



Come Follow Me and the Power of Questions | An Interview with Evan Fitzpatrick

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back east. My mom was single mom and conference of the church. She joined the church after I was born. She was Catholic before that. So I'm actually baptized Catholic as well. And she even after joining the church, she had a great love for the Catholic Church still and to send all of her kids to Catholic school all through our education. So it wasn't until I got to BYU that I went to school with another member of the church, which was a really fun fun experience. Nice. What was your path career path starting at BYU? Yeah, so I hopped around like many students a couple different majors, but eventually landed on accounting, which was a great thing to study for an undergrad, but then went kind of a general business path after that. Spent a couple of years working for the Boston consulting group and their Washington D.C. office. And then for the past ten years, I've been with being capital. The private equity firm, most of those years, we spent in Boston, but a couple of years ago, we actually decided to uproot the family and move to Salt Lake. And so we live up here now. And before the pandemic, I commuted all the time on airplanes and since the pandemic, I've been mostly working for my basin. Awesome. I'll join the club. There's as many of us out there doing that. So very cool. Tell me about the come follow me and how it began and started and give us a background there. Yeah, I'm happy too. So this is a project that's been going on in one way, shape or form, really for the past four or 5 years. And really actually started before the come follow me program came out for the church. Our kids are still pretty young at that point. But my wife and I, you know, ever since we had gotten married, we would try and study the scriptures together. Between the two of us. And I'm sure we were blessed for our efforts. But it often felt like a struggle. And it often felt like we weren't getting out of it, what we really wanted to be getting out of it. And oftentimes, we would not do it at all because of that. We read a chapter a scripture or we'd read a conference talk. But then it would just kind of end. And that led to long periods of time where we didn't study the scriptures at all. And one day I kind of woke up and said, you know, I'm going to be married my wife for another 50 years plus. This is a problem we're solving. We should be able to figure out this problem because doing scripture study and having that daily connection with God is incredibly important. So my wife and I really step back and said, what would be the ideal scripture study for us? And we thought about it and we decided it would look like a lot like a mini Sunday school class.

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And if you think it's Sunday school class when it's done well, usually there's like a punchy set of scriptures they focus on usually a quote from a general authority that expounds on those scriptures a little bit. And then a question. And most of the classes spent discussing that question. And so we kind of ran with that idea and started creating content that are aligned with those principles. But we also said, it's got to be short enough that there's never an excuse not to do it. And so all of the content we created was something you could read in like two minutes. And then so even if it was really late at night, we'd always have time to do it. And then we did that for a while and it was great and we really enjoyed it. And we're like, okay, this is really good,

but we were using a Google spreadsheet and it was really a pretty poor experience. And so we decided, hey, let's invest a little bit of money here. And we are going to pay somebody at a friend who knew how to code on iOS. And he built an app for us. And it was super ugly. It was very low functioning, but it was nevertheless. It was an app we could download from the App Store and it housed all the information. And so we started using that. And then the app basically sat there for four years almost. And we used it, and we had a couple of friends we knew we'd occasionally talk about it in a couple of friends would use it. And there was a way to contact me through the app. And so I knew some other people had started using it. But there was no goal to grow it or see this as a tool that could eventually help members of the church around the world. Which is now our ambition. And then about a year and a half ago, a couple of things happened that really kind of changed the vision around what this could be. One was COVID had happened. And so I had gone from traveling 45 weeks a year to traveling no weeks a year. And so I had a lot more time on my hands all of a sudden. The second was my kids had gotten older. And so my wife and I were still really enjoying using the app for ourselves, but the content hadn't really been designed with kids in mind. Third is the come follow me program had come out. And so we wanted to align the content with the compound me program. And so as I had some time on my hand, I really began to look around and say, well, is this something we really want to invest in? And could this be a tool that we could offer a much broader group of people here to help them with the same problems that we've been wrestling with? And with through a big process to decide that, yes, this was a big opportunity. We go through there's a lot of other members who had the same issues that we had, which is just struggling to have a habit of daily scripture study. There are a lot of good tools that we could learn from and broader Christianity. And leverage a lot of the great things that they were already proving as very effective. And then we could just take those technologies and approaches and kind of wrap them into a church and Jesus Christ, so context and a come follow me context. And created tool that can really bless the lives of lots of members of the church. Yeah. Yeah, I love that fantastic. And the similar has some echoes of our journey with leading saints. This member led effort of creating more content for latter day saint leaders that will hopefully help them in their journey to better lead. And one thing I want to ask you about is that you explain to me offline is just how the broader Christian community is sort of figured things out a little bit more. They're ahead of the curve than we are with as far as apps and the Bible app and whatnot. Maybe a little bit more about that. I found that quite enlightening. Yeah, when I was thinking about this early on in deciding is this something we really wanted to try and do really well and make something that could be shareable with other people. My first instinct was to approach this like I would a project at work. And if you were going to create a product like this at work, one of the first things you do is what's called a market landscape. What are all the other products out there that are serving? Similar needs, maybe for a different customer segment. And I'm using very businessy terms here in an important note that people should understand. This is a 501c3 nonprofit. It's a free app. We're not trying to make any money here. But I really did think about it in a business context of I was going to invest some resources I was going to invest a lot of time and I wanted to make sure we could do this really well. And so I spent a lot of time. I literally went through if you download in the App Store, you can just type in Bible or you can type in Christianity. I went through every single app that exists. On the App Store related to Christianity and use them and tested them out. And there really are some great tools out there.

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And I think it's an interesting thing to think about why is that? And I think there's some good reasons for that. One is Christianity is much more segmented than we traditionally think about it. We kind of think of there's ourselves and then there's all other Christians. But the reality is there's thousands and tens of thousands of churches out there. And it's a very fragmented community. And each of those communities are driving innovation. They're incubating within their communities, different approaches and different ways to reach people. And there are some that have a lot of resources. And a lot of scale and have figured this out really well. And so the one you referenced is you version Bible app. It's by far the most popular tool in broader Christianity. It's been down the over half a billion times worldwide. Not a half a million and a half a billion times worldwide. That's encouraging. It's penetration in the U.S. Christian population is like over 50%. There's 45 million active users of the app in the United States. And there's only about 70 million people who walk into a Christian church on Sundays in the United States. And they've themselves really just learned from other service providers like Instagram and YouTube and Twitter and TikTok on what makes those products. So addictive. And they've just taken a lot of those same tools and technologies and then wrap them around the Bible to get people to build the habit of engaging with the word of God on a daily basis. Yeah. Yeah, that's really cool. It's one of those things I've been so involved in just the gospel library or the church produced apps that I didn't venture out to see. What are other Christians looking up? And so hearing those numbers, as far as the app that are being used in the broader Christian world is like, wow, you know, there are maybe different approaches out there. And then how would you as far as explain just the general experience? When I get on come follow me, usually I'm on the at least once a day. It's a good way to start the day because like you said, just two minutes, you can have some engagement with the come follow me versus for that week. And I generally hop on there. There's sort of a, I forget what it's called, but it's like an Instagram story. Where you click through the different slides. Listen to somebody share a one to two minute thought. And away you go. But how would you describe it? Yeah, so I'd first describe it as our goal kind of target audience is members of the church who are otherwise not studying the scriptures. If you already have a scripture study have it where you're digging deep into the scriptures for 30 minutes a day, you can probably get some benefit out of our app. But you're not really our target audience who are really going after we believe is the majority of the otherwise active church attending ties paying membership of the church. But who have testimonies, but for one reason or another, struggle to have a habit of scripture study. And what we're trying to do and help those people do is get them from zero minutes a day or an inconsistent two or three days a week to a consistent 5 to ten minutes every single day. And as you say, our big goal is that they wake up in the morning and this is one of the first things they want to do. They want to find out what's the verse of the day to today. I want to see who's doing the video and the verse of the day story today. That's really the reaction that we're going for here. And the content within the app breaks down

into a couple different things. So the main feature that by far the most popular feature is the version of the day story. As you were saying, this feels a lot like an Instagram story. But it creates a 5 minute Sunday school class. There's just several screens that take you through what a Sunday school teacher would take you through. There's kind of a welcome to the topic of the day. They share the verses of the day. There's then a two minute video of a different person every day sharing their personal insight on the scripture, and it's kind of like the Sunday school teacher asked them, hey Kurt, can you read this scripture? And then tell us your thoughts what stands out to you in this first. Then there's a question that helps you think through how you can apply that scripture in your life. There's a conclusion screen that kind of wraps up. Here's the main takeaway for the day. And then there's some ways you can go deeper with your study of that verse if you choose. So the first thing stories kind of the main feature most people who use the app use. We then have devotional plans. These are if the day story you could think about that's mostly meant for a user to use by themselves. This is like their personal study. Devotional plans are largely meant for people to do with other people. Either parents to do with each adults to do with each other, parents do with teenage kids or parents to do with younger children.

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And we actually have devotional plans geared toward kind of each of those groups. So we've devotional plans that are really geared toward adults doing them with each other, or we have devotional plans that are geared toward parents doing it with their young children. And they're all around again, this idea of kind of punchy set a scriptures, maybe a quote from a general authority or for the kids, maybe a friend article or a video from the church that relates to the scripture of the week. And then the big focus is questions that you can discuss and ponder. And think about and get that gospel discussion going in your home. So that's the second kind of group of content. The third major group of content that we have is we're also trying to act as a centralizing platform for all of the great come follow me related content that's produced out there. Whether it's produced by the church or it's produced by other third parties. And I know you've had several of these people on your podcast, but there's like David butler and Emily Freeman with don't miss this. There's book of Mormon central. That puts out a ton of great content. There's people like real talk, et cetera. There's actually a huge group of content creators out there. In addition to the church that are producing content that are geared toward adult members of the church as well as kids. So there's a lot of pine line. There's ponder fund, there's AP Sunday school. Scripture explorers. There's a huge amount of content. And right now, what we're trying to do is pull all of those into one place so that if you remember the church, you can go to a one stop shop and find all of this great content that's being produced around the web to help you again engage with the scriptures and engage with the word of God on a regular basis. Yeah. And just for my own experience running a third party nonprofit organization dedicated helping the church with their greater mission. I know sometimes people

can be a little bit unsure about these resources. I've heard of individuals who've recommended leading saints to their bishop, or other people in the reward, and the minute they find that it's not church produced or church sanctioned. They're just like, ah, I'll have none of that. Thank you. How do you respond to that to know that this is a positive resource? Yeah, I actually think that's a really interesting question and wanted to think about. In some ways we're an incredibly decentralized church, but in other ways we're an incredibly centralized church. If you think about it, there's a few other churches that give so much leeway and responsibility to their everyday members of the church. People are getting new colleagues all the time. And to serve in leadership positions and in some ways, speak for the church in those capacities. But in other ways, particularly as it relates to doctrinal topics, we're very focused on a top down message, which is great in a lot of ways, but definitely agree that that can cause people to sometimes be confused around these types of resources. And so our approach there is to just be transparent around who we are and what we're trying to do. And again, that's one of the reasons we think we can play a valuable role for the church and it's one of the constraints that church actually has in doing some of the things that we're doing is that, look, if members find us helpful and find us to be a useful tool, please use us. But if you don't, it's no problem at all. You don't need to feel any sort of guilt around not using our application because it's not the church. You know, the church isn't endorsing or recommending what we're doing. And so just use it if it's helpful. And if it's not, that's totally okay. Find something else that works really well for you. Not everybody looks at these things the same way, not every tool is going to work for every individual. And so our hope is that this works really well for a lot of people and is a blessing in the lives of a lot of people. But no problem at all. If this isn't your cup of tea. Yeah. Yeah. And I would as an independent organization from the church in general, just as leading states, we'll go ahead and endorse this. If people enjoy the content with leading saints definitely find the come follow me app very tell your helpful and encouraging that way. So I appreciate that as well. I think the other thought on here is we've taken a very specific approach in how we think about the content that we put up on the app and as well as some of the video contributors, et cetera that we have. We really are trying to reflect across section of the church in that audience. And we want everything to be doctrinally sound. But we also want it to feel like Sunday school. Not everything scripted, not everybody who you're going to see on the app. If you go to their social media page or something like that, are going to be looking like they came out of the first youth manual, for instance.

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Again, in that way, our church is incredibly decentralized of anybody can walk into Sunday school and as long as they're saying things that are doctrinally correct. They can share their thoughts and their ideas and contribute to the conversation. And contribute their perspective on the savior and on the gospel. And we've tried to follow that principle in our lives of it's not just

called authorities who are able to speak in class and share their ideas. It really is meant to be a cross section of the church, which by its nature is a pretty broad spectrum of perspectives and ideas. Yeah, for sure. Well, I encourage people like Evans and it's free on both iOS and Android and so might as well download it, play around with it, try it out for a while and I know it's benefited my study and experience and so check it out for sure. One component of this sort of dovetails into our greater conversation a day is this concept of questions. And as I go through those stories of each day, you always end with some type of question that hopefully propels people into a deeper study. And sometimes we have this feeling in the church that we want people to walk out of sacrament feeling like, oh, I learned so much today or walk out of Sunday school. Oh, I learned so much today. But I'd almost rather people walk out with more questions than answers, right? Because it's these questions that propel people into deeper study and understanding where they'll find more answers, but they'll be on a much deeper level that will last longer and strengthen their faith and testimony because of those questions that they maybe got from church or from an app or whatnot. And so is that sort of an I articulating your philosophy about using questions through the app? Yeah, I think that's exactly right. Basically everything in the app leads to a question that is meant to help the user think about how to apply what is being taught in their personal life. And if you step back and think about the church's come follow me program more broadly, that is perfectly aligned with how they approach it as well. If you read the come follow me manual, every little snippet, every devotional that they have in the manual ends with a question. It's all driving toward getting members of the church to think about how to apply the scriptures, not just be consumers of somebody telling you this is the answer. This is what you should think about this for about this doctrine. It's getting you to really engage in the process and think about how would I think about this doctrine or apply the scripture in my life? Yeah, that's awesome. So let's talk about you sent me a great outline around questions. Maybe I'm just curious in general is there some moment or experience that you've had in your life or maybe just your academic training that has led you to think more deeply about questions? Yeah. I think this probably comes from training initially in kind of strategy consulting. A lot of that is focused on setting up front before you get into doing any work, making sure you've got this framework to think about what are the important questions we need this work to answer. And then those questions really guide the work that you're going to go do and prioritize the work you're going to go do and give you a clear road map to know when the work is done or not based on whether you've answered the questions or not. And so I do think my focus on questions and my appreciation for the importance of questions does in large part come from that kind of professional training I've had. Yeah, that's awesome. So let's jump into this as far as the importance of asking good questions. And I think all of us especially as leaders we want to ask really thought provoking good questions. But where do we begin to understand what a good question is how to actually ask them? Yeah, well I've got a great great quote that I always go back to when I think about this, which actually I think Tony Robbins was the first one to say it, but in the quote is the quality of your life largely depends on the quality of your questions. And life actually isn't so much around getting the right answers to questions. It's about knowing what questions you want to focus your life on, finding the answers for. And you can think about two different people. One who's asking the question, the primary question of their life is, is how do I make the most money and have the most fun? And they may go and find the right answer to that question.

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And another person could say, how can I live my life so that I can use this time to become most like my heavenly father? And serve other people and develop price like love. That's a very different question. And they could also then go spend their life finding the answer to that question. Both people ultimately find the answer to their question, but their lives will look very, very different because of the question that they started with. And so I think questions good questions for a wife are aligned around what your ultimate goals for your life are. And our aligned with the bigger picture of what you're trying to accomplish in your life. Yeah. And so I imagine this is the case as you know in your day job as well. You walk into an organization who's looking for direction. And you've probably want to help them start formulating what those questions are. We typically in typical latter day saint experience, we're typically in a family where at church and whatnot. And so how do we begin to develop what those questions are that we know, yeah, this is the right question I should focus on, and it's going to lead me to the type of success or the result that we want. Yeah. I think that answer is probably going to be different for every person. But I think the broader principle just to focus on that, I always take away is that whatever leadership role you're playing within the church. You should make sure that you are asking a lot of questions. Whether you're a teacher in a class or the bishop, running a word counsel meeting. Your primary role in those settings is to actually be a question asker, not an answer giver. And you can think about the best classes you're ever in. They're usually focused on a teacher who's asking really good thought provoking questions that are leading that are eliciting really good input from the class. And the same for word counsel. The worst word counsel meetings and kind of against the council system of the churches is a bishop just saying, here's exactly what I want to do and just giving out assignments and not getting any input from the council members. But a bishop who's really doing their job or this could be true for release society president or primary president working with their presidencies is asking the right questions to elicit the best input from the group to inform that decision that you're trying to make. Yeah. So how do you use this? I'm curious in the context of your marriage and even in the context of engaging with your kids. Yeah. So there's another quote I really like which I think comes from Nietzsche. I think I'm saying that name, right? But it's marriage is just one long conversation. And that is, I didn't hear that statement until a couple of years ago. But what I heard it, it just rang true. And I wish I had heard that quote before getting married. Fortunately, I married somebody who I love having conversations with, but I feel like that criteria wasn't anywhere on my radar in picking a spouse, but now that I've been married for a while, I really appreciate how true that is. You want to marry somebody who you're going to enjoy talking to for the rest of your life. Because that is largely what marriage is is one long conversation. And at the end of the day, what is conversation other than asking each other questions or jointly exploring a question together? And so one way we do this in my heart is we do a lot of come follow me using the come follow on the app and everything that focuses on driving toward a

question. And so my wife and I almost every night, we're not a 100% perfect, but definitely more often than not. We'll go through the come follow me adults and teens devotional and spend that time talking with each other. And those are some of our best conversations throughout the day is just that structured way to engage on a really good gospel centered question. And the same thing goes with our kids. We do the come follow me kids devotional plan every morning with our kids and there's always good questions in there that we're able to discuss with our kids. But do this with our family in different ways. When my wife and I go on vacation, we almost always have a question or a couple different questions that we identify in advance of going on the vacation to make sure we spend that time discussing really important things. And it's often something related to our family or our kids, something we're trying to work on with our kids, et cetera. And we'll really think about those questions in advance and what do we want to focus our discussions on.

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But then also just with kids, I try and be thoughtful with the questions I ask my kids, you know, you can think about a common question and I definitely ask my kids this question a lot. How is your day? And you can predict in advance, what response you're going to get to that, which is my day was good. It was fine. And you're not really good at engage your kids that way. But a question I've actually been asking my kids a lot more lately, which I found to be really effective is what was the most exciting part of your day and why? Or what was the most challenging part of your day and why? And it doesn't work every time, but 9 times out of ten, I will get a much better response to that question. And they'll be much more eager to share because it's actually something they need to think about. It's not this question that they're used to getting. And so it's really causing them to think. And as they think, they then want to share. Yeah. And I think naturally, our brains just have these scripts that we go to just naturally as you walk into a new environment and someone says, how are you doing? And actually, say, I'm fine. Even though you may not be fine. Asking these questions that makes them breaks the script and makes them think and ponder and then that creates more engagement, right? Yeah. I love that my wife and I are about to leave out of town and I like that concept of having a question. Even the question may not be related to the activity or anything. But I can see that in the same context of award council or not just having a question that people can wrestle with or consider maybe even apart from the group. And then as they come back together, they have a deeper perspective and thought that they can actually share with the group. I think that's going back to an earlier question, you asked. I actually think that's a component of good questions as well, is giving people actually some time to think about it in advance. When I'm teaching a class, I often will say the question before I actually expect a response to it. So for instance, before reading a scripture with teach the young men now, before reading the scripture I'll say, hey, we're going to read the scripture. And here's the question I'm going to ask you when we're done with the

scripture. And I'll ask them the question just so that they can begin thinking about it as we're reading the scripture together. And then they've got more time to actually consider what their answer is. But as you think about a word counsel, that's the important reason to get the agenda out there advance is get those questions that you want input on from the members of the word council so that they can actually have time to think about it and pray about it in advance and come to the meeting with ideas as opposed to just getting put on the spot in the meeting where really what you're testing then or getting out there is how quickly can they think on their feet, which may not necessarily be the best answer that they can provide. Yeah. No, that's such a crucial principle. And I remember in a few contexts, I think Hank Smith was the first one that when I interviewed him, he talked about this concept of building in building in the silence and lesson plan. And so because sometimes a teacher may stand in front of a group and they ask a question and then they feel awkward when nobody responds, even though they'll wait in silence for ten, 15 seconds, then they leave that experience really frustrated like, man, why doesn't anybody want to contribute? When in reality, you haven't really given them the space to answer and respond. And I remember in a similar setting, when I served as bishop, I remember being frustrated after a few times of word counsel where I just wasn't getting much feedback from the ward council. And I mentioned it to the elder scorn president. I was serving with. And he said, well, that's because you've had all week to think about these questions. And you just throw this question as and we haven't even had time to process a good answer to respond with. And so you just need to give us more time to process. It was like this lightbulb moment of like, oh, if I give them space to consider it, then I'll get better answers. And you can do that. It doesn't have to be days and days. But even in the context of the class, just saying, hey, we're going to take two minutes, three minutes. Here's the question. Think about it, and then we'll come back and discuss it further. Yeah, I couldn't agree more. I do that all the time in classes where I'll ask the question and say, I don't want anybody to respond. Take two minutes. And I'll literally put a clock on it and make sure I'm really giving them two minutes to think about it. I think the other example of that that I think is the most ignored part of the lesson plans that the church puts out is that they actually specify in a lot of the lesson plans. The last 5 minutes of class shouldn't be the teacher wrapping up.

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The teacher should actually wrap up more than before the last 5 minutes of class. The last 5 minutes of class can often be best used by just letting people think and write and record their thoughts on their phone or in their notebook or whatever, what really stood out to them today and how are they going to put into practice? What was learned in the class and discussed in the class? And that chance for I forget what you said Hank Smith called it, but I loved it. That space for silence or whatever it is. I think is a really powerful tool in part because that's when the spirit can come in. You know, if we're always creating noise, there's no room for the spirit. That's still

small voice. Yeah. And the other beautiful thing about that concept is that as I've had opportunity to teach, maybe in a Sunday school setting, it removes a lot of the pressure from the teacher. You know, sometimes early on, I felt like I've got to study the Hebrew and Greek roots of all of these words and make sure that I come and present something that they can feast on and walk away saying I learned something. But instead it's like, no, I'm just going to come focus on what are the most powerful questions that I can present to the group, give them space to process those things, and then see what the spirit teaches them. And that's going to be more powerful than any research I could do Monday through Saturday at home. Yes. Yes. I think that's exactly right. So talk to me about anything else that we've missed as far as in the context of church especially for those Sunday school teachers out there or just any teacher in a ward that is striving to improve their lessons and whatnot. Any other concepts around questions that you would want to hit on? Yeah. Another one and you kind of touched on it there in your comment, but this is one of my favorite questions to ask myself. And again, I've stolen this from my professional work and applied it to the church, but it's this question of what does the user need? And what does the user want? Which is very different than what do I need or want? Because there's this principle in the business world that you aren't the user. The people who are often designing products and figuring out what a company is going to sell or do, et cetera aren't more often than not actually not reflective of the customer base that they're trying to sell that product to or market that product to. And so you constantly need to be getting yourself into different mindset of not what would I want, but what's actually going to resonate with our customer. And I think the exact same thing is true, whether again you're a bishop or at least society president or a teacher in a class, the idea of preparing for that class or preparing for what you're going to be focused on is a bishop or whatever isn't what would I want to bishop to do or what would I want a teacher to do in this class? It's more what are what is my audience? What are my word members? What are my class members? What are my members of my release society? What do they need from me right now? What do they need from the spirit right now? And separating those two things because you can as a teacher often get caught up of like, oh, here's all these really interesting factoids that I learned in my study this week. And for a nerd like me, you know, I can easily go down that rabbit hole of like, you know, here's all these deep doctrinal points, et cetera, but that's not I teach the teachers quorum right now. It's not what the teachers need. They just need to get a real appreciation for the basics and those fundamental doctrinal truths. That's what they and they need to see how is the gospel going to bless them in their life and help them be happier and more successful at school and more successful in their family relationships and all the type of stuff. That's what they need. And so always keeping that in mind of what does the user need? What does my audience need here? Not what do I naturally want to share that I would find most interesting? Yeah. You know, this is such a powerful question. And one that I can see, it can be so powerful for award counsel to just sit with this question and think about it. Because oftentimes, it's so easy to jump in and fill in that the answer to that question as far as why do people come to church? Why do the users or the members of our ward show up on Sundays? And naturally, we think, oh, that's because they want this deep relationship with Jesus Christ. They want to renew their covenants. They want to participate in ordinances, whatnot. And I would guess that some of them actually come because they're just they just want some community. They want to see their friends. They just want to see their friends and feel exactly, you know? At the end of the day, most of us don't have to worry about

food and shelter and physical safety and so on the hierarchy of needs. Our next one down is like, we just, we just want to feel loved. And yeah, I mean, the covenants and the testimony and all that type of stuff come with that.

00:40:03 - 00:45:05

But I couldn't agree more. You know, what's the most common need people have walking in the Sunday schools to feel the spirit to feel a little peace and hope? And to feel loved and that people care about. Yeah. And that's just one example. Today we don't want community. Maybe they want something else, but you really don't know until you create a system or a way of finding that out. How many members have you sat down and said, just honestly, give me an honest answer. Why do you come on Sundays? What is it or going to that or go to the other family who's not coming and saying, hey, I'm not here to convince you one way or the other. I just want to know, why don't you come on Sunday? What do you hoping would be a church that's not there that doesn't get you out of bed on Sunday, right? I mean, such a powerful question. Yeah. And you put these in your outline in the context of four examples of good questions. And these are just good either thought provoking questions that can really lead to more inspiration and guidance. One of those being, what does the user need? What other questions should we hit on there? Yeah. Probably my favorite question, which is, actually, I use all the time in my life, whether my professional life, my family, life, my church life, et cetera, is how would I rather be wrong? I think this is, I can't remember who said this to me first. But it just one of those things that I immediately ate up and it just became part of me. And it is a tool that I use all the time that the principal behind it is when we make decisions, we never have absolute certainty around whether we're going to be right or wrong in that decision. And so we need to think about the consequences of being right and being wrong in any decision that we make. And so and oftentimes thinking, how would I rather be wrong because you're usually picking between two things and choosing one could be you could be wrong for a B and C reasons or if you chose the other one, you could be wrong for D and F reasons. And which of those would you rather pick based on what would happen if you were wrong? And I think if, you know, in the church context, this is most demonstrated for me. As I think about my fear, potentially of reaching out to somebody, whether sharing the gospel or checking in on them if I think something might be wrong or just going up and talking to somebody who's sitting by themselves in church. I have this fear in part because of my personality if, well, what if I'm just annoying them? They just want some peace and quiet right now. Sure, this bad thing happened to them, but they don't want to be bug right now. They just want to be in their house alone and just working through it by themselves. And or in sharing the gospel, like maybe they don't aren't going to be interested in the gospel and I think that's true more often than not. But they're going to be offended if I share it with them. And but at the same time, if you make the decision not to reach out to those people or not to share the gospel or not to go up and talk to them, there's a chance that you're wrong

that they really did want you to reach out and you ignored that prompting to do it. And if I had to choose between those two possible ways that I could be wrong, I would much rather error on I reached out and annoyed them. Then I didn't reach out at all and they really needed me to. And I think that's a really helpful way to think through those decisions. Again, whether you're a leader of an organization or a minister, we're all ministers and I know as we think about those assignments, that's often something that comes up like, do they really want me going over to their house and bugging them on a Sunday afternoon? And aren't I just creating more trouble than I'm worth? What am I going to share with them that's all that helpful? Well, there are those families that an individuals who really need that. And when you rather accidentally bug somebody out of good intention, then to not be there for them when they really needed you. Yeah. Yeah, that's so powerful. And I think it just removes for those individuals who are maybe more risk averse. It's just like, well, there's still risk and you not doing something. You might as well recognize that and say, I'm either going to take this risk and not do something or take a different risk, which has a higher payoff if I'm wrong. That direction. Every decision or indecision has risk. Everything has risk. And it's really thinking through which risk would you rather take? Yeah, love it. All right. The next question you have here is where am I giving my best self? How do you employ this one? Yeah, so this question directly led to the creation of the app in the first place.

00:45:08 - 00:50:06

Here I was, you know, I was working at being capital, progressing up through the ranks a fairly high powered career, professional, doing really well at work. And in my family, we were failing at scripture study. And that, to me, just wasn't an acceptable outcome. If I had that same situation at work, I would have been up late at night, burning the midnight oil, trying to figure out how to solve that problem. And that disconnect for me was really caused me a lot of concern and issues. And it really was what got me down the road of investing the time and the resources to create something that would really work for my family. Obviously, my hope is, most people most people have to do that. We've now built a tool, but I think this framework of are you being really successful in one area of your life? Potentially at the expense or maybe not at the expense, but just your prioritizing one area of your life over another area of your life in an unbalanced way. And I think it this manifests itself most for me. I've served in a couple of different bishoprics. And I think where I've gotten most in trouble here is the hours I'm giving to my calling. How much of that time is spent in administration versus ministry to people? And oftentimes the things that will come at the top of the priority list is making sure we're ready for sacrament meeting and the meetings that are supposed to be happening are happening in the assignments are being given. And there's very little time at the end of the day left to actually go into people's homes, go say hi to people in the hallway at church, et cetera and again, just show that love and kindness. And so I think it's helpful for leaders of the church and thinking through that of in the time and in the

energy and capacity they're giving to their callings, are they appropriately balancing it between all of the responsibilities that they have in those callings? Or I think is oftentimes the case letting the administrative part of the calling eat up all their the most important hours of their day effectively. And whatever is left goes to the actual ministry and the showing of the Christ like love. Man, this is such a powerful question, but when I could probably do several episodes all about, because there's this, I just recognized my own self. The way I serve as a bishop in the church is different to how I serve now as not a bishop of the church. And I often catch people off guard by saying leaders have it easy, because in that premise alone, what do you mean leaders have it easy? They've got so much to do. I'm like, that's exactly why they have it easy because it is handed to them on a platter saying here is everything you need to do as bishop. You have these meeting night, all these appointments. You've got to organize Sunday meetings, sacro meeting. And so you can feel like, well, I'm really giving my best self because naturally these responsibilities have come to me because of the title I have for the calling. I'm in, but it's when you're outside of those callings that you have to really push yourself and say, okay, am I going to give my best self even though I don't have the title of the office, the responsibilities, and that's as I get in that frame of mind, it really pushes me through that apathy that naturally comes of, I'm just here, I'm happy to help her I can, but no, I'm going to be engaged. I'm going to an administer. I'm going to do these things because that is I want my best self to show up at church, not necessarily that my 9 to 5 job. Right. Right. Yeah. It was a really powerful, powerful question. All right, then we've talked about what does the user need and then how would my view change if I knew another person was acting rationally? And I had and had good intentions. Yeah, so a little bit more of a tongue twister, but you know, I think about this question a lot. Anytime there's relationship conflict, whether that's in at home at work or oftentimes, unfortunately at church. And to focus in on an example there, I'm a defender of the faith for sure. My going back to the how would I rather be wrong? I'd rather trust every word coming out of the profits mouth and occasionally be wrong in trusting him because he got something wrong than to question every word coming out of the profits mouth and occasionally be right in questioning that.

00:50:07 - 00:55:02

I'm a defender of the faith and definitely error on trusting our leaders and following their guidance. And so when people raise concerns or critiques of the church, my natural inclination is to fight and defend. The church. But oftentimes, we know that that just leads to angry words being exchanged and hurt feelings and all that type of stuff. And what I've realized over time is when people raise concerns, raise objections. They're not doing it because they have ill intent. And they're not doing it because they're irrational. They're doing it actually out of place of love and concern. And usually they're dealing with some sort of moral dissonance that they're feeling between things that they really believe that are true. And other things that they're confused by

that they feel within themselves are in conflict. And so I think if you as a leader or anybody kind of responding in that situation, can put yourself in the mindset of this person's actually coming from a place of good intent and a place of sincerity and that that is almost always the case. So often the case that you should just assume that it is always the case. That the mindset you have in responding and trying to help that person is going to be very, very different. I think another example where this is maybe easier to see and then you can draw the analogy from it is politics. Whether you're on the right or the left, we often get trapped in this thinking that like, oh, well, Republicans don't care about the poor or Democrats don't care about individual freedom and liberty. The reality is both of both groups care about the poor. And both groups care about individual liberty. And protection property rights are already both care about having a good economy and good healthcare and all that type of stuff. They just approach it from different angles. And they think they disagree on the policies necessary to achieve those outcomes. But their inherent goals and desires for society are the exact same, almost all the time. And but I think we forget that when we get into this kind of us versus them, it's actually all of us. We're all going for the same goal of we want a happy, healthy productive society. We maybe have different views around how to best get there. But we share the share the same goals and desires. And anyway, I think that's often true at church as well as we deal with these more complex and potentially confrontational or challenging topics. Just remembering that everybody in this discussion is coming from a good place. They may have different perspectives on what the right answer is. But they're all coming from a good place on it. Yeah. And this is almost like a skill set where you have to just train yourself to take that deep breath and say, all right, brain. Let me tell you what's actually going on here. I don't know, I'd love to ask God someday about why he gave us this program function here. We fill in the gaps of maybe we observe a situation that involves us and we feel jaded a little bit by it. And so then we fill in the gaps of well, the reason this happened is because this person hates me, and they secretly want to kill me. It seems like our brain defaults to the worst case scenario about this other person. But when we just take a deep breath and say, well, actually, let's live in a world where they're actually a fully rational person who has the best intentions, then what would that story look like? Then fill in the gaps. Then it's like, oh, they were just having a bad day or they missed this detail. And all is well. And we can move forward and not create more drama in our lives that we don't need. Yeah, and I mean, this is a good, a lot of these questions that we've talked about today are my favorite questions because I need them. Because if I'm not asking myself these questions, I go down a really unproductive path. And this is a perfect example of that. Of I almost never enable. I mean, hopefully, one day I get to this point where I've got the self discipline of in that first discussion with somebody, I can I don't go down that rabbit hole of like, oh, they hate me in there, you know, totally irrational and just, you know, I'm just super frustrated with them. It's often after the first discussion that doesn't go very well. And I'm like feeling really heated and upset and I can actually finally get to the place of like, okay, I'm not reacting in a Christ like way to this. Let's step back. Let's ask myself this question of okay.

What if this person said all the same things that they said, but they were saying that for a completely rational reason and are coming from a place of good intent. Okay, I can get myself in that mindset. Now I can begin to see their side a little bit and I can go back and engage with them in a much more constructive and way. But I almost never do that well, the first time around. This is more a way to salvage it the second time. Yep, for sure. And I get a lot of messages and emails from individuals who really struggle with the leaders of the reward. Or they are a leader, but another leader on the word council that they feel like is always after them or is always frustrating them. And this is just a good exercise to say, let's just assume that the bishop isn't evil. And he's not necessarily prideful or a narcissist. He's just acting with the life experience he has with the best intentions and this is what comes out bless his heart. And now we can love him and serve him for who he is and where he's at in life. Yeah, exactly. This question is as important, if not more important for the followers than it is for the leaders. The bishop or again, the release society president or your elders corporator or something, does something and it's frustrating and you just don't understand why they did or said that thing. But getting yourself in the mindset of the rational, they're trying to come at this from a good intent and maybe they made a mistake, but they're trying to do the best they possibly can. And having that mindset, I think changes your perspective very quickly. Well, then this has been enlightening and helpful both in the context of come follow me and this concept of questions. And I love connecting with individuals like yourself and other third party nonprofit organizations. I don't think a lot of the lay membership of the church realizes how many of us are out there who run these third party organizations. There's a whole list that I could go down that are doing phenomenal works in their own corners. We're tackling the leadership angle of it. You're tackling the scripture study income following me angle of it. And I just, in my mind, I just want to have this little group of Avengers that comes together. You know, there were battling for the church and maybe unofficial capacities, but it's still important work and we need to do it. And so I can't stress enough for people to go check out the come follow me app that is part of the come follow me, foundation, go to their website, come follow me foundation dot org, donate, check out what they're doing, use their app, share their app. I guess I did all the plugging there for you. But anything you would add if there's anywhere to send people to check out what you're doing. Yeah, just either come follow me foundation dot org is our website or just go to the iOS App Store or the Google Play Store and just type income follow me in and it'll be the first thing that comes up. But yeah, I hope you enjoy it. Thank you so much for your time today. And so grateful for what you're doing as well. I agree. We as third party organizations trying to support the church can do a better job coordinating our efforts and syncing up because there really is a lot of great stuff going on out there. All from this desire of just trying to help members in different ways. Thank you. So the last question I have for you Evan is whether you think about it in this context or not. Your own leadership journey of the come follow me foundation and the good work you're doing and I bet there's been discouragement and adversity along the way, but how has this path of leadership in your own life helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ? Man, that's a good question. So I mean, first and foremost, it's gotten me in the scriptures a whole lot more. I still write a lot of the content that goes into the app. And it's been a huge blossom in my life to spend that time in the scriptures trying to put together material that's going

to help other people. And so I think that's probably the biggest way. The second is it has brought my family much closer together. And it's been a huge, huge blessing in my own family. You know, the third that has been really interesting to me is this was my baby. I care deeply about this. But it's gotten big enough now and again, I don't get any money from this at all. I have a full-time job, other commitments provide for my family, et cetera. And so I've had to hand more and more of the responsibility off to others. And not that I compare myself at all, but it is it has given me a little bit of a sense more so than even other things I've done professionally of this handing off responsibility to somebody else that you trust to really lead something that you really care about.

01:00:10 - 01:01:51

And I think I got a sense of that related to what heavenly father and Jesus much must feel when they give us responsibilities to take callings at church. We are stepping in on their behalf to do work that they can't do on their own because they're not physically here with us. And it's giving me a little sense of the anxiety they must feel sometimes as well as the gratitude they feel for the work we're all doing, trying to advance their mission. And now that you've listened to this episode, go check out our top ten most popular episodes by searching T ten in the search bar. And be sure to subscribe to our weekly email leadership message by going to leading saint dot org slash subscribe or text the word lead to four 747 four 7. It came as a result of the position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when the declaration was made, concerning the all and only true and living church upon the face of the earth. We were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we can not shrink nor run away. And to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.