

## Come Follow Me Class Insights – 38 – Doctrine and Covenants 102-105

I'm Taylor, and I'm Tyler, and I'm Casey. This is Book of Mormon Central's Come Follow Me Insights. Today, Doctrine and Covenants sections 102 through 105.

We're excited to have Casey Griffiths with us today as we cover these particular sections. There is a lot going on in sections 102 through 105; we're going to be covering a lot of ground in this particular lesson.

Let's begin with section 102 where the Lord sets up our first high council. And section 102 might seem a little bit odd as you're reading through the Doctrine and Covenants because it's not really a revelation. It's a collection of minutes from the very first Kirtland high council that was held. The reason why it's placed in the Doctrine and Covenants, though, is because it's some really important instructions about how to run a council.

So maybe you'll remember – I remember when I was growing up that in my stake center there was this one room that had this big, long table and on both sides of the table there's six chairs, and then at the very end of the table there were three chairs, right here like this. And if you got to hold Sunday school in here it was like the best day ever, right? Everybody felt like they were part of the Jedi council. Well, that's literally what section 102 is describing. Section 102 describes how to hold a high council specifically in case there's been some kind of dispute. In fact the wording in section 102 verse 2 says: "The high council was appointed by revelation," so everybody's sitting in these chairs is called by revelation, "for the purpose of settling important difficulties which might arise in the church, which could not be settled by the church or the bishop's council to the satisfaction of the parties."

So first things first. To hold a council like this is relatively rare. Most disputes that happen within the Church can be settled within the Church or by the help of a bishop or in extreme cases, the bishop and his counselors. If something like this is happening that means that there's something pretty serious that's gone on and the council is here together to basically assist the person in going through the repentance process or being corrected or whatever they

need to do. However, the principles here that rest again, are used in generally extreme cases, kind of diffuse through all councils in the Church and the description here is kind of a good way to show us how we use a council to resolve a really serious issue or difficulty that's happening.

So what it describes in section 102 is that the council would meet together and the people that are sitting right here on the end are the stake presidency. The stake president of the Kirtland Stake was Joseph Smith. So when everybody arrives in the council meeting, they would be assigned lots. This could happen just as simply as you have a box with a bunch of papers in it and the lots are numbered 1 to 12. According to the directions that are given in section 102 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the councilors that draw even lots, that's 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12, are the individuals who are supposed to look after the needs of the accused person. The people that draw odd numbered lots are assigned to look after the needs of the Church, and this pattern which you're seeing in section 102, according to Joseph Smith, was actually the pattern that existed among the church anciently in Jerusalem. Joseph Smith said he saw in vision how ancient councils were conducted and the law of the Church. In fact, one of the things that he points out is that the people on this side that are supposed to look after the needs of the accused aren't the defense attorneys. And the people on this side that are supposed to look after the needs of the Church aren't the prosecutors, either. Joseph Smith instructed that it was not the order of heaven in ancient councils to plead for or against the guilty as in our judicial courts, but that every councilor when he arose to speak should speak precisely according to the evidence and according to the teachings of the Spirit of the Lord. No councilor should attempt to screen the guilty when his guilt is manifest. The person accused before the high council had the right to one half of the members of the council to plead his cause in order that his case might be fairly presented before the president that a decision might be rendered according to truth and righteousness.

So typically, and Tyler, you probably served on one of these councils before. When the person comes in, they know they're not trying to present themselves as an innocent person. They've usually already talked to their ecclesiastical leader and shared what's happened and it's been deemed serious enough that a stake council can help. And this isn't – this could look like it's an

intimidating setting; the stake high council I served on, our stake president would actually have him sit right here next to the stake presidency and was very, very clear in saying hey, we're not – we're not here to persecute you or punish you; we're here to try and help you.

So one of the interesting caveats here to see unfold through time, is early on, these are – these are seen in the eyes of many general membership looking at this as a punitive thing, even though it wasn't intended to be that way. In fact, the title is this disciplinary council. Well, in our most recent handbook of instructions we don't call them disciplinary councils. We're not here to discipline the person although technically, the root of disciplinary is disciple – to help them be a better disciple. So that is still absolutely in place, but now we call them membership councils. And I think there's a good reason for that to see it as a step in their repentance, in their – in their level of discipleship to Christ.

When I was on a stake high council and served in some of these, many of the councils that I participated in were reconvening. It's where someone had been involved in a serious transgression and now it was sometime later and they were getting ready to come back into the Church or be rebaptized or get all their privileges back and the council was reconvening to just hear. And so as weird as it might sound, some of these meetings were some of the most spiritual meetings that I ever attended because you got to hear how the Savior helped the person that had done something really serious come about through the repentance process. And even in the few of these where I attended where we did have to deal with the question of the person's membership, there was always this overwhelming spirit of love. So this isn't the Spanish inquisition. In fact, it's almost the total opposite of it in that every individual here is really focused on trying to help the person and help them understand what they've done and how to deal with it and what the next steps through repentance are.

Yeah. So that repentance element, the root of repentance is this idea that we're trying to help people change, to become more like Christ. Hence, this whole effort isn't to punish or rebuke or push somebody out, it's to try to get

them onto the straight and narrow path and invite them to come and partake. That's really important.

And the new handbook actually gives three reasons why you would hold a council like this that we ought to make clear. So reason number one, according to the – this is the handbook that just came out in 2020, February 2020 is to protect others. So there might be a time when we hold a council like this to try and protect someone that's vulnerable, something serious has gone on and the council is being held to make sure that the person that's vulnerable is being protected. Number two, and in my experience this was by far and away the most common reason to hold one of these councils, was to help a person repent or access the redeeming power of the atonement. Number three, the reasons for these councils was to protect the integrity of the Church. So there were times and there are times when sometimes a person who is a member of the Church teaches or does something that affects the integrity of the Church. Let's say, for example, you had an ecclesiastical leader that had embezzled funds or something like that. We want the members of the Church to be able to trust their leaders with their funds that they give to them; those are sacred, precious funds. And so a council like this could be held in their case in order to protect the integrity of the Church.

In the latest iteration of the handbook too, the actions that the council can take has also been changed as well. So the word excommunication, for instance, is now removal of Church membership. And that's kind of the most extreme thing that happens in these cases, but other possibilities could be official curtailment of Church responsibilities. That might be where they say to somebody we're not going to have you hold a calling or exercise the priesthood for a little while where you're going through this repentance process. And then the third outcome could be that the council decides to not take any action but to allow the individual to continue to work with their bishop or other ecclesiastical leaders to try and work through the issues that they're dealing with at that time.

Formal versus informal counseling with time limits attached. Now you'll notice in section 102 it gives this instruction that as you draw those numbers, draw those lots, and you have certain responsibilities, if it's a really simple case,

then only two people are going to speak. If it's a more complex issue then you add two more. But in the most extreme cases, it says you only have three and three representing the good name of the Church and making sure that the individual is being represented fairly and appropriately. Once again, as Casey said, this is not like a prosecution and defense attorney setup in a court of law. This is different where we're seeking truth, not trying to defend the indefensible to get them off on a little, minor technicality, it's – we're trying to figure out what really happened and make sure that the good name of the Church as well as the good name of that individual is protected to the greatest degree possible, that they're – they're going to be able to be encouraged to move forward in faith, trusting in the Lord.

Now, stop and think about this for a minute. The overview, or the structure of section 102 trying to set up the power of a council in the Church, and why so many people, I mean, wouldn't it be a lot easier if we just said let the three, or better yet, let the one just make the decision in every single case? Now as Casey said, some cases are simple enough that that's all it takes, a bishop even, or a bishop's – a bishopric to make those decisions. But in the more complex issues, today, the handbook of instructions says that most of these issues that come are going to be resolved by just the stake presidency and it's only in the much more complex issues that we convene this full council kind of as outlined in section 102. So that adjustment has been made where if it's – if it's pretty cut and dried, the decision can be made. It's where we're not quite sure what the situation is, that's where we convene this council. Why? Because revelation is scattered among us and there are different perspectives that can be brought in to that discussion, and it's pretty powerful as you have this many people all connecting with heaven seeking for heaven's aid to know what to do that the Spirit can be manifest and we can come to conclusions that no one individual person would have figured out on their own.

Another thing to know about these councils that my students ask a lot is, these councils are relatively rare. If you were a teenage kid that broke the law of chastity, for instance, you probably wouldn't be called before a council like this. You'd probably work with your ecclesiastical leader, your bishop or your branch president to get through the sin. Typically a person that's called before a council like this is usually somebody that's made temple covenants and

somebody that – if you're male, holds the Melchizedek priesthood but the principles here diffuse through all councils in the Church and that's what makes section 102 so valuable. So for instance a council like this could exist in the form of just a bishop and his counselors at working with an individual that's committed a serious transgression. In those cases the bishop might say I'm going to appoint this counselor to look after the needs of the individual and this counselor to look after the needs of the Church, and then conduct the meeting going forth from there.

At all times, and a good principle to remember here, is that whenever we have to conduct any kind of disciplinary action, and maybe that's not the best word, but when we have to help a person repent, is that we're balancing the needs of the individual with the integrity of our faith. Part of the reason why we hold these councils in the first place is because it's a big deal to be a member of the Church. Every member of the Church in some way or form is a spokesman for the Church and their actions and the integrity that's associated with their actions can reflect positively or poorly onto the Church. So we're concerned with the individual's salvation; that's the number one concern, but we're also concerned with the fact that if a person isn't doing what they're supposed to be doing, we want to get them to a point to where they can.

In an earlier section in the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord says where much is given, much is required. And so a person that holds the priesthood or has made sacred covenants in the temple does have a little bit higher expectation for them. Part of the reason why the Church might take an action to remove a person's membership isn't as a form of punishment; it's a way of saying you've made a mistake, we want to help you solve your mistake, the expectations are higher right now, so we'll remove some of those expectations, some of those covenants, and allow you to work through it without those expectations on your shoulder.

It's kind of the same thing when an ecclesiastic leader asks somebody to withhold from taking the sacrament for a little while. That's not intended to be a punishment in any way, shape or form, it's intended to prevent the person from making covenants that they're not in a position to keep at that time. So there was a time when I was serving on a council like this and I pulled lot

number one and we had talked about what the individual had done and I'm not going to share any specifics here because that wouldn't be appropriate, but the decision of the council, the revelation that came to our stake president was that the person's membership should be withdrawn. As number one, he turned to me and said, Brother Griffiths, can you explain why we're doing this? And I gave an explanation very similar to what I just said, that we weren't doing it to punish the person, but we were doing it to try and help them resolve the problems that they had without the expectations that come from the covenants they'd made. And after a person has gone through a period of repentance, let's say if their membership was withdrawn, they can come back into the Church through rebaptism and then about a year after rebaptism there's a ceremony called the restoration of blessings where the person's temple covenants, where everything up to and including their patriarchal blessing were restored.

So section 102 is giving you kind of the extreme case and situation, and one of the things that I really like about this is that there's nobody that's exempt from this. When we get to section 107 a little further down the road, it even gives the procedure for what to do if a president of the Church engages in a serious transgression you'd still hold a council like this and follow the principles that are in section 102. In fact, we've only ever had one president of the Church that got brought before a council like this and it was Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith wanted to take this out for a test drive and see how it would work and so when someone accused him of unchristian-like behavior, he said, let's call a council, almost enthusiastically. In the case President Smith wasn't completely exonerated, the person that had accused him of unchristian-like conduct and Joseph Smith were invited to make amends with each other and enter into Christian fellowship. And so the way that this works is to just kind of help everybody along the road to immortality and eternal life by giving them a chance to fully engage with what they've done, address what they've done, and ask the Savior's help and receive the Savior's help through the members of the council to fully become clean.

So I'm going to erase this. We're going to step back. Actually, we're going to – we're going to step up and look down from a heavenly perspective for a moment on why in the world would we set this up as councils, this idea of

going to this great effort to try to discover the truth? Many times you'll have people in scripture have heavenly visions and what will they report seeing up in heaven? They see usually God sitting on his throne surrounded with numberless concourses of angels and the word that often gets used in scripture is councils, heavenly councils. It's people who are conversing together and counseling together.

So what happens is, section 102 for me becomes this heavenly manifestation of God saying okay, the Church is now at a place where we can give you line upon line, where we can give you another layer of what it's like to be heavenly, of how to become more celestial, more like God. Because – stop and think about this for a minute. How hard, honestly, really, how hard would it be for Jesus to do all of this for us? It is the Church of Jesus Christ, after all. He could come down in Kirtland and personally manifest himself to the people and say, have ye any disputations among you? Have you any sinners among you? Have you any who are struggling? Bring them all and I will take care of everything and I will pass a perfect judgment on every situation, every hardship and every – every decision you're trying to make. I'll give you the right, best case scenario answer to all of it. You realize Jesus could do that in every single case. But what is – what is the point then of having a council? Why call presidencies? Why call councils? Why have anybody get together to share their thoughts and listen to others and ask questions? It's because there's growth that happens as we are given tasks to accomplish, make decisions, carry out Church procedures. We learn from our experience and in the process, like a little baby being put down and let go for the first time to walk, we learn how to walk, and then we learn how to talk and we learn how to run and we learn how to read and write and do arithmetic and all these other things because we're given opportunities to be in settings where we can learn, where we can share, where we can experiment and we're growing.

Brothers and Sisters, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the section 102 context is all about Jesus sharing his perfection with us in our imperfection and one of the ways to protect against individual imperfection is to put you in a – in a council together with people whether it be a husband and wife, whether it be a bishopric or a young women's presidency, or a high council or a first presidency and quorum of the twelve. There's something



powerful about actually listening to other people in that council and having all sides represented. It would be silly if, in those high council settings, everybody drew an even number and were all looking out for the one side and totally ignoring the other side.

There's power to guard against my own imperfections and my own personal weakness and my own biases when I get in a council setting, and I don't know about you but there have been many times going into a meeting, whether it's an official Church meeting or in a session where my wife and I are talking about some needs of the family, a family council, so to speak, I've gone in thinking I already know the answer. I already know what we're going to do. It's all very clear, and after counseling and praying and pleading for help, you come out of that council at the back end and say, wow, it's a good thing we didn't just do what I thought was so obvious at the outset. There's a great power in counseling with our councils. President Russell – or M. Russell Ballard has talked about that a lot – this idea of coming together, whether it's in a family or a Church setting. Great power why? Because it's giving us an opportunity to connect with God and become more like him, because he could do this all himself, but he doesn't. He lets us grow through the process.

So in section 102 you'll find the names in verse 3 of the people who are originally called to his high council with the presidency there listed first, and then the twelve high councilors toward the end of verse 3. It's interesting that we're missing a name in verse 3 that was actually replaced. Lorenzo Young was originally called in this list and he stood up in the council and he rejected because he didn't feel capable, he felt unable to fulfill that calling whether it was – he didn't feel like he – he was worthy enough or smart enough, we don't know for sure. He's just saying he's not fit for that calling, so it was removed. The reality is there will be times when leaders will be inspired to extend a calling that the Lord already knows that person isn't going to fulfill, for whatever reason it may be, but isn't it amazing that growth and self-reflection and repentance can still take place or cause to be taking place even if the calling isn't fulfilled. We don't know all the back story with Lorenzo Young. We don't know how the Lord worked with him and continued to teach him through receiving this calling even though he didn't accept it and move forward,

hopefully, and he's going to come up in a variety of other places down the road.

The other consideration moving forward as we finish off section 102 and get ready to jump into 103, is the need to constantly be, as Casey said, looking for how to apply these principles in all aspects of our life, to not assume that we have all the answers and that we know everything, but rather go in seeking the Lord's will and seeking to listen and learn from other people realizing they have parts of the puzzle that we don't bring to the table with us. What a beautiful principle this whole idea of councils becomes.

Well and another thing to remember about councils is that it's not always about you being the shining star. It's about you training the next person who's going to have to step in and take over. I can't tell you how valuable it was in those meetings I was in to watch my stake president and the way that he interacted with the other members of the stake high council and even with the individual that was there for the council, the person who had committed a transgression, to see the way that he acted towards them taught me a ton. I learned a lot just by observing. And that is another reason why section 102 shouldn't just be flipped over because it's not a revelation, it gives this idea that there's real strength that comes from – well not just going out and doing the Lord's work, but in looking to and training the next person who's going to have to do the Lord's work.

In fact, there's interesting semantic here if we - can we go to section 103? Section 103 which comes up right next is about the call of Zion's Camp. So Zion's Camp, which – we've come to call it Zion's Camp - Joseph Smith at the time called it the Camp of Israel. This name was kind of taken over by Brigham Young and the pioneers of 1847 and Zion's Camp becomes our preferred term, but Zion's Camp is a relief or rescue mission that's intended to go and help the saints in Missouri that have been struggling since the summer before when they were forcibly told to leave Jackson County. Now they're told in July that they're going to have to leave, and then in October in probably the worst time of the year to be kicked out of your home, when it's starting to get cold, when there's freezing rains coming, the saints are forcibly ejected from Zion's County – from Zion's County - sorry, from Jackson County.

Joseph Smith is absolutely torn apart over this. He's trying to handle the business of the Church in Kirtland, we'll see some of that in section 104, but he's also trying to find a way to help the saints in Missouri and so Joseph Smith asks the Lord and the Lord gives section 103 which effectively asks Joseph Smith to take a group of people and go to Missouri and try and help the saints there get their land back.

Now one thing to note historically about this is there's a lot of brand, new converts in Kirtland that have just shown up that are going to go on this journey that are basically going to drop what they're doing and take a few months of their life. Among them you've got guys like Brigham Young. Brigham Young has just barely arrived in Kirtland and at this point he's remarried to Mary Ann Angell, his first wife Miriam has passed away, three little kids to take care of, but he sets that aside, I'm going to go help my brothers and sisters. Brigham Young takes along his best friend, Heber C. Kimball. Heber C. Kimball has a wife and kids, but I'm going to go help my brothers and sisters in Missouri. There's a brand, new convert that's just barely shown up named Wilford Woodruff that goes along with Zion's Camp and actually writes down a lot of the information and stories from Zion's Camp that are valuable to us. You could list off Parley P. Pratt, Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight; a bunch of important people in early Church history all go on this relief mission led by Joseph Smith to Missouri to try and assist the saints that are there.

Now what are they trying to do? The governor of Missouri had left suggestions that if the saints brought and provided some men he would provide state militia and they'd be able to escort the saints back to their homes in Jackson County. So Joseph Smith sets out with this expectation that this is how we're going to solve the problem. The Lord's already told us where the city of Zion is supposed to be built and now this big barrier has been placed in our path where we've been ejected from the place where the city is supposed to be built. This is the solution he's thinking; this is the way that we're going to get the saints back to where they're at, and a lot of the people that are recruited for Zion's Camp are also thinking this is where the Lord's going to manifest his power in kind of an Old Testament sort of a way, that they're going to go in there and they're going to be able to forcibly put the

saints back into their homes because the power of God's going to be made manifest then.

Now this journey is a lot about their expectations and what they're thinking is going to happen versus what the Lord kind of has in mind. And some of this does relate back to our theme of councils that we've talked about because Joseph Smith has the opportunity for three months as they cross the country from Kirtland, Ohio to Independence, Missouri, to interact with, to train, and to set an example for a lot of these newer converts to the Church and to inadvertently train them to become the sort of leaders that they are. I mean it's not a stretch to say that Brigham Young, when he's planning the exodus west, just thinking back on the principles that he learned from Joseph Smith on the journey that Zion's Camp makes from Kirtland to Independence.

Now let's turn our attention to section 103. As we're looking at the text in section 103, there you could get the impression that that was what the Lord was calling them to do, that they were going to go to Zion, they were going to go in and they were going to clean house, basically. There are a few places in here where the Lord says, verse 2, "Being driven and smitten by the hands of mine enemies, on whom I will pour out my wrath without measure in mine own time." So one expectation is the Lord's going to get retribution for what's happened to the saints in Missouri and he's also laying the foundation here to tell them that they're going to play a role in salvation, for instance, verse 9, he says, "They were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men; inasmuch as they are not the saviors of men, they are as salt that 's lost is savor, and therefore good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under the foot of men." Come down to verse 12. "After much tribulation, as I have said unto you in a former commandment, cometh the blessings." This blessing I promise after your tribulations and the tribulations of your brethren, your redemption, and the redemption of your brethren, and even their restoration to the land of Zion, to be established to be no more thrown down. So you could, if you were Joseph Smith in the winter of 1834 when this revelation is given, expect that yeah, it's going to be tough, and we're going to go through some things, but we're going to go there and when we get there, the miracles are going to happen and the doors are going to open and we are going to go in and get Zion back.

They could have no idea that the tribulation and that the delay of the building of the city of Zion wouldn't be just a couple of months, be a couple of decades, maybe even a couple of centuries until the saints were fully ready to build that, but part of the reason why the Lord is telling them to gather here is the journey that they're about to go on and the experiences they're about to have together.

Initially, the call is for 500 people to go to Zion. They aren't able to recruit quite that many. They wind up somewhere around 300, there's also several women that accompany them on their trip to Zion as they seek to cross the plains trying to with this good intent help the brethren and sisters that they have in Zion gain back their inheritances. The Lord says to Joseph Smith verse 22, "Say unto the strength of my house, my young men and the middle aged – gather yourselves together to the land of Zion, upon the land which I have bought with money which has been consecrated unto me." He also sets up a couple different things like Sidney Rigdon in verse 29 is going to stay behind and hold down the fort, preach to the eastern congregations. Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight and a few others are all going to be elected to go out and recruit people so that in the summer they can travel to Missouri and assist the saints in getting their lands back – they think. But there's more to the journey than they really kind of have in mind and as it is a lot of times in our life, we sometimes go into a class, a business venture, a you name it, expecting one outcome to happen and the Lord has something completely different in mind as to what he wants to accomplish. Like these early leaders of the Church we have to be flexible enough to realize we might not always see the end, but the Lord does, and what we want might not always necessarily be what's best for us.

Let me – let me illustrate that principle with some examples that might – might – might make some sense for some of you. Many years ago when I was teaching institute up at the Logan Institute of Religion adjacent to the campus of Utah State University, one of my assignments there for four years was to work with seminary pre-service, so I would – I would help train people who wanted to look at potentially teaching seminary full time for the Church, and then I would go and observe and make recommendations for who I felt should get hired. There were on many, many, many occasions during those four

years, there were people who would come to the office and say, Brother Griffin, my patriarchal blessing tells me I'm going to be a seminary teacher, or my mission president gave me a blessing as I left the mission telling me that I would be a seminary teacher, that I should pursue seminary, or I have this impression that I need to teach seminary.

The problem is, is out of the Logan pre-service center we would only generally hire somewhere between two to five, maybe six in a really good year back then, full time in an entire year and I would have lots of these people coming in saying this was – this was what needed to happen. So here I found myself with a person at point A saying that they needed to be a full time seminary teacher for whatever reason, and so what I learned after the first one or two years of going through a process and then watching what happened and realizing this person isn't going to be a full time seminary teacher and watching some of them be devastated by that and feeling let down like well I thought the Lord told me this is what he wanted me to do. And I learned the difference between point Z and point B. Often what happens is the Lord gives you instructions as Casey was talking about, and this isn't just in occupation, this could be in relationships. You could start down a road with somebody in dating and think, oh, I'm being inspired, this is good, and you get further down the road and then something happens and it doesn't put you at the point Z you anticipated. The reality is, is God gives us instructions to say I want you to pursue this, I want you to go here. I want you to go after this goal, whatever it may be.

Now that it's been many years after having been in that pre-service setting I've talked to some of the students that I had back then who didn't get hired, who ended up in other careers, and in every case I asked them, did we make the right decision? And in every case the people that I've talked to they've said yes, I'm so glad that things have worked out the way they have, that I didn't get hired full time, but wow, the things I learned through that process, I use them all the time. The Lord was shaping me through that experience to accomplish what I needed to accomplish that I didn't know was what I needed to accomplish back then, because I thought it was leading to full time seminary employment, not the Lord preparing me for something different that he had in my future. That, to me, is the biggest overarching lesson of this whole Zion's

Camp experience. You've got these – in some cases, guys who are just really excited to go out for a fight, which, by the way, clarification, Joseph Smith from the outset – I don't know that his intent is to go out and start an offensive campaign. The problem is, is Governor Dunklin had told them if you get enough support, I'll call out the State militia to restore the people to their lands, but then I'm going to call the militia off and you have to have people in place to defend them. So it was more of a defense mission rather than an offensive campaign to go and say let's start a war, it was more once we get them back on their lands, we need people there to help defend them so that the same thing doesn't just end up happening again.

You'll notice, by the way, that there are a variety of reasons why a person goes from point A to B to C and sometimes ends up getting derailed and not make it to the point Z that they had in mind, or, in some cases, that the Lord had prepared for them. You'll notice in verse 31, "Behold this is my will; ask and ye shall receive; but men do not always do my will." Because of this power of the agency given to us sometimes we do our will rather than his. One of my favorite C. S. Lewis quotes is where he says, in the end there are really only two kinds of people, those who say to God, thy will be done, and those to whom God says, thy will be done, because he's not going to force us. So you'll notice just because God gives revelation or gives direction or empowers us to do something, doesn't mean that it's guaranteed to happen because sometimes we don't follow through on our side.

You'll notice he told them to ask in verse 31, look at verse 35, "Therefore, as I said unto you, ask and ye shall receive," there it's repeated, so between that what is - what's happening between those two book ends, he's telling them to go out and recruit and try to get 500 volunteers, and if you can't get 500, get 300 and if you can't get 300, well, get what you can. Look now at verse 36. "All victory and glory is brought to pass unto you through your diligence, faithfulness, and prayers of faith." I love that that he says I'm not going to just guarantee all of these outcomes. You have to be diligent, faithful and offer prayers of faith in order for the desired outcomes to occur.

Now we shift gears into section 104 and talk about the united order and some adjustments that are going to be made in how that's carried out, this law of consecration.

Now this isn't something that we talk about that come in the Church but the Doctrine and Covenants is concerned with it, and those are principles of Church finance. Over three quarters of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants discuss financial matters, and you might be asking yourself why is that? This is supposed to be a spiritual book. Early on in the Doctrine and Covenants in section 29 the Lord says I've never given you a temporal commandment. They're all spiritual commandments. To him the temporal and the spiritual are the same thing and so when the Lord says something like build a house, it's a spiritual commandment to him. We might think of it as physical. Sometimes we like to separate out commandments like the word of wisdom and say that's a physical or temporal commandment, but the Lord's just saying no, it affects your spirituality as well. And the reason why he speaks so much about finances, it's really hard for a person to be spiritual unless they're temporally well – they're wondering where their next meal is going to come from or if their house is going to be foreclosed on, it's difficult for them to focus on spiritual things.

So section 104 happens right before they leave on Zion's Camp, it's received in April of 1834 and part of the idea here is to get the Church's financial house in order before they go on this mission to try and rescue the saints in Missouri. There's a lot of moving parts that are going on here. For instance, the saints in Kirtland are trying to build their own house of the Lord, they're building the Kirtland Temple. Joseph Smith, who's leading that effort, is going to be gone for the summer, trying to assist the saints in Missouri and so the Lord is reorganizing Church finance.

In all the earliest revelations the term that is used here is United Firm. Now under Joseph Smith's direction when these revelations were published, the term Firm was taken out and the word Order was place in. Sometimes the United Order is used as a synonym for just the Law of Consecration all together, that's generally how Brigham and a lot of later Church leaders even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century have referred to it. But the United Order at this point in



time is a small group of Church leaders that have consecrated everything that they have to build up the Church in Ohio and Missouri. What this revelation does, is there was a United Firm in Missouri, that one is going to be ended in this revelation because the saints in Missouri have lost their land, they're in survival mode, that United Firm collapses and the Lord, instead, continues the Kirtland's United Firm.

Now sprinkled throughout this revelation are a number of principles of finance and we don't use this system that's set up in section 104 right now in the Church but the principles that are said here are intended for forever, in fact, it says right in verse 1, I give this as, "an everlasting order for the benefit of my church, and the salvation of men until I come – with a promise immutable and unchangeable, that inasmuch as those whom I commanded were faithful they should be blessed with a multiplicity of blessings." So while this particular, specific system of finance is now the Church's operative, the Lord is saying the principles that I'm going to teach you here are eternal, and they're going to stay for quite a while.

So let's walk through the revelation itself and identify some of the principles of Church finance that the Lord gives to the early saints. For instance, if you look in verse 11, "It is wisdom in me (and) a commandment I give unto you that ye shall organize yourselves and appoint every man his stewardship." So even though we tend to think of consecration as everybody sharing everything and I can come in and borrow Tyler's tie or take Taylor's shoes, it never worked that way. Everybody agreed to consecrate what they had for the Lord but consecration or consecrate is just a term that means make holy. After it was consecrated, or basically recognized by the Lord, a stewardship was given back to the individual and that stewardship was their private property and the individual was allowed to basically work with what they had and do what they could with it for the benefit of themselves, their family and the larger Church.

Another principle, and this is found in verse 14, is to recognize that everything belongs to God. The Savior here says, "I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine." So a second principle of Church finance is to recognize that everything belongs to God, that what we're working with, whether it's our home, the money that we

make from our profession, whatever blessings we've been given, it really, ultimately, belongs to God and we need to think of it in that way, that it's not our personal property, it's God's property that he's loaning to us to help us to build up the kingdom of God.

He also asks, verse 16, "It must needs be done in mine own way... and this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted (and) the rich be made low." Now that's just expressing this basic idea that you help the poor, that you try and find the best way to help them, and sometimes that means that you give them a meal, or you help them find clothes or furniture for their home, and sometimes it means that you help them find education to get a better job, or another way to empower them, get them a higher paying job so that they can afford a little bit more.

As you continue to go through, the Lord appoints a series of stewardships to people that are in the Church and gives them responsibility, so he's just kind of acting out what he's explaining here, that you give a person a stewardship, you explain to them where their blessings come from, and then you give them a charge that if they have extra, if they've provided first for themselves, that they think about what they can do to try and help and lift those that don't have what they have.

And you can see a little bit of a switch halfway through the revelation around verse 47 where the Lord says, now concerning Zion, so he switches from general principles of finance to sort of principles of Church finance and there's a few items of guidance that he gives here too. For instance, if we jump down to around verse 57, the Lord gives them a couple of specific charges, I have appointed you stewards to be over my house as stewards indeed, for this purpose I have commanded you to organize yourselves to print my words, the fulness of my scriptures, and the revelations which I have given unto and which I shall hereafter, from time to time give unto you.

So one important charge given to the Church was to print the scriptures, to help people obtain the word of God and know what God's will was through reading and understanding the words that he's given the prophets. To that end the Lord commands them to organize two treasuries, as you can see as you go through the verses down below. Verse 60, appoint unto yourselves a

treasury and the Lord gives the purpose for this treasury which we're going to call just basically here, the sacred treasury. The sacred treasury as the Savior sets out here is intended to specifically to do the following: he says to make use of the stewardship, this is verse 63, which I have appointed unto you, exclusive of the sacred things, for the purpose of printing the sacred things as I have said, and to the avails of the sacred things that are had in the treasury.

So this sacred treasury is intended to get the word of God out there. That could mean, and in Joseph Smith's day, it meant the revelations, they're getting ready to publish the Doctrine and Covenants for the first time after their printing establishment in Missouri was destroyed. He also asked them to use it to carry out the work of the Lord and he says this, verse 59, to prepare my people for the time which I shall dwell among them, which is nigh at hand. This treasury, like the Savior says, has a seal placed upon it and it is used to perpetuate and help with sacred things, but the Savior also talks about a second treasury – this is down in verse 67 where he says, "there shall be another treasury prepared," which, I don't know if that's the best name to give it, we'll just label it another treasury. Sometimes when I look at this I think of it as the secular treasury, but I don't like that line between sacred and secular because this really isn't a secular act, but he says, "all the moneys," this is verse 68, "that you receive in your stewardships, by improving upon the properties which I have appointed unto you, in houses, in lands or in cattle or in all things save it be the holy and sacred writings which I have reserved unto myself for holy and sacred purposes, shall be cast into the treasury as fast as you receive moneys."

So they take the benefit from these other stewardships that they have from the lands, the properties, the buildings that the Church owns, and they use it to set up another treasury that's used to improve the communities and the places that they live around them.

Now using this as a governing principle of Church finance, let's ask a couple of questions. The Church spends a significant amount of money every year on different projects. For instance, a lot of you are watching this on a mobile device. And on mobile device you've got gospel library which is this comprehensive source that has almost everything that a prophet has ever

said ever, and it's updated continually and has a light and a dark mode and a lot of neat accoutrements. Would you say that that comes from the sacred treasury or the other treasury? In 2021 that's what it looks like to get the words of God into someone's hands. In 1834 it meant that you build a printing press and you print and you bind and put a book together. In 2021 it means that you develop an app and you put the app on as many stores as possible so that as many people as possible can download it. It's literally possible for you to talk to somebody on a different continent and say just download a copy of the Book of Mormon, or download gospel library and they can read and see and view almost anything that the Church has produced. That would probably be an item that comes from the sacred treasury.

Now a few years ago, in Salt Lake City there was some controversy because the Church built a mall, the City Creek Center. That was built, President Hinckley specified, not from the tithing or sacred funds of the Church, but from the Church's secular investments. We would say this would be an example of using items from the other treasury to make communities a little bit better. President Hinckley outlined the reasons for building that structure was because downtown Salt Lake was starting to falter. So the Church made an investment in the community that it was in, using its secular funds.

One of the things that has always been unique about our Church is this fusion between what other people see as the spiritual and the secular. And in fact, an interesting story problem I sometimes present to my students is, the Church owns the biggest theme park in the Hawaiian Islands, they own a theme park called The Polynesian Cultural Center; maybe some of you have been there. Is that something that comes from the sacred treasury or the secular treasury? Well this is a place where the two things might mix. The reason why the Polynesian cultural center exists is because BYU Hawaii is right next door there, just separated by a fence, and the students that come to BYU Hawaii come from all over the Pacific and Asia, a lot of them come from places where it's really difficult for them to have enough money to attend school, so they need to work, and the little town where BYU Hawaii is located, that's Laie, there weren't enough jobs to provide for all the students, so the Polynesian Cultural Center was built in order to give them jobs in order to assist them to pay for their schooling. That's helping them to understand the word of God.

That's a sacred treasury responsibility but it's also beautifying and helping the community that they're in. That's another treasury item.

I visited the Polynesian Cultural Center a couple of years ago and I walked up to this young lady who was weaving a palm frond hat and I walked up to her and said, do you feel like you're being exploited for your life here and she said, I used to make these for free back home. Now we charge ten bucks for each one. I feel like I'm exploiting you. And I said, I don't mind being exploited, then they handed me a little smoothie inside of a hollowed out pineapple and I was like being exploited feels great, thank you. It's a case where the secular or what the world would call the secular and the spiritual are mingled together in order to accomplish the purposes of the kingdom of God.

And one thing that section 104 really brings out is this idea that a person that like me, teaches the gospel for a living, isn't making any greater contribution than a person that's really good at accounting can towards the kingdom. That everybody has these different gifts and abilities and the Savior is able to use them to accomplish what he needs to accomplish. We might not think about it but when you're out there punching in the numbers and doing the job that you're doing, the Savior is thinking of ways to use your gifts to help the Church or help a Church member maybe in a completely different country.

But one last principle that the Savior puts in here, and this is around verse 78, this is a fairly long revelation, he says this, concerning your debts, it's my will that you should pay all of your debts. Built into the Doctrine and Covenants and you can see this as early as section 19 where the Savior's telling them to pay off the printing for the Book of Mormon, it's this idea that we do what we can to get ourselves free from debt. He refers to it down in verse 83 as bondage. And the idea is if you're in debt to someone else, then you're less likely to be able to use your talents, your gifts and the blessings the Lord has given you, to help other people as well.

Now, another thing to take away from section 104 is just the timing. Joseph Smith has on his mind a relief mission that he's going to send to Independence to help them. Before he does that, though, he inquires of the Lord to make sure that the saints in Kirtland are okay. He wants to have everything financially kind of under control before he has to take off and go on

this kind of uncertain venture, to go to Missouri and try and assist the saints there, and maybe a principle to take away from this too, is that you're limited in your ability to help others if you don't take care of your own home and the place that you're at. Elder Christofferson gave a talk where he said bread winning is a consecrated activity. Where you have to be at work and make sure that you are good at your job and competent at your job so that you can provide for the people back home.

Now it's possible for that to get out of balance and for you to become too focused on bread-winning and making money and then that causes all kinds of other problems. But if you've ever felt that pang of guilt and I know I have, in having to spend an extra hour or half hour accomplishing my job, it's okay. Joseph Smith right here wants to make sure that the Church in Kirtland is financially secure before he has to leave and go to Missouri and on his way to Missouri it's nice to know that these principles of finance have been well established among the leaders of the Church that are going to keep the home fires burning while he's traveling to assist the saints in Missouri.

So this might seem like a strange interruption in the story of Zion's Camp which is the big story you want to tell in this section, but it's valuable to just show that Joseph Smith wasn't the sort of person that would just run off on an adventure. He sat down and asked the Lord, well what do we do to reorganize the Church and take care of everyone's needs everywhere before we go and assist these people that are struggling.

Then you jump to section 105 which takes place in a totally different context. This is the only revelation that I know of that's received at this specific location and it comes after Joseph Smith and the men of Zion's Camp – the men and women I should say – have already travelled hundreds of miles to assist the saints in Missouri. When they get there, they're expecting big things to happen and big things do happen, but not necessarily the things that they were expecting to happen.

So as this Zion's Camp moved westward, word preceded them into western Missouri and what did the – what did the enemies of the Church do with those numbers? So as they get closer and closer to Jackson County - and this revelation is received at the Fishing River, which is just outside of Jackson

County to the north – the saints started to hear rumors that there's a force being raised against them. In fact, they run into a woman who tells them there's a group out here that aims to kill you, and they all get in defensive mode. They've got their weapons ready, they're ready to fight. One person even begged Joseph Smith to prematurely seek out the people that were coming after them and attack them first.

They finally camped near a fork in the Fishing River which is this little stream and five men ride into the middle of their camp and tell them that they have raised 500 men from Jackson County and that that night they are coming to destroy them, to wipe them out. At this point, everybody kind of, you know, gets their powder out, starts loading their musket and says Joseph, we are ready to fight. According to Wilford Woodruff, Joseph Smith turns to them and says no, we're not going to fight, brethren, stand still and see the salvation of God. Then Wilford Woodruff gives the most vivid explanation but he said we saw a dark cloud appear on the horizon that then unfurled like a scroll and then a storm of the most ferocity they'd ever witnessed broke upon Zion's Camp and caused the river that separated them from this group of people that were coming to attack them several feet so that it was virtually impassable. While the hailstone is falling, everybody runs to seek shelter in this little Baptist church that's nearby and Wilford Woodruff remembers Joseph Smith coming in and shaking the water off of his coat and saying, boys, this means something. I think God is in this storm.

So what we could technically call the battle of Fishing River is the Lord intervenes so that they don't have to fight. It's impossible for us to know how many people actually were coming to attack them but they're protected at least that night and now it's the next day and they really are excited thinking, we've seen the power of God manifest, it's time for us to go in and take back our land, help our people get them back to where they need to be. Unfortunately, this is where the Lord's expectations come into play and they don't quite get what they were seeking.

At the difference between Point B and Point Z Joseph receives this revelation saying basically, well done. You passed this test, but it wasn't – you didn't come here to fight. Look at verse 5. "Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the

principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself. And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, even if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer," which is an allusion over to Hebrews chapter 5 verse 8. Here's this group of men and you've got the women and children with them as well but especially the men are ready to fight and they're being told nope, stand down. This is – this is not the end result that the Lord had in mind for us. We all anticipated that's what was going to happen, but not the Lord.

A good friend, Rory Bigelow, he shared this concept once with me that we love the hymn number 270, I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go Dear Lord, I'll say, I'll do, I'll be what you want me to be, and Rory said, I wish we had a hymn right next to it that said, I'll stay where you want me to stay dear Lord, because sometimes God asks you to stand down, or to be still, or to stay. Sometimes saints are given the calling to stay and can we be disciples, can we serve the Lord in those settings as much as when he gives us the big go build an Ark kinds of revelations and go on the Zion's Camp march? Yes, this big, huge endeavor, I'll do that, but sometimes we falter when we're asked to stay and serve in a more simple way as far as the world's concerned.

And you can see some of that in these sections right here, for instance, verse 9 it says mine elders should wait a little season for the redemption of Zion. In other words, they're right there. They're right on the edge of Jackson County and they think that now they've got the power to go in and do it and the Savior's saying, hold up, and he gives a couple of reasons why. For instance in verse 11 it says, "This cannot be brought to pass until mine elders are endowed with power from on high." This is a reference to the building of the temple in Kirtland and the keys and powers that are going to be given to them there.

The Lord says I'll fight your battles, but he also tells them that – you jump down to verse 24 – and this might hint a little bit at what he's addressing about the motives of the people in Zion's Camp. "Talk not of judgments, neither boast of faith nor of mighty works, but carefully gather together, as much in one region as can able, consistently with the feelings of the people." In other words, even though these people were hostile towards them and they



persecuted their friends and their families, the Lord said you have to take into consideration them. You're thinking you're going to go in there and you're going to wipe out the wicked and act as my destroyers. The Lord says no, you need to consider the feelings of the people. In fact, in verse 26 he says, "...this way you may find favor in the eyes of the people, until the army of Israel becomes great." He even tells them how they're going to get their land back in verse 28. He says the lands in Jackson County should be purchased and the lands roundabout. In other words, he's cutting off the avenue that it seems like some of the elders in Zion's Camp wanted to follow which was to use violence to get their land.

They had been violently treated by the people in Jackson County and they wanted to use violence in return to get back what they felt was theirs. The Savior's saying we're not going to do it that way. We're going to do it peacefully. You're going to purchase the land. Sometimes hard for us who think in terms of minutes and hours and days to know that the Savior thinks in terms of decades and centuries and millennia. And we might have to wait a little bit longer because we still have among us those violent tendencies to want to go in and bring down fire and brimstone and destroy the people that we see as our enemies. The Savior is saying first of all, don't see them as your enemy, and second of all, I can't build a holy city on a foundation of blood. That's just not how it's going to work. It's going to be built on principles of righteousness after you've gained the respect of the people, the love of the people and you've legally obtained the land without violence or force.

It's a beautiful principle Casey and you look at the way he ends this section that I would – I would hope that we could see our own life and our own situation reflected here not just the situation there at the Fishing River in Missouri. Look at verse 38. "Again I say unto you, sue for peace, not only to the people that have smitten you, but also to all people." He wants – he wants his followers to be true peacemakers, not warmongers. Verse 39, "Lift up an ensign of peace, make a proclamation of peace unto the ends of the earth." I don't know if you have family members or if you have colleagues at work or if you have neighbors or ward members who – there's been tension or contention in the past, I think the Lord would be inviting us to say let's – let's mend those bridges. Let's lift up the banner of peace. Let's freely forgive and

let's – let's sue for peace rather than demand justice. Look at verse 40. "Make proposals for peace unto those who have smitten you, according to the voice of the Spirit which is in you, and all things shall work together for your good. Therefore, be faithful; and behold, and lo, I am with you even unto the end. Even so, Amen."

This section closes here at the Fishing River and Casey, it wasn't well received by everybody in Zion's Camp – I don't think so – and there is a coda to this story that's important to understand the section that's coming up next, section 106 and section 107. Joseph Smith explains that because of unfaithfulness in the camp a scourge will be put upon them and the camp is stricken with Cholera which is this terrible water-borne disease that makes almost everybody in the camp, including Joseph Smith sick. Several members of the camp – several real stalwarts in Church history including Sidney Gilbert who some of the earlier sections in the Doctrine and Covenants had been given to, died because of this. Joseph Smith loses a close cousin of his, Jesse Smith. He's the last person to die of cholera.

And Zion's Camp who marched triumphant across the plains separates into smaller groups and goes back to Kirtland. But in those moments when Joseph Smith was close to dying, he may have been wondering who's going to take over for me if anything happens. And that winter after they had traveled to Missouri and everybody's made it back to Kirtland, Ohio, Joseph Smith gathers together the priesthood in Kirtland who are largely the same individuals who travelled with Zion's Camp and gives this explanation of what happened. He says, God did not want you to fight. He could not organize his kingdom with twelve men to open the gospel doors to the nations of the earth and the seventy men under their direction to follow in their tracks unless he took them from a body of men who had offered their lives and he made as great a sacrifice as did Abraham. Nine members of the original quorum of the twelve were people that had marched on Zion's Camp. Sixty three members of the original quorum of the seventy were people that had marched on Zion's Camp as well.

And it seems like the end that the Savior was actually going for wasn't to reclaim the lands in Jackson County. That's going to happen but in its own

due time. It was to train these men and have them demonstrate their level of faithfulness in order to set up the other councils in the Church. At this point there is already a first presidency. That's been around since 1833. Now there's going to be a first presidency and a quorum of the twelve and a quorum of seventy underneath them to lead the Church and provide additional leadership if anything were ever to happen to Joseph Smith. It's almost a decade after this that that system fully comes into play. But right now the lesson that Joseph Smith needed to learn from this was that councils were something that was important. Like Tyler said, revelation is distributed amongst a number of individuals and even if you're amazing, and you are amazing, you are wonderful; it's good for you to hear from the voices of other people and learn from their perspective. It helps you to be a better disciple and it helps the process of revelation to fully flow within the Church.

Thank you for joining with us wherever you are. We hope you've been inspired and edified as you listened to stories of past saints who like you, desired to be building the kingdom of God. We want you to know wherever you are, God knows you, he knows your path and he will bless you. We encourage you to feel his love in your life. Know that you're loved. We encourage you to spread light and goodness wherever you go.