

Come Follow Me Class Insights 26 D&C Sec. 67-70

I'm Taylor, and I'm Tyler. This is Book of Mormon Central's Come Follow Me Insights. Today Doctrine and Covenants sections 67 through 70.

A quick message from the production team. We experienced technical difficulties with the audio track on this episode and we apologize for the bad audio quality. If you are having trouble hearing, we recommend that you turn on the subtitles by clicking on the closed caption button. Please enjoy.

So these sections are given during this kind of this long conference and you'll notice we've been having a lot of conferences in the early stages of the Church.

Yeah, so we've got to remember that back at this time there's no First Presidency, there's no Quorum of the Twelve, there's no Quorum of the Seventy and there's a lot of decisions to be made and they don't have a Church General Handbook and so Joseph is convening and bringing the brethren together, the Church members, to discuss things. So, in order to understand because if you look at the word "conference" it actually means to confer. That word – you discuss together and even though Joseph Smith is the Prophet, he's received lots of revelations. He's not simply saying hey God, we're all just going to sit around waiting for you to tell us every last thing we need to know. Instead, what does he do? He gets the brethren together, let's raise a question, here's some things that we have to work through and let's discuss it together and they make lots of decisions and yet even in the middle of that sometimes God says, hey, good job. Let me give you some additional insight.

For example, they did four sessions here over a number of days, somewhere between like November 1st to November 12th and they'd always assign a different person to be the moderator. Oliver Cowdery, I think, was for session one, we're not sure about session two, and William McLellin was the moderator for sessions three and four, but after the first session, it's a noon break, and he receives section 1. Right? Interesting how God works, that God allows us to work through the messiness of discussion and talking and making decisions and sometimes we do things that might be wrong, and God doesn't always just stop us in the middle of a conversation like well, you're wrong about thinking that. He lets us work through the messy middle.

It's fascinating to me to sit with people in conference or in counsel and it's this old notion that you've heard before. President Ballard has emphasized this counseling with our councils. Elder Anderson - Elder Neil A. Anderson has used the phrase multiple times: revelation is scattered among us. So, it's this idea of now - let me use a couple of different colors here to signify - if this is what we're trying to figure out what God wants us to do, the beauty of a conference, or the beauty of a council is that person A comes in and they bring this perspective and person B brings this perspective of that issue and person C has this kind of experience and person D might have these life experiences and these things. You'll notice they have some things that aren't accurate, that fall outside of the realm of truth – things as they really are.

But the beauty of a conference, the beauty of a council, whether it's in a hierarchical structure of the Church or in a patriarchal or familial structure of the home, when husband and wife come together equally yoked with their children and counsel together in love and in righteousness, then it's amazing when we stop trying to defend our position and say that represents truth, things as they really are, but rather to say hm, let's confer. Let's – the revelation is scattered among us and I appreciate the fact that it doesn't matter the setting, when you bring the best that everybody has to offer together, you get a more complete picture. So, in this case, yeah, there was some error, there were some things that don't fit, but by the time you're done counseling, you don't have all of God's truths in this little diagram in this perspective. But notice what you do have, maybe missing this part until we bring somebody in who maybe comes from a different background or upbringing than you, and over here, you get the idea – conference, counseling, revelation is scattered among us.

This is a principle of the gospel that you will see throughout scriptures but nowhere more obviously than in the Doctrine and Covenants and in Church history because of what Taylor is saying. When you don't have a First Presidency and a Quorum of the Twelve and a Quorum of the Seventy, they're trying to figure this out. And then on those beautiful occasions when God says, okay, you've done the best you can, you've done your due diligence, now let me give you some of these missing pieces that you don't have yet scattered among you. I'll help you with – I'll help you fill in the big spaces that are missing.

Yeah, what's also cool about this is when they're done, they get unified in their witness or their testimony of what they're going to teach and what they're going to do by – God asks them after the end of these conferences, I want you to be unified and testify together. Let's also just as you are erasing that, write out this word. We have these two words “council” and “counsel”. Right? In English they sound the same. You know, the top one, council, is a group of people who end up counseling together. And this is the very part we're talking about is the power that happens when you talk with other people and actually listen to other people and hear other perspectives and consider other people's viewpoints. And God asks us in families, in marriages and in the Church to counsel with one another, not to dominate, not say I'm always right, you've got to listen to me. But the joy of life is God has given us the opportunity to work in a messy world to figure out the best we can. And sometimes God will come in and insert himself with a very clear revelation and sometimes he's like, you know, I want you to act and learn.

And so in a marriage, in a family, in a work setting, in a church setting, what an amazing thing when the leader or leaders of that, whatever that organization or family may be, when they say let's counsel until it becomes clear what the right answer is. Far better to come up with something that is – that represents us under inspiration than me alone, in isolation from my own set of experiences and constraints. It will be a happier marriage, a happier family, a happier organization, a happier ward when we don't dominate but rather when we counsel with our councils.

I did so many – well at the end, they were joyful experiences when I came into a conversation even in my marriage where like I start talking and I agree with myself. So that must be the right thing because I agree with myself and my wife would bring up a perspective. And there was one particular story some years ago, my car died, so I had to get a new car. Well, I had to get another car, a used car. This was totally true. I literally was about to sign the papers, I found, I'd done the drive, I'd checked it all out, I'm at the dealership and literally all I had to do was just sign and the car was mine. Well, after paying for it. But I thought, I told the sales guy, let me just check with my wife one more time. We'd already talked about it like three or four times. I called her up and she's like, actually, I've been having some additional thought, I think you need to get something else. And I'm just like, what? And she's like, let's get ourselves a van. And I wanted a smaller car for myself, I'm like why do we need a van? We had two kids at the time, she's like, that way we can drive the neighborhood kids to school. But we were really going to keep this car and I'm like, I'm not thinking I need to go buy a neighborhood bus.

Well, let's fast forward a bunch of years. My wife was right, by the way, but it took me a while to come to terms with the fact that she was right, and I have to tell you that a number of times over the last six or seven years, currently, like today, I just dropped off the kids. I was driving a bus full of kids with our van. And I'll come home and say, you were so absolutely wise to encourage me not to sign that paper because our life circumstances were going to change and we were needed to be participate – being good neighbors. And this is joy when you listen to other people and get outside of like, yeah, I agree with myself. There's real power in learning to agree with others.

Isn't that amazing? To finish this up, there are really kinds of – three levels here. There's the me level, and then when you're in that group, that organization, whether it be a marriage or a ward or whatever it may be, it's the we level. But the ultimate level is when you can have those two combined with the thee level, when you can involve all of those layers and levels in this decision-making process, in this conferring together, it's not just me conferring with myself. It's like the old cliché or the old saying of - of course I speak to myself. I sometimes need expert opinion. That just doesn't work very well in a marriage. That doesn't work very well in a ward or in a work setting, even. When you can really expand that out, you're going to be better but it's out here where you go good, better, best, when you can involve the Lord and people all around you in making those decisions, which – Joseph is modeling that over and over and over again. And there are times when the voice of the Lord is very clear and even though people are trying to encourage him otherwise, he learns some lessons about giving in to other people's opinion when he already knew what the Lord's view on it is.

And that's what you also see in our – in our Church today, occasionally where you get modifications or adjustments to policies or procedures for certain things that we do in the Church. It's as if the Lord has spoken to our prophets, seers and revelators and though we may have lots of questions out here about how to implement what they're telling us to do, the reality is, the direction is clear, so now we move forward.

Timing and the order of the events in these sections gets a little tricky. If you go to josephsmithpapers.org and you go to the 1831 section and you see the revelations coming out and

then you read some of the historical backgrounds on each of those revelations, you'll notice that in timing that they've listed on the Joseph Smith Papers website, section 68 followed by section 1, followed by section 67, followed by section 133, followed by then section 69, and then we march forward.¹ There's a lot happening in here, you'll notice. We're all over the Doctrine and Covenants now, which might be a little bit confusing to some of you.

The Book of Commandments is first printed in 1833. Now keep in mind, when you get the mob action really ramping up in Independence, Missouri in 1833, this is the book that they're almost finished printing in its entirety in W. W. Phelps's print shop in Independence, where they destroy the press, they throw out the windows all these copies of different – different stacks of papers containing the Book of Commandments. It's that Commandments that the Rollins sisters save some and go out into the corn field, you've probably heard that story. That's 1833 and keep in mind the Book of Commandments is going to be stopping here. But at the time, it wasn't section 133 because the Lord gave the preface and the conclusion to the book right in the same time period and so we now put it at the end of the Doctrine and Covenants. So, we're going to print the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835 and there is where we shift the appendix or the conclusion to the book back into its place where we see it today.

So you have the preface and the conclusion. What makes this so interesting, Taylor already mentioned that you have William McLellin, you have Sidney Rigdon and you have Oliver Cowdery who all have been tasked with this idea of, we've got all these revelations up through section 65 and 66 but we've got them in Hiram, Ohio and we've got to decide what do we want to do with them? Well, we need to publish them. They'd agreed in conference, they'd agreed to publish ten thousand copies of these. And so, they were saying well, we need some context for them; we need - we need a preface so people know what it is that they're reading, what these revelations are, and so isn't that amazing? You get Sidney, you get Oliver and you get William McLellin all writing their own – their own preface and they come together in conference and they're debating and they're – they're disagreeing. No, I don't like the way you've worded that. No, that claim right there, I don't think we should make, and there's this debate.

And here's Joseph watching this conference going on between these three and other people participating, and what does Joseph do? He turns heavenward and asks for direction at which point revelation begins to flow and it flows very clearly and very methodically to the point where it can be written down line by line by line and thus we get section 1 from above. It's a gift; it's given.

Now, I don't know if they would have received section 1 even if they hadn't had Oliver and Sidney and William go through that exercise. I think – I think personally, that they would have still gotten section 1. But the fact that they did the best they could before the Lord gave them section 1 is going to, at least for those three, and anybody else in that council who watched the process, it's going to show them the power – they are going to hold on more dearly to section 1 than perhaps they otherwise might have done because they saw their own feeble attempts that failed and now they see the beauty of – of that section as it comes forth.

¹ Various Authors. *The Joseph Smith Papers: A Comprehensive Digital Collection of the Papers of Joseph Smith*, www.josephsmithpapers.org/.

Again there's this beautiful principle that God allows us to suffer and to struggle. I mean God could have just shut up and said, I'm going to give this section early on – I want no confusion, I want no wondering of what the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Commandments is all about. And yet God allows us to suffer and to struggle.

I have to say that in my life, I think the doctrine that I struggle the most with is that God will allow me to suffer so that I can become like him. It's a doctrine that I think that's like – I'm a fallen natured human and just give me the primrose path and just make it nice and clean and clear with no thorns or briars or any difficulties, no stubbed toes, no skinned knees. God's like, I could do that, but you could never become like me without the suffering and the struggle. And I love that he allows them to work through it.

Now I want to make it clear, just because you are suffering and struggling doesn't mean you need to stay in that situation. But God loves us enough that he allows us to experience. And the great joy I get is to know that Jesus experienced or suffered all things so he can succor us and lift us up in whatever we're struggling with.

It's beautiful. How many of you have ever been in a – in a difficult conversation where you're struggling to figure something out and it's just not clear and you're not seeing eye to eye and the temptation for both parties or both sides is to just give up and walk away and say, pssh, we surrender. We can't figure this out, versus this idea of these early saints are showing us, they keep at it, they keep at it and they keep going. It's like this – this journey through a dark forest. This counseling with our councils trying to figure out what everybody's bringing to the table and trying to find truth and if you just keep at it, keep at it long enough, then the light will shine. And oh, how much more glorious the light shines when you've spent time working faithfully and struggling with the trust through that dark forest experience. It's beautiful.

Now on to section 67, this section is given because there are some very, very clear apprehensions going on. You can picture Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, William McLellin and others who all have significantly more experience and education and learning than Joseph Smith and now we have sitting in front of us this book of revelations that we're going to now have published and sent forth to the world that has some – well, it has a lot of spelling errors. It has some grammatical flaws to it. The punctuation in places is terrible. The consistency of the usage of certain terms and what they're defined as isn't perfect. It's not flawless. And the struggle is, is we're now sending this book forth, printing – the plan here at this conference in Hiram, Ohio is that we are going to print ten thousand copies of this?

Notice verse 5: "Your eyes have been upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and his language you have known, and his imperfections you have known; and you have sought in your hearts knowledge that you might express beyond his language; this you also know." Oh, by the way, this revelation, keep in mind, is coming to them from the Lord through Joseph. Do you think there have been times when – when the prophet Joseph has perhaps been painfully aware of his inadequacies, of his imperfections, of his unlearned state as far as the world's standards are concerned? Do you think that he hasn't noticed how other people maybe are more eloquent, Sidney Rigdon could maybe preach for two hours with power and force and Oliver Cowdery was a great

schoolteacher and William W. Phelps is a great writer? I think Joseph's noticed all of that, but I love the fact that here the Lord is acknowledging that Joseph is his chosen servant to do this work.

Look at verse 6: "Now, seek ye out of the Book of Commandments, even the least that is among them, and appoint him that is the most wise among you;" , which is going to end up being William E. McLellin who takes on this challenge. "Or, if there be any among you that shall make one like unto it, then ye are justified in saying that ye do not know that they [these revelations] are true" (Doctrine and Covenants 67:7). So basically, it's the Lord saying, let's try a little experiment here. You pick the wisest person among you – anyone smarter in the world's eyes than Joseph Smith, and have that person write a revelation that is as good as the least of these revelations, the one that you feel like is the least sounding like God. And if you can do that, then you're justified in saying that you don't know that these things are true. William E. McLellin went and tried and he tried and he tried and he failed and he came back and he said all right, it's good.

Notice – notice verse 8: "But if ye cannot make one like unto it, ye are under condemnation if ye do not bear record that they are true. For ye know that there is no unrighteousness in them, and that which is righteous cometh down from above, from the Father of lights" (Doctrine and Covenants 67:8-9).

Now put a piece of paper or something in your scriptures here, keep your place because we're going to come right back here. Turn back with us for a moment to Doctrine and Covenants section 1. Let's go back to section 1 because God addressed the very same issue here in verse 24, section 1 verse 24: "Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me...". He didn't say these are – Joseph made them up. "[They] are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding" (Doctrine and Covenants 1:24). Oh I love that. God on high, "the Father of lights", says I'm going to give my commandments and my revelations unto my servants according to their language (Doctrine and Covenants 67:9). A beautiful cross reference you could write in your margin next to section 1 verse 24 would be 2 Nephi chapter 31 verse 3 because Nephi picks up this theme clear back in the Book of Mormon. Listen to this: "For my soul delighteth in plainness; for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men. For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men...", notice this, mark this, "...according to their language, [and] their understanding" (2 Nephi 31:3).

Keep in mind, God up in heaven is not speaking 1830s English in frontier America. That's not the dialect of heaven. But God doesn't come down and speak in the heavenly language to Joseph. He speaks in the language that Joseph will understand, just like if he comes to a saint in Korea, he's not going to speak in English; he's going to inspire that saint in Korean or in Zimbabwe, or if he goes to Brazil it's going to be in Portuguese. He's going to speak to people at their level of understanding and according to their language that they get, and Joseph's language was not refined, high English. It was frontier American English.

So in the book Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants by Steve Harper, he quotes Joseph as saying that Joseph felt imprisoned by what he called the "...total darkness of paper, pen and ink;

and a crooked, broken, scattered and imperfect language.”² There's Joseph feeling imprisoned by the language constraints but he has these lofty visions and lofty truth that he's trying to teach us using that imperfect method and he simply moves forward doing the best he can.

Now what does that mean for you? What does that mean for me? Huh? That means if you've ever had the experience of getting up in a sacrament meeting or in a Sunday school lesson or a Relief Society lesson or an Elder's Quorum lesson or if you give a talk in some other setting and you get frustrated because you feel things, you want to teach things, you want to say them in a certain way and you sit down and you finish that lesson or that talk and you feel – you feel deflated like oh, I failed, I didn't – I didn't do what I – what I felt. I couldn't get it out.

You're in good company. The prophets through the ages have wrestled with this struggle by trying to communicate things with imperfect words and imperfect language where there may be times where you write things a little wrong or you might pronounce them – you might mess up some words and people might make fun of you or you might not be the most eloquent. I love the fact that Joseph simply keeps moving forward, trusting in the essence of the revelations that are coming rather than in the mechanics of how they came and how they're portrayed, but to focus on the bigger picture. And I think that's helpful for us moving forward in our families and in our lives, to focus on the bigger picture of what we're trying to accomplish rather than all of the nitty gritty details of how we're accomplishing it moving forward.

Now verse 10: "...again, verily I say unto you that it is your privilege, and a promise I give unto you that have been ordained unto this ministry, that inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble, the veil shall be rent and you shall see me and know that I am –" now notice the qualifier, "not with the carnal neither natural mind, but with the spiritual. For no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God. Neither can any natural man abide the presence of God, neither after the carnal mind" (Doctrine and Covenants 67:10-12).

Brothers and sisters, your first view of God won't be with carnal eyes; it will be in those little moments where you get glimpses of the heavens. It's where you might be sitting there listening to a song or you might be in a conference or a ward meeting or a family meeting or a personal scripture study or traveling down the road and a thought crosses your mind, or on a walk and you're just struck with connection with heaven where you get glimpses. It's almost as if you're walking close enough to the veil that the heavenly breezes are wafting that veil just enough that it just parts, just a sliver, just a crack, where you catch a glimpse of heavenly things and then it's – then it's done and it closes and you then can move forward in faith for decades on those experiences with – with glimpses of the eternities that come from the power of the Holy Ghost helping you to recognize things as they really are. It's powerful.

Look at verse 13: "Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now, neither the ministering of angels; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected. Let not your minds turn back; and

² Various Authors. "History, 1838–1856, Volume a-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834], Page 242-243." *The Joseph Smith Papers*, www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/248.

when ye are worthy, in mine own due time, ye shall see and know that which was conferred upon you by the hands of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun. Amen" (Doctrine and Covenants 67:13-14). I love the way the Lord closed that revelation. He's my servant. His name's Joseph Smith, Junior, and he's a farm boy, and as you read section 67 closely, these aren't the words of a farmer. These are the words of God spoken to us through that chosen servant of his. These are lofty words given in section 67.

So section 68 is yet again a beautiful example of where people came to Joseph seeking to know God's will for them and he receives this direction for them and here at the beginning of this section is this beautiful description of what God expects of these missionaries. So you have Orson Hyde in verse 1 called, with others, to go out and to teach. Look at verse 2: "...behold, and lo, this is an ensample unto all..." you could circle all, "...those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth —". So any missionary or any teacher or any leader to go forth, this is the example or "ensample" for all of us: "...that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation" (Doctrine and Covenants 68:3-4).

Brothers and sisters, this is an amazing verse that, if we're not careful, we'll swing the pendulum too far one way or the other. Let's just let the verse be what it is and say what it says, nothing more nothing less without going to extremes. There is this beautiful word in here "scripture". Now sometimes if we're not careful, we take the word "scripture" and we narrowly define it as the canon, that which is canonized scripture which is authoritative and applicable to all of us through time. That is the ultimate example of scripture but I love the fact that God is giving us a more expansive view of, we're not changing the canon, we're not adding to the canon when missionaries go out or when people ordained to these callings go out and speak by the Spirit, we're not adding to the canon. It's not applicable to everybody at all times in all places. That's why you'll often hear General Authorities say at a Regional Conference or at a Stake Conference or at a fireside, don't record this. Don't publish this. Don't post this on the internet as a direct quote that then others may take as binding on them. This is a specific, shall we say, "scripture" for this group on this occasion today, right now. Don't record it. Just let it enjoy the experience today. It's scripture for you, but it's not binding on other people and in other settings.

Let's look at this, the word "scripture" comes from the word "script", that which is written down. Even at the time of Jesus, how often did the religious authorities get mad at him when he started teaching things that weren't written down? And if you think about it, the scriptures always started with words, God's words. And so for us to somehow say, well if it's not written down it doesn't count, actually misunderstands the process of God speaking and then some of those things are written down to be for everybody. Some of these are written down just for you; perhaps your patriarchal blessing or other blessings that you receive, so we use this word all the time but we have made it such a narrow thing at times, that I love the revelation here in D&C 68 that the Lord expands when he says when you're experiencing the voice of God and his Spirit, that's scripture, that's revelation.

That's beautiful. I'll never forget, this was one of the defining moments of my life. I was fifteen and-a half years old and my mother called up a patriarch who was no longer giving patriarchal blessings in our stake simply because he had given some blessings to some older siblings and she felt very strongly that if he was willing to give one more blessing, that it would be a great benefit to me. And so here I am, fifteen and a half years old. He agreed to do this. My parents and I went and knocked on his door there in River Heights, Utah, Carl Mortensen. And this old man that I had never met before – he's not in good health – that's why he was no longer functioning as the regular patriarch but he was still an ordained patriarch and he agreed to give this additional blessing. We go into his home; he spends maybe ten minutes just chatting, mostly with my mom, not even to me, and then he tells me to come and sit down in a chair and he starts a little tape recorder and places these shaky hands on my head and proceeds to pronounce a patriarchal blessing.

Brothers and sisters, that blessing, for one of the first times in my life, I felt some things in my soul, in my heart, that I hadn't felt to that degree before – a connection with heaven that this blessing was being given not by a really old patriarch, but coming through him directly from heaven, and that blessing has become absolute scripture to me, like Taylor was talking about. To me that scripture is as good as canonized for me, but nobody else on the whole planet. Same thing when a stake president or a bishop or a Relief Society president gets appropriate revelation for their ward or their group, whatever it may be. It can be absolute, powerful scripture for that group; it's just not binding on anybody else outside of that group.

So I love this expansive opening up of this revelatory seeking process that the Lord is doing with these people. And isn't it interesting that President Nelson, his first major talk on that Sunday morning, the first session or the first conference after he was put in as the prophet, what is his talk? It's seeking revelation for the Church and for ourselves individually. It's – it's this expansive idea that God wants to speak to us. In Steven Harper's book he points out that in 1838, seven years after this, Ralph Waldo Emerson is going to be speaking at the Harvard graduation in Boston and what does he tell them? He's going – he says, quote, "...to show us that God is not was; that he speaketh, not spake."³ That's what I see happening here as well is this idea of, don't just worship a dead God who spoke to people in the past, connect with the God who is speaking to people today.

So, you'll notice now in verse 8: "Go ye into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature, acting in the authority which I have given you...". Some people ask, why does your Church send missionaries into Christian parts of the world? It's not because of any other reason than we're commanded to – to go "into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature..." – that's a hundred percent – "...baptizing [them] in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Doctrine and Covenants 68:8-9). Jesus keeps this very, very simple. "And he that believeth shall be blest with signs following, even as it is written. And unto you it shall be given [to you] to know the signs of the times, and the signs of the coming of the Son of Man;" (Doctrine and Covenants

³ Emerson, Ralph W. "Divinity School Address." *EMERSON - Essays - Divinity School Address*, archive.vcu.edu/english/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/emerson/essays/dsa.html.

68:10-11). So that is our commission, to go do it, now we get to figure out the how, how to make that happen, what that actually looks like in practice.

Now you'll notice something here. Verse 15 talks about the First Presidency, and yet you're aware of the fact that in 1831 there is no First Presidency. So in the original revelation, verse 15 wouldn't have been there. This gets added for the 1835 edition which now we have in our – in our 2013 edition as well down to today, is some of these, what would be called “anachronisms” or out of time statements or revelations. And it's okay because Joseph in 1835 when there's more revelation, he comes back into section 68 and this is where he inserts the additional information that is relevant to everything that is going on in section 68, the things that are being discussed here. You'll notice the same thing in verse 22 and 23, some additional things that are added later on that wouldn't have been in your original 1831 but now you understand hopefully why they get added.

And now verse 25: "And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents." Can I – can we just share a little story with you that I heard on the radio thirty years ago driving to work about a father who was very, very successful at work? Oh, he was good. He was – he was on the top of his game and he would spend hours and hours and hours at work. And everybody at work loved him and everybody celebrated him, thought he was the greatest thing ever. And he was making a lot of money and - and climbing that ladder of success in his career and little did he realize what he was missing out on at home. One day he came home late again, as was his practice, and his wife had put the children to bed and he went into his oldest son, about ten years-old and his son was already in bed, but he was still awake and he gave him a little kiss goodnight and told him how much he loved him and the little kid said, Daddy, can I ask you a question? How much do you make an hour? And his dad thought that's a strange question from a ten-year-old. And so he said something – he gave him some number. At that point, the little kid reached under his pillow and he grabbed out some waded money and he started counting it and he said, Dad, can I borrow \$12 from you? His dad's like, what do you need to borrow \$12 from me for? And he said, because if I take that \$12 and add it to what I already have, then maybe I could buy an hour of your time.

Brothers and sisters, there are a lot of things to pursue in this life, there are a lot of things to go after and spend our time and energy and talent on. I love verse 25 because it brings us back home. It brings us back to things that matter the most and the things that matter the most aren't things; they're people, they're loved ones. They're all around us. Keep in mind, when you sacrifice willingly for something, it leads to increased love of that thing. The greater the sacrifice, the greater the potential for love. I don't – I don't know about you, but I've never yet met anyone who is getting near the end of their life who shakes their head in regret and says, man, I just wish I could go back in time and spend more time at the office, spend more time in worldly pursuits, getting the gain and the glory of the world. I've never yet met anybody who has said that, but I've met a lot of people who have said, oh, I wish I could go back in time and just spend more time with my family, with my children, sacrificing some of those things that are really important to me at the time, for

those which are the most important, which are those relationships, those – those connections with people.

Now this is not intended to be some new program you institute in your family or to become some formulaic one-size-fits-all program. Isn't that interesting that the most powerful relationships with your family – those most powerful experiences, do you know what they often are? They're spelled this way. T-I-M-E. It's – it means you spend time with them. We're not just talking spending lots of time making money so that you can spend quality time for one or two weeks a year; it's quantity and quality time with those that matter most. It's – and for some families, that means you're going to spend a lot of time going to sporting events and practices and games. For others it's going to be dance recitals, for others it's going to be spending time in the kitchen cooking with them and taking food to people. For others it's going to be sitting on a couch reading lots of books or a series of books or watching movies together or taking up a hobby of painting or skiing or going on vacations, whatever they may be. It's this time on task where these youngsters then learn from you and these people around you learn from you but the key with the children isn't just time to fill the time. It's time where they get to really know you, where you can really teach them the gospel which means, it's kind of like these revelations we've been talking about where they go along doing the best they can and then on occasion, God gives these flashes of brilliance. If we're not putting that in with our family, we're less open to those flashes of brilliance where, at the right time, at that perfect time when that child's heart or mind are receptive to actually learn something, where the Holy Ghost can then inspire us to teach that gospel principle. If we're not spending the time with our children and with our loved ones, then we're less likely to get those opportunities.

In all generations God asks families and parents to teach their children the gospel. If we go back to the early Israelites, they have been safely taken out of Egypt, and God has made covenants with them at Sinai and he wants to give them the promised land. And if you look at the Book of Deuteronomy, he's reminding them of their covenantal duties and obligations and listen to this, Deuteronomy chapter 6. Beginning in verse 4 he says: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:". And you might actually consider that as an ancient Israelite Article of Faith. And it goes on: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Okay, well how is a way we could show that, of that full love to God?

Let's continue on, verse 6: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:". And then verse 7 is very important, and if it's right here, and to what we're learning in Doctrine and Covenants 68 about the importance of parents teaching the gospel principles: "And thou shalt teach them..." these words, "...thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." I want to just point out here: did God say, I want you to have an official lesson that begins with a prayer, a song, and you have like a 25-minute lesson where the kids are absolutely not distracted in any way and no fights break out, and then you conclude with another song and you conclude with a prayer and you have an agenda that you followed? No, even if those moments are important as families to have official time to talk about the gospel. What I love is God's focus on, just live your life and let your life be an example to

your children of your faithfulness, that you love me and you love your neighbor. Let your life so shine that in any moment, all times that you can find an opportunity to talk to your children about things that matter. It doesn't have to be an official moment.

So again, sometimes in the Church we feel this need that we can check off all these boxes that yeah, I've made sure I've done my family home evening and I've done my family church time. Those are important activities, but what if you just said to yourself, I love my children and maybe you're at the grocery store and it's an opportunity for that – to talk to them about the importance of financial management. Or, I'm in other – I'm at a park and I just talk about the importance of loving those around me. It can be any setting in any principle of goodness, but always coming back to the power of faith in Jesus Christ and repenting or changing our lives so it's focused on Jesus. And again, I love how in a modern-day revelation we are reminded and encouraged to do this, parents to children. And we get it in the ancient times as well. God is consistent; he's the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

So as we finish up this particular concept, two final thoughts that I'd like to share. Number one, some people as parents or as grandparents or as siblings feel inadequate, feel like they aren't smart enough or have the right training or the right words to be able to help a child or a sibling or a parent or a loved one in one particular setting. The reality is, brothers and sisters, God put us together in – in the family structures that he did for a reason. Your children don't need other experts to raise them. They need you. God sent them to you and he will empower you with knowledge to know how to be you and to help them to grow into the very best versions that they can become. Now you'll use experts as needed in different settings, but don't feel inadequate; feel empowered, that God has given you what you need in order to raise these children that were born to heavenly parents before they were sent to your family.

Now the second thing I wanted to mention, then we'll move on, is this notion of that which you sacrifice for increases your capacity to love. Think about the Lord Jesus Christ, the greater the sacrifice, the greater the potential for being able to love. He gave everything. Does it surprise you now that he loves you infinitely? I think that infinite love is the product of his willingness to infinitely sacrifice for us and there is great joy that he receives in that process.

Sometimes you know we look at our – those of you who might be raising a family right now or have younger grandchildren, sometimes it can be heavy. It can feel like a lot of effort and a lot of work with not a lot of pay-off at times. And we feel like ahh, I've got to be this good parent so I'm going to sacrifice the things that I really would rather do to come and play this little game with these children. Brothers and sisters, one of the beauties of eternity is that reading that story or playing that game with little children isn't just for the little children. I as a daddy need that softening, need that down time, that connecting, bonding time just as much as they need the bonding time with Daddy. The Lord allows both groups to be edified together through all of this shared experience over time.

Now he – he finishes section 68 by saying, verse 34: "These sayings are true and faithful; wherefore, transgress them not, neither take therefrom." Isn't it interesting knowing what's been going on in Hiram, Ohio with these counsels at this conference and the concerns about the

language? Here's the Lord at the very end of section 68 while this is fresh on everybody's mind saying, don't take away from this revelation, which hearkens back to something in Deuteronomy, also in the Book of Revelation, don't take away from or add to the revelations. They may look imperfect to you, but just leave it and God will inspire his prophets, seers and revelators who have authority to make those changes if they're needed to be made as we've shown in a couple of instances here down the road. But it's going to come through the appointed channels, not because we think we're smarter than God's prophets, seers and revelators who are appointed and given the keys to these – to these scriptures, so to speak.

Now, very quickly, moving on to section 69, this is a scripture that gives this notion that Oliver is going to be going on this long journey with this really important book that's going to be published in Independence by W. W. Phelps and he's got a lot of money with him and he needs some help. Look at verse 1: "Hearken unto me, saith the Lord your God, for my servant Oliver Cowdery's sake. It is not wisdom in me that he should be entrusted with the commandments and the moneys which he shall carry unto the land of Zion, except one go with him who will be true and faithful." Hmm, I wonder if that principle is relevant to us today, not just to Oliver and John Whitmer in 1831. I wonder if God loves it when we all find traveling companions in different forms and different kinds of relationships that are true and faithful that help us overcome temptation, that protect us from outside influences and outside hurt and help us go safely on our journey. I think there's probably a lot of ways we could liken that scripture to us and if we have eyes to see and look around, I think that from Oliver Cowdery's perspective, we today would be able to recognize a whole bunch of John Whitmers who the Lord has brought into our life at different times to be our traveling companion, and to help shore us up because together we're much stronger and we're less likely to fall to temptation than when we're divided and separated.

Now, in closing, brothers and sisters, you don't have to compete for the Savior's time. You don't have to try to buy an hour of his attention for you. You've already got it, freely given. He's already sacrificed everything that he had for us and he already loves you infinitely. So, in closing, our invitation is as we try to be like Jesus and follow in his ways, go look for opportunities and ways to find those people around us to counsel with our loved ones and with our councils and to seek the Lord's will and to spend quality time and quantity time with those whom God has entrusted into our care. And we know that he lives, and we know that he loves you and we leave that with you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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