

**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 297 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. I have been so excited to bring you this episode. It's actually been a couple of years in the making, just the ability to get schedules together. Uh, but every once in a while I get to interview a living legend and that's how I feel about today's guest. My guest is Gordon MacDonald and he is somebody who was influencing me back in law school. That was years ago when I read *Ordering Your Private World* as a young leader in my twenties it blew me away how we studied it in our small group, a whole bunch of lawyers who were Christians who would meet in our apartment. We studied that when we were in Toronto and I met him once briefly before, but we had the opportunity to spend the better part of a day together.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** And this is the, I think the longest interview I've done. This is like over an hour and a half and you might be, "Oh my goodness." Listen, you will be so grateful. Gordon is a living legend. He has influenced just millions of people. He's a written or coauthored more than two dozen books. He's been married for 58 years. He's been in leadership for five decades and as he shares in the story, he's now 80 and he sees his life in a very different vein than he did a few years ago and there is so much wisdom in this episode. We talk all about tough father wounds he had, about becoming a father figure, how to discover a new calling at age 60. We talk about why this was really interesting. You have very specific thoughts on what leaders struggle with between the ages of 32 and 42 and again at age 48 and at age 62. Yeah that specific. How he counseled Bill Clinton when he was president of the United States.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Some stories from the Oval Office that I had never heard before and some of the dangers of drivenness and so much more. This is one you probably want to save somewhere and maybe even go into the transcripts. We also have video of it. Thanks to Next Level Church. We shot the entire day. And so if you check out my YouTube channel, Carey Nieuwhof or The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast, you'll see the video has been uploaded for this day. Two, it was just really, really rich and this is going to be a treasury for me for years to come. So that's a long introduction to say I'm glad you're here and thanks for subscribing. Thanks for listening, thanks for watching. And yeah, this interview with Gordon MacDonald is just, that's bucket list stuff for me. I got to tell you that. So wow. With all that said, I want to talk to you about a couple of our partners who've got some really exciting things on.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** And by the way, thank you for supporting our partners. We hand pick them very carefully. You know, it helps me fly to cities and I'm doing more and more. As you probably notice regular listeners, interviews in person. I think you get a better interview when you're in the room with someone in certainly we would

not have gone an hour and 40 minutes had we been on a phone call or a Skype call. So anyway, a couple of our partners this week that we want to profile because they help you is Pro WebFire. Lot of churches say, I just don't have the budget for that and I can't hire staff. And maybe you're looking at the 2020 budget going, yeah, there's no new staff people. But what about a subscription service that not only builds you a new website but updates it weekly and manages your Facebook, Instagram and YouTube and actually launches campaigns for you on those channels to drive traffic to your website and increase church visitors.

Carey Nieuwhof: And even uploads podcast to iTunes for you. What about that and what if it was a monthly subscription service? So they also provide ongoing consultations with digital outreach experts every month for social media strategy and current digital trends to reach more people. The Pro WebFire launch special this month for listeners is 30% off plans for life and it ends October 31st, so you can ignite some growth through digital outreach with Pro WebFire by going to [ProWebFire.com/Carey](http://ProWebFire.com/Carey) that's [ProWebFire.com/Carey](http://ProWebFire.com/Carey) and in a similar way as you get ready for 2020 if you are a not for profit organization, what are you doing about health care? And usually it's a lose lose proposition number one, it costs you a lot of money as an employer, lose. Number two, the benefits aren't all that great for staff, lose.

Carey Nieuwhof: What if you turn that into a win win? So Remodel Health uses technology not to get a group plan like one size fits all because employees are not the same, but they will actually sit down and create a custom solution for each of your team members, whether you have three or 300 and what that usually results in is this better healthcare coverage for each staff member or at least the same if they had excellent coverage. And secondly, you save a boatload of money. In fact, so far they have plowed \$7.2 million for faith-based, not for profits back into their mission. Listeners of this podcast alone have saved over \$625,000 so imagine if someone came to you and say, you know what? You got \$20,000 more in next year's budget or \$80,000 more to put towards something else in next year's budget. Curious? You want to check out, [RemodelHealth.com/Carey](http://RemodelHealth.com/Carey) today, you can download their health insurance buyer's guide.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I'm so excited for so many churches who are jumping on board with that because everybody wins. So thank you to our partners for supporting this podcast continues to bring you as best a job as we can do for free and you can subscribe for free here on audio or on YouTube. And remember we're also adding Ask Carey #askCarey and we got a question from Justin who wants to know about self evaluation. I thought that was a good question after you hear what Gordon MacDonald has to say. So we'll be doing that at the end of the podcast today before we sign off. Anyway, without further ado, can you tell I'm excited to bring you the one and only Gordon MacDonald. Gordon, what a joy it is to be with you today. Thanks so much for making the time. Thank you. Yeah, I was sharing with you before we got started.

Carey Nieuwhof: We've been a couple of years setting this interview up. So I'm really thankful that you made the time. But my time with you, when I first heard of you, I was a law student in Toronto and a young Christian in my early twenties and ordering your private world came out and it was a book that we study, read it. I'm the one who read it. That's it. I'm the guy back in the day and I got to tell you, it was one of those books that really defined my twenties and one that's still on my bookshelf. And uh, it was something that really, I think it was the first realization I had that the interior life was actually a life you needed to pay attention to, um, in addition to your order in that. But I, I wanna I want to start back even further than that. So you've had a, what year did you start ministry? What, uh,

Gordon M.: I started in 1961. And the reason I can be so explicit about that as my formal ministry began the day, my wife Gail and I returned from our honeymoon. So if I remember my wedding anniversary, I remember my ministry anniversary and vice versa.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. So that was, that's like six decades of leadership and ministry. Yeah. I wanted to a retrospective, like over your lifetime, what have you seen change in the culture, in the church, in leadership? What have been some of the most significant shifts that, that you would say you've seen?

Gordon M.: That's probably a three hour conversation.

Carey Nieuwhof: We got the day.

New Speaker: Uh, I was born at the beginning of WWII, 1939. And so I come out of a generation that's marked by the depression a few years earlier and the war and in my childhood, those, the, the way of thinking that came out of that was deeply impressive upon me. My father was a pastor, he was a Baptist minister. He was part of the old fundamentalist network that was heavy into doctrine and what they called separatism. I really admired my father and uh, I wanted to be like him, but we hardly ever knew each other. He, he didn't know how to connect with children. And he admitted that to me many years later. And my picture of my father when I'm a boy is that my father is walking away from our home, his back turned toward me and he never looks around.

Gordon M.: And I see him going toward the church and I never see his face. And to this day, whenever I think about my father who's been gone now for almost 10 years, but that's the picture I come up with that we're, we're just separating. So I watched my father from a distance and I admire the way he preached, the way people responded to him. He, he really was very good at whatever he did in those years. Um, and so I grew up with that idea that someday I'm going to probably preach the Bible like he did. Uh, but then we, we came through a lot of changes, uh, as I moved out of my childhood. And when you talk about cultural changes, um, my conscious growing up is in the fifties and early sixties where you are, um, dealing with, uh, with a world which is beginning to really come apart at the scenes.

Gordon M.: I'm deeply marked in those days by the Cold War. And the preaching in the church in those days was on eschatology and anti-communism, and it was done in a very fearful way so that even now, all these years later, I remember going to bed night after night crying myself to sleep because we thought the Communists were going to take over at any moment. That was, that was the message you got in the church. It was also a time when, as a boy when I went to public school all week long, I heard the normal litany of teaching on evolution, on science, all of those things, which we all heard. Then you'd go to the weekend and now you heard the scientists know nothing. They're anti-Christ. They're giving you false fronts so that you're jumping back and forth like a ping pong ball every week and it really did a job on a lot of us

Gordon M.: in my generation. It we struggled with our ability to think because there were so many boundary lines. We were, we were cut off from the popular culture. You know, you can't go to movies and you can't go to parties that are held by non-Christian people. And then a few years later you can't date a girl who's not a Christian. And so you're, you're always living a life of exclusion. In the meantime, we're having to deal with the death of President Kennedy, Martin Luther King, um, the rise and, uh, all of these secular issues which are coming to us in the 70s, 60s and 70s. So it was a hard time to grow up because the world was dramatically, um, reorienting itself to a, a new kind of secular orientation, which in my childhood had I'd never heard. And, and then a final comment I'd make, and I think about this often, I, I went to a state university with an athletic scholarship.

Gordon M.: And you would think that your generation or, or the parental generation would be thrilled that this had been an achievement. But I can remember in those days, everybody in our church coming up to me saying, "Certainly you're not going to go to the university. You'll lose your faith." Those professors will, those professors will turn you into an atheist in a year, which is kind of interesting because these were the same people who believed in the eternal security of the believer. And, and yet they've got you, you know, in, in, in Satan's grasp within a year. So I spent the first two or three years of university life on the defense, waiting for someone to take away my faith. And they never did. They didn't, they didn't care. And, and so I was well along in my post high school education before I really discovered my mind. And in one sense, I feel like my whole life I've been playing catch up ball, uh, intellectually and, uh, people tell me I don't have to worry about that, but I still do worry about it and keep stretching myself to make up for what I, I think was lost time.

Carey Nieuwhof: Why do you think you kept your faith in the midst of that? Because people are concerned about so many. It's funny. The more things change, the more things stay the same. I mean, people are worried about their kids going to a secular schools today, et cetera. And I'm not sure that we're winning the intellectual debate very well with, with, uh, with Christianity these days. But when you look back on it now, can you, can you pinpoint like, do you know why you didn't lose your faith?

- New Speaker: Well, it has a lot to do with my mentors. Um, there was a woman in my world when I was three, four, five, six years of age who was an incredible Bible storyteller. And every week she would have a group of us children week after week after week into her home. And we would sit in a circle in her living room and she would tell us the stories of the Bible and her ability to tell a story, put you right in the time and space of that story.
- Gordon M.: I mean, I can smell the smoke at Moses' burning bush and I can imagine the stink of the whale that Jonah was in. Um, she made those stories come so alive. And so I often say, even to this day, my faith is a story-based faith, many people, their faith is a doctrinal faith or a principle faith. Mine, I am very much alive to this day with the men and women of both testaments. And then I build my doctrinal faith out from there. So it's, it's a different way than other people did it. I think the stories kept me for a long time. Then I end and she was the first of, of I've listed them, nine different people who walked into my life at a certain point with a way of approaching me that met the needs of my life in that moment. My, my grandmother was one of those women.
- Gordon M.: She taught me to love the world, or she was a devout Pauline Christian. But nevertheless, she taught me to love the beauty and the artistry of the world. And we would, we would explore New York City every after every afternoon I was with her. And she would say to me, "Son, always look for the glory of God in the city. Look at it in the faces of people. Look for the glory of God in the sculpture, in the park, the parks, the architecture, the museums." So I grew up with this enormous curiosity that she built in me, that this was God's world. And I was going to break from anybody who said it wasn't. And then there was my track coach or a about whom I wrote a, a book in my prep school years. And he was determined that I should learn from my athleticism, spiritual principles.
- Gordon M.: And so they went hand in glove. And you know, to this day I hear my coach in the back of my head whenever I questioned something, he's always there 60 years later, you know, instructing me, mentoring me. And then there were others who would come along. Uh, we don't have time to mention them all, but the mentors kept me in the faith. And then when I was about 21, I went to a university conference, um, on Christianity, listen to a well known theologian of that time, talk about the life of Jesus and the resurrection. And it fell into place. And so I had an adult conversion. Yeah. Um, and, and many of us, if he would admit it, probably had about five conversions. I had at least five conversions and that was the big one. Then it came about two years before I met Gail, my wife to be.
- Gordon M.: And, um, our faith just merged when that happened. So that, that would be the process. I, uh, somebody asked me the other day, if I ever doubt, and I, I said, "Oh, sure." And gave us a little shocked that I would say this as bluntly as that, but you know, you as life goes on, on the, the realities of your life change, you're always having to rebuild, reorganize your faith. And my theory is that every seven to 10 years, we all rebuild our faith whether we know it or not. We

bring into place new scriptures, new insights, new heroes. And, uh, I'm now in my 80th year. So I, I've my faith as the face of a 70 year, 80 year old, very different than when I was 20.

Carey Nieuwhof: What were some of your other conversions? You said you've had five.

New Speaker: Oh, and now you're going to hold me to the number.

Gordon M.: Well, well, I think there's the conversion you have as a very small child. If you're, if you're in church, like I was, I, I was in church for, you know, from the fourth day I was born. So you're going to Sunday school and vacation Bible school. So the first, first conversion comes as a child, one at about four years of age, you lift your hand because it pleases mother and your Sunday school teacher. Yes. And then there's the curve of conversion that comes I think 12 to 16 if I can say it, where you're, you're beginning to be hormonally driven. Yes. And your, your conversion has to take into account your hormones. Sin is really about your hormones in those days. And who of us as young, vibrant males, and I, I'm not going to speak for women, but you know, you go through that period of time with the temptations are, are always there and you, you have to equate your Christian life, uh, as the life basically of being able to overcome temptation.

Gordon M.: And that's every 30 minutes. So yeah. Yeah. And I think a, a third conversion comes maybe in your college years where you have to bring your faith into alignment. Intellectually. You have to find a base intellectually that fits the Bible stories and your desire to live and be faithful to Jesus. Now, now you're having to deal with the history of faith and the Christian movement and, and the big ideas like the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. And by the way, the Ascension, they all come in order. So that's a third conversion. I think a fourth conversion might be the conversion of, that that is involved in your sense of call, what you're going to do in life. You know, you have all these romantic ideas in your teens. Uh, typical of me, you know, I'm going to take Billy Graham's place someday would be an example.

Gordon M.: And somewhere in your college, early adult years, you begin to settle down and you, you hopefully hear and cement into yourself a sense of call from God. And that call becomes very powerful. So there are four. I would say the, the, if, if we, if we're going in an order, the fifth conversion probably comes at midlife and on up to where I am today. It's, it's a deeper conversion with new values, new important things you, um, if you've taken a hit or two in life, uh, you no longer see yourself as potentially the most important person in the Christian movement. You, your goal is no longer to preach to 10,000 people. Um, all, all that crazy stuff that we imagine in our earlier years, your life settles and centers a little bit. Now I'm in my, probably my last conversion now I'm forced at my age to face the fact that statistically I'm probably within three or four years of my death, um, within three or four years of having Gail and I having to say goodbye to each other.

Gordon M.: And some people say, "Don't say that. It's so gloomy." But it's biblical and it's realistic and all you have to do is look around you. It's happening all the time. So every morning when Gail and I get up, we ask ourselves, "Is this the last normal day?" You have to ask that question. You have to plan for it. And then the following question is, "Um, so what's heaven like anyway?" When I was 40, I preached occasionally about heaven. Not enough, but it was a very academic type of teaching. Today, heaven is a very real question to me. How could you be sure you're going to walk through that door? And if you get on the other side, what's it gonna be like? What are you going to say when you, um, bump into a person there you never liked, you know, and, and, and what are you going to do there?

Gordon M.: And you go back to the old biblical teaching. Heaven has streets of gold. I don't want a street of gold that would be too difficult to keep clean. Heaven is full of mansions. I don't want a mansion. The property tax is too high. So you know, those, those first century, early generation of writers explaining heaven, they were using metaphors and word pictures that meant something to them in their impoverished state. And to them, a street of gold sounded pretty nice. So that makes me in my conversion, ask the question, "What do I know about heaven and how can I be sure that it's going to be there when I go?" That's a conversion of a type. So there's five or six to year.

Carey Nieuwhof: I never met Dallas Willard, but I have spent some time with John Ortberg and uh, John tells stories about Dallas. He says he reads the Bible and Dallas Willard every day.

Carey Nieuwhof: And one of the comments about Dallas Willard when he died in this idea of sanctification was that hopefully if, if your life becomes transformed enough, and I hope I get this right, Dallas' theory was it might be a while before he realized he died because the kingdom of God was being realized in his life, in his home, in his heart. Any thoughts on that? Is that, is that roughly what you're talking about or do you, how do you think about eternity?

Gordon M.: Well, I don't think the mind is quite capable of embracing it. I think we've now reached the outer limits of our mental capacity and we're left to imagination. Um, my comment about the streets of gold and that is very, is very important to me because if you were to ask me in this 21st century, what would be the most beautiful ideas of life?

Gordon M.: Well the first one I'd say is beauty. Uh, whenever you experience a flush moment of beauty, a mountain scene or a beautiful child or something like that, there's something that rises up in you for a moment. Um, people might call it awe. Well, what if heaven is perpetual awe? And being in heaven means we're constantly stripping back the layers of God's infinite creation and we're going to spend an eternity discovering an eternal heaven. That makes, that gets my imagination running. I think secondly, imagination is a place of relationship. And I can imagine unlimited amounts of time without restriction where you listen to

each other and you tell stories and you imagine and you enjoy the presence of one another in magnificent ways in which today is just a little hint. So those are the things that come to me about heaven. I'm trying to find parallels in life today that will set me up for what heaven might be like that.

Carey Nieuwhof: You mentioned the image and I've heard you talk about that before, that the image you have of your father is of his back and he's walking away in the ministry. Do you think or how do you think that impacted you?

Gordon M.: Well, it impacted me very powerfully. Um, the, and again, I'll say what I said before. The salvation in, in that mess was that I left home at the age of 14 to go to prep school. So my, my, the bulk of my teenage years were spent 2,000 miles away from my family of origin. And while I was back in New York becoming a student, my mother and father were laying the tracks for a divorce, uh, which ultimately happened. So, uh, I escaped a lot of the, the pain that would have been on my back if I'd been there. But, uh, maybe I got off track there.

Gordon M.: The important thing in all that was that other men entered my life and they were very much father figures and each one played, you could say the fatherly role to me at a very timely moment when I needed that man. Um, I'm thinking of a man that I, I shared an apartment. He rented an apartment room to me for two years. He was a Godly man, very principled, full of Christian character. And he grew me up to be a gentleman. You know, he would say, "Gordon, a man of God puts the toilet seat down when he finishes using it." Or he'd say, "Gordon, a man of God pays his bills on time." Or, "A man of God, treats the women he dates with the utmost of courtesy and respect." Uh, "He makes his bed every morning." These were all things that I'm not sure I was doing until I met him.

Gordon M.: That's what helped me to compensate for, a lossness of fatherhood is I had men like him who came into my life at just the perfect moment. And maybe it's part of my own temperament, but I studied these people, I watched them, I observed them, I copied them. And even to this day, at the age of 80, um, it's not infrequent that I will make a choice or do something or say something and I'll say inside myself, "That's the way Keith would have said it. That's the way coach would have done it. That's the way..," you know. And so I see all these mentors, these men and women in my life, and I say to myself, "How wonderful it was of the living God to know what kind of surrogate parents I needed at just the right time." And the last of those was Gail, my wife, um, because she, she's been the one who's been putting the finishing touches of life into me over these last 58 years.

Carey Nieuwhof: So you have a, a life to look back on and a whole leadership journey as a pastor and author, a speaker, and really in many ways a, a thought and spiritual leader. Obviously you did a lot of things right. So we have a lot of young leaders. The majority of people listening to this podcast are young. What did you do well that laid an excellent foundation for your life? What are some things that you're like,



glad you just do it the same. If you were starting over again, you'd just do it the same way.

Gordon M.: Well, I think I, in one sense, I've already said it in that I was always curious about people. To this day, I I meet a person. I'm full of questions about your story. I want to know I'm, I want to ask you the same question you just asked me. So I've, I've always been a listener. That doesn't mean I always obeyed the things I heard, but if anything, they, they got stored up somewhere inside of me so that I like a book on a shelf. I took them off later on and profitted from what I'd heard and seen, and by the way I did begin to discover that many of those to whom I must listen, we're not necessarily Christian people, right? They were men and women out in the larger world who could we say a doctrinally, we're living by the larger grace of God and um, and we're wise and disciplined and likable and relational.

Gordon M.: So that's the, I would say it's one of the first things I did right. Um, uh, is I feel a little bit arrogant trying to talk about what I did right. The second thing I probably did right in those early days was I made some good choices about relationships. The best choice I made of course was Gail. And, uh, my friend Keith, who I mentioned to you a few moments ago, came back to the apartment one night and he said, "Gordon, I think I've met a woman who would make you an incredible wife." And the next day he introduced me and four months later we were married.

Carey Nieuwhof: That was fast.

Gordon M.: Fast. But the reason it happened was that I trusted the man who introduced me. Ah, and that's something in our Western culture we don't think about too often. If you and I were in China or Japan, we would talk about the introducer

Gordon M.: who picks a spouse for another person. So it's been a very real Asian tradition. The introducer, and by the way, if the marriage isn't worth the introducer, gets the blame. But my friend Keith was the introducer. He was a young, he was a man who pumps so much into me that when he says, "I've made you, I've met a woman, that it makes you a good wife." I don't treat this as a shallow comment. I, it's dead serious to me. What is he seeing in this human being that I could profit from and that I could give to? So I meet Gail the next day and in 30 minutes, in 30 minutes we have something going. And three weeks after we'd met, I gave her a ring and four months later we walk the aisle together. Never regretted that. That's one of the things I did right.

Gordon M.: I think the only other thing I, well I, I did fairly well over the years, Carey, in picking men and women to work with. Yeah. It was a tough, my generation is the bridge generation from the small pastoral church to the large mega church. Right. We were the people who dreamed up all these ideas that people like you are making happen. And so we were, we were rewriting the script all the way along the line. And failure was always right down around the corner because we

had no precedence. We couldn't go to anybody and say, how do you do this? There were no, none of these big conferences like they have them today. So we, we were moving along by instinct and the most important thing you were doing constantly was bringing around you men and women that could make this vision go. Yeah. And um, as the lead pastor, as they now use the term, one of my most important jobs was hiring people.

Gordon M.: You know, I, I give myself about a 60% success grade on that and I challenge anybody to think they can do it any better. Yeah. You know, you talk to any number of pastors and they will probably tell you that their number one struggle is in building staff and maintaining it. We back on the seventies and eighties, that was, that was the most difficult task.

Carey Nieuwhof: What, what gave you, and I agree 60%. I mean that, that is good. I don't know that mine is much higher, uh, hopefully getting better at it every decade. But what were some qualities and characteristics that you were looking for in your team that you said, "Okay, these, these are things I need to look for in the future?"

Gordon M.: Obviously you're looking for people who have a strong spiritual foundation, which is difficult when you're looking for people in their twenties and early thirties, because, um, let's not kid each other.

Gordon M.: You don't become snap crackle and pop a man or woman of God. Uh, we're often looking for traits in people that it takes 35 years to build. So when you're in your twenties, my first, well, my second church, there were 600 people. So I had a staff of about four or five. And again, in those days, church, most churches didn't have staffs, right? This is, this is when it's opening up to these specialty programmatic ministries. And so nobody had ever given me a management principle in seminary. I never heard the word management in seminary. And suddenly I'm managing a very complex organization with a staff, with a several dozen programs reporting up the line line by line till they get to my desk. How do you do that? How do you do that? And I remember one day in frustration slapping the desk with my open palm and saying right out loud to the walls, "Nobody ever taught me how to run this church."

Gordon M.: And so I had to go to the business world and take lessons from secular organizations that could help me to know how you run a nonprofit organization like a church. But back to the people. You want men and women with a strong spirit, a sense of call. People who know how to be loyal. You want people who are willing within the lines of respect. Um, to tell you the truth, when they think you, you've missed something or you're blowing it in one place or another. You want people who are teachable and are always growing. I think you want people who are gonna stick around for a while. Um, and you know that now that borders out you're, if you're hiring a male or a female and they're married, you wanna you want to inquire something about their quality of their relationship at

home. Cause if there's problems at home, it's gonna make it to the office real quickly.

Gordon M.: So you're watching this all the time. And I guess that would be, you know, you surprise me with a good question there. Those are the things that come off the top of my head that are, I remember looking for again and again. I was not afraid to hire people that came right out of our church congregation. In fact, the 60% rule, I, I would suggest that that number drops when you're hiring people from other parts of the country. When you see a man or a woman operating in the confines of the congregation for a period of time, you're able to watch their growth, the way they interface with people, uh, the way they relate to you obviously. So I would think that the 60% rises a little bit. When you go into the congregation and you discover that a person, um, that if, if you get them the right kind of teaching, uh, just might be a real asset to your team.

Carey Nieuwhof: What are some things when you look back at it yourself at 20 or 30, that you're like, "Oh, I would never do that again." Anything that you're, you're looking back on that you'd do differently?

Gordon M.: Not a whole lot. You know, I, and I don't want that interpreted, "Gordon doesn't think he made mistakes."

Gordon M.: I do think I would've been a little bit more effective in cutting back on all that ambitious drive that we all had in our thirties. Um, there was too much of a show.

Carey Nieuwhof: Do you think that's a thirties thing? Like when you're, cause I look back, it resonated immediately. My ambition really got ahold of me in my thirties.

Gordon M.: Yeah. I think it would be age 32 to 42. If I'm allowed to pick a bracket.

Carey Nieuwhof: Please do.

Gordon M.: Um, those are the years where you're, you know, you've, you have finally gotten into ministry in your 20s and you've got what education you're going to get now. You're, you, you have to, and I'm using the word Gail wouldn't like this, perform. And you're also measuring yourself against people all across the country. And particularly today, thanks to people like you. There's media that's spreading the stories all the time.

Gordon M.: When I first got into ministry, we had none of these connections. So you, you were pretty much all on your own. And every once in a while you might hear what someone was doing a thousand miles away. But yeah, the 30s are the years where your, your, your ambition is flowing, you're, you think you have a passionate desire, um, to be faithful to God. You dare to think that one of these days, God's going to read your address and he's going to call you to something huge. You're reading the biographies of, of men and women who over the years,

God really blessed. I want to be like that know something like that. And then around 38 and again, I've noticed that pastors that are struggling will come up to me at the age of 38, 48, 62 to give you some arbitrary numbers. The 38 year olds are saying, "Gordon, I'm exhausted."

Gordon M.: "I've run out of ideas. I just keep shopping on the internet in conferences. Who's doing what? How can I copy that? And we're rolling over a new church philosophy every 15 months. I can't keep doing it anymore. And my wife is no longer happy with the ministry and she thinks it's sucking the oxygen out of me. We have no useful time together. She's caught up with her job and the children and, and it's just not working." That's a 38 year old. The 48 year old is saying, "I think it's all passing me by. Um, I think they're going for younger men and women now, and I'm not sure I understand what it is that the church is trying to accomplish anymore." I remember the first times that I began to face the new contemporary music and I liked it. I could see why younger people wanted to do it, but my songs were It is Well With My Soul and Holy, Holy, Holy.

Gordon M.: Those were the songs I had the tears. And at 48, I felt like I was slowly beginning to lose my, my purchase of authority and experience. Then at 62, um, fear sets in. Uh, when I was, I made a decision in my life that at the age of 60, I was going to step away from institutional leadership, one of the best decisions I've ever made. And one of the things that encouraged it was I began to become, I, I could see younger staff members down the table and I'd say something and one of them, one of them would roll their eyes like this, you know, the old guy's pontificating again and I thought, "You know, five years from now this will be serious. They'll be wondering when's he going to retire, and when can we get a younger person in here? And um, and the women are saying, when are we going to get our woman pastor?"

Gordon M.: And the, there were a lot of those change questions being asked and Gail and I started talking about this when I was about 55 and and that that was part of our plan. We're going to step away from this at 60 and leave a vacant space for the younger generation to come in with its music with its themes, its way of doing things.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's interesting. I picked 55 and I went at 50, four years ago. So I'm 54 now and when I was in my early forties I said at 55 I'm going to step away from, I didn't call it institutional leadership, but that's basically I'm not going to be the lead pastor anymore and I went at 50. Why was the, I know my reasons, but I'm curious why you said a little bit around it that you were becoming different, but why did you pick 60?

Gordon M.: Well, I'm spinning a lot of theories with you.

Carey Nieuwhof: This is great. I love this. I live in this world.

Gordon M.: I feel, Carey, that almost all of us leaders with a few exceptions probably have about a 20 to 25 year time slot when we can really push our giftedness to its limits. But by the time we get upwards towards 60, um, our time slot is beginning to grow old and rusty. And if you look down through the, the decades now, it would seem like the church goes through a cultural change about every 20 to 25 years. And I decided I wasn't going to kid myself, even though I thought of myself as young spirited at the age of 58 or 59. The truth of the matter was people saw me differently and uh, you know, I, I would, I needed to listen with, with acute ears, what's going on. So that's the first thing that came me is that, you know, each generation has its time.

Gordon M.: The second thing I, I thought about was if I wait until 65 to step away from leadership, I probably will have lost most of my courage to ever lead anything again or to do anything again. Where at 60, I've still got enough muscle and energy and enthusiasm to go on and try something new. You know, for me it was to a considerable extent the life as a writer, the life as a mentor to leaders and pastors and then maybe to fool around a little bit in the business world. You know, could I take the gospel framework and put it into language and vocabulary that would make sense to men and women in the business world who weren't following Christ? And I fooled with that idea and I don't think I would've had the courage to try that at 65. So what I think I did was I added, and this, this is just the human in me, see, I added probably 28 to 30 years to my life by dropping out of active pastoral ministry at the time that I did.

Gordon M.: I'm 80 now and um, I'm still pretty full time occupied with what I think God has called me to do. And I felt like in the last years that God gave me a fresh new call, which has been very powerful to me.

Carey Nieuwhof: What is that call?

Gordon M.: I have to tell you, at the age of 64 when I was, I, you know, I wrote for a number of years for leadership journal, which I'm sure...

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I used to read it.

Gordon M.: And my editor asked me if I would do a piece on call. So I wrote the thing, which wasn't hard to do because the standard biblical message on call is one we probably all subscribe to. But when I mailed when I pushed the send button, very dissatisfied with my own writing and I thought, "My call, my call came when I was about 14 or 15. I don't even think about my call anymore.

Gordon M.: It has no real traction in my life. I just do what I do because I've always been doing it and I liked doing it and I can't do anything else." And I began to pray and I, and my prayer was, "Lord, do you have a fresh call for a 64 year old man?" I've never heard anybody in their sixties say they have a brand new call. Just never have heard it. So is that possible? Because I can't find anything in the Bible that instructs me about that. And so I kept praying week after week, "Lord, is there a

new call out there?" Then I went to Germany for about 10 days to speak each day in a different city to pastors. And after several of those days, at the end of the day, some of the young German pastors would come up who could speak English and they would say, uh, "You talk to us today like a father."

Gordon M.: "Well, what do you mean by that," I'd ask. "Well, the old German theologians and pastors, they shout, they lecture us, they talk about philosophy, about the history of theology, but they never opened their hearts to us. They never tell us their stories. And that's what you did today. You told us your story and where you hurt and where you failed and where God blessed you. And that's what we, younger people need so badly. Please keep doing that." So I went home to the US and out to California to do another one of these conferences for Asian pastors. And after the two days, the host stood up to thank me and he said, "It's been such a good time with Gordon. I've had tears in my eyes almost the whole time he's been speaking, and he said, you may wonder where the tears came. They're there not because he's that bad a speaker, but the tears came because I thought I was hearing the voice of a father." And the Holy Spirit as a word kind of came on me at that moment, and I don't say these words very often, but I felt like I heard heaven say to me, "You wanted a fresh call."

Gordon M.: You've got it. Just spend the rest of your life being a father to men and women of leadership." That's a great call. You never run out of customers. I get out of bed almost every morning and one of the first questions I'm asking myself is, "Who will I get to be a father to today?" And often when I speak to a group I've never met before and you get up after the introduction and I'll, I'll say, "I've been looking at all of you and I've made a discovery that's bothersome. I'm the oldest person in this room by many years." And everybody laughs of course at that and after they quiet down. So you say, "Well, since I'm the oldest person in the room, let me talk to you like a father." And the room goes dead instantly. Every person is on the edge of their chair.

Gordon M.: The reason? Because the new generation desperately needs a father. And when it's all over, and the day's over, it's amazing how many people will come up afterwards. "Thank you for being a father to me today. Thank you for talking like a father. I needed to hear that." So that's my fresh call. To this day, my experiences, as long as I'm willing to be a father, I don't have to run things. I don't have to bore you with my stories. I don't have to prove myself. I'm just here to encourage you as a father would encourage his son or daughter.

Carey Nieuwhof: What does the next generation need to hear from a father?

Gordon M.: Well, first of all, it needs to hear that they are loved and respected. Um, that God has great things for them. If they will stay on track, don't go off the rails. They, they need to hear from a father who may not like everything they do. But nevertheless, will say, "When you're in motion, I see the life of God in you." And to hear that affirmation, most young men and women, you know, will kill to hear someone say something like that. Um, I try hard not to correct people

unless they ask me for the correction. I try hard not to give advice unless someone asks me to give the advice. In the right sort of context, I will on occasion rebuke somebody. But, um, I think those are things younger generations need to hear.

Carey Nieuwhof: So it's encouragement. It's affirmation.

Gordon M.: Yeah. Even if you yourself don't like it or understand it.

Gordon M.: There's a lot of things this younger generation is doing that I don't understand. And if you promise not to tell anybody, don't even like, but then, but then, then it's like the spirit of God says to me, "You know, your father didn't like what you were doing either." And then I realize I was always rebelling against the older generation. I was always convinced that if they would give me half a chance I could preach a better sermon. Um, so um, at that causes me to quiet down.

Carey Nieuwhof: In *Ordering Your Private World*, and I want to come back to mentoring but I don't want to lose this thought. You talked about if my memory serves me correct, the difference between "driven leadership" and "called leadership." So for the pastors and for the marketplace, business leaders listening, can you describe a little bit about what a driven, cause I saw myself in that writing as again 32 to 42 very driven, hopefully more recently.

Carey Nieuwhof: A little more called, can you play that out a little bit? I think that's a really important distinction.

Gordon M.: Oh, drivenness is probably the doorway to leadership for a huge percentage of men and women who become influencers as the years go by. Drivenness is all about naked ambition. It's about trying to please somebody in your life that you feel is important to you. You know, for me, even though my father had his back to me, I was always trying to get his attention. I dreamed of the day when he would come around the corner and say, "Son, I never told you this, but I am so proud of you. I am so delighted with the hand of God on you." My father never could do that because as a young man, I began to preach to larger congregations. I was the right one, the right that he wanted to write book couldn't.

Gordon M.: I was the person who was invited to some privileged positions of leadership that he never got. So my father saw me as a threat and I on the other hand, was always trying to say to him, you know, "Look at me. You know, affirm please that, that God's hand is on me." I would rather hear that from my father than a thousand strangers. So drivenness is all part of that. Drivenness is often comes out of anger. I meet a lot of preachers who really are preaching out of anger. And I think that would be the second level of feeling like you have to prove something. There's a lot of men and women who enter into nonprofit leadership that failed to make it in the larger profit making world. And um, you know, this became their, you know, I can't do anything else who I'll do this.

Carey Nieuwhof: Here I am.

Gordon M.: I've been meaning to talk to you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Exactly, exactly.

Gordon M.: But I, you know, I was a driven person and I've already in effect said that to you. I was a driven person and uh, it's all in the Older Testament. The first Israel King was a driven person among others. So there comes a moment where you have to convert from drivenness to callness. And for me, that came at about the age of 31. In going through just a, um, a moment of, of, you know, I don't know whether you want to call it burnout. I don't, I'm not sure I like that word, but there was a moment when everything for several weeks just went wrong in my journey and I saw no way out. And uh, on a Saturday morning, everything hit the fan. And Gail finally said to me, "I want you to take a look at your schedule for the last six or eight weeks and ask yourself, is this the way we're going to live for the rest of our lives because this is not what I signed up for." And my response cause she was right, she was dead right.

Gordon M.: My response was to just dissolve into retching and tearing and crying and for the better part of the day, I just cried and cried and cried. And to this day, I'm not sure I know what was behind all those tears. Was it the frustration of the previous weeks? Was it the tears of a childhood that had been very unhappy? Uh, was it my failure to have ever made it with my dad? I, I don't know if that was all just coming out like a volcano or, or what. But at the end of the day, there came a moment when, when I had to say, "What's the message in all of this?" And I, I've already mentioned once, this is probably the second time I felt, I heard God speak and the words were, "Now you know what it's like to live out of an empty soul." And I realized that this fundamentalism that I'd grown up in, even my seminary training, which had been great education, nobody had ever effectively acquainted me with the space inside of each one of us, which I believe is, is largest spaces, outer spaces.

Gordon M.: Nobody had ever taught me how to treat that space and how to occupy it and how to meet the Lord Jesus there. And that's when another conversion in effect happened. And I began to ask for the first time, "How do you fill your soul and keep it filled?" And OPW, Ordering Your Private World comes out of that experience. It, it's the triggering experience, which a few years later caused me to write that book. And by the way, I wrote it in a very, very quick amount of time. So it's always amazed me that anybody has ever read it.

Carey Nieuwhof: That sold crazy amount of copies, hasn't it, over the years?

Gordon M.: Yeah. Uh, you know, it has a revision, this is, uh, it's in its fourth revision now. And uh, I had to bring it up to date with all the technology and stuff.



Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, yeah. It was a, it was like a, if I remember it had some DOS prompts in it back in the 80s or whatever. Right. You have counseled a lot of people. So we're here, uh, with Josh Gagnon who I'm going to interview later today and he's a young, under 40 pastor of a very large, remarkable church here, Next Level Church. And as a New Englander...

Gordon M.: You understand we're new Englanders?

Carey Nieuwhof: Absolutely. I mean, you led in Boston for a number of years and this kind of story doesn't often get written in New England. Can you talk about your relationship with Josh and what that's like?

Gordon M.: I hope he won't mind my saying this, but um, Josh is like a son, um, to an older man and you, he's a very lovable man. And one of the most, uh, unique things about Josh is his teachability. Um, I've known very, very few people in my life who were more open. I mean, I hope this sounds okay. He'll sit and listen to you for hours, if you're willing to talk for hours, um, most people, you know, will give you 40 minutes and that's it. So I find in him a ready spirit, a humble spirit, and I find a man who's ready to be transparent and to talk not only out of his joy and the power in his life, but also to have talked to you about the, the painfulness of life so that that causes the you know, when you meet somebody like that and they, they keep coming back to you, um, little bit by little, something closer than a friendship begins to happen and you, you don't waste time talking to each other. It's, it's not a conversation about the Red Sox or something going on in Washington. Um, but it's, it's deep spirited content that's aimed at helping both of us to appreciate Jesus more.

Carey Nieuwhof: You've also counseled at least one President, perhaps a more.

Gordon M.: One's enough.

Carey Nieuwhof: One's enough? And that was Bill Clinton in the, in the 90s. Um, and you've worked with a number of other very high powered leaders. What were some things Bill Clinton says he read your book, *Rebuilding Your Broken World* twice. Um, a book I found very, very, uh, powerful. And what, um, what is different in the world of most high capacity leaders? I mean, if you're leading the free world or you're President of the United States or leading a very large church or company, what is different and what is the same in those worlds?

Gordon M.: The thing that's different and unique about coming into the lives of people like that is you realize very quickly how little freedom they have. We, we all have this notion, those of us who live at lower echelons of life, "Man, it would be nice to be president of this or that. I could, you know, I'd have my own plane and I'd be able to do this. I'd be able to do that." Then you get into their lives and discover they're more chained up and held captive than almost anybody. And Clinton used to love to say, and I think he was quoting somebody else that the White House is the crown jewel of the American prison system.

Gordon M.: And, uh, and for sure what he was talking about. I, and I'll give you one example, which I don't think is, um, a breach of confidentiality. Um, I, when I, I used to see him every second or third week and I went to see him one day and it was in the middle of, of the, uh, impeachment hearings. And on the way down on the plane, I had this idea, "I wonder what it would be like if Bill Clinton repented in words and in the depth that evangelicals are demanding from him?" Because that was every time he would take a step forward, my evangelical companions would say, "Well, he didn't repent deeply enough." And I would keep saying, "Well, how, how deep does a person have to go the first time they repent?" Because we've all had to repent and repent. Repentance is like, stairsteps.

Gordon M.: Anyway, I wrote a speech for him. And when I got there, we sat down together in the Oval Office. I said to him, "I wrote a speech for you on the way down in the plane." He said, "Oh, what did you say?" I said, "Well, I probably ought to wait because I think I would make you mad." He said, "I promise not to get mad. Read it to me." So I read this speech as if I was Bill Clinton. When I got through. He said, uh, "Could I have it?" I said, uh, "No." I said, "It needs to be edited. Spiffed up. It's just scrawl on a legal pad." "Well, can you have it on my desk by eight o'clock tomorrow morning?" "Yes, I can do that," I said. So I went home that afternoon, worked on it into the evening. The next morning, about 6:30, the President's secretary is on the phone. The President wants to know where the speech is.

Gordon M.: I said, "Betty, I'll have it on your desk by nine o'clock." She said, "Well, don't wait any further than that. And by the way, you may want to watch the television at night at 10 o'clock or four o'clock this afternoon." So I got the speech fax down to the White House and at four o'clock, we turned on the TV and here's the President coming out of the Oval Office to the Rose Garden all by himself. Now, if you've watched, if you've watched Presidents in the Rose Garden, they're always surrounded by entourage. And uh, but this time he was all alone and he was reflecting a story I had told him about the King of England who repented and went to the, uh, cathedral, uh, at Canterbury, to be absolved by the Archbishop, and he had to go alone. And the President had taken that story very seriously, and he stood alone and he read this speech, which largely reflected the outline.

Gordon M.: And the vocabulary that I'd used, only problem was that it was laundered of all the frank directness that would have added up to this is truly a statement of repentance.

Carey Nieuwhof: So it had been edited?

Gordon M.: It had been edited. And that's where I was going with this story. It had been edited by his political advisors, his congressional advisors, his lawyers, and uh, some other group, I forget. And little bit by little, they had laundered the whole speech and reduced it to nothing. And it made me realize how captive men and women in high leadership are because they can't make a choice or a decision in

their lives without somebody from the outside interfering and demanding that they exercise their responsibility in that case to the Government or to a big organization or even a church. Everything has gotta be managed.

Gordon M.: Everything's gotta be vetted, you know, does it pass the smell test of this, that, and the other thing? So it was, the President was often in a very difficult spot where if he was at one of those moments when he, he really wanted to make right to the Nation, it was questionable as to whether he could. And you know, now, even as you and I sit and talk, we're in another not dissimilar situation and, um, you know, no one knows where these political crises like they're experiencing in England and in the US and, uh, and other places. Where do these go, and how free is the person up top to make a decision? And you can only hope that they have good advisors come. Um, I sat in the Oval Office two or three times when the President was faced in that moment to make a decision about something out around the world that could involve the killing of people.

Gordon M.: I watched a couple of these dramas unfold and in one, he was being asked to send some cruise missiles into a country and destroy some military bases. And he knew that hundreds of people might die and the advisors were coming in every five minutes to update him on aspects of this decision. And he finally turned to me and he said, "So what would you do?" And I mean, he wasn't asking my advice, it was just kind of one of those throw outs. And when I left, I left shaken because I realized that, um, what would happen if I was asked to make a decision that would cost the lives of scores and scores of people? This, this is not play school. And, uh, I just, you know, I just don't think that we in the public understand the pressures that are going on and how much character is needed on the part of the person who's in power to make right decisions and to accept the responsibilities. This can be a life or death decision that I'm making.

Carey Nieuwhof: In *Rebuilding Your Broken World*, probably one of the most, it was an incredible book, but probably one of the most remarkable parts I read and I wanted to ask this question now because, you know, I don't know when this'll air, but I promise you between the recording of this interview, there'll be another scandal. There'll be somebody else who's forced to resign, uh, because a variety of things. It could be character, it could be whatever. And this happens in the church. This happens in the business world. This happens in the sport world, in the political arena, in almost every area of life. And um, you have a whole section on repentance, reconciliation and restoration. And when I read that a couple of years ago on my summer vacation, I was like, nobody is talking about it the way you talk about it in the way you lay it out. So if you were advising, whether that's a president or you know, a pastor or a politician or business leader today to say, "Hey, you've made a mistake, this is taking you out of leadership for now. This is the path ahead." How would you counsel them?

Gordon M.: Christianity is a religion about repentance. Repentance infers, total transparency, humility, um, a recognition of, of powerlessness and the need for there to be a forgiver that closes the transaction. I would contend that

repentance is the most important single event in the life of a person who chooses to follow Christ. And if, if what I'm saying is not too far from the truth, then then concomitant to that is there must be a place where I can repent, which I think both you and I would agree we're church men, that the church ought to be the place where people's repentance is honored and responded to.

Gordon M.: And yet today, and I don't want to say this in meanness, the church is one of the last places that one would want to repent because people do not respect the privilege of accountability. I use accountability, but transparency. Um, and it may be in fact that one of the reasons the Bible speaks about not being gossipers is because there's so much to gossip about in the church because it's one of the few places where people might talk about the darkness of their spirits, their souls. I mean, you don't go to a Quantas club and confess your sins. You don't do it at the little league soccer game on Saturday morning. What do you do at church? Well, one of the things ought to be you give thanks, but a second would be I acknowledge my sinfulness. If you ever want to see this done, Carey, go to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Gordon M.: I went to AA meetings two and three times a week for about a year and a half. Not because I drink alcohol, I don't, let's get that straight but I went, because I was coaching some executives who were going to AA everyday and the things they told me smells so much like what I thought a church ought to be, that I had to go and see myself and I went to an AA meeting and within minutes I was thoroughly mesmerized by the openness of women and men to repent to each other to acknowledge when when they'd slipped and taken a drink and shouldn't have. And I walked away saying in the church, "The preacher often has to start with the people who think they're here and talk them down to here so that they could maybe start doing something right" In AA, you start down here and you build up. The first thing you do in an AA meeting is say, "My name is Bob.

Gordon M.: My name is Carey, my name is Gordon. I'm an alcoholic." Everybody says that every day. So we all now know where each other stands and then the next hour is spent reading from the so-called big book and and telling our story. That's repentance. And that also is the received group that hears the repentance. And the favorite response of the group will be, um, "Just keep on coming. Just keep on coming." They say it a thousand times, "Keep on coming." And uh, I was blown out of the water by my AA experience and so thankful that those alcoholics allowed me to join their fellowship for that year and a half. So that's back to the church is what you know. I think every pastor ought to be encouraged to go to AA meetings for six months or nine months just to see what the church could be like if we discovered repentance. So repentance is this acknowledgement.

Gordon M.: I have failed and I renounce any desire to excuse myself or to ask you to look past this. We're going to deal with it. This is what happened. And when that has been satisfactorily pronounced, then the next step is the forgiveness and

restoration. And, if I'm the one that's repenting, I cannot forgive myself. I cannot dictate the terms beyond that. But I'm, I must be surrounded by a group of men and women who accept the responsibility to oversee the working out of my repentance and too, they're like a cast on a broken arm. The arm is broken and can't function, but the cast sturdy is it. And the people who surround me become the cast and they're the people who say, after a period of time, "We've been watching this woman or watching this man or this couple. The sorrow that they feel for their sin is real and genuine.

Gordon M.: And from everything we can see, God has brought to them full forgiveness. We recommend that they come out and take steps forward to the more visible."

Carey Nieuwhof: So it's a communal process.

Gordon M.: That's what the church is. It's a communal process. And, uh, you know, when you hear about someone who just takes this on their own back, you say to yourself, "That just can't be right." Um, this is a place where the church is to be in motion lovingly with each other and, and that demands that as time goes by, that the forgiven person, be slowly restored to certain levels and that the church stops holding against them, what, what has been so detrimental to the cause of Christ at that particular moment. I would suggest to you that these principles are there and, but everyone, every individual experience is different than the other one by a small degree. And so each one has to be taken on its case by case basis.

Carey Nieuwhof: You say in the book, and I'm quoting, "Broken world, people are in no position to demand grace or even deserve it." Which is something you see these days that that is interesting. Someone says, "Yes, I did it, but I deserve forgiveness, I demand forgiveness," almost immediately without that process you talk about. Why? Why do you feel broken world people are in no position to demand grace or even deserve it?

Gordon M.: Here's an idea. No one ever sins alone.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes, no one ever sins alone.

Gordon M.: When a person falls into sin. And you have to very careful when you say this, you also want to look at the context in which they made the choice that they made and say, "What else was going on at that particular time that that didn't help this person defend themselves when they made the bad choice?" Um, you'll often hear people say, "Yeah, so-and-so did that, but and therefore the grace of God go I." And if I'm the person that's hearing that, I want to say, "So where was the grace of God, when I needed it? If it prevented him from falling into sin, why didn't it prevent me" So the question is that wherever there is sin, might we assume that there was something going wrong in the larger context of this person's life? And there are other people who have things to repent about them. They have things to repent about too. In other words, this is a communal

repentance when something goes wrong. And the person in question may be in our human way. We have to say that they may be on a scale of 10, but there are also people in this thing on a scale of three and four and they have something to account for too. So if you want community, it's community is not only there to bless people in their finest moments, but community also takes responsibility when someone fails.

Carey Nieuwhof: Rather than banish and push, push them to the outside.

Gordon M.: Rather than banish and be outside.

Carey Nieuwhof: I don't want to spend too much time, more time on it, but there was another really intriguing quote that I wanted to, first of all, make sure it's accurate. Secondly, share it with you. See what you have to say. "More than half of middle aged American men harbor at least one secret about their personal lives. Acts of vengeance, dishonesty,

Carey Nieuwhof: sexual promiscuity that would 'bring about catastrophic consequences for them in those close to them.'" Hey, comment on that. And what do you do with that kind of secret?

Gordon M.: Well, the comment is based upon anecdotal experience. I mean, nobody's put out a questionnaire lately saying, "Have any secrets? So what are they?"

Carey Nieuwhof: I agree with the quote. That's why I'm asking the question.

Gordon M.: The first thing we ought to do, and this may not be what you were looking for, but we need to ask ourselves if that's true, then what does it say about the context of the church, the way we do church these days, that makes it possible for 50% or more of the people in attendance on a given Sunday to have secrets? Since I wrote that, I've fooled around on a number of occasions with a talk and then an essay about the TSA scanner at the airport.

Gordon M.: And I'm thinking to myself, "What if you had a scanner at the front door of a church and a person coming to church, and the scanner examines their soul and spits out a printout that says, 'This person today is wildly angry at his spouse. This person, um, is terribly fearful about a doctor's appointment that's coming on Tuesday afternoon. This person, um, fell into deep sin this week and is terrified that somebody's going to find out.'" And so three minutes before the worship service starts, the head usher puts all of these printouts in the lap of the pastor. And I say to pastors, "If you knew that 18% of your people that morning were there seething in anger and 14% of the people were stone cold in their spiritual journey, and this person was unfaithful to his spouse, and this person was afraid of getting fired. If you knew all these people were sitting out there in those benches, how would that first affect the way you pray that morning?"

Gordon M.: How would it affect the way you preached to people? How would it affect the words you use to formulate a benediction when you send these people out the door?" And by the way, when they come in the scan through the scanner, how do you want them to leave an hour and 15 minutes later? What do you want to have changed? What are the grand results that that hour is supposed to achieve? One of the interesting things, and you and I discussed this a few moments ago, um, when we step away from being deeply involved as a pastor and we start sitting in the pew from time to time, what do we see that we didn't see when we were behind the pew?

Carey Nieuwhof: You see different things, don't you?

Gordon M.: Absolutely.

Carey Nieuwhof: What do you see?

Gordon M.: I see boredom. I see people going through the motions. I'd like to go up to everybody 10 minutes after the service is over.

Gordon M.: And say, "What did the pastor preach about? Or did you feel elevated when he or she lifted the congregation in prayer?" One of, one of my concerns by the way, about the new modern churches we're doing churches, it seems in most places it's in my observation, is a real diminution in prayer. And one of the great pastoral privileges is to pray for people. That's what a pastor does. Here are these people that I'm sitting out there. I know what it's like to sit in one of those pews with a secret. I've been there and as I talked to men and I, I have breakfast three to four mornings a week with, with men, business people and stuff and over and over again, the moment comes when they unload a secret on you. And you realize people are carrying secrets all over the place and walking the halls of their homes in the middle of the night, terrified less they'd be found out.

Carey Nieuwhof: I think you have that analogy in your book, *Rebuilding Your Broken World*, about sitting there with a dead body under the boards. Do you remember that?

Gordon M.: Oh yes. That comes from a great American novel.

Carey Nieuwhof: Which one?

Gordon M.: Oh my gosh, it's called *A Telltale Heart*.

Carey Nieuwhof: But it's that idea that, and I'm going to get it wrong.

Gordon M.: The heart beats louder and louder.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. The heartbeat. You can almost hear the, the beating heart under the floorboards and if no one else discovers it, the murderer has to financially just

say, "Yes, I did it. It was me, it was me, it was me. I'm telling you, I can know you all like that." That conscience really eats at you.

Gordon M.: Yeah. Which by the way is exactly what happens in AA but doesn't happen in church cause we have this program that needs to be followed inch by inch and we can't break the program. Um, for anybody to stop and, and, you know, experience the love of Christ and the grace of Christ. I, I, my own feeling is the next 25 years, the church is going to have to reframe its way of doing business. Lest it totally fail. People who need fresh starts and an infusion of grace.

Carey Nieuwhof: You still believe in the church? I mean, I'm not saying that in an accusing way, but there's a growing number of people who are just walking away from the church period and saying, "I'm a Christian but I'm by myself."

Gordon M.: Yeah. I know any number of them. Yeah. The businessman who comes by at the end of the Sunday morning and says, "I've just attended my final church service. Um, I've got too much good stuff to do with my time than to sit through something that doesn't touch me Monday through Friday." One businessman said to me, "You know what church is like for me?" He said, "Our pastor gets up at the end of the service and he prays, 'Lord, thank for our meeting together this morning. Would you please bless the choir, has it rehearses on Tuesday night. And those of us who will be a prayer meeting on Wednesday, and the youth as they go off on retreat, and bring us back here next Sunday, ready to praise you again. Amen.'" And the business guy looks at me and he says, "He doesn't know I have a job. He doesn't know that all week long I'm suffering and stressing through a work world, which is just pulling me apart. That's what I need prayer for."

Carey Nieuwhof: Hmm.

Gordon M.: And so, you know, you asked me do I, I will never leave the church. Um, and, and by the way, we're back to oldness again. Gail and I need the church cause we need somebody to die with. Yeah. We need somebody to die with. I need to know if I go before I get home tonight, that there'll be people standing around my grave with Gail. I need to know if something happens to her that people will stand with me around the grave. Um, and that's the role of the church. Ultimately, it's a family of people. So as boring as it sometimes may be, it's your people. You watch old people and you didn't ask me to this, I'll just throw it in. You watch old people when they come to church, um, they, you often come early to get the back rows and the side rows and they come to see their friends and if you listen to the conversations, it's about, "I have a doctor's appointment at nine on Tuesday." Or, "My grandchildren are coming home this week."

Gordon M.: I'm so excited." And you listen to them talk with each other, the talk of friends. Then at the end of the service, they talk more and then finally go home. The price of the talking is you have to go to the worship service because in the worship service, you know, there are no songs they know. Yeah, no sermons are



usually about things that old people are concerned about. What are the sins of old people? Nobody knows.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's a great question.

Gordon M.: Yeah. We know the sins of 20 year olds, as I said before, because of the hormones, our emotions. And so most sinfulness in our early years is about sexually related situations. But when you're 75 or 76, that's not a problem.

Carey Nieuwhof: So what are the sins of old people, Gordon?

Gordon M.: Well, fear.

Gordon M.: How am I going to die? Will anybody be there when I die? Well, I die a long death or a slow death? Will I get Alzheimer's? Will I get dementia? Or will I peacefully go in my sleep? So fear. Bitterness. My grandchildren never come home. My son only wants my money. My friends are all dying and there's no one left. The, those would be the things that 70 year olds, my anger, the system letting me down. I thought it would, you know, we have people in church at the age of 70, 75, 80 who, 25 years they gave everything to that church. They chairman'd the building committee. They were there every week to teach a Sunday School class now, but in now, no one even knows who they are. So they become bitter. Is this all I get after all those years with faithfulness to the church? Now you and I may think right now that's awfully picayune but there's a lot of people who are thinking, thinking that way.

Carey Nieuwhof: What would you do to them if you were the 40 year old pastor today and you're looking at those, you can rewind the clock and knowing what you know now? How would you speak into the lives of 70 and 80 year olds?

Gordon M.: Well, you, you obviously have to parcel out your time and proper proportions. But I could hear a sensitive pastor maybe once a month in what I call the pastoral prayer say, "Lord, so look out across the congregation today. I see more than a few people who have gray hair. It's so good that they love to be with us, but I know that some of them are struggling with things today that they don't feel they can even share with us. So I pray for them that you build up their courage. If they're in pain, that you'd heal them. If they're facing a little bit of depression, that they might know something about the presence of Jesus." That's all old people need to hear. And maybe once a month sing a song that they know by heart, you know, sing Holy, Holy, Holy, or Crown Him With Many Crowns or Fairest Lord Jesus. And watch the old people, the smile that comes across their face to hear something familiar. Don't always make them stand. It hurts their hips. And if you wonder why they sit across the back, that's because many of them know they only have 40 seconds to get to the bathroom. And no, no young people know that.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's a good word. Speaking to young leaders, we have a lot of the next generation leaders listening. And uh, I feel like I've grown so much in our, our time together today. If you had a word for the next generation, the up and coming church leaders, business leaders, entrepreneurs, what would you say to them?

Gordon M.: Well, there's so much good I could say. Um, I, I'd want to say something about, I, I love the vision of younger people. Their boldness. Um, I love the fact that a lot of them don't get caught up in small things that I've found my generation getting caught up in. Um, so I love those kinds of things. I love their compassion and their openness to the broken people of this world. I see them disciplining a lot of them anyway, disciplining their consumeristic approaches. I love their concern for climate change and for the beauty of creation. Um, so those are the things I'd want to affirm. On the other hand, I think young people are missing the joy of the splendor and the majesty of God, which is created by a certain solemnity. Um, that must be there sometimes and an openness that this, our God is so great.

Gordon M.: And again, back to AA, the first of the 12 steps, we admitted that we were powerless and that there is someone that's greater than us. I'm not sure I hear that quite like that in the church. So I think my AA friends and they have a better theology than I have sometimes, but, but I would call young people in the church. Oh, finally to recognize that church is a 52 weeks a year proposition and if people are going to come to church to worship only 1.7 times a month, then they better accept the fact that their faith will not go very far and that is becoming one of the great problems of churches. The church has been structured for 300 years to a 52 Sunday a week year. People teach Sunday School 48 Sundays a year because children need the same teacher week after week. Other people serve in various ways, 48 Sundays a year because the church depends upon the faithfulness of people. It can't be, "I'll be there this week and maybe next July and next August." So I would love to see in this new generation, more faithfulness, more committedness maybe that would make work more exciting.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'd be remiss if we didn't talk about your marriage. It's 58 years. You and Gail have been, is that right? 58 years. Yeah. What are, I know a, it's funny Toni and I, my wife, we will celebrate 30 years. And what have been some things that have really helped the two of you because of everything I hear through Josh and other things I've seen you read or speak, you seem to be very much in love, uh, almost six decades into this. So what are some, uh, marriage tips or, or insights you could give us?

Gordon M.: Sometimes when I'm speaking at a men's conference. I'll say, um, you know what the high point of my day is in this quietness as people think about that, they don't have the slightest idea? And finally I've got them curious and I'll say, "High point of my day is when night comes and I crawl into my bed and I put my arms around Gail and squeeze her as tightly as I can. That's the greatest

moment of the day." And I still feel that way. We 80 year olds still hug and enjoy each other very, very much. When my friend Keith that I told you about a while ago introduced us. Those weeks went by as Gail and I worked our heads off to know each other better and better and better. And two weeks before we were to get married, my friend Keith took me out to lunch and he, um, we ordered it and then he said, "Gordon, I have something to say to you." He said, "God has given to you an incredible woman to be your wife. He means to say many things to you through her." And then he took his finger, any wagged it in my face and he said three times loudly and firmly, "Listen to her, listen to her, listen to her because you're not a good listener."

Gordon M.: That's one of the most important pieces of advice I ever got in my life because I fear that if he had not said that as strongly as he said it, I would have been one more brash guy thinking I had all the answers. And if Gail would listen to me, we'd be fine. But to this day, I'm not going to say 100%, but as often as possible, whenever Gail offers a rebuke or an affirmation, whenever she offers an idea that's a little bit different than mine, I hear Keith saying to me almost 59 years ago, "Listen to her because what she's going to say just may be a word from God." And, uh, that put a sacred canopy over our relationship. Um, which is, is there, is there today as much as it's ever been. It isn't that we've had the perfect relationship. Um, but I've never seen one that I prefer more than the one I have. I anticipated your question. I wrote down a few words on this piece of paper. Um, I realized the day I married Gail, that I was making a commitment to serve her. "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." And that verse in Ephesians is simply saying, "You want to marry this woman? Then you better be prepared to die for her because that could happen." Serve her, make sure that you're providing the opportunity for her to grow, to be every inch, the woman God intended her to be.

Gordon M.: Enjoy mercy in your relationship. Be quick to forgive and slow to take offense. Learn how to affirm each other, point out the good things that the other one is doing all day long and say a thousand thank you's. Most of us men in leadership, women I suppose too, we don't have the time to give thanks. We just assume everybody will do everything for us, but giving thanks may be one of the greatest habits of all relationships there are. Talk with each other, have endless hours of conversation. Gail and I are never without things to talk about. It's probably because we both read a lot because we're involved with people all the time. Um, we always run out of time to talk about all the things that are on our mind and I'll bet on her company more than anybody else that comes on, you know, that is in my world.

Gordon M.: She's just a fascinating woman to live with. And finally, and this was one that we had to learn a little bit the hard way, um, learn how to play. When our children were at home, all of our play was when going to watch them play soccer, basketball, lacrosse, all these other things. We were always there on the sidelines. That's a pastor's flexibility as you know. So we were always there and then one day the children played a bad joke on us. They left home, they knew

that they went off to college and they got married. They weren't supposed to do that. They were supposed to be there to provide us with amusement and they left. And so Gail and I very wisely filled all those vacant holes on the schedule with more work, right? Write more articles, preach more sermons, traveled to this place.

Gordon M.: And then one day we realized it had been a long time since we left. Where we had just forgotten about ministry. And we're um, just really enjoying life. I said to Gail one day, "Next month we're going to Switzerland." "What for," she said. "We are going to climb mountains. We're going to have fun." "Well, we don't have a agenda or a, uh, we don't have a schedule." "And that's just fine," I said. "We're going to go and we're going to guess at each day what it takes." "Well, how long are we going to go," she said. I said, "Well, 31 days sounds like a good round number to me." And we went. It was the best 31 days of our lives. We climbed the mountains every day. We read books, we ate good food, we slept in and made a lot of love. And when those 31 days were over, we were newly married. And we've gone back to Switzerland almost every year since 30 years ago. And um, it's been the place where, you know, we've just renewed everything. It's sacred territory to us, even though it's very expensive.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes. Yeah. But isn't it strange that you end up, you know, as long as you've had a long life so far. But like Toni and I, we became empty nesters when I was, wasn't even 50.

Carey Nieuwhof: And it shocked me, like shocked me that there's more life ahead of you without kids than there was with kids.

Gordon M.: Important point.

Carey Nieuwhof: I missed that, and I never thought about that until it kind of happened. And then you're like, "Oh, what do you do with the rest of this life?" And the play is easily forgotten in your fifties. Yeah.

Gordon M.: Yeah. You just said are extremely wise thing. And um, every woman and man in leadership want to hear that and start talking with the principal people, their lives because your, your marriage. We discovered our marriage came in thirds. The first 20 years were the, the firsts. Where you're doing everything for the first time. First house, first, nice new car. First of this, first of that. Then this, the middle part of life has the, the sames. You start doing the same thing over and over again.

Gordon M.: Every week it's a sermon. Um, every week it's a staff meeting. Every week it's a trip to here and it's not novelty that drives you anymore. It's quality. And then the last third of life are the lasts. The last freezer we'll buy. This may be the last second car we'll have. This may be the last house we'll live in before the assisted care center. This may be the last time we go here or see this. And in fact, this may be the last time we're going to see certain people. We're saying goodbye all

the time to people we love that we're never gonna see again. As I say, they either are going to heaven or Florida.

Gordon M.: But life in the lasts is a lot of goodbyes.

Carey Nieuwhof: This has been such a rich time. I don't even know how much time has gone by, but is there anything else? We've covered a lot that you would love to share.

Gordon M.: Gosh, Carey, I feel like I've, I've said more than I know

Carey Nieuwhof: Gordon, this is, this is bucket list stuff for me. You've influenced my life in so many ways over the decades and to be able to sit down and have a long, meaningful, unhurried conversation with you, that just happens to benefit a lot of leaders is great. If there's one more thing, do you have time for one more? I forgot this question.

Gordon M.: Well, I, is there one more thing?

Carey Nieuwhof: One, yeah. One more thing you have and then I've got another question that I forgot to ask.

Gordon M.: Well, this may sound like it's kind of outside of the explicit sense of faith. But I would like to say to young people, be diligent to grow intellectually. Your mind is a muscle and it becomes flacid and stale if it's not used. We do not train a lot of Christian leaders to think. We train them to have right answers. We train them to make the right kind of appearances. We don't teach them how to think thoroughly and deeply. And that was one of the things I regretted in my younger adult years. No one ever challenged me with the adventure of thinking. And it's one of the reasons that the evangelical voice, my judgment in Canada and America is so weak today. We're just talking to ourselves and to talk out into the larger world and speak so that you gain traction, you have to be a thinker.

Gordon M.: You have to prove to people that you've exposed yourself to the great thinking of the centuries, all the way from Socrates and Plato all the way up to the days in which we live, where there are some incredibly brilliant people walking the face of the earth. We need to know who they are and what they're saying and whether or not we agree with that. But all the way through college and graduate school, I don't remember anybody saying, "Gordon, learn how to think systematically and come to sound conclusions that will be persuasive to other people. That's my last word to most younger leaders."

Carey Nieuwhof: That is a fantastic word. We, we share that passion. And uh, I remember as a, I spent 10 years in university history, law, theology. Um, it was like you can love God with your mind, but you're supposed to love the Lord your God with your heart, soul strength and your mind. Questions. This was my question about questions somewhere along the line in my research, my preparation for today. I heard you say it might've been in your interview with Josh on his podcast that,

in your view, you and Gail don't think people ask enough questions that sometimes, and, and my wife Toni and I had the same observation. It's like rare to be in company where people don't talk at you and they actually stop to ask you questions. You want to say a little bit more about that because that really intrigued me about the art of question asking?

Gordon M.: Well yeah, you, you went through an educational process where you learn to ask questions.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's what a law is.

Gordon M.: And I mean, and you, you understand how the, the order of questions and I suspect you all to know what questions should not be asked at certain points in litigation, for example. My mentor Vernon Grounds who, um, I, I followed for over 50 or 60 years was the greatest question asker I ever met. He was like a skilled surgeon. He just smelled how to get into your heart and you'd, you'd go and you'd sit down and the next thing you know, he would, he would just go one question after the other and he would ask them in such a way that you didn't feel intruded upon. You trusted him that he would handle what you told him. And I began to realize this was the, this is the starting point of most ministry, question asking.

Gordon M.: So I watched him over years. I, I learned to copy him and I just, when I would sit down with anybody, you know, and this has been a little bit of a worse experience for me because you've been the one asking the questions, I should be doing that. Uh, but the, the privilege of getting into people's hearts and minds and making them feel heard and satisfying some of their curiosities and confusions. I'm asking the questions that in gender, that is an amazing experience. And you know, you've hit a home run to use baseball language when someone says, "Wow, nobody ever asked me that question before." Or, or they'll say, "That is an incredible question. I've got to think about that." So that, that was what, um, Gail and I learned over the years and we've decided the questions are the start of almost all ministry and, but now back to your point.

Gordon M.: I'll finish with this quickly. If you don't like to think, then you don't ask questions cause you're not curious. And so it's true. You go to one meeting after another to a party or whatever and you go on home and Gail will say to me in the car, "Anybody ask you anything tonight?" Or I'll ask it to her. "No, no. I just ended up asking people about how they felt about this or that. But nobody asked me anything." I'll just, I guess I say with blindness, I, I'm appalled that men and women who say they're followers of Jesus aren't more interested in each other's stories in each other's conundrums is just something we've failed to teach people to do.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I feel we have somewhat parallel existences. Toni and I will drive home from sometimes two, three, four hour engagement. We'll have the same

conversation. I'll say, "Did anybody ask you anything tonight? And she'll say, "No, no, I was at some event for three or four hours. Nobody asked me a single question." And it's just fascinating. And so we're trying this stage in our life to be the question askers but it opens up a whole new world, doesn't it?

Gordon M.: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: And when it's mutual, it's the best.

Gordon M.: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Um, Gordon, your books are everywhere books are sold. But, and you don't need a thousand emails as a result of this interview, but if someone wanted to find your work, is there a website or collection where it's easy to, to find these days?

Gordon M.: Uh, not really. Uh, Amazon is the place of course, if, if any of the books are available. Uh, so I'd encourage that. I, I have not gone like YouTube. You guys have done and use technology like you have. My generation just wasn't really trained in that, and we're happy to see you doing it. And, and I'm at a point in my life where, um, the, the walls are beginning to, to come in closer. And, um, you know, at my age I don't necessarily do as much international and nationally wise stuff as I had the privilege of doing before. So, you know, I I prefer to communicate with people through the books and um, you know, and go beyond, they know your address and you can reach me.

Carey Nieuwhof: Thank you. Gordon McDonald, what a gift this has been. Thank you so much. Thank you so much.

Gordon M.: It's a privilege to have been with you, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: That was just so incredibly rich and helpful. When the cameras stopped rolling in and we finished, I said to the crew, "Man, it felt like a Holy ground." It really did. And I did another interview with Gordon for other purposes that I'll share in 2020 and thanks to Josh Gagnon who made that possible set that up. It took a while but it was so worth it. And then we went for lunch with Gordon and I learned a whole lot more. It was just a just exceptional exceptional time. This one is on YouTube as well as here on the audio podcast and you can also get transcripts if you want that. You can go to [CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode297](http://CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode297). The transcripts are searchable and this is probably something you want to share with your team as well, so super excited for this guys, we're back soon with some fresh episodes.

Carey Nieuwhof: Who have we got in the roster? We have Alejandro Reyes and we talk about hyper growth, digital marketing. He is a partner of mine who's helped me with my courses. Patrick Lencioni. I went to San Francisco and sat down with Pat at The Table Group and so that one is coming up. We also have Albert Tate, we

have Francis Chan, Larry Osborne, Carlos Whittaker, NT Wright and well, so much more guys. I'm very, very excited for what's coming up on the podcast. Also make sure you check out the specials we have, oh, let's see, the Pro WebFire special so you can get a website done for you for life. You get 30% off for life and that website gets renewed every three years and updated weekly. Plus they manage your social for you ProWebFire.com/Carey and if you want to get a handle on healthcare costs and save some money in 2020 head on over to RemodelHealth.com/Carey today and download their free health insurance buyer's guide. Now as far as episodes coming up, here's an excerpt from next episode that happens, well next Tuesday actually with Alejandro Reyes, here you go.

Alejandro Reyes: Have a big idea like have a, have a framework. Um, it's almost like your life thesis. It's like, "Live in a way today that will help you thrive tomorrow." That's a big idea and you would unpack that later. But what is your unique framework, your step by step system that you help people do? So what makes me unique? You know, how do I help people? And so some sort of unique framework, some sort of unique system that you do that no one else has done.

Carey Nieuwhof: That is a question that gets asked over and over and over again. How do I, how do I make an impact online? Alejandro, he has got the magic on that one. Now to my Ask Carey question. Justin wanted to know what are some really practical ways to self evaluate? Great question. I, you know it's interesting Justin because I think it's hard to evaluate yourself in a vacuum and in fact I'm not particularly good at evaluating myself in a vacuum because I have blind spots. So I'm going to suggest to you that the best way to self evaluate is to get other people in on that evaluation. So how does that start? I think it starts with a stance. I mean if you listen to the interview with Gordon today, you know how important that was in his development as a person and as a leader. It was getting input from other people.

Carey Nieuwhof: So I think that starts with step number one being open. You've got to be open to other people's input in your life. That can be your wife, your kids, your coworkers. As I've aged as a leader, I have been trying to get more and more input into my leadership. And I think that really is a posture and a stance. So if you're closed and defensive, nobody's going to tell you the truth. If you're open, a greater likelihood of that happening. Secondly, invite feedback. I ask my team all the time, how are we doing? Is there anything I'm doing that is getting in the way of your leadership? Is there any way that I'm kind of working against the mission that I might not be aware of? So invite that feedback. When they give it to you, the only words out of your mouth are, thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Don't defend yourself. Don't explain yourself. Don't, don't tell people why. "Oh, well here's why I do that. Oh, I'm an Enneagram three. That's just the.." What? No, no, no. Just thank them. Say thank you. So that's a step. It's a stance. It's an openness. You invite feedback. You say, thank you when you get it, if you need to go off into another room and cry in the corner when you hear it, then you do



that. But you, you don't shoot the messenger. Then the final thing I would recommend is take some personality profile tests. Okay. The Enneagram, Ian Cron has a new IE nine I think he calls it. That is really good. It's going to cost you a little bit of money, but it's excellent. We'll link to that in the show notes. I learned a lot. I have a 42 page report on all of my staff on their Enneagram profile.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'm an eight by the way, if you were wondering, that can be incredibly revealing about who you are and how you operate. We also use Right Path. We'll link to that in the show notes. And then there's another lesser known profile that I love called Leading From Your Strengths. And it was the first profile I took it years ago, maybe seven or eight years ago. It said things like, "This kind of leader needs multiple offices." And I'm like, what? I have kept multiple offices for years. I always have. I'm like, how did, how did, how did you know? I thought that was a weird thing about me. Um, but no, that's my personality profile and that will lead you to self awareness. And then what you should do. Those are painful to read my Enneagram, I'm not proud of every page. Same with my Right Path or Leading From Your Strengths, but you can make that a source of your prayer life.

Carey Nieuwhof: You can seek from other people feedback on like, "Okay, I know I tend to run on meetings or I know I tend to get upset in these moments. How am I doing these days?" And just ask them and again, when they tell you, you just say thank you. So I really hope that helps. Justin, thanks for the question. If you've got a leadership question, leave on your favorite social platform at #askCarey my team and I will collect them and we'll do one of these every week. Thanks for listening guys. Please subscribe and share and if this episode helped you let other people know that it did and in the meantime, I hope our time together today helped you lead like never before.

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