

LEADING SAINTS

Mother in Heaven at Church | An Interview with Scott Layton

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welcome back to another episode of the leading saints podcast. If you've enjoyed content on this podcast. It's important that i tell you about the leading saints newsletter that we send out every week this newsletter keeps you up to date an all the current leading saints content releases including podcasts articles online events and even live events. That might be happening in your own area in this newsletter. We also recommend some past episodes and written articles that you don't want to miss each week. We include additional leadership perspectives and thoughts. That you can only find in the weekly newsletter. So you definitely don't want to miss out to subscribe to the weekly newsletter simply text. The word lead to four seven four seven. Four seven or visit leading saints dot org slash subscribe leading. Saints is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping latter day saints. Be better prepared to lead and we do that through content creation like this podcast which you hope useless subscribe to. We also have a website leading saints dot org with thousands of incredible articles all about leadership in the context of being latter day. Saint we host virtual summits live events and also have a weekly newsletter to keep you up to date on all things. Happening with leading saints visit leading saints dot. Org for more information today. I'm in west valley city my hometown with another homeboy here. Scott late how are you scott. I'm fantastic now. We are both alumni of Grainger high school. We are your nineteen ninety nine and two thousand. Yup we turn out great. You're alive we'd never joined the gang right. So west valley gets a bad rap. A really bad rap. And you're still here so here. Yeah and was that. The plan do mary a west valley girl or go married a west jordan girl and in looking at homes and that we settled more on the west side of west valley and so we live in hunter boundaries. Now oh boy. I have to tell all the youth and my ward that we can still be friends. I wouldn't have grainger ugo hunter. We can still be friends and your your seminary teacher so that. Divide your allegiances once again and teachers seminary ten

years. Nice dream job. I mean range Phenomenal i always tell. I tell people that i get paid to hang out with teenagers. And that's for some people and not for other parietal but that's alright. Guy talked two years ago. He said he can't think of a fate worse than hell and they have to be with teenagers all day. Yeah hey i mean this is sort of cliché to say you know. This is a great generation. 'cause the up and coming is just always inspiring a dec- phenomenal. He's going to be run. Run in this church in this culture this community we live in. It's inspiring we're in good hands. Yeah go so recently. Released his bishop. Guess how was that. Phenomenal the the analogy. That we've always used Somebody use this once with me. That he compared being a bishop to going to disneyland and he said how like when you go to disneyland. What you spend eighty percent of your time doing meeting standing in line. Oh yes it's boring right and it's just hot and muggy and there's people around you and but why is it that we always want to go back. The rights right twenty percent of the twentieth said being a bishop is eighty percents standing in line twenty percent blessing. People and i wanna come back every time. Yeah for sure. So the eighty percents from now being released and looking back on it. It's soul stretching. Yeah for sure some good stuff in. It's hard and you learn lessons and make mistakes and you try your best to recover from them and repentant but defense. I'm you being a fulltime teacher and being a bishop developed. You just never get a break. Can never yeah. You just always. In the fact that i have a student the other day i bumped into at a grocery store. Then i wait. You have normal close yes. Did you think we sleep in our white shirt and tie. Maybe we do right. Yeah sort of you see general thirty in polo shirt writing like oh. Wow you aren't human doesn't look normal so this is gonna be interesting discussion and so you live in the state of my of my cousin and you went to his word and gave a fifth sunday lesson all about a mother and heaven correct. I mean who couldn't just go give a fifth other so wh with your with your time in with seminary what's the what's the history of view maybe putting information together about mother in heaven the doctrines our great question so few years ago i was asked by some some leaders within the within seminaries and institutes to put together presentation on one of the gospel topics i and this was the topic that i'd been assigned and instantly had that thought of. There's nothing you want me to talk on this.

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When there's absolutely nothing out there and so i started initially just started with the gospel topics essay and part of my research methodology. I just looked at it and said okay. I'm going to start with the footnotes. And then i'm gonna use the footnotes from those and just kind of kept expanding and expanding and realize the longer i kept studying. We know far more than any of us who are willing to admit we. Just don't talk about it. Yeah and so. You're preparing this information. For what exactly not not necessarily teach the kids know this was more just to provide good information for the teachers okay so that they could feel confident if somebody brought questions to them. Yeah yeah and that. How long did would you say that story. I mean not that you're you've concluded the study means but we're always learning but high that initial study phase. I probably about a month and a half four or five hours. Monday to friday of looking at information trying to process what was there trying to sort it into some sort usable format and there's some remarkable things. Yeah yeah until. Here's sort of my you know it's sort of the the

hip thing to do these days with with podcast especially when relating to the church like I. Talk about mother and heaven right and and it can you can default. While we don't know much or seems speculative but sometimes. I worry that you know there seems to be this movement like i'm working on this manuscript. Have a book i'm writing. And various editors come back with these comments of where i've put heavenly father. They say oh well put heavenly parents like okay like some some context that makes sense others. I'm like well. I don't necessarily know if that would be completely appropriate just as far as the context in which i'm saying because sometimes we think like okay. We know. I think presently said we shouldn't pray to mother in heaven correct but we sometimes conflate these two eternal beings in ways of like a little more passive of worship and we don't know where the cross the line i don't know where to cross the line so sometimes i worry like are. We conflicting their roles too much and is becoming just. Because it's more maybe more interesting to talk about the more open to it right. And so maybe by the end of our discussion. You'll be able to have this. Maybe where to draw that line. I don't know phenomenon. There is not a line to draw from. So where do we begin to lay a foundation with this with this topic. So where i started of my researchers a in the october two thousand thirteen general conference president dallin h oaks in a talk entitled no other gods. He said this he said our theology begins with heavenly parents and our highest aspiration is to attain the fullness of eternal exultation. And so i was reading that and and just kind of had this more mike. Oh my heavens our theology everything that we believe everything that we are as latter day saints begins with this foundation of heavenly parents that then shaped everything that i studied It's interesting you brought up this idea. That's kind of do. We use heavenly father to use heavenly parents in my areas that line. There's this unwritten. I don't even know what to call. But there's this unwritten expectation of wealth heavenly mother exists. Why don't we talk about her. And i think we all kinda shy away from that question a little bit anytime that i've done. This presentation talked with individuals. I'll ask them that question. I say give me your number one reason you've ever heard for why we don't talk about her. Yeah typically they say it's It's too sacred. Stu sacred heavenly father's trying to protect their had this. We're reading his mind. He had this intention of protecting her rights. So i one of the things that i read is a Article from one of the a. Byu women's conferences nineteen ninety-one. The author of this was catherine shirts. She said that she said. I remember primary class in which someone asked the teacher. If we have a mother in heaven how can we never hear about her. The teachers reply that god was protecting her name from the kinds of slander that human beings direct towards the names of the father and the son. It was a clever reply and at the time we all thought it was quite satisfying. And i think we all read that we. Yes yes yes yes. That's exactly what he's doing. Sweet and like something great hasn't been. She finished that paragraph by saying none of us realized then that this answer described a lady not quite up to taking care of herself in a tough world an image drum purely from certain human conventions and not from divine reality. And i'll usually pause there and say okay now. Let's think about this. Do you believe that a divine goddess who possesses all powers all attributes. All projections needs to be protected from the big that humans over us mortals right with facebook and i love that last line that it's it's an image drawn purely from certain human conventions and not divine reality.

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Yeah and this is sort of a this habit. We have in in in human nature we try and put everything in a box or give purpose or reason for why things are already are when in reality. We simply don't know a lot of time correct. Yeah we like that. That feeling that comes from ed. Yeah that feels good to me and but we never actually stop and check that against reality and does that match the understanding that we have of what a divine god and goddess would be safe to say. We can set that idea aside and i think that's becoming more more well-known of like That's not really that's not doctrine and nobody really knows that has maybe just some speculation that made it to the surface over decades of try. Now is become tradition right. Yeah stronger strong true. That's a good way to word that so where to go from here. Then we know. It's not because god is protecting her. Yeah so that then begs the question. Then why don't we talk about her. I would say there's not a lot of information to talk about your right and there's far more than we realize so. It brought me back to that quote. That i started with that. If our theology begins with heavenly parents will then. Why aren't we talking. There's gotta be some other reason something else that we haven't processed yet and as we dive into this. I'm i'm hoping that we can get to the point where i can. Then look at you and say doesn't make sense right right. Does it make sense as to why we don't in the end bay led me on an interesting study. And and maybe i'll i'll reference right now. I wanted to find out okay. How much do we talk about her. So used a corpus that i had available available to me at the time and i went and word search general conference all the way back to joseph smith. How many times are we using. The term heavenly mother mother in heaven Mother god godmother god the mother like those kind of search terms our peak was in the nineteen seventies and it was nine references from nineteen seventy to nineteen seventy nine. Wow that was the peak. That either pete not even double digits correct yes so it seems to support that idea. We're not talking about her. So i kept playing with it. Kept playing with a couple of days later came back and said i missing something. What am i missing way. What am i not processed in this and it was that quote from president oaks. Our theology begins with heavenly parents. And so i went back and added heavenly parents into the search term. Now in the nineteen seventies when we hit our peak. If i add heavenly parents into it we hit nineteen in the seventies in the seventies. Yeah every wells. Were still single digits. Until i got to the two thousand tents in two thousand ten. The term heavenly parents was used to sixty seven times in ten years. And these these are all conference all general conference. They're talking about her. We're just not hearing. Yeah we're expecting the term heavenly mother when the general thirties of the church looking at us and saying heavenly parents so that point i realized okay if i take everything that i understand about heavenly father i can now apply that on the other side and i now understand her and her powers capabilities and projections because they're equal one's not above the other so that kind of started this whole process of realizing while we do know a lot we just have to open our minds a little bit and look at the different term. That's being used that we now have the ability to become like our heavenly parents and i wonder if there's also going back to reasons we don't talk about her. Is this constant effort of trying to fit in the christian club rights. Yeah no no. We're christians. no you're not. No we are like we believe in jesus and all these things and then then we roll in by the way we believe in heavily mother and and everybody wait a minute by mouth like yep. We're out right. And so i have to wonder maybe just that. Approximate background That some of our roots are in is just like there wasn't never really a tradition to fit that doctrine in there and so it never it was easier just maybe

to pretend it wasn't that doctrine was in there. Yeah i b h roberts one of the early church historians i in in the millennial star earn long longtime ago this was referenced but really an essence. He challenged christianity to come up. With a doctrine that noblest women like our doctrine of a mother and heaven and he'll go on a conclude he and he'll say he'll say this i offer doctrine that presents a conception of the nobility of woman and of motherhood and of wife hood placing her side by side with the divine father as does our doctrine of heavenly mother and he'll conclude. They can't do it. they can't do it. They believe in this eternal father but they then have to stop short. And say we're gonna reject this idea of the nobility of womanhood so anytime that.

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I'm talking with youth about this anytime that i'm with young women in particular and i start talking about this idea. I i find a lot of young women. Have this misconception that very terminal identity and purpose to become like a man because the way that we worded we look at these young women and save if you keep the commandments. If you receive all the ordinances you do all of these things. You'll receive all the father has and it creates this this misnomer in their brain that i'm going to become like a man and that's just not true or it's only reserve for my husband and i'm sort of. I'm in the house with secondary like get tagged along with. Yeah yeah. I'm driving in heaven or something. You know what the known the the same opportunity. Blessings and exultation is available for women as much as men and then the that game shows the importance of having that doctrine in highlighting it. And right correct. Yeah all right. So what's the next so now go back to what he said. As far as the was the phrasing he used as far as like challenging other churches to to. So here's what he said. I challenged the rest of christianity to offer a doctrine that presents a conception of the nobility of woman and of motherhood and of wife hood placing her side by side with the divine father. Okay so as. I'm hearing all these things like i'm i'm feeling more and more like this permission of like. No this is. This isn't something that's just a acute doctrine or something that exists. But it's something that should be highlighted. It is fundamental if our theology begins with the idea of heavenly parents then every commandment every doctrine every ordinance everything that we are has to be within the context of a divine father and a divine mother. It's the foundation of our theology. Yeah yeah wasn't except where do we go from here so let. Let's dive into the gospel topics essay on. There are some really powerful statements in there. That as i played with this i started to realize. Oh man there's some powerful things here so number one thing that will point out in the gospel topics essay. I it says this. The church of jesus christ of latter day saints teaches that all human beings male and female our beloved spirit children of heavenly parents heavenly father and a heavenly mother. And then this. I think this is key. This understanding is rooted in scriptural and prophetic teachings about the nature of god our relationship to deity and the godly potential of men and women words matter to me and i love that. This starts by saying that this idea. This doctrine is not just something that we talk about but that it's rooted in scripture. So then the question is going to be posed. I they site at the bottom of this five scriptures that teach the existence of a heavenly mother. I so if you look in the notes of of that you're gonna run into in genesis. Moses romans psalms and in the doctrine and covenants. And i love that. They're

starting is by saying here's where it's at. You kinda have to read it a little bit in the and understand some of the context behind it for instance in genesis when it talks about as being made in the image of god the that uses plural male and female so for created in the image of a plural god. Men were created in the image of heavenly father and women were created in the image of heavenly mother. And so as you read that you have to have that lens of the plurality here that there's a divine father in a divine mother who were working together for the salvation of their children. And i would see as i've heard other like christian dominations explained that they typically see it in the context of the father and the son type of thing they say we make them in our image type of thing. But very likely i mean they're talking about the the male and female. In the book of moses we learned that there was a spiritual creation and then a physical creative. And so i like to look at that and say we'll in the spiritual creation you have the divine parents working together to create the ideal and then in the physical creation. You have the father and the son working together to bring it into reality so if we if we're only looking at the physical creation you're right father and son but we can't forget that spiritual creation at the same time aperture and so as like as i like the where. My mind goes like the roles of these of the deity both male and female that we have such a strong tradition of the role of our father heaven in our life in the role of the son the only begotten son as our savior and so sometimes. I wonder if it's in this is. This is probably a flawed analogy. I realize that. But i'm trying to process my mind like when i served as bishop obviously had a wife now.

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We were a couple but our roles as far as the word was concerned was very different. Grim couldn't go to my wife and and confess sin the keys of repent absolutely. Yes and so after one where it's like. Okay we recognize. There's a couple there but the rules are very different. And then there's doctrine of the father son and holy ghost in never mention of the heavenly mother in those things and so. That's where i sort of am not sure where. To draw drawings froze. What's the role here. You know if. I'm trying to be my daughter's trying to become like our heavenly mother. How do they access that. Is it mainly just to be. So they can relate to her and then turn to the saviour or Working there is that role in their purpose. Phenomenal phenomenal question in the gospel. Topics essay is has as with many other truths of the gospel. Our present knowledge about a mother in heaven is limited nevertheless and that's critical word. There we have been given sufficient knowledge to appreciate the sacredness of this doctrine and to comprehend the divine pattern established for us as children of heavenly parents. So we have to start by looking at this and saying okay. What's the divine pattern now in all of my studies as i started to play with this that pattern will multiple patterns exposed themselves. The one that you're asking about is this pattern of. What does that mean for daughters. What does that mean for the women of the church. And what's their potential. And how do we define these roles president. Harold b lee. He says we forget that. We have a heavenly father and a heavenly mother who are even more concerned probably than our earthly father and mother and that influences from beyond are constantly working to try to help us when we do all we can so. I don't think it's this idea that she is just not involved. Yeah there's definitely an influence there a major more so than your earthly mother. Take a second. Just because he's led that settle. I one

question that. I always pose here in the and i think this is funny because again just going off of the good feelings. We like to talk a lot about when we when we die. We get to the other side. I can't wait to give jesus a hug. Yeah and have them wrap arms around us. And i i was just pause and say guys wait you ever seen a missionary come home. Who gets hug number one. Yeah it's the mom every time on what happens if you get in the way of that hug. He'll get an elbow or trampled or who do you think it's hug number one when we get back heavily mother. It just makes sense that hug number one would be mom that she is more concerned about us than our earthly mothers. And that she still has influenced she still has power she still working but now we have to address the division of responsibilities. The division of roles right so so. We've outlined here that there is an influence happening yell at the mechanics of how that influence were not totally sure. We're still limited information. I wanted sort of sit with that in a minute. Just the 'cause sometimes i'll hear individuals especially women and you know. I think is beautiful that we have this doctrine that women can turn to and find relation to divine. Yes threat right. It's beautiful but sometimes it then it goes on and i know that you know leaders are faced with these circumstances where it's like now. I felt my heavily mother. Come and comfort me and it's like well you know that could be the holy ghost as well like this becomes money and then it sort of feels like this. These doctrines carried away a little bit and again i. I wouldn't say a leader needs to like no. You can't think that way it wasn't that right but just it. It's it's intriguing to me you here in some of these things like well. I don't know if that's her role per se but maybe you know who knows. And so that influences that we don't maybe we don't know the mechanics of it. The caution are usually gave when i heard individuals use that phrase of highest. I felt heavenly mother coming comfort. If that's what you felt. I don't get to question that right. But what a sacred moment. And i would be very careful with that and i just. I wouldn't float that out in front of a whole ward. I wouldn't float that out in front of that would be something that i would keep in treasure in my own heart. Yeah and i think that's sort of where i were. It just gets hard to understand is because in that moment if you feel like you're heavenly mothers comforting you it's so easy to then turn and pray tonight heavenly mother greg say. I'm so glad you're here you know. Would you help me with this right and then again. I don't know we're supposed to do that. And again and this these are these are messy things. I don't want to be like there's a right way to the wrong way but when it comes to prayer there is a right way wrong way and prophets have been very clear that we although we can seek a relationship with heavenly mother. We do not pray to her. The pattern of prayer as taught in scripture by the savior himself was that we pray to the father.

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That's how he prayed. That's the pattern that we've been given so that one there is a right and wrong and we do need to speak up if somebody begins to pray heavenly mother. Yeah that's one. That president hinckley was super clear on in fact in his. I can find it here. Really quick gordon b hinckley right here a so president. He teaches is. This is the october nineteen ninety-one general conference. He was speaking in women's session about this idea. I and was correcting the idea of we. Don't pray to heavenly mother. But he did say this he says logic and reason would certainly suggest that if we have a father in heaven we have a mother in heaven

that doctrine rests well with me and i hope you can hear that in his voice where he's just like had just rest well with me right but i think there's this powerful moment that just because we don't pray to her doesn't devalue her right we don't pray to jesus christ be we still have a relationship with them right right so i don't know that praying to someone creates the relationship or limits the limiter perpetuates the influence as well. So i think that's that's a powerful moment when we have to realize we pray to the father be at worse we still seek relationship with. Jesus christ we pray to him. We don't complain about that is that we don't play the father There's influence there. Could we say that we are comforted by heavenly mother because that's sort of the role of the comforter right. The reason would suggest yes. Okay all right now. How does that work in where we start having to be very careful that we don't take away the role of the holy ghost as the agent of the atonement as the comforter. And there's it. There's another figure in the attorneys that we really don't fully understand the mechanics of crabs how that works and why and the hornets or faith allows us to continue to move forward. Even though we don't fully understand absolutely right next. Let's stay on this topic of of roles really quick. Because i think this is where if we can flesh out this idea of okay. So what's the role then. We have this powerful moment where we can see the beauty of the divine plan. I following the pattern if we look at the way that prophets apostles talk about earthly mothers. And what their divine role is we can then start to infer back to the relationship between heavenly father and heavenly mother. And how do we split that role. And what are they do. And what are they responsible for. I'm glad you brought up this idea of of when you serving as bishop that you still had a wife right so the question i would pose as this when you were sitting in in your office and you counseling with member. They were there present with you. In that moment did that in any way shape or form devalued diminish or neglect the role that your wife was playing home. Definitely not definitely not as much different. And she's watching little mermaid for the fourth time but yeah so we run into this moment where there's just a division of responsibility. Yeah so president hazard have been teaches. A mother's role is also god ordained. Mothers are to conceive. Bear nourish love and train. They are to be helped mates and our council with their husbands at love. This part lahiri says there is no inequality between the sexes. In god's plan it is a matter of division of responsibility when parents and compassion or in companionship love and unity fulfilling heaven imposed responsibility and children respond with love and obedience. Great joy as the result. This one quote unlocked for me. Why we don't talk about her. It's a division of responsibility dad's at work mom's at home. I think we forget. Sometimes that primordial existence. They're still children there. So who's taking care of. I believe and would not as doctrine but it as a conclusion that i would draw personal here. Mom's home with the children. She still training and rearing and teaching them about mortality while dad's at work and again it's not that we know that but it's as you sit with it you sort of see like There's a of logical a lot of moving parts to this this eternity them which you're trying to create here right then and different roles in needs that way so it could there be a moment in the again hypothesizing here could there be a moment that the children in pre mortal existence are looking at mom and saying how come we never talk about dad. Dad's at work right now k And then we're on this side looking and saying how can we never talk about mom. Mom's home with the kids. So we're just we're in a different phase of the plan where we had a mother who was getting us ready and a father. Who's ready to bring us back. So that when we receive our exultation we become like them we then dwell with both of them for eternity.

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Yeah yeah it's a division of responsibility rather than just its hush-hush we can't talk about right and that brings a lot of comfort because it is. I think you know again. I'm not a women's. I don't understand completely but a lot of women can feel like man. I i desire this connection with the with the female divine and i'm just not feel like i'm getting it in the structure but to just know like well. There's a larger picture here. And maybe there's more opportunity after this life or maybe we had more options before the site that will remember at some point and it will that will feed our heart that moment but for now we're in this stage of eternal in the attorney and this is sort of where we're developing and becoming sanctified through this relationship with our father in heaven at the moment correct. I like to look at it as a partnership that we're in where the objective for women. The objective for men is to bring everyone back to the presence of heavenly father and heavenly mother different responsibilities though to make that happen. Yeah so on one side. The role that women play again. I've got quotes in quotes in quotes that you can look through on the on the role that women play as they conceive. Bear nourish love train. There they been given the power to bear and become co-creators with god. So i like to look at it and say part of their responsibility is to bring mortality which is essential to becoming like a god or got us the priest then steps in after that to redeem from this fallen world. You can't have one without the other. If i'm not born in mortality i can't be redeemed from it and so part of the responsibility is to bring children in and bring him back and that's kind of a separation of responsibilities of who gets to do that so another way to look at it or speculate about as maybe our mother in heaven is more involved in that role of bringing us into mortality. And then our father in heaven and the savior's focus on bringing us out of mortality and exalting us out of more touted. Love that yeah. There's a painting that i saw a little while ago. That has become one of my favorites. It's this idea of hand weaned. The veil and the painting has hands on both sides. And there's kind of white curtains hanging around this baby and i love deeply. Love this idea of a heavenly mother handing one of her children to an earthly mother. And saying i trust you. will you take care of. Will you try and be like i. We do the things that i taught you to do. You look at just divine traits that come and that are are given. I think for a second. What happens if you hand brand new baby to a teenage boy teenage right. You're holding that baby and they're looking at it like what is this. I have slipped story in so when i was serving his bishop. You know different sisters in the ward have babies and you know the release. I've get together and deliver meals. Were all my wife was assigned to deliver meals ones and but she was wasn't Bailable so i'm like i'll just run all. Take the mil over. It's great and i'm just the type of guy i'd like. Hold the baby. Like i love my kids. But it doesn't it doesn't do it for what it was satisfying. Yeah and i get white is for others. So i deliver the mill in this sweet sister. Looks like what you like to hold him then just like in my mind. I'm thinking yeah. I'm good but sure i'll hold your baby you know and it was. It's it's funny because you yeah. The teenage boy. Yeah there's a lot of teenage boy. And how do we what i do. What happens the second. The baby starts crying out here. Tom potato like i don't know to do with this explained to me. Then why my four year old daughter knows how to hold a baby instinctively. Naturally she knows what to do. I believe that there's a divine trait and for lack of a better term. I'm to get beat up over this one but could it be the primordial we all

had to take classes and the sisters were enrolled in a mothering. Wanna one top by heavenly mother and she developed an instilled in them. This desire right now granted. That's it's an over generalization has yeah. There are some women who don't have that and that's the wrong. Skip those classes or whatever. We're just talking skip patients class. So we ain't nobody got and sit on like as we talked about this division of responsibilities. I really i mean our society has sort of diminished the role of mother and a center. As if we're if we're saying a mother should say home with the kids as if we're saying you don't belong out here with a right in the real world but not like. I think it's important as you know the family proclamation talk about. Is these these divine roles that it is in their nature. Generally speaking of nurture things but a lot of people a lot of women can take that is like all like you're diminishing me like i can do other things as well and we don't mean as a diminishment is just as we talk through these things right now.

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There's a power they're the ones you recognize. This is essential. This is a foundational doctor. It almost becomes liberating to recognize that we have the potential to become like heavenly father and like heavenly mother and were not purposely trying to limit or restrict. Were trying to empower and lift and build and bring everyone to the table and really uncovered the divine. That's in one of these women that i mean. What if you know again. Speculation we get to the other side. And we realize like that is where our mother and heaven spending. Most of our time is nurturing. These souls that are coming into mortality and loving them in preparing them and that emboldens. I feel like women in their role of of really leaning into that part of their nature. You know again. we're generalizing but it is. I know that's it's perfect because it empowers. And i think that's what this doctrine has done the more that i've been able to share it and talk with individuals about it. It's it's empowering when i've done this in in wards and and youth conferences and that kind of stuff what i normally find is it for most men including young men. I'll finish this and they'll be like wow. That was awesome. And you watch kind of mama's boys who come out and they're just like yeah. I love that. But when i get to see the way that women connect with us when i watch an adult woman who. It's almost a relief for them. That they just go i can. I can do this. I get most impressed. The one i watched the women of the church. Yeah anytime that. I've had a conversation about this. It's not just a relief for them. It's empowering and a gives them the ability to say. I can go out and change the world. I can go and actually be the type of person that i'm being asked to be. Because it's within me. Yeah so. I'm curious like maybe the application of that how we do that. There's one moment where. I was sitting with my daughter in sacramento during the during the sacramento. I think she was like seven or so and she leaned over watching the deacons do their thing and they said dad. When will i be able to do that. And it's like this. Is this that parenting moment. I've been training for right so but it's difficult to talk to her. We had a great conversation. But it's easy to say. Oh well that's for the boys the at yata. and so. How do we apply that. Really like empowering the women and the girls in our life to say there's a feminine divine here that The you should be really excited about but at church there sort of all these. The structure doctrines that right-wing towards that exultation role of the father. Right yeah so looking again at the at the roles of mortality and redemption We find a lot of instruction in the story of adam and eve. I find it interesting that there's two trees

specifically mentioned in the story. You had the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of of life. Eve is the first partake of the tree of knowledge of good evil which brings mortality great beautiful symbolism in there then removed from the garden and they then have to spend the rest of their mortality working their way back to the tree. How do we get back to the tree. It's through the ordinances and that's administered through the priesthood. We watch as adam and eve then as a husband wife work together as she bring souls in and he works to redeem them through the tome. There's some power in that as we recognize that maybe this mortal phase is a little more priesthood centered but that in no way shape or form diminishes the role that women play. It doesn't devalue my wife infected nobles one of the ways. I try to look at it and and remind myself in the ordinances of the gospel. We do them all individually. So i'm working for my own. Salvation baptism confirmation the endowment process. There are all personal for me and my wife is doing the same thing on her site as she's working towards that when we get into the ceiling room every ordinance every covenant we've ever made is then sealed together in one covenant. This is where you get the moment where president m russell ballard so. This is april two thousand thirteen. He said in our heavenly father is great. Priesthood endowed plan. Men have the unique responsibility to administer the priesthood but they are not the priesthood. Men and women have different but equally valued roles just as a woman cannot conceive a child without a man a man cannot fully exercise the power of the priesthood to establish eternal family.

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Without a woman in other words in the eternal perspective both the procreative power and the priest power are shared by husband and wife again adam and eve being the instruction here. There's some great symbolism in the creation. That woman eve was taken from adam's rib on always look at youth and say okay guys. Where's your where's your ribs and always point to the front of their chest. I guess it side and could it be that god was sending a clear message. That woman was not to be in front or behind the men. She was constantly be at his site now again. Society kind of muddying. The water here is trying to promote one at the expense of the other. And i think this doctrine of of placing a husband and wife an any terminal. God any maternal goddess side-by-side shows that divine potential that one is not greater than the other. We just have different roles and responsibilities. But we're still equal. Yeah that's really helpful any other. Obviously we can unpack all this in a simple podcast episode any like general doctrinal points that you found that have inspired you in the study of heavenly mother. Maybe one that will point out i. It's a hot button issue. We won't get too far into it but in the family of proclamation of the world there's a paragraph that says all human beings male and female are created in the image of god each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents. There's that phrasing in and as such each has a divine nature in destiny. It's right in the family proclamation. We're not hiding it or not saying that. She doesn't exist. We put it right there in the proclamation what i found interesting doctrinal e at in the same paragraph where we establish that the next sentence is gender is an essential characteristic of individual pre mortal mortal eternal identity and purpose so the conversation that we need to have about gender hinges on this doctrine of divine and female if our eternal identity and purpose was to become like heavenly father gender doesn't

matter but where we have the potential to become like heavenly father or like heavenly mother gender now matters pre mortally mortally and eternally so that kind of enhanced my understanding of that conversation that needs to be had a little bit about the roles the gender plays in mortality and that it isn't just a social construct and i see like a lot of other denominations are sort of like you said. They're sort of shorthanded with their their doctrine. Because they don't have that the heavenly mother doctrine to turn to the you know we after shoehorned into this concept of heavenly pointing towards god heavenly father and these things but we can point toward the a pair of people correct that are divine and we can look at their relationship to then provide counsel and support for earthly relationships. That it's not just this idea. That marriage is something we figure out here mortality. But i like to think about heavenly father and heavenly mother as a married couple. Yeah and i've i've wondered. i'm probably gonna get in trouble for this one. But i wonder what friday night date night looks like for them. Yeah sure is heavenly father walking through the universe galaxy over there. I created that because it reminds me of you. Oh i i think it's it's idea but yeah it's kind of like what you know. There's going back to god's progress and obviously he's exalted. He's perfect being. But what is a you know a friday night at seven. Look like for him you know. He's the he's creating still. Is he done creating. But and so this relationship. The between a couple like what does nurturing in the eighties. Look like ryan. That's an interesting dynamic One area. I know i fall short when i get home from work. I'm tired and i just want to be left alone. I wanna have my couple of minutes to sit in process and scroll through social media and all of that but i like it in the creation when get today seven says that god rested or still monday day seven his quote unquote rest is providing for his family. Interesting way to look at it and so for now me as a father does my definition of rest match his definition. Yeah and in my actively working for the salvation of my family. Yeah that's awesome so this has been really good and and just like understanding these you know division of responsibility and whatnot again. We don't understand it fully. And you can see i mean i'm sort of stumbling through his. I'm asking these questions trying to put it all together for myself. And maybe i need to spend more time here but the fact that there are great quotes. There's resources there. The doctrine gospel topic essays. Right to go to start at least sitting with these this doctrine saying we're not that we haven't figured out or i can you know go. Abc down the list of how this all works.

00:45:00 - 00:50:03

But there is we can say clearly. There is a feminine divine. Who's our mother in heaven. And every girl every woman can become like her and that's beautiful. Yes and lean into that doctrine. Lean into that experience. And there's obviously an influence going on with between you and her me and her whatever it is and and sit with that and see you know take it to god and sees it takes you almost kind of stretch perspective a little bit and not focus so much just on mortality but on the terminal plan and stretching our vision to look at pre mortal mortal post mortal. How is she threw all of it. And here we are in this. Tiny little phase called mortality. We're trying to infer that because in this tiny little phase. We're not talking about her. she doesn't exist. We've gotta stretch our perspective a little bit in and see it for what it really is. Yeah so let's take it in the context of church like as a as a bishop whereas someone who's running awarded relief site. He

president like they. They're inspired by the quotes in. You know there's this feeling of you know making mother heavens presence or existence. More obvious in a sunday church experience or even writing a manuscript. It's like where do i do. I do the so what advice would you give to a leader. Who's like you know. This is great. Love these quotes. I want to make more of an emphasis on heavily. Mother in church but again. Where do you draw the line nor should there even be. A line is necessary to draw. President nelson talks a lot about this defining time that we're in that we need to develop the ability to receive personal revelation. We need better at that. I think the line we have to be very careful in trying to draw where that line is because it may be different for each one of us. There may be in private conversations where i can go a little further with someone and help something that they're struggling with as it relates to this doctrine whereas in a general setting i may be a little more reserved. There may be things that i hold back because maybe somebody isn't ready for it step number one it. This has to burn in our own soul. I we have to have that inside of us. And so i would recommend step number one. You've gotta get it inside yourself. I go spend some time with it. Look at the quotes again. We're not hiding it. Is you just have to spend some time looking for it. Second thing that i would say is if we're dealing with like a relief seti president of bishop or something like that. I stay firmly rooted in what we do. And we've had a couple of moments here as we've been talking where we've kind of said well i can go from a to be and i see right and i think as long as people involved in the conversation or are looking at. That's a logical conclusion right. I think we're still somewhat safe but it has to start a it's rooted in scripture. Be it's rooted in prophetic teachings. And the moment we get outside of those two things we start to stand on small branches and we run the risk of that branch breaking him. So i the only caution i would give is. Just be careful. Don't say plus be equals c. therefore ex. Yeah because there's a lot we still don't know so be very guarded conclusions. You do draw. Yeah and i think we see this model really well by general and that's what they are as general right and so you may think like man. Where's all these quotes in general conference. Or why aren't they talking about more. They are general authorities speaking to a general audience and when they step into that role. It's very i mean. They've got to lose lose proposition lot. Because it's so hard to talk about specific situations on a general stage and typically stay general with the scriptures and whatnot. They're not rarely again if ever do they ever infer something or draw some of these. They're fun to talk about. And maybe as you're with a group of people or you know you're taught even in a sunny school. She may in for some things in your clear that i know that's not in the scripture anymore. But that's sort of just were. I'm being light on my spiritual journey. I may be wrong. But that's what feels right to me right but in these roles as bishop Least i present recognize this is somewhat of a general responsibility and so as you stand and deliver messages. You may wanna keep it more. General scripture rooted scripture sound and then allow people to have specific interactions with the divine and not diminish those in just like. Wow well lean into that you know. Obviously you're having an experience there see where it leads you so when i teach this i'll print out at the end. All of the quotes. That i've used and provide that to the individuals who are present. But what i don't provide is the commentary between. Yeah because what i want to be careful of is that i don't infer my conclusions to their study process and wanna recreate a moment where they can see. Okay here's every quote that i used and you can follow the pattern that i went through. But i want you to go have your experience with. Yeah and we do that with other doctrines as well.

00:50:03 - 00:55:08

The the atonement being one of them that we can spend all day talking about the atonement in the depths and exploring the nuances of it. But that doesn't matter until i've had a personal experience with it. Yeah so as a relief site. President is bishop i. My number. one responsibility was to point them to the source. That can actually help them. And if i can get that connection and have them have a personal experience with it. They're not relying on me anymore. Yeah i love that the a and this is a. This is a real issue because we live in a world of content. I mean there's so much content it so easy access and now sometimes see it with. Come follow me. It's like all right. What youtube lesson to listen to which these are great and i can soon enlist him as well but to make space of like while these people have some conclusions or some perspectives on the gospel. Right i'm going to take that ponder over and see what conclusions can come from. It gets so easy to walk into a desert book. Pick up a book and be like. Oh well this guy said it. And he's pretty seems he's talking about so. These are my conclusions too but to step back and say actually. I'm going to sit with these and find engage with with god and see where he leads me out almost propose that we flip the order of that i wear french. Follow me. I personally go engage with the scriptures. Yeah i drum mike conclusions. I take the things that i'm and then i pull in some of these other things as supplements. Yeah yeah and i. The other way sky up that create that creates a reliance on them. Yeah is and we're all about. Self reliance yeah not just in physical and temporal things but in spiritual things as well have i developed the ability to find those principles and doctrines and pull them out of the scriptures for myself or my still dependent on someone else to do it and i think this this doctrine this doctrine lends itself that way where i can become dependent on this podcast or i can. I can be handed on the gospel topics essay. Or i can go spend some time for myself and get an in me right now though powerful really helpful any other quote or if you want to just run down a list of different quotes We can again. We're not gonna be able to pick each one but And will you provide a list of these quotes that we can share the listening on. Absolutely i will out. Yeah same thing that we were just talking about. You may not put all your conflict conclusions there but you'll put a love just providing the quotes for letting people go have an experience with also absolutely i can do that and you liked any other quotes that notch over. I have one that will end with it. It's my absolute favorites hugger. Vaughn j featherstone says october nineteen eighty seven elder featherstone at this point said sometimes misguided women or men director youth away from their divinely appointed role worlds without end. Men will never be able to bear children. Every young woman may be appropriate with god and carry a little one under her breast either in this life or in the eternal world's motherhood is a wonderful priceless blessing. No matter what all the world may say priesthood ordination is a blessing to men and then this there are serious consequences when either motherhood or priesthood is abused or laid aside. We were talking earlier about this idea. That society is kind of land lending itself to moving away from motherhood and as latter-day saints. I think we need to be the champions of motherhood. Yeah and we have to be careful that we don't become so prescriptive in that moment that we say motherhood is staying home that we don't become the champion of one version of it right but that we recognize that being a mother is a priceless gift and we need to focus on that and live it the best that we can while we empower and lift everyone else around. Whatever way that's going to look think about

ministry and how beautiful this could be the instead of just focusing on we'll get my visit this month. Have i done my interview. Have have i checked all the boxes that i'm supposed to check if you could convince sister when you give her that assignment. Your job is to help her. Be the best mother that she can be. Go figured out to look at a a precept holder and say your job is to ennoble the the office of father and mother in the and to get the children to follow that at. Your job is to build the family. Now go figure it out and give them some of those guiding principles. I one of the most stressful things about this presentation. And i'm i'm hoping i'm hoping that there are some sisters listening right now. Who aren't married or unable to have kids who just their soul longs for this. I hope that they realize in this moment that the promises they're elder featherstone just set it. Every young woman may be appropriated with god and carry a little one under her breast either in this life or in the attornal worlds and that we have faith.

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We have confidence and the we trust that our heavenly parents will do what is best for us. The you have faith that it will happen. It may not look as the traditional stereotypical family. Here in mortality. But it will happen and we have the confidence in that promise. I remember the very first time that i presented this sitting on the front row of the auditorium where i was was about seven sisters who were not married and i watched him as i kept getting into this and the role of mothers and women they just sobbed and i remember feeling. In that moment i missed the mark. The point of this isn't to just say here's the role women. Here's the role of men but it's instead to provide hope to give us a little courage to take maybe another step forward and the ability to trust in these eternal promises now had led that. This isn't a trying to double down our roles right. But it's more of like of course you your heartaches those things because you have divine potential in you like you that is part of your nature like your heavenly mother gave that to you right so of course you it that aching and yeah. That's hard to reconcile in the moments or light situations. But you know this isn't about like roles or duties or anything like that but like uncovering the divine that has always been there and just increases. Faith is just causes me to lean into this gospel even even more right. Yeah and that right there. I love that phrase leaning into the gospel because it requires us to be unbalanced in the perspective of so much imbalanced in the in the way that we present. Things are but unbalanced in that we lean on the savior. We lean on our heavenly parents. We put our trust our faith our strength in them not in ourselves. Yeah that's really good good so this is sort of what i'm going back to the beginning of our discussion as i'm writing this manuscript in determining you know which editor to listen to as far as what whether heavenly father or heavily mother and it seems when it becomes illinois. I'm talking in the context of becoming like becoming more like god. That would be a good place to put heavenly parents because mellon femur that you are becoming like your heavenly parents right when it becomes in the context of like what god does for us as far as a salvation in christ dying for us and these things that is. That's a clear role. As far as again. I don't know how the mechanics work but may be safe to say to us heavenly father or the savior in those things deals with exaltation and sank to vacation these things. I don't know if that's completely say. Their safety in following patterns. Yeah and one of the things that i'm working on right now in still trying to understand this and and trying to wrestle with what you're doing yeah there's a spike in

the way that the general authorities of the church us parents so part of what. I'm studying right now in trying to better understand. When do they use heavenly father and went to the us heavenly parents. And i'm trying to follow that pattern bright and following that pattern rather than try to blaze a trail of fall. They don't want to get into control over the last ten years. Yeah and just like research if we see it. Ticking up you know. And we can have more opportunity to see how they're modeling the use of the doctrine and heavenly mother and so forth in will be safe in attempting to do that. I'm just learning like in general like it's liberating to sort of feel like in these specific interactions or the ways that lessons are taught. Like don't don't like get nervous if heavenly mother comes up or don't run away from it. It's fine and there's great quotes in in these things and let that conversation. Even if people begin to in first things like they're sort of on this journey and let them sort of play around with that for a little bit not that we're drawing any conclusions or again. We're not praying to heavenly mother but make some space for it. Because they're some they're sending influence from heavily. Mother that can be found there that can be really healing especially for women correct. Yeah awesome anything. We're missing we done all we've done it all maybe just one thing as we talked here at the end about creating hope and having this ability to trust the process in a byu devotional dated march. Ninth two thousand ten glenn. L pace was the was the speaker he says this. And oh man i. This is the home run com. This homerun rank here. Like if there's anything that. I want to be taken away from this conversation it's this one quote again. He says i he says sisters. I testify that when you stand in front of your heavenly parents in those royal courts high and you look into her eyes and behold her countenance any question you ever had about.

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The role of women in the kingdom will evaporate into the rich celestial air. Because at that moment you will see standing in front of you. You're divine nature and destiny once we're there once we strip away all of these mortal problems. Yeah and we can see it for what it is. I love his phrase that it will evaporate into the rich celestial. Air is just gonna disappear and you're going to be perfectly settled perfectly calm with the way this all played out because standing in front of you is what you're going to be a matter of moments and i don't know that we process that idea of of us becoming eternal gods and goddesses and in possessing powers perfection knowledge and being able to stand next to my wife and look at each other and say we did it. I love you because that's who we're going to be. 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 leading saints dot org or go to leading saints dot org slash contact and send us your perspective or questions. If there's other episodes or topics you'd like to hear on the leading saints podcast leading saints dot org slash contact and sheriff's new 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 council or other leaders that you may 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. It came as a result of the position of leadership which was imposed upon us. I the god of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel. Of jesus

christ run the declaration was made concerning the only only true and living church upon the face of the earth. We were immediately put in a position of loneliness loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor run away and which we must face up with boldness and ability.