

Come Follow Me Podcast  
Elo Viz production  
Week 34  
Alma 53-63

In these last few chapters of Alma, which continue the war chapters. A group of young men are introduced, the 2,000 Stripling warriors, as they call them. We are all familiar with the story I'm sure. how they were young, and how God protected them, how not a single one of them was killed in battle. But I believe the backstory on these young men is important: Who are they and how did they become stripling? If you remember when we talked about Ammon's involvement in a conversion of Lamoni and his people, and then because of their conversion they became endangered from their lamanite Brethren, so they fled to live with the Nephites and were protected by them. These were the same people that buried their weapons of war and covenant not to take them up again and to never shed the blood of another man; these two thousand young men are their sons. This account was recorded in 64 B.C. the sons of Mosiah left on their mission in approximately 90 BC so it's been about 25 years since the Lamanites were converted. So, these young Stripling warriors were either very small children at the time that Ammon and Alma came into their lands or not even born yet. Suggesting that these young men grew up in the gospel. Perhaps just like you and your children. So, how did they turn out so faithful and so good? In chapter 56 it gives us some insight, starting in verse 46 it says:

**“46** For as I had ever called them my sons (for they were all of them very young) even so they said unto me: Father, behold our God is with us, and he will **not** suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth; we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone; therefore let us go, lest they should overpower the army of Antipus.

**47** Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the **liberty** of their **fathers** than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their **mothers**, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.

**48** And they rehearsed unto me the words of their **mothers**, saying: We **do** not doubt our mothers knew it.”

I find it interesting how they speak about their mothers. And why they speak about their mothers. At first my question was: What about the fathers? Where were they? And how come their sons weren't brave because of their fathers? I believe their fathers played an important role in their lives. However, when it came to this point these youngmen relied on the faith of their mothers. They trusted them. These verses reminded me of a talk given by Bradley D. Foster back in October Conference of 2010. He tells two stories that illustrate how important the role of the mother is in our lives. His first story he says:

“My good friend Don Pearson shared an experience that highlights this influence. One night his four-year-old son asked him to read a bedtime story. Eric had picked out his favorite book: *The Ballooning Adventures of Paddy Pork*, a story about a family who

lived on the isles of the sea and traveled from island to island by hot-air balloon. It was a picture book that had no words, so Brother Pearson made up words to the story. “Paddy is in a hot-air balloon. He is landing on an island now. He is dropping a line over the side of the balloon.”

Eric stopped him. “Dad, that is not a line. It’s a *rope*.”

Brother Pearson looked at Eric and back at the picture book, and then he continued: “Paddy is getting out of the balloon and climbing down the tree. Oh no! His coat is caught on a limb!”

Again Eric stopped him. “Dad, that’s not a coat. It’s a *jacket*.”

By now Brother Pearson was somewhat perplexed. He said, “Eric, there are no words in this book, just pictures. Why do you insist that it’s a jacket?”

Eric answered, “Because Mother told me.”

His father closed the book and said, “Eric, who do you think is the last word, the ultimate authority in this house?”

This time Eric thought carefully before he answered, “You are, Dad.”

Brother Pearson beamed at his son. What an exceptional answer! “How did you know that?”

Eric quickly responded, “Mother told me.”

As President James E. Faust said: “There is no greater good in all the world than motherhood. The influence of a mother in the lives of her children is beyond calculation” (“Fathers, Mothers, Marriage,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Aug. 2004, 3).

By divine design, nurturing seems to be part of the spiritual heritage given to women. I’ve seen it in my daughters, and now I see it in my granddaughters—even before they could walk, they wanted to carry and care for their little baby dolls.

In my profession as a farmer and a rancher, I’ve had a front-row seat to observe how a mother’s natural affection manifests itself even in nature. Each spring we take a herd of cows and their new calves up along Idaho’s Snake River, where they graze in the foothills for a month or so. Then we round them up and bring them down a road that leads to the corral. From there they are loaded onto trucks that carry them to their summer pastures in Montana.

On one particularly hot spring day, I was helping with the roundup by riding at the back of the herd as it moved down the dusty road toward the corral. My job was to gather any calves that had wandered from the road. The pace was slow and provided me some time to think.

Because it was so hot, the little calves kept running off into the trees to find shade. My thoughts turned to the youth of the Church who are sometimes distracted from the straight and narrow path. I also thought about those who have left the Church or who may feel that the Church has left their hearts while they were distracted. I thought to myself that a distraction doesn’t have to be evil to be effective—sometimes it can just be shade.

After several hours of gathering up stray calves and with sweat running down my face, I yelled to the calves in frustration, “Just follow your mothers! They know where

they're going! They've been down this road before!" Their mothers knew that even though the road was hot and dusty now, the end would be better than the beginning.

As soon as we got the herd into the corral, we noticed that three of the cows were pacing nervously at the gate. They could not find their calves and seemed to sense they were back on the road somewhere. One of the cowboys asked me what we should do. I said, "I bet I know where those calves are. Back a quarter of a mile [0.4 km] or so, there's a stand of trees. I'm sure we'll find them there."

Sure enough, just as I had suspected, we found our lost calves taking a nap in the shade. Our approach startled them, and they resisted our efforts to round them up. They were frightened because we were *not* their mothers! The more we tried to push them toward the corral, the more stubborn they became. Finally I said to the cowboys, "I'm sorry. I know better than this. Let's ride back and let their mothers out of the corral. The cows will come and get their calves, and the calves will follow their mothers." I was right. The mother cows knew exactly where to go to find their calves, and they led them back to the corral, as I had expected.

Perhaps the reason we respond so universally to our mothers' love is because it typifies the love of our Savior. As President Joseph F. Smith said, "The love of a true mother comes nearer [to] being like the love of God than any other kind of love" ("The Love of Mother," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1910, 278).

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2010/04/mother-told-me?lang=eng>

I believe this statement is truth. I believe I have become who I am today because of the influence of my mother. And I'm grateful to my wife for being that kind of mother, like the mother of the Stripling Warriors that raise their children in the gospel. I believe their influence is so important because you typically spend more time with the children, they look to you as an example they trust you you become their guardian and their director their compass of light in the

Darkness. I give tribute here to all those faithful mothers, members of the church or not, but faithful women around the world, who show love and empathy to their children. Who are not distracted by worldly influences but give their attention selflessly, teaching their children how important it is for us to follow the Savior, and to live His example, to repent of our sins, and to strive to be the men and women who were born to be. I praise those mothers. I am grateful for those mothers, and I pray that you will continue to be that example, that Beacon of Hope that your children so desperately need in this world of confusion. This is my humble prayer.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.