



Sanctifying Gathered Israel While We Gather Scattered Israel | A How I Lead Interview with Tim Welch

May 11, 2022

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Let's talk about the plague of pornography for just a minute. Wow. This is one of the biggest issues that so many deal with in these latter days, but few talk about it, or even know how to talk about it. And when they do talk about it, it's usually in a private setting with a leader who is expected to know how to navigate struggles with pornography. Thankfully, leading saints has put together a remarkable resource called liberating saints. It's a virtual library with 25 plus presentations focused on helping leaders be better prepared to help someone overcome struggles with pornography. We cover topics like how to minimize shame when the bishop's office, how to talk with children about pornography, and even how to talk about female pornography use in relief society. If you'd like to review the liberating saints library at no cost for 14 days, simply go to leading saints dot org slash 14. That's leading saints dot org slash one four. While you're at it, we'll give you access to all of our virtual libraries that cover several leadership related topics. So click the link in the show notes or simply visit leading saints dot org slash 14th. President Tim Welch welcome to the leading saints podcast. Thank you, Kurt. Nice to be here with you today. Nice. Well, and you've had the opportunity to have that title president through a variety of callings in your time. But right now, maybe tell us what, how do you end up with the title of president? Well, I've been serving here the MTC for a while, service of branch president here when we came home from our full-time mission experience in Ohio. And then about 5 months ago was called the serve as a counselor here in the empty seat presidency alongside of president Benson Porter who's here. So it's been a good experience my wife

serves as a counselor in the empty sea release study presidency. So we're kind of both back into this full time at the MTC. We see senior missionaries arrive on Monday and we'll get a new group tomorrow at the MTC of young missionaries. So it's a vibrant pace and a fun experience to see wonderful dedicated missionaries. Yeah, and this is the Provo MTC, right? You have all the numbers and standards that comes with that, right? Yes, we do. It's kind of a slow season right now. We have maybe 500 missionaries right now. We get another 140 tomorrow. So we're kind of gearing up for the surge that will happen after high school graduation late June and July. So right now it's not quiet, but it feels like only relatively speaking. And you recently served as the mission president of the Cincinnati Ohio Michigan. Is that right? Animation from 2016 to 2019. We had 553 young missionaries and in addition to that, we had just over a hundred senior missions. As we had a large family history centered up in Fort Wayne, Indiana. So we had a lot of senior missionaries that have been just a remarkable experience. Just turning life-changing for us. So being familiar with how the just from your experience serving in a mission presidency in Ohio, how is it different serving in a mission presidency for an empty seat? Oh, it's dramatically different. I think the empty seat is more like a multinational organization. The NTC is a large operation here with a large campus of buildings that you may be familiar with, but also involves the large group of 700 missionaries returned missionaries that are training. We have security. We have the cafeteria. Plus we have the ecclesiastical side, which is our primary stewardship is with ecclesiastical leaders in missionaries, their experience on Sundays and Tuesday evenings in the welcoming sun Thursday. So it's quite a bit different. There's such a wide range of responsibilities that the empty sea, and it goes much beyond just the day to today work of helping and training and assisting missionaries. So it has a much broader reach. Yeah. And so one of your responsibilities you say is over the ecclesiastical portion of the MTC? That's primarily the focus of the MTC presidency. Now we also have response, there's always a kind of tie us to the professional side of the MTC. I have training responsibilities, so I work with the training team here at the MTC. But our focus primarily is from an ecclesiastical perspective with a 120 ecclesiastical leaders that are here, and then all the missionaries that we have branches on Sunday, devotional Sunday nights, and during the week on Tuesday night, we always have a visiting authority who's here with us. We have dinner with them at 5, and then the devotional at 7. And then we welcome missionaries with our branch presence in their counselors and branch missionaries on Thursday evening.

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So it's a fun, fast paced, engaging experience. Yeah. And then so you have roughly 500 missionaries there now. Okay, that's a very similar to your Ohio mission. That's roughly the same as what we had for the whole time that we were in Ohio. So yeah, we have 500 now, which is kind of a relatively low number, but we have in addition to that, we have about 75 senior missionaries that are here a week ago, we welcomed a 120 senior missionaries. That's the

largest group we want to see here with the MTC. Nice. And do you have any idea what the capacity is as far as like pre COVID numbers, the Provo MTC? What we're calculating right now is that it's about 30% less than the pre COVID numbers because missionaries who are speaking English do one week at home and those are speaking languages for languages. They do two weeks at home. So if we had a pre COVID max capacity of about 2200, if you discount that by 30%, that would tell you what about the same level. Maybe 16, 1700 would be here. We actually can't do have a capacity although. We've never had that many missionaries here of just over 3000. But I think the max and some are 22, 2300 in the pre COVID world, which would tell us right now that that's going to be 16 or 1700 is what we might see maybe by August or September for the shoot. Wow. Interesting. Yeah. That seems like 22 years ago or so when I sat in that auditorium for devotional, I would guess there probably was 3000 or so. Missionaries sitting there. And then currently English speaking missionaries are spending a week at home. And I don't expect you to divulge any insider information or anything if it's not public, but the ongoing plan for the unforeseen future. I think the reviews and all the sort of analysis that's been done is extremely favorable. There may have been some discussion about whether or not that was going to be changed, but I think now we're finding missionaries coming here. They're anxious, they're well prepared. Some of the things that we've experienced before that we've had to deal with or that when they arrive in the field, mostly related hopes and homesickness and other things. It just seems to be a sweet positive experience for them. So we ask that question when the brother in here frequently on Tuesday evening. And my sense is that generally speaking, the reviews have been very, very favorable. And my children are still quite young. I haven't had my own missionary out per se. But the empty sea involved quite to any level during that first week or do they have just going through a workbook or no new meetings. That's all the M two suit. Under the direction of the MTC. So Kelly males who is here at the program to see is the administrative director for empty seas worldwide. So it's really his team, all the work that's done in terms of the online material is done under the direction of Kelly and his team of trainers. So the large group meetings that they have every day of the week and also the individual training sessions with their teachers, all of that's done online via Zoom and all that's done under the direction here at the MTC. So it's interesting. It is an empty experience. Yeah, that's great. And so if you're speaking a foreign language, I assume Provo, MTC still has those to some degree or no. That's Ken packers domain with the foreign language speaking missionaries. But they'll participate in the same large group meetings. They have a little different content for training the second week, but all of that's done at the direction of Ken and his team for all foreign language speaking mysteries. This experience. And they'll stay there a couple of months. They'll do the first two weeks at home, and then depending on the language. And they have this categorized by language numbers from one, two, or three. So if you're speaking a language would say might be Spanish, which is generally considered to be something that would be a little easier to learn. You'll have you'll have four weeks with us. If it's a language like an Asian language, if you're doing Mongolian or if you're learning Mandarin or Cantonese, or some of the Eastern European languages you could be here as many as 7 weeks, that's beyond your two week at home experience. Oh, wow. Wow. So I'm curious just from your experience serving as a mission president, now having this experience in the MTC, that training component. What would you go back in time and tell yourself as a mission president or even maybe as a stake president in preparing young men and women for missions that this may be more

profound now that you're in their current role? I don't know that it would be dramatically different, certainly not as a mission president.

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I don't think I probably wouldn't teach a lot of things more differently. Again, I think as an ecclesiastical leader, we're probably thinking about things a little differently than the professional side teaching and training missionaries how to be missionaries. But I think the overarching principles that I think I would teach and try to teach now were pretty much the same with what I was teaching the first year of being in Ohio, which is really. Is God's work. And the doctrine behind that is, if we read from second if I chapter 27, he says it in verses 20 and 21, and you can sense that he's teaching this with sort of a very emphatic demeanor that I am able to do mine own work. He says it twice. And clearly, not just in the missionary context, but in the broader context of our experience and the church, his work is us. It's you and I, that his work in his glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. He can do the work. And I think what it means then is that we need to surrender our will to his will and invariably that what that looks like I think for most of us that we need to teach a little bit more about becoming holy, a little bit more about personal sanctification. But what that looks like, what it feels like, and just to be deeply invested in it, I do think there can be sometimes. And I felt this is a mission president where sometimes when we get so caught up in teaching goal setting and planning and teaching the intricacies of finding people and extending commitment invitations, which are all really good, sometimes we get lost, we put the things that matter most at the things that matter least as Steve Covey would teach us. I really think what we have to remember if we connect ourselves and remember whose work this is, the inverse 23 of that chapter that I was referring to, he tells us he says this, behold, I am God. And I'm a God of miracles. And I will show it to the world that I'm the same yesterday today and forever. And then he says this. And I worked out among the children of men say that according to their faith. So how we engage God in the work is we exercise faith. And that's shown in a variety of different ways. But generally, it's acting, it's doing something. And so I think as leaders, whether it's here at the empty C or in the mission field or even in our home ward, I think what it's about is we need to find a way to access God's power more fully by changing us and becoming a little bit more holy to seeking a greater measure of sanctification. We don't have to be perfect in this work in any of us. We don't need to do that. But to a greater extent, as we access this power by focusing on us first, we become clean. It's sort of the constant theme that we talked about with engaging members in the work. I think members get two there are two concerned about offending a neighbor by sharing the message of the gospel. And I think what we were trying to help them understand is, is God's doing the work. He tells us in section 88 that I will hasten my work at its time. He tells us in section 30 one that I will gather my elect from the four quarters of the earth. I will open the hearts of the people and they shall receive you. He's doing the work. What we need to do is bring to this a measure

of holiness. So what we need to do is just become a little more sanctified. Become a little bit more clean. In the process, God will create all these intersecting points where we have the opportunity to show the gospel likely with people we don't even know who they are. That's how it works. And that's how we saw it happen over and over and over again. So I think we need to think less about the process of how this works and think more about the principles associated with what do I need to do to change my life. When I focus on me as a leader, to becoming more clean, more holy, less judgmental, more kind, more considerate, more empathetic, then the power comes. We can access probably power that's really needful in this greatest of all works is this. Yeah. And so I'm curious as a mission president in Ohio. How did you go about making sure that those principles were paramount because it's so easy to sort of will try and will these things into the existence and I'm going to make this miracle happen when we needed to create space for faith there. So as a mission president, how did you approach that to keep your missionaries engaged? Well, it is always a challenge. I learned early on that when everything is important, nothing is nothing is important.

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So if I start talking about 5 things, they have trouble remembering what I think is the most important or what sister Welch and I were trying to teach them. And so this issue that we're talking about here in terms of holiness about personal sanctification. I felt like it sort of I had to define my ministry based upon that. And then that still gave me enough latitude that we could teach the principles in preach my gospel. The first, really, the first 6 chapters are more about this that we're talking about. They're more, they deal more with preparing oneself from the inside out. Except for chapter 7, which is about language, the following chapters beyond that. The 6 chapters beyond that are about skill based training. And so I think they're needed to be, we needed to do both, but I found that as soon as I got very, very far away from the central message, which is being wholly being clean, they drifted pretty fast. And so I somehow felt like in every meeting of with missionaries and in interviews, it was something that I couldn't get very far away from. We had to stay connected to the central theme is, number one, this is God's work. We access his power to do his work based upon us, our cleanliness, our holiness, our own efforts to be sanctified. So it was a challenge. There's no question. I think as it is for every leader, but I think the more that you can stay home and stay with the things that you really care about and will make the greatest difference. I think it's easier to stay on message. And with that message of staying wholly and clean and did that, was there a clear message of the obedience in the mission and obviously making sure you're worthy to be there and whatnot or is that how it was typically interpreted in applied? Yeah, I think so. I mean, it was more taught like this. I would, I would say. Before as rebellious Israel came out of Egypt and they had waited a time and before God was ready for them to return, returned to the Holy Land to reclaim that land. Joshua was gathering its troops together before they go back in. This is a hedonistic group of

people who were occupying that land and I think God was grateful to have Joshua and his team and the Israelites go back into it. But of all the things he could have said, what he says is, I mean, you might think you'd be talking about battle strategy and sharpening swords, but in Joshua chapter three verse 5, he's reminding him that this. And this is sort of the theme that would have been central to the things I taught in Ohio and it really here with missionaries. He says this sanctify yourselves for tomorrow the lord will do wonders among you. So that's sort of the broad message. It connects us with God if we seek to sanctify ourselves, sure we've got to be able to teach the skill based aspects of missionary work, but I felt like for me it was more important to have senior mystery leaders doing that. I mean, I love to teach you about goal setting and planning and love to teach about finding. But I felt like my ministry really had to stay centered and focused on this sort of holistic aspect of missionary life, which is none of this is going to matter if you're not getting up in the morning. That's how we exercise faith when God said that I worked not among the children men said they'd be according to their faith, you can't access God's power if you're sleeping in. Or if you're getting in late or if you're spending an hour and 20 minutes rather than 59 minutes with members. So I would talk about that repeatedly about what it looks like. But I tried always to start with just the central theme we need to be clean. The spirit will direct you. It will provide you with the information you need. The spirit is the ultimate the quintessential teacher of gospel topics. And it will work with you. You don't need me whispering in your ear in the morning to get out of bed. You know that? The more that we have missionaries who are clean and seeking to be wholly, I remind them, and I'll talk to them, but the spirit is the ultimate director of helping us get realigned and frankly to be perfectly honest with you. We did it. We had some instances with missionaries that struggle the vast majority of them. I think really sought to be clean. They understood what it meant like meant to look like to be holy. And I, you know, that's one of the proudest things that I think for a sister Walter and I both is that we had missionaries who really bought into this idea that we were trying to become sanctified as a mission.

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And then let God do the work. We'll take it if there are a lot of baptisms if they're not any baptisms. As long as we're working hard and exercising faith and doing everything we can do to be clean, it's his work. Yeah. This is where we leave that to him. Yeah, I really like that. Because we sort of run into the similar dynamics with leading saints. We love the new cool idea or tactic or approach of hitting the numbers or whatnot, but to sort of step back and just say, well, let's do our own work first before we worry about doing other people's work. Let's sanctify ourselves and then naturally we'll say to buy others as we get in that frame of mind rather than the cool new tactic, right? Well, I think there is a kind of great seduction for leaders sometimes in the church where we bring things from our professional life into our life as an ecclesiastical leader. And I think we've all done that from time to time. And we have a tendency to start thinking

strategically. About things that we can do and to communicate messages. And I think it's great. I think it's fine. And I think those things need to be talked about, but I don't think it's the wrong question. I think when we're thinking strategically about things in this work, it's God's work. And really, the essence, I think, behind really outstanding leaders in the church at any level at award level or to stay level or certainly all the senior leaders in the church headquarters, they model what it looks like to be holy and to clean and then having a vision for the work and understanding how you can help and minister primarily to the one. It makes more sense then. But God will teach you he'll teach us as to how we can reach out and minister one by one. I've heard over bednar say he said that something to the effect that his experience is a member of the corner of the 12 has taught him that he will send members of the 12 all around the world. And they'll speak at leadership conferences and at stake conferences, he says, but invariably, what I've learned, it's about one person. It's about finding a way in a situation to minister to one. And I really, I think that's the essence of what it is we're trying to do here in any aspect in any role of leadership. And in consequently, I think if there is a panacea for leadership in the church, it's fixing me. Me become more clean. Me to become more holy. And then trust in the process that with all the resource material that the church has given us, which is extraordinary, that coupled with the direction from the spirit, which is the ultimately ultimately the greatest teacher, then it's hard for me to really make mistakes that are catastrophic. Even cats with me can somehow find a way to get through this experience without destroying the church. We can still do it. We trust that God will help us. He'll bless us, but I think he's asking for us. He's reminding us that it's his work. First and foremost, it's his work. And that's true whether you're a primary teacher, your mission president or a bishop or whatever you do in the church picks me. Work on me. I need to clean. I can repent more. I think that's what he wants. He wants us to bring him parson hands that are clean and pure. And then he'll give us the opportunity to work miracles in the sacred work. And then oftentimes, missions get a bad rap when it comes to numbers and sometimes overly focused on numbers and results and whatnot. Obviously, I think generally most people agree that there's a time and a place and a purpose for numbers and so with this message, like I would imagine, there still comes a time for production and results. How did you balance that or did you? Well, you know, I honestly would tell you that I never felt like that it was my role to balance that. I felt like the missionaries purpose were there too. They were there to teach with pennis baptized converse, but I didn't think that was my role. I thought my role, and I know that there can be some misunderstanding among different mission presidents about that topic. And I think there is a tendency to feel like there's a an encouragement to baptize, but when I speak privately with a brother and about it, what I sense more than anything else is this sort of seating a difference. They're not concerned about the numbers. They're concerned most especially about what happens to missionaries when they come home. That's the overarching concern, I think, among the brethren about life in the mission field. So that doesn't mean we shouldn't do everything we can. Every possible thing to exercise face so that missionaries are fulfilling their divine mandate to preach the gospel of repentance and baptize converse.

We should be doing that. And I think the miracles baptism will come, but honestly, I didn't feel like I spent a lot of time illuminating about convert baptism numbers. What I was concerned about is that we were doing what we should have been doing in alignment with what God wanted us to do. And that's primarily engaging members in the work because when that happens rather than just missionaries going out and finding people sometimes if there's a lot of emphasis on baptizing, they end up in neighborhoods they shouldn't be in teaching people that really don't have a hope of being real active in the church. But when we engage members, we have this capacity to enlist a faith multiplier where we have a lot of members that are working with us and I think ultimately is what God wants us to do because he's, I believe this, courteous, he's as equally interested in sanctifying gathered Israel as he is in gathering scattered Israel. And I think that's where this faith multiplier can be a blessing to the church as missionaries engage with members and exercising faith that's what every priesthood leader in this church wants. I think every bishop every branch president, when we talk to him about missionary work, some of them can roll the rise and say, well, the last 5 converts that came to our branch are less active. Why should I get engaged in missionary work? The message to that is always about increasing faith among members. If we can find ways to be able to increase faith, we become more active in the church, likely. We'll have temple recommends and participate in temple worship more often and pay tiding. Those are all things that every priesthood leader wants. And I think we need to sort of reshape the message a little bit. I think as leaders as it relates to missionary work so that leaders trace the leaders, it really needs to be them that are directing the work of finding through members. And the extent to which we can see that happen in our mission, we went from pretty low numbers of retention levels and high teens to low 20s to near the end of our service and the high 70s and mid to high 80s in some of our stakes because the everything changed around finding two members. And I think I think when we make this issue about baptism, we miss the most important messages that what are these what are these young missionaries going to be doing in ten years? They're going to be faithful in the church. If they hadn't experienced it really transforms them. That can't be measured by comfort baptisms. It's measured by a deepening in faith and personal conversion in this sacred work. That's what meant the most to me always it meant the most. Wow, that's powerful. And I'm curious if you have any more insight on just that relationship between local leadership and missionaries. Sometimes there's this passive aggressive awkward push and pull that that's happening there and sometimes I feel I'm currently serving in our word mission and sometimes I feel that as well sort of expectation that the missionaries bring to us as award and we're like, well, we sort of have expectations for you and then there's this silent battle that is happening with smiles. Anything that you learned or insight you have as far as dynamic between local leaders and missionaries. Well, I can just tell you from my own experience what I found. And I think what I found mostly was what you're describing. And I think is sort of generations of us as missionaries as full-time missionary admission presidents and missionaries. I think we're asking members sometimes to engage in high risk activities where I don't think that's what the lord wants us to do. And again, you're hearing my opinion about this topic. Right. But here's the thing, is when I have to take over some warm bread to the neighbors that have lived by us for 5 years and hand them the bread and then maybe invite them to come to a family home evening. That's high risk

behavior. And there will be some members that will do that or talk to the person that they are at work with. About it. But we get very few members that engage with us because it is high risk. We were putting at risk a relationship. And I think if we can change the message, and this is what we were trying to say to our state presidents. What we want you to do here is just simply this. We teach the doctrine about finding which were some of the things that I refer to earlier, God's doing the work. I will hasten my work in this time. He's doing the work. But he doesn't do it without an exercise of faith. So here's what this is all we're asking you to do. But it needs to be your message. It can't come from me. You hold the keys to the members and your stake. But this is what they need to hear from you, because I think if you'll do it, you'll find that we're rather than having a very small percentage who will gain that will actually engage with us and finding because they don't want to do it. And here's the truth. I don't want to do it either. That's not how it works. But let me just tell you what this looks like.

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So I'll teach a group to stay president and say, this is what we want you to do. Have them sincerely pray for missionary opportunities. And just trust that God will lead them to those opportunities. Do it every day. As a family that we're thinking about, we're praying for, we'll ask missionaries to work with members, but they'll teach the lessons they'll just pray for them. Maybe have a copy of the book Mormon that's just a reminder every day we pray for missionary experiences. So the story looks like this, and that's what we're trying to have our missionaries teach members. So if they're in a work council meeting or they're in a sacrament meeting or they're in a weekly meet correlation meeting towards mission later, it looks like this. And everybody has their own stories. So last week after his own conference, let's just say, this actually happened, but we had our assistance meet us in an Applebee's restaurant just outside of just north of Dayton, Ohio. They arrived earlier, and it happened to be the NCAA championships that were basketball tournament was going on. So when they arrived, they sat them there so they could see a television and they were uncomfortable with that. So they asked, we asked the waitress to receipt them somewhere else in the restaurant. So by the time we came, they'd already made one move. They were sitting at sitting at the back of the restaurant. They escorted us Welch and I over to the table. We sat down. And then a young lady may be in her early 30s. Came and handed us the. Menus. And I said to her, this is how this is the extent of the complexity of what I would do as a mission present. I said to her, have you ever met a couple of more missionaries? And she says to me, funny thing. You know, when I was 12, I lived up here in huber heights, and my next door neighbors were all members of the church. And I went with them to church meetings and I started going to girls camp with them. Went for about three or four years. And then we moved I married. We've got three kids. You know my husband and I last week, we were just saying, you know, we really need to find a church to go to. Funny thing. We can help you with that. I guess I tell you that story and it sounds simplistic, I know. But

if you're listening to you there's a member and I would say this is what we want you to do is probably somebody you don't even know. It's going to be some of you talk to at the AT&T store. It's going to be somebody that you run in a sort of what seems to be a serendipitous way. At the grocery store, somewhere else that your lives intersect, if you really believe that this is God's work. And you pray an exercise faith and you seek a greater measure of cleanliness just through panels a bit more. God will do the work. We're not asking you to go knock on the doors of your neighbors. That's not what we're asking you to do. We're asking you to exercise faith. But if it's not me, if it's the same president, who that's his message to take offers, this is low risk behavior, we're trusting God that he'll do the work. He'll help us find people for the missionary to teach. Once the state president owns that and the branch president and the bishop own that, so is their message, their responsible really for gathering scattered Israel in the state. We're just here to help and teach. But it isn't missionaries that we should be making people feel guilty. We shouldn't be coercing that. We shouldn't be asking them what they're going to talk to their neighbors. I don't want to do that either. Honestly, I don't want to do that. In those kind of experiences and we've had so many Michelle and I have had our own experiences that's very same way ourselves. God will do the work. Let's trust you. Let's get out of the way. Let's just let him do the work and lead us. And also we need to do is in those moments, we need to be willing to say funny thing. That's it. I mean, it's not any more complicated that. But I think sometimes members, we get fearful when the topic comes up in a priesthood or really starting meeting and we're thinking we're going to be asked to do something. We don't want to do. I'm with you. I don't want to do it either. Here's another way to do it. It has greater impact, I think, in terms of building God's kingdom because we engage members. Now we get people to engage with us. Because they listen to that story and they'll say, I can do that. I'll do that. Right. Is that what you're talking about? This over here that you were telling me before about the warm bread. I can't do that. I just don't feel comfortable. I feel disingenuous. It feels inauthentic. Because I feel like I'm trying to manipulate them. I'm taking the pose of being a kind loving neighbor, but really what I'm trying to get to is to get them to the family when you think. Yeah. No, I love this approach. Seeing as a low risk, finding the low risk activity in it all. And I remember I was in a condo. We had neighbors below us. And the missionaries came over, the neighbors blow us. We're not members of the church. And missionaries came over, they had dinner, and you sort of expect it, you're sort of bracing for the end of the meal, the ask, like, who are you going to refer us to? And so we did that nice stop and said, elders just made it here.

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Let me tell you something. I'm not going to walk downstairs and ask if this guy wants to come to church. When I can do, as I know we both like movies, and I can invite him to a movie. And that movie, going to a movie together, that will continue to develop a relationship with him to the point that if he has a hard time or wants to reach out to God or find a church that he'll ask me

about it. Why don't I commit to you that I'll ask him to do a movie. They're like, okay, and then I said, will you follow up with me and make sure I do that? And they're like, yeah, we can do that. Everybody was happy because it was a low risk behavior. And I was happy to do it. Yeah, but I do think if rather than focusing on your neighbor, they were just focusing on just, we just pray every day that God will do the opportunity somewhere. And this trusted it'll happen. It might be somebody downstairs, but it's more likely to be somebody that you don't even know who they are. There'll be an opportunity. And I think what I think the response that we all make is I can connect with this idea that as God's work, he's gathering scattered Israel. I just need to exercise faith. That's my part that I play here. And if I can do that by just, I connect repenting as an exercise of faith. It's an action because I seek to be more clean to be more holy. That's what he wants. He wants us to be prepared because it's his work in his glory for us to be exalted with him. That's the essence of what he's trying to do here. And so anything that starts to feel a little bit manipulative, it's really hard. I think for most people, for most of us, including me, so it really has to be I think really what God wants us to do is exercise faith. Let him do the work and then he'll give us opportunities that will be comfortable. It will be as the brothers say normal and natural. Those are the things we're looking for. Those experiences, but most likely there are people you don't know. And it'll be hard comfortable for you to do it. Be very easy for you to do it. Yeah, that's so true. So true. We started this interview with I typically asked for some general principles and that's helped you and served you well in different leadership capacities. And you sent me three words, vision, character, and passion. I think we've touched on these obviously character has a lot to do with being sanctified and being wholly and establishing that vision. But anything else, any other component of those three words that we haven't hit on that you want to make sure we do before we wrap up. You know, I don't think so, really. I mean, those came from the book that I published in before a mission about defining skill as it relates to selling in the selling world, but I think the principles can apply, but they're probably not principles I'd be teaching in a setting like this. They would teach in a secular way about the importance of having a sense of vision and having passion for the work, but I guess my message to you and those that would be listening, my experience has been and I've taught sales leaders all around the country and various international locations for 40 years. I think that message is applicable in the business world, but here in the church, understanding for all the reasons I mentioned earlier is God's work. It's done differently. He tells us, Isaiah chapter 55, my thoughts are not your thoughts. And neither of my ways your ways. And as though the heavens are higher than the earth so my thoughts and your thoughts, my ways in your ways. I think he's trying to remind us, I don't do it like you think you ought to do it. It's not done like that. He tells us in the 19th chapter of the 19th section of doctrine covenants for 38. He says, pray always and I will pour out my spirit upon you. And then he says this and grace shall be your blessing Ye even more than if you should obtain the treasures of the earth. How many of us really believe when God says this, he's trying to tell us the greatest thing I could give you in mortal life is to understanding the fullness of my spirit, recognizing the power of the holy ghost as a member of the godhead that you can have personal companionship with. You think it's money, you think it's position. You think it's celebrity. I think what he's trying to do is debunk that notion of American pop culture and say, it's not that. Just pray always, I'll give you my spirit and grace shall be your blessing, yay, even more than if you should obtain the treasures of the earth. So when we think about doing things in the lord's kingdom, it has to start with the way he does things. And I think that's

why those principles are applicable. I think they're important leadership principles. I agree. But in not in this work, we have to align ourselves with God's will completely. And determine what it is that he wants for us to do as leaders, sometimes who hold keys, others who have delegated responsibilities from those who hold keys to be able to perform a great work. Once we feel clean, once we felt his spirit, he'll teach us all things that we should do. It's not any more complicated than that. Honestly, he's doing the work.

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He'll do it. Amen. I'm in. So I'm curious about this concept of passion because oftentimes, I think it's obvious why passion is important, what not. But as leaders, we want to infuse passion and others. Maybe if I'm ten times as passionate, they'll be 5 times as passionate. We want to fuel them with passion because this is important work. And if they're passionate, they're motivated. So any advice you'd have as far as the concept of passion in terms of leadership. Well, here's the thing. I think there is some doctrine behind it. And I think if we understand the doctrine, then I think it will help us understand how to access the power that comes from that. And I think it's something that's too commonly misunderstood, particularly among young men and young women. The doctrine is this. And proverbs chapter 23 for 7, he reminds us that as he or she think in his heart, so is he or so is she? In second, if I chapter 9 39, we're reminded that to be carnally minded is death. To be spiritually minded, is life eternal. We reach from the 121st section of the doctrine of covenants, lord speaking in verse 44 and he says, let virtue garnish thy thoughts, unceasingly, he says. And then shall I confidence like strong in the presence of God? And the holy ghost should be your constant companion. And then if you think about what we do, every Sunday in the sacred ordinance of the sacrament, we make specific covenants in the first blessing on the bread, we covenant to take upon ourselves the name of christology, remember him and keep his commandments. In the second, the blessing of the water, we only do one thing. And the only promise we're making is that we will always remember him. And it promises that we have his spirit to be with us. I found in our experience in the mission field that what I needed to teach and help missionaries understand is this tremendous power that comes from learning a greater measure of self mastery and controlling what you think about. That we it's the only thing we have complete control over. You don't get to control the weather, you can't control politics. And here's the troubling news for many, you can't control your kids. You can influence from them when they're young, but you don't have nothing you can control. You can't even control your health. You can influence it. The only thing that God has given us complete control over is the ability to control what we think about. And my experience of having taught this in a number of different ways over the years, having young missionaries understand this reality, there's a difference between subconscious mind and conscious mind. Subconscious mind is where we start daydreaming. We start drifting off. And what is true, the science would tell us, is that the subconscious lacks the capacity to differentiate between facts and fiction. So

what it means then, when I started thinking about something and I don't know how many times hundred times as a state president or as a mission president, I have people coming to my office, missionaries are members of the stake when say, I just feel guilty. I don't feel worthy. We'll talk about it. David Penn are the same some time ago. The scripture refer to this process as a dog returning to his vomit or a fool to his folly. We're repented things that we've taken care of some time ago. When we start marinating in it, because we start drifting into that subconscious mind, it produces the natural physiological biological emotional response because I think that's what we want. And so we feel guilty. And I think the strategy of the adversary with most of these young missionaries, he wasn't trying to get him to go to Vegas. He was just trying to get him to think about something stupid they did. It's Friday night when they were 17 in high school. And they start thinking about it for 15 minutes. Because it's a sensory rich image, they feel guilty. They feel unworthy. And then they're calling me and saying, you know, president, we need to talk. I just don't feel worthy. We talk about it. There's nothing that they haven't done. Other than the fact that they're going back and reliving something that I think the adversary, the great seduction is, we don't actually have to do it again. And that's the reason why pornography is such a pervasive plague. Is that their digital images that we can access any time if we've seen enough of that debris and so the minute I started going back and spending time thinking about it, then it's like the spiritual equivalent of a spring ankle or a twisted knee, I just don't, I can't testify with the same conviction or the same power because I'm feeling guilty about something, something I did 5 years ago for heaven's sakes. So this inability, the passion, the passion piece is connected to what we think about. If we can re harness this, so rather than strange thing is, Kurt, I think when we commit to say that we'll always remember him, I actually think that's what he wants us to do.

00:45:06 - 00:50:03

He wants us to always remember him. So it's pervasive in our lives so that it's not things that we've done before that we have that we've repented of and taken care of. But the more that we can immerse our lives, that's why scripts reading is so important. So it sort of feels us what we think about the characters. We think about the experience. We're drinking it. We're breathing it in. And with a more we think about them about him and started envisioning our lives in the way that he wants us to. The passion comes from that place. It's Katie ledecky. If you remember a 14 year old girl who was referring to the Olympics, this is years ago before her first gold medal. When she said, when somebody asked her the question, how do you get up in the morning and spend it 4 o'clock and get in the pool and spend 7 hours a day swimming and you know what she says? She said, well, I can, I can see myself in my mind standing on the podium with a gold medal around my neck. I can hear the music. I can see the flag. I can see my parents. Having an experience where she could actually experience the end two years before she was actually the Olympic Games. That's the power of the subconscious mind if we learn how to control what

we think about, to eliminate all this negative debris that the adversary is trying to foist upon us as we become more clean and holy. We can write our own program. We can play our own movie trailers. They don't even have to have happened yet, but we can see our life and what do we want it to look like as we do that, then naturally the process of the human body in this psychology of the subconscious mind, it'll give us passion and energy, a desire, because we become what we think about. That's the doctrine. And as we let virtue garnish our thoughts and seemingly, of course, why are we surprised that our confidence wax strong in the presence of God so we can actually be in the same room with him and not feel diminished because just simply the process of letting virtue garnish our thoughts, we control what we think about. And see our lives that we actually can claim the privilege of becoming a joiner with Christ and receive all the father has. That's the essence of passion in my judgment. The more that we can teach that and understand it, so young men and young women understand it, they're not victims by the adversary. We get to make conscious choices about it. It's the only thing we can control. Life's changed. I think it's one thing that if we understood more, chase everything else about our experiences, not only leaders, but also members of the church. We have the power to change what we think about. And in the process, it changes literally the trajectory of our lives if we can do that. Love it. That's so good. This has been fantastic. And I want to squeeze in a quick shout out to your son Adam, who arranged this meeting today. And I think now all that are listening are glad and grateful for Adam for doing that. He was setting this up and he said, hey, when you get my dad on there, would you mind just having him mention a charity golf tournament that Adams working on? Absolutely. A local tournament here in Utah called the Father's Day classic tournament. What details do you have on that? Father's Day classic is an event that Adams started last year. And it's a wonderful event that's right, the Friday before Father's Day at Thanksgiving point that the interestingly enough that the field in the morning the four man scramble has already sold out, there are some spots I think in the afternoon for the dads and their young sons or daughters to play in the junior event. But it really is all about father standing up to child abuse. That's really the essence of what the message is about. And I think it's done a wonderful job in being able to get some great sponsors who are there. Helping and supporting this phenomenal cause and they were able to make a considerable donation to prevent child abuse in Utah, nonprofit in the state and I think he's just done tremendous work. I'm really proud of him. So yeah, if any of your listeners have an interest in being a part of that of participating and joining arms with Adam and his team with preventing child abuse in Utah, that's a great event, wonderful event. I'm sure he'd be happy to find ways to utilize you if you will definitely. But the details in the show notes and I can get behind that mission any day and so I'm glad we can speak about it for a moment and push people towards that event and what a great thing to do. So the last question I have for you is as you reflect back on your different opportunities of leadership both in your current role in the mission presidency to being a mission president, stake president bishop, how is being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ? Well, you know, I think it's interesting you would ask that question I think it's an interesting question because really if you think about what we've been talking about really, it's really the way that I can increase enhance my own discipleship is that I seek to be clean.

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If I really believe that as a husband and as a father and as a priesthood leader in the church, that really it starts with me being more clean, more holy. Chances are I'm probably a better dad, probably chances are I'm a better husband and father. And I think it's always true that the more that I seek to be clean and holy and recognize whose work this is, that it enhances my discipleship, it brings me closer to him because when I feel the majesty of his power to my life, when I repent and feel clean from him, I have a greater measure of devotion and love. I love him more. I desire to serve him more. I feel a greater sense of closeness to him. So the essence of everything about leadership in the church is to change us from the inside so that our desires, our appetites, our passion, we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually as we learn from king Benjamin. That's really the essence of it. And in the process of that, it brings us closer to Christ that we love him more and have a greater desire to serve him. That's the essence of discipleship, which is really, I think, I think the essence of what leadership is about is becoming more like him, more like Christ and loving him more. And we can do that first and foremost by becoming more holy. And that concludes this how I lead interview. I hope you enjoyed it and I would ask you, could you take a minute and drop this link in an email on social media in a text wherever it makes the most sense and share it with somebody who could relate to this experience and this is how we develop as leaders, just hearing what the other guys doing, trying some things out, testing, adjusting, for your area, and that's where great leadership is discovered, right? So we would love to have you share this with somebody in this calling or a related calling, and that would be great. And also, if you know of somebody, any type of leader who would be a fantastic guest on the how I lead segment, reach out to us go to leading saints dot org slash contact, maybe send this individual an email, letting them know that you're going to be suggesting their name for the singer view. We'll reach out to them and see if we can line them up. So again, go to leading saints dot org slash contact and there you can submit all the information and let us know. And maybe they will be on a feature how I lead segment on the leading saints podcast. And remember, go to leading saints dot org slash 14 to access our full liberating saints virtual library. It came as a result of a position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and when the declaration was made, concerning the all and only true in 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