

348: Oct 27; Nov 3. Kingdom Come (New Testament Weeks 43-44)

Oct 27: 1 Thessalonians; 2 Thessalonians (home study)

Nov 3: Philemon; 2 Timothy; 1 Timothy; Titus (Sunday School)

Episode Outline:

1. Fundraising check in
2. Sunday School
 - a. Leadership and discipleship
 - i. Leadership in the Church (institutional and cultural issues)
 - ii. Servant disciples (lay leadership)
 - iii. Spiritual training
 - b. What is scripture? What is an inspiration? (great opportunity for discussion)
 - c. Fighting the good fight (the end of life and today)
 - d. Kingdom come (the in between)
 - i. This world and the world to come
 - ii. Timing of the 2nd Coming
 - iii. Living the kingdom now
 - e. Next episode: Hebrews (I'll turn around and work on it right away)

To begin our Sunday School lesson, let's first talk about leadership as we cover what are called the Pastoral letters, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus.

Leadership and discipleship

Leadership in the Church (institutional and cultural issues)

One reason it took me so long to find ministry is because I didn't realize how much professional training was involved in becoming a minister! I'm chagrined to admit that I believed the message that "we have authority; we

don't need professional clergy" and I was even impacted by the mocking of "false authority" and professional clergy as hypocrisy.

I'm in awe of how impressive The education and licensing is very similar to a therapist or social worker.

Lay leadership is powerful and contributes to the vibrancy and effectiveness of the Church... but it also results in priesthood leader roulette. I think we are doing better and better, and would love to see increasingly formal training of lay leadership

Cultural approaches to leadership: historically, many general and local authorities have come from business backgrounds. In general, LDS culture values *professionalization* (get a good job and support your family) more than education per se.

I'm deeply grateful for the increasing focus on *ministry* (My suggestion would be to have some church employees go through Divinity school and pastoral training and then design all the training materials and be available to train and consult with the lay leaders)

What makes a good leader? (vital opportunity for a good discussion)

A few things that come to mind:

- 1) Know yourself (strengths and limits) "Care beyond competence does harm" is one of the most important principles I learned in my training.
- 2) Know what you don't know, and send people to professionals when needed
- 3) Do your own work (transference and counter transference) Live and teach by example. Can get to a point where your presence is healing without you needing to say or do much.
- 4) Companionship over fixing ("bear their pain without breaking")
- 5) It's not about you: Facilitate the process of others. (another of the most important principles I learned)

1 Tim. 3:1-13

31The saying is true, "If someone desires the office of bishop, that person desires a good work." 2Therefore, a bishop must be **above reproach**, the

husband of one woman (likely against divorce, not polygamy), clear thinking, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, a capable teacher, 3not inclined to being drunk, not violent but **gentle**, not argumentative, not a person who loves money. 4He must **establish his own household well**, keeping his children submissive while maintaining complete dignity 5(**if a person does not know how to establish his own household, how will that person care for the church of God?**). 6He should not be a recent convert, so that he does not become arrogant and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7Those outside the church must **hold him in good standing** so that he may not fall into disgrace and into the trap of the devil. 8Deacons must also be dignified, not deceitful, not inclined to too much wine, not greedy for profits, 9holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10And they ought to be tested first, and then let them serve as deacons after they are **proven blameless**. 11Their wives must also be dignified, not slanderers, self-controlled, faithful in all things. 12Deacons must be the husbands of one wife, managing well their children and their own households. 13For those who have served well as deacons place themselves in good standing and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim. 2:22-26

22Flee from youthful desires and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23Have nothing to do with stupid and ignorant controversies, because you know they generate infighting. 24And the Lord's servant must not be confrontational, but kind to everyone, an able teacher, patient, 25correcting opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant them the chance to repent and come to know the truth 26and that they may escape the snare of the devil, where they have been held captive to do his will.

D&C 121:39-46 (One of the best guides to leadership)

39 We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.

40 Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

41 No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

42 By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

43 Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reprov'd, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

44 That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.

45 Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

46 The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.

Servant disciples (lay leadership) That's the secret and paradox of leadership in a gospel context... leadership is about service, not power and privilege. So the same things that make us a good disciple make us a good leader.

Women and leadership:

1 Tim 2:11-15 (one of the most infamous passages in scripture)

A woman must learn in quietness and all obedience. I do not allow a woman to teach nor to govern a man; she is to be silent. For Adam was created first and then Eve. Adam was not deceived, but the woman was

deceived and became a transgressor. She will be saved in bearing children if she remains in faith, love, and holiness with self-control.

Wayment's notes:

11– 15 These teachings are tied to a historical situation that is no longer known or understood. It remains unclear why Paul would instruct women to remain silent and to learn in all obedience. From the tone of the verses, it appears that Paul was attempting to settle a dispute in the community, although these verses may represent common cultural attitudes. The fact that Paul uses the sequence of Eve's creation as an argument that she is inferior to Adam does not represent the Genesis account or other scriptural teachings (compare 1 Corinthians 14: 34– 35).

Spiritual training (I LOVE this principle!) (I'm increasingly convinced that living the gospel comes down to *practice* and *training* rather than understanding. With every thought and decision, and especially with every action, we train ourselves and those around us.

1 Timothy 4:6-16 The word translated "pay attention" means focus, meditation, improve through practice. 6By presenting these things to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished by the words of faith and the good teachings that you have followed. 7But reject those myths of the ungodly and gullible. Train yourself for piety. 8For "bodily exercise is of little value, but godliness is valuable in every way because it has the promise of life now and in the future." 9This saying is trustworthy and worthy of all acceptance. 10For this is why we toil and struggle, because we have hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all humanity, especially for those who believe. 11Command and teach these things. 12Do not permit anyone to look down on you because you are young, but be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. 13Until I come, pay attention to reading scripture

publicly, to exhortation, and to teaching. 14Do not neglect your spiritual gift which was given to you through prophecy by means of the laying on of hands by the elders. 15Pay attention to these things; commit yourself to them so that your progress may be visible to everyone. 16Pay attention to yourself and to the content of what you teach. Continue doing this, and you and those who listen to you will be saved.

What is scripture? What is inspiration? (great opportunity for discussion)
(This has been taken to mean scripture is inerrant, exactly what God wants it to say, which is a doctrine I'm grateful we don't believe in!)

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the person of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Wayment, Thomas A.. The New Testament: A New Translation for Latter-day Saints (Kindle Locations 14190-14192). Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book. Kindle Edition.

Inspired "God-breathed"

Starting point: All scripture was written by humans. Even if God really did inscribe the ten commandments personally, the account we have of it was written by a man! All religion was founded and perpetuated by humans. So one of the most important questions to ask is: What is the relationship between the divine and human here? I take a functional approach. I generally believe that what is inspiring was also inspired. And we should always "challenge and be challenged by" in all areas of our lives, including reading scripture.

I don't like it when I need to deconstruct the scriptures to make the best, most responsible sense of them, because it requires more of readers. I

think the very best target is an approach that works no matter what you conclude about scripture, or even if you don't happen to ask the hard questions. But there are times when the surface reading misleads or brings up questions that deserve to be answered. I continue to be impressed by Tom Wayment's New Testament, including his introductions and footnotes.

Talk about Noble lies and inspired fictions. Our job is to accurately assess a starting point and go from there. Find a way to make it work either way.

Propose a good order of operations for reading the Scriptures. Careful surface reading and then follow the threads.

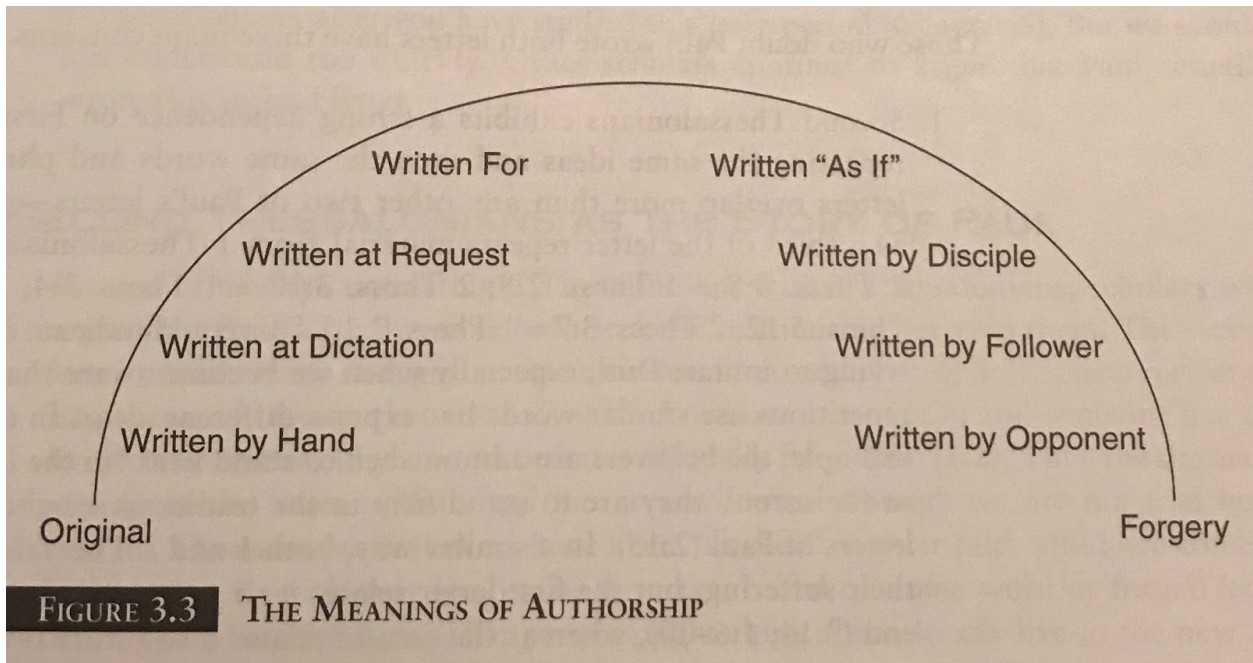
Be nourished by the scriptures. Challenge and be challenged by the scriptures. Share according to what you and others need.

Rational: Confidence is in ratio/proportional to evidence.

Stay curious and open. What does this mean if Paul wrote it? What does it mean if Paul didn't write it? What are the implications?

A fuller understanding of authorship: (When we ask whether Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians or 1 Timothy, we should remind ourselves that Paul didn't write **any** letters... he dictated them at most. That's why he comments in Galatians 6:11 "see what large letters I write with my own hand"

The key question is how the ideas in one book or passage relate to the ideas in another book or passage, which is always a worthwhile topic to explore.



Fighting the good fight (the end of life and today)

2 Tim. 4:11 "Only Luke is with me" Who do you hope will be at your death bed? Great thought exercise.

4:6-8: For I am already being poured out as an offering, and the time for my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. Finally, a crown of righteousness is reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me in that day, and not only to me but to all who love his appearing.

Another great exercise: If you died tomorrow, how would you be remembered? How would you feel about your life?

"Death at a discount" I'm so grateful I get to learn end of life lessons at middle age. In my hospice experience I've seen that similar to cramming at the end of a class, many people save their growth to the end of their lives. When our bodies and minds decline and we need to rely on our support systems and relationships, we find out where we really are. I deeply believe that we can live each day in a way that it would be worthy to be our last. This is what "peace of conscience" means to me.

1-2 Thessalonians. Interesting because they deal with opposite concerns!
1 Thessalonians: The congregation is concerned because at least one member died before Jesus returned.

The key passages are 1 Thess. 4:13-15

13We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, concerning those who have died so that you will not grieve as the others who have no hope. 14For we believe that Jesus died and rose again and that through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. 15For we tell you this by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and who remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have died.

2 Thess. 2:1-3

We ask you, brothers and sisters, regarding the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, 2not to be quickly disturbed in mind or alarmed by a spirit, word, or letter as though from us to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. 3Let no one deceive you by any means, because that day will not come until the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness, who is the son of perdition, is revealed.

3:6-12

6Now, we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to stay away from a brother or sister who lives in idleness and not according to the tradition received from us. 7For you know how you ought to imitate us, because we have not been idle when we were among you, 8and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but in toil and labor, night and day, we worked so that we would not be a burden for any of you, 9not because we did not have the right but so that we might be an example for you to imitate. 10For even when we were with you, we gave you this instruction, that if anyone did not want to work he should not eat. 11For we hear that some live among you without working, not actually

working but nearly working. 12In the Lord Jesus Christ we command and exhort such people to work in silence and eat their own bread.

(Obviously we are commanded to care for the poor and those who can't meet their needs, or who need assistance, but this was responding to something in particular)

Kingdom come (the in between)

This world and the world to come

Timing of the 2nd Coming

Living the kingdom now (Philemon) (Fascinating little book.

Paul himself says "I write to you, knowing you will do more than I asked" (21) The key question is whether Paul hoped that Philemon would accept Onesimus back as a slave, or "more than a slave, as a beloved brother" (16)

More provocatively, did Paul want to keep Onesimus as a slave? (13) "I wanted to keep him with me so that he might serve me..."

How do we live in the world as it is? How do we move toward our heavenly hopes? What is the relationship between social norms and society perfected? (Respect social order and transcend it at the same time, which to a significant degree is what the New Testament models)

Next episode: Hebrews (I'll turn around and work on it right away)

Conclusion: Live as if the kingdom has already come. The bedrock of my faith is that we can live in such a way that these questions do not urgently matter. We can live in such a way that it doesn't matter when or even if! Jesus will come and fix everything. We can live in such a way that it matters little when we die. We can live well now, in this moment. I pray we all commit ourselves to this.