from everybody else. The rising generation. Exactly and. I'm not saying that's not true but i'm saying the way that's being interpreted especially i think it's more so in today's world because even my kids your kids they all speak the same language. They walk away and they go. I'm just not sure what my purposes. I was girls camp last night. Mas my first experience. I was like you know. Initiation rites right there. But i was a girls camp. It happened with the testimony meeting. I just a dad there. You know volunteering. And as i'm sitting there have a large group of girls. Probably there's probably forty girls there and the amount of instability or insecurity or disorientation in terms of where they stand in their life. It's phenomenal the world has done a great job. Maybe i don't know has done a great job of creating monastery traps. These girls live in their psyches. They're rowdy nima that like one or two they act. They spend their days in their weeks in their nights processing and thinking about who am i where do i belong. Where do i fit in. I'm told that i'm supposed to be doing this. But i don't feel this and i don't feel that and they're just constantly churning and thinking and then they stand up there girls camp and you are so grateful that they feel they can talk authentically but at the same time. Your heart aches because you go. Wow like this the are not. These are not kids. That are rock solid in the gospel. Because they're not rock-solid in life you know what i mean 'cause they're they're interpreting all the information even bit sitting in a girls camp testimony meaning of okay. These people are standing up. This is what they're

saying. What does that mean about me. And an moore's my place in this. And maybe i should stand up. But what am i going to say. And there's other trapped in their psyche like that like in their head right like they're processing. What is trying to earth everything back on them. Rather than being open and stepping into a larger journey at one of my favorite analogies is the lego movie which is now a couple years old male. Some people don't know but in the lego movie. There's a prophecy right. That the world is gonna come to armageddon and that one person will rise up and save the world and they call this person the special. Well what you find out to the course of the movie. Is that pretty much. All of the talented people out there. Want to be the special. Yeah and so. They grow up and this is a great analogy for life. Because i think. I think in general people feel this way but i think especially amongst latter-day saints especially people who have been raised in the church. They grow up thinking. I'm the special. I have a special mission. God is going to give me an assignment. Like i'm here for a reason and that reason is beyond the normal reason like i'm here to start a family and you know i was like i'm gonna do something amazing as well right right. And so we're latter-day saints. Were kind of like hoping for that expecting that at some point in your life. It doesn't go that way. And so now you have to do.

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What the psychologists call sense making we have to make narrative you have to start to find a story to tell yourself why it's not going that way and and when you feel that tension as a a twelve year old who didn't get called into a special calling or didn't get the grades or didn't the family or didn't get the whatever you start to say to yourself. Well either i missed it. Something's wrong with me. Or maybe god doesn't love me or maybe god doesn't exist or maybe the church that's making me feel like i'm supposed to be doing amazing things. The culture of the church. Maybe it's not true. Why because when i tell myself it's not true then. I can let go of that pain that i feel at not being special or by. Tell myself god doesn't love me or doesn't exist than i can say. Well that's i don't have to feel pain anymore. Because that was i wasn't true and so is it the problems with the premise of setting up. That you know like with a youth group telling them all know you are special likes you are meant for something because that seemed like a positive forcing message right that Yeah your purpose. you got meeting them. God created you. So how do we adjust that. So that that trap doesn't they don't fall into that trap war while it's not even just the youth because i mean i'm finding with his message workshops already open so people are talking having conversations. We've got forty fifty year old men and women who are basically saying the whole premise of my life is changing. Because i've been in search of purpose. And now i'm recognizing that my purpose is to search for meaning like my purposes given anonymous to search for. Meaning what is that. How do you search for meaning. It's it's you fulfill the life that you want to live. That's how you find meaning if you're living the life that you want to live if you're the self ideal universal self ideal then you feel fulfilled right and the the great thing about that. Kurt is that when you when you need a purpose you resist. You resist the circumstances that god or your parents or your society or history has imposed upon you and you say. I don't like this because i can't be who i want to be in these circumstances then the mindset flips when you realize that your purposes to wander and you embrace fate you

embrace the circumstances you say this is where god has placed me or his street or fate and my job is to learn how to be who i want to be in this situation. 'cause we often see fate as sort of a punishment for god or we did something wrong. Yeah he had a purpose for me. I messed up somewhere along. The way lost the opportunity in this fate is sort of a result of that and you know and and that's not a good place to be because doesn't it doesn't it's not a growth mindset in that that state of my. Yeah yeah and. I mean fix fix that growth mindset for sure comes into play with us because when you recognize the the the purpose of life is to wander that is that is a very good growth mindset to be in. Because now you're saying how do i live the life. I wanna live in this situation and wanders different than than being lost right. 'cause wandering was has this Has a purpose to because you're wandering in search of something greater right and and seeing how you can grow in in whatever situation whatever situation you wander into that right. Yes so you'll you'll recognize from the book the quote from jr token. Yeah who wrote the lord of the rains he said not all wander are lost and that i tell the story in there about how i came to that quote it i read the fellowship of the ring but i never picked up on that Tell we were having an experience. And my wife handed this piece of art to me has a subscription on it and we're basically looking that going. Okay we are wanderers at the time we were living in an rv driving around the country with no purpose. We had no purpose. Kurt like honestly we were just trying to survive. And just keep moving. That was the only thing and so she has this to me. She says here. I think this means something. I don't know what it means. And so i looked at who wander are lost. Yeah you're right. This means something because we are wandering you have no purpose and yet we've never felt more alive more whole and more human. We're not lost so he's got something here. I don't know what it means. We hung up on the trailer wall. It wasn't until you know. Spent three three years since we were in in the rv living full-time it wasn't until i was preparing this workshop. Will all the sudden. I was literally just neck deep in research. Alison it just hit me. Foam not all who wander are lost. The point is we're all wandering. A hundred percent of us are wandering. You cannot escape it. it's in your nature. The distinction is whether you're wandering aimlessly or wandering purposely but purpose doesn't resolve wandering. You're still wandering.

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Yeah so put this in the context of like leader. Who's trying to encourage those that they're leading right. Maybe a bishop. Who's that people released say president. Who's trying to lead early society where we sometimes default of this Got has a plan for you. Like this is all part of god's plan and that that feels different than the wandering message a little bit where so how can we overlay that. The wandering message with that. With god's plan how did we all went to hold onto. I think that we overemphasize. So we wanna say god is in. The details of the details of the details are alike. That's the new thing to say right because one of the sisters said that in her talk and it just resonated. There's so much truth. In that i go to the true statement but we interpret it the way we want it to be. We want that to mean all i'm going to get. I'm going to be able to eliminate uncertainty right. We hear asking you showers. Knocking shall be opened unto you. And we all that's gonna eliminate all the uncertainty in my life or the one. I've been studying this week. We second defy thirty two opera diverse somewhere. Eight nine like that. But it's the one

where he says you know the holy ghost will tell you all things what you should do. So i'm like okay. I wanna i wanna study this verse. Because that sounds like it's contradicting the things that i'm saying so i really want to ponder this all across references and all that stuff right and then he merged for me as i was studying. This the holy ghost. Who tell you all things what you should do yet. There are some things in your life that you should do like. You should be kind. The holy ghost will tell you to be kind and you should get baptized. That's god's plan for you and you should get baptized and you should you whatever like there are some things you should do but we read that and we interpreted as the holy ghost will tell you all things to do right like all things all things in right and then we with. How do you square that with. it's not meet. These should be commanded. And all things. While the way that i square is that there are some things you should do. Most of them are general principles. They're about living the life. You mean to live there about living. Like jesus christ. But they're not about where you should move there not about whether you should quit your job. They're not about whether you should speak to your boss today and ask him a certain question like most of those things are. That's on you. I see. I created the plan. Created the space for you to wander. You're here wander and as you wander. You will receive confirmation along the way not in the monastery trap not in the psyche. Not in the preconception of the activity but along the way the holy ghost will confirm to you. Hey you're becoming the person that you want to become not necessarily we want to. We want to interpret that. Say oh i'm doing exactly what god told me to do. An outline for me in the pre exist none and you have done a thousand things that would help you become the person that you want to become but the holy ghost is leading. You know this is a good thing to be working on because this one is helping you. Yeah and it's like that certainty that we crave like our mind craves de that. Oh yeah. I'm i'm doing everything i should like all the check boxes that gotta sent me. I'm marking oftentimes. There's no there's no check box. And i've found in my own personal experience you know. It's not the not the moments where i ask in prayer something and then that answered the holy ghost tells me all things i should do. But it's more of like. I pray about something and then i go off wandering sort of in the landscape of whatever wherever my life is at and then i stumble across some things and taught at various stages as i'm wandering rather than as i'm kneeling. They're waiting for the answer. Yeah you think about that with your church calling. I mean we take a very business like approach to our church callings. We say okay. I've got this calling after. Come up with a vision. Like what is it that i'm supposed to do right. And we are told like god called you for a reason right but we we want the certainty and leave me. I teach the vision workshop as well as the purpose workshop so there is a role and there is value in having vision but having a vision is different than having vision. We want to have everything in our heads perfectly mapped out versus vision which is being able to see things as they really are and to see things as they really will be. That's vision as the kind of vision that sear has And when you can develop that kind of vision for your calling or for your family or for your job then all of a sudden when you see things as they really are and as they really will be if nothing changes then you start to see things that you can change. Today that will change the future. So do i believe that god intervenes. Believe the god reveals things about the future. Yes but i like the way. That the the author of the alchemist put it. Which is one of the books i studied for. S where he said. If god reveals the truth it's because he wants it or sorry if god reveals the future it's because it's a future he wants to see changed guy so in other words he can foresee.

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It's not a good path for you because you're supposed to wander and make meaning that's gonna limit your opportunities or a communities opportunities to wander well so let's change that. Let me show you the future so that you can change that. It's kind of like mosaic. One right it's time. It does not come to him and say like you to leave and i want to go to this place and this is was or does he just simply say if you stay here. Bad things will happen. And the mo- ziya goes. I think it's time to leave. Because god said if we stay here things bad things will happen. Yeah yeah so. What does this like in practice like for ineligible in present wakes up on sunday morning as it you know. How does he wander during the may day. Is it mainly you. Don't mind he's thinking okay. I'm going to church this time. We have elders corum. This lessons taught this person's going to teach it and then there's gonna be visits to and then it's mainly putting on that that perspective of wandering saying but i'm going to these. That's the agenda. But i'm going to sort of wander through that that agenda and maybe just be open to. Maybe there's a purpose i can find purpose of where i where i sit in elder score or the comments semi but what does that look like in practice. So we have everything we've been talking about has been the foundational philosophical principles. We don't even talk about those in the workshop. We have what we call. The action principles the principles of basic wandering principles of epic wandering. And i'm just going to talk about one right now. It's ask the basic question. The basic question of life no matter what situation you're in it is how we live the life you mean to live in the situation okay. So here's the story is straight asking the basic question in real life. So i'm in a basketball. Turn it from my son this last weekend and i actually don't go to his summer games a my like to give them space but he's been coming home telling me my playing time is going way down. I'm not feeling good vibes for my coach. Like things are not things are really not going well and so i felt like you know to be a good adviser to him so this is the basic question this is this is this is where you're at right and to be a good adviser him on like i need to go see for myself. What's really going on here. So i go to the games one day and as clear there is a problem. Like there's a disconnect between the coach and my son and so we're after the game everybody's crowded around in the hallway of the school gerald af high High school awesome my alma mater. Go caveman and we're standing in the hallway. And i've got the tension that pretty much every parent of a high school athlete has ever had. Which is i don't like what's happening. I feel like. I should go talk to the coach but i can't talk to the coach because if i do then it's going to probably backfire and harm my kids chances. It's i'm just gonna do nothing okay. I'm standing there in the hallway. Feeling that tension which i felt for the last four years with this particular son and then i asked myself the basic question i said. What would you do right now. If you're living the life you mean to live. I said to myself i really don't like having to silence myself. I really don't like having to play the politics of high school basketball or high school athletics. In general. I don't like the way i feel when i sit in these games and i feel like i don't have a voice. I don't like turning my son over to somebody else who's having a dramatic influence on his emotional and mental wellbeing and not being able to have a conversation with him about my son's emotional mental wellbeing. So i said while the is giving his closing speech to the boys like what would you do. As if i was living the life. I wanted to live. And i meant to live and i'll be proud of i was making meaning in the situation. I would go have a conversation with the coach and so i walked up to him afterwards. I

said hey coach. Can i talk with you. And he said sure. I said hey you always say. Let's have a day of rest. Let's take a break between game and and Let's talk after you know heads of cool. I said so. Can i come over tomorrow. And said i'd rather just talk right now so we had that conversation. It was not easy for me or for him right because neither of us wanted to be there. But what i can tell you. Is that my son has been with the team all week down in cedar city utah. And they're on their way to phoenix right now. And what i can tell you. Is that amazing. Things have started to happen in my son's life. I sent him to spend an hour on sunday with another mentor of his. As i said just go bare your soul to that guy. Because i know he's going to ask you the right questions. And then i said to my son. I want a five minute video every night where you just talked me about your mental emotional goals not about basketball. I said this week is not about basketball improvement. I couldn't care less. This is about you learning to embrace purpose which is to wander well and become the kind of person you want. Come because what i learned. Here's the thing from the coach. But i learned from the coaches that first of all. I disagreed like any parent. Parenthood with ninety five percent of what he said right guy. that's just he should be starting every game and the bias right so there. It is right and i told him that.

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So he knows. But i said there's a nugget of truth in every piece of feedback and when i got in the car and he said what did the coach say. I said i'm not gonna share anything with you. Because i need to process it because i want to be. I wanna live the life. I wanna live basic situation. The basic question in this situation. So i can't just spout off right now because i know that i won't represent your coach fairly and i won't represent the truth fairly because i am too biased right now so it was later that night when i pull him in my wife and i said okay. I've been reflecting on coaches feedback. And there's a nugget of truth in that and the nugget of truth is you don't have a spark in your eye. And when he said that i instantly knew he was right he said i wanna put him back in the game. But i looked down there and i just see someone who's not in a good place and i said my son that's true. I saw that on the court on the bench. You're not in a good place. Now this is a very happy kid the happiest kid the chillaz kid i've ever known but he's not in a good place. Which is why. I went to the games because i was starting to get disturbed by that and so the reflection was back to me was at. Isn't the coaches fall. That isn't even my son's fault. It's my fault. Because i have cared way more about your basketball performance than i have cared about how you are developing here. We go buzzwords from the church. Youth program how you are developing mentally emotionally spiritually. And i much prefer the word. Psychologically intellectually her. And so i repented and i started working with him on that development and recalling that basketball is only a context for the man that he's becoming. It's not about basketball. That's a hard reset for apparent because we have so much ego built into that with our kids right and so it goes back to starting with that that asking that question the moment do i go talk to the coach or do i doing gauge the politics of what's happening right and going and doing something that makes you uncomfortable because culturally. It's taboo but when you wanna live the life you mean to live you ask that question and moves you into the culture. You lean into that discomfort. They know will come when you do something that you're not supposed to do culturally so i want to wear that question again. What's the question in that

moment. The economic how do i live the life that i mean to live in this situation. The question that matters isn't what is the meaning of my life. Yeah the question is what is the meaning of my life in this situation. What is the significance. What am i going to become in this situation. I love that the context or the the phrasing of that question because oftentimes as we seek for purpose even if we think were wandering it can feel like while there's a few steps have to quit my job. I have to go go back to school. I got or i gotta go to do that. Thing i've always meant to do but it really puts it in a practical place of this moment right here not like once. All this stuff happens. I can live my purpose but i can actually purpose right now in this situation right. Yeah so i told you before the interview. There's a guy in our. Maybe i said this on your view. There's a guy joined and he's not a member of our church. He's very very engaged in the community building. I joined it was like hey. I'm i'm either atheist or agnostic. I'm not sure which one but i'm not sure. I want to be like super involved in a religious community at. That's what this is. Well love having him in my community. Because as i wrote this book i had to think through what of this was coming from my perspective as a religious person and could i sustain these arguments outside of a religious context guy. So if you believe. God created you and we send you on the search for the holy purpose. They because i do always podcast with these christian-based podcasters so cool. There are so many cool podcasts out there who are doing such great work and i just i love getting to know them as much as being you know me being on the show given a message but they believe wholeheartedly that god will give you an assignment and i call this the harry potter moment. Like you're waiting for your envelope to arrive in the mail. The says you are chosen. Your special and i have an assignment for you. So that's what they're out there preaching like. Go get your assignment from god. So if you believe that if you believe in god then that's it go to the monastery and you can't live a life of purpose until god gives you your assignment. And i'm like whoa. That is so damning because unless you're the profit or maybe the bishop or someone like that it's not common you have to wander. That's why we're here. And do i believe that god gives special assignments. Yes i do. But i believe they're actually few and far between in that for most of us. He didn't us for that purpose. He created us to wander and to learn how to serve him and to love and become like jesus in every situation that we're in k now on the flip side if you don't believe in god or if you believe in god doesn't care how you live your life.

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Then it's on you to figure out what your vocation is to figure out yet to sort through all of your complexities everything that makes you you and decide. What is the one activity. Or the one vocation that i'm going to dedicate my life to. I'm going to judge the success of my life to this by this. By how well. I do with this and that is that is a whole lot of complexity to pull out of our sorry a whole lot of simplicity to pull out of a whole lot of complexity. And so what is your purpose. Well it's just his case. So i love the way aristotle put he said if you want to know the purpose of something you just have to look at the nature of the thing. You don't have to ask. Its creator. So even though i believe in god i don't have to go to god and say what's my purpose i just have to look at myself and say what makes me exceptional and as a human being. I'm exceptional because i have agency. I have the intellect and the autonomy to think and act with intention and to create now create. what what would god create need to create. He can create world. He can

create universes. What would he create me to create its nature. It's evident the only thing that he can't create that's what he created me to create and that's my story. That's my journey. That's my life and that's my being. That's my my ultimate outcome of who i'm becoming. That's the one thing that god can't create because the only way to create it is by me thinking and acting and this is applicable to like it as we find ourselves these different callings. Because there's sort of this tradition of like well we got to seek god's will and everything we do. And what does god want for. You know the the american fork second ward in this on the street and and we get trapped. Ed's part of this trap of like now we have to go in our bishops office closed the door pray and humphrey a minute and tell that scroll from heaven comes down wind and rail guys like you know i put in you to create and so wander right like maybe it. Is that strange barbecue idea. You wanted to go wander down that path and see where it takes you ran wasn't meaningful right and you'll feel fulfilled if it was your walk said that was meaningful and so here's another realized example for for us so my wife got called to the primary president right before covid well couple months but just barely got up and running and then covid happened and so now she's kind of like getting a fresh start as the primary president and she was filled with tension over this and so i was kind of trying to be a nice husband and like oh. Yeah everything okay. We're to help us going on. And and i uncovered this tension. That was going on about what to do the first week back. I said what do you wanna do. She's that i want to hold a party. I said okay hold party. She's at a camp said why not because we're not allowed to hold parties so who told you can't hold party. She said well church. it's sunday it's the primary. Were supposed to come in and have singing time and have a talk and a prayer and separate and go to our rooms and that's what we're supposed to do and so we talked about this for a while and then i asked her the basic question. I said okay and there's variations of the basic question right. So i said okay. If you were in charge of children's group who had just spent a year and a half away from church and we're feeling all of the tensions and stress of that but also all the tensions has stress of coming back and you're trying to orient them toward the future like and you didn't have a boss and you're the founder. That's one of my favorite questions if you're the founder of this organization. What would you do if you didn't have to answer to anybody is easy. I'd have a party. And i said well it's time for you to start doing. You're calling because god called you to do it. Just do it. And if the bishop has a problem with it he'll reach out to you and say hey. This one crosses the line right. Guess what nobody said. This one crosses the line so here we are first week back and the primary brought noisemakers and all the kids are marching around outside and they're sitting outside on the grass and they're having a and a celebration of celebrate the return to primary k. Now is that the answer for everybody right. Should we go on pinterest and tell people this is what y'all should have done absolutely not right. But that's who she is. That's her gifts. That's her talents. That's what she found meaningful if she had done anything else in that situation because her intuition had already told her what the answer was what the approach was and if she had done anything else she would have felt unfulfilled. She would have felt hollow k. But by doing what she by living the life she means to live in that situation. She walked away having a great experience. Now here's the leadership principle of this in the research. We call it transformational leadership. When you're living the life you mean to live you become magnetic called moral power people look at you.

00:40:06 - 00:45:14

And they say wow. I'm here to find out how to live a meaningful life in every situation and you're living a meaningful life. Not because i want copy you but because you're clearly feeling joy you're clearly feeling fulfilled. So i think i'll follow you because you might be able to show me how to live like that. And that's a magnetic principle that draws people into you and your influence with them dramatically increases and my mind is going to so much like connecting all these things to doctor and when he mentioned the doctor agency right like god made us agents of action right in going to elder bednarz favorite scriptures. Second to fourteen like we are there. Things created to to act and things be created acted upon and sometimes we lock ourselves or back shelves into that corner of. I'm an agent for god to act on me. I'm i'm the bishop. What do you want me to do. God i'll go do it. But he created to be agents that of action to take action to use that agency and wander and find deeper inspiration and purpose in in our journeys. Yeah yeah what what. I was doing corporate consulting. I can't tell you how many employees would say to me things like this relative to their bosses. Why doesn't he just tell me what to do. I will do whatever he tells me to do. But i don't know what to do and so they do nothing well. That's the same exact posture that we hold with. God if you just tell me what to do. I would do it. I'm a dutiful soldier. I'm a good little boy. I'm a good little girl. I'll do whatever he asked me to do. But what god asks you to do was to think and act with intention to create your life. Hey so here's the ironic thing. You cannot not think enact with intention so when you choose to do nothing. You're writing your story. So here's a great A discussion that's in the booklet. So what i find is that people often say well. I don't know if it's my voice or it's god voice that's talking to me right. My intuition is my intuition. Or is it the holy ghost. And the implication of that is if it's god's voice. I will obey immediately. But if it's my voice i think i'm going to think about it for a little while. Just make sure because that doesn't you know there's some risk involved with that some uncertainty you know and so we freeze and we do nothing so now say that you are the kind of person that wants to live a life of leisure. But you're also the person who wants to live a life of productivity. Which ones should you choose. Because they're kind of at odds with each other. Well i would rather live a life of leisure or a life of productivity than a life of indecision. So just pick one and go. I i would rather go do good in the world than sit around and wonder if god is asking you to do this. Good thing just go and have god needs you to know that the messages from him he'll sign the card. Yeah right because with neef he said i'm going to lead you in a way that you will know. It is by me that your lead. That was when he was crossing the seas then. There was a time that he said go the plates. I'm not gonna tell you how to get him. Awesome in angel down to interrupt your brother's killing you. Because i'm not quite ready for that scene to play out. Yeah right so. There is some divine intervention. But the angel doesn't say oh and by the way i know you failed twice already. Here's the here's the answer. He just goes back in not knowing beforehand. Things you should do. What neef is the same night. That said i will tell you the holy ghost. We'll tell you all things what you should do. Holy ghost didn't tell him what to do to get the plates he said. This is my fate. These are my circumstances. How do i live the life. I want to live we'll lehman. Lmu wanted to life going back with their tail between their legs. And if i said no no. The life that i mean to live is to follow through. I made a commitment to my father. That i would not come back without these plates. And that's the life. I mean to live so i'm gonna live that life right now. I'm just gonna walk into the city knowing that. I'm already a wanted man and

i'm gonna see what happens and then. He just embraced fate. In circumstances show themselves. And there you go and you would have never gotten there. If he didn't wander into that in that place exactly yeah yeah and again deceptive share the scripture from anthony swit- the first one that turned me onto this but doctrine covenants. One twenty eight verse nine speaks perfectly of this and i love how it starts out. Says it may seem to some to be a very bold doctor. And i love that preface. Like i'm going to say something very bolt right now because we often think of revelation as a one way street it's in heaven and it comes down here and then we act on it right. This is a power which records or binds on earth and binds in heaven nevertheless in all ages of the world whenever the lord has given a dispensation of the priesthood to any man by actual revelation or any said of men. This power has always been given hints. Who server those men did in authority whatsoever. Those men did in the name of the lord and is it truly and faithfully and kept proper and faithful record of the same. It became law on earth and in heaven and just concept like when we make decision when we're When we act according to the authority and sometimes authorities agency like it is stamped in heaven that is revelation and it came from the earth up to heaven.

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Not so it's a two way street rather than one way and that's where we find deep purpose in wandering as we as we do that in i love. yeah that's that's a fascinating scripture so many so many parallels that come from the scriptures and you had brought up already You know. I talking about agency and things to act not be acted on and he also talks scripture about. There must be an opposition in all things well wandering presuppose opposition. The opposition is the uncertainty of not really knowing where this is all headed. I'm just going from situation to situation trying to make meaning in these situations but what we wanna do today is we wanna say no. We want eliminate the opposition. We wanna make this easy for you and just get you going in this one direction. Now my study of the doctrine and covenants this. You know this year has been interesting. Because i think that the doctrine and covenants in some ways does us a disservice because we read the scriptures where people had access to an anomaly. Which was the prophet. Joseph smith and joe smith was compared to moses in other words a once in a thousand or two thousand year profes- who speaks face to face. Here's the voice of the lord indirect commandment and can basically has like an open conduit right in in terms of pulling down the words from heaven. A he's unlike any other profit that we've had in this dispensation that's why he was prophesied right so but we see these people going to joe's and say tell me what to do or we see joe's of receiving revelation saying sell your house by this farm. Go here come back here. And like the directions are are so clear as we tend and i've had conversations a lot of people who have been saying like well. Why isn't that happening for me. Why am i getting dot. Kind of direct revelation. If you will. And i think we have to keep in mind that there was a time period where the lord needed some things to happen. That couldn't happen without a ton of divine intervention and so is the lord and the details of the details. Yes because he cares about us he loves us and the spirit will confirm will comfort and so forth but he commanding in the details of the details absolutely not and if he did during that time period is because there was going to be events transpire. That weren't going to enable his kingdom to get

planted in that time period. So that could grow in the way that needed to to pre-stage the second coming of Jesus Christ so lot of direct divine intervention but the principles that i think matter most us are the ones that start to come out are starting now to come out in the doctrine and covenants. Things like it matter if not right a matter of not all bought. You're traveling on the waters and you're so worried about getting from point a. to point b. that you forgot to live the life that you mean to live in the situation you thought the life you mean to live is to be a fast traveler but it was actually to be a christian and to be carrying about the people on the other side of the bank as you were going so just quick. Pause let me remind you the principal. Open your mouth ministered others while you're traveling while you're wandering right but a matter not whether you take the ferry or the canoe the horse bagri on other. None of that stuff really matters to me. You're going to get there. And then such a liberating principle and really helpful any anything of as far as the context of like leading an organization that wanders anything else. You'd add that the covered so a phrase that's been in my mind for some time so we talk a lot about purpose driven organizations that i didn't really understand this phrase because i tend to have reactions to things that i don't understand and i just sit with them for a number of years. Understand him but one of the phrases that came to me was. I don't think there's anything any such thing. As a purpose driven organization there are only organizations that are led by purpose driven leaders and didn't really fully understand that until i had these epiphanies and these revelations with the purpose workshop and with book stop asking why and i started to realize that when you wander as a leader the next so number one you have to wander and then number two is. How do you invite the community to wander with you. So it's not the organization that is wandering well or that's purpose driven. It's that you are learning to invite other people to wander with you and then your story and the community story becomes the same story and we can no longer tell the difference between the two. I mean look joe this matter timeout. Dnc is talking about Joseph. Smith's personal history hair or is this the church history. They're the same thing because he's wandering clearly that's one thing that's clearly evident rough stone rolling.

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You have a read of that. And you'll realise. Joseph is really doesn't always doing and for for all these revelations that he's getting which are mostly about other people he spends most of his time going. What am i supposed to do next. Yeah i have no idea. And so he just makes meaning kalem in this situation. I'm preaching at this sermon. I'm traveling now with these guys down to you know Missouri what am i. you know. he's just trying to make meaning everywhere that he goes and the process. He gives the lord so much to work with right but that his story becomes the churches story. So if you wanna be a purpose driven relief society president or are you have a purpose driven relief. Society is very simple. Start living with purpose start roaming with purpose as a relief society president and the community will start to come with you. Yeah the learning incorrect wrong. But it's because you're not making the argument that you know having a vision or a specific purposes necessary out of bounds but it's division gives us a direction we're going but we're gonna wander as we had that way right. God gave certain direction and commandments. Sir purposes to Josie Smith but there was a lot of wandering happen as he was headed that direction. But why didn't god just tell him what he was building. Why didn't he say

okay. Let's let's lay this all out on stone tablets okay. There's going to be a first presidency. There's gonna be a corner of the twelve. There's going to be you know i don't know how many corners of the seventy there are. Now there's gonna be a lot of them okay and they going to have high councils like why's it all mumble jumble because god is not going to violate the purpose for which he created us which is to wander so joseph smith nikolai. You name it. They even though they are going to do the work that the lawyer wants to do. It's going to be done through wandering and god can foresee all things. So i do love the neil maxwell quote a long time since i read it but he says something to the effect of if god has a grand plan for humanity than. It's only reason that he has a plan for each human. Even something to that to that respect. I have absolutely believe god has a plan for every human and the plan is to give you the maximum opportunity to become like jesus christ two repent and repent and repent and repent and repent as you wander so the plan is to keep the state of probation oakland for you as long as it makes sense so that you can continue to try and fail and try and fail and try and fail and then look back and say wow. I thought it was failing the whole time. But i was becoming. Yes the becoming thing right like the reason. God doesn't just tell us is that there's such sanctification in the wandering right we we become more like god in that wonder right well so for me right on much. Introduce new doctrine. Here right right. Yeah this is a radical thing you know now radical at all in fact. It's just more than anything. It's just a way to talk about these things in a way that counterbalances the way that the world is talking about these things because the language of the world is overtaking. Our school lessons and our elders chrome lessons like. It's because i know the leadership language so well sometimes i sit there and go wild. These people are not we're not talking doctrine anymore we're talking leadership guru talk and that's not only like two bad that we're not talking about doctrine it's also true the things he's leadership bureaus are saying. They're not true. And so what i'm doing is it's like a way to say let's talk about it differently. In a way that i believe is one hundred percent compatible with doctrines. Not that i understand them all right but i have all kinds of questions that come to me like well. That's the purpose of our life is to rome from situation situation find meaning. Is that ever stop. His god still roaming from situation situation in search of meaning create and when i say insert creating meaning. Yeah i think he is. I think that's why he created us because he's just continuing on forever and that's why for me all sense like okay. I've sometimes been like well. Why don't you get bored at some point or when you've got everything figured out if i were the fun. Where's the create. Well he just keep creating and you just keep going. And i think we want to believe that god. He does have a plan for humanity but does he have a master plan for his existence. Does he foresee absolutely everything that he ever was. In ever will be in the ever will become of his existence. I dunno will we when we talk about becoming god. Will we reach the point where we never stop having to think and act with intention a sense of creation. I don't know yet. What i appreciate about this discussion is that again. It's not that you're introducing new doctor and a radical doctor. They're changing things. But you're giving new. Maybe new language of articulating some of which separates us from the cliches. Were we say things so often that we sort of lose the meaning in what we what we are saying. In and death this concept of wandering brings new new meaning to it all that early clarifies.

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It yeah my whole goal is to get down to the action principles to get to the point where we can get people off offense and say no. You don't have to regret your life. Yeah i just. I just spent some time with a friend a yo. He was telling me historian he said. You know i. Somebody told me. I should open a smoothie business when i was in my early thirties and a lot of other people said. That's the dumbest idea. It will never work. And i should have never done it. I lost everything had to sell the house. We had to move it. It it it right. Then you proceeded to tell me about all these experiences in life that he's had and i just came back to it and i said even fail like you did. Your business failed but you tried to make meaning in that situation. It was context in which you're trying to make meaning and now you moved on and look look how rich your life is. Look how much you've experienced and how much you've changed as a result of that. Don't wish it away. So i think for me. I wanna help grandma. Betty who ninety one and i wanna help her say you have a purpose. You don't have to go search for your 'cause you just need to say this is where i live. And if god wanted me to live in a different context and have a different body or beaten different generation. He would have but he didn't hear. So how do you make meaning and live the life. You wanna live giving your constraints. And that's the same thing goes for the elders squirm instructor for the euro. The relief society temple and family history leader. You don't get to choose your calling so just embrace fate. That's your calling now. How do you live the life that you wanna live given the fact that that's what you're calling is so i think this is empowering biog- this afternoon and get people thinking and acting with intention anything i wanna make sure people know where to go to read the book. The book e book for free against a short book and profound helpful but any any other principle concept that you wanted to go that we haven't man. I'm so hot on this. I could talk about this in depth forever and probably gone way over time already. Now i would say i'd say we've hit all the bases and if people wanna learn more they can check it out. And that's what i mean and this conversation is sort of we've modeled and it's been very very because we've just sort of wandered through these things. I mean night some questions. We talked about some things director. Go but it's in that wandering where we almost found deeper meaning and purpose in this conversation. We just plan that two more things. In life and god's glory would be manifested through that awesome. So we're where do people go if they wanna check out the book for free and maybe the part of this workshop you have coming up. Yeah so good question so we will give will make available to your people friends brice which is sixty percent off. So that's the dots website. I'll give you it's crucible life dot com slash purpose slash friends and willing to the show. Nonsense one click away and so they can go get the book for free. And where do they get the book there. On the website they can click a link that will take them toward the book is or a video of me. Sort of summarizing restating. Some of what's in the book and and frankly if people wanna talk about this they can just reach out to me and they figure out how to do that on those sites too. Because that's really why i'm here is because i know we're going to talk about these things anyway right so we might as well record it all right then you could use it as content. We go to lunch time. You think man. That was the best podcast that you will ever hear so. I'm glad we record this time. The final question. I have is just if the leaders out there that are maybe they sort of understand the concept intellectually. But they're nervous leaning in and to be into wander. What final encouragement would you give. You can't steer a parked car so if you want your life to change direction if you want more meaning more fulfillment and you want to reach the pinnacle a so joy i you know we

man are they might have joy the makes it sound like. That's the purpose. that's not the purpose. Joy is the barometer that tells you when you're fulfilling your purpose so if you want to feel more fulfilled and more joyful in your life you've got to do something different. You gotta get moving and then trust that either your intuition or the holy ghost will tell you how to change direction in order to find that joy in the situation that you're in cancer parked car. That concludes this episode of the leading saints. Podcasts we'd love to hear from you about your questions or thoughts or comments. You can either leave a comment on the post related to this episode is leading-saints.org or go to leading-saints.org/contact and send us your perspective or questions. If there's other episodes or topics you'd like to hear on the leading saints podcasts. Google leading-saints.org/contact and sheriff's information there and we would love for you to share this with any individual you think this would apply to especially maybe individuals in your world council or other leaders that you know who would really appreciate the perspectives that we discussed and remember text. The word lead to four seven four seven four seven in order to access the three free sessions of the lgbt saints library.