

Announcer: Welcome to the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast, a podcast all about leadership change and personal growth. The goal? To help you lead like never before in your church or in your business. Now your host, Carey Nieuwhof.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, hey, everybody, and welcome to Episode 281 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof. I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. I am heading back on the road in August. We'll be at a number of events. I'm going to tell you about some of them in just a few minutes this fall. But one of my favorite things is, when I meet you guys, listeners, and we talk in real time, you're like, wow, it feels so slow. Because if you're like me, you listen to podcasts at, I don't know, 1.2 1.5.

Carey Nieuwhof: I met somebody who listens to audio books at 3x normal speed. I can't do that. But you know what, a couple of years ago I started listening a little bit faster and these days, I listen at about 1.5. Anyway, here I am in real time, not sped up recording this and saying thank you so much for taking your time. I hope it's a valuable investment for you. I want to thank all of you who have left ratings and reviews, all of you who have subscribed, all of you who share the podcast on a regular basis. You continue to help spread the word and we are having some incredible guests as a result. So, I want to thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: One of them is my guest today. Her name is Heather Zempel. She has served at National Community Church alongside Mark Batterson for years as part of the teaching team and in charge of adult discipleship. Heather is just one of those fascinating people. We're going to talk about, she's a biological engineer. Did not even know there was such a thing, but she is that. Then she worked on Capitol Hill for a little while. We talk about the hill as it was then, as it is now about doing ministry on Capitol Hill. We also talk a little bit about what's changing in terms of getting people plugged into community. Heather says some really interesting things about small groups. She's in charge of small groups, and how their emphasis at NCC is changing.

Carey Nieuwhof: This is a lot about the state of the culture, it's a lot about the state of really the church. I think you're going to enjoy it. Anyway, Heather, so glad to have you on the podcast and I love me some National Community Church. Mark's going to be one of our future guests as well. Hey, speaking of events this fall, I do love connecting with you guys on the road. Orange Tour is a one day event. It's got inspiring sessions, customized breakouts, and it's really designed to align your volunteers and leaders. It's something I've done every year for over 10 years. We're going to be going all through major cities across the US, too many to list right here. I am going to be in a few cities. I will be in Irvine just south of Los Angeles, Phoenix and Austin. But you can join us in all the cities for Jon Acuff, Kristen Ivy, Sam Collier, Kara Powell, Joseph Sojourner, Paula Danielle, Reggie Joiner, and of course myself and more.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's really about reaching the next generation. I'm going to be building into senior leaders, talking about some of my favorite content. If you head on over

to orangetour.org, orangetour O-R-G, use the coupon code Carey, C-A-R-E-Y, you get \$10 off the regularly low price for the one day stop in your city. Use the coupon code Carey at orangetour.org. Then October 1st and 2nd, I'll be in Pittsburgh, back at Pittsburgh for the Future Forward Conference. I'm so excited about that. It's for church leaders and members who are committed to fully engage the next generation in a rapidly changing world.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm going to be speaking there, so will my wife Toni, which I'm really excited about. It'd be said Sam Collier will be there, plus Lee Kricher and Jason Howard will talk about leadership succession. You're going to hear all about that on my podcast too.

Carey Nieuwhof: Topics include like world changing women in ministry, digital messaging, building genuine community in a disconnected world, leveraging creativity, irresistible kids and young adults ministries. They are really crushing it on all those fronts. Plus, the leadership succession has happened there. It's really quite an interesting case study. If you're looking to transition your church and really embrace the future, bring your key leaders so you can plan your next season. It's a third of three Future Forward Conferences. You don't want to miss it. And of course, we're going to take care of you. Go to futureforwardchurches.com/theconference. [Futureforwardchurches.com/theconference](http://futureforwardchurches.com/theconference) to register. Tickets are \$79. But the price goes down to \$59 if you bring five or more people. So, make sure you do that. We'll be hanging out in Pittsburgh, October 1st and 2nd.

Carey Nieuwhof: Let's talk about volunteer training. It is August, some of you are back in full gear at your church. Others like us are gearing up in the fall for the fall for September. How do you get everyone in your church into the same place at the same time? These days as you know, almost impossible. Well, Ministry Grid makes it simple to train every volunteer and every leader in your church. They've got a library of over now, 3500 videos, 800 courses. You'll find training for every ministry and leadership level from volunteers to ministry directors. Ministry Grid scope and sequence of training makes it easy to know who needs what training.

Carey Nieuwhof: The best news, for the month of August, that's right now, you get unlimited access to Ministry Grid for your entire church for just \$399 a year. You're locked in every year at this price. My church Connexus has been using Ministry Grid to train our volunteers, we're loving it. And I'm also working on some content that will be exclusive to Ministry Grid and be delivered to you there. On top of this, if you get a subscription this month, you get a copy of my latest book, Didn't See It Coming as a bonus on top of this great price.

Carey Nieuwhof: You want to take advantage of this? Go to ministrygrid.com/carey, C-A-R-E-Y to get unlimited training for \$399. Once again, ministrygrid.com/carey. Well, without much further ado, let's jump into my conversation with Heather

Zempel. Heather, welcome to the podcast. It's a joy to, I want to say finally have you on?

Heather Zempel: Thanks, Carey. This is such an honor. Man, I've been such a fan of yours for a long time, appreciate your friendship, your investment and just all the resources you bring to the kingdom and into leadership. Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, it's absolutely mutual. We've gotten to know each other through our mutual friend, Mark Batterson at NCC, National Community Church, which I think is just such a great idea to have a thriving church literally at the doorstep of Capitol Hill. We're going to get there. But you had a really circuitous path in the ministry, which is interesting. You have a lot of lay people listening. Lots of non-ministry leaders listening and a ton. But okay, Biological Engineering, what the heck is that?

Heather Zempel: Yes. All right. Let me tell you a little story. When I was in the seventh grade, my parents took me on a trip to Disney World. In Epcot Center is where I decided I wanted to be a biological engineer. I didn't know it was called that at the time, all I was excited about was a joint research project between NASA, USDA and Epcot Center to develop sustainable agriculture and life support systems for the space program.

Carey Nieuwhof: You're in seventh grade

Heather Zempel: I'm in the seventh grade.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, and this is what's interesting you?

Heather Zempel: That's what I've decided I was ... To the point where my parents invested about four hours, and I'm not sure how much money the next day to get us a private tour of the greenhouses and the labs of that facility. Yeah, I didn't know it was called Biological Engineering at the time, but I decided that's what I wanted to do with my life-

Carey Nieuwhof: Say again, what was it? I was just so shocked. I didn't know the story, and this is the fun part about doing this. The display was what?

Heather Zempel: It was a joint research project between NASA, USDA and Epcot Center. They were developing sustainable agriculture and life support systems for the space program. Let's say you set up a base on the moon, where scientists are going to live and work for a season. How are they fed? What do you do with their waste? All of those kind of questions, how do you make life work in space? That's what got me excited.

Heather Zempel: Now, the different applications for Biological Engineering are really broad in terms of what it is. It's taking the basic engineering principles from mechanical

engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering, chemical engineering and applying them to biological systems.

Heather Zempel: For instance, if a mechanical engineer might be designing a crane that's involved in construction activity, a biological engineer is taking those same principles and designing prosthetic limbs, for instance. Maybe a chemical engineer they're working on reactors that are developing, I don't know maybe, fuels or cleaning products, a biological engineer would use those same principles to create reactors that are pumping out pharmaceuticals or using wetlands to clean wastewater, for instance.

Heather Zempel: It's a really broad field. I still love it. It's weird. I've got a Master's degree in environmental engineering, or biological engineering, which my application of it was in the environmental world. Then worked on Capitol Hill for several years, and now I'm in ministry. I wouldn't trade those experiences for the world because I think all of them have been formed and shaped the way I do ministry and I do leadership. I think, as weird and nerdy as it sounds, principles from biological engineering are impacting how I understand spiritual growth today.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, well, we can go there. But I want to go back to seventh grade. A lot of people just want to ride Space Mountain one more time and can we meet Mickey? You're fascinated by this biological engineering project that NASA and the USDA and Epcot is working on. Looking back on it now with hindsight, what was that? What do you think that was?

Heather Zempel: Wow, that's a really good question. On my Strength Finders, learner is my top strength. I've also been a little bit of a cross pollinator. Around the time I hit middle school, I was very interested in the science world, but I also have this creative side of me. When I went to college ... Just get more confusing. When I went to college, I had to decide between engineering and theater, because-

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, those are companions.

Heather Zempel: There's this creative side. I think what it was it was combining these two worlds of a very left brain science but also the right brain creativity of innovation and invention. What's a new application for these principles that we already know? I think that's what it was about.

Carey Nieuwhof: You have a Master's in biological engineering. Did you practice in the field?

Heather Zempel: I did. Not for very long. It was just like-

Carey Nieuwhof: It's like me and law, briefly.

Heather Zempel: It was a couple of years, and I loved it. There was no reason why I left that world. In fact, I have a sabbatical coming up, and I'd really like to spend a part of that time scratching that itch a little bit. Again, not necessarily doing work in

that field, but I don't know, taking a class or two just because I'm still inspired by that world. It was really just circumstances that led me back to Capitol Hill and then eventually into ministry.

Carey Nieuwhof: What brought you, because before you were in ministry, you were a policy consultant, if I understand right, to a US Senator.

Heather Zempel: Correct.

Carey Nieuwhof: Tell us more about that.

Heather Zempel: While I was studying at LSU, getting my Master's degree, I had had a conversation with a senator who was on the Environment Public Works Committee. He wanted to bring someone in for a year just to do a yearlong fellowship to help him with research related to that committee assignment. One thing people don't know is DC is largely run by 20-somethings. Because 20-somethings are the only ones that have time, the insanity, the energy to work the hours that are required, and the passion to motivate them to do it.

Heather Zempel: But very few of them have actual expertise in the areas that they've been entrusted with policy wise. They're political science majors or economic major, something like that. It was a unique opportunity for me to get experience on Capitol Hill and the senator to get someone who had an actual background in the things that they were creating policy about.

Heather Zempel: I agreed to do that. That's when I started coming to National Community Church, just as a member. That was a time when we were meeting in Union Station. We were one church in one location. Pastor Mark was still wearing a suit at that time. That's how far back it goes.

Carey Nieuwhof: You probably have pictures. That's why you're still on staff and he pays you well, right?

Heather Zempel: Yes, absolutely. I have pictures, and I have old sermon tapes. Not that we have anything that could play those, but I have a lot of things that give me job security.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because NCC was started in what, '96? Have I got that right?

Heather Zempel: Yeah, '96. Look, I remember an executive leadership team conversation about whether or not to discontinue tapes. Whether to keep the tape ministry or let it go. Sometimes the things that we spend a lot of time as leaders talking about, we've already missed it. We need to jump the curve.

- Carey Nieuwhof: I'm going to give Mark a hard time about that. Really, that went to executive leadership team? Are you kidding me? When are we going to end the cassette ministry?
- Heather Zempel: Keep the tapes, move to CDs. Then I think when we made the jump to get rid of CDs and go completely to podcasting and webcasting, that was little bit faster of a conversation.
- Carey Nieuwhof: You started attending NCC just as a young Capitol Hill 20-something working on Capitol Hill for a senator.
- Heather Zempel: Totally. 20-something, working on Capitol Hill, found NCC didn't look back was there for a year for that year of being with a senator's office. I fell in love with the city, I fell in love with the church, I fell in love with the political world as weird as that sounds as well. But at the end of that, I chose to move on, and I wanted to get experience as an engineer, I wanted to work in that environment.
- Heather Zempel: Moved to Nashville for a couple of years and had a great experience there. I loved it. Out of nowhere, I got an invite from the senator's office to come back. At first, I just missed it. But then, I don't know, something just ... I kept thinking about it, and I kept being more excited about it. I decided to leave the engineering world at least for what I thought was going to be a season. Come back to DC to work in a more full-time, permanent staff capacity.
- Heather Zempel: That's when I was tricked into ministry. A lot of people have calling stories; God called me into ministry, there's the handwriting on the wall story. Mark has a, I was walking through a cow pasture and God called me. I was just tricked. Pastor Mark asked me if I'd be willing to come on staff part-time for nine months to oversee small groups. That sounded like fun for a season. I'd had some experience with small groups at various churches before and I loved it.
- Heather Zempel: So, I said yes. Three and a half years later, I'm still working full-time on the hill, what's become full-time at church and really had to make a jump. At that point, I started looking at where was I seeing the most fruit and feeling the most fulfilled? This doesn't sound very spiritual, but where I was having the most fun. The answer in every one of those situations was the ministry I was doing in the church world. I was still getting to rub shoulders with the hill because so many of my small group leaders, ministry leaders, that was their world.
- Heather Zempel: I felt like ultimately, my obedience point, my calling was to make disciples. Then it was just a question of what environment is the right one? Is it being in an office on Capitol Hill, or is it being able to influence 20 people that work in 20 offices on Capitol Hill?
- Carey Nieuwhof: I would love to go back to your time on Capitol Hill, both stints. You know it really well. Now as well because you've got a huge ministry there through NCC. But, Washington has all kinds of stereotypes associated with it. It's very divisive

is the thought these days, but I want you to take us back. How many years ago was that? 15 years ago that you were on the hill?

Heather Zempel: Yeah. Well, I first came in about ... Let's see, I first came to the hill in '98.

Carey Nieuwhof: '98. Okay. So, late '90s. I'm Canadian, so forgive me if I get this wrong, but Clinton was still the president. Is that right?

Heather Zempel: Yes. I was here when the Monica Lewinsky hearings-

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, wow. Okay.

Heather Zempel: Yep.

Carey Nieuwhof: What was the hill like back in the day? Give us the skinny here, I want to know.

Heather Zempel: There's what I kind of feel like are two periods. There's the pre 911 period and post 911 period. Then there's the pre social media period, and post social media periods. So, pre 911, post 911, that was largely just an infrastructure change. In terms of pre 911, anyone could walk right into the Capitol Building. You had to go through security-

Carey Nieuwhof: I remember doing that.

Heather Zempel: You just walk in. You gave yourself a tour. If you knew how to do that you could ride the little underground subway system that senators use to navigate around. Most people didn't know they could do that and therefore didn't. But there was a high level of access because the security level was so low. The idea of this being the people's house, it was really a remarkable thing. Then post 911 things just changed a good bit in terms of access.

Heather Zempel: Then I think social media has really changed the way, at least that the outside world understands DC. Gone are the days that everyone is listening to a singular voice at the same time, hearing the same thing. Gone are the days of Walter Cronkite giving us the news and what's going on. Now, not only do you have multiple media outlets, but everybody has an opinion and a voice through social media.

Heather Zempel: I think one of the things that I really want people outside DC to know and to remember is that, first of all, everybody's got an angle. Even when it was just a handful of media outlets, there was still an angle involved. Knowing what's really going on and digging into what you're hearing and learning what the truth is, was always really important. I'd have family members or somebody that would call me and say, "Hey, I heard this happened on the Hill today and I'd be like, no, I was sitting on the Senate floor when that vote happened and that's not really quite what it was about.

Carey Nieuwhof: Really, just because they were reporting even then.

Heather Zempel: The reporting. Sometimes they were procedural votes and then it gets reported as so and so voted against such and such. When really what they were voting against was prolonging the debate on it, or shortening the debate on it. It's just little nuances like that, that are sometimes you can't capture them in sound bites.

Carey Nieuwhof: I spent time in Ottawa too, briefly. I was involved politically as a young adult teenager, that kind of thing. But yeah, it's remarkably undramatic, for the most part, right? It's like law.

Heather Zempel: Absolutely. Absolutely. You've got to find a way to make that sexy and make it sell. Unfortunately now, in terms of media. But another thing I like to ask people to remember is that people that are in DC, you don't get rich by working in politics. Maybe a lobbyist does. But if you are an elected official, you're not doing that for the paycheck. Regardless of whether, what side of the aisle you're on, what your political position is, just remembering these are people that genuinely I think want to make a difference.

Heather Zempel: Now, we're people that are full of mixed motives. But people that are good people that genuinely want to make a difference in the world, they live in and remembering that they have spouses and children. Just bringing some humanity back to the whole thing, regardless of what side of the aisle they're on.

Heather Zempel: For me, I think when you have a name and a story and a face to go with a caricature, or to replace a caricature, it just makes a huge difference. I find it a tremendous blessing to be able to be in this city, to count amongst my friends, people that have very different political opinions on different sides of the aisle. I think it strengthens us as people, I think I value the way our process strengthens us as a nation. I think it certainly strengthens the kingdom of God when you've got people that are coming around the table that have different opinions, but also recognize that they're a part of a bigger kingdom, if that makes sense.

Carey Nieuwhof: Mm-hmm (affirmative) Go back to the late '90s, early 2000s. The perception is, or at least from the sources that I'm reading, that it was less partisan then. That you could actually work across the house or across the Senate and get things done. Was that your experience of it, or was it deeply partisan even back then?

Heather Zempel: No, my experience was that. I have a distinct memory of being invited to a meeting with a senator. Usually staffers went to meetings with staffers, and senators went to meetings with senators. But a senator from the opposite side of the aisle, invited me and several of my counterparts from both sides to her office for her to pitch to us an amendment, a bill that she was thinking about, and wanting our opinions on it. It wasn't just across the aisle, it was also this mutual respect, even down to the hierarchical org chart.

Heather Zempel: I found, we did a lot of bipartisan stuff. We had a lot of bills, a lot of amendments. One time I mean, this was going to be, just even mentioning this name is going to be controversial for some of your listeners. Both names are going to be controversial to different people. But at that time, Senator Jeff Sessions, and Senator Ted Kennedy had bipartisan legislation. Kennedy had voted against Jeff's federal judgeship. Yet, when they were both senators, there was this level of mutual respect, and this idea that we can work together. There are things we agree on.

Heather Zempel: I'm not personally on the hill now, it does feel like some of that is changed. I do think that social media is playing a role in that. I think that there's a lot of yelling at one another instead of talking with one another. There's what used to be face to face conversations we're even seeing play out in Twitter. I get different people yelling at each other through social media.

Carey Nieuwhof: As we record that, that is the top story. There's a Twitter war going on, and the house is involved, and the President's involved. People aren't really talking to each other, they're talking at each other. Or at least that's what it feels like as somebody outside of Washington-

Heather Zempel: Again, not being on the hill, immersed in it, like I used to be, honestly, I have the same view that you do a lot of times because I'm seeing it through the computer screen instead of personally, and that's where it tends to be playing out these days is in that social media world.

Carey Nieuwhof: One of the things I really appreciate about your church and about Mark and about you. We've talked about this over dinners we've had together. I've spent some time with your team and some days in DC working with you guys. But you have a real ministry to people on the hill. These are, as you said, we may see them as caricatures, but they're real people with real needs, real fears, real emotions, spiritual crises, all that stuff. There is that sense that the hill, Washington is run by 20-somethings. It is.

Carey Nieuwhof: You get behind the scenes, and when you're working 100 hour weeks, there's not a lot of 48 year olds who have got that kind of stamina anymore. Or they're wise enough to say, not me.

Heather Zempel: I think that has a lot to do with it too.

Carey Nieuwhof: What are the ministry needs? I think the church ... This is one of my little pet theories that I work on. The church does, for the most part, a really good job with those who are down and out, but we often forget that there are people up and out. In the bank towers and law firms, in the finance industry, and politics, and they're just as broken, sometimes more profoundly so than others.

Carey Nieuwhof: What are some of the issues then and now or that seem to be the serial offenders, the perpetual issues that keep coming up in people's lives, real lives?

Heather Zempel: Yeah, I appreciate you saying that and raising that, recognizing it. I think there is a spiritual poverty that happens at the upper levels of leadership. One of the things that we ... You mentioned earlier or we talked earlier about our protégé program. One of the things we want to do is capture leaders early on in their career. Because it's a lot easier to teach integrity to a 20-something and start a process of building that in their lives, than to try to reverse it when someone is in their 40s or 50s.

Heather Zempel: I think issues of ... This sounds so silly, but even just time management, priorities, walking in humility, recognizing that there doesn't have to be a distinction between humility and real hustle, how to grow out of a biblical worldview, that leadership is a good thing, that leadership was God ordained and God inspired, and God granted to us. So, it's not a bad thing to want leadership, to desire leadership, to be successful as a leader, but then how do you do that within a biblical construct? Those are some of the things that we find ourselves coming back to over and over again.

Heather Zempel: In DC in particular, we have a lot of people that you have young 20-somethings that come, and they become jaded very quickly. They came here to change the world and after two weeks of making coffee and making copies and filing things, they just become discouraged. Instead of digging deep to play the long game, they get really frustrated or they get jaded. Then some people get jaded by the whole power of thing. They come here. Power is addictive. People get drunk on power.

Heather Zempel: Those are some of the things that we're constantly trying to come back to and trying to remind people we're part of a larger kingdom, to celebrate the idea that we are bridge builders and peacemakers. Learning to listen, to understand, to lean in, and that we can make a difference in those places.

Carey Nieuwhof: I remember one of the conversations we had when I was in DC with you guys, I forget who said it. It might have been you, it might have been Mark, it might have been someone else. But the observation was made for your protégé program, which is basically your internship program for young adults on Capitol Hill, is that they usually do not need competency training. These are the best and the brightest. They've gone to the best schools, they've made it all the way to Washington on their own.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's not like, you should really study foreign policy a little deeper. That's not the issue. It's almost all character. It's some of the personal skills; time management, and I've taught on that with you guys. But time management, High Impact Leader stuff in my world, and then a lot of character development, is that absolutely still?

Heather Zempel: That is absolutely still accurate. Yeah, it's character, it's perseverance, it's patience. One of the things that we say a lot in protégé is that your character formation is way more important than your calling. What you've got to focus on

in your 20s is developing the character that you're going to need to sustain the calling that God's placed on your life.

Heather Zempel: The question with these 20-somethings is not do they have potential? Do they have a calling? Can they make a difference? It's, will they be people of integrity, and will they be leaders that are worth following? That's what we spend a lot of time investing in.

Carey Nieuwhof: On that, the popular perception of Washington for decades is that it's a moral cesspool, if I can use that phrase, is that fair? Is that harsh?

Heather Zempel: Yeah, absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: That whoever is sleeping with whoever, drinking drugs, you name it, it's going on there behind the scenes. What's your experience actually living on the hill? Is that a stereotype justified, unjustified? How do you work with people who are in the kind of context that you described?

Heather Zempel: Yeah, totally. Well, a lot of people get, I think their views of DC right now, not only from social media, but also from programming like the West Wing, or what's the one that's popular right now? I've never watched it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, Veep just finished its run, but I don't watch TV anymore. I really have to start. The last few years I've just dropped off.

Heather Zempel: There's another one that's wildly popular and everybody's going to dig me for not being able to-

Carey Nieuwhof: That will be in the comments, I promise you. Somebody will come to our rescue.

Heather Zempel: There's certainly that portrayal. I love the people that come to DC, particularly the young people, they're hopeful, they're inspired, they're inspiring. Certainly, there are things that we wrestle with. I don't know that some of the issues like sexuality and alcohol abuse and things like that are any worse here than they are anywhere else. I think pressures are stronger here or maybe different. Maybe I should say different. The pressures are different.

Heather Zempel: Sometimes people turn to those unhealthy habits as a way to self-medicate. But I have found ... One of the things I always want to tell people is, there are people in DC that love Jesus, that love the church, that want to make a difference. It's not this terrible place that is sometimes portrayed in the media or portrayed in the entertainment world.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, that's good to know. What are you learning in working with young leaders? First of all, we have a lot of young leaders listening to this podcast, and a lot of people working with young leaders in the marketplace and in the

church. What are some of the top things that you're focusing on right now, and what are the trends you're seeing in developing 20-something leaders?

Heather Zempel: Well, I love young leaders. Maybe that's obvious from some of the things that I do here at NCC. I'm constantly telling churches, sometimes as older leaders, we love to talk to one another about young leaders. The young leaders are in the room now. We need to let them talk about themselves. I think there's been a lot of us just ... We're like old people explaining this younger generation. I loved reading Dillon Smith's blog post a few weeks ago.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. My 20 year old staff member who posted on my blog. Yeah.

Heather Zempel: That was great. One of the things I've always valued about you, Carey, is that you platform young leaders and you give voice to young leaders, and you give young leaders the decision, you invite them to the table. That's what I keep telling us old leaders that we've got ... Let them lead, we can learn a lot. I think when you believe in someone, and you give away opportunity, you're going to build the trust.

Heather Zempel: I think sometimes we're afraid. If we let a young leader lead, and they're going to go rogue or go crazy, and then that's going to reflect badly on us. Sometimes that's true, I think we have to take that risk because somebody took that risk on us. I think that if we do those things, that builds trust. Then they're willing to listen. They know that they're going to fail, and they know when they fail. I think if we've done that hard work of taking the risk, making the sacrifice to give them the opportunity to lead, the trust is going to be built for us to then give feedback and speak into that. All that to say, I don't even remember now exactly what question you asked.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I love this. That is a great ... I'm going to call it a small rant. I love it, Heather. It's so good. Because you're right. The funny thing is, you're this 20-something, barely 20 in Washington DC writing policy for a US senator. A guy named Mark Batterson, who's still wearing suits because that's what you're supposed to do back in the day is a 20-something launching a church on Capitol Hill.

Carey Nieuwhof: The stuff that we did when we were younger, is insane. But there is a power grip, I think that Gen Xers and baby boomers have hung on to the we need to let go. We need to empower, enable, release the next generation. We learned so much of what we learned by trial and error.

Heather Zempel: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's where all my content comes from. Here's the 7,000 ways I've screwed up. Now, you don't have to.

Heather Zempel: Totally. I think that Gen Xers were the squeeze generation. We're in the middle. I think that might be part of the reason we have such a hard time. Because, first

of all, we're coming behind the baby boomers that were just such a huge generation. I think a lot of Gen Xers have this feeling that we didn't get our chance. Because the baby boomers hung in for so long, and now the millennials are coming up behind us. I get that.

Heather Zempel: But I think another thing we have to keep in mind is a lot of times, when we complain about the millennial generation, which one of the difficulties we have right now, I think in organizational leadership is we're dealing with two generations behind us now. There's the millennial generation and Gen Z. We lump them all together as the young people. I think that what we have to remember with generations coming behind us, the millennials have been the most probed, picked on generation ever.

Heather Zempel: People have loved to write about, talk about, complain about the millennial generation. I think we have to remember as leaders to make a distinction between what is a unique generational issue, and what is just a 20- something issue.

Carey Nieuwhof: A life stage issue for sure.

Heather Zempel: A life stage issue, exactly. Because I think sometimes we conflate those two things. Time Magazine actually did an article. I can maybe send a link to you for-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, send a link. We'll put it in the show notes.

Heather Zempel: Sometimes when I'm talking with other leaders about the millennial generation, I will read a quote from a Time Magazine article and it's about the new generation coming up. Everybody's nodding their heads and groaning and agreeing. Then you find out the article was actually written in 1985. Everybody thinks that the article is talking about the terrible millennial generation. When in actuality it was talking about the Gen X.

Heather Zempel: Just remembering that some things are life stage issues, and some things are unique generational issues, but trying to find a way to distinguish that it's important.

Carey Nieuwhof: I have not been able to successfully find this. Again, maybe a listener can come to my rescue. But I know a long time ago I heard this quote, and I'm pretty sure it'd be accurate. It was a quote about what's wrong with young people today? They wear their hair funny, they're lazy, they don't try much. It was like from Emperor Claudius in the Roman Empire-

Heather Zempel: Yes, I have heard that too.

Carey Nieuwhof: Have you heard that? I cannot find it.

Heather Zempel: Yes, absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: It is a perennial issue that one day the millennials will be wringing their hands over their children.

Heather Zempel: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's life. I say this just for the record in case you're tuning in for the first time, my entire team. I have no baby boomers on my team. I'm the only Gen Xer, and everybody else is millennial or Gen Z. So, I love it. They're doing a great job. They're fantastic. I love to talk about it because I like to pop the stereotypes.

Heather Zempel: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: You can find lazy baby boomers and lazy Gen Xers and you can find lazy millennials.

Heather Zempel: Absolutely, I totally agree with that.

Carey Nieuwhof: And highly motivated people. You give them real responsibility. Tell us what the protégé program involves. Are these people working full-time at Capitol Hill or they've taken a break to join your team.

Heather Zempel: Mostly, they take a break from whatever they're doing to join our team. They come from Capitol Hill. Some people now are coming from other places. We've had full-time youth pastors quit what they're doing and come work with us for a year-

Carey Nieuwhof: Because you have a national profile-

Heather Zempel: Yeah. People come from a number of different places for a number of different reasons. But the protégé program is a yearlong immersion experience at NCC. You're part of our full-time staff. We don't pay you. We give you a small stipend to live somewhere. It doesn't cover everything, but hopefully it helps. We let you learn in the trenches. There is a cohort model learning education piece to it, but most of it is just shoulder to shoulder mentoring within a department. We give protégés big projects.

Heather Zempel: At the end of the year, we can look back and we can put on a list of things that would not have happened at NCC without our protégés. Curriculum that wouldn't have gotten written, programs that wouldn't have been developed, ideas that wouldn't have come to fruition. We really want to deploy leaders for the local ... Not just the local church. Some of our protégés have gone on, they've actually learned they're not called to the local church. They're actually called to be entrepreneurs. They're called to go into politics, they're called to go around the world as missionaries. But we want to deploy young leaders that

have character to sustain the calling and that will have the character to do whatever it is that they're launched into.

Carey Nieuwhof: My son was an intern at Connexus. I still remember one day on the ride home, he said, "This is like the first responsibility I've ever had. If I don't do my job, bad things happen." I'm like, "Yeah, that's right. Church won't happen." That is a wonderful and terrifying thing to get as a young adult. But I think too often we just have them sit there, observe and do nothing. When they're extremely capable. You study history. By the age of 21, people have made inventions, discoveries, people are smarter than we give them credit for.

Heather Zempel: Absolutely. Totally, we want to ... We wouldn't be the church that we are without our protégés. They make us who we are. We love having people come be a part of that program.

Carey Nieuwhof: Let's talk about ministry on the hill, in Washington, DC. One of the things I've learned-

Heather Zempel: I think I laugh every time you say the hill. I just don't know what's going to hit me.

Carey Nieuwhof: Is that good, is it bad?

Heather Zempel: It's great. It's great. I love the hill. I love the hill.

Carey Nieuwhof: But I know one of the things that happens that surprised me is you have a turnover every time the government turns over. In other words, thousands of people get fired. They leave Washington, and then a whole new crew of people come in. You have people who are trying to do ministry or business in military towns and transient towns and DC would be chief among them. How do you do community with people who are working 100 hour weeks, traveling all over the place, and everybody gets fired every three years? How do you get them into groups?

Heather Zempel: Absolutely. Add to that chaos, also the academic calendar. There are so many universities in DC that we have people ... Some of our longest tenured NCCers are undergraduates, because we have them for four years. We've got a full four years with them. But our grad students are here for two or three. If you're on the hill, it might be two years. I knew a statistic at one point that six months was about the average lifespan for a hill staffer in a specific role.

Heather Zempel: Somebody might say on the hill for three or four years, but six months in one role. That's just a lot of moving around. Now, on one hand, we get asked a lot, "How have you done such a great job forming community in such a transient city?" On one hand, I think we actually have an unfair advantage, because people are most likely to get involved in something like a small group or connect to a Bible study or connect to a group when they're in the midst of a life change.

Heather Zempel: When you're first moving into a city, that's probably when you're most available, you've got the most ... Not that you have the most discretionary time, but you can prioritize your time differently. I think that we actually have a little bit of an unfair advantage because we're catching people at life transitions.

Carey Nieuwhof: All your patterns are broken, they say that.

Heather Zempel: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's like, well, I just moved, it's a new apartment, new job, I don't have a routine. To be able to put church into my routine, group into my routine, serving into my routine is easier now than if you've been in the same rut for 10 years.

Heather Zempel: Absolutely. I'd love to be able to say it's something awesome that we're doing. I think a lot of it is just catching people in transition seasons. I also think, and this is a new thing, Carey. I'm about to talk about something that I have very little data to support or experience with, but one of the things I'm hearing from the younger leaders is that it's less community that they're seeking. At least kids in the church, it is more discipleship. They're not wanting ... That's exciting to me, because we've always lead with the unique connection is the bait to get people connected either to serving or to small groups or Bible studies or whatever. But they're saying how do I operate within a biblical worldview? I've come to this city and I've been given this job that is overwhelming and a lot rests on it, and I don't know what I'm doing? So, how does my faith connect with my 9:00 to 5:00, or in this world by 24/7?

Heather Zempel: I think we're going to start leaning in a little bit more to hitting some harder topics and asking people to serve at a higher capacity and be accountable to a higher capacity. One of our best environments, and I'll share this because it might be exportable to other, particularly urban environments, city environments. We started something called Freshman of The City a few years ago. It was this realization that, now, this is for people that are full-time in their jobs. Many of them are on Capitol Hill, the administration, but they're new to the city. We realized that colleges, universities do a tremendous job in the first few months to orient freshmen to the campus. They want to generate cultural buy in, they want to set up students to succeed on the campus, to be able to play the long game for four years.

Heather Zempel: But then these students are leaving college and moving to cities and they have the same passion, the same excitement, but you've stripped away the dorm environment, you've stripped away the college or the department of the campus and kids are a little lost, they don't have anybody to orient them to their new life.

Heather Zempel: So, Freshman of The City is basically freshman orientation for kids that are new to Washington DC. It's everything from dealing with how do you ... I don't know that they do this as much anymore now, but in the early days, how do you

navigate the metro? What do you do when you go to the grocery store and you come back with a whole cart of groceries, but you got to somehow get all that on the metro and back to your apartment?

Heather Zempel: To maybe the more transformational stuff of what is a biblical worldview? What does it look like to grow as a person of character? How do you serve a boss that you don't like or maybe you disagree with? We give each freshman that comes in, they're put into a small group, and there's a mentor that walks with them for six months. Sometimes they're married couples, sometimes it's just singles that are working together as a mentor team. They walk with these freshmen for about three to four months and sometimes longer. It's a way to orient them to the city.

Heather Zempel: That's one of the most successful environments we have right now. We're finding more and more that we need to hit hard topics there that it's not just about the community aspect. It's about how do I do this in my day to day job?

Carey Nieuwhof: I wonder if that is the beginning of the edge of a cultural shift? There have been a couple times on this podcast and sometimes we get pretty angry emails when people question community or angry comments or that kind of thing. But is it that people are communitied out or they've got that in other areas of their life? Because the data would show that people have never felt more alone. You would think that they would want community, but you're saying the felt need seems to be more discipleship, tell us what we really believe.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm trying to figure that out. Maybe that's a harbinger of post-Christianity, that I don't know what we believe. I'm not very biblically literate, you need to help me. But I would also see community as a super high value as well. Can you pick that apart a little bit? Because I think there is something there that maybe we're all wrestling with, but nobody really understands.

Heather Zempel: Right. I've been wrestling with it for a few days in particular, because of a conversation I had with some younger leaders about community and discipleship. I wonder if some of it is in the church in particular, that we have over promised and under delivered in that area? So often, we've said, Get into a small group, you'll find your best friends. How often have we been in small groups that if we walk in on the first night and we think I've got to spend the rest of my life with these people, we're out-

Carey Nieuwhof: To be fair, that is biblical community, it is not all your best friends. Read I Corinthians, it's like, oh, all these crazy people. Hello.

Heather Zempel: What we've done is taught that. We've said, go to small groups, you'll find your best friends. We think it's just add water and stir, and these are people I'm going to enjoy hanging out with. We haven't taught the benefit of leaning into the other and intergenerational, I think even. I think there's some over promise, under deliver.

Heather Zempel: I wonder if community is one of those elusive things, that when you try to aim for that, you don't often get it. But if you aim for something different, community comes is part of the package. For instance, the kinds of communities that I tended to develop when I was really involved in small group, which I still am, but they were all face to face. I'm wondering now if building community around something that shoulder to shoulder is actually more powerful and sustaining and transformational in the long run. It's the reason that we see such tight community develop on missions teams, for instance.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Shoulder, you mean like a serving context kind of thing or a missional context?

Heather Zempel: Yes, it's the same context or being pointed in the same direction with something. Missional, purpose oriented, service oriented, you'll get community on the other side of that. I wonder if some of it is a younger generation coming up behind us, they don't just want to just sit around and talk, they want to go make a difference. The point of their engagement is not you need friends and community, but you have a purpose and a mission, and you need others to do that alongside. I think that might be another piece.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's good. I know for us and in our local context here at Connexus, we have some really good groups, we have some groups that have their challenges. But what has really surprised me in the last four or five years, is how much community has formed in the context of our volunteers. That sometimes, let's say you're serving in preschool. When a preschool teacher ends up in the hospital or they're not, they're small group leaders, but you know what I mean. When they end up in the hospital or their child is sick or something, it's often without a whole lot of prompting that that preschool group that gathers together will just rally behind that person, but that's shoulder to shoulder, that's not even an official group.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's interesting. Then what are the subjects that you're diving into more deeply now, when you talk about the desire for discipleship. What are you sensing the menu needs to be on that?

Heather Zempel: I think one piece of it, there's a desire for Biblical literacy. We started something a few years ago called The Story, which takes people through the chronological story of the Bible in three nights. So, you take the kings and put them into context ... I'm sorry, the major minor prophets, put them in context, the kings, the poetry and wisdom, literature and context with kings. Then the writings, the epistles in context with the book of Acts. There's been a hunger for that. Just knowing how all the pieces fit together.

Heather Zempel: For church kids, they've heard the stories, but it hasn't been put together. Then for non-church kids, they're finally getting what this is all about. But not only biblical literacy, but even how do you read the Bible? How do we approach this book? How does this book written thousands of years ago connect to my life

today? How do we ... Things like historical context, cultural context, spiritual context of ancient Judaism versus 1st century Judaism of Jesus. All of those things, people seem to be eating up.

Heather Zempel: Then along with that, spiritual disciplines, some of them that are very opposite of pace of life in DC. Things like listening prayer, contemplative practices, Sabbath, silent retreats have become ... Some of these things, they're not even part of our program, yet. We're just paying attention to where there's energy, and where things tend to be bubbling up. Silent retreats have become very popular it seems.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, they're popular in the mainstream world too. There are secular silent retreats. You see those things and I think it is a counterpoint to the overwhelm we're all feeling, and our phone buzzing 1,000 times a day in our pocket.

Heather Zempel: Totally.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm glad you're paying attention to that. Because for those of you who know or don't know NCC, you guys are classically you would say you're an attractional church, that's generally the model, a little bit charismatic. One thing that really impressed me, I wrote, I didn't attribute it to your church, but it certainly has been a factor in my writing, and thinking about where church is going.

Carey Nieuwhof: You guys have always done what I just call, maybe you have a better name for ministry moments. I was at your broadcast location, and Joel Schmidgall the campus pastor got up. He just prayed for people like the old time, old school. Maybe some of you, you're having a hard time. I'm just going to pray for you right now.

Carey Nieuwhof: It was really powerful. It was a really powerful moment. Can you talk a little bit about that and how that's addressing the needs of young adults?

Heather Zempel: Yeah, I think sometimes ... Well, one of the things that we know we have to create is a place of transcendence, a place that feels different from the day to day. We want to create a place where people, they know they're connecting with the holy. By that, I don't necessarily mean something that's rigid, but something that's other, that's different, that's a little bit distant, but at the same time also the eminent.

Heather Zempel: I don't think Pastor Mark would talk about it this way, but I think about it in terms of transcendence and eminence, and we need both. We need to usher people into both of those places. We think that breaking the routines is important to making those things happen. Whether it's having those old school ministry moments, or sometimes it's the opposite, it's bringing something into an experience that people might not consider initially to be a spiritual thing or a church thing, but we know that God's truth is everywhere. So, redeeming everything. Oh, go ahead.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, I was going to say, do you have an example of that before we move on?

Heather Zempel: Yeah. This is an old school example, actually, this was pretty popular in churches in the '80s, but we just did it a couple weekends ago at our new Capitol Hill campus. We had a guy that painted through the entire service. For some people that's like, oh, yeah, churches were doing that 20 years ago. For other people that's like, wow, there's somebody painting in the service, what is that about?

Heather Zempel: But using that as another way to express worship as another way to connect with the message. We encourage people to observe lent, to practice lent, which is not something that is necessarily normal in our particular tradition, but it's another way to break routine. We'll regularly call people to seasons of prayer and fasting. Those things are resonating.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, yeah. No, I see that. That's good. You were going to say something else. So thank you for clarifying that.

Heather Zempel: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. Now, you also are part of the teaching team at NCC.

Heather Zempel: Yep.

Carey Nieuwhof: You've been doing that for over a decade. What are some ... Anything you want to share from your teaching area about what seems to be connecting, what's not connecting anymore, how you're changing and growing as a communicator? Heather's a powerful communicator, by the way.

Heather Zempel: Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Really great.

Heather Zempel: Thanks. I appreciate that. I don't know if it's just the young adults I'm running with, or if this is a larger trend, it's something I'm trying to pay attention to. Our preaching used to be very felt need based, very story driven. I think there are two ways of storytelling. I think there's the cute anecdote that paints a nice little picture of the point we're trying to make, and then there's storytelling that actually draws people in and without them noticing what we're doing, we're making a point moving them in a direction. That kind of storytelling is resonating.

Heather Zempel: I think the cute anecdote that paints a picture that you hang as an ornament on the point of the tree you're trying to make isn't as effective anymore. But I'm seeing more and more hunger to just open up the text and dive in without a lot of upfront dog and pony show or giving you a reason why this is important. It's

like, let's open up the scriptures and dive in. Let's talk about the historical context, the cultural context, what's going on, that makes this makes sense.

Heather Zempel: I'm sure that that differs from location to location and community to community, but those are some of the things that we're experimenting with a little bit more here. The other thing I'm seeing is, having a greater level or comfort level with being in a place of the gray space. Not being able to answer every question, not tying it up in a bow in the end. To live with a little bit of tension and conflict and discomfort. I'll give them for instance.

Heather Zempel: Again, you're going to find people on both sides of this. But a couple years ago, we did a sermon series, God In The Hands Of Angry People. That is one of our most popular sermon series we've done. The idea that what happens when the idea of God or religion or spirituality gets in the hands of really angry people, and they abuse it?

Heather Zempel: What I was assigned with was talking about the God of the Old Testament, and why that God has caused problems for people. I talked about the genocide that we see in Joshua, and how do you handle that? How do you reconcile that with a loving God? What I did in the message, and I'm going to get in trouble with your podcast listeners or some of them, I'm sure. But what I did was I said, hey, here's four or five different ways of understanding this. This is four or five different ways that we can interpret this, that we can understand it, that we can make sense of it. But at the end of the message, I didn't give an answer. I didn't reveal my cards, where I personally leaned. I didn't give an answer to what you should think. I just said, here are tools that we can employ to be good students of Scripture, and to be good theologians.

Heather Zempel: I think that's what most people are craving for is not necessarily teach me what to think, but teach me how to think. That's a really long answer to your question.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, I love that.

Heather Zempel: Walk alongside me while I do it. Now, I will say we did have at least one person leave the church because they said, "I don't want a guide from the side, I want to Sage from the stage. I want somebody to tell me what to believe." But I think in our context, that's more the exception than the rules. think the more we can lean in to teaching people how to think and walking alongside them as they do that instead of teaching them what to think is a difference that I'm seeing.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's incredible. To me, what I hear you doing and what I hear you saying in our conversation, it sounds like NCC is doing a really good job of figuring out in real time how to reach a post Christian culture. I know in Canada, that would resonate. Now, there are things you're just clear on. But you can read five conservative commentaries on any of those passages you would preach on, and give five different angles. It's not like there is one thing, and nuance is actually

appealing to unchurched people and to Christians who are like, oh, well, if the Bible ... I think it was Calvin who said if the Bible's clear, be clear. If it's not, you don't need to be.

Heather Zempel: Yeah, absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: He clears the scripture as, at times it's crystal clear and sometimes it's like well, we don't 100% know what to do with that.

Heather Zempel: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's okay to say that.

Heather Zempel: Absolutely. I think it's actually necessary to say that is communicators in today's environment. I think it builds a level of trust with people that you're leading. It also gives them confidence that I can study this too. I don't have to have it all figured out. I don't have to have all the answers. I don't have to come to a firm conclusion the first time I read it, that it's an invitation to a journey.

Heather Zempel: One of the things that I love about NCC is we have a teaching team. I'm probably going to lean in a little bit more to that kind of nerd level, academic, here's the culture, here's the history, here's what different theologians say, let's wrestle with this. Then Mark Batterson comes in, such an amazing storyteller. You're going to learn a lot about history, contemporary history, and you're going to learn a lot about culture and a lot of different things listening to Mark preach.

Heather Zempel: Then you've got Job. It's like, "Hey, guys, let's go out and do this. If we're not doing it. It doesn't make a difference." I think there's value in having different voices. I think it's Jeff Henderson that talks about different styles of communicators. There's the vision caster, there's the storyteller. I think when you have a teaching team, you're able to capture ... As a communicator, I don't have to be all things to all people, I just do my thing, and then the team fills it out and rounds it out. I think that's a strength of what we're doing at NCC, because we are drawing a lot of different people from a lot of different backgrounds. We're a bit of a melting pot. I think the teaching team is a strength.

Carey Nieuwhof: Heather, anything else you want to share with us? This has been so rich.

Heather Zempel: Oh, man. I think if you're a leader that is leading young adults, man, encourage them, give them a voice, give them a platform. Read Dillon's blog post on Carey's blog. If you are a young leader, I just encourage it, man, hang in there, play the long game. Have patience, perseverance. Don't trade what you want 20 years from now for what you want right in the moment. You're going to do good, you're going to make it.

- Carey Nieuwhof: Sounds like a good word, don't trade what you want 20 years from what you want right in the moment, for what you want in the moment. That's well said. Heather, it's been a joy. You've also written a couple of books. Tell us about them.
- Heather Zempel: I have. Well, I've written two books that are about small groups and community that probably need to be rewritten now.
- Carey Nieuwhof: That's life, right?
- Heather Zempel: One is titled, Community Is Messy. That's a little bit of our story and journey at NCC. It's primarily for small group pastors, as they're thinking about how to create environments of community at their church. Then the most recent one is, Big Change Small Groups from our friends at Orange. It's taking some of their lead small principles and growing them up to adult small group settings. Those are both group related. Then I've got a book called, Amazed And Confused. It's on the book of Habakkuk.
- Heather Zempel: Carey, I tend to write for the smallest audiences imaginable. Like small group pastors and people that read the book of Habakkuk.
- Carey Nieuwhof: So, for all three of you? No, I'm kidding. There's a lot of small group pastors. But that's awesome.
- Heather Zempel: Exactly. But Amazed and confused is what do you do when God's actions don't seem to match His character? What do you do when God doesn't act the way you think He could or should? That's what I've written.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Well, we will link to all of that in the show notes. Heather, I want to thank you so much for being with us. I'm looking forward to our next gathering. I think I'm in DC with you guys again in October.
- Heather Zempel: You are.
- Carey Nieuwhof: I can't wait for that. It's going to be the best. So, thank you.
- Heather Zempel: So exciting. Well, thank you so much for having me on the program. This has been a huge ... Your podcast is a huge blessing to me as a leader. So, it's an honor to be here.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Well, you've blessed a lot of people today. Thanks, Heather.
- Heather Zempel: Thanks, Carey.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Man, I love the eclectic and rather unpredictable nature of that conversation. If you want more, we've got show notes and transcripts, also some fun ways to

share the podcast too if you follow me on social, on Instagram in particular, but also Twitter and Facebook, you'll see some really cool new graphics we're putting together. Feel free to copy those and share them on your platform as well as you help us get the word out.

Carey Nieuwhof: You can find everything in the show notes at [careynieuwhof.com/episode ...](http://careynieuwhof.com/episode...) What are we at? 281. Or go to leadlikeneverbefore.com and just search Heather's Zempel's name in the search engine. That'll do it too. I'm really pumped about our lineup. It just keeps getting better and better. I'm pinching myself because we've got NT Wright, John Townsend, J.D Greear just confirmed to be on the podcast, David Platt is talking about his new book, Max Lucado, Jeff Henderson. I think Louie Giglio, Mark Batterson, Gordon MacDonald. Yeah, it's going to be a great lineup coming up. If you subscribe, you get that all for free.

Carey Nieuwhof: Next week, I am actually going to be talking to the former CEO of SeaWorld and Saab and Herschend Entertainment. His name is Joel Manby, I've known Joel for years. We talk about the ups and downs and the struggle of leading through challenges. It's powerful. Listen in.

Joel Manby: I think because my dad was blue collar, and we grew up on the lower side of the tracks, I was always good at being able to talk to the chairman, but also the frontline worker. That differentiated me from a lot of different people. What I found I was really bad at was setting boundaries. I listened too much to too many different people, and I cared too much about what the external world thought. At the end of the day, and we'll get to this, and this is a big point to make, I believe it cost me my marriage because I listened to too many different voices, I worked too long, I didn't fulfill that commitment in my marriage. I should have listened always to my internal voice and not the voice of anybody else.

Carey Nieuwhof: Anyway, that is next Tuesday on the podcast. Make sure you register for Orange Tour this fall. Go to orangetour.org. Use the coupon code Carey, and futureforwardchurches.com/theconference and we can hang out in Pittsburgh October 1st and 2nd. Remember, LifeWay this month incredible gift. You get my book, you get unlimited access for \$399, you get that rate forever. Ministrygrid.com/carey to take advantage of that.

Carey Nieuwhof: I really do appreciate you guys listening. Thanks for listening. Thanks for sharing. I really do hope that this has been a good investment of your time and I hope it's helped you lead like never before.

Announcer: You've been listening to the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership podcast. Join us next time for more insights on leadership, change and personal growth to help you lead like never before.