

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 300. Yeah, we made it. We are 300 episodes in on this podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. Well, we saved a real special one for episode 300. For those of you who know who NT Wright is, you know you're in for a treat, and if you don't, and I understand that you may not, you're in for a treat.

Carey Nieuwhof: NT Wright is actually one of the foremost New Testament scholars alive today, and he has served in so many different capacities. He was the Bishop of Durham. He is a professor of New Testament and early Christianity at a number of different universities. He is most recently the Chair of the New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. His books have won many awards. He's written, I believe, over 80 of them. If you're a little bit tired of just the tone of the current conversation, not just in the church but in the world where everybody's just mad at each other, and people have polarized views, you're going to love this.

Carey Nieuwhof: Tom Wright has a podcast called Ask NT Wright Anything, and it is just great. Like if you're like, "Ugh, where do we find just a reasonable answer?" You will find it from Tom Wright. His books have helped so many different people. His podcast, honestly, is just ... These are the best academics, right? The best academics are the people who can explain something really easily, and that's what Tom Wright does. So it was an absolute delight to have a conversation with him, and I want to give you a quick warning.

Carey Nieuwhof: For those of you who like me like to listen to your podcast at 1.5 speed or 2x speed, you probably don't want to do that. Why? Because this episode is calorie dense. I ask him one question, and all of a sudden we're swimming in an ocean, and so you probably really want to listen, and you may want to access the transcripts. You can do that by going to CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode300. Okay, so we've got those available for you.

Carey Nieuwhof: I think you're really going to enjoy this, and if you're looking for reasonability in a crazy world, you came to the right place. Anyway, Tom, thank you so much for freeing up the time to be on this podcast. And of course if you subscribe, guys, you know you get this automatically, and so many of you have been sharing the Gordon MacDonald episode. I think I've heard more about that episode than almost any episode we've done, 300 episodes in. That's 297; if you haven't listened to that, scroll back.

Carey Nieuwhof: I am so grateful for our partners. We've got a few things we want to tell you about. First of all, do you know listeners of this podcast have saved over a million dollars on healthcare? Yeah, I asked for some updated stats from

Remodel Health. It's crazy. Because you have taken action when we tell you about these things, there's already a million dollars that have been poured back into ministry, back into mission, and you've given your employees either the same benefits or better benefits.

Carey Nieuwhof: How do you do that when it comes to healthcare? Well, you got to renew your health insurance, and if you go to Remodel Health, they will help you save. So here's how it works. Most people do like group plans, and then everybody gets treated the same which never works because nobody is really the same. So they will find individualized, custom solutions that give your team the same or better benefits for less money. So if you want to get in on the million dollars that people have already saved simply by listening to this podcast and going to RemodelHealth.com/Carey. Whoa, why don't you do that? Head to RemodelHealth.com/Carey today and download their health insurance buyers guide.

Carey Nieuwhof: Also, so excited that Pro Web Fire and Pro Media Fire, same company, are looking for just 20 churches. All right, so this is like if you've ever wanted to get in on the front edge of something and really try to leverage an experiment, this is what they're doing. They're looking for 20 churches who are ready to really dive deep into growth in 2020. Only 20 will be accepted. Applications are being received until December 1st.

Carey Nieuwhof: Here's what Pro Media Fire and Pro WebFire are going to do. They want to find 20 churches that are interested, and they custom plan to help ignite growth with strategies that include Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, new church website, custom graphics, and videos. You've got to be prepared for growth and have your systems in place. So they're looking for people who are ready for this.

Carey Nieuwhof: Second, you've got to be willing to make a monthly financial investment through 2020, but in return you will get a discount of up to 30% off the normal rate of services, and you should be willing to provide a testimony to tell everybody how it actually went. So if you're ready to ignite church growth and need help reaching more people, you can apply. Applications are being received until December 1st, and here's the unique link. Go to ProMediaFire.com/2020. That's ProMediaFire.com/2020.

Carey Nieuwhof: And finally, hey if you haven't yet checked out the Red Letter Challenge, what are you waiting for? Over 60,000 people have already completed the Red Letter Challenge which is a done for you campaign built around the words of Jesus. Sermons are done for you, small group resources, and so much more. So Christmas is kind of here and gone, but you've got to start thinking about Easter. There's always something coming, and this can be a great opportunity for you to launch into the teachings of Jesus.

Carey Nieuwhof: Because let's be honest, even people who maybe don't go to church, they're kind of interested in what Jesus had to say. So if you haven't yet checked out

Red Letter Challenge, go to RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey. There are packages ready for you to go. For small churches, you can even start with a small group, or megachurches, all kinds of churches have done this, and you can get between 10-40% off by going to RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: I am so excited to dive into episode 300 of this podcast, and I can't think of a better way to do it than with a living legend, another one. This is NT Wright, Tom Wright, my conversation with him about all things faith.

Carey Nieuwhof: It is an absolute thrill to have Dr. Tom Wright, NT Wright, on my podcast today. Welcome.

NT Wright: I'm glad to be here, and it's extraordinary and delightful to be talking to a Canadian. I lived in Canada for five years, as you probably know, and it's always nice to be back in touch.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, you taught at McGill, did you not for a while?

NT Wright: I did, yes. 1981-1986, I was the young New Testament professor then, which was a great time in all sorts of ways and good to connect with the city and a lot of people and launch my teaching career there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's fantastic. Montreal's a beautiful city, it really is. Interesting city, but beautiful. McGill's a great university.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well Tom, I wanted to start, because I've been reading your work for years and a big fan of your podcast, will be encouraging everyone to subscribe. It's just wonderful theology and great conversation. But faith is really under fire in so many sectors, and that's one of the reasons I'm so grateful for your voice, particularly these days, and you've said you've never really lost or left your faith, if I've got that right in what I've read and what I've heard?

NT Wright: I was brought up in a churchgoing family where we said prayers every night, and where we sang hymns around the piano, and where we went to church on Sundays, and there were various family members who were ordained, and we'd go to different churches where they would be leading worship or preaching, if we were on vacation or whatever. I grew up with that being a very natural thing for me.

NT Wright: Now of course, a great many people who grew up with that background tucked it all in when they became teenagers, and for whatever reason I didn't. It might have happened, but it didn't in my case, and I think that was partly because I ran into the Scripture Union boys camp's movement which was lively in Britain in those days. I think it still is, but where we would be taken off into the Scottish highlands, and we would go climbing and sailing and canoeing and goodness knows what and then have very good, brief camp prayers morning and evening with short talks from the Bible, and then some friendly followup from the

leaders who were the kind of people that a young teenager looks up to. They were sporty, they were intelligent, they were friendly, they were fun.

NT Wright: I was very fortunate in that that helped me to make a transition into a kind of different dimension than I'd had from my home church that I think the balance of the two, I rather stayed in ordinary old fashioned church, and then this much more evangelical Bible oriented movement that I became part of in my teens. That balance has stood me in good stead I think for the rest of my life.

NT Wright: At every point when questions might have come up and did come up and when I could see my contemporaries questioning things and rejecting things, I always had a sense of the presence of God with me and of the love of Christ vying for my, and I've never lost that. Looking back now, I realize that's an extraordinary privilege. It's not due to anything special about me, but it's kind of a gift that I've been given.

NT Wright: I think at the moment as well, there are so many different movements, it's hard to say that our culture is going this way or that because there are many who still are embodying that drift towards practical atheism or theoretical atheism, but there are many others who are kind of bored with secularism but don't want to look back to Christianity for the answers. They want to look anywhere else, whether it's the drug culture or whatever it is, and people who call themselves spiritual but not religious which is the current phrase, I think.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

NT Wright: And so all sorts of spirituality are on offer, and it's a real old mess and muddled out there right now, and I see this with students that I know now, and I see it in a measure with my own family, a real amount of confusion. And so for me, being anchored in kind of an old fashioned but solid worshiping tradition, praying tradition, bible tradition, that has kept me where I am, and maybe some people would say I should have given bits of it up by now, but it still seems to be okay as far as I can see.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well what fascinates me about that too is I think a number of listeners could think, "Well, that is what my father," perhaps a grandparent, "would say," or that kind of thing, and yet you have done quite a rigorous set of studies as well. You have multiple degrees. You've studied philosophy, history. You're a historian, you're a theologian. In what ways did your academic ... Just give us a little canvas of some of your academic work, and then how did you end up with a stronger faith as a result of your academic studies? Because that's where it usually goes off the rails for so many.

NT Wright: It can do, but that's partly because what classifies itself as academic studies often smuggles in ideas from the various intellectual and cultural movements of the 18th and 19th centuries, some of which were actually always explicitly hostile to Christian faith. In fact, a book of mine which is coming out in

November, History on Eschatology, which was the Gifford lectures that I did 18 months ago, that is tracking through some of those movements from the 18th and 19th century and showing how a lot of things that people now, in the 21st century, just take for granted as sort of automatically as a given and are in fact cultural innovations which were brought in by people specifically to try to elbow Christianity off the patch and to have a different kind of worldview.

NT Wright: By unmasking some of that, I find that's helped me greatly to say, "Hang on, we don't have to accept these false alternatives which people have been offering," but for me as a historian, I started off my academic career working on St. Paul after I'd done my first two degrees, I did a PhD, a DPhil actually because it was Oxford, on St. Paul, and so I spent a long time studying Romans, particularly, very intensively, syllable by syllable, and getting to know it really quite well, and the rest of Paul as well.

NT Wright: That was fine because I was and am fascinated by Paul, and I hope I will be until the day I die. He goes on being stimulating and challenging. But then in the late 70s after I was ordained and I was working as a college chaplain as well as a university lecturer first in Oxford, then in Cambridge, then in McGill, then back in Oxford again, I kept meeting, because you do when you're ordained, all these questions about the gospels. You look at this story and that story about Jesus and you say, "Well, did it really happen, and if so what did Jesus actually mean? What could he have meant by this, by that, whatever?"

NT Wright: There were many skeptical scholars saying, "Oh no, Jesus didn't say this," or, "No, that story couldn't have happened because that's a miracle and we know that miracles don't happen." That is just a classic bit of 18th century polemic, but in terms of a lot of the sayings in the gospels, the sayings on Jesus's lips in the gospels, that the problem I think of an older scholarship was that it hadn't really studied the Jewish world of the 1st century all that intensively because particularly in the 19th century there were a great many people in European Christianity who didn't want Christian faith to look at all Jewish or to feel at all Jewish because the Protestant prejudice was that the Jews believed in works, and we believed in justification by faith so you didn't need to investigate Judaism, and the 1st century Judaism, and if you did you were likely to corrupt everything.

NT Wright: Now, I began to discover that the movements in the late 70s particularly when people who had studied the Dead Sea Scrolls were coming on stream as Jesus scholars, I'm thinking of the late, great Ben Meyer who was actually teaching in Canada in McMaster University at the time. Ben Meyer wrote a book called *The Aims of Jesus*, one of the most learned books of the time about Jesus, drawing on a very detailed knowledge of Jewish sources to talk about what it meant to talk about the Kingdom of God in the 1st century Jewish world, and then what Jesus could have meant and intended, and what he was trying to do and achieve, and that was like my eyes being opened.

NT Wright: So I would be preaching week by week, but I would also be studying because I never wanted to get into the pulpit and have to say, "Yeah, Jesus said this," but in the back of my mind be thinking, "But I'm not absolutely sure that he did or what he might have meant." So it kind of forced me to say, "I need to look saying by saying, line by line, at the gospels," and see what I think is going on within the 1st century Jewish context.

NT Wright: So I studied 1st century Judaism pretty intensively from the 1970s onwards, and the more I did that, the more I found that both Jesus and Paul and the other early Christians, the whole thing came up in three dimensions, and the historical vision of what it was actually like, what was going on, made so much sense and makes so much sense. The problem is most people in Western Christianity don't think like that and don't even grasp what the phrase Kingdom of God would have meant at the time, and they usually think it just means going to Heaven when you die or something like that which it never, ever did.

NT Wright: And so they systematically misunderstand it, and then you're simply down to saying, "Well either Jesus said it, and he must have meant this going to Heaven thing, or maybe Jesus didn't say it anyway and the early church made it up." As far as I'm concerned, those are non-debates. They're irrelevant. We need to be soaked in the 1st century Jewish world, and then we discover that what Jesus was saying and doing and how he conceived his whole vocation, climaxing in his extraordinary death, this actually though it wasn't as shocking, it made and makes a huge amount of sense.

NT Wright: Again and again, I have found that. And particularly with the resurrection. That when you really understand how 1st century Jews worked, and thought, and ticked, and prayed, then the idea of saying somebody is alive again having been dead ... there are lots of other revolutionary movements in the 1st century, lots of other messianic and prophetic movements in the 1st century. They routinely end with the death of the founder, and then that's it. Unless the founder had a younger brother or a nephew or maybe a son or grandson who could carry on the movement, but you didn't go around saying that he's been raised from the dead because he obviously hadn't been.

NT Wright: Then when you put Jesus's movement alongside that you say, "Well hang about, this movement continued." That they didn't say that James, the brother of Jesus, or somebody else was now the messiah. Jesus was the messiah because he'd been raised from the dead. So historically, it's very, very difficult to explain why Christianity began and why it took the shape it did without the resurrection of Jesus at the middle of it.

NT Wright: Now that's not a knockdown argument. Skeptics can still say, "Well I just don't believe it. It must all have been made up some other how." But for me, and I live mentally in the 1st century a great deal, this just makes so much sense. I've taken that as read, I've argued this in great detail, and I've been able to go on from there. Sorry, it's a very long answer, but it was a very good question.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well thank you, that's a great answer. And I think what you're poking at, for those who maybe didn't do seminary, is the Jesus Seminar, right, and some of the ideas and also the ideas in the Enlightenment, or is it beyond that?

NT Wright: Yeah, yeah, well that's right, but the Jesus Seminar was a very low grade version of late 20th century scholarship. I mean, yes they made a lot of noise in the 1990s particularly, and I did debate with various members of it, in fact became good friends with Marcus Borg and Dom Crossan even though we disagreed. What people need to remember is that hardly any of the leading American Jesus scholars, and more or less none of any Jesus scholars from anywhere else in the world, belong to the Jesus Seminar. Ed Sanders never belonged. Tim Charles has never belonged. John P Meyer never belonged, etc, etc, etc. They laughed at it.

NT Wright: There's a much broader movement of which that was a rather bad, low grade representative, and it goes back to the 18th century, and it goes back to a guy called Reimarus who when Albert Schweitzer wrote up The Quest of the Historical Jesus, he started with Reimarus in the late 18th century. You have to remind yourself that when Reimarus wrote his little Fragments actually about Jesus which were published after his death, this was at the same time that Edward Gibbon was writing for the Roman Empire and attributing it to this stupid thing called Christianity.

NT Wright: It was also the same time that Adam Smith was writing The Wealth of Nations. It was also the same time that the American and French revolutions were taking place. This was a time of great turbulence in European culture, and people were looking at everything the other way up and saying, "Oh, maybe it should be like this. Maybe it was like that," and so this was not neutral objective scholarship. This was, "Hey, we're bored with the way European culture has been, and let's do this thing called Enlightenment, and we'll start from scratch and see what we can make of it," and of course the traditional stories about Jesus don't really fit in terribly well into that. I've had great fun trying to sort of pull all that together.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's so helpful, and for leaders who are listening going, "Okay, what's underneath that?"

Carey Nieuwhof: So when you hear people say, "Well, Jesus actually never said that," this is the debate, right? Like, that the gospels that we're reading are not in any way what may have happened in the 1st century and therefore are not reliable. Is that sort of the-

NT Wright: Right, right. Yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: ... gist of what's being done? That's definitely an argument that I hear on a regular basis from atheists, and atheism appears to be having a little bit of a renaissance or certainly faith in the West is ... As you say, it's more complex than that in some ...

NT Wright: In some senses.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay, talk about that.

NT Wright: Well, there's a new book, a year or so ago, by an atheist philosopher in Britain called John Gray, and the book is called Seven Types of Atheism. John Gray is a very fine writer and philosopher and a very shrewd thinker, and I like his work a lot even though obviously I disagree with where he comes out. He looks at the so called new atheists, the people like Richard Dawkins and so on who have made such a smash in the popular field, and he says that's just trivial. That's just a low grade rerun of an outdated Victorian squabble, and it really services only to keep the media entertained now and again, and it's not actually about the serious business.

NT Wright: So one needs to look at a book like that and say, "Hm, there's several quite different types of atheism, and we ought really to be able to distinguish," which of course most people don't. Most people, if they want to reject a traditional faith, they just read either Dawkins or somebody like that, or they read somebody like Géza Vermes on Jesus, and they'd say, "Well there you are, there's a Jewish historian who says Jesus was just a good Jewish lad who would have been horrified to think of a church being founded in his memory, as it were."

NT Wright: And so job done, they don't need to think anymore, and that's the point at which I and others want to say, "No, this is where you do need to start thinking, where you need ..." Because look at the historical roots of atheism, see which cultural narratives you're buying into, and it's not just so easy as saying either you believe in God or you don't believe in God. Which god is it you don't believe in? And when you ask that, people realize, "Oh yeah, maybe the word god could mean different things, and maybe I should think of it more about what I meant when I said, 'I don't believe in God,' because there are lots of gods out there that I don't believe in but that lots of other people do." Then then the conversation can really start, and that's when it can get quite fun.

Carey Nieuwhof: So there are, and I agree with you the pop culture and the way a lot of people process their theology tends to be at maybe a more superficial level, but when you look at atheism, the new atheism, ancient atheism, what do you think, and I mean this in a very sincere way. Some of the best arguments for the atheistic viewpoint would be. Obviously they haven't been determinative in your life, but what would you say, "You know, that's a really good point." What would you say, and then how would you approach that?

NT Wright: Yes, it's difficult to want to set up a straw man in order then to knock it down.

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, right.

- NT Wright: But I mean, ancient Epicureanism was one way into serious ancient atheism. The Epicureans believed that the gods did exist but that they were a long way away, and they didn't get involved in our world at all which breeds then a functional atheism because there's no point praying to them, there's no point doing anything in relation to them. You just kind of think, "Oh, well there may be gods somewhere but so what?"
- NT Wright: It was that Epicureanism, which is actually quite a serious philosophy because it looks at the ways in which the world makes itself, and if people think that there are gods upstairs somewhere but who are pulling hidden strings like a puppet master so that everything that happens in the world that we know is really the work of the gods.
- NT Wright: Then when you examine closely, as the ancient Epicureans did and as the modern scientists have done, and see that all sorts of things that go on in our world have what we call natural causes. If you think that therefore the world has to be divided between the natural and the supernatural, and the supernatural means that something has happened for which we can see no other explanation, then of course the more natural causes you can discover for things, the more you can say, "Well, it looks as though we don't need to have any kind of god involved."
- NT Wright: And at that point one has to say, "Sorry, this natural, supernatural distinction," which many Christians buy into by the way. Many Christians think that it's their job to defend something called the supernatural. Often in very nakedly 18th century terms, I want to say, "No, no. Don't give them that. Don't collude with that split," because it's a well known or well worn path, but you don't need to go that route. The way that the ancient Israelites and the 1st century Jews and the early Christians saw the world is much more complex and interesting with a rich interplay of things that happen in the world by what we now call natural causes, but with god involved in that as well. So it is not an either or.
- NT Wright: And so then tracking and seeing what God might be doing in his world. This kind of rocks you back on your heels, and you say, "Wait a minute, I thought we had this all neatly mapped out that things were either natural or supernatural, and if we could whittle down the supernatural to almost nothing, except a flutter in your tummy when you say a prayer or something, then it can just be written off."
- NT Wright: And I want to say, "No, it's not like that. In the Bible you have these two spheres which we loosely call Heaven and Earth which are God's world and our world," but these go together. They are meant to intersect, to interlock, and ultimately to be, if you like, married once and for all and forever. That's the great exciting thing about biblical theology which sadly many, many Christians in our contemporary world have never begun to get their heads around.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, we've had John Ortberg on the podcast, and he puts it as John often will, John says it's not so much about getting us into Heaven, are you driving at, it's about getting Heaven into us. That there is more of a fusion of the two worlds.

NT Wright: Exactly.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

NT Wright: Yeah, yeah. And I think that the whole biblical story works the other way up to how most modern Western Christians imagine. Instead of us needing to find our way upstairs to Heaven, the whole point is God wants to come and dwell with his people, and the last scene of the Bible is the New Jerusalem coming down from Heaven to Earth so that the dwelling of God is with his human creatures.

NT Wright: Most Christians in my experience just never actually seen it like that because our hymns, and our prayers, and our preaching, and our liturgies are all running the other way.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, there are so many directions we could move in this interview, and we literally could spend all day on it, and we have about an hour.

NT Wright: Sure, sure.

Carey Nieuwhof: I want to shift gears a little bit and just talk about how your faith has evolved. Some of your views, and you've been quite public about this, have changed over the years. Things you used to believe when you were in your 20s you don't believe. Notably, women in leadership is one of those issues in which I believe you've rethought things. Can you talk about the things that have shifted in your worldview and your understanding of scripture?

NT Wright: Right. I think the biggest thing would be a shift from a kind of teenage dualism to not a monism, and this again is part of the problem. That we don't have very good language for saying it, but the older evangelical dualism that I embraced when I was in my teens and early 20s which was all about salvation and going to Heaven on the one hand would then anything to do with things happening on Earth as being essentially secondary, and trivial, and temporary, and shouldn't really worry about that. So a big split between faith and politics and so on and so forth.

NT Wright: Looking back now, I realize that that was typical of so much West, and is, still is, typical of so much Western Christianity from the 18th century to the present, and it basically colludes with the Enlightenment. I was chased out of that by your fellow Canadian, Brian Walsh, who became a good and close friend and has remained so. In the early 1980s, Brian came to McGill to study for his PhD under Joe McClellan in philosophy of religion.

NT Wright: Brian and I became good friends, and Brian would be relentless in saying, "Hang on, you're reading this text wrong," and, "How can you possibly say this?" and so on. Brian had come from the ICS Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto which very much from a ... that's Calvinist perspective which is completely different to what I knew.

NT Wright: The more I saw of it, the more I thought, "Actually, you know, this is right," and particularly I was writing the first biblical commentary I've ever written which was the little Tyndale commentary on Colossians at the time, and when I started writing that I found some aspects of Colossians really, really difficult. I put it aside, and I thought, "I have to come back to that in a year or two."

NT Wright: When I came back to it, I was quite nervous, but then was I going to find it was still incomprehensible? Then because I had been rethinking all sorts of things, and this was affecting me in my prayer life, in my personal life in all sorts of ways as well. I went through Colossians, and it all made sense. And for me, that is the touchstone. If when you, as it were, if when you find yourself making an intellectual move, if then you come back to scripture and find that bits that didn't really fit together or couldn't see how it fit together before suddenly do come together, then that's an a-ha moment. This means, "Wow, something's just happened."

NT Wright: Instead of saying, "I've now thought differently, and I see the Bible was wrong," it's "I've now thought differently, and suddenly what the Bible was telling me all along makes sense to me. It's me that needs changing." So that was a really major shift for me, and that was really the beginning of the work which then led into Jesus and the Victory of God. Then the concentration on the resurrection which was when I was writing The Resurrection of the Son of God after that Jesus book, I was lecturing about that and realized that so much of the language that we were using in church was treating resurrection as a sort of odd synonym for going to heaven or something like that, and I decided to think it through much more rigorously.

NT Wright: The lectures that turned into the book called Surprised by Hope, that was just a major, major transformation of thinking of how resurrection, new creation, works and what you do with the second coming or other, what God's going to do with the second coming in the middle of all of that, and so on, and so on. Again, so many things came together and made sense, and particularly at that point in my life integrating politics on the one hand and the arts on the other hand into these things, and if God is going to remake his creation, and if he's begun to do that in and through Jesus and his resurrection as a result of the victory over the powers of darkness in his death then actually God's new world has begun, God cares about putting the world right, and if we are his followers, we ought to care about putting the world right here and now and not wait for that to happen at some long, distant future.

NT Wright: So suddenly, all sorts of things about politics, and then with the arts. If God is remaking his beautiful world then art and music and literature and wider culture in general can and should reflect that, and so suddenly there is a kind of a mandate for Christians working in those fields to see where they belong on the map of what God is actually doing rather than simply giving distant illustrations of the gospel which is about something else entirely.

NT Wright: So all of those things were major transformations for me.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah.

NT Wright: And in the middle of that, in the late 80s I guess. It was a long time ago now. We were having big debates in the Church of England about women in ministry, and we've had women in ministry for a long time, but we hadn't ordained them as priests, and that was the big question, or then as bishops. And for me, the thing which came most strongly was the resurrection narratives, again. That when Jesus wants to tell somebody to go and tell other people that he's been raised from the dead and he is being exalted to the father's right hand and basically that he's the lord of the world, the first person he chooses to do that is Mary Magdalene.

NT Wright: Now, in John 20, that cannot be accidental. John does nothing by accident, and that is the foundation of all Christian ministry is to announce that the crucified Jesus has been raised from the dead, and he's the lord of the world. That is the gospel. The first person who gets entrusted with that message is a woman. It's downhill all the way from there.

NT Wright: Then when you read Romans 16 and see that the person Paul entrusts to take his most important piece of writing ever to Rome of all places, is a woman, and independent woman, Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchreae, and there she is in Romans 16. We don't know for sure, but it's highly likely that in the ancient world, the person who brought a letter to somebody else would be the one who would read it out to a group. Read it out, and quite possibly expound it as well. So that what you're looking at is the high probability that the first person to expound Paul's letter to the Romans was an independent woman from Cenchreae who had traveled to Rome.

NT Wright: And again, I just want to say what's the big deal, guys? Why are we still worrying about this? When we read this in its context, it should be clear.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, that's fascinating, and thank you, and that's so helpful. So you've changed your view on women's position in ministry. You also, before I go onto the next question, you mentioned politics. Great Britain is not without its political challenges right now.

NT Wright: Sure, of course. Of course.

Carey Nieuwhof: And America, many would say, is more polarized than ever, and you see that even to a certain extent in Canada and in other places in what we broadly call the West. What do you mean by the redemption of politics? Many Christians would say, "Well, that's why we have to vote Republican, or that's why we have to vote Democrat, or that's why ..." That's probably not what you're driving at.

NT Wright: No, that's simply that for a couple of hundred years, many, many Western Christians have said that politics is a dirty game and we're not having anything to do with it, or they have just been automatic, unthinking supporters of the status quo, which for many people in many countries that's all you can do, really, and there are many countries where any political dissent is going to be so costly that only some people at some times are called to do it. Those of us who pride ourselves on our Western democracies need to look hard at what democracy is and how it works because ...

NT Wright: Okay, I'll go back to a basic text. In John 19, Jesus is on trial before Pontius Pilate, and they're arguing about kingdom and truth and power, and Pilate says to Jesus, "Don't you realize I have authority to have you crucified or to release you?"

NT Wright: And Jesus says to Pilate, which is extraordinary, he says, "You couldn't have any authority over me unless it was given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin." That is extraordinary. That means that Jesus is saying that Pilate's authority over him, over Jesus, is given by God, and that can only mean, and as a good Jew this is how a good Jew would think, that the god who made the world wants the world to be wisely governed by wise human beings, but we'll hold those human beings to account. This is what you find in Romans 13, famous and notorious passage where Paul says, "The powers that be are ordained by God."

NT Wright: And people say, "Oh my goodness, that's a fascist charter. That's a recipe for tyranny," and the answer is no, they're ordained by God, and therefore they are jolly well answerable to God. And here's the wrinkle, here's the wrinkle. In John 16, the spirit is given to hold the world to account. How does the spirit hold the world to account? Through the witness of the church.

NT Wright: For years I used to read John 16 where it says, "When the spirit comes, he will convict the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment," and I used to think, "Oh, that's great. Yeah, the world needs convicting. Bring it on. Let's see it," and then I realized that the spirit is given to the followers of Jesus.

NT Wright: And so what the spirit is going to do, the spirit wants to do through Jesus's followers who have the responsibility to speak the truth to power, to hold up a mirror to power, to say in effect, "You're supposed to be doing A, B, and C, and instead you're doing X, Y, and Z. This is wrong, and bad things are going to happen as a result." The politicians or the power brokers don't like being told that, and the church will often get slated this way and that.

NT Wright: I came upon a very interesting thing just the other day where C.S. Lewis, after the Second World War was offered an honor by the prime minister. He was going to be given the CBE, Commander of the British Empire, which is quite a high civic honor, and he turned it down. The reason he turned it down was that he, as he must have known, many people in the wider world sneering at the church would be complaining that the church was actually in league with the government, the political parties, this way or that, and he didn't want to risk anyone saying, "There you are. Lewis was just propping up this particular political point of view, and so they've given him a pat on the back, and so we don't need to take him seriously."

NT Wright: This happens all the time, but actually we do have a responsibility to speak the truth to power, and this works in a number of different ways. In my country, one of the most telling things that's happening on that line at the moment is that there are food banks all over the country for poor or homeless people, and almost all of those are run by churches. This is often pointed out, and people kind of scratch their heads and say, "Why?" The answer is the churches are holding to account the deeply flawed system of our modern Western democracy which has got an awful lot of human, I don't know what the word is to use, flotsam and jetsam. The poor people who have been rendered homeless or rendered jobless by decisions taken by other people far away, and the church is there to say, "Hey, something is wrong with this, and we're going to help at this level, and that will give us a moral high ground from which to campaign for other kinds of reforms."

NT Wright: You know when I was Bishop of Durham, curiously I had a seat in the House of Lords because the senior bishops do. When we had the big financial crash in 2008, I'm sure you remember.

Carey Nieuwhof: I do, yeah.

NT Wright: There was a big debate in the House of Lords as to how things were going to get put right again and how we were going to cope with the result, the fallout, of this. All the other speakers in that debate were worried about how is business going to get back on its feet, how are the banks going to turn this around, etc. I was the only one of, I think, 35 or 40 speakers who spoke about the plight of the poor. Because I could see on the street in where I lived, I could see shops shutting, I could see banks shutting down. I could see homelessness increasing, and nobody else, it seemed to me, really wanted to know about all that. But actually, somebody had to hold the government's feet to the fire.

NT Wright: Now, I don't know whether what I said actually made that much of a difference. I would like to think it woke some people up, but the church has to go on doing that, and to do so cheerfully and creatively, not negatively, and making it quite clear that this doesn't mean that we are simply offering a new version of whichever left wing party happens to be in power, or if the left wing were doing something bad, it has to be quite clear that we're not simply offering a new

version of a right wing philosophy. That the old left and right polarization simply doesn't accord with God's rule of society.

NT Wright: So all of this has to be articulated, and every generation has to do this. We can never sit back and say, "Oh yeah, we read Augustine on just war," or we read this or that. We've got to hammer it out in each generation.

Carey Nieuwhof: I love-

NT Wright: Again, sorry, a long answer, but it was a good question.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh no, no, no. I love, and this is what is so missing in a lot of the current dialogue is nuanced and complexity of thought.

NT Wright: Quite, quite, quite.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I appreciate that. One thing I just want to clarify to make sure I understand it correctly and just to make sure that others don't, when you said everything was downhill from there, you meant your previous position on women in leadership was downhill from there, not that everything is downhill from there once women were in leadership?

NT Wright: No, no. Sorry. By downhill from there, I meant that the argument can freewheel all the way home from there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Correct.

NT Wright: It's like if you cycle up a steep hill, and then you get to the top, phew we've done the hard work, and now we just coast down the other side.

Carey Nieuwhof: Ah.

NT Wright: And so once you say what I said about Mary Magdalene in John 20 and about Phoebe in Romans 16, then basically okay, game over. The case has been made.

Carey Nieuwhof: The argument is made. Got you.

NT Wright: The argument is made, yeah, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Just wanted to clear up my inbox and your inbox on that one. So thank you, appreciate that.

Carey Nieuwhof: Another very highly polarizing issue these days is sexuality: sexual identity and in particular LGBTQ, the whole conversation. Any thoughts on that whether that is to substance or even how we are handling that discussion? Because one of the things I love about your podcast is it's so nuanced. You're so good at this.

NT Wright: We're not handling that one well, and part of the not handling it well is that it is so toxic that if you touch it from any angle it explodes in your face. So I'm afraid I'm not going to comment in any detail on this because I've found over the last 10 or 15 years that whenever I've said even a single sentence about it in either podcasts or interviews or whatever, that's when I get all kinds of ... You talked about the inbox. I get all kinds of things this way and that. The only way to handle it is with great care, with great prayer, realizing that what we're talking about is human beings who are nervous and worried about who they are, about deep desires, hopes, fears, etc, and the danger is that it be handled at a sort of abstract level, and simply the labeling, LGBTQ, where does that come from? Where is that going to stop?

NT Wright: I heard the Archbishop or Canterbury a year or two ago say each one of those letters stands for something which is a significantly different sort of thing to each of the others. So implying that it's all really the same issue is a way of not thinking clearly about any of the relevant issues, and I fear that's all I really ought to say. I'm actually sitting here in my study looking at two long shelves of books really all around these issues which have accumulated over the last 20 years, and I've read most of them, and I can see the complexities, and if one was going to address it properly, it would be a very long book because there are several different issues. It's kind of perfect storm at the moment of several different philosophical, cultural, social ideas, fears, hopes, etc, and it cannot be addressed in a sound bite, and so I better not try.

Carey Nieuwhof: I think that's actually very wise, and I respect that answer. If you could warn or critique pastors and church leaders about anything you see in the modern approach of the church, what would you tell us? And that's to conservative evangelicals and even progressives. I'd love to hear that.

NT Wright: Yep, yep, yep. There are so many things, and going back in the conversation I think it's so easy to ... Even when people have studied seriously what the Kingdom of God actually means, it's so easy for that to collapse back into actually it's all about going to heaven after all, isn't it? And so to watch out for that, and some of my favorite hymns, they're great hymns, and it's often the last verse that then lets them down. I think of Love Divines All Loves Excelling, one of the great hymns by Charles Wesley, and it ends, "Change from glory into glory until in heaven we take place until we cast our crowns before be lost in wonder, love, and praise."

NT Wright: Now that is simply picking up from Revelation 4, but Revelation 4 needs to be read properly. That is a vision of what is going on right now. That's the heavenly dimension of our present worship, not a vision of the ultimate future. There are many, many misreadings, and I want to say yes, when Jesus's followers die, they go to be with him. Paul says, "My desire is to depart and be with the Messiah which is far better." So that is where they are now with him, but that's not the end of the story.

NT Wright: And to make it the end of the story, deconstruct so many other things which are vital for the help of the church. So really, I think the thing that really worries me is when people have stopped thinking freshly about the Bible itself either because they're progressives and they've said, "Well, the Bible's a funny old library of books, and we know that it all came from very different people, and so we can sit loose to this and that." That is a recipe for shallow thinking and just for going with the flow of whichever bit of the culture you happen to be floating on at the time.

NT Wright: Equally, there are many in the more conservative line who learned how to read the Gospels or Paul or whatever when they were much younger, and they've not thought that some of the ways that they learned to read the Bible were actually deeply misleading. I have a very high theology of scripture. I've always done so, but that to me doesn't solve the questions. That opens the questions and says, "Now, if we're taking the Bible seriously, oh my goodness we better ask this question and that question, and these are open questions, not closed." I think so many people have said, "the Bible, the Bible, the Bible," assuming that our traditions have got it right in terms of what the Bible is supposed to mean, and I want to say that isn't necessarily so.

Carey Nieuwhof: Why do you have such a high view of scripture?

NT Wright: Well, it's one of those things, I was taught it when I was young, and I've kind of tested it out, and of course I say I have a high view of scripture, I don't like the word inerrancy because that's an 18th century rationalist word, and trying to push the Bible into a slot vacated by a rationalist view of the church's authority from the middle ages. So the Protestants were saying, "No, it isn't the church. It isn't the Pope. It's the Bible instead," and so trying to give the Bible the wrong sort of status.

NT Wright: When I say I have a high view of scripture, I really mean this is the book God intended us to have, and it's a funny old book, but it is really the one God wanted us to have, and that doesn't mean that there aren't many puzzles in it. My favorite obvious example which everyone probably knows is if you put together the four gospel accounts of when Peter denies Jesus and the rooster is crowing in the background, try to figure out how many times the rooster crows, how many times Peter denies Jesus, and what the sequences of events was, and people who are desperate to say that each one of those accounts must be like a video tape recording of what happened when they put it together they end up saying that the rooster crowed nine times which actually none of the accounts say.

NT Wright: So in order to say that they're all true, you have to say that they're all false. When you get into a muddle like that, the answer is, "We must be asking the wrong question. This is not why Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote that passage." I get emails from people saying, "Oh, I discovered that the king in 1

Kings such-and-such here was called such-in-such, but in some ancient source it says he was called this. Does this mean the Bible isn't reliable after all?

NT Wright: I said, "Just lighten up. That's not what it's about." There are all sorts of things going on there. Like the great numbers in the Old Testament and so on. That has never bothered me. The thing that worries me then is that the people who do get hung up about that or who bend over backwards to try to explain rationalistically why the Bible is in fact inerrant in every jot and tittle, they are routinely missing the big biblical story itself. That's the joke of it.

NT Wright: So that the people who are most worried about say a Darwinian account of origins versus a Genesis account of origins are often part of kind of right wing movements in America and elsewhere who actually are deeply Darwinian themselves in the sense of a might is right philosophy and a survival of the fittest philosophy in terms of how contemporary culture works and how politics works.

NT Wright: There are all sorts of ironies like that, and we need to be shaken out of that. The Bible itself, left to itself, will do that for us. Our problem is that we, including those who say, "The Bible, the Bible, the Bible," we have often ignored the big story of what the Bible is all about which as we said half an hour ago is the story of Heaven and Earth coming together.

NT Wright: I've often said that if the Protestant reformers instead of having Galatians and Romans as their set text, now I love Galatians and Romans, and I always will, but if instead they'd made Ephesians their set text, then all sorts of things would have been different because at the heart of Ephesians 1:10, you've got Paul saying that God's purpose from the beginning was to sum up, in the Messiah, all things in Heaven and on Earth, and that idea of Heaven and Earth coming together which is then symbolized in chapter two of Ephesians by Jews and Gentiles coming together in the church which is then symbolized in chapter five by male and female coming together in marriage.

NT Wright: So that the whole thing is about creation and new creation. Then that gives you a big picture of what the biblical story is about which we in the West badly, badly need. Now again, I could go on about this all day. There we are.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, this is so good. One of the questions I guess I have, I mean you've read thousands of books, you've authored 70, you have multiple degrees including your DPhil from Oxford, and rumor has it that your morning devotions are using the original text, you read in Greek and Hebrew and Aramaic as appropriate. For the average Christian who's like, "Yeah, I'm never going to have a DPhil, I didn't even know the Bible was written in non-English, like I can't read that," where would they go, or how much background do they need, to be able to access this world? Because it is fascinating, but you have a little bit of an unfair advantage.

NT Wright: Well, in a sense yes, in a sense no. I mean, when I was growing up because my grandfather was a parish priest, I knew quite a lot of older clergy, and you'd meet them here and there, and visiting clergy of that generation, those who'd grown up around the turn of the 19th or 20th century, many of them would have on their shelves books like Alfred Edersheim's Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, or an old translation of Josephus, the great Jewish historian, Whiston's Josephus was very popular.

NT Wright: You'd see these on clergy shelves, and these were the sort of go-to helps for when you wanted to preach a sermon on, say, Jesus's conversation with the Sadducees, you'd go back to Edersheim to remind you who the Sadducees were and why they didn't believe in the resurrection and stuff like that, and any person with fairly minimal education could read Edersheim and get more or less a steer, and Edersheim was pretty learned for his day.

NT Wright: Now, we've got modern versions of that, and actually one of the reasons that this book, the New Testament in its world, one of the reasons why I think it's needed is precisely because we know so much more now about the world of the New Testament, and all that stuff that we know so much more about sheds a flood of light back onto the New Testament itself so that there are many, many passages which were opaque before but archeological discoveries and new additions of [inaudible 00:55:20] texts really, really help.

NT Wright: So that it's part of the task of a teacher like myself to try to be a bridge between the academic and the popular and obviously that's what I spent a fair amount of my life trying to do is to bring things across from one world to another, and that's been great fun. There are different levels. I remember once when I was an undergraduate myself, a learned theologian gave a lecture on the meaning of the cross, and he outlined, I don't know, six or eight or ten different theories about what Jesus achieved on the cross and lined them all up, and there's arguments pro and con, and these texts and those texts. At the end of it, I remember somebody asking this, it was a lovely guy, but somebody asked him, "How much of this would I have to understand in order to be a Christian?"

NT Wright: And the lecturer smiled and said, "Very little." He said, "Something about God, something about Jesus dying, something about God's love reaching out to embrace you." He said you start there, and take your time to explore the rest of it. So I want to say for ordinary Christians it is pretty basic. Something about there is a God who made the world who loves the world who made you and loves you, and through the death and resurrection of Jesus, he is reaching out and grasping you now, and saying, "Here is genuine life, and you can share it right now and forever."

NT Wright: For many people, that will do for a year, for five years maybe, but some people almost at once discover that there's this book called the Bible, my goodness they want to get it, but then who are the Pharisees, who are the Canaanites,

who are the Samaritans, who were the this, who were the that? And why did they think this, and what did they mean by the Kingdom of God?

NT Wright: That's where there are good answers available, and those are questions that very ordinary people come up with and that the clergy have to be equipped to deal with them at whatever level, and yes I mean when I was a kid I went to school. We studied Latin and French from the age I think seven or eight, and then I started Greek when I was 13. I didn't start Hebrew, sadly, until I was 19. I wish I'd started Greek and Hebrew earlier, but better late than never.

NT Wright: So yes, I see those as gifts which I didn't ask for but which I was given by God and which I've been able then, hopefully, to use, and to use to help people. But just as some people are given extraordinary artistic gifts and they didn't ask for it. It just turns out that they can draw, or paint, or sculpt, or whatever it is, and if you've got those gifts, you get them for a purpose, and you get on and use them so that people like me who aren't artists can have our eyes opened to dimensions of beauty and indeed sorrow as well as joy, which the artist can draw our attention to, and so we all have to come from where we come from.

Carey Nieuwhof: I've seen your new book, an advance copy. I'm very excited to have that in my library. With all of the books you've written, and let's speak to a non-clergy who are listening, if there was a good entry point for your work, for somebody who just wanted to understand maybe the 1st century and their faith a little bit better, do you have a recommendation?

NT Wright: I would say probably Simply Christian.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's where I was going to go.

NT Wright: Which I wrote, what, 14 years ago I think. That's an attempt to say, "This is the basic stuff." It doesn't go too deep, but it tries to hit the notes, and I've had good reactions from that book. Then I think apart from Simply Christian, my most popular book which I get a lot of messages about from around the world would be Surprised by Hope. I think a lot of people who've read one or both of those books would then be drawn into more sustained Bible study, and then of course my series, The New Testament for Everyone, that's what it's there for. Sometimes people move up to the longer, larger books, and then sometimes to their surprise find that they're quite fun to read. That's the aim.

Carey Nieuwhof: They are.

NT Wright: I always try to write in such a way as people will enjoy reading it. That's the hope.

Carey Nieuwhof: All right, a couple more questions before we wrap up, if you don't mind. Is that all right?

NT Wright: Sure, sure. Sure.

Carey Nieuwhof: So you are an immensely prolific writer, I believe 70 books, is that right, that you've written? No?

NT Wright: I think it's actually somewhere over 80 now.

Carey Nieuwhof: 80.

NT Wright: It's 82-83, something like that, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

NT Wright: Isn't that funny? I don't know how that happened.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well that's what I wanted to ask you is like that is ... I'm on number five, and I'm pretty impressed, and it's hard. What's your writing and study schedule and discipline like?

NT Wright: It varies, it varies depending on what stage of a project I'm at. I mean, I didn't publish very much until I was 40. I didn't publish my doctoral dissertation. In those days that wasn't kind of mandatory. I kind of let it sit and used it as a quarry from which to get other material out which I then did, and it was only then when I turned 40, I remember sort of something went click, and I thought, "You know? I'm old enough now. I'm just going to start writing the way I want to write and see what happens," and fortunately I found a publisher who was happy to go with that, SBCK in London, and it sort of fanned out from there.

NT Wright: The results of that was that I was teaching intensively, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, through from the mid 70s to the late 80s when I turned 40, and that intensive teaching, trying to explain things to bright but clueless students by which I mean intellectually able, but they hadn't studied very much of this stuff before they started at the university. So they don't know about the Kingdom of God. They've got good brains, but so I was forever trying to use illustrations and draw diagrams and try to make it clear, etc, etc, and I kind of enjoyed that.

NT Wright: I think one of the things that I've done ever since is whatever topic I'm writing about trying to see, "How could I help people understand this? How could I make it clear?" I enjoy that, and it seems to be something that happens for me that is, again, it's kind of an odd gift, and writing and words, I like that. I have good friends who have written wonderful books, but they say writing is really, really hard work for them, and they're glad if at the end of the day they've got two or three pages done, and that's never been my problem. I'll write 20 pages straight off, and then I'll print it out and go for a walk, and come back and sit down with a cup of tea and read it through and scribble all over it and correct it and so on, but I kind of enjoy that. That's the fun bit.

NT Wright: The hard work is when you want to map out a subject, and then you realize, "Oh my goodness, there's those three big books over there that have helped with this that I haven't read yet." Okay, we sit down and read them and see what we think about them, and then discuss them with friends, and so on. It's only then that you make a fresh map of the subject, and then it's a matter of going on, mapping it out, and mapping it out, and at a certain point you think, "Do you know what? I'm going to try writing this out and see what happens," and sometimes you have to do that four or five times. Sometimes if you've done the initial map work then by the time you do actually write it out, it'll fly, and the other thing of course is that I do a certain amount of lecturing.

NT Wright: I'm going to be lecturing in bits of America a couple of times this autumn in September, then November, and one in October as well. For that, I will try out some ideas, I'll see what feedback I get from the audience, see if those key questions, see if they're making me realize the things I'm missing out. So I'll go back, and I'll rework it, I'll rewrite it, I'll fill in those gaps or change those bits or whatever it is, and then at a certain point, again, it's one of the great gifts of having computers, of course, that instead of having to type it all out again from scratch on an old typewriter, you can fiddle around with bits of it, and out it comes clean again. And at a certain point you say, "Okay, this is now a book," here it is, that's how quite a few of my books have happened.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow, podcasting as well. That's fairly new for you. Your Ask NT Wright Anything, is it Ask NT Wright?

NT Wright: Yes, yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: I've listened to every episode.

NT Wright: Have you?

Carey Nieuwhof: What are you learning from podcasting?

NT Wright: Oh, it's kind of fun. I mean, I'm an extrovert. I get energy from being with people, talking with people, so the guy who does that, Justin Brierley, he does it somewhat very thoroughly, and he's an extremely good and shrewd interviewer. So when we are having a conversation, either just the two of us or then sometimes he brings in other people, those sessions are just great fun, and I just love sitting in his studio with the cameras rolling, and we just go for it. He's got the ability to hone in on the key issues and enable me to, sort of tee me up to, say that need to be said.

Carey Nieuwhof: And the questions are great. They're very practical, and you give some nuanced answers. I would encourage everyone to subscribe. Anything else you'd like to share before we wrap up? I really want to honor your time.

NT Wright: Well thank you. I mean, the thing that's been astonishing to me recently has been these online courses which I think you did mention before, the NTWrightOnline.org, and I knew nothing about these mass online courses, MOOCs as they're called, until about five or six years ago, and I was doing some lectures and a debate in Yale, debating with an atheist philosopher in Yale, and I discovered that this philosopher, Yale has a sort of a gift to a world where they put a camera in his classroom, and anyone who wants can log in and see him lecturing on his topics, and apparently he's the most popular philosophy among young people in China. Who knew? I was chatting with friends about this and thinking, "This is extraordinary."

NT Wright: They say, "Well, you could do this too."

NT Wright: And so I approached my own university, St. Andrews, and said, "Were you thinking of doing online courses?"

NT Wright: And they said, "No, we're not doing that at the moment." I think actually now they are, but they weren't then. They said, "If you want to do that, go ahead. That's fine." And so the colleague who works with me on this, David Seemuth from the Wisconsin Center for Christian Studies, he basically produces them, and we have a highly skilled videographer who comes with a couple of cameras, and we sit in the room where I'm sitting now, my study and college in St. Mary's College in St. Andrews, and I simply talk in 15-20 minute bursts on whatever subject it is, often expounding a book of the Bible, and then David my colleague does any light editing and adds the visuals, and they go out online, and we have I don't know what it is now, over 40,000 students in over 170 countries.

NT Wright: I know those statistics because David has told me about them, but I find it impossible to imagine that sort of audience, but I think, "Well clearly there are people out there who want this kind of thing," and I'm delighted that I've been able, so far, to do it, and we're planning a few more, too. So that's been a real revelation to me, yeah.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, that's wonderful.

NT Wright: Isn't that exciting?

Carey Nieuwhof: So where can people find you online? Yeah, that's very exciting, and I mean Jordan Peterson has found the same thing at the University of Toronto.

NT Wright: Yes, I'm not in his league, and I'd like to meet him one day. Some people who I vaguely know who know him have tried to get us in touch with each other, but he's a very busy man, and I'm fairly low on his scale of priorities, which is fine. I'm not looking for extra work at the moment, but no, the NTWrightOnline.org is one, that's the website for the courses, and there is my own website which a friend in America runs for me which is the NTWrightPage.com, if I remember rightly, and NT Wright ... I think it's www.NTWrightPage.com. I think that's it.

Anyway, if they just googled NT Wright, they'd probably find it. Probably find a lot of rubbish out there as well, but

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, we'll link to everything in the show notes, and just a little Jordan Peterson thing, I studied at the University of Toronto, which you would know well.

NT Wright: Oh yes, yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: And if you know King's College Circle, Knox College was my seminary, and of course just to the north of that is University College, the oldest college at U of T.

NT Wright: Of course.

Carey Nieuwhof: So that's where Jordan Peterson, when I was in seminary he was actually teaching philosophy, and the best coffee shop at King's College Circle is on the west side of University College. It was called Los Diablos, a nice little devil joint.

NT Wright: Oh, right. Okay.

Carey Nieuwhof: And I'm sure I must have seen him there from time to time, but that was long before he was Jordan Peterson, so.

NT Wright: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: I can never leverage that to get influence. I will do it on your behalf as well as mine.

NT Wright: Oh, well. Oh, well.

Carey Nieuwhof: NT Wright, what a thrill this has been for me. Thank you so very much.

NT Wright: Well very good to talk to you, and thanks for some great questions.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yes, absolutely. It's going to bless a lot of people.

NT Wright: Thank you. Well all very best to you and yours. Thank you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I kind of did warn you about not trying to do 2x speed or 1.5 speed on that one. Was that not rich, and isn't it just great to have someone who's just so thoughtful and measured? And I mean, reads the New Testament in the morning from Greek and the Old Testament from Hebrew. I mean, and actually just has some reasonable views on things. I think that is fantastic. If you want to learn more, you can get the transcripts. You can go to CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode300.

Carey Nieuwhof: Guys, if you subscribe you get absolutely everything for free every week, and that is courtesy of our partners. So remember, if you want to save, already listeners have saved over a million dollars by going to RemodelHealth.com/Carey. Pro Media Fire and Pro WebFire are actually looking for 20 churches that are into growth in 2020. You can go to ProMediaFire.com/2020 and apply there.

Carey Nieuwhof: Of course Red Letter Challenge is still open. If you're looking for a way to really key in to the words of Jesus in a way that ignites spiritual growth in your congregation, go to RedLetterChallenge.com/Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: We really thank our partners. We choose them really carefully. Trust me, there are a lot of people who want on the podcast, but we're really careful about who we share with you because we know that trust is the most important commodity. So make sure you check those guys out.

Carey Nieuwhof: Also, guys, we are getting really close to 10 million downloads. My team has planned something so fun to celebrate 10 million downloads so keep listening, and if this episode has helped you, please do share it on social. We watch all that stuff. We're so grateful for you, and I got to tell you about some of the lineup coming up. We are really excited to be bringing you Albert Tate. He is up next week, and why don't we just go straight into a fascinating conversation with Albert as we talked about how to add humor to your talks, porn, sex, and handling the pressures of leadership.

Albert Tate: I did it with Rick Warren. Rick Warren had just got up and spoke. He's at a church planning conference, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Right.

Albert Tate: And these are church planners praying about getting off the ground, all this other kind of stuff, and Rick gets up to inspire us, and he says, "The Bible says we should go to all nations. Well, I just thought one day we should go to all nations. So we put together a team in October 16, 2016, we went to the final nation. Saddleback has been in every nation."

Albert Tate: And I get up, and I'm like, "Way to inspire us Rick, great, you went to every nation. I'm just trying to go to my neighborhood and struggling try to get a budget, and you've gone to every nation. I want to quit before I ever get started." So I just went ... because every pastor out there is kind of lowkey thinking that. They're kind of thinking, and it's not a reason to disqualify his message, but it actually qualifies the message to say, "Don't be intimidated by the numbers, look at his passion. Look at his commitment. Look at his prayer life. Look at his tenacity." Same thing with Francis Chan, I got in trouble for this one.

Carey Nieuwhof: That conversation with Albert was unbelievable. You're not going to want to miss it. Carlos Whittaker, Rebekah Lyons is coming up, Larry Osborne, Jordan Raynor. We've also got John Mark Comer, Jasmine Star, and then you should see 2020. When we kick off 2020, how about like Francis Chan, Louie Gilgio, John Ortberg, Liz Forkin Bohannon, Jefferson Bethke, Craig Groeschel. It's going to be incredible. So guys, subscribe. You can do that for free.

Carey Nieuwhof: By the way, we're doing Ask Carey, right? We promised to do that. You've come, you've listened to the very end. So here's the question. Elize wants to know, "Can self-awareness be taught?" Can self-awareness be taught? The answer, absolutely. You know the best thing? And I love the question, Elize, is like emotional intelligence, which is something I learned about I don't know probably 20 years ago or so, first I read it and I thought, "Yeah, I could grow in that area," but the good news is you can grow in it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Some things are just gifts, right? Like, I'm not a musician. Some of you are so gifted, you just hear a piece, you can play it, or it took you three minutes of music lessons to figure something out. Those are just gifts, but emotional intelligence and self-awareness and self-regulation are two parts of emotional intelligence. Those are things that can be learned. So how can you become more self-aware?

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, the way you can become more self-aware, actually, is by first of all asking a question like, "How do I become more self-aware?" Right? Watch for the impact of your actions on others, and then just try to see because you know what I've found, there was a ... I've grown in self-awareness. We had a staff member for many years, and she ... I'm in Enneagram Eight, she just called me Bamm-Bamm, and if you ever watched the Flintstones when you were a kid, there was that little ... Barney Rubble's kid was Bamm-Bamm, and the thing about Bamm-Bamm is he didn't know his own strength, and that's my problem is in Enneagram Eight I come in, and I think I'm having a perfectly normal modulated conversation, and everyone else in the room feels like I just clobbered them.

Carey Nieuwhof: Or that, "Well, Carey said that so that's what we have to do," and I don't even see it. Because I think of myself as just, you know, hey I'm just one more voice around the table. Now of course, I'm in a position of leadership and authority, and there's all of those dynamics, and then there's just the force of a personality of an Enneagram Eight.

Carey Nieuwhof: So by listening, her name's Nadine, the staff member that gave me that feedback, I'm like, "Really? That's what it's like?" And then so Nadine and I would have dialogues, and I would say, "Hey, man. How did I behave in that meeting? How did I come across?" And she would say, "Well, it was a little bit strong," and I'm like, "Okay, okay. Well what can I do?"

- Carey Nieuwhof: And I have solicited so much feedback over the last 10 or 15 years to try to realize, "Okay, in my head I'm one way, but in the room I'm another way," and that's true in marriage, that's true in parenting, it's true in all of those things. One thing you can do is simply be very clear that the way you think you're coming across is probably different than how you're coming across, and it can be the opposite. Like, I come on really strong in a meeting. You might think you're coming along really strong, but you're actually coming on really weak, and you need to speak up a little bit more. It could be the opposite.
- Carey Nieuwhof: So that's one way to improve self-awareness, and then the second way you would do it is to solicit feedback, solicit feedback. You can do that the way I did very casually with Nadine. Another way to do it, and obviously for many others over the years, another way to do it is to do a formal review or a 360. So we've used the RightPath 360 for that. Another way to do it is to do personality tests like the Enneagram or RightPath or ... Well, what else have we done? Oh, Les McKeown stuff.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Les McKeown has been a regular guest, so his stuff on the Synergist is really good to discover your style, and I think reading in those areas, doing personality profiles, getting a formal 360 review, and then just soliciting casual feedback, and remember I've said this before on the show, when you get that kind of feedback do not be defensive. Just say, "Thank you," learn, and grow.
- Carey Nieuwhof: So can self-awareness be taught? 100%, and that's how you do it. So I help that helps. Listen, I love this little feature. It's #askCarey, and you can go onto social media, any of the platforms, we're there, and you can follow me if you haven't done that yet. I'm CareyNieuwhof on Instagram, CNieuwhof on Facebook and Twitter, and just leave your question there. We will find it, and every week we're going to try to answer a new one.
- Carey Nieuwhof: Thanks so much, guys, and I hope this episode, really special one, 300, has helped you lead like never before.
- Announcer: You've been listening to the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast. Join just next time for more insights on leadership, change, and personal growth to help you lead like never before.