

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: Hello, everybody, and Happy New Year! Welcome to episode 313 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof, and I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. It is great to kick off the New Year with you. Today's episode is brought to you by BELAY and by LifeWay, Ministry Grid in particular. Hang on. We've got some brand new stuff for you guys there.

Carey Nieuwhof: I am so excited to bring you Francis Chan today. Francis has been a guest before, and if you know Francis, he is never boring. Today's a pretty fascinating drill down. Francis made an address at a university a few months ago, and it kind of blew up one part of the internet, like if you're in certain tribes, what he said. I know a lot of you are church leaders who are listening, and that's certainly Francis' background.

Carey Nieuwhof: But even if you're a business leader, this is a fascinating conversation on what happens when a small thing you said gets blown up on the internet. It's also a MasterClass on how to be human in your responses, because Francis is incredibly vulnerable, which should be no surprise to anybody, but he really kind of lets us in and goes, "Guys, I'm a real person, okay? And when I hear this stuff, it actually has an impact." I think this is a pretty helpful conversation to kick off 2020. So I think you're going to love it, regardless of where you come from or the space you work in, we are all online these days. We all have thoughts about what's happening. So we're going to drill down on the real issue. Then we're also going to talk about how people responded to the real issue, which is one of the reasons I love bringing you conversations like this.

Carey Nieuwhof: Guys, a new year is upon us. Congratulations! Happy New Year's! We made it into 2020. And is it Happy New Year or New Year's? That is a really good question. I think it's New Year and I just let New Year's slip out. But anyway, New Year's upon us, hopes and dreams for a fresh start, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: If you have on your goal list increased productivity, staring down a calendar that's already filling up at an alarming rate can feel like a lost cause. We're only seven days into the new year, and you're already like, "Ah!" Doesn't have to be, because BELAY, the incredible organization revolutionizing productivity with virtual assistants and bookkeeping services for businesses, churches and non-profits alike, is offering a free download of Productivity for the Win: Your Personal Guide to a Productive Work Week. Everybody who listens to this podcast gets it by using this code. It's Productivity for the Win: Your Personal Guide to a Productive Work Week. If you would like that to help you accomplish your 2020 goals, just text Carey to 31996. That's C-A-R-E-Y to 31996. Now you're one step closer to actually achieving your New Year's resolution.

Carey Nieuwhof: Back in August, you guys may remember, particularly those who follow me on social, that I was working on a few exclusive courses with my friends, because I do courses on my platform, but some exclusive ones for my friends over at Ministry Grid. Well, guess what? Those courses are finally here. For the month of January, you can go to [MinistryGrid.com/Carey](https://MinistryGrid.com/Carey), and access these brand new courses free. These courses cover common leadership challenges, how you can overcome these leadership obstacles in your church, ministry, or organization.

Carey Nieuwhof: It gets better, though. If you complete any of these courses on Ministry Grid, their team will send you a copy of my latest book, *Didn't See It Coming*, as a gift. There's no strings attached. So head on over to [MinistryGrid.com/Carey](https://MinistryGrid.com/Carey), C-A-R-E-Y, check out the free courses. It's our gift to you. And while you're there, check out their full volunteer training library that you can use at your church. My church, Connexus, loves the tool and how it's developing our leaders and our volunteers. So make sure you head on over to [MinistryGrid.com/Carey](https://MinistryGrid.com/Carey), where you can get some free bonuses. It's a nice way to start out 2020 with some free stuff, isn't it?

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, guys, I am really excited, and I think this is an important conversation. It goes in some really interesting directions. Make sure you listen to the end. I think my favorite thing about this interview is just the humanness of the conversation. I know we're heading into an election year. Everybody's nervous. I know we're heading into probably the most polarized year that most of us have lived through. But on the other end of every keyboard, on the other end of every microphone is a real, live human being God actually loves. I hope we remember that this year. This conversation may get you in that space. I hope you find it as meaningful and helpful as I did. I promise you, it's not boring. Here's my conversation with Francis Chan.

Carey Nieuwhof: Francis, welcome back to the podcast!

Francis Chan: Thank you. Good to be back.

Carey Nieuwhof: Never a boring conversation, I can tell you that.

Francis Chan: I know. I don't know why that always happens.

Carey Nieuwhof: We were saying before we started recording, it's just one of those things that you said something at a university and you blew up the internet, right? So-

Francis Chan: Yes. Then I thought, "Let me just address this one crowd," and then everyone has their opinion. I don't know. I guess I'm not ... Here I am, trying to figure out exactly how to say it. But I'm very good at saying things real precisely and perfectly, and to just kind of speak out of my heart. Sometimes it causes confusion. I get it. I get it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. So the bottom line, and we're not going to spend the whole podcast here, but you are moving again, correct?

Francis Chan: Yes.

Carey Nieuwhof: So you want to fill people in on what's actually true? That's a good place to start.

Francis Chan: Yes. Okay. My plan, and don't hold me to it because every day is different for me. So in a lot of ways, nothing's changed. I could tomorrow really be seeking out for God and my time with him, and generally be leaving Africa tomorrow, you know? And I'll do it. And so I never know, day to day, but I believe he's calling me to, at the end of February, move to Hong Kong with my entire family and I honestly have no idea why. This is something Lisa and I felt called to do eight or nine years ago, when we were in Hong Kong, and that was weird, because we were just in India, Thailand, China. And yet, when we got to Hong Kong, we separately both felt that God was saying, "This is it!"

Francis Chan: But then, shortly after that conversation, I felt like the Lord spoke to me ... And understand, this is before I was Charismatic, right?

Carey Nieuwhof: Right, right.

Francis Chan: I didn't believe in ... I'm like, I really think God told me to go back to the US and start a new paradigm of church, and give a different picture of marriage and family. Let's go back to the US, but I felt like that's what God told us to do. So now that we've done those things, it's like, let's go back to Hong Kong.

Francis Chan: In fact, a couple of months ago, what really spurred it on was I was in another country, and we were ministering just hut to hut in the slums, telling people the Gospel. And the receptivity, I was like, this is so life giving. This is so enjoyable! This feels so Biblical. And it seems like ... I asked my wife, "What do we do on an average day that compares to this?" You know?

Carey Nieuwhof: I do.

Francis Chan: Remember when we felt called to Hong Kong? Let's go! Let's do it! And we'll be closer to all these unreached groups. I don't know what God's calling us to, but I think this is time. And so that's as much as I know.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's awesome. That's awesome. One of the things I'm always curious about, Francis, is how people hear the call of God. Can you walk us through? Was it a feeling? Was it a sensation? Was it after prayer? Was it the two of you agreeing? Because that's how, you know, it gets abused and then sometimes it gets ignored, right? On the one hand, you hear the call of God for every bad decision, and I'm not saying it's a bad decision, and other times, God's calling and you're so suspicious, you don't hear a thing. I probably land more on that

side, where I'm ignoring the promptings, rather than obeying them. So how do you determine, you know what? That's from God.

Francis Chan: Yeah. I really think the first thing is, like Peter tells us, we have to be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of our prayers. I've got to clear my mind. I can't be watching a million videos and then jump into prayer. I have to show some self-control. I've got to get my mind clear. And then I have to seek him with all of my heart. Not just lip service, not just whatever, but just pursue and pursuing regularly, daily, hourly, and not just casually, but with all of my heart. And during those times, as I'm in prayer and seeking him, there are times where most of the time, I'd say 99% of the time, it's when I'm reading the Scriptures, and I get convicted by something, and I'm going, "Lord, what do I do with this? What do I do with this?"

Francis Chan: But there are a few other times with decisions, and that time in Hong Kong was one of those, when I'm just seeking. Like, "Lord, I'm trying to figure out where you want me to go." And it wasn't an audible voice that went through my ears, at least for me. It wasn't-

Carey Nieuwhof: "Francis, go to Hong Kong!" It wasn't that.

Francis Chan: ... an external voice, but I think it might be something like how, you know how in 1 Corinthians, is it two or three, where he's, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has promised to those who love him. But God has revealed this to us by his spirit." So somehow there are ways that God can communicate to us that aren't like you. Like, right now, you're looking at me. I can see you. I can hear you in my physical ears, and it's going cognitively into my brain, however that works. I have no clue. But I can physically explain it. I can just tell you somehow these things were communicated to me.

Francis Chan: But other people I've talked to may see pictures, visions, and they'll tell me things that freak me out because they're right on, and they'll nail things in my life where I go, "That must have been God, because no one could have known that." And it's different for them. So for me, that's how it works.

Carey Nieuwhof: I appreciate it. You also hinted at this fact. I just want to test it. Is it a little bit like, we all have different personalities. I am very rational. You're like, you know what? I could hear from God and it's Africa by the time January rolls around. I wonder if some of that is actually ... You look at how Bob Goff lives, and that's genuinely Bob Goff, right? He's in Enneagram 7, and he's just open. And I know some of that's discipline, but our personalities are a little bit different. Do you think some of how you process is dependent on your personality?

Francis Chan: Yeah. Yeah. Like I'm very skeptical. I'm very efficient. I can't stand inefficiency. If you took 45 minutes to get this thing going, I would be so annoyed with you. But it's nice. You just got right to the point. Let's go. All right. Let's go.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, we try.

Francis Chan: So that's me. And I tend to ... I used to just dwell on problems a lot, like everything that could go wrong. My mind tends to go towards negative. And so I do tend to think things through, and yet there's this other side of me that God has taught me over the years that, look at Scripture. There's this sense in which he calls people to do things that they don't know the next step. They can't figure out what's going to happen next. God just tells them to take the next step. And it's like, "Okay, Lord, because that's in your Scripture, I'm going to try to pursue that also." So I'm kind of this mix of seeing both in Scripture and trying to be both.

Carey Nieuwhof: I've got a lot of listener questions. I crowd sourced this one, so we'll get to those in a minute. But you've got me really thinking, Francis. I'm not into speculation, and I try not to trend jack or that kind of thing, but I think this is a very interesting case study, because you gave a talk. It broke a segment of the internet, right, where all of a sudden, "Francis Chan says America is in trouble, and he's going overseas again!" And what's wrong with the rest of you? And the whole deal.

Carey Nieuwhof: We got from you what you're actually going to do. But tell me some of the craziest stuff you heard that you were going to do. Because that's what happens, right? We live in this little bubble right now where all of a sudden, people make up stuff or mis-hear things. So what are some of the crazy things you heard about what you were going to do?

Francis Chan: Totally. And understand, I don't know them all, because I stay off of the internet. But people come up, "Oh, I'm so sorry about what that guy said about you." And I'm like, "Don't even tell me. I don't even know. I don't want to know." But it all ends up coming through, friends with good intentions texting me.

Francis Chan: I think the big thing was ... and I totally get it. The headlines of one of the ones that went really by a roll was like, "Francis is becoming a missionary to Myanmar." So suddenly everyone, which I never said that, but I get it, because I told a story from Myanmar, and then I said I'm moving to Asia, so you put it together. And, again, this is at Azusa Pacific, where they give me 22 minutes, and then the kids have to be in class. So I'm just saying this real quickly as a precursor, like, "Hey, I've been preaching here 20 years. I'm moving. Here's a couple reasons why." But I had a message. I was going to preach the Gospel.

Francis Chan: And I feel like I did. I feel like I nailed it. But no one's even listening or talking about that. They're going, "Oh, those first two minutes, he said this, this, this." So suddenly, there was this big thing about he's going to Myanmar. He thinks he can take over the country, and it's all about him. And then people start arguing about this. And I'm like, you guys are arguing about what my motives are in moving there, and I'm not even moving there! It's just weird. It's weird how

people think, because they think I'm so arrogant that I think I can take over a country and that I don't even realize all the other people that are serving there.

Francis Chan: And I'm going, "Gosh. How did we get there so quickly?" I'm trying to think of the weirdest ones. I'm blank right now.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, that's good. This sounds like an easy softball question after that answer, but what are the reasons you stay off the internet?

Francis Chan: You know, there are a lot of people who love me and they say some really kind, flattering things. If I read all of those, I will get so arrogant and into myself. And then there are a lot of people that are just trying to write the most abrasive things they can to get more listeners and viewers, and some that maybe find fault in me, which there is plenty to find. They'll say some of the most cruel, biting things. And if I watch all that, listen to that, it'll make me angry, bitter, sad. I'm human. I don't want to pretend like this tough guy. "You say anything about me, it doesn't," no. It hurts at times. I think I've developed thicker skin, but it can discourage you from the Body of Christ.

Francis Chan: So I feel like neither of those are good. Too much flattery, too much criticism. How much can one person take? And meanwhile, I want to just hear from the Lord and not from everyone else.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. I hear what you're saying, Francis, and I'm online probably a lot more than you are. But one of the things people will ... Like, I didn't write about what you said at Azusa Pacific, and people will often text me or message me and go, "You need to write about this pastor who fell." And I'm like, I don't even know what to say. How do you ... And so I want you to counsel people on social media, so the next time there's a Francis Chan moment where you say something at a university, and it blows up the internet, I would love for you to let us know what you think the best course of action is. Because I think what really resonated with me is you nailed it. People who have never met you, who probably never will meet you, who don't know you, are questioning your motives based on a two and a half minute excerpt in a 22 minute speech? What would you say to people who want to jump on and express their opinions on something like that?

Francis Chan: I think if I ever say anything that is clearly anti-Biblical, you have a responsibility to really think that through and evaluate it, just like we see that's in Scripture. That's good. Amen! Amen! Please, don't just listen to everything you hear. But ... Listen to everything. I mean don't just believe everything you hear. But you need to listen to everything you hear.

Francis Chan: What I would say is try to look at someone's life, and everything that they've said. Like James says, if anyone never slips of his tongue, he's a perfect person. So I'm going to say things that are wrong. During this podcast, or whatever you call it ... Is this a podcast?

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. It's a podcast. Sure, it is. Yeah.

Francis Chan: Okay, great. I will say things that are not perfect, I promise you. Please consider looking at my whole life and going, "Gosh, this has been 35 years this guy's been in ministry. Here's what he has said all along, and here's what he has done in his life." Look at the context. Consider. And then consider the context of I'm still in my fallen state. And I am going to make mistakes.

Francis Chan: But also consider, maybe don't always assume that you've got the right answer. So everyone I listen to, or I compare it to the way I think, and the way I've been taught, maybe just listen and consider, gosh, maybe this guy has something to share and teach me. I think in my early days, I thought I knew everything. You know? And people had nothing to teach me. And I was taught, "Oh, this guy's a heretic. This guy's a heretic." And you get to know, and you hear, and you go, "Maybe he's off on this. But, man, I sure can learn from this area of his life. And who knows if he's wrong on that."

Francis Chan: Come with humility. I would say number one, right? Who do you think you are? Who do I think I am? I'm a fallen man. I'm going to say things that are off. Man, I'm trying to seek the Lord. Man, I'm trying to follow him, and I'm trying to use the best of this human brain. And maybe God gave you a better brain, okay? I don't know. But just consider maybe yours isn't perfect, either. And we're striving. Look at the Scriptures, and I don't know, pay more attention to the Scriptures than what I say, or anyone else, you know?

Carey Nieuwhof: That's a good point. I also think ... You know, there are certain cases where there's a flagrant violation or whatever. But generally speaking, number one, give someone like Francis the benefit of the doubt. Just give you the benefit of the doubt. I think that's good, unless it's like, as you say, a clear violation. And secondly, I'm not sure the world needs my take on everything that happens, right? I'm not sure that I have to have a running narrative on every event.

Francis Chan: Yes! And that's also why I don't do the social media thing. I don't want to feel like I need to answer everything. I'm not an expert at everything. And that is something a lot of those young people need to hear is we really don't need another running commentary. I know you believe you're brilliant, but just consider, maybe you're just one ... You know, we don't think about working together and the unity that Christ wants. Let's figure out how to work together more, and have more private conversations and true fellowship rather than everything being for the whole world to listen to.

Carey Nieuwhof: Thanks so much for processing that, out loud, in public. Because I think that really is helpful, and we are in a really weird cultural moment right now that I hope doesn't last forever. Maybe we can just see that there's a real person behind that microphone or behind that account or whatever.

Francis Chan: Yeah, and

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. Go ahead, Francis.

Francis Chan: To say that, you know, like everyone that's listening, don't you get into conversations every day, you walk away, and you go, "I should have said that differently. I should have said this! I should have said that." We all do that. And so understand that just because someone is in public having a conversation that we don't just consider their humanity, especially, I think, like this. We didn't sit down and script out every word we're going to say. We're trying to be two human beings having a conversation, learning from one another. And I'll walk away from it going, "I should have said this differently." We all do that.

Francis Chan: And there are times when you're like, "Oh, I said that? I didn't mean to say that. Is that even a word?" I think I've done that a couple of times where I'm like, "Hey, don't hear everything you listen to." You know? That's not what I meant.

Carey Nieuwhof: I'll lead with that story: Francis misspeaks. Don't hear everything you listen to. It's insane. And I think the thoughtful conversation, the longer narrative, and treating each other with some dignity and respect. And, yeah, if there's a clear line that's been crossed where someone clearly has done something that really harms other human beings, or angers God, that's a different type of conversation. But, yeah. The, "Oh, you're moving to wherever," it's just the weirdest things that blow up. Well, we do have some good ... Yeah, go ahead. Go ahead. Keep going.

Francis Chan: I want to say something to this, because it's all in my heart, because right now, it's very popular ... We have a million heresy hunters out there that want to say, "Hey, all these guys are heretics, except for me and my four pastors I like." Right? And everyone is doing this now. It's just blowing up. So everyone's finding the little sound bites where this guy messed up, and they'll play it over and over and over. And they'll say, "See? We have to disassociate with these people." And they'll quote, "Because 2 John says to disassociate with them."

Francis Chan: Well, 2 John, it's about those who are saying Jesus did not come in the flesh. It's not just a blanket statement of anyone who disagrees with your theology. But what Scripture does say is to warn the divisive person once. Warn him again, then have nothing to do with him. The Scripture talks about division, and those are the people we need to stay away from. So a lot of times you've got these people that almost get a free pass because they're heresy hunters. And so we have to respect them, because they're really intelligent. But they're the very ones that are bringing division to the Body of Christ, and they're the very ones we need to stop listening to, according to Scripture. And they're misquoting Scripture saying, "Yeah, we should disassociate with this guy, this guy, this guy, this guy," who's a dear brother in Christ, they're saying he should be cursed. We should disassociate with him. And him. And him.

Francis Chan: And I'm just saying, be on the lookout for that, because Christ loves unity. Just like every dad out there listening, you would hate if your kids were divided.

You'd do anything to keep the family together. That's our father, and let's pay attention to all of this garbage that's out on the internet that's trying to divide the Body of Christ and speaking so blatantly and use blasphemy against some of God's servants. Sorry. I just had to get that off my chest.

Carey Nieuwhof: No, that's really well said. And it's funny, because I just finished up last week 1, 2, and 3 John, just in my own personal reading. As I would exegese that text, it had a lot more to do with love than it did about judgment. Those are the love books, guys! This is all about the love of God. And I hear you, Francis. Anything else on that? This is really good and, I think, really helpful.

Francis Chan: I mean, Christ told us, "Look. When you can become perfectly one, then the world will know that I was sent by the Father." So look at where the Evangelical Church is today. It's not that ... I hope that I'm not coming across like, "Oh, my feelings are hurt. This is why I'm saying this." I'm seriously going, "Gosh. I look at Scripture. I'm going, Jesus wants this so badly. I know the heart of a father. And just even as a earthly dad how much I want this unity," and I'm seeing it all through the Scriptures, and this isn't a little side note. Unity is not a little side [crosstalk 00:27:32].

Francis Chan: I read something on Saturday where this guy said, "Unity is the most divine word we have." And I thought, unity? And then he unpacked it, and he talked about Christ died on the cross so we could be one, unified with God, unified with one another. You know? What is most precious to us is that I am one with Christ right now. I am one with the Father right now. I have this union with him. There's nothing more important to me. And so he's just explaining it in the same way. There's this picture of unity and the trinity, what we believe, our core foundation of are they three? Are they one? They're one! They're so one that you can't even call them three.

Francis Chan: That's what he wanted for the church. And so when we flippantly and casually bash another guy and cause division, we're destroying the temple of God. In 1 Corinthians 3, it's like, don't you get that you, plurally, are forming one temple? And if anyone destroys that temple, God will destroy him, because God's temple is holy and you are that temple. And so it's like, whoa! We've got to get serious about this. It's not just, "Oh, that'd be nice if we all got along." It's at the foundation of what Christ did on the cross. He made the two one.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's a good word, and a word really needed in our culture now, Francis. Well, we do have some listener questions, and they're good. It's going to sound funny after what we just talked about, but we have great listeners. They don't get into the trenches and sling mud.

Carey Nieuwhof: But Joe Gustafson wondered at that now infamous address, "What did you mean by you don't want to be called a coward on your decision to move overseas? What was underneath that? Or is that even an accurate statement of what you said?"

Francis Chan: Honestly, I don't remember saying it.

Carey Nieuwhof: You don't remember.

Francis Chan: I probably did. And if I did, again, like, I don't know what I said ten minutes ago. So if I said I don't want to be a coward, then I would have been thinking Revelation 21, just about ... You know, when he's talking about those who get to be in this place with no more tears, no more sickness, no more pain. But then, right after that, I think it's verse seven or eight, he says-

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, yeah!

Francis Chan: ... but as for the cowardly, you know? And I'm like, that's the first thing he mentions. And I think about, is it Hebrews 10 where he says, "We are not of those who shrink back." And so there are times in my life when I'm called to do something that scares me, and many times I chicken out. And it kills me. There are times when I just feel like, "Oh, I'm supposed to talk to that guy right there and share the Gospel. He's going to reject me. I should do it!" And sometimes I do it, and sometimes I don't. And I hate that. I don't want to be that coward.

Francis Chan: And so when I do think about moving overseas, there are things that definitely scare me. I know God is with me, and there's a sense in which I'm fearless, but my mind is like everyone else. It can wander into dangerous things. Hong Kong's not the safest place right now. And some of the other places I'm venturing to go, I've heard of people dying there and this and that. You know? I'm not ... I would say I'm 90% not afraid to die for my faith. But depending on what I dwell on, and torture or whatever else, I get scared like everyone else, and I don't want that. My God is not a coward, so I don't want to be one.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah. You know, I look over my life, and there's lots of things where I'm like, really? Really? And so much of faith is taking that step when you have no guarantee of the outcome. I love that.

Carey Nieuwhof: William Knelson wants to know, "Not all of us are called to minister in other countries. So what's your advice for those of us who are called to stay and lead in North America," or, we can broaden this, in the Western church, because you're right. San Francisco probably feels a lot safer than Hong Kong right now. So what about those of us who remain in the Western or the developed world?

Francis Chan: It's cool that his name's William Knelson, asking why I'm on the road again. Stupid joke. Okay. So Willie Nelson, here's what I would say. I really believe ... You just got it, huh?

Carey Nieuwhof: I just got it. I'm like, is he an explorer? See, on my note, there's a K. It's K-N-E-L-S-O-N. Willie Nelson. I get it. Thanks, Francis. I'm slow.

Francis Chan: Absolutely not all of us should be on the road again. This is an important thing. This is an important thing. Okay? Because whenever I do something, there seems to be a pocket of people that think I'm saying everyone should do exactly what I'm doing. Right? And I'm not saying that. I'm just telling you what I'm doing. And I'm telling you the motives behind why I'm doing what I'm doing.

Francis Chan: Now, there are certain times, if I'm repenting of sin, hey, let's all do that. But when there are times when I just go, "Look. Here's why I'm doing it," I'm not saying everyone should do exactly what I do. For example, a lot of times when I get up to preach, I have no idea what I'm going to say. I don't have a plan. That is the worst thing that some of you should do. Now, for me, I've been preaching for 30-something years. I used to preach in a place where I preached the same sermon five or six times in a row, so I've got these Scriptures. I've got this backlog. I've been studying this Book, and I study it all week, and I teach it all week, so I can go up on the stage and pseudo wing it. But for some of you that haven't been preaching for 30 years, to just get up on a stage, there's going to be a lot of heresy coming out. So understand there's certain things I do because it's my specific calling at this point in my life. I'm not saying everyone should leave the US, and everyone should go to Hong Kong.

Francis Chan: There's unique things, like, I am Chinese and I did grow up in Hong Kong, and there is an affection. I did go there. So there's a lot of that. So for those who are called to stay in the US, and you've really sought it out, and you're, "I know I've sought the Lord. He told me to stay." Praise God, and I would just say, if I had one piece of advice, I would say: Let your theology dictate your practice.

Francis Chan: Why I say that is we have a tendency in the US to do what we think will work in ministry. So we choose seminary, and we learn our theology, and then we'll go to different church growth seminars and learn how to actually run a church. And I'm saying, no, that shouldn't be. Somehow, as we look at our theology and go, gosh, according to my theology, it's the Spirit who gives life, and the flesh is of no help at all. So if I believe that, and I believe it's about the Spirit, then I would spend a lot more time on my knees, begging for the power of the Holy Spirit, that as I preach this simple Gospel message, they'll change.

Francis Chan: But my practical side, my human wisdom side, will "Go, gosh. I think if we lead off with a song, so maybe if we do a secular song, maybe a Willie Nelson song, we'll sing that, and that'll pull people in. And then if I have good looking girls on the stage, that'll pull people in. And then if I bring in someone famous, that'll draw people in. And then if I just the first week tell them, 'Hey, God is good. See you next week.' And I'll slowly ease them in, and I'll come up with this methodology."

Francis Chan: But that's the way Francis would think. Francis wouldn't think, like Paul says, I think it's in 1 Corinthians 4, where he says, "I refuse to use cunning, but with an open declaration of truth." I try not to say things so cleverly, but I'm just going to declare it openly because, he says, "If you're blinded, it's because the God of

this world has darkened your mind, so you can't see." You can't see. And he goes, "So I'm just going to lay it out and see if the Holy Spirit doesn't do a miracle."

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow.

Francis Chan: That's what my theology would teach me. But what Francis Chan thinks is, "Well, I don't want to talk about the judgment of God, because that's going to be offensive to people. So I'm not going to openly declare that. Let me hide some things about God until I feel like they're ready for it." I don't know that I would get that from Scripture. I feel like Jesus, the first time he met with people, he didn't ease them into anything. He has a crowd of thousands and says, "Look. Unless you're willing to pick up that cross and die with me, deny yourself, unless you're willing to hate your father, mother, wife, kids, you're not worthy of me." He just threw it out there.

Francis Chan: I think sometimes we just try to get too clever, and think that in the flesh we can do something. But I say that based on Scripture. That's my best understanding of Scripture. I'm realizing I got caught up in trying too hard to appease people, and with my mind thinking I had a way of talking them into Jesus. But I wouldn't get that, if I just read the Scriptures. So, please. Study the Scriptures and make practical decisions based upon the Scriptures.

Carey Nieuwhof: That dovetails nicely into the next question. Clayton Bell, and maybe that's also a musician, said: Do you have any fear that you're creating an ... and, again, I mean, Francis, you hear this for just what it says ... a disdain for the American church? Many of us love her, labor in her. Do those who don't know the difference between entertainment and religion not deserve outreach? Why are they treated as less by so many?

Carey Nieuwhof: It sounds like a bit of a loaded question, but I think I know Clayton. I've seen his stuff. He doesn't mean anything by it. But it is that tension of we live in an entertainment culture, and a lot of churches are doing exactly what you said. Let me reframe that a little bit. What would you give as advice to the American church, realizing you just wrote a book called Letters to the Church a year ago. But what would you say to that tension, where we are in a culture where people are hyper-entertained, and how would you address that?

Francis Chan: Yeah. Yeah. Let me answer, like he says, do I create a disdain-

Carey Nieuwhof: Disdain for the American church.

Francis Chan: You know, I probably do. I even write about this in the book. I said it's so hard. Sorry, I don't have all my verses perfect, but it's-

Carey Nieuwhof: I don't, either.

Francis Chan: 1 Thessalonians 3, 12-ish, where it says: Admonish the unruly, and encourage the fainthearted. Admonish the unruly, and encourage the fainthearted. I write about this in the book. I go, look. Whenever I write something for everyone, I'm going to end up admonishing the faint hearted, and encouraging the unruly. You know what I mean? It's like, how do you write something that's going to ... Well, if you just encourage everyone, then those who need to be kicked in the butt, you know, and then, others, if you just hug ... You know, if you just admonish everyone, there's others who need to be hugged!

Francis Chan: So I can do that in a small gathering with people I know. But it's like, anytime I preach, I go, "God, this is impossible. This is impossible. The people that I know need to be admonished, they may feel hugged. And then other ones here are trying their best. They're seeking out the Lord, and it's going to sound like I'm just telling them they're worthless. I don't know how to do this, Lord. I don't know. Please, Holy Spirit, have those right words come out, because people are so quick to pick up on one thing."

Francis Chan: But, you know, you preach something, and then someone comes up to you afterwards, and they'll pick out one thing and think you meant to say this. And you're like, "That wasn't any bit of my message. I'm so sorry." But then I'm also completely confused as to how you got that, because you realize I'm going to be off in how I communicate, and they're going to be off on how they listen. It's a perfect storm. So, yes, I'm sure I've made people angry that I didn't mean to. And the last thing I wanted ... and I write about that. The last thing ... I think it's in my book. Oh my gosh. Some young guy's going to throw this book at his pastor and say, "See? Your church is all screwed up!" And I'm even warning against that.

Francis Chan: It's never going to be perfect, and it's so frustrating. So, yes. I apologize to everyone if I've caused division in the Body of Christ. That's certainly not it. And yet, at the same time, I'm sorry for those who I haven't confronted hard enough, because I chickened out, or I was just going to mess up on that. So what I will say is, gosh, what I said earlier. Don't just take that one talk. Try to, what I was saying about use your theology and your practice. Have your practice flow from your theology. That's what I'm trying to say is I don't think we're believing some of these words of God.

Francis Chan: Just like what we talked about earlier: unity. You wouldn't think that if we became perfectly one then now, suddenly, unbelievers are going to believe in their own destruction and our salvation. But that's what Philippians 1:27 says. You know? It's when we're side by side, they're going to believe in their destruction. And we think, "No, that's not going to do it. But I think entertaining them will." And I'm like, yeah, maybe. Give it a shot.

Carey Nieuwhof: So on that note, there's a phrase that circulates. I've used it at times. "Use the culture to reach the culture." So you might do that Willie Nelson song or another song. And every church ... We talked about this last time when you

were in Simi Valley, you use amps. You use lights. That kind of stuff. Where is the line? Because that was one of the questions under his question, too. It's like should you never, ever use that stuff? Or how do you know? What are you thinking?

Francis Chan: Yeah. What I tried to do in the book was talk about what is clearly Biblical. Okay? And my favorite thing that I wrote, that I most enjoyed, was a chapter called The Sacred. Gosh. You know, this week, we'll read through Ezekiel and Revelation as our church. It's like, wow. The way worship is in heaven, worshipping God, let it be done on earth as it is in heaven! Oh, man. Look at how they do it. Look at how sacred it is. This is beautiful! Everything's centered around him.

Francis Chan: And so, in our quest to relate to the culture, I just fear we have really lost this sense ... The world is not seeing a reverent church that fears God and is just so serious about him. I really believe they're actually confused by how culturally relevant we're trying to be, and now, suddenly, we're not as strange as we ought to be.

Carey Nieuwhof: Okay. Trent Hardy says: "How is what you've been doing for the last few years in San Francisco, your home church method, improving your members' connectivity and spiritual maturity?"

Francis Chan: Yeah. Okay. Let me address that. First, I'm kind of getting known as the house church guy, which, you know, now I'm the missionary guy or whatever. I have never believed that house churches were the answer. So first, let me just say that. You can have horrible house churches, blasphemous house churches. You may have a house church led by a guy who does not know the Lord Jesus Christ and has not walked deeply with him. And so spiritual growth is not, okay, let me go to a house church.

Francis Chan: For me, it was just somewhat of a practical side where I'm going, gosh. In order for people to truly know each other's needs, use their spiritual gifts, I don't know how I can do that if there's a thousand people in a room and I'm speaking for 40 minutes of that hour. So I'm just going, how are they going to know each other? How are we going to display this unity that I was talking about? And a lot of times, you can spend 10 years in a building, and not know a person. And so I was just trying to figure out a structure where there was time for that, and where one person could really disciple, and know who's unruly, and who is faint hearted.

Francis Chan: And I was also trying to figure out a way to spread it to thousands and thousands, possibly millions, and not be stuck and limited by a building. There's a ton of other reasons. But I would say, if in a house gathering, it's done well, you have a leader who loves the Lord with all of his heart, who knows him deeply and loves the people in that room and takes time to shepherd and care for their needs, and pray for them, where everyone's prayed for daily by their

shepherd, and knows ... And the shepherd knows them by name, and in a perfect setting, and everyone comes, believing I have a supernatural gift, a manifestation of the Holy Spirit for the common good. I'm going to come because I love these people so much. So everyone's coming, I love these people so much, and, God, give me something! Give me a gift! Not just my own human encouragement. Give me this supernatural, spiritual gift, so that when I gather with those guys I can bless them. I can bless them!

Francis Chan: If everyone comes like that, giving to one another, having been alone with God and now sharing what you've learned from the Lord, you've got a leader that loves those people, man. There's going to be tremendous spiritual growth, and I've seen that. To say that that's happening in all of our house churches, absolutely not. But hopefully that gives you a little bit of a picture. Done well, you can probably imagine how it really would be life giving.

Carey Nieuwhof: Just to follow up, what have been some surprises with the house church thing that you've been doing for the last six or seven years? What have been the positive and the negative surprises? Like, thought it would be a lot bigger? Or I thought it would be smaller; it's a lot bigger. You know? I thought people would be deeper and people are still people. In that vein, what has been, "Hey, this was awesome, and it's like, wow, why didn't this work?"

Francis Chan: What's been awesome is leadership. People grow so much when they have responsibility, just like we grew as parents the moment that child came. It's like, "Oh my gosh, I've got to take parenting seriously." I wouldn't have grown like that just by reading parenting books and not having my own child. In the same way, I've seen these leaders, when they're in charge, there's been a growth in them. They're spiritual giants now, our elders. I am learning so much from them, because we're all doing the same thing. The camaraderie, the fact that I now am fed so much by these other guys, I wasn't expecting that. I wasn't expecting to feel so little pressure of being the man. In fact, I'm learning so much from them, because they're growing so fast. So that's the good surprise.

Francis Chan: The bad surprise has been a lot of people gravitate, people that gravitate toward this model tend to be people that are angry at the church, maybe burned by authority so they think this is a way, "Yeah, I'll just do my own thing. I'll do what Francis did. Forget the establishment. I don't want to be corporate. I'll do my own thing." And that type of attitude that got them to leave another place in anger is going to manifest here, also. So we've seen a lot of that. We didn't take into account just where our culture is that you see is everyone has their own opinion, and everyone does what's right in his own eyes. And so it's been a lot harder to explain authority.

Francis Chan: Because I absolutely believe in Biblical authority. This was not an attempt to rid the church of authority. In a lot of ways, we're doubling down on authority and saying, look, we're going to have this servant-leader that's going to be in such close proximity to you. Whereas a lot of times, you don't even have that. So it's

almost like they're coming, expecting less authority, and just more independence, and we're saying, "It's actually the opposite. We want a deeper accountability to one another." So that's caused a lot of people to say, "Okay. Fine. I'm leaving, and I'm going to start my own thing."

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. Thank you for that. So this came up a few times. Greg Davenport, Josh Cox among them, asking: "You've held different roles in the Kingdom of God. What do you see as the difference between a role and a calling? And does a calling change?"

Francis Chan: I don't know if I'm the best one to answer that question. I don't know if I've thought it through that much. I think of Jeremiah's calling. That's the first thing that comes to my mind, or whatever you want to call it, his role, you know, God tells him, "Before you were born, I knew you. And I determined, before you even came out of your mother's womb, that you were going to be a prophet to the nations." So I don't know if you would call that his calling, his role, but somehow in the amazing foresight of God, he knew he needed this prophet at this time, so he creates Jeremiah at this time and decides, before he even comes out of his mother's womb, this is what you're going to do. You are a prophet, and this is what you're going to do.

Francis Chan: So I believe that about myself. I know, God, I was born at this time. I don't have any clue why you suddenly put me in, and given me this platform. Sometimes I try to hide, and you just make it bigger. So I don't know what that's about. I don't know why ... You know, sometimes I just want to just be unnoticed. I don't want everyone watching me, you know? And so that's part of the no social media, not taking pictures of me everywhere I am. It's like, I just want to hear from you, Lord, and go do this thing. But somehow other people take pictures of me and record it and send it out. And I was like, "Okay. Maybe that's your will. Obviously, somehow it's your will." I don't know. Let me just try to walk in faithfulness today.

Francis Chan: And maybe ... Sorry to go too long on this, but maybe because I don't understand and my mind is too simple, I just do things and say things as I feel called and led by the Spirit, by the Word, to do them. I don't take into account, okay, but maybe I do have some other role. That's why everyone's listening in and thinking that I'm setting this example for everyone to follow. I don't know. Does that even make sense?

Carey Nieuwhof: No, it makes a lot of sense. What I've heard you say throughout the interview, Francis, is that when you get up at Azusa or wherever, this is descriptive, not prescriptive. I'm telling you what I'm doing. I'm not telling you what to do.

Francis Chan: Yes!

Carey Nieuwhof: That's what I'm hearing.

Francis Chan: And so, maybe if I understand and embrace my role ... Maybe there is a role that I was called to be in that I don't quite understand, then I'd be more careful about my words and thinking of how everyone's going to hear them. But the dangerous thing about that, though, is I started going down that road, and I'm just like, every statement I would make, I was thinking, "How is this going to be taken? How is this going to be taken?" If everyone looks at me like this, and everyone looks ... And pretty soon, I'm just not even me anymore. I'm not even communing with God. I'm just thinking about what everyone thinks in this specific role I've been given. And so I would say that's just a caution.

Carey Nieuwhof: It's interesting, too, Francis. I don't know what your take would be on this, but last time we talked, you'd been out of Cornerstone for a while. Then you've done this thing in San Francisco. You traveled the world, then you did the thing in San Francisco, which you're wrapping up now. Now you're going to Hong Kong and who knows where you will be.

Carey Nieuwhof: But what I see in that is freedom. I see a calling on your life, but I see a freedom in expression. Do you know what I mean? So I expressed that for a little while in California, and then I felt a shift in the wind. I felt a shift in my heart. We went to Asia. Then we went here, now we're going here. I'm wrapping up 25 years of ministry this year in our community. I'm still going to go to the church, but I'm morphing out of full time leadership, but see this podcast and some of the other things I'm doing as much as ministry. It's a continuation of a calling, just a shift in role.

Carey Nieuwhof: I wonder if sometimes we straight jacket ourselves into almost that our ministry becomes a sentence, or our calling becomes a sentence, and we just have to stay in it forever and ever. I don't know. Any thoughts on that?

Francis Chan: Yeah. No, that's good. Yeah. I want to add something first. I do think there's responsibility, a responsibility to the Body. I want people who are listening to understand that as Lisa and I came back from Myanmar, we talked about the church. There were times when I felt like the church was not ready, so I'm not leaving it, because I don't think they're ready for this. This time, it's like, gosh, look at these leaders! They're insane. They're just like, oh! They're ready. I think this is the time.

Francis Chan: So that's also with leaving the US. Sometimes I feel like, gosh, I think I've said everything I know to say. Sometimes I think I'm more of a distraction to Christ, because it just starts these intramural battles. It's just too much attention on me, and the more I try to put it on Christ, somehow it gets back to me. It just feels like there's a completion, like maybe I've done it, and now it's time to move on.

Francis Chan: We'll never know until we stand before God, 100%, were you really supposed to go on? It's like, do I look back at Cornerstone days and go, gosh. Should I have stayed? Maybe. You know? There's one time we almost broke off and just did

house churches there. Should I have stayed and demanded that? Maybe. Should I have stayed in India? Should I have stayed in Thailand? You know? There's always doubt. But you make a decision based on, if I had to stand before God today, Almighty God, best I understand, Lord, this is what I think you want me to do.

Carey Nieuwhof: Wow. That's good word. James Quebee asks: "What's your hope for America? Do you still have hope for America, and if so, what is it?" No hope.

Francis Chan: Of course I have hope for America. But I think part of the hope is people not just gravitating to a personality, to either love him or hate him. The hope has to be ... I remember one of my mentors from India took me to a speaking ... He was in the US and drove me to a speaking engagement. And, again, there's horses and chariots and lights. Literally, it's like, wow! And he just started laughing. He goes, "You Americans. No one will show up unless there's a great speaker. And no one will show up unless there's this or this." And he goes, "In India, when we hear that communion is going to take place, we get excited. We get so excited."

Francis Chan: I thought, "Whoa! You guys get excited to take communion? That'll draw a crowd? The body and blood of Christ? You don't need Francis Chan? That's weird!" And yet you just go, "Oh, that's so beautiful! That's so honoring the Lord! So people will go to a prayer meeting just to pray? Like, people show up to pray? That's so weird to me." You know?

Francis Chan: My hope, my desire is that somehow we can get away from everyone wanting to become a personality, or attach themselves to a personality and we attach ourselves to the body and blood of Jesus. I have a hope that people will talk more and more about their time alone with Jesus, going, "Oh, I was with Jesus this morning. I was reading his word. It was so beautiful."

Francis Chan: I have a hope that people will say, "Oh, I was with the Body of Christ, my brothers and sisters, and there's something so powerful when we come together as a body. And then we took of the body and blood of Christ! And he was there! He was with me. And then the way the Holy Spirit moved in us, as we just fell in reverence to God." And it's just all about the Lord. It's all about Jesus, and it's about the Body and less and less about, "Did you hear this guy's sermon? I thought it was stupid. Oh, I thought it was amazing." You know? We have to get back, and get excited.

Carey Nieuwhof: A couple more questions, Francis. Thanks for being just so open, and so transparent. Luke Simmons asked a question, really about generations. "So you've been in ministry 30 years, but when you look at younger leaders, in what areas do you see younger leaders swinging the pendulum too far away from legitimate weaknesses in the church or leadership?" I guess it's probably a pendulum swing question. Is there anything in the younger generation that makes you a bit nervous?

Francis Chan: That's good. No, I see the younger generation seeing faults in leadership of the older generation, and rightly so. Guys are falling left and right. And there are so many that they don't resemble Christ. When they look at them, they're going, "Gosh, I just don't see Jesus acting that way. I don't see Jesus living that way." I get that. That's good.

Francis Chan: But what they're doing is they're kind of throwing out ... We talked about this earlier ... the whole thought of authority and the whole thought of what can I learn from an older person. They'll get in their basement and start their own podcast and go, "You know what? All these guys are off, so I'm going to set the record straight." There's a lot of that going on, and they themselves becoming that authority, almost feeling like they have nothing to learn from that older generation.

Francis Chan: I get it. There's mistakes. I'm openly saying I make mistakes, too. But there are just certain things that you learn from older people, and that the Bible even speaks about, telling the older women to teach the younger women how to love their husbands, and raise their kids well, and work hard. There's something that they can give. And so when we're just a younger group, trying to figure it out on your own, there's something you miss in that multi-generational church.

Francis Chan: And I get it. Here's an example. I grew up in a Chinese church, and so we'd always have translation, and my Chinese isn't very good. So I'd have to listen to the translator, but the translator didn't translate very good. And I'm like, I don't know what's better to listen to. Meanwhile, there's this older generation that only spoke Chinese, and all of us, we're the ones speak English. All our friends do. There's just so much, oh, oh, oh, the way they do things versus the way we do things. You know? They have these meaningless rituals. And, gosh, we just want to get to the point. So it's like, well, it just seems more efficient, you just go do your thing. I'll start something new.

Francis Chan: At my age now, I'm starting to realize, maybe we made some mistakes. Maybe it was okay to sit through the translation. I started dreaming. I go, what if I was in a bilingual church? Maybe I speak in English for 15 minutes and I have another pastor who speaks in Chinese, and he does the same message for 15 minutes? And what if all the English speakers prayed for the Chinese speakers during the time that the guy was doing the translation, or the speaking, and vice versa? And God looks down and says, "Man, that's a lot more work, but they want to be unified. They want to be together, and it takes a lot more effort, but it's such a better picture of the Body of Christ."

Francis Chan: Isn't there a sense in which, if we were a little more patient with each other, and going, "Okay. I don't see things that way, but I want to be one with you." So, yes, it'd be more efficient if we just did a one language service, but then maybe if I just spent the time praying for you, and we had all the generations together. And then, when the English speaker's speaking, why don't you pray for us? And God looks down and sees this unity and this oneness. And parents maybe even

are explaining to their kids during the service a little bit, or afterwards, because it wasn't perfect for the kid. And you have these conversations, but we work harder to be together.

Francis Chan: I guess it's kind of give and take. I just believe that's got to be the future where, let's not just throw out the old people and the old way of doing things because, one last word, I've been reading stuff about the ancient church, like the early, early church. Some of the rituals that probably had become meaningless for a lot of people, and I used to look at, what's the point in that? That just seems like meaningless repetition, and I'm starting to read why they did those things. I'm going, "Whoa! That would be awesome. That's actually really wise. Gosh, some of this stuff I came up with sounds really stupid compared to that."

Carey Nieuwhof: Can you give me an example of an ancient tradition that is capturing your attention?

Francis Chan: Okay. Okay. One of the things, like with the offerings. I'm reading a lot of things they do in preparation for the Eucharist, of actually taking the body and the blood. It wasn't just a haphazard thing. It wasn't like, "Hey! There's bread and juice in the back. Grab it." I'm trying to think of little things like, even the offerings and how they would lay the offerings at the ... We see it in Scripture of

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, yeah!

Francis Chan: ... the apostles creed. But there was this thing that the early church did where they would put it on this table, and you would come, having resolved, thought through, here's what I want to bring to the widows, to the orphans, and eventually, they would bring all those gifts onto the table where the body and blood were, because they were saying, "That's Christ. And Christ and I are one, and Christ is sacrificial. That's what we're celebrating. And here's my sacrifices, because we're one body right now. We have the mind of Christ. We're sacrificial. We bring, just like Christ gave everything, that's why I give this, is Christ gave everything to me. And so that's why my offering is there on the table where his body and blood are. It's because we are, by nature, by who Christ made us because of the cross, we give to one another. We sacrifice."

Francis Chan: And I'm thinking, whoa! You know, there was on and on and on as I'm reading about it, going, that is so beautiful. And yet, what did I do at my church? I thought, well, if we pass the plate, that feels like you're guilting people into it. And then it takes a lot of time. And then we've got to figure out what to do as we're passing the plate. I don't want to solo every week, and so let's just put offering baskets in the back, and you can throw it in if you want to. This way, no one's pressured. It doesn't take any time from the service.

Francis Chan: I'm just so casually, efficiently doing something, and they are putting so much effort and time into this to make it a meaningful act of worship. In the olden days, I would have said, "Dude, that'll take forever." And I'm going no, it's

actually brilliant. What if everyone came with an offering, and really thought about that in light of the offering of Christ? What an amazing act of worship, right? That's one. I'm learning a hundred of these things. I'm going, "Oh, I want to worship like that!"

Carey Nieuwhof: Francis, couple more quick questions. This one's kind of funny. She didn't mean it to be funny, Melanie McLaughlin, but in light of our whole conversation, and I want you to hear this. This is not like, "Hey, what you said last week, or what you said, but looking back on 30 years of teaching, three decades, are there any of your teachings that were very, yeah, I meant to say this teachings that you think, 'Man, I'd really like to change that?'"

Carey Nieuwhof: It's an interesting thing to say, because I look back on 25 years of preaching myself. I'm like, that's a really good question. Is there anything that you're like, yeah, I'm not sure I buy that anymore?

Francis Chan: Yes. Absolutely. Absolutely. Let me just preface it with, when I was preaching every week at Cornerstone, there were many Sundays where the first thing I would do was apologize for something I said the week before. And what was cool about it, and I think this is an important point, what was cool about it was I remember distinctly a couple of times where after I apologized, the whole congregation applauded.

Francis Chan: That says something. That says a couple things. One, it's like, "Francis, we love you. We know you're going to make mistakes, and we love that you see when you make mistakes, and I'm going to applaud you for that. Thank you for owning up to it. Yeah, you screwed up. Yeah, that was stupid." I mean, there were a couple of really stupid ones. And so-

Carey Nieuwhof: Do you remember one that just, because people are going to wonder.

Francis Chan: One, I did this illustration where I had a BB gun, and I asked, "How many people think I can shoot this little balloon," that was, I don't know, on the other side of the stage, so it was pretty far. Most people raised their hands, almost everyone. And then I go, "Well, how many people believe to the point where you would hold it in your hand?" And there were still a few people. Then I'm like, "Who would stick it between their teeth?" And this one kid did. And so I had him go up there, and I was just going to scare him. But once I had it in the sights, I just pulled the trigger, because I thought, "I'm committed to this."

Francis Chan: And I hit the balloon. My heart's pounding, but my point was: Who was the true believer in the room? Everyone who raised their hand, or the guy that stuck it between his teeth? But meanwhile, I've got attorneys in the room going, "You could have lost the whole ... Do you know?" I had so many people ... I know.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, Francis, that's unbelievable. That's-

Francis Chan: But don't anyone do it, because, yeah, you could take an eye out! I mean

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, to repeat that over five services, too, that would be quite the feat.

Francis Chan: I only did it at the Saturday night service. But anyway.

Carey Nieuwhof: That is possibly the best preaching story I've ever heard. You win.

Francis Chan: It's a great illustration, though!

Carey Nieuwhof: It's a fantastic illustration!

Francis Chan: Everyone says they believe in Jesus. Who's going to stick this thing between their teeth? It's like, oh.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, Francis.

Francis Chan: So understand there's those. But I would say the things I wish I could take back, I used to ridicule Charismatics. I was absolutely sure, as a staunch Cessationist that they were ... And it's not so much even the words, but my attitude. I think that's why I wish I could take back ... I could see pride. Like, oh my gosh, I just thought I knew it all. I thought these guys were ignorant, and I've had to apologize to dear, dear brothers of mine that I, one, I think theologically I was wrong. But whether or not I was wrong, too, and more importantly, is my attitude was wrong.

Francis Chan: I think about a sermon, not even a sermon, a Q&A that I did not too long ago at Facebook. I got a bunch of grief over that. I look back, and I go, they're absolutely right. I was so arrogant. I could see myself. I don't like to look at my old messages. But, my gosh, why was everyone so mad? Then I look at it, and I'm like, oh. That's why they're so mad. I know exactly what I'm thinking right then. Here's a group of Facebook employees, and I remember in my mind thinking, "Okay. These guys are the move fast, break things, rebellious." And then we tell them, "I'm rebellious, too. Oh, yeah, at the old church, this is how we did things, and I've got a new way." I could just see I exaggerated, said things that I didn't really mean. I got caught up. I wasn't thinking about God. I was thinking about these people and how to please them, and how to communicate.

Francis Chan: You know, sometimes as a communicator, you try to get a point across and suddenly all you're thinking about is how do I get this point across? You're not thinking what is absolutely true, and you're not thinking, "How does God want me to say it?" You get absorbed with this, and then pretty soon you're exaggerating, which is lying. And I look at that talk, and I'm going, "That wasn't entirely true."

Carey Nieuwhof: That's really honest, really, really honest. You know, I think in this whole interview, Francis, the whole hour, it's been so refreshing. I think anyone who listened to it and isn't willing to look in the mirror missed the point. We've got to take ourselves a little less seriously. We've got to be able to say, "You know what? That was a mistake. I need to change that." I found this really refreshing.

Carey Nieuwhof: So, totally out of left field, the last question. Sarah Inman has: "What's a process of book writing for you?"

Francis Chan: It's been different every time. I honestly don't know how many I've written. It's not that many, either. Just six or seven, but I don't know if it's six or seven or eight. But each time, it's so radically different. Honestly, I don't even plan on writing. After I wrote *You and Me Forever*, I said that is the last book I'm going to write. And then I wrote *Letters to the Church*. Okay, that's the last book I'm writing.

Francis Chan: Because I don't feel like this calling, or that it's my role. It's just every once in a while I feel like this strong impression, and whether it's of the Lord or not, I believe it is, where I just think, "This needs to be written." And so I just go for it. It's different every time. This last time was the hardest. A lot of time alone, a lot of time seeking the Lord. But it was hardest because this was the first time I had other people read it and give me their opinions. And oh my gosh, the different ... You start realizing where one is going this and that. And other people saying, "You should write it this way." And then I'm second guessing myself, because I tend to be that type of person that I always think, "Oh, this guy's smarter. This guy's smarter. This guy's smarter." Then it's not me anymore.

Francis Chan: But the coolest thing about this last one is who actually really saved me was my 18 year old daughter who is brilliant. It's not false humility. She's just more intelligent than I am, and I feel wiser than me in some ways. She looked at the manuscript and sat down with me and was like, "Dad, do you really mean this? Because I know you, and I don't think you really mean that. That sounds like you were just trying to appease these people." I'm like, "Yeah, you're right." "Dad, look how you wrote this. Did someone mess with it? Because that doesn't seem like how you would say it." I'm like, "Yeah, someone messed with it, and I just let it go."

Francis Chan: She just went through the entire manuscript, and I'm like, "Will you just sit down with me for a week? Can we finish this thing up together?" It was just awesome.

Carey Nieuwhof: That's a gift! Man.

Francis Chan: My own daughter? Who would think, when this kid's born, oh, yeah, 18 years from now, she's going to be able to help me finish writing this book that I'm going to be so frustrated with? But it becomes this amazing bonding, just it's not even a dream come true, because I never dreamt it. It's beyond what I could

have dreamt. So to say, how do I do it? I don't know how I write. Every time, it's so, so different. But it comes from a lot of time with the Lord and lessons he's taught me through time, and lessons I've already taught other people. So then, just putting all that in print takes a different form each time.

Carey Nieuwhof: Sarah also wants to know what your go-to karaoke song is?

Francis Chan: Go-to karaoke? I think the last time I karaoked must have been 20 years ago. You know, I did this video for my wife, probably 15 years ago. Maybe longer. Maybe 20 years ago. It was back when you had to piece things together and this whole music video for her, I think, 30th birthday. It was Shania Twain, You're Still the One. (singing) You know?

Carey Nieuwhof: That's awesome!

Francis Chan: That would probably be it. I don't do karaoke that often.

Carey Nieuwhof: Yeah, I don't do karaoke either. I don't have a go-to song. Francis, this has been awesome. Anything else you want to say before we wrap up?

Francis Chan: Yeah. I-

Carey Nieuwhof: We covered a lot.

Francis Chan: We've hit so much. I just want people to know, look. One, I am so sorry. I know I've said things that have hurt people unintentionally. Other times, I've said things that have hurt people intentionally, kind of like what Paul says in 2 Corinthians about I did want to cause some sorrow that led to repentance and praise God for that. But I am sorry for all the human mistakes and the arrogance and miscommunication. I've made a lot of mistakes over these 30-something years in ministry, and I have hurt people. I am really sorry. And I'm sorry to God, because he wants his Body to be one, and it kills me to think that I'm part of the problem. Man! And I know I am. And pray for me. Give me wisdom. I don't want to do that. I want this church to be one.

Francis Chan: And there will be times when I add to the problem. Please, show a little grace. I'm trying to do that with others. We never know the line. And so pray, pray that I become more humble. That all of Francis would die, be crucified with Christ. It's no longer him that lives, but it's Christ that lives in me. Let's pray that for one another, and just, yeah, humility, humility, humility. I need more of it.

Carey Nieuwhof: Francis, I just want to thank you. You've taught me a lot. Every time I read you, every time I hear you speak, I feel more convicted. I also feel more convicted to love and to serve, and you challenge me. I know I'm someone who's actually benefited from your ministry immensely, personally, so thank you for your humility. Thank you for letting us see the real you. And thanks for opening your heart. It was really an incredible hour and some together.

Carey Nieuwhof: I know you kind of hide on the internet, but if somebody wanted to connect with your work, where would they be able to find you? Where is the best place?

Francis Chan: Best place would be at CrazyLove.org. There's a team of people that just grabs my sermons and puts them on there and gives little updates. Again, I just try not to make everything public. But, yeah. That would probably be the best spot, at least to hear from me.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, I am extremely excited to see what's next for you. Thanks for continuing to pour into the Church, with a capital C, and so many people's lives. Francis, I'm grateful for you.

Francis Chan: Yeah. Thanks, Carey.

Carey Nieuwhof: I told you it wasn't boring! Francis, thank you. Thank you so much for your openness and transparency. Guys, everything we talked about, including the transcript, is available at [CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode313](http://CareyNieuwhof.com/Episode313), or you can just head to [LeadLikeNeverBefore.com](http://LeadLikeNeverBefore.com). Search Francis' name, and my name, and you'll find it all there: show notes, transcripts, the whole deal. We love being able to bring those to you.

Carey Nieuwhof: This episode's also available on YouTube, so we do have a small and fledgling presence on YouTube for some of these episodes. If you prefer to watch, or you want to share it that way, please do so. And if this episode has meant something to you, would you share it on social? We are trying to create space for the good people on the internet to hang out, and my guess is you're one of them, and that you've got some good people you'd like to share this with. So we want that tribe to grow this your. Thank you so much for sharing.

Carey Nieuwhof: We have some free stuff for you to start off 2020, as well: a productivity guide from BELAY. Just text Carey to 31996. That's C-A-R-E-Y to 31996. Make sure you also check out [MinistryGrid.com/Carey](http://MinistryGrid.com/Carey). I did some exclusive courses for them, shorter courses. You can check it out. It's absolutely free. And if you complete the courses, they're going to send you a copy of my latest book, *Didn't See It Coming*, as a gift, no strings attached. So head on over to [MinistryGrid.com/Carey](http://MinistryGrid.com/Carey). Kind of a fun way to start off 2020.

Carey Nieuwhof: We are back next week with a fresh episode. Louie Giglio is here. He just wrapped up the biggest Passion event ever. And we have another remarkably honest, disarming conversation about how to take the relentless pressure off yourself as a leader. I think you're going to love it. Here's an excerpt.

Louie Giglio: And to be able to stand in that moment, things happen that are intangible. And, yes, I can listen to Christine Caine a lot of places, and I can hear John Piper speak, or I can hear this particular worship song sung, but I've never heard it sung with 70,000 people my age before. It's not a goosebump moment. It's a goosebump conference. And so it is. It's the transcendence of, if you gather in

my name, I'll be there in your midst, but something about 60,000 of you gathering in my name, it's powerful and palpable, and I do believe it's the X-factor, and it's the intangible. When you say to somebody, "Tell me about Passion 2020," I go, "No. Never mind." Because there really isn't a way in a sentence, standing in a restaurant to convey what we experienced in that place together.

Carey Nieuwhof: There's also an incredible insight in that podcast about how people are processing live events. It's great. Man, I'm so excited about this lineup! If you're new to the podcast, somebody shared this with you, you can subscribe for free. Spotify, Apple podcasts, Stitcher, what is there? Tunein, Overcast, wherever you happen to listen. Thank you so much for listening. We do this about six times a month, and we've got six episodes this month to kick off 2020. Please do share, and let us know how this podcast is impacting your leadership.

Carey Nieuwhof: I also have a free almost daily newsletter that I send out to over 55,000 leaders that you can get by simply going to [CareyNieuwhof.com](http://CareyNieuwhof.com). You can subscribe. Just give us your email, your name, and we're happy to send that to you. A lot of people, we hear every day, how people find that helpful. And if you are looking for fresh leadership content for a brand new year, I hope that helps you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Well, guys, thanks so much for listening. I hope our time together today helped you lead like never before.

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