

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. And now, your host, Carey Nieuwhof.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, hey, everybody, and welcome to episode 296 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. I am so excited to have my good friend, Mark Batterson, back on the podcast. He's been on a few times before. He's a New York Times best selling author, also an exceptional visionary. So, he went into Washington DC in 1996, planted a church that really didn't take off for a few years and now reaches thousands of people across multiple locations and has had a profound impact on one of America's most important cities.

Carey Nieuwhof: We talk about that, but what I love ... and you'll hear this sort of fresh direction as I do more and more in person interviews, but Mark and I talk about a particularly difficult time in his ministry a number of years ago, where it wasn't going well at home, and his wife, Lora, who Toni and I know quite well, kind of said, "Hey. I didn't sign up for this," and it changed Mark profoundly. Any of us who have led with some intensity, you know, whether that's through growth or you're just a driven person, yeah, sometimes that creates problems at home. How do you respond? Mark talks pretty upfront about that.

Carey Nieuwhof: He's also got a brand new book that's out today, called Double Blessing, and we'll touch on that. He's written I think 17 books, plus lots of ancillary books. My goodness. His books are now in the hands of over 6 million people. It's crazy, crazy. I'm so glad to be with Mark. We actually had dinner with him and Lora. Then I went over to his office. For those of you who follow me on Instagram, you might have caught that tour of his office, which was really cool. He's read thousands of books. So, we kind of did that while I was there, and happy to bring you this conversation.

Carey Nieuwhof: Also, remember, we've got the brand new feature this month called Ask Carey, so listen to the very end. Mark talks about how he created some boundaries. One of the questions from ... Actually, I get this one all the time, but this particular one was from Andrew, who wanted to know, "Have you ever taken a sabbatical, and what do you think about them?" So, I'll answer that at the very end of this episode, before I sign off.

Carey Nieuwhof: Hey. Speaking of things that are really important, have you actually put together a website for your church that is, well, somewhat 2019/2020? You know, right, that nobody really comes to your church without checking out your website or your social presence. So, our friends, Pro Media Fire, have launched a brand new service this month, called Pro WebFire. They will design, get this, a custom website for you. They'll manage it every week. In addition, they'll handle your Facebook, Instagram, YouTube ads. All of that will drive visitors into your church throughout the year.

Carey Nieuwhof: The pricing is super simple. Everything's included, and you get a new, custom website every three years. Trust me. If you've ever tried to rebuild your website, you know how complicated that is. So, because you listen to this podcast, you can get a launch special of up to 30% off for life, depending on the plan. So, no upfront cost, 30% for life, only until October 31st, by going to ProWebFire.com/Carey. That's ProWebFire.com/Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: As you plan for 2020, have you checked out the Red Letter Challenge yet? You probably heard back in the day of Rick Warren's 40 days of Purpose and how that revolutionized things. Well, I'll tell you. Zach Zehnder has put together, in The Red Letter Challenge, more than just a 40 day challenge for your church. It's a simple discipleship tool that will help you encourage your people, like across the board, kids, adults, everybody, on how to follow and implement the words of Jesus. So, I asked Zach, I said, "Hey. The Red Letter Challenge has been out for almost two years. What are some of the stories you're hearing from people who have taken their entire congregations through the Red Letter Challenge?" Here's what Zach had to say.

Zach Zehnder: Yeah. We've seen a few hundred churches go through it so far. Thus far, probably one of the greatest things is the pastors love is their small groups grow. We've seen little to large churches grow in their small groups by an average of 40%. We've also seen churches that didn't have small groups launch with small groups. So, they'll see that, but also what pastors love about it is it gives people an opportunity to actually do the words of Jesus together. So, pastors can actually sort of objectively feel like where they're strong and weak in regards to what Jesus asked of his disciples. It provides a really great tool for people to follow after Jesus on a daily basis.

Zach Zehnder: So, those are some of the things that ... We've also got lots of personal stories, you know, of people that have never fasted before that are fasting. We've had stories of two sisters that were having a problem and hadn't spoken to each other for years, but during the week of forgiveness that we focus on one of those sisters reached out, and they rekindled that relationship. We've seen stories of people going out, in the week of going, of actually going and sharing their testimony and making a difference in someone's life. So, little stories to big stories, we've seen them all.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, if you want to see small groups soar, if you're looking for a turnkey resource for the entire church, adults, children, small groups, and everything, head on over to RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey. There are packages ready to go for you. Small church, you can start with as little as 10 copies. You've got a big church, you can get 1,000 or more or custom plans. Going to that link, RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey, will get you up to 10 to 40% off, depending on the package that you choose. So, they would love to be able to serve you at RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey and get your church in a whole new place when it comes to the teachings and the example of Jesus in 2020.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I'm not going to wait a whole lot longer to jump into my conversation with the pastor of National Community Church, New York Times best selling author, Mark Batterson. We pick up the conversation in his office in DC. Well, here I am with Mark Batterson in DC. It's nice to actually do an interview with you on your turf, my friend.

Mark Batterson: It is. Here we are hanging out in my office.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Which has apparently no name, I just learned. It's a really cool office. If you've ever seen this ... We'll post pictures. How many books are in here?

Mark Batterson: You know what? I don't know the count on this.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. There's a lot.

Mark Batterson: I've read thousands, but this might be ... You know, it's a fraction. These are the ones that make the cut. Now, I will say that when people stand outside, look up into this second story window, people often ask about the bookstore upstairs.

Carey Nieuwhof: A bookstore upstairs.

Mark Batterson: Because we're above Ebenzers Coffee House, so our customers walk in, they get their coffee, and they think there's a bookstore up here. Nope.

Carey Nieuwhof: It would be a great bookstore.

Mark Batterson: It would be.

Carey Nieuwhof: I mean, you have a lot, and you have pretty eclectic taste. We talked about this in previous episodes, but pretty eclectic. Okay. So, here's a question that wasn't on the list I sent you. Desert island, you can only bring 10 books. Yeah. I know. This is mean. Right? It's like people asking me, "Pick your favorite podcast episode you've ever done out of 300." But you have thousands of books here. Obviously the Bible, but aside from the Bible, are there a couple that you're like, "Oh. I don't know how I'd survive without these books"?

Mark Batterson: Yeah. There are books that I go back to all the time. There on the shelf is Book of Legends. It's a compilation of stories from the Talmud and the Mishnah. I love that backstory to the Old Testament. I'm probably going to take a Tozer.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh. Right. A. W. Tozer.

Mark Batterson: I'm probably going to take a Gladwell. I'm going to take something maybe from physics and neurology. You know, I think every ology is a branch of theology, so I love reading across disciplines.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. You do.

Mark Batterson: Cross pollinating.

Carey Nieuwhof: It shows up in your writing all the time.

Mark Batterson: Yeah. I'm definitely going to take some history, Doris Kearns.

Carey Nieuwhof: Which book from her? We're trying to get her on the show. You can help me.

Mark Batterson: The World War II book on Roosevelt. I forget the title. Fantastic. You know what? Even David McCullough. Just read The Pioneers with kind of westward expansion. I'm interested in everything.

Carey Nieuwhof: McCullough's a great writer. Have you read The Wright Brothers?

Mark Batterson: Oh, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: That is such a ... I don't know why. It's just such a beautifully written book.

Mark Batterson: Yup. This is my backstory. You know, I started pastoring at 25, so very little life experience. I needed to borrow experience, and so that's when I heard that a book, on average, an author puts about two years of life experience into a book.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Mark Batterson: So, I did the math. I thought if I read 250 books this year, I've gained 500 years of life experience. So, I read 3,000 books before I wrote one.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. Just a second. You just said if I read how many books this year?

Mark Batterson: Well, if you read 250 books-

Carey Nieuwhof: This year.

Mark Batterson: Yeah. ... then you've-

Carey Nieuwhof: Can you unpack that?

Mark Batterson: Well, yeah. I was pastoring 19 people. I had time on my hands.

Carey Nieuwhof: Everyone was well visited. Right?

Mark Batterson: Yes. So, in the early years of pastoring, that was my average pace. It's nowhere near that now.

Carey Nieuwhof: No. I get that, but how do you read 250 books?

Mark Batterson: You didn't have social media, and I would say, listen, put a book in your bathroom. Everybody can read a book a month. Some people have more potential than that.

Carey Nieuwhof: I've been thinking about that. You know? I've been hesitant to put this on social, but I'm convinced that 80% of social media happens in the bathroom. I think that's actually true.

Mark Batterson: I think you're right.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, if you sub out some of that social media habits for book reading, then your life is probably going to be better, because you're working on books, rather than, oh, what's so-and-so saying on Instagram?

Mark Batterson: Yeah. Take away smartphones. I mean, when I started pastoring, I didn't have one.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. How do you use your phone now? I mean, we're going to talk about it, but you're in this massive building project. You're opening up new locations. You're writing and launching books. How do you use social media? How do you use your phone?

Mark Batterson: Well, I mean, for me Instagram is a photo picture book. I'll go back at the end of the year and look at those pictures, and it jogs my memory. It's a way that I journal with pictures. Then I let, you know, thousands of people be a part of that process. Now, I follow very few people on Twitter and on Instagram. It really is family, and staff, and then a few friends, but I found it becomes a vortex I get sucked into if it's this constant flow of pictures and tweets.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. So, do you intentionally limit yourself?

Mark Batterson: I do. If I felt like the negatives outweighed the positives, I would quit, just like I at one point quit blogging, because-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Yeah. We were talking about that. Let's talk about strategic quitting. I have a friend of mine, Kevin Jennings, who said, "Carey, you're really good at quitting things." I'm like, "That sounds bad, but it's actually good." We were talking. We had dinner last night, you and Lora, Toni, and I, and talking even this morning. I've shared this before on the podcast, but you were one of the first bloggers I started reading in the early 2000s. There was the story of National Community Church in Washington DC, trying to make a difference in the city. I mean, you were a near daily read for me. Then all of a sudden ... You were telling me, before we started recording, that you had, the final year that you shut down your blog, how many page views did you have, or how many visits to your website did you have?

Mark Batterson: Yeah. 15,000 or 15 ... I'm sorry. 15 million hits.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's a bit of a difference. 15 million hits.

Mark Batterson: I think the uniques were they might have been half a million.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. But it doesn't matter. I mean, that's a lot of traffic. And this is years ago. This isn't even today.

Mark Batterson: Yeah. It's more than a decade ago.

Carey Nieuwhof: More than a decade ago you shut it down. Why did you shut that down?

Mark Batterson: I couldn't keep up. I was pastoring a growing church that was going multi-site, was writing a book a year, was taking way too many speaking requests, and frankly at one point my wonderful wife said, "This isn't what I signed up for." Thank God for a wife who is loving enough to speak truth, because I don't even know if I would still be here, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Mark Batterson: So, I've put some boundaries in place. One is that I wouldn't do more than 12 overnight speaking trips.

Carey Nieuwhof: I remember when you made that change. Now, of course, until recently I didn't know the story behind that change.

Mark Batterson: Yeah. So, I just had to dial it back. You know, I had to define some things. One, I want to be famous in my home. Well, it's hard to be famous in your home if you aren't home. Then I defined success, that for me it's when those who know me best respect me most. That's my wife and my kids. So, I had to make some tough choices that I need to dial back a few things. One of those things, the blogging, became more of a daily pressure or stressor while trying to write books, and I just decided I can't do it just because of the number of hits or followers. Something has to give, and that's what I decided to dial back on.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm not sure most people would take that radical action. They might say, "Well, honey, what if I did 25 speaking engagements a year? What if I only blogged once a month?", but you kind of quit cold turkey. I mean, you went from whatever you were doing ... like once a month is different. I remember when you made that change, because I think we knew each other by then. It was once a month. That's it. Did you suffer from FOMO, fear of missing out? Were you nervous when you went from 15 million blog hits a year to, hey, now I'm not producing content there. What happens to my book sales? What happens to all of that? Were you not worried that the universe was going to collapse in on you?

Mark Batterson: I was worried. I'm a type three on the Enneagram, so I'm a performer, and I'm pretty driven. So, very, very difficult to do that. You know what I had to do, Carey, was I had to Jedi mind trick myself. I have a hard time saying no to requests to meet with me. Well, I can barely keep up with our staff, you know, and then beyond that ... I'll give you an example. I had to do the math, that if we spend a half hour together one-on-one, there's unique value there, but I spend 30 minutes with thousands of people now when I speak. So, I had to do the math and realize that if you add up the number of people times that half hour, it's almost three months of time per message. So, I did the math, and then I did the same thing with books. The Circle Maker I think is more than a millennium now, and so the time I-

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. Just unpack that for a second. What do you mean more than a millennium? Because it sold so many copies.

Mark Batterson: So, number of books sold times five hours. That's a fast read. That's a fast reader, but let's call it five hours of reading time. You take the number of books times those hours and it adds up to more than a millennium.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Mark Batterson: What that did is, I feel this guilt when I say no to people, but I had to realize, as Andy Stanley says, "Saying yes to one thing is saying no to something else." So, if I say yes to every half hour meeting, then I'm cheating the thousands of people that I'm speaking to on the weekend or I'm not going to have the time to read a book, which I think is my high leverage point in terms of influence. So, I hope that makes sense. But as someone that is a type three performer, I've had to do the math in a way that convinces myself that it's okay.

Carey Nieuwhof: No. That's good. We all have our own methods, don't we? By the way, we are in downtown DC. We are like a stones throw from the Capitol, the US Capitol. So, if you're hearing that buzz in the background, that's just an air conditioning unit. If you hear sirens, we're actually-

Mark Batterson: Probably a motorcade.

Carey Nieuwhof: Probably a motorcade. Right. Exactly. Probably a motorcade.

Mark Batterson: It's our way of life here.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. I want to go back. You use this math, because in previous conversations I've seen you talk about it, where you're like, "Okay. If I read a book, that's like two years of life experience, so if I read 250 books, it's X number of years I've added to my life," and that kind of thing. That math really informs your decision making on a number of levels, like it keeps popping up.

Mark Batterson: It does, because I have to convince myself. I think my default setting is yes, and my default setting is people pleaser. So, I've had to come up with these little tricks that keep me honest. In fact, I'll give you one more. This is me kind of pulling the curtain, but I told our stewardship team, "You need to tell me that I can't be on more than three boards at one time."

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. Like boards of directors.

Mark Batterson: Yeah. Because I'm not good at saying no. So, I need to put rules in place, whether it's the boundaries of 12 overnight speaking trips, or three board commitments at a time, or even my weekly calendar and the number of appointments and days that there's study days. I have to make no apologies for that, because I'm holding thousands of people captive for a half hour. I do not want to waste their time. I want to leverage it. So, all of those have been mechanisms that have helped me honestly keep my sanity.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Two questions. How long do you think ...? Had you not made those changes, what would have happened to you? What would have happened at home? What would have happened to the church, if you didn't put those, or even your writing, those boundaries in place?

Mark Batterson: Well, I love counterfactual theory. It's my favorite branch of history.

Carey Nieuwhof: There you go.

Mark Batterson: What would have happened if this had happened or had not happened. It scares me. It sobers me. What I know for sure is I would have tremendous regrets, because I would have cheated the people that mean the most to me, and that is my wife and my three children. Listen, I love our church, but they can find another pastor. One of my heroes is Peter Marshall. He pastored New York Avenue Presbyterian here in DC. In the 40s, people would line up down the block, around the block. I mean, it was one of the first megachurches in the country. He went on to be the senate chaplain, a wonderful, Scottish preacher. He at one point in his ministry, Carey, hit a spot where he had to take a time out, just physically fatigued, mentally fatigued, and had to get on the sidelines for a season. When he came back, someone asked him the question, "What did you learn?" Peter Marshall said, "I learned that the Kingdom of God goes on without Peter Marshall."

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. Wow.

Mark Batterson: I remind myself of that all the time. You know, on one level we have this core value. You're invaluable and irreplaceable. There never has been, never will be anyone like you. No one can take your place, but in another sense, listen, I think we've got to realize that the Kingdom of God is bigger, and longer, and stronger than Mark, and Carey, and Peter, and Andy, and anybody else's name you want to fill in that blank with.

Carey Nieuwhof: You know, Toni and I had a moment where ... because things are complicated, like in leadership they just get complicated. You're on the road all the time. You're doing episodes. You're writing. You've got book deadlines, the whole deal. We sat down last week at my house, in my backyard. My assistant, Sarah, came over. Toni was there. We spread 2020. We actually printed out a calendar. I hadn't done that in years, years, printed out the calendar, set it out over the table, and started planning out. You know, it's complicated. It's like playing chess. Right? It's like, okay, what move here? What move there?

Carey Nieuwhof: Then we go to the end of June next year, and the calendar opened up. There was nothing there, and I said, "Well, I've got speaking engagements in the summer. I've said no to everything. We haven't really mapped out the fall. I've got a few things for 2021, but ..." I thought Toni was going to cry. It was just a reminder. And cry, because, oh, we have breathing room? Oh. We have a break? Oh. There's no demands? Like there's an end in sight? It was a really good reminder for me ... We just put our boat away. Right? You and I are both boaters. Unfortunately, the boat tells you how much you used it. It has that little hour meter. Right?

Mark Batterson: It does. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: The weather wasn't fully cooperative. We had a better summer last summer, but, I mean, I used it a 30% of what I used it the previous two summers. To me that's a little alarm bell. Now, I was writing a manuscript, writing a brand new book, ironically on time management, one, by the way, that you, Mark Batterson, last time I was here ... Right? Do you remember that?

Mark Batterson: Yes. I remember it well.

Carey Nieuwhof: ... spoke to your staff.

Mark Batterson: I said, "That is a book."

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Well, it is. It just took a few years. So, thank you. Thank you, my friend.

Mark Batterson: Well, thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. But I'm saying all that to say, yeah, I think ... I'm talking to myself here. This is good, free therapy. I want to go back to where we started. What is your reading discipline today, and how do you get through this many books?

Mark Batterson: Well, I mean, it's so many books, so little time. I have to read really strategically now. I set a pretty high bar. If I get into a book and I'm not underlining, I'm not putting an asterisk on the side, I'm not leafing over the page, if I'm through the first chapter and I'm not doing that, I'm probably putting it down.

Carey Nieuwhof: You're done. Yeah. So, you read strategically. It's like just because I started, I don't have to finish.

Mark Batterson: Yeah. As a writer, I hold myself to the same standard. I know I have to hook people at the beginning of every single chapter. I work hard at it. I would say half of the effort is on the first portions of a book.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you do that? How do you hook people?

Mark Batterson: Well, I think it's about organizing metaphors. It's why the parables are so brilliant. You know, about 250 words on average, but read them once, you remember them forever, because Jesus was so good at taking ordinary things and then equating them to spiritual truth. You know? Faith is like a mustard seed. You know, these are so simple, but so good. So, as I like to say, it's not rocket surgery. You start with a story. That's what hooks people's minds. It's usually history, or science, or even something from my personal life. You start with something strong, a metaphor at the beginning of the chapter, and then you tease it out the rest of the chapter.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Do you read every day?

Mark Batterson: I mean, yeah. I think it's a daily discipline from scripture, and then when I'm in a writing season, it alters a little bit-

Carey Nieuwhof: Of course. Yeah.

Mark Batterson: ... because it's more I have a stack of books that I know are going to make it into the end notes. Then I'm referencing what I've already read. You know, one thing we did this year was Lauren and I took a week and really called it a reading vacation. You know, Bill Gates has done this for a long, long time, and so we kind of picked up on that idea.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. He's voracious.

Mark Batterson: He is. Just read and mixed in a few hikes and a few meals. I think you have to game plan it though and be strategic. I think we have an unfair advantage, as preachers, because there's always a series coming, and so generally I'm reading strategically to kind of prep myself for whatever it is that we may be talking about. So, if we're going to do a series on mental health or trauma, well, I'm going to pick up a book like the Body Keeps Score, and I'm going to read it in a way that helps me have a better understanding of the people that I'm going to be talking to.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, as a content producer, as somebody who writes books, writes messages 25 times a year, who speaks on occasion, do you find that there is a correlation between what you can output and what you input? I think about that a lot, because sometimes I find my well getting a little dry, and I think, "Oh. I'm short

on input. I've been outputting too long, and there's not enough coming in the hopper."

Mark Batterson: Yeah. There's definitely a balance there. I think I had so much input in my early years with ... If you read 3,000 books before you write one, you still have some leftover content. The thing I would warn leaders about, and especially communicators, and we actually talked about this a little bit, you can go back to the same well. We have hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds of manuscripts that we can go back to and just kind of dust off and be a little bit lazy. Now, I would say that there are some things you need to come back to consistently, because you need to say it seven times for people to hear it, but I am a learner, Strengths Finder, and ideation is way up there. So, if I'm not thinking new thoughts, if we aren't innovating, I'm bored, and I feel stagnant spiritually. So, for me that's the engine that really drives it. I describe it as holy curiosity. It's Albert Einstein. He said, "Never lose a holy curiosity." That phrase, that juxtaposition of holy curiosity is one of my all time favorite phrases.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, Mark, you've been leading the same people, same city 23 years now?

Mark Batterson: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Wow. How do you keep fresh? How do you keep renewing your energy, your drive, your vision, your passion? How do you keep that strong for so long in one place with one people?

Mark Batterson: Yeah. Well, R.T. Kendall said, "Sometimes the greatest opposition to what God wants to do next comes from those who are on the cutting edge of what God did last." That's a constant warning to me, because we've been early innovators on a lot of different fronts, from meeting in movie theaters to podcasting to blogging. But here's the deal. Every new wineskin eventually becomes an old wineskin. So, I don't think you can ever settle in for too long. The truth is we have a vision that is going to take longer than my lifetime to accomplish. I think when you have a God-size vision, it gets you up in the morning. It keeps you up at night. And you never get bored. So, I think you need a vision that's beyond your ability, that's beyond your experience, and we're doing some things right now that honestly sometimes I falter under the weight a little bit, because they're pretty big dreams. I'm sure we'll talk about some of them.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Can you give us just a snapshot of some of the things that you're seeing, and building, and imagining?

Mark Batterson: Yeah. Well, 13 years ago, turning a crack house into the Ebenezer's Coffee House-

Carey Nieuwhof: Where you are right now.

Mark Batterson: ... where we are right now, you know, that seemed huge. It was a \$2.7 million vision. But the way you steward miracles is you believe God for bigger and better miracles. So, then we did a \$5.5 million dream center in Ward 7, where we're mentoring and discipling kids. I'll be honest though, Carey, I didn't have a category for a city block. We bought what was an 1891 Navy Yard car barn and purchased it for \$29.3 Million.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Mark Batterson: Didn't have a category for it. We're through a phase one building project that's an event venue. Then phase two is a child development center. That's one of the mayor's top initiatives, because we're not just trying to build a church. We're trying to bless a city to the third and fourth generation. Then phase three is a make use marketplace and coworking space. These are expressions of our core convictions that the church belongs in the middle of the marketplace. But here's the reality. We are so far past our pay grade, and this is something that we have the real sense it's not for us, but it's for the urban church. I think it's a prototype of what the church can look like and might need to look like, especially if some tax advantages that we enjoy change.

Carey Nieuwhof: May disappear.

Mark Batterson: You know, I think we've got to be proactive. So, we're doing business as mission.

Carey Nieuwhof: What does that look like, business as mission?

Mark Batterson: Well, at Ebenezers every penny of profit goes to missions. It helped build the dream center. We'll do 28 mission trips this year. We've taken 228 trips over the last 17 years. So, it's about doing business really well. Again, if you can't compete with Starbucks, stay under the porch. Don't do it. So, you've got to have a great product. You've got to have great customer service, but at the end of the day, for us it's not about a net profit. It's about giving every penny of profit back to kingdom causes. Less and less people are walking through traditional church doors to go to traditional church services, so if you want to reach people who are outside the box, you have to do some things that are outside the box.

Mark Batterson: So, when we create this marketplace, which will include an anchor restaurant, we'll have thousands of people circulating through our space every single day. Who says the only way to reach people is by inviting someone to a traditional church service? We've got to find other ways of blessing the communities that we're a part of. So, whether that's a coffee house, where people can hang out, or a child development center, where their kids can experience a character based childcare solution to their needs, or even a place just to hang out or even work in a coworking space, I think we want to expand the boundaries of the kingdom in some more creative ways.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. When we were driving by last night, after dinner we swung by that whole city block that you bought, and you were talking about building a coworking space. Then we passed WeWork on the way back to the hotel. Right?

Mark Batterson: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, you're talking about going toe to toe creating optimal space that people would go, "Oh. Are we going to go to WeWork, or are we going to go to this one?" Right?

Mark Batterson: Yeah. We'll learn from the 49 coworking spaces that are in DC. In fact, we have a lot of people in our congregation who manage those spaces. But here's the thing. We should be the best at hospitality. Of that I'm sure.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. As Christians.

Mark Batterson: That is one of the most ancient apologetics or relationship with God, and it finds its way into the Sermon on the Mount and all the way through the Apostle Paul's teaching. In fact, I think the last time I checked we ought to entertain everybody as if they're an angel.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Mark Batterson: I think we have some unique advantages that we can bring some love to the table and some hospitality to the table and do what we do really well.

Carey Nieuwhof: The preschool space you're developing in connection with the Phase Family Center, through our mutual friend, Frank Bealer, who we love-

Mark Batterson: Yeah. Both of us are smiling right now, because-

Carey Nieuwhof: Exactly. You can tell we love Frank.

Mark Batterson: I can't imagine a better person to partner with. You know what? I think Frank and ... By the way, a previous podcast-

Carey Nieuwhof: And Reggie.

Mark Batterson: and Reggie are a couple of my favorite people. I love the podcast that you did with Frank. You know, I think they embody mission and business, and you can do both well.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, it's a preschool, which apparently is the number one need in many US cities, quality childcare for preschoolers. You're going to set that up, so some of that will be the Phase Family Center in DC.

Mark Batterson: Right. It's 20,000 square feet of kid's ministry space that we use on the weekend for a growing kind of ... We have a baby boom happening. For the longest time we were 80% single, 20-somethings. We're still 50% 20-something and single, but a lot more people getting married, having babies. So, why would we leave that space dark Monday to Friday? That doesn't seem like the best stewardship. So, let's leverage it. And it's taking a little extra effort and a little extra money to construct it in a way that meets code, but over the longterm what happens is it pays for itself. Then beyond that, it pays for the next one.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right. So, this is sort of that church as a business/mission model. I want to look back, because we were talking before we hit record about what ... I want you to reflect on 23 years of what may be the innovation curve. You have been first to market, or at least in the early adapter, if not innovator, stage on a number of different things. Like you were telling me, the New York Times covered you when you were doing a podcast, because churches really hadn't gotten into that space. Right? So, can you go back and say, "Yeah. Here's some things we tried first, and here's some things we see next"?

Mark Batterson: Yeah. Carey, this comes from something that we say all the time around here, that there are ways of doing church that no one's thought of yet. I want to give credit where credit is due. I think most of those ways of doing church no one's thought of yet are coming from the front lines of the kingdom, and the front lines of the kingdom are church planters. So, I have more to learn from a 20 or 30-something church planter I think than they have to learn from me. So, I think there's got to be some reverse mentoring there. But, you know, we have innovated certain things, but I think this idea of creating a city block where you can work, and eat, and play, and pray, and do all of that together, where there are revenue streams that help fund the kingdom, and we're creating a place where church and community can cross paths, I think it's a prototype for the urban church. Part of it is how much money it costs to do church in the city.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. I mean, you were giving me some figures last night. What does it cost right now to develop a city block in DC? We're not talking suburban DC. We are talking like right downtown. I mean, the Nationals Park, what's it called? I should know.

Mark Batterson: Yeah. Nats Park.

Carey Nieuwhof: Nats Park is eight blocks away. You're just down the road from everything in DC. So, what's the total investment so far that you're looking at?

Mark Batterson: Well, I mean, it was 29.3 to purchase it. By the way, an investment firm offered cash, and we got it. We got it 18-

Carey Nieuwhof: So, wait. They were trying to buy it?

Mark Batterson: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Mark Batterson: Yeah. We got it 18 years to the day from the day that I did a 4.7 mile prayer walk around Capitol Hill. Ebenezers is the northwest corner of that prayer circle. That car barn, that city block is the southeast corner. I literally turned the corner at 8th and M Street.

Carey Nieuwhof: No way.

Mark Batterson: So, we had no doubt it is an answer to prayer. God-

Carey Nieuwhof: So, there was an investment firm that had a cash deal, and you beat them-

Mark Batterson: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: ... as a church.

Mark Batterson: You and I both know that banks don't love loaning to churches, because no one wants to foreclose on God.

Carey Nieuwhof: 100%.

Mark Batterson: It took so many miracles, and it's going to take a few more. So, we're at another 10 million to build out phase one, 6 million to build out phase two, and that doesn't even get us to phase three. But here's the thing. I want to say a couple of things here to caveat this, because I know those are big numbers, but listen. Our first year I remember our income being \$2,000 a month. Okay? And I remember we were paying \$1,600 to rent the DC public school where we met. That left \$400 for our salary and all other expenses. That will keep you grounded. We're aware that DC is the most gentrified city in the country, and so we are doing things, even with the Child Development Center, to reach across socioeconomic lines. We'll create hundreds of jobs. Well, who are we going to employ? Well, I think we want to help employ some people who have a tough time finding a job. That would be returning citizens. It would be ... We currently-

Carey Nieuwhof: When you say returning citizens, can you explain that?

Mark Batterson: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because we had talked about that.

Mark Batterson: I mean, I think it's folks who have spent time in jail, in prison, and they try to reenter society, and it's very hard. If you have a criminal record, it's hard to land a job.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. It is.

Mark Batterson: But last time I checked, God was in the restoration business. Then I think you know we resettle about 65% of the refugees in the DC area. So, we're very active in helping people furnish apartments, helping kids get acclimated to school. Well, those refugees have a hard time learning certain skills. The crazy thing is many of them are professionals where they're from, so there's a language barrier.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, they're doctors and lawyers, but-

Mark Batterson: Yes. So, I think those are all things that we are trying to make sure it's a holistic win for everybody. Then at the end of the day, it is a big investment, but here in DC, it'll be worth twice what we invested in it in 25 years, because they aren't making more land. When you're a mile from the capitol, I think you have to have an investment mindset that sets up the next generation.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Think about some other, over 23 years, some innovations that you would say ... like you were first to the theaters and that kind of thing. Can you just kind of list some things you tried perhaps on the early end of the curve over the years?

Mark Batterson: Oh, man. Yeah. I mean, I think that the theater was pretty innovative at the time, as a strategy.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. In the late 90s.

Mark Batterson: Not as a short term solution, but as a way of us expanding and growing. Now, let's be honest. Theaters are turning to recliners. I'm going to keep it real right now. It is not easy preaching to people in recliners. Okay?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Because theaters are struggling in a way they weren't in the 90s.

Mark Batterson: They are. I don't think we could have foreseen that. I think Ebenezers, you know, was pretty innovative, this idea-

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, and people haven't been here. If you've been in DC, you know, and you've been to Ebenezers, but a lot of churches do this little coffee shop that's like God's Grounds or whatever, but it's not great coffee, and people who don't go to the church never go there. I'm sure a lot of people who frequent here wouldn't even know it's put on by a church. Is that fair?

Mark Batterson: No.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's just a good coffee house.

Mark Batterson: I think they would have a sense that there is a cause orientation, and they don't have to dig too far. You know, we're not overt or covert. Every coffee house is

owned by somebody. This one happens to be owned and operated by National Community Church. So, we do have a little bit of an advantage, if we're being honest. We're kitty-corner to the Security and Exchange Commission, which is the-

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. The SEC is right around the corner.

Mark Batterson: It's the largest office building in DC. If you can't make a business work here, you probably can't make it work anywhere. You know, I think that was significant. I think we've tried to leverage technology. Maybe one that's interesting, you know, a lot of churches brand their series, but I think we were the first or one of the first to create trailers. Why would we do that? Well, we're meeting in a movie theater. I'm seeing all these trailers for movies. Why wouldn't we have our media team do the very same thing? So, we started creating trailers for our series. The way I see it is the screen is post modern stained glass. You know, medieval church used stained glass to tell the gospel story in pictures. We use moving pictures, in part because the brain processes print on a page at 100 bits per second, but it processes pictures at a billion bits per second.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh. I did not know that.

Mark Batterson: So, a picture is worth 10 million words.

Carey Nieuwhof: Literally.

Mark Batterson: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, the brain actually processes images in a much faster way than it process text, and that's scientifically-

Mark Batterson: Yeah. I think these are things that we need to think about. We need to be aware of the sequence of cognition, that the brain recognizes shapes and colors before it recognizes the message. So, the way we shape and color things are even significant. Maybe that's why Orange Theory-

Carey Nieuwhof: Orange Theory Fitness.

Mark Batterson: You know, everybody's working out at Orange Theory. They get it. They've just leveraged a color to kind of get their brand out there. I think the greatest message deserves the greatest marketing. We could be a little bit better at that.

Carey Nieuwhof: What are some things that were innovative at the time that aren't working anymore? Can you think of any?

Mark Batterson: Oh, man. You know, I think if you aren't careful, everything runs its course. So, it was new to you. It was novel, but over time there are two challenges. One is

unintentional blindness, that we stop noticing things in our environment, including an order of service. If you keep doing the same thing the same way week after week, three songs, announcement, message, closer, it's the law of requisite variety. If you do the same thing over and over again, it loses its effectiveness. It's true if you work out the same way with the same exercise, it loses its effectiveness. You have to confuse your muscles.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Muscle confusion.

Mark Batterson: So, as leaders, I think our job is to confuse people, but-

Carey Nieuwhof: I do a good job then.

Mark Batterson: I can't remember the citation, but I remember hearing once that once you sing a song 30 times, you no longer think about the lyrics. Well, if you're a worship leader, think about the ramifications of that. So, that means you've got to find ways to help people engage it differently. I think Jesus is a great example of this. He didn't do an orientation with his disciples. He did a disorientation. He said, "You have heard that it was said, but I tell you." He was confusing them. Wait. It's not eye for an eye? You're telling me to turn the other cheek? I don't think we understand how disorienting that was for someone who had grown up in a Torah mindset. I mean, these were radical things. So, I think everything we've done, I think you have to continue to reinvent it, change it, and mix it up. I don't think you ever arrive.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Well, Mark, you've got a brand new book coming out, not exactly sure when this airs, but around the time that this is going to air, perhaps the day. It's called Double Blessing. You said this one was harder to write. When you and I have chatted you said, "Wow. This one just was ... it took a little more." Right?

Mark Batterson: Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Want to talk about that?

Mark Batterson: Yeah. Well, even the title might intimate some things that I'm not trying to say. I don't think blessing is health, wealth, and prosperity.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right. So, this isn't a prosperity gospel type book.

Mark Batterson: It's not. In fact, I talk about blessings in disguise. I think the blessing is God with us, God in us, God for us. It's right relationship with God. But here, if you reverse engineer it, you go all the way back to the beginning, before original sin there was original blessing. This is God's most ancient instinct. If you get that sequence wrong, you relate to God out of fear, as opposed to responding to a god whose default setting is to bless us. Now, we have to figure out how to posture ourselves for that blessing. God doesn't bless selfishness or greed. He doesn't bless laziness. You know, you have to do some things to position

yourself for that blessing. Then once you get it, it's about giving it. You know, God doesn't bless us to raise our standard of living, blesses us to raise our standard of giving. Of course the book talks about how the double blessing really is giving it away.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. What does that look like, giving it away?

Mark Batterson: Well, for me it's a simple phrase that Lora and I live by, flip the blessing. So, if you bless me somehow, some way, and I think that could be time, talent, or treasure, then I'm going to find a way to bless someone else in that same kind of way. Here's a good example. There was a pastor that very graciously ... He was too busy to meet with me. This was before I wrote my first book, but I knew he had written a book, and I had a lot of questions about how he did that, how he found an agent, how he found a publisher. How do you balance being a pastor and an author? He didn't have time to meet with me, but he took time. Then he introduced me to my first agent.

Carey Nieuwhof: No way.

Mark Batterson: So, here's the deal. I'm going to find a way to flip that blessing. I don't have time, but I try to find time to meet with first time authors. If someone has a question about a publisher, about an agent, I'm going to take time to engage in those conversations, because that's the way that I then flip the blessing.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. So, if you've been blessed, it's that blessed to be a blessing idea. Right?

Mark Batterson: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's very counter cultural, because a lot of people it's like, finally this is flowing to me. I'm going to enjoy it. That's not what you're talking about.

Mark Batterson: It is not. I kind of debunk the #blessed with a picture of an exotic vacation or an expensive car. Come on. You are devaluing something that means so much more than that.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you find the line between, you know, when you've got enough? What does that look like?

Mark Batterson: I love that question. How much is enough?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. It's something I wrestle with all the time.

Mark Batterson: Yeah. I will say that we have put some ceilings in place, even with the way we by faith with some early book contracts decided what percentage we were going to give away. You want to have a little bit of fun, you start double tithing. You go 50/50. You go 90/10. So, it's a way to stretch faith, but we put some things in

place that we knew would honor God and would allow him to bless some of these books, because it's not coming to us.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Mark Batterson: We are going to find a way. I think it started early on, Carey, with the very first book. We lost money before we made money, because we gave away so many copies, with no guarantee that it would sell enough copies that we would make it back. Even now, when a book comes out, Lora and I personally gift a free copy to everybody at National Community Church on the Sunday before the Tuesday that it comes out, because we feel like it's an opportunity for us to lead with blessing. That really has become a mantra.

Mark Batterson: For what it's worth, I mean, that's what Jesus told his disciples when he sent them out two by two in Matthew 10, "Give it your blessing, and if those who you give it to, they aren't deserving, it'll come back to you." They talk about counterintuitive and counter cultural. See, most of us, we assess the worthiness of a person before we give them our blessing. Jesus operated in a totally different way. Lead with blessing, and then there are going to be situations where it's going to have to come back to you. Then, by the way, you're going to have to shake the dust off of your feet and move on. That's okay. But I want to err on the side of blessing. That really has become a mindset and a lifestyle for us.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm glad I learned that from you and Lora about gifting a copy of the book for your church, because I always felt ... I kind of wrote leadership books, which weren't really general distribution books, but the last one was *Didn't See It Coming*, and that's like, no, anybody could read that book. Having talked to you about that and learned that, I said to Toni, "Why don't we do this?" It takes the funk out of ... because I wasn't going to teach on my book. Right? Because then you're like, well, I don't want to be driving sale of my book. It just feels like a conflict to me.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, we were able to purchase copies of the book for everybody who came to the launch of the series, and we were able to do that personally, and then the church didn't have to put out money, and people didn't have to put out money. Now, if you wanted to buy five copies, that's up to you, but you got a free copy of the book, one per family. It worked really well. It just took all the funk out of it. That was a little bit of a stretch for us, but we were delighted to do it, and you feel so good doing that.

Mark Batterson: You really do. It's because Jesus was right. It is more blessed to give than to receive. There's just so much joy on the giving side. I hope that as folks read *Double Blessing*, I hope it creates this contagious feeling of it's just so much fun to be a blessing. Then it becomes contagious. Then it becomes kind of a culture, so to speak.

Carey Nieuwhof: I want to give you a last word. This is a little bit of a pet peeve. It's a bit of a loaded question, Mark. I want you to talk to stingy Christians, because there are a lot of stingy Christians. In some circles, being stingy and miserly is a virtue. One of my secret missions in life is to cure broke thinking in the church, not the prosperity gospel, but just that, you know, well, cheaper is better. What would you say to stingy Christians?

Mark Batterson: I would back up two steps and say this. You know, the Talmud says that if you fail to thank God for a blessing, it's as if you have stolen it from him.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Mark Batterson: I think generosity starts with gratitude, and it's counting our blessings. It's understanding that every good and perfect gift is from God. It's all from God. It's all for God. If you have that mindset, now it frees you up to be generous. That really is where the joy is found. I would encourage people ... I think sometimes it's tough to go from 0 to 60, Carey, and so just find little ways with your time and with your talent to be generous towards other people. Then get the treasure in the mix. As you begin to do that, I do think you discover you can't out give God. That doesn't mean that-

Carey Nieuwhof: You can't.

Mark Batterson: ... listen, that the reward for giving is material blessing. Again, I think that's devaluing God's blessing. That's priceless. You can't put a price tag on joy unspeakable or peace that passes understanding, but those things are found on the giving side of life. Of course, God sets the bar, for God so loved the world that he gave, and he gave what was most precious, his beloved son, so that we could experience a relationship with him and follow suit and give what is precious to us to other people.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, the book's called Double Blessing, and it is available everywhere books are sold. Mark, where can people find you online these days? Insta?

Mark Batterson: Yeah. Insta and Twitter, @MarkBatterson, both of those.

Carey Nieuwhof: And MarkBatterson.com still works.

Mark Batterson: It sure does.

Carey Nieuwhof: As always, what a joy to be with you. Thank you so much.

Mark Batterson: Carey, thank you. Thank you for the consistent encouragement that Lora and I receive through your podcast. It is a gift to the kingdom. It's a calling. I know that all of us who listen are grateful not just for the words that are spoken, but

more than that, the spirit behind it. It comes through in those podcasts. So, grateful to call you a friend and grateful for our time together.

Carey Nieuwhof: Mark, I couldn't be more grateful. Thank you. I feel like we got like 30% into it, so we'll just get ready for the next time you're back. Okay?

Mark Batterson: Sounds good.

Carey Nieuwhof: Thanks, my friend. Well, that is just rich stuff. You know, some of you heard me say this before, but one of my favorite things of doing this podcast is actually being able to get to know some of the people that I admired from afar for a long, long time. Next week, we are back with a legend. I'll get to that in just a moment. But you know what the good news is? I mean, the news is always full of bad stories about, you know, pastor this, and business person this, and politician X, and everything, but my experience, at least with the guests that we curate on this podcast, is when you meet someone like Mark or some of the other guests we've had, it's better than you think it's going to be. Isn't that good. I mean, isn't that just good for your soul?

Carey Nieuwhof: I've got to also say thank you to all of you. I've been on the road a ton, speaking all over this fall. Everywhere I go I hear from you. You guys come up. You tell me how the podcast is speaking to you. I just want to thank you for that. Also, even an increasing number of business leaders. I was on a flight last night actually coming back from Pennsylvania. I was sitting next to a business leader, who's like, "You're a podcaster?", and took a snapshot. He's in sales for a major healthcare company. He said, "We'll have to have you come and speak." It was good. So, if you're a business leader listening, welcome. We're really glad that you're here.

Carey Nieuwhof: Make sure you check out, church leaders, our offers this month from our partners, who are responsible for bringing you in person interviews for free every week. Just go to ProWebFire.com/Carey. Get a website, a new one updated every week, renovated, like redone, every three years, and your social handled. You can get up to 30% off if you go this month to ProWebFire.com/Carey. Jump on into the Red Letter Challenge, which has helped so many churches grow, small group growth of up to 40%. There's a lot of specials on for you right now at RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: Next week, guys, I'm so excited for this one. Back when I was in law school, way back when I was in my 20s, I read *Ordering Your Private World*, and it rocked us. It was one of my first small group studies that I led as an adult. I never thought I'd have the opportunity to get to know Gordon MacDonald, but we actually spent most of the day together in September. I really spent some time. It is a long interview. We talk about his relationship with Bill Clinton when he was president, had some conversations in the Oval Office, father wounds, the dangers of drivenness. He's got some very specific theories on what leaders struggle with between the ages of 32 and 42, at 48, and at age 62. Gordon is 80

now, and oh my goodness, the wisdom from him, unbelievable. Here's an excerpt from that conversation.

Gordon M.: But you can't afford to cram your schedule with things and toss out your personal relationships. You know, obviously your marriage relationship, you can't ignore that. You can't just keep filling up and doing a 90 hour pastoral week and then come home and realize you haven't said a word of usefulness to your wife all week long. You can't afford not to have key, wonderful, seminal moments with your children. You don't give them the tired time. You give them the best of time. Then thirdly, your mentors and what I call your cap left friends, which is only five or six people, all those people go into your schedule first.

Carey Nieuwhof: That conversation will also be on YouTube, by the way. We've got a growing archive of not every episode, but a lot of episodes of this podcast now, which you can find on YouTube. Just search my name, Carey Nieuwhof or The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast. You'll find it there. Guys, if you subscribe, you get that all for free. Thank you for sharing. Thank you for continuing to help the word spread. I am so grateful for that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now, to your question. Love your question. The question is simply this, and this is from Andrew, "Have you ever taken a sabbatical during your leadership? What kind of influence did it have over you?" So, my answer to that is no. I get asked this almost all the time when I'm on the road, "What do you think about sabbaticals?" I'm going to give you my theory, which I haven't really published before. That is I haven't taken a sabbatical, at first, because I was too driven to take a sabbatical, and I burned out in 2006. Then when our elders offered me a sabbatical, I didn't take it, because I kind of knew at that time, in the fragile condition I was in burn out, if I took a sabbatical, I was never coming back. Even though I felt done, I don't think God was done with me. So, no. I have not, in 24 years of leadership, taken a sabbatical.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now, I've developed a whole new theory, which I teach in the High Impact Leader, which is I think you should try to figure out how to live in a way today that will help you thrive tomorrow. For the last 13 years, since I burned out, I've been attempting to do that. So, I'm recording this on a Saturday morning. Usually I don't do these podcasts on a Saturday, but I'm on the road five days a week. I did seven flights into five different cities this past week. I feel great. I feel really, really great, because for the last 13 years I have tried to live in a way today that will help you thrive tomorrow.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, even in the midst of a really busy season, doing live interviews, speaking at conferences, events, hosting dinners, flying to different cities multiple times a week, I picked my flights based on, and even seating assignments, based on helping me show up rested the next day. I was getting kind of tired earlier this week. Thursday I flew into a city I was speaking in, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, on Friday. I flew in Thursday afternoon and just took the afternoon for myself, didn't try to do much. Went to bed at 9:00. My wife was with me for most of the

week, but Toni flew home on Thursday morning. So, I was alone. I just took it way and got some deep sleep, felt great. Last night I got in a little later than I want, but guess what? I just slept in this morning. I feel fantastic. It is possible to thrive, and I'm doing more than I ever have before. It's the strangest thing. Some of that is delegation. So, I would say the best antidote to needing a sabbatical is to live in a way today that would help you thrive tomorrow.

Carey Nieuwhof: Now, what about sabbaticals themselves? Okay. Here's what I think sabbaticals are. I think people run at an unsustainable pace, and then what happens is they take a sabbatical, they recover, and then they go back into an unsustainable pace. Bad idea. Bad idea. Bad idea. If I ever took a sabbatical, here's what I would do with it. I'm not closed to it, but I would want to continue living this way, and then I'd want to take, I don't know, two months, three months, six months, a year, who knows? This isn't in my plans. I'm just saying hypothetically, because I'm actually really enjoying my life and what I'm doing right now.

Carey Nieuwhof: But what I would do is try to go into it rested and then take some time specifically for whether that's Sabbath, or whether that is study, or whatever that happens to be, but have a purpose for your sabbatical. Then do it from a place of abundance, not from a place of deficiency. So, I think if that happened, we would have way better leaders. Now, I've figured out how to basically most days, not every day ... I get stressed, like everybody does, but the recalibration should be quick. That is my theory on sabbaticals. I don't know that that was helpful, Andrew, but nope. Haven't taken one, have no plans to take one. I'm not against it, but I do think you should figure out how to live in a way today that will help you thrive tomorrow. If you can do that, if you take one, you will not be running into your sabbatical on empty.

Carey Nieuwhof: If you want more about how to do that, I share everything in the High Impact Leader. You can go to TheHighImpactLeader.com and learn more there. I'm looking forward to bringing you more in that area. In fact, my next book is about exactly, it's an expansion on the High Impact Leader, on how to live in a way today that'll help you thrive tomorrow. So, that comes out in a year. Anyway, guys, thank you so much for listening. I enjoy this so much, sometimes too much. We have a lot coming up, with Gordon MacDonald. I'm talking about online marketing with Alejandro Reyes, Patrick Lencioni, and so much more. So, thank you so much for listening. I hope our time together today has 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 leader like never before.