

Youth Q&A Session
“The Heavens Are Open” General Conference
Hurricane, Utah
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Denver and Stephanie Snuffer

Denver: There were some questions that got submitted beforehand, and there are also questions coming in live. I'll take one that was submitted beforehand.

“Why are there no female writers in the Scriptures? Why are there no accounts of women receiving their Second Comforters? Thank you for the opportunity to ask questions.”

Well, number one, we don't always know who wrote down the Scriptures. We don't know who the scribes were. In fact, it's likely, in particular in the Book of Judges, that some of the accounts are clearly reliant upon women to provide the information. And in the Book of Luke, the *only* source that could have provided information about the private contact between Mary and the angel—that is the source that Luke relied upon for his account—would have been Mary. And so, did Luke have access to an account written by Mary? Did Luke interview her? There's a lot we don't know about the generation of Scripture and who the scribes were. So, the question assumes something about which we don't have enough information to say Scriptures aren't the product of a woman's effort or a woman's writing.

Okay, so—

Stephanie: Okay, I'm on the— I'm looking through some of these, so I'll be looking down. We're going to divide some of them up, and some of them just won't get answered, 'cause that's the way the world works. So— And some of them will be addressed not necessarily answering questions, but just getting some insight about some other things.

So, the first one talks about families—parents, families...being dedicated to the LDS Church and think they're apostates...not arguing, but you can't talk spiritual things and, you know, can we get our families back? And then it follows up with an actual question that I'm not going to answer.

But what I am going to talk about is if the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon at Bountiful, Gospel principles are not good enough for you to talk with your family members about, then you're focusing on the wrong things. Because if all you're talking with your family members about are the things that divide you, like which conference you go to or which leader you follow, then that onus is on you. So, I would suggest that instead of worrying about the things that you don't have in common, that you talk about the things that you do have in common.

I spend an enormous amount of time talking with people I know and love, who are on all spectrums of their traveling back to God, about Gospel principles because we have those in

common. And that would be my suggestion—and that goes for your family members, for your friends, for the people you still go to church with, for the people that you used to go to church with.

The missionary effort you're engaged in just does not stop, didn't stop, and shouldn't stop when you decided to worship somewhere else or when somebody decided to make you worship somewhere else. Bring it back to what you know, bring it back to what you have in common, and stop thinking you're better than they are. 'Cause we're all working towards the same goal, we're just doing it in a real— We might be doing it in very different ways.

Denver: This reminds me of an incident that happened. Rob had his daughter, his youngest daughter, on the back of his motorcycle. I think I had Nathan on the back of mine. A group of us were on our way out to Sturgis, and we were south of Newcastle, Wyoming, at a gas station where we were getting some water to drink, and on our way there. And there's a fellow who was there sitting on the benches next to us outside, getting a little bit of rest from the ride. He was from Colorado, and he was a welder, 'kay? So, Rob's a construction contractor, I'm a lawyer, and this guy's a welder; and we're all at the same gas station at the same time on our way out to Sturgis. We have absolutely *nothing* in common except the motorcycles and the Harley rally out in Sturgis, South Dakota—and that was enough.

We had a *great* visit. He told us stories that were pretty funny. And I noted that he lacked some hygiene attention that I expect to be usual and customary, and he probably thought I was a bit dainty for a biker. But it didn't matter! We had one thing in common, and that was enough. And for those moments in that gas station in Wyoming, probably 15 years ago now, we were buddies. If you've got something in common, that's enough.

Stephanie: Was that when Jessie drank out of the water bottle?

Denver: Yes, and that was *the guy* whose water he drank! So, I'm not telling the rest of that story.

Stephanie: Yes, exactly! Yeah, do not pick up water bottles that you do not know who they belong to.

Denver: Yeah.

Stephanie: Okay, I got one here. An eleven year old who feels like the future is pointless... This breaks my heart. (Oh sorry, Reed—whoever—I just smacked the thing.) "I want to have dreams and goals, but everything is changing and unpredictable. How am I supposed to care, or what should I care about?"

So, we have kids. You know, I have older kids—not an eleven year old anymore, but kids who want to grow up and have kids. And I want to see my grandkids grow up! And you know, we had an earthquake in Salt Lake on, whatever, and it was *super freaky!* And then,

on top of Coronavirus, we're all sitting around going, "What the, what the, *what* is going on?!"

So, the day of the coming of the Lord is unknown. Scripturally, it is known *only* to our Creator. So, sitting around—and I don't mean to be flippant, especially to this beautiful eleven-year-old question—but sitting around, and worrying, and wondering is...it's not healthy. And it doesn't help. And so, the only thing I *can* say, because I can't answer to how much time is actually left—and neither can he [indicating Denver]—is "*act as if*." That's the thing I want you to remember: Act as if. *Act as if* you're going to go to school when you're not quarantined anymore, and then go to school. *Act as if* you're going to graduate from high school. *Act as if* you are going to go on to college, and get a degree, and get married, and have kids, because the likelihood of that happening for many of us is pretty high.

There is no answer about when things are going to end. You can pay attention to the signs, and you can look around and you can see things happening, but if you let that stop you from *acting as if* you're going to finish middle school, and then go to high school, and then go to college, and get married, and have kids, and have grandkids, then you're going to sit in a place of despair and frustration and pointlessness. And I *do not* recommend that. It is not a good place to be.

So, the other thing I would say to this particular question: Talk to the people you love. You don't have to sit with this being fearful and being afraid and being worried. And if you don't have people around you who are hopeful, then expand your circle a little bit and find some more people who are willing to be hopeful and encouraging, and help you see that every day you have is a gift from God. So, *Act As If*.

Denver: Hmmm.

Stephanie: Do you want to do one?

Denver: Yeah. "For women who are alone, do you have any thoughts about having those with authority bless over the phone or the Internet?"

I don't have a problem with that. Peter didn't lay hands on anyone when he walked by and healed the person in the gate to the temple. I think you could. If you're at a remote location and there's no one there with authority, I think you could bless the Sacrament over the Internet. I think you can give a blessing over the Internet. I think you can do it having the voice alone, because the intent—

Christ did not go *to* the house. The Roman said, "I'm not worthy to have You enter in my house, and it wouldn't be kosher for You to come into my house. Just speak the word, and my daughter will be healed." And He spoke the word. And then, as he's returning from the conversation with Christ, news comes and greets him on the way that tells him that his daughter was healed. And he asked, "When did that happen?" And it was in the self-same hour as when he was visiting with the Lord (see Matthew 4:2 RE).

I don't see any reason why people of faith today can't operate on the same basis that we see in Scripture—Peter and the Lord, both.

Stephanie: He knew Him.

Denver: “How can you tell if you have truly forgiven someone?”

That was one that came in that I thought you ought to answer.

Stephanie: Oh. How do you tell if you've truly forgiven someone?

Denver: Yeah.

Stephanie: Didn't that— That corresponded with another one that we were talking about. Basically, you're not worried about it any more. I don't know, is that too simple? I figure—

Denver: You forget about it.

Stephanie: Yeah. I figure if you've forgiven someone, you— If you've actually forgiven someone— In the context of this question, if you have actually forgiven the person that you're thinking about in this question, you wouldn't be asking the question. So, I don't know, too simple?

Denver: Yeah. I can't remember *one single thing* my wife's ever done that's wrong.

Stephanie: Stop! That is just utter trash!

Denver: She remembers *everything*.

Stephanie: I do, I do. Do you want to tell them why? Tell them why.

Denver: No, I think it's okay. I'm not going to.

Stephanie: Oh, you're not going to tell them why I remember? Whatever.

Denver: Okay. “In the account of the transfiguration of Jesus and His second visit to the Nephites, the text makes comment about the whiteness of Jesus' raiment—in the later account, the whiteness of His disciples' raiment. Will you share with us an increased understanding about the explanation of a demonstration of Jesus' disciples having no sin—why it would be important to point to 'raiment?' Clearly, it's an illusion to being clean and victorious over sin...” and then, so on.

Anyway. Yeah, I can point you to something. There's a— You can find it as a recording, but it's much, much better as a transcript of the paper itself, called “Treasures in the Heavens,”

written by Hugh Nibley. If you hear it as a recording, you're just going to assume he's talking. If you read it as a transcript, you're going to realize that more than 45% of the words of the entire article are quotes from early, but obscure, Christian sources.

The "Treasures in the Heaven," among other things, is a white robe that was laid aside before you come to this earth, that is kept in safe-keeping under the throne of God—that is yours to *lose*, here, or to *reclaim* if you do what's required, *and* to have more added to it if you are true and faithful and you give diligence and heed.

And the article is actually, I think, relying upon obscure Christian sources because they were considered sacred, and they're not widely disseminated. They didn't make their way into Scripture. But you'll learn a lot about sacred clothing and ascension and purposes of a temple. "Treasures in the Heaven"—interesting article. You can get it on—I found it on the Internet just by searching, 'Hugh Nibley Treasures in the Heaven.'

Stephanie: Me, too.

Denver: Yeah.

Stephanie: Do you want to do another one, or do you want me to?

Denver: No, I've got to see what I'm looking at.

Stephanie: Alright. This one came in this morning. "Why doesn't God talk about science in Scriptures? I have learned about symbolic things in my chemistry, microbiology, and astronomy classes that denote there is a God, but I've always wondered why the laws of nature and scientific ideas are never discussed."

So, we're going to break this one up. First thing I would say is, I don't know, I tend to think that science *is* God. Now I know *scientists* don't think that, and they're looking for ways to disconnect science and God. But I happen to believe that if there was no God, there would be no science, and they wouldn't have jobs. And so, to me, there is no separate— There is literally no separation. So, the fact that this person is *finding* God in microbiology and chemistry and astronomy is no surprise.

The second thing I would say is I am finding science in human growth and development. I am finding sci— Did I say "science" or "God"?

Denver: You said science, but you meant God.

Stephanie: Oh, no, I'm not finding science. Well, I might be finding that too, but that's not what I meant. I am finding *God* in human growth and development. I am finding God in counseling theories and practices. I am finding God in substance abuse principles. I am finding God in every textbook I am currently engaged in. So, I would say, much like Jeff said earlier, God is everywhere. And the fact that we should never limit our search for God, or

even our presumption of finding Him, to Scripture—which is a wonderful place to find Him—but if I can find Him in substance abuse practices and principles, you can certainly find him in astronomy and microbiology. And then you—

Denver: Yeah. But all things bear testimony of Christ—*all things*. Whether they are on the earth or under the earth or in the earth or above the earth, all things bear testimony of Christ. The Scriptures say so. You think about the caterpillar that’s a pest, that’s something to wreck your garden, that goes into a cocoon—and then it comes out of the cocoon, and it’s now something that helps fertilize and pollinate. And it leaves its grubby, earthly confines to become airborne and colorful, and a contributor to life and to your gardening. It’s the same animal. And tell me *that* isn’t a testimony of Christ. All things bear testimony of Him, and science simply ratifies that.

Stephanie: Do you want to do that one?

Denver: “‘Thou shalt not kill; he that killeth shall die’ (see T&C 26:6 RE). Are we required to be pacifists?”

No. I mean, the Book of Mormon— How many war chapters are there in the Book of Mormon? I mean, it’s a guide to the method by which violence is to be accomplished. You *protect* the innocent. You use violence to defend families and children and to prevent offenses and abuses, but you don’t use it to abuse. And if the person that is the threat, as they do in the Book of Mormon, agrees to lay down arms and no longer be a threat, then there’s no reason to continue onward. You meet with force that which is destructive, only at the level required to—according to the Book of Mormon—to deal with the threat. And upon the threat having been dealt with, then you stop.

Clark Aposhian—who is the big gun-rights advocate, and teaches the self-defense, and gets everyone their concealed weapon as a consultant for the Utah legislature—says that you fire your first warning shot into the torso of the person, and you continue to do so until he’s “*utterly neutralized*.” And you leave no witnesses other than yourself about what happened there—at least when he taught me the concealed carry permit. But that seems a little non-Book of Mormon-ish.

Stephanie: Okay. All right, this one, “Will you—” This is for you. “Will you explain the difference between the ‘Kingdom of God’ and the ‘Government of God’? And what does it look like to get into the Kingdom?”

Denver: In one sense, they’re synonymous, but the term— The usage of the term is a little different when you’re talking about mortality. You can have the Kingdom of God any time God, as *the King*, is speaking. So, as soon as God is speaking and there are people that are giving heed to what the King is saying, they are subordinate to the King, and therefore, *there* is the Kingdom of God; it exists.

The 'Family of God' is really a Holy Order, requiring ordinances and things to take place. And in the *afterlife*, the 'Government of God' or the 'Kingdom of God' and the 'Family of God' are all synonymous. In *this world*, the Family of God doesn't get truly organized but on rare occasions, but the Kingdom of God has appeared a number of times. The Kingdom of God was with John, as Joseph put it, while John was crying repentance in the wilderness and people were coming out to him—*there* was the Kingdom of God (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pg. 271). And the Kingdom of God was here when Joseph was talking because God was administering, in effect, what was taking place; and so, you had the Kingdom of God. The Family of God is another challenge, and it's a little more rare.

How about this one: "The Scripture Glossary says, 'Because the Father's power was what came through and because the Father had attained to the resurrection, it was impossible for the Father's plan to fail. The Father had already taken care of redeeming all the creations under His hand' (see T&C: A Glossary of Gospel Terms, "Surety, Christ As"). If a creation can be redeemed by the Father, through the power of the resurrection He has already attained, can you help me understand Christ's motivations for creating and coming to redeem this world, aside from personal growth?"

Joseph touches on this stuff in the King Follett discourse, in which he talks about Christ attaining to the exaltation, to the throne of the Father, so that the Father can go to yet another *higher* exaltation. Well, it is never possible for the works to fail, because the glory and the power of the Father was given to the Son so that this creation could be made through the power of the Son as the *Creator*—because He had to be the Creator in order to be the Redeemer. So, the Father's power through the Son creates this universe, and the Son, by His sacrifice, redeems this universe. But it *could not* fail, because if Christ were to fail, it was the power of the Father, and He had the power then to redeem.

It's *always impossible* for the works of the Father to fail, which is why when Christ is bearing testimony (He's teaching the Nephites), He's always saying, "The Father told me to say this to you. The Father told me to command you. The Father told me this is the doctrine. This is the doctrine my Father gave me. This is the doctrine; it's the only doctrine that will save." When He introduces Himself to the Nephites, He refers three times in one short paragraph—three times—by identifying who He is by reference to the Father: "I've suffered the will of the Father in all things. I've glorified the name of the Father. I've taken upon me the sins of the world in order to do the works of the Father" (see 3 Nephi 5:4 RE).

The Savior is an extension of the will of the Father. But fidelity and strict compliance with the works of the Father were done, in order that Christ may *then* sit on the throne of the Father, and the Father can move on to a higher exaltation—because *that is the plan of salvation*, and Christ represents the prototype of the saved man.

What *we* saw Him do on *this* world was the final step in the process of qualifying to *attain* to the resurrection, do what the Father did, and sit on the throne of the Father. That was the last step to be taken—we got a chance to witness it here. But the Father had done that before. And the Son will then, sitting on the throne of the Father, continue the works that

He saw His Father do in others. And ultimately, the plan continues, worlds without end. But read the King Follett discourse, it will help you. (For one possible source, see www.byustudies.byu.edu/content/king-follett-discourse-newly-amalgamated-text.)

Stephanie: Okay, do you want me to do one?

Denver: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You can finish this. I'll just sit here.

Stephanie: Okay, then we're done.

Denver: No, do another one.

Stephanie: Okay. It says, "In your—" He would never answer this one. "In your opinion, is it better to pray for a soulmate, to pray for someone that would be a good mate, to try and date like-..." (these are one, two, and three) "...to try and date like-minded people, or to just live our lives as good as we can and see what happens, or five, something else?"

Denver: I'd say, five.

Stephanie: Five, something else?

Denver: What are *you* saying?

Stephanie: I say all of them, to some extent.

Denver: Dude. She had 1500 first dates!

Stephanie: No, I only had 500 first dates.

Denver: She had innumerable first dates! I was the only one who ever took her on a second date.

Stephanie: Totally, that is not even true.

Denver: 'Cause I'm a brave soul. So, you would say some of all of this?

Stephanie: I would say a little bit of all of this, okay? And I'm going to speak from the perspective of a mother, alright?

Yeah, life is a little more complicated than it used to be in terms of, I don't know, finding someone whose values you share. I know in our family, we've sort of transitioned. It's more important to find someone whose values you share than whose religion you share, okay? I'll go that far. And, it's... I think... (I had such good things in my head a minute ago. I think you distracted me.)

I don't personally believe in soulmates—although, he is definitely mine. I don't think we should settle for someone that's *just* a good mate, because I think God cares more about all of us than just— 'Good' just sounds so much like 'adequate,' you know? And we should be striving for more than adequate.

Certainly, hanging around and being with like-minded people is a good idea, but 'like-minded people' does not mean they either have to be *this* thing or part of *this* group or part of *this* group. You can find like-minded people in a lot of places that aren't part of your *groups*, if that makes any sense. You just have to be willing to sort of stretch yourself a little bit. And then you should *always* live your lives the best that you can, and see what happens.

God loves you more than you will ever—more than you *can ever*—comprehend. And He wants your happiness more than you can *ever* understand. And it's easy to think *that* when you're a parent, because my sort-of mantra is "He loves them better than I do." And if He loves them better than I do, then I know that if they are genuinely pursuing the best that they have, at any given moment, that He will bless them for that. And so, that is the advice I give to my kids who, you know, they're out looking for good mates, soulmates, like-minded people, and trying to live the best lives they can too. So, do a little bit of all of that, and have faith.

Denver: There's also that comment about 'some people are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it' (see T&C 139:15 RE). If you share values, and you value truth and they value truth, eventually you can help them find truth.

Stephanie: Uh-huh, yeah. I'll go to this next one. It's a little bit— It's a little bit similar. It's less about finding a mate, but—

"I'm currently in college...have lots of friends that question my beliefs and ask many questions of me. Since I'm still trying to learn the contents of the Scriptures and be taught the truth, I feel like I don't know enough yet to be a teacher. Do you have any advice for how I can try to bring my friends closer to God at this point in my life? Should I even try, or should I wait until I feel like I have sufficiently learned enough to teach?"

A couple things— I mean, I always go back to the admonition to Hyrum, which is somewhere in the T&C (used to be in the D&C), where, you know, 'seek first to learn my words before you go out and try and teach them' (see Joseph Smith History 14:14 RE). That's always a good mindset to have. But if we all wait until we know enough, we'll all just be standing around with our thumbs in our ears—nobody ever going out on a limb to teach anybody anything. So—

Denver: I don't think the thumb goes in the ear. I think—

Stephanie: Yeah, well.

Denver: I think some other part of the anatomy.

Stephanie: Yeah, I know, but I chose the ear. *I chose the ear.* So, because I may think it, [whispering] *I just don't say it.*

Denver: You just don't say it?

Stephanie: [Whispering] *I just don't say it.*

So, I would say, again, do it all. Continually seek. I mean, I'm 50-some-odd years old, and I can't tell... I don't even think I read the Book of Mormon first through, completely through for the first time until I was in my thirties, okay? Which is not— I'm not bragging about that; I'm just saying you're never done learning. And there's never— There's *always* time to learn. So yes, please continue to read the Scriptures and learn the truth, and surround yourself with people who can teach you the truth. And then, when you have the opportunity with your friends to bring up subjects or have conversations about religious principles, Gospel principles, God, the universe, or anything like that, do so at your level.

The other thing that this question says: "Do you have any advice for how I can try to bring my friends closer to God at this point in my life?"

"Try to bring my friends closer to God," I think, is a wonderful question. "Try to make my friends believe what I believe" is not a good question, 'kay? We're not trying to make anybody believe what we believe. That sort of is not necessarily— That's not well received. Trying to bring people closer to God can, and will probably, be received by everybody.

So, my answer to this question is make sure you know what you're trying to get your friends to do, and just gauge it based on what you know right now. And be willing to have conversations about God, about Gospel principles, about the bigger, deeper meanings of what goes on in the universe. Those kinds of things will just bring people closer to God naturally. And it beats the heck out of BuzzFeed...and whatever other— Twitter? (I do know these things; I'm not acting like I don't.) But yeah, talk about Godly things, and that will just naturally bring people along.

Denver: There's also a lot of videos that have been put together that are out there and available, and are conversation starters. There's a first and a second seven-part video. They're short videos—you know, four to six minutes long—on the Protestant Reformation and the Restoration. And there's a third video series, the first one of which just got released on the Equinox, dealing with the continuation of the Restoration. There'll be a seven— There'll be a total of seven of those, as well (see www.learnofchrist.org).

And there are a lot of recordings—the Restoration Archives has a whole host of recordings that are either good to listen to, good to use as a basis for conversation, or something that you can ask your friends to look at (see www.restorationarchives.com).

Stephanie: Actually... And they're great; really, they are. And they're short, and they're easy to understand, and they're a good, general-Christian-belief-in-God way to learn things that aren't so entrenched in a specific religious movement or something.

Go ahead.

Denver: So here's one: "How do I know it's not just wishful thinking when I hear the Lord say, 'Your sins are forgiven?' How do I get past the distrust in my own ability to reach God and believe that He can reach me?"

Well, first of all, the adversary doesn't forgive sins. So, if you're hearing a voice that's forgiving you of sin, that's undoubtedly a benign, good source because the adversary's not interested in that. The problem that you've got is that then you decide not to cast it out of your memory, but you want to continue beating yourself over it. Lay it aside! Just forget it! If I— "I the Lord forgive whom I will forgive," and "He remembers it no more" (see T&C 45:9 RE). If the Lord's not going to bear it in His remembrance, why are you? Why do you want to contextualize yourself in that way? Why do you want to think of yourself in corrupt terms?

I'm thinking about all the great stories in literature where people in horrible circumstances managed to escape those circumstances, and go on to be good and virtuous and noble. And then you think about the Count of Monte Cristo who escaped, but never *ever* could get beyond his plot for revenge, his desire— I mean, he could and should have moved on in a wholesome way, and he moved on in a vengeful way. It's one of the great themes of problems in literature.

Move on; forget about it. The Lord remembers it no more; you ought not entertain it.

Stephanie: That one, then that one?

Denver: "Will animals play a role in Zion?" Well, yeah. Yes.

Stephanie: I'm taking *my* dogs.

I'll do this one. You can add Scripture to this if you want to.

So, "I've been told that pride is the worst sin, but this confuses me because murder takes away others' free agency, which I always thought is worse."

So, I have had ongoing ideas in my head for the last several years about just trying to make sense of things that I see or believe, and try to synthesize right and wrong down to, you know, six principles. It's not working, but whatever. And so, I'm going to say... I'm going to agree that pride is— I'm going to agree with this, that whoever's told you that pride is the worst sin, that currently is my understanding—my personal understanding. And I'm going with that because pride is the umbrella under which *everything else falls*.

I watch a lot of TV. It's kind of an escape; I like it. And *pride* is what leads to murdering someone. And pride is what leads to wanting political power. And pride is what leads *to*. So, I'm hanging onto the fact that pride is the worst sin, or the umbrella under which all other horrible sins fall. So, my challenge would be: Figure out how pride is working in your life. 'Cause I doubt you're murdering people, but I guarantee you, it is holding you back. So, that's my answer.

You have a scriptural answer to that? Or you just want to move on?

Denver: No, there's a whole bunch in the Psalms and in the Proverbs—mostly Proverbs—about that stuff.

So, here: "In T&C 31:6-8, the Lord told his disciples anciently of events that would take place when the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled...includes the following:

When the times of...gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness...it shall be the fullness of [the] gospel, but they receive it not, for they perceive not the light and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men.

And in that generation shall the times of the gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be men standing in that generation that shall not pass until they see an overflowing scourge, for a desolating sickness shall cover the land. But my disciples shall stand in holy places and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices, and curse God, and die.

"What does the Lord mean when He says, *But my disciples shall stand in holy places and shall not be moved?*"

He's talking about Zion. If— It's that same— This T&C 31:6-8, keep reading. When you get to verses 14 and 15 of that same thing, the only people that shall not take up arms will flee to Zion, and the terror of the Lord shall be there.

There's an incident that happens when Christ is arrested in Gethsemane, when they come with their swords, they come with their lanterns, and they come to take Him (see John 10:1 RE and Testimony of St. John 10:1). And He, after suffering what He'd suffered, stood up before them. And they're looking for Him, and He identifies Himself to them: "I am He." I mean, He's submitting. They're confronting the guy that they went to look and find; He's standing there in front of them, identifying Himself as the one. And they stumble, and they fall backward. I mean, if you take a step backward and there's another guard behind you, you're going to fall; and they fell down. It's one of those Monty Python moments.

But, why do they cower? Why is the presence of the Lord intimidating to those that had come armed to arrest him? It's because no matter what you may think, there is something

palpable about righteousness. There is something *tangible* about the righteousness of God, the power of God, the presence of Holiness; and it is frightening. That incident that's described about judgment in Mormon, where the people are in this agony in the presence of a just and holy Being? The just and holy Being is doing *nothing* except being there for them to behold. But they feel by the contrast of a just and holy Being with themselves (see Mormon 4:6 RE).

I mean, there's one of the revelations that we have in *our* Scriptures, that aren't in anyone else's, about how at the Second Coming there will be people who are still laden with sin. And they know— Ministers will *know* that they've ministered falsely. And people will *want* to have their sins forgiven, and they will be *asking* people to baptize them. But this is not the day for repentance—this is the day for judgment, and they have to be turned down (see T&C 160:1-4 RE).

Why, if they've been religious? *Why*, if they are a minister? Because ministers, who ministered falsely, are among those that are convicted of their sin at the Second Coming. Why would you be a minister, and now with the return of the Lord and the presence of the Lord, wishing yourself to be hidden from His presence? It's because there's *authenticity*. It's real, and it's palpable to the program of the Lord and the forgiveness of the Lord. And it *cannot* be *faked*; it cannot be imitated. Because coming face to face with Righteousness is so tangible a reality that you may as well have a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of smoke by day, because *that* is holy ground, and you go not up against that. Not because they're armed and they have snipers. It's because it's dreadful; it's frightening. It's something where you do not want to be in the presence of *that* Light and Truth, because you prefer darkness.

I've already... I've already—

Stephanie: All right. Okay, do you want to do this one?

Denver: What is it?

Stephanie: “The three trees on the front of *Preserving*— Do you know?”

Denver: Oh, yeah. No, those are for self-discovery.

Stephanie: Okay.

Denver: There's stuff that no one's ever figured out yet.

Stephanie: I know, I know. Okay, I'll do this one—another eleven year old who worries about everything. What is up with our worrying eleven year olds? Stop it! Just stop it, stop it, stop it!

Okay. If you're focused on worry, you're going to worry 'cause you can't *not do* something you're focused on. Okay, I don't know how— I don't know, I'm not exactly sure how to

explain this to an eleven year old, because you're in fifth grade. You should worry about your bike and your friends and your—

Denver: Well, if they ride a bike, they get the target acquisition/target fixation.

Stephanie: Okay, hold on.

Denver: It's a real deal. Tell them not to— Yeah, use that.

Stephanie: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, okay! All right, here's the thing. I'll tell you about riding my bike. If you're riding a bike—it goes for mountain bike riding, skiing, motorcycle riding—it's called target fixation, okay? So I'm riding my...let's do my mountain bike, okay? I'm riding my mountain bike down the mountain, and I see all the rocks that I want to miss. If I look at the rocks I want to miss, I'm going to hit the rocks I'm trying to miss. It's a real thing. If I fade out the rocks I want to miss and look at the path I want to take to miss my rocks, I'm going to stay on the path, away from the rocks I'm trying to miss.

Denver: You look where you want to go.

Stephanie: You look where you want to go. *You look* where you want to go. You want to go *away* from worry. You want to go *toward* the things that bring you peace. You want to go *toward* the things that bring you joy, that make your life happy, and that help you focus on the positive instead of the negative. *Look where you want to go.*

Denver: If you're riding on a rural roadway on a motorcycle and you confront a curve, a turn in the road, the way to keep your bike in track is to look at the end of the curve—because you will adjust the arc of your turn to arrive at the spot you're looking at without trying to *steer your way* through the thing. You look where you want to go; you look at the end of the curve. You arc the bike to conform to arriving at *that* spot, in that lane, in that track. You look where you want to go.

Stephanie: You look where you want to go.

Do you want to do that one?

Denver: Well, I don't have my glasses on.

Stephanie: You've got to put— Keep your glasses on!

Denver: No, wait. No, I'm done. I'm through.

Stephanie: Then I'll answer one more.

Denver: I'm going home.

Stephanie: Okay. Good.

Denver: What is it?

Stephanie: This one.

Denver: Oh! That's even the best way! *You* need to answer that.

Stephanie: Yes?!

Denver: Well, yeah.

Stephanie: Okay. There's a question: "Will patriarchal blessings be given by our biological fathers?"

Sure!

Denver: It's the only way it's done in Scripture.

Stephanie: Go ask your dad for a patriarchal blessing. Sounds *awesome*.

Denver: It's the only way it's done in Scripture.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Denver: Almost always it's done by the oldest one in the patriarchal line. And after that person has been acquainted with someone *throughout their life*, and as they are approaching death and moving into the things that matter most—and in *those* circumstances they bring them back, and they give them their final blessing. It's the way it happened ever so frequently in the Old Testament *and* in the Book of Mormon. And that's a better source than it is through some institutional program, in which they train people and give suggestions of a list of criteria that ought to be followed in order to make sure the programs of the Church continue. It's rather like the prayer circles that have become an instrument for advancing an agenda, in temple rites in the LDS Church, instead of something spontaneous that is heartfelt and may actually stand a good chance of getting the attention of heaven and getting a response.

Stephanie: Okay, I'm going to answer three more quickly. I can do it quickly, I promise.

"How do I turn down friends who invite me to do Church-related things without hurting their feelings?"

I'm not really going to answer this. I'm going to ask a question back—a couple questions:

- Why do you want to turn them down?

- And is this not a good way to maintain friendships and relationships, for people who may need what you have to offer at a later time?

So, that's on you. And to answer the question legitimately, you are not responsible for their hurt feelings. Be polite, be gracious, say, "Thank you, but no." And you cannot help someone else having hurt feelings; that's just the way life is.

"I am a fifteen year old who plays online shooting games with my friends. (For shame! [Sarcasm.] No...) I get torn on spiritual focus or being worldly with my friends. How can I choose God and still be kind of a normal teenager?"

Well, you can. Go ahead, play your shooting games; it's fine. Balance is awesome. (*I say*, play your shooting games; it's fine. I don't know what your parents think. That's not my call, okay?) You know, if you're finding other ways to be godly and to connect with God, and you feel like your life is pretty balanced, and you're— I mean, if you're torn because you're feeling guilty, because someone is making you feel guilty, I can't answer that. If you legitimately want to know, my answer would be, "Have a good, balanced life."

The measure in our house was, "Does it grieve your spirit?" If something you are doing grieves your spirit, then you probably want to steer away from that no matter how many of your friends are doing it, or who's doing it, or what it is, or what the people around you think is right or wrong about it. If it *grieves your spirit*, then I say give it up. But in terms of balancing your life between God and being a normal teenager, I'm pretty sure you're already doing that.

"Is it a sin to feel proud about your relationship with God, proud of your family members and loved ones, or of your work done towards growing closer to God?"

I'm going to go out on a limb here and say if it's *pride* you're feeling, yeah, it's probably a sin. So, re-evaluate what it is you're thinking. Was it Alma, who trumped...and wanted to know... Do you know? You know what I'm saying, don't you? What's the Scripture? What's the Scripture...

Denver: No, give me a little more than "Alma," because Alma said a *lot* of stuff.

Stephanie: Anyway, help me! Help me, help me! What was it?

Audience comment: Oh, that I could speak with the trump of an angel.

Stephanie: Yes! Oh, that I could speak with the trump of an angel (see Alma 15:12 RE). Then it's like he catches himself—

Denver: Yeah, but I sense... Yeah.

Stephanie: He catches himself—because all of a sudden he feels like he’s being too prideful about what he’s saying.

Denver: Yeah. If you feel happy, if you feel satisfied, if you’re grateful, that’s not pride.

Stephanie: Yep.

Denver: If— The difference would be, “I and my family are better than other people.” That’s not it at all. I think I addressed that in the talk just a few minutes ago. But if what you’re feeling is, “I’m so grateful to be in this family. I’m so grateful to have the blessings that God has bestowed upon me. I am so pleased with the circumstances in which I find myself, and it humbles me”—that’s not pride.

Stephanie: Right.

Denver: That’s gratitude.

Stephanie: Right.

Denver: So, I mean— Was it a fifteen year old?

Stephanie: No, I don’t know. This is the...yeah.

Denver: We have a lot of emotional-vocabulary ignorance among the youth that confuse them about what it is that is really going on. The word ‘pride’ is a negative, but the emotion that’s being felt may be *misidentified* as pride. It may, in fact, be satisfaction, gratitude, humility, and appreciation. And if so, then just re-identify your word.

Denver: Get a better grasp of the vocabulary meaning...

Stephanie: Yeah.

Denver: ...because pride can lead to arrogance and haughtiness and condescension towards others, which is never good.

Stephanie: Yeah, I would agree with that.

Audience 1: Can I ask one, just very quickly?

Stephanie: Oh, my gosh.

Audience 1: I should have thought of it earlier.

Audience 2: We’re in no hurry.

Audience 1: Can I? Just one?

Stephanie: Okay. We may not answer it, but go ahead.

Denver: Yeah.

Audience 1: I just want to know. I noticed that Christ, when people—when He appears to them—are there in His presence, He will say, “Come and touch my, you know, the marks in my hands and feet and side, that you may know that I am Christ.” Can a false Christ bear those marks? You know, to identify a false Christ that may appear to you, would they have those marks?

Denver: The adversary imitates. The adversary counterfeits. The adversary is not in the business of saving souls, he’s in the business of corrupting souls—even if the only corruption he manages to do is slight—in order to hedge up the way and prevent the progress.

Never had a false being try to produce a counterfeit in that fashion, but I have had experience with other forms of counterfeiting that bear remarkable resemblance to things that are, in fact, true. And in that case, it was the content of the message that tipped it off that it was a false message. And at that point, I was able to detect the adversary when he appeared in that manner and to, in the name of the Lord, rebuke and remove him. So, I would say, if an experience like that appeals to pride, appeals to vanity, or delivers anything that is contrary to all of the words of the Lord that we find in Scripture, I would rebuke in the name of the Lord and dismiss, and I would give it no further thought.

And obviously, you don’t rebuke the Lord in the name of the Lord and send Him packing. You would dismiss the adversary in the name of the Lord and send *him* packing. But, the response would tell me something. But it’s also the content, because I have seen the adversary go to *extraordinary lengths* to mock up a false appearance in order to try and to deliver a false message. And I’ve been able to detect and dismiss, and I’ve not fallen captive for any of that.

But then, very often, if you’re going to have to deal with the adversary on any substantial matters, you’re usually going to be exposed in a way—

Joseph was exposed in a way that gave him the capacity to detect the adversary in a dramatic way, that cued him in and put him on guard, because that would have prevented a whole lot of mischief from later ensuing (see Joseph Smith History 2:4 RE). Moses on the mount had an encounter with the adversary that, again, gave him a capacity that helped him to detect the adversary thereafter and prevent a lot of mischief (see Genesis 1:3-4 RE). And Christ, after His baptism, in the wilderness was confronted by the adversary in a way that equipped Him on an ongoing basis to deal with that (see Matthew 2:5-7 RE).

The Lord's educational process sometimes requires that you get exposed to the enemy of your soul in order to know how to avoid falling prey to the enemy of your soul. And I know there are people out there that are so befuddled and so concerned about *this very issue*—about the devil misleading—that they *cannot* tell the difference between someone that *is* in the employ of the adversary, and deceived and preaching a false message, and someone that *is not* and has not been deceived, and knows how to detect and rebuke, and has not fallen prey to him.

The only advice that I have given to people when it comes to whether they believe anything I'm saying is: Disbelieve all you want. Search, and try to find the errors all you want. But be very careful about what you *say* when someone has been sent on an errand by the Lord, because that is *one thing* on which the Lord absolutely does intend to judge this generation.

I have been given a message from Him. I have an errand, and I'm working on it. And I don't care if you have no interest in it whatsoever; that's fine. Not everyone who heard the Lord's message when He was *living* had any interest in what He had to say. And I don't care if you disregard what I have to say, but I would warn you to be very careful about *fighting in opposition* to what **the Lord IS DOING NOW. Because He IS doing something.** And I'm on that errand, and I intend to complete my errand. And fighting against *that* is not fighting against *me*; I'm nothing and no one. But it *is* fighting against the Lord, who intends to vindicate promises made to far greater people than *me*. I just happen to be the weak and ill-fitted vessel that He chooses now to work with. And I'm doing my best.

Okay!

Stephanie: Let's go.

Denver: We're out of here! We're done. Is there a closing—

Audience comment: Yes.

Denver: Okay, then you get up here, and let me get out of here.