



The Holy Spirit's Influence on Leadership Decisions | An Interview with Robert Millet

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Did you know Rob Ferrell's Leading Saints podcast interview has over 100,000 downloads? Yeah, it seemed everyone loved it. After that interview, we actually invited Rob Ferrell to a Leading Saints live event and told him he could take as much time as he wanted. Well, he ended up teaching for four plus hours and don't worry, we recorded it. It's all part of the Leading Saints core leader library and we want you to watch it at no cost. Simply go to Leading Saints dot org slash 14, and you can gain access to not only Rob Ferrell's four hour presentation, but also to 100 plus hours of all other leadership related content that we have in the core leader library. You're going to love it. So simply visit Leading Saints dot org slash 14 and get started. The following episode is a throwback episode, one that was published previously and was extremely popular. To see the details of when this was originally published, see the show notes. Enjoy this throwback episode. Welcome back to the Leading Saints podcast, my name is Kurt Francoml, and I will be your host. Now, if you're new to Leading Saints, we welcome you. This is a podcast where we strive to help latter day saint leaders, be better prepared to lead. And I hope if you're new that you'll subscribe and jump in and there's a lot of episodes here, but they're worth every minute I promise. Now, in this episode, we talk with Robert Millet, a well-known name in the church, you often see his name on books in church bookstores, especially desert book, who is his publisher. But this book is called the Holy Spirit, his identity, mission, and ministry. I have the opportunity to read this book and was highlighting and taking notes and tagging and trying to remember all this content because it's phenomenal. And so luckily, I get to not only read this book, but I get to sit down and have

fascinating conversations

with the author, Robert Millet. And so we did that at the corporate headquarters of desert book in downtown Salt Lake City. We met up and had a deep discussion about the Holy Spirit, but more particularly of how the Holy Spirit in the context, as far as what we should understand about the Holy Spirit in the context of being a leader in the church, especially in the bishop's office or when we're missionaries or how we testify and what their role is and just further understanding that doctrine of the Holy Spirit because, well, it's an important one. So I hope you benefit from this conversation as much as I did. You're going to love it. Here's my interview with Robert Millet. Today I'm in downtown Salt Lake City, sitting down with brother Robert Millet, how are you? I'm well. Good night and call you Bob. I know you go by Bob. Is that all right? My friends call me Bob. You can call me Robert. Maybe by the third interview, I can be on that level, but it was great. Great. Now, I know we have the opportunity to record an interview of a few months ago, maybe about a year ago. And that was received well. There's always a new project in your life. Is that right? Well, yeah, there are always seems to be something I go through bookstores looking for what no one's talking about much. And you have a long list of those topics that you had. It's getting shorter. It is good. As you get through this, my life gets shorter. Well, good. And you've most recently read in the book, the Holy Spirit, his identity, mission, and ministry, and it's available at all church bookstores primarily at desert book and obviously on Amazon and those worldwide bookstores. But what was the impetus of tackling this doctrine? Well, I've been fascinated for years with the work of the holy ghost or the Holy Spirit. And what occurred to me that got me thinking more seriously about this, I was sitting one day thinking about a typical Sunday. How many times would you hear an expression like in a prayer bless us that the spirit may be with us or less so and so as she speaks that the spiritual guide her in March or bless all of those who are here that we will be guided and touched and instructed by that same spirit. And what hit me was the holy ghost is involved in everything. You would have trouble finding a facet of the Christian faith in which the holy ghost is not intimately involved. And because of that, it's so common and I don't mean anything bad by common, but so frequently referred to and discussed.

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I don't think we appreciate just how in and through everything it is. And so I thought if I remember, I think I did a series of talks on this in an education week and it was received well and I thought maybe there's something here. So I went along the lines of what are the functions of the holy ghost? What are the facets of the holy ghost? What does it take to get and keep the holy ghost? What is it? What do you have to do to lose it? And what's the worst way to lose it? And so forth. And so it all began with the consideration of how involved is he. And the answer is, he's in everything. And I'm just curious, when you approach the doctrine or subject so vast, like, where do you even begin to? And what are some of those routines or strategies that you use to really make sure that you're covering the topic effectively? Well, starts with my sitting down with a tablet that I keep with me at all times. And I just begin saying, if I were to write a book on this, what were the things that would just have to be in that book? And I'll make a list.

And as the days go by and the weeks go by, I find myself saying you didn't mention this and so I'll slip that in. Or I'll notice that I have numbers three and 7 are basically the same thing. And so over a period of weeks that list chapters, the table of contents, essentially, gets formed, and then I began asking, I'll take a particular chapter and say, now, in a chapter on obtaining the holy ghost, what ought to be in it. If I were reading a book, what would I expect to be in a book on that area of the faith? That is, what does it take? Or if I have a chapter on quenching the spirit, what it takes to lose it, what are some areas that ought to be covered, then I'll ask, well, what are some prophetic statements or scriptural passages that teach that particularly well? And so it's a bit of a bit of a branching outfit. I find myself thinking, yes, no, when I've done this, then you need to do with and oh yeah, the scripture so and so comes to mind. And I'm sure by the end, by the time the book is printed, you don't you're not able to put all of that in one book, right? That's a problem. Almost any book, especially something of this sort, you start with the presumption of delimitation. There's no way to cover it. It's like the book I did on Joseph Smith and precept upon precept. It's just too big for one book. And so I had to decide which things will I leave out. And that's often painful. But it's also probably a healthy exercise to really start zoning in on what are the really core parts of this doctrine that are most important. And along the lines of are there things that are unclear or misunderstood that we know of pertaining to the whole spirit. Yeah. I know, just throughout my time is a leader, especially when I was in a state pregnancy where you had that state conference every 6 months where knowing that I was studying in a way that I, at the end of all this study, I had to stand up and present. It really helped me formulate my thoughts and seek deeper direction because of that. So I imagine it's the same thing that maybe somebody out there could mimic this process, though they may not be writing a book or end up giving it a talk on it. Having that goal of how do I formulate this down to the essence so that I can articulate it. That reminds me too. That would be another facet of the preparation of outline is asking myself what experiences have I had with this or what experiences am I aware of that church leaders have had through the century, you know? Yeah. And so those are the kinds of things I would plug in. And as time goes by, I find myself saying, I just don't think this is necessary. It's not that big a deal. I know when I decided years ago, I wanted to do a book on prayer. And why? Because as I walk through the bookstore, there wasn't a single book on prayer. Pretty good, important subject. But there was not a book on the show. Now there had been a collection of general authority talks or inside articles on prayer, it made it into a book called prayer, but that's like 1978 or something. It's time for another book. So I sat down and I took about two days to put together 80 lengthy outline of what I projected would be about a 300 page book on prayer. And the more I worked on it as I began the writing I found myself saying, is this part that really that really just important at all? Does it matter? By the time I finished, I had a 120 page book on it. Wow. Yeah, but definitely a helpful exercise to go through. It is because you start asking separate come up. I mean, is this something that's going to matter to anybody? And you start saying probably not. Yeah. So was there one specific chapter or as you sat down initially that you were really excited to write about as it relates to the doctor and the Holy Spirit? Well, I wanted to I wanted to talk at some length about the relationship of the members of the godhead. And that was probably my first impulse.

What do we know from profits and scripture about how the members of the God had relate? Is there an ordinal relationship that is, for example, in a conservative Protestant perspective, say an evangelical Christian perspective, no one is greater than the other. There are three co equal

co eternal beings that have always existed as it were, or at least the father and the son. And yet it's very clear to me in the gospel of John, Christ is constantly saying things like my father is greater than I. I come not to do my own work, but the work of my father or my doctor is not mine, but he is that sent me. It's throughout the gospel of John and mentioned occasionally in the synoptics, but I first wanted it to address that. Interestingly, the other one I wanted to do a little more with was, what about sons of perdition? What do you have to do? Not that you want to qualify. You don't need that road map, but I wanted to see if I could find out whether research had been done on the question of, is there such a thing as a daughter of prediction? Oh, yeah. And so I did confine that to a note in the book, but the fact is the leaders of the church have gone back and forth on this. Some say yes, I'm saying them. Some say a person must have the priesthood someone says the priesthood, you don't need the priesthood. I was misses you need to hold. And so it's good to know that there's no position on this. Yeah. For sure. And so that one I was interested in. I wanted to make sure that I did something too on worthwhile on the light of Christ. We talk about it. I wanted to be able to talk about what is the relationship between the light of Christ and let's say the influence of the holy ghost is that a different. Is it a gradation? Is it a growing amount of spirit? It's all God's power. Right. God doesn't have to say, okay, why don't you why don't you switch into Holy Spirit for that one? And let's have you switch and to priesthood for that one. And it's all God's power. And yet it's administered in different ways, different facets, different amounts, and I came across the passage in mosaic 18 that we've read a thousand times about the covenant of baptism. But what I hadn't paid any attention to was why not be baptized Alma ask that the Holy Spirit may be sent upon you in greater abundance admitted him. That's what he's talking about. The gift of the holy ghost, which you can only have the full measure of the holy ghost following baptism. Yeah. Yeah, and there's obviously differences in these words and how they're explained. And the administration of them, right? And so those two or three, four, in particular, and then as I began getting into it, I began thinking, oh, you've got to have something on this, or you must deal with this. And suddenly you have a book. You have a long book, yeah. Well, good. Takes a lot of writing and rewriting, yeah. And I just think my mind goes to a state conference I was in once, and there's a visiting authority. I think it was elder golden just remember that. But he opened it up for some questions to the Saturday evening session. And obviously this is a risky move for you, right? I remember the first question was in relation to will the Holy Spirit ever have a body and explain that because it seems like there's some parts of doctrines that it's interesting and if there's a question, that would be there's an answer to these questions. That would be fascinating. But a lot of these doctrines you can go down a certain rabbit holes that really don't matter. Or maybe they do matter. They either don't matter. They're just not anything on this. The one you just mentioned, for example, when we were planning this book myself and my colleagues at des red book, we were wrestling over a subtitle. Holy Spirit seemed like a good title, but subtitle. And one of the words they wanted to make sure that was in there was his identity, and I said to them, it's going to be a really short chapter. Because I'm aware of about two statements from Joseph Smith on

this, and that's what's in that chapter. And so yes, we need to know who he is, but that doesn't take a long time to say, because not a whole lot has been said about it. And so really, with

those questions, if someone went to a priest or leader and asked something like that, how would you suggest they respond? Like that question? Yeah. I probably respond with we really don't know a great deal about it. I'm aware of a couple of places where the prophet Joseph Smith said that the holy ghost will eventually receive a physical body because he's a son, a spirit son of our heavenly father. End of what we know is first, I know. There's a chapter. I haven't even come across any general authorities at ever even speculate beyond that. It's just, that's about it. Yeah. Yeah, it's fascinating. So I want to maybe dive into with a leadership audience listing, there are certain doctrines and principles that we learn in primary and as we develop in the gospel that the gift of the holy ghost comes at baptism. And so forth. And then when we are putting these leadership positions, not only do people come to us with some questions like that and others that maybe do have answers, but we gain or we seek for a deeper understanding of these things.

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So you talk about as far as losing the holy ghost. We often hear this that we have to be worthy for the holy ghost. We receive the gift of the holy ghost after baptism. What does that even begin? What does it even mean to lose the holy ghost? Well, I think when we commit sin of a magnitude that is offensive to the spirit, then we feel that spirit influence less. I don't think it's complicated. I just think we feel it less. And it's interesting. I think the book of Mormon uses language like you do withdraw yourself from the Holy Spirit. He doesn't have to withdraw himself, you would throw yourself by serious sin. And so I think when I and I think I'd say it this way too, that the finer, the more the more refined our lives become, the higher standard we have to live. In other words, the slightest deviation for a person that's really living a holy life, the slightest deviation from right into wrong will bring great pain and an absence or a kind of a chastening. And so now on the other hand, a person who is just getting back into activity, let's say, after years of being less active, it seems like the spirit is much more patient. Yeah. Yeah, and encouraging. Encourage you to help. That's right. So the slightest thing I tell a story in here and it was a sobering one for me of an experience I had with my first time I was bishop with a man and I wore it. He was excommunicated for immorality. And it was serious. I worked with him in the state president worked with him over the months and he came in to see me at about the second month and we chatted and I said, how are you doing? And he said, bishop, I never knew how much light I had until I lost it. And then he said this, it's so dark out here. And then he added this and I don't want to establish doctrine with this, but I think it's a fascinating point. He said, I even enjoyed the spirit to some extent while I was sinning. He says, now I feel so dark. That is, following severance from the church, following membership being taken, he was in he literally was experiencing what is called the buffeting of Satan. He was being pushed around and he felt just vacuous. There was just emptiness he felt. And his greatest desire was to get that spirit back. Yeah. And so I think he's probably right. He probably had to measure the spirit that he felt, even in his moments of doing what he shouldn't do. But I think, on the other hand, if you're living the gospel and you're doing better and better at it, that the holy ghost is trying to raise you to a higher standard. In fact, there will be a certain point

where you don't have to commit sin, you just have to pause on a plateau for too long. You follow me? Yeah, yeah. Remember a president, Kimball said we've paused on some plateaus, long enough. Wow, that's an important statement because it's saying you can't remain neutral. You won't remain neutral. You go backwards. Yeah. Or you go forward. Yeah. You can't take a vacation from the spirit. I'm going to or you can't take a vacation from the church. You're going to lose. Yeah. You may be released from the position and you're not quite as involved as you were before. But you just can't set the spirit on the shelf and say I'll come back later. Yeah. It just reminds me like when I had a bishop, there's a couple across the street from me. And the records are on the rolls. I knew that they had a connection to the church. And so I made the connection with them and encouraged them back and to the point where this young man, no kids yet, young married couple. This young man came to my office and was willing to have a conversation with me. And he told me about experience where I think he had been through a disshipment of some type. And he told me that his YSA bishop got to point where he mentioned to this young man that, well, you can't receive personal revelation because you are unworthy of the spirit. And this was such an interaction that was just so shaming to him where it felt like he was more saying you are unworthy as a human and as a person that you don't get any of this spirit. And I assured him I felt good in the moment to say, no, you need a relationship. Your savior and your father in heaven is reaching out to you for that relationship. So there's sometimes we simplify these doctrines so much that we think that black and white isn't black. Right. It's more on a continuum. Right. And so I guess my question is in those instances where church discipline and serious sin has been committed. Sometimes we use the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as sort of like a stick to beat them with a little bit saying, well, you can't have this doctor now, because you don't have the gift of the holy ghost. How can we better facilitate that conversation with encouragement rather than pulling this doctrine away from them? I think we can talk to them about the fact that what they do reveal feel in certain moments which they assume is the spirit is, and that the spirit is working with them.

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There's an interesting phrase in scripture. This is another thing that was good to do more research on that is the phrases my spirit should not always try with now. But I had to come to appreciate that the prophets have taught, that is referring to the light of Christ, is referring to the holy ghost. In fact, the holy the light of Christ strives with us. To think about that word strive, it's related to the word strife. It battles with us. It battles to get us in shape, spiritually, to prepare us for better things. The holy ghost doesn't battle with us. If I were talking like I talked in Louisiana, I'd say Hogwarts won't mess with you. Meaning you begin to feel less of that spirit when you sin. The light of Christ, you'll never lose the light of Christ. It'll always be there. So there will always be an element of spirit trying to prompt you and move you toward greater light and greater

knowledge. And so, yeah, I don't think there's ever a time when a person doesn't have a measure of God's spirit. Yeah, because I've even talked to many individuals who one close friend of mine who's currently excommunicated and kind of going through that process. And his

experience has been, wow, this has been such a sanctifying process for me. I feel close to lord. I've never had this feeling like I am in the dark or I feel that connection. I feel that guidance of the spirit. Sometimes it's hard, like you said, you can't get in the black and white territory with these doctrines. Well, that's right. I think it's why there is something to the idea of a portion of the spirit. That's a book of Mormon phrase. A portion of the lord's spirit, not long ago a man came up to me, had given a talk and I used that phrase, and he said, there's no such thing as a portion of the spirit. I said, well, you better talk to Alma because he tends to use that expression in a good paper. And I think all it means is you may not have the fullness of the spirit, but you'll have the spirit. That's a portion. Okay? And so yeah, I think that I'll give you another illustration. People outside our faith. I've heard this a hundred times if I've heard it at all over the years next this. We are the only people that still believe God speaks to man. I don't know how we started saying that, but I know too many people of other face. I've spent 25 years of my life working with them. And I'm telling you, they have the spirit now. Do they have the gift of the holy ghost? I'd have to say no. That comes after authorized baptism when confirmation. But they certainly have a spirit with them and it's God's spirit and to say they don't have the right to inspiration. What kind of a father would do that? Right. Of course they can pray and get direction. Of course, they can have their prayers answered. And so I think the proper way of saying it might be, we're the only church that still believes in apostolic oversight and that the church and the leaders of the church at the highest levels are receiving ongoing revelation. That's where we distinct, but to say we're the only people that believes you can have inspiration. That's just not so. Yeah. They all believe that. I mean, I would hope that they would live in such a way that the spirit could guide them. And it does. And especially you talk about outside of our church, if there's a baptist minister who feels inspired to start a church and that's where it's going to motivate them in that action, right? Because could anybody listen to Billy Graham preach and say, is he just don't have any spirit? I didn't want to walk up to the front. And then do an ultra cold, but at the same time, I was always very moved. Absolutely. And so yeah, I mean, I think that's an example of an oversimplification and a relative to the spirit. Yeah. And I think we really just have to be careful, especially in these leadership positions that it can come across as very shaming when there's no shame in this process at all. It should be encouraging. It needs to be upward looking. For sure. It also, in my mind, in the typical 8 year old baptism ordinance, typically grammar grapa speak about the holy ghost. There's always this default to the doctrine that this is our primary terms. This is our special friend. You'll now have a companion to go with you. Sometimes that's where we simplify the doctor and saying, well, if you don't get baptized, you won't have a companion. You won't have guidance or I feel like the stronger doctrine is less about having a special friend and more about the cleansing agent of the holy ghost. And to me, if we can get that doctrine across to the developing faith in our church that that's why we go to church, we need that cleansing agent every week. And as I mentioned, a moment ago, we also want to have that spirit with us more abundantly. Yeah. Even more than I have it now. I want more, you know? And even for the temple recommend holding individual who's quote unquote worthy, there's still an abundance that he can reach for.

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Absolutely. Absolutely. So yeah, it's an infinite. There's an infinite gradation of spirit. Yes. And so it really doesn't help people to say, you don't have any spirit and you never will until get

baptized. Well, that makes no sense because they have to at a certain point begin feeling the spirit to prompt them on this and help them with that and so yes. Any other related to this doctrine of the Holy Spirit is as it relates to repentance, the repentance process that would be worth mentioning. Yes, I think the one that comes to my mind is this either members of my ward or students in my classroom over the years, the question that has been asked again and again is how do you know when you can stop repenting of this? How do you know when the sin is forgiven? And I think it's a good question that we need to answer more regularly and the answer I take them to the fourth chapter of mosaic in the book more than we read the first three verses these people have heard Benjamin deliver the words of the angel about the coming of Christ, the atonement of Christ putting off the natural man, and so forth. And the people respond, they respond to what is they said, we believe all the words you've spoken. We know of their surety and true, what the people do when Benjamin finishes that what we have is the fourth chapter. They basically are prostrated on the ground and they say we how do they put it may be the Tony blood maybe be cleansed by the atoning blood of Christ. That his spirit might be with us. Well, the account says, after they had done that, one they had piece of conscience, two, they felt joy in three, and anyway, there's a series of things. When I've asked when I'm asking young people, we read that in class, and I'd say, okay, how do you know when the spirits get no idea? How do you know from this, your sins have been forgiven? They say, well, you feel piece of conscience. Good. Another one, you feel joy. Good. Anything else. So we got down peace and joy, anything else. The spirit came with came to be with them again. Meaning, if, in fact, if a man living in sin, if he can say that no person as the scriptures say, the Holy Spirit can not dwell on the person that's unclean and impure, and what does it mean when the spirits dwelling week again? We no longer unclean and you no longer impure. The spirit is the lord's way of saying you're back on course. And a larger measure of the spirit is the lord's way of saying you're back on course. I don't think we press that enough, which is, as I finish this book, the thing which is so clear to me is let's don't complicate this. It's very simple. Don't do things that within the spirit. If you can live a life like that, then the spirits can be with you. And what that means is you're on saving ground. If you were to drop dead right now, you're going to go to Paradise and enjoy celestial glory one day. Why? Because as Paul said, the spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, the earnest of the spirit meaning, it's God's earnest money on us. It's God's statement to us. I'm sending my spirit to tell you to certify to you, I intend to save you. And if you can keep the spirit with you, you're right on course. Does that make sense? Yeah, yeah. And so I guess at least we need a question of, where's the grace in all this? Because sometimes it can feel like your relationship with the holy ghost it's always this transaction. I'm always trying to earn you. Where does the grace of it all fit in to this doctrine? Well, when we're working with someone, for example, who's in transgression, or if I'm working with myself, I'm in transgression, I began to appreciate that the forgiveness comes by virtue of the spilt blood of Jesus Christ. The atonement. The atonement of Christ is what accomplishes forgiveness. But that the holy ghost is the medium by which that's accomplished and in essence, the holy ghost as you mentioned becomes the cleanser. He becomes the sanctifier. And so what the spirit does is when my sense of forgiven, I'm living in a justifying condition. I'm in right relationship to God. And at that point, from that point forward, the spirit continues to work on me and work on me and I become a little more pure and a little more holy and that's the sanctifying process. That's a lifetime process. But over time, you continue to keep that spirit with you and miss the spirit, the spirit begins to reveal new things to you. Yes, the spirit begins to work on your conscience. And you have things that you can not do

now that you have no problem doing 5 years ago. Which means your conscience is being educated and your desires are being educated and your judgment is being developed. So that at a certain point, you don't need a major revelation in something. You can pray about it, but it's very clear you knew already what was the right thing to do. Yeah. And so I think as we know and we have to appreciate that it's through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ that it takes place. The holy ghost is an act of the lord's grace to us.

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The spirit is a grace. It's a gift to us. It's called the gift of the holy ghost. You can't earn the spirit anymore that you can earn Salvation. But you can put yourself in a position to receive the gift. Meaning, in this case, how does the book Mormon end? Deny yourselves of all in God and see if you shall deny yourself as well and you have to miss and love God with all your might mind industry. Then is his grace sufficient for you. And you become pure and you become homeless. Actually, that makes sense. Yeah, yeah. I see it often that I equate that and maybe it's detached to this doctor as far as the love of God, that as far as earning God's love, obviously God loves us. However, to feel higher level of that love that comes through these sanctifying processes. That's right. And so I've often said it this way, the sun doesn't stop shining because I put a bag over my head, I still shine. Yeah. I've just blocked the light. And so it is with God. He doesn't stop loving us when we say and he loves us through it. I mean, you only have to take this to a personal level when your children do awful things, do you say one day? That's it. No longer loved it. Yeah. No, you love them. He loves us through it all. But there are certain things he can't do for us in the same way. And so yeah, the love is forever there. But when a person lets themselves get into serious sin, they're not going to feel the love of God in the same way. Yeah. The love of God is there. But you've put the bag over your head and you can't see it and feel the light. To me, connects to I think there's a whole chapter on the doctrine of justification and sanctification. And I really feel like this is at the core of our doctrine, but we miss it a lot because it's so easy to see things in the justification side of things of, okay, am I justifying to receive the spirit? When in reality, yes, you are always justified to receive the spirit because Christ justified you. We're in the sanctified area of things. The justifying thing, you can know when you've been forgiven, as we've talked about. The sanctifying is such a slow process as president Benson once said, the person may not even notice the changes that are taking place. Sometimes it takes someone else to say, man, you are really changed. What do you mean? Because it is slow, it is a slow process, and the changes are, in many cases, imperceptible. But they're real. Yeah. Now, at the certain point, you can look back on your life in some have come a long ways. But you didn't feel those little pieces of progress as you were taking them. Yeah, the spirit is something we grow into. Yeah. That's the way the prophet Joseph Smith described him. He says we learn the spirit of revelation. And I think that's such a helpful dynamic when you are mentoring somebody through a transgression or whatever, remove the black and white of you either have the spirit or you don't or you made this decision and therefore you don't have it. But Christ is justified you. And you're in that process. Now you're sanctifying yourself through actions and through the atonement of Jesus Christ that you're going to figure out how to actually

change so that that spirit is so you can feel a higher level of that spirit. I think, for example, the role of a bishop or state president, there are many rooms, but one major role is to guide the process of repentance and to help that person by saying things in its true and you can sense it, saying you're making progress. You can see it and you can use and it's very real. You see somebody, they're changing. They may not appreciate that there's changing, but you've seen it, you can see it in them. And that's one of the roles that the priesthood leader, the legal administrator plays, is helping that process move forward and tutoring the person in sin along the way. And really, focusing on that you're not progressing in order to earn your way back into heaven, you're progressing so that you can feel a higher level of his spirit. Because that can be such a shaming state to be in that I'm cast out. I am no longer counted among his children. That's where the adversary wants you to be. Well, and there's this passage and the doctrine covenants that people take the wrong way, you know? It's the idea that if you, if you sin, the love of God, you will not experience the love of God. Well, again, that means not that God doesn't, he's not that God stops loving you because you're saying it means you can't feel the love of God in the same, again, you've distanced yourself. Right. Yeah, that's powerful. Anything else as far as justification sanctification would be worth mentioning. Well, it's surprising how many times, especially in the book of Mormon, you'll hear the prophet that's teaching or speaking, referred to a forget that our sins be forgiven, and that we can be made pure. Well, there's your two processes. Our sins of forgiven justification were being made pure. Thanks for catching. And they're there. And we just don't see them sometimes.

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Yeah, and it's such a fun exercise. As far as the clean heart pure clean hands of pure heart dynamic dichotomy throughout the scriptures that's fun to look for. And the other thing is interesting too, is this notion in the book of Mormon of obtaining and then retaining a remission of sin. King Benjamin talks about that in chapter four of mosaic. He says, and now for the sake of retaining a remission of sins, and indescribed two steps it gives one, he said, always acknowledge God's greatness, always acknowledge the fact that you're an unprofitable servant that, without him, you're nothing, acknowledging my nothingness, and he's everything that's the process of living in a state of perpetual gratitude. State of gratitude, if you can live like that, always acknowledging God in all things, you're going to remain in a justified condition. The

second thing Benjamin mentions in verse 26 is the other way you become able to keep that spirit with you for over two retain that remission of sin to retain that justified condition through the care of the West Virginia. If you want to retain your mission set, get out and serve people. Yeah. It's powerful. So I want to shift to another dynamic that I have two areas that I don't know if this is the right word, but sometimes we weaponize the holy ghost in certain ways. For example, maybe somebody and not weaponize maybe we use it almost as a way to manipulate situations in whether in our favor or in the favor of the person. For example, someone may come in with some strong doubts of some of the tenets of the gospel. And so we feel like there's been several stories where the believer steps back and boldly gives a testimony and our hope

is that we're sort of projecting the spirit upon this person to change them and they're thinking before our eyes and even president Ballard is mentioned, gone are the days where we simply testify and these answers go away. So what do we need to understand about that dynamic of trying to project and aim the spirit of people in order to change them? Is that a thing? I don't think so. I think what happens is if I'm sitting with a person who's wrestling with the faith issue of wrestling with a historical question, wrestling with the doctrine question. I think in many cases, to come on really strong with testimony, is again almost a shaming mechanism. I think they need to know that I believe this about my heart and that this has been particularly the way I've come to appreciate this and the way I've come to understand this is as follows that I do believe it's true. I don't think you overpower people. I don't think you, I don't think there's fear allows us to do that. I think it would be a I think would be in many ways a sham to think if I could just either speak loud enough or use the holy tone enough times. They're going to come around. No. You can't manipulate the spirit. It's like a person saying, prepare yourself brothers and sisters. We are going to have in our Sunday school class that a we are going to have a great spiritual experience. Well, I wonder if the holy ghost isn't somewhere saying, oh really? Let's see. Why? Because you can't manufacture the spirit. You can't manipulate the spirit. You can't elicit the spirit we can set the stage. We can prepare the room. Maybe you're playing beautiful Evernote require music as the people are coming in. Whatever, it can't force it. You can't force testimony. Elder packer said that you can't words like force compel, do not describe our relationship with the spirit. In fact, he goes on to say, do not be too eager to gain great spiritual experience. He said, seek to help it along, but be patient and don't force it or else you'll open the way to be misled. In other words, it's not the lord's spirit. It's another spirit. Yeah. And so yeah, I think what you mentioned here is very true. And I think a little bit in our even mentioned this that the phrasing we use that received the holy ghost. An individual has to receive it. It can't be forced upon and you can set the stage, right? And hopefully you can stimulate that, but it can't be forced or contrived. I think it's perhaps related to this verse in the third chapter of John where Jesus was talking to academia. And he says, the wind bloweth where it lists of now hears the sound thereof, but can't not tell whence it cometh and whether it go well wind is just one translation of the word pneuma in Greek, but is also translated as spirit and breath. And so if he's saying, the spirit comes and goes as it will, and you can't always control it. Yeah. And I think that is an important lesson. Now, it doesn't mean you don't have it with you. What I've come to appreciate, it's two different things to have the spirit and to always feel the spirit in the same way.

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They're not necessarily the same. Someone, for example, I'm often noticed this among religious educators who do this daily and the odds are they're not going to come out every hour on fire. And yet the students were deeply moved by what they had to say. And their wife says to him, Bill, how did class go and you say, well, frankly, I was kind of bored. I feel much of anything. Just another day of the office. Every day at the office, but you had students write your emails and send you texting, oh, that's the most wonderful thing I've ever heard. This is meaning he didn't have the spirit? No, it's just that we're not going to always feel it in the same way. Yeah. And that's the beauty about this doctrine is that not everybody in the room has to be on their a game for it to work. I'll hear people say too. You need to have, in order to have an effective

class, you got to have everyone making a comment. You can not allow people to just sit there quietly. And I found myself saying, what? Sometimes this person back there that's sitting quietly is doing some serious pondering on what's being said. And so there's another example. I don't think you were not going to create a spiritual experience with this person. And that he speaks out doesn't mean he's learning a great deal. And so I think it all has to do with we can not manufacture or monopolize the spirit. It's not within our grasp to do that. Yeah. Another scenario sometimes we maybe try and create a manipulative situation Anthony sweat BYU professor calls it the spiritual Trump card, where a typical scenario you're in a ward council meeting, your debating one aspect of whatever it is in the ward. The bishop or somebody else in the room uses the phrase. I have a strong feeling that and then fill in the brain. That Trump said, well, there's my Trump card. You can't argue that because I have a strong feeling that. That completely implodes the council setting. So what are your thoughts on that? Yeah, I agree with you totally. I'm reminded of a colleague of mine to BYU for many years. Tell me of an experience where his younger sister had come to BYU to go to school. And in her ward, this fellow walked up to one day and said, you need to know that it's been made known to me that in the pre mortal life you promised to marry me. He laid out all the Trump guards he had right there. To him and she said, well, I may have made that mistake once, but I make it again. That's great. No, I think it's not only cruel, it's wrong. To do that. I think we have to be very careful about the things like I feel impressed that nobody Joseph mcconkey used to call it spiritual grandstanding. A teacher stands up and he or she is teaching and suddenly the teacher says something like, I sense that there's someone in this room that's feeling this, this and this. And so what I'm about to say is just for you, that spiritual grant and standing. And I've always said to the faculty when someone had asked me about it, I said, look, teach what you feel impressed to just don't tell them the holy ghost just gave me this because that's being almost boastful. And not like that, it's like you say, it's arm bending. It's saying you better pay attention to this because it came from the spirit. Now, if it came from the spirit, give it deliberate, just don't announce it. Yeah. Does that make sense? Sure. Sure. And I would imagine that, again, there's nothing wrong with using that phrase, but I think that's maybe an opportunity for leaders to say, you may have that feeling that we should go that direction, but I'm sure someone else has a feeling other direction. And let's talk about that because that's how we can get to some serious inspiration. We couldn't agree more. Yeah. Now another dynamic that we and this is when I really struggle with some interested to dig in this and get your perspective. Sometimes we, as our roles are required, sometimes we are tasked to make callings in the ward, right? And like you said at the beginning, the spirit is almost in everything. This doctrine is everywhere. And influencing us in so many directions that we probably aren't even aware of a lot of those directions. But sometimes it feels like there we are in a bishopric meeting and every last decision we feel like has to be made through a prompting or the guidance of the spirit. And so we may be praying about the third Sunday teacher that's going to teach twice a year or whatever it is. And nobody can move until we have received specific inspiration and revelation for that calling. And at the end of the day, we've been set a partner. Can't we just make the call and move on? Sometimes we have to coat everything in. This came through inspiration, or we can not move on. What are your thoughts on that dynamic? When I was a state president, we were having a pretty effective I thought bishop's training meeting monthly meeting and one of the bishops said every decision that is made every calling we make, we pray over individually. Now this is a student ward.

00:45:01 - 00:50:05

Okay? Those long meetings often you know how often you have to you'd have to build your knees to fill callings every week because people are moving. I said, I really wouldn't go there if I were you. I think that's going to be a backfire on you. And here's why. Did you pray to start the meeting? Did you ask the lord's spirit to be with you as we make important decisions? Does that not suffice? Yeah. I mean, is it everything requires an independent prayer? I don't think so. Here's the other thing we say about that. Began donning on me some years back that there'll be those times, those seasons were each of us passed through what I call seasons of unrest. Where you just don't feel as close to God as you did before. And as far as you can determine, you haven't done anything awful. You haven't done anything wrong. You just not feeling close to the lord for some reason. And it doesn't even mean that you aren't. It's just you're not feeling it the same way. Well, I think one day we're going to look back on our lives and as I used to say, watch the video and notice that during those times that we were feeling most alone, the lord may relevant with the spree clubs close to them. I think what we're going to look at and realize is that as we strive to keep the spirit with and so if you try to live our lives in a way that the spirit can be with us in an abundance, then gradually over time the holy ghost shapes your judgment. The home of those forms, your sense of reasoning, the holy ghost as we indicate it educates your conscience. So that before long, you're able to sit in a meeting and it just feels right. The sister Jones should become to do that. You didn't necessarily have to kneel down and pray better with you. And what we'll find one day is that those statements, those decisions that we make, were inspired, have so not necessarily that the spirit had to come in prompt me again, but that the spirit has formed my judgment has formed my thinking in other words so that what I do come forward with is with judgment. And it's proper. It's what the lord would do. And that it's almost too spiritually excessive to pray over every item just doesn't seem right. Elder oaks when he was years ago. In fact, spoken BYU emotional and said he knew a situation where a man in his wife, when he went shopping, the man always went to the store with his wife because he wanted to pray over every can with they purchased. L rogues and his subtle ways that it seemed a bit excessive to me. Well, of course, and it's actually crazy. It's gospel crazy. It's just not necessary. So I think that that the spirit can guide you in a meeting and that you don't have to pray about every single thing. Yeah, I think if you drive, I think wear yourselves out. Like I said, a student ward and you start over or a young people's war, and you start over every semester, you got a hundred callings to make. You need to be bruised. And I really appreciate that. And it goes back to sort of that doctrine of sanctification. The one way that the Holy Spirit influences us is through that sanctification process. I often wonder what experiences did I have ten years ago that meant nothing then, but of development of the person to make a certain decision today in a certain way. It's a good way to put it. I think the spirit prepares us today for decisions we have to make tomorrow. And join me back to the callings that I often see that I refer to as the chalkboard in heaven. We've put so much pressure on ourselves as maybe a bishopric that God has this chalkboard in heaven with every calling in our ward and he has a specific name next to every calling there. And it's our job through the spirit to determine what's on God's chalkboard. So it can be on our truck board. But a lot of times I would say that am I wrong in thinking that maybe there's two or three people like calling in God really doesn't have an opinion one way or the other. Let me give you an illustration. I've seen this happen many

times and you stay presidencies to be called and in the days and weeks preceding that two or three different men good men men that definitely are not seeking to be the state president, only one of them. Right, there's only one spot. I think that's the lord's way of saying you would be perfectly fine. Yeah. Meaning your life isn't that may not be who's called. I'll share this story and this could be misunderstood. I hope it isn't. Joseph mcconkey shared with me once that when his father had returned, his father Bruce had returned from a state conference assignment as they were sitting down to eat, he turned to his dad and he said, dad, do you feel confident as you brethren go out and call me state presence? Do you feel confident that that man is the Lawrence man? Elder mcconkey's response is very interesting.

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He said, oh no. But once we call him, that's a great principle. You know what I'm saying? No, I could see where people could misunderstand that. And I hope they don't, but I think it's, you know, maybe to be called as an apostle, there's one. In fact, God has in mind, but as far as who's going to be the home evening leader, not that it's unimportant, but that maybe you don't need a major revelation for that. Yeah. And I think elder McConnell's point is very interesting. Once that person's called, the lord fits them to that assignment. Yeah. Isn't that a great question? Yeah, it is. And I think there's scripture one 28 9 where it talks about this bold doctrine that we often see revelation as a one way street from heaven to us, but oftentimes we make the decision and it goes to heaven and then is stamped as revelation. I think that God honors his servants. Yeah. Yeah, for sure. And I was going to mention just that oftentimes we rarely say that this individual is called by God, but they are called of God. And of his process and of his doctrine. And I think that's helpful to see there. Well, this is been a fun discussion insightful for sure. Yeah, and any other aspect as far as it relates to leadership in the church of the holy

ghost. I mean, obviously there could be a whole book on that. But anything that you'd want to mention before you wrap up. Maybe something that comes to my mind is something that I talk about in the book toward the very end. And I keep making reference male friend Joseph mcconkey. I miss him. But we learned that he and his wife had been called to serve as mission presence to preside over a mission in Edinburgh, Scotland. Not long before they left, my wife Sean and I who were good friends with a mcconkey's went to the park and had dinner with them. It was sat around very casually and enjoyed ourselves. And I remember turning to Joseph and saying, have you have you been through everything that's been sent to you and of course he'd been sent. Volumes of things to read and I addresses by the general authorities to new mission presidents from previous times, he said, yeah, I've been through it all. I said, well, what do you think? And he said, well, this is back when the little white handbook, the missionaries rules, the deuce and the don'ts. It's there. He said, I've gone through everything. And I've gone through this little book, and he said, there's good stuff there, and it certainly correct, he said, about trying to come up with something that could distill the message in that little handbook. And in the missionaries lives, is there something he said that could cause us not to worry about keeping 63 rules, is there an overarching guiding principle that other be

involved here? He said, when I came up with this, he said, I want to teach my missionaries to understand this. I would never do anything that would cost me influence in school. And it sort of became a mission model. And I think if we could live by that standard, I would never do anything. It would cost me the influence that will affect places where we go and don't go. Things we say and don't say, people even affiliate with and shouldn't affiliate with. It's a powerful statement. Now, I think for those call to positions in the church, especially pre study administration, isn't the call to be superhuman. But they are called to try to align their will with will of God, and to live in a manner so that the holy ghost can work with them. Because it's not just now that the holy ghost can work with that man to be a better man. The holy ghost networks with that man to help make others better men and better women. And so it's just so very responsibility to be a priesthood leader. And so bring to be a leader in any facet of the church, why? Because souls are precious in the sight of God. And so there's a beautiful little saying in the book of Mormon where, in the 26th chapter of mosaic, Alma has just Alma the elder has been delegated, responsibility, as high priest by king mosaic. And he's overwhelmed. He's overwhelmed with transgression, the church he's never encountered this before. So what does he do? He takes the transgressors to the king and says here I brought them for you to judge. And the king says, no, I deliver them back to you to judge. In other words, that's why I call you. It says, and now the spirit of album was again troubled for he feared that he would not do right. That is so moving to me. I know that feeling. You know that feeling. When you're dealing with people's lives, we're going to make mistakes here and there, but there's something you just don't want to make mistakes with. And one of them is a person's soul. Joseph Smith said once only fools would trifle themselves. So I think as a leader in the church, we strive to the best of our ability to not do anything or cost us the influence is. And that concludes this throwback episode of the Leading Saints podcast.

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That concludes this episode of the Leading Saints. 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 LeadingSaints.org or go to LeadingSaints.org/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 LeadingSaints.org/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, go to leadingSaints.org/slash14 to gain access to Rob Ferrell's four hour presentation at no cost. Visit LeadingSaints.org/slash14th. Yet 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