



The LGBTQ Journey Through the Bishops Office | An Interview with Tyler Lefevor and Samuel Skidmore

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Okay, so you're here for some great church leadership content. The podcast is great, but there's also another piece of content you need to be enjoying each week. It is the leading saints email newsletter. Now I get it. Email newsletters feel so 2006, you know? But it isn't as old fashioned as you might think. It's actually one of the most popular pieces of content that leading saints produces. Each week I share a unique leadership thought that can only be found in the newsletter. I keep it short and sweet, most can read in less than 5 minutes, and then we share with you recent content you might have missed, throwback episodes, and leading saints events that happen more often than you might anticipate. If you want to make sure you are on the email list simply visit leading-saints.org/14, that's leading-saints.org/slash-14. That will also get you 14 days access to our full library of content, not available to the general public. So look for leading saints in your inbox by going to leading-saints.org/14 or click the link in the show notes. Hey everyone, this is Kurt Franklin again. I feel like you hear my voice a lot on the intro. Now the secondary intro, then on the episode you're gonna hear my voice again. Maybe I need to find somebody with a really cool accent out there, shout out to my UK saints. If anybody's out there wants to do some reading so that we maybe mix up the voice here, or maybe you just love my voice. I mean, I know my wife does. I think. Anyways, hey, I'm excited for you to jump into this episode. I had the opportunity to interview Tyler Lefevor and Sam Skidmore about some research that they've done at Utah state university. Tyler and Sam are both former Latter day Saints who have since left the church. They are both gay individuals and are, I don't know, the right way to say is pursuing that lifestyle, right? There's so much and am I saying this right, but nonetheless I'm trying and obviously they don't wear my heart is, but this is

a fascinating discussion. You know, obviously, well, rarely do we have non Latter day Saints on the podcast. Obviously since we're very latter day saint focus, but even more rarely do we have two former Latter day Saints who've left the church on the podcast, but aside from the content that we talk about and the important topics we cover. I hope that this can be an example to you of how to have just an open honest real conversation with individuals who've maybe stepped away from the church, and I can really see that any leader in the world who has, for example, LGBTQ, former Latter day Saints, can still reach out and just say, hey, what do you want? How can I serve you? Do you want me in your life? Do you want me to just stay away? Do you want me to invite you to the 4th of July, right? So there's all these things approaches. I know it's easier to stay away and not engage in what could be a very awkward conversation, but hopefully this a conversation is an example there and it's not like at the end they commit to being rebaptized again or anything that obviously was not the goal, but I just had such a sweet conversation with these two and I'm so grateful for the research they're doing. I mean to see two individuals who've maybe can convince themselves of every reason to be angry at the church or not to help the church but to still be engaged in our faith community and helping us through research and the research that they've provided to help leaders better help LGBTQ Latter day Saints as they're coming out or going through that journey which usually ends up through the bishop's office or the elders quorum interview or whatever it is. I really appreciate this interview. I'll give you some more resources and links at the end to make sure that you can jump into this and understand the best you can as far as the research goes. So here is my interview with Tyler lefever and Sam, skidmore. Today I'm sitting down with Tyler lefever and Sam skidmore, Sam. Welcome to the podcast. Thank you. Tyler, welcome. Thanks very awesome. And we're in Centreville, where we're Tyler lives. But you both work and Sam, you live in Logan, right? Yes. And that's home of you test state university. Graduate student, Sam. Yeah, so third year PhD student. In Tyler's lab. Awesome. So are you going to teach her? What are you going to do with a PhD? That's a great question. Just have people call you doctor. That's the only reason I'm doing it. No, I think teaching is the root. I'll do some research and then maybe be a therapist. So see clients. So what are you getting your PhD in? It's clinical and counseling psychology. So it's a lot of research and then also the focus on seeing students just kind of helping out with mental health things. So you will be a psychologist at the end of this, is that Annie? And Tyler, you work there. You have a PhD. I have a PhD, I am a psychologist. Nice. Yeah. Did graduate school in Miami and wanted to be back by my people in my home.

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Nice. So born and raised in Utah. Yep. Yeah, born and raised. They'll actually lived in California and Colorado in the middle between being born and being raised. Okay. We all have our pilgrimage. And Sam, you have a little bit of an English accent because your roots are in the UK, right? Yeah. Born in the UK, but kind of grew up in Utah. So trying to balance both. Two

tough accents. So you recently you both have been involved in a study at Utah state. And Tyler, why don't you sort of build a foundation here of what this was and what you're trying to accomplish. Yeah, so I've been doing research about LGBTQ+ Saturday since for a while. It's been 5 years maybe. And one of the things I've noticed in focused in on is that there's a lot that happens with church leaders and ways that make LGBTQ latter day science experiences much better or much worse. So this study, the idea was about how can we help church leaders minister must effectively tell LGBTQ+ Latter day Saints. And this project specifically, we really wanted to work within church leaders frameworks, not interested in challenging church teachings or church doctrines or even practices. I think that there's just a lot of room within the gospel and within ministry that church leaders could more effectively minister. So that was the first question that we had. And we kind of took that and we did a bunch of interviews. Sam maybe we can talk about that. Yeah. So we found 25 people who were interested. We found a lot more people who were interested in sharing their stories, but we chose 25 of them. Sat down for 30 minutes to an hour, and LGBT individuals. Yeah, LGBTQ people who are currently in the church are who were and then kind of taken a step away. Because we wanted to get different stories and yeah, we sat down with these people and basically said, tell us about your experiences with church leaders. When did you come out to them? What went well? What maybe did it and what advice do you have for people to make this a better experience moving forward? And were you looking for regularities in these stories or commented experiences? Very much. Yeah, we kind of had four or 5 sub questions we were asking. We were interested in why did people talk with their leaders? We were interested in what were they told? What was helpful and helpful? What were the impacts of the conversation? And then what were LGBTQ+ Latter day Saints reactions to talking to their leaders? So we kind of we asked versions of most of those questions, and then when we were looking through these interview transcripts, which were multiple pages long, we were kind of pulling out themes from what people said. And our goal was to kind of put aside our experiences and biases. Because both Sam and I are LGBTQ+ Saturday saints. But to see kind of what people said, what stories kept coming up, what themes kept coming up. Just and then kind of summarize that back for people. Yeah. And so I'm curious, I'm not as familiar with the research process in colleges. Now, what's the hope? What's the end goal of doing a research study like this? Is it to write a book or to, I mean, what do you do with it? You know, honestly, credits this podcast. I appreciate that time. Yeah, this project was really about helping people understand better practices. And maybe eventually we will write a book with a bunch of studies that we've done. But this was a project we really wanted to do to get understanding of how things were working, which maybe would inform other studies to think about what are the ways to change or improve. But then, I don't know, yeah, write a pamphlet had do podcasts got written an article in the tribune, but just kind of shared the information back with concerned people. Yeah. And I would imagine, I mean, you have a deep love for this community. And so it's like you want to help it, right? The reason I started this podcast is that we want to help, right? Absolutely. Awesome. And would you say, as far as the focus on leaders, did you, I mean, white leaders and why not families or talk about what mom and dad said or focus the study on familiar relationships? Yeah, that's a great question. I think there's quite a bit of research out there already on LGBTQ experiences with family because it happens in any religion or background. And I found in my own experiences I've had really good experiences and really bad experiences with Church leaders talking about my sexuality. And

there's just such a lack of understanding that within this church specifically, and there's no official training material available for bishops. And so the goal kind of became let's see what's going on. Let's see what's working and what's not. And maybe we can kind of help out in the ways that we know how. Would you say that this leader member relationship? Like this is like, it's the moment. I would imagine for some LGBTQ individuals. It's like, I haven't even told my family, my Friends, but I'm going to go into the bishop's office. I'm going to tell him. It doesn't have more of a moment. It's stressful. Yeah, I was actually thinking about my experience too, 'cause that was, there's a line in the first of you that said basically if you experience same sex attraction, you should tell your parents new bishop.

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And that was the only reason I came out. Oh, really? When I was like 13. And I told my parents, and then I told my bishop, and then I went back in the closet for a decade. But it was powerful that line was powerful enough to make it into a moment, and that interaction with my bishop and my parents was a big part of what pushed me back in the closet for ten years. Because it felt so shameful. And they didn't neither my parents nor my bishop wanted to have that conversation. And fair enough, I didn't want to have that conversation. So we just all kind of agreed not to. And that was enough to kind of wrap it back up for a long time. Anything you'd add to that Sam as far as the moment of so mine was quite different my first time, the very first person I came out to was my mission president on my mission. And so I built it up a lot as we're going to tell some un finally. And for that to be a church leader as well while I was on a mission, it seemed really scary because there's all these potential ramifications of you could be sent home, and what if he tells you other missionaries, all these thoughts. And I ended up having a really good experience with him, where he just kind of took a step back and said, I don't really know exactly what to say right now, but I do know that I care about you and you're a really good person. So give me some time to think about this. Here are some resources, but just know this is okay. And I think I would say you always have that option to say, I just need more time, right? Because I remember as a bishop, there was such this pressure of like, oh, well, I wanted to be the bishop who grabs his quad and flips through the mic. I've got just the scripture, right? But a lot of times I just didn't know, right? And so you create that space of saying, I just love you, but I need some time. I don't know what to do, right? And that's such a like, I loved that approach. And I find that hard for myself sometimes when I'm in therapy with people. We're kind of told it's better to take a step back and think than to just say what the first thing that comes to mind, but sometimes that's the pull of like I need to be here for this person. So I get that approach. I just don't think it's the most helpful. And I remember, as a bishop talking with an LGBT individual, I even said, I'm about to say some things. But you have to promise me you'll give me another chance if I mess up and she was very grateful giving me that grace because I wanted to say something but I'm like, I didn't want to be just petrified and like you said, let's just not talk about it because that's not

helpful either. One of the things that came out and we'll talk about so much, but was the tension that both parts feel in the interaction both LGBTQ+ members and leaders both understand this is kind of a high stakes endeavor and so both often approach the conversation kind of guardedly or scared about what could happen. So I love that approach of being able to say like I'm going to say things and it's not going to come out well and help me. Like if it doesn't come out well, tell me I want to do well by Sam, I want to go back to your story a little bit was this just during a routine mission present interview you brought it up or was it did you feel it boiling over in you? Like why did you feel like now's the time? Yeah. It was a couple months in the making. I was in leadership and so we had monthly meetings where all the leaders would go to the mission president's House. And so I knew that it was upcoming, I sent him an email or a text, maybe and I was just like, hey, would it be okay if I pulled you aside at the end and just talk to you really quick? And he said, yeah. So it wasn't an official meeting. But I had gotten to the point where I was like the tension is too much between religion and these my sexuality and my identity. And I need someone else's opinion. Like I just can't keep doing this. Was there something about the missionary life that was causing that? Or was it just maybe God was coming on you? We're dealing with this now, Sam. Yeah. That's a good question. I honestly don't really know. I think part of it for me was not being home anymore was really helpful in that I just had more time with my own thoughts and hearing family and people that I knew their perspective because I already knew that. So it gave me the chance to be more autonomous and to say this is something that I want from me. And yeah, I just got to the point where I was like, I want to be an effective missionary. And I feel like I'm just slowly becoming more and more stressed about this thing. I need to talk to someone. And I would imagine in that moment you don't feel like this is the end of my time in the church or it was more of a from a place of I want to be a better missionary. I'd need to reconcile this somehow in order to move forward with my spiritual progression. Yeah, for sure. I have since left the church, just like that's where I'm at. But at the time, it was one of the most helpful things for me with my relationship with the church. And it's the reason I think that I stayed for next to three or four years. I had this moment of people in the church to care, and there's a way to make this work, even though it's difficult and uncomfortable, like it got better once I came out and got positive reactions to that. Was it impacting your in this moment of tension almost there was impacting your personal mental health or was it like was it a depression type thing? Depression anxiety since I uncovered my sexuality maybe around 11 or 12 until a bit after I came out, but it started getting better around the time I came out.

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And before this, in your early teen years, you just found ways to cope and manage it or type of thing. I guess. Not effective ways, right, right. I think a lot of my coping was building anxiety because it was me hiding a lot from people and then having this fear of what if they find out. And that's just not a fun way to live. I don't want that for anyone else. When you say I was afraid

they'd find out was it like if I didn't know how to set a hard screen on the basketball court like they would never I mean what did you mean by that? Why did you think people are going to find out without you telling them? It's just like the fear that I think a lot of LGBTQ people, maybe I shouldn't project that. I assume people think that. That's my experience. I also like I wasn't sporty. I'm not splitting still. I was in the musicals in choir, which are stereotypically more flamboyant things. And I was like loving it. And then there's also this piece that's like you need to be the perfect member of the church because if you're not, people will start asking questions. And that seemed really big and scary for whatever reason. Yeah. Did anybody say later that it may be did perceive this part of you or before you told them? No one had told me they came out to my mom and she was like, I knew. And I was just like, this is your mission. This is after my mission. Okay. She said she knew, and I was like, no, you didn't. And she was like, okay, I didn't know. I think there was one friend that was like, I had considered it that I'm like, I'm just glad that you came out. Yeah. Like, I'm glad that we can be honest. And open. In our relationship now. But yeah, most people didn't. So those fears were unfounded. No, after you come home from your mission, it was just harder and harder to reconcile with the church in general or your faith there or so I came out and I tried so hard to do the church thing, whatever that looks like. So I was the admission leader, I went to BYU. I worked like I taught at the MTC. My life became church and staying with the church. And were you generally open? Did members of your ward know? Was it a casual thing that you had mentioned as you're hanging out with friends? It became that. I think it took a year or two because I came home and I started telling family and close friends and then I waited about a year because similar to Thailand, like kind of weird coming out experiences so I went back into the closet for a while. But then yeah, when I officially came out publicly, it just became like I would talk about it in church talks. And then lessons, like I wasn't ashamed at that point, I just was questioning a lot of where do I fit now in this religion? And did you feel like you needed to commit to a life of celibacy and this is just your journey? I love all these questions. And don't worry, Tyler. I'm enjoying. I did. I did. Yeah. Until maybe the day that I left the church. In my head, I was like, the only way for me to make this work is to I knew the marrying a woman wasn't on the table for me. I would go on a date and then go home and be so frustrated with myself that I couldn't feel anything. So yeah, in my head it was like, I'm going to be kind of depressed. And in the church, making it work, being celibate, because that's what God wants for me. And then when I got to the point where I left the church, she became very God wants me to be who I am, and this is who I am. Like I'm going to marry a man and that's great. And obviously not all things religion directly connect to sexuality and whatnot. And so how does your personal faith develop like in Jesus Christ or in broader themes of our beliefs? Yeah, since then, or just up to current day. Yeah. That's a really good question. I think I kind of struggle a bit with religiousness. Since leaving the church, just because there was so much. I had some really negative interactions with church leaders after your mission. After my mission. Mission president was wonderful. And some bishops were great too. And that's part of the reason for this study is there's such a range of experiences people have. But I had some bad experiences with church leaders and then church members. And it got to the point where I recognized in myself like it's not good for me to keep doing this, at least the way it's going on. And so since then, I've kind of developed more on the spiritual side of things of just personal connection to other people, finding my own meaning in life. Things like that. And obviously, none of us want to pin this any of your decisions or directions on the leaders if you don't blame them.

Do you think if you had more positive interactions with church leaders, like you'd find in a deeper strength to maybe find deeper faith and belief in the tradition? That's a wonderful question. I honestly don't think so.

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I think the my trajectory either way would have been leaving the church. I think the difference would have been that I would have had a lot more positive memories of the church, having stepped back, my mental health would have been a lot better being in the church. And I'd probably at least still have some ties or some, I mean, I have tie still to the church. But I think I'd be a bit more open to going to church on a random Sunday when visiting family. Because church would be a safer. It would feel safer for me than it maybe does. And I remember just from some of these interactions, there's some level of trauma that you've experienced where it's like, why don't we not? And look at that, right? And so even if you say like, yeah, regardless of what happened or who said what, I probably find myself here, but it maybe would be nice that I didn't have these heavy negative traumatic experiences. Like it affected things. And I still like a really deeply appreciate people in the church and a lot of the messages that the church gives and the good that it does. So I try and hold that with the fact that it did a lot of for me personally and it can harm a lot of LGBTQ people. The church of people within, like, whatever we want to put that on. Yeah. So it's an interesting balance trying to hold both. All right, you're off the hook for a bit. So Tyler, I want to hear your experience growing up in Utah or going to high school in Utah and whatnot going on a mission coming home still being very involved in going back to this concept of the moment. We have created this if anybody is struggling with us in or maybe a difficult marriage or what not sort of this moment of like, I will now go see the moment. What was your experience like? I can think of a few different moments. For me coming out was something that was a process I engaged in that maybe spanned 15 years. So there's the ten years I reference where I talk to my parents and bishop, no one back in the closet. I wasn't ready for it. They weren't ready for it. And what agents that I was 1415? And so fast forward as 25, I served a mission in New Jersey. Loved it. I really kind of like Sam was saying poured my self into the church and I think part of it is that I love the church a lot and that was my world. That's my family's world still. And so it was really just a lovely place to be. And I think another part of it is that that helped me resolve tension that I felt. So if I felt tension around my sexuality, one way to resolve that is by dedicating myself more to the church. That lets me push down the sexuality and just say, well, this is what really matters to me. And it was. It battered a lot. And it was a form of sort of pray the gay away type of thing. Yeah, it felt less insidious. Wasn't conscious of the gay piece, but it's like, if I felt a little bad, I knew I could feel better if I did church things. I prayed or studied scriptures or did you ever have the expectation that this would minimize or go away or more like distract you. I suppose subconsciously I did for a while and eventually I realized it wasn't going to go away. I was dating a woman who ironically was the

one who married my partner and I last year. But we were dating and it was when I started dating her that I understood that I needed to tell someone about this thing that I had, which I still called same sex attraction and didn't understand what it meant to be gay at that point. But she was one of the first people I told and after telling her it was like all of these walls that I built up inside of myself had started to crumble. I had really kept my wife separate and divided. And that was, that was the moment where I told my family again at 25. And then I talked to my bishop at the time and was let me ask you that when you told your family again, was there ever reference to maybe the night before you were going on your mission? Like, hey, how do you feel about this thing? Never. Never forgot. Not spoken up. Wow, okay. Yeah, but neither of my parents were my bishop. And you didn't necessarily mind, even though it was maybe in hindsight, maybe hurtful or right. It hints that I wished someone had just said it was okay. Like that, I think would have really changed things. But honestly, actually, to today, I have not talked to my parents about that day. You know, like it's still something that's 14 year old day or the 14 year old day. Like we have not revisited that conversation topic. Yeah, so when I came back, I came out to them again and I was much more certain about what was going on for me. Were the first time I was really hesitant and really scared. I was still scared, but certain. And I'm like, look, I same sex attraction. Still going to be active in the church. Still dating my ex and because we're good. Same with the bishop. And with the bishop it was different, I was more, I was really looking for some guidance there. So it was the first time I'd spoken and I was wanting to understand how do I help make this work? This is a thing and how does this work with the church and myself worthy? I was I was elders corn president at the time and I was like is this still okay for me to be with all these men? Is there something wrong? So did you walk into the bishop's office with this feeling of this is a confession of some type.

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Yeah, which is odd because I had done nothing. Like the first time I looked at pornography was like four years after this fact. So I'd never even really looked at porn and hadn't been with a man and but I still felt really wrong and really guilty. So that bishop was great. Because he just held space for me and he let me know I was okay and that he still trusted me and that he had confidence in me and my calling. And I walked out on cloud 9 and we're good. And that was encouraging. That was really encouraging. Yeah, and it probably has this feeling of like, I did it, I got past it. I'm gonna feel this way all the time now. Right. Yeah, and for me, that was really the ideal an ideal interaction with that bishop for where I was. And that let me, I was active in the church who probably another four years after that point. And I had a variety of interactions with bishops after that. And mostly I was kind of coming back to them with where I was out of my life, and they were, I don't know, checking in or giving me counsel, kind of depended. So maybe a year later, I might X and I broke up and came to my bishop and I was like, I wasn't having questions about the church, but I started identifying as gay rather than same sex attracted, but

still very LDS. And I want to highlight that, you know, we use these terms and people have different feelings and whatnot. But for some individuals, this transition from calling yourself same sex attraction to gay can be a helpful one or it's a thing. It's not like sometimes I use gays. Do you really test your identity? And that was the hardest moment for my family. Things with my family were good when I was staying sex attracted, but when I identified as gay, even so within the church, that felt like the tipping point where things started to be hard for them. And when they started seeing my path to verge from the church, even though I hadn't started thinking of it that way yet. So there's this feeling of like, why are you using that word when you're if you're still in the church? Why are you letting that be such a big part of your identity? So yeah, then there's like the next year I came out as gay and I'm like, I think I'm going to date men and then I was celibate and eventually four years later I left, I didn't leave the church. I decided that the best path for me was going to be a merit to marry a man. And I was just going to do it and then be excommunicated after because I let the church I was participating with still meaningful. I'm not going to quit. You're going to be exactly. And I like Sam, I was really enjoying being active and sharing my story and my experiences with the same like, look, I can be here and I can still really value all these things. This is great. And then the church came out with the policy in November about same sex couple, or the children of same sex couples, 'cause nothing really changed for me, but emotionally it felt really impactful. And I resigned shortly after because it felt easier, honestly, for my family and the people around me to understand actually my mentality has shifted, but I think that healthiest way for me is going to be over here. Still love and honor over here, but this is kind of where I'm heading. Nice. Anything and it'll detail about your journey. Yeah, maybe a wrap up detail with leaders as I was leaving the church. I formally resigned which meant that I talked with my branch president, my stake president. And had a really great experience as resigning from the church actually, both my branch and stake president were really clear they asked if I was sure. And I'm like, yeah. And after that question, which I think is super fair, they're like, well, we just want you to know that if you want to come back, here's a place. I want to talk to you. You are so welcome. And those interactions felt really, I didn't know they let me, it felt like they honored my intention to leave while making it clear that the door was still open. And so it's made it easier to continue to engage. So I'm curious to your thoughts, both of your thoughts on this concept. We use this term, leave the church and everybody uses it, right? And it's such this can feel like such this club or membership. Either in or out right now. But obviously you live in Utah and it's so much part of the local culture as well. And so, I mean, do you want to be out of the church when I mean like as far as like, I'm over here, you're over there. We only interact like a Costco or something. Do you have a desire to go to the 4th of July breakfast to sing in the choir or to show up every once in a while? Great question. 'cause I quote unquote left when I was living in them first. So it was a different feel. If you can disappear a little bit easier. Yeah, there was less of a community where it didn't feel, yeah, I don't know that very much of it felt oppositional for me. It felt more like being heading somewhere rather than heading away from somewhere. So I was saying, look where I am going is toward marrying a man. And that it's clear that it doesn't let me have all the privileges associated with church membership, but I still had I still have friends and I would go to church things after.

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And I definitely didn't want to get, oh, I wanted to get away from Sunday for a while. But not from, I remember singing in the Christmas choir like the year after I left because I loved singing in the choir. Yeah. Yeah. Do you experience similar to Sam's story? I would imagine there's some level of trauma or experiences there that sort of just being maybe just being in the chapel is like, this is great, but my mind can't stop going back to that moment or that thing or yeah, you know what I can't do is listen to people speak. What's worse than it's not just church. It's like other meetings too. So a formal cadence of I'm gripping the podium in a certain way. Yeah, I can do podcasts, but I can't hear lecturers speak very well either. I feel really powerless. So that comes up from your church, but it's so much easier for me to go back for fast and testimony meeting or for a musical primary program. Primary program, that feels great, but if even if it's just like Mary Jo down the street talking, I'm like, I'd rather not. And I think just like any culture where we have this cadence of just how we present ourselves and perpetuate. So Sam, I'll come back to you as far as do you want your bishop to knock on your door? And if so, like, what do you want him to say? Yeah. I don't know. The answer is no. Okay. And we can edit out long positive. No, that's gonna be fine. I guess, well, so for me, the very last church leader I talked to was my bishop. And why I say what? Is it the guy who's your current bishop? Because there's like four years ago. I've moved twice since then. So we're safe. All right. But I came out to him, and he was very in the moment. He seemed fine with it. And then I heard from all my BYU professors the next day. Your bishop reached out to us, told us to keep an eye on you. But if you give a fuck to anyone, we should report you to him, so you could get you out of BYU. And it felt like gross just to hear that. Yeah. I was in the psychology program. All my professors were like, no, this is a thing. We're not going to do that. But just be aware he's sending these emails. And so that's the last bishop I've talked to. So I recognize that's not all because I had some great church leaders. Yeah. But yeah, I just don't want to go back into that. Is it just the bishop, the title of the office of bishops or this authoritative figure that's coming to you or would you want some ministering brothers and a knock on your door and just say, hey, we're from the local ward. I mean, I'm curious. I live with two other members. Oh, okay. And so people are around. I guess I'm just so comfortable with where I'm at. I feel really good about my position in life. And so I think I wouldn't be offended if people came over, but I also would very respectfully say, just so you know like I'm gay and I don't intend to change that. Nor do you need a place in the religious community per se. Yeah. Like if you want to invite me to play frisbee, let's do it. But I'm not going to go to church services because I know that that's not what I believe in. And that's okay. Like I respect what you're doing. Because that's from the leadership side of things it's such a, I remember being bishop and there was two guys that were, I don't think they're married, but they're living together and one I think was a return missionary. But we were just sort of like these like, I won't talk to you if you want to talk to me and now I have such deep regret that I didn't at least try that I did not knock on the door and just say, maybe you don't want me here, but you can never go anywhere I think that I didn't try. You know what I mean? What about you, Tyler? Do you want your bishop knock on your door? No, I don't either. But I think the point that I resonate with is what you said Kurt is asking, 'cause I think that's right. Saying if my vision ported, I wouldn't resent my bishop that's here in centerville if he came and said, hey, I'm the

bishop. If you live in the area, curious who you are, what you're about what you feel about the church. I would love that. I would love to know him. And I think that's just kind of where it would end. For me, because it would be kind of similar to Sam. I would like that's easy. An interactions with church members or ministers or leadership to be projected. And I think it would feel like that almost regardless of who reached out because I know they reached out because I'm either not going attending services or because I'm queer. And that would feel yucky, but my husband and I just bought a house in K's bill and I actually have imagined going back to church when we go out there to meet the bishop in the local war because there's the idea that our neighbors are mostly going to be latter day saying yes. And without that, I would love to know my neighbors and know this thing that connects them and then but I want to be seen as like a proper human being and like a complete and fine person without the church.

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So I don't want to feel like you're saying something's wrong with me for not being there. Or there's always this undertone of like just nudging like, hey, why don't you come back? Yeah, exactly. Yeah, and that's interesting. Because I sometimes hear these experiences of people saying like, you know, they have these activities, but only the local members invite each other and whatnot. And there's sort of this feeling of like, they're sort of bad people because they're not open and reaching out to others, but I don't think we recognize they may be just completely petrified. They don't know how to do that. And so there's always this interesting dynamic of do you want us to reach out or not? I think in Utah, especially it's different because so much of like neighborhood dynamics or latter day saint dynamics. And so I think it could be really helpful and healthy for award to think of itself as like a neighborhood HOA board. If they approach neighborhood reward activities like that, I think people would feel more included that they said like, well, who are the people in our neighborhood that we want to be there and then we're just going to invite them 'cause this is the thing we're doing in this neighbors and I think it could help blend. Interesting. All right, I feel like I've completely voided your research. But it's tangential, right? So with this, how can we circle back to the research as far as jumping off point with maybe just what you found and I know you have a great infographic as far as some steps that leaders can take. Yeah, I mean, we can go through it. We can also kind of just give high level suggestions for what we found. Sam and I have digested this, we talked about it a fair amount. And we kind of each have our favorite findings from what we got here. So I can start with one of my biggest takeaways from the research. We asked people why they talked with church leaders and there were a lot of different reasons they talked about some of them wanted to repent. Some of them wanted to just be open about their sexuality or gender. Someone a guidance, someone had comfort. Some didn't even want to talk about it, but just did because the church leader asked, and we really found that there are so many different reasons that we think that leaders will do best if they can understand why people are talking to them about sexuality or

gender. Because if I'm, if my earliest self, my 14, 15 year old self who was so scared of my sexuality or gender, what I needed most was just comfort, you know? And if I had gotten that, it would have really helped soothe me. And I think a lot of times leaders approach people coming out with repentance and church doctrine. In a way that doesn't match what people are actually coming to them with. They're just saying like, I trust you. I want you to know this thing. And this is something I have recognized this in all settings, not just LGBTQ conversations, but there's this sort of this default as a leader. And I've been this leader and I understand it completely where you default to behaviors. Even asking something like, will you have an acted on that, right? Right. There's such an overtone of behavior there, as far as like, well, let's make sure that behaviors in order, then we'll get to the comfort part, right? Yeah. Yeah, because I know I'd want it to be understood and seen most. And I think that's a beautiful way to lead Christ like Lee. If that's a word, it's just seeing people and a lot of ministering is just saying, I'll walk with you. And that's often enough. Because I think that as far as default behaviors, there's this feeling of, it's not okay if you have acted out. When in reality, of course, it's okay. Everything can be reconciled by Jesus Christ. It is okay. And so putting that aside and just focusing on the comfort of just being present with the person. Super helpful. Anything you'd add to that same or the slip of comfort or yeah. I really like that idea of tailoring, so making sure you understand why people are coming in because people will be looking for different things. And if you just have kind of your standard, like just pray and read the scriptures, that's not going to be super helpful. We asked what the most common counsel was that people were given. And it kind of ranged, but we followed that up with what did you find most helpful? And this is my favorite takeaway by far, is that everyone, like the most common, helpful thing for LGBTQ members was nothing that church leaders were saying, but it was how they were approaching the conversation. We called it empathic listening skills, but essentially actively listening, showing that you care like validating experiences. Those skills, when they were used, were seen as far more helpful than any specific counsel that was given. And that's such a clear and easy takeaway for church leaders is you don't have to say the perfect thing, just be a person with a member in the room and show that you care and that you're there. And when you talk about these skills, is there any resources or you would refer people like, how do we build those skills? Because we often use this mantra I go to get in re optimistic ability problem for a motivation problem.

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Like, my leader just doesn't want to love me. On the other side of his eyeballs, he's thinking, I am so petrified right now. I don't know what to do. I don't have the skill set. So I maybe there's not an immediate answer for that, but I have to look this up in circle back with you because there's got to be some really good accessible stuff online because I basically empathic listening skills like reflecting back to the other person what they're saying and pausing after you speak and being comfortable with silence and having a pleasant demeanor. Like really pretty actually

concrete things that we a lot of people naturally do to communicate like interest, but for a lot of other people are not natural at all and take a lot of learning and those are some of the skills that I think are really. And I guess I don't mean to paint the picture that there's this one resource you should do, but even sitting down and Googling empathic listening skills or even to YouTube and I'm gonna watch some guys. It's a start, right? Yeah. For sure. It'll also help you in your marriage. Yeah, exactly. That's very helpful. Awesome. So how do you frame this first takeaway? I'm just discomfort and empathy. Yeah, I think just allow it for church Toledo's allow yourself to focus more on just being there with the person and showing that you care as opposed to thinking of the perfect thing to say. You're the perfect way to get them to stay. Cool. What's next? What else did you learn? Yeah. Another takeaway that I love is that knowing when you know more, you can do more. So it's the perfect counterpoint to the last takeaway. Because we found LGBTQ+ Saturday saints saying that it was hurtful when my leader was ignorant or had black and white thinking, this idea of talking about to do act on it, being like the most important thing, or not understanding what LGBTQ people experience, and so the more that leaders know about what it's like to be LGBTQ+, but I think the more effective they'll be able to be. They will feel less nervous and less likely to make errors and say, oh, if you're gay, you must have had sex, or if you're trans you must have transitioned. And more able to set kind of in the grayness of the middle and be more effective. Yeah, that's how fun. No more do more concept of to me. I'm a big proponent of north star and their conference. I said on their board and whatnot. And so we're always promoting it every year. And it's coming up this year in June, by the way, but just like you don't have to go there and return it as an expert or feel like, right? But just the power of a bishop coming back and saying, I want you to know, like saying to his preschool or when I want you to know, I've been at this conference. Oh my God. Trying to learn more. Let me just share a few things that stood out to me, right? Again, you're not an expert, but suddenly they see like, this is a guy that's trying and he wants to understand all sit down with that guy, right? I've ever bishop would go to northstar. We would be in a great place. Yeah, for sure. So again, or even just picking up a book and saying, I'm read this book. Whatever it is that you're trying. And I think it really helps, especially with trans and gender nonconforming members of the church. There's a lot many people at this point in time have a gay or bisexual friend. And so there's a lot we feel a lot more comfortable socially with sexual minorities. But a lot of people don't know anyone who's transgender or gender nonconforming. And so you can really see their eyes open up when someone comes out and says, hey, I'm trans like, okay, I don't know anything that this means. So I think that would be particularly helpful for a bishop to go to north star or to visit a voices of hope or listen to some stories like YouTube videos of transgender members of the church just to hear the ways that they talk about themselves and the ways that they understand their gender would be really helpful. That's awesome. Anything to add to this no more do more? Yeah. No, I love all of that. I think it's definitely best when people know I remember specifically to conversations from the interviews and one was a gender nonconforming individual. And they said that they had gone in and talked to the bishop and said, hey, I'm non conforming or non binary. And the bishop was like, oh, so you use they them pronouns. Tell me a bit more about your experience. And a participant was just like, that was the safest. I think I've ever felt coming out to someone because I knew that they at least knew some things. And that they were open to talking about it. So there's such power in that. And also for people who aren't aware, I think it's okay to ask to say like, hey, I actually, I'm not really sure

what it means to be transgender. Could you explain what that means to you? Help me see what you're going to do. And I would say, even if you feel like you know what that means, you've even started there because for them, maybe you don't know what it means. In their life. Everyone has different experiences.

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For sure. All right, next what comes after that? Any other takeaways? So we asked them at the end of each interview, one of the questions was what were your reactions to church leaders, but do you have any messages that you would like to share with church leaders? And I was a bit surprised by it, but we found that there was a lot of grace given. So a lot of individuals would share really difficult experiences that they had with bishops and stake presidents. And then at the end, they'd say, you know, I actually, I don't have hard feelings toward this person. I recognize they're just human, and they're trying their best, and they just don't know what to do. And so just know, it's okay, but please do better. And I think that's such a cool message. And hopefully less pressure on church leaders to know a lot of these members aren't going to go and gospel about each. They get that your people and that you're trying. So lean into that. Because you're both just people talking to each other at the end of the day. Yeah, I was surprised to see so much grace too. And it really counterpointed nicely the idea that people feel a lot of LGBTQ+ members feel really anxious talking to church leaders. We heard so many different versions of this idea that, you know, I talked about church leader and it wasn't great, but at least it wasn't one of those horror stories. I got lucky. And people kept saying that in a way that was really odd because they weren't telling us the horror stories, everyone was grateful they didn't have the horror stories. And we started to wonder if there's this narrative that you're going to have a horror story when you talk to a church leader. And I think that's sad first. But also really helpful for both leaders and members to know that there's just a lot of anxiety built into the conversation. And even though it's unlikely, this anxiety isn't rooted in most people's experiences, it's still there. And so members, even while they have grace, they're probably going to be pretty anxious when talking about gender or sexuality. Yeah, and just being mindful that as really anybody who walks in that office, there's some level of anxiety that you maybe have more power to diffuse than you realize. Exactly. And if personal experience, there was I was living in one ward and there was my stake president had a question about regarding leading saints. And he called me in. And this was such an eye opening experience for me because I knew I wasn't going in for a calling. It wasn't routine. He had a question about leading saints. I didn't know if it was good or bad or whatever. Right. And it suddenly I had this awakening moment of how shameful this experience of being called in is even though it wasn't a big deal. It was fine. But I thought I've got a long list of things I would do differently if I was, but this is just one of those things of like if I ever have to, if I was a leader and never had to call somebody in to discuss something like is there a way we could go about that that isn't like, okay, you need to just sit

outside this big oak door with the name tag. And then sit in and welcome to my Cadillac desk here. And just these little things where yeah, from my standpoint as a leader, I was like, well, I'm just, I got a lot of people to meet, like I'm at the church, just line them up and I'll meet them, but it can just that environment can be more shaming than we really intend it to be. And so it may be that first one where the bishop isn't aware that you need to come in, but you come in and you talk but maybe and I love this interview the bishop in Minnesota and he has this taco restaurant and he calls it his secondary bishops, obviously. He just takes people to talk. And that just shifts the thing of like, hey, we're just going to talk as you say people to people. I think we don't realize the fact that we have this office in this church with this big desk. And I look at you straight on. You may say like, what, I'm not being shaming. It's like, well, yeah, but you built this fortress of shame sometimes. Maybe it's not the leader that intended to be that way, but that individual walking in there could go that way, right? And I think a lot of leaders, at least I know, even as ehlers corn president, I wasn't often aware of the power that I had. And with the power that means I'm responsible for dictating conversations that people are going to listen to me and take really seriously what I say and so stepping, I think, out of that power position can be a really easy neutralizer, which is I think why the taco shop. Even just on the other side of the desk, like moving your chair through sitting at each other without a desk. That says like, look, we're on the same place and really works. Yeah, I think that's helpful. Anything else as far as these messages or the people to people or minimizing that upfront anxiety, like I'm expecting an awful story. I think those are my big ones. I remember being really struck at the end of each interview with people have such a range of experiences. And yet they still a lot of people are still like, I want to make this work. And I wish that I was having better experiences because sometimes it makes it a lot harder. And it really is just being able to be that person and to say, like, hey, I'm just going to listen to you.

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Tell me what it means to you to be queer. That's such a simple, easy thing that people can do. And I think people just don't know that that's what they can do. And the results of these meanings, again, these moment meetings, they can be so binary that you're either leave on cloud knife thinking. There's hope, or you leave, this is just going to get worse and worse. Yeah, and we saw that. People said the meetings were really impactful on both ways. We had people saying that this let me feel really like I belonged in my ward, and then we have people saying, oh, this is the reason that I stopped going to church. And I guess I don't know what you do with that information as a leader, but understanding that people do experience these meetings is really impactful. And narrate their lives afterwards by the impact of the meetings. Yeah, that's helpful. So Tyler, you've mentioned that you're making an effort to get in front of ward and state councils, right? And I would imagine some leaders that's laughable you're married to a man, you're outside the church, and you want this audience, excuse me. But tell me more about that.

Yeah, so we want to talk towards the councils for 5 minutes and to do a really brief rundown of what we found because we think that just knowing what will help leaders lead better. And recognize in so many ways that neither Sam nor I are fully part of the church. And maybe those are actually the best reasons to invite us. Because we've been on the other side of the desk. And I think we've talked about our both Sam and I's goal is really to work within church frameworks. We're not interested in challenging doctrine or teachings. We think there's plenty of room in the doctrine and the gospel of Jesus Christ to be more effective ministers. And that's what we want to help people do. And we just think that there's a lot of people who if they had more information, they could be better leaders for LGBTQ+ members. Yeah, yeah. So let's say worst case scenario, they don't let make some time in order State Council. And they just listened to this episode. That would be great too. Any other message you'd add to this if you were in front of a State Council that we haven't covered already. I think for myself, those are the main points that I would share. It's just really beneficial to be able to kind of have people's feedback and to answer maybe not even answer questions, but kind of allow for more thought provoking Ness. And I think I'd say that just having these kinds of conversations and word and state councils and in wards and stakes are super helpful and just saying like, we're going to talk about LGBTQ+ members today. And the word in state councils that we visited have been the visits have been most effective. I think simply because the bishop or sick president said, this is something that matters to our border's sake and we are going to talk about it. I'm like, our part in the council's is really small, but the attention communicates like an understanding and an eagerness to learn. And there's a former stake president in Southern California that did something similar, but invited members of the LGBTQ community, their locally to come and talk and share their story and whatnot. And I think there's this dynamic part of the content where you're going to share. I think it could be a really helpful experience of maybe after the discussion saying, what do you feel like? Was it appropriate for me to invite Tyler here who's left the church and married to a man and living this lifestyle? How do you feel about that? And just to see where people are, I think it could lead to a great discussion. But is that a strong example of I'm not afraid of these people, right? I love that. I hope those discussions happen. And if people are willing to let us come, we also are interested in getting their perspectives. We're wanting to get information from church leaders about what they wish. Their perspectives on counseling LGBTQ+ members because we've talked to the members, but we haven't talked to church leaders. So we've built our own little like 5 question survey for church leaders that we're hoping to get people to also take to understand what they feel, what in their perspective has been the most helpful and yeah, that was my next question because you just talked to LGBTQ individuals, not that you may be interested in talking to leaders, right? Yeah, and if you can link to it in the show notes, we can give you a link for interested leaders. For us leaders, does anyone on a ward or State Council? Because we recognize this it's a gap, right? The experiences of members is like 50% of the interaction, but a leader could have said something really wonderful and it got taken really poorly and vice versa. With these points that we've considered, would you tweak or is there anything to add as far as if you're talking only to youth leaders? Because obviously this is something that may be happening more under the surface, but we'd like it if it didn't happen on the surface. When we remove that shame of it also, you don't have to go back in the closet for ten years, right? Right. Anything you'd say to the youth

leaders are around these things. I think I would just advocate for a bit more showing that you're open to having the discussion. So I think about the north start comments that we made before.

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If for me, growing up in young men, like if a church leader had said, anything that indicated that they were safe space to talk to. Even if I ended up not talking to them, I'd feel so much more comfortable being around them. And I wouldn't be carrying so much shame of I can't tell anyone about this. And there's this feeling of like we've built this framework somehow in our faith tradition of the bishop is like the only guy that can have the tough conversations, right? I would love if I was a bishop again just to even in the repentance process just sort of do the quote unquote paperwork of it. I am the guy that says you forgiven. I'm glad you made all this progress with your preschool adviser. Great. You know, you're good. Rather than all right, now we gotta get you in the bishop's office, right? Yeah, I really think young men and young women's presidencies and organizations are crucial. And at the risk of over speaking, I would say it's irresponsible for young men's and young women's presidency to not discuss LGBTQ issues in any given year. This should be a discussion that happens every year because the youth are having these discussions with their friends. And the youth are a lot more open and engaged in the topics. So I think it sends a really strong message when church leaders don't talk about it, that this is not okay and honestly, I think that it becomes challenging for straight and cisgender members when it can't be talked about at church because then they also deal with conflict about like, well, I love my friend Sally, who's lesbian and I can't talk. Just providing framework is helpful. Yeah. Interesting. So the last topic I want to explore is and maybe I'll introduce it with this. So every time as I was a bishop in an inner city area and so I get random calls either for welfare help or another was a people who wanted to get married. They reach out to me, hey, they really like my rate, you know, free. And they reach out. And I always would say, sure, I'd be happy to just need to meet with me before. And the way I saw it was it was an opportunity to get him in the church to get him in the bishop's office, see me face to face, to sort of diffuse, maybe create more safety, right? And then I also took, you know, we go through the details like when is it? Wedding details. And then I would always take a moment of just saying like, all right, so what's the deal? You're not coming to church. You're moving your transitioning into this stage of life. I believe that religion will really be busting your life. So what's up? And sort of create that dialog, right? So I love these principles and concepts come to the surface. And I realized that there may be, you know, the comfort and safety and initially we got to build that foundation of that. But at some point, we believe that we are representatives of Jesus Christ and we hold keys and at least some leaders and we promote unashamedly the covenant path, right? And so at some point, there has to be a discussion of, you do understand this, this is not the I do not endorse this director. I mean, what are your thoughts on that? Is it just because we can't just sort of be like, right? I'm just here not saying anything. And because there is some doctrine we

deeply believe in in a path that we want them to go on. So what comes to mind when we say that? I think yeah, I think about parents who have kids that are getting into things that they don't want them to. Most parents have rules about their house and what is in this not okay for kids. One of the most effective strategies I've seen for implementing and enforcing those rules is the same. You know, Johnny, if you do this, this is what's gonna happen, right? And you know that, right? Yeah. Cool. And that's it. It's relatively ineffective for the parent to like walk down in his room so that he can't get access to the cookie box. Yeah. I think that's a really helpful frame for church leaders too with LGBTQ+ issues. Really the only church leader on a local level that should really be concerned about it is the bishop. Bishop's the only one who'd be involved in any church discipline against an LGBTQ+ person. So if you're not the bishop, I think you can say phew, thank goodness on the picture figure this out. And if you are the bishop, I think a really helpful frame is to say like, okay, yes, I love you, I support you all of that. And you know if you transition, if you're in the same sex relationship that I will need to process excommunication against you, you know that's the case, right? Yes. Now, okay, awesome, done. I think that doesn't. I think that checks the boxes. And actually, no, no, one follow up, because I think a lot of the sensing is what it is that individual members are wanting and needing because some many LGBTQ+ Saturday censor wanting to repent are wanting to be in full fellowship. And that's a super important role again, mostly for the bishop to help them to get there. Sam, what would you add to that? Yeah. I think just from my own, I agree with everything Tyler said fast. From my own experiences and from something that came up in the interviews, there's so much power in hearing a church leader say, hey, you know, this is what the church says.

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And this is what I want for you. However, I also respect your decisions. So if this is what you feel is best for you, just know I'm here for you either way. Like if you choose to not go to church anymore, you can still talk to me. I still want to be your friend. And the church will always be here for you. And if you choose to stay, that's great, and we'll make the space as comfortable as it can be for you. So highlighting, obviously, this is the church's position. However, you have agency, and you should use that and know that I'm here for you either way. Yeah. That's such a powerful message. Yeah, and because it's at the core of Christ doctors is that concept of acceptance. You do realize, no matter what you decide, I just love you. And I'm your friend and whatever, and we will always save a place in the piece for you. If you need that, right? Yeah. Anything else to add to that? I don't think so. I really, but it's a really complicated position to hold. And I think a lot of LGBTQ+ members are met really often with people restating church doctrine and positions in a way that's actually super unhelpful. Right. Because I think it's generally safe to assume as a run of the mill member of this church that LGBTQ+ members know how the church feels that LGBTQ+ people, at least doctrinally. And so unless you're in a position to be spiritually in charge of someone, I think it's usually not helpful to bring up the

church's views. Because it's just, it's understood already. Yeah. Yeah, that's really helpful. Well, this for me and my personal faith experience, Jesus has been as has changed me, obviously. And I don't speak for anybody, but myself. That's the guy with the podcast. I just hear your stories in so many. And I'm just so sorry that you experienced this any level of trauma in the context of our faith and whatnot. That doesn't fix anything per se, but I hope you know all these one person recognize that. And I say that because there's such beauty in this church, right? And I just would want, as a leader, I want an individual to feel like even if you just have one primary sign that you love, like I'll play that once a month if you just come in and sit down and enjoy that because not because I want you in the club or I want you to repent or I want you to change your ways but I just want you to find Jesus some way. And maybe you think Kurt, yeah, I got him. And that's fine, but the way that I've experienced been so powerful life-changing that my hope is people listen to this. I hope people or maybe more intentional about how they can just carve off a sliver of Jesus and say, I can make room for that. What do we got to do? You can come and leave or whatever, but I just want you to feel part of this, right? I love it. And I appreciate that. And I think that's why the church and its teachings are so powerful is because when people are sharing it well, it's because it means a matter so much to them. And to communicate that and show someone, it is inherently beautiful. And sometimes that gets lost in translation and sometimes it feels bad, but that idea is super beautiful. All right, I'm always thinking of a last question. It's got their question. But maybe I'll just have you answer and Tyler, you answer first and then Sam, but if you were to speak to all those past leaders, especially maybe those that didn't handle it very well. Where are you at right now? And are you happy and like what? Are you okay? These are silly questions, but I think we sometimes lose sleep over it. So what would you say to those leaders? Yeah, I mean, thank you as the first piece because the majority of my interactions were good. And I'm really grateful for my church leaders, especially the ones in Miami and Memphis as I was really navigating. Let's just I'm really grateful that they held space for me. And I think to my earlier church leaders, I would say I understand, and I hope you learn. It would be like, and I understand, and I would still there'd be some firmness to it of like, you could have done better. And I'm not blaming you. I'm not carrying that around, but I hope you also use your negative experiences as motivation to keep moving. And I just, I really think we've got great leaders and mostly I see people who really want to do well. And are doing well with such limited time and energy. Yeah. And tell us about your happiness right now. Oh, really great. I'm feeling really happy. Yeah, I got married the last year, and that's been a real source of stability and happiness. There were several years that I actually legitimately wondered if I was ever going to be stable and happy. When I was leaving the church because it was so difficult, I loved the church. I loved the church, and my experience of living was very much of not being able to have something that I really wanted. And I didn't know that I would ever be able to let go of that. And it's been really nice last few years to feel like consistently stable and happy like I've been able to reorganize my life in a way that brings me meaning and purpose.

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And value and connection with others and spirituality. All right, Sam, how about you? If you were in front of all those leaders, the good and bad, the positive negative experiences, what message would you have for them and then tell us about your happiness? A lot of retweet to our title. Yeah, I feel really lucky that most of my church leaders were also very just good. Like very clearly there for me. Both bishops and young men's leaders and whatnot throughout and especially my mission president obsessed. So I would just honestly probably express a lot of gratitude of like I really appreciate that you were there for me and I felt that and that impacted me. I'm sure in many ways that I still don't fully understand. There's always room to improve, like please make those improvements, listen to what we said today. However, I recognize you're a person, and you're doing your volunteering all of this time to help people. And that's such a beautiful thing. So thank you for doing that. I appreciate that sacrifice. And then yeah, I am so happy. And my family very frequently is like, I've never seemed like a very emotionally expressive person until three ish years ago. When I just kind of began feeling and showing this joy because life is so fun. It's stressful sometimes, but like I'm so happy just to be living every day and to be around people and to just share good times. It sounds so cheesy, but it's true. That concludes my interview with Tyler and Sam. I'm so grateful for their willingness to talk with me and their openness to talking with me. Obviously they want to promote their research and get it out there, especially to individuals in this audience who are leaders in the church, but they're just so sweet and open and sincere and I hope you picked up on that as well. I want to make sure that you know where to go to find more information about their research to if you want to download their simple infographic, they really made it easy to review with maybe award council, State Council, whatever it be, and again, this would just be a great episode to send out to that group of people to say, hey, why don't you all listen to this? Let's discuss later. Obviously like Tyler said he's open to connecting via Zoom or in person where it is your located and making sure that you have this understanding and I get that there may be some trepidation or hesitancy to invite a former latter day saint individual into that conversation but really I mean Tyler is so I would have no hesitation in doing that. So but nonetheless, worst case scenario you can just listen to share this interview with those in your circle of influence there and have a discussion about it and then I'll put these links in the show notes, but you can go to LGBTQ Mormon research dot com and that sort of the main landing page if you want to reach out to Tyler, Sam, you can do that through that website. You can download the infographic or just look into more details about the research. So again, it's LGBTQ Mormon research dot com. And again, I'll put the link in the show notes. And I also want to squeeze in here the information about the upcoming north star 2022 conference is happening in Salt Lake City, Utah, June 9th through the 11th. Now you can either attend the full conference or they have specific leadership sessions that are actually free to attend for any church leader. You find all the information at north star, LDS dot org will link it to the show notes so you know exactly where to go, but this is a great opportunity to really jump in, seek deeper understanding and do so in a faith promoting environment. I highly, highly recommend that all church leaders make time for the north star conference that's happening June 9th through 11th, 2022. 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 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 of which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability