

S5-E4_Instability, Insecurity,...y Forward - Podcast - Feb 2024

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SPEAKERS

Dave Leake, Jeff Leake

- D** Dave Leake 00:02
Hey, what's up, everybody? Welcome to the Allison Park leadership podcast where we have culture creating conversations. My name is Dave.
- J** Jeff Leake 00:08
My name is Jeff, We're glad you joined us today.
- D** Dave Leake 00:10
Yeah, absolutely. And we want to say a special thank you to everybody has been a regular listener, as we always do a sort of gratitudes. But especially, we want to give a shout out to Christian underscore the Christian. So wherever you are Christian, thank you for your kind review. He left us a five star review on Apple podcasts. And we would love to give you a shout out as well if you've never actually gotten one. So if you want to go to your apple podcast app, you can leave us five stars helps to get us a little bit more recognition. And you know, the word immunity Yeah, to get the word out to share. So we'd love if you could help us with that. But yeah, I think it's been a part
- J** Jeff Leake 00:42
of that and some background on us. So this is season five. For us with yellow spark leadership podcast again, we shifted the tagline to culture creating conversations, because we're father and son, both pastors on the same staff at Allison Park church. Dave is at the north side, and I'm the lead pastor. And we're talking about the kinds of things that are going on in the world, and how we interpret them. We're talking about biblical theology, we're talking about controversial questions. We're talking about politics, we're talking about, you know, a lot of

times in this world, people are having responses to everything that's going on through a really brief social media posts, which inflames a lot of passion. And this is sort of the counterculture idea to that we want to have a a nuanced, sane, long conversation about things that gets into biblical truth and tries to be sensitive, at the same time to something. So we're glad that you are a part of this conversation. Absolutely. So Dave, what are we talking about today?

D Dave Leake 01:43

Well, first and foremost, I just got to say, kind of crazy. We'll be hitting our 100th episode. This year. It's um, yeah, probably maybe six months, but it's coming out glazing. I think we're on episode 88. Come on, which is crazy. So yeah. Thanks for joining us for this journey. So we're kind of discussing, sometimes these conversations that we have on our podcast, are like, real conversations we're having in the background. Yeah. Right. Right. As opposed to like, Oh, we're gonna teach on this or like,

J Jeff Leake 02:14

all of them are, right. Yeah. I mean, yes.

D Dave Leake 02:17

Sometimes it's a discussion discussion of theology where we have a general idea of the endpoint. Yeah,

J Jeff Leake 02:22

like, okay, so. So some people have come up to both of us and asked this question, we'll let you behind the curtain a little bit. So how much time do you take to prepare for these conversations? And the answer is, you prepare more than I do. Like, sometimes you don't care at all, I

D Dave Leake 02:37

don't prepare.

J Jeff Leake 02:39

I don't know, I'm speaking out of out of a lifetime of ministry experiences. And you and I have had had conversations like this, and I have with my other kids as well, about these value based kinds of things, since you were little. And so this is kind of an extension of that. And so what makes this podcast really work, I think, is that interaction that you and I have shared over over many years. But then also Dave, you're very curious. So you, you, you ask great questions that dig to the root of an issue. And then you push back when I give an answer, that's too simplistic,

or I do with you. So I think that that becomes something really healthy. So a lot of times, we're leaning into what's bothering you, or what you're wondering about. So let me ask you, David, what are you wondering?

D Dave Leake 03:28

What I was gonna say is, I think sometimes they're just more general things that have an answer maybe, that we're sort of looking into, and we're just discussing the background on it. Sure. Sometimes we have like a more of an open ended discussion. I think this one's a little bit more of

J Jeff Leake 03:43

that. So it's a little bit more risky. We don't know where this is gonna end up.

D Dave Leake 03:46

It'll be good. Yeah, it'll be good. But it's, it's an actual, I don't know where we're going with this conversation.

J Jeff Leake 03:52

So again, to let you in behind the scenes here. We're getting ready to record this podcast, and we're trying to land on this topic that we are now going to present to you with the title insecurity, instability. And the pathway forward. Yeah. And we were trying to get to the root of what the dissonance is, that especially I think you're feeling but I think everybody feels. And so to some degree, and let me explain why. So the world broke in 2020, right? It just broke like, it's not that it was perfect before. It's just that the whole world broke. And it's, it's been broken, and it continues to be broken. Maybe we just see it as more broken now. But it especially became broken and so many levels, right? Distrust levels are higher and the church became different and ministry became more difficult and politics became even more intense and, you know, points of view became way more inflamed. And in the context of all of that we're all trying to live in the new normals. Have what is the last couple years? And and with the same levels of questions and insecurities about life and our future and how to do things, right, one of the top potential titles we came up with with is is, Am I doing this? Right, right? Just a question that I think we all ask. When we're dealing with marriage, am I doing this right? We deal with parenting. By doing this, right? We're dealing with ministry, a lot of our listeners are pastors. Am I doing this right? In the department that I lead? In terms of how I live healthily? Am I doing this right? Am I productive enough? I mean, all these are questions, I think that we asked in the middle of all of this brokenness. But how is this manifesting itself for you, Dave? Yeah, I

D Dave Leake 05:46

mean, in one sense, it's like, Oh, my goodness, I could never talk about COVID. Again, and I would have talked about it too much already. I just don't want to forget about every app and then move on. But at the same time, like

then move on. But at the same time, like,

J Jeff Leake 06:00

there's some of that about this time of year. It's, it's it's a little bit warmer, and we're recording this in February, but you might be listening to this in March, because March was the time when the whole world shut down. Yeah, it might

D Dave Leake 06:11

be something to do this time of year,

 06:12

you wake up with cold sweats like, oh, no, here we are, again, spring, I

D Dave Leake 06:17

see people wearing masks. So I but it's not so much about that. I think you were just saying about the things that broke. So what what feels like it broke to me, that has stayed uncomfortable or dissonant, or, you know, just like it's a little bit of a splinter there. And I'll elaborate, but it feels like it's things like yes, sense of security. A sense of progress, like, are we moving forward, and many of the major areas are moving backwards, sense of trust, like, man, the more you hear things, and then things get exposed as lies or as, you know, totally skewed, or what's a hoax, and what's real is this. If somebody tells me from from their from their agenda, like just for the world at large, that's there. But then when you break it down, like like, for example, going back to COVID, it's still wild that you'd have somebody's like, I'm a doctor, I'm an expert, and this is going to kill you. And they'd be like, I'm a doctor, I'm an expert. And they're totally wrong. This is fine. Like, it's like, every expert is totally disagreeing. And I know, we're sort of past that now. But I just think it's created a general sense of maybe unease. And then in the church world, it's like, at least for us, at least in our sphere of influence, we realized, Okay, I think maybe we had some of our, our indicators for what we're trying to do. We've realized others were a little off kilter. And we've been rethinking things and but

J Jeff Leake 07:42

what does success look like as a church? Yeah, and as we realize a lot of things maybe were were superficial, and they look good on the outside, because the numbers were good. But then when you when you were put through the the intense pressure cooker of 2020, and 2021. And beyond, you realize this wasn't built on solidity. And a lot of this was false. Yeah. And it was fog. Like, it was a mist and it went to grab it, and it wasn't there. And like, I thought this was solid and I couldn't grab hold of it. Okay, so now everything settled a bit. The dust is settled, the fog is a little bit less. And now you're saying, so what is solid? Yeah, what am I building?



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Dave Leake 08:22

Yeah, I think now, it's like, there's a concept, at least for me, and I feel like I've noticed this there's there's just a general unease. Like as if like, when's the next thing gonna break? You know, no, seriously, like, there's there's like the war in Ukraine and the economy's all up and down. And there's this fear Israel, job loss, Israel and Palestine and Elektra, China, oh my gosh, what's gonna happen? Political parties, National

J

Jeff Leake 08:45

Intelligence is going to take over the world. It's everything to know mimic your voice so that they could put something out that looks and sounds like you, but it really isn't you. Yeah. And it's a robot who says there's going to be this great reset, or they want to take over everything and, you know, like, okay, so yeah, so like, what's real? worlds like that? And I care yeah. And then there's an election coming up. And yeah, the worlds

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Dave Leake 09:09

like that. Yeah. But then it feels like with the church, it I don't know. It's like, okay, so I we've talked about this a few different times. In fact, this is this was kind of on my heart talk more about was was the idea of success. And we define success as obedience and faithfulness, like working hard, as hard as I may below being healthy, to be faithful that God's called me to do and so that's there, but it's just like, Man, I think whether it's personal or professional, insensitive, the church world or the world at large just feels like man, like, when, when are things gonna feel solid, or stable or normal? Because everything I just think there's a general sense of like, a little bit of unease and like waiting for the other shoe to drop because it feels like it has constantly every year it's like, oh, this and then this and then this and so so

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Jeff Leake 09:57

sometimes, Dave, I've had this feeling that happens for me. So let me let me describe there is the insecurity that comes with failure. Right? You just messed up, you screwed up. And it's and it's bad. And everybody sees it, and you see it, and you got to apologize for it. Or you just got to say, you gotta admit, oh, man, I didn't know what I was doing there. And you have to rebuild from it. There is something really embarrassing about that moment, when you fail. No one's talking about moral failure. I'm just talking about leadership failure. But but but that's, that's sort of solid, like, you can look and say, okay, that went wrong, I made that decision bad. I'm gonna make that change and move forward. But there is a nagging insecurity that comes when you're succeeding. Because that insecurity is says, How can I keep this up? And is this real? Is

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Dave Leake 10:48

it as successful as it could be? Or am I not putting enough in to really see this go as far as it should? Right,



10:55

 Jeff Leake 10:55

right. And somebody else, let me give some detail. So the good news is, we just talked about all the instability and struggle, that at Allison Park church, we now we, you know, we had some pruning, we went from six campuses to three campuses. After the pandemic, two of them closed, we felt good about the reasons why they closed and we knew that it was the right decisions. One of them, we released the dear lakes campus to become forged in Faith Church. And so they're a healthy Sister, Sister church, but now we're three, three locations, and then APCs, three locations were growing. And all of them actually, this is the fastest growth rate we've had in a long time. We're still not quite to pre pandemic numbers, in most situations, but I think the total overall growth rate, put all three campuses together something like 16% Over the last year, which is really good. And the Northside campus is growing the fastest, which is what you lead? Yeah. So right now? Well, I mean, it's gonna last, what, four months since since you started the new format, you're up 71%. So you would think that based upon those statistics, you would be like, we're killing it like, this is awesome. But again, I'll reflect this as often what has happened for me, too, is when you see a moment of success, that's another moment of insecurity, because you're asking the question, Am I doing this right? Is this is this really based on something solid? Maybe I did good by doing this. But if I had done a couple of other things that would be even better than this. And this is the insecurity that comes with leading anything in your life. So. And I think, actually, it's less insecurity, if it's just the fear of failure, or the fear of you know, just this second guessing kind of thing that happens when we look in the mirror and we see a flawed person looking back at us. Yeah,

 Dave Leake 12:52


that's probably true. But can I take a pause on a side note and just say, it's funny, because I have this memory of you of you telling me whenever I was younger, like, you know how I forgot to you said it, but you're talking about like the futility of introspection. You're like, Oh, you're way too introspective. You think? Well, like, that's what the podcast said. So, like, most of the other podcasts tell you how to succeed and

 13:13

where to go. I called it the futility. Like, you're way too introspective. You

 Dave Leake 13:18

just got to move and do stuff. And it's like, that's a little I feel like, every time like, I'm thinking about what this title is gonna look like insecurity, instability, like, oh, man, you do do introspection.

 Jeff Leake 13:28

But you're, you're a gift to us that way, David, because you think deeply about topics? And maybe most people might think on the surface of things, but they feel that nagging sense, down deep inside, am I doing this, right? Why do I feel so insecure? Why did things feel so unstable? What do I do to move forward? Okay? A lot of people feel that, but they aren't

thinking about it down to a level enough to where they can root into some kind of solution, or sometimes accept some type of peace. So, but when I described your situation, you being you made a change in your approach to the Northside campuses function, and you've grown 71%. And the finances are over what you we expected? You would think that you'd be at a place where you'd be doing backflips and feeling like, everything was great. Yeah. But instead, there is this question

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Dave Leake 14:20

probably. Okay. Probably a concern, I think because, yeah, it's it has to do with everything we just discussed about the general, you know, to quote the matrix, like a splinter in your mind. But it's just always like, I feel like it's a concern like, yeah, I guess you're right. So some of that is like, is this gonna keep going this way might do for a drop anytime soon. How do I keep this going? And I think for me, too, like I tend to be someone that's more of a consistent person than an explosive person. I would love to be explosive. No, that comes with its own things, but I've tended to be like slower Growth and Stability and whatever. Everybody's

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Jeff Leake 15:01

a consistent verse. Yeah, you

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Dave Leake 15:03

think okay, yeah, yeah. Here's

J

Jeff Leake 15:05

my theory, Dave. And now we're talking about leadership of anything, a company that grows fast, a church that grows fast, whatever. There's always a backstory. There's always a reason no one is just an overnight success. There's always something else that isn't, isn't explained that all of a sudden makes that makes the story what it is. So everybody's, everybody's steady and consistent. Okay. And the ones that go too fast up are oftentimes not built on something strong enough. Yeah. And so anyway, back, let's go back to the questions about, is this built on something solid? What do I do with what I'm sensing? So I have some thoughts about where confidence is found. But I want to go, I want to go with your

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Dave Leake 15:55

question. Questions. Want to follow my question? Torment inside? That's probably a hard word, a harsh word for that. Okay, so let me let me meet, you can take this value, then wherever you want. Can we try to set it up? I think I would say wait,

J

Jeff Leake 16:12

wait, before we go on. Yeah. What What was the context of the splinter in your mind for the matrix that are? Like what the quote Yeah,

D Dave Leake 16:19

he they're saying like, because they're in this reality that's computer generated. Yeah. And they're saying like, something always seems off to

J Jeff Leake 16:26

you. Okay. So why? Because you're hooked up to the computer like you always news,

D Dave Leake 16:30

you know, you something is not totally real. Okay. It's like this idea. That's a splinter in your mind. This popped into my head. Hey, guys, go back.

 16:38

I'm curious to let that go.

D Dave Leake 16:40

My sci fi background anyway. So um, yeah. So I think I would say this, I think a lot of people have this general sense, whether it's with success or sort of stagnation, or maybe a degree of people are going through some sort of a dip, whether it's personal, or it's a hardship, or it's in their career. And I just think it feels like this is the, the tone of the culture. It's the it's the temperature of the room is like just this general unease. Yeah. And so you're talking about a place to find some solidity or stability, or confidence, as you said, in spite of the general feeling of maybe uncertainty as part of it to, you know, a certainty about what's happening, or what's going to happen or whether something was the other shoes gonna drop. So yeah, I'll kind of I think the great thing about what you bring to this podcast is like, you have 35 ish, six ish years of ministry experience. Yeah, and have been through a lot of different cycles, and have probably faced all the stuff I face as far as insecurities and whatever in different generations and you know, through different eras. So yeah, I'd love to hear some life experience and maybe other people if you're feeling regardless as to what generation you belong to, if you're feeling sort of a similar, or have felt recently, a sense of unease. Yeah. Talk to us.

J Jeff Leake 18:02

Yeah, so I may have shared some of these thoughts before. But I'll go back to a crisis moment in my mental health life. So I became the pastor at ABC in 1991 1996, we started to plant churches out of our church, which was unusual for church to do because at that time, there was really very few multi sites. And there just wasn't a lot of churches that were doing that. And so

we we piloted something that became known as parents church planting, which is when you sponsor a church to go out, and we planted five churches in five years, which at my age, we started that when I was 31. And we planted our fifth by the time I was 36. And because that was the case, I was garnering some national attention, people were asking me to come and share what the heck we were doing and how this was working. And then we then we got into the building of a brand new building because the church was growing as well. And it was right about that time that I got hit with some massive migraines. And and what I couldn't function for like three weeks, I went to my doctor and I became aware that this was not just a physical thing, it was stress. So when I sat down with my counselor, because I went to emerge ministries, which by the way, big shout out to them a great Counseling Center in Akron, Ohio, and they have branches and other places. And I took up a test to see where I was due how I was on my mental health. The the aberrant factor in all of the qualities that stuck out was my fear of failure. And as I was talking with my counselor, he said, the really weird thing he said, is that right now, you're not failing. You're actually succeeding, and you're succeeding at a high level. So that other people are asking you, How are you succeeding? But my fear was growing because I was feeling like the same things. You're saying, How am I going to keep this up? It's real. Like, I don't know, maybe I've just gotten lucky. Like some things just worked out for me. And now everybody expects me to have all these answers. And I don't know if I'm up to this. And I certainly don't know how to build a building because construction and architecture that is not my skill set at all. So I felt like, what if we end up spending all this money and it's bent wrongly, and I don't want to be exposed as a leader that didn't manage this? Well? Okay. So I had a lot of fears that were that were surfacing. And one of the things that came out of those conversations was, was was the question and again, I know I've said this on this podcast before, but I'll just repeat it because we're in the middle of this right? He asked me, Would it be okay with you? If we're a season, God allowed for you to fail? Not morally, not ethically, but in a leadership? If and if your failure brought more glory to him than your success? Would you be okay with that? And my answer was, I know, I'm supposed to say yes. But I would not be okay with that. Yeah. And he said, Well, you got to get okay with that. So what was exposed there for me it was I, without really knowing it, I was not really working for God's glory, was working for my own effectiveness, leadership success. And not necessarily bad motives. I wanted to grow my church and plant churches, but I was doing it for something beyond or other than just honoring and pleasing God. When I got okay with the idea that failure was acceptable to God, as long as my motives were pure, and I was trying to glorify Him, that brought me a sense of relief and peace. And as I want to stay in that zone, God, I just want to please you, Lord, whether this succeeds or fails, I just want to I want to bring glory to you in this, that that would be enough for me to honor and glorify God, whether I succeeded or failed. And so I don't always live in that zone of health. But I tried to stay there. Yeah. I don't think I've ever hit the levels of stress and panic that I was having over fear failure before. Some of that because I know my body hasn't reacted to the migraines that had back then. Because it was it was clearly a result of me tightening up.

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Dave Leake 22:24

So I can't imagine what you would have been doing back then. Like, there's been times where I've seen you, and you've never had that level sense. But I've been like, wow, you're working really hard and like barely taking a break. So

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Jeff Leake 22:36

there's a difference between pace and pressure.

D Dave Leake 22:40

Okay. Yeah. So the pressure was way ratcheted up.

J Jeff Leake 22:44

And it was it was it wasn't about my pace. At that point. It wasn't even about the productivity. It was internal pressure. Okay, I was putting pressure on myself. Because I felt like I was going to fail. Like, I wasn't going to measure up that I wouldn't be up to the challenge. And it was just, I was just wired, kept tightening the volt. Yeah, inside until finally it

D Dave Leake 23:09

broke. Yeah. Yeah. So he was like living constantly with this. It stinks that I'm being exposed nationally, because of this topples. Yeah,

i 23:19

everybody's good. Everybody's Good to see ya. And they're gonna be like, Oh, look at what happened to him.

D Dave Leake 23:24

How not to

J Jeff Leake 23:27

shut up like a rocket back down to the ground. Yeah. And apparently, Adobe are probably maybe be even surprised that I was thinking these things because honestly, I have never really been one to just go around touting results. But inwardly I have had a success addiction. Yeah, I guess you'd call it in a way like I wanted to be, I kept wanting to be more productive than the last time. And so yeah, it can wire into you. So I think that's one thing is you got to have your motives, right. And when you start to feel the insecurity and instability, you've got to come back to something that is that is solid, like God, as long as I please you, it's gonna be okay. I still don't want to fail, fail. But the reality is, I might not know enough, the world might change some, and I might step into the future and make a wrong move, and things might collapse. And if they do, it's okay. Because God and I will still be in relationship with each other. He knows I was doing my best. He may receive glory out of how I handle that moment. And the real purpose of my life is not to succeed. It's to honor him and please him and bring him glory, and enjoy His pleasure. And that that's where that's the sweet spot of life in for all of us.

D Dave Leake 24:52
It's hard to live there.

J Jeff Leake 24:55
There's a freedom in it right? There's a joy in that.

D Dave Leake 24:58
I know you have some Bible verses. Hold up. Do you want my reactions? No,

J Jeff Leake 25:02
I wouldn't I just haven't pulled up in case. Okay.

D Dave Leake 25:06
Man, so it's weird. Okay, so like, let me let me tell you like where I am like, so I grew up hearing you tell that story. And I mean, that's actually like, that's been a framework for me. All throughout ministry, I think earlier on my first few years of ministry was the most intense of like, I'm not living up to my own expectations, and I'm so frustrated by that. And then I kind of grappled with that, and it's still up and down sometimes. But like, most times, before I go to preach, especially when I'm not feeling like, like, I'm feeling nervous about it, I just kind of pray like, even if I look dumb, I pray with this be glorifying with somebody, you know, encounter God's presence in a powerful way. So I feel like, that feels like that's helped me. I just, it's just hard to get away from the feeling of like, you know, the parable of the people with the talents that of one guy's five, and he doubles at the 10. And then there's two, that becomes four. It's hard not to feel like, dang, I hope I double those talents. You don't I'm saying? Like, so like, to me, it's like, I realized that, yeah, obedience. And faithfulness is the main measure of success. Like, am I? Am I doing what God's asked me to? Yes. But then it's like, but am I working as hard as I could? And my ringing out every last drop? Am I leaving it all on the field? Could I, you know, if I was a better version of myself, or whatever? Or or, or like what you were saying, am I setting a toppling foundation up to? Okay, so

J Jeff Leake 26:31
you know, so let me take you back in as a good counselor might do? What if you were a better version of yourself? What if you were leaving more on the field? What would you get? Then?

D Dave Leake 26:41
More validation?

J Jeff Leake 26:44
So seriously, think about what would so if all of those were maximized? What would you then have?

D Dave Leake 26:51
I think what feels like it's missing that. I mean, so to be honest, the it feels like I know I'm you're setting me up for a trap that I'm

J Jeff Leake 26:58
no, I'm really not. I'm just asking you to think about the thing you just put. Yeah. You just said if I had it. So I'm just asking, well, what's the follow up to that? If you had it, then what

D Dave Leake 27:08
if I think what it feels like, I think what I feel like I would like to have is a sense of like, settled, oh, I've i Not that I've made it like I don't want to keep growing, but like, oh, like, I'm happy with this. And it's it's I'm not concerned about whatever. And like I I feel pretty confident that this is going to continue to go well, and like a sense of validation. So

J Jeff Leake 27:36
what would make you feel settled? And that it has? How would you know that? I

D Dave Leake 27:42
think for me, it probably probably a lot of it revolves around that. I just don't know what's going to happen. So it's not so much about how it's going right now.

J Jeff Leake 27:49
So if you knew what was going to happen, that would make you feel settled. If

D Dave Leake 27:53
I knew the results, were going to be good. Would you? Would I feel

J Jeff Leake 27:58

settled? Yeah. Because how would you ever know that?

D Dave Leake 28:01

You mean, because I can't I don't understand what you're asking. Yeah, what? Because

J Jeff Leake 28:05

you can't know. The results are going to be better because you could know what's going to happen, but not necessarily know that was going to turn out better.

D Dave Leake 28:13

Yeah. Yeah, I'm gonna guess I guess it's I know, it's ridiculous and impossible. But I think let me

J Jeff Leake 28:19

ask you, what would be another way for you to feel like it's settled?

D Dave Leake 28:33

I don't know. I was a long pause. Yeah, I was just processing through it. In my mind. I was like, I don't know. i Okay. So like, let me let me like, be clear, give a caveat here. If we were to talk outside of this setting, where I'm thinking really about exactly where I am, I would say in general, like I'm so thankful and happy for where where we are what God's doing, you know, in my family and in our campus.

J Jeff Leake 28:58

Marriage, you got a beautiful son. Yeah, you're leading a campus that's growing. You're connected with people that you know and love, and you work with a lot of your friends. Yeah.

D Dave Leake 29:10

Yeah. God's blessings. God's blessed us. You have a nice home. So I'm not saying this from a place of like, things aren't good. And I'm like, when are they finally going to be good? I think I'm just like, like, sometimes it doesn't even just feel like I'm doing this. For me. Personally, I just have sensed general uneasiness as a tone sometimes of just like, Yeah, I don't know why. So I think so. Let's

J Jeff Leake 29:33

go back to your parable. Yeah. The three so the parable of the talents. We don't have scripture reference, but you can look it up. It's found in both the book of Matthew the book of Luke. It's called talents I think in Matthew and mine is in your book, right? Right. Okay. Which are two different types of monetary descriptions. Okay. In in all three cases, two of them here. Well done. good and faithful servant. Yeah. And one here's your wicked lazy servant. Okay. Yeah. So what makes you settled? is hearing those words? Well done. Right? What makes you unsettled is when you're not hearing those words. Yeah. Right. Okay. So is Do you feel the Holy Spirit's saying to you? Well done good and faithful servant? Probably in

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Dave Leake 30:21

general? Yeah. Okay. Well, not the way that it's, you know, and like a

J

Jeff Leake 30:26

heavy pilot. He's not a final sense, right? You're not at the Day of Judgment. Were you receiving your reward? Yeah. But But overall, when you go to preach or do something, and you present yourself to God, or even as your parenting or you're interacting in your marriage, and you come before God in prayer, and you're like, God, here, I surrender to you. I want to I want to please you, I can sense in my Spirit. So I've had a number of times, Dave, where I've been reflecting on what my life has meant, and what my ministry has produced and what my family looks like. And, and I've sat back and reflected, and I felt one time in particular, I felt the Holy Spirit say to me, isn't this beautiful what we get to do together? And I was like, it really is. And then I basically said to him, in response, you've done most of it. Because that's really true. Yeah. And then he then he said to me, yeah, but you've got a part. And then we just had a little moment where we enjoyed that together. Yeah. And in that moment, I'm settled. Yeah, yeah. I think that's one of the keys is the affirmation and pleasure of God is available to you today. Whatever, wherever you are in your life journey. You don't have to wait for the dead for judgment day to find out if God's Okay, all you got to do is ask him. And if he's not, okay, he'll tell you what he's not okay. With, yeah, bills could convict you about something he'll say, change that attitude. Go back and apologize to your wife. Make this right. Humble yourself, you know, start doing this, like he will guide and direct you if you ask him. And you he's able to give you moment by moment doses of his pleasure. As you just simply try to lean into him. And you know, often when we fast and pray I especially feel that like, as I'm seeking Him, I feel like God, God is because, okay, not to get too mystical. But I actually think God is way more concerned about doing life with you than what you are doing for him. Of course. So if you're doing a lot of things for him, but you're not doing it with him. Yeah. He's probably less pleased. Yeah, you can be off the charts on the productive scale. Yeah. But if you're skimping on the intimacy scale, you, you actually aren't experiencing the fullness of His pleasure. Yeah. And probably aren't getting his insight and input. As much as

D

Dave Leake 33:00

that's true about any relationship. Right?

J

Jeff Leake 33:02

J Jeff Leake 33:02

Exactly.

D Dave Leake 33:03

If we were for, you know, my mom, your wife, or for my wife, it's like, you're working hard for them, but you're not giving them any time. Yeah, I'm like, What are you doing? Yeah, right. No, I mean, conversely, I do need to be doing my part or Yeah, like

J Jeff Leake 33:16

laying in bed all day, and you ever helped James or work, but but if you're generally in the space, as you need to be doing the things you need to do be doing, and you are really investing in the relationship aspect of things. Your marriage tends to be great. Yeah. So same thing is true with God. Sometimes we measure output more than we we measure the connectedness.

D Dave Leake 33:40

Yep. I think I think as I'm reflecting on all this, you know, I think part of it is just a little bit attached. So they say for like, with I'm gonna misquote and bottomless but it's like, for relationships in marriage. You know, a lot of what you're dealing with, with conflict is typically like expectations, how the person should be and how they should act, and you had one view of them before you got married. And then you realize the person you're actually living with is different than the person you had a mental model of before you knew them as well. I think that like, when when you're young, and you're in school, or you're in college, you have this picture of what your future might look like, and everything is unlimited. And who knows what could possibly happen and you picture all the excitement and the adventure and and then life starts to happen and then you hit the problems. And then even if it's going the way you wanted it to it doesn't feel the same way that you

J Jeff Leake 34:34

thought it would however, okay, let me now I'm not just trying to be political. Yeah,

D Dave Leake 34:40

I think there's a there's a degree of sometimes disillusionment that can sneak in, that can sometimes steal contentedness like error, because it's like most things can be going great, but it's like but I thought I would. I didn't expect to have these problems though. I didn't, you know, problems with health or a relationship that's difficult or a lack of monetary security. or

J Jeff Leake 35:00

have Okay, so a breakthrough. Let me drop some old man wisdom now please do. Okay, are you ready? Please do a little go back to the to the marriage illustration. So you meet your meet

you ready? Please do so let's go back to the to the marriage illustration. So you meet you meet your spouse you fall in love. You have the imagined version of who they are. Yeah. And some of its true. Yeah. And some of it isn't true because you created this image of what you think they are. And then you move, you move to marriage, and you move in together and you have arguments and you do life and you realize, that is not what I thought, right? Like, that's different. And some of it's better and some of it's worse. Yeah. Okay. Learning to cherish the woman you have not the woman you thought you have. Yeah, is where real deep connection comes from? Yeah. So like, I love Melanie on a level now. And she loves me on a level now, that is far greater than the infatuation we had that was based upon mysterious image. Because now I've learned to cherish in the hard moments, the preciousness of who she is. And even some of the things that I thought I didn't like about her have become attractive to me, because I have learned to appreciate them in a very real way. So I love the real woman that I have. Yeah. And I cherish the things about her that I have come to discover, okay, same thing is true with your reality as a person. You always dreamed of the church that you had pastor and the ministry that you would have, and the family that you would raise in the house that you would live in, okay, and all of us have this imagined future of what the light of the world will look like. But once you get into the real church, you have the real problems, you're having the real, you have to learn to, to savor what God has given you, as, not just good enough. But but so good, because it's the assigned woman that God has given me. And it's the assigned place like this is, these are my people like, this is my church family. It might not look like someone else's Instagram post, but this is I love Allison Park church. I love the aspects of who we are. And yeah, we're not, we're not another ministry that may have wonderful things about it. By the way, all you get on Instagram posts are the mysterious woman you thought you had, you don't actually get the real stuff there he has true. That's true. So you have to learn to get into the weeds into the realness of life, and find the little things to cherish about the reality that's there, and savor them down to the last drop. Yeah. Because that's how God sees us. So God looks at us and we look at ourselves. And we have a hard time savoring our own strengths and giftings. But God looks at us and he doesn't look at us with disappointment. Or he doesn't look at us and be like, Well, if you were a little bit more, no, he created us like this. He designed us to be the way that we are. When he looks at you, he looks at me, he savors the things He created us to be, and the places where we're weak he's still working on. So I think it's learning. This is a key. So back when I was in Bible college, one of my professors, he was famous for the phrase, what you appreciate, appreciates or grows in value. So what you spend time valuing and cherishing and appreciating and talking positively about appreciates or grows in value, what you depreciate where you, you sort of trash in your mind and complain about and grumble about decreases in value. So I think it's what a Malcolm Gladwell is books, where he documents a study that was done that that says that the people who were most contented in life, or the or in their marriage, are the people who look at their spouse through rose colored colored glasses. Yeah, right, that if you believe that the top half of the truth all the time, even though you might be deceiving yourself a little bit, it's better to be deceived in the positive than it is to be overcome by the negative. And I think I think that's one of the skill sets in life where you get into the realness of whatever is happening in your life today, your workplace, your house, your assignment, your family, your situations, your ministry, and you save are the good things that God has given you today, as a part of the journey. Yeah, and instead of feeling like it's always out there somewhere this thing, this unattainable thing, I'm trying this perfect marriage, this perfect, romantic thing, this perfect situation, this perfect ministry, you start to just live into and lean into the things that God has deposited in you. Yeah.

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Dave Leake 39:46

Or I guess the future where that where everything is good, and you have peace and there's no

Or I guess the future where that where everything is good, and you have peace and there's no problems because that's i That's doesn't exist. No, that's for anybody. Yeah. Yeah, right. Yeah, right. I guess like Using your analogy about like the Instagram post, it's kind of like you're lusting after a different life in some ways.

J Jeff Leake 40:05

Yeah. Someone else's mysterious woman. Yeah. Yeah. Then like

D Dave Leake 40:09

what God gave you. So, how do you how have you learned to like, for the good and the bad aspects like lean into and enjoy all the bits of the life that God's given you?

J Jeff Leake 40:23

You got to get real detailed. Right you got to look, you got to look at the small little things right? You got to get detailed. So I love Allison Park church, because Allison Park church comes from this blue collar Pittsburgh kind of loyalty. Pittsburghers are loyal well to a fault. I mean, we are we are hard working, show up you know, be willing to work hard.

D Dave Leake 40:57

Not glamorous yet we listen.

J Jeff Leake 40:59

We are in a beach town. We aren't we aren't Miami. Like there's people are moving in because of the weather or because of the upward mobility. But like I love Pittsburgh, and I love the people of Pittsburgh and I love the heart of Allison Park church, where people are willing to weep over that one person who's overlooked or forgotten. And the open up their pockets in their lives to care for somebody. So I like deeply love my church for that. Yeah. And the Northside where you are Dave has an enthusiasm about everything. Like when I go down to the north side, and I preach her I'm pretty proud of the service. The worship is infectious. And the stories of the people that come to your campus are often these powerful redemptive redemption stories. You could take a service and just have a parade of people who attend your campus come up and how did you come to Jesus? And you would have people shouting one another down. I mean, they don't just a menu at the Northside. They scream back at you. Yeah. Right. And and if you say let's come to the altar, like they're, they're running to the front to seek God is beauty in in the Northside campus. It's, it's awesome, let alone the fact that you pastor in the location of the church that planted Allison park in the first place back in the 1960s. I mean, it's a full circle redemptive story. So, but I also I also look at my wife, okay, let me give you an example with Melody, I remember. So melody is way more spontaneous than I am. And I tend to, like you think deeper thoughts and, and I have a hard time, just enjoying the little things in life. And I remember one time, we went to Ross Park Mall, and we're sitting in the food

court. And she is flitting about, like thinking about all kinds of things. He's looking at different things she's shopping for, and she's enjoying her lemonade that she got and like, and I remember just staring at her thinking to myself, you know, I so admire the fact that she has this ability to just disconnect from all of the other questions and hardships, she's not thinking about anything deep right now. And she has just taken it all in, and I found joy in her joy. And when we first got married, I was annoyed at that. But then all of a sudden, I realized, I need her, I am so glad she's not like me, if both of us were like me, we wouldn't be miserable. She is such the balance for me. And I needed time to appreciate what I had been given as a gift in her. So I think there's all kinds of things that you just got to get down to appreciate the little stuff. That's where it's found. Getting out of the mystical I one day, I'm gonna get up here, and I'm gonna have this many people or I'm gonna have this much ministry success, or we're going to have this size house or I'm going to get this kind of bank account, where we just get into the nitty gritty of what God has given us as the as the gifts we often overlook, that we start to savor and cherish. And actually, you can spend a lot of time just cherishing the small things. I think Melody would tell you that she now appreciates my melancholy, deep thinking, right? At first, she was like, why would you ever want to spend time thinking about that? But now I think she can actually lean into some of that with me. And she would probably tell you that she thinks deeper on some issues than she would have before. Because we've added value to each other. And over all these years, we're better people because of one another. You know, and so, yeah, that's, I think, I think that's one perspective. Let me get to the other part of this conversation unless you want to talk about this. So I actually shared this message at the Ignite conference back in January 2024. And I basically preached a message a really short 15 minute message on it. The hope is in you, not ahead of you. I should better said, not just ahead of you, because there is hope ahead of us like a lot of times when we think about hope for the future, we think, you know, when this happens when God fulfills this promise when he answers this prayer when he brings this breakthrough, but actually David was during 2020 It was July and the world was falling apart. And there was pressure coming at me from all sides, and I didn't know how to handle some situations. And honestly, for a minute I had kind of lost my confidence. I don't know if anybody's ever gotten up about their world as a new year like So even for me after all these years of leading a church I felt like I don't know if I know how to do this. Maybe I need to just quit you know, it was a brief fleeting thought I wasn't writing a resignation ya

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Dave Leake 45:45

know what I mean? Well, it's weird to hear that you thought that at all because I feel like you don't doesn't feel like a Jeff Leake thing to me Yeah,

J

Jeff Leake 45:52

it was like I was really heavy and I was really down and I didn't want to talk to anybody and and then I was just I happened to be reading through First Timothy chapter one where Paul is talking to his young appointed pastor in Ephesus, young man and a huge responsibility emphasis was one of the key churches in New Testament era. And he speaks to Timothy about his insecurity and instability, which is what this is about. And, and he says this in verse six for Second Timothy, one, six, for this reason, our men remind you to fan the flame the gift of God, which is in you, through the laying on of hands. Okay, so I'm gonna give it to you just like I felt like the Holy Spirit told me, basically, Paul base says to Timothy, I prayed over you, there was a

gift imparted to you. Now that gift is in you, Timothy. And if you need to activate that gift, by breathing on, act, like work it now so that it comes alive. And I felt like the Holy Spirit said to me, because I was basically saying, God, what am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to handle this? The world is changing. There's so many things going on around me. I don't know what to do. I feel like just quitting. And I felt the Holy Spirit said to me, you're an apostle, act like it. Stop whining. I put a gift on your life. Yeah. Your gift is actually the answer to the situation. So rather than searching for the answer, outside of you, be the answer I created you to be now everybody has a gift on their life. Yeah. So they have you have a pastor teacher gift on you. Right? Nothing in the world that changes in the future is going to take that gift away. You're going to be a pastor, teacher, if I sent you to India, you would be a pastor teacher. And maybe there's some other things that are going to emerge in your life as well. Apostolic Lee, I think you function prophetically to right? Isn't that true? So wherever you got put in the world, whatever situation you are in, the gift that's on your life, would activate, and would start to change the world around you. Because that's who he created you to be. And this is not just for those who have fivefold ministry gifts, this is for anybody. God has put a gift and capacity in your life. And you are that in any space that you're in. And so what you are, you should be now I should come back and say, I don't throw the word around your an apostle, all the time. In fact, I think that's really kind of icky when people try to use that title, because oftentimes, it's a powerup kind of move. Yeah, I always use it little a apostle, and I talked about it being a functional thing of mobilizing people and sending them out to do Kingdom work, right. But at this particular moment, God needed to say that to me very directly by the Holy Spirit, because he needed me to remember who I was. Yeah, so I would say to you, Dave, be who God made you to be. Yeah. Right. Or as, as, as the Lion King when Simba is on the mountain, and he hears his father say, remember who you are, right? That's, that's the idea. Stop looking ahead of yourself and look inside to realize what God has deposited in your life.

D

Dave Leake 48:57

Yeah. So what would you say to somebody who is like, I'm thinking of a lot of people right now. So let's describe situation on our on at our church and our staff. You're in the pipeline, and Allison Park church, you don't really know what God's called you to do. And there's no positions that are opening up right now right away, and you find yourself serving and wondering, like, what am I supposed to do? I'm not talking about practically like, how can you work yourself into a position? But like, I know, am I supposed to leave where I am, but I can't. So

J

Jeff Leake 49:25

there is a gift on you. So you say well, I don't know what that is yet. Well discover it. God didn't put the gift on you. And he's going to now make it something he's going to hide from you. Seek it out, figure it out. Keep on trying stuff. Keep on working at it. Step out there, do things. Talk to a mentor that will help you figure it out and when you when you figure it out. What makes your gift valid is not that there's a position open or there's someone willing to pay you for it. What makes the gift valid is that you're aware of who you are. You're using your gift effectively. And when you do, your gift will make room for you

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Dave Leake 50:04

let speak speak to somebody who's feeling disillusioned in the waiting season. There. It's hard

to be content with my life because, or I'm single, and it's hard to get out of my life because there's a missing piece or it feeling that you don't I'm saying we're talking about like, because for you and me, it's like, like, I can say that for myself. It's almost weird that I would ever feel anything like this because it's like I have what I need. And I have what I've been asking for and things are good. But what about somebody feels like they're, there's a missing piece that they're really seeking.

J Jeff Leake 50:31

So let me go right into the next verse. Your your question sets me up. Perfect, right. So verse six fanned the flame, the gift that God's given you, verse seven, God has not given you a spirit of timidity, but a power of love, and a sound mind. So here's the second thing, the Holy Spirit said to me, you have the Holy Spirit living in you act like it. So. So you're like, what I don't know and what's happening, okay, but the Holy Spirit knows, the Holy Spirit knows, you think the Holy Spirit doesn't have a plan for you, he doesn't have the strength for you to have joy for you in the moment you're in. The Holy Spirit has everything you need. So rather than walking around with a spirit of confusion and fear, shake it off, and lean into the Holy Spirit's presence in your life and let Him guide you. Because here's what we start to believe we start to believe, well, because I don't know it yet. Or I don't have it yet. I'm not sure that I'm ever going to have it. I'm never going to know it. That's just a lie from the pit of hell. The Holy Spirit lives inside of you. He's given you power is given you love and he's given you the ability to think properly a sound mind, he will bring you into all truth. This is one of the promises. So I think we can get all mopey sometimes. And we start to we start to feel like no one loves me. And God hasn't revealed this to me and hasn't Shut up. Shake that off. God has not given you a spirit of confusion or fear or timidity. He's given you spirit of power, lean into the Holy Spirit. So what do I do in the meantime, pray in the Spirit worship, cultivate his presence. Okay.

D Dave Leake 52:08

Let me let me Let me twist to the other side of the device, because I feel like, like, there's empathetic side that, that Well, I don't want to overpower our that I know, I know, know, your ears. I'm saying, let me just get there. Because I think you want to say this anyway, let me like, trigger this. I think you're also saying, like, you can find joy today, before everything is completed. I think I think there's the illusion of until everything is completed, I'm going to feel bothered and unstable and insecure and frustrated. But when I finally have whatever it is, then I'll, it'll be settled. And there'll be peace and contentment and joy, but you're saying like, it's not just like, be who you are pressing Holy Spirit. It's also like, find joy, in the journey that you're on right now and

J Jeff Leake 52:53

realize that the Holy Spirit who is in you has all those things you're longing for. Yeah, he has joy, he has peace, he has the answers, he has the wisdom. And, and he is your partner in life. And he wants to share all that with you. So where you're lacking some of that, rather than searching it for, for it out there, like I'm reaching for something in the future that I don't have. Grab ahold of what's already been deposited in you, there's a gift on your life. There's a Holy Spirit in your life. And, and, and then the last verse nine, he talks about verses eight and nine.

I'm in I'm in prison, he says for preaching the gospel. So remember who you are, and make sure you proclaim it as well. Like you have the greatest message that the world has ever or will ever hear. And that is the message of Jesus Christ. You have the capacity at any given moment, to preach a eternity transformative message to someone that needs to hear it. So we undersell things we understand Sal the fact that we have a gift on our life, we undersell the fact that we have the Holy Spirit living within us. We undersell the fact that we have the gospel message to proclaim. And sometimes we forget that there's so much wealth that we're already carrying around, that we feel like the missing piece of what we don't know, is the reason why we are discontented or disconnected. But maybe it's the fact that we don't appreciate what we already have. Yeah, yeah. That's making us depleted and confused and feeling and state. So if the world starts to fall apart again, in some other level, you are still the gift that God has made you to be, you still have the Holy Spirit living inside of you. And you still have the most important message ever, which is the gospel. Everything else can change. And we might end up back in a weird spot. We don't know what to do, but some things will never change. Yeah. And we can count on them no matter what. That's good. That

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Dave Leake 54:49

was a good closing thought. I think so we can we can end right there. Hopefully that was helpful to you. I know. It's sort of a I don't know, it's a raw thought that I don't always have in my mind. But it's sort of feels like it's been there in the background. So if you've felt a sense of unease, or maybe disillusionment or frustration with a waiting season that you might be in hopefully this is encouraging that the Holy Spirit has what you need and that, and that there's joy to be found, even in the blended mix mixed bag of what we're walking through right now. There's still joy to be found there. So I guess it's always good to just close by saying, Thanks. Why don't you close the episode?

J

Jeff Leake 55:26

Yeah. So I just would challenge you to realize that God is closer than you think he is. And he wants to share with you his pleasure. Just take a moment and breathe in a little bit and let him breathe back to you. Well done good and faithful servant. Yeah. And if he can't say that to you right now. Because maybe your life isn't where it needs to be. Let him breathe to you. There's hope for you. But you got to deal with this. Let them speak into your life so that you can get yourself into a place where you're living in an intimate sense of his pleasure. And one day at a time, we'll move forward. It's

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Dave Leake 56:02

good. Thanks for listening. Thanks for joining us again. We always ask this, but it's just helpful if you really can actually be a part of us reaching more people, and encouraging the weekend edifying the church, the Body of Believers by helping us spread the word. So if you've been a regular listener for a long time, we would just love to ask for your help. Here's how you here's what you can do. You can watch this on YouTube, you can like it subscribe. You can share this video on social media or through text message with your friends. And then obviously, whether

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