



Girls Camp, Grace, and the Bishops Office | An Interview with Emily Belle Freeman

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love with reading the scriptures. And there's several places that I do that. I teach a seminary class once a week, and then I do not miss this, come follow me, helps. And then on Thursday mornings at 9 in the morning, I run a institute class on Instagram that women from all over the world gather and the discussion, the comments are so much fun and we do an hour every Thursday together just women from all over the world. So Instagram Live type thing. It's a Instagram life. Nice. And you just watch the comments and they ask questions and you comment. They're brilliant women. It is this group of women that are just so good and we call it inklings institute is where it is. Cool. That's a handle. The handle. And everybody comes from, I mean, seriously, it's so fun in the morning because you just start watching all the nations come together and then really awesome just discussion that takes place in the comments as we do that. So it's been really fun. Yeah. Obviously this is a leadership podcast. So what some of the highlights in your leadership journey that you remember? Like the callings you've had, I guess. Yeah, so callings that I've had have been because now I'm 52. So a million different callings. I've served in the early society, I've served in the young women's, one of the callings that I've had frequently is girls camp director, which is one of my favorite callings and in fact, where I learned one of my greatest leadership lessons was from that experience, and then if you got to put a sign in your front yard, what you want to do run for your calling Sunday school is my favorite, particularly that 16 to 18 year old class, that's my favorite calling of all church callings. Yeah, yeah. And so I'm just jumping into one of these wormholes, but the girls camp director. If you were to give some hard and fast rules or principles in relation to making a successful girls game, where would you start? That's so good. So it would be what I learned from this one girls camp. I've probably been the girls camp director 14 times in my life. So like for some reason, that's just. When you got it, you got it. For at least God thinks it calls to me. But I had one in particular where I went up and they had the Y CLs come up the night before. It was going to be a state girls camp. The night before everybody else was coming up. And the camp director, that's all they wanted, was just the camp director, the Y CL, so we all went up the night before. Let's use camp leader. Yeah, you with camp leader, and it's that older group of young women. Yeah, 18, 19, maybe? Yeah. And we went up and the stake president had us all gather in the amphitheater and then he gave us a challenge for the four days we were going to be there and he said to the camp, directors, I don't want you to talk the entire time in leading situation.

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I'm going to invite you to let these Y CLs do all of the leading and the decision making and the resolving of conflict and the setting out the schedule and the asking of questions and all of these things and he said, if you will do it, I promise you you will have a camp experience like you've never had before. And so when we got done with the meeting, we went back up to our camp and we were just sitting around the fire roasting marshmallows 'cause you can't go to girls camp unless you roast marshmallows every night. And I said to the girls, okay, what do you think? Do

you like, do you want to do it? Or how do you want girls camp to go this week? 'cause I will support you in any way. You want. And they were like, yeah, we want to do it. And so we set up this plan and the plan was we would meet every night after everyone was in bed to go over how the day had gone, and to kind of line out what was going to maybe happen the next day. And then we had this little spot where if you ever had a question, you could come over and I would be like a 100% present for answering questions all during the day, but they would lead out. And so that no one got overwhelmed. We split the days up in thirds. So you only had to be in charge for your third of the day. And the other thing we did is split up the tent assignments. So each of those girls was a leader in the tent. And when all the girls drove up, that next day, I gathered all the leaders and said, we have been challenged by our state president to not speak in a leadership role the entire time we're at girls camp. So if you have anything you want to add, it either has to be at the night meeting or the morning meeting, or you could come to this place of counsel. But otherwise, we're just going to let the girls do it. And it was seriously one of the most amazing weeks of my life. And I led, but I led a group of 5 young women. I did not lead 40 young women that week. I led a group of 5 young women who kept coming and then would go back and whether it was explaining the schedule, whether it was conducting a devotional or whether it was resolving issues in a tent, those girls went out and did that job. And those nighttime around the fire pit marshmallow councils are some of my favorite memories of my life. As we would sit in brainstorm, what was the best part? What was the worst part? What would you have maybe done differently? What trouble do you see brewing for tomorrow, what could we do to make things go better? It was the best girls camp I've ever been to in my life. Just an amazing experience. And that's similar to the encouragement we have in general with the youth of letting them lead and not dominating that process. Which is so hard, right? When you look at it because that didn't mean I wasn't the leader, right? And I think that sometimes we get confused of what is my role, what is their role and do they teach every lesson? Do they plan every activity? Do they do all the shopping? Do they do, we would burn out an entire generation if that's what they were doing. And so learning to find that balance of I will be in this spot and you come to me at any time and tell me whatever you need from me. And I will do it. But then also empowering them and encouraging them to go forward and do their part. And finding the balance of not having too setting and expectation that was unachievable for someone who's in school and working a job and learning that balance of what will actually provide increase in progress and growth and what will overwhelm. And I think the spirit is really good at teaching that balance. And what I appreciate about that example that I think we miss is that you had a clear structure in place of we're going to meet every night and we're going to listen to you, how's it go answer questions, brainstorm, whatever you need, or there's this place you can come if you have an immediate question, right? And it may obviously look different for maybe a preschool adviser or a young young woman leader or whatnot, but say, how can we structure this in a way that they feel like they're leading, but they can still come back and ask questions and regroup and get our guidance if they need it. Yeah, because when you go into the workforce, you realize in every working situation, there's different leaders within the group that are providing allowing for that organization to run. There's never just one leader. There's layers of leadership. And I think part of it is harnessing all of the layers so that everything is working synergistically together. And it's when you can learn how to harness all of the leadership potential in a group that I think miracles happen.

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Any other girl scout. Girl scout girls camp tips that you'd let me think of there's anything else. I do one of my other favorite rules that I have is the first meeting we ever have with the ICL's. We call it a Disneyland brainstorm. The rule in the olden days Disneyland brainstorms is that nobody could say no. You could build on somebody else's idea, but you never said no. And I love doing one of those at the beginning of the example. Because at the beginning of girls camp, here's what you're planning all the food. Are you having sweatshirts, t-shirts, hats? Are you going to have crafts? Are you going to have devotionals? What are those going to look like? Are there going to be people that you're doing Secret Service projects for whatever, right? And a lot of times you come to those meetings and the girls come with these ideas that if you've ever been before immediately you're like, that's not going to work because this and that's not going to work because this. And that's not going to work because this. And then the creativity just plummets. And then the girls are like, well, we're not really in charge. So why don't you just tell us what you want to do? And I'm always like, let's just write up every single idea for sweatshirts for t-shirts for hats for what, like we're just going to write down everything. And then once everything is on the paper, then we will then go back and be like, okay, realistically, what's our best option in this category? But it's made for such fun girls camps because when you let the girls just go like that and the ideas are so big, you never have the same girls camp ever because you're always doing something else. Yeah. And I can see that model and also word counsel setting that let's just get the ideas out, let the revelation flow. And then we'll determine the practicality of it. Awesome. Love that. So what about you remember from your time as really excited president? Is there any highlights or if you were to do it again? You'd make sure you do this or that. So if I was going to pick one thing that I learned as a release society president, I actually had that opportunity twice once in a young married ward. Where I learned the most awesome advice about taking care of the welfare of souls. And then I had another experience where I was actually only the release society president for 18 months. And that's when I think I want to tell you about is when I got called into that calling, it was at a really weird time in my life and it felt like when the bishop came over to extend the calling, I was like, are you sure? Because I just, I don't know if this is right. My husband was serving in the bishopric at the time. So it was like two really busy callings at the same time. And in that short time that I was in, we had 5 moms in our ward who delivered 5 babies that all would end up dying. Every one of those. Those babies. In fact, there were 6 because one mom had twins, but one baby lived of the twins. And what that year and a half was filled with was hospital visits. Tons of hospital visits, some of those moms lost their babies right away and some lived for a while, but tons of hospital visits is what those years were filled with. And the interesting thing is, I had had a child with those born with diabetes that required lots of hospital stays for us. And from a very young age and what I knew was what it was like to be in a hospital. And I also knew what it was to raise a child with a severe health condition. And it enabled me to really be able to love those moms in a

unique way because I had experienced a lot of their same emotions and fears and lots of those things. And it made me realize that we may underestimate how God orchestrates callings. And that he puts people in at the right time. And in the right place, maybe because of what they can bring to the table in that moment, however, short or long, it is, and it's taught me to ask that question, why am I here? And why am I here now? What did God see in me that he felt like was so important for this ward for these particular months? I would be here. And so with those situations, a family who's gone through some trauma, you know, losing such a sweet loved one. I mean, what advice would you give to someone if someone's listening to this driving to the hospital? As the recite president and because just walking into that space as I don't know what to say, or do I not even go, maybe I'll just send flowers or I mean, any advice you give them walking into those situations.

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So I'll tell you a story that happened many years ago with my mom that was life-changing for me that I still, anytime I am driving to the hospital and I think about this. So when I was 12, my young woman's leader was pregnant and she lived across the street. And when you're 12 years old, you are like so excited about that new baby coming and everything about it. And I had come home and found out that that while I was driving home in carpool, that woman had actually lost that baby. It was born stillborn. And when I walked in the house, I told my mom that I just heard that our cute friend had had her baby and that it didn't make it. And I'll never forget my mom got the keys to her car. And drove away. Like, write that second. And she ended up going to the hospital and when she got there, there was a note on the door that said, you can't come in unless you check with the nurse's station, no visitors, et cetera on the door. But she just walked in and she saw her cute friend there, and she said, it was one of those moments that she was like, I had never happened to me before. I didn't really have words. I wasn't sure what to do, so she just climbed into the hospital bed with that cute neighbor and wrapped her arms around her and she said, we just cried for an hour we cried. And a couple weeks after that, that neighbor's husband came to my mom's house and said to her, I just want you to know you taught me a really powerful lesson when you came because it wasn't anything you said and it wasn't anything you did and it wasn't anything you brought. The fact that you were there made all of the difference and he said, I want to be something like that. I want to be there. Well, a couple months after that, my little brother was walking home from school and got hit by a school bus. And my mom got the phone call to come to where the ambulance was and she went racing out of the garage and this cute friend who had lost the baby was standing in the front yard and she was like, let me drive you down there. And then I'll go back and try and find your husband and this was like before pagers and cell phones and this is when your phone still hung on the wall. Right. And so she dropped my mom off, but she got in the ambulance and went to the hospital and this cute neighbor went home and started trying to find my dad who did real estate and no

one could get a hold of him. And my mom says, I'll never forget when we pulled up to the emergency room. And they opened the ambulance stores, the husband of that woman was standing, right at the back of the ambulance, and he stayed there until my dad came. He just stayed there until he got there, and I just think there's something really powerful about being there. Yeah, and that presence, right? Yeah. Wow. Yeah, and it takes off a lot of that because I remember being that bishop thinking, okay, what's that scripture I'm going to share? Nothing's coming. What do I say? But just being there and crying with them. Jesus wept that being in that spirit of it is fascinating for sure. So you recently published another book. How many books have you written at this point? Do you know what? This is so crazy and I really need to count because I honestly have no idea but nearing 30. So is that crazy? That is crazy. Is that include the journals that you do as well? Okay. Wow. And what got you into writing? So I spoke at a young women's fireside. And there was someone there who was like, you talk like a writer. You should write something down. And I was like, oh, that is so interesting. And I actually love writing. I took creative writing in high school because I just, I really actually love writing, but I had never thought I would write a book. Like it hadn't even occurred to me to do something like that. And so I just sat down and wrote something down and actually the first two books I turned in were rejected. It was the third book that finally made it, but it just was a process that I love. And so what was your first book about? The one that got rejected or whatever you consider your first book. The first book I ever wrote was on adversity. Okay. And there were too many books on adversity that year. And the lady I was working with said, we have way too many books on adversity, but I love your writing style. So write something else. And so I took that book and just put it into 21 things that I had learned about coming closer to Christ. So I took those things that were in there and then added to 21. I used to love to do a walk with Christ before Easter or before Christmas. So I was like, oh, maybe other people would want to do this, so I called it 21 days closer to Christ. And then they wrote back and said, we have way too many books with numbers in the title. Publishers are so frustrated. Yeah. Try something else. They told me. So the first book that got published was the ten virgins that I wrote.

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It has a number in the title. Yeah, I know and I did giggle when they said yes because I was like and Simon Dewey did all the artwork for that one and it was kind of took the parable and brought it to life in story form. And then right after that one, the next year they were like, we want to do we want to publish 21 days closer to Christ. Now, so they did end up going back and picking up that. Nice. That first one. Nice. And so your most recent book grace to become, it follows the first book, what was it? Grace where you are. Grace where you are. So this concept of grace is really fascinating to me. Because we have sort of a strange history with the concept of grace. And grace and leadership is like, in my opinion, so crucial. You can not lead effectively without the concept of grace. And I feel like we've, as a religious community, we have

intellectually understood this concept of your work, Brad Wilcox's work. I mean, there's so much out there, but the application of it gets a little bit tricky. It makes sense on paper, but then in our lives, it gets complicated. So why grace, why did you move towards this doctrine? So I feel like this is such an important I don't want to call it a theme or something to understand, but it's a really important concept that I feel like we are missing in our society right now. We're just not very good at giving grace. And I think it's because we actually don't understand grace. And so as you think about what grace is and where do you see it in the life of Jesus Christ, it helps us to understand it better. In our religion, we often use the word atonement where other religions might use the word grace. Like you almost don't, from my experience, you also don't hear the word atonement in other words the Christian denominations outside of ours. Yes, because they will talk about grace more or they will just use the name of Jesus to describe. We talk about an enabling strength that comes from the atonement. Which actually isn't really the right vocabulary to use for that because that enabling strength actually comes from Jesus. It comes by virtue of the atonement or because of his gift of grace, but it comes from him. And sometimes we actually replace the person with the event. Yeah, I almost forget it. We talk about it as like in the Star Wars concept the force. It's like this arbitrary force out there. No, this is a person. Jesus Christ. He did this thing that now enables us. Yes. And trying to bring him to the forefront and what I like to do when I talk about grace is just talk about what it actually does for us. What does it look like? When we see that gift of grace from Jesus Christ, what does that actually look like? And I think for leaders understanding everything that encompasses grace makes us such a better leader. So at the beginning, what I love to teach is Jesus will meet you where you are as you are. That's just true. And what he brings into that moment is grace. So if you think about it, the woman caught in adultery. She just comes into that situation with him. He doesn't wait for her to qualify. Somehow there's no after all you can do for that woman and adultery. Just immediately he meets her where she is as she is. Another great example is Paul. Saul on the road to Damascus. Right? He's carrying a letter in hand threatening the saints. Like, he did not qualify in probably our concept of what that looks like to receive grace. And yet Jesus came. He met him where he was as he was. In that moment and what does he extend is grace? And that first understanding grace where you are. I think it's important for us to realize the importance of story. The importance of actually meeting someone where they are as they are. We just show up into that space that is grace. Yeah. In that moment. And we see it. The woman at the well, we see going into the leper colonies. We see, just think of Jesus anywhere, and he just shows up in people's story. That's a really great principle for a leader. Yeah. Are you showing up into somebody's story or are you setting expectations that say, if you can, ABC, then you can enter into this place. That's not how Jesus did things. He just went in. So he would meet people where they were as they were, but he did not intend to leave them there. Right. And that's the second part of grace. So the first grace I love to call saving grace. Is it grace that heals wounds and rescues and delivers and saves? We would say saving grace. That is that first grace. It's that grace that meets us where we are as we are.

But then, because he doesn't intend to leave us there, right? He came to lift us up to where he is as he is. That's what he came for. And that is an exalting Greece. That's a grace that elevates a soul. That transforms and increases capacity. And it helps you to become something. That first grace, that saving grace helps you overcome. Sin and death. Exalting grace helps you become. And you're going to become like him. And I think that's the second job we have as a leader is to then once we're in that situation, we are in that story. We have a full understanding of what is going on in that person's life. Then we can lift. Because we understand, so then we can lift and say, okay, let's just go up this one stair. And see if this would be better for you. Could I help you become a better wife? Or a better friend? Or a better mother? How could Jesus coming into your life let you experience that kind of transformation? In your life, that's the second step that is this grace to become, that we all need so desperately, right? We all want to be better than we are today tomorrow. And that is a grace that allows for transformation. And lifting. And I think sometimes we accidentally lead with lifting first. We will just walk in and be like, quick glance, I think this is the best solution for you. This is what we're going to start working on, right? We don't meet people where they are as they are. We just lead with lifting. And if we can do that first, walk into the leper colony, or go sit at the well for a minute. If we could do that part well, and give people the grace to say, tell me what you're feeling. Tell me what your experiencing. Tell me what the hard thing is. Like, bring me into the story, so I can see what's happening, lifting is so much easier. At that point, because then we can take where they are. We invite Jesus into that story and then we are led to help lift and transform and help people become something that they couldn't become without him. Yeah. And so before that lift step, we just call it an acceptance stage. Yeah. And that's such a tricky thing about this because then there's these natural paradoxes that enter, where it's like, well, I understand why Christ was with that woman caught in adultery. But what if she was caught in adultery every single day? And we know what he would just be there. Every single day. But then we have this feeling just from our mortal experience of like, well, if that was my kid, by day ten, I'd be like, listen, you got to get in this figured out, right? Yeah. But crisis so much that acceptance there. And so we struggle with this concept of acceptance because we think, well, what if I accept them? And I'm really enabling them to change. That's like the paradox of acceptance is when we feel that love, there's nothing more we want to do than just change. And so I mean, I'm just thinking in the context of maybe the bishop's office. It usually people come in there and they're sort of motivated by a negative behavior that they're experiencing or they're doing in their life. And so we jump in and I was this bishop. Well, let's lift you. How's that Internet filter? Why don't you text me every night? And make sure you're good. But in its almost a skill set, it sounds so easy, but it takes practice to just be with that person and you often use the phrase like, do you know you could never change? You could do this the rest of your life. And I'd still be here. I would accept you completely. I just love you. How does that resonate with you, right? But come with me in the bishop's office there in that moment as we're trying to not move on to lift too quickly. Yes. So I think the important thing is at that first place where you are meeting someone where they are as they are. As we really lean in and listen to that well, we're going to see where they want to be lifted. So instead of it being our agenda, we allow it to be there agenda. And what they need. And loving well actually, in my experience, happens best with boundaries. I think that's really

important. I've heard someone talk about high love and high expectation. And if all you have is high love, it's a frat house. And if all you have is high expectation, it's a prison. So there's finding this balance in between and I think as you look at that, there's also a place for high trust, right? If I come into a situation, if I go into a bishop and I trust him, because I've seen what he can do, then I'm going to allow him to have high love and high expectation in my life because I trust him.

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That he can do something for me. And so I think if all we do is love big, that's not going to balance what needs to happen. And if all we do is set high expectation, that's also not going to balance well. And that's what I love about these two graces is one allows you to go into someone's story and sit with them there and be there. And love them in that place, but the high expectation allows you to set boundaries and ideals and those type of things that will move them into a transforming process. And that requires work, right? That requires I like to think of taking the yoke with the lord. I trust you enough to actually share the balance of this with you, and if I'm yoked to you, and you say turn the corner, I'm going to have to turn the corner because I'm yoked to you. So there's that shift between that grace that heals wounds and meet you in that place and sits with you into a grace that transforms you, that requires movement. That requires work. And the concept of expectations is really fascinating to me as it goes along with grace because and I have some radical, I'll be the first to say, I'm probably wrong, but I have some radical beliefs when it comes to expectation. And let me just think through this and you can correct me where I should be corrected. Or give me your perspective. But I often think of consider the atonement of Jesus Christ or the system he set up through the satomi, where God is set up. He sent his son to die for us, and you think we always talk about, do we have faith in Jesus Christ and his atonement. But as I sit with the concept of what does God's faith and belief and certainty when it comes to Christ's atonement, he has 100% faith that that'll work. His grace will reach us. And so when expectations entered, it also enters in the possibility of disappointment. And that's where I struggle that because I think that's where people struggle with grace. It's like, yes, I know God loves me. Yes, I know he offers grace, but he sure is disappointed in me all the time. And that's like, there's so much shame in that feeling of like, I just can't get it right, that it almost separates them from leaning in, right? And so now I'm rambling here. But the point being is that the high love and high expectations, I guess it becomes difficult of when we insert the expectation because and the love, right? That's where the balance comes in. And the trust. Because it is just a constant flowing of those three things at the appropriate time, right? And I think Jesus knows us so well. He allows that to take place. But let's look at what it looks like for like a real live person. So we had a boy move in with us when he was 18, wanted to turn his life around. And trusted that we would be able to help him do that so he came. And at the beginning, we brought him in with open arms, right? We just loved him. And that's what he was missing in his life was he just needed to be loved. He needed someone

to say, you're actually good at this. And we love having you in our home. And we will accommodate to what your needs are as part of loving you well, but we also set expectations, right? There were rules when he moved in, and I had told him when he moved in because he kind of what he brought with him was scary enough. It could be detrimental to our my family who lived in the home at the time. And so I had said to him, these are the three rules. And if you break them, we will help you find somewhere else to live. We will still love you, but we will help you find somewhere else to live, and he just knew that was those were the rules. And as time went on, I extended more and more love over and over again, but also we had to set more expectations, right? There were certain things that as we would come upon them, I would be like, oh, okay, we actually don't do that in this family. We don't hit people, you know? It doesn't happen. And so we would write it out on paper and he would sign it. He had all these little contracts on his door. And that was the expectation, right? The expectation went up on the door. Well, I'll never forget one night he came home, and he was like, wanted to go out. And in the beginning, we didn't let him go out very many places because you just weren't sure what was going to happen. And that was just part of the rule. You had to be home by 9, and things. And he was 18. So that was tricky. And he really wanted to go and I just did not feel good about it.

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I didn't feel good about it. So I finally was like, I don't think so. Here's some other things you could choose instead. No to that. And he said, why don't you trust me? When at what point are you going to trust me? And I sat there for a minute because I didn't want him to think he had built a lot of trust with us over time. There were places where I did trust him, and I kind of wanted to go into that. Like, well, what about this? And what about this? And what about, but the spirit so quickly just came back and immediately in my mind, the question came out, why don't you trust me? Have I ever done anything so far since you moved in, that led you down the wrong path? And as we're talking about trust, there's going to be moments where I'm going to have to trust you, but there's also moments where you are going to have to trust me. That's the balance. And this. And I watched that boy's life be transformed through the grace of Jesus Christ. I watched it. I'm still watching it happen. That transformation that's taking place, but it really is learning that how fluid it is to move between when is love needed and when is expectation needed and when is trust needed? And I think if we are feeling shame, then the part we're missing is love. Yeah. Which means we're just not leaning into love enough in that moment. And that works like with a bishop or a parent, but also works with the savior. If all we're leaning into is the rules, we become parasitical. That's what happens. And if we don't understand how he loves us, then we should turn our scripture focus for the next little bit to show me what it means to be beloved. Yeah. Show me that. And teach me that. And let me learn what that looks like in my life. So that I can trust your expectation. For me. Yeah. So taking it back to the bishop's office context for example, like when an individual comes in and maybe

there's a struggle with pornography and how do you insert the expectation in there because I think the trap a lot of leaders fall into is they insert that way too early and it's like great, I'm glad you came in here now in a week and I expect you to not mess up again. Like whether that said or not. And then they want to go you off a little bit because I went into a counseling session once with a good friend of mine who asked if I would come who had a pornography addiction. And but had never been to counseling. So he was super worried about entering into that situation. And I have a counselor who I just love. So I was like, let's just go visit him once, just once. And then you can decide. And when we went in and sat down, he got to know him. He asked him questions asked where he came from and kind of what his story was and then he asked him about what he was struggling with and he said pornography and the man said to him, tell me what you've tried. Tell me things that you've done in the past and like he really took time to figure out where he was what pornography means to this person right now. And then this is my favorite part. He said to him, I'd love to work with you. This is what you need to know right off the bat. You're going to mess up as soon as you leave this office. And you'll probably mess up three more times this week if you are struggling that much. My job is to help you figure out what to do after you mess up. That's my job. And so when that happens, I need you to reach out to me and say, this is where I'm at because then I can help you figure out, oh, this is what you actually should have done to prevent this. So that pretty soon you're only messing up once a week. And then you're messing up twice a month, and pretty soon we will have given you the tools to overcome this. And when I sat there, I was like, I love that you just acknowledged he would mess up. And that's what you're here for. Is actually the mess up. That's what you're here for. Because all of a sudden that boy was like, oh, okay, yeah, I think I could actually enter into that kind of a situation. Yeah. And then the expectations if you approach the expectation is this come later of now if you want to maintain a healthy life and not rely on this numbing agent, here's the expectations type thing. Is that? Yeah, well, and just moving a little at a time. First, let's put a lock on your phone or let's try that for a week and see. Did it work? Did it not work? Okay, why did it not work? What else do we need to implement? You know where you're working with that person and being like, my goal and your goal should be the same.

00:40:02 - 00:45:04

And it is this outcome. It's this becoming, so we both have the same goal for you. Now, let's work together to get there. Yeah. Yeah, and those goals and expectations and things is what is the growth agent. Nice. Any other concepts of as far as grace that we tend to miss generally speaking. You know what? I was in the car with my daughter and her roommate, the other day and I was like, define grace for me because I love to hear people's definition of grace. And she said, grace is allowing for mistakes. And I was like, that is so interesting. And no one has ever said that to me before and I've asked that question a million times. But that really is true. Grace is actually allowing for mistakes. That is grace. And also making space for growth. And I feel like

that is what we're missing in society right now. We actually do not allow for mistakes. If you make a mistake, we cancel you. Right. Right? That's like, that is what happens. There's no grace there. Because what should really happen when you make a mistake is someone should say, you just made a mistake. And I'm going to recognize that you actually did something wrong there. But I'm also going to give you room to change. If you want to. And I will help you, too. If I'm the one offended, I will help you be able to change. What if that's what society looked like right now? And we gave each other the grace to actually be able to grow. Yeah. And so let's insert the doctrine of repentance in here. With that background, that context, what is the process of repentance look like? Because sometimes we boil down and while there's 5 steps, right? And maybe those are helpful for a younger age or whatnot. But grace and repentance because sometimes there's this feeling of go and say no more. There it is. You're forgiven, right? And so what thoughts come to mind? So I actually should tell you I'm someone who does not believe in the ours. Okay. What we're on the same team is that accidentally put you into a repentance that is more like penance space, which I don't, as I read scripture, I don't necessarily think that is what is being taught there. I love when you think of that word repent, if you look up the Hebrew definition and the Greek definitions and you start studying that word, it actually means to turn again or to turn back to and so if you were to build a continuum, and you add Jesus on the right side, and on the left was weakness. And you're moving along that continuum. And repentance means just to turn again to or to turn back to, then in a given day, how many times am I facing Christ and how many times am I facing my weakness? Whatever it is. And like think about it. Anytime I feel contention, weakness. Anytime I'm feeling overwhelmed or fearful, also weakness, right? I'm going to that place that is like, makes me doubt, it makes me feel shame. It makes me feel disappointment. And all through the day, that's going to happen to me. But every time I stop in that moment and turn again to Christ, that's repentance. So for me, today, what did repentance look like? It looked like my prayers this morning. When I turned again to Christ. In a moment of doubt, it looked like stopping in that moment and saying to myself, why are you having so much fear over that situation? Your God is greater than that situation. And it was turning again to that faith. That's repentance. So when you look at a situation of grace, we all have weakness. There are things our capacity will never be big enough for. But with his enabling strength, then yes. And so anytime I turn again to him for strength or you would say I repent and look for grace, that's the same line both ways. I either repent and access his grace or I turned to him for enabling strength. That's the same. That's repentance and grace working. Yeah. And so and this is where I'm going to ask you some impossible questions. I realize this, so I don't expect to have the perfect answer. These are just dynamics that are difficult with so many times a bishop for example, that's usually where this quote unquote repentance is happening. We naturally turn into spiritual parole officers. We're just like, I don't know what to do or say you should just stop what you're doing and but maybe you should come visit and you don't seem to stop doing that.

Okay, let's go. Let's go 7 days and then we can start taking the sacrament or 14 days, right? We get in the it turns into this math equation, right? And so as somebody is struggling and going to the bishop, what is that process for in order to help people turn? What are bishops supposed to be doing impossible question? I realized. What thoughts come to mind with that turning process? My first thought is what is a bishop's supposed to be doing would be like, I always like to think of my bishop as if he's Jesus, right? He is the representation of Jesus in my life. And what does Jesus bring? Healing. That's his, that's what he does. He brings healing. And so as I look at that situation, I'm like, what that person is coming for is healing. You might call it a pornography addiction. You might be calling it a relationship issue in a marriage. We might put a tag on what it is and eating disorder or whatever. But what that person really is walking in that room for is healing. That's what they want in that moment. Something is broken. So the pornography is their current band aid for the thing that is broken and I think that's where you go back to that first grace. Which is, I need a better understanding of where the hurt is coming from. That's what I've got to figure out. And we're probably not smart enough. But the spirit is smart enough. The spirit is smart enough to know, and I think as we lean into what the spirit is saying, that healing will come in stages. It'll come in stages. If the person is willing to, I mean, the hard part is everybody has agency. And there may come a time in somebody's story where they're like, I actually don't want to take the yolk. I actually don't want to turn again to Christ. Right now. And we can't someone has to be ready to turn it into Christ. Someone has to be willing to take the yolk. And so is every situation going to be success? No, because agency. And that's the other part is leaning into when that person walks into the office. Are they fully engaged in wanting healing? Yeah. Because that's when the greatest work, and that healing, as we have so many resources like therapists and what not to say, wow, there's something going on inside you that when you bring in some professional counseling, and unwind this, so we can approach this better. Yeah. All right, next impossible question is as far as grace in this administrative processes we have in relation to membership councils, people can do things to the point that they're membership is removed. And I've heard this more often than not that sometimes a state prison may be in this point of view where they almost need to make this a little bit this process really difficult. So that this person will think twice the next time they want to do something. There's almost this, I need to punish you just enough when in reality Christ, he handled that part, right? And so these larger like you're trying to get re baptized and get back into get your blessings are stored and whatnot like from your point of view in this doctor and like what is that process for and helping people turn or what's the point of all that? So I once had this conversation with my dad when I was very young. Like I wasn't even married yet. I was so interested in that. And he told me something that I thought was so interesting. And I think it is good for us to realize this as membership of the church, but also those who are in leadership. My dad said to me, you have to remember those meetings are not the way out. They're the way in. It's the way into relationship with Jesus, not the way out of relationship with Jesus. And it most likely occurs because someone has come to the point where they say I want to turn again to Christ, but that relationship has been severed enough that that turning back into relationship actually requires a fresh start, a clean slate. It requires a coming back in through a process of realigning back with him, and I love that idea of those that it's the start. It's the beginning. It's the

entering back into relationship. It's the turning again. And sometimes in those situations, people decide they don't want a relationship with Jesus, and they do walk away. But in the moments when someone is like, okay, this has now provided me an opportunity to become right with God again, and they do enter in those are such sweet moments.

00:50:10 - 00:54:31

That happened there. And I think some of it is just the way culturally we look at it. From my perspective, I want it to be the opening of new relationship. When that happens and being able to turn again and walk back into this relationship with Christ that because of choices or where our emotions or our heart is facing at the time, it's severed that relationship. So it's that just bringing that back together again. Really helpful. So grace, grace to become, obviously, published by desert books, so you're probably going to see it on the bookshelves in there. It's out. It's out that came out in March. And then they can pick up your grace where you are. Where you are. You should also be there. And jump into this. And these aren't like, as I've read them, they're not like this heavy doctrinal book. But it's a way to explore at least for me it was like a way to explore these doctrines in a very uplifting and encouraging way, right? Yes. And that is what I'm hoping for with those is you're not going to be picking up a doctrinal reference manual. I want it to be a sweet read. You know that you just get in, there's a lot of story in there. And interspersed with scripture everywhere, because I love the scripture, but it's mostly a coming to know Christ with eyes that you may have never used before. Nice. Well, thank you for answering my impossible questions. I think you did quite well. Well, I don't know if I did very good, but good conversation. They're just worth exploring because then I feel like a lot of people, they just sort of assume all the bishop knows the answer to these like he's already thought about. I've been that visual and like, I don't know. So I think it's worth just creating that space, exploring it, whether I'm right, whether you're whatever, we're cheering and learning that way. So the last question I have for you is and this is softball questions in relation to all the impossible questions I asked. But going through this really sitting with the doctrine of grace. How is that enhanced your health to become a better follower of Jesus Christ? So one of the things that understanding grace has helped me to know is how well he loves us. Not just how much he loves us, but how well he loves us and how he does want to enter into our stories. Also how accepting he is of people and how generous he is with his love. And inviting people in to sit with him and I think I watch him do that so well and it makes me want to be better at doing that myself. That concludes this episode of the leading saints podcast. We'd love to hear from you about your questions or thoughts or comments. You can either leave a comment on the post related to this episode at leading saints dot org or go to leading saints dot org slash contact and send us your perspective or questions. If there's other episodes or topics you'd like to hear on the leading saints podcast, go to leading saints dot org slash contact and share with us the information there. And we would love for you to share this with any individual you think this

would apply to, especially maybe individuals in your word counsel or other leaders that you may know who would really appreciate the perspectives that we discussed. And remember, to get on the email newsletter list simply go to leading saints dot org slash 14. 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 to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability