

## Podcast 141: Forgiving Others, Continued

In an earlier podcast (#106 – Forgiving Others), Denver and Stephanie discussed the mandatory condition that we forgive others in order to obtain forgiveness ourselves.

In this podcast, Denver and Stephanie discuss more about the mechanics of how we forgive others. Forgiving is a necessary step in the ascension process; without it, we are not qualified to receive the Second Comforter. Denver and Stephanie discuss how we can look upon and handle offenses, and how forgiving others relates to seeking judgment. Forgiving offenses helps us obtain salvation by providing a means for receiving our own forgiveness.

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STEPHANIE: The Lord's standard is pretty clear, and there's not much wiggle room. You want Heavenly Father to forgive **you**? You forgive each other. That sounds like a really good way of **loving yourself**. Forgiveness is a **requirement**—it is a condition—and the Lord has this to say about it. Third Nephi 5:34:

*And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.... For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if [you] forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (3 Nephi 5:34 RE).*

*And behold, it is written also that thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but behold, I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, [and] do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in Heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and...the good. Therefore, those things which were of old time, which were under the law, in me are all fulfilled. Old things are done away and all things have become new... (3 Nephi 5:24-26;30-31 RE)*

*I have given you a former commandment that I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men. And again, I have taught that if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses... If men intend no offense, I take no offense, but if they are taught and should have obeyed, then I reprove and correct, and forgive and forget. (T&C 157:58)*

God is the only one who judges correctly. He is the only one who can decide whether an offense was intended or not, and then He reproveth, corrects, forgives, and forgets. We are rarely worthy to judge, and we are only able to reprove and correct people we have a relationship with—and we are always expected to forgive and forget.

DENVER: Everybody will have to make changes. The most important changes have been provided in a blueprint revealed in the Answer to Prayer for Covenant, including the terms of the Covenant. We are expected to remember and obey these words:

*My will is to have you love one another. As people, you lack the ability to respectfully disagree among one another....*

*Wisdom counsels mankind to align their words with their hearts, but mankind refuses to take counsel from Wisdom....*

*There have been sharp disputes between you that should have been avoided. I speak these words to reprove you that you may learn, not to upbraid you so that you mourn. I want my people to have understanding....*

*Satan is a title and means accuser, opponent and adversary; hence once he fell, Lucifer became, or in other words was called, Satan, because he accuses others and opposes the Father. I rebuked Peter and called him Satan because he was wrong in opposing the Father's will for me, and Peter understood and repented.*

*In the work you have performed there are those who have been Satan, accusing one another, wounding hearts and causing jarring, contention, and strife by their accusations. Rather than loving one another, even among you who desire a good thing, some have dealt unkindly as if they were...opponents, accusers and adversaries. In this they were wrong...*

In the chapter on the Atonement in [Come, Let Us Adore Him](#) there is an explanation given of what Christ suffered and what obligations are devolving on us as a result. We must do as He did, suffer in like manner, and forgive all offenses. His infinite suffering cannot be replicated in one sense, but in our own sphere and time we do suffer offenses and abuses. We are required to forgive as He forgave. It is our own forgiveness of others that qualifies us to receive forgiveness from Him. When we harbor grudges and resentments, we cut ourselves off from His Atonement. IF we are to be forgiven we must in turn FORGIVE others. In [The Second Comforter](#) it is shown how we must make intercession on behalf of others, even our enemies, if we are to have a hope in Christ. We must lay down the burden of sin to enter into His presence. Much of that "sin" in each of our lives has been the offenses against us, and the resentment and anger we hold from these abuses. There are people who have done you wrong. There are some who did so intentionally. When you forgive them, and plead on their behalf for the Lord to also forgive them in sincerity and love, you are not far from the Kingdom of Heaven. Your Lord did this. You must do as He did

to be like Him. It is the only way to understand your Lord. In this, you must suffer as He did, choosing to forgive offenses rather than to seek justice. When you show mercy, you merit mercy. The beginning of repentance is found in forgiving others.

Your just claims for retribution must be surrendered. Your worthy desire to have vindication must be abandoned. Your right to have judgment against the ones who abused you must be forfeited. And you must go on to pray for their forgiveness.

It does not end, of course, with service and kindness to your fellow Saint. You must also learn to serve the “Samaritan,” and to heal and care for them. If it ends with mere Church service, you have not yet overcome xenophobia. It is the “other,” the “outsider,” and the “stranger and foreigner” through whom sacrifice is perfected. The unlovely and even the persecutor is where Christ’s commandments lead us at last. We must develop love for those who persecute us, or despitely use and abuse us to reach what Christ taught. He really meant it. And He really wants us to get there. When we do, we find ourselves standing on holy ground. For that ground was sanctified by His own blood, shed in His own sacrifice, when He poured out the last full measure of devotion to His Father’s will. When you hear His words echoing in your own voice, “forgive them for they know not what they do,” then you will begin to see the Master in the mirror. His image will appear to you there first. Your countenance will look more like His: more humble, more contrite, more obedient and filled with more light than you are right now.

The way is strait and narrow, and cannot permit you to pass through while carrying any burden of accusation, desire for revenge or even just complaint about others. When you lay down what you might justly claim against others and seek nothing for their offenses, then you are able to enter in. To be blessed, we must seek peace with those who would make war against us. ([Matt. 5: 9.](#)) When we judge all others with mercy, it is with mercy alone we will be judged. ([Matt. 7:2.](#))

This matter does not end there, however. Christ tells us to pray for those who abuse and misuse us. Odd as this may sound, it is what He did. It is one of the things that allows us most to emulate Him. Though it may seem out of character, you should try doing it. You can’t sincerely pray for another person without losing your anger toward them. This act of intercession with God for those who have committed offenses is directly related to making sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice of Christ. Lehi did this, as recorded in 1 Ne. 1: 5: “Wherefore it came to pass that my father, Lehi, as he went forth prayed unto the Lord, yea, even with all his heart, in behalf of his people.” These people had the judgments of God about to fall upon them. Rather than join in condemning them, Lehi prayed to God about them. He showed mercy to them. [231](#)

Nephi similarly showed mercy and made intercession for his elder brothers. In 1 Ne. 2: 18 it is recorded: "But, behold, Laman and Lemuel would not hearken unto my words; and being grieved because of the hardness of their hearts I cried unto the Lord for them." Nephi's act of showing mercy, refraining from judging, and praying in intercession for brothers who rejected him, made Nephi a "type" of Christ. Meaning that Nephi's example conformed with the later message and ministry of the One who made intercession for all mankind. Christ did it for real. Nephi did it in imitation of Him. We can do it as an imitation as well. That imitation of Him is required to qualify us for the Second Comforter. If we are unwilling to accept these standards and imitate these acts, we are not qualified to receive the Second Comforter. Without resonating at the same frequency as He, we are not going to be moving where we can see Him.

On November 1st Joseph was sentenced to death "at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning in a public square at Far West." Militia leader Doniphan refused to carry out the order, and Joseph's life was spared. In the lead up to his arrest, and then during imprisonment, disaffected Mormons were far more dangerous and threatening to Joseph than the non Mormons. It was Mormon lies about him that caused the peril.

Joseph's original arrest at Far West was arranged by an agreement George Hinkle made with the commander of the Missouri Militia. The church leaders were inside Far West, which at the time was fortified and would be difficult for the militia to take without serious loss of life. Hinkle was sent to negotiate with the militia poised outside Far West as the representative for the community.

Hinkle agreed with militia commander Colonel Lucas to surrender church leaders to the militia, but lied to Joseph and the others. He did not disclose they would be arrested, but led them to believe they were going to meet with Colonel Lucas to negotiate an end to the conflict. Joseph was surprised when Hinkle led him into the camp as a prisoner. George Hinkle was a traitor.

Joseph Smith wrote several documents while imprisoned in Missouri. Specific dissidents are named and their treachery explained in those documents. The individuals and their wrongdoing are set out in what I am about to read:

From jail Joseph Smith petitioned for habeas corpus. In the petition he mentioned George Hinkle. This is an excerpt from that habeas corpus petition:

*"Joseph Smith Jr is now unlawfully confined and restrained of his liberty in Liberty jail Clay County (Mo) that he has been restrained of his liberty near five months your petitioners clame that the whole transaction which has been the cause of his*

*confinement was (is) unlawfull from the first to the Last he was taken from his home by a fraude being practised upon him by a man by the name of George M Hinkle..."* (JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 344; as in original.)

Hinkle is mentioned in another letter, along with John Corrill, Reed Peck, David Whitmer and W.W. Phelps. This is Joseph's letter:

*"Look at Mr [George M.] Hinkle. A wolf in sheep's clothing. Look at his brother John Corrill Look at the beloved brother Reed Peck who aided him in leading us, as the savior was led, into the camp as a lamb prepared for the slaughter and a sheep dumb before his shearer so we opened not our mouth But these men like Balaam being greedy for a reward sold us into the hands of those who loved them, for the world loves his own. I would remember W[illiam] W. Phelps who comes up before us as one of Job's comforters. God suffered such kind of beings to afflict Job, but it never entered into their hearts that Job would get out of it all. This poor man who professes to be much of a prophet has no other dumb ass to ride but David Whitmer to forbid his madness when he goes up to curse Israel, and this ass not being of the same kind of Balaams therefore the angel notwithstanding appeared unto him yet he could not penetrate his understanding sufficiently so but what he brays out cursings instead of blessings." (JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 300-301; as in original.) [That is an allusion to an incident in the Old Testament.]*

Sampson Avard led the Danites, a secret Mormon, quasi-military organization that terrorized Missourians and exacted a revenge against them. They burned houses and engaged in assaults to retaliate against the local non-Mormons. Avard was responsible for Joseph, Hyrum and others being held on the charge of treason. Without Avard's testimony it was unlikely for enough evidence to be shown for probable cause to hold them on the charge of treason. Joseph wrote from jail about Avard the following:

*"We have learned also since we have been in prison that many false and pernicious things, which were calculated to lead the saints far astray and to do great harm (have been taught by Dr. [Sampson] Avard) as coming from the Presidency and we have reason to fear (that) many (other) designing and corrupt characters like unto himself (have been teaching many things) which the Presidency never knew of being taught in the Church by anybody until after they were made prisoners, which if they had known of, they would have spurned them and their authors from them as they would the gates of hell. Thus we find that there has been frauds and secret abominations and evil works of darkness going on leading the minds of the weak and unwary into confusion and distraction, and palming it all off all the time upon the presidency while mean time the*

*Presidency were ignorant as well as innocent of these things, which were practicing in the Church in their name[.]” (JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 306)*

Joseph wrote about the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon (David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris) along with William McLellin, John Whitmer, Thomas Marsh and Orson Hyde. All these were identified in the following condemnation written by Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail:

*“Such characters as [William E.] McLellin, John Whitmer, O[liver] Cowdery, Martin Harris, who are too mean to mention and we had liked to have forgotten them. [Thomas B.] Marsh & [Orson] Hyde whose hearts are full of corruption, whose cloak of hypocrisy was not sufficient to shield them or to hold them up in the hour of trouble, who after having escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of God and become again entangled and overcome the latter end is worse than the first. But it has happened unto them according to the words of the savior, the dog has returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Again if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking (for) of judgement and fiery indignation to come which shall devour these adversaries. For he who despiseth Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses of how much more severe punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath sold his brother and denied the new and everlasting covenant[.]” (JSP Documents Vol. 6, pp. 307-308.)*

W.W. Phelps was another Mormon dissenter who was removed from leadership and then excommunicated in June 1838. He was one of the witnesses who testified against Joseph Smith in the Missouri treason hearings and accused him of being responsible for violence and treason. Phelps may have been motivated to testify against Joseph Smith to protect himself from criminal charges. He had been seen by Patrick Lynch, the clerk in Stolling’s grocery store, as one of the Mormon mob that robbed the store and then burned it. (JSP Documents Vol. 6, pp. 417-419.)

Joseph was not fooled by these men. He recognized they were traitors and liars. But he revealed to his wife his own spirit of forgiveness about them. Writing from jail to his wife, after 5 months and 5 days of imprisonment, Joseph counseled Emma “neither harbor [sic] a spirit of revenge.” (JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 405.) Joseph’s advice to his wife contrasts sharply with the revealed word from the Lord to Joseph.

Early in 1839, after nearly a half-year of imprisonment, Joseph Smith wrote a letter from Liberty Jail to the saints. The letter included several revelations. One revelation declared these words:

*“[C]ursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed saith the Lord and cry they have sin[n]ed when they have not sined before me saith the Lord but have done that which was meat in mine eyes and which I commanded them but those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin and are the children of disobediance themselvs and those who swear false against my servants that they might bring them unto bondage and death. Wo unto them because they have offended my little ones they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house their basket shall not be full their houses and their barnes shall famish and they themselvs shall be dispised by those that flattered them they shall not have right to the priesthood nor their posterity after them from generation to generation it had been better for them that a millstone had been hanged about their necks and they having drownd in the depth of the see...” (JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 366; all as in original.)*

It was the Lord who said those men who bore false witness against Joseph “shall not have right to the priesthood nor their posterity after them from generation to generation[.]” Even as late as the 1830s it was possible for men to so offend God that He will curse both them and their posterity from any right to the priesthood.

Just as Christ made intercession for all of mankind through the atonement (see 2 Nephi 1:6), so Nephi also makes intercession on behalf of his unbelieving brothers and cried unto the Lord (1 Nephi 1:9) for those who had rejected him. Nephi’s conduct makes him a ‘type’ of Christ. Nephi shows himself to be faithful in the face of adversity. He has been charitable to the critical. As a result of this, he is ready to receive more.<sup>2</sup> Christ teaches man to love his enemies, bless those who are trying to do him harm, and pray for his persecutors. This is the only way to become like Him. He is an intercessor. Becoming an intercessor for others is part of one’s development, through grace, to become as He is.

STEPHANIE: God is the **only** one who judges correctly. He is the only one who can decide whether an offense was intended or not, and then **He** reproveth, corrects, **forgives**, and **forgets**. We are rarely worthy to judge, and we are only able to reprove and correct people we have a relationship with—and we are **always** expected to forgive and forget.

READER: Satan is a title, and means accuser, opponent and adversary; hence once he fell, Lucifer became, or in other words was called, Satan, because he accuses others and opposes the Father. I rebuked Peter and called him Satan because he was wrong in opposing the Father’s will for me, and Peter understood and repented.

In the work you have performed there are those who have been Satan, accusing one another, wounding hearts and causing jarring, contention, and strife by their accusations.

Rather than loving one another, even among you who desire a good thing, some have dealt unkindly as if they were the opponents, accusers and adversaries. In this they were wrong.

You have sought to recover the scriptures because you hope to obtain the covenant for my protective hand to be over you, but you cannot be Satan and be mine. If you take upon you my covenant, you must abide it as a people to gain what I promise. You think Satan will be bound a thousand years, and it will be so, but do not understand your own duty to bind that spirit within you so that you give no heed to accuse others.

DENVER: The greatest false spirit of all is the one that inspires you to accuse your brethren, condemn your sisters, and judge others unfairly. This is Satan. We cannot be Satan and also be the Lord's.

We are not being asked to lay down our weapons and be killed. *We* are only being asked to lay down our hostility, slander, and abuse of one another to become peaceful and loving. This is a good thing that benefits everybody. Despite this, we keep our pride, ambition, jealousy, envy, strife, and lusts. These destructive desires are preferred over forgiving offenses in meekness, love, and kindness. None of us are asked to die for a covenant, but are only asked to be more like Christ and forgive and love one another. This seems so difficult a challenge that we quarrel and dispute among ourselves. We remain haughty and self-righteous and fail to realize self-righteousness is a lie, a mirage, utterly untrue. We must trade our pride for humility, or we will never be able to keep the covenant.

The context of “judge not that ye be not judged” is framed by the statement that “with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” We do “judge” one another because we must. But the judgment should err on the side of forgiving. It should err in favor of trusting motives to be pure, and intent to be good. We should be generous with our gratitude, evaluations and suppositions. When we know someone is misbehaving, we should make allowances for their shortcomings, forgive them before they ask, and impute no retribution because of their offensive conduct.

This does not make us better than another, it makes us whole. It allows the Lord to forgive us for our own, much greater offenses against Him. For when we are generous, we merit His Divine generosity. It is how we are healed. It is the means for our own salvation. Instead of thinking ourselves better than an offender, we should look upon them with gratitude for they provide the means to obtain salvation-- provided we give them forgiveness from all their offenses. This is why we should rejoice and be exceedingly glad. ([3 Nephi 12: 10-12.](#)) They enable us to obtain salvation by despitefully using us, as long as we measure them by the same standard that allows God to forgive us.

What perfect symmetry: You measure to others using instrument that will be used by God to measure back to you. So your ready forgiveness is how God will treat you. All those grudges can be replaced with petitions to God to forgive those who abused you. As you lay aside all those sins against you, committed by others, it will purge from you all your own sins.

Straight and narrow indeed.... But oddly appropriate and altogether within your control.

*Be of one heart, ...regard one another with charity. Measure your words before giving voice to them...*

*There remains [a] great work yet to be done. Receive my covenant and abide in it, not as in the former time when jarring, jealousy, contention and backbiting caused anger, broke hearts and hardened the souls of those claiming to be my saints. But receive it in spirit, in meekness and in truth. I have given you a former commandment that I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men. And again, I have taught [you] that if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses. How do I act toward mankind? If men intend no offense, I take no offense, but if they are taught and should have obeyed, then I reprove and correct, and forgive and forget. You cannot be at peace with one another if you take offense when none is intended. But again I say, Judge not others except by the rule you want used to weigh yourself....*

(One of the questions that someone asked is, why we are admonished to pursue judgement? The answer are those words I just read to you: *I say, Judge not others except by the rule you want used to weigh yourself.* Pursue judgement whenever the opportunity presents itself. Use judgement to evaluate based upon the standard you want applied to yourself, and pursue judgement).

STEPHANIE: I have a simple formula that works for me, and I'll share it with you. I figure that every single interaction I have with another human being will achieve one of three things:

- The experience will either build our relationship with a positive interaction,
- It will leave it unchanged or status quo, or
- It will tear down the relationship with a negative interaction.

Grocery store clerks, gas station attendants, students, teachers, husbands, children—doesn't matter. The good news about this formula for me is that I get to choose, **every single time** with **every single person**. It's **never** out of my control. There is no love for others **or yourself** if your time's spent focusing on flaws, criticizing, imputing intent, or taking offense for no good reason.

Here's what the Lord says about judgment, flaws, criticism, ascribing motive, offense, and intent—and it's time we start taking Him seriously. So, He moves on from the Ten Commandments to the Sermon on the Mount.

In Matthew 3:40, He says:

*Now these are the words which Jesus taught his disciples that they should say unto the people: Judge not unrighteously, that you be not judged, but judge righteous judgment; for with what judgment you [shall] judge, you shall be judged, and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. (Matthew 3:40 RE)*

(It's like a person with a cold's worst nightmare. [Audience laughter.])

The difference ~~is~~ here that I see between the no judging and the righteous judgment is likely related to Final Judgment, as opposed to all those in-between judgments that we can do if we **think** we have the Lord on our side, in terms of righteous judgment.

And then moving from Matthew into Third Nephi—Third Nephi chapter six, verse six:

*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull ~~that~~ [the] mote out of thine eye, and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam [out] of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again, and rend you. (3 Nephi 6:6 RE)*

And so I say to that: What the heck does that have to do with anything? So, on the assumption that it is actually related to what came before that, I spent a reasonable amount of time contemplating it, and this is my version of pearls and swine and dogs and whatever. It's a strange ending to this particular thought; so, what if it means that **we** are the dogs and swine, and judging is a holy and precious act—one that we don't have anywhere near the godliness to engage in, at least without seriously pursuing God's help—and we will get out

of the attempt (and **all** we will get out of the attempt) at that kind of judging is trampling and rending. So, that's my take; and so, let's not do it. Okay? Let's just not do it.

In the foregoing scriptures, we are being told to worry about ourselves **first** (and **that** should take a long, long, long time). And then, if we need to, we can worry about other people after that. So, in theory, if we're as critical towards ourselves as we are others, we should be doing a lot of repenting, improving, growing in love and charity and empathy—as we make ourselves better; because it's just about beams and motes, people. That's it—just don't do it.

When it comes to our interpersonal life, knowing how to make yourself better takes a lot of courage and introspection; you have to be willing to be clear on what's wrong with **you**. It's a lot easier to think about what's wrong with other people. So asking questions like:

- How did I make **that** better or worse?
- What did I do or say to make them react that way?
- What did I say or do to cause their defensiveness? or
- Why did I do or say what I did or said, and how and what could I have done differently?

are absolutely necessary in order to become more Christ-like. However, if focusing on other people is your jam, then do it charitably; impute the highest motive and best motive to other people; assume their best intentions; engage in empathy and perspective-taking. **These** are godly acts. They make **your** life better. They wash away the bitterness, anger, hurt, and unhappiness **you** feel when you're focused on the negative. This sounds like loving yourself.

DENVER: We have been a really rancorous group of people who are strongly opinionated. It's like we're refugees from an abusive experience in a hierarchical religion that, as soon as we are set at liberty, everyone wants to pick at the slightest hint that you're aspiring to be the next Relief Society president or the next bishop or—just all of that. There's a decompression, there's a “post-religious trauma syndrome” that was really evident. Everyone was walking around saying, more or less, “I've been abused. Religion has been a source of anxiety and trouble in my life, and you're practicing religion—but by damn, you're not going to practice your religion on me! I mean, I want to have the liberty with which Christ has made me free. I do not want to have that experience repeat itself. I want nothing of that.” And that—we were wearing that, and probably every one of us were wearing that chip on all of our shoulders.

I didn't see that over at Grand Junction. I didn't see people worried about the motivations of one another. I didn't see them looking for cause to complain or cause to take offense at what someone else was saying. I thought we turned a corner, and something happened. And maybe we needed a little while to decompress. Maybe we needed a little while to—

And as other people come in, they're probably going to walk in with exactly the same attitude that many of us had for the first several years because of our prior experience. We're just going to have to bear with that. And they need to get over that, because there's a lot of personal intrusiveness and personal abuse that goes on in the name of the Restoration. It's worse among the fundamentalist group. It's worse among the people that have come out from that tradition to say, "Let us—let us join in here." All of them have suffered from religious abuse.

As aggravating and trying as people are on one another, we need to go through this. There is no magic path to loving one another. Some people refuse and must be left outside. When it comes to loving others, some things must be abandoned, some things must be added, some things must be forgotten, and some things must be ignored. But learning what to abandon, add, forget, or ignore is only through the doing. We chip away at ourselves and others by interacting and sharing.

We will learn things about one another that will distress us. And we may well wish we didn't know some things about others. How will the socially-offensive become socially-acceptable without help from a loving society? And how can a society become loving if people are not broad-minded enough to figure out that some things just don't matter? Few things really are important. If a man is honest, just, virtuous, and true, should you care if he swears? If a man has a heart of gold and would give you assistance if he thought it was needed, should you care if he is rough and uncouth?

The adulterous and predatory will rarely reform and must often be excluded. They will victimize and destroy. We are commanded to cast out those who steal, love and make a lie, commit adultery, and refuse to repent. The instructions we have been given state:

*You shall not kill; he that kills shall die. You shall not steal...he that steals and will not repent **shall be cast out**. You shall not lie; he that lies and will not repent **shall be cast out**. You shall love your wife with all your heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else...he that looks upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the spirit, and if he repent not...**shall be cast out**. You shall not commit adultery, and he that commits adultery and repents not **shall be cast out**; and he that commits adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsakes [it] and does it no more, you shall forgive him; but if he does it again, he **shall not be forgiven, [and] shall be cast out**.*

*You shall not speak evil of your neighbor [nor] or do him any harm. You know my laws, they are given in my scriptures. **He that sins and repents not shall be cast out.** If you love me, you shall serve me and **keep all my commandments.*** (T&C 26:6, emphasis added)

This teaching is still binding. If your fellowship includes those who ought to be “cast out” you have the obligation to do so rather than encouraging evil. Be patient, but be firm. If a person refuses to repent and forsake sins, you may end fellowship with them and include those who are interested in practicing obedience and love.

The Gospel is based upon happiness. Alma writes of this as the “great plan of happiness.” Your affiliation with the Church should bring you happiness. Your faith should be filled with joyfulness. The Gospel is intended to awaken in you security, love, and hopefulness which increase your joy for life.

If you find you are entrenched in fear, anger, and selfishness, then something is wrong. Delightful people should never have their joy curtailed by small-minded and oppressive others. You should not surrender your agency to the opinions of others. It is just fine if you are misunderstood and viewed harshly. It is almost the ideal if people speak about you falsely and misunderstand your true intentions. You are most closely following Him when you suffer under these burdens. He told you: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” (Matt. 5: 10–12.) If you are going to do it right, persecution is part of the package. You get to be understood by Heaven, but misunderstood by your fellowman. There is deep satisfaction in knowing you are more interested in what the Lord thinks of you than in caring about the opinions of men. It is liberating. You will find yourself, as you lose your good name and reputation among men. Unfortunately, you may also be called upon to lose your good name among fellow Saints. We can be pretty hard on each other. We should know better, but we don’t. So you need to be tolerant, forgiving and patient even with the Saints. This will free you to find joy. For when you are given offenses, but return good for bad, you grow into something bigger and better. You get to know Him.

The Gospel aims to reunite you with God.

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The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Stephanie Snuffer's remarks entitled "Love Others As Yourself" given at a regional conference in Sandy, UT on July 14, 2019
- Denver's conference talk entitled "Civilization", given in Grand Junction, CO on April 21, 2019
- Denver's blog entry entitled [Come and Be Saved](#), posted August 9, 2010, and recorded April 17, 2021
- Passages from Denver's book entitled *The Second Comforter: Conversing with the Lord through the Veil*, published June 14, 2006, recorded April 17, 2021;
- Denver's blog entry entitled [2 Nephi 30:2](#), posted August 16, 2010, and recorded April 17, 2021
- A fireside talk entitled "Cursed, Denied Priesthood", given in Sandy, UT on January 7th, 2018
- A Glossary of Gospel Terms, "Intercession", recorded April 17, 2021
- The presentation of "Answer and Covenant", given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, ID on September 3rd, 2017
- Denver's blog entry entitled [3 Nephi 14:1-2](#), posted October 26, 2010, and recorded April 17, 2021
- Denver's conference talk entitled "The Heavens are Open", given in Hurricane, UT on March 22, 2020
- Denver's talk entitled "Authority, Keys and Kingdom" given at a regional conference in Sandy, UT on July 14, 2019; and
- A passage from Denver's book entitled *Eighteen Verses*, published October 31, 2007, and recorded April 17, 2021