



Teach Them Their Identity | An Interview with Elaine Dalton

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00:00:04 - 00:05:08

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the cruise and are hoping to hear all of those interviews or maybe missed one live or whatnot, we'll make sure we get those to you. But let's jump into this fantastic interview with sister Elaine Dalton. It's been a few years since she was the young women's general president. And so here's a brief bio about her. He laying down was born and raised in Ogden Utah. She received her bachelor's degree in English from Brigham young university. Sister Dalton married Stephen E Dalton in the Salt Lake temple. They are parents of 5 sons and one daughter and grandparents of 16 grandchildren. Sister Dalton enjoys running and hiking with her family and dancing with her granddaughters. She loves to read, especially the scriptures and she loves the lord. She has a deep admiration for the young women around the world and firmly believes that one virtuous young woman led by the spirit can change the world. His sister leaned on was the young women's general president from 2008 to 2013. So here is my interview with sister Elaine Dalton. So we are on this beautiful cruise ship for the Holland America and we have some remarkable speakers here, some remarkable guests who are on board here with us. And he laying down on the speaking circuit with me on the ship. It's been pretty fun, right? I am and it has been. I've enjoyed every second of it. Absolutely. I mean, people. Great people. And we are docked out here in the ocean just outside of Cabo San Lucas and in Mexico. So this is the most unique recording location I've had in my time. But when I'll take every time. Isn't it kind of like a dream? It is. I know. Awesome. We'll just wake up and wonder if this interview ever happened. So Elaine give us some of your general background like where you're from, your early faith development that those types of things? Well, I'm originally from Ogden, Utah. I was born and raised there in a home on 20th street. My father passed away when my mother was 45 and I was 18. And I had two younger brothers and myself and my mother went back to work, teaching school and raised us, I went to Ogden high school and then from there I went to a year of Weber college and then transferred to BYU, where I met my wonderful husband, Steven, and he's here.

00:05:09 - 00:10:04

Nice. And then we moved to California. I graduated from BYU and Steve did as well. We were dorm parents for 76 girls on campus. Maybe a foreshadowing of what was to come. I don't know. We moved to California, my husband got his MBA at UCLA and got a job with an international company who transferred us to Salt Lake City, Utah. Wow. And we have been there ever since. We've had a family of 6 children, 5 boys and one girl. And a beautiful life. And when I was called to be the general young women president, people would say, well, what qualifies you? Because you've got 5 boys and only one girl. And I said, I know all of boy secrets. So I think that's why. So early on, obviously, losing your father a young age and your mother raising you was how would you describe the dynamics of faith in your home and how you were how your testimony was nurtured in those early years? Well, our home was always a faith filled home. My father was the bishop for as long as I could remember. Those were the days when men were called to be bishops for a long time. And I remember sitting in the congregation just

longing to be able to sit with my father who was always sitting on the stand. So our home was always one of faith and dedication to the lord. We live next door to my grandparents. And so it was just kind of a one big, happy, happy family. When my father passed away, I remember very distinctly my mother gathering myself and my two brothers together and telling us that in order for us to make it now as a family without our father, we were going to have to work together and be totally reliant on the lord. I'll never forget that. And we had kind of an oval rug in our living room in front of the fireplace. And so every morning and every evening, we knelt together as a little family and prayed and asked our heavenly father to be with us and to help us to make our way in the world without our father. And so those were those who were really formative defining times because I totally and my brothers and my mom, we totally relied on the lord. And felt very close to him. And that's so we've just had that presence. I've had that presence in my life always. And I know he's here. I know he's close now. I know he hears an answer's prayers from just a little child. I knew that. Yeah. We are all familiar with you from your time in that general presence with young women. What was church life and callings like before that opportunity came to your life? Well, church cipher and colleagues were just like what everyone else has. You know, my husband was called early into a bishopric at Brigham young university while we were serving his dorm parents. That's where I had my first son. And that's when I realized I remember saying to Steve, why do three men have to sit on the stand when there's one struggling or two struggling women with children in the audience? Why can't just one take charge? That's when I got taught about priesthood. And presiding. And I don't know if it's just I've probably always worked with the youth. Not necessarily with the young women. I was mostly a Sunday school teacher for what everyone called the rowdy, the rowdy boys of our world. And those rowdy naughty boys, I went over, you know, you can always win over that boys with food. And donuts were my secret. They had gone out the window on every teacher that ever had. And those boys now are bishop state presidents and mission presidents. Very proud of my boys. The donuts worked. They donuts work. That's awesome. What colleagues led up to as we sit and watch general conference, suddenly we hear these names and these people even fill those seats, but we don't really always hear how they got to that list of names that they selected from. I believe were you in the general relief study pregnancy before? No. No, I wasn't actually my husband was called to be a part he was a singles word bishop first. And I remember sitting in, we had three relief societies in that ward.

00:10:04 - 00:15:13

And I remember sitting in those relief societies, he called me to be the adviser to the relief society, which I said, that's not in the handbook. That's just a bogus calling. But it was actually a very inspired calling because I believe those young adult women or who prepared me for when I did get my calling. My husband then served in a state presidency of a married adult married young adult ward. And again, I was just as I attended. I was just tutored. The first thing I realized

when I was going to work on a general level, I got called by the general young women presidency to come in for a focus group. And shortly after that time, I got a call from elder hails office. An elder hails called my husband and myself in. We didn't know why. That's always fun. Yeah, my husband was sitting in the foyer with the coldest hands I've ever felt in my life and mentally selling all our positions. And when we got into elder hill's office, he said, just brother Dalton, you can relax. This is a calling for sister Dalton. And I was then called to be on the young women general board. And from that, from that place, I served with Margaret Nadal, was the president. I served for 5 years there, then when she was released, Susan Tanner was called to be the president of the young women, and she called me to be her second counselor. Julie Beck was the first counselor when she was called to be the relief society president, then I moved up to first counselor, and then when Susan was released, I couldn't believe it because I'd been serving for so long by that time. I'd been serving on a general level for ten years. And when Susan was released, I thought they probably wanted to get on. But president monson became the prophet. And I was the first calling that he made shortly after he was set apart as a prophet and sustained as a prophet to be the next general young woman president. So that's the history. That's the history. It's crazy. So I have actually had the privilege of serving on a general level in the church for 16 years. And I'm so grateful for that tutoring that I've had. Those experiences. And so going into that calling is the general gen woman's presidency. There's almost to some extent to have the opportunity to walk into a calling that maybe were a little bit intimidated by. We don't know maybe how to approach it so we feel like we're faking it for a while until we find our footing. Any advice that you'd have just looking back on that experience or maybe you can talk about that experience of just starting that calling, where did you begin to lead in that context? Well, you know, I think the lord was really good to me because he did take it slowly. He tutored me slowly. Some of his children he has to work harder on than others. And I was one of those. And so I kind of learned along the way when I was called by president monson. He said this. Now the lord has called you. And I want you to go home and speak with him and find out why he did and what you're supposed to do. And I remember, and Benny said, come back and let's talk. And I remember very clearly petitioning the lord to help me understand what it was I was supposed to do. And my husband and I were together when it all happened and it was like a floodgate wasn't it, Steve, he's here, and he is shaking his head, yes. I knew exactly after a period of about three hours of just exactly what the lord wanted me to do what he wanted to accomplish for the young women and even in time frames. And in a certain order, everything had to happen. Yeah. It was quite miraculous. And so I didn't flounder too much because I knew for sure what I had been called and what I needed to do. Which was wonderful. Yeah. And tell me about the process of calling counselors because typically when you're called an award setting, you sort of have an idea of your restricted to that word boundaries. But you could probably call anybody in the world who was the latter. Okay, that's what president wants and told me. He said, okay, now that you know what to do, I will get you pray and whoever you want for a counselor, I will call anyone in the world. To be your counselor. And so again, I went to the temple and I prayed about that and clear as a bill, it was I could see a long haul and at the end of the hall, I could see two women.

00:15:15 - 00:20:03

And one of those women was Mary Cook. And the other one was and which I was like, I don't want to see and dip. She's President Monson's daughter. How can that be? You know, prayers President Moss has given everything he has to the church and now I'm saying I want your daughter. And I really, really struggled with that. And to the point where when I was supposed to, he told me to write the names down on a piece of paper and then bring it to his office. And so I made about four attempts to go to his office with that envelope and just couldn't do it. I was just scared. I just thought, how can I ask for this? But finally, I did go to his office and I was actually very relieved that he was not there. But I left the envelope with his secretary. And then I didn't hear for several days. And I kind of agonized about that, but he in the meantime had called those two women to be my counselors, which turned out to be the greatest blessing. Do you remember did he ever comment on his calling his daughter? Never said a word. He never said a word. Isn't that interesting? Well, we all experience just her love and dedication to that calling. I can still think of many of her conference talks and so she turned out to be a great choice. I'm glad you followed me. She was a great choice and she actually, I think she had prophetic genes as well. She was a very, very good account counselor to me. She counseled me. She had, of course, observed church protocol and how things are done properly for all her whole life. And I of course hadn't. And so she counseled me in very wise ways about what to do and how to navigate and how to get things done, which was a great blessing. That's great. So tell me about if you're in front of a brand new young woman's president and award. With the hindsight of that calling and experience there, the 16 years you talked about on those general levels, where would you encourage it, brand new young women's president to start as far as in their leadership calling? Personally, or as their leader leading the young women. Yeah, personally, they're looking for any advice that you might have in that role. Well, first of all, I think I'd want that brand new young women president to know that she was called and chosen by the Lord. And prepared and that she has a unique contribution to make to the young women that she's leading. I would want her to know that. And if she were to ask me what I should, what would I teach these young women? What's the most important thing for them to learn and know? I would say teach them their identity, help them truly understand their identity that they are really daughters of God. Because I believe that once a young woman, a young man, anyone, understands who they truly are. That takes care of every other decision. And for some reason, as a young girl, I kind of knew that. And so when my friends were at parties and they were making choices that weren't right, they were offering me a drink of liquor or whatever I would just say that's not who I am. No, thank you. I made a decision a long time ago. That's just not what I do. And I was very confident about that. And I think that's partly due to my parents and my grandparents influence in my life. So I would say to a young woman president teach identity identity who you are. Yeah. And is there any further advice as far as the how of doing that? Because I think we try and stand up in front of that group of young women and say, you are a child of God, you are a daughter of God. You repeat the young woman values and whatnot. And any other advice as far as how to really drill in that identity to this young generation. Okay, here's my thinking. Of course, you know that I'm the young woman president that introduced a new value to personal progress. And that value was virtue. And by virtue, there are a lot of good

adjectives that come out of the word virtue, but by the virtue I meant was the one in one 21 doctrine and covenants one 21 where it says let virtue garnish that I thought unceasingly. And you go down to the little number that it describes in its sexual purity.

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It's chastity. And so that value, that value was critical for the young women to qualify to have the constant companionship of a member of the godhead. And so we always talked about a return to virtue, because using the word return includes the savior's atonement who makes it possible when we make mistakes that we can change. We can return. And so virtue is absolutely key to having the constant companionship of a member of the godhead. And when a young woman has that the holy ghost will actually teach and witness to her who she is, that's how it happens. And so I would say to a young woman president, put these young women in places where they can feel the spirit where the spirit is present. That's why camp is such a huge priority for me or was when I was young women general president because that's a place where I magic happens. That's a place where you can be still. You can get away from the world. A young woman can drop all the all the things that are distractions and she can actually feel the spirit and have the spirit teach her who she is. Yeah, that's powerful. Anything else I want to make sure I don't move past this context too fast as far as any other advice that you would give to a brand new young woman's president to help him out. Anything else come to mind. Yeah, that's true. You know, the power of prayer. I think we forget how powerful prayer is. And as a young woman president myself and as a Laurel leader myself, I would worry about young some of the young women that were in my class. I would see them making choices that weren't consistent with who they were. And I can testify to you that we can't force anyone, but you pray for someone by name, day after day after day and petition the lord. And the power of prayer is huge for a young woman. And I've experienced I mean, I had one girl who was a Laurel that I couldn't reach. I'd go to her house and I'd hear her mom say or her say to her mom in the background. Tell that woman I'm not here. And she just did not want to even see me and yet I prayed and prayed and prayed for her. After I was called to be the general president, I went to the temple for years go by, you know, and you worry about that girl. And you see her making choices that just seem like they're just on a spiral, clear to the bottom. And years go by, I'm in the temple for a temple wedding, and I'm sitting there waiting for the officiator come in. I look across from me and there's that girl. There she is one of my girls. She's sitting there in the temple. And I did what I should not have done, but I went, what are you doing here? Kind of, you know, like, wow, and she just smiled this biggest smile at me and she just sat there and after the wedding I went over to her and I gave her a big hug and I said, tell me what's happened and tell me how you got to this place and what's the secret because I'm still a leader of young women. What can I tell the leaders? And she said to me, something I'll never forget. She said, oh, sister don't tell them, never, never give up. Never give up. And so years later, those prayers work and the lord used

other women that she had come in contact with to make connections with her until he got her right back where we all wanted her. And it took it took a whole community, but it happened. So prayer's powerful prayer is very powerful. And I love that story because it can feel like we're in these callings for just a blip of time that seems and you wonder even make a difference. And you worry that you didn't see any progress and maybe it was just a waste of my time or I'm glad it's behind me. But over time, that's just how God works. The largest due time, can I tell you one more story? Please do. So when I was in my calling, I traveled to Freetown, Freetown in Africa. And there was a young woman that the priesthood leaders wanted me to go meet with and Steve and I went through these little alleyways and into the most desperate of circumstances into the smallest little tin home I've ever seen. Walked in and it was clear this young woman was in trouble.

00:25:03 - 00:30:02

And that a lot of horrible things had occurred in her life. And I've never felt it was just the young woman and her mother. I've never felt that kind of despair in my life. And I sat there and spoke with them and did everything I thought I could. And at the end of that session together, I invited them to come to church because I knew that the gospel of Jesus Christ was their only hope. Out of the situation that they were in. And I invited them to come to a meeting that evening where I was going to be speaking. And so that evening, I got to the meeting and all the people gathered, but the mother and her daughter weren't there. And it was clear to me that that wasn't going to happen. And I was so upset about that because I was so worried about that girl. But about part way through the meeting, here they came, walking into the back door of that chapel with their headdresses on. They looked so regal, they look like two queens had just walked in the door and they smiled from ear to ear at me. And after that meeting, we embraced and we spoke and I knew the next morning I was going to fly away to Salt Lake City, Utah and never see her again and just prayed. That somehow something had happened that would keep her coming to the church and that those leaders would grab a hold of that girl who wasn't the most appealing girl to grab ahold of at that time. I prayed for her. I have prayed for her every day for lots and lots of years. Ever since I met her and tell about four months ago and four months ago, my husband and I were sitting and I never knew what happened to her, but I prayed for her. My husband and I were sitting at the kitchen table, we were looking through the church news. My husband turned a page, and he said, do you see what I see? And I said, no, what? There was a picture of a bunch of relief society women from Africa from Freetown Africa and he said, look who's on the end. I'm there, she was. Ten years later, 20 years old, the most beautiful, shiny, young woman, and it was her. And it was such a tender mercy of the lord to just let my husband point out there's there she is. She's with the relief society women now. She's gonna be okay. In other words, have my father said, you can quit bothering me about her. She's okay now. But what a tender mercy that was after years and years of praying for that girl. It works. And it's such a

sweet basic principle that sometimes we imagine a new young woman's president gets into this role. And she wants to have the most epic girls camp in the most epic Sunday lessons and do everything just right. But at the end of the day, it's like the moment of her just kneeling down and praying for each one of those girls and even after the time they're released. That's really where leadership resides and you're doing good enough just doing that, right? I think so. And I think sometimes we get so caught up in the epicness of the activity that we forget that it's not about that. It's about this precious young woman. It's one on one. It's really one on one. And sometimes I think we do things wonderful so people will think that oh, we're wonderful, but it's not how it's not how it should be. We do things the way the lord wants them done. So people will say, isn't he wonderful? Yeah. Yeah, so true. And dove telling off that sweet story traveling internationally, what perspective did you gain as far as the young woman around the world or the church in general, just by traveling into these different places and seeing the church function and such diverse locations? The bottom line perspective that I gained is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only hope for this world. It really is, and I watched because I would go to countries multiple times different years. I could see when someone became a member of the church. I could watch them rise. You can literally see a physical difference in people. And then you could see as they began to act in faith and pay their tithing and so on. You could actually see a difference in the prosperity level that they were experiencing. So I guess I would say that the hope of the world is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ and his infinite atonement once people get that message.

00:30:03 - 00:35:01

There's no stopping them. Yeah. I love that. You mentioned a little bit, but as far as girls camp goes, this is such this tradition, the strong tradition we have in our faith and in every summer it can be daunting for a lot of young women. Okay, here we go again. Let's see what we can do. And you want to, you hope and pray that the girls have such a remarkable sanctifying experience there. You put that on your shoulder on these young women's presence and be overwhelming. So what general incites do you have about girls camp and that experience that you haven't talked about yet? Well, you know, I think girls camp is a ton of work. And I don't like the spa kind of girls camps. That's not where I reside. I feel like a girl in packing up her backpack and having her tent and sleeping in a sleeping bag and learning how to cook over a fire and with a Dutch oven. Is actually preparedness temporal preparedness. I think it also allows a young woman to experience to kind of set up a mini home. And she does that with she sets up her campsite and I also think it takes a young woman out of her comfort zone. And I think any time we're taken out of our comfort zone, we're stretched a little tightly that all of a sudden we realize we can't do everything on our own. Even just a hike a backpack or whatever, I think it helps us realize that we are totally dependent on the lord. And so and I think it also helps us just drop the worldly things, you know, you find that you're out in the wilderness for a

couple of days and really it doesn't really matter what your hair looks like. And you don't even think about putting on lipstick anymore. And it's very freeing for a young woman because they're trying to live, they're trying to look like they think they're supposed to look to be beautiful, but what happens is they discover how beautiful they truly have been made by our heavenly father. And isn't it true? I've traveled all over the world and I've never met a young woman who's not attractive. And especially attractive when they glow with the holy ghost. They're just beautiful young women. Uniquely made because they each have a unique divine contribution to make. And so even the way our bodies are made are the size we are the heights we are, the color of our hair the way we smile. The lord has made us individually so that we can our bodies can actually help us fulfill that individual mission. What is the world tell us? Oh, we all have to look a certain way, you know. And so I think just getting away from that message for a bit is very freeing and very enlightening to most young women. Yeah. Yeah, just really keeping it simple. Creating new experiences in nature and not high expectations and those things can go a long way. And tying in the scriptures and just quiet time, yeah. Yeah, really helpful. Anything else about girls can't even know that's right. I love girls camp. I just love it. I loved it. You know, we have 5 boys and one girl and so we did a lot of boy things, but I can't think of anything I love more than camping in the outdoors under the stars being in nature. I was talking with someone just today on this cruise about the fact that perhaps there's so much anxiety in the world today because we've lost touch with the earth. Then maybe we need to all go walk and put our toes in the sand and sit in the sun and stare up at the stars a little bit more because we're inside we're looking at screens all the time. And I think it does something crazy to our inner soul. Yeah. Yeah, for sure. What about speaking in general conferences, had many opportunities to do that? I often, a lot of experience even speaking in general, but sometimes I wonder how do those people get their legs to actually walk up to that lectern and without falling over. But what stories come to mind as far as your experience speaking in general conference? Well, the first one is my husband. I remember when I gave my first talk in general conference. I got to the conference center and he said now don't be afraid. There's only 9 million people that will hear this and be sure when you walk down the stairs to the pulpit don't trip. So I was enormous right, but here's what I've learned. Faith and fear can not exist in the same place at the same time.

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And something happens when you stand up from that red chair, you know you've prepared you prepare to talk and it's interesting because you prepare a talk and then you have to fit it into a certain time frame, which means you cut and you cut and you cut. And you change vocabulary words because some words you may use don't translate correctly in a different language and there are so many languages. And so you'll change even wording in your talk. And you get it to fit into this specific time frame. And by the time you do that, you don't even recognize your talk. And I didn't even even know if my talks would make sense. Because I felt like I'd had to cut the

heart and soul out of those talks, but I tell you that the minute you stand and you walk to the pulpit, something else takes over. And I remember the first time that I did that, as I was walking to the pulpit to give my talk, all the brother in the 12 were right there on the stand and they all were like, they put their thumbs up and just give me this big thumbs up and when you get a thumbs up from the profit. Yeah. You try really hard. You were really good job. That's awesome. Anything else? It's interesting to hear just the cutting process editing process. Some of these things, anything else as far as the process of preparing, I would imagine you know coming up to a general conference with a good amount of time that you're going to be up to do this. Anything as far as the revelation that came or developing the topic and the focus that can be worth mentioning. But what happens is you get a letter a formal letter and you open and you see opposite the first presidency on the envelope, you open that up, and it says dear sister Dalton. You will be speaking in this session. It doesn't say, would you like to be speaking in this? And it's not a matter of agency, is it? Because when we accepted the call that was already part of it. You will be speaking, you will follow so and so and you will have 12 minutes to speak. May you be blessed in your preparation sincerely. And then it's hand signed by the three members of the first presidency. So there's no topic assigned. It's just may you be blessed in your preparation. And that is where the work begins and that is work. And there were times when I would write 16 talks on stardom and then just dwindle out. They were I couldn't, and then it started another one and then dwindle out. And I'd read to Steve and hit sale, that's terrible. And I was like, no, don't tell me that. And then finally, finally, and some talks would come line upon line. They were hard talks. And then others that I gave just fell out of heaven. They just came like in a stream. And so some were easy, some were hard. I remember my first talk as a young women general president when I gave that I return to virtue. That literally fell out of heaven. That talk, someone said, that talk must you must have written that talk in the pre mortal life and somehow you were able to find the file folder that that was in. Because it came so quickly. Others took a lot of work. Yeah. Yeah, that's interesting and encouraging because by the time we sit down and watch general conferences like, wow, they sure make this easy. Stand up there and read their talk, but we fail to see the wrestle that took place. You know what, that's such a good word Curt. It is it's a wrestling. And when you start in on it, when you read that letter, you go, oh, I've gotta start fasting again. How much time do you spend 20 trips to the temple? And some of those you'd go and you'd sit in the celestial room and nothing would come nothing. And did they give you about 6 months out of it before? Actually, no, you get about two months. Okay. Yeah, about two. And then, from what I hear, you have to turn it in earlier, so translation can happen. Yes. Yeah, you have to get it. I think it's about two or three weeks before general conference. They have to have it for trans all the translation. Yeah. So I love that. It's such a sanctifying process, even local leaders. You have to speak or give lessons a lot like sometimes the lord says, here's the print now, just read from the top, and other times it's like, let's go on a journey together and I will reveal to you and teach you as we go through this and what a blessed opportunity that is even though it takes a little more work. And you know, you start out to write a talk for general conference and you want to use, you want to be so intelligent, you want to use all the right things, you know. But what the lord does, I learned is he uses your own unique experiences.

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And he allows you to teach what you have learned about him through those experiences. It's really all about him. I'm curious just in general like the young women's presidency or other general presidencies, what do what's happening behind the scenes that maybe we don't realize? What type of decisions or conversations are happening that because sometimes we think, oh, they just speak in general conference. That's what they do. There's a lot more that goes into that. How would you explain generally speaking, what happens behind the scenes? What happens behind the scenes is different, I think, for each presidency for us. We had a lot of work to do. We had a young women curriculum needed to be changed very badly and that curriculum actually is the one where now having us as adults, but it began with the young women, and then the young man and then seminaries and Institutes. And that was the time when that whole shift came in the curriculum where we allowed profit Sears and revelators the words of profit series and revelators current wants to be a part of the curriculum. I'll never forget going before president monson, who by profession is a printer and making a proposal to him that we now quit printing manuals and we put everything online so that we can be nimble enough to use the current words of the prophets. And I was just shaking when I made that proposal and president monson was quiet for a long time. And then he looked at me and said, you're right. It's what we need to do now. And that was a huge prophetic decision. And so I don't know. You know, I just think, I think a lot of things happen in different presidencies, but we did that kind of work. We did a lot of committee work. We served on a lot of committees in that church with the brethren. And that's not new. We may think that's just happened of late. That's not the case. It's funny. It just wasn't publicized. But we served right along with the brethren. They asked our opinions on a lot of things. And we were part of all of that committee work. I think the thing that I love the most about working with profit Sears and revelators was praying with them. And I wish that every person in the whole world could hear a profit, pray. I wish the women of the church could hear a prophet pray for them. I think it would be a game changer for all of us to be in a room where that happens. And it's a very, very sweet experience. I've been in the room where I've literally watched revelation being received and it's incredible. It's incredible how the lord cares about his church, his children, his young women, his women. All of us, it's really an incredible experience. But busy all the time and the other thing that's just so crazy about that calling is you have homework because you need to prepare. You don't go into a meeting with your brethren and just go high. How you doing? I mean, you have to be not just intellectually prepared, but you have to be spiritually prepared. For meetings like that. And that takes a lot of work. And then, of course, I don't know about you. When does the holy go speak to you? But he doesn't speak to me. I mean, I hear a lot of promptness in the day, but on this calling, it was three 30 in the morning. That's when he came. At 20 spoke, that's when I got answers to prayers. That's when I, you know, you've heard present Nelson say he has a tablet by the side's bed I did too. Because you have to hurry and write those things down or you do forget them. Is that how it happens for you? Well, maybe you need to set my alarm for three in the morning and see what comes with. To me it's more of a shower. I'm standing in the shower. Okay, that's another place a lot of people say because why? Because we're still winning. Yeah. We don't have the distraction. Yeah, we turn everything off and focus on the task hand. There's

emails I get and this may be a dynamic doesn't talked about enough, but ward setting, there's a lot going on as far as in a volunteer organization, the bishop's call, the elders quorum, the young women's presidency and what not. And we all want to do our best and have a say and sometimes I get messages and emails from maybe some friction between the bishop and the young woman's parents.

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They don't feel like they have the autonomy that they wish they had or they make a decision and the bishop bridge seems to change it every time. And it can be really frustrating for some of these auxiliary leaders organizational leaders. Anything you'd say as far as encouragement there or what we should consider obviously you deal with these dynamics on a general level with working with the brethren and whatnot and it sounds like they are always encouraging. And giving you a lot of leeway and autonomy to fulfill the function you were asked to serve in. So any thoughts or perspective with that dynamic? Well, yes, of course. I didn't always get immediate yeses. And so I would just, I would just act the best I could. But I learned very quickly that you don't want to ever go out on your own. On these things that it's so important that you have united support of priesthood power and of auxilia, the auxiliaries that, you know, if I ever got an answer, we'll sister Dalton. You go ahead and do that. It was very frightening to me. You don't want to go out on your own. But I also learned this that when the lord speaks in inspires you to do something. That he'll make a possible. In his own due time, and I watched the hand of the lord move and make things possible that needed to be made. And in the process of that, I also watched him not only tutor me in his ways, but tutor others in his ways. And so that was a fascinating thing to be a part of. My philosophy, if I were to talk to a young woman leader, I'd say every now is one step closer to yes. If it's right, every now is one step closer to yes. And sometimes that's how things happen. Yeah. And if you feel that inspiration revelation coming just keep leaning into it and take those noses they come with as you communicate and I really feel this is a direction I'm feeling prompted to go. And the way and the way you just said that is the way it should be done. I think you can't ever stomp your feet and shake your curls. Does that make sense? I mean, I mean, we have to be we have to be filled with love and charity. We have to be we can be bold, but we can't be brash. There's just the worst way is a different way than the world's way. And I think a lot of times we watch the world's way and think that's how we're supposed to do it. And I think I was really tutored in the softness and the sweetness of the lord's way and that that's how things come about. It's not this is what I want to walk in there with a sledgehammer. That was really big tutoring for me. Really good. And before we wrap up here, any questions? First of all, the live studio audience here. Everybody say hi. There's probably 40, 50 people here. I'll listing any questions you have for sister Dalton before we wrap up. We have a wireless mic here so I can roam. How did you and Steve meet and what was your first date? Oh, you're so cute. Oh, dear do we have time for this? I'll give you a short version. The short

version, I saw Steve Dalton on the campus of BYU. He had just come home from his mission. And he shined. And I said to my roommate now that's the kind of guy you'd want to marry. And she said, oh, him, he Steve Dalton, and he's from springville. I know him. And I said, you do, I have to meet him. And I happen to have a job at the Wilkinson center main desk. And at that time, people could come to that desk and they could ask to see someone else another student schedule. That would never happen. Wow. And so I was the one who would hand them the card of the other student schedule. They could copy it down and then I'd take it back and put it in the card file. So having his name, I looked up Steve Dalton and got his schedule. Class schedule. And then I just happened to be there when he'd come out of certain classes looking as spiffy as I possibly could. So Steve, you had a stalker. This is interesting. Well, people will call that stalking the day, but at the time I called that flirty. Oh, okay. That works and it worked, here we are, you know? So that's how I met my husband and we started dating and the rest is history. And how many years has it been now, Mary? It has been 54 years Steve. 53. 53. Awesome.

00:50:01 - 00:55:13

Any other questions? Sister Dalton. Just wondering, did you receive revelation beforehand that you're going to receive your call? And what was the circumstance when the call actually came? And when it was broadcast in conference. Garcia, that's a great question. I had I did have some promptings. That I should get myself shaped up. And I felt like maybe those promptings because I never suspected I'd be called to be the president. I thought maybe I was going to die. And then I needed to just really sanctify my life, and that worried me a little bit. I asked my husband for a blessing and he gave me a blessing, but I remember when I when I got that phone call that president monson would like to visit with me and my husband and his office, I just fell to my knees after that call. And said a prayer to heavenly father. And ask him to please help me and my husband be worthy to do whatever it was the profit asked. And we went to his office with that kind of heart. And then that's when he received that call. What I thought was going to happen was he was going to say you've served a long time and I'd like to release you. And so I pray that I'd be a big girl. I wouldn't cry because I loved what I was doing. I wouldn't cry. And I actually practiced this. I said, I practiced saying, well, thank you, president Watson for the privilege of serving. It has been the joy of my life. And I promised myself, I wouldn't cry. And so when we did go into that office, he did say, as you know, a new presidency is going to be called and I'm going to release you. And I remember thinking, what a classy profit. He's face to face telling me I'm going to be released. So I went to say my rehearsed speech and he said, and I'd like to call you to be the 13th general young woman president. For the church. Of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints. And I can remember, I ruined my rehearsal. I just bawled my little eyes out. That's sweet. I'm curious with the release that came after he said 16 years of serving in these general positions. And I remember my time serving as bishop for 5 years in a state Pennsylvania after that release it. He'd lose such self identity because you've been serving for

so long and you remember wandering. Does anybody want to talk to me? What advice would you give to leaders like that time that other people are saying, well, isn't it great? You don't have all that stuff to do anymore. But it's such rewarding service. It leaves such a hole in your heart. So what advice would you give or what have you learned after being released from those long years of serving? I'm glad to hear you were wandering because I was doing the same thing. I didn't anticipate. And I would say to leaders today, you know, prepare the day you're called for your release, because it does happen. But it is kind of an identity thing, especially the longer you serve, I think. And I realized that I didn't even have any vocabulary words other than gospel and young women. And I also, those first days at home, I didn't have anything to think about. Because I'd start thinking about the young women, I'd think, oh, you know, what do I what do I do now? But one of the other things that I did realize is why does the word give us callings in the first place? He gives us callings to tutor us in ways that he wants us to be all the time. So a young man or young woman goes on a mission. They are tutored in the ways of the lord. They serve their mission they come home and they're released. Are they through being missionaries? No, right. You can be through because he's put in all this intensive tutoring. So over time, I realized that the calling, if I were to put everything I had in the drawer, close it and never even think about that ever again because I had been released. That would be a mistake, because I think every calling is preparation to be more serviceable to the kingdom. And so in that in that way, I just thought I've got to use what he's tutored me in to continue to serve without a calling and really don't you think that's what science is going to be like when we wake up in the morning and we have such a witness of the holy ghost we have him so close to us.

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We know exactly who we need to go see and what we need to do. We're starting on that road, I believe, with ministering. I think, you know, we now have our ministering assignments. I think there will come a day when we will get this down to the point where it won't be an assignment. We'll wake up and we'll know what we need to do and how we need to minister. And I think the callings just to address and prepare us for this kind of science society. Any examples come to mind as far as how you've not put those skills and abilities and callings in the drawer. How do you manifest that influence administering outside of the official titles and callings? Well, you know, I think I try to just stay in tune enough with a spirit that when the spirit prompts me to do something I can do it. And I shared this in one of the sessions we were in San Diego having lunch at this place. It was a chicken and egg place and they called it the crack house. And we are not in the correct house. We're having lunch there. And I see these young adult women coming down the sidewalk, and I had a prompting that I needed to go speak with them. And so I did. I'm crazy. I mean, and so I just try to follow these promptings. And ten of these most beautiful women. And in San Diego, and I said, tell me who you are. You look like you could be members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints. And they said, oh, we are. We're

here we're from New York. And we said, where have you been? You shine. And they said, oh, we've been to the temple. We came and we went to a temple wedding. And so I think I just try to follow the spirit in that way. I don't seek opportunities to put myself out there. I really like just that quiet ministering one on one and really, really holy sweet things happened on the sidewalk in San Diego, California. And several of the girls had been to their girls camp and they shared things that had happened there that had changed the direction in their life. And so the lord just kind of arranges opportunities for us to do his work when we are open to hearing him. And when we're bold enough to obey and most of the promptings that I get put me take me out of my comfort zone because I'm not one that will walk up and talk to strangers. Doesn't happen, but when I get a prompting, I learned in my calling, you can not ignore those promptings. I tried. But you can't do that. You have to just go. So that's really cool. That's kind of how I'm serving now. Yeah. One more question from the audience, anybody have one? I'm just curious what your calling is now. My husband and I share a calling and it's a grand calling is to preparing the youth for the temple temple preparation. And my husband is a sealer in the temple and so we are able to prepare the youth in our ward for the temple. That temple prep class. Now it's involved into being what is it called now family host is for the grown-ups too. Temple and family history for everybody in our world. And we've just begun that one. So that's what we do now. That's great. That's awesome. Well, Elaine, this has been so awesome just hear some of these stories and I'm inspired and encouraged by it. The last question I have for you, just reflecting on all these years of service as a leader. How is being a leader helps you become a better follower of Jesus Christ? That's a good question. I don't think I don't know that any of us are leaders. I think we are our followers of our savior Jesus Christ and I think as we follow him and we have him be a part of our lives and as we seek to do his will and learn his ways that the scripture that comes to mind for me is that we attract others to us. And so we're not really leading we're following in a way. His great example, but we attract others to us. It's like cleavage to light and virtue, love with virtue. And I think perhaps that's the secret of leadership is just gathering more and more light as we live here on the earth and being attractive enough in that way that we can attract others to the gospel of Jesus Christ not to us, but to him.

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Thanks for listening. Like I said at the beginning of the episode, make sure to visit leading.saints.org to find similar content that will inspire you to be more prepared to lead. Simply text the word lead to four 747 four 7, I will send you a link to make it easy to get started. Also, would you mind sending this episode to another person who would find it insightful? Maybe in a text message or an email, it will definitely bless their life. 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.