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Announcer: The Art of Leadership Network

Carey Nieuwhof: Welcome to the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast. It's Carey here and I hope our time together today helps you thrive in life and leadership. Well, I am passionate about the Next Generation. I'm thrilled to have Grant and Cheyenne Skeldon on the podcast today, tell you more about that in a second. Today's episode is brought to you by TenX10. TenX10 is here to give you the tools you need to connect the young people in your circle to a church. You can visit tenx10.org today to access free resources to help reorient your youth ministry. And today's episode is brought to you by Subsplash. Join over 16 thousand churches partnering with Subsplash to make disciples in the hybrid reality of church today at subsplash.com/carey. Well, I really appreciate Grant and Cheyenne Skeldon.

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I've gotten to know them over the last couple of years and we are going to talk about what they think is wrong with the church, sort of the next-gen. They're like, hyper-connected in the younger Millennial and Gen Z space. So what's wrong with the church? Why there's no Next Generation crisis but a discipleship crisis. That's coming up, a lot on the podcast, watch for a theme we're tackling it next year as well, close-up friends and close friends, and predictions about the future Church, very excited for this conversation. So Grant is the next-gen director at Think he is the director of culture at Way Church. And the author of *The Passion Generation*, a book published a few years ago.

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He finds, unites, and accelerates diverse dynamic young leaders to reach the most lost generation our nation has ever seen and Cheyenne serves as partner success manager at Gloo, one of our partners, where she closely works with the Barna group in the organization's missions to serve church leaders with timely insights and resources. In addition, she partners with her husband Grant leading the NextGen initiatives at Think where they convene high-capacity NextGen leaders and create space for connection and spiritual health.

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She's also the director of culture at Way Church in Nashville, Tennessee, where she exercises her shepherd's heart and helps cultivate a community culture that's committed to doing life Jesus' way.

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Well, leaders, speaking of connect with TenX10. They are a collaboration of organizations working to support leaders as they disciple the next generation. With more than one million young people leaving the church each year, TenX10 has strategically created and curated resources to help you bring awareness to the issue. But also they're giving you practical resources to help reconnect young people into a church community. And they provide you with the tools you need to support the leaders who serve the next gen. You can go to TenX10.org today to access the free resources and help spark growth to your youth ministry.

And then we're also living in a really complex time of the last few years many church leaders, and certainly pastors, have experienced huge disruptions to what they considered business as usual, but did you know that many churches are actually growing right now? And what did today's thriving churches have in common, they focus on discipleship and a hybrid digital reality. So growing churches are actually living out the Great Commission and they're using technology to do that. So for 18 years Subsplash has been building the leading digital platform for churches. They have mobile apps messaging, website streaming, groups, giving, and whole lot more they put the best of today's technology into the hands of churches for the sake of discipleship. So if you want your church to access this join 16,000 other church leaders that partner with sub Splash to make disciples in a hybrid reality. Get started today at subsplash.com/carey.

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And now my conversation with Grant and Cheyenne Skeldon.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: It's good to have you both on the podcast.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: Carey, so good to be with you. Thanks for having us.

GRANT SKELDON: Thanks, Carey.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Good to hang out. Like we're always together in real life and now we get to actually do this on the podcast which is good. So I would love to know, you two are married, but before that, you both got really interested in the specific challenges and opportunities that the Next Generation faces in leadership. So maybe trace out each of your paths on how you got to this place where you're really passionate about the next gen.

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I mean, I really did get passion about next gen because specifically next gen leaders because I just was a next-gen leader. It was around that time, it was probably about 23 or 24. I got my first opportunity to speak at a conference and it really was a last - second two -day invite there was a millennial panel and this was the prime of you know, participation trophies was in the conversation, skinny jeans were in the conversations, and I think they realized this huge conference that Tim Keller was kind of like headlining in Dallas and they basically realized hey, we have a millennial panel, but we don't actually have a millennial on the panel.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: So a bunch of boomers and Gen Xers talking about Millennials.

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That's always fun.

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GRANT SKELDON: Yeah, and I always want to give grace. There was definitely people and because this happens all the time. There's definitely people that care about the next generation and impact the next generation But you gotta you gotta have someone in the next generation and it still happens a lot today I mean, I I speak at a lot of different churches and there's always some younger crowd or a lot of conferences and there's a younger crowd that comes up afterwards and they sit together and afterwards like you know, what? Yeah at first I was a little skeptical but you actually represented us pretty well, but I will say they always say this are like we've been telling them all the same things.

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You said you just say it better and they actually try to listen to what you're saying.

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And so I always tell people like you got to get them in the conversation. It just does impact it but long story short is I got in, two days before they add me to the conversation I really honestly was going to go in kind of with a heavy hand because I felt like man you guys have 40 speakers. It's so diverse and I just think what I would feel for. The first time to going forward is we always think about diversity and representation on conferences and at events, but it's usually gender and race we often can go without ever having a 20-something or 30-something or even maybe a teenager, true Gen Z like high school kids sharing just a bit to get a little bit their perspective.

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And so I feel like I need

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Present and again, if you remember the millennial days, I really felt like it was pretty - it was / that participation trophy think skinny jeans. It was a lot more critical. I think it's got lightened up with Gen Z. But I had this heart of like I'm gonna go in there and say, you know, what participation trophies you guys came up with them.

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We were kids, you could've given us giving us a Capri Sun and I would have we would have known there were trophies instead.

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We were just children and you guys gave it to us and then I wish we would have stopped you guys from giving it to us if we knew you're going to hold it over her head. And all these things that technically were true but it just was not the right posture. Not the right heart. Honestly Carey, like the most I've ever felt like a pit in my stomach like physical expression of guilt or just don't do that.

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So the day before I'm praying, I just felt like God saying, don't try to convict them into caring for the next generation, like inspire them to excite them, thank them, talk about the positive. And so I just talked a lot about the people that impacted me and others and basically this common denominator I found in that most impactful young people I knew were usually invested in older leaders had like they had these people behind them. And I mainly said we don't have a next-gen problem. I think we really have a discipleship problem. And if we could fix that, I think we'll fix whatever is hurting whatever next generation.

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That's a long way to say from there I started getting asked to speak at all these things and I figured out, man It's great to travel and do all this but it is lonely and it is hard and there's a pressure and I heard that phrase for the first time leadership is lonely, which I kind of now I don't like normalizing that phrase personally. I want to say leadership can be lonely, but you have to refuse to do leadership alone. You have to refuse to do life alone. You have to fight for Community because after college you never really drift towards community. There's a lot of elements from like high

school camp or college fraternities or you're living on in dorms, but after college like there's not a lot of things that you just drift into community regularly. There's always something going on.

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Even how many people don't know their neighbors and so it can be very lonely, but you have to fight for the community and I just wanted it for myself and by the grace of God, there was a man named Eric Swanson with the time leadership Network who said kind of sounds he's got a high voice.

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Grant, why don't you want you to do a retreat and get your friends together and I'm like hi and I guess I just never done a retreat and he said just do it. I'll get you a location. I'll cook the food. If you could just get 12 guys together for free just get them there as long as they get their everything else will be free. And that was the beginning of kind of a very Soul giving like life-giving bond between these guys and that was 67 years ago was so cool carries like Noah Heron was one of the guys there was 12 guys. There I'd say eight of those guys are some of my closest friends to this day and Noah was a photographer at that point three weeks ago. He just planted a church 500 plus people they're here in Nashville 38 people give their life to Christ the first day and I'm know that we are closed because and we are healthier now because we all started getting together at a young age and kept fighting for that relationship.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Cheyanne, how about you?

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah, my journey looked a little different, so I grew up in a really small town in northeast Texas, about an hour and a half outside of Dallas, a three stop light kind of place.

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And so I grew up in church, really faithful, but relatively, you know, kind of smaller congregation than especially compared to the big city of Dallas, right down I -30. And so in my own journey, I love that you used the word inspired, like older leaders feeling inspired and younger leaders inspiring versus trying to convict. First, that's just not our job. It's the job of the Holy Spirit. And so I think that kind of helps keep us in the right place. But I felt really inspired by the people in my life.

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Who are calling out leadership traits in me at a very early age things that I wasn't even fully and of seeing in myself or recognizing, knowing that I have a bit of a different wiring. I have a very Shepherd tender heart, can be can be loud and outspoken, but can also be very soft-spoken at times too. And I just had a number of people especially in high school and then into college who kind of just said I see something in you.

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I want to help cultivate that, they inspired a lot of that in me wanting to then do that for others because I had felt like somebody had done it for me.

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And so when Grant and I met a few years later in college, we're sorry right outside of college.

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It was really interesting to see how God had put some things in his heart the things he was starting to kind of bring to light in my own and then now being married and doing Ministry together has been really interesting to see how those two things that at one point felt a little bit conflicting are very complementary now and so Grant is just such a visionary at how do I create a structure for a group for connection to happen? What does that look like from almost even like a systems level, you just have such an eye for that and for me, I'm very one-on-one.

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I'm very like, how is your heart what's going on with you? What's let's Deep dive into kind of your story. And so it's been really fun to get to do but at this work together and the nature of Retreats and Gatherings is you know, you're kind of out a way ideal you're in a mountain somewhere and you don't have good cell reception.

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And so you're kind of unplugged from whatever the kind of normal day-to-day life is, and you're just a little bit more open than you would maybe be. And we've just seen God do a lot in that space that we could never credit to either one of us, but I think he's in his kindness and goodness just chosen to partner with us and do things through us that we could never take the credit for.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Well, I want to put a pin in marriage and ministry. So hopefully we can come back to that later on in the conversation. There's a lot of people who are listening who are married and in ministry and trying to figure that out. So we'll come back to it. But I want both of you to talk about the specific challenges and opportunities you're seeing that next-gen leaders, and let's just broadly say under 40, and that gets into another pet peeve of mine that, you know when you're 40 when I was 40 you kind of seen as a midlife leader. Now, you're still seen as young that's a whole problem that we can get into later on. But when you're looking at under 40 leaders, what are the challenges? What are the opportunities? What are the struggles? What are the pain points that you are seeing in this new generation of leaders?

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GRANT SKELDON: Such a big question. I mean, I'm always gonna say that one of the biggest challenges is the lack of discipleship. It's just not a normal thing in our culture in the church today to meet Christians who have someone there discipling like I think if you asked 100 Christians. Hey, who is your disciple? Even the ask that might be they might even kind of laugh at the question. Like we don't even ask people that you could actually even not only Christians just in leadership. I think you could you could get a job and go through it whole interview or series of interviews and no one ever asked you to get a job at a church whose your disciple it's it.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: What do you mean by that, who's your disciple, because discipleship is a big thing, right? So what do you mean by who's your disciple?

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GRANT SKELDON: Just like, do you have someone. I define discipleship, which I don't think I've got the all the answers on it, but I think we should all have a little clarity on, hey, what does it look like for us, and for me, discipleship looks like the question, is somewhat frequently following you because you're spiritually a couple steps ahead and to go a little longer is like if someone frequently following you and you're helping them become more like Jesus. I use the language of frequently following because I think we often confuse what I would call mentorship with discipleship, like to meet with someone, which is still very powerful. I've had my life changed by meeting with people who have helped me see how to have a healthier marriage, how to be a better leader, how to grow my intimacy with God. But there's

something more robust about getting to shadow someone. Some of the best leaders of our time definitely shadowed other individuals that were great leaders at their time. And it left them with an idea of like, hey, what would this person do when they were in this situation?

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And they know because they actually saw them in those situations. I think it's what Jesus did with the disciples where he leaves and the disciples are like literally asking the question, not just what would Jesus do, what did Jesus do?

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To me my favorite like sign that they actually didn't just meet with Jesus once a week for three years, but they followed him regularly, frequently, is that they were terrible at prayer like the whole time they were with Jesus. They literally, he's like yo, you guys tried to cast these demons out and she didn't know how to do it because you didn't have prayer even in the last days like they're falling asleep while he's praying like I I think it's also encouraging for any of us that ever pour in two young people and don'ts maybe see the fruit right there immediately is even Jesus experienced that and the sense that he never really got to see them as prayer warriors. But if you read, let's say you became a new Christian and you just went straight to Acts and then beyond, they're prayer warriors, like they get beaten and told not to preach the gospel and they don't pray for a hedge of protection. They pray for more boldness.

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So there's this prayerfulness about them that they never Jesus never really saw even on his last days even in suffering but I like to think again, maybe some conjecture but I like to think they would say, hey we don't have Jesus anymore and but we're in a lot of situations that he was in right now. What did he do? Like, oh he we saw him early in the morning.

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If he had to go find him because he was praying we saw before the crossing before getting turned over like he prayed and so they they responded they started with they went to the source of prayer and relationship with God.

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And so I think that to me is to stop sugar frequently following someone and you're now becoming more like Christ.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: So that's interesting, you know, normally when you talk about next generation and we've had that conversation dozens and dozens of times on this podcast, you go to anxiety, depression, purposelessness, you know, the list goes on and on and on, social media. You're almost jumping to the solution side saying the thing that people don't know is, you know, there's a discipleship crisis, not a next-gen crisis. Okay, I want to come back to that. What other things do you see your generation, slightly older, slightly younger, struggling with? Cheyenne, what do you see?

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah, I think, and this is something else that I think when we have the next -gen conversation, often comes up and we give credence to. So we all know that it's kind of one of the ingredients stirring around in the melting pot, if you will. But I think the fact that our generation grew up with technology and all of a sudden everyone could have a spotlight.

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It's, you know, and it's definitely kind of grown beyond that. But before then, you know, it would have been like, oh I published a book and it was really successful, or I started a church and it really began to grow, and you almost kind of, earn is the wrong word, but the platform the spotlight almost grew with you, I would imagine I'm sure there are exceptions to that. However for our generation you could become well-known and thrust into the spotlight virtually overnight within a matter of hours.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Without really having done or accomplished anything grown anything built anything talk about that a little bit more. What's at stake with that?

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: I think if the light gets shown on our hearts before there's been enough cooking going on, it's not been in the oven long enough, it can really hurt the recipe. I think it could really do a lot of damage putting something in the spotlight before the internal strength and character and integrity is ready to withstand that and ready to kind of have a really bright light shone on it. I think unfortunately that's been so much of a story that we've also grown up seeing in the you know, and some of the leadership fallout is just broken all of our hearts.

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I wonder if sometimes, because of the digital space, which I'm a huge fan of, I worked at a tech company in fact, I wonder if that has played a role in our platform has grown before our characters had a chance to catch up. And when those two things become increasingly distant from one another, the risk very much increases with it.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: I hear you and, you know, I was just reading, as I'm sure you were just recently, that more kids today want to be influencers than astronauts, right?

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: That's right.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: And the whole idea of being a YouTuber or an influencer on TikTok, etc. What do you, what's the challenge with that? Because I agree. Like if your platform outpaces your character, the implosion is not a question of whether it's going to happen. It's when it's going to happen.

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah, I, on the drive down here to the office, the studio, was thinking about this a bit and I was really tempted I didn't because I was driving there was really tempted to pull out my phone and check what my screen time was and I'm not somebody who I am an introvert a bit introspective as well. And so I'm not a social media Guru. I'm probably have a little bit of a real like push back against it just internally for myself not because I believe it's a bad thing. It's just for my wiring. It doesn't fully fit. But even then I was like, I can't imagine how much time I actually spent on my phone on these digital platforms somewhere within the realm of these spotlight.

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But how much time am I spending, you know having conversations with Jesus or wiser older mentors who have you know, experienced knowledge and wisdom or I'm investing the same level if not more time and how I'm developing my character and conversations I'm having with Jesus about what he's seeing and giving space to the Holy Spirit to do some of that convicting work and it's a real challenge because I think the world is so good at being up close and her face and we can very easily turn into a cycle of reacting versus saying like, oh God gave me a sense of agency in a

sense of free will I wonder what that could look like for me to begin to be intentional about even just where I'm spending my hours where I'm spending my time.

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The margin that I'm incorporating in my life for some of those interruptions to happen.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Any other issues that you're hearing about in the DMs or in the texts from friends or seeing as you sort of travel the country or build into people? What are some of the other pain points that you're encountering?

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GRANT SKELDON: Some of the language I've kind of come up with and why I kind of go to discipleship is because it's like so many of the things have failed the next-gen that it's kind of like we get to come back to offer something that I think they're really looking for. But the language I've used is they've often been coddled by their parents and then they end up getting criticized by their bosses. They've been crippled by their colleges. Many of them don't get jobs remotely close to what they went to school for. And so coddled by their parents, criticized by their bosses, crippled by other colleges, and then I would even say then, confused by the culture that they're all these things are making very difficult for a young leader. And so if you have been parents who are well-meaning who are like, hey, you got to go to college because this is what it does and it's like, oh there's I would say a better guarantee of you going into debt than getting a job by going to college. Like that's it's not separating you like it used to and it I would also say that I would encourage parents, we gotta stop treating colleges like experiences. It must be a training ground to launch them and sometimes I think college we've allowed even as young people college to become like it's more about the experience than education and so you just aren't a lot of debt and you're not further in your in your role. And so yeah, I think that those would be four areas of the cultures change the and then lastly I Big 12 is another c word I guess is my big thing Carey, as the last I mean, I talked a lot about discipleship, but I really care these days especially among young leaders is comparison. I think that it is the most subtle, sinister problem in church leadership, and just people in general in the next generation that we kind of treat like a bad habit instead of treating as like no. This is a soul-killing like intimacy stealing. This is this thing is robbing me of security identity intimacy with God and I was ultimately I would say like an authority. I can't walk with an anointing and authority if I'm struggling so much comparison, but our mentality towards it is the same way we

kind of treat biting our nails, in my opinion, like everyone does it, we all kind of have our thing, and I just think that approach is like killing us, that we're treating it like it's just something to be managed instead of crucified and killed.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: I know nobody speaks for their generation, but you do connect with a lot of millennials in Gen Z. Cheyenne, we'll start with you. What would you say is wrong with the church from their perspective or your perspective?

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: It's a great question.

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GRANT SKELDON: I'm glad you asked her.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Because Grant's going to rant. Hang on.

GRANT SKELDON: No, no. I'm like, ask her the hard question.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: I actually like that phrase, Grant's going to rant. I feel like we should have that put a t-shirt or something. Grant's gonna rant.

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You know, it's interesting. I think in an effort to become more broad, the churches become more niche.

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I think in an effort to do all and be all we've actually maybe made it a little bit harder for people to match expectations with their real experience. You know, we've had this conversation a lot being a part of a church plant here in Nashville, and I think a bit of our own Journey has been coming to terms with what our own expectations of what our church should be. What should it be adding to our life. How should we be? Adding back in serving into it. What is the role of church in our life? When we moved to Nashville a little less than three years ago when we were searching for a new church home.

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You know, we almost had to come up with a grid in terms of like okay, what how do we even choose a church home? We both grew up in Dallas and had the privilege of

being able to go to churches. We had really strong relationships with and all of a sudden were thrown into this new space and for us, we had to identify it's like, okay. Well not everything in the journey with Jesus is dependent on our church and it challenged a little bit of maybe some of the expectations I didn't even know I had until we started having conscious, real conversations about it.

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And so I think my encouragement to the churches would just be, you know, what is Jesus asking you to do in your city? Like, what is the part of the body that you've been called to your city? Are you a right-hand? Are you a left ear? Are you a knee? Are you an elbow? And then how do you do that to the best of your ability? How do you steward the people who are showing up on Sundays and throughout the week? Like, how are you equipping them to be discipled and to look more like Jesus and to do life the way that he did it?

GRANT SKELDON: Carey, if I can just pull out something on her too. I wanna know, what would you say, were there any kind of hey, this is these are marks of a church we don't want to join? And then of course we're helping with the church plant. Like what is it that we're so emphasizing because we're surprising a lack of.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah, that's a good question. We tried not to notice or care as much about the Sunday experience. For us it was really important to be a part of a church community that was embedded within the community of the city. Like that was something that was really important for us. It was like what it is the Monday through Saturday expression of this church of this local church. Not just the Sunday that's important. It's not to say one is more than the other it's more of a both and conversation.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: So if I can just I want to continue this, but if I just want to clarify a little bit for leaders particularly church leaders, so what I think I hear you saying and please correct me, nuance me, whatever. It's like there is a lot of homogeneity in churches and other words, we're all trying to be Starbucks. We're all trying to you know have that same feeling and again drop into any City a lot of even Mainline Evangelical churches. Same songs. Same general kind of message same kind of vibe and you're saying no, I want the independent coffee shop that's like all about that neighbourhood and all about that city. Is that kind of what you're saying is that there's a little bit too much generic in church these days and not enough specific, local, relational.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: That's right. Yeah, and I love the analogy of a coffee shop to as when friends come to town and they're asking for a great coffee shop. I'm probably not going to send them to the Starbucks down the road. I'm going to send them to the little hole-in-the-wall places that we know and love because I know the owner and because they have, you know, the special item on the menu that you just happened to try.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: And you're probably not taking them to Applebees, not that there's anything wrong with Applebee's right, but you're not taking an Applebees you're taking to some local independent place where you're like, oh, Grant and I love this, this is our favorite spot.

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah, they're willing to own their own expression and also not say like, I have it all figured out. This is the right expression. Just this is one expression to add to the broader landscape around me.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: And do you see that in your colleagues, your generation, you see that longing for something a little more unique, a little less generic?

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: I do, yeah. I think one thing, especially Gen Z is really keen on is challenging the status quo. They really value, in a beautiful way, authenticity and individuality. And fortunately for us, that is, a lot of what the Bible speaks to as well in addition to community and the way that we were, you know wired to be in relationships with others, but I think there is a really unique opportunity for us to stand at ease that out a little bit and get creative I think will be really easy. I think almost to take ourselves a little too. Seriously sometime not that it doesn't not to say it doesn't matter or that there isn't weight attached to that and and significance but I think also there's there's room for fun in, okay, what what could a local expression of our church in this city be what is what is the city may be missing that we feel like Jesus may be inviting us into, how could play a role in that?

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: That's good. Well, I don't know they were going to get a grant ran or not. That's a New Concept about 2 minutes old. But yeah, what would you say from? Your perspective is quote wrong with the church today Grant.

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GRANT SKELDON: Yeah, I mean again just the discipleship piece missing is definitely something there. I think another one would be, she kind of hinted at it, as we are helping with that way church with no here in Nashville and our technical roles or titles at least there's director of culture. It's basically hey, we're going to we kind of told him we're going to be your best members that aren't on staff. So I feel like that's great is we want to help a lot. We don't want to be on staff, but we do want to help like a lot with especially building a Chur that resonates with what we see missing in the church, maybe and young people are desiring and I feel like probably number one is what we're really focusing on and Nashville is probably the best place to expose the heart of this, too. This community is probably what you're thinking people want the most even, Carey, were doing a conference this year called The Next-Gen Summit. And so I'm talking to all these different churches that are coming and there's definitely a conference in the world today and there's something I keep saying, which is not just like a line I'm using. I do retreats and done private gatherings for seven years and my scorecard is always connection first, content second, like just because in my opinion, the next generation is saturated with content. Like I don't know a lot of people like, I'm looking for more content. They're literally unsubscribing from so much content. We can't even keep up with how many different channels we can get content from. Like all the different ways to watch movies or watch TV.

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It used to be like, I jokingly would say like, it used to be Seinfeld or Friends.

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And now it's so many, not just good shows, amazing shows. We don't have enough time to watch all the content. And so connection though is so much loneliness and so much even depression I think comes from loneliness and just so much desire to.

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The language I use is like not to be in a forced community which sometimes small groups can become where we found ourselves. We're kind of doubting ourselves on this is we don't share this in a public setting but I've also never been interviewed once in my life like this, but I love that I'm doing with you. Yeah, I do not like this not on a podcast not to my knowledge. And so basically one of the things we found is we would be in small groups and I get it's hard socially at large churches where you gotta just put people in groups like very hard to get into. The nitty gritty of how do we connect the all these people in the right groups, but you can use your cell just like on a blind date like within 10 minutes base, especially at night. Hey, this is it.

Not it not no more man. Hey, there's a chance here. Like I could see that and we always are surprised. Sometimes we have the wrong intuition of where that relationship is going to go but by and large you can usually tell and I always say to young people, especially in our staff or we're trying to talk through this is like I never want our small groups to feel like situations where I would be in where we're hanging out with our friends and they were like, oh my gosh, it's Thursday night guys. I got to go to this thing. It's and they're like, what is it is like my community I guess but I don't know. I never see him except for this one time in the weekend. We literally never try to hang out outside of this and they barely know me still but we always just talk about stuff but we don't talk about our lives and which that's again. I guess we all are trying to navigate how to build relationships at a mass scale, but all that to say is I just think community and they're natural when I say it exposes that is It's crazy carries like when we started doing these interest meetings for Way Church I started a second time we did it we asked like hey how many you guys moved here in the last two years and it was legit like 70% of the group I would still say as now we're weak months into from interest meetings to gathering My number one question I'm meeting a new person it's just probably about 30-40 a week right now that are coming to the church is hey, how long have you lived here and it's usually I mean how many times I get two months or less? It's so many new people and so again highlighting Eric's once again for just mentoring me and deciphering me He would always say this line.

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He said people are the most susceptible to the gospel in transition more than instability. And he kind of talked about like just even think about your own testimony. I bet there was some big shift or change within three months of you giving your life to Christ and people are just more open, and well if you invite someone to church and they lived there for 15 years or even seven years or five years and you're like, hey, you should come to this or small group or this thing where churches doing that like, we already got our rhythms are things this what we do Tuesday nights as we do Thursday nights, but if they're new to the city, there are six months in, especially two months in, it's like we found so many people how many people have invited to play spikeball for the kingdom like it's so easy people.

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They give me their number immediately like, when, they want to hang out, they're looking for their community and their rhythms.

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And so I just think for right now in a saturated content World giving connection deep connection sincere connection the people who I do life with and I partner with and I build things with who can call me. They don't have to say hey. Can I set up a meeting? They just call our people have had bonding late-night experiences with where we hang out we've done things. It's like we I'm always thinking, how can I create core memories among these people? Because if I've had core memories with them then when things get hard or when I see you're messing up. I'm just going to call. I know we had a connection. I know that we're we have a relationship, but if not when things go bad and we see this a lot is like no no one knows you and which only makes it easier for you to fall in into temptation.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Yeah, you know shout out to Kevin Queen from a neighbouring church, but I was with Kevin and his team in March. I was just in Nashville and you know, he said something that I never thought of and all these years in Ministry is you know, it's usually new to Cross Point or new two-way church, right? Well and the church plant everybody's new but you know with an existing church, that's a really good strategy, but they started a new to Nashville gathering.

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He said, because there's so many people in, and I'm like, well, of course, because you don't know anybody, you don't know where it's going. I want to talk about community and younger leaders. So I have a small group I'm really excited about. All people at very similar stages. And like last night, we had dinner at our place. We've expanded our group from two hours to three hours. And I got to be the time cop. It's like, all right, some people have to get home. We got to keep going. And we were all laughing last night that we've all been part of groups or communities where it's like, all right, look at question three. Who would like to read question three? Right?

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And then you're like, can we do this? Can we do this in an hour?

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Like we don't need, and we're like, we would do six hours if we had time. And what I mean, it's just, it's an amazing group. I'm so grateful.

[00:38:49.300]

I'm sensing your generation doesn't have time for, would someone read question 3. Can we get a different translation? I mean, I'm just talking about the awkwardness

of small groups. Like whenever we get together you guys cut to the chase fast. Is that just you or do you think that's a hunger that you're seeing in the people around you as well?

[00:39:10.500]

GRANT SKELDON: I think it's probably multi-generational. I think people like being asked good questions for sure. I would love for you to share on just even this guy mean this so resonates with us right now. I want to know are you guys meeting six to nine?

[00:39:29.900]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: We're meeting 4-7, it's really complicated one couple comes in an hour and a half. We're all super busy. We're all on airplanes like one of the couple's missed it last night. They were in Italy.

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Next time we have Canadian Thanksgiving and then you know once a medical doctor who is on a fellowship in Boston, but it went to virtual so he could make it so like literally pulling all of us together as been almost impossible and we almost gave up then we came up with four to seven and we knew two hours but in when we met last year, it was like 5 hours and we're like, okay. This is not sustainable. Like we all have lives and everything but there's such a hunger for authentic community it's just for couples and you know, it's been so life-giving. And so yeah, it's three hours We Gather we check in for an hour. We have a quick dinner. We were doing they're all good cook. So we were doing gourmet stuff. It's like, all right. Stop trying to wow people. We literally ordered pizza. We brought in boxes of pizza and that's what we served last night and we had outside and then we had about an hour discussion around what lie is at the center of your life. Like what lie do you believe that isn't true, and stuff popped like, it was great.

GRANT SKELDON: The fact that you guys started like that too, I just want to say this, and I'll try and share what we're doing. And it sounds like God might be doing something for leaders like this is, you know, there's a quote for connection in that core memory thing that I use a lot, such a random quote for it, but you know, Abraham Lincoln has this quote where, there's somewhere he says something like, if I had six hours to cut down a tree, I would use four of those hours sharpening my ax.

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And when I think about, hey, if I get these people for six hours, if you will, or for two hours, but I'm gonna use 60 % of that time to build a bond and connection so I can use the last couple percentage so they can actually have meaningful conversation that's actually gonna matter.

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And the fact that you guys, it's two hours in before you guys even start talking about things but I bet that last hour is like it's so easy. It's so real it's memorable, so powerful.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Oh it's so intense. And you know, I'm one of the group leaders, my wife and I lead it, Toni and I lead it and you know, I'm like, alright, let's do a check in and I'll go first like there's no veneer. There's no fake church face here. I had a really crappy day and I was upset about this and lacking margin. I know wrote a book on it, but it just and I went into a lot more detail than that. That but like I'm like, please don't bring your game face. Please bring your real face.

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And like, oh the I think we're, I'm hungry for that.

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How does that go with the Next Generation?

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: It's really good. I it's interesting for us because we have what I would call close friends and we also have close up friends. And so because of just how much we get to do nationwide with friends across the nation. We have a small group also for couples. So maybe that's the magic number here. I don't know. We have a small group of us.

GRANT SKELDON: These guys. I'm a big like, let's get some more people they would like they like literally and we can't do more than 8.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Yeah, no more than eight. I'm with Cheyanne.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: We had an intense discussion and debate about this.

GRANT SKELDON: I'm like can we do 10, like no 8, just once it passes 8, it's anxiety. I'm like how? It's two more people.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Well it depends.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: The math math's.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: You end up, you know, I read this once, but...

GRANT SKELDON: We're arguing over two people.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Okay, you know why I think it matters? If you have more than eight people at a table you end up with two conversations. You ever think about that? You end up with two conversations because one end can't really hear the other and then you just end up with two different groups. That's true in leadership for an elder board I never had more than five elders when I was leading Connexus because then you end up with factions and if you have five really sharp people you're okay. So I find generally four couples is the max where you can have one conversation I don't know.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah, and then if you have a couple that can't make it like three is still, three couples is still a good solid number. So thank you Carey.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: You're welcome. You're welcome. So this podcast over Cheyenne's right. Anyway we'll just say that's my preference.

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I'm just saying that's my preference.

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Yeah, but then if you want to do a party or spike ball or that's different. Yeah lots then invite some people and you know, it's good if you want intimacy, smaller, too small, it's weird, right? There's something about six to eight that's pretty cool.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah. Yeah, so we've got a group of eight of us who every year we get together. We see each other all throughout the year fortunately because even though we all live in different states and different parts of the country were involved in a lot of similar things.

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We get together every new year. We actually stole this idea from Andy Crouch. So shout-out to our friend, but we get together every new year and we aim to spend three, if we can manage it, four full days altogether and there's a little bit of kind of an agenda but it's really just time in person playing games resting checking in having side conversations having group conversations going and exploring

whatever city we're kind of, we try to pick a different city every time and for us that has brought such a level of just stability people who they are that pick up the phone and call them if something comes up whether it's you know, I hate this just hit the fan like what do I what your Insight what your perspective like, sometimes it's family stuff. Sometimes it's work stuff. Sometimes it's just, you know, I'm trying to figure out this aspect of my health or whatever it is. It's just really great to have people who know you, who know you deeply. So I would say those are our really close friends, but we also have close -up friends. And I would say that's like our regular, we meet every week, also four couples, small group here in Nashville.

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And they were friends who, when we moved to the city, we actually formed a small group before we officially joined a church.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: There you go.

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: And we said, we're just going to hand pick people. We want friends who are kind of in our life stage, who are, you know, kind of wired similarly, but different. We want different perspectives. We want different personalities, kind of speaking into our lives. But we need people who are close up also. And yeah, we go deep, but I would say just having people who understand what life in Nashville looks like they were regularly just kind of checking in on the day-to-day mundane, like what happened this week? And you know, how's your heart towards your local church? We all attend different churches. And so that's always a fun conversation to but close and close-up friends have been lifesavers in different ways for us.

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GRANT SKELDON: One thing I'll add too that really stood out. Especially when we first did this was as newlyweds at that time. This was nearly little less than three years ago was high never accounted. It for this as a young single person is how important couples are. We're both of you guys like both of them. I had a lot of friends around like I love him and she would even love him but I was like, but I don't know if I really connect with her and she had the same I was like, I just I mean, he's a cool guy. He's nice guy was sorry all saying the stuff. That was like yeah, good guy. It's like what do you want to hang out with him? No. No, I don't want to.

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And so it was finding who is like we just all click and if you get eight people who click across the board, it's just yeah, there's a lot of magic that can happen there and he shared to some of our young leaders and yeah, they kind of instigated a text group right there, but he actually called this group The Eulogists. They call themselves The Eulogists. Andy Crouch, he said years ago he just formed kind of in light of all the leaders falling is like let's let's get together regularly throughout the once a year and maybe throughout the year here and there we but we want to be so close to each other that we would be the ones doing each other's funeral because we have that kind of depth of commitment to each other and that inspired us several years to go and that when I said I'm outing myself is like I'm a big believer and I don't know if it's bad. I don't think it's bad. I just think it's common is I think if you can you should form your own small group now don't make it so easiest just to hang out.

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But there's, when you're new to town and you need a small group and they can help you, but I just think there should be different nets. But if you can find a community where it's like we already have some, some chemistry here. I think the challenge is not all of us go to the same church and a kingdom mindset. I think that's fine, but I can get how well we're, you guys are at this church and this church and this church and who's leadership is overseeing it. So I can, I can see that getting difficult, I guess, but it's been the most life-giving small groups I've ever been. And since we started doing that about five years ago, really.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: I love the distinction between close and close up because the problem is you may have your best friend who lives across the country. You see her or him twice a year, but you have nobody close up in your life who knows how it went on Tuesday at three o'clock, right? So that's different. The other thing you said, Grant, I think there might be something there.

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I have always usually been very intentional about who's in my small group in part because I want it to work and if you're going to debrief and your leadership, you know, you can't really unload that on like what function is your group serving?

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And so I've been very careful to cultivate small groups where I always like to have somebody who's a little bit on the fence spiritually in the group, but I also want it to

be a safe enough place relationally. That if I'm having a bad day, I can say it and you don't have to keep some kind of veneer up or whatever, but I wonder if that's something that that is unique to leaders because I can also see ya if you're not in leadership and not plugged into the kingdom the way you are the way I am but it's just like I love Jesus and I want to go to a church.

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I'm curious about Jesus and want to go to our church how that sort of big.

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This is how we connect people in groups saying could work.

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But as you get more established maybe in leadership, if you really want to go deep. Yeah, because trust proceeds at the level of the least trusting person in the room. So think about this right now, we're 45 minutes into this conversation if we introduced a complete stranger that I don't know and you don't know either of you know in this conversation we've been right it would be so weird and we're right back to like. Oh, what's your name? Okay. What are you doing here? We're having a really good chat right now about community in the future. Future of the church and got re-calibrate 20 and I think that leaders are lonely and doesn't have to be but I wonder if that's part of it because without Community like I'm I'm dead. I know for me personally and your I'm seeing that in the next gen. So when we I think we had lunch maybe it was in Dallas-Fort Worth.

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Was it then that we sat down and we came up with this idea of like this marriage retreat and you were just so open and Honest about where you were where a lot of your friends were and I hope you're talking to my wife about that soon So I'm hoping that can happen in 2024 talk about being married and next-gen. What's the experience of a lot of young couples, you know, what has that been like?

GRANT SKELDON: I know, I mean we talked about a lot, because like I said things I didn't account for that just didn't realize I'd focus so much on being a leader that then I realized, man.

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There's a difference in marriage even in leadership and I think, Carey, remember there's a couple things I was telling you and I would even say there's a difference in

being a leader in the next generation, because culture is kind of changed and the church is kind of changed a bit and how we see even like let's say women in leadership. That's also going to change how we respond to maybe the norms of what our parents, our grandparents experienced and in marriage and so some of the new, I don't want to call them challenges. I just say they are things, realities we've got to at least acknowledge and have a plan for is if you're getting married today, one, counseling is a big one is I felt like counseling was so recommended.

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The year before getting married it's like, go into marriage strong with some counseling, premarital counseling, everyone recommended it and I felt like counseling wasn't highly recommended to that degree until pre-divorce.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Pre-marriage, pre-divorce.

GRANT SKELDON: Oh you guys are on the brink of divorce? Okay. Now you guys need to get counseling again. I was like, why didn't we do some like post-marriage counseling like the year? I think the year how many people talk about how hard the first year is, I'm so shocked. There's not equally as much like hey, make sure that counselor also been walked with you just for the first year like even maybe budget for that just as much as you budget for the wedding maybe, more importantly, budget for counseling. Everyone keeps saying that the hardest one of the hardest years and then have a plan for that. But I that's where that group in Nashville really helped a lot is almost of the eight the original group.

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I think almost everyone had been married in the last two years and so we all, during COVID too, so like we all had mostly COVID weddings and so it was very helpful, such it was so helpful to talk to others that were navigating marriage in that time. The second thing I would say is just it's not, at least a lot of my friends and the people we were talking about were maybe two individuals who had different types of callings, though they did life together similar to you and Toni, it's like hey well you both have books and therefore you might both have travel schedules and both might be speaking at two different major conferences of the same day and just how to talk about that, let alone if you have kids or babies or babysitters and it's just not as much.

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I'm just seeing more, thank God, like I think is a great thing is we're seeing where it was. Hey, the wife is also going out. She's not just like, all right you go and I'll be

back here waiting on you it was going out or we have not seen as much and we're only going to see more where I think of like Jenni Allen and Zach Allen who I remember talking to her and her husband around that time.

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We were talking Carey, and her husband's line is just always stuck with me of he was doing amazing.

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He was a church Pastor. He was doing all this stuff and kind of step down a bit to help support Jenny and he the line he said is I chose to become a dream releasing husband. Yeah, and I think

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Hannah Barnett, who's one of the eight and I know is that mutual friend of ours amazing young female leader and Aaron her amazing husband who's really got behind Jennie and her organization and Cheyenne's doing some amazing things right now that it's finding out like how okay is this is maybe these couple months are you and those couple months is us and I know we don't have the answers. I just know the man that's a new challenge that I don't think there's a lot of insight on how to navigate that. So those are two big ones is first year counseling and navigating when your calling.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Dual calling, dual career. Yeah, and that's been a factor. I think that's one of the reasons we're having this conversation in our marriage. I mean my wife and I met law school. She was also a pharmacist.

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I mean, when she worked, she made more money than I did for years in ministry, and it was really helpful to put bread on the table, you know, with very small churches and the whole deal. And I had to learn very on, or, you know, I saw, I don't know if I had to learn it, but I saw very early on, it's like, we have two real legitimate callings here in this house. Not just mine and your job is to support me. And that might have been a little bit out there back in the day, but I'm really glad to see it in the next gen, where, and I remember having conversations with Toni saying prayerfully, who should have the dominant career? Because we didn't think we could both go full guns, 50-60 hours a week, right? And stay married and stay happy and stay alive and all that.

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And prayerfully she decided that you know, if you're called to ministry, I will play the support role, but that was a negotiated thing. It wasn't an assumption and I mean she's super sharp. One of my great joys this summer was she had an event I wasn't busy. So I went and carried her bags and sat there in the front row cheering her on that was great. That was fantastic. I had no role it was the best. How do you see that Cheyenne?

[00:56:24.500]

CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah, I think It's really interesting because so much of what we learn in life right is what we've seen people do before us and we either are trying to emulate that or we're trying to do, you know something very different that right, but regardless we still kind of have this picture of what it could look like and how it kind of plays itself out not just on paper but like in you know negotiating like okay who's picking up the kids today or you know, well, I've got this trouble you've got that trouble they've asked us to both be there which one you know, quote-unquote wins out? And I love what you highlighted their carry because it really is it's a it's a for us. I think what we're figuring out now is it is a negotiation and each opportunity is a new conversation and I think early on, especially in marriage, there's so many things that you know is like I've been a Christian since I was four years old and I've known Jesus for a long time.

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You're so lucky to get me, you know, kind of... Like, if I'm being completely honest, like, there was a little bit of, like, pride built up in my mind. Then I get married and all this stuff starts coming out of me, and I'm like, oh, my gosh, I didn't even know that was there. And so I think it's been a gift, truly, it's been a really hard gift to receive, but a pure and invaluable gift nonetheless of, like, some of the humility, I think, that just comes in marriage. And the more that you see the Lord doing in and through your spouse, the more you're just like, oh, this marriage, this, whatever it is, this life, this schedule, this, you know, winning, whatever it is. Like, this isn't actually about me. Like, I wonder, like, what could Jesus be wanting to do in the life of my spouse? Like, I have a mentor, Dr. Alicia Britt Shelley who we just love and adore. She just opens her mouth and I swear, wisdom just falls out of it.

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Just so wise and so kind and so close to Jesus and she she asked us one time. She said I just like I just wonder if each of you spent maybe five minutes asking Jesus what the conversation in heaven over your spouse is right now and I just kind of okay. Yeah, that was a really great thought and I think it's it's yeah, just trying to

lean more into that leaning more into What does life look like together but also understanding like the the verse around to becoming one is true and I think can outside of you know, appropriate kind of context and whatnot. It can be misleading because all of a sudden it's like well if my life is my spouse's life then like why did God make me unique and where is my calling fit in that? And so the way I've kind of been thinking about it for better or worse has you have your calling I have my calling and then we share one. And what does that look like? What does what kind of nuance does that create in the conversation? And how do we make room for all three of these knowing that there's going to be overlap knowing that there's going to be seasons for it's like okay. It's not going to be an equal 50/50 all the time. That's that's not always realistic. That's not part of this dance that we're in. We talked about dancing in terms of juggling, you know, margin or no life and all the things that are just that come with different seasons, but I think I think figuring that out when you're both kind of unique leaders in your own rights and marriage is really important too is what does the dance look like and it definitely requires a deep level of humility that I know I'm being humbled with.

[01:00:05.700]

GRANT SKELDON: Carey, I mean, if you share some wisdom on us, is there anything y'all found as, when did Toni's book come out?

CAREY NIEUWHOF: It was like 2021. Before You Split. Great book.

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GRANT SKELDON: Is there any finding in the last two years that you're like, all right, this, cause would that be where she started traveling pretty big in the last, let's say five years?

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Yeah. I mean, she's doing quite a bit of traveling and everything. And I think because she was so thoughtful with me back when we first got married and kind of went through things, because I realized, wow, I've married somebody who's whip-smart, smarter than me. And she was so deferential to me that it was easy for me to be supportive and deferential to her. And of course, she did practice law for a number of years, et cetera. And not that I always get that right.

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But it was one of those things where I think if I okay if I was really honest there's a part of me that says, oh that's her thing and I don't need to go, and then when she

had an event in Dallas and I was actually off, it was my month off, and part of me is like well-off means off so I don't really want to do a work trip, but then I thought what a wonderful opportunity to just be her companion and her support because often when she does have an event like she was out last Last week on the west coast talking to a Business Leaders breakfast. I had stuff I had to do here. I had to do some podcast interviews I had to do other stuff. So I legit couldn't go and she totally understood that but when I have the opportunity, it's not like oh that's her thing go have fun.

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Like she's come to support me o many times. I have to go out and support her and so it's a reminder to me as a man to do.

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: That it's really good, Carey.

[01:01:59.300]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: The other thing I love about your generation. There's so many different things but like, you know, I'm barely Gen-X almost a boomer and so technically born in 65. So technically I'm Gen-X, but I did not want to spend time with older leaders when I was young and what I find in your generation, we have friends who are like 30, 20 years younger than us, and they really genuinely value the wisdom of older friends older leaders. Why do you think that is in your generation? Because it's all over the place. Why do you think that's the case?

GRANT SKELDON: I mean I think because there's so much foundational historic areas of growth or learning that just again, they are failing the next generation. So if you're not staying at a job for a long time or getting a boss that really is like, I'm committed to you being here for a long term and we're gonna develop you, it's not, I used to in the early days when talking about millennials, they would always say, why do you think young people aren't as, why do you think they're not as loyal to their company as we used to be in our generation? And I started asking, do you think companies are as loyal to the employees as they used to be in your generation? It's just not the same system.

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If you're not, if you go to learn from teachers and professors and then you end up graduating, you're like, so many friends work at Starbucks or work at a job, they're just like, I can't believe I majored in this and I'm working in this.

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It's so interesting to me how many unbelieving young people are seeking and would totally be open to having mentors in their life. I that's where I often think that the church has such an advantage is our founder's last words, which I think should be our first priority is go and make disciples is like we that's our products. It's not in my opinion church services its disciples we make disciples and if we do that well Ironically the world is looking for it a lot.

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And I did I kind of on this too.

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I if I can ask you another question here because if there's one thing that you stand out for is the the reverse of this to me like I will write one day and with your permission. I'll add a story with you in it.

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I don't think there's unfortunately it for a how many young people want to learn from the older generation. I haven't found as much of a reverse of that where it's like I'm older and I'm trying to figure out next gen because so many are it's got to be top five conversation the church today is how do we reach the next generation or why are they leaving you the first time I met you we're so curious about learning from me and I've never told you this but we had we spoken of it and then we both had a flight around the same time. It was in Atlanta. And we found out we were both going the airport. So you want to just ride with me instead of catching an Uber. So of course, I'm thinking I'm with you. I'm going to ask you so many questions and I love asking questions. So but you didn't let me ask almost any questions at all, legit. I've got 30-40 minute drive. You ask all the questions and your so sincerely curious and and asking what do you think on this and the next gen and I'm seeing this what's your perspective? I've only had like a handful legit five or less people that where like, I want to ask them because I so respect them and they so flipped it on me and we're so curious and I have such immense honor for that. And but it made me think as even as a millennial at that time now Gen Z over the last couple of years, of course, is so next gen as it helps me think, man, I don't want to be the guy who's like, Oh, you're the new next-gen person. I'm challenged by you. It's more like, Yo, okay, it's time for me to learn, learn from you.

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I'm curious. Yeah. Where did that come from for you?

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Yeah, you know, it wasn't really a decision. And I'm glad that was me on a good day because otherwise I just sort of, you know, and I remember that. I hope that's my posture with the next generation with people I meet. It is a conviction. I came out of my summer vacation this year, kind of going, I want to be less of a teacher, more of a student. But I also have a profound understanding of the passage of time. I have a degree in history. I'm reading history right now. And you just realize that, you know, you were the young leader and now you're not the young leader moving into sort of the sage years or whatever you want to call them.

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So many of my assumptions from songs movie references the Next Generation doesn't even get and I didn't grow up as a digital native. You did and everybody younger than you did and so I think I have if I want to keep leading with relevance and intelligence in the Next Generation, I just have so much to learn and so much I don't know and yeah, I can offer a little bit of wisdom here, a little bit of help there, but I really think it comes from a posture of realizing my limits and some of that is a limited perspective to that's true of race, that's true socioeconomically, that's true culturally. And so I really want to be a student as I get older.

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I find like cynicism and knowledge are very closely related. So the more you know, the more cynical you become and a lot of people my age get very cynical very fast, and then they get upset because the next generation is not coming to me to ask me questions. You know, I have all this wisdom. It's like well, maybe if you'd be a student and build a relationship with them people would take an interest in you that might happen. So I don't know all that is going on in my head as I think about that but I think you're right.

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The natural posture is to go mmm, well I'm the expert now. So, you know, you're lucky to have some time with me. But I'm I just want to be a student law life and really curious and and I love younger leaders like you bring an energy and vitality two things. I think I'm pretty energetic for my stage. But like you guys bring energy and ideas and perspectives and here's a pet peeve of mine. You asked me pet peeves.

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My pet peeve is when I was 23, people gave me a stupid amount of responsibility. When I was 30, they entrusted me with a church. Like they gave me ridiculous amounts of authority and responsibility. And I think my generation and older, we kind of look at you if you're under 40 and go, oh, they're still kids. Like, do you find that we're holding onto the keys a little bit too long?

CHEYANNE SKELDON: It's a good question. So as you know, Carey, I work for a tech company that's incredible. It's based out of Boulder, Colorado. Serves the church, but it's not a ministry or a church itself. And I, in my experience there, I've been given so much more trust and responsibility than I had earned. And I think it's really interesting knowing it's at a tech company, very forward-thinking, very futuristic. Like, how do we how do we help create a system that supports the church and the church can really come together around this. So it's constantly kind of asking these big questions and I will say too kind of juxtaposition my experience there versus in church, I mean I've been given responsibilities to lead teams and to inform product decisions and to make design choices and user experience things. Like my degree is in Psychology, sociology and counseling.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Yeah, and I think we can name it. I mean Gloo is no stranger to this podcast and they're amazing and you know, I hadn't really thought about it, but it is a young team and Scott with all of his genius, you know scaling Blockbuster and lots of other national chains and everything like that. Yeah, probably understands that intuitively. But yeah in the church, that's not always everyone's experience.

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: That's right. Yeah, and I think there can be so much partnership and collaboration and I love that you're focusing on just taking a learner's posture in that is I would say that has not been my experience leaning with churches or ministries necessarily has been that kind of same posture. It is, I would challenge us, I would encourage us to really focus on you know, kind of the the abundance mentality versus any sort of scarcity mentality whether that's around power, position, or influence, whatever that may be, or even just disconnection. I think there can be, we talked earlier about expectations, there can be some assumptions and some expectations that may or may not even be real in our kind of local context as we're trying to figure out how to navigate things that I would say I've had a really great experience work -wise with. Even though I'm under 40, I just turned 30 this past year and so...

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Everything's going to change.

GRANT SKELDON: Everything's going to change. Well, I guess 10 more years is what you're saying potentially.

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah, so even leading up to all that, I was given immense trust and somebody believed in me when I was in my 20s.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Yeah, that's amazing. And that's how it should be. I mean, people were changing the world as teenagers in history. If you look at it, John Stuart Mill, the philosopher, had mastered Greek and Latin, I think by the age of three. It's crazy.

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And we're like, you were lucky teaching the alphabet. I'm not saying you should teach your kids Greek and Latin but I'm just saying if you compare yourself to a couple hundred years ago people were entrusted with so much at a very young age. What do you think about that Grant like do you feel that the next generation is empowered enough or we've got room to grow in that as church leaders?

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GRANT SKELDON: Yeah. I think it's a huge conversation. I've never really got a talk to you about it or everything have many older leaders kind of bring it up, but I do think this is a bigger problem than we realize. Why's it is that we are slower to hand over the baton in the church space and I think even thinking through it and hearing her talk about glue in the tech world. It might even be in this specific industry because I think of

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DC and it's such a young empowerment space. I think of movies especially music. It's a young I remember hearing Kanye West interviewed once he's like they're asking why you moving to Fashion because at the time he wasn't successful yet. There was really crazy was going to hear so good at this. Why would you go to fashion and Sway was asking him this and he's like, it's a young man's game. He's like, it's a young man's game is what he kept saying. It's like he tell me one artist that's over 50 whose breakout artist of the year, and I had never thought of that. He's like tell me anyone who is older. He's like, it's always someone use you're gonna be thinking ahead of what's next. And I wonder how much that is kind of hurting the church to be like it. I do think there's a correlation to us always asking questions about the

next-gen and then you look at conferences today and you're like, there's no next gen voices.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Well, I know we talked about that. In events I plan I'm like, okay, yeah diversity, but age diversity, too.

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It's like, whoa, what are these people doing? It's like, all right, let's not talk that way.

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No, I hear you. And you know, music is young, influencers are young. And incredible, there's this band I follow on TikTok, Burn the Jukebox. I mean, these guys are just, I don't know whether you've found them, but they're amazing. They've gotta be teenagers. And they're just so musically gifted and fluid. And we have certain roles for them, but it's sort of like when you get into the upward leadership echelon, you know, it's like, well, you're just lucky to have a seat at the table, not a voice, just a seat.

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I don't know, that's not good.

GRANT SKELDON: Yeah, when I was 24, I used to always say this line. I said something like, and it's been a long time. And I said, if you were to join the military at 18 years old, they would entrust you in another country with a lethal weapon or maybe even a tank or just huh, if you were to join a non-profit in another country, they might enjoy like and they didn't trust you with like the entire like youth program or maybe the whole dang thing over there. But if you were to join a church at 18 or 19 years old, they'll be like do you want to be either on the parking team?

CAREY NIEUWHOF: They'll trust you with the traffic cone.

GRANT SKELDON: Yeah. It is like in on this one day for a couple hours and I always say the next generation is not leaving because they get asked to do too much but because they're getting asked to do too little.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Uh-huh you're right, you're right. Inside joke. But anyway, okay, let's talk about the discipleship crisis because a lot of people think well, we have Bible studies, we have small groups, I teach expository teaching That's not what you're talking about. What are you talking about?

GRANT SKELDON: You're talking about with discipleship?

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Yeah. Yeah, if it's not just Bible studies or you know, because most churches would say, I think we're checking the Box on that. But I think you can also look at how politicized and tribal eyes the church got not only in the mid 2010's with elections. But the way we kind of imploded with covid. It's like, oh we have a discipleship PROBLEM.

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I agree with that. And the answer maybe isn't more Bible studies. What is it?

GRANT SKELDON: Yeah, I think it is, I think one, you got to start with the building a culture of discipleship where it's not just something the staff needs to take on. I'm the last person that wants to say, hey, one more thing the church staff need to do to like fix everything. I think that the people, the congregation, us as the body of the church need to step up what it means to be a Christian is, two, be a disciple, not just a believer. Right now, I think like the scorecard often is go to church regularly, give to the church, join a small group, and maybe serve those four things.

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And every single one of those are very important, have a role. I want to add to the scorecard, not take anything away. I kind of liken it to a pulse.

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You need to have a pulse. Those things are all things of a pulse like you but you can have a post and be eating really unhealthy. And so there are some other parts of the scorecard that it's like but are you pouring into someone? Does someone know who you are, sorry not someone knows who you are. But like dude, could you go and ask some of your friends like hey, do you have someone that you are pouring into because I'd love for Christians to be marked by like, those are the people that just pour into the next-gen, like they are really good at raising them. But they're really good at pouring into them. They're just a way you always want to hire young Christian because they're just really hard workers. They always ask questions. They have relationships with older people. They know how to interact with older people. They're not always on their phones. They take notes. They just all these different marks of young people because it's just so in the ethos of Christians as we are the people that pour into the next-gen and elevate their character, their calling, their maturity.

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I would just quickly say how you know, this isn't kind of happening right now is if you were to put I always say this test is like if you were to take let's say 50 people from your church put them in 50 different rooms and some of those 50 are the church staff some of those 50 are the elders or deacons or Elder leadership, some of those are key volunteers and some of those are just part of the congregation, but they're all involved in some form of fashion and you ask them, what is the discipleship strategy at our church?

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It's pretty surprising how many people would have so many different answers and was even more surprising is I think there's a lot of churches that have the mission statement on their walls as something like we exist to glorify God by making disciples in Dallas or Nashville or Denver or whatever, but it's literally making disciples. That's the thing we're doing. But you ask them, well, how are we doing it? What's the strategy to do it? And there's not a clarity on that. And so my issue as a young leader who was always asking like, hey, what's the discipleship strategy here? No, 9 out of 10, they may not have an answer. And if they did, they would say, oh, well, we got small groups for that.

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But then I would then say the second question is then, what's the success rate of discipleship relationships through small groups?

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And there was usually no even info on that or even a... Yeah, there's no metric at all. So that's the second part is like, build a culture within the church. And the second part I think is build a measurement so we know.

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And it doesn't have to be, we all as the Christendom have the same metric, but your people are clear on what your metric is for discipleship. Because I promise once you measure it, it's gonna show that it matters and they're gonna move towards it. But right now, the word that's most associated with discipleship in my experience is the word organic.

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It's usually if I would ask they'd say, oh, well, we have more of an organic strategy. We're doing small groups and I'm like yo, hipsters, Millennials, we are the ones that created the organic thing. I'm telling you organic is the opposite of what you want to associate with discipleship organic means like these fruits have not been touched. They have not been tampered with, they have not been altered, they are organic, and that's not the disciples story. You look at Jesus and the disciples. They definitely were tampered with they definitely are altered, they're impacted, the trajectory of their life was changed because of intervention and so you just I don't think you can do organic discipleship, but I don't know why we do organic discipleship when Jesus did such strategic discipleship, and so just quickly I'll take care of you.

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Everything else in the Great Commission is strategic. We do Jesus called us to like four things; to go, to make disciples, to teach, and to baptize. Those are the four calls to action and every other one we do strategically we like we don't do organic missions.

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We don't just send our people and say just figure out what to do. There's literally books about that, When Helping Hurts is when you do just organic missions. You work with vetted partners that know what they're doing, that are indigenous to that area. That know what the actual need is and then you help no one and I know and no matter what denomination even the ones that are like very free spirit. They do not do organic preaching on Sunday. They're not like who's feeling at this Sunday know they have strategic meetings to plan the whole year that strategic plans for and preparation for the sermons and they're going to teach strategically and same thing with, if we go teach as well as Baptism like we we we don't just expect our people to organically go get baptized in the lakes or rivers or Jacuzzi's like we have classes we have weekends dedicated to it. We have like plans to make sure they know what they're doing And so I always think like man, why would we do, that one left is the discipleship piece is we're still doing that organically when we do everything else strategically, but Jesus clearly did it strategically, and that's why I keep going back to this next-gen thing is, the next -gen is the ones who are suffering when we take that organically because if we don't disciple them the world would love to and is and has been. The only difference is and why I think we keep thinking something's changing in the next -gen Is because the world has changed a lot in the last 20 to 30 or 40 years They don't look as close to the church as they used to they look way further and so now this generation is way further because they've been discipling them and Now we're seeing the cost of not discipling the next generation.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Have you seen a church or an organization offer that kind of strategy you're talking about. Are you have in mind or if that's what you're gonna have to write?

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GRANT SKELDON: That's why I mean that's why we're doing a church plant when we have a lot of other things we are doing honestly is because because of that question is is probably the number one question. I've been asked areas like what what are their churches are doing it and I always want to shout out certain churches that like, I think I think that Manna Church in North Carolina, Hatcher's his last name. He's on a military base. And I know he wrote a great book. I think it's called empowering leadership where he was forced to focus on discipleship because being in a big city with a military base or one of the biggest military bases.

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They were always losing members and so he's like I got to train up a culture of discipleship and empowerment because I'm gonna lose my people. I think Carrie it's why so many Campus Ministries not even just College Ministry specifically almost all college campus ministries, the ones that are on campus really have a tendency to focus on discipleship because they're not going in with the mentality that we're keeping these people. They know from the offset, we're losing them. I would say Jesus knew from the offset. I'm losing them so when you know, Know that you're like, how do I equip them and prepare them as much as possible so I can send them rather than this idea of how do I just get them to keep coming back and invite their friends.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: So Manna Church, College Ministries, anyone else anywhere else you would Point people to? Way Church

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GRANT SKELDON: Way church, yeah. I mean, that's the one.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: That's good. Those are three examples.

GRANT SKELDON: We want to, and Nashville prioritizes measuring discipleship, forming a culture of discipleship. And if I could just, because I know it's a little bit of a harder word.

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I failed at doing this, and I remember having to get my staff, and I would recommend this to any staff is, there's not a lack of pastors that want to make disciples. Everyone cares about it. I think Pete Scazzero has this, this unbelievably great framework for what he calls the action behavior gap, which I think you could apply to almost everything.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Reading through that right now again.

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GRANT SKELDON: Yeah. Yeah. And when he saw that, I was like, man, this needs to be applied to so many of the principles of what we're called to do, because we all esteem to or value discipleship. It's just moving from, I value it, to like, I prioritize it. He uses it for Sabbath, which is a perfect place. We're so C. No one dislikes the Sabbath. No one thinks we shouldn't do the Sabbath. It's just many of us, including myself.

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It's moving from like I value it to I'm prioritizing it no matter what, and that's that's the next step I think for the American church at least, and for us in the staff. It was kind of hey, I'm going to put everyone's everyone's staff's name on the on the board in the main meeting room and I want to start in the next six months figure out who are you discipling and who's discipling you? I know you can't force discipleship. You can't force someone to say yes to disciple you and you can't even for someone to say yes to you pouring into them and it's awkward sometimes in hard to Ask there's probably one of the big reasons we don't do is like there's almost nothing like asking someone to disciple you or to be disciplined other than asking someone to date you. It's kind of weird.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Yeah, it's a vulnerable question.

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GRANT SKELDON: Yeah, you're putting yourself out there and you could be rejected. There's not a lot of things you do. I mean other than maybe somewhat like sharing the gospel, but at least this one's more like do you choose me, not do to Jesus? Like do you choose me? Am I worth it to you? And so I think it's hard and

that's why I was like, let's give six months. I just want to know everyone has he's asked upward and downward you asked someone if you could be disciplined. I found if giving a goal and giving a deadline and making it visual and making a part of like something we so seldom elaborate it people started making moves towards it and started becoming a part of the culture. So then we can start talking about it and failing forward and it because there's always something else that's on the calendar that's more important in our in an urgent at least in discipleship that it's got to be a consistent thing we see and talk about.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Cheyanne, we've talked a lot about discipleship anything you would add and otherwise I got another question for you.

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CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah, a lot of a couple of maybe just practical insights and this is something I think Grant lived for a long time and then just through, you know, joining lives, I've definitely reaped the benefit of is how do we live out discipleship? It's like you're you're preaching a lot about this thing but what does that actually look like and for us it looks like giving somebody access to her calendar and saying, what would you like to join?

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You know, what what are you wanting to be disciplined in like I'm discipling a young woman here in Nashville and she wants to learn how to be a communicator. She also wants to learn how to be a healthy leader She's trying to figure out her purpose right now. She feels called to ministry but doesn't know exactly what that looks like and so just we had a really upfront conversation about What is it you want to grow in? Do you see that in me? It's okay if you don't, if you do, then like let's talk about it. I'd love to disciple you in that. If not, I would love to help connect you with somebody who I think could really pour into you in that area. So I think being specific calling out also a time length to the relationship I think is really helpful. I think that might be actually something so we're talking about the church and discipleship.

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It was interesting hearing that the groups that know that they only have a certain amount of time. The military base and college universities. They know they only have four years on average, that they're really intentional.

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So I do think there's something about knowing like, oh, we're in a one-year long discipleship relationship at the end of that one year. Here's where you hope to have like grown and I think just adding that level of clarity and intentionality goes above and beyond because then when we're having conversations and we try really hard to, I'm sure you're familiar with this hat like this concept of habit stacking. We really want to habit stack. It's like I would love to meet you for coffee if I'm really wanting coffee, but otherwise like let's go for like I'm trying to get really into a walking out in nature. That's something that's really healthy for me. Why don't you come join that because I already have that on my calendar or you know, I'm doing movie night with my niece and nephew who live with us right now. Like why don't you come join us for the movie night and you know, we'll hang out for a little bit once they've gone to bed but not looking to add more things to your calendar, but just adding somebody to your calendar giving them permission being willing to honestly be vulnerable enough to let somebody see past the veneer past that like, oh I can show up and meet you at a coffee shop, but it's something different to let you in my home when I've not cleaned in two weeks and laundry is everywhere and the kids have pain at the side of the house and whatever else.

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Those are just a few, maybe, practical examples. By no means I would think we would say that's like what you have to do, but just if it's helpful, a few ideas of what discipleship, in the sense of how we kind of talk and think about it, could look like.

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CAREY NIEUWHOF: Okay. So here's where I want to wrap up. I want you to think five, ten years in the future. I mean, the oldest millennials turned 42, I think, this year. So we're not talking about kids anymore, but I want you to look five, ten years in the future and think through the future church. How do you think when your generation really is fully shaping it, how ideally is it going to look? What's it going to look like?

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GRANT SKELDON: So this is the dream church, right or is it like based on know seeing now?

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Well, you can play both scenarios but I'm talking about - I like it's probably not going to be generic we're doing what everybody else is doing. Let's just get people in the room. I know that the jig's up on that. So what yeah, what do

you think how you going to shape it ideally and then maybe what's a realistic scenario?

GRANT SKELDON: Sure. That's a fun question. Yeah, I think something that I dropped the ball and in the discipleship conversation is realizing all these different elements of it that I'm excited that the Gen Z and maybe the youngest Millennials I think are going to add to the conversation is that when I grew up in let's say in my early 20s, I felt like discipleship, if you said that generally people thought of it as let's go through a book together and I would say it was kind of thinking memorization. It's like the hey we can memorize the Bible together or this book together. And so the ending of the timeline was let's finish a book and once I finish the book you've been discipled and I just felt like it was lacking a little bit. So I was thinking man. I'm not really thinking memorization, I'm probably thinking more like replication. I want to, like Jesus did, he trained them so much and impact them so much that they could go and do what he did. He would even say they will do greater things and and in a way they reached more.

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But you know, Carey, as I've, this is only like the last couple of years I realized in light of seeing this shift in towards more vulnerability and open conversations around emotional health and the clear need of emotional health and accountability and vulnerability in community from seeing so many leaders fall. We're seeing so many different leaders from Jeff Bethke, John Mark Comer, even, I don't know if you're familiar with Jeff Vanderstel, I grew up with him as like a missional guy and he was like, Grant, actually, I'm really moving, not that I'm leaving missions, I'm just emotional health is the thing. I'm like, man, everyone's like shifting over to this as the conversation. Of course, we talked about Pete Scazzero, Alicia Britt Shawlee, I'm just, it's the message that's definitely resonating, especially with young leadership that I always think, okay, memorization is important because I want the next generation, not just to know how to lead, but to know and be anchored in the word of God. So it's kind of, to me, a threefold piece that I would want to see in the future churches. They know God's word and they memorized it, and it's in them, absorbed so they replicate it. So they don't just know God they they're they're making an impact for his name and they know how to because they shadowed and saw done well, and so they're doing with excellence and when some lie, but then third they're healthy and they last and they finish well and they hear from God well done good and faithful servant, and they know how to connect with their children, their spouse. They are people in general they have The emotional health to do that and so it's transformation that inner transformation. I would say leadership replication as well as biblical memorization.

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The second part is, this might be an odd one, but I really think, man we got to talk about more and it's some a conversation has been had I just don't think it's been tied with next-gen and I am excited for how few young people even know much about the sacred and secular divide in Gen Z and I'm thinking it's that's a silver lining is they don't need to unlearn it.

[01:32:13.400]

They never learned it as much as well as I'm so thankful for how many young people are tired of church being just an event and so they want something more and that's a good thing. It's like how do I think in the coming years will capitalize on okay this latent energy want. There's not a lot of young people that are leaving because they're lazy. They're leaving and joining social entrepreneur organizations and they have tons of side hustles statistically.

[01:32:37.600]

So many of them are building something, creating content online, they're definitely creative and passionate, and there's this energy. It's just not going into Kingdom efforts. And so what I think the future church will be is like, we are going to have a more robust form of success of what church success looks like to where it's in the world. It's one of the big conversations we're trying to think through in the culture of Way Church is yes, discipleship, yes community. And third is, how do we hinge the success of our church on the success of our people in the city, in their work and in their faithfulness? Some of my thinking of layers of that is, are they a faithful witness? Of course, are they excellent and respected in the industry that they're in or the job that they're in? Do they bring like health and stuff to that or when they if they leave the job. Is it just like anyone else are like our people glad when they leave or they like man, we've got to hire two people because of losing this person. Like we don't even realize how much that person was doing. They're so good at what they do. They bring so much of the culture we miss this person. Like they the hospitality the intentionality that were Such a faithful witness gospel witness and we're really good at what we do but to I think like the hero even and videos at the in churches today again, it's usually hey, this is John, John used to drink a lot, got saved, and now John's on the parking team and basically it's like be like John. I mean, be like John because we need parking team absolutely need parking to I'm not negating that I just think and maybe we need other forms of heroes in the faith to because it's either like that or it's a missionary overseas. There is a big gap of people that are in between that aren't going to be maybe one of those to where it's a lawyer or a doctor or someone who could cannot commit to that kind of weekly, but they can do

something else or they are doing amazing things for the kingdom, but they're not really getting highlighted and I think the more we can highlight Christians and culture and see them as a representation of our church in the city the more we're going to reach the next gen where they're like, wow. I've never got this kind of support from my church for just doing my job. But now I'm learning how to do it more Faithfully with more excellence and and with more intentionality.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah. Yeah for us something that's been really helpful framework to think about this and have strategic conversations with young leaders is five -fold. So, APEST, apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher, just what are the gifts, being like who we are, who God created us to be. How do we steward ourselves as gifts to the world? Not in like a high and mighty way, but just in a stewardship kind of role, as well as the seven channels or seven mountains.

[01:35:29.500]

There's a few different names of it. It's like, well, what are the influential main spheres in our everyday society? And so then you begin to kind of see this overlay of, okay, where do I find myself vocationally? Where am I spending the majority of my just hours, especially weekday hours?

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And then how has God wired me? Like what? What is my particular kind of expression of Christ that's just very naturally kind of flows out of me. It's just part of how God made me knitted me together. And so for example, like I'm a Shepherd heart working at a tech company and so, you know working at Gloo and working with engineers and working with brilliant. People are get to work really closely with our friends at Barna who are just incredible humans and also some of the smartest people I know and so it's like what does it look like to engage missionally at that specific intersection? Because that's where God's put me right now. And so how do I as someone who has kind of a Shepherd heart show up in a technology digital kind of partnership space.

[01:36:33.900]

And what does that look like? Well for me, it looks like checking in on the people. I meet with regularly take not kicking off every single meeting with okay here's the to do list. Here's the agenda. It's taking you know, 6-7 minutes just be like, hey, how's everybody going like I know you were doing this and that this weekend, you know, it's just that intentionality and that might look super different for someone who has more of kind of a an Apostolic or almost like an entrepreneurial bent, like that's

going to look really different even if you're in the same space or you're in a different space with the similar wiring. I think that just begins to underline and bring to light purpose which innately you know, I think we were all designed with this desire to want to make an impact in the world. Like, why was I created like what is my purpose?

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And that can be a really interesting kind of framework to play with, to begin to kind of narrow in and have some really good conversations with people who know you, who love you, who know and love Jesus around what that could look like.

[01:37:34.400]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Well, I'll tell you, this has been absolutely fascinating. Final thought. I said that was the final question, now the final final. And then we should wrap up. I'll go to Grant for one and you, Cheyenne, for the other. Grant, one piece of advice to leaders over the age of 40 when it comes to empowering the next generation. Make this like a bumper sticker, a sound bite, like just real quick.

GRANT SKELDON: You're saying one minute or one sentence?

CAREY NIEUWHOF: One sentence, one minute. I mean, you pick.

[01:38:06.500]

GRANT SKELDON: I can do it in a minute. I will say.

[01:38:08.600]

CAREY NIEUWHOF: You do it in a minute.

GRANT SKELDON: I'll do it in a minute.

[01:38:11.400]

Look at Saul and he did an amazing job until he got back to Jerusalem. He allowed a young leader that didn't have the credentials but seemed like he had the hand of God to empower him to do one of the biggest things ever. Like I said, they don't leave because they're getting asked to do too much but too little, and David, man that was a huge responsibility and we often don't want them to do big things because if they failed big time, which they will sometimes, then it really hurts us. But man if you give them such a big responsibility, I think David never forsakes all because we all remember the first individuals who were older who just believed in

us and gambled on us and it's a connection for Life almost to that person. And so there's such power in that too. Saul did not force them to do it his own way.

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He's not like, hey, you know you're fighting Goliath. You should wear armor. You should take a sword and I think we're in a time right now where we see Goliath or the culture taunting us and saying a church is dying churches dying churches dying for decades. I've been we keep hearing this and think it's time for a new way. Not a new gospel at all, but a new approach and letting a young leader young leadership come and say hey, I think we should try it this way and it might end up being like we're shocked it works, but third Is when we come back, it doesn't matter if they get a lot of credit. We need to learn how to like share the credit. He still got thousands and today would be like, well the David got 10,000 followers and you only got 1,000 followers, who cares like God is going to win, like God is going to win. There's more than enough lost people in the next generation for us all to just give it all for him and share. We don't care who gets the credit. We really are doing this for the kingdom.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Cheyanne, what would you say for under 40? So, your generation, you've got to give them a piece of advice. What do you tell them?

[01:40:04.400]

CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah. I would say a similar sentiment, actually, stay humble, embrace humility, and stay hungry. And those two things don't have to conflict or compete with one another. A book that is just radically kind of shaping my heart and mind right now is Humility and Absolute Surrender by Andrew Murray. And the more I read into it, the more it's just the Holy Spirit's revealing in my own heart. It's just my own lack of humility. And I think that can be such an easy place for those of us who are younger. to get tripped up is to think that because I've got the digital savvy because I've got you know opportunities here and opportunities there. I'm a gift in this way and I've got these sorts of you know, strengths and Leadership criteria personality, whatever it maybe like we can begin to think a little too highly of ourselves a little too easily. There's a reason why pride was the thing that got us in trouble in the first place.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: That's true of all of us. I think yeah.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: Yeah I think embracing humility goes along. Away, great. I've so appreciated this conversation. People are going to want to track with you. So easy places to find you both online?

[01:41:23.500]

CHEYANNE SKELDON: He's easier to find I already outed myself earlier it's like, I'm not great at social media, but it's fine. I'm there.

GRANT SKELDON: Well, luckily. I we've never seen the last name Skeldon before with a D and so Grant Skeldon and Cheyanne Skeldon.

[01:41:39.200]

I think we both have our own websites now. GrantSkeldon.com and CheyanneSkeldon.com. And then also if you ever want to hang with us, we are doing the Next Gen Summit at actionsummit.com here in November.

CAREY NIEUWHOF: Cool. Cool. Thank you both so very much. I really appreciate it.

CHEYANNE SKELDON: Thanks for your time Carey.

GRANT SKELDON: Great to hang, appreciate you.

Carey Nieuwhof: Oh, man, I sure love the heart of the Next Generation. Thanks so much Grant and Cheyanne for everything you're doing if you want more we have show notes and we've got transcripts you can. Find them over careynieuwhof.com/episode616 and also coming up. We've got some exciting episodes. I'm going to tell you about the first make sure you visit tenx10.org today to access free resources to reach the next Generation be part of an initiative that's reaching 10 million young adults over the next decade go to tenx10.org today.

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And then join 16,000 other churches partnering with Subsplash to make disciples in the hybrid reality of church today at subsplash.com slash cari, that's subsplash.com/carey. Next episode, we've got William Vander Bloemen coming up. I'm never bored when I sit down with William. He always makes me think. We talk about the future of work and what it's like to actually find the right candidate for the job. I think the succession crisis is a crisis, so William helps us weigh in on that.

[01:43:05.400]

William VanDerBloemen: And the list was nothing that I thought it would be. It's not even he was the quarterback, she was the head cheerleader. It's not education levels, it's not intelligence, it's not socioeconomic or racial. It cut across every age bracket. There were 12 habits that these unicorns almost seem to be driven to perform, like they were obsessed. They didn't know it but just this is where I go naturally and they were 12 habits that were very uncommon among the rest of us and exceedingly applicable and learnable. And so what we set off on this selfish, let's

figure out how to spot the unicorn, what we figured out was we've actually uncovered a roadmap to becoming a unicorn.

Carey Nieuwhof: So that's next time on the podcast. Also coming up in the remainder of this year. Jenni Catron, Mike Foster, Karen Gordon. Plus we're going to bring you some highlights from the Art of Leadership Network. Then I kick off 2024 with a church Trends series very excited for that.

[01:44:14.300]

I always do a church Trends are always I mean the last 67 years have done a church Trends post on my blog. It always does one of the best articles in terms of you know leaders accessing yet all year. Well, we're doing it on the blog but we're also bringing it to the podcast. JP Pokluda, Gabriel McCullough and I dissect my church Trends then I sit down with David Kinnaman Ryan Burge Brady shear and John Mark Comer in successive episodes and we talk about the trends that they're seeing. So that's coming up. I think I think it's going to be a fun way to kick off 2024. Hey, if you enjoyed this episode, please subscribe. I only listen to the podcast I subscribe to and share it with a friend. Give us some feedback. Give a shout-out to Grant and Cheyenne on TikTok, on Instagram, or wherever you happen to be on social and make sure you subscribe wherever you're listening to this podcast. And if you would be so kind please leave a rating and review let us know what you think and that helps us all get the word out so we can keep doing this so

[01:45:11.100]

One more thing, because you'll listen to the end, I got something free for you. If you want to start transforming your preaching, go to preachingcheatsheet.com and get your copy of the Preaching Cheat Sheet for free. What it does, it's helped tens of thousands of leaders run every message they give through a little filter that makes sure that you know that it will connect before you deliver it. Preachingcheatsheet.com, it's free, link will also be available in the show notes. Thanks so much for listening everybody.

[01:45:39.700]

I so appreciate you and I hope our time together today helped you identify and break a growth barrier you're facing.