

# EPISODE TRANSCRIPT



**Announcer:** The Art of Leadership Network.

**Jon Tyson:** Someone had just said I can't wait for your church to rethink your sexual ethics. And I was like hey with all due respect, you think I haven't thought this through? You think I'm sitting here twiddling my thumbs? You think when you drop something that you saw on a YouTube video about the word homosexual not being in the Bible like, I've never, oh my gosh, I've never heard that. I've never heard that. So again, I think there's an assumption of your ignorance. They're not saying that because they're ignorant, they're saying it because they've just learned it and it's exciting for them and they want to test that. They're saying that because they care about people and they're worried that people who are not thoughtful are holding on to positions that are harmful for others. So, you know, it's um, in secularism there is no higher good than human flourishing.

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And so I think the way secularism shows up in Gen Z is the ultimate good as human flourishing. And so somebody says, like, you're harming someone with that idea. That's like the ultimate trump card. Your position does harm and so yeah, I mean, this is you know, eudaemonia this is like human flourishing is the highest good of life and self-actualization is the point of existence. And that's a lot better than hedonism man, but it's just not the kingdom of Jesus. There's something about human flourishing which is the glory of Jesus and the kingdom of God. And so I think, I don't think we've done a good enough job teaching Gen Z about the kingdom of God. If they're meant, I would say this, if they're meant to be seeking this first, we owe them to tell them what it is that they're meant to be seeking. And I do not feel like we have done that. I feel like we've shown them a shallow version of modern church.

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**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, we are going to sit down with Jon Tyson. I love talking to Jon and we talk about all things New York. Well, what are we going to talk about? We talk about your cultural identity. Why is that such a big issue these days? What's happening to our identity?

Why is it shifting so much? And well, we also touch on generational differences in the church happening right now, aging well in leadership, tech, AI in discipleship, and a whole lot more. That's all coming up on this episode. Today's episode is brought to you by The Church Network. Hey, you know, they've got a conference happening in Lexington, Kentucky July 9 through 12. You can register today at the churchnetwork.com slash 2024 conference. And by Church.Tech. Did you know with a single click of a button you can actually turn your message into small group guidance devotions, social media and more go to church to get started use the code. Carry c a r e y at check-in. Well Jon and I go all over the place today. I think a lot of you follow Jon and for those of you who don't well, I think you're really gonna enjoy this Jon is a pastor and author New York City originally from Adelaide, Australia. Shout out Adelaide, love Adelaide. We never spent enough time there been there a couple of times movie three times always want to stay longer Jon moved to the us over two decades ago with a passion to seek and cultivate renewal in the Western church. He's a best-selling author including the books Beautiful Resistance, The Intentional Father, and his newest book Fighting Shadows. He is the lead pastor of Church of the City in New York City.

Hey, I know this is probably springtime as you listen to this if you're listening live, I got a new bike this year. I am out on the roads. And that's where I'm listening listening to podcasts listening to well some of the podcasts that I'm sure some of you do as well and really enjoy it. I don't know where this finds you but if you enjoy episodes like this, please leave a rating and review share it with a friend text them the link or give us a shout-out on social. I'm @CareyNieuwhof on Instagram and when you give us a shout-out and share the news guess what we get better guests. That's how it goes. So thank you for doing that. And thanks for those of you who leave ratings and reviews as well all church leaders. Do you ever feel lonely in Ministry? You are invited to build community discover resources and grow with other Church operational leaders at the Church Network Conference on July 9th through 12th.

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See, that's what Church.Tech enables. So if you're ready to jump in go to church.tech to sign up and don't forget to use the code CAREY at checkout when you go to church dot Tech and now my conversation with Jon Tyson.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Jon, just thrilled to have you back, welcome.

**Jon Tyson:** Thank you so much, mate. Always a joy talking with you.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Yeah, so what are some of the things that you are swimming in right now? It's a different city New York City than it was say five years ago. I think we're all agreeing that we're moving into some kind of a different era. What do you see? What are you feeling? What are you experiencing?

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**Jon Tyson:** I tell you I've been in a series of meetings this past weekend. One of the things that people talk about a lot but I have felt and observed is generational differences in the church. I mean I felt it. It's almost like walking into a wall in terms of values and preferences and understandings and you know people have talked about that. I've talked about that before but like watching it happen giving Gen Z folks more space at the table not just to be there but to shape to speak in giving them confidence to start with what they really think those sorts of things. It leads to some confrontations and some misunderstanding and so I've noticed that that's been a huge thing. I think I'm seeing the increase of secularism not as an academic ideology but as a functional way that people navigate reality and live. Creating identities and building their world without even a thought of God as a reference point in any of it. That has normalized so quickly, and it has cemented in ways that have been very, very surprising to me. I'd say another big thing would just be suspicion of authority in general, but a hyper-suspicion of spiritual authority. So yeah, it's an interesting time to lead.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Well, there's the agenda for an hour. Okay. This is really good. I'd like to pick up on number two, because you lead in the same city, Tim Keller, led in for decades.

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I mean I talk about Keller a lot, think about him a lot. He's been a profound influence on me. One of the things Keller said Tim said in an interview I did with him in 2020 was that if he was starting over again in New York? He would talk about identity because he noticed, even since 1989 when he and Kathy first came to the city, he said that it was kind of success and this isn't your mother's church and then it went into you know work as my Identity or whatever or you know, some kind of apologetics. I'm not doing him Justice on this, but he said if I was starting over again. Identity has become so huge not just sexual identity. But with the demise of the church people are looking to attach their identity to something else. What are you seeing? You mentioned identity. Are you seeing something different? Are you seeing an extrapolation? What are you noticing about identity and the role it's playing in secularism?

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**Jon Tyson:** Well, what Tim said, and these are all just paraphrases not exact quotes, was the essence of sin and how it maps itself out in secularism is not any particular moral violation. It's not you know, it's not the breaking of rules as such it is the construction of an identity without any reference point towards God. So in Romans chapter 1 when Paul's going to map out to the great city of Rome, I mean you imagine writing a letter to Christians in the city of Rome. You think, if you've ever been to Rome, you think about the Palatine Hill, you think about all the temples, you think about the military, you think about the sports, you think about all the nations, it's a huge huge city.

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And Paul starts by saying, they did not acknowledge him as God or give him thanks. So all worship is rooted in a sense of, I recognize I'm created and dependent and therefore my response is gratitude and worship. Compared to idolatry, which says I am self-defining and entitled. I've made myself and I have obligations to nobody beyond myself. That's the essence of how modern people, I think in many ways that we're talking about, form their identity. The sin is that there's not a reference point towards God. So the thought that there is a way you should have to live.

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That you cannot have identity options as a blank slate for self-expression, that just sounds like cultural heresy. And so I see a lot of people who absolutely live their life by self-definition without reference point to the Creator. So for example, we're now playing the role of the Creator. Jesus says in Matthew 19, have you not read the

Creator made the male and female now in the modern world, we're saying I am the Creator I can make myself a male or female. There's no reference point to when he sort of Divine Design blowing of distinctions and boundaries. I think yeah Philip Reef who's been mentioned on a podcast before, he talks about culture and anti-culture and anti-culture is the annihilation and hunting down of any settled convictions.

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Culture is organizing chaos for flourishing. And anti-culture is hunting down boundaries and convictions and destroying them. And I think that's what we're seeing with identity. There's no ordering the raw elements of Life under some Divine vision. It's just radical self-expression based on whatever economic, sexual, political, even theological categories that you want. So that's, I mean, I think we all know that how that makes that hard. Is to tell one of these people I have good news for you. There's a way you're supposed to be and you have to change and for a lot of people that does not come across as good news that comes across as oppressive, restrictive, harsh, controlling, bigoted.

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I think it was Lyotard who said postmodernism is a suspicion of meta-narratives. And I think there is an acute suspicion of anybody who tells you how to live your life.

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So yeah, I mean, that is happening a lot. Yeah.

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**Carey Nieuwhof:** Yes and no. Not disagreeing with you, but the idea that, okay, we're all opposed to meta -narratives, but I think you raise a really good point. We're all creating our own meta -narratives. So if my identity isn't in work, it might be in my sexuality, it might be in my status, it might be in my politics, it could be in this label. It's funny, we live in a very anti-label culture.

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Except we all want to label ourselves, and we want to say, I am fill in the blank. It's like this push-pull, this yin and yang. What are you noticing in the people that you're actually interacting with in New York City? Which in many ways is a cultural Harbinger for everything that is to come in America down the road and I know a lot of people in the South would say no, it's not it's like well just look at what was happening in New York 20 years ago. Look at what's happened in the nation now you'll see some parallels.

**Jon Tyson:** Yeah, I mean there would be some some universals that what happens in New York does get distributed to all the places I think in some sense. shed media consumption has...Um, New York has lost its global importance in some areas because everybody's looking at the same YouTube videos and whatever's going viral. So there's definitely a great flattening, location of flattening that social media has done for us which has staggering implications, but there will always be a local reality to where you live. I think one thing that you know, maybe you see on the news that I feel, acutely the migrants who are here in New York City. 180,000 migrants have come here in the last 18 months two years you think about I don't know if you're still in Canada, but I like this there's there isn't hundreds of cities over 180,000 people in Canada and maybe even in the US there's not so they just you had 180,000 people that the city is in many ways paying for.

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Um, trying to integrate and build new lives here and, um, that is causing a lot of chaos. The systems are not designed to support that many people. There's a lot of heartbreak, a lot of terrible stories, a lot of pain, a lot of controversy. That is a real factor. Um, I mean, that, that affected my life this morning at six AM. I mean, that is, well, you're just, you're talking to people, you're meeting people, you're seeing people on the streets, you know, um, there's whole families asking for money, sitting there begging, you know, um, there's other folks who are being horrifically discriminated against in the workplace because they have very little agency to defend themselves. There's a lot of exploitive labor and work conditions, incredible economic challenges.

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Church, you know, what role does the church play in that? Many of these folks don't speak English and so you try to offer support and anyway that so that's something that I don't think when people think New York City, Manhattan, they're thinking that, and I think that's something that we would think and pray about a lot. I think another one people are sort of thinking through is AI. New York is a creative industry. what it's doing for content in terms of writing, even art, automation, a lot of those things, I think there's I think a lot of New Yorkers are thinking about what are the implications of that cost of living? I mean, it's just stupidly prohibitive.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Almost everywhere but especially New York.

**Jon Tyson:** Yeah, what's it's sort of at that point where it's like Can you build a life here long-term?

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Probably not, not for most people, you got to be really successful and often that's success is going to put you through a gauntlet of about a decade where your schedules choked out. And so yeah, so I think I see that as something but I think a lot of people would say it's the best and worst of times in New York. It's it's amazing. It feels amazing. You know, I was out on the street on 9th Avenue right before I came up here sun shining. It's a beautiful winter day. It's clear people are walking around a lot of joy, so yeah, I think I think New York is leaning into the realities of you know, technology and immigration and the economy. Not at meta levels, but on very very personal and profound level. So these big news headlines. We feel those on a very very personal level around us quite a bit.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** So how has that changed or altered your approach to Ministry over the last few years?

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**Jon Tyson:** Well, honestly, it's a real tension with us. We don't own any facilities. I've been here 19 years. Pack up, tear down, four services on a Sunday, we have three venues as a church. And no matter how you gamify it or talk about Jesus taking off his outer robe and washing people's feet and having a servant's heart, 19 years of doing the same stuff in a city like New York where you can't even park properly is frustrating. So we don't control most of our leases. So we can't serve the poor.

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We can't bring, like our offices where I am right now. I'm in Hell's Kitchen. We can't, there are security guards at the front desk. We can't bring the poor in and care for them and offer services. So a lot of our stuff has been through Partnerships and I think we've had a more external focus on Partnerships. How do we empower other churches? How do we give resources to other churches? We've increased our giving to People we think are serving the city well. I think yeah, I think that it's an outward focus and it's an inner frustration is probably what I feel that church has grown a lot since Covid. So we feel growth strains. We've got all the systems strains many ways. We're in an act six moment, you know a lot of like who's job is it to do what good growth problems? But all of that put together does make for some challenging leadership.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** You started off with generational differences. So what do you know noticing and what kind of tension is that creating around your table or tables?

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**Jon Tyson:** I think a big one. So number one I want to say I feel torn on both sides. I'm 47. I'm an old 47 man. Not a young 47.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** What does that mean? What do you mean by that?

**Jon Tyson:** I don't know. I don't know. I just got a lot of mileage on this model. So it would be some examples some of our older folks sort of can't believe the way they're talked to so there's just there's just no assumption of cultural respect. There's no you think you deserve something because you've been breathing are a few years longer than me now, no one would say that but you know, I mean an example would be when I get done preaching some of the things that people say to me. It's just like hey, you don't have, you believe you have a full right to say whatever you want to any person in the world without any filter. And you know, I don't take that to heart that often. I want to engage and I want to give a warm welcome and make people remember How non -defensive and open I was but I think those interpersonal things are very very real the amount of technology jokes people make about me is staggering like Hey Jon, like Facebook ads. Hey, you on Facebook this morning?

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You know, I'm not on TikTok and I think I'm cool on Instagram. They're like, I'm just realizing, and I think other folks are realizing that we are not the edge. Now here's why that's hard. I our church has never had more influence or momentum than this moment and so you can you can build a world at my age where you feel like you're the center of it But if only you could realize the center of your world is on the side of the stage of history.

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You know what I mean? And so you've got to you've got to lean into the future because the Futures hear more than we already know. It's the classic you are one of the first people I heard point this out. Everybody was talking about reaching Millennials and you're like Millennials drive minivans and have kids you got to go after Gen Z. It's sort of like that. The future is more present than we're aware of but we're still building for the past even by a few years and I think I feel that around the table. Another thing I feel around the table is a lack of biblical worldview. Not even biblical knowledge, a lot of people listen in a podcast and by the laps, there's a lot of a lot of Bible input but there's a lot of discernment. And so there's a lot of a lot of younger folks who have not been taught properly how to think in a Godly way about all of reality and I think there's a lot of secularism in their worldview.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Coming up with some pretty dense sentences here packed with meaning Jon. So I'd like to drill down a little bit further. First of all just an



observation about your 40s. Thanks for going there. A lot of people who are in the senior pastor chair are in that space right now, and I've got a decade on you. I'll be 50 well decade and a bit I'll be 59 by the time this comes out.

**Jon Tyson:** You look like you've got less mileage on you than me, mate, so congratulations.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Well, I'm fighting with the sun here in my studio that is in between lighting and renovation. Again tech jokes, but it's really interesting. I think your 40s is a really awkward decade. I remember being 42 and that was the last time, I don't know why this stuck out. It just hit me when I was 42, nobody's calling me a young leader anymore. Happened till I was 41 and you're not being seen and you're not quite a sage or an elder of the village as Bob Goff would say or that kind of thing yet. You know, by the time you're almost out of your 50s, people look at you differently and there's a little more grace there, perhaps, but it's a very awkward teenager phase of adult life.

**Jon Tyson:** It is. It's kind of a second adolescence.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** It is like a second adolescence. I think that's why you see marriages blow apart. That's why you see people have affairs because your youth is stealing away, but your wisdom years are just getting started, theoretically.

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**Jon Tyson:** Oh, mate, we could do a whole podcast on midlife. I've just done a huge, I've got a course that I do at pastors events called Ministry in Midlife because it's almost no theology of ministry for middle-aged people and a lot of the crises happening in ministry are being called spiritual warfare, cultural change, lack of accountability, and really it's the leaders internal life not having the tools needed to make it into the second half of life. That's a different issue, but it's certainly a very very prevalent one.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Interesting, what are some top insights from that course about midlife?

**Jon Tyson:** Well, if you have a problem midlife crisis It should feel as awkward as your teenage years. It is a second adolescence. The first half is really about accomplishment and success. It's called heroic thinking in your 20s you like what did the generation before tolerate this do this? I'll show them. And then when you get a little older into your 30s, you know, like why do my parents have such a bad marriage?

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Why don't they just love each other and work it out? And then in towards your late 30s, you're like who else really hard to accept another person as they are and not trying to change you? Wow, I actually think I may be the one that needs to change. So you shift from heroic thinking. to the second half of life, which is really defined by meaning and wonder So I listened, similar to you. There's very very few worldly accomplishments. I'm interested in. You know, you speak it enough staff you you just kind of like hey, look there's not there's not a conference on Earth right now. If I got to speak out of it would probably move my heart. I tried to serve Jesus, but I'm not chasing those sorts of things. I realize life is hard. What I'm chasing is meaning who am I, really, not who I wish I was.

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Find joy and accept that, and then wonder, life beats the stuffing out of you. It's very easy to get cynical and lose vision and joy, and so it's a quest to re-enchant your heart. But to do that in midlife in a mature way is more than hobbies and great vacations. It is a real sense of trying to find God in the world in a new way. Anyway, so yeah, there's not a lot of tools for that in ministry, under the pressure of ministry.

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**Carey Nieuwhof:** Yeah, and bigger and better does lose its luster, doesn't it? It really does. It just starts to fade. You're just not as motivated. I was thinking about that. I was recalibrating my personal schedule earlier this week. I've got an episode with Cal Newport that'll be out sometime this year where I kind of had him consult with me live and I just done it the day before and I want to spend the first two hours and I'm so early stages into this this could all blow up by the time this broadcasts, but I thought I want to live like our mutual friend Jon Mark Comer. You're good friend want to live with my devices off for the first few hours of the day and the digital Bible was getting in the way of that because I use YouVersion like half a billion other people do. And then but it was so tempting for me. I'll check social. I'll just see who texted me. I'll just and so I literally grabbed my analog Bible off the shelf printed out my prayer schedule print it out. My Bible my One Year Bible reading plan and very small fonts so that I just now look it up analog style and just started going with that and the first two hours of the day are devoted to zero productivity and a lot of deep thinking and creating.

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So I'm working on a project right now that may or may not see daylight but a few days into it, it's just so refreshing and it's like, I don't know that his will be a book. I

don't know whether it'll be a documentary. I don't know if anyone will be interested. I don't know whether I'm going to go after a publishing deal or whether I'm going to do it myself. I don't care. I just want to do the work and hopefully in service of church leaders who are listening one day and if it takes me two years it takes me two years. That's fine. That is so refreshingly liberating and a younger driven me would have been like Scottish by Christmas. It's like hey something will happen, you know, but I don't know do you feel some of those changes happen?

**Jon Tyson:** Well, you know, what's so interesting what I think one of the things you would said maybe we'd touch on his like, you know, like what have you done a cultivate resiliency? It's interesting you said two hours, because I have found for about 23 years of my life, that it takes me about two hours in the morning to be the man I want to be in the day. And that two hours is, I've got a little template.

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Listen, man, I'm an organized guy, but I've got a little template, like here's my perfect day, here's my perfect day, here's my perfect week, broken down into perfect morning, perfect afternoon, perfect evening.

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And my perfect morning takes me two hours to get through. And it's so different than what people think. It's looking at photography. It's reading poetry. It's reading Smith Wigglesworth's daily devotional, so I get a little dose of Pentecostal faith. It's reading John Frames, Small Theology, so I'm really understanding who God is. It's lectio divina. It's slow thought. It's receiving the Father's love. There's zero contending, urgency, a sense of duty. And exactly like you're saying, it's offered me standing there with coffee sort of looking off into the horizon, lost in thought and so, people would say where do you get time to do it? And I'll say I can't not do it. It's not even a necessity for me. Like I can't live the life. I'm called to live and the demands that are on my heart without having a well to draw on a daily basis and it just it just takes me about two hours. To sort of run the script. That's just what just how long it takes. so I don't know. It's not prescriptive. It's just an observation. But maybe there's something there.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** But you've got the craziness of like 19 years in rented facilities growth challenges all the usual stuff. You know last time you're on your talking about your wife having long covid your whole family being sick. Like you've got the normal stuff well and abnormal stuff of everyone else.

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And it can be so tempting to hit the ground at pick your our five six seven am and just run into it. But you know, you're one of the I don't want to say who it was but I was texting with a guy who's becoming a friend. He's about 15 years younger than me leads a very large ministry. And we were at an event together and he just said, you know where are the Tim Keller's and the Jon Pipers of this generation? And it's a really great question to ask and when I think about the future and I've said this to you, I've said this to Jon Mark Comer, I've said this to a handful of other people. I think doing that deep work the combination of looking at photography that you really enjoy cuz you know, you do enjoy that and Lectio Divina and prayer and leadership hours a day and reading widely. You've already quoted a couple of philosophers. Nobody listening to this has probably heard of, including me, like that actually over time, at 57, you'll have a decade more reps of that, at 67, you'll have even more, at 77, should we live so long, you'll have even more. And that's how wisdom is cultivated. That's why Eugene Peterson was, you know, I was talking to somebody, well, I think this was public, Jon Mark Comer. Yeah, he did. This was on my podcast. And he was saying, you know, he went to see Eugene Peterson shortly before he died a couple of years, and it was clear that his decline was in process, and he didn't say a single word that hadn't been published elsewhere. But it was like being in the presence of Christ.

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**Jon Tyson:** I was on that trip. I was in that one.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** You were on that trip? Okay, tell us, give us your slant.

**Jon Tyson:** No, no, I mean, yeah, I mean, he definitely had some cognitive decline. I mean, it's I've been around a lot of great leaders. He was the genuinely Most sage-like in the truest archetype of sensor that would he was a quiet, content, half an eternity, half in the room, quiet, authoritative man. He had it's just he was liberated from a single thing to prove. and I made it was a it was a really I mean we We took yeah, we took time to debrief that we spent a day and a half. I don't know. I can't remember how long was exactly and then we spent two and a half days debriefing it. Because it was really kind of a jarring experience. There's not a lot of men that are like that, and yeah, I think we have an obligation. I mean yeah, there's a there's a massive generational mantle transfer through death and ministry failure happening right now, and some of the guys getting it are not quite ready for it, and I look around New York. I'm in. gosh, man, there's not a I feel like a young father. Now I've got adult children. You know, both my kids are in their 20s. But I look around and I'm like at some point. You've got to say Lord. I'm not quite ready. But there's not, but I

feel like I'm up a little bit. Now again, I don't think the difference with someone like Piper and Keller is these men were raised pre-social media.

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So whatever fame they had, both of them had fame, Keller's fame was tape circulation, subscriptions to Redeemer's literal cassette tape ministry. And so that will draw your attention away, but only incidentally.

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And there was not podcasts, there was not a publishing accolade like today, there's no social media, there's no blogging. So these men were formed in a kind of deep, contextual faithfulness that this generation has not, will not, cannot be formed in. So we have a lot of catching up to sort of imitate the conditions of depth, stability, lack of external awareness that those folks have. That's how they were, I remember talking with Keller and he said, and I just published my first book.

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And he was like, none of you have got anything to say until you turn 50 and I remember just going. Oh, I was gonna ask you to endorse just and I was like and I think he published reason for God like in his mid fifties.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** I think it was 57. I mean, I'm like, so shocking.

**Jon Tyson:** Yeah, and I think he left it too late, just personally. But when he arrived he could just hang it any level and I think. I I do agree with got a we've got to ask God for new spiritual fathers and mothers to come up but we're way more wonderful and deformed and they were by the cultural mechanisms we have, particularly around pastoring. You know.

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**Carey Nieuwhof:** Several questions, it's hit me, you know because I've I would say being my stage, you know born in 1965. 10, 15 years ago, I would say yeah, I have a pre-digital memory. But that's when I was like 38 40 and now I'm saying it and I'm realizing there are 40 year olds with no pre-digital memory and I'm wondering if we're going to become the generation that dies off remembering the depression and nobody else remember that depression, right, or the war or whatever it is. It's interesting.

**Jon Tyson:** It's a very very important question with there's a real tension there. There's attention on forgetting the past out of a desire to be relevant and you don't

want to be relevant. You don't want to, I have negative desire to try and be a young cool pastor. Negative. I never. If I tried to dress cool, my wife would say, what are you doing, why are you dressing like that?

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I basically wear a uniform and it is a non-observable, non-cool uniform. So I don't want to be one of those older guys trying to be cool and relevant and keep up. But I also don't want to get stuck in the past. I mean, I've got a very high appreciation for jazz music. Nothing will bring me more joy than going to, you know, Birdland is literally out that window. And man, I would kill to just sneak over and get a 5:30pm set, get one drink, sit at the bar and take in a show. I think that's cool and the next generation cares about that. And the vast majority, it's like talking about Bob Dylan. They're like, Bob who? I don't care about the war years. I don't care about peace in the 60s. It's irrelevant to me. It's very, very hard. So I was thinking this morning, I was watching in an elevator, an older leader interacting with the younger leader and this guy I thought was doing it really well. And he just sort of acknowledged that he wasn't a main feature in that person's audience. He just sort of acknowledged, I got an older generation, here's my demographic. I can't I may not be the man to reach you. So I'm going to be really good at who I am. You know, I think it's done this really well? Gordon MacDonald. You know, he's just kind of like hey, man. You can try and get teenagers to care about it. But I just don't think they will. It's their loss, I think he's just kind of like, if you read his books, he would just sort of say the older you get the more you realize it's about relationships you're living in the past.

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Your best days are not ahead you what's coming up is sickness and Frailty and yeah, Heaven is I guess but so it's tough to get that. So I guess the answer I would say is this I'm trying to be timeless. I'm trying to be helpful. I'm not trying to be cool. I'm trying to be wise I'm trying to be trusted. I'm trying to be stable and if that helps younger folks and they feel like he feels like my dad a bit but he feels like a young dad and I'm grateful for it and older folks feel like maybe he's a young sage, man. He's emerging into a really thoughtful leader. I'm happy with that. But what I don't want to do is Chase Trends and try and be relevant and try and have the kids think I'm cool. Give it to someone who is call and mentor them and love them and help them with their character and mature them.

[00:37:39.100]

**Carey Nieuwhof:** You do TikTok. I'm good.

[00:37:42.500]

**Jon Tyson:** Exactly. I'll start with MySpace.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** No, I think this is, you know, and I think one of the reasons I'm thinking about pre-digital memory, it's not just, you know, I remember the 70s and 80s, the 90s, you know, it's not that. It's like literally for millennia, we have lived without digital tools and culture keeps changing. But there's something I'm reading.

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I just started, so I'm hesitant to recommend it, but it's a really interesting look at history. But Mustafa Suleyman's *The Coming Wave*, do you know that book? Somebody recommended it to me, and it's fantastic.

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He started DeepMind, and he's just writing about all the changes in history. Last year I read Tom Holland's *Dominion*, another really interesting retrospective, and you see the patterns. And I think we're at a hinge in history where those of us who do have a pre-digital memory perhaps have an interesting role as Interlopers are interpreters to play in helping people make sense out of what really matters because I can't imagine getting my first device at 2, you know as an iPad babysitting me at a restaurant, and you know, having a smartphone and middle school where I had full command of the internet, and everything else. That really does shape your world differently. So I want to ask you...

**Jon Tyson:** Can I just say one thing? It's very interesting. When people say to me like what are you love doing children? Like my favorite thing is between 20 to 50 people and four days, two days and not enough, three days not enough, four days, that's when you get to that final layer of defense. And just going deep with people. AI cannot take deep human connection. And so look, I'm not worried that I'm gonna run out of content. I'm not I'm not the worst AI gets the better it gets for in-person discipleship. Now I'm not anti-online discipleship. I love it. There's never been a better opportunity to leverage technology ever, but there's no threat. So if you if your job is being an internet celebrity, you gonna have a challenge for crowded Market, but if your job is like discipling people in person and loving them doing humanity. These are the most beautiful days at churches almost ever had it will only get better and better. So the future will be a jewel response, but I'm very excited at my age to meet with people a few years either side of my life and just process becoming like Jesus together. Just being honest going there *Opening Our Hearts* getting below the surface. And I'm very excited about what that means for the church.

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Carey Nieuwhof: I think this is true for all ages. It's a theme that's sort of developing from conversation to conversation. Not everyone, but a lot of them on the podcast. For those of you who listen every episode, you'll notice when the culture goes shallow, the church's move is to go deep.

[00:40:46.200]

**Jon Tyson:** Yeah, you're right.

[00:40:46.800]

**Carey Nieuwhof:** And I'm for you. I mean, we use AI, I use AI. We can talk about that if you want. AI is here. It's inevitable. It probably won't be contained. And God is still sovereign, but I think we are the alternative to what the culture is missing. Is that what you're thinking when it comes to personal?

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**Jon Tyson:** Well, I mean, it's deep connections. Everyone's got sort of shallow connections, but all that's really doing is producing. It's making us knowledgeable, but not wise. Connected, but lonely. I think this is a beautiful moment to say we're here. We love you and we got space at the table. I think it's a beautiful moment.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** When you walk away from and you said it took a few days to debrief from a Eugene Peterson visit and you said he had one foot in eternity in one foot in this world. I think John Ortberg said this about Dallas Willard who he knew. I think this is either John or Dallas's wife. Who said After he died, he might not even have known the difference because he was so Heavenly-minded like it might have taken a while to go. Oh, wait a minute. I'm dead and this is an awful lot like my life right like so good. Yeah.

**Jon Tyson:** That's really cool.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** I want to know what that did to you because there's a lot of us who would have loved to have been in that room. There were a handful of people what Legacy impacted that leaf.

[00:42:16.700]

**Jon Tyson:** Well, I tell you the most can I tell you the most shocking thing from the whole meeting the most shocking thing from that meeting today was it was a good group of young pastors? Who were there many whom you would know and everyone's like thank you Eugene for just pastoring 300 people. Thank you for keeping the church small. Thank you for just having the vision of being a Shepherd.



Thank you for not caring about size. And at some point all of these accolades sort of shook him a little bit and he said very quiet raspy voice. Hang on. Do you think I kept the church at 300? I couldn't grow it past 300. That was my leadership limit. That wasn't a philosophy of ministry. That was the limit that God gave me. He said the lady who came in after me was a way better leader and the church grew to 600. And it was interesting watching people who had sort of moralized a leadership limit or capacity as some deep, profound conviction. And it was just like, oh, really, really interesting.

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What I loved, what I think happened in my heart was this sense, dear God, let me finish well. Let me finish well. It seems almost impossible to finish well these days. I mean, if you look at the Christian magazines, another one of my mentors, a guy that really impacted my philosophy of ministry, has just had an affair and been fired.

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It just made me want to finish well, made me want to be Godly. Made me want to be kind and patient. It made me want to invest in younger leaders. It made me want to be strangely present. Made me want to talk about Jesus and poetry, you know, and to be a great man. It was really it's really hard to explain. the depth of his presence You said we talk about charisma is four things strength wants intelligence and energy. And as in the world sort of defines it so you get something strong with the warm, but they know a lot like good energy. Like wow, that's funny. He was so charismatic. And basically he's just warm and kind, you know what I mean. It was he had a weight to him. So it really I would describe it as an anointing.

[00:44:45.400]

He had a sense of the presence of God not like a Pentecostal though. He was Pentecostal in his early years. He was also a butcher which I loved but he he had an anointing. He was under the shadow of the Almighty. And if he got near him, you could feel it. It was beautiful man.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** That's what John Mark said. He said it was like being in the presence of Christ, which I think is one of the reasons I'm a little obsessed with people who are finishing. Well, and from everything we know Eugene finished well. Tim Keller finished well and many others many of whom names. We don't know. That's right. Yeah, a lot of people do it, right. I want to meet more and more of them Gordon MacDonald is someone you know, he had a mistake along the way but anyone who knows him would say it was out of character and he is finishing extremely well.

**Jon Tyson:** But the gift he gave us was how to recover and all these folks do not seem like they're not recovering well.

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**Carey Nieuwhof:** Rebuilding Your Broken World, fantastic book that gets forgotten by Gordon's people, like, you know, people who know of Gordon. They know of the story, but they don't know of the process he went through to finish well and live out his years.

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Yeah. And you know, it's interesting, you know, when you think about where the church is going in the greats we've lost, the women and men that we've lost over the years, Gordon's been on a few times. I've got to reach out to him again and just reconnect. In fact, we haven't talked in a bit, but the number of people who DM me or text me after they hear one of his episodes, you know, particularly the first or the second one when he was on the show, The View from 80 or whatever. Yeah, that was so good. Oh, he talks about the spiritual father and like good friends who never cry.

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Call me weeping and texts me saying I just broke down and cried. Like it's just we need more of that. So an encouragement to Young leaders is if you can drink from that stream and the last thing I'll say too if you want to capture a little bit. Have you seen the YouTube series that Fuller put on with Bono and Eugene Peterson up the lake?

**Jon Tyson:** I have seen that yes.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** A similar vibe to what you guys like.

**Jon Tyson:** I think I sat at that table man. I mean, I'm not exactly...

**Carey Nieuwhof:** That's was in his house. It was that house know it was in his house and he's got the white Mr. Coffee coffee maker, like no upscale cappuccino machine like and and apparently according to his biographer because I've done those interviews too with Eric's son and his biographer on the show most of the money he made off of the message, he just quietly gave away to people to fund their Seminary education or their doctoral studies and other causes that were close to his heart and they lived a very simple life.

[00:47:22.400]

**Jon Tyson:** Well, I think that his dad built that house and they just sort of maintained an added over the years. I mean you go there and the thing you notice about it is the beauty of Montana not the scale of the home. It's like what you're caught up in is Montana which God made.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** So it's well ordered. So we'll link to that in the show notes if anyone wants to see the vibe, but it was a very similar vibe and then you know, the iconic story of Eugene is Bono wanted to get a hold of him because he loved the message and so it's like Anna wants to invite you to a YouTube show and he goes well, I don't know whether I have the time and they're like are you kidding? It's Bono and he goes, yeah, but it's Ezekiel like he was in the middle of translating the Old Testament at the time. He got no you don't understand Bono.

**Jon Tyson:** That is a man in the second half of his life right there.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Uh-huh. Exactly. So, oh man, this is such a great conversation. So let's talk about Gen Z. You said you're getting challenged as a preacher now, there seems to be a breakdown in, I don't know whether you'd call it decorum, but people just, I think because we're all used to having a microphone now, are you finding, you know, and a phone where we can broadcast whatever, whenever to whomever, do you find, how do you, what's happening there? What's the dynamic, I guess, is the question.

[00:48:42.600]

**Jon Tyson:** Well, listen, I've got no complaint about it. It's how a generation grows up. So I'm not upset or offended or how could they, these are my kids' age, you know. It'll just be things like, you know, I'll spend, I'll read 15 books on a topic and put a hundred hours of really thoughtful analysis on something and then speak on something and someone should say, you haven't thought this through, like that's not even biblical. That's not even biblical. Have you read that book? And I was like...

[00:49:17.200]

Oh, yeah, I did read that one. You know, it's just sort of like it's an assumption that you know, nothing. It's, you know, rather than like wow, I assume you've really thoughtfully prepared and carefully worked through this and you know, so yeah a classic. Um, you know, someone had just said, I can't wait for your church to rethink your sexual ethics. And I was like hey with all due respect, you think I haven't thought this through? You think I'm sitting here twiddling my thumbs? You think when you drop something that you saw on a YouTube video about the word homosexual not being in the Bible like, I've never, oh my gosh, I've never heard that. I've never heard that. So again, I think there's an assumption of your ignorance.

They're not saying that because they're ignorant, they're saying it because they've just learned it and it's exciting for them and they want to test that. They're saying that because they care about people and they're worried that people who are not thoughtful are holding on to positions that are harmful for others. So, you know, it's um, in secularism there is no higher good than human flourishing.

And so I think the way secularism shows up in Gen Z is the ultimate good as human flourishing. And so somebody says, like, you're harming someone with that idea. That's like the ultimate trump card. Your position does harm and so yeah, I mean, this is you know, eudaemonia this is like human flourishing is the highest good of life and self-actualization is the point of existence. And that's a lot better than hedonism man, but it's just not the kingdom of Jesus. There's something about human flourishing which is the glory of Jesus and the kingdom of God. And so I think, I don't think we've done a good enough job teaching Gen Z about the kingdom of God. If they're meant, I would say this, if they're meant to be seeking this first, we owe them to tell them what it is that they're meant to be seeking. And I do not feel like we have done that. I feel like we've shown them a shallow version of modern church. I think we've shown them soundbites. I just don't think they've had a beautiful theology.

So part of the great project of my life would be to talk about Jesus and the kingdom of God as the main priority. Just Jesus and the kingdom of God.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Well, I was going to ask you and this is a micro and a meta question. But in the micro when you're having that conversation someone's like hey, you just need to rethink your sexual ethic like come on man. What do you say in the moment and then second part, what will your long-term play be, which I think you just hinted at.

**Jon Tyson:** Well, I mean in many ways, I'll be very kind in the moment. I'll be discerning in the moment. It depends on the situation. You know, is this person coming is this a social media grab? I don't engage in social media. Nothing good happens.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Nothing if it happens online?

**Jon Tyson:** Yeah if it happens online, there's no response. I mean I say, hey look go back. I've taught on this. I did an hour and 20 minute talk and she's in the gay community if you listen to that. I'm happy to engage on any point on it.

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But if it's in person I'll say hey, yeah, tell me. The number one thing I'm trying to do is not my opinion versus your opinion. The number one thing I'm trying to do is like,

hey, how do you read these texts? Because my assumption is you want to follow Jesus because you're talking about Jesus in this. So how do you interpret these texts now? They may have not been used appropriately but to dismiss them because people have been hurt by them is bad theology. You can't we don't do that to any other issue the Trinity's hurt people in Cults. Therefore, we we don't teach on the Trinity these have become, you know, so again, but you can't weaponize verses, so I want to talk through the text. How do you read Romans 1?

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What do you think Jesus meant by Matthew 19? And I'll be honest with you I would way rather engage with someone who disagrees with me and has really thought it through, than someone who agrees with me and hasn't done like deep work on this. You know, I'm not looking for it to rouse the fan base or to rally the base, you know. So I want to be pastoral. I want to be thoughtful and I want to understand where they're coming from Is this an issue you've wrestled with personally and you're trying to figure out if there's a place for you in our church Do you have a friend you care about a family member? I'm trying to discern where they're at.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** So, you know when it comes to the long play, I think you're right Everybody does have instantly formed opinions on almost everything and some sometimes, you know, they're well thought through sometimes not so much but what is the long play that you have for figuring out how to pastor a church and lead people through a time where the culture wars are going on and everybody has an opinion on everything literally.

**Jon Tyson:** Well, it would be you know, Gerald Sits who wrote Water From a Deep Well, I think you wrote A Resilient Faith. He basically said the key to the church whose current moment is the second-century Christians in the Roman Empire. And it's basically generative suffering love. That's sort of the approach. Create the world you want to see.

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You will be persecuted for doing this. Do not get bitter. Suffer and love well. I think that's really my Approach. I think my approach is really, I don't get to I'm trying to inherit. I'm trying to be faithful to the deposit I've received. I want to Steward that well. I want to make it about Jesus and not Jesus and politics or Jesus and purely and ethical Vision or Jesus and human fly. I want to talk about Jesus first. And then I want to build a beautiful community of people who model the way of Jesus and such a way that you ask is this place at the type for me. You know, I've been thinking. I've been thinking so much about this one scene in the life of Jesus. That is just so it is so

beautiful I am fixated on it. Jesus is having a meal with a Pharisee and a sinful woman goes to the Pharisee's house, brings a bottle of perfume, anoints Jesus' feet, and then washes his feet with her perfume and hair. And the Pharisee says, if this man was a prophet, he would know who's touching him.

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And I just thought for a moment, who is Jesus that the most sexually shamed, outcasted person in a religious society is willing to endure the shame of going into the house of the Pharisee, to be in the presence of a holy man who will show her grace?

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How did Jesus do that? That is what I want to do for the future. I want to offend Pharisees, welcome sinners, and still be a holy person that does not change my theology. And I think—

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I mean, how did Jesus do that man? That is it. The emotional field he created. The compassion, the kindness, the dignity. So to me, I've just spent a lot of time like how do we create a church where that happens auto credit church. We don't lower our standards how to credit church people know what we believe but our love is so strong. It's stronger than the love of the tax collector who will love you because you're like them we will love you in your differences. That church has not been good at that. I don't know if I'm good at that but I am resolved the church should be like that.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** I want to, and feel free to disagree or have a totally different take, but what I'm sensing, seeing, is that some churches are finding growth or at least stability by saying here's a very narrow line. This is what we believe on sexual or sexuality. This is what we believe on racial justice. This is what we believe on economics Etc. This what we believe about the second coming. Everybody here agree? Good, we're fine. There's another type of church that I see is growing in healthy that isn't necessarily, you know, far left or far, right, but biblically centered, biblical anchored, faithful teaching, where the teaching is orthodox but because it's such a curious mix of people in the church, there's a diversity of opinions on some of the key issues of the day. You will have people who vote left, you know, and people who vote right. You will have people who maybe don't have a biblical worldview on what they believe sexuality should be, etc, etc. And so you got a diversity of belief, not necessarily about Jesus. I mean, there are people who are still exploring and

checking that out, but just who don't all fit this uniform grid and yet, you know, somehow they're coexisting. What do you see in that?

[00:58:35.600]

**Jon Tyson:** I mean, I have two immediate thoughts on it. Number one, that feels like a very challenging long-term solution. It probably works fine in the short term. You've got to have clarity on key issues, you know. I mean, I think you just do. That's how humans cohere. But then here is Jesus with a zealot and a tax collector, and they're both his disciples.

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And so Jesus somehow had a way to offend everybody's vision, elevate everybody's vision, surprise them with what it looks like to live in that vision. And then the real risk was when he ascended in Pentecost. They're in the room and he's physically gone and so the Holy Spirit comes and then they're baptized and Christ is in them and that same Spirit as internal. So I like that idea. It all depends on what you can consider, again, what are primary and secondary issues. I think you can have disagreement on cultural issues. I don't know if people in the modern world think you can have disagreement on cultural issues. You know, so just in secularism, there are no secondary issues, there's only primary issues and the issues that we draw our morality and identity and our sense of worth from so that makes it very very challenging.

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It is a messy time man. It's a message time because yes, there's so much ideology and so much failure of the church and often the ideologies address the failures of the church, but they're not the biblical solution to what the church should do. And so, you know, you've lost the moral authority to sort of Rage Against the ideology because the people who don't believe what you think they should believe are sort of living the thing you should do better than you are and that's the challenge. So again, the future is discipleship.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Wow, okay. Yeah, I mean there's so much and you know, I think there's a stat. I think Ryan Burge might have had this one. It could have been Barna. I don't know which, but people, if you're a parent of you know, a 20-something child you would rather have the more people are comfortable with the marrying a non-Christian than someone who votes differently than they do.

**Jon Tyson:** Yeah, that's that sounds about right. But again, I mean, that's because we no longer have a sacred sense of identity formation. It's only cultural identity

formation. So that sounds right. I just saw an interesting study that was done this morning, it was on shopping, and it said, how to tell which generation you're in based on this one question of your shopping preferences. You're at the checkout, do you want to talk to a human to scan your goods or do you want self-checkout?

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And everybody above Gen Z wanted a human and Gen Z said if they took away self-scanning, I would stop shopping there. And the response was, I don't like the human interaction. Isn't that fascinating?

**Carey Nieuwhof:** What do you read into that?

**Jon Tyson:** I just read that there's a generational difference. That's what I read.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Anything else on the generations? You're giving them a seat at your table, you are.

**Jon Tyson:** Oh, yeah, man, I got a young staff man, I pastor a young church. Yeah I'm 47, my wife's 45. We are regularly the oldest people in the room by a decade plus, regularly, and you know, I've got to say I love it. I love it. I wouldn't trade it for the world. I'm grateful. I want to just call forth in prayer, mothers and fathers to come help us, but I do love it. I don't think I'm seeing anything a lot more than we've talked about one. One thing. I've noted, you know, I'm always starting Revival history. I read something about revival every day.

[01:02:30.600]

Most revivals even if they had an older leader. So Breakthrough by handing it over to the Next Generation. And so I mean Evan Roberts is in his mid-20s leading the Welsh Revival. But the Welsh Revival broke open because a teenage girl stood up and testified in a meeting and I said there's a cloud over the nation of Wales. And when she testified the rain started to fall. Even in the Hebrides Revival, Duncan Campbell, there was praying, Donald who was a teenage boy and Duncan Campbell in meetings with would look at him and say I can't get a breakthrough in prayer. Pray. And that's definitely something I'm noticing is you've got to give Gen Z serious spiritual responsibility. And it's, look at Jesus trusting his kingdom on earth to teenage fishermen. That's like you've got to give it over.

[01:03:29.200]

My one observation I have is about retiring earlier. Now look, I've known plans to retire soon. I mean, I've got a lot of energy. But it's about giving away the emphasis and the influence more quickly. One pattern my best mate Darren Whitehead and I



talk about, he was Hybil's number two, knows a ton of people from that world, is a lot of these guys that have spectacular failures, if they just let it go five years earlier, all they would be remembered for was once in a generation leaders. Something about grasping in those final years, or scandals catching up to them.

[01:04:09.000]

I want to let it go earlier. I want to give it away and I want to be there to support. I don't want to bail. I want to be there to support from behind and offer wise counsel, but I do think we tend to leave at five years. So if you build a big church in the passenger pastor's final years of legacy, here's my legacy. Those five years are often the very thing that the Gen Z leaders will have to spend breaking down before they can get back to zero before they can do what God's doing now not always but there's something that we should consider the older we get, you know.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** It is interesting as someone who passed the baton at 50, which almost everybody said was way too young now. I did keep a teaching role for another five.

**Jon Tyson:** And that's wise.

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**Carey Nieuwhof:** You know, I highly recommend it. I'm not saying everybody should go at 50 Mark Batterson told me, we went out for dinner shortly after, he's like, well, you know, the levitical priests they would retire at 50. Now 50 3000 to 4000 years ago might be different than 50 today. But you know, there was a study done a number of years ago. I know I linked to it on my blog that said one of the predictors of a moral failure is you stay in a position, this was corporate, six months or longer than you should.

**Jon Tyson:** Oh that's interesting months. That's interesting.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** But what happens, you get bored, you get restless, the energy isn't there you get frustrated because maybe you're not growing like you used to grow and then you get distracted and when you know, there's that hunting passage if David's life at the time that Kings normally go to war. David was always at war, he wasn't at war. He takes a nap. He's on the palace roof, and we know what happens next. And it was one of those things where I'm like, oh, there's a lot of wisdom to that and yeah, I'll just underscore that.

[01:06:00.000]

**Jon Tyson:** I think it was Pete's Scazarro, I think this was him. Maybe it was Hybels. I can't remember. But they said there's three reasons why people stay too long. They haven't saved enough for retirement, so they need to keep working. They don't have a sense of identity beyond the task that many of these founding pastors have done for so long. And they don't have a ministry to go to next that feels meaningful. So you've got to start building the financial resources and the sort of the third act career that you're going to have and then figuring out what it's like to be God's man at that age of your life or God's woman at that age of your life. And I think we should think a little bit more about that the older we get, too.

[01:06:37.300]

**Carey Nieuwhof:** No, I agree. And I mean I didn't have the financial security to step out of the role. So it was a bit of a well. All right, here we go. And it's worked out just fine. It's fine. But I think there's an element of Faith too because if you wait until all the conditions are perfect. You probably waited too. Good word. It's like two seasons too long. What else you're seeing on the church at landscape that is really catching your attention or your heart good or bad?

**Jon Tyson:** What I said what I see as good is the openness of Gen Z. I see that as a very hopeful thing, you know, I was at Asbury. I mean it was just absolutely beautiful. I mean, gosh, that got me a lot of hope, a lot of spiritual hunger, you know, the good news about secularism is that it's a failing story.

[01:07:31.700]

Jesus and the kingdom of God have never looked better for an anxious, overwhelmed, and burdened generation. To have Jesus say come to me all you who are weary heavy laden and I'll give you rest learn from me. That's good news. So I think I'm excited about that. I'm interested in what technology does for discipleship. I obviously think there's a ton of downsides but it is a glorious moment. For technology in the church for discipleship in the church to access to learn and have our deep questions answered and all that sort of stuff very excited about that. Very excited about digital evangelism. You remember that that study I think it was called the Great Opportunity by the Pinetops Foundation. They had a phrase in there that I've used, you know, I'm looking for a hundred digital Billy Grahams.

[01:08:20.100]

You know, one kid on TikTok can get more than Billy Graham did his entire life preaching ministry. We should, we need to leverage that. I was telling our team the other day, we need a budget where we literally have 10 creatives in a room doing digital evangelism all day, every day, in the room next to us. That is a massive

mission field. My vision is that kids are, teenagers are on the train going to school in New York City, having encounters with the Holy Spirit where Jesus comes through a TikTok video and they're arrested by the presence of God. I believe in that in the deepest part of my heart. You know, Luther, a failed Monk, marries a nun, took on the might of the Catholic church with a printing press and he did alright. So, again I want to leverage that. I'm so excited about that. I don't want to do it. It's not me. It's not like hey team put me on tiktok. It's like let's help you figure out how to reach your generation. Very excited about that. That being said, I took concerns at the same time, one is a lack of discernment. So much content, so little wisdom, ignorance of history, and heresy. And so you get a lot of people, you know, I'm in a lot of prayer meetings where I just want to put my hand upside. Excuse me. That's one 100% heretical. I don't mean even false teaching. I mean that was condemned by the church fathers in the third set. That's like not biblical. And then the whole room is like...

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Can you give me an example of that?

[01:10:04.400]

**Jon Tyson:** People who don't believe in the Trinity, but don't know it. You know or people who don't believe in the trinity, assumed universalism. You know what I mean? Human universalism and aversion to the wrath of God, you can say that if someone says oh Lord, please have mercy on them. They're under your judgment, immediately, a love. correct is going to come in the next prayer. Thank you Lord for your great love, you know, it's like no one can just handle the fact that you know, we rage against injustice, but we just cannot comprehend that God who is the source of all Justice would do the same thing. You know, um, so like discernment is a concern and this is an interesting one, though I am very sympathetic to it. It's an overemphasis on Sabbath.

[01:10:52.800]

**CN;** Really?

**Jon Tyson:** Yeah. I I've written about Sabbath. One of the most popular talks I've ever given is called Rest Must Resist Exhaustion.

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But Sabbath is in the context of a six-day work week. I always tell people like, you know, you committed to like the biblical view of Sabbath. I'm like, you work six days? I say, well, no, you've got an American view of work. Like enjoy the five-day weekend, but it's not biblical. Go to Israel, go to Israel and they're working six days a

week because that's what the Bible says. I'm not advocating working six days a week. My simple point is I think the job market has changed so much and there's been so much confusion in our culture and so much exhaustion and so much legitimate trauma in our culture, people have lost their capacity to work hard and long or the church has not provided in the theology of work. So it's sort of a typical person is saying it like this. They wouldn't say these words but the emphasis like this, oh, what a workaholic secular evil world. We live in we have to endure it all week and then we have this wonderful gift of Sabbath. That's not biblical. Biblical is, thank you God that you made me in your image that you have given me gifts to build culture, repair the world, and cultivate beautiful things for your glory and the good of others. Please help me do this work for your joy.

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And then thank you that I get to reflect at the end of the week and rest with gratitude for what has happened. So Sabbath is not an escape from the curse of the work. It's a mechanism to enable you to do it for the glory of God and do it for the long term. I get sad because I don't want Gen Z to miss out on the beauty of finding a sense of call. And doing it well and having a place in the world and blessing others because you're good at what you do when you and and you share it with others. So I think we need a bit recover a little bit of a theology of work.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** You know, that's a really helpful because you're right. The Theology of Sabbath can easily become an obsession with leisure, sort of this influencer lifestyle where you do have five-day weekends and four-day weekends, and I saw somebody posting recently. It was like, you know, if you really want extra time off, here are all the days to take off because they fall on long weekends. You only have to take four to get five days off and I'm like, whoa, that's like really gaming the system. Work is actually a gift of God, right? And without it, you listen to Arthur Brooks and other people like that, without work or a higher purpose, you're kind of lost.

[01:13:44.400]

**Jon Tyson:** 100%. When people are unemployed, they feel shame. When they're underemployed, they experience frustration. When they're employed, they feel dignity, like I'm earning a living here. When they have a career, they have a sense of accomplishment.

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But when you have a vocation you get a sense of divine favor. And that's what we need people to have like why God what have you made me to do in the world? We

need a Theology of creation and vocation to come back again. And with Gen Z being so creative, I'm like, I want to help them map that on to God's will for their lives and not make them think that they have to escape it.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** You know what I love about this conversation, if you rewound half an hour ago, it sounds like we're kind of pre-digital memory and all this stuff and yet it's like wouldn't it be great to have 10 Gen Z's TikTok in a room and we're finding them and they're being watched on the subway system as kids go to school. It's that rather than the 52-year-old senior pastor going put me on TikTok, right, which I'm not saying you shouldn't be on TikTok.

[01:14:59.800]

I love like it's it's a both and conversation not an either or conversation which is so helpful. Hey, there's so much we didn't get to and I want you to mention your new book called Fighting Shadows. I love that you continue to write, thank you for that. What else is on your mind? What else is on your radar right now?

**Jon Tyson:** You know, I basically try and if someone else is doing a great job, like if there's you know, I just try and champion their thing. I'm not sure I'm trying to sort of like solve problems and fill gaps a little bit one of the things I've really sort of fallen into if it was like a divine assignment is fatherhood and men's ministry. And it just it was not something I was looking for. I did this right-of-passage journey with my son. It was like one of the most beautiful, life-changing experiences of my life.

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I wasn't really going to do anything with it. I had dinner with Pete Gregg. I'd just come back from walking the Camino 500 miles across Spain with my son, and he said, hey man, that wasn't for you. You've got to get that off your laptop. That was for a generation of kids, like you need to put that out there.

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So I did that and that's probably had more favor than anything I've ever done, and that was a divine accident. Then I had so many dads reaching out saying, my dad never did this for me. Do you have anything for men? So yeah, I've got this thing called the Primal Path. It's like a five -year rider passage journey, proper deep discipleship to form adolescent boys into godly men. But then I've started this thing called Forming Men with Jefferson Bethke. This has another level of favor on it like anything I've seen, and it's a combination of psychology, theology, spiritual formation, and like Brotherhood and fatherhood. That's in a very rare combination.

Yeah, I tell people I'm not an Alpha male. I'm a Beta male. I've I don't think I've ever shot and killed an animal. I don't like killing stuff. I don't have a truck. I have a Honda you know what I mean? Like I'm not a... but I used to be a butcher and I'm from a working-class background. So I get those dynamics, but I'm a thoughtful, intellectual, urbanite. And yet, this is just getting like a resonance and it's on male formation. I've got a conviction that gender matters. It's not just a social construct. It's a spiritual reality, something that's a part of the grain of the universe, and that men need spaces, women need them too, but I think women have done better than men in the last 20 years men need spaces to be vulnerable honest and open, deal with the shame and failures, and then given a vision of how to move forward. I am seeing such accelerated transformation in the lives of these men. I feel like I'm almost struggling to know what to do with it. So we've got a non-profit. We've got a bunch of curriculum coming out for men and it's not like there's a lot of good curriculum but a lot of its 20 years old, and the changes in gender and culture and faith, it's almost like speaking a different language. So there's definitely core themes. But for whatever reason our language is like hitting a sciatic nerve in men's souls right now. So we wrote a book based on the seven core issues. We see men wrestling with the world today and we just try to address it. So that's what the book's about.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** It's called Fighting Shadows, right?

**Jon Tyson:** Yeah. It's called Fighting shadows. And it's I'll give you the big idea of the book. I'll give it to you in two minutes. Satan is always overplaying his hand.

[01:18:31.900]

And there's a scene when Jesus and Peter are talking where Jesus says, Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you like wheat, but I've prayed for you, that your faith may not fail, and when you've returned, strengthen your brothers. That word fail in Greek is ecclepo. That's where we get the word eclipse from. And here's Satan's strategy. He wants to eclipse God. He wants to put something between you and God so it looks like God has disappeared and all you are left with is the problem. And so Jesus says, I've prayed for you that that will not happen. When the eclipse passes, strengthen your brothers. And I think Satan basically tries to show you can stand and position your hand in such a way the sun disappears. The sun's not gone, but it looks like it. And Satan's strategy is to put things in front of the eyes of men where it seems like God disappears and all they have is their problems.

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So it's a book on the seven core issues we see men wrestling with in the modern world and then how to respond to them.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** What are, you don't name all seven, a couple of the top issues you see men struggling with?

**Jon Tyson:** Apathy is one of them. Like a lot of men just can't get traction in their souls. On the other side, ungodly ambition, the ones who do can't get a governor on it. Obviously loneliness is a huge one. Loneliness is at epidemic proportions, but male loneliness, many Christian men feel like they do not have a group of men they can share their struggles with, they're fully isolated. And so just yeah helping men become friends again, you know, it's a beautiful opportunity. I'm getting a lot of Joy working in that space.

[01:20:15.800]

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Jon, I gotta tell you these conversations are always fascinating. Thank you for just showing up your whole self, open book, really appreciate it. And you know, one of the goals I have for this show is if we were at dinner, what would the conversation be like and I feel like mission accomplished.

**Jon Tyson:** I have talked to you offline. And it's this. This is it. You are very good at that and I appreciate you having me on your podcast.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** I really like it because everyone read the talking points and they've read the books and that kind of stuff but like to have the real wrestling match of what do you see, and what else do you see, and sometimes it's not 100% consistent and yet it's real, and this is what we're all feeling, and you bring that in spades. Thanks for doing the hard work. Thanks for spending two or three hours in the morning to get yourself together, because we're all benefiting from it in one way or another. Jon, really appreciate you, my friend.

[01:21:11.800]

**Jon Tyson:** Thanks. Cheers, mate.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** I find Jon so interesting and fascinating, and I hope you did as well. Again, if you appreciated this episode, would you share and leave a rating and review? I'm really, really grateful when you do that. It makes a big difference in getting the word out. And also want to thank those of you who are doing that.

[01:21:29.800]

For example, Carrie Garcia said, I love the long-form interviews so you can really hear the people sharing. That's a five-star review. We got another one. I want to reach out, incredibly beneficial. I rarely leave reviews, however, I am consistently amazed at how helpful this podcast is to apply to my life and leadership. Not only do

the guests have relevant gold nuggets that I'm able to apply immediately, but the resources that Carey mentions are truly game-changing. Thank you so much for all you do.

[01:21:58.600]

No name there just so incredibly helpful, is how you signed it. Thank you so much for that. I'm really grateful. And yeah, we do break a few book budgets around here. But is that such a bad thing? I don't think so. Anyway, hey, we got show notes for you as well. We're changing the way we do show Notes too. So you may want to check that out. In the meantime. You can go to [careynieuwhof.com/episode645](http://careynieuwhof.com/episode645) and we got transcripts there as well. That's free. Thanks to our generous sponsors. Make sure you check out this awesome conference, July 9th through 12th by The Church Network. It's all about, well, getting your community. They've got a lot of things going, over 50 breakouts. You can register today at [thechurchnetwork.com/2024conference](http://thechurchnetwork.com/2024conference).

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Coming up next time, Scott Galloway, Prof G is on the Pod. I'm very excited about that. We've also got Lee Strobel, Tara Leigh Cobble, Gavin Adams, Rich Birch, Matt Chandler is coming on for the first time. We've got Ken Blanchard, Will Guidara coming back, and a whole lot more. And because you listened to the end I've got something for you. It's the Preaching Cheat Sheet. So to start transforming your preaching visit [preachingcheatsheet.com](http://preachingcheatsheet.com) to get your copy for free. We've helped tens of thousands of leaders. It's just 10 simple questions that you can run your message through before you deliver it. So, you know, whether it's going to land or not, curious, go to [preachingcheatsheet.com](http://preachingcheatsheet.com). You can get started today absolutely free, the link is also available in the show.

[01:23:37.700]

Well, thank you so much everybody for listening. Enjoy that ride, enjoy that time in the gym, enjoy that outdoor walk, enjoy cooking dinner, whatever you happen to be doing. Thank you so much for listening and I hope our time together today has helped you identify and break a growth barrier you're facing.