

Episode 20

Why I Believe

JOHNNY AND JANET PAGE

NARRATOR: The views and opinions expressed here are those of the guests and are not the official position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

MALE VOICE: We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

MALE VOICE: We believe the Bible to be the Word of God...

FEMALE VOICE: We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men...

MALE VOICE: We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved...

MALE VOICE: We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

FEMALE VOICE: We may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things...

(Music)

RICK STARR: Welcome to Why I Believe on the Mormon Channel. I'm Rick Starr. Today we will be joined in the studio by Johnny and Janet Page from Madisonville, Kentucky. Janet grew up Mormon and married Johnny in 1995 who was Pentecostal at the time. Johnny joined the Church six years later after his heart was softened following the death of his sister-in-law and his mother. Brother and Sister Page, thank you so much for joining us today. Johnny, I would like to start off with you, being that you were raised Pentecostal. Tell us a little bit about your religious beliefs growing up as a Pentecostal and how they might differ from Mormon beliefs.

JOHNNY PAGE: Well, growing up, we baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. We had the belief that everything was Jesus, that the Father and Jesus and the Holy Ghost were all one and that's some of the biggest difference from what—

RICK STARR: As opposed to three separate—

JOHNNY PAGE: Right.

RICK STARR: Personages—

JOHNNY PAGE: Like, now our belief is, you know, that they are separate, that we have a Heavenly Father in heaven and we do have our Savior Jesus Christ and we do have the Spirit, Holy Ghost to lead and guide us. So that's the biggest difference that—

RICK STARR: In the Godhead.

JOHNNY PAGE: In the Godhead. Yes. That was the biggest difference.

RICK STARR: Any other main differences that you've noticed over the years since you've been a member of the Church?

JOHNNY PAGE: Well, now with the priesthood, it is a big difference. I feel that we have the authority with the priesthood that wasn't recognized in the church I grew up in. There was a pastor and he was the sole part of the church but now also even though there are several different Pentecostal churches, they teach different things where that now is wherever you are is taught the same gospel. It's not what man thinks, it's what the Spirit, that we're led by the prophet. And that's a big difference for me. I can see the difference no matter where I go in the United States or in the world. It's gonna be taught the same way. It's not what man thinks, it's what the Spirit is told given by our, the prophet to us to use.

RICK STARR: We should know that you actually became a Pentecostal minister.

JOHNNY PAGE: That is correct. I was a Pentecostal minister. I grew up and started a little church, went to a city that didn't have a church and opened up the doors to start my building and started a church, and I was there about three years.

RICK STARR: I see. That's kind of like opening up your own private practice, is that what it's like?

JOHNNY PAGE: That's kind of the same way. I still—you know, there were guidelines that I guess I tried to follow from the church I grew up in but it's still a different way when no one told me that I had to teach this or that but I just went by what I was brought up believing—

RICK STARR: I see.

JOHNNY PAGE: And did it that way. So it was never really an organizational part in it.

RICK STARR: And Sister Page, you also grew up in Kentucky.

JANET PAGE: Yes.

RICK STARR: As a Mormon.

JANET PAGE: Yes.

RICK STARR: Talk a little bit about your upbringing.

JANET PAGE: My mother wasn't actually active but she was a member of the Church. My father was not a member of the Church.

RICK STARR: I see.

JANET PAGE:

But my sister was seven years older than me and she always attended, and I grew up going to church all the time. Back when I went, it was called MIA and we, you know, it was just a very important part of my life, and I was active in the Church until I was about 18. And then right at the time I was graduating from high school, I became inactive and started running around basically with the wrong people and met someone that became my husband. And he was not a member of the Church. He didn't attend anywhere. So I was actually inactive for about four years and had planned, always had planned to go back because I never—I have never not had a testimony of the Church. I grew up going and knowing that it was true. I've known that Joseph Smith saw God the Father and the Son. I've known it my whole life. I've never doubted it or had any reason to ever not know that it was true. It was just in my heart. But I just chose to do a few things that I didn't need to be doing, mostly not living the Word of Wisdom and the fact that I started smoking 'cause I thought that would be cool and drinking because that's what my boyfriend/husband liked to do. And one time my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, asked me, was I ever coming back to church? And I said, "Well, yeah," and he said, "Well, when?" And I said, "Well, definitely when I get pregnant. You know, I wanna raise my children in the Church," and he said, "So then you're gonna quit smoking?" "Oh, yeah, I would never smoke while I was pregnant." And I said, "So you know, when I have kids, I'll be back in Church," and he said, "So in other words, if you never have a baby, you'll never be back in church." And it just hit me overwhelmingly and I said, "No, that's not true." And from that minute on, I made an appointment with our bishop, the head of our local organization. I made an appointment to meet with him and I went and talked to him and told him that I was coming back to church and I wanted to be active again and that—and I have never—you know, from that moment on, it just hit me and I realized that I wasn't living what I believed. And I wasn't happy not living it but my first husband—we were married for 12 years, and he never joined the church. He never actively pursued it or was interested in it at all.

RICK STARR:

So you became active again in the Church and you were active pretty much on your own for about eight years, it sounds like.

JANET PAGE:

Yes, yes. Well, we were divorced for ten years and I had four children by that point, I had adopted three and then gave birth to one and at the time, my youngest child, the one that I gave birth to, when she was about three months old, my husband and I separated and so I raised the children on my own and then when we divorced—we actually separated and were divorced, I mean separated about two years before we actually divorced because I had never planned that. I had always assumed that because what I knew was true, that I would naturally—anybody else would know that it was true, and I just knew that my husband was going to, you know, at some point accept the gospel and change a lot of things about his life that were not good, and that didn't happen. So I stayed very active in the Church the time that I was divorced and raised my children, and then after being divorced about eight years, my youngest was about eight years old, and I realized that I really didn't wanna be by myself the rest of my life, but I didn't wanna be married to a nonmember because it was easier for me to live the gospel without someone trying to pull me away than it was to just live it on my own and raise my children that way. I had a really strong friend, a really strong friend group at church and then I decided I wanted to

find someone and I found a Pentecostal man and it was like, “Father in heaven, what is this?” [LAUGHTER] You know.

RICK STARR: Well, we’ll get to the how you met in just a minute. I’m really interested to find out, Johnny, if before you met Janet, did you know anything about Mormons and what did you know, what was your impression, your perception of Mormons?

JOHNNY PAGE: I did not know anything about the Mormon Church, the LDS Church. The only time I ever—apparently I was never home if they knocked on our door, the missionaries, and the only time I’d even see them, they would come to church sometimes, I guess, just to see what the church I grew up in believed; as a young man, not the church that I pastored but when I was a young man. So I really didn’t know what they believed in. I know that I believed—you know, I didn’t believe in drinking, in smoking, in cursing and all these different things and running around, you know, and the moral issues that I had was very high because that’s the way I was brought up. But I didn’t realize what they believed in until I met Janet.

RICK STARR: And you—we should mention that you also were previously married—

JOHNNY PAGE: Yes.

RICK STARR: And divorced about five years when you and Janet met. Is that correct?

JOHNNY PAGE: Four and a half, maybe five years.

RICK STARR: Okay. And you had a couple of children living with their mother.

JOHNNY PAGE: Right.

RICK STARR: So now the big question is, how did the two of you meet? And what were your first impressions of each other, of your separate, you know, your different religions?

JOHNNY PAGE: Well, the first time that I talked with Jan—we spoke on the phone for three hours. Two nights later, our first date, but when I was talking to her for the three hours, it felt so natural speaking to her. Everything just clicked, it was just like, this is a great woman, you know, just kept talking with her. She told me about her family and I don’t know the Church even was brought up the first three hours, and it may have but I was so totally overwhelmed just talking with her, I didn’t catch that.

RICK STARR: Something must have clicked well then.

JOHNNY PAGE: Yes, very well. And then on Friday, two days later, we had our first date and it went real well.

RICK STARR: Now how, just stepping back a little bit, how did you get Janet’s phone number?

JOHNNY PAGE: I’ll let Janet tell that part. [CHUCKLING]

JANET PAGE: Well—

RICK STARR: Okay.

JANET PAGE: I had a friend who suggested that I do the classified ad where you know, the singles, and I said, “Oh, I don’t wanna do that.” And she said, “If you can’t find any—if you don’t go to bars and there’s no one in your church and there’s no one where you work, how are you gonna meet anyone?” And so I thought about it and I thought, well, that made sense because that’s pretty much where I was, either in church or with my family or at work. And so it kind of made sense, and she explained how it worked where you just call and you record a message and you put a, there’s a voice mail box there and then the person can dial in and listen. And they don’t have your home phone number or any way to contact you. They don’t know your whole name or anything so it sounded very safe to me. So I put the ad in and I, you know, they told me—when I called this company, they said that, you know, “You need to make yourself sound enticing. And you know, you wanna, you know, you wanna—“not exactly seductive but that’s the impression that I got. And they said, “You need to practice it several times and make sure you say it exactly right” so I said, “Okay.” So I hung up from talking to them and I dialed the phone and I said, “Hi, my name is Jan. I’m 41 years old, I don’t drink or smoke, I like movies. I like to talk. I love music. If that sounds interesting, call me.” I mean, that’s how much trouble I put into it. And Johnny happened—his washer or dryer had messed up and he was at a Laundromat and he had picked up the newspaper and he was just reading through and he read that one and he thought, “Oh,” so he wrote down two or three names, I think—

JOHNNY PAGE: One..yes it was.

JANET PAGE: And so he called and he had called like on a Monday and he kept checking to see if he had a message and I had never called so finally on Thurs—on Wednesday, I dialed in, because if you called very much, you had to pay for it but if you just called every so often, it didn’t cost anything. Well, I was a single mom so money was very tight, and when I dialed the number and I heard him say, “Jan, this is Johnny,” I had a feeling from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet that this is the person that Father in heaven had sent for me. I had absolutely no doubt and I still don’t. And so when I heard his message, I wrote down his number and I called him. So he answered the phone and he had call waiting and he said, “Hello,” and I said, “Is this Johnny?” And he said, “Yes,” and I said, “This is Jan.” And he said, “Oh, oh,” he said, “I’m on the phone.” He was on business; he said, “I’m on the phone, could you call me back in ten minutes?” And I said, “Well,” because it was long-distance where he was living and I said, “Well, why don’t you call me back?” and he said, “Well, I didn’t know if you’d want me to have your phone number.” And I’m thinking, “Well, we’re gonna get married. I don’t care if you have my phone number.” [LAUGHTER] So I gave him my phone number.

RICK STARR: That’s thinking ahead. [LAUGHTER}

JANET PAGE: Yeah, and he called back and we talked for three hours and he asked me, “Could we go out?” and where did we wanna meet, and I said, “Well, you can just pick me up at my house,” and he said, “Well, I didn’t know if you’d want me to know where you live.” And again, I’m like, “We’re gonna get married so we’ll be fine.” And when he came to the door, he walked to the door and knocked and I went to the door and said, Ralph? And he said, what did you call me, Ethel or something like that?

JOHNNY PAGE: or something like that. [LAUGHTER]

JANET PAGE: And then we both laughed and we have been laughing ever since.

RICK STARR: That's great. [CHUCKLING] You are listening to Why I Believe on the Mormon Channel. I'm Rick Starr and today we're talking with Janet and Johnny Page from Kentucky and how they met as members of different faiths. And I'm really interested to hear you met and two days later your first date. What was your reaction to each other when you realized you have different faiths and Johnny, you didn't know much about Mormons so what was, you probably had a lot of questions.

JOHNNY PAGE: Well, I did have some, a lot of questions and as a matter of fact, she told me about the Church and that was on that Friday night. We talked again on Sunday night and then two days later on a Tuesday. I walked into her home for dinner and one of my first things I told her, I said, "If we get married, are you gonna try to make me join your church?" And she said, "No." Now, I understand at that point, I understand what she was saying now because no one can make you do anything. The Spirit has to lead you and that was the whole key to it. The Spirit was leading me. I just wasn't aware of the way He was directing me to go at that point, but it was not—my questions were different, you know, because the way I was brought up, and I attended several meetings with her and—

JANET PAGE: He was bored to death.

JOHNNY PAGE: Because what I grew up in, there was a lot of worship; a lot of, you know, praise and clapping of hands and shouting and things. And I walked in here, it was a different reverence than what I was accustomed to. Now there again, it was nothing that I felt was wrong, it was just different than what I was accustomed to.

RICK STARR: You said, "No, I'm not going to make you join my Church."

JANET PAGE: Well, and I knew I couldn't. I knew that one person could never force another person to do such a thing and I just felt so strongly that the Spirit would lead Him along. I just, I never doubted that it was the right thing to do. We met, our first date was the 21st of April and we got married June 30th, exactly ten weeks later. So it wasn't a long dating, I mean we met on Friday and on Tuesday he mentioned marriage, so when we had known each other one month is when he asked me to marry him. Because we both knew, he had been praying and I had been praying and I knew that he was the right person but I have to say that there was a couple of years there that I really wondered why Father in Heaven had put us together because if he was never gonna join the Church—I had already been in a marriage; it wasn't a happy marriage like it has been with Johnny, but I had already been in a marriage where I couldn't share the gospel with my husband and I couldn't understand why Father in Heaven had told me that this was the man that I needed to be with. Because I thought it would all happen a lot faster. I'm—okay, I'm actually impatient, I guess, I'll admit it.

JOHNNY PAGE: That's what I would say.

JANET PAGE: Yes, and I just felt like that once he heard it and once he went to church and once I explained everything to him and the missionaries taught him that it would just be, you

know, just a matter of a short time, and I think that Father in Heaven was trying to help me learn to be faithful and be patient and to continue loving him regardless of what his decision was and I did learn that. And we had a couple of home teachers that Johnny was not impressed with; they were very forceful and then we had one wonderful one. And Johnny will probably tell you about him.

RICK STARR: Well, before, I do wanna get to that but I have an interesting question for you because quite often, we would advise members of the Mormon faith look for members with, certainly members of your faith with high standards, and I think there's an interesting thing that's happening here with you, Janet, because you were very prayerful in looking for a husband. And obviously you were directed, the two of you were directed to be together. Talk a little bit about how the Spirit was involved in that decision; I guess that's what I'm saying.

JOHNNY PAGE: That's kind of the same way that I grew up. We, you know, you'd always marry someone in the church that you attended and obviously it didn't work out for me with the first time around, but it was something about when I met Jan—her sincerity, she had the same high standards of moral standards I had and it just felt like the spirit within me was saying, "This is right. This is what you need to do." And my family, the only drawback they had was the fact that she was LDS; that she was a member of the Mormon Church. And that was the only drawback. And they loved her. They had the same respect for her standards that I had but there again, we were opposite ends, you know, completely different the way we believed in. And it was just, but I felt so led by the Spirit that I still felt like that this was the lady that I needed to marry. She felt like my soul mate and I know people say that all the time. She really felt like this is the person that I need to be with throughout my life. And now I realize, you know, know that we're for time and all eternity; that we're sealed together. And I'm proud of that. I'm glad for that fact that we have that opportunity. And I'll let her tell you her perspective on her end of the spectrum there.

JANET PAGE: I often tell people that I chose my first husband and I let Father in heaven choose my second and he has much better taste than I do. [CHUCKLING] The first time I didn't pray about who to marry. I met this person and I had fun with him and I never even—at that point of my life I was not praying regularly, and I didn't even ask, I didn't even think about asking, "Is this the person I need to marry?" because I knew if I had asked, the answer would have been "No." And so I chose not to ask, and I decided that I would never again make a decision so important without asking Father in heaven to help me with the decision and it has made a world of difference in my life. Johnny is—he was before he joined the Church and he is—the best man I've ever known. And I like him more than I do anybody else. And I'm just so grateful that Father in Heaven provided, you know—every day, every day as we pray together, we thank Father in Heaven that we are together and that we have the opportunity to not only live on this earth but to know that we're gonna be together eternally, and what a blessing. We're just grateful.

RICK STARR: That is wonderful. And you make a great point about involving Heavenly Father in our decisions. I agree. I know that there are times in my life when I've decided not to ask Heavenly Father because I already knew the answer. [LAUGHTER] I think that happens quite often.

JANET PAGE: It does.

RICK STARR: Well, Johnny, you talked about your family and how they were, they loved Janet but they were concerned about her converting you to her religion.

JOHNNY PAGE: Correct.

RICK STARR: You were married for about four years before your mother passed away but she had a very deep desire that you stay Pentecostal, is that correct?

JOHNNY PAGE: Yes, she did. My mother loved Janet, as I said, and her only concern was the fact that Jan was not a member of the church that I grew up in. When she started going downhill—she was a brittle diabetic and so she passed away January 9, 1999 and very devastating— [WHISPERING] I'm sorry—time for me because through the divorce, she was my best friend. I could tell her anything and speak to her and talk to her about whatever was on my mind, and I really desired her to like Jan. I wanted to make sure she liked her. And I told Jan to meet them, my family and everything, and they all loved her—you can't help but love her spirit—and so when she passed away, it was very devastating for me, and a home teacher that we had at that time, I actually called him my home teacher even though I was not a member of the Church. They're allowed to be called that way because he's a great guy and he told her that "You know, as long as Johnny's mother is alive, he probably won't join the Church out of respect for her or out of—" and he did never tell me that but I guess deep down in my heart and my mind, I would allow myself to even comprehend what the Church was about after that point. Then after my mom had passed away about a year later, Jan came to me wanting to do the work for her. And so I really was kind of, I don't know, those of you who are married out there understand this, when you walk in the house, your wife says, "I got something to ask you," and you go, "Oh no, what have I done now?" but she just asked me the question about "I've been praying about having the work performed for your mom and your brother and your dad and my twin" and I say, "Well, let me pray about that." And I literally went into the bedroom and prayed, and the more I prayed about it, the more I thought, "Well, I don't see anything does it hurt if they do this." And so that alone was a miracle to me. I went back to her and I said, "Okay, but here is how I want to do this," and I named off who I wanted to do the things for my mother and my dad and my brother. And so that's the way it happened in that perspective. I was not a member. Even though considering her to have the work done, I was still not a member of the Church.

RICK STARR: And that was how many years into your marriage?

JOHNNY PAGE: That would be five years.

JANET PAGE: Five years.

JOHNNY PAGE: Because it was 99, the first of 2000.

RICK STARR: Up to this point, just going back a little bit, you had—Janet, you had four children and you still had two children—

JOHNNY PAGE: Yes.

RICK STARR: That I'm sure you saw often.

JOHNNY PAGE: Yes.

RICK STARR: How did you decide during that five years what church you would attend, what activities you would attend, where your youth, your children would go?

JOHNNY PAGE: Well, my children were in Tennessee. I was in Kentucky. My son—my daughter was already married before I met Jan, and my son, he would come visit, and a lot of times, he—at that point I was not attending church with Jan so he would go to the church that I attended there or one of the other churches there in the area, I would take him to church there. So it was really not a big deal in that part 'cause I really was not affiliated myself with any Pentecostal church—any particular Pentecostal church. I attended the Pentecostal church but I didn't pick this one or this or the other one, I would just go and just attend there and then the times I didn't attend with Jan. So that's how it worked out with me, and I had no problem going with her with functions for the kids as far as the Young Women activities and things; I had no problem with doing that, in taking them to those functions.

RICK STARR: So you were very supportive, you just didn't go to the church.

JOHNNY PAGE: I didn't—

JANET PAGE: Absolutely.

JOHNNY PAGE: I didn't try to stop her from doing anything. I'd support her. I felt like, you know, this is her children and this is the way they're raised and I will do that. I will not try to convey my beliefs on her children.

JANET PAGE: He would even participate in Family Home Evening some. You know, we had to keep it fairly objective because, you know, it was stories from the Bible or that because we didn't, you know, we didn't wanna offend each other with our beliefs. But if the girls were in anything, if they were doing anything with Young Women or if there was any special event—Johnny sings beautifully and he would even sing with me—before we got married he actually sang with me once in sacrament meeting and then we were asked frequently to sing together and we still do sing a lot in church together, but he would come, he just had a hard time sitting there sometimes because he would hear things that he didn't really agree with and in the way he was raised, it was not unusual to comment on what the person that was speaking or preaching was saying. Well, in our church, we don't typically do that so one time it happened to be a ward conference and our stake president was there and he was saying something and Johnny went, “U-uh” out loud and—[LAUGHTER]

JOHNNY PAGE: I didn't realize I was that loud.

JANET PAGE: And friends of ours that are now our best friends were sitting behind us; she leaned over to him saying, “Johnny, be quiet.” But he was good about going and I really appreciated that. He would attend with me but he just, he had not—at that point he had had discussions, he went through the discussions with a few sets of missionaries but in the

very first discussion, and they do it differently now but the first discussion used to be about basically the Godhead—God the Eternal Father, His Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost—and so when you differ on that particular belief, you can't really go much farther, so he had the first discussion what, four, five, six times?

JOHNNY PAGE: At least four, five, six—

JANET PAGE: He could almost teach it by the time he actually did join the Church because once he made the decision to join, he was like, “Okay, I’m ready to be baptized” and they said, “Well, you really need to go through all these teachings and make sure” and he said, “Well, I can teach the first one pretty well” [LAUGHTER] “because I’ve heard it a lot.”

RICK STARR: He just had to get past that first big hurdle.

JANET PAGE: And it was a huge hurdle. And it was one I could not understand because I knew and I have known my whole life that God the Father and Jesus Christ are not the same. And I knew that with my whole heart. And Johnny knew with his whole heart that they were and as a matter of fact, at one point, we, you know, he said, “Well, you’re wanting me to pray about your church, why don’t you pray about mine?” Well, I didn’t, you know, I hadn’t really thought about that because I thought, “Well, because I know that I belong to the true church,” but I decided to do that. I thought, you know—

RICK STARR: It’s a bold statement, isn’t it?

JANET PAGE: Yeah, I thought, “I’ve never done that,” so I did pray. And when I prayed that, and I asked Father in Heaven, you know, and I said, “I need to know the truthfulness of this” and almost as if someone was standing beside me saying that said, “God the Father and Jesus are not the same. We are not the same.” And it just, just, I knew in my heart again that that was true, and I went to Johnny and I said, “I have prayed about it” because, you know, maybe everything I had believed my whole life was not the exact truth, you know, I don’t, we never say that Johnny believed wrongly because many of the things he believed are true and he has great faith, I mean, faith that is just amazing, and, you know, it’s not as if it’s not true, it’s just kind of like the Paul Harvey thing, it’s the rest of the story [CHUCKLING] and now and that’s what he’s tried to tell his family, is, you know, we don’t believe that they are wrong, we just believe they don’t have the whole truth, and they’re good people. I mean they’re some of the best people I’ve ever known, and they’re faithful, and they attend, and they are giving, they just don’t have the whole, they don’t have the priesthood and authority to act in the name of God. And that’s very important.

RICK STARR: You’re listening to Why I Believe on the Mormon Channel. I’m Rick Starr, and today we’re talking with Janet and John Page from Kentucky who were married as members of different faiths—Janet as Mormon and Johnny as Pentecostal. And I’m interested, Johnny, as we’ve been talking, we were talking about Janet doing the temple work for your mother—

JOHNNY PAGE: Yes.

RICK STARR: And you did have to have a lot of faith to be able to pray about that and then to give her permission to move forward with that. Do you feel like that was kind of a turning point or a point when you started to soften on the gospel?

JOHNNY PAGE: I think I started turning that way and I guess the biggest thing that really brought this about was that Jan's sister had cancer and was dying of cancer and dying from cancer, but we would go visit. They lived in California, we were in Kentucky so we went two or three times that I traveled with Jan and several more times that Jan got to go by herself that I was not able to go, but we were out there talking and Brenda—I loved her, I loved her very dearly, still love her very dearly, of course, respected her—the way that she was going through this ordeal and the way that she took it and the way that she knew that everything was alright and I was sitting there and she walked into the kitchen one day and Jan and I were sitting there and she said, “Johnny, what do you want me to tell your mother when I meet her, when I see her again? And it bothered me so much the Spirit, I felt it so strong that I had to go walk out the room ‘cause I couldn’t say anything to her and I knew then that—‘cause she knew my mother, she had met my mother, she knew the work had been performed, she knew that she was gonna see her, that she was gonna be there, and it was something about it that just seemed so right to me. At that point, it was still much later before I joined the Church and I think at that point the adversary throws doubts in your mind even though you think you know and to a point where that I started softening my heart. We don’t drink coffee. I grew up drinking coffee and I’d drink decaf, and that’s what I told Jan, “I’m drinking decaf, it’s not a big deal, I’m not drinking caffeinated.” But I was thinking that and as a faithful wife to me she would make coffee, and the coffee maker would be ready when I got up in the morning. She made that coffee and we were running out of coffee and she turned to me and said, “You need to pick up some coffee,” and I said, “Just don’t buy any more.” And she immediately said—

RICK STARR: That was a step of faith, huh?

JOHNNY PAGE: She immediately turned and looked at me and she said, “You know I’m looking at you,” ‘cause I immediately turned and looked away from her so that I wouldn’t be facing her and she said, “You know I’m looking at you” and I said, “Yeah,” and I turned and looked at her and said, “Don’t buy more coffee.” I never told her I was gonna join the Church but she knew that I was on the right step. My heart was already softening. And then I had some questions that I needed, that I wanted answered and, of course, the one big one, the whole, my whole belief that they were all one, that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ were one. And so the stake president, not the one I made a comment about but at that time they had already changed and he was over several congregations as we know in the local congregations, so I made this list, I mailed it to him and he—

RICK STARR: This was a list of questions?

JOHNNY PAGE: A list of questions, ten questions that I wanted answered about the Church. I think I already knew all of them. I just wanted, the big one I didn’t know, I still was doubting that, didn’t know why I was doubting but still there and so—

JANET PAGE: Can I interrupt just a moment? The reason he wanted to talk to the stake president is because he had attended a stake conference with me and he heard him speak and he felt

the Spirit when he heard him speak and he didn't wanna offend anybody in our local congregation because by this time, he had become friends with just about everybody. He just—everybody loves Johnny because of his friendly nature. And so he wanted to go and we have an hour's drive to go see our stake president, it's not like here in Utah where it's just a few blocks, so we had an appointment and we drove the hour and we went to talk to him and he had these ten questions but the biggest one was the Godhead.

JOHNNY PAGE: And he went through and he kind of dismissed, not dismissed but he answered very simply on the other questions and I don't really remember all the other questions because I don't think they really mattered to me, it's just something—I felt like I need to have at least a list of questions for him. But when he started talking about that one, the one fact that Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father are separate, that Heavenly Father is Jesus Christ's Dad and He is His Son, begotten Son, and I can't remember every word he said but as he was speaking, [EMOTIONAL] he said in the Garden Gethsemane, when the Savior was speaking and talking and praying to His Father, who do you think he was talking to? And the Spirit—at that point I broke down and started crying in his office. Jan was crying, he was crying, the Spirit was very strong, and we ended our conversation and he said, Johnny, don't you ever join the Church till you're ready, till you know it's true. I said "I won't," and I think it was two weeks later I was baptized.

JANET PAGE: And he, the stake president baptized Johnny.

RICK STARR: That's great.

JOHNNY PAGE: And so—

JANET PAGE: And he also attended our—when we were sealed in the St. Louis Temple, he drove the three hours to come and be there with us.

JOHNNY PAGE: That's—but him answering that question the way he did was a testimony to me that the Spirit spoke to me that it was true, that They are separate. I prayed about it and it just—even after I went up there, I prayed about it and I felt like it was the only way it could be and that's the way it was.

JANET PAGE: But one other thing that happened with him, when Johnny prayed, he always addressed Jesus in his prayer. His prayer either started as "Precious Jesus" or "Dear Savior" or "Precious Savior;" he always prayed to Jesus Christ. And after this had happened and he'd met with the stake president and we had had this wonderful meeting, he had to leave town for a couple of days and I asked him before he left, when I was, you know, we were talking, and I didn't know at what point he was spiritually because he wasn't, you know, he didn't wanna tell me very much because he wasn't sure and I said, "Well, would you just do me one favor and would you pray to Father in Heaven when you start your prayer, would you start and say, would you pray to Father in Heaven instead of Jesus Christ?"

JOHNNY PAGE: And that's what I actually did. I was in a motel, in a conference, and I don't drink so after the meeting was over, they had a happy hour so I just dismissed myself to the room and I turned the TV on, just watching TV, and I turned it and, you know, something just—and I said, "You know, I promised Jan I'd pray about this" so I turned the TV off and went into the bedroom and—

JANET PAGE: And that was the miracle. That was the first miracle. He turned the TV off.
[CHUCKLING]

JOHNNY PAGE: I like sports.

RICK STARR: My wife might say the same thing. [CHUCKLING]

JOHNNY PAGE: I like sports. So I turned off the TV. I walked into the other room and knelt at the bed and I did—first time in my life I ever prayed I said “Father in Heaven.” You know, I’d prayed “Father in Heaven, hallowed be thy name” but I really addressed Him that He was my Father in Heaven and I prayed about it and I said, “I wanna know if the Book of Mormon is true. If it’s not true, I wanna know that. I wanna know if this young man named Joseph Smith really did see You and Your Son” and I started praying that way, sincere, believing it was real or believing that I really wanna know. The Spirit, the same Spirit I felt in that room with that stake president once again overwhelmed me so strong that it was like electricity all through my body that I knew it was true. I had no doubts—everything I had been brought up to believe—I had no doubt that this was the truth, the true gospel restored on the earth today, and I read the story, reading the Book of Mormon in earnest—not because it was Jan who wanted me to but I did and I went home and told Jan that I was gonna be baptized. I told her she couldn’t tell anybody that and that was kind of very mean I guess because—

RICK STARR: How do you contain that excitement?

JANET PAGE: It was very hard. I was teaching that Sunday at church—

JOHNNY PAGE: Well, what I wanted to do was to get up and share my testimony ’cause it was fast and testimony meeting and I was going to invite everyone to my baptism the following week. Well, that didn’t happen to happen that day because, well, the stake president said, “You know, we don’t need to wait on this, we need to go ahead and do this.” Well, out here, different wards meet at different times, there’s only one ward in Madisonville, Kentucky. We meet from 9 to 12. And he was at a ward conference and he couldn’t be there until 3 o’clock in the afternoon so he agreed to be there at 3 o’clock that afternoon to baptize me. And he said, “I don’t know how many people will be there” and I said, “Well, the way I’ve read it, it only needs to be me, you and two witnesses is all it’s gotta be,” and he said, “That’s right.” So I said “If it’s just us four and if my wife will be there, that’s fine with me, no problem.” But then Jan can tell you how

JANET PAGE: I was teaching that Sunday in Relief Society, the women’s auxiliary, and it was very hard for me to teach. I was so emotional and I just was crying and he had told me, “You can’t tell anybody. This is my news to tell and I don’t want you to tell anybody.” And I think it was just his way of getting back at me for the five years of, you know—but anyway, we do, like I said, we have a good sense of humor with one another. So he didn’t want me to tell, he wanted it to be his news to tell and I was trying to teach and I could barely teach because I was so emotional and anyway, he finally did. He called just about every member of our congregation to tell them personally that he was going to be baptized the next Sunday and, I mean, of course, everybody had been praying about it for a long time and they loved him and they knew that he had a good heart and at his baptism the next

week, I stopped counting at 155 people. There was standing room only and there were several nonmembers there, people who just wanted, that were just happy for him. It was just a wonderful day.

RICK STARR: Oh, that is wonderful. If you're just joining us, you're listening to Why I Believe on the Mormon Channel. I'm Rick Starr and we're talking with Johnny and Janet Page from Kentucky and right now we're talking about Johnny's conversion to the gospel, and I wanted to step back just a minute. You had written ten questions out for your stake president to answer, the major hurdle being one of those questions which was the Godhead.

JOHNNY PAGE: Correct.

RICK STARR: And it's interesting to me that he didn't answer you directly. But he answered you with a question that allowed you to answer that question yourself and open your heart to receiving an answer from the Spirit.

JOHNNY PAGE: That's correct.

RICK STARR: Don't you think that's interesting?

JOHNNY PAGE: That's what really made it so true to me 'cause he said, "Well, who do you think he was talking to? You know, he wasn't trying to get me to, he wasn't being defensive, he was just saying, "Well, who do you think he was talking to?" And then it was like the Spirit said, "Well, yes, He was talking to His Father." You know, so it all just became real.

RICK STARR: It all just made sense.

JOHNNY PAGE: Yes. It made sense. Everything was true, that it was logical, 'cause sometimes I think we, as humans, we try to over think things and try to let our mind get in the way with the Spirit. If you just let the Spirit lead you, you'll do right every time. Just listen to the Spirit.

JANET PAGE: I think I learned a lesson with this in that regardless of the beliefs that other people have, they are their beliefs and they need to be respected. And at first, when Johnny and I, before we got married—and we had a very short courtship actually, but one day we were just driving and he said something about God and Jesus being the same thing and I said, "Well, that's just stupid." And he was so offended, and I felt so badly that I had made that comment because it wasn't stupid, it's the way he believed, and we should never believe that what anybody else feels or believes to be true, we should never think that that's stupid, and I felt badly for that for several years. And another lesson that I learned is that we have to let people feel the Spirit. We cannot try to influence other people to believe what we believe, we have to just hope that the opportunity arises that we can bear our testimony of what we know is true and then we can have a respect for them to allow them to feel the Spirit and get that same affirmation of it that we have gotten. And we can't rush that.

RICK STARR: Right.

JANET PAGE: It can't be pushed or rushed or forced upon another person.

RICK STARR: Yeah. Well, certainly it's also a great testimony to your faith and your patience over that six-year period of continuously providing that opportunity for the Spirit to speak to Johnny. And it happened.

JANET PAGE: It did.

RICK STARR: It required patience but it happened.

JANET PAGE: It did. There was about a year and a half that he wouldn't go to church with me at all. He had just gotten—at first he would go and then all at once he said, "No, I won't go." And there was nothing I could say or do to make him wanna go with me and so I would kinda tell my daughter—my youngest daughter who he dearly loves and I said, "Holly, why don't you go in there and ask Johnny does he wanna go to church with us." And so she would go ask him and he'd go, "Okay." And so I just learned and so she did it every Sunday. [CHUCKLING] And then it started with the elders quorum president that had really become friends with him and really liked him, so Johnny would come to sacrament meeting, you know, the first hour, and then he would leave. And so it got to be where members of the Church would come up and say, "Well, Johnny, do you wanna stay and go to Sunday School?" Or "Do you wanna stay for Priesthood?" And he knew that people loved him. It wasn't because they wanted to force the Church on him. They loved him and cared about him. And I think that's what we have to remember is to show love for everyone and that's what the Savior did. You know, everyone that he met was not of the same belief but he loved them regardless and that's what we have to do, too.

RICK STARR: That's a really important point. Well, Johnny, when you got baptized, speaking of family, what was the reaction of your family members?

JOHNNY PAGE: I don't think they were very pleased at all. They tried to talk me out of what I felt. I know that on a couple occasions that they would wait until Jan was not in the room and say, "Well, you know that this is not right. You know the truth and you know this is not right." And so that I would not offend them, a lot of times I would just say, "Well, just leave this alone." And then about a few months, well, just I don't know how long, a couple of years ago now, they got to a point where that she was not around and they, my brother-in-law and sister-in-law, my brother-in-law and my sister was very strong about this and I witnessed to them and I told them my conversion story. I told them about how I felt with the Spirit and how that after I prayed about it and read the Book of Mormon; I even made a comment, you know, "Have you even read the Book of Mormon?" And I think that's the biggest hurdle that people don't get over, so when I did ask them that, they said, "Well, I'll read it," "Okay good, I'll get you one." And so after I bore my testimony and I said "I say this to you in the name of Jesus Christ," it's kind of hard when someone shares their testimony with you in His name, what are you gonna say? You can't say it's not true. Because that's what you believe, that's your testimony, that Jesus Christ has given you this testimony that this is true. And so they, they're not members, they probably won't ever be, I don't know, the Spirit's gonna have to move them like it did me. We pray for them, we love them, we hope that they have the same opportunity to read the Book of Mormon and find the truth for themselves and all I can do is live, you

know, my life and be an example to them and show them. One of the big things is that we don't eat out on Sunday. We don't go to restaurants. That was a big thing that we did in the church I grew up in. You know, you go after church on Sunday, on Sunday night, you'd go out to eat and had a big time and maybe 8, 10, 12 people. Well, that was a big deal for my family that we didn't do that with Janet. And so but that shows them and, you know, I can't say that it would have hurt me to go and eat a meal with them on a Sunday but I was told not to do that. I've been told not to do that, to keep the Sabbath day holy, so I don't do that, and they recognize the difference that, you know, "Oh, I forgot, you all don't go out," even my sons, "Oh, all right, Dad, I forgot you guys don't go out on Sunday for dinner," and but see, I feel like by living our lives the way that we should that we are an example to other folks and some day, you know, if they feel strongly about that and who knows, the next day maybe they'll read the Book of Mormon and believe and so we're, you know, we're praying for them and I'm sure they're praying that I'll go back the other way, you know, because of the way they believe I'm very strong in my, in our belief, and Heavenly Father has shown me time and time and time again that this is the true Church, and I just know that I need to live my life the best I can and to walk the example and, you know, that's all I can do. The rest is up to Him. The Spirit has to direct them like it did me.

RICK STARR: Absolutely. And your children, how about their response to it?

JOHNNY PAGE: Well, they—of course, their mother had a negative response on that, of course, and they were afraid that I was gonna try to get them to join the Church. And there again, I told them and said, you know, I won't call their names but "This is your decision, you know what you—" and they were both raised that way and they both attend different Pentecostal churches. I mean they're the same UPC but different churches so see, there again, that should give them some idea there that if it was all the same, then why would they have to go to different churches because of what man teaches instead of what the scripture is teaching, and I'm not being offensive, I'm just saying that we look at different things and I kind of bring that out to them. You believe what you, you know, you believe this but they do respect us, they do respect Jan and myself and what we believe, and you know, all we can do is live the gospel and in our home is, the temples are, pictures of temples are hanging there and the temple, and the proclamation of the world is there and just letting people know and then the scriptures are there for them to read if they want to and that's all we can do.

RICK STARR: That's great. Well, talk about, you've been married now—

JANET PAGE: Fifteen years yesterday.

RICK STARR: Fifteen years. Yesterday. Congratulations! Which means that you've been a member of the Church for about nine years. Is that right?

JOHNNY PAGE: That's correct. That's correct.

RICK STARR: How has your marriage changed since you've become a member of the Church?

JOHNNY PAGE: Well, I think it's changed for the better. I mean we both know that we're gonna be together for time and eternity. We know that we're going to—she respects my priesthood

as far as things I have to do, home teaching and things, the callings that I have, and she respects that. I respect her callings that she has in the Church. We help each other. We have our grandchildren, between the six kids that we have, we have 12 grandchildren. So we're very helpful with them in the Primary and the other auxiliaries of the Church and trying to get them to be what they need to be as far as to learn the gospel and so it's changed, you know, in that perspective.

JANET PAGE: I don't get to sit with him in church now. Because when we go to church, he's, he's a member of the bishopric, he's the first counselor, so when—before he joined the Church, any time he came to church with me, he sat with me on the pew and once he joined, that ended just pretty soon [CHUCKLING] so that's the only thing, but it is such a blessing to live the gospel with your husband. It's such a blessing to go to the temple together and to know every night when we pray together that we will be together for eternity. It just, it's such a feeling of peace. Johnny has a few health problems and I've had a few problems and we know that regardless of what time we have on this earth, we know that there is an eternity of togetherness and I think that I tried to explain that to him before he joined the Church, what eternal marriage meant and how the, I can't think of the right word but the connection and how I felt it although I hadn't experienced it but I felt like the commitment was so much stronger when a couple was sealed in the temple for time and eternity. More so than being married when someone says "Until death do you part" and I wouldn't allow that to be said. The bishop of our ward married us but when we, we kind of wrote the things and I would not allow that line to be there because that's one thing I hated to hear, is "till death do us part" because I didn't wanna be parted from Johnny at death.

JOHNNY PAGE: And that is a big difference.

RICK STARR: It really is.

JANET PAGE: That's a huge difference, and it's just such a blessing to live the gospel together. We strengthen one another. It just is wonderful.

RICK STARR: Well, you mentioned that Johnny is in the bishopric now. So sitting up on the stand when you see investigators come to your ward, for example, you have a unique perspective with your background coming from Pentecostal—

JOHNNY PAGE: Correct.

RICK STARR: Religion and even being a minister at one point. What is your advice to us when we welcome investigators into our congregations?

JOHNNY PAGE: Well, the best thing is be friendly. I don't meet many strangers. I got that trait from my mother, a good trait, I talk to everyone no matter who they are but I try to make them feel comfortable, ask about them, you know, what brings them to the service, and just try to get their general view and whatever church they may belong to. A lot of times, I know a lot of people in the city and more likely I know someone who attends that church and I ask them about them or whatever and just kind of make them feel at ease and my advice to anyone, just be a friendly person to them, just greet them. I know the south, you know, everyone greets everyone as far as but sometimes in large wards, there's a lot of hustle

and bustle and, you know, you don't really take time to meet someone who's there; even when we're here. A lot of times they don't know that we're not members or we are members. But, you know, it's good for us to stop and just ask who they are, why are you here, you know, and that way if they are an investigator, they feel a need, you know, they feel a warmth if you're talking to them, or if they're someone just visiting, they feel that, you know, the warmth; and ask them to attend Sunday School or what it may be to help them in that way. That would be the best thing that you could do but to me, being friendly is key, I think, that very strong suit of my conversion was the friends I had at the ward and they just, even though they knew I wasn't a member yet, they just were still my friend and so my advice would be to be a friend to everybody no matter. If they'd been there their whole life, be friendly to them.

RICK STARR: Yeah, that really became evident when you were baptized and 150+ members and friends showed up for your baptism. That's wonderful. We have just a few minutes remaining and, of course, the name of this program is Why I Believe, so we'd like to end with that question—to you, Janet, first, and then Johnny. Why do you believe?

JANET PAGE: I believe the Church is true because I know that Joseph Smith saw Jesus Christ and Father in Heaven. And I know that what he said that They told him is true. I know that deep within my heart. I know that Father in Heaven is my Father and that He loves me and cares about me personally, not just as a group or a huge bunch of people, but he cares about me, Janet Page, specifically. And I know that Jesus Christ suffered what He suffered specifically for me and that He suffered all the things that I have ever suffered—physical ailments, heartbreak, everything that I've ever suffered through, He suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane. And I know that He is truly my Savior and I know that He provides us a prophet to tell us His will for His Church and that this is not a manmade church, this isn't a church of Thomas Monson or Gordon B. Hinckley or Joseph Smith but it is truly the Church of Jesus Christ and that it is set up exactly the way He set His Church up when He was living on the earth, and I know that in my heart. And I know that we have the priesthood authority or the authority to act in the name of Jesus Christ if He was on the earth, when we attend the temple, when we are doing any proxy work for anyone that that is truly being done for people, for spirits who will be at some point attaining some degree of glory. And I know that I have the opportunity to achieve that highest degree and I know that I can live with Father in heaven again and I know that I can live with Jesus Christ and I know that I can see my family again and I know that I can be with this man from now on and that's why I believe.

RICK STARR: Thank you. Johnny, please.

JOHNNY PAGE: Why I believe is because I've read the scriptures, 'cause I already said, because of what the Spirit led me to believe what I felt when I prayed, I believe that as I look at things, I look at people and they say, "Well, I'm an atheist" or they look at something and they say, and I look at it and say, "How can you not believe God Our Eternal Father with all the beauty round about us?" I believe because of the fact that He loved me enough that He gave his only begotten Son, [EMOTIONAL] that I can return back to live with Him and His Son. I didn't have that opportunity before, the church I grew up in, but I do now. Gordon B. Hinckley, President Gordon B. Hinckley, was speaking at a conference, at a semi-annual conference, I was with Jan, he got through speaking, I don't know why I

attended that meeting with her but I did. He spoke. As he first started speaking, it was like the voice of authority was speaking to me. And what he said to me that day as he gave that talk and when he finished in the name of Jesus Christ, I told Jan on the way home, I said, that man is for real. He is the real McCoy. There's nothing fake. Now there again it took me a while to get the whole truth in my heart but he made me believe. If I look back and see that believing, it made me start believing in what the Church was. It's subtle small things all the way through till I finally broke down this old man and allowed the Spirit to deal with it. That's why I believe. The Spirit will lead us and He will guide me. I'm thankful that I have the opportunity to attend the temple. I'm thankful that I'm sealed to this woman for time and eternity. I know I will see my mother again. I know I will see my twin brother again. I will be with him; I will be with my Father in Heaven, my Savior Jesus Christ. I can never thank Him enough for giving His life, for having the opportunity to return to be with Him, and I say this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

RICK STARR: Well, Brother and Sister Page, it's been great to have you here on Why I Believe today. Thank you so much for sharing your testimonies and your stories with us today.

JANET PAGE: You are welcome.

JOHNNY PAGE: Thank you.

RICK STARR: Thanks. You've been listening to Why I Believe on the Mormon Channel. To share your story with the Mormon Channel, e-mail us at radio@ldschurch.org. For more information on this program or to see pictures of those interviewed, visit our website at radio.lds.org.

[BEGIN MUSIC]

[END MUSIC]