

Ep 238. God's Thoughts About You



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jody Moore

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Jody Moore: I'm Jody Moore and this is Better Than Happy, episode 238, God's Thoughts About You with Kurt Francom. This podcast is for people who know that living an extraordinary life is not easy or comfortable. It's so much better than that. This is Better Than Happy, and I'm your host Jody Moore.

Hey, everyone. Welcome to the podcast. Thanks so much for being here today. I'm super excited to introduce you to Kurt Francom today. For those of you who aren't familiar with him, I think a lot of you are familiar with him because he is the host of the Leading Saints Podcast, which is a fantastic podcast.

If you like podcasts, which I'm sure you do if you're here listening and you like what you're learning here, you're going to love what you hear over on Kurt's podcast. He is a member of the church. He has held many different leadership positions in the church, including in bishopric, and serving as bishop and various other roles.

He set about to provide leadership tools and skills and help to church leaders. He's going to talk a little bit more about that, so I'm not going to go into detail on it. I just want you to know that his podcast is one that I listen to, even though my church callings are not necessarily what I would call leadership positions in the formal sense. I'm usually the nursery leader or primary teacher or something like that.

I find it relevant no matter what, because we are all leading in some form or another, especially, though, if you do have a position in the church that has a lot of responsibility. I know my bishop of my ward told me that he listens and finds it so helpful. I highly recommend it for those of you that are bishops, Relief Society presidents, Elders Quorum presidents, Young Women's presidents, all those more formal leadership positions.

That is challenging work, and I can tell you as a former leadership coach in corporate America that we don't come here, most of us, just knowing innately how to lead people, especially in a volunteer organization like the church. Super tricky to do.

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So, I hope that if you like what you hear from Kurt today, which you're going to love, I'm super excited to share his message with you. It's so good. But then go and check him out on Leading Saints and check out all that his organization is up to. I've been fortunate to get to participate in some of the events and things he's put on, and he just always does a phenomenal job and invites the spirit.

So, without further ado, here is my conversation with Kurt Francom.

Jody Moore: Okay, I'm really excited to introduce any of my listeners who aren't familiar with you and your podcast, to introduce them to you. So, let me just briefly share how I found you, and then I'd love for you to add on. Kurt Francom is the host of Leading Saints Podcast, yes?

Kurt Francom: That's it.

Jody Moore: Formerly leading LDS.

Kurt Francom: That's right. The cool kids are changing their name these days and getting rid of the LDS.

Jody Moore: That's right. We have a new style guide.

Kurt Francom: That's right.

Jody Moore: Leading Saints, which is such a brilliant name. I love that.

Kurt Francom: Well, thanks.

Jody Moore: I love your podcast. Why don't you actually tell people your purpose when you first started that and how it goes with your organization.

Kurt Francom: Yeah, so our mission is to help Latter Day Saints be better prepared to lead, and as many Latter Day Saints know, when you get

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called to a leadership position, you're handed a handbook and a good pat on the back, and they wish you luck and away you go.

Jody Moore: Good luck.

Kurt Francom: Right. And so, it all started when we're in the ward where I met my wife. It was a YSA, Young Single Adult ward, and I was called as the Elders Quorum president. This was my first experience with leadership. I'd been a district leader on my mission, but that's just pretend leadership, let's be honest.

And so, here I was in front of all these elders and I really wanted to do a good job. I felt like they asked me to do this, I'm going to step up to the challenge and really do a good job. And so, I did everything I could. I mean, I made all the mistakes of I did the guilt trip lesson with home teaching. I didn't know how to delegate. And again, on the surface it looked fine. It wasn't like I was starting fires or anything.

So, obviously I met my wife, we got married, moved out of that ward. A few years later I was called into a bishopric, and then that bishop got released and I was called as the high priest group leader. Here I was again, thinking, "Oh no. I'm going to try really hard again and just follow my faith. I won't move the needle."

And I couldn't understand why I could go into Barnes & Noble and find leadership books aplenty about life leadership, business leadership, and I just felt like nobody's talking about leadership in the context of serving in the church or being a Latter Day Saint leader, so I thought, "Well, I'm not a leadership expert, but maybe I can create a platform to bring the experts," and so that's when I started leading LDS that's now Leading Saints.

The podcast followed a few years later and now we're rocking it. We get to have fun conversations with all sorts of people, like yourself.

Jody Moore: Yeah, it's so good. You've had so many amazing guests on there and just lots of – I agree. Why are we not talking about this more?

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Not only is leadership a challenge anyway, but then leadership in an organization that's volunteer-based.

Kurt Francom: Right.

Jody Moore: Where you don't have a lot of leverage. The normal leverage we use in leadership to hold people accountable does not exist when you have an organization of volunteers.

Kurt Francom: And we feel like we come after them or say, "Hey, this needs to change," or, "You need to do this better." They'll just stop coming or they'll ask to be released, and so how do you approach that? It's really difficult.

Jody Moore: Right. Yes. And we want to do it with the spirit and the direction of our leaders. Anyway, it's a complicated topic, so I love that you've started that. I know that my bishop of my ward mentioned the other day that he loves your podcast.

Kurt Francom: Oh, nice.

Jody Moore: And I personally tend to get the kind of callings in church that are more like nursery leader, primary teacher, and yet it's all leadership in some form. I find it to be highly useful, no matter what your calling is in the church. I highly recommend it.

Kurt Francom: You know, our tagline is "Be a leader, not a calling" and really it's not a podcast specifically for the official leaders that have been called and set apart. The way I see it, we're all leaders in this church –

Jody Moore: That's right.

Kurt Francom: And we can all step up and find ways to lead, even without a calling.

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Jody Moore: Yeah. Absolutely. Okay, so what I wanted us to really dive into today is an episode that actually you did without a guest that I loved so much. I was listening to it in my bathroom, like, "Yes! This is exactly right!"

Kurt Francom: That's funny, Jody. I'm in my bathroom a lot screaming at you, like, "Yes, Jody! Preach it, girl!"

Jody Moore: Good. That's why we get along so well. We agree with one another.

Kurt Francom: It's true.

Jody Moore: But what I love is you have such a depth of knowledge of the scriptures and all of that that you, I felt like, brought to what I'm trying to say, and you have your own way of saying it. Basically, the topic was, I think your podcast episode was called "Can God be Disappointed in You?"

Kurt Francom: Yeah.

Jody Moore: Yeah?

Kurt Francom: Yeah. And it comes to me, I mean that's a catchy title and everything.

Jody Moore: It is. Good marketing.

Kurt Francom: But it comes down to, the concept of it all is really grace. There's been an upsurge of grace in our Latter Day Saint tradition. More conference talks are focusing on grace, we're being more clear with the Christian community, like, "Hey, we've always believed in grace, folks, and let us show you how."

Brad Wilcox has put some great books and content together all about grace, but sometimes we, it's on paper, it's like, "Yeah, yeah we believe in grace. Uh-huh." But then we go back to real life and we just beat ourselves up and we're like, "Well, grace is sort of, it stings a little bit, or there's not so much grace for me."

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So, I just feel like one of the greatest lies that the adversary puts in our mind, which, talking about as far as thought work and the thoughts that go through our mind is, "Yeah, I know God loves me, but he sure is disappointed in me. Most of the time I think he's just completely disappointed in me because I keep messing up."

And so, I get it, God loves me. And it's easy to stand in front of youth group and say, "Listen, God loves you so much. So much." Those words are easy to say, but we think, "Yeah, he loves us, just like my mom loves me, but she's always disappointed," or, "My boss, yeah he cares about my wellbeing, but he's just always angry."

It's easy to project these mortal experiences of I'm a parent and yeah, I get disappointed in choices my children make, and so God must always be disappointed in me. And to me, the adversary just leverages that thought to the point that creates so much shame. Just like going through the model, the anatomy of a problem that you always talk about.

We develop these thoughts, then impact how we act, and then impact our identity as Latter Day Saints, and we've got to get past it. In my opinion, I truly believe God is never, ever been disappointed in you, in me, in anybody. That's such a liberating thought that we can work with.

Jody Moore: Okay, so let's dive into that because I'm just going to get in the heads of some of my listeners who are like, "What do you mean he's never disappointed in us?"

Kurt Francom: Right.

Jody Moore: "When we break commandments, and knowingly, you don't think he's disappointed in us?"

Kurt Francom: Right. I think this goes back to the anatomy of the problem that you talk about. The circumstance is, and help me through this Jody, because you are the expert here.

Jody Moore: Yeah, let's discuss it. Well, I know I'm not, but –

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Kurt Francom: But I think this framework really is, we're talking about the same thing.

Jody Moore: Yeah.

Kurt Francom: The circumstance I would say is I'm mortal and I make mistakes, and that could probably be proved in a court of law.

Jody Moore: Yes.

Kurt Francom: I've got lots of evidence to show you that I make mistakes. And then the thought becomes, "Well, God must be disappointed in me because he said, 'If you love me, keep my commandments,' and, well, I'm obviously not keeping the commandments. I do love him, but obviously I'm not showing him that love because I keep breaking these commandments, so therefore God must be disappointed in me."

And then the feeling that comes from that, a lot of shame can come, I can feel maybe he doesn't love me, maybe he's just angry at me, he's disappointed that I have to use the atonement of Jesus Christ. And then the action, which a lot of shame stimulates, is more sin.

And we may say, "You know, I give up. Why do I keep trying when I keep messing up, I keep going back to the pornography, I keep yelling at my kids, I keep doing these things? What is the point? I'm just not fit for this Latter Day Saint model for the gospel and why even try?" Or, you just numb out.

I love all the content you've put together about buffers that we have in life, and we just want to numb ourselves from the demands of the gospel because God is always – I'm just so tired of God being disappointed in me and breaking his heart, and so I'm going to numb out. I'm going to go to the food, I'm going to go to the sin, I'm just going to keep going back to it.

And then, the result of that is sadness, discouragement, addiction at times, right? And so, I love with your work, you oftentimes – When you're coaching people, as far as I've heard and understood, it typically revolves around a relationship. A mother in-law, it's always the mother in-law, right?

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Jody Moore: It's common in many relationships, yes.

Kurt Francom: But it's always these relationships, and I think it would do us good to step back with the resources that you've created, and I'm sure you've done this in various contexts, and say, "What about my relationship with God? What thoughts am I creating that's creating this false relationship that we somehow have this god in heaven that yeah, he loves us, but he's just so disappointed in us."

To me, that's just not the gospel, and I have a few things that I can walk you through to show you that. But any thoughts that come to mind after that?

Jody Moore: Yeah. I completely agree with that. I love the idea that the adversary is taking what easily we think is just righteousness even. I think we mistake it with, no, for me to think that he's not disappointed is – People mistake that with justifying sin or eat, drink, and be merry, or what have you, when I don't that's what you're saying at all.

I think it's an understanding of God and his perfect ability to love us, because we can't relate to that. As human beings, even as a mother who desperately loves my children, I can't relate to the way God loves me. I do get disappointed in my children, and so even though I love them, in that moment I'm not experiencing love, I'm experiencing disappointment. And God doesn't operate that way. He is perfect at loving us.

Kurt Francom: Right. And a lot of people say, "Kurt, I love the concept and I get what you're saying, but have you read the scriptures? There's a whole lot of disappointment from God in those scriptures." Everything from – Let me pull up these phrases that we hear a lot, the vengeance of God and things like, "Lord was angry with me." These are phrases from the scriptures, that he is not well-pleased.

"They incurred the displeasure of God upon them, the wrath of the Lord." A lot of times you can see it. Think in our mortal state. Every time you've been angry, how often is disappointment tied to that anger? I think with my

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children, every time I become angry with them, it's because I was first disappointed.

I had an expectation that my daughter or son would do things, and don't even get me started on bedtime, Jody. It is still a disappointment with a 4-year-old and a 7-year-old. It's a three-minute process that takes three hours. Anyways, they do something, I have an expectation, and I'm disappointed and that leads to anger, so we must think, "Well, if God's angry, he must've had a disappointment."

I usually take people through this process of asking them some simple questions of what is the definition of disappointment? And if you do a simple Google search, it says that disappointment means sadness or displeasure caused by the non-fulfillment of one's hopes and expectations.

There's a surprise component to disappointment. You had an expectation and you expected, obviously that expectation, to happen, and then it didn't. Therefore, your disappointment. So, in order to be disappointed, you have to be surprised. So, can God be surprised? What would you say, Jody? Can God be surprised?

Jody Moore: I don't think he's surprised that we're sinning.

Kurt Francom: Right. There's some scholars that would argue the fact that God doesn't know the future, past, present, but I think it's a pretty solid doctrine that God is all-knowing, knows the future, present, and past, right?

Jody Moore: Right.

Kurt Francom: And so, he has an expectation of the mistakes that you're going to make, so I don't think God is ever surprised that you made that mistake, Jody, or that I made the mistake. Then, that's when it takes – Well, the scriptures, though. The scriptures have a lot of disappointment in them.

I love the instance in the scriptures in Doctrine and Covenants, section three, where Joseph Smith, this after Joseph Smith has lost the 116 pages.

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I mean, talk about a moment that disappointment should be in abundance for God. He has this scripture, he had given it to us, and then this Joseph guy runs off and gives it to Martin Harrison. They lose the 116 pages.

A lot of people point to that and say, "Ha-ha. Kurt, here is a section full of disappointment." And it's true, if you read that scripture or that section with a mean dad voice, and believe me, I have a great mean dad voice, it sounds like there's a lot of disappointment. However, if you read it with a kind, grandmother voice, there's just correction, there's just encouragement, and there's no disappointment.

In fact, in the first three verses it says, "The works and the designs and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated. Neither can they come to naught. For God does not walk in crooked paths. Neither doth he turn to the right nor to the left. Neither doth he vary from that which he hath said. Therefore, his paths are straight, and the course is one eternal round. Remember, remember, that is not the work of God that is frustrated, but only the work of men."

When I internalize that scripture, to me it just says, "Listen, you're not frustrating me. You made some mistakes. Let's talk about those mistakes. Let me give you some direction, some encouragement, and get you back on track, but you haven't frustrated my work." So, there's nothing that we can do that's going to frustrate God's work, and therefore, in my opinion, he can't be disappointed in us, and that's a liberating thought.

Jody Moore: Yeah, let's put it in the context, like you said, of the model that I teach. You gave that great example of when we think he is disappointed, and then we feel the shame, which doesn't perpetuate any useful behavior, especially regarding future decisions. So, let's look at the alternative. If we put in the thought line then that God's not disappointed, what is the thought that you would recommend instead?

If I'm not living according to the commandments and the way that I want to live, what is the thought that you recommend instead?

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Kurt Francom: Awesome. So, I have a story that maybe will help articulate this.

Jody Moore: Okay.

Kurt Francom: I was, a few months ago – No, this was earlier in 2019. I was in my office working. I have this stand-up desk by here and then the desk I'm sitting at now, my scriptures were on this desk, and they were wide open. And it was almost like they were mocking me, like, "Hey Kurt, I'm over here. You know that good boys should read their scriptures. You're a seminary grad, you've been a bishop, and you haven't read your scriptures in weeks."

This is the thought that I knew where this encouragement was coming from as far as the tone, it's from the adversary, but in that moment, I thought, "Ah, you know what? You're right. I haven't read my scriptures." And so, some days I would force myself to sit down, read the scriptures, but they were just empty. They were just words on the page, and I was just really discouraged.

It became an identity thing for me, like, "Man, I really thought I was better than this. I'm supposed to love the scriptures and I can't seem to get through a chapter. What's wrong with me?" And I later found out that I truly believed that God removed the joy of the scriptures from me for a season because he had a strong lesson to teach me.

So, a few weeks later I'm at a leadership retreat. It's a Christian retreat. Before the session starts they have some Christian music playing, and so I'm just sitting there with this discouragement, thinking, "Man, why can't I read my scriptures? I know I'm supposed to read my scriptures, but I just can't get into it."

And in that moment it was such a sacred and grace-filled experience. My God said to me, "You could never read your scriptures again and I'd still love you." And then it came again, "You could never read your scriptures again and I'd still love you. And so, put the checklist away because I want

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to connect with you. I don't need you hopping through these hoops so that you can somehow take me out of this state of disappointment and love you. No, I will always love you regardless of what you do."

And I truly believe from that, disappointment and grace can not co-exist. I cannot have a God who is full of grace, that is just pouring grace out, who's also disappointed. It does not work. So, going back to your question, as far as the thought, when I feel that thought crop up, saying, "Man, today's gone rough and I can't believe I just snapped at my kids, and God is so disappointed me."

That's the thought where you can stop and say, "Well, what would be different?" And the different thought is you could yell at your kids all day, every day, and I'd still love you. You could sin like crazy and I'd still love you. And that puts me in a state of receiving grace, thinking, "Okay, I'm okay. I can do this."

And again, going back to your earlier point, this doesn't perpetuate life of sin or that suddenly I spin off, like, "Wait a minute, I can yell at my kids? Great. I'm going to just yell at my kids."

Jody Moore: Great. Yeah.

Kurt Francom: "Or I can binge on all my favorite sins? Great, I'll do that." It puts me in this state where I'm so motivated through his love that I never want to sin again. I never want to do these things again, and I realize I will, but disappointment is not there to push me down and bury me in shame.

Jody Moore: Well, and if the motivator for living correctly is to win approval or love or be worthy in some way of God's love, that is not something that is probably a sustainable motivator for us as humans, because we're not perfect, right? So, what you're saying is that the motivator becomes because he loves and because I am worthy of his love and I am whole and complete. It makes us want to live a better life.

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Kurt Francom: Yeah. There's a great quote by Adam Miller, he'd be a great guest for your podcast. A philosopher, a Latter Day Saint philosopher, he said, "Love is for its own sake. It works only as a gift, never as a reward. It can't be earned or bartered or ensured. It is a grace and it is freely given, not given at all."

And then I always follow that quote up with one from C.S. Lewis who said, "The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because he loves us." And to me, those statements just fill me with grace, and I feel so motivated. I just want to live the gospel after that, thinking, "Okay, he's never disappointed in me. I can take on today. I can take on tomorrow because I know that his gospel is all about repentance and progress."

Jody Moore: Yes. I love that. So, one of the things I've been thinking about lately, I'd love to hear your thoughts on, is we use this word "worthiness", like, "Am I worthy to go to the temple? Am I worthy to serve a mission?" And that there are certain things that we participate in that require us to be at a certain point.

But I almost feel like that word "worthiness" gets misinterpreted and I wish there were a better word, but because we, I feel like, internalize that as that I am unworthy of love. I am unworthy of acceptance if I'm unworthy to go to the temple or to serve a mission when I don't think that's the point at all. What are your thoughts on that?

Kurt Francom: Yeah, to me this goes to a discussion about identity. If we think about how the adversary tempts us, I love the old images, the cartoon images. Donald Duck would have an angel appear over one shoulder and evil angel appear over the other, and it was like they're arguing behaviors.

We sometimes focus so much on behaviors in our religious practice, right? We have a checklist of things that good Latter Day Saints do. They minister, they take a cash roll to the mother who just had a baby, they go to church, they magnify their calling.

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And so, these behaviors can be used and leveraged, especially by the adversary, to identify us. In Doctrine and Covenants 10 it talks about that the adversary has a cunning plan. He's not whispering in my ear, "Hey, you should go rob a bank," and I'm like, "Oh, I never thought about that. Maybe I'll go rob a bank," or saying, "Hey, that guy just cut you off. You should hunt him down and murder him." What? No. Why would I do that?

I just don't think the adversary is coming at us, saying just random behaviors that we should go do, or even behaviors we want to do, because his planning is cunning. And also, in Doctrine and Covenants 10 it talks about that he will convince us to lay our own snare or our own trap.

Imagine this. This is a brilliant plan. Imagine if you're coaching a football team and you say, "All right, folks, here's the game plan. We're going to go out there and we're going to let the other team score all the points." Like, "Well, okay coach, I don't know how we're going to do that," but if you could do that, it'd be great, right?

And so, the adversary convinces us. If he can convince us to lay our own trap, he can take the week off. He can take the month off. He can take a lifetime off knowing that we are so busy setting our traps that we'll step in them time after time and we'll walk into hell without any encouragement, because he's convinced us of our identity as so poisoned and so messed up that he can take the week off.

And so, I always refer to the words "I am". These are the most powerful words in the history of our language, and in any language, "I am". And, in fact, in the Old Testament, there's "I am that I am". This is a name of Jehovah, and that's how powerful it is. And so, if the adversary can convince us to say, "I am," fill in the blank, this is how he convinces us to lay our own snare.

There's two great examples of the adversary tempting an individual that are recorded in the scriptures. One is when he tempts Eve and the other is when he tempts the Savior. And he always approaches it with a term of identity. So, in Moses 4 verse 11, it says, "For God doth not that," and this is when

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he's tempting Eve, "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be open and ye shall be as God's, knowing good and evil."

So, it's an identity statement. He's saying, "If you eat this fruit, your identity can change. You can become something." And then with the Savior it's a little bit different. He says in Matthew 4:3 he says, "And when the tempter came to him, he said, 'If though be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread.'"

So, he either comes at us like, "Look what you could become if you do this thing. Look at how you could identify," or he challenges our identity, says, "You're really the Savior? Then make this stone bread," or, "Are you really a good Latter Day Saint? Then read your scriptures every day. You're really this? Then prove it."

It's all of these, an identity argument, because if he can convince us of our identity, he can set that snare. So, going back to your question as far as of worthiness, this is the eternal struggle that the adversary is setting us up for. Absolutely that we use this term "worthy". I don't know, we could probably use it a little less in our culture.

But, it's easy to see it or have the adversary tempt us to see it differently, like, "Oh, this is an identity statement. You're not worthy. You don't have the recommend. Therefore, I think God's disappointed in you and maybe he doesn't love you as much as you think," or "He does love you, but he sure is disappointed in your most of the time."

I think we really do have to be careful with the word "worthy", but just like Moses did in, this is one of my favorite scriptures, Moses chapter 1:12-13, the adversary's tempting him. He says, "Behold, Satan came tempting him, saying, 'Moses, son of man, worship me,' and it came to pass that Moses looked upon Satan and said, 'who art thou, for behold, I am a son of God'."

And so, as the adversary's coming at us with identity statements, like, "Are you really worthy? Can you classify yourself as worthy?" the best way to respond is with an identity statement. Whether I'm worthy or not, whether I

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have a temple recommend or not, I am a daughter of God, I am a son of God, and that's validation enough for me to continue on this journey towards getting that recommend, towards making covenants. Is that any follow-up on the word "worthy"?

Jody Moore: Yeah, and I love – Maybe if it's possible for you to send me, I loved so much when you played that clip of, was it your daughter or your son, taking their first steps.

Kurt Francom: Oh, yeah. Yes, Devery. She's seven years old now, but this was back when she was one year old, and I was home alone with her and she took her first step. And I love – This was one of these moments that I look back and it's such a tender mercy for me that God gave me this experience. Obviously, it's fun to see your daughter or son walk for the first time, but now he's interpreted to me that this is how I am talking to you every day.

And I would say things to her, like, "Oh, you fell down. Get back up. Here we go again. Let me help you. All right. Take another step. Oh, you fell again. You're going to fall another bazillion times, but it'll be worth it." It touches my heart and I weep every time I see that.

Jody Moore: Me too. It's so sweet because it's so genuine. Maybe we can put a clip of it in here, but –

Kurt Francom: Yeah, I'd be happy to.

Jody Moore: I love the idea that that is how God sees us. To your point, you're not disappointed when your child falls down. You know that's a part of the process of learning to walk and that when we fall down, or we are unworthy to go to the temple, or what have you, that God is cheering us on. "It's okay. Let's get back up. Yeah, it's going to happen again." I just thought it was such a great analogy.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. Can I share a quote that goes along with that?

Jody Moore: Yes, please.

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Kurt Francom: Elder Renlund said this in a conference talk. He said, "This shepherd, our good shepherd, finds joy in seeing his diseased sheep progress towards healing." And I always love to point out the fact that an apostle just called us all diseased sheep. That's a first for me. We are so broken without Christ, and we need to recognize that we're diseased sheep, but we're progressing towards healing.

That's why people can – Again, you can think about this concept of, "Okay, God's not disappointed in me. Why am I trying anymore?" Again, because of that motivation that comes from love, and going back to the scripture of, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." This is John 14:16. It's easy to think, "Okay, the only way I can show love to God is if I keep his commandments or if I do his commandments and I don't break any of the commandments."

But, in reality, that's what repentance is for. The quote by Elder Robin said, "Repentance isn't his backup plan in the event that we might fail. Repentance is his plan, knowing that we will." Maybe you think, "I think God's disappointed." Okay, let's say we do have a disappointed God. Is he disappointed when you have to use the atonement? Did he get to a point in the eternities where he had to call Christ into his office, he's like, 'Okay, you won't believe this'."

Jody Moore: Oh man. What are we going to do now?

Kurt Francom: You're going to have to go down there and fix this. Can you believe it? They actually have to use your sacrifice, right? Nothing is more disappointing when we don't use a sacrifice. When we think, "Ah, I'm using the atonement too much. I've got to stop doing that, so I have to act better."

No, this is the process. We are diseased sheep that are so broken without Christ. He's our fuel, he's our gasoline, as if we're cars. We cannot operate, we cannot progress without his atonement. And that's his gospel. Like he says in Doctrine and Covenants 10, "Behold, this is my doctrine. Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me," the same as my church.

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This is what we do here, folks, is we repent. And so, I have no problem with when I mess up. I mess up and I think, "Okay, I'm so glad God's not disappointed in me and I can give this another go, and I can go to church and take that sacrament and go one more time. I'm going to figure it out this week," and, "Turns out I didn't figure it out this week. I'm going to go one more time."

Jody Moore: Can you help us connect the dots? So, a lot of people listening to this are parents, so when we have children who are making decisions we wish they weren't making, how do we use this knowledge to guide them? I love what you talk about, about not overly focusing on the behavior or focusing on helping focus on the identity.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. It is easy – At the end of the day, I have a four year old son. I can close my eyes, Jody, and I can be at the MTC in 15 or so years. It's going to happen. He's going to love it. He's going to go, he'll probably go to Sacramento because that's where I went, and he's just going to love it. He'll learn Spanish. We'll speak Spanish together after his mission. It'll be so awesome. But, I can be there.

I just have this hope and expectation that it would be so cool when I can drop my son off at the MTC, unless it doesn't happen. And that's heartbreaking because we just want our kids to just – We get they're going to mess up, but they've got to get on a mission. Come on, you've got to get on a mission, or you've got to marry in the temple because –

Speaking of the worthiness term, another unintentionally negative phrase we learn, or we use in our culture is "No empty chair. Make sure there's no empty chair in heaven." Because we're basically saying, "And if there is an empty chair, well, we don't really love you that much," or, "We sure are disappointed in you." Right?

Jody Moore: Right.

Kurt Francom: When it's like, "Christ filled all the chairs, folks. The chairs and their salvation is one."

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Jody Moore: Yeah, they're full. Don't worry.

Kurt Francom: But it's so difficult. I get it. I'm that parent who I just have expectations for my kids, and they don't. And I haven't even entered the teenage years, Jody, and you can speak more to that. Who knows what's going to come, right?

Jody Moore: Toddler years are pretty rough. I don't know.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. I have a friend who has a son who's just going through so much. He's 17. I mean, if we could just skip the 17-year-old age we'd all be better, but just so much, he's just buried in shame and he acts on that shame because of how he's interpreting his identity. It's so hard to look at him and think, "Yeah. What if he doesn't go on a mission? What if he doesn't do these things? What if the expectations I have don't come true? And what if we lose him?"

So, first of all, it's not our job to save. We believe in the Savior so much, he's at the core, but somehow we miss the point that it's not our job to save. It's our job –

Jody Moore: Even with our kids.

Kurt Francom: Right. Even our kids. It's our job not to fight for their behaviors, it's our job to fight for their heart. And I often look at this sweet young man who I just, I'd love for him to go on a mission, but I think if he maybe doesn't go on a mission, maybe he moves out with a girlfriend, they get pregnant, maybe falls into drugs. But then, at age 35 or 40, maybe then he comes back to the church, gets married in the temple, and has a great joy of experiencing the gospel.

I'm okay with that. I'm okay with that, and so while he's going through this process, I'm not going to try and manipulate his decisions or influence him. I'm just going to love him and be with him and battle for his heart. There's a great, you can maybe link to it, Clint Pulver, who I interviewed recently, he's got this great video on YouTube called Mr. Jensen.

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It talks about a schoolteacher he had called Mr. Jensen. And Clint was, he was very fidgety as a 10-year-old, and it was grade school, he's always fidgeting to the point that it was very disrupting in the class. He'd get called down to the principal's office, they told him to sit on his hands, all these things. You've got to watch the clip because it's so much powerful, but this teacher came to him, called him and said he needs to wait after class.

He waited after class, thought he was in deep trouble. They'd finally had it. Maybe they're just going to kick him out of the school. This teacher brings him over to the desk and pulls out some drumsticks and says, "Here, these are for you." And the words that Clint uses, he says, "Mr. Jensen said to me, 'Clint, you're not a problem, you're a drummer.'"

Man. When I sit with my kids and I think, "Man, okay, Tyson," you have got to get this straight. "We were in sacrament meaning and if I've got to take you out of this one more time, you got to get it together." I just think, I go back to the identity, like, what is my son? Maybe you're not a missionary, but you're my son. Maybe you're not a missionary, but you're going to tour with this band that you think is going to go up the charts or something.

It's like, "That's cool. Is that where you're at? When's your next concert? I'm going to be there." And this sweet young man who is going through so much, I talked to him. He works at an arcade, a virtual reality arcade, and when I talked to him about his virtual reality arcade, he comes alive.

And so, instead of thinking, "Eh, listen buddy, are you reading the scriptures? Where do you think you'll go on your mission? Hint, hint, hint." I just say, "Hey, tell me about the arcade you're at. What's the new game? Do you ever think you'll run a VR arcade of your own someday? That would be great business. You'd be great at it." I'm sitting with him where he's at and where his heart is.

Jody Moore: Yes. That's right.

Kurt Francom: And I connect that way. So, as far as parents, battle for their heart, not for their behaviors. I get it. It's not like you'd let the kid roam free

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and do whatever they want. Just like the model the Lord gives, there was still, in Doctrine and Covenants 3, there was a lot of encouragement, of direction, of guidance that he gave in the section 3 there, and that is necessary as a parent.

I always, I try every day to end, as I put my kids to bed, especially my 7-year-old, I just tell her – I don't just say I love her anymore. I say, "Devery, I love you, but I hope you realize that I'm not disappointed in you. I'm so proud of you." So many kids are internalizing that, which is going to identity when they say, "Yeah, I know my dad loves me, but he just hates me for some reason or he's disappointed."

I always try to remind her, "I have been disappointed, but I'm not anymore. I'm just okay where you're at and let's figure this out together." Sorry if I'm going on too long here, Jody.

Jody Moore: No, you're good. I love it.

Kurt Francom: My mind is going from one to the other. I got this email after I gave that podcast episode, I got an email from a mother of two young boys. I think they were maybe like 7 and 10 or something. They snuck into the candy stash and they took candy, and they run up to the rooms and they ate it all. And then, their mother confronted them about it, and they lied. They said, "No, we didn't do it. We didn't do it."

And so, we've all been in these types of situations. It is so tempting to go after the behavior and say, "We don't lie in this household. You shouldn't lie. That's not keeping the commandments," or you can go there and say, "Every time you lie, we're going to have this consequence and that consequence," but instead she's like, "You know, I'm going to go after their heart."

They just had a conversation about it and said – It all came out, obviously, that they'd lied, and they talked about it, like, "What do you think about that and why do you think we have restrictions on candy? Should we just have candy all the time for every meal? What would come if we did that?"

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And she said it was just this, she just had this epiphany, realizing that in a few years they're going to come across pornography. It's going to happen. "If I don't go after their heart right now, why would they ever come to me when they do see that pornography or if they do have harsher circumstances. I have to start building that heart connection now or else they'll never come to me in those moments."

Jody Moore: That's right. Well, and I did want to add too with your example of if we know that kid is going to struggle, and then at maybe age 35 or 40 or whatever he's going to come back around. One of the things, I had Thomas McConkie on a little while ago –

Kurt Francom: Yeah, he's great.

Jody Moore: And one of the things that people have said over and over again, really resonate, was when he talked about you don't know what that child's journey is going to be like. For him, it was 20 years of leaving the church, but he said, "What if it's going to be 2,000 years?"

Kurt Francom: Yeah.

Jody Moore: You know? We were talking about eternity here and the journey that each of us is on in order to refine us and to become who we're able to become, we think it should like a certain path, and yet it doesn't for anyone. I just love the idea that I don't know what my kid's life is supposed to be like. And to your point, I know what kind of mother I want to be. I know what things I want to teach them, and that I need to be an example of everything I'm telling them.

And I'll do it all terribly, but I'll just keep trying to get better, and then that's it. The rest is up to God. I just don't believe that we are capable of interfering with what their journey is supposed to be.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. "The scoreboard is set." Elder Holland said that. "The scoreboard is set. Christ won. They are saved. Salvation is there for the taking." And they may not take it today, tomorrow, but this is part of their

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journey. This is part of the sanctification of the atonement. They've got to go through this journey so that they can appreciate that grace when they're finally ready to take it. Christ's job is to save, ours is to love.

Jody Moore: Yeah. Amazing. Well, thank you for everything. If people want to learn more from you, there's the podcast. Anything else that you want to direct them to at this point?

Kurt Francom: Just come visit us at LeadingSaints.org and obviously you can subscribe to the podcast at the same place you're listening to this one. We try and jump into difficult conversations that leaders may face or have, and we do talk about just general cultural issues and topics, because that's a big part of being a Latter Day Saint and being mortal. Yeah, just join us and listen if you want, and if you do anything, just mention to your bishop maybe.

Jody Moore: That's right. Tell your bishop.

Kurt Francom: That's right.

Jody Moore: I love it. Well, thank you so much, Kurt.

Kurt Francom: Thank you, Jody.

Jody Moore: Say hi to your lovely wife for me.

Kurt Francom: Yes.

Jody Moore: Good luck to you guys.

Kurt Francom: Thanks.

Jody Moore: If you have a question about something you've heard me talk about on this podcast or anything else going on in your life, I want to invite you to a free public call, Ask Jody Anything. I will teach you the main

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coaching tool I use with all of my clients and the way to solve any problem in your life, and we will plug in real life examples.

Come to the call and ask me a question anonymously or just listen in. Go to JodyMoore.com/AskJody and register before you miss it. I'll see you there.