



CHURCH PLANTING COURSE

FOR THOSE PLANTING OR SUPPORTING
A CHURCH PLANT

Church Planting – A Transcription

contributed by
Andrew Selley, William Marais
and Richard Gordon

Church Planting – A Transcription

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Introduction

To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Eph 3: 8 – 10).

It was the plan of God from the beginning of time to reveal His manifold wisdom to the world through the church! There is a great need throughout the world for churches to be planted and the Gospel advanced! This understanding accompanied by a vision from God is what stirred Andrew Selley, founder and lead elder of Joshua Generation Church, to begin presenting a church planting course. This manual is the written transcriptions of this course and aims at providing this amazing resource to churches, leaders and saints in a low-data format.

May you be encouraged and spurred onto greater things in Jesus while working through this manual!

To listen or watch these sessions in conjunction with this transcription, please visit our Four12 Global Webpage, YouTube Channel or App.

Website : <https://www.four12global.com/resources/series/church-planting/>

YouTube : <https://www.youtube.com/user/four12global>

Session 01

Image Bearers

Please note that these notes have been transcribed directly from our Church Planters course, video content. They should therefore be used alongside said content, which can be found on the Four12 Website, www.Four12global.com, or on our App.

This section will be covering the theology of why we church plant, what it's about. It's not practical; it's more theological because I don't want you to go out there with all the passion and zeal without knowing why we do it the way we do it. Why are we here? Why does God use church plants and church planting to impact nations? You will have to have that rooted inside of you before you get out there; so that you are ready to stand in the storm. Church plants are a whole new season of storms. It's also an entirely new season of opportunity. We will move from the theology into the practical, the dangers, the difficulties, and hopefully, out of this time, we'll see a wave of guys being readied and enabled to either lead a plant or support a plant. I believe even if you stay in the church you are in, that this course will give you a greater understanding of what's really going on and how you can make a significant difference wherever you are, bringing the Kingdom of God into the area you find yourself in. I'm very excited; I think this is going to be a game-changer for us.

What I want to do tonight is talk about the why. Why do we church plant? There is a thinking that there's method in it and that it comes from God. There's a method in God's madness, in terms of how He's going to change the planet. Church planting, I believe, is one of the primary tools He's going to use. Theologically we're going to go through the process of redemption, how God plans to save the planet, and out of that show where church planting is a vital ingredient or churches are a vital ingredient in what God's going to do. If you don't understand that, you're not going to know why you're out there, you won't understand why you're paying the price. I'm hoping we can see it from God's perspective. So, we're going to look at how God saves; how He saves countries, nations, people groups, and continents for the glory of His name.

Let's start looking at Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." (Gen 1:26 NIV)

I want to start right at the beginning, because church planting is how God plans to redeem the planet and so we have to see how the planet fell, to see what God wants to get it back to. Right when God's busy making the earth, we see He created the animals; He made all the creatures, He made the fish, etc. He made all these different things, and then He comes to the pinnacle of His creation. At this moment, He says, "Let us make man in our image..." let's just pick up on that first part. Firstly, God says, "Let us", I think something to realize is that God is three persons in one. God is community within Himself, Father, Son, and Spirit. The heart of God was to bring others into that sense of community, into who He is as God. So, He speaks within himself, and it's like God speaking to God. Sometimes you see that in the Bible, where Jesus speaks to the Father or the Father speaks to Jesus. Now they're speaking within the Trinity, and they say let us do something, let us make humans. Let's make mankind, and that means you and me. So, this is kind of the pinnacle of why you're on the planet. You were created in the image of God, in His likeness, and to extend the rule and the reign of God.

So, let's look at that, the image and likeness, because I believe this is one of the core things that we are here to reflect and to do as human beings. Are you on the planet to be an accountant, to get married, have kids, to get old? That's not why you're here! You are here to be an image-bearer for God. You are here to reflect what He is like and you'll do that in your marriage, and you'll do that in your accountancy job, you'll do that in whatever you do. Your primary purpose, however, when God made you, was for friendship, for intimacy, and to be an image-bearer.

When I say an image-bearer, what I mean is that you would reflect something of His image on the earth. That you would reflect Him, and when I say image, I mean His nature, His character, ultimately, what God is like. We were made in His image; originally, we were made to be like Him. If God is love, we were initially love. If God is just, we were initially just. If God is kind and merciful, we were initially kind and merciful. We were like Him, and it was beautiful. God said it was good, and He gave us rule and reign, and that rule and reign was to extend Him in the earth. Remember, God rules and reigns, and we were made in His image as His sons, so, as we reflect Him, we begin to extend His rule and reign on the earth.

One of the things I wanted to pick up on is that we were made to be sons of God. In Luke 3:38, Luke's telling us about the genealogy of Jesus, and he's working backward from Jesus all the way back to Adam. He says this guy was the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, and Adam was the son of God. God made Adam, he was the first man created, and actually, he was made like a son in the image of God; to look like God, to be like God, and to reflect the character of God.

I want us to pick up something about being made in the image of, or as a son carrying the image of, a father that we even see today in our children. Looking at our kids, we can see that often they reflect our

nature and character, sometimes even our good or bad looks. They reflect us in many ways; they are in our image. Now Adam was the image of God and Proverbs 17: 6 says,

Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children. (Prov 17:6 NIV)

Listen to that; the glory of a child is their father! They become the image and likeness of their father, a reflection of him. Each one of us that have children, they will learn our values, they'll learn who we are, they'll learn, and they'll carry something over into the next generation and the next generation. So, as parents, we are the glory of our children, and likewise, they reflect our glory. We can even look at our children and their reflection of us in how we reflect the Lord.

When God made Adam as a son, Adam was supposed to reflect the glory of his Father. If you looked at Adam, you should have seen God. Adam should have been able to say, like Jesus said, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father" (John 14:7). Adam was just like God, an image-bearer for God, but he turned away from God. Adam rebelled, and ultimately, he wanted to be God himself, and so, he began to turn away from God. He was no longer the image of God. Now Adam becomes the image of satan. He was a fallen man in a fallen world, and he begins to lose the reflection of God. People so often ask why the earth is so full of suffering, hatred, murder, and death, and it's because we are now image-bearers of satan; we no longer bear the image of God. The rule and reign of God is no longer extending on the earth through people that aren't saved. We have become children of the devil, and his nature is to hate, destroy, divide, gossip, slander, murder, rape, punish, be selfish, and be self-centered. Humans are under bondage, and they are now sons to the devil. If you're not a born-again Christian, Jesus would say you're a child of the devil. It's an out-there statement and thought, but because we were born into Adam's sin, we are born children of the devil. We did the things our father did. We were not like God! We reflected the image of satan more than the image of God. Even though there was something of God left in us, we had lost something of the glory, the wonder, and the character of what He's like. We were all selfish; some of us still are because we are young Christians. We lived a self-centered life, living for what made us feel good, instead of what would ultimately glorify our Father in heaven. The Bible says all have turned away; all have fallen; there's no one righteous - no, not even one (Rom 3:23).

God makes the earth beautiful; it is like Him. When God's rule and reign is coming on the earth, it's peaceful, it's harmonious, there is no death, there's no bloodshed, and it's literally like the earth is a perfect place. There's no bloodshed; the first bloodshed would be the lamb that God would kill to cover Adam's nakedness. That was a picture of the blood that His Son would shed one day.

God made you for intimacy, made you to be like sons. The thought of losing a son is devastating to a father. In the same way, God has lost what He loves, which is you and me. He loves mankind; He loves the world. The Bible says, "For God so loved the world" (Jhn 3:16), and God came to save the world, which ultimately means He came to save you and me. You were made in His image and His likeness. God wants to redeem you as a son and as a daughter. Therefore, He works things in our lives to bring us to the place where we can hear the message of the Gospel, and believe, so that we can come into the family of God.

So, we become sons of God through faith, and we'll look at that now scripturally. God wants to save, and it's a big thing to save a planet. In Isaiah 43:6-7, God begins to speak about how He's going to save, and He says:

"I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth, Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made." (Is 43:6-7 NIV)

We are the sons of the Father; we are designed to bring Him glory. God created us to be that to Him, and now He says I want you back. I want the earth back; I want my sons and daughters back, and so He starts His process of salvation.

He starts this with Israel. Israel was initially the firstborn son of God. It was the way God planned to bring salvation to the world. Often, we wonder where Israel fits in everything, and we will cover that in a bit of detail. Israel starts with one man; there was one man by which every nation, tribe, and tongue started. A man and a woman began having children, those children then had children and tribes developed, nations developed, every nation began in that way. Ultimately all of us can follow our ancestry back to Adam. We are all made in the image of God. If you look at dogs, you can find that all dogs came from one source the Chihuahua and the Great Dane. That's how micro-evolution happens. Micro-evolution being - dogs give birth to dogs, and dogs can change a little bit in terms of what they look like, how they can grow longer hair and shorter hair, etc.

We all come from God, and we've all fallen short of the glory of God. Then God comes into the earth, and He says, "I'm going to save the world, but I'm going to start with one man." In Genesis 17:1-8, we read about Abram. When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him and said,

I am God Almighty walk before me and be blameless. (Gen 17:1)

It's fascinating that God starts with Abram. "Abram, I'm God! I'm the one who's worthy of your life! I want you to do something; I want you to be blameless and walk before me faithfully," He says (in a nutshell). That word blameless is the word "Tamim" in Hebrew, and it means to walk in completeness, in soundness, in perfection, to walk without blemish. Ultimately, God says walk, and reflect what I am like, be an image-bearer for me on the earth. God comes to the earth, and He picks one man and says Abram, would you be an image-bearer for me? Would you walk before me, like I am? Would you reflect me, as a son, to creation? Then the story goes on, and God says to Abram that if he does this, if he commits to do this in his heart, then God will make a covenant between Himself and Abram. He promises that He will significantly increase Abram's numbers if he walks blamelessly before Him. God promises Abram that He would make a covenant with him because he became an image-bearer of God. He promises that all of Abram's children will become an image-bearer of Him. So, through Abram, the Lord would develop a race of people that would love God, that would reflect Him and would carry His values onto the earth.

In this way, God chose the Jewish nation. God found one guy, and He asked him if he would be that guy, the one that reflects Him to the world. Would Abram be His son, would he be His image-bearer? Abram falls face down, and God said to him that His covenant to Abram would be that he would father many nations. God told him that He would make a nation out of Abram, but His plan was beyond one nation. God wanted to save many nations. He then gave Abram a new name, Abraham, because he would father many nations (Gen 17:5).

In the Spirit, if you're a born-again Christian, you can say that Abraham is your father. We have a lineage by faith. I've been adopted into His family, by faith, and I am part of the Abrahamic covenant. Every Christian is now brought into this genealogy, by faith. We are adopted into his family line, because he became our father and the father of many nations. God then promises that He'll give Canaan as an everlasting possession to Abraham. So, God makes a promise to Abraham's, literal blood children, that they will have a nation and an inheritance in the land. God meant that He was going to work salvation through Abraham because He's looking for image-bearers. He's looking for those that'll walk before Him as Abraham did.

And so, Abraham starts this journey. He has a son, who has a son, who has a son, and very soon, we begin to see the nation of Israel form. In Exodus 4:22- 23, we see God calling Israel, who were in Egypt where they had become slaves, and it was in slavery that God began to form Israel into a nation. They arrived in Egypt as a family, but they left Egypt as a nation. At the end of 400 years in slavery, this is what the Lord had to say about Israel,

Israel is My son, My firstborn. So, I said to you, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me.'
(Ex 4:22-23)

God says to Abraham that his children, that nation, will be God's firstborn son, and as a son, they will reflect the glory of their Father. Israel was called to reflect the glory and character of God, what He is like, to the world around her, and so she leaves Egypt and moves towards Canaan, which God had promised Abraham 400 years before. God is literally establishing a new nation on the earth out of a bunch of slaves. This group of slaves would then become image-bearers of God. The plan was that they would show the world what God was like. If you remember the promise to Abraham, it was that he would be the father of many nations, not just of the Jews. If you go and study the genealogy, or the ancestry, of Jesus, you start to see Gentiles tapping into what God had promised Abraham. We see a woman Rahab; she was the prostitute that helped the spies by hiding them and helping them to escape before they entered the Promised Land. She was a sinful Gentile, not a Jew, and actually by faith in God, by faith in what God was going to do, and by helping them, she comes into Israel, and she becomes part of the nation. Rahab, who was a prostitute, becomes one of the ancestors of Jesus. Down her bloodline one day, Jesus would come. This is the mercy of God in action, showing that He would take people from any walk of life. It doesn't matter where you came from, if you would turn to Him by faith, He will make you an image-bearer of God. God would choose a Gentile prostitute and graft her into His family to the point where out of her lineage would come the Messiah! By this, we can see that the plan was always that Israel would show the world what He's like.

If you look at where Israel is, geographically, they were literally in the hub of the known world. Every nation that would go to war would have to go through Israel first. They called it a highway that everyone had to go through. The hope was that they would look at the Israelites, these Jews, and wonder what it was about this nation. They were so different because they were image-bearers of God. God then gave Israel the law, and the point of the law was actually to teach Israel how to reflect Him well! The problem with Israel is that they lent away from some of the things that the Lord instructed. They started trusting in their own righteousness, and they forgot that they were supposed to evangelize. It became all about Israel, and they forgot that they were called to be a light to the nations.

When Jesus came Israel had failed, and in Mark 11:17 He says,

Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of robbers.' (Mrk 11:17 NIV)

He comes to the temple, which is the hub that everyone's supposed to be able to go to, to see what God is like. But instead of finding image-bearers, Jesus comes to the temple, and he finds them in the court of the Gentiles. This was the part of the temple set apart right from the start for those that were not Jews. This area was meant for the Gentiles, so that they could come and worship God, but the Jews had now made that an area to buy and sell things so that they could worship. Instead of remembering why they were God's nation, they had taken the places that the Gentiles were to come to, and worship, and they were buying and selling stuff for their sacrifices in that place. The call of Israel was to be a light to the nations, but they failed dismally, and ultimately, they didn't like what He said, and so, they crucified Jesus.

This was all part of the plan. God knew that they would do it and that He would work salvation through the brokenness of His firstborn son Israel. There are some beautiful promises God made to Israel, but when Israel doesn't get it right, God took that promise, and He gave it to somebody else. I believe He still does that today. I believe that God will often make a man a promise, but if you do not commit yourself to be faithful to your side, He will take that promise, or that calling, and He will put it on somebody else. When you are not faithful, He'll find someone who is.

Let's look at Isaiah 42:1-8:

God's Promise concerning His Servant

"Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. "He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. "A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. "He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law." Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it, "I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison. "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images. (Is 42:1-8 NIV)

So, God comes to Israel in Isaiah 42:1-8, and speaking through Isaiah about Israel says, "Here is my servant," that servant is Israel, but later, Jesus became that servant because Israel would fail, "whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. I will put my Spirit on him." At that time the "him" would be the nation, the firstborn son Israel, but Israel failed. So, He took it from Israel, and He put it upon Jesus, His firstborn as well. (Jesus became the firstborn of all creation.) "I put my Spirit on him, and he will bring

justice to the nation's," this justice is the righteousness of God to the nations. Israel was supposed to do that, and they failed. Now Jesus would bring the righteousness of God to the nations. "He will not shout or cry out to raise his voice in the streets, a bruised reed he will not break and a smouldering wick he'll not snuff out." In other words, He'll be gentle in faithfulness. He will bring forth justice, He will not fault or be discouraged until He establishes justice on the earth. "In his law, the islands will put their hope." "The islands" is a symbolic word for the Gentile nations. He's saying that through His law, He's going to cause, the islands, those that are not Israel, to put their trust in His law. "This is what the Lord God says, he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people and life those who walk on it; I the LORD have called you in righteousness." Again, remember that He is talking to Israel but He's also talking about Jesus. "I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you, and I will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles" He is saying that He will work salvation through them, that the Gentile nations would come and see the light in them. They would be a light to the Gentiles, and they will come to the light that's in Israel and bow their knee and acknowledge God.

Jesus spoke, using this same language, to the church as well; He told us that we are a light, a lamp on a stand (Matt 5:14). As the church, we have taken something of the place of what God would do, the plan of God, and now we are the light of the nations. He said to us that we should not put our light under a bowl, because if we bury the light we're going to be just like Israel. You're going to miss the plan that He had. He wants to save the nations through you. He wants to give you nations as your inheritance. If you bury the light, if you don't show others what He's like, if you don't reflect the image that you were called to imitate, then you are failing His plan. He's called you to be a light to the nations so that the nations would look at your life and question what it is about you that is so different. You're an image-bearer for God, you're a son, and a daughter of God and your Father is your glory.

So, when Israel fail and Jesus picks us up, He becomes the servant of the Lord, He becomes the one that God upholds. God ultimately brings justice to the nation's through Jesus dying on the cross. We've all failed, we've all fallen short of the glory of God and so Jesus pays the price.

I heard a story once of a man who was a judge, possibly in America, and one day while he was sitting in the chamber, a young girl was brought forward. She had been caught driving without a license. The problem was, that she was his daughter. As a judge he had to judge his daughter. He loved his daughter, but the judge realized that he couldn't ignore her sin because she'd broken the law, otherwise, he wouldn't be able to judge anyone else. He had to judge her, and so what he did was, he said, "I find you guilty to the full extent of the law," and he fined her whatever it was \$1 000 \$2 000, but she couldn't pay

it. He then got up, opened his wallet, and gave her the \$2,000. He paid her price, and in doing that, justice is served.

Similarly, God looks at the Gentiles, He looks at you and me, at our sin, and He has to judge us for what we've done. But He loves you too much, and He knows you can't pay the price, so He pays the price. Jesus lives the life we should have lived, He's a perfect reflection of God. He would say that He brings glory to the Father in all that He does, and he's fulfilling what a true son should do. None of us have been good sons to God, but then as the only good Son to have ever lived, Jesus goes to the cross and He pays the price for your, and my, sin. For the things we've done wrong. In doing it, He brings justice to the earth and the righteousness of God is met. Not only that, but He then also says, to whoever believes, He'll give the right to be called children of God. You'll be adopted into the family. Though you were once aliens and far away, Gentiles, heathen, and nothing like God, not reflecting Him at all, He will bring you into the family, and He will bring you into the purposes of God.

Let's Look at Hebrews 1:3

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. (Heb1:3 NIV)

"His Son is the radiance of God's glory." Jesus is the radiance of God's glory. The Son will always bring glory to the Father. He is the reflection of the Father. He would say, if you've seen me, you've seen Him. He is the exact representation of His being. We see that right from Genesis. Adam was supposed to be an accurate representation of God, he was meant to be in God's image and His likeness, but he failed. Now we have one son who is, "in the image and the likeness of God, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty of heaven", where He prays for you and me, night and day the Bible says.

We have the firstborn Son who's the perfect representation of God on the earth, but God didn't want one son, He wanted many sons. I'm not talking about sons in a legalistic sense, I'm talking about the many that would reflect His glory. They would be image-bearers. When you were born again, you were picked to be a son, and as a son, you were chosen to be an image-bearer, and not only would your sins be forgiven, but God, by His Spirit, would come and do a miraculous thing in you. He would give you a heart that would want to love God and obey God. If you are genuinely born again, you'll know, because suddenly you'll want to do things that please God. I remember experiencing it like that in my life. A drug addict, this, that and the next thing, and when I met Jesus something happened to me. I no longer

wanted those things, I wanted what God wanted. I wanted to please God with my life. That's how you know that you are saved because you're now becoming an image-bearer of God. You're growing up from a young child into a mature reflection of what He's like.

So, in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. (Gal 3:26 NIV)

Do you understand how big that is? You are now called, through faith, to be an image-bearer for God. You're a son to Him, and, as a son, you ought to reflect the glory of your heavenly Father. People should look at you and ask, "Is that what God is like?" They should look at how you love your wife and go, "Is that how God loves his wife?" They should look at how you wives submit to your husbands and say, "Is that how God submits, one to another?" They should would look at how you love people in the community of faith, how you forgive, how you are merciful, how you're not holding a record of wrongs, and go, "Is that what God is?" You're an image-bearer of God. In church you will get a lot of opportunity to reflect Him, as even the church has been put into a fallen world.

In 2 Corinthians 6:18, God says,

And, "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor 6:18 NIV)

Now it's not just Jews, it's Jews and Gentiles that become sons and daughters of God. Again, you've got to see that picture of an image bearer in sonship. So let me say this, if you hear someone teach about salvation and they don't get you to the place that you are called to be an image-bearer, they're not teaching true salvation! There are a lot of people teaching messages about grace and all these things about what He did on the cross, and what He did on the cross was amazing, but the cross was not the end of salvation. The cross was how He would provide salvation. He said He would leave the Spirit on the earth, who would come inside of you and me, and give us new hearts. That would be the born-again experience! He said He would give us hearts to obey God, hearts to love God, hearts to come into something of the unity of the Trinity and join in with God. Join in on what He's doing; and extend God's rule and reign on the earth. So, if you're a Christian, you should desire to see God's Kingdom come on the earth! You should desire to see others coming to the light of the glory that is Him because, you as a son want to bring glory to the Father! Your life's purpose should change! You once wanted to live for yourself, now you want to live for Him. It's like your heart position would be to ask God what He would want because you're now His son, and He is your Father. You should want to reflect Him to the world. That's what salvation is!

I would love to show you a few verses in 1 John as we close this part of the course. Once you see these scriptures in this way, you're going to start to see them everywhere in the Word.

1 John 2:3-6, I could show you so many, but I'll just pick out a few,

By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. (1 Jhn 2:3-6 NIV)

You know that someone is saved when they start to walk as Jesus walked. What did Jesus do? He lived for the Father's glory; He reflected the Father. This is how you know you're saved; you start to reflect Him. You might not get it entirely right, but there's something in you that starts to want to glorify Him. That's how you know you're a son! That's the work of salvation, when someone is beginning to reflect Jesus to the world! And by reflecting Jesus to the world, they're reflecting the one that Jesus would glorify. They are showing the Father to the world!

Another example, in 1 John 2:28-29,

"Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him." (1 Jhn 2:28-29 NIV)

In other words, you know you're born of Him because you're imitating Him. The Son does what His Father does. If you are born again, you are called to do what the Son does. That is to reflect the Father. If you're not born again, you're not saved! You can go to church your whole life, you can know the Bible off by heart, but if you're not born again, if you're not born of Him, you can't be like Him. When you're born of God, something in you changes!

Let's take a look at one last example, 1 John 3:9-10,

"No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. By this, the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother." (1 Jhn 3:9-10 NIV)

See, this is salvation starting to work. It's not saying you're never going to sin because John goes on to say if anyone says he is without sin, he's a liar and the truth not within him. You are still being made into the image of your Father. You come into this thing broken and messed up and so you've got some

baggage that you have to process and work through. That takes time, but actually, once you're born of God, the thing in you that wants to carry on sinning dies. You'll know immediately you are born again because suddenly the things that you once wanted to do you can't do anymore. It's not even like you can't, you just don't want to. You won't want to do it anymore because you know it's going to hurt your Father. You won't want to do it anymore because God's seed is now in you, and God's put something in you by the Spirit.

Do you know that you're sitting here today because you have the seed of God living inside of you? Now, that seed of God wants to produce a tree that looks like God. God has put the potential of godliness into you by the Spirit, and if you nurture that seed, water that seed, that thing will start to grow inside of you. Then, what comes out of you will be more and more of what God is truly like. You'll be an image-bearer of God. You will reflect Him to the world; you'll show everyone what He's like. You will be a light to the nations. That is salvation. It is what God planned to do right from the start!

Do you get what we've just looked at because this is the foundation of why we are here? You and I are on the earth now to extend the rule and reign of God. What God did at the start is now restored! You were born again, the Bible says, not of corruptible seed but an incorruptible seed (1 Pet 1:23), so that you can grow up in your faith to be like God. You know you are in Him because you have started to walk like Him. That's how you know you're in Him because you don't want to sin anymore. You can't carry on doing the things you once did, you've been born again; salvation has come to you! But then God wants salvation to come through as well!

Do you remember how Israel buried the lamp? Israel became comfortable in their own self, their own Christianity, their faith, and the danger for you and I is that we can make the same mistake! Israel grew comfortable in the fact that they were now sons of God, and I think so much of the church stays in that place. People go to church, and they know to lift their hands, and they do some nice stuff on a Sunday, but they've forgotten that they are here to extend the rule and reign of God on the earth! Jesus would say to all of us;

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matt 28:19 NIV)

As a father, He is calling His sons and daughters from the four corners of the world. He wants to use us as a light bearer, as an image-bearer of what He's like, to teach the world about what He is like. He will come alongside you; He'll be with you as a Father. He will never leave you! You will never burn on your own, but together with Him, you will extend the rule and reign of God on the earth. As we go out there

and plant churches, as we preach the Gospel, we tell people about Jesus so that justice is brought to people. Faith comes to the nations, and they turn their heart to God, the seed of God comes into them, and they are born again of incorruptible seed, and so they start to grow in their faith, and we become like a good virus! That's what we are, with the aroma of life to some. But, if you are doing your job well, you will also become the aroma of death to those that don't want to be saved. You know you're a true Christian because people start hating you because of the aroma coming out of you. It's the aroma of God that is released as you begin to reflect Him.

You are showing the world what He's like, and they look at you and see God, but they don't necessarily want God. So, they start to hate you, and if you're not being hated for your faith, the question is, are you reflecting His light? Some men love darkness and not light. Some will see the light in you, and they will come and bow their knee, like the Queen of Sheba, who came and saw the splendour of Solomon. He was at one point, a beautiful reflection of the light, and the Queen of Sheba was in awe of his God and of the wisdom that God had given him. So, they'll come to you and see the light in you and respond, saying, "This is what God is like, I want this! I want what you've got!" While to others, you'll be the aroma of death, "Get that light out of my eyes," they will say.

Whichever way it goes, we are called to be a light and the image-bearers for the glory of our God. Wherever you find yourself, in whatever church context you are in, this is why you are here! You are not here to fill a pew; the pew is simply the place to train you and equip you so that you can grow up in your faith and reflect what He's like as an image-bearer, for the glory of God.

I just want you to know that I didn't plan to do this, but I'm just very conscious of the fact that there is something of the Holy Spirit in this and that there is something of the Lord speaking to our hearts right now of the big picture of what He wants to do and how we might fit in it. Amen!

Session 02

Good DNA

Salvation is the medicine that God would give to save what was dying. This is how salvation works, He would bring salvation through the Jewish nation, then through Christ, who would ultimately be the pinnacle of the Jewish nation and what they would stand for. And so, salvation would come to all of us. A lot of people still have to get saved on this planet. The Bible says that the planet is in bondage to the devil. It groans, longing for the revelation of the sons of God because its redemption is tied to us as we begin to grow in our faith. So, there's something of redemption that will come even to the planet itself.

God made the medicine that the nations would need and the plan of how that would work. But when you have medicine, you need a vehicle to bring the medicine to your body. In other words, you might have really bad flu, you may go to the doctor and he tells you that you need an antibiotic. At that point, you are aware that if you don't get something to heal you, you're going die. Knowing the doctor has the power to save you, you allow him to put the antibiotic into the syringe and inject you with it. The syringe becomes the vehicle and the doctor, the vessel. Through the vehicle and the vessel, salvation comes.

We have looked at the medicine, but we haven't looked at how the medicine will be injected. This is where we start to move towards churches and church planting. We must understand that there are a lot of people that have given up on the church, but the church is the vehicle, the syringe, that God is going to use to bring His medicine of salvation through Christ to the earth. In Ephesians 3:10-11, God tells us that it was his intent, that

so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, (Eph 3:10-11 NIV)

That manifold wisdom speaks about the attributes; the nature of what God is like. That nature will be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. Right now, the earth is in bondage to satan. He has rulers and principalities and powers in place that ultimately extend the rule of satan, but then the Gospel and the vehicle of the Gospel, the church, would come. As the church does its thing, so the wisdom of God would begin to be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purposes which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. What Jesus did for us

will be dispensed through the church, the church is what God is going to use. If you take away the church, the medicine can't be dished out. The church is vital to how salvation will come to the planet.

When Christians say, "I am the church; my buddy and I, in a coffee shop, are the church," they are missing the entire point of what the church should be. It should be a community, like a colony, of the Kingdom that would live in a particular area. If they knew this, they would be so different. By our love one for another, by how we get along with one another, we would become a reflection of what God is like. By this the world will know, by your love one for another. As we gather together in these new communities, in churches, then we actually begin to be able to reflect what God is like to the world. The medicine of the Kingdom is dispensed through us. Christ is poured out through the church. The church dispenses the Kingdom, through Jesus and what He has done on the cross, through you and I being light and by inviting people, bringing people, praying with people, loving people, and by people preaching.

Jesus said in Matthew 28:19 to all of us,

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (Mt 28:19 NIV)

This should be the heart of every Christian. That word "go" is written in such a way that it's not just; go pack your bags and climb on an airplane. It means as you go about your life, as you do whatever you do, make disciples and remember not just believers.

Faith is how we get into this thing, but a disciple is someone who follows a teacher and becomes like his teacher. In other words, we are to make people like Jesus, the firstborn, and the true image-bearer of God. As we teach people about Jesus and they grow up to be like Him, they become image-bearers for God because they're being trained and disciplined to be what He's like. We are called to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and to teach them to obey everything God has commanded. With this discipleship, the law of Christ would be written inside of them, and they would begin to learn to obey everything that He has commanded us. God has said that He'll be with us; He'll be working with us to the very end of the age. He won't send us out on our own. We're not orphans, we are sons, and as sons and daughters, wherever we go, He'll be with us. He wants to extend the rule and reign of God on the earth through us, that wherever we go, we'll reflect His image, and we'll bring people to the light that is in us, which is Christ.

How does this work out? Jesus says to the guys in the early church, "go and make disciples of nations." They immediately gather together, and the church is birthed. A church, by definition, isn't just two

Christians. A church, by definition, is a community with leadership, with teaching. It's like an entire little country in itself. There are many aspects of church that we will look at during this course, but above all, God wants to be God on the earth. To see what God is like on the earth, we have to look at the church. The first church would ultimately become a picture of what all churches should look like. I believe the church you get saved into is more important than what you get saved out of, because the church you get saved into will disciple you and train you in the things of God. If it doesn't represent the things of God accurately, you're going to be poorly disciplined. If you are poorly disciplined, you won't reflect Him well. So many Christians do not live out that priority of discipling nations. Most go to church, lift their hands in worship, and then they just continue to live their lives. Maybe they don't swear and smoke, but that is not reflecting the fullness of God. In order to look at what a church should look like (if it's reflecting what God is like) we have to look at the first church.

In Acts 2:42-47,

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47 NIV)

Here we see that, in this church, there's a devoting of themselves to the Apostles' teaching. In other words, people give themselves. They're not forced to come, they give themselves to the Apostles' teaching, to the breaking of bread, to the fellowship, which means to each other. They gave themselves to each other, as Christ gave Himself to us. They did this because that's what God's like. God gave Himself to us, and then He says that we should give ourselves one to another. As He has loved us: so should we bear His image; so should we love one another. In the same way that He doesn't hold any record of our wrongs, so should we hold no record of wrongs against our brother. If you do you've lost the fact that you are an image-bearer. "I always trust you, don't I?" says God. "Therefore, will you trust your brothers? Because love always trusts." In this way, we become image-bearers. As a church, you are in this community that's growing up in its faith, but not everyone is like Jesus. Even those that are like Jesus can offend you because we are all broken. We are all seeing things through broken lenses. We're not yet made perfect, but every situation is an opportunity to reflect Him.

These are signs of God being amongst His people. All the believers were together and had everything in common. One of the things we do when you join JoshGen is we say the 'fridge prayer'. "What's in your

fridge is mine and what's in my fridge is yours," because if one of us is in need, we all are. James tells us that we need to love one another as we'd love to be loved. If you have lost your job and you're going to be put out on the street, what would you hope someone would do for you? When you were destitute in sin, God fully provided for you. Now, when you see your brother in need, your faith is useless if you don't fully provide for him. That's what church looks like. It's not about just coming and sitting in a pew and giving. It's far more than that. It's about living in community and about having everything in common. In other words, we have our lives in common, we do life together, and we have one heart, one mind, and one purpose. Everyone here should have the same desire to see the Kingdom of God come on the earth and into the nations of the world.

You might earn a lot of money and want to bring that money and lay it at the Apostles' feet so that the Kingdom can be extended. Or you might have a gift of healing. Are you willing to bring it and lay it down so that you can help serve the community of faith and see the Kingdom of God come? Every single one of us should live with this thing in our hearts of, we are going to do this together. God said, "let us make man in our image and in our likeness," in Gen 1:26. They did it with a sense of oneness. Therefore, together, we are going to reflect Christ better. When the church sold their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. In other words, people were more important than things. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple court. They had a real devotion to people and the Kingdom. They also broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts. This is a genuine community who love praising God, radical praise and worship and enjoying the favour of all the people. The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. They were light-bearers because they were showing their light daily, and people were coming to the light that was in them. Gentile nations were coming and bowing their knees. The Jews first and later the Gentile nations would come and bow before the King that they were reflecting, and this is the point of the church.

It needs to be reiterated that it is through the church and through Christ that God is going to bring His medicine of salvation to the earth. The devil will try and take people away from the church or try to make you lose faith in the church. He'll try and make leaders fail. He'll do all these things because he knows if he can get the syringe to break, the medicine cannot be injected. There's a vast assault on the church. It comes from many things, that originate from within, through lousy doctrine. It also comes from outside through persecution. You're going to find that the church is corrupted from within. When this assault causes the medicine to get corrupted, the devil will take the medicine of the Gospel and pervert it and twist it so that it isn't the true message anymore. He will also threaten and hurt and try to damage the vehicle that God has given us. Therefore, we must guard the church, protect it as Christ loved the church. Surely if you love Christ, you'll love what He loves because the church is His bride. This is why we

love the church; because even when it hurts us, we love her because He loves us; even when we hurt Him. We give ourselves to one another, we work together for one another, for the glory of God submitting ourselves one to another out of reverence for Christ. And so, God births this church in Jerusalem.

The first church had 12 apostles. These were serious guys that had walked with Jesus for three years, and Jesus was birthing something significant here in Jerusalem. There's a principle the Bible speaks about which says that like will reproduce according to its kind. Jesus was establishing a very strong and healthy church in Jerusalem because every church would ultimately be spawned out of what would start amongst a bunch of Jews, who are now Christians, who are living together in true community as image-bearers for God. They start, and they grow; they are light-bearers. The Bible says that they didn't yet realize that they were supposed to reach the nations; they'd heard it, but the penny hadn't dropped.

Then at one point, the Bible says that the Jews speak about them saying, "they've turned the whole city and even the neighbouring towns upside down. They have rocked the nation's capital city, and they have turned the city upside down." They go from an aroma of life to an aroma of death, and the Jews wanted to stop this thing (they thought it was dangerous). The Jews saw this new thing but didn't know if it was the truth, so they tried to crush it. But you can't crush the church. However, you can hurt her, and it got to the point where everyone except the Apostles scattered. We read in Acts 8:45 that those who had been scattered, preached the Word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. What happens is that they are so used to this culture of love and community and witnessing that wherever one of them goes, they would carry the DNA of that church in them.

The amazing thing is that the church you join will give you a spiritual DNA. If it's good DNA, wherever you go, you will reproduce according to your kind. If it's bad DNA, you'll reproduce according to your kind. As a simple example, when a new church wants to partner with us, we look at how they worship when we visit for the first time. Just that is an excellent indicator of the church's DNA. Every church will reproduce according to its kind. Paul said that he wanted want men everywhere to lift holy hands, to shout to the Lord and to sing a new song. If we can't teach all the saints to worship with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their soul, and with all their strength; to lift their hands, if we can't get them to do that, then we can determine that the DNA is bad and that church will never reproduce praising God as the early church did. It will never fully reflect what God wants the church to look like because God wants men to walk into our meetings and be so conscious of the fact that He's there. This is shown by how

radical, how extravagant, how powerful the worship, and the prophecy is. By witnessing all these things, they would be compelled to acknowledge that God is among us.

We've got work to do when we plant a church because we've got people that come to us, they come to Christ and us, but they are brand new babies, they've got baggage and history. Furthermore, you've got to teach them the ways of God. People are quite stubborn, sometimes. People are broken; they've got their patterns, and you'll learn how difficult it is to disciple people. When you come into leadership, it's an extremely difficult place because you're dealing with broken people, and they don't always respond the way they should. Very often, you are the tall tree that catches the most wind, and so the difficulty for any leader is that leadership is a challenging place. Nine out of ten pastors burn out or give up the ministry. It's the highest fallout rate of any job, if you can call it that, because the cost is so high. It's extremely difficult because you're dealing with the devil, and you're dealing with sheep that bite. But because we love Jesus, and we remember how much He loves us, (and we remember how many times we've bitten Him, how many times we have failed Him and how many times He gave us grace), we find grace for people, and we keep on keeping on.

One of the most important ingredients to any church planter is your ability to bounce back, because you're going to get smacked on the ground sometimes. Have you ever seen a boxer who just takes too many shots to the head and gets knocked down? Then all of a sudden, he gets up again, but he's stumbling around? Sometimes church planting is just like that. You have to keep getting up on your feet after being knocked down. If you just keep on keeping on, somehow, He keeps you. It feels like you're going to die, but He says you won't be tested beyond what you can endure. Somehow, in God, we keep on keeping on, and the Kingdom keeps coming. It's the joy and the pain of leadership.

The early church started to grow, and wherever they went, they preached the Gospel. I believe South Africa is going into a time of scattering again, and I do want to say this, don't you dare run unless Jesus says you can! You live where Jesus tells you to live. You're not your own; you were bought at a price. Remember that if you pick up your life, you will lose it. Rather lose it for His sake, and you'll find it! The devil will try and make us run before we are ready or before it's the Lord's will for us, and we can miss God. "If you take your hand off the plough, you are not fit for the kingdom," Jesus said in Luke 9:62. I do believe that sometimes Jesus is a lot more serious about who He will choose, and keep choosing, than we realize. I think sometimes you can make a silly decision and it can cost you. So, we need to work these things out with a measure of fear and trembling. God is gracious and kind, but we are His servants, and we need to remain in Him if we want to bear much fruit for His glory.

Coming back to the Apostles who had scattered, Jesus had said to them beforehand, that when the persecution comes, they needed to run. And in this case, they did just that. Then Jesus said to them that they will be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The first place they went to was still the nation of Israel. They'd left Jerusalem, which was the capital, and they went to Judea and Samaria. These were still very Jewish areas, and because it was what they knew, they were comfortable going there. Then the Kingdom starts to go out beyond them, which causes persecution to chase them there too. So, they scatter further.

For thousands of years, the Jewish nation and Israel kept itself in a particular Abrahamic type, Old Covenant faith. Then in a matter of moments, everywhere these guys were scattered this changed because of the DNA inside of them. They turned the capital upside down. Thousands of Jews got saved, and the people were utterly transformed. People were freaking out because of the change the Gospel was causing around them. Every single church and every single person in that church could have been used to spread the Gospel. They might not have been apostles or great preachers, but they knew the message that they carried. They knew that they had the seed of God in them, which had the power to bring the Kingdom against rulers and authorities. Every person went out, believing that God could do more than they could do by themselves. Therefore, everywhere they went, churches started getting planted. The challenge was that they weren't equipped for it, but they weren't supposed to be.

We are just a part of a picture. We are a piece of the puzzle. Paul says, "I plant. Apollos waters." Each one of us has a part to play, and God works everything out for the good of His name. For example, Philip, who was just a deacon in his church, went to Samaria and preached the Gospel. The Bible says the whole city was turned on its head. From there you can see that the church starts working together.

Let's look at Acts 8:6-16

The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. So there was much rejoicing in that city. Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 8:6-16 NIV)

In Acts, we can see that the Apostles heard that the Gospel had come to Samaria, so they sent Peter and John to travel there. When the two Apostles arrived, they could see revival had broken out, but no one had yet been baptized. As much as Phillip was gifted and powerful in the Holy Spirit, he didn't understand how to bring the baptism of the Holy Spirit to others. He'd been faithful with what he could do, but God has designed us that we need each other to extend the Kingdom. Not one of us is a full package. So, here we can see that the Apostles came, and they worked alongside the Saints and with the leaders to help the church fully reflect the plan of God.

Biblically, every new church planted out needs to be in a relationship with the apostolic. This is because the Bible says that they will come and supply what is lacking in faith. A new church plant needs apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers so that we can grow up and mature to become more like Him.

Ephesians 4:11-12 says,

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (Ephesians 4:11-12 NIV)

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are all needed for us to be image-bearers of Christ. Without these people speaking into the life of the church, it's going to be deficient. God has designed that we would need each other. So, if you plant a church, be sure to keep in close contact with

apostles, pastors and evangelists etc. Ask for help, and whether what you are doing is right. Ask for perspective so that the church can fully reflect Christ and not just your own little reflection of Him. In the beginning, you can't afford to make mistakes because every decision could determine whether or not people continue to follow you. The credibility you have as a leader grows over time as your good decisions play out well. After you have some credibility, you have some leeway to make some mistakes because people can see your track history. Continue to stay in close contact with those, apostles, pastors, and evangelists, who can provide what is lacking and give advice about how to lead people.

I want you to see something of a healthy church pattern. The saints of the healthy Jerusalem church go out, then the church is birthed and matured to become more like Jesus. Antioch is one of those churches, which becomes strong. Then Jerusalem sends out the Apostle Barnabas who later finds Saul, who becomes Paul, and together they come alongside Antioch and help the church grow. Then Antioch sends Paul and Barnabas, which further extends the Kingdom of God. When we plant a church, the point is that you are becoming a new colony for the Kingdom of God. You need to fight to break open and see the Kingdom of God come where you are. You need to pursue maturity in your faith so that you become a good reflection of Him. So, if you become a good image-bearer and people understand the good DNA, then the Kingdom of God will leap beyond you and plant out further and further. The Kingdom advances like yeast; it keeps on growing if we are faithful to what He's called us to do.

Now, there's no settling in the Kingdom of God. You settle when you run over the finish line and you've run your race. Don't take your hand off the plough and don't pick up your life. You were bought at a price, and you ought to live for the glory of God as an image-bearer. As long as you have breath in your body, you need to keep running to see the Kingdom of God come on the earth. This is why you are here; this is where your reward lies.

Here's a practical story of church planting, following a normal guy from JoshGen named Gerrit:

He wasn't an elder, so he had never sat in an elder's meeting; he wasn't a deacon either. He was a community group leader, and he and his wife, Cherie, ran our coffee shop in Sunningdale. They felt to move to a town called Richard's Bay, and they tried to find a church, but they had a problem. They couldn't find the same DNA as the church they had come out of. So, one day Gerrit phones me and says, "We have a problem. I can't find the things you've taught me. I can't find what I've seen in the Bible, and we have really looked! Can I try and start something?" All I could think was, "Oh my goodness. You have no idea what you don't know. You are not equipped for this; you have no idea what you're getting into." But, I knew the power of the message that was in Gerrit. So, I sent him to pray about it, and he felt that

God wanted him to plant a church. I thought, "Worst, case scenario would be that one person gets saved because the light in them was shining. Best case would mean that maybe 30 people get saved." So, I gave him the go-ahead. Looking ahead, the Richard's Bay church has now been going for 2 years, with 140 adults meeting on a Sunday. I just ordained his 3rd elder last Sunday. So, as you can see, good DNA multiplies. The worship is even like our worship because all the things he learned here, he took there. The people are coming out of brokenness, and they are growing in their faith. There is also a devotion to the apostolic teaching! Here we can see that like reproduces after its kind.

It's wonderful that God will raise up many of us to be like fathers in the house of God. We will have children, spiritually, that will carry the DNA that we've learned. As we make disciples and nations come to the light of what He's called us to, our spiritual children will become our glory as we are the image and the glory of the One who is our Father. God's called you to be a light, so don't bury your lamp under a bowl. Remember that Jesus didn't promise that you will always have success or that it will always be easy. If I go somewhere and one person gets saved, it is worth it, and anything else is a bonus. I think Jesus would have died even for just one person because God loves what He made, His sons that He wants to call from the corners of the globe. If I get to be a part of that, anything else is a bonus.

Just jumping back to Gerrit's plant in Richards Bay again, we can see that others (be it apostles or prophets and many visiting saints) are going up to support and strengthen the plant. They are not on their own; we are not on our own. There's a brotherhood, a fellowship. We work together for the glory of God. There may be a time as a leader where you may feel alone because of the position that you hold, but those are things we need to work through as we lead.

Then getting back to Jerusalem planting out into Antioch, in Acts 14:21-23, Antioch begins to branch out, and they also send out Paul and Barnabas. In a way, we do that now as well. We have so many who are going into the nations. So Paul and Barnabas preach the good news in the city and win over a large number of disciples, then they returned to all the towns they'd been in and had planted churches in, to strengthen the disciples and encourage them to remain true to the faith. We need to remember that we have to strengthen the disciples, every little colony out there. As they went around, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in each church, with prayer and fasting, committing them to the Lord in whom they put their trust.

Every church needs leaders on the ground, and apostles are needed to break things open. Still, ultimately every little colony of the Kingdom needs to learn to function semi-autonomously, almost like it can live on its own. To do that, it needs its own leaders who are on the ground, reflecting Christ, discipling people, and dealing with discipline cases because the apostles can't do that. So every local

church should have elders on the ground that will work with the apostles, but the elders care for the sheep, discipling and training; pastoring and loving—even rebuking when it's needed because they need to help you grow in your faith. The elders remain in relationship with the apostles. It is the apostles who come and ordain elders; help those that are eldering; make sure that the churches are standing true in the faith, growing and doing the things they should. If they can't be there themselves, the apostles may add what's lacking by sometimes sending a gift, in the form of a person, to help that church better reflect Jesus, so that church can grow up in all things to reflect the fullness of Him. So, we need to work together until He returns, and together we reflect the fullness of Him as each part of us does its bit.

I came into this year, and I really felt to trust God for 20 church plants. I thought I was quite full of faith until I saw what God was actually doing. I look at what He has done and realize I have so little faith actually. I think God is more passionate about this than we dare to dream of or imagine. Somebody asked me a question before this meeting. They asked, "Did you ever imagine that you'd be doing the things you're doing?" And the answer is: Honestly, no. Never. I wanted to serve Him, but I never imagined these things. All He needs is someone to say: Lord, I'm here. Keep me rooted in Jesus; keep me remaining in intimacy with Him; keep me looking like a good reflection of Him. Use me for your glory. He needs someone to say: I want to partner with You in the nations of the world; I want to see Your rule and reign come on the earth; I want to raise up others to run with me! Because together we're going to do more than what we can do on our own.

Sometimes I think, "Dear Jesus; this is bigger than I think I can cope with!" But I know how passionate God is for the nations to come to His Son. And I know that God is looking for healthy churches that reflect His image, and there's not a lot of those around. I hope that you get the DNA so deeply entrenched in you that you become a beautiful image-bearer for the King, one who carries the light, whose devotion is the King and the Kingdom. If you get that into you, then wherever you end up, you'll reproduce after your kind. The world needs to see more flat out, proper Christians that are living for the glory of their God. I pray that you'd be one of those.

Session 03

God's Promises

I would like to start by bringing a correction about something that I shared in the previous session.

Shosanna mentioned that Isaiah 49:6, a light to the Gentiles, is probably instead referring to the Messiah Jesus, which it is.

he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." (Isa 49:6 NIV)

I incorrectly said that it was also for Israel. That specific promise is *not* to Israel, although Israel is called a light to the nations. One of the mistakes I made was that I Googled "light to the nations," found it, and I pulled that thing together. I didn't do my homework and, therefore, preached it incorrectly. I want to bring correction tonight and maybe answer a question about that. Remember Isaiah 42:6,

"I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, (Isa 42:6 NIV)

I mentioned that Israel lost some of the promises of God that were given over to Jesus, which is correct. I thought it might be useful to cover that again, so I'm going to do a little bit of a theology lesson, then we'll go more into church planting.

It is essential to understand the theology in this. If we don't understand the outworking of the promises of God, we will struggle to understand most things in terms of how the Kingdom of God works. In Isaiah Israel is being called a light to the nations,

"Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn." (Isa 60:3 NIV)

This is a promise directly to Israel, but also a promise then made to Jesus. So, nations are supposed to come to the life that is Israel. We see that with the Queen of Sheba, who comes to visit Solomon. We see it in many places, where people are brought to the nation of Israel. In the previous section, we looked at how Israel was supposed to be a reflection, or image of God to the world. Now the church has picked up that role.

Many people have this question: Can we trust God's promises? Why did Israel lose some of the promises of God? You get some excellent answers like, "They just haven't happened yet." "Promise" is kind of a broad word to us. Sometimes a promise is conditional, and sometimes a promise is unconditional, and that is very important. I think that is one of the reasons why most Christians end up getting stuck, when it comes understanding how salvation works and how faith works. I wanted to look at a few verses on this to help you unpack this with me.

Firstly, Israel did get promises, and they have lost some of those promises. Look at Romans 9, Paul's writing here about the Jews and he's talking about how they've been cut off, how they've lost something of the promises, and he says,

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named." That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. (Rom 9:1-8 NIV)

That is a profound statement: that I would wish that I was cut off from Christ to see Israel saved. This tells us something of the heart of the Apostle. We see further on that God gave them promises, see theirs, in verse 4, they got it first. Paul continues because he has this question: Did God's Word fail because God promised them a whole lot of things, but they are not walking in those things right now? If God made them promises, what happened to those promises? We see that God's word does not fail because God's promises are always true if we understand them properly. The challenge for Israel was: Who were the promises given to? They were not given to the bloodline of Abraham, but Israel thought it was to themselves and said, well, these are our promises. Paul argues and says, well, actually the promises aren't necessarily given to the people who think they're going to get them because Israel sees themselves as Israel, by blood. They are Israel by blood, and it always will be Israel by blood, but there's another way to see them. Their father was one of faith, and the true Israel will be those who are of faith. That's not easy to see when you just read it.

The Jews were shocked when Jesus came to them in Matthew and said,

And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. (Matt 3:9 NIV)

They were surprised, as they thought, we're the children of Abraham. Jesus opposes them and calls them the children of the devil. They were highly offended as they could trace their human ancestry all the way back to Abraham. Paul opposes them in Romans 9 and says it's not about human ancestry, it's that you are like your father. The condition to the promises then isn't as obvious as everyone thinks. The condition to the promises is that true Israel will be the Israel of faith.

Sometimes, God blurs the edges a little bit for us, and this is one of those blurred edges. Paul has just argued that Israel was given promises, and it looks like those promises failed, but actually, they fail on the part of Israel because they didn't combine the promise with faith.

Someone asked me, "Aren't God's gifts and His call irrevocable" (Romans 11:29)? And doesn't it say in 2 Corinthians 1:20, that "all the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus"?

So, if God's call is irrevocable, what does that mean for Israel? We have to look very carefully at the promises God makes to find out exactly what they mean. Are there conditions for this? Who exactly is this promise to? One of the mistakes we make as Christians, and the Jews made the same mistake, is that we read all the promises for us, but all the promises are actually for Christ. If we are by faith in Christ, we enter into something of those promises. There are some promises that God says, "This is how it's going to be. I swear by My name there's no condition to it," and then it's pretty much a done deal, but most of the promises God gives are conditional. In other words, He says, "If you do this, I'll do that, and if you remain faithful to Me, if you remain in Me, I'll remain in you, and you will bear much fruit." The challenge we face is this, and I know this is theological, but it's an important one; God's promises generally remained faithful to those who are faithful. It may be difficult to understand, and we get stuck when we read our Bible.

One of the things I'm involved in is Freedom of Religion South Africa (FORSA). The South African Constitution's (legal document detailing how the country must be run) section 9 reads, "No one may unfairly discriminate against anyone on one or more grounds including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour..." There is a whole list of things on which you cannot discriminate against. That means if I say the husband is the head of the home, I've just broken the law because I've based this upon sex. This creates a huge problem. Pause and consider that if you build your theology on your country's law, then the church cannot exist in this country (South Africa) right now. But if you read a little bit further, you'll see there's another part of the Constitution that comes back and answers us from another place. Section 9 said you couldn't, but section 15 says this, "Everyone has a right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion." This shows there's something else that seems to balance what was said in the first place. If I believe, based on a religious belief, that the

husband is the head of the home, then possibly that part of the Constitution isn't as weighted as it seems, and it's more balanced out now.

Firstly, when considering the promises of God, we need to read the Word of God, we have to read the whole Word of God to understand exactly what's being said. The problem with most Christians is that we read one line and think, "Oh yeah, that's how it is!" and get ourselves into a lot of trouble. You have to take the whole Bible in context to understand what it means. Remember, the Bible isn't a legal document; it's a letter to encourage; it's a letter of love; it's a letter of how God is.

If I were Father God writing to my daughter one night when she's scared that I don't love her, I would say to her, "Enyah, nothing can separate you from our love, no height, no depth, angels or demons. I love you, my girl." (Romans 8:38-39). But were she to start doing terrible things, maybe she murders Emsie and pulls knives on me every time I come near her, I'm not going to sit her down and again say to Enyah, "Nothing can separate you from my love." I'm going to say, "Now, Enyah, you might be separated from my love. Actually, you might end up in jail. You might end up never feeling my love again if you do not turn, repent, and change your heart attitude." This almost seems contradictory. Can I? Can't I? Yes, you can. No, you can't. From the Father's perspective, you can't, but from your perspective, you can separate yourself from the love of God. Remember, this is written to a church being persecuted, and they're questioning if God loves them because when they were Jews, they weren't persecuted, but now that they are Christians, they are being persecuted. Paul is saying, under authority, nothing's going to separate you from the love of God, but there's one person that he doesn't mention in all those things, it's you. In other words, you don't have to worry about all those things because *they* can't separate you, but he's not saying *you*. You have to read this verse with the whole Bible in context. The Bible has many warnings about falling away from Christ. We have to read the whole Bible to understand it in context.

The second thing we need to consider is, is there a *condition* to the promise. What's the condition? What did Jesus say?

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (Jhn 15:5 NIV)

Paul writes later, saying to the Gentiles, don't think you are secure because the Jews were the original. They were in the vine, growing out of the vine and God cut them off. If He cut them off, you, being just grafted in, don't think you are secure because if He cut the vine off, how much easier will He cut you off (Rom 11:24)? We have to wrestle with all these scriptures to get a proper understanding of the faithfulness of God. God is always faithful, but when He has conditions, we must heed those conditions.

The third thing; is the promise to a nation, an individual, or is it a promise to Christ? God sometimes makes promises to Jesus. Let me give you an example of this, showing again how we misread our Bibles.

"Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' (Luke 10:8-9 NIV)

We read this and claim this promise. But can I take it for me? I have to consider who this was written to and when was it written? Is this an eternal thing, or was it just something that Jesus said to someone specific? In this case, Jesus takes 72 of His disciples, sends them out to the lost sheep of Israel, and He gives them this instruction. This instruction was to the 72, it wasn't to me. So "When I come into a town this evening, what is set before you..." I can't use that as a basis for how you must receive me. I do believe that we can heal the sick, but I can't use this Scripture because God was doing something specific in that place, at that time. He's talking to the 72. He wasn't talking to you and me. In other words, if I said to Manie, "Manie, I want to give you a car." I'm trying to give him something. I can promise this to Manie, but this has got nothing to do with you. You can see what I'm like; you can see something of my nature: I'm generous. But you can't claim the car. When you read the Word, you've got to ask the questions, "Who is He writing to? Who is He talking to? Is this relevant to me?" Maybe I can learn something about the nature of God, but I can't claim it as a promise.

Is His promise to a nation? You're reading your Bible one day and come to the following Scripture:

"Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the LORD. (Isa 54:1 NIV)

So, you, who are barren, you are trusting in God for your miracle. One day, you read that, and you go, "Oh, it's a promise I'm going to claim!" No. This was not a promise to you; this was a promise to Israel. You, the individual, cannot claim this promise made to a nation. The Spirit of God might speak to you out of that. But again, you can't take it and apply it to the letter in your own life. This is something that we often do.

no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the LORD. (Isa 54:17 NIV)

Is this scripture for you? No, it's not for you, it's for Israel at a specific time because of what she's doing. Ask yourself the question as you read the scripture, who is He talking to, and is this relevant to me? Otherwise, you're going to get yourself stuck on all sorts of things.

We also need to consider if the promise is one promised to Christ? God makes promises to Jesus. Again, Paul's arguing about the Jews being cut off and how that happened. It certainly looked like they were in the promises.

In Galatians 3, he says,

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. (Gal 3:16 NIV)

When the promise came to Abraham, they read it as if it was to Abraham and all the sons of Abraham. They missed what God was saying. God wasn't saying all the sons of Abraham are going to walk in the promise. He says one son of Abraham will walk in the promise. The seed, Jesus, and anyone who links himself and remains in Him and comes into Christ (Christ in me, me in Christ), they will inherit the promises that Christ has, as long as they remain in Christ. If you get out of Christ, the promises that God made to Christ are no longer yours because you stepped out of Christ. Ask the question, "Is He talking to Jesus here?" If I'm in Jesus, then I get to benefit from this! Or, "is He talking to me here?" You must ask yourself that question when you read the text.

How about this one? Is it a national or individual promise? Because, again, God often blurs the lines. Remember, God's Hebrew, not Greek. Greeks think linearly; one plus one is two. Hebrews can count and go, one plus one could mean anything. Hebrews think in spatial terms, they don't think in linear terms. God writes spatially, not linearly. Greeks taught us science and maths: one plus one equals two, and it will always only equal two. Hebrews say one plus one can equal two, but maybe it could mean four. Hebrew thinking is that you could hold two contradictory things together, and they can both be true. God can be loving and just – Hebrew. Greek says either loving or just. A big problem today is that we read the Bible as Greek novels written from a Hebrew God. God is not Greek. The Greeks just colonized the way we think. The bottom line is they taught us logic and reason, and God isn't logical, and God doesn't stick by the rules He gives to us. I wish I could explain that now, but that's a teaching in itself.

Is a promise national or individual? Because that's a big deal. Is God making a general promise to all who are in the faith, or is God speaking to you specifically? Again, we are arguing about this Jewish national, or individual, promise when God made the following promise to Israel, Romans 11,

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you will not be conceited: A hardening in part has come to Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come from Zion; He will remove godlessness from Jacob. (Rom 11:25-26 NIV)

Does that mean that every single Jew is going to get saved? Here, he's talking not about faith so much; he's talking about how Israel is going to be saved. Therefore, He's not talking about the Israel of faith now. He's talking about the Israel, who has been cut off because they didn't have faith. But then he says even the Israel that was cut off (because they were dead in their faith) will be saved and all Israel will be saved. It's a bit confusing to Greek thinking. He's just said Israel got cut off, but the Israel that got cut off because they didn't have faith (but they are still Israel) are going to be brought in again, and all Israel will be saved. Now, does that mean that every single Jew is going to be saved when it says all Israel will be saved? No. Again, that's how we get ourselves into trouble. There are guys who write books about a coming revival and all Israel (every single Jew on the planet and every single Israeli that's spread out in the nations) are going to come to Christ. No, he's blurring the two Israel's here. Israel is going to come back to Christ at some point like we've not seen before, but to say that every single Israeli is going to be saved is impossible because even if you look in the last two thousand years, how many Israelis have died outside of Christ?

The Gospel in its basic form is very simple, but it can get quite complicated. Peter writes about this when he says Paul's letters are actually very complicated and broken people distort those letters and make them mean what they don't mean because Paul is not that easy to understand.

If God says, "Who can separate you from His love," it doesn't mean you won't end up being His enemy again. "I know the plans I have for you..." is a promise to Israel who's in captivity, and they think they're forgotten. God says, "No, I'm going to restore you. I have plans to bring you back from captivity to the land that I promised you." It's a promise to them, but when you are going through a tough time, can you claim, "Well, He knows the plans He has for me, says the Lord, plans to prosper me and not to harm me"? If you are Paul in a Roman prison who is about to have your head chopped off, it's not a good promise - but you can look at it through the lens of this: God does mean good for us in all circumstances so even if my head gets chopped off somehow, that's good.

As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, (Rom 11:28 NIV)

In other words, Israel is loved because of their fathers. That's an interesting doctrine that I would love to teach sometime that your children can be loved because of the actions of their fathers. What you do will ripple into your children.

We come to the scripture, "...for God's gifts, and His call is irrevocable." Now for the last two thousand years, the gift and the call haven't been working because, for two thousand years, pretty much most of Israel has not been saved. Here, God is speaking to a nation, and He's saying to the nation, "I'm going to save you," but to the individual, He's saying, "You need to come into Christ through faith. As a nation I'm going to save you. I've made a promise I'm going to keep, but not everyone who is in the bloodline of Abraham will enter into that promise." The promise remains, God is faithful, but you must come into that promise by faith.

For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all. (Rom 11:30-32 NIV)

Again, God will be faithful, but here God makes promises to a nation, and I think, again, sometimes the promises, even in the New Testament, are to Gentiles, to nations. But we must enter into, and remain in those promises as our Father did, by faith. Without faith, it's impossible to please God. Remain in the faith.

Here's something interesting. God made a promise to Israel, but Israel's been hardened. They are enemies of God right now, but He still loves them. I think God still loves Israel in a special way, even though they are His enemies. They just have a better place with Christ than we do as Gentiles. We were grafted in; they were in the branch already. For 2,000 years, many Jews were not going to heaven, so was God faithful? He will say yes, He was faithful even to Israel, the bloodline of Abraham, because Paul says in Romans 11,

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah--how he appealed to God against Israel: (Rom 11:1-2 NIV)

Now, I have to say, no, He did actually, Paul. You just told us earlier He did; and He didn't. He rejected every Jew for the last 2,000 years that did not come to Christ and remain in Christ. God did reject Israel, but He didn't. Jewish thinking. Greeks are like, "I'm getting a headache just listening to this guy!" Then

Paul tells you why God didn't wipe out all Israel, because he himself was an Israelite. He says "God did not reject His people whom He foreknew..."

("Foreknew" is a teaching in itself which we don't have time to cover now.)

Reading further,

God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. (Rom 11:2-5 NIV)

This is the challenge for us in the New Testament because, on one end, God did reject them, and on the other end, He didn't. At the end of the day, He won't reject, He's going to revive and fulfill the promise to all Israel, whatever that is, whoever that is. There's going to be a move in Israel again, and Israel will come to faith in numbers like we've not seen before. Israel is still very special to Him. They were the ones who first received the promises. They were the ones through whom Christ would come, but for now, they've been hardened. What you and I must be careful of is: if God did that to them, He might do that to you if you don't remain in Him. Remain in faith, remain in Christ, and He'll be faithful to all that He promises to you. Shosanna's Jewish, she's a witness right here, that God was faithful because she's in the Covenant of the seed. She's a believer in Christ, the true seed of Abraham.

Our last point on a promise where we get stuck: Is it a promise or principle? Let me illustrate. In Proverbs it says,

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. (Prov 22:6 NIV)

So does that mean if I teach my child about Jesus and the ways of God, even if he meanders for a while when he's old, he will come back every time because God says that, I believe it, that's how it is. No, you misunderstood what's being done here. God is giving us a principle, not a promise. I guarantee you, some of our children will die outside of Christ, as terrible as that is. There's a principle here that if you are generally faithful in training your child well, there's a very good chance that he's going to come back to the things you taught him. But we read that in a very Greek, linear thinking. The words "will not depart

from it" makes us think we can claim this as a promise. This is wisdom, it is not a promise. Proverbs is a book of wisdom.

There's a fundamental principle of wisdom here from which we can learn. We must be careful because it looks like it's a promise as it says, "he will not depart from it." We say, "I'm going to stand on that." No, you can't stand on it. You can ask God for it, "God; You said. But, at the end of the day; You know." I know, and God knows that He wasn't telling me that my child will always serve Christ because I taught him to.

Sometimes, the Spirit of God will come to you specifically and take the Word, but He doesn't need the word to do that. He can just speak to you as He did before the written Word. Just like Abraham didn't have the Word to read as he got it directly from God, God can tell you something specifically and you can believe the promise of God, whether it's in the Word or not, but God can also use the Word.

Emsie was given that promise about being a barren woman settling happily in her home with children (Isaiah 54:1), and she felt the Lord spoke that Word to her specifically. She believed it. God can speak something to me, and I can combine it with faith and believe Him for what He's told me specifically, but that's by the Spirit. That's the relationship between my spirit and His Spirit; and remember in the early church they didn't have the Bible; they only had the Spirit.

In the Garden of Eden (this is way off my notes now but anyway let's go there), in Genesis, when satan came to Adam and Eve, he said to them; you'll be like God if you eat of that fruit. You will have the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:5). In other words, you, within yourself, will be able to work out how this thing works, you'll have the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, because you have knowledge, and knowledge is power, you will try to work this thing out for yourself. Deep down inside of us, because of the fall, we have a desire for control. We don't want to trust God; we want to understand so that we can be God; because if I understand, then I can work a system out to make it work for me. The problem with us is that even in our theology, very often, we want to understand and package it and say one plus one equals two. Therefore, if I do this, God must do that. We want to package it, own it so that we can feel safe and secure, because it just feels so good to know that it's all going to work out the way we want it to. The challenge is that God says, "My ways are infinitely higher than yours" (Is 55:9), let alone Hebrew and Greek. Even for a Hebrew, His ways are higher than mine. We've been colonized in our thinking, and Greek thought has fashioned the world. Greek thought was scientific and mathematical, mathematics and science are two ways we can learn to control the earth and control circumstance; and so, we have been trained to take control.

We were all heathen. We were growing up in the bush somewhere with our sheep and our cows, but at some point, we were colonized into Greek thinking because the Greek thinking spanned the Western world. Our African brothers don't have that problem as much as we do. This is a problem for "whities," not for "darkies", not for our black brothers – you've been spared this, and it's a good thing. Some have been westernized, so some think in a more Western way than their ancestry. Greek thinking thinks a certain way, and it wants to control and understand and box. When you come to God, you read something, and you immediately try and package it so that you can understand and control it. You are actually trying to control God.

For example, God doesn't heal sometimes. Greek thinks I've got to find the solution, so now you go to the Bible and see they didn't have faith. So, you rationalize it and think that if you don't have faith, God's not going to heal you. You then start building theologies based on trying to understand and then when you think you've got it all pinned down, you write a little book, and you put it out there as theological – "I've got the answer! You can have the answer too if you buy my book." The challenge sometimes is that we just don't know why God doesn't heal.

God is a person. He's not a system. God does as He wills, and His ways are higher than ours. He sees a thousand years down the road, and we don't. His thinking is so much higher than ours. We have no cooking clue why He does what He does and why He doesn't do what He doesn't do. We fall back on faith, which is, "I don't know, but I know that You are good." Faith is when I can't see but I trust anyway.

A Greek struggles with that, and will say that it sounds very noble, but actually he wants to understand. He's going to delve into the scriptures. It's not a bad thing to study the scriptures, but if you read them through a Greek lens, you're going to get it all messed up because it's not written to a Greek mindset. You may even say that what we've been looking at is very confusing. What is it then, is God faithful? Yes, always yes, but sometimes it doesn't feel like it for us, and sometimes His faithfulness will actually be to judge us. It's hard to understand, but at the end of the day, we fall back on, "We see Your ways, God. We see how You work through history. We see that You are kind and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love. We see that You take no delight in even the death of the wicked, and so we see enough of You to know that we can trust You." Now, that, is Hebrew thinking. The Greek thinker wants to understand, and when he can't understand anymore, he either rejects God, or his faith falls apart because his faith is built on his understanding and not in the nature and the character of God. Unfortunately, our thinking doesn't help us as Greeks because we all think in a Greek manner. We have to come back to this thing and think a little bit more "Hebrew."

So, when you get stuck, I have given you a few pointers. Look at them, even in your Greek thinking. You can work your way through some of those promises and realise who He promises these things to. Ask, "Is this relevant to me, and are there conditions to the promise being fulfilled?" Invariably, for most of the promises, there are conditions.

Let's go back to church planting. One thing I thought would be good to look at is our place in redemption history. We're going to do a history lesson. We're going to go back through church history, and I think it's very important that we do this because we need to understand that as much as Israel was lost for a season, so the church can go through a seasons where she's lost - at least to aspects of Christ.

I've been going through Kings and Chronicles, my goodness I have not found one single king that served God in the whole of Israel from David. The best you can see is one of the guys that sort of sought God once and then kind of just carried on worshipping Baals and the Asherah poles.

You have hundreds of years of unfaithfulness and God remaining faithful before He finally says, "I'm cutting you off," and that needs to be the lens through which we realise what He's like. He is slow to anger, abounding in love. Look at King Ahab. He's arguably one of the worst kings. He's killing all the prophets of God and brought in pagan worship. He's mean, He's about as bad as you get. At one point, Ahab has a moment where he softens, and God is there in the hope that he'll be redeemed and restored. God was so gracious, even though this guy killed all His prophets. He has this moment where he softens, and God's there to save him. What does it mean for me? It means He's unbelievably kind, unbelievably loving, more than I can grasp, He wants to save me. He takes no delight in the death of the wicked, and I'm His son. My security then isn't in some legal system; my security is in my Father. He's kind and loving. He wants me to be with Him forever. But we want to fall back on a legal system of how this works. You might ask yourself, "then can I fall?" My answer to you would be, just remain in Him, and you never worry about that because He's good.

Let's look briefly at church history and go through the last 2,000 years of what went down. This is important because if you don't see the receptiveness of Christ through the ages, you'll miss what I think God wants to do in us. When the church was birthed in the book of Acts, I believe it was the picture of what Christ wanted His church to look like. You look at what they were and how they impacted the world. The church was very healthy at the start. It was expanding, it was growing, it was turning cities upside down. They were totally different from the world around them, and it was an incredible picture, (read Acts 2:42-47). This was an incredible Church, but towards the end of the first century, we start to see that the Church is starting to get polluted. Bad teachers, compromises, persecution from the outside, and people begin to turn away from the faith. For example, the whole letter to the Hebrews is

written to Jews who have become Christians and are now trying to backtrack to Judaism because Judaism was protected by Roman law. If you were a Jew; then no one was going to hurt you. At this point, Christianity is separated from Judaism, and you could die for being a Christian. The Jews just want to go back to Judaism (because after all it was all about the Jewish nation). So, the whole letter of the Hebrews is to strengthen people so that they don't turn back.

By the end of the first century, the compromising church is weakening; five of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 are starting to have quite significant errors and problems which they need to deal with. This carries on into the third century where the church is moving forward but floundering, she's not cooking quite like she did in the first century - a lot better though than I think the Church is doing today. Then in the third century, something radical happens as a king is going to war. For three centuries Israel, the Church, is persecuted, being killed because they were Christians. Constantine (a pagan Roman Empire) is going to war, he's ruling the world, and he has a dream. In the dream, he sees a shield with the cross, and he hears a voice saying, "If you put the sign on your armour, you'll win." He does it. He goes against an empire much bigger than his, and he defeats an enemy that's two and a half times bigger than his army. He begins to try and find out what the meaning of the cross is and becomes a Christian.

Many would say this was one of the worst things that would ever happened to the Christian faith because what he did was he made Christianity (at this point there's many different religions in Rome), the only religion; and Jesus the only God. He makes it illegal to be anything else. Suddenly, everyone else is being killed because of their faith, and so pagan priests just swing over. Suddenly the church is in pagan temples; with pagan priests that are now Christian. Christianity is now compromised, and no longer has the purity that it once had. Christianity becomes the norm, the status quo, and everyone says, "I'm a Christian," because if you're a Christian in Roman society, you're going to progress in life. If you're not a Christian, you're going to get kicked out, but people are not born again. There's nothing of the power of the Spirit, just Christian morality.

The question comes up, "Is Jesus God?" Believe it or not, the church doesn't actually think that He is. There's a massive debate that "He's not God" for a period of nearly a hundred years. The majority of the church didn't believe that Jesus was God, and in 325 AD, the Council of Christian leaders meets and discusses, "Is He God?" They decided at the Council of Nicaea that Jesus is God, which was a milestone. We've just suddenly seen a kickback because at this point, the church is even denying and not sure if Jesus is God, they just think He's an angel that's been created. You have to imagine being in the church

at that time, and I often wonder what I would have believed if everyone around me believed that He was just an angel. Quite scary, isn't it?

The rise of the Catholic Church begins out of that place. A lot of doctrines start creeping into the church at this stage. These include Mary being the mother of God, and that the way to get to God isn't through Jesus, because what son won't listen to his mother. So, if you want to get God on your side, speak to His mother. Again, there is a Council of Constantinople, and the second question comes: Is the Holy Spirit, God? Everyone says, "no, He's not." Again, there's confusion in the church. Finally, the Council of Constantinople in 382 AD, realise that He is God. They passed a law that from now on, everyone in the Church must teach that the Holy Spirit is God. Then, a slide starts, and it goes very badly. There are moments of glory if you go back to church history where God has kept the remnant right throughout out, but pretty much the Roman Catholic Church is drifting to the place that by the 1300's they started to kill people for reading the Bible. It is crazy, some of the things that they were starting to do. A guy called Wycliffe writes the Bible in the language of the people. This is massive, but it's illegal to do what he's done.

In the 1400s, Martin Luther, a Roman Catholic priest, goes to Rome, where the Church needs to build a whole lot of big buildings. The Pope issues a decree, and he says no one's good enough to go to heaven, but instead of saying that through Christ and faith, you'll be saved, he says you have to pay for your sins (which is not Christian). He says if your loved ones are dead right now, they are burning in a place called Purgatory, which he just makes up - we don't see Purgatory in our Bible. Imagine your mom, my dad, your grandfather, they are suffering worms and all these horrible pains. It's like hell, but if you give money to the church, literally as your money falls into the basket, you've released your loved ones from Purgatory, and they go into glory in Heaven. This is pretty much the Christianity everyone is believing. People are coming and pouring their money in because they are trying to build St. Peter's Cathedral (Basilica). Luther comes upon this, and he's thinking, "What is this?" He's a priest, so as a priest, he has access to some parts of the Bible, not the whole Bible. He has a book called "The Breavery", which is a shortened version of the Bible. The priests didn't have access to the whole Bible, but even in the Breavery, he sees that there are major problems with the doctrines of the church. So, he tries to reform the church. But the church has power of the state because at this point the Roman Catholic Church is dying and the Catholic Church has become the power of the day. They start to hunt him to kill him. He, fortunately, has a rich German friend who is a king and hides him. He translates the Bible; and by grace he does this at the same time as the printing press is released.

The first book that is ever printed in the history of the world is the German Bible. Because it was printed and not written, it goes viral. It's illegal, but people are getting it, and it's being passed around by hand. People are getting the Bible, and for the first time in hundreds of years, Christians are able to read the Bible for themselves. What happened next, is from Martin Luther, you started to find reformed theology, which basically means people started saying the Church is sick and we need to reform it. It wasn't so much the Church, as much as what the Church believed was sick, and they needed to reform the Church.

Interestingly, we have reformed people today. Calvinists have claimed that for themselves. But actually; Armenian or Calvinists (anyone who's protestant actually), is reformed - we no longer believe what the Catholic Church believes. Martin Luther said this: "The Catholic Church is the Whore of Babylon." As far as he was concerned, you could not be saved if you were a Catholic. He regarded it as no longer Christian. It's an interesting thing in a modern world.

In the 1500s, you have this Reformation of the Bible being the highest authority, so now people are reading the Bible, and now the Bible is your authority, not the Roman Catholic Church. This is massive. If it doesn't line up with the scripture, what the Pope says is irrelevant and we ignore the Pope. In fact, if Luther says what's not in the Bible, we ignore Luther. Suddenly, the Protestant Church starts tearing apart, and so you have different groups beginning to emerge because everyone said, "Well, we read the Bible differently to you."

Then the Anabaptists came back with water baptism for adults. Adults need to repent, believe, and be baptized in water. For the first time in over a thousand years, baptism was restored to the Church. The first thing Martin Luther says is that he doesn't like this new doctrine and he orders that the Anabaptists get drowned; I kid you not! Martin Luther, the great reformer, said, let's drown them then because if they want to get baptized as adults, we'll drown them. The Anabaptists literally paid for that doctrine with their lives. The Church killed them. So, when we stand today, and we say you need to be baptized, please understand that some people died for God to restore that truth to us. God is restoring something to His Church.

Then there's a shift. We've had a reformation of the Word, but now we started the reformation of the Church. People start realising as they read the Word that the Church isn't right. Remember, Luther and Calvin really just copied the Catholic Church. You still had priests, and you still had robes, you still had everything like a Roman Catholic Church. The order of service, if you go to those churches, is very similar to the Catholic Church. So, they haven't reformed the Church enough. There's more that we have to take a hold of.

In the 1820s, you start to see groups like the Brethren Movement that said this, "There are no more priests, we're all priests." This is reformation! You don't need a priest. You don't need to go and confess to a priest, you, yourself, have direct access to God. You're a kingdom of priests. You have something of an inheritance as a saint. You must understand, no one believed that until these reformers came. God's restoring His church.

Then the Congregational Movement emerges in the late 16th Century. You don't have to be in a denomination. You can be in a local church. You should be under Christ, not under a denomination. In the 1700s, evangelism kicks in, and suddenly people are getting saved. Evangelists like George Whitefield and John Wesley emerged. They weren't allowed to preach in churches. Certainly, Wesley wasn't as he was kicked out of churches all the time. No one would have him. He finally got to preach in fields, and thousands and tens of thousands, started getting saved. Evangelism was restored to the church because the church was not evangelizing. So, evangelism restores holiness to the church. Through Wesley, "you must be holy as He is holy" is taught, even though he had no formal education to preach. John Wesley fought for that. Mind-blowing! You don't have to go to a seminary to know Jesus. He chose fishermen; He still does. He's the same God today. All of these things are reforming the Church back to Acts.

Then in 1906 the outpouring of the Spirit in Azusa happened (the Azusa Street Revival). There was a meeting on 9 April 1906 in California where the Holy Spirit is poured out. Strangely enough, there was also a meeting around that time (the late 1800s) in Wellington under Andrew Murray, and no one knew what it was. Murray, himself, thought that it was not God, and he tried to stop what God was doing. Suddenly, people are being filled with the Spirit and speaking in new tongues. God is restoring His church. Here's an interesting point - not all the churches were reformed. You still have people today, stuck somewhere in the Dark Ages, theologically. God has moved on. Intimacy with God is restored through Andrew Murray. Murray's books say you can be intimate with God. It's mind-blowing. He's reforming something to the Church.

The 1920s come, and suddenly the churches talk about:

- The Second Coming. Jesus is coming back, but no one thought about that. What, He's coming back?
- Divine healing. God can heal today. Suddenly, because the Spirit is being poured out, signs started to follow, and healing starts breaking out. A theology of healing begins to get formed.
- The laying on of hands. No one did it, but now.

In the 40's and 50's, prophecy starts popping, and there's a prophecy movement, Pentecostalism. Assemblies of God was born out of the Pentecostal movement. The AFM, the AGS (Afrikaans, traditional churches), these were a move of God in their day. Deliverance happens, and demons are suddenly driven out. You'll see them through history, but now suddenly they're hitting on a global scale. Inner healing increases, and then you start to find a teaching gift. Suddenly, teachers are emerging that are carrying huge profiles and being restored to the body of Christ.

In the 80's the Kingdom of God team ministers with church meetings in homes. Suddenly, the church needs to meet in homes. Maybe, they went to places they shouldn't have, but there was a restoration of the church into homes in the 1980s.

Then you start to define a restoration of apostles and correct church government. You began having men like Terry Virgo, Dudley Daniels, CJ Mahaney, men around the world emerging saying apostles need to be restored. They are still relevant to the church.

Then in the 1990s, you saw a move of church planting for discipling nations so that believers can live in freedom in the presence of God amongst other people and worship. I remember the changes in worship. Even in my generation, when I was saved, I remember when groups like Cutting-edge and Delirious came out. Suddenly, worship began to move to a more intimate, more personal thing. It's all just moves of God restoring worship. God as a friend, as a lover. These are new doctrines. These were incredible to the churches. Suddenly, everyone believes these things. I believe those were moves of God. I believe we're a second-generation move of God and the Apostolic.

Then in the 2000s, some of the things we stood for included: the priesthood of all believers, but on a different scale. We actually want everyone to participate, be involved in discipling nations, not just the apostles. That we would build on the best of the reformations of the past. Church health is something that wasn't thought about before. The Church needs to be healthy. We needed to develop individuals in the church, to see them come into their destiny. These are all new things. The Spirit and the Word - we need both. The balancing of extreme doctrines. That is something I fought hard for, trying to balance them out. One of the things I think we're in now is the decolonizing of the Kingdom because we've colonized the Kingdom with our culture. We read through the lens of our little Greek world, and we actually make God what we want Him to be. We are in the process of decolonizing that back to Acts. Christ's voice to lead the Church, not men. Christ needs to lead the Church, and we have to let Him do that.

We've got to be Spirit-led, not just in theory and in doctrine, but in practice. We must hear God for where He wants to take you and for what He wants to do. These are things that I have never seen but are in now. There would be a link in the Spirit to partnering churches around the world. That's never been seen before - partnership. Not these weird other things, like "networks," because we always end up mixing up what God does. Partnerships mean mutual submission, not lording it over, not independence. There are so many things.

I believe there is another move of God, and God is restoring something to His Church. It's not something new; it's something very old. We're going back to the book of Acts, building on the shoulders of those that have gone before us, but we need to be faithful in our generation to see God restore to the Church what He wants to restore. God has a dream of the Church today that is different from what it was yesterday. We need to take hold of that thing and flesh it out in our generation so that the nations can see the image and the glory of God through the Church as she lives out her faith the way she's supposed to.

Session 04

Building Church

We have looked at many promises and their conditions, so which promises can we hold to? The Bible talks about being in Christ by faith. God makes several promises to Jesus, and if you are in Jesus, then all the promises to Jesus are yours. That is why all the promises of God, in Christ, are yes and amen. When God says that He is going to raise Jesus from the dead, for example, that's a promise to which you can hold. Because, if you're in Christ, He was the first fruits of many that would be raised from the dead. One of the things we can do then is, by positioning ourselves in Christ, we can have access to the promises that God gave to Christ.

Then what happens with things like tithing? Isn't tithing an Old Testament law? Is it relevant to us? What about Malachi? God says to the people there that they're robbing Him by not bringing the tithe into the storehouse. Is that relevant to us, or is that just to them? Let me quickly give you an overview of tithing. According to the New Testament, and the Old Testament, tithing is something that starts in Abraham. This means tithing started before the law. It passes through the law, and when it came to Christ, Jesus endorsed tithing when He said to the Pharisee that he should have practiced tithing and mercy (Matt 23:23). By endorsing tithing, Jesus brought that promise that God had, that thing that God had started in Abraham, right through into the New Testament. That Abraham, the father of our faith, tithed to Melchizedek models to us that likewise, those who are sons of Abraham, by faith, will do what Abraham their father did. So, we tithe to our Melchizedek - Jesus. Therefore, we can see that tithing is something that comes all the way through into the New Testament covenant. This means then that the principles of tithing remain. So, in Malachi, if they were not giving their tithe, they did not walk in blessing. You can see that if tithing is a way that God has planned His Kingdom to work and we come into what God wants, then when we tithe there is a sense that we will walk in the favour of God. We will walk in the favour of God because we've been like our father Abraham, but if we don't, then maybe the Malachi warnings are relevant to us. Tithing is something that God has commanded, and whenever there is disobedience to God, you can be sure that you won't walk in blessing.

I've done, and I know of, many surveys where people ask Christians, "Do you believe in tithing?" It is always interesting to see the outcome of those surveys. Those that say they do believe in tithing when asked how much they give, on average, were giving between twelve and thirteen percent. It would generally be broken down as ten percent to the church and three to alms or the poor. Some would even

be giving much more. People that don't believe in tithing, on the other hand, have been found to give less than one percent. It's interesting, isn't it? If the worker's worth his wage in the New Testament, like the priests in the Old Testament, Paul says, it is his right to receive remuneration for his work in preaching the Gospel (1 Cor 9:19). He said it's a right. In other words, I'm due my money because I work as much as anyone else in the secular world, and when you go to work, and your boss doesn't pay you, what does that mean for you? So, it's a right. I can say you owe me our tithe. Actually, it's not me you owe but God. You pay God (via the church) your tithe, and He pays me. He called us to do this in His house, not everyone has that call, but that's what He called us to do. We have a different inheritance from you!

Now, let's look at the church and in Acts 17:30, we read this,

In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30 NIV)

One of the things we must realize about God is that God overlooks for seasons and then does a "but now" moment. Even in your own life you will have "but now" moments. When you were first saved, God maybe dealt with you on certain issues. For me, it was swearing, marijuana, sex, and cigarettes, until I stopped those it was all He spoke to me about. Then, when I stopped those, He started on the next thing. After that, He moved onto the next thing and the next thing. Now I'm many years down this road, and He's just talking to me about different things. It's like He says, "Okay, I'm dealing with these things, and I'm calling a "but now" moment for you here. Deal with this." If you deal with it, you move on. If you don't deal with it, you just go around the mountain again and again. If that is the case, you will never mature in your faith, and so we need to heed when the Lord says there is a "but now" moment.

I believe that if you look in history, there are many "but now" moments. God says that for a while He's let us get away with things, but now we are going to have to deal with it. We're in a "but now" moment when it comes to how the church is going to be built, and the tragic thing is often, we as humans, don't recognize the "but now" moments. Look at the Anabaptists dying for water baptism, that was a restoration of God, and there are still Christians today that say they don't need to be baptized. Or people that twist baptism to mean something that God doesn't mean it to be. Like you can baptize babies, or there's that weird theology that says everyone is born into the covenant, like they're Jews. No one's born into the covenant anymore. If anyone could be, it would be the Jews, the only line that still has any covenant connection with God. We, on the other hand, are Gentile, essentially mongrels. God might be nice to our kids because of us. He might love our kids because of our walk with Him, but there's no

covenant that He has with them. It's only through faith that we enter into covenant with Him. Faith is how we entered, faith is how they enter, and with faith, the first step of obedience is baptism.

So, how do we build church so that there is a restoration? One of the things is that the church needs to be built upon the Bible. As you go out there, you're going to be challenged as church planters, especially around what this Bible is really saying. We need to know that we cannot go beyond the Bible.

Paul says this,

Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other. (1 Cor 4:6 NIV)

When you build a church, you have to come back to the Bible. What does the Bible say? Now, the challenge in modern thinking is that we become too clever. So, one of the things you'll face, if you haven't already but certainly as a leader, is people. There are theologians currently in the world that teach this, that everything is trajectory. So, in other words, in the Old Covenant, a woman would be stoned for being immoral sexually, but in the New Covenant, when Jesus came, she wasn't stoned. He just told her, in essence, not to do that again. So, they talk about trajectory, and how if that's what Jesus was doing, because it's moving in a certain direction, then we should follow that same trajectory. It then fast becomes a progressive revelation. They start arguing that in the Old Covenant, some things would be regarded as abhorrent, but coming into the New Covenant, some of the abhorrent things aren't so shocking anymore. For example, people in the Bible had slaves, and then they were not allowed slaves, so is homosexuality not something like that? And what happens is they start to move the goalposts, and they move its trajectory. In other words, maybe homosexuality isn't a sin?

Now, in the Old Covenant, a woman wasn't allowed into the very presence of God. They were allowed in the outer courts only. The high priest, who was always male, would go into the presence of God on her behalf. The Rabbis would thank God in the morning for the fact that they weren't born a donkey or a woman. Which shows you that being a woman had some distinct disadvantages during those times, but then Jesus comes, and the first person He appears to is a woman. Now, in that culture, a woman had absolutely no rights. This meant that; if a woman saw a murder, no one saw the murder because she was just a woman. So, the fact that Jesus appears to a woman is remarkable because why should He appear to her because she had no legal status? She can't even be a witness about Him! The argument then goes, well actually Jesus was showing that He was going to change something with women; and

that women now have equal status with men, in the sense of their place in the church, because of the theology of trajectory.

If we don't go beyond what is written, we're going to realize is that there was a progressive revelation, and then God put the final package down and gave us the Word of God. Yes, God was redeeming and restoring how people saw Him through the ages, but there came a point that He drew a line, and He said those are His final results. That's what He wanted it to be, and we can't go beyond those boundaries because as soon as you go beyond those boundaries, you open Pandora's box. Where does it end, then, because there's no line?

Imagine, for example, if I was driving here and I was driving at 65 kmph in a 60 kmph zone, and a traffic officer pulls me over. Can he say I broke the law because I was driving too fast if there is no law, no line? Because, what's too fast if there's no 60 kmph law? What's too fast, and who decides it's too fast? Too fast for you may not be too fast for me. Maybe I can drive at 250 kmph; if I had a fast car, and maybe that's not too fast for me. It stands to reason then that anything goes. So, as soon as you open that door, you might as well just shut the church because she has nothing to stand on. We cannot go beyond what is written. You cannot go beyond that. Those are the boundaries, that's the line. Paul said it, so we believe it. Therefore, when you build the church, I don't care what new revelation comes, we go back to old revelations. If that's what it says, that's how we build.

There are prescribed ways, not just for theology, but also for the method in which the church has to be built. I think this is very important; as much as Martin Luther brought great revelation about the fact that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone (which is a doctrine that keeps us and is still what we build on), there's also a reformation of how the church is supposed to be. This is arguably one of the biggest things that we are a part of, reforming how the church functions, how it works. We're not coming up with new doctrines to what those fathers did, but we are coming up with old things that they missed in terms of the book of Acts; and how these things work out. I want to look, therefore, at how this concept of a healthy church looks and functions.

As you plant a church, you've got to realize why you are going to plant a church when there's another church down the road. I say this because most of you are going to go into a region where there are churches already. Why then, don't you just join one of those churches? Have you ever thought of that? Why don't you just join one of those already established churches? Because if they're all doing the same things we do, then you should join them instead. Help them get on with what they are getting on with because surely two is better than one? Together you can have a greater return for your work. So, if they are doing this thing the way we believe is right, then we should help them. We'll be more effective that

way, and so will they. Rather than doing our own little thing and they do their little thing, and everyone ends up saying that the church is so divided.

So the thing is, why are we doing this? Why are we planting churches? We are doing this because we believe we are part of a Reformation of God! If the Anabaptists didn't die for water baptism and they just said, "Well, we are all part of the same thing," then we wouldn't be baptized now as adults. Likewise, people would never come into the fullness of what the church is supposed to look like unless we take a hold of what God's called us to do; and actually, flesh it out on the earth.

I want to look at how important it is for us to grasp this concept of a pattern, or way, that God wants this thing called the church to work. Do you know that, when God gave Noah the command to build an ark, He had a very prescribed way that He wanted the Ark to be built? Have you ever read the scriptures on Noah's Ark? God wanted this thing to be this high, so He gives him a measurement. He wanted it to be this long, with these many floors, and Noah must use this wood. Also, there had to be a window there. Noah had to do everything as prescribed. It says all this in Genesis 6:15. God gave them the dimensions, and the measurements, and exactly how it would be. Quite incidentally, I heard about a shipbuilder once, who took a look at the dimensions of the Ark, and they put it to the test. They found the Ark's dimensions were the most seaworthy dimensions for a ship to this day. In other words, the Ark could rock on its axis, almost to the point that it would flip, but because of how it was built, it would pop back up. It was way ahead of its time, but God had a prescribed pattern that He gave to Noah so that Noah would survive. Purely because humanity would die if Noah and that ship sunk. It was the end of the world, no more humans, no more animals, no more anything.

So, from this, we can see that the first time God redeems, He is very specific about the pattern. In Genesis 6:22, it says that Noah did everything just as God had commanded, and he did it exactly how God told him to do it. So, the ship survived; and we are here today because of Noah. Then, if you look at when God starts to redeem them, He comes to Israel, and He tells them that He will be their God, and they will be His people. He tells them to build a tabernacle, which was, at this point, a tent that they would travel around with Him in it. As they would go through the wilderness, they would meet God in that tent. It was like the first church. This was how they were to worship God. This was the place where they were to offer sacrifices. The Bible says again in Exodus 25:9 that they had to make this tabernacle, and all its furnishings, precisely as the pattern God would show them. God was very clear in saying that He didn't want Moses' idea of how he would build it. God knew how He wanted it built, and He gave Moses the pattern, and Moses had to build it exactly as God told him to. He wasn't interested in Moses'

creative ideas. It was His ideas that Moses needed to flesh out; because it's God's temple, it was His house.

Then after the tabernacle, remember initially it's a tent that moves around, a temple was built. Bear in mind that each of these things is an Old Testament picture of the church. Again, when it comes to the building of the temple, in Chronicles we read,

He stationed the Levites in the temple of the LORD with cymbals, harps and lyres in the way prescribed by David and Gad the king's seer and Nathan the prophet; this was commanded by the LORD through his prophets. (2 Chr 29:25 NIV)

Here's the thing, Noah got the revelation of how to build the Ark, Moses got the revelation of how to build the tabernacle, but David was given the revelation of how to build the temple.

"All this," David said, "I have in writing as a result of the LORD's hand on me, and he enabled me to understand all the details of the plan." (1 Chr 28:19 NIV)

David was given and understood the details of how the physical building would be built, and he built it faithfully through his son. He gave it to his son before he died, and his son, Solomon, built that temple.

Then we jumped from there to the church, which is the next revelation, the next thing of God restoring His place of worship. The church is us; we are living stones being built together to become a dwelling in which God will live by His Spirit (1 Pete 2:5). We are that modern expression of what was supposed to be in the Old Covenant.

Paul says,

For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. (1 Cor 4:17 NIV)

This is fascinating, Paul had a way of building, and a way of teaching and this was how it was in every single church. It wasn't like different churches doing different things with different people. No, there is a way that God wanted the church to look and God's given something of that revelation to Paul. Paul was then going to send Timothy to remind every church how the church was meant to look; and how it was supposed to be. So, we need to realize that God has a way that He wants His church to be built. He doesn't want our ideas on it; He wants His ideas. It's His room, it's His house, it's not ours, and so, we have to find what the Master wants so that we can express that properly.

The danger is that we want to be like God. So, you could go today, to places in this suburb, and find a lot of different ways of building a church. There are a lot of different leadership models, a lot of different styles on a Sunday. You'll find churches in this area where the meeting is orchestrated literally from 9 o'clock, or whenever it is that they start, to when they end. Every minute is documented and designed, to the point that they could tell you now what will happen on Sunday at 22 minutes past 9. They can tell you exactly what time the last prayer will finish. Then you'll find a church that says they are a house church and they don't want to get involved with the institutionalized church. Then you'll go to a Catholic Church, and they will have priests. Ultimately, all of these things are saying that they've got the revelation of how the church should be; and unfortunately, not all of them can have the revelation of how the church can be. We can't all be right on these things. So, we've got to be careful that we are getting it right; because one day, God will test how we built.

If you're going to plant a church one day, you have to make sure that what you build is built according to the way God wants it built, because if it's not, your work could get burned up, and you might get in trouble with Him. We must realize this because I think we don't realize that God isn't happy with our ideas. In fact, He detests our ideas. He wants us to be where He is. He wants us to do what He's asked us to do. He's God, and we're the created ones. We don't know what we don't know; we do what He asked us to do.

One of those stories of redemption went wrong. David is ultimately called to be the one who will lay the foundation for what the temple will be. He ends up buying the ground that it will be built on one day, and in the process, He is restoring the presence of God to Israel. You can't have a temple without the presence of God. The presence of God is, at this point, kept in a box called the Ark of the Covenant, it's not just a box. The story behind this is that that box had been taken captive by the Philistines. There had been a war between Israel and the Philistines, and the Jews thought again that they could come up with a brilliant idea. They were losing the battle, and so they decided to take the glory of God with them into the battle. They reasoned that God would then be with them and so they would win. The problem was, however, that they didn't ask the Lord, they just came up with an idea for themselves and ran with it. They went into battle with the Ark in front of them, with the idea that they would win, and what ended up happening was the opposite. They got slaughtered and the box of the presence of God was taken into captivity, taken into the temple of the god of Dagon (which is the Philistine god).

Eventually things go wrong for the Philistines because God was not about to bow down to Dagon. It got to the point where they were getting sick all the time, boils were breaking out in their camps, and they finally realized that the presence of God was not a good thing for them. So, they figured it best to get rid

of this box. So, they put it on an ox cart. They worked out that if this is the true God, they'll leave the box on a cart drawn by a cow who is separated from her calf. They thought that if the cow would leave her calf and go back to Israel, this must be the One true God, because there's no way a mother would leave her calf any other way. The cow then walks away and leaves her calf to die. Now, they knew that this was the true God and again Israel was being a light to the nation's without even realizing it. When the Israelites see it, they were so excited about the Ark of the Covenant returning that they run out and touched the Ark. Immediately, they start dying because they are not dealing with the Ark in the right way. So now, Israel is also freaked out. They decided to leave the box because they didn't know if it was a good or a bad thing for them. They end up leaving it at the house of Abinadab and it stays there for a long time. Then when David is king, he wonders why the presence of God is not in Jerusalem, the capital and heart of the nation. He keeps hearing about this guy who's actually walking in the blessing of God and he realizes he is under the blessing of God because he's got the box that carries God's presence. So, David figures he needs to get that box, because if the heart of God comes back to the center of His people, then Israel will come to revival; she'll serve and worship God the way she's supposed to. He then sets out to get this box and in 1 Chronicles 13 we read the story of what happened.

They carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all their might, even with songs and with lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals and with trumpets. When they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, because the oxen nearly upset it. The anger of the LORD burned against Uzza, so He struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. Then David became angry because of the LORD'S outburst against Uzza; and he called that place Perez-uzza to this day. David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God home to me?" So David did not take the ark with him to the city of David, but took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. Thus the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months; and the Lord blessed the family of Obed-edom with all that he had. (1 Chr 13: 7-14 NIV)

Here's a lesson, David went to fetch the Ark, and remember this, the Ark had come to them on an ox cart, which is easier to carry than to carry it the way we read they should have carried it. What ends up happening is that David copies the pattern of the Philistines and figures that because it came to them on an ox cart, they can take it to Jerusalem on an ox cart. Then, because it's on an ox cart, the oxen stumble, and the box falls. Uzzah, who is one of the servants, then reaches out to try steady the Ark, which is a really good thing to do. But, by touching the Ark he does something that Israel is not allowed to do. This disobedience to the ways of God gets him killed in that moment. This then freaks David out, which makes Israel freak out, and they call the place Perez Uzzah, which means an outbreak against Uzzah. In

other words, God broke out against one of His own people there, and there's fear, anger, loss of purpose, and David just figures it's best to leave it.

It's a terrible thing when we start to come up with our own good ideas about how to bring the presence of God into a place. We do exactly what David did, and even though David was greatly loved, it didn't stop the judgment of God from breaking out against him and his people. In Revelation 2:16, John writes about how Jesus tells a church to repent; otherwise, He will come to them and fight against those in the church that are not listening to Him. He says He will fight them with the sword of His mouth. Jesus can still break out against His church today.

That's why they had a fear of the Lord, and the fear of the Lord wasn't something small. It was a real reverence for the Lord. So, when David inquires of the Lord, in 1 Chronicles, he realizes what went wrong. This is what he says,

"It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the LORD our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way." (1 Chr 15:13 NIV)

They didn't inquire of Him about how to do it in the prescribed way. You see, the box had little rings along the side that were put there by God's design, and the Levites were supposed to take a pole, they weren't to touch that box because it was sacred, and they were meant to put those poles through the rings. The Levites were then meant to put that box on their shoulders and carry it. But David didn't ask the Lord how He wanted them to carry the box. He just came up with his own idea about how to do it. The result of this meant that God's judgment broke out against him and against his people.

Now, He's the same God, yesterday, today and tomorrow, so we need to ask Him what the prescribed way is for the church to be built. If we don't build it His way, we might put things in place that make a lot of sense to us but actually might invoke His judgment. We are ultimately deciding what cupboards go in His room, and we might touch sacred things without realizing it.

So, here are a few worldly things that I think are very prevalent in the church right now, and again, these are things that we adopt from the world. This is what you'll find in churches. We tend to learn from the world and bring it into the church. We just make them Kingdom, but we need to go back to the Bible to see the prescribed way of building. These are just a few thoughts.

Denominations. Can anyone show me an example of denominations in scripture? How about committees? Seeker churches? Churches where we decide to make the church comfortable for people. How's about pragmatic, or entertainment, churches? Let's make the church really cool for people to

come, and we'll program the meeting to suit your preferences. When you read the Bible do you see the early church designing how the meeting will run? Or do you find them gathering together and, as the Spirit leads, they're speaking, they're prophesying, they're teaching? Do you find that everything is prescribed beforehand? Because, you see, if you prescribe how it's a service is going to run, you can make it run very smoothly. I've preached in some of those churches. They once said to me that I could preach from like 22 minutes past 9:00, to 44 minutes past 9:00. They then told me I could pray for five minutes and then it's over. I sat there thinking, "And what if Jesus wants to do something different?" How do you hear Jesus that well that you can tell me exactly what He's going to be doing at that time?

I remember being in a Chinese Church once, and I was preaching the Gospel and people started weeping, the Spirit of God began to break out and these Chinese Christians were shaking under the anointing, being filled with the Spirit. They'd never experienced it before then, they'd never known it before, and while this was happening, the leaders came up to me and told me to stop. They asked me what I was doing because it wasn't the time for these things. I told them that I wasn't making it happen. They told me I had to do this at the end of the meeting, and I told them I couldn't just turn it on and off. As I was talking, people were speaking in tongues for the first time, falling on their knees crying out, weeping and wailing, and they wanted me to stop so that they could carry on and do notices.

Here's another one, missions! Are mission organizations they in the Bible? Is the pastor separate from the other leaders in the Bible? No! Why then in most churches do you find a pastor and with some elders you don't really know. Or Deacon driven church? Or a church where people vote? There are quite a few churches where they will vote for the pastor every few years. Can you show me once in the Bible where voting has ever worked out in a way that God has been happy? Every time I see people voting it's bad. Program Church vs. Spirit-led Church. I've mentioned that one already.

So here's the thing, these are all things that are in the church, and how people build the church, and we need to go back to the Bible and ask Jesus how He wants His church to be built. I could put one little thing in place that would skew the way the church is done irrevocably. For example, I'm the pastor, and in a charismatic model, the pastor is pretty much like the Pope, and you will come to church and listen to me. I will pastor and preach; services will be about you listening to me preach. In the end, when you are sick, I'll come to visit you in the hospital. I'll be the one who does pretty much everything, and you'll pay me the tithe, and you'll never be a priest in His Kingdom, I'll do everything. Which means that ultimately what we're doing is, we're taking the away glory of God. Church is supposed to be all these people functioning in what they're called to and we're putting it upon one man. It's a twisted, distorted concept and the priests never rise up, the nations are never reached because we limit the church to one man.

Now, people come and watch me shine, but they don't shine in themselves. We need to go back to the biblical pattern for the church.

Do you know you can do the right thing the wrong way too? In one of the scary scriptures in 1 Corinthians 11:17, Paul writes to the church in Corinth, and he says their meetings are doing more harm than good. I mean, that is just a mind-blowing statement! There are some churches that Jesus would say that He would actually prefer it if they weren't there, their services do more harm for His Kingdom than when they don't meet. Then in this church, in 1 Corinthians 11 He says,

So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. (1 Cor 11:27 NIV)

Then, further on:

For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. (1 Cor 11:29-30 NIV)

That scripture is saying that just by being part of that church, you could die. Just by breaking bread incorrectly and out of accordance with the pattern the Lord has set, the Lord can judge you, as He did with this church in Corinth. The Lord can break out against you in the same way He did with David. Do you get that that's in the New Testament?

1 Corinthians 3: 9-16 says, that each man must be careful about how he builds, for God will test the quality of his work. When you go plant a church, you have to be very careful what you build. You need to remember that when you are the leader, you pretty much decide what's going to go down. If you build and do things that are not right in the sight of the Lord, you might not bring blessing onto yourself and the people, you might bring judgment upon them instead. The Bible says it's good thing to desire to be a leader; but leaders will also face a stricter judgment. You've been entrusted with more, so make sure you get this right.

When you plant a church, you're going to get so many books about how to build His church. Books about how this man did that, which made his church grow from five to five million in two days. Be very careful what you do because, at the end of the day, you've got to build what God wants. God has a prescribed way that He wants His church to look, and as stewards of this mystery, we need to make sure we build that well into the people. Even when it's uncomfortable, we need to build according to God's pattern.

Again, I go to Paul,

For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. (1 Cor 4:17 NIV).

In 2 Timothy 1, Paul says,

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. (2 Tim 1:13-14 NIV)

Building church is a huge privilege because it's through the church that God has chosen to reveal His glory to the rulers and the authorities in heavenly places. During this course, we will look at what that kind of church looks like, but before we look at what it looks like, I wanted to show you that there's no option but what He says in the scriptures. It's not like we can choose how we want to build this. If God has given us His prescribed way, we build it that way. Building God's way is much harder than building the world's way! I've often said, when I have trained church planters, if you want to grow a big church really quickly, just get Bethel to do your worship. Get Joyce Meyer to do your preaching; and get in and out in an hour. Hire a big venue, go big and you'll grow huge numbers. You'll grow a huge crowd. You will gather people, gather huge numbers. You will gather people looking for "itchy ear" stuff. But, if you want to build the church, you need to remember that sometimes the church is a remnant. Sometimes, as you look back over history, the majority weren't the church!

I just know this simple prayer:

"Jesus help me to be in You and You in me. Help me to build in such a way that You're pleased with the work of my hands. Teach me your ways, God, because I don't know what I don't know."

If we posture ourselves that way, and we seek wisdom, He says if you need it, He'll give it to you. We must realize this is not an optional extra. This is what we have to learn to do right. Each one of us, our actions have huge ramifications for blessing and sometimes for cursing. So, I want to leave you with this, we have to get this right! Every time God has brought redemption, it's been in a prescribed way. There is a prescribed way to build the church! We are on a mission to find that way and to build that way, and it doesn't matter what anyone else does, we want to go back to the Bible.

There it talks about how leadership works, the role of people in the church, who does what, how we work together. Every one of those things has to be brought into the house of God so that we become the image-bearers that God's looking for. So that by looking at us, the nation's will stream to our light as the promise was always that nations will come to the glory of Christ, as we build the right way!

Part 05

Faithful

I do realize that we need to get to handles, practical things, that'll help us to build a church effectively. However, I think more important than hands, is ultimately heart. When our hearts are aligned right, it's very easy to shift our hands. But, if our hearts aren't right, actually hands can be quite dangerous things, if they learn all the tricks of the trade, as it were, but we will get to more and more practical matters as we go on. I realise that many of you will be planting a church. Some of you might help plant a church, or some of you might stay where you are to help a church move forward. In all of this, there is an equipping that needs to come for every single one of us. There is a positioning for what God wants to do in and through us.

This section will deal with becoming a leader through whom God will build His church- because God doesn't just build His church through anyone. There are things we can learn from the Scriptures that can show us how we can align ourselves to become that kind of person that carries the favour of God. I want to say this, if you are ever going to plant a church or be in any leadership anywhere on the planet, for Jesus, you want His favour on your life. And where you are now will position you for that. The things you do now, the decisions you make now, will position you for tomorrow. So, it's too late tomorrow. It's like when you're standing in battle, if you haven't learned the lessons now and prepared yourself beforehand, you're going to get smacked six-love in the battle. So, I want to share with you, how we become the kind of person through whom God will build his church.

But firstly, just to clarify, I can't make decisions outside of what God is telling us and what God is doing. And I can't make you something that God hasn't made you. You need to know that your promotion, whatever God's going to do in and through your life, will come from God, not man. The Bible says that promotion doesn't come from the east or the west; it comes from the hand of God (Psalm 75:6&7). What I can do is teach you how to position yourself for promotion in God. I can teach you how to learn the ways of God, how to be pleasing to God. And if you keep aligning yourself with becoming who He wants you to be, because He's faithful, you'll end up walking in the things that He has for you. And so, I'm hoping to cultivate a healthy climate in your heart, that'll ultimately fashion your hands.

I also need to ask this: "Is every leader chosen by God?" It's an interesting question. There is something here that we need to understand. God does delegate authority, and where God delegates authority, He

allows that authority to choose. Then God will back up whatever was chosen, to some degree. God somehow works in those things. He is able to bring through those leaders that He wants to bring through. He can open doors that no man can shut. Even if men try to shut the doors, I believe God will ultimately open the doors for those that are faithful to Him. So, it's a kind of mystery. At the end of the day, if you align yourself properly with God, you will walk in the things of God. The secret now is to align yourself with the things of God!

To begin with, maybe I'll share a story. In Port Elizabeth, there was a church called The Storehouse, which I visited many years ago as a young man. I had just come out of the Assemblies of God (AOG) movement. I was ruined by what I saw at this church, it was just an incredible church! I wanted to be a part of it! I felt my destiny was tied to it, and so I met with the pastor and kind of hoped that he was going to offer me something in his church. In Assemblies of God, I was about to get given a church. I'd done the Bible School, and I was one of the blue-eyed boys in Assemblies of God, in those days. I figured if I went to this guy, that he would offer me something. I'll never forget sitting down with him and hoping that he was going to, you know, see the ministry or the grace on my life and offer ministry to me. I never forget what he said to me; he said, "Andrew, I don't care if you're Pope John Paul. You will need to join this church as everyone else does. You can make tea." And then he said, "If your calling's of God, no man will take it from you, but if you don't have a calling from God it is better that you never walk in any form of leadership."

He was asking me to trust God, and it was a little bit scary because I was about to be given leadership in the AOG. I mean, I had been faithful in the AOG, I'd done the Bible school and everything else. I was about to be given a church. I had to lay that all down again and trust the Lord to raise me up. I realised that this was the way of the King. This was the way of my God, and I needed to go through the processes, and I did. Years later, I came through in the life of that church- and they sent me down here. They gave me six months' salary and a couple of people to help me, and here we are today! But I believe that it was the things that I did in that season of my life that positioned me for what I'm walking in today.

I need to say; what you do now when no one sees, is positioning you for what you will be tomorrow. The Lord sees everything, there's nothing hidden from His eyes. He sees the secret decisions you make; He sees the tests that you face; He sees the things that you do and don't do. He determines what He's going to do with your life, based upon how you're responding to situations right now. The scripture for this is in 1 Samuel 13:14. The Bible talks about God looking for a leader for Israel, and it says that the Lord had sought out a man after His own heart. God had looked for a man who's got a heart like His, a man whose heart is towards God. When He chose David, God was looking at his heart. He looked across Israel, the

whole nation, and found one young man with a very particular heart attitude; and it was that heart attitude that caused God to choose him. David became an incredible leader, arguably the greatest leader outside of Jesus, in the history of Israel. Under his leadership, Israel extended its boundaries for the first time. It took the land God promised Israel because up until then, it hadn't; and Israel even went beyond that. And Jesus would ultimately come out of this lineage of David.

Then in Ezekiel, again God searches, He wants to do something amongst His people,

"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one. (Ezekiel 22:30 NIV)

So, there are times that God will look for a leader. He'll look for a man that He can build with, but here there is no man with whom He can build. God might want to do things on the earth now but if He can't find a man that will align Himself properly with the purposes of God, God can't, or won't, do it. So, you wonder what things could have come to the earth, had man fully surrendered himself to God. I heard it once taught that the world hasn't often seen what God can do through a man wholly surrendered to Him, because very few have been fully surrendered. Jesus was fully surrendered! He was the son of God, but there was a deep surrender there.

David was a surrendered man and look at what he did in Israel, what God did through him. I would look at you, and I wonder what potential is in you. What things might the Lord do through you by His grace; but He's looking for a heart attitude. It's very important. And so, I need to say this; when God chooses, He chooses a leader based upon two things: either potential faithfulness or present faithfulness.

Unless God's choosing you for destruction, which is a teaching, I don't want to go down right now. (Because He does choose people for destruction sometimes. If God realises, He needs a failure to get a success; you might be that failure.) I just never want to be that guy- I don't know about you. I want to position myself correctly. Then when God decides to do something, I'm on the right side of God not the wrong side. Because then He might harden my heart because I've already got a hard heart; and He might use me like He did Pharaoh ultimately to deliver His people, because God can do that. I didn't quite plan that, but it needs to be said. Judas is a great picture of those chosen to fail. God knew he would fail, but He knew that He needed His son to die on the cross. So, He picked someone that He knew had a skew heart and chose him to fail. Again, don't be that guy, do not be that girl, get your hearts right.

Let's look at being chosen for potential faithfulness, and again, you look at the Bible, and God's a person, He is not a system, so He chooses people based upon what He chooses. But there are certain principles where He genuinely aligns Himself to you. It's not like He always does it that way, but this is how He normally does it, so learn the ways of God, and you can position yourself accordingly.

Gideon is somebody chosen for potential faithfulness. He was hiding when God chose him. He wasn't thinking of Israel, he was thinking of his own stomach, his own crop, he was literally hiding in a wine vat and hoping no one had seen. The enemy had overrun Israel. He wasn't on his knees, crying out, "Oh, God! Pick me, God! You know I've been faithful!" He was just thinking of himself and trying to think, "How am I going to get through winter?" When God calls him, there's a lot of self-doubts. He's like, "Whoa, I'm the least and the lowest and the weakest." He's got this whole long list of reasons why God's choosing the wrong guy. And then when he does do the first thing that he's supposed to do, going to destroy the high places and the altars of Baal on the hills, he does it in the middle of the night and then sneaks away so no one can see him! He is not a guy that is filled with courage. No, he is terrified and scared for his life. But the Lord sees that, by His grace, He can do something with this man. And remember, it's not that Gideon would do it by himself, because at the end of the day, God's not going to let us boast, it's always grace! But it's grace that comes into the soil of our hearts to produce something. If the soil responds well to the seed, there's life. But if the soil is wrong (the parable of the sower, ultimately), even what God wants to do, can be corrupted or destroyed. And so, God looks for the heart aligned with His. He looks for soil that's going to be good soil.

God also sees the end from the beginning, so it is easier for Him to know how it's all going to work out because the Bible speaks about how God foreknew, He predestined, and so there's a foreknowing that goes along with predestining. God knows how you're going to respond long before He chooses you. He knows exactly when I will die. He knows what will be on my mind the second I die, and in some ways He doesn't just know it because He's the God that's outside of time, He is right now where I'm dying, and He's also right now where I'm born. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Before He formed you in your mother's womb, He knew you (Jer 1:5). Before you were even born, He knew you. He knows you now and He knew you then, because He's outside of time, so there are no surprises for Him. It's not like He goes, "Oh, whoopsie, that didn't work out." He knows. But remember, sometimes He can choose you to do whoopsies. He can give a nation an evil leader on purpose, to make them cry out to Him. These are the mysteries of God, and again I just want to say, make sure you're on the right side of the line, by the grace of God, because remember that grace empowers you to position yourself.

Another example of someone that was chosen because of potential future faithfulness is Paul, the Apostle. He picks up on this about himself. He says in 1 Timothy 1, he was chosen, not because of who he was, but rather because of who he had become. This was by the grace of God.

He says,

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; (1 Tim 1:12-13 NIV)

In other words, Paul said, "I might have been confused, but I was faithful in my confusion. I didn't understand everything correctly, but God saw my heart. He saw that I am passionate about God, I am zealous for the things of God. I am a Jew of Jews, a Pharisee of Pharisees, when it comes to salvation, that's not going to help me. I get that," he says, "but when it comes to God choosing me for what He would do, He considered me faithful before I'd done anything good. He saw my heart, like Gideon." Paul's telling us here that the reason why he was chosen was that God saw faithfulness in him before it had manifested. So, faithfulness is a big thing, and we'll look at that a little bit more just now, but I want to lay this as a foundation.

Right now, where you are, you are in the place where the decisions you make now will determine whether you are, over the next season, going to be considered faithful. In Luke 16, it says,

"He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?" (Luke 16:10-11 NIV)

When I came to Christ, I was everything but faithful. I was self-centered and selfish. But when He grabbed my heart, by Grace, I fell in love with Him, and I did strive with everything in me (and obviously by His Spirit) to try and please Him, to try and do things that would honour Him. I did my very best not to sin. I did sin, and I failed, but I found Grace when I fell, and I kept fighting those areas of my life that were broken until His healing came; until I began to get breakthrough in them. And I'd get breakthrough in little things, sexual immorality and cigarettes. In all these things, I would be fighting to get free, and it was tough. I can't believe how hard it was to break free from sexual immorality where I had pushed the boundaries, and I was unmarried. Or how hard it was to stop smoking, or how hard it was to stop swearing. You might be unfaithful right now like I once was, but when I saw my King and when I saw who He was and how He desired me to serve Him, I began to try and learn to be faithful in the little things. I realised it was in the little things that I would one day qualify myself for the big stuff. It was the things

that no one else would see; no one else would know. It was His little whispers He'd put into my heart, and how I would respond to Him, or I wouldn't respond to Him.

Every time I'd hear a preach, I'd go, "What am I going to do with this because I can be unfaithful to the Word that's been sown in me." And I realised there are a lot of Christians that are unfaithful to what the Word has sown into them. It's almost like God comes, and He brings you into a meeting, somebody preaches, or somebody shares, and the Word of God goes into your heart like a sword, and it brings conviction. That's the work of the Spirit of God. That's God wrestling with your heart, to create faithfulness. Then we have to respond because it's wonderful when you're under the anointing, but depending on what you do, it will ultimately determine whether you grow in faithfulness or not.

The scary thing is the Bible says that we can get a calloused heart, which is when God comes, and He speaks to you, and when God speaks to your heart, it cuts. Your heart is open and bare before you. You see him, but if you don't respond, you start to get a callus on your heart. It starts to go hard, and once your heart goes hard, you come to a point where you are ever hearing but not perceiving. The Bible speaks about these people's hearts, which have grown calloused. And so it is for every single person that's in the church you lead, or in your homegroup. Or even in your own heart. You have the potential to get a hard heart, or you can yield to the Spirit, and like a sword, He comes, and He cuts away. He says in Jeremiah, our heart was a hard, the heart of rock, but He'll give us a heart of flesh. He promises that He will make our heart tender. To keep a tender heart is a key to keeping the favour of God. You've got to keep your heart tender.

I get nervous when I don't get convicted of sin as much. You might look at me and think, "Andrew, do you sin?" Well, I remember buying a pie at a shop; I'd been surfing, and I was hungry, and as I turned, there was a lady who had been coming to our church for a few weeks. She grabbed me by the arm, and she looked at me in shock; I was in the Spar, and she was used to seeing me at the church. I said: "Hi, how are you?" and she just looked at me like she'd seen a ghost, and looked at the pie and looked at me, and looked at the pie and looked at me, and then said: "You eat?!" I felt a little bit guilty then that I had pie my hand and I said, "Yeah, of course, I eat." Anyway, she never came back to church, she left after that, I never saw her again. I'd failed her as a pastor because I was eating a pie! That's just a freebie, at some point in the church plant, somebody leaves, and you think: "What? Seriously? You left us because I ate a pie?" Sometimes they're going to make it all spiritual, but sometimes the reasons people leave a church are feeble. So being faithful in little is so important!

Today I am entrusted with the souls of tens of thousands of people. And what I teach, the lines I'll hold, the lines I fold on, will determine whether you walk pleasing to God or not! I've got to face pressures on

issues like divorce and remarriage, and what is sin, and what isn't sin, and how does the church work through discipline. These are the difficult things that you face as a leader! I was chatting today with one of my apostolic partners in the Gospel, and he was almost in tears, just saying: "Andrew, I just want to be an evangelist. I don't want the responsibility of the churches anymore. There are so many decisions that have to be made, and so many of them are hard to make. I have to make decisions that offend people and hurt people, and I feel terrible every time I have to do that." Paul speaks about being beaten and shipwrecked and horrible things, then he says that above all that, he faces the burden of the church, and that's the most difficult burden of the lot.

The burden of picking a line and ten people disagreeing with you, it's not fun to be disagreed with. When people form in a group and start meeting and discussing why you're wrong. Any leader feels it. And you are then watching the gossip begin in the church. You start thinking that everything you've given your life to over these years is about to get burned up.

James says,

Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. (Ja 3:5 NIV)

You watch, and you lose sleep, and you carry the burden because you feel, "God, God, we fought so hard for these people!" You watch people that you love, and they once loved you, and you watch hearts turn. It's so easy to fall! Even today, I was wrestling with God. I had to hold a line on an issue where most churches aren't holding the line anymore, which makes you look weird. I wish sometimes I was born 20 years ago because then everyone held the line on these things, but now no one holds a line anymore. So, people are saying: "You guys are like a cult." And I'm saying: "No, for 2,000 years Christianity has been saying what I'm saying. It's just the last 20 years that it shifted. I'm not the cult. you guys are! You are the guys that are drifting!" And people are leaving because we are "legalistic." These are the lines that people throw at you because you're trying your best to represent the Scriptures, to represent the Lord.

You've got to be faithful in the little! Because if you do not stand the test when God asks you to tithe when you can't afford to, or to be generous when you really need that money for something else, or to forgive, if you don't pass those tests in a secret place, you are going to be on dangerous ground one day when the big decisions are left in your lap. Pass your tests!

The Bible says if you can't be faithful with the little, you won't be faithful with the much, and the one who's dishonest in very little is also dishonest in much. These are the things that the Lord looks at. You

know you travel overseas, and you buy something, and you can put it in your luggage and walk through a border post without paying tax on it. You think: "Well, it's a little thing," but it's being dishonest even in the little. And you know, you can get away with it in your own eyes, no one would know. I travel overseas all the time. I remember once, years ago, we were in the States, and I came back, and I just walked through the border. It felt so good for a moment, and then I got convicted, and I thought: "Flip, what do I do now?" Because I was dishonest in the little. I mean, I probably would have paid R400 tax. I was so stupid. I had lost my peace over a few hundred-rand taxes. If I can't be faithful in the little, I'm not going to be faithful in the big things. So, realize that what you do in the secret place, the little things, if you fold on the little things, if you give in; they'll ripple through into your ministry one day. If you don't defeat them when they're little foxes, they're going to become giants one day that will control you. Position yourself now, so that when you are standing in front of Goliath, you know that you've defeated some bears and lions. Otherwise, Goliath is going to eat you for breakfast.

Then the Bible says, if you're not faithful with worldly wealth, who's going to entrust you with true riches (Luke 16:11)? One of the most significant tests we'll face is regarding money. Are you tithing faithfully? Are you generous with your offerings? My salary when I planted JoshGen was R2 400 per month, before tax. That didn't even pay my rent in Cape Town, let alone anything else. Emsie and I had saved up over a few years because we knew that one day we were going to plant a church. We'd managed to save up about R10 000, which was a lot of money for us. Coming to Cape Town, the church sending us didn't pay for me to have a removal company. I loaded my life onto two trailers, and our friends, Jaco and Sharon, drove one car with a trailer, and I drove, with Emsie, in the other one. And we drove to Cape Town and moved into our home.

Now about two weeks before we left that previous church, we'd been taking up offerings for that church who were building at the time. The elders of that church got up and said, "Guys, we're feeling the Lord tell us we need to extend the building and build a coffee shop on the side, and we're asking you to give." I remember thinking, "Thank you, Jesus, I'm out of here. I'm going in two weeks. I mean, it's not my church anymore." And then, when we came to Cape Town, I started looking for properties, and we found one for about R2 400 per month, which is more than I earned per month. But we thought: "Okay, we're going to go for it. We've got R10 000, so let's hope the church grows fast enough so that we can do this." And then the landlord said to us that they wanted a double deposit. So, we had to pay R4600 and the first month's rent. So, obviously I was thinking, "Whoa, it's eating big time into our buffer." I was starting to lose sleep; and let me just tell you when you plant a church, you're going to lose some sleep! I was seriously getting stressed, thinking, "Dear God! We're going to sign something now, and we don't have the money for it! And what if the church doesn't grow?!" Then the Lord spoke to me, and I never

forget how He did it. I was in worship, and the Lord says: "Andrew, you know that R10 000?" And I said to God, "No, I don't know what you're talking about!" And God said, "Andrew, I want you to give that R10 000 to the coffee shop in the church you're leaving." And I thought, "No, I've got this martyr complex, so maybe this is my martyr complex, it's not the Spirit!" I said, "Lord, you'd better tell Emsie the same thing, just to be sure." And Emsie comes home and literally, she walks up to me and says, "Honey, you know that R10 000? ..." and so, we gave R10 000 to the other church's coffee shop, everything we had to come to Cape Town.

I don't know where the money came from to live, honestly, because when we planted it was, Julie and she was a hairdresser that didn't have a job yet. Then Melanie was an artist, and she wasn't selling any paintings. Jaco and Sharon didn't have work. Nicky Carstens was fresh out of drugs and still needed a place to stay. Yet somehow, God came through for us, but there was this thing of being faithful in the little. No one saw the challenges, in those days, that we were facing. No one saw whether we were faithful in the secret place, but we were faithful when we were throwing it all on the line. Then the Lord, because of that, actually entrusted us now with nations! And I think, "Lord, if I had failed that test, where would I be now? What would I be walking in now?" I don't know!

Just because you're faithful, doesn't mean God will give you the same inheritance that He gave me, because He chooses as He chooses. But I can tell you this; you will not walk in the fullness of your destiny unless you learn to be faithful in the little because you'll be disqualified in the tests around money and things like that. So, when a leader asks you to give, that there is a test. I'm not saying this for my benefit. It's something I want you to learn because you've got to position yourself right. If the elders get up in your context and say, "Guys, God's leading us to do something, to buy something," then let's be generous! Love the house of God as Jesus did, He gave His life for the house of God. If you're not getting before the Lord and saying, "God, I want to be generous," then you are not faithful with the little things, and you don't understand life's priorities.

If you put God's house first, He will put your house first, but if you put your house first, He's not going to put your house first. Learn these secrets in the secret place. These are things no one will know, but God will know. Because you're faithful with the little, He'll entrust you with much. Much in this case is people. People are the most valuable thing in the universe, so precious that Christ Himself died on a cross to save people. So, you've got to pass your tests. What you do in the secret place in the next season of your life will determine your destiny. Or, in many ways, determine the boundaries of how close you get to your destiny. And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who'll give you property of your own.

I could tell you so many stories of trying to walk these things out faithfully in the Lord. Back in the day, we were brought through the church onto eldership in PE, and then we felt, God gave us two pages of prophetic words for planting a church in George. We had prayed, the elders had prayed, and we'd all felt it was right in the Lord. We had given up our homes. Emsie had given up her work. I was relocating, and we were going to plant a church in George. This was about a few years before we planted JoshGen. We had several people that had given up work and given up their homes and were relocating to George to help us start. Two weeks before we were going to go, I remember being in worship in the church, and I still remember the song, "You're leading us on to new things!" I'm terrified; I'm excited; my faith is at an all-time high. All the years of serving and faithfulness have now come to fullness. I had served for years to get to that place, faithfully. This was my dream, and I felt this is what God had called me to. I was feeling: "Yes, God, finally!" I'm in worship, in the presence of God, and I remember a tap on my chest, and I open my eyes, and there was one of the guys who was in the apostolic team that we were in partnership with then, standing in front of me, a man called Phil Maxwell. He says to me, "Andrew, are you sure God's called you to go to George?" And I'm thinking, "Obviously." Remember, I've got two pages of prophecy about George. And he says, "Andrew, I think this church needs you. Tom's traveling a lot right now." Tom was the guy leading the work, and the church was floundering a little bit because it didn't have enough shepherds on the ground. I said, "What are you saying?" He says, "I'm just saying, the church needs you." "Are you saying I can't go?" I say. He said, "No, you can go. We've endorsed it, but I want you to know that the church needs you."

Oh man, I tell you what, the presence of God lifted. I felt sick in my stomach, and I'm now trying to worship after that, but I'm just thinking, "What do I do?" The thought hit me, "I live in a generation of self-centered people. Everyone just wants their own thing. No one's prepared to lay it down for somebody else; no one's going to be faithful in another man's house, someone else's property. If I can't break that in me, how can I ever expect that from those that will follow me one day." So, I thought to myself, "God, I'll lay it down, even though you've given me two pages of prophecy." Emsie was also convinced. And at the end of the meeting, we called our little group that was all going, and they were excited! I said, "Hey, guys, could I see you after the meeting?" Remember, these guys have moved out of their homes, and they've left their jobs. And I've got to say, "Guys, we're not going..." By the grace of God, they were alright.

We ended up planting in Cape Town, and I've often wondered, "If I had gone to George, what would have happened?" I had a dream of planting in George, and then moving towards Mossel Bay, having those two churches. Then years later, Dion and Kim planted a church in Mossel Bay, and then they brought it in as one of ours, and JoshGen now has a church in Mossel Bay. And now we've got a church in George, that Chad Lahana is leading, too. And I realized that God has given back to me the very things that I laid

down, and that He's given me much, much more, because I was faithful in another man's house. Again, these are things that you've got to position yourself for now, because if you learn these things, you'll walk in the favour of God.

Psalm 78:70-72 tells us that God chose David, His servant, and took him from tending the sheep, and He brought him to shepherd Israel. So, God watches this guy, and He gives him a couple of little sheep, and He says; "Look after them." And God watches. And David tends those sheep, tends them so well that ultimately God sees him as a faithful man, and so God says; "Now I'm going to give you a bigger inheritance." And He entrusts to him the care of Israel. I think this is the principle of how you lead your home group, how you lead whatever God gives you to lead, whatever He entrusts into your care, and He then watches to see if you will be faithful with that. He might make it tough to test you. He might give you the worst person in the church, someone demonized, and someone even the Apostle Paul couldn't get the demons out of him, and this guy in your homegroup. And you think; "God, why did I get this guy?" And God says, "Because I'm testing to see if you're faithful- will you love him?"

So often we want the easy road, but there is no easy road to the favour of God. It will cost you everything you have and more! As a young man, I saw Jesus. When He called me, He appeared to me physically, I saw him. Not a lot of people can say that. I was breaking through, and I was growing in my faith. I was being faithful in so many areas. Then God tells me I'm going to get married and I marry Emsie. And then things just go off the rails. I go from like feeling like I'm Moses, to feeling like I'm satan incarnate! We were fighting all the time; our marriage was terrible! I used to cry sometimes and pray, "God, I'm in this marriage, I can't get out because divorce is sin! I want to get out, but I can't! I'm stuck with this now! Help me, God, I've made a mistake! She's going to ruin my life!" And then once I prayed, "God, why did you give me such a broken woman?" He said this to me, "Andrew if you think your wife's broken, you should see mine! And until you learn to love this one, I'm never going to give you my one to care for." Emsie has had to fight her way through from so many areas of brokenness. She's an incredible woman today, and an incredible wife, an incredible mother. I thank God for her, but there was a lot of work we both had to do to get our marriage to where it is now.

God might give you a tough situation, and He's just looking for faithfulness. Are you going to fold when it gets tough? Are you're going to try and bail? Or are you going to be faithful and keep on keeping on. Are you going to keep putting to death whatever is rising up in you, through whatever pressure that is to come? The problem is if she can bring the worst out in me, then you can also bring it out in me, and so it's got to be dead in me. That flesh in me that wants to save me has got to be dead, dead. Dead because

I cannot afford to react to you! I cannot afford to react to somebody that hurts me; and I am going to get hurt a lot. I cannot afford to react- I have to respond!

God chose David out of a sheep pen. What's your sheep pen? What's God given to you to care for? David was faithful in another man's house. When the lion and the bear came, he fought them off to save the sheep, and they were not even his sheep; those were his dad's sheep. Have you seen what a lion can do? And David stood his ground with another man's property. Learn to follow well. Learn to care for what's been entrusted to others; and don't break it down or hurt it. Be faithful.

You don't have to be perfect. You've got to strive to be perfect but getting there's a journey. You look at Elijah, he fought with depression. Peter was impetuous. John was ambitious. You know you're not perfect, but overall, God's looking for a heart that is prepared. You can prepare your heart. If there's ambition, you've got to put that thing to death. If there's selfishness, you've got to put that thing to death. In Acts 1:24, where they were choosing an apostle to replace Judas; the Bible tells us they prayed, and they said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart, show us which of these two you have chosen." They were saying, "God, you know the soil that's in there; you know the decisions they made in the secret place."

The things you do now will shape your heart for good or for evil. I believe you can position yourself for greater things than you're walking in now and maybe even greater things than God initially allotted to you. The Bible speaks about being faithful in the little and how He'll give you more if you're faithful in this now. There's a portion that God gives all of us to start with, and God watches what we do with that portion. What are we doing with that area of influence that He's given to us? If we're faithful in those areas, God says that He will enlarge your portion; He will give you more. He will stretch out your tents and extend your boundaries.

In 2 Timothy, Paul writes about this to the church, and he says,

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. (2 Tim 2:20-21 NIV)

He's talking about the house of God, the church. Paul tells you here that if you are faithful and you cleanse yourself; if you work on yourself and you keep beating your heart into shape then even if you're just a "wooden teaspoon" you can be positioned supernaturally to become something more beautiful, more glorious and ultimately used for the master's service. The principle is, be faithful with the little, and God will give you more.

One of the men that I think has walked in much more than I believe God gave him initially (and I think I'm one, as well) is Russell Fraser. Russell had been in church for quite a few years already when he joined us in Cape Town. Both leaders that he served under in the church that he came from said to me, "Yeah, he is a good guy. He's an okay deacon. I think that's pretty much what his allotment is." Then I saw Russell make Godly decisions again and again in the secret place throughout the years. Today Russell is walking with influence into nations, but it was not always like this with him. I've watched him grow in grace. You can grow in grace! Learn your lessons and do this right!

How you follow is significant to God, because obedience and submission is a big part of the Kingdom.

The Bible says,

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Heb 13:17 ESV)

The authorities that God has chosen have to lead the charge. They have got to point us where we are going. When you're in the army, and the sergeant says, "Jump!" you ask, "How high?" not, "Why? Can you explain to me the reason why I should jump?" Remember, Jesus called that faith. When the Centurion spoke to Jesus and said, "Say the word, and it will be done because I'm a man under authority and in authority, I give the command, and it's done" (Mat 8:9). Jesus called that faith. So, as a follower, I need to say, "I'm going to be faithful in another man's house and when he says, 'Jump!' I'm going to say, 'How high?'" If you can't get that right, you're not a sheep, you're a goat, because the goat always goes; "But..." and there are a lot of "buts" in the Kingdom of God right now.

I know that when we enter a church, we've got baggage and we've been controlled. If you're following a leader that wants to control you, get out, and join the right church. But make sure that it's not your broken lens that's making a good leader seem like he's some kind of controlling dictator. Sometimes the lens we carry can massively affect how we see things.

Now, I almost don't want to say this because I'm giving you something that you can jump through hoops in and try and cheat the system. If you cheat the system, that's between you and God, and God will see that, and He'll sort you out. But I can tell you this, as a leader, when I look for faithful men that will run with me, I look for people that when I say, "Guys, we need to take that hill!" I don't want to sit down and have a little discussion about who thinks what, because I'm the one in charge, and we need to take that hill! I've made my decision, and I need you to run with me. We've discussed this as elders, and now we're moving. If you are that person that when we say, "Guys, let's take the hill," and we're running, and we

look around, and you're not there, then you're never going to be a leader. You're never going to come through because you're not faithful. You're not obeying the basic things of the Kingdom, such as obedience and submission.

One of the questions I ask guys when they come onto eldership is, "When we took up an offering for the building, did you give sacrificially?" If you didn't, I don't want you on my leadership team, because you're going to model something and break something over our people where they won't be devoted and won't give themselves to us. You see, I gave when my leaders asked because I understood the ways of the King. I need men and women who've got the favour of God, running with me in the nations of the world.

Again, if you do it for me, to be seen, well, Jesus sees that, and then you will disqualify yourself in His house. It's like you're praying the prayer on the street corners so that everyone can see that you're "spiritual". And because Jesus sees your heart, even if I think you're awesome, Jesus won't think that. God won't give us the peace to open the door for you. I've had many people who I've looked at, and I said, "Man, Lord, surely this one!" It's a bit like Samuel with the brothers of David. You go through the obvious choices, and then the one that no one sees, the one tending the sheep, is the one that God chooses. That is the way of our King.

Remember that you are asked to be "obedient children", that's what John would say. As obedient children, you're learning the values of the house; you're learning the values of the Kingdom. The King loves strangers, foreigners, and aliens and wants them brought into the family. So, go and reflect Him well and love the visitors. If you're thinking, "But I'm shy!" I would say to you, if you can't go and speak to a visitor because you're shy, how are you ever going to do anything for God? You can write down the questions in the front your Bible. Is it your first time here? Can I help you with anything? Write the questions down and then rehearse it. When I started waitering, that's what I did because I was so nervous. I was fresh off drugs, and I couldn't speak to people, and now I need to look after a table! I remember just thinking, "What do I say?" The first line? "Hi, welcome to Mike's kitchen. Table for two?" Now you're walking to the table, what's the second line? That was me! So, write it down in your Bible, print it on your forehead if you have to, but just learn to do these things!

God sees when you come early to church! I love the story of Joshua. The glory of God comes down, and then everyone leaves. Even Moses leaves. Then the Bible says that Joshua remained in the Presence. God sees the thing you do in the secret place before your God, with faith. These are the things that draw His favour on your life. If you want to plant a church, you'd better learn to connect with visitors even if you're just going to help the church plant. In a bigger church, you can hide, but when you're a church plant, you're it! So, learn your lessons now!

When it comes to the prayer meeting before church, if you're not at the prayer meeting, why do you want to be a leader? Imagine if I just decided it's a bit hard to wake up? Sometimes I feel like I am half dead, but I'm there. I can't rely on my feelings. If I rely on my feelings, you're not going to know where we're going; we're going to be; up; down; left; right! I have to learn to hold my line and so these are things that you learn in the secret place.

Give yourself to your leaders! If you're in a church now and you feel you could lead a church one day, then first give yourself to your leaders now! In 1 Chronicles 12:18, these guys come to King David, and basically, he's trying to check these guys out. Are these the guys who are going to be able to run with him? Are they going to become a team that'll bring the Kingdom of God on the earth? Which is what they did. They did amazing things! The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit came upon one of them called Amasai, chief of the thirty. Then after this David received them and made them officers of his troops.

Amasai's speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit,

Then the Spirit came on Amasai, chief of the Thirty, and he said: "We are yours, David! We are with you, son of Jesse! Success, success to you, and success to those who help you, for your God will help you." So David received them and made them leaders of his raiding bands. (1 Chr 12:18 NIV).

Until a leader gives their heart to another leader, they shouldn't be on a team. The Spirit of God does that. He's got to work through our brokenness, our lack of trust, our self-preservation, and all those things. But there's a principle of the Kingdom which is that we give ourselves to our leaders. And we need to be able to say, "I'm yours and your success is my success! I want you to succeed. I don't care if I'm seen in this picture. I want you to succeed." The amazing thing is that Amasai, and some of these mighty men that joined David, were more gifted than David was. David killed Goliath, and then one of David's mighty men kills Goliath's big brother and his uncle. These are seriously mighty men, but their hearts are given to David. God looks for that. If you can't give your heart to me, or the elders you're serving alongside, you will never have people give their hearts to you. And if they don't give their heart to you, you'll never lead them anywhere. So, give your heart and fight for the health and blessing of your leader, for the one that you have given your heart to.

There's a quote by Samuel Bringle, "By self-surrender, a courageous sacrifice of every idol, a bold, uncomplaining embrace of the cross, and by an eternal unfaltering looking unto Jesus crucified are men chosen. It is not gained by seeking great things for ourselves, but like Paul, by counting those things that are gained to us as a loss for Christ. This is a great price, but it must be paid by the leader who would not

be merely a nominal but a real spiritual leader of men. A leader whose power is recognized and felt in heaven, on earth, and in hell.”

These are the things that we've got to learn. If we want to bring nations to the glory of our God. We have to position ourselves. The eyes of the Lord are roaming across the earth looking for a man, looking for someone with a heart positioned right. You're in a season where you can learn this, so get your hearts right and learn the ways of the King.

Session 06

David and Saul

One of the significant challenges with leadership is the burnout rate. I've heard it said from more than one source that the highest burnout rate out of any job, if you can call it a job, is men in ministry; and you see men falling, you see failure is a huge thing. Often you see men taking their hand off the plough because it's sometimes just too hard. Honestly, I have to say that leading a church and planting a church is exceptionally challenging. It is like I've often said, sometimes, those that succeed are just those that are thick enough to keep getting up even though they've been punched so many times. At times you feel like you are punched. and punched drunk, that you don't know left, right, up or down, but you know you've got to stand. Paul writes to us and says, just stand and stand firm. There's that place of I'm going to get up again, and I'm going to keep doing this thing because this is what the Master's called me to. You learn to be faithful in the little things, and so it teaches the big stuff. It will stretch your leadership, whether you plant, or whether you lead. I would definitely say that the point guy carries it differently to other elders. I've often said if you want a really good elder, plant him out for three months and then bring him back onto an eldership team. He'll be the best elder ever, because you suddenly know what it feels like when you're leading a work, and somebody leaves the church or says something about the church, it's just different. It becomes personal, it just gets beneath your skin, and you've got to work through those things. These are enormous challenges, and not everyone succeeds.

We do see a lovely picture of failure and success in the life of king Saul and king David. In this section, I want to look at some things that king Saul did poorly and some things that king David did well and try to give us tools. There is that sense that everything that you do, every decision you make, is recorded. You are precious to God. Every tear that you cry is recorded. Everything that you do, what's done in secret the Bible says, will be shouted from the rooftops on that last day, (which is terrifying). Can you imagine? Imagine when my video plays, and I've been a fraud. That's when it really counts. You can see people here, but on that day when the secrets of our hearts are laid bare, o Lord let us be found faithful on that day. So, these are things that we need to learn now because one day your video's going to play, one day your book's going to open. One day we will read your book, and we'll marvel at the decisions you made, like David.

Be faithful, and one day you will receive your crowns. Then you'll throw them at His feet and say Lord; "You were faithful in me. It was You that worked in me by Your grace." And you'll give Him glory. Either

that or that which you do will be burned up and destroyed. You'll have no crowns to throw at His feet. You might get into heaven, as one escaping through flames. The Bible says there might be tears even as you think of what could have been. This is the most important thing in my eternity now because my eternity will be fashioned by the decisions that I make now. When I die it's over, I live in the good or bad of it, so live your life well.

Let's look at David and Saul. One ends in disaster, and the other becomes the greatest king Israel ever had in the natural. Firstly, let's look at their past. I think your past is important; but remember that you didn't have to be head-boy to be chosen by God. In fact, that might work against you, because you might think you are something. In the Kingdom, if you believe you are something, you're nothing actually. You could be chosen if you were the head boy, but that's just real grace. The things you do and how you grow up will fashion and shape you. They fashion how we respond to situations; they fashion our temperament, our personality. So, it's important ideally that we were brought up in a good home, but many of us weren't and didn't have moms or dads that were always a good reflection of Jesus. For some, you are the first believer in your family.

So, what I am trying to say is that we come into leadership with baggage. We need a total reboot of who God is and how we need to respond to Him. The good news is this, God takes broken things, and He makes them whole. He fixes things; He has an incredible ability to redeem what is lost. That is our hope; that He is a redemptive God, and He can save us no matter how far we've gone. He's able to save to the uttermost and so don't disqualify yourself because of your lack of faith. Without faith, you will never be pleasing to Him no matter what you've done. You can find grace in your time of need, so find grace. If you realize that there are things in you, realize that these things have been in me too. I've had to try and recognize them and put them to death. None of us were born perfect, but we need to become more like Him and learn His ways.

In 1 Samuel, Saul is the first King Israel ever has and unfortunately, he's a terrible failure. We read,

Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor. He had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people. Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to his son Saul, "Take now with you one of the servants, and arise, go search for the donkeys." (1 Sam 9:1-3 NIV)

Interestingly, he was a man of wealth. If you look at the positioning, the first thing you learn is that he's from a wealthy family, and he's got a lot going for him. Sometimes we have a lot going for us. That can

be a dangerous place because we can start to depend too easily upon ourselves and not enough on the Lord. We begin to think too much of ourselves. Now in verse 3, the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost.

Interestingly, we see David, a shepherd boy looking after the sheep fighting off lions and bears. We see Saul, he's going to find these donkeys, but he doesn't find them, and he gives up at one point and goes back. Then the prophet finds him on the way. I think we see something here; he's dealing with donkeys and donkeys are stubborn creatures. They don't listen; you have to drag them along. You treat them forcefully, and so Saul is strong, tall, good-looking, wealthy, and he's probably a little bit too strong. He has learned in growing up to deal with things that are stubborn and hard, and he uses force to overcome them. This is going to become something that he'll carry with him throughout his whole life, because he doesn't take that thing captive.

You know when you grow up there are things that happen to you and things that you do that formed you and fashioned you. By looking back over a man's shoulder, when he comes to you, is normally the way he'll leave you. If he comes to you slandering the last leader and telling you how amazing you are, he will leave you slandering you and telling the next leader how amazing he is. That seems to be the pattern as long as I've been doing church. It's just a freebie. What goes around, comes around. Very few people manage to break free from their past. Still, some do, and if you're like that, break the pattern.

God's given you a time to get out of where you are at and until you face those things you can't be helped. The problem with us is we always deflect; it's everyone else's fault, that's why our lives suck. Stop doing that, deal with things because if you don't deal with things, you're going to become a Saul-like leader.

Looking at the lost donkeys, he turns back when he can't find them. You start to see an issue here that he's not someone that pushes through when the stuff gets hard. When the situation gets hard, he folds. That's something else that'll carry all the way through his ministry. His ministry was to be the king in Israel. So, sit down, and look at yourself honestly in the mirror to see what in your character is broken. Maybe even sit with leaders, because sometimes we can't see what in us isn't like Jesus. Seek those conversations. If you don't, you'll just live on that foundation for the rest of your life. You're now in a place where you can change. When you're in leadership, you will fall back on your default. It's tough to change that when you're fighting in the heat of battle. When the pressure is on, you'll find that you go back to the thing that you were once comfortable in. You must consistently take that thing captive. You've got to continuously work on that thing until you eventually change your natural default. We need to work on these areas; so, get help, get perspective.

Let's look at David's background, in 1 Samuel 16:11, the prophet Samuel, arguably one of the great prophets of the Old Covenant, comes to his father's house because one of Jesse's boys will be the next king in Israel. Samuel goes through all the boys, and none of them is the right one. Finally, he says to Jesse, "Are these all your sons?" and Jesse explains, well, there is the youngest, but he's out looking after the sheep, and Samuel told Jesse to send for him. We find David tending sheep. While Saul has lost donkeys and gives up on finding them, David is defending his father's sheep with his life.

The first thing I want you to see is that he was faithful in little. He had a shepherd's heart. How do we learn to get a shepherd's heart; like the one David had? I believe that there are certain things we need to learn to get a shepherd's heart because, ultimately, a shepherd is not thinking of himself. He's always thinking of the thing that he's entrusted to care for. The sheep are more important than the shepherd, and we see that with David, he's prepared to die for them. He's prepared to give his life for them, and he would likewise do the same one day as a shepherd in Israel. He became the great shepherd of Israel. He loved them in the same way that he loved those sheep. The Bible speaks about an elder being a husband of but one wife (1 Tim 3:2), because if a man can't love his wife well, how will he ever learn to love the Church of Jesus Christ? There is faithfulness in the secret place that we must learn now. You might have been unfaithful, but that was yesterday. Take that thing captive and learn faithfulness today.

How do you learn the shepherd's heart? With some of the things, we learn by doing menial tasks. Imagine how boring it must have sometimes been watching sheep. They didn't have gates or fences; you would have to walk out to lead the sheep, and then you would sit down, and you would become an outstanding instrumentalist because there's nothing else to do while the sheep eat grass. You're there all day, and it's menial. It's day-in-day-out, you walk back, you take the burrs out; it's menial. Listen to me; God will test us and teach us to have a shepherd's heart with menial things. At some point in your Christian walk, you will feel as if you are going around the same old, same old boring stuff. It may feel like you're not getting anything out of this, that the things of the church are menial. You're just going through one of the things of learning a shepherd's heart. The problem with us, though, is that we are kind of like fast food junkies. We like the new and the now. We run after the next conference or the next event. Remember that it's the menial basic things in which we learn faithfulness.

The second thing is that David was overlooked. You could have a bit of unforgiveness toward your dad when one of the boys is going to be the next king in Israel, and your dad doesn't even call you from the field. That is being seriously overlooked. One of the things God will do with you is you'll be overlooked. He'll let people right around you get promoted. He'll move them forward; He'll bless them, He'll give them the anointing that you wish you had. You could fast for 40 days for the power, and when you pray,

people die, and the person next to you prays, and they fall down and get healed. God will overlook you at times. It's part of testing you and developing the right heart inside of you. At times you'll feel forgotten, there are times you'll feel that God has left you on the shelf, at times you'll feel the leaders don't see what's in you, welcome to the club. I've been there, done that. It's part of the Lord shaping a good heart in you. The problem is that in many of those times when no one's seeing what you could be, you choose to save your life or your ministry. Jesus said if you try and save your life, you'll lose it (Mat 10:39). It's a test; do you have faith when you're forgotten? God has never forgotten, but we lose faith in God, and we try to put faith in ourselves. We start using our own strength instead of His strength.

We find the Lord "leading" us to join another church because they're going to make me a pastor. But it's not God making you a pastor, the devil can also open doors. I've heard, so many Christians say that opened door thing, an open door means nothing to me; nothing. I've had so many doors open to me. Remember this; the devil opened a door for Jesus. He asked, "Do you want the kingdoms of the world? The Father's called you to get that, right, that's why you here, isn't it? You came to save the kingdoms of the world. I'll tell you what, the Father's way is going to be hard, crucifixion, betrayal, denial and even He will leave you but, if you just quickly bow down and worship me, just acknowledge me quickly, then I'll give you the kingdom of the world because I can give them to whoever I want to. They belong to me." That's an open door. But it's not God's way. The devil will give you open doors to take you out of the purposes of God. He'll make sure when it seems like God's forgotten you, like He's put you on the shelf, and no one's seeing you and you thinking, "Woe is me I'm a nobody, nobody sees my calling." Then the devil comes with a boss, or a beautiful woman, or whatever it was, and he will offer you the world because if your soul can be bought, he'll find the price for it.

Don't think a job promotion is always God. Just settle that in your hearts. Another thing is if there's ambition in you, God's got to kill it; He's got to beat it out of you. In some ways, we all want to count, and we want to do something for God. We want to feel like we are special. The problem with ambition is that it becomes about me and not about God. I love David, he's tending the sheep, and when the prophet's looking for a king, he's not even positioned in the area. There's no ambition there; you can see that right through his life. He was faithful.

After we didn't plant in George, there was the possibility of taking over our local church. I remember thinking that it would be an easier way to walk in what God called me, because I thought I was just going to be given a church of 300 people. I thought I'm so glad I passed my test. I had people coming to me, and they were saying, "Andrew, we know you're the one. You're the one we were praying for, that other guy is a nice guy, but you are the one." Even I was thinking that I was the one; it all made sense to me. At

that moment, something rose up in my heart and here's the problem, now I know Tom is looking to see to whom he's going to hand the church over. It was between me and this guy Richard, and so Tom would say to Richard one week hey Richard would you lead this week, and I'd lead next week. Now, I'd think he was watching and that if I lead well, he might give it to me. Every time I got a prophetic word, I didn't know if I could share it. I was scared that I was doing it because I wanted to be seen. Have you been there? I was scared that this was me wanting to be noticed. That was ambition and I was trying to kill it. Then on outreach in America, the Lord spoke to Ems and me at the same meeting, out of the blue says this, "Andrew I haven't called you to take over a church." He said, "If you take over a church, you'll never lay its foundations, and I'm going to teach you to lay foundations into churches across the nations. You're going to have to plant a church". It was going to be a long, hard process, and a few years later, he sent us down here.

I'll never forget there were times when I was a young guy coming through the ranks that when I was around leaders, I would feel my heart beating in my chest because I'm going to speak to the leader, and I felt stupid standing there, saying stupid stuff. I just want to be noticed, but the Lord had a way of slowly killing me. I remember that being one thing that I fought for 20 years. I recognized it, and it took me 20 years before I finally felt I defeated it. Every time I was in that scenario, that thing was clawing at my throat, but I kept fighting it. Now get these things right, and don't get ambitious, just kill that thing in you and be willing to serve.

David kept serving Saul long after he was already anointed to be king, he kept serving Saul, and I think there's a place of just serving that positions you for the favour of God. The second thing about Saul was that this threatened him. In 1 Samuel 18:7-9, we read that Israel used to sing that Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands. Saul got angry; it said that the refrain galled him. They accredited David with tens of thousands but him with only thousands. He wanted the praise of men. He wanted the people to respect him and honour him. He had gotten so used to being the center of attention that he didn't know what to do when he wasn't, and he didn't beat that thing. He didn't put that thing to death in him, and so he ends up acting on that. He acts on his insecurities and his fears, and at times he started trying to kill David. He threw his spear at this young guy that's pretty much giving his life to serve him.

Here's the amazing thing, God put David, a man after His own heart, who He'd already anointed as king in the house of king Saul. He knew that the leader He'd put him with was going to hunt him, chase him and try to kill him. Saul's mission in life was to destroy and kill David, and God knew that, and He still put

David with Saul. I remember saying it to somebody years ago because I was once a David serving a Saul. I remember saying to this one young guy if I'm Saul he better be David for the sake of the Kingdom.

I'll tell you a story of my own. One of the leaders I sat under told me years later that he was threatened by me. I was a young guy in the church, and people seemed to love when I preached, they seemed to love when I did stuff. I wasn't aware of that, but he seemed to be aware of it, and he started wanting to crush me and destroy me. I'll give you an example of something I went through, to illustrate. I was on his eldership team, one of the elders in his church. I was full-time, and there was a pastor's fraternal in the town that we were in. It was about 80 pastors and elders from around the different churches that got together for breakfast, and somebody would get up and share. I wasn't a significant pastor in the city, I was just a young elder on somebody else's team. No one would have noticed if I was there or not. That morning I went to church, I walked in, and I sat down in my office, and I noticed he wasn't in the office. He was normally there before me, so I asked his secretary where he was, and she said that she didn't know. Then at 11 o'clock, I got this sick feeling in my stomach; there was a pastor's fraternal, and I'd written it down on the wrong week in my diary. Now listen, I didn't sleep with the secretary. I didn't steal money from the church, I forgot an event. I put something in my diary, that I wasn't even important at, on the wrong week. That was my sin. His car comes back to the office, he gets out his car and walks straight up into my office. He was a big man, he walks into my office, and I'm sitting at my desk, and I was a little bit nervous because I figured why was he coming to my office straight away. He looks at me, leans on my desk, and he says to me, "Where were you?" "I'm sorry, I just had it in my diary for the wrong week," I say to him. He goes, "You embarrassed me today! You know what, you were the biggest mistake I've ever made in my life. I wish I'd never made you an elder. In fact, I wish I'd never met you," and walks out of the office. This is the man of God, my pastor. I was freaked out by this. Could I be the biggest mistake he's made in his life? I wasn't offended; I was freaked out. How bad must I be if he wishes he had never met me?

I started getting offended, I didn't need that in my life. I served him and poured my life out for him. I was miff. I wanted to leave the church, and I wanted people to know what he was like. I was sitting in my office when the Lord broke in, and He said, "Didn't I put David under Saul?" He reminded me that Saul tried to kill David with his spear, and all that David's done is serve him. I realized that God had put me under this man, that He did it to test me. Will I save myself, or will I serve faithfully? I remember just asking God to help me to serve him. I wanted to serve him well; not to get his praise because I would probably never get his praise. But I wanted to serve him well to get God's praise! I wanted Him to see what I was doing. I decided I wasn't going to defend myself; I wasn't going to fight my battles; I wasn't going to go and tell the world what he's like, because that would be dishonouring. I was going to honour

him as though he was God, because He said a slave will serve a master, even an unfair master. If I'm the slave, he's my master; I'm serving this man. I served him for many years after that, and for years after I planted the church, we remained friends with him.

Years after I planted the church, he asked to see me. He didn't know what I decided to do in my heart then. He didn't know what the Lord had spoken to me, but he looked at me, and he started crying, and he said, "Andrew, I need to apologize for something I said. You know years ago when you were a young man I was intimidated and threatened by you. I saw the call of God on your life, and I felt intimidated and threatened, and I wanted to crush you. Andrew, you were always a David to me, and you always served me faithfully, and I need to acknowledge that you've been a David, and I've been like Saul." I just burst into tears. God had tested me. I believe that that is why I am walking in what I'm walking in today. Those were some of my tests; those were some things I walked through. I pray that I'm never a Saul to you. Don't act on your insecurities.

As David is running from Saul, he runs towards the caves of Edelen, where he will end up hiding. He ends up with these priests of Nob, and they recognize that he's God's anointed one, and they care for him for a while he is there. He then runs off again, and Saul hears about this. He calls these priests in, and when he hears that they have cared for David he's threatened, and it says, in 1 Samuel 22,

Then the king ordered the guards at his side: "Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me." But the king's officials were unwilling to raise a hand to strike the priests of the Lord. (1 Sam 22:17 NIV)

In other words, they were executed because they didn't tell Saul that David was on the run. He had done nothing wrong. He was just running away to save his life. Saul acted on his insecurities, and there are many times in your life that you'll feel tempted to act on your insecurities.

When the Lord told me to leave the Assemblies of God (AOG), I joined up with the New Covenant (NCMI) crew. No one saw the potential in me to lead a homegroup, but guys would come around, and God broke out at my house. We had a Holy Spirit move, and it broke out of my house. We would often end up with 50 people in my home, without me being a leader yet. People were getting saved; demons were leaving, it was amazing, Julie and Melanie were part of that season. This was a move of God, and so at one point, the elders said, we think there's something on your life, but I wasn't convinced that I would be an incredible leader. Deon and Kim Delpport were on that eldership team, and they said they felt like I could potentially lead a church and that there's a three-month church planters course they were going to send me on; to learn how to plant churches. So, we leave home, we leave our jobs, and for three months

we travelled around the country learning how to plant churches. In the first session, there were about 30 of us, and we had to introduce ourselves. Everyone there had been in ministry for many years and had already planted multiple churches. I was sitting there, and we are the last to go. I got up and said, "Hi, my name is Andrew, this is Emsie, we are from PE and we make tea in church," and I sat down. I wasn't trying to be humble, I made tea; I had nothing else. I wasn't trying to be funny, but I was thinking to myself, "What are we doing here?"

The more we were on this course, the more Emsie and I were thinking that maybe we were those guys that everyone thought shouldn't be on this course. Emsie and I were like twiddling our thumbs at Kentucky Fried Chicken, because no one is interested in us. At the end of the course, it's the last few days, they called all the leaders together, there was a big camp in Durban, and there were several apostles and prophets at this camp from the movement we were in. On the last night of the camp, they prayed for the church planters and I was thinking, "God, this is your moment to tell us that we are supposed to do this." Emsie and I were thinking, "This is the moment God, please, because we seriously just want to go home. This is a mistake, we shouldn't be here." So, we went to the front to be prayed for, and we stood in a row, and the apostles and prophets go to the first guy, and they fall under the anointing, and the Lord says, "You will bring cities to Jesus and nations." Then they go to the next guy and say something along the lines of them seeing him bring thousands to salvations. I was just watching all these guys going down. I was thinking that we were next, and then the whole group jumps over Emsie and I. They carry on down the row, so that every single church planter got a prophecy by this group of guys except Emsie and I; no one even prayed for us. I was totally overlooked and felt sick to my stomach. It felt like a waste of three months.

We were ready to go home, that was it. It was embarrassing, but I remember thinking that we can't act on our insecurities. We had to stick this thing through, and we did. We went for another week and a bit. Then they had the final meeting with us. They called us into the office and one of the men I respected the most in the world at that time in terms of their leadership gift, sat down, and he looked at me, and he said to Ems and I, "I need you to know something, you guys have been standouts on this course." I was like, "What? Seriously?" We cannot act on our insecurities. We just need to keep on keeping on, the Lord can raise us up from wherever He wants, if He wants to, just be faithful and keep on keeping; on even when you feel like you can't.

Another difference to look at is that King Saul is never found worshipping God, but David is a worshiper. If you don't know how to tap into God in worship and draw your sustenance and strength from Him directly, you'll never have anything to give to others. You will end up leaning on your own strength

because you've got to provide them with something. That's what Saul keeps doing; he doesn't learn to depend upon the Lord. Become a worshiper. It'll be God's presence that sustains and keeps you. You need to learn to tap into His presence and worship. Listen to me, the Bible's a wonderful book, and I love it, and I devour it, but worship is something different. From Scripture we see that you need both. So, stay near to God and guard your heart.

I love David, at one point, he is in hiding from Saul in the caves of Dunham's. Psalm 57:4 -11 is a psalm he wrote while Saul was hunting for him and at one point; Saul is in the area, and he comes into the cave where David was hiding. David says, "My soul is in the midst of lions". As a church planter, you will feel like this at times. You won't believe how people rip you apart. Despite being hunted by Saul, David says, "I'm being ripped apart, I'm hiding for my life, but You be exalted, o God above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth." He goes on about how they spread a net for him, and they want to kill him, but his heart is steadfast, and he will sing and make music. Here you find this worshiper that, when the rubber hits the road, he gets before God and worships. If you want to be a home group leader, or a leader that brings anything of the life of God, you've got to learn how to worship. Put a budget down for CDs, or whatever it is that you need, but you have to find some way to worship the King on your own, not just on Sundays.

Recognize the boundaries that you've been given and be faithful in those things. This is a crucial thing. I'll tell you the story, you can read it in Samuel 13, this is a vital lesson. I'll just tell you about the lesson. King Saul has been entrusted with the care of Israel, and the Philistines have gone on a bit of a rampage. They started advancing against Israel. As king, he's got to rally the troops, and so he sounds a trumpet and Israel rallies around him, and they're going to go to war against the Philistines. The prophet, Samuel, who he needs to listen to because, in some ways, the prophet Samuel is like a picture the Holy Spirit for us, says to him, "Wait at this place, wait for seven days. I'll come on the seventh day, and I'll offer a sacrifice to God, and then you can take the men into battle." So, Saul gets there, and he waits with his men. But the Philistines are massing, and they're just becoming more and more, and at one point, the men with King Saul start getting a bit scared. They start hiding and disappearing. The seventh day comes, and Samuel hasn't arrived yet. He thinks I can't afford to lose one more man, and so he says I'll offer the sacrifice. Instead of waiting for Samuel to do it, he does it, but he's not called to offer sacrifice; he's a king; he's not a priest. He overstepped the boundaries. He thinks that surely God will be alright with it. God wasn't. Just as he's offering the sacrifice, Samuel arrives and says, what have you done? He went beyond the boundaries God gave him, and because he had done this, the kingdom would be torn from his hands.

Going beyond the boundaries for you looks a certain way, and I think it's important we understand who we are in the Lord and what authority God has given us and stay within those boundaries. If you're a home group leader, you are not entrusted with the direction of the church. An elder would represent a different office to you, so, if you were homegroup leader and you don't like where the elders are taking the church, and you do something to change the course of the church, you are doing exactly what Saul did. Our democracies work against us, we are taught to think that we know better than our leaders, it's drummed into us because of the world we live in. We have to learn that we are in the house of God, and this is what He's entrusted to me, and I'll be faithful in my boundary. I'm not going to touch what somebody else is supposed to do. I've had to learn to be faithful to it. Remember, it's fine to ask, but be careful of where you posture yourself because very quickly you can posture yourself outside of the favour of God.

When Saul sins, he doesn't own it. Basically, he keeps dodging. When David sins, he owned it. Own your sins as a leader, own your failures. The decisions we make now, fashion us, and determine much of what will be tomorrow. One day I'm not going to be here, one day, you are going to be standing on your own, needing to make the decisions you need to make, and the decisions you make at that moment will determine what you walk into in the next season of your life.

Therefore, learn these things and apply them. These are the ways of God, this is the Word of God, and I can tell you I've lived these things; I've got these things right. I failed, but I've eventually gotten them right, and I've walked in the favour of God. We need people to walk in the favour of God because when you walk in what God has for you, who can be against you? But, if God is against you, who can be for you? Position yourself for the favour of God now so that when that day comes when you put your hand on something, God's there with you to bring His kingdom; because He knows you are dependable.

Session 07

Being Sent

This section will be broken up into two parts. The first part we will be looking at is about church planting and its challenges. Now some of you know, Pam and I have had the privilege of planting five churches, over 32 years. And then the last nine years, of course, we have been involved in JoshGen; not only locally but trans-locally as well. And in those 32 years, we experienced unbelievable challenges. Now I have got 20 points that I'm just going to knock off for you. They'll be helpful pointers for some, but for me, these are non-negotiable. I learned you don't mess with these, take it from an old bullet. Our first church plant was in the Leibrandt Van Niekerk hall, nearly twenty years before Andrew and JoshGen started in the Leibrandt van Niekerk hall. It was wonderful. Blouberg road was a rough road running down to the sea and there were a few small shops up at the top of Flamingo Vlei. There was nothing else. So, there were just houses, a little butcher shop and a tiny post office.

But the heart has always been, to plant a church with people values. What I mean by that is, to get to a point where you love people as Christ loved people, and value people the same way He did. People are our commodity; not the system, not the program, not the way we do things, people!

Right at the beginning, I want to say, if you don't have a love for people, you're going to battle in church planting, and you're going battle in the church. We've got to love people. That's why Paul says in the book of Hebrews 6, and also in 1 Thessalonians.

Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, (1 Thess 1:1-3 NIV)

Interestingly, he says it twice, and I want to say; that some people will be a labour of love. Especially if you're going to be church planting, you will get some people that it's as though they've travelled across the entire country just to get there to be that person in your life. It's a labour of love. I had one lady; she was a medical doctor, she had a partial stroke, and so she spoke with a speech impediment. They wouldn't let her practice anymore or handle the public because of what had happened. So, they would let her work in a laboratory context or pharmaceutical research, but she couldn't work with people. She was an excellent doctor, but as a result, she picked up an offense. So, her hurt, she was going to put on

to you. And so, unfortunately, she came into the church that I was busy planting, this third church plant. And I knew from the beginning that this lady was going to be a labour of love. I remember one Sunday, she came up to me and she had 12 handwritten A4 pages about my faults, all numbered. She gave them to me, and one of them was that I wear a winter jacket with a summer shirt. I said to her, "Lady, I want you to know, as the doctor I want you know; this isn't my best jacket - this is my only jacket."

You're going to, at times, have to exercise a labour of love. She gave me the pages. I went home and read them and then dropped them into "file 13", but I did read them. When I got there the next Sunday, I knew she was going to ask if I had read them and she did. I said, "I've read them." She said, "And?" I said, "I want you to know please if there's anything else you need to let me know, put it down and give it to me. But can I ask this of you? Can you please pray for me, because there's so much that needs to change in me that you don't know about, I need help?" She looked at me and said, "Okay." And that was the end of that.

And so, I want to say in church planting; don't take everything personally. You can't afford to. Pam has a saying for me, you know in English we have "water off a duck's back," she says for me, it's "duck off a water's back." But it's not that you try and be facetious, oh no! It's just that you've got to guard yourself. You can't give yourself to everything that's going to be said to you. Hear me! If you are oversensitive and you want everybody to like you, don't church plant. Because Jesus says if all people like you there's a problem. Jesus said that, Jesus knows what He's talking about. If you're going to spend all your energy trying to get people to like you, you're going to exhaust yourself.

So firstly, we have got to focus on people and loving people. Secondly, we have got to focus on people and loving people. Thirdly, you have got to focus on people and loving people. Our commodity is people; this is our commodity, and everybody's different. Everybody's got their own strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes, "fiemies" (nonsense), a nice little Afrikaans word that. But we've got to, for Christ's sake, if you're going to go into church planting, you've got to love people. I think this is one of the major success factors in those churches Pam and I planted. Looking back, I felt that we planted them fairly successfully because they are still there, and the buildings are still there, and the people are still there, and the leadership is still going on, for 32 years. But the bottom line was people; it's people. And you know this thing of the labour of love, let me just encourage you, when you love somebody who knows they are unlovely; unlovely people know they are unlovely, critical people know they're critical. And they go away afterward saying, "Why did I say that? Why did I do that?" And it's because there is a hurt in them, there's a flaw in them, and so you've got to love them, when they know they are unlovely, into loveliness. And they will love you for it. They know you love them despite them. So, I want to leave that with you, that's

the heart of God. But you can't do it, only God's love in you will make that possible. If you break your relationship with the Lord and you do not have your times of intimacy with Him; you will become the unlovely one. Relationship with the Lord changes that. Amen!

If you're going to church plant, these for me are non-negotiable.

The first one is, hear God for yourself. Don't let somebody come speaking in tongues saying, "I see you in Thailand, real Thailand, capital T, you know, forests and jungles." I'm serious! Why? Because one of our elders in JoshGen, these folks were with me in the church in Natal about 35 years ago. A prophet came to town, a serious prophet, and he prophesied over them that they need to go to the Johannesburg Airport. He said they should drive up, sell all their belongings, give all the resources away that they got from their belongings, and sit at the airport and somebody's going come up and give them two tickets, and they're going plant in Ireland. Well, let me tell you, (and they had a little one), they sat there at the airport and the evening came, and in those days we had the railway police that looked after the airport, and of course, they asked them to leave the airport. They had to leave the airport, get back in their car, but there was just enough petrol for them to do 200 kilometers out of Joburg. So, they had to go to a farmer and tell him their story; of course, he thought they were crazy.

They got back, and for a seriously long time after that, they had a problem with the church. Let me tell you, if you're going to move into something with God, you better make sure you've heard from God. I love the prophetic we need the prophetic, I need the prophetic to confirm what God has told me. You know Mervis, came to me and said, "I need to give you a prophetic word." I said, "Oh, here we go." He said, "No, no, before I give you the word, I'm going to give you a word of knowledge that's going to confirm the word." And he said, "The word of knowledge is that only you make your bed, Pam doesn't make the bed. In the morning, you get up, you make the bed, but you make it like military-style". I said, "It's true! Pam has never made my bed, our bed, never! I don't even know if it's because I was in the military, but I get up, and when Pam gets out of bed, that's happy days and the bed gets made." So, when he said that, the prophecy that was to follow, was confirmed because there was something I was waiting on God for. We need the prophetic, but let me tell you, you better hear God in the prophetic. If you just hear an outside voice, you have become an adopted son and not a true son. "For those who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom 8:14). Often God will endorse or confirm something He wants to tell you through the prophetic, but you must hear.

Why do I say you must hear? Well, just an illustration quickly, I remember our third church plant; well, from the first one to this last one, I mean having put up these buildings and built up this congregation, and then the Lord says, "I want you to go together with Andrew." I thought, "I wonder if I'm hearing

right." And then the word the Lord gave me was from Romans, that actually comes from Genesis, stating that the older will serve the younger. And there's no problem with my understanding who's the older - I am, the older. So that thing fell into place. But when we went to our third church plant, Pam wasn't keen. She was very advanced in her pregnancy; I think she was eight months and she always said to me, "I'll go anywhere, so long as you can tell me you've heard from God. Have you heard from God?" And I hadn't. But I wanted to open myself to a word that was given, a prophetic word. I went to Natal, we were busy planting in East London, the work had grown substantially; it has almost got to a thousand people. We had twelve elders, and they loved us. I mean when you are well-loved, you got a good salary. One of the elders had said, "If you're willing to stay, we will give you the house on the bond of Bay River". And you know, I said to him; "If something happens, I just want to ask you, if God speaks, are you able also to give me the anointing?" I said, "You will end up with a dead stick here." And that elder looked at me and said, "That could be a problem". I said, "It could be a serious problem". Anyhow, I went to Natal, and it was this little group of people; I think I've told some of you the story. And there was this little pump organ in the corner, you know. A pump organ and you have got to pump before you can play, and you have got to keep pumping. I thought this is different, you know. And I think they were about a dozen people there. It was a group of strange-looking folk, not all of them, but different - like in the Kentucky mountains.

So, I felt in my heart that I wasn't that keen, but I was willing to go, okay. So, while there, I preached and finished. We went for lunch with a sugarcane farmer. While I was there in the afternoon, I hadn't had time to finish my quiet time; I was busy with my quiet time in the book of Judges, Judges chapter 1:1-2. They were inquiring of the Lord, on their way to take the land, who must be sent first; the Lord says, "Send Judah, Judah must go first. If Judah goes first, I'll give this land into your hand." I thought about Judah. Judah praised, Judah did this; you know I thought all kinds of things to do with Judah, but I couldn't get anything from it. So anyway, I go to the evening meeting, and there was an old lady, and she got up, and she spoke in tongues. Now the next day was my birthday, and all I wanted to do was get home so that I could be with my family for my birthday. Then she sat down. I said, "Well, Scripture says, we need to allow an interpretation. Is there an interpretation of this tongue?" A guy gets up, and I remember his name until today, Danie Vermeulen; he gets up, and he looks at me, nobody knows what I did in my quiet time, and he was a seriously prophetic guy. He says, "And you've inquired of the Lord who must He send, and the Lord says you, Judah; if you're willing to go, He'll give this land into your hand. Are you going to be Judah or not?" I just stood there. Now I've got to go and tell my wife, and I just burst into tears; she doesn't like the heat and Natal is a seriously hot place. Let me tell you; this is why I say you must hear the voice of God. Romans tells me that when you get the Word, the Word generates

faith, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word (Rom 10:17). Now, let me tell you why that's important, because once you get the word, it generates faith. Dudley, Andrew and I were on his team before New Covenant ministries, he said, "Don't let anybody go anywhere if they haven't got enough faith to faith it." That's true! So, you get faith from the Word. Why is it important to get faith from the Word? Because when you are there, it's going to be you and God. When you are there you can't phone up somebody and say, but you said... No, no, no! When you're there, you have got to have faith, because faith gives birth to conviction, not preference. I'll rather prefer to be there than there, no! It gives birth to conviction, and conviction carries you through the day. So, the first thing is you need to hear God yourself.

Secondly, don't use anyone else's plan. This is very important, because each plant is unique. Our fourth church plant was in Sea Point, and our third church plant was in Natal, but I also did a plant into what was then the Zulu context, and the Zulu context, it was unbelievable what God did. But when you are working into a Zulu context, don't use somebody else's plan from Sea Point! It's not going to work! It's totally different. So, what I've got to understand is, if God brings me into a place, He's got a certain plan that He wants me to take hold of for there. It's unique; every plant is unique. Somebody said to me a while ago, "You know what, with you having done all these church plants, you should write a book on how to plant churches. I said," Are you crazy?" He said, "Why not?" I said, "Planting churches is like having children. I mean they have the same parents but the one's totally different from the other one". You know the one's compliant, the one's defiant, but they have got the same parents, and the same home, same love, same attention. That's how the church is. That's how people are. That's how situations are. So, we need to understand that there's no manual for church planting. I want you to know that, I'm just giving you what has worked for me, but they are broad strokes. And if you're going to do something with, and for God, you better find out the fine strokes, but that's between you and God.

So, I thought this afternoon I would google church planting manuals. You should have seen them; I mean everybody's put out church planting materials. When I read them, I thought, "Thank God I didn't read this stuff before I planted churches." I don't know where they got this, I don't know if these folks had ever left town, you know; I don't know. And sometimes, they are people who teach it or write it because they can't do it, or because they've never done it. And if I could just say this thing of 'don't use someone else's plan', there'll always be a percentage of risk involved for you. That's called faith; you're going to have to faith it in God.

Thirdly, your spouse must be willing to plant with you. Oh, that's important! The reason is she must be prepared for the challenge. It's a serious challenge out there. If your spouse isn't locked into it, if you

haven't convinced her biblically that this is God, I'm telling you now you're going to be miserable. Your spouse must be a hundred percent in. All I had to give Pam was what God had told me, that's it; she would have known if I'd gone looking for something other than God. She'd know, because we often check with each other where we are. When there's something that we need to move into, it's vitally important if you're married, I'll touch on singles later; but if you're married, you've got to be together. Your spouse must be willing. She must be as excited as you are.

You know, Lance and Sue are now in Malawi, and we've just been with them. They came to see me 18 months ago; when Lance spoke about Malawi, the telephone wires went down to the ground with Sue. She found her shoelaces interesting. As I was sitting in my lounge, I thought, here's a challenge. When I saw Sue now, she was laughing all the time. She said this is God. And you know with those Malawian folks, she's all over their wives, and she's hugging them, and they are sitting down, and she's introducing me to them. And she was in their homes, and they came and slept in her home now. And I think she's more into it than Lance is. I said to Lance, "Lance, you know why this is going to be a success? Because of Sue." Let me tell you; those two are cooking. You won't recognize them in that context. You've got to get this right, if you're going to go anywhere as a couple, make sure that both your hearts are in. Very important, my word to you is, if the wife isn't in - don't go! I'm serious, keep that in mind, that's a very important factor. Your spouse must be willing to plant with you.

Fourthly, and we all know this, you must be sent out. Your leadership must recognize it, and you must be sent. Like Gerrit now in Richards Bay. Rob, one of his elders that's instrumental there, Cliff went there to set him aside as an elder. Rob came up, and I was asking him how it's going in Richards Bay with Gerrit and the work there, and he said, "So you know how many folks they had this last Sunday?" I mean this is a guy (Gerrit) who wasn't a deacon, he wasn't an elder, he hadn't been to Bible School, he hadn't done whatever training, he hadn't been through church planters' course. He just felt the call of God to go plant in Richards Bay. Now, it's just over two years, and they have a hundred and sixty adults. Oh, Rob says it is cooking there, and the two of them are doing such a work. But they were sent out. They were endorsed, they were totally under the Apostolic. Nothing happens there without him submitting it to the apostolic first. He keeps coming back, submitting, "What do you think? Am I doing this, right?" Because you can get to a point where you feel that you can do this on your own; you don't need any restrictions. You have got to do it, God's way. And God's way is to be sent out from, and in relationship with, the local church. Very, very important.

Number five - you must be debt-free. It doesn't have to disqualify you, but work on it, work on it! If you get into a church planting context and you got a wolf at the back door, it's not pleasant. Now, Pam and I

don't have a wolf at the back door; we ate it a long time ago. When I married Pam, I was the only one in our relationship that had debt. Because I used to buy Italian suits and crocodile skin shoes, big watches, and I drove a Mercedes 236 cylinder, and then I met Pam. And that was the end of my Italian suits and the end of my shoes. So, everything changed. So that we've never had a cents debt in 41 years of marriage, that's with five church plants. Even with this JoshGen Edgemoor building, not a cent debt. I want you to know if something's of God, it's God. God's vision, if we start off with God's vision, we'll never lack His provision.

I'm not saying there won't be difficult times, we had economy weeks, economy months, almost at one stage an economy year. I mean when we lived on almost nothing while we planted. But the fact that we are purposed to take hold of God's Word, which said, "Owe no man anything." The Lord will do that. So, there was no back door. Do I have credit cards? Yeah, I use them to fly around, buy tickets; but it's never something that I've used to get into debt with. Now, I want to say for most folks today this is a challenge, for most folk today this isn't discussed. If you're going to make yourself available to be used by God, we need men and women to plant. We are desperate!

The third point of our Four12 slogan is advance. We're not advancing if we're not planting. You know, in the late sixties, churches were being planted every week by the Baptists, the Assemblies of God, and the Methodists. Everyone was going ballistic with planting churches. Every week there was a church being planted somewhere. I was the first one to plant in Table View. Within about six months, we had ten churches in Table View, but these days almost nothing. Strange hey! You don't hear of it. Something's happened. I think it's because everything's become introspective and everything has become so expensive. It was expensive then too; it was just different, you know. So, this thing of being debt-free, I'm not saying that it's a priority for you; but that it was a non-negotiable for us, non-negotiable! And it's something that I'm trying to massage into the church, especially in the third world context. You need to be asking yourself, "How can I get out of debt?" The starting point is to become a plastic surgeon; take that little piece of plastic and cut it up.

Number six, I encourage folks to start with your home as a venue. Then move to something nice, not something big, just something nice. Grow, so that you've always got about 40% growing space. So, the minute you get to your venue and you see you've only got 40% left, move to another venue. Move somewhere bigger the minute you start to feel that it's like a beehive. You don't want too many people in that space. So, we need always to be creating room, room for faith. I mentioned now that this last weekend I was in Malawi, also talking about church planting, and a lot of them have got 40 or 50 churches. I said, "No, you haven't got 40 or 50 churches; you've got 40 or 50 preaching points under the

tree somewhere with 12 or 15 people, and that's not a church." So, we need to grow a church, plant a church, and now this is what it looks like. So, we had to look at that. But you know there are principles that you take hold of; a lot of folks they want to hire a hall, they put balloons outside and banners saying you're welcome and it's Will Marais ministries, come inside. You know, get your healing, all that stuff, no relationship. Eventually, you're preaching, and it's just your family of 4. I could sometimes see in my kids' eyes when we did that; they'd say, "Dad, you know it's just us here, and you're preaching salvation again. You know, we are saved." So, we always started with our family, and we started in a lounge. But as I said, it got to a point where some of those churches got very, very big, but we grew with a congregation. We wanted to know as many people as possible, and you know people love that kind of fellowship. They'll come, especially in winter, if you got a fire in the corner and you got coffee and muffins, and you're sharing the Word.

In comparison to sitting in a cold school hall, 15 of you, I mean Santa Maria! Our first church plant, we moved from the lounge into the garage. I moved the cars out on Sunday, rolled the carpet out, packed the chairs. The garage could only take 30 chairs. We had just had our first elder come and have dinner with us. We'd roll the carpet out and put the chairs out. And in those days, we had a little piano in the corner. And I even got a guy who fellowshiped with us to paint palm trees on the walls in there. It looked a little Jewish, palm trees and all, but then that space filled up, and we had to make the big move to the Leibrandt van Niekerk hall. And I'll tell you what, overnight it filled up. But there was a good core, and it was a good family fellowship, and there was the right ethos and the right DNA. And I remember the first service when Andrew came in here, just before we were going to join together; before we were going to slot into JoshGen, he said, "This is a family church." I said, "I hope so, I really do." And you know, there's something that you reproduce; if you are family, you reproduce family; if you are a little weird, you reproduce weird. So, you need to know that but start with your home. I encourage you in that. So, you don't have to put out a lot of money for a big venue, but sometimes you outgrow that sooner than you think.

Number seven; start with a team. Oh, that's Four12, we do it with a team. There was no apostolic when we started. In fact, for the first church plants, you either swam or you sank. There was nothing to model ministry by, no help, no father figures, nothing. And we always thought it was us four, no more; then it got to us six. That's how we started wherever we went to plant. And we'd meet folk and invite them to our home on a Sunday, "We are meeting together and sitting around the Word." So, folks would come, that's how we got going. And you know what, it worked! But it wasn't right. It was not God's way. The New Testament is always team. And so to get the train out the station, it took a long time; because you know, you are the guy blowing the whistle, running to the back with a flag, and then coming to the

engine, and releasing the steam and throwing coal on. And what am I saying? You know, I remember so clearly being at the door welcoming folks," So good to have you, God bless you ", then I'd run to the front, I'd say, "Folks, lovely to have you here this morning ". Then I would pick up the guitar and lead worship. I was the worship leader, yeah and I loved my Jewish songs in E minor. And the offering time was straight after that. Now, I remember the one service; I sat down after worship; you know, I thanked God it was offering because somebody else was going take the offering. And Pam lent over, and she said, "You're going to kill yourself." She said, "You're like that guy with a monkey on his shoulder playing the drum, and the guitar, and the whistle. You can't do that." There was no team! No multiplicity of gifts. The New Testament never told us to do it that way, no! I think it is God's grace that allowed us to go through and so, every time it came through, but eish, I was totally exhausted.

Number eight; this thing of always referring to the Apostolic team when you're planting. Always refer back to the team. Now, that's the New Testament. Remember, Paul had the issue in Acts 15, with the incident over circumcision, and he had to go back to Jerusalem; he went back to the Apostolic team. It says Paul went back to Peter and James to discuss an issue that was totally irrelevant to where they were in Jerusalem, but he got Apostolic perspective. And I want to say to you, I didn't have that, and I made many, many mistakes, but people were so gracious. I don't know how this stuff worked, but people got saved, people got filled with the Holy Spirit, the church grew. You know God just graced the people. Yes, it's wonderful to see what God did. But you know if only there had been the Apostolic, I could have gone to them for advice. That was just not healthy. So always refer back to an apostolic team.

Number nine: do not appoint elders hastily. If only somebody had told me that 40 years ago. You know, you may think, this guy will make a good elder, you got no perspective, nobody to bounce it off. There were three guys that I appointed; yes, they were fantastic guys. They were like the three musketeers. These guys together were phenomenal, and they were serious business guys, and they had lots of finance, etc. They nearly killed me those three guys. On one morning, I had to go to all three of them in their different workplaces and say, "I really thank you for being willing up to now, to function as an elder, but from today you're not on eldership anymore". Let me tell you, all hell came to town on 30 horses of fury.

Appointing somebody is one thing, dis-appointing them is another thing. Hear me; those guys have family in the church, they have friends in the church. They were into secondary offense in the church. So, our growing church suddenly took a major speed wobble; but after about five months, the church just grew and exploded again. Once that thing had come right, I thought to myself, "What did I do wrong?" No, I said, "What didn't I do right?" And this thing of the apostolic and don't appoint elders hastily; always

bring in the Apostolic to get their perspective. It's your team, they're going to be your elders, but make sure that you get perspective on them because there are blind spots. And by the way those three guys, we are still friends today, unbelievable! Now Paul writes, and he says, not to lay hands prematurely (1 Tim 5:22), and that's what this is referring to, when setting elders aside.

Number 10, model zeal and passion in your public worship, your prayers, your vocal gifts, and your giving. Now the keyword here is model. So, if we have a prayer time together, then I want you to encourage, exhort and enthuse. Not only by telling saints what to do, but you model prayer. Now I've just taught in Malawi. I had to fix up their prayer. We had a time of prayer, it was wild, good but wild, close to weird. Now, the reason I say this is, and I've taught on this before, that if you look at John 14, 15 and 16, Jesus teaches on prayer. Jesus says in that day, ask me nothing, and he's still talking to his disciples now, only ask the Father in my name. Who do we ask? The Father. In whose name? Jesus' name. But the thing to understand is we must model. So, don't be slow in bringing correction, but be gentle. Some folks just don't know what they don't know. I didn't say to these guys (mocking sounds). I said, "that's interesting the way you guys are praying. You want to cover all bases yeah". But by the time I had finished explaining from Scripture; the love of the Father, that we are the inheritance of God the Father, we are going home to the Father, it's in the Father's house. I'm in the Father but Jesus is the Way, there's no other way to the Father but through Jesus. And I love Him, and I adore Him, He's my everything because He made that possible. But it's the Father. Then I asked them if we could pray again and they were all like seriously cautious. And I said, "I know you'll make some mistakes again, but we thank Jesus, we thank the Holy Spirit, but we ask the Father". So, we got to model that.

Sometimes in prayer, I've watched us, some of the elders they don't realize that it's a prayer time and it becomes a time of meditation, and for folks too. Say to folks, "this isn't a time of meditation, we're going to pray here". "Mmmmmmm, mmmm (meditation sounds) amen, mmmm (mediation sounds)" Say no to that but we need you to model prayer! You must show the folks! This is a church plant; the people are going to get what you've got. And as Andrew always says, which we got from Dudley, it's more important what they come into, than what they come out of. What am I bringing them into? I must model my worship. You know, I once saw an elder sitting in the background with his arms crossed during worship. I thought Jesus help him because my concern is that he's modeling that. So, what are the people going to do? They will sit down too and cross their arms. We don't worship like that! Let me tell you how we worship; we worship with all our heart and soul and strength. And even now heading for 70, I want to expend as much energy as the young guys. I want to model something. There's a danger in that, though; you don't know how influential you are in modelling. You model to people, as a church you do that, leaders do that. So, we need to just be so careful.

And then I just stuck in there giving as well. I want to encourage all of you; prepare yourself, if you feel God's going lead you into this, prepare yourself now for what lies ahead. What am I saying? "The tithe is mine," says the Lord. For some of you it comes off with EFT, mine's an EFT, but for Pam and I that's the Lord's. I don't give the Lord my tithe, it's His tithe, I give Him back His tithe. I don't want to fiddle with His tithe, because He says if you don't give me what's mine; He says in Malachi 3- you are a thief. This was eye-opening for the guys in Malawi now, and geez they said, "No, we have got to start tithing. We thought we lived off the peoples' tithe". No, no no! But see they just didn't know what they didn't know. And I said, I could give God back His tithe, and He says, "If you are not giving it to me, you are a thief. If you're not giving it to me regularly, you're a kleptomaniac." And His Word says no thief is going to enter the Kingdom of God. That's quite a thought. You may say, "No, I know God understands." Oh no, no, no! He understands but when it comes to tithes and offerings - model it.

On a Sunday, you know when the box thing that comes past us, those little envelopes of offerings; have an offering as a leader. You know the church in which we were busy ministering in now, the guy gave such a great talk on the offering. Man! I mean it was unbelievable! If I had more money, I would have given it. I'm telling you it was such a talk. But then he sat down in front of me and when the offerings boxes went, he put nothing in. I couldn't believe it! I said, "You know what, you've just modelled is that talk is cheap." Paul said, "when I am among you, I didn't only make known to you my doctrine but my way of life." So, I want to give what's mine. I'm giving what's mine to God. I am not giving to get anything in return; but I have found that when we do give, jeez, we do get.

Tithes and offerings, model it for your people. And, I want to promise you in congregations like this, you know we guys who are full time get a salary from the head office. Often, I've gone to Andrew, and I said, "a funny thing happened again." It's happened about a half a dozen times in the nine years, so it's not bad in my context. I said, "You know, they forgot to take up the offering." And he said, "What?" I said, "Yeah, the guy leading said they forgot to take up the offering and that they would take a double offering the following week." Oh, Oh, double one next week?! People have spent that offering this week. This could have been something they could have been blessed in. Now I have modelled something, I have modelled that offerings are not so important. Now, let me tell you when you plant, I promise you that you will always remember to take up an offering! Because that's bread for the mouths of your children. I mean the, "Ah, we will take it next week," oh no, you won't! You will take it this week! Amen!

Session 08

People Focused

Let's start straight with point 11. I want to come back to this again; we must be focused on people. People-focused not program focused. A lot of times, when I'm with churches in different parts of the world, they want to know what I thought of their service. My response to them is that I'm here to see the condition of their people. I want to see if they're happy people, I want to see if they're content, I want to see if they are family. I want to see if there is something of a Godly atmosphere here. We can work on the other stuff, and of course, our meetings must be orderly and not too disorderly, but we need to look at the people. People are our commodity. If you're going to church plant, I want to encourage you in this; you must give at least 60% to your time in a day to people.

We must be people-focused, not program focused. The reason I say it is that you'll find that there'll be so many things that will demand your attention, and they'll be urgent things, but they're not important. The important thing is people. So, I need to work out in my day, am I giving 60% of my time church planting to people? You may say, "Well, no, people are working." Well then work out who has their own businesses and who is working. Organize a tea appointment with them and then in the evening get people into your home and get into their homes.

As a side note, I want to encourage you to keep a diary; it's very important. The reason I say to keep a diary is that in our first church plant, the phone rang one night, and when I picked it up, the lady on the other end said, "Are you still coming?" Now, Pam and I were busy eating supper with our two small kids, and I looked at her and immediately said, "Stop eating." A Dutch reformed couple in Table View, who happened to be seriously wealthy, invited us over because they were thinking of coming to the church, and they had prepared dinner. Now, let me tell you this, an Afrikaans family preparing dinner is not just a one- or two-course meal, it's serious business, and here we were, halfway through our own meal. I looked at Pam and the kids and said: "STOP eating!" And it's all because I never worked with a diary. Now I have two diaries - I have one I write in, and an electronic copy.

The thing we need to know is, how much input am I giving into people? It's people that everything in church planting revolves around. If a baby is born, you drop everything, and you get to that family. You pray with that young mom, that just had the baby, you even pray for that baby! That couple will never forget you, I'm telling you! So, it's people; it's all to do with people. Jesus was always amongst people.

They didn't have programs. Instead, He prayed early in the morning, and He was led then by the Spirit of God to people. Amen! Always keep that in mind, a successful church is a church that loves its people and a leadership who loves its people. So, keep that 60% in mind.

Then point 12, in another context, this is my number one, but in this, I put it down as number 12. Hard work, no entitlement, hard work! Church planting equals hard work! It's exhausting! Not only because of the people-pressure, but everything surrounding church planting is hard work. I remember Pammy and I were planting in Table View; I thought we would do an extension out towards Melkbos. So, we started a home cell, and we began to reach folk through that mid-week community, but the only little car we had was one of those little mark 3 VW Mini's, with a little extension back, with the little wings. It wasn't pretty, the battery had corroded through the back by the boot, behind the seat, and it only had one front light. It had one front light, and the battery was hanging on its two cables! It wasn't on the ground yet; but it was out the boot! Oh, and the breaks, the breaks you had to pump! So, we did this community, it was fantastic, and coming back after a meeting one night, with our firstborn Laura on the back seat, there was a roadblock. I said, "Pammy, pray, pray quickly, pray," and we both started praying. The traffic cop stepped down, and he saw us coming in this little Mini, with the one light, and he must have thought it was a motorbike because he just waved us past. And then when we went past, I think he thought, "Jeez, what was that!"

But, when I say hard work, it's not only the time you put in, it's everything that surrounds a church plant. It's hard work! It's hard work trusting God for breakthrough! It's hard work when all the money dries up! It's hard work!

We planted our first church in my second year of theology. I remember we got to a point in this church plant, where Pam and I were both still students, and we had quite a distance to travel. Pam would go out towards Kalk Bay (she was at a Bible school there, and I was at the seminary), and it got to a point where we ran out of money. We had no money left! It was a Sunday, and we had no money to get to church. Luckily for us, Pam had a train ticket that expired that Sunday night. I put her on the train (because I was also helping out with another church in Wynberg, which meant that from where we stayed on this side, on the town side, and Wynberg was quite a distance). I gave her my Bible, gave her my jacket, and I ran next to the train. I ran next to the train from station to station. I mean, by the time we got to Wynberg, I was sopping wet! It was hard work! I thought to myself, "You know, I think I've had enough of this!" Then my brother in law came around, and I was thinking that very thought when I said to him, "I think I need to go back into business, this is too hard!" He asked me why I was saying that (he's in the ministry you see), and I told him how we had run out of money. I told him that I couldn't get to lectures, he said I

should take my car! I said I couldn't take the car - I had no petrol, he said to take my bicycle! I said I had sold both our bicycles just to try and get some extra money. So, my brother-in-law told me to walk, and I said I wasn't so keen to walk, you know. "Ah," he said, "no! You will walk, and if your legs pack up, you get into a wheelchair, and if the wheels on the wheelchair collapse, then you know God doesn't want you in church planting in the ministry."

So, now this is the Sunday following this when I'm running next to the train. You know when you're going to do something, but you actually don't want to? I was at that point, but I had decided I was going to do this. When we got to the station, I got Pam, my jacket and my Bible and then as I was walking to the church, a guy comes walking across the road to me with this envelope, a thick envelope, full of money. He then walks up to me and says, "God said I must give this to you," and I responded, "I believe it!" I took that money, and well, I didn't have to run home. It was a test, and that was a test we never had to pass again, but there were other tests. It's hard work!

I want to say this thing of visiting people and loving people, as with all these other points, it's hard work! I want to assure you of that! But my secret was that I had a little black book that was ordered alphabetically inside, A to Z. If I went to visit somebody, I would have this little black book, and I would get hold of their surname and write in their names. Then, when I was there, I would discretely ask some questions. Like what the kiddies' names were, where did they work, how long have they been married? I would ask everything, wedding anniversaries, birthdays, the works! Then, before I left, we would break bread together. I would always have a little thing of bread and juice, a bit like an Anglican priest. And before we would break bread, I would ask them what needs they had or for what I could pray. "Oh, the kiddies are sick," they would tell me or, "We're having financial problems!" Anything like that, I would write it in my black book and then pray for them. Then the next time I came to visit, I would check my black book. That way I would go in knowing them by name, knowing the kid's names and I would ask how it was going with little "Joey" because the last time I was there, they said "Joey" wasn't too well. Let me tell you that mom's heart will be yours because you were interested in little Joey. Then before I left, we would break bread again and thank God for what He's done and what He's still going to do. It's hard work!

It's not just coming and quickly popping in for a cup of coffee. No, you have to be intentional, and it's something we need to revisit. In the New Testament, they went from house to house breaking bread. It wasn't a scheduled thing; it was a part of life. It was hard work, folks; this is hard work. Amen!

Onto number 13, I'll just mention this quickly - invite the new folk for meals in your home and then also take the business folk for coffee dates. The important thing is to make a point of inviting them into your

home. By the way, it's a prerequisite for eldership that you are hospitable; this is how hospitality looks! Don't just invite the select, invite whoever comes! Invite them into your home at every opportunity.

Number 14, this very important, be both interesting and interested when engaged in conversation with folks. Some folks don't give you a gap to talk; they're too busy telling you about themselves. It even happens with guys in ministry. Andrew once asked me to go and see this guy, can't say who it is, but I went to see him. From the time I landed to the time he dropped me back at the airport, he was telling me about himself! He was dropping names and what he's done and how God's going to use him and and and... It was very interesting, but he wasn't interested in me; he knew nothing about me. I couldn't be bothered by that, but he knew nothing about me when I left. Now, people, we do need to be interesting, but then you need to switch off the interesting and become interested! Be interested in people, not just loosely but really interested in them! People are our commodity. Church planting has to do with people; they're our commodity! I'm seriously excited because church planting is the heartbeat of God, but, ultimately, we need to be interested in people. Amen!

Number 15, being faithful with your tithes and offerings. Not just being faithful with them but also modelling it. I can't emphasize this enough, Pam and I have never short-changed on our tithes and offerings. I'll just drop something with you, applicable even today; there is one businessman who has kept on putting money into an account that I've got at JoshGen. There is also another man who is putting money into that account even after I challenged them not to. Now, it's in there, and I don't get any of that money personally into my accounts, I only draw from it for ministry. Now, why am I saying this? Let me tell you; it doesn't just happen. It doesn't just happen! There is something that catches the attention of God, and that is doing things His way! For the right reason - catch His attention.

Pam and I don't have a savings account or a secret account where we get X amount in so we can take X amount out. You know, if you do that with the Lord, your hand starts to shrivel. But what I'm saying is nothing just happens - you need money. When we planted this church (JoshGen Edgemoor, formerly Kingdom Faith Family Church), the Lord said that we could take no money out of the previous plant. He said we had to draw a line, four times we had to draw that line. So, for the fifth church plant, we had no money, absolutely no money. There was also no room for faith by hints—none of that faith by hints thing. We once had a couple to whom I eventually had to speak. For one community (life group), we visited their house, and their house had just been broken into, and they came to community with a list of stuff that had been stolen. They came with a list of the things for which they were trusting God. It included even the model and brand and where to buy it. That is faith by hits! Don't do that when you come to God! God doesn't like hints! Be faithful with God, not only believing in God but believing God!

When you church plant, you have to believe God! You have to firstly, believe God has called you to this! You have to know that! Then secondly, you mustn't only believe that God's called you to it, but that God is going to provide for you. His vision won't lack His provision!

You must also accept that there are going to be some lean times, through which He wants to shape you. Maybe there's something He wants to teach you. Can I tell you, there were lean times, there were many lean times over the last 32 years. But, over those 32 years, I would say the equivalent of about one hundred million rand has come through our accounts. The Lord wants you to be a pipe, a conduit of His provision. He wants it to go through you and for it to be given to others. The secret is that when the pipe is pouring out, it stays wet. So, as you are giving and sowing into the Kingdom, your needs are being met all the time.

We need to understand this truth from God. There's an old mentality of "poor is pure." I would like to say that poor isn't pure, poor is just stupid. I'm not saying that we are into this name it and claim it nonsense, but I am saying that God is more interested in establishing and advancing His Kingdom than we will ever be. And I can't leave town or effectively build His Kingdom without money! I can be as spiritual as I would like, but I need money! I need your money! I tell people this, "Not only do I need your money, but I also want your money! I want your money for the Kingdom! I want to advance the Kingdom with your money! The money I need to advance the Kingdom is in your pockets, and I need it out of your pockets! I'm not going put my hand in your pockets though, because you'll break my fingers. So, you must put your hand in your pockets!" We need people to understand this! Giving generously is birthed out of conviction, and we need to provoke people into living from conviction. And we do this by living from a place of conviction ourselves. We need to get people to buy into what God's doing! You're going to have to get people to buy into what God has told you, and it's not going to be through manipulation or coercion, it's going to be through conviction. They must see conviction in your eyes! There's something God wants to do through you so that you can share it with others! They must see the conviction in your eyes, in your life! Amen!

Number 16; avoid ever being alone with the opposite sex. This one is not only for the men, ladies too. Avoid it like the plague. Avoid it like somebody's put arsenic in your coffee. That is death. The reason I say that is because I've counselled three men in ministry, three godly men, more gifted than me, they led far larger churches than me. They were passionate about the things of God, and I looked up to them. These men fell in sin with the opposite sex. You know, it broke my heart! Each one said to me that it happened as a result of starting with a platonic relationship. For me, there's no such thing as a platonic relationship. Scripture says you give birth to it in your mind. If you have birthed in your mind, just picture

arsenic. Picture something that's going to kill you! Picture what scripture says, it says you're going to get an arrow through your liver, that's what Proverbs says about he who sleeps with a woman who isn't his wife.

The reason I mention this is not because you're good-looking but because you love God. Do you know what attracts a person of the opposite sex who loves God? The fact that you love God. It is God, in you, that they see. You can be as ugly as sin, like me, and you can be as old as me, but if you love God... They see God in you; they see the Zeal of God in you; they see the desire of God in you. It's something with which they want to participate.

For this reason, I don't do house visits if the husband is not home. How can you visit that woman alone? I mean, what will you talk about? You know, the species from Venus don't talk about what we talk about. They speak an entirely different language. So, what do you talk about when you're there? Counselling? You might think, "oh no, I'm the pastor, and I must do the counselling," and "everything must be closed because it's private." I say - you are out of your tree! Maybe the relationship with your wife has gotten a little tense, and now you're in your car, and it's raining, it's cold, and you think to yourself, "where can I go for a nice cup of coffee? Oh, that one, the one that's kind to me!" The thing is, though, in church plants, the devil will let you get to a level of success, and he'll take it from you if you give him the chance. Don't tell me when you fall that you couldn't help it. You set yourself up, you went to see her alone, or she went to see you alone!

Now my teaching is always men minister to men, and women minister to women. Amen! It takes you a lifetime to build up integrity, and you can destroy it in a moment. In a moment, it's taken from you. God gives us another chance, but let me tell you, you don't want to go down that road! Avoid ever being alone with the opposite sex!

Then 17, please be a happy, pleasant person in public but also in private. You can't be pleasant in company and then get home, and you're kicking the cat, and your kids are traumatized. It's a kind of schizophrenia that sometimes happens. This is why in the life of JoshGen, and Four12, we are accountable. We say that if you come into ministry, and there's something wrong in your marriage, it's not, "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas." Oh no, we are mutually submitted one to another. Pam knows that there are three ladies that she is often with, in our eldership team, that she can go to if something goes wrong with me. If I'm strange at home, like I'm "hahaha" outside, but at home, I'm not "hahaha," she can go to any one of those ladies and ask them to tell their husbands that Will has lost it. This is how we want to operate! Not for condemnation but for restoration, to bring us into more in God. Amen!

Many of you know that in my own marriage, about seven years ago I think, I had been in JoshGen for about two years, and something came out. Every four or five months, because I'm a bit of a workaholic, I would get a little miffed off with Pam. It was about every four or five months - that's all. It may "be all," but it's not acceptable. What would happen was that I would be miffed off with her for a morning, maybe a morning and an afternoon. It wasn't that I said anything or did anything, it's that I didn't say anything. If she offered me a meal, I would respond with, "Yeah, whatever." This continued until my daughter, the same daughter who's now my PA, threw me under the bus. She phoned Andrew and threw me under the bus. She told Andrew that I would lose my cool every now and again. "But he doesn't say anything, and he doesn't really do anything," she told him, "and that's the problem!"

The guys got in touch with me, and they said that we were going to have to sort this out, whatever it took. "I haven't been into pennies, petticoats or power," I told them, and they said, "It's not the whole of you, it's just this crack." So, it was decided that the way to sort this out was that I wouldn't be allowed to minister for three months. I was sitting on a plane when they phoned to tell me this! I was on my way to Spain, to the UK, and to the Isle of Man to do three conferences. This meant that I had to go there and say, "I just want you to know that I've been found out! I go a little cuckoo at times. It's not bad, I don't do anything, I don't say anything, and it's going to get sorted out, but I can't minister at your conferences."

From then until now, it has never ever happened again. Why? Because my wife is going to go and tell one of those wives and I'm not prepared to get another phone call while sitting on a plane again!

Point 18, watch out for religious spirits. Andrew often talks about the guy with the shofar under the chair, but it could be anything! I once had a guy, a prophetic guy, come to JoshGen Citybowl while I was there. Apparently, he was the prophet for the city. He had his little hat on, with a feather in it, and his nails were painted mauve. He also brought his little entourage, and he had white lipstick on. It was wild! He came in and sat down. Eventually, one of his entourage members came up to me and said, "the Prophet wants to speak." I said to myself, now, this is weird. I told him to tell the prophet to come talk to me. Reluctantly the prophet came up to me, I was standing in front, and he said he's got a word for the city and a word for me. "I am the prophet for the city," he said. So, I said, "Oh, I'm Will!" You see, you have to engage like this because we need the prophetic. We will die without the prophetic; we need intercessors. But the prophetic and the intercessors can be the worst, if they're not a true prophet and if they're not truly submitted to the apostolic, as Paul speaks about. So, you have to try and measure these kinds of things.

So, I addressed the man and said, "I just want to ask you a question. Would you, if you were a father sitting around the table, let somebody into your house, to come sit at your table, and tell your family

how other rabbits are going to chew the cabbage?" He looked at me with a confused look on his face and I said, "You're going to tell us what to do, and we don't know you from a bar of soap?" I said, "Now, we don't forbid prophecy, and we're going to test your word, but if you bring public prophecy, you have to know that I will correct it publicly." I said, "Do you understand? Here's what I'm trying to get you to understand. The reason I can speak into my family with authority is that I carry full responsibility. I'm responsible for my wife and my kids. I'm responsible for the food, for the clothing, for the schooling. I'm responsible for the rent, for the electricity. I'm responsible for their health. I'm responsible for everything! Now you come in here, and you're going to tell the rabbit how to chew the cabbage? What responsibility do you have in this house?" And he stood there looking at me. I then told him to go sit down, and he did, and he came to me afterward, and he said thanks very much! I thought maybe he got something because sometimes people just don't know what they don't know. Saying this, you have to know you'll get weird folks coming in, but you have to ask God to give you the right words. We need to protect whoever God gives to us; we need to protect the flock. Amen! Religious spirits- watch out for them!

Then 19, preach the word in a way that leaves the folk with something to do. He gives apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists for the equipping of saints (Eph 4:11 - 12). For the what? For the equipping of the saints. We need to preach the word in a way that they can do something. What am I getting them to know that they can do? If I'm just getting them to know, that's exegesis. They can go read about that for themselves! But am I, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, giving them what's called exposition? I'm giving them what they need to know, but also handles on how to do it! We need to do that when we church plant, and that's something that builds up the congregation. So, preach the word in a way that when you are finished you can ask yourself what you have given them to do. Blessed are they who hear the word and do it (Lk 11:28). Have I given them something that's going to change their lives by doing something with what I've given them? When I come from a church or somewhere out in the world, and I go back again, the thing that excites me is that they've moved forward! They've done something! That's very important for us!

Lastly, number 20, discipline! On our Four12 and JoshGen websites, I've got a little booklet on discipline. A lot of the churches don't understand discipline, but I'll leave this with you - a lot of the churches don't want to involve themselves in church discipline. A lot of the churches don't understand that discipline is Godly, and if we don't discipline, we don't only disregard, but we also disrespect the Godhead because we are ultimately embracing sin in the house!

I'll close with this, in England, there was a church that wanted to partner with Four12 and some of the churches we work with just need a little tweak, just a tweak, and then there are some of them where you know it's going to be hard work. It's like building a new house, you speak to a builder, and you start with one thing. Then just as you sort that thing out, something goes wrong with the electrical work. Then it's the plumbing, and then you bang on the wall and so on and so forth. And it was like that with this church in England. When I was there the first time, I realized they have two categories of people in that church. One group is called the politicians, and the other is the royalty.

Now, when I was with the pastor, he said to me he wants to move into a new testament model of church, but this thing of discipline didn't sit right with him. I asked him if they practiced discipline and he told me that people don't discuss discipline, not in England. I told him that actually, we don't even really discuss it in South Africa, but we do it. "No," he told me, "we can't do that here. You don't tell somebody what to do." He told me it wasn't "British." Anyway, we were standing at the door of the church, I'm ready to go in, to minister, and there were these two lovely couples, really lovely couples. I asked him if they were married. He told me they weren't. I then asked if they stayed together. He said that they did. I then dared to ask if they slept together. He was quick to assure me they didn't; they couldn't possibly. I remarked to him about the small size of the houses and apartments in England. He agreed with me that they were very small. I ventured to ask him if he had been around to their homes, and he said he knew exactly where they lived. I asked if they were one-bedroom or two-bedroom houses, and he said that they were one-bedroom places. A little shocked, I asked him where the guy slept, in the bath? Well, let's just say that was the end of that. It later came out there was something wrong with him, and he's gone now.

The thing people need to understand is that discipline isn't for condemnation; it's for restoration and reconciliation. Discipline is to bring us back! God isn't interested in the fact that you've fallen, He's interested in the fact that you're willing to get up again. He is interested to see that you are willing to go through whatever it takes. To repent with godly sorrow is so that we can be restored. The say burnt bricks are always better to build with. People who have gone through discipline know they won't be going down that road again.

This is something we need to embrace as church planters. You've got to be resilient; you've got to be uncompromising, but you have got to be loving as well. You've got to love the flock! They must know that you are doing this because you love them. People will be willing to walk these things through with you because you love them.

Session 09

Spirit Led

During this section, we will be focusing more on the practical aspect of leading. Specifically, I want to touch on how to lead a meeting or, better yet, how to let God lead your meeting. I think this is a crucial subject: 'How do we let God lead whatever we're leading?' Whether you are leading a home group or youth or whatever you are doing, there is a sense that we need God to do what God can do because we cannot build the Church. Jesus said,

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matt 16:18 NIV)

We need Jesus to be doing the work, and He uses us, He works through us. As a leader, my job is to ultimately make sure that I am connected to Jesus and doing the things that Jesus is doing. If I am in line with Him, you will see the Kingdom of God start to grow. If I am not, something might grow, but it will not be the Kingdom. It might be a big church, but it won't necessarily be the Kingdom of God. Just because it calls itself a church, it does not mean Jesus is building it.

You can build a big 'church' on good communication and leadership skills but lacking Christ. This is a lesson we need to learn very quickly: 'Only God can build His Church.' One of the challenges of letting God lead us as we lead meetings is that it is quite hard to hear Him sometimes. Do you realize that God speaks when He speaks, and then sometimes, He is just silent? You can get before Him and say: "Lord, tell me what you want to do." At times it is like heaven is brass, and we have this challenge of trying to hear Him. In Acts 15, the disciples were together, and they said this:

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements. (Acts 15:28 NIV)

Honestly, a lot of leadership is a little bit like, 'It seems like this is what God wants to do.' We are picking up a bit of what the Spirit wants to do. The Bible speaks about the Spirit being like a wind that blows where it wills. Following the Spirit can be like feeling the wind. I used to kitesurf years ago. Wind can seriously make it fun or horrible. It is quite challenging to know what the wind is doing. The Spirit is very similar. You can learn to read Him and walk with Him. If you are in leadership and you want the Kingdom of God to come through you, you must learn how to read the wind of the Holy Spirit.

How can we let God lead our meetings? Jesus said:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (Jhn 10:27 ESV)

A large part of building the Church is rooted in our faith that He will speak. It is quite challenging sometimes because the meeting kind of feels like it rises and falls on me. If I have the microphone, I must settle in my heart that He will speak. Amazingly, where there is faith, God does seem to respond. In fact, the Bible says that without faith, it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6). One of the great challenges in leading is that you are continually walking in faith.

How do you get faith?

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (Rom 10:17 NIV)

When referring to the Word of God, I do not only refer to the Bible. When I hear God, I receive faith. I know He is going to do something. It is easy for me to have faith then. But, if I have not heard God speak, it is a little bit like; 'Oh dear, Lord.' We need to try and hear Him. One of the big challenges you will find as your leadership profile grows is that it is hard. It is impossible to build the Church the way God wants to build it. Very few people truly let God build the Church.

Do you remember in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve sinned? Satan came to them and said: "You will be like God if you eat of that fruit. You will have the knowledge of Good and Evil." Denise dropped the following statement: At some point in her relationship with the Lord, Eve went from eating of the Tree of Life to eating of the Tree of Knowledge. Remember, there are two trees. One is a Tree of Life which is God. If you eat of the Tree of Life, you live. The other one is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve chose Knowledge over the Tree of Life. Knowledge means, 'I can do this without God.' 'I can learn the ways of God.' 'I can even work God because I know how to manipulate Him.' That is one of the biggest challenges in the western context.

We often sit with leaders who ask why God does not heal someone. Then they try and reason it out. They start leaning into the Tree of Knowledge. They think that maybe someone did not have enough faith. Immediately you start trying to work it out in your head theologically. Charismatic circles tend to teach that if I do this, God must do that. That is a very dangerous place to be, because God is not a system. God is a person. The Knowledge of Good and Evil means once I am eating of that tree, I can learn how to make a meeting rock. I can program it. I can work it and generate a life of its own that looks

like God. You will be like God. Remember, they ate the fruit of Knowledge. Like God, they will know good from evil. This means that as a leader, I can make an amazing meeting just on my leadership skills, but I cannot build the Church. I can grow a crowd but not build the Church because only God can work in the hearts of people.

As you lead, you will be challenged to either lean into the Knowledge of Good and Evil or lean into God and what He is doing.

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. (Rom 8:14 NIV)

Do you want to know how the Bible says that you are saved? You are a son of God if the Holy Spirit leads you. That is the sign of being a son of God. 'The Holy Spirit leads me.' 'God is leading me.' 'God is taking me somewhere, and I am following Him.'

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. (Gal 5:18 NIV)

There is this constant thing coming through the scriptures that the Holy Spirit must lead us. The first person I must hear as a leader when I get up in the morning or when I do something for the Church is His Holy Spirit. This is something I have been criticized for in elders' meetings because even elders and leaders are people, and they have opinions. I do not care much for opinions. I do not even care about my own opinion because I realize how frail we are, we naturally lean into the Knowledge of Good and Evil. If I am going to have the final say as a leader, I have got to make sure that we are going to take this church where Jesus is going. The Spirit is taking us somewhere, and so in an elders' meeting, I am trying to listen in this way. Sometimes somebody will say something, and you will sense the Spirit on it, and you go: 'That was God,' and we build on that. I do not care how clever you sound in an elder forum. What I am listening for is where is the wind blowing. Unless the eldership team understands that, they will get miff because no one took their advice. We can throw things around and ask: 'What about this?' or 'What about that?' However, at the end of the day, we have got to hear the Spirit of God because Jesus is only Lord of what He is Lord of. In other words, if Jesus is in control, then He is Lord. If I am in control, or if the elders are in control, suddenly we have become lord. We have taken the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and we do not need God anymore. We can do this without Him.

If you want to be a leader in the house of God in any shape, size, or form, you must be led by the Spirit of God. If you want to be a Christian, let alone in leadership, you must learn to be led by the Spirit of God, and that takes a lot of work. It is like a relationship where you have got to get before God, quieten your heart, and take the time to settle yourself. Silence the voices in your head and wait on Him until you

hear His voice. In 2 Peter 1:20, we read that even the scriptures were written as men were carried along by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is so integral in the life of the Church that we really cannot do this without Him. We love the Bible. In fact, we cannot go beyond the Bible. The Bible is ultimately the manual, but the Bible is quite a broad book. In many ways, it does not tell us precisely what to do. For example, does the Bible tell us what we must preach next week? Does it teach us how to run a youth meeting? There is a lot that the Bible does not teach us. The Bible gives us some broad principles that we cannot go beyond, but then within those broad lines, we have got to hear the Spirit of God. We can never go beyond the scripture.

Think of it this way: if you had a map of Cape Town, the Bible could map out where Cape Town is. The map can tell where the roads are, but to be where God is, you have to follow the Holy Spirit. If I am a son of God, I must be led by the Spirit. I have got to be where the Spirit is walking right now. The fact that there is a Cape town around me, and all mapped out in the Bible is great. I realize I am still in Cape Town as long as I am on that map. If I walk outside of that map, then it is not the Spirit taking me there because the Spirit will work within the confines of the Word. The Spirit is where life is. This is confirmed in 2 Corinthians:

He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant--not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Cor 3:6 NIV).

In other words, if you just apply the Word without the Spirit, what is the fruit? Death. That is quite scary. The Spirit is where life is. At one time, Jesus was talking to the Pharisees, and they were a bit offended at Him because He was not always doing things the way they thought He should. At one point, He drops this bomb on them. He says in John 5:

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, (Jhn 5:39 NIV)

Do you realize that we can take the Knowledge of Good and Evil and start reading our Bibles through that lens to gain knowledge? When we do that, we become a little bit idolatrous because we are now beginning to try and learn the systems so that we can control life and control God. That is idolatry. You have just made yourself God. You do not need Him. Just like Adam and Eve in the garden, you do not need Him anymore. You will be like God, discerning good and evil. The reading of the Scripture can be a destructive thing if you do not understand that correctly. I am making some outrageous statements here, but you can diligently study Scriptures and be rebuked by Jesus. He told the Pharisees that.

You may be diligently studying the Scriptures, but you are not going to Jesus to have life. The scripture should point you to Jesus. They should point you to a relationship. They should point you to what you know. Walking with Jesus rather than thinking: 'Well now that we know how this all works out, let us work the system.'

Many people ask why the power of God does not flow now as it did in the book of Acts. Then we start trying to work something out. The guy who comes up with the best argument has everyone saying: 'Wow, that was very good,' but it is just the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Why is it that at the beginning of Acts handkerchiefs were passed out, and people get healed from walking past someone, but at the end of the book of Acts Paul said, 'I left Epaphroditus sick' and he's saying to Timothy later on: 'Hey Timothy, drink some wine for your many stomach ailments.'? Now we want to understand because if we can understand, we can get power. Here is the thing, He is God. Walk with Him. Ask Him. At the end of the day, He is God, and God does as He pleases. The Bible says,

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isa 55:9 NIV)

Do you know how high the heavens are above the earth? We can see 46 billion light-years right now, and the heavens are probably further than 46 billion light-years. When God says my ways are that much higher than yours, you got to think: 'Oh my goodness. To think that I might understand God is highly arrogant.' I can hear Him, and when He reveals Himself to me, I can obey and understand. I want to say something that sounds outrageous. The Bible is insufficient. If we only had the Bible, the Kingdom of God would not come to the earth. We would just have the Knowledge of the Good and Evil. Do you know that the early Church was birthed without a New Testament Bible? The printing press came years later. They were stumbling along in the Holy Spirit, trying to understand Old Testament Scriptures and from time to time, pulling them through. The Spirit of God is where the life is, but He doesn't go beyond where the Bible goes. That is the boundary. That is the map of Cape Town. Do not go beyond what is written.

This is one of the challenges when you lead a church. Some people say: "Why do we not just do expository preaching for the next six years?" I did it once on Genesis 1 a few years ago. I did Genesis 1:1 for about one or two months and then went on to Genesis 1:2. When you dig down, there is so much you can start tapping out. We could spend the rest of our life just teaching out of Genesis 1 and 2, but is that what you need? We have to go: 'Lord, you are a person, and you are building your Church. Yes, we have the manual there that we cannot go beyond, but we do not build the Church on the Bible. We build the Church on a person, and His name is Jesus.' The Bible points us to Him, but at the end of the day,

Jesus is the foundation, and the Spirit is the one that will lay Him into our hearts and lay Him into our lives. As leaders, we must follow Jesus, hear His voice, and walk with Him. You must keep that intimate relationship because if you lose that you have nothing to give.

Moses said:

Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. "For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?"
(Exodus 33:15-16 NIV)

He knew that if God is not with them, there is nothing to distinguish them from the nations around them. 1 Corinthians 13:9 encourages us that we know in part, and we prophesy in part. That is a good place to get to. We know in part, but we know the one who knows fully. Even prophecy is never the full revelation. When you prophesy, it is like one colour of a spectrum, and so when you build a church, we must realize that we do not know that much.

We must try and keep up with Him. In some ways, my job is then to hear God and make sure that everyone plays the role that God wants them to play at that moment because we are like an orchestra. The Bible says if each one of us plays our part, the body grows and has life. As a leader, my job is not just to be the lead instrumentalist. My job is also to play those around me that are called to do certain things in the body of Christ. There are a few things that we have got to settle if we are going to be Spirit-led.

The first thing I want to say is this: if you want to be a Spirit-led leader and you are going to build the Church, you must be a son of God. You must deal with your fear of man. Generally, what people think and what God thinks are at war. You must hear what God says and have a greater fear of God than you do of people. The challenge is sometimes that the Lord will cause you to do things that make people quite upset with you. Let us be honest. Jesus is kind of in your face, is He not? We all like to think He is gentle, meek, and mild Jesus. Jesus is not scared to call out the Pharisees and say: "you brood of vipers" (Matthew 23:33). He used that kind of language. As a leader, I cannot worry about what you think. I must worry about what my master thinks. I want to be concerned about what Jesus thinks. I do not want to cause you to be offended just because I am arrogant, but I cannot let your thoughts stop me from hearing what His thoughts are.

One thing you will find as a leader is that you will be loved, and you will be hated. The taller you get, the more wind you take. It sucks because no one wants to feel like that, but at the end of the day, I am going to stand in front of Jesus, and He is the one who will finally decide what was right and wrong. As a leader,

you must settle that in your heart that sometimes you may have to stand all on your own, and it is difficult. There is going to be a sense of self-doubt. You might think you are deceiving yourself. I want to be accountable and submissive, but I also need the courage to stand up for what I believe in, no matter what the price is. If you cannot do that, you cannot lead because you will be a people pleaser. If you give people what they want, it is like asking your six-year-old daughter what she wants for breakfast, lunch, and supper. She will want a Spur burger for every meal, and I will have a thrilled, fat, unhealthy child that will probably die young. We must give people what they need.

I must add this story, years ago, as a young guy, I was cutting my teeth in leadership. At times I was leading strong, and I remember there were a couple of guys that got upset with me about something I did, and I just got stronger. I even said this; "You know what, if you are in this chair just to fill a pew, do me a favour and go join the church down the road. We need your chair for somebody else." I would think 'Jesus was the rock of offense, and they just got offended.' Then the Lord spoke to me He said: 'Andrew, I am the rock of offense. I did not ask you to be the rock of offense.' I realized at that point that I, not Jesus, was a stumbling block to people. If you stumble over Jesus, it is one thing, but the Bible says:

If anyone causes one of these little ones--those who believe in me--to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. (Matt 18:6 NIV)

That is scary. I cannot ever be the rock of offense. I must try and help everyone to come with me. If you fail, it is not because of my lousy presentation, but it is because you fell over Jesus. Remember, you are representing Jesus.

Here is a challenge, sometimes, someone in your church is divisive. They will start gossiping and slandering, and then you will meet with them to try and help them. They will turn on you, and then they will be phoning people in the church and start spreading lies and rumours. What you have given your life to build is suddenly poisoned. You watch people switching off as they connect with those people. You are a leader, and you think I am responsible for these people. This thing is killing the life of God. It is killing the unity of God, and we respond. Remember, I am just a person. How would you feel if someone came to your daughter or son and started doing things that would turn them against you? What would you do?

I will tell you a funny story. I felt the Lord on something, and we were moving the church in quite a significant shift. We had prayed it through; we felt that we had heard God. It was a precarious thing because I realize it was a very vulnerable time for us as a church. I remember getting up saying: "Okay, guys, the Lord is saying this. We had prophetic words, and the elders are witnessing with this." Then one

man got up. He was one of those guys who always 'buts' you. When he got up in front of the whole JoshGen, I was like 'Oh'. He said if JoshGen does this thing, God will judge this church, and it will be destroyed. I mean, that is a pretty out-there statement, and that does create a feeling of 'Whoops. Should we trust our elders now?' This guy is not a young Christian. He was a loved and trusted homegroup leader. They knew him more than what they know us. As he said that, I looked at him, and this is the first thing that came up in my heart; I remembered how men had revolted against Moses with Korah's rebellion. The ground opened and swallowed them alive into just flames and then closed again. I could only imagine Moses saying, "Did anyone else want to say something?" I remember standing there going 'Lord; it would be really wonderful if the ground just did that. If you do that for me right now, this would be awesome.' Then, you must deal with your heart because you think, 'Oh my goodness. I cannot think like this.' The challenge is that my heart was reacting to this guy, but I am also a leader, and I must protect the people.

Where is the line between my reaction and my need to draw a line for the health of the people? It is challenging to be a leader because if I do that, with anything of me in my heart, it is ultimately the flesh. Any reaction like that is the flesh. The flesh will war against the Spirit (Galatians 5:17). Leadership is very challenging. You must get before the Lord, and you have got to go 'Dear Jesus, help me to get this thing right.' I can feel what I am feeling. It is not some peace, love, and joy, in the Holy Spirit. He got up and said: "I prophesy this..." I responded and said, 'The Bible says when someone prophesies other prophets must test it.' and I asked, 'so who are the prophets amongst us?' They called up Melanie, Julie, and one or two other names. We gave them the microphone and asked if they would weigh the word. All of them responded by saying that it was not the Lord. I said: "Thanks. That was not the Lord. We are moving on." I knew it was not the Lord, but the challenge is that he has an opinion, and it's your opinion against his.

You must deal with your fear of man because if you do not deal with it, those moments will destroy you. You will be too scared to do anything. There have been seasons in my life wherein every preach I do, I offend somebody. As I am preaching, I can feel offense. You can watch it fall on people, and you are going 'Oh, I do not even want to say this.' When I preach hard messages, I know my week will be busy because I must run after all those people and try and settle them because if I do not settle them, they take offense. The Bible says an offended brother becomes as unyielding as a fortified city (Proverbs 18:19). They talk out of their offence, and suddenly I have got a whole portion of the church that is getting diseased.

It is so exhausting that you just want to preach 'Jesus loves you' and no one will get offended. That week everyone will be happy because Jesus loves them, but when you start trying to take people somewhere,

when you try to lead them, people do not trust leaders. They come out of a broken generation. They do not want to give themselves. They want to eat of the Knowledge of the Good and Evil themselves. Trusting another person is hugely challenging, and it is going to get worse. People get more and more broken. They come into the Kingdom with their baggage. As a leader, you must settle that. There are two sides to this. I will fold my leadership and walk away from it if there is a question over my integrity. Guys have seen me in this situation. At times guys have given my leadership back. But at the same time right now, if Jonathan Stanfield, Brad Verreyne, Dan from Benoni, and Russell Fraser get up and say: "Andrew, where you are taking us now, we will not follow." I will say: "Sorry to hear that, but I know I am hearing the Lord. Bye-bye." I cannot keep everyone happy, but at the same time, my posture needs to be one of 'Lord, am I deceiving myself here?'

You have to settle fear of man. Every time you preach, you will feel it. How many of you, when you are home, you put on Facebook 'Had a really amazing meeting this morning' start trying to gauge whether it was a good meeting. For you, it was, but you look whether anyone liked it or commented on the post. I really felt the Lord was in that meeting, and if no comments come, you start thinking, oh dear. Then you speak to your wife, and she says: "Honey, well, you know you said that one thing." and you think that you do not ever want to preach again. Just remember, Jesus's message was not popular. Paul's message was not popular. John the Baptist's was not popular. At some point, you must settle in your heart that you stand before an audience of One. Do your best to stand right before Him and lead with faith and conviction.

Secondly, you need to walk with faith, not in religiosity. The word religion has often been used negatively but is not a bad word. The Bible uses it in a good sense. The Bible says pure religion is to care for orphans and widows. Charismatics often state, 'I don't have religion, I've got Jesus.' True religion flows out of a relationship with Jesus. It is not something of an outward expression. It must be happening inside of you out of a relationship with the Lord. Faith is paired with this. The Bible says,

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Heb 11:6 NIV)

The Bible says if you do anything outside of faith, it is a sin (Romans 14:23). People ask me these questions, "Do you think I should go out with this girl?" or "Do you think I can go to a night club?" and I'll say: "Well, do you have faith that God wants you to go to the night club or that He wants you to go out with this girl? Do you believe God is stoked about this? Can you look me in the eyes and say, 'I believe, I

have got such faith; this is God. I know like I know this is His will.? If you have not got faith, you sin if you do it.”

If you are not leading with faith, you sin. Remember the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil versus the Tree of Life? Using the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil would enable you to run church every week of your life. Some Charismatic churches have an itinerary that is worked out sometimes as much as a year in advance. If I preach in some of their churches, they will say: “Our meeting starts at nine o'clock sharp. Notices are going to go for exactly this amount of time. Then we will do three worship songs. These are the songs and the instrumental riffs.” It may look like they are in the Spirit, but they are not. They are just rehearsed to look like that so they can tell you that at exactly 9:28, you will get up to preach. You have 25 minutes to preach, five minutes to close, and then we are out. It is orchestrated and prescribed. Those churches feel sleek. You are not going to build the Church on that, and you do not need faith for that. I can find a good 25-minute preach out of the Bible every week. I can get a good worship leader upfront, but that does not require much faith. That is just proper planning.

Faith comes in at the point where I'm outside of my comfort zone. I am not leaning on things but leaning on the Lord. As soon as I lean on things, they become idolatrous to me. One of the questions I always ask guys is, “When you are going to lead a meeting, what do you have faith for?” This is what I mean: “What do you see, in the Spirit, will happen before it is going to happen? What do you believe?” Faith comes by God. When I am leading a meeting, the question I ask as I come into that meeting is: ‘Lord, where do you want to go? Where are you taking this meeting? I need to hear you. I need to know where you are going. What are you doing?’ I might have heard him during the week for some of the meeting, but the whole meeting I am scrounging and scratching for faith. Everything I do has to be by done by faith.

Sometimes faith grows. On a Tuesday I may be with the Lord and the Lord will speak to me about something for the Church. He might say: “You know Andrew, Church is going this direction. This is coming in, and you need to teach this.” I will just know that when I wake up the next morning, which is typically at two in the morning, and I will start writing the preach down, and when the flow stops, I will try to go back to sleep. Then it begins again, and if it goes three times, I know I am not going to sleep the rest of the night. Sometimes the whole preach is there. I will go and take that, and I will work that spine into a preach. I know that's what God gave me. Then you come to the meeting, and you are convinced this is what the Lord wants to do. You go to the prayer meeting, and you are standing in the prayer meeting, and guys will start praying into the very thing that you are preaching. It is like they read your mail. Now guess what is happening to you, your faith is growing. Faith is knowing that God is going to do

something. It just flows because there is faith, and God is in the church. Faith cannot move God, but without faith, God will not move.

I heard His voice. I know what He is going to do and so I must find faith and not get stuck in the system. You cannot start to depend too much on the Christian liturgy. The challenge is that liturgy comes down to the letter, and the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. I have often found that God moves the most when I smash the liturgy. Do not just be different for different sake, but when you depend on the liturgy, it becomes dangerous. There is nothing wrong with an order of service, but when God cannot break into that order and never does, there is a problem. I must prepare myself more than my message. As a leader, I am going to walk into a meeting already in the presence of God. I am listening to God. I am hearing God's voice because if I am going to be the one who is going to direct the affairs of the church, I have got to direct them where God is going.

The terrifying meetings are those when I am not sure where God wants to go. 'Lord, I think you want to do this, but I am not sure. Now I am clutching, but I am listening.' I think God will sometimes even test you and see if you are going back to what you know, or are you going to walk with Him. I often walk into the meeting with three preaches, but I do not know which one He wants me to do. Now I am at the prayer meeting, and I am listening. One person prays that preach, one person prays the other preach, and one person prays the last preach. That did not help.

At times I have felt fear as the meeting starts because I realize it has come to the point where I must take the lead. Now I must get up and do something. 'I do not know what you want to do, God.' I remember once coming up to the microphone, and I was still not sure what He wanted to do. We could not go on worshipping anymore. The guys had killed their songs, and there was nothing left in them. Guys are like lying on the stage half dead, and I walk up, and I looked at the congregation, and I said: "I do not know what to do." I said it. "I do not know what to do right now. Could we just wait? Close your eyes with me and let us just wait." Now, this was awkward. 'What do you mean, just wait?' I think the Lord tested me.

As I am waiting, I am thinking, 'Anytime now, Jesus.' It is the longest minute of my life. Two minutes in, you are thinking, 'God!' Then suddenly, there is a little trickle. You can feel it. That is so often how the Lord leads me. I have a sense and the wind starts moving. I can feel it. Then I start, and my mouth goes with the wind, and the next thing you know, I have preached a 45-minute sermon. People say: "Flip, that was the best sermon you have ever done." Well, that was not my sermon. I just went with the Lord. As a leader, God will test you to see if you are going to be following Him, or are you going to lean upon your own ability to deliver a good sermon. If you do this every week, there is a problem. Some people think

we are just going to get together and see where the Spirit takes us. No, Jesus knew He was going to Jerusalem to be crucified. There must be a sense of, 'I think I know what the Lord is going to do.'

Let me tell you a funny story. I was in a meeting once, and I was like: 'Lord, where do you want to go in this meeting because You know I am your servant. You speak, and I will take it there.' The Lord said to me: 'Where do you want to go in this meeting?' He only did this once. I am like, 'Who cares where I want to take the meeting. I am not God. You are God. You tell me where you want to go, and I will be your wingman.' He said: 'No, today I will be your wingman. Where do you want to take this meeting?' This was messing with my theology. I am supposed to be Spirit-led. I realized in that moment that He was just walking with me as a friend. It was just the sense of 'Andrew; you have been faithful. Come and let us have some fun. Where do you want to go?' I went, and the anointing was there. This was radical. He backed me up in one meeting, but that is not the norm, okay. Come and prepare your heart as much as you prepare your message. In other words, when you come into that meeting, your heart has got to be tender and soft. You cannot have things in your heart. You must have dealt with those things because you have got to have an open channel to heaven.

It is okay to fail. There is a lot of pressure when you are up there. I had learned as a young man, I could preach well, and I could flow in the Spirit, so I was getting all those slots, and people were getting saved; it was awesome. Then, when they wanted to bring me on to eldership in the church, they said: "Okay, Andrew, would you do the notices this week." I knew this was a test, so I was going to do these notices well, but I had never done notices before. So, I got up there, and the problem was that when I started doing the notices, I realized notices are a bit different from preaching. When you preach, there is an anointing, but notices are just like 'On Wednesday night at aunt Sannie's house there is a knitting class for all those that want to go.' There is no anointing, and I was just not feeling God in the notices. At one point I realized that I was doing these notices really poorly. The more I was trying to do them better, the more they just tanked. I was so depressed. I walked off and worship sucked. I was so bad, and I felt I never want to do that again. It sucked. I was going to go to the pastor and say: "Look, use me for preaching but never again for notices." Then I realized I had to learn to do notices. When I went to the pastor, I said: "Tom, I know that sucked. Please can I try again." He said: "Oh, okay." Two months later he gave me another slot. I sucked again. I went to him again and said: "Please, I have to learn to do this. I know I am failing but I have got to learn how to do this."

I kept doing it, and actually, in the end, notices became one of the ways we built JoshGen. I ended up building more in notices than in the preach because you can bring the values of the church through in your notices. It is okay to sometimes fail but if you fail, do not go hide in the corner and suck your

thumb. We all feel like doing that. Just get off your bed and try again. Say, 'Lord, I want to go for this again. I want to get this right. I am here. Help me Lord.' Otherwise, one failure will cause you to never put that microphone in your hand again. Just keep trying if you feel you are called to it. If you do not feel called to it, say 'Thank you God I am not called to that. I am called to this.' Do what you are called to do because remember you will never be what God has not graced you to be, but do not throw yourself under the bus too quickly. Sometimes God calls us to do things that we cannot naturally do in ourselves. Be flexible when you are leading a meeting. In other words, I have a sense that I think this is where the Lord wants to go but 'Lord, You can break-in at any moment.'

That means that when you come into a meeting and ask God to help you, remember, He is your leader. God says that if I lack wisdom, I only need to ask (James 1:5). 'Right now, I am confessing that I am lacking wisdom. I do not know how to do this. What do you want? Help me. Give me the wisdom so that I know what you want to do here and with that give me faith.' Then the meeting starts. You are leading the meeting, and you have your notices, and the worship is going somewhere, and you have a sense that the Spirit of God is taking us to God wanting to build unity in the Church. A person comes up to you, and you see the person come to the front, and they are standing there saying: "I feel the Lord says that we must pray for the government." 'Okay, I was not expecting that. That does not feel like where I thought He was going to go, but they can also hear God.'

There are a number of things you have got to ask yourself as you lead. Sometimes, when a person is in a meeting, the Lord will speak to them, but it is not for us; it is for them. Sometimes they do not realize that. They just feel this burden of the Lord speaking to them, and they go, 'Oh, this must be for you.' So, they come to the front, and they want to share what the Lord is saying to them, but it is not for us; it is for them. You must discern that when they come. At other times, a person comes, and they will share with you, and I am witnessing with what they are sharing. Then I would say: "Go for it." Sometimes I do not know. I am not sure if that is the Lord. It could be the Lord, but maybe I am missing it. Then I will say to the person that they should just stay near me for a while. Then I am like, 'Oh Jesus; you got to speak to me.' I wait because I realize if that is Him, somebody else is going to come with the same thing.

This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." (2 Cor 13:1 NIV)

Then there is another person knocking on my shoulder saying: "Hey, Andrew, I really feel this..." and if it is what that person says, I am going on your faith now but I believe somehow God is in what you are saying and not what I thought He was saying. My faith is now in you and in what God is going to do

through you. I will get the mic, and I will let them go, and I will change the course of the meeting based upon where that goes. I will try and pick up that wind of the Spirit and go there with them. I might not preach, or my sermon could change. You must weigh it carefully.

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. (1 Cor 14:29 NIV)

You can also use another elder if you are not sure. The elders do not sit in the front because we want the cool chairs; it is just to help me when I am not sure what to do. I will ask them what they are feeling at any given moment to help me discern where the meeting is going. Remember, I know in part, and I am a little bit confused right now. I am trying to listen to the Spirit, and once I hear the Spirit, I go where He goes. It is not an exact science, but I think God honours that desire to try and hear Him. He comes in with what you are doing and really does amazing things.

I will finish with this story. Let me give you an idea of a meeting that can go pear, and as a church plant, you are going to have some dreadful meetings. This was one of our awful meetings. When you are a church-planter, you are so desperate for people to come. You know, when you know there are four of you in a room, you pray, 'Just one more person, please God. Can you just pack out the room? We look like a bunch of hillbillies that are going nowhere. Please, God.' Make us look one person bigger than we are. 'I will take anything so that we are growing.' That is what you feel when you plant a church. We had one of those Sundays where we probably had about 130 people in the church.

We had led a guy to the Lord. He was a Rastafarian who had often been coming. One week he missed, so I phoned him, and I'm like "Hey, are you alright? Are you sick? I noticed you were not there." Then he said he is fine. He visited another church that Sunday. I was like 'slit your wrists.' As a leader, it feels like he has betrayed you completely when he does that. You will only know that when you lead a church. It is terrible. The story goes like this: We got a pastor here from Durbanville, and he said he would come next week. I am like, 'Cool.' So, he arrives next week with a whole group of people and that Sunday was one of those Sundays we were just packed. We went from 130 to 160 in one meeting. I can see they are not all saved, so I change the whole meeting. I am preaching the Gospel with everything I have got.

At the end, I say: "Okay, close your eyes. Anyone here that wants to accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, just lift your hands." Five people respond, and I am like. 'Five people for a church plant. Yes! That is like a revival. Yes! This is like the best.' Now, one of the ladies that came with the Rastafarian guy was a lady who was leading a Jewish / Christian sort of thing. So before I preach, in worship, she comes up, and she says: "Excuse me, I realize that you are the leader, and I just felt like I have got a word for the church that I want to submit to you." Now, I think, 'Yeah, she knows her way around. She understands

submission. That is great.' She shares the word, and it is exactly what I am preaching. The worship guys see that something is going to happen, so they tone down, and they create that moment. The presence of God is thick, and we are all like 'Ah, God is here.' This woman comes, and I give her the mic.

This is something you will learn. Do not give the mic to a person you do not know because you might not get it back, ever. Just hold it so you can take it away. Anyway, I did not know that. I just gave her the mic, and there is a pregnancy in the air. She goes, "Shalom." Shalom is Hebrew, and it means 'peace be with you.' But most of the new Christians do not know that. I can see she is rattled because no one responds to it. So, she goes: "I said, Shalom." Now the presence of God has just left the building. It is like the anointing is gone, people are opening their eyes because 'What is going on?' and she is looking at the people and like a schoolteacher, she says: "I am a Jewish Christian, and when I say 'Shalom' in Hebrew, it means peace be with you. You must say Shalom back. Shalom!" About five people go 'Shalom,' and I was like 'Oh, flip. This is not going well.'

She shares the word, I get the mic back, and I said: "Russell, nobody else gets the microphone. If Jesus appears in this meeting, He is not getting this microphone." So, we do the meeting. I preach, and I throw the net out. Five people respond, and I am so stoked. They come to the front, I am standing on the stage, and I am like: "Okay, pray after me." Everyone is sitting with their eyes closed in the presence of God again. I go, "Lord, Jesus." and two people, one on each side, just fall on the ground and start manifesting demons. Everyone who had their eyes closed has now got their eyes open. Visitors are looking around and thinking, 'What is going on?' I am thinking, 'What is going on?' We got a couple of guys that walk in deliverance, and they are ready. The oaks are running to the front and you can hear 'Come out in Jesus' name. You have no authority!"

Now, I am thinking about the visitors, and this is a meeting that is going pear. I say to Russell: "Russell, just take over leading the meeting." I run to the door because I am watching the visitors, they are grabbing their bags. I run to the door, and I say: "I know this might seem a little bit strange, but do you know the Bible has got lots of stories where this kind of thing happens. Jesus drove demons out of people." Then I would hear a roar and say, "It is very normal." The oaks run, and their car is gone. I am thinking, 'What is going on?' I am trying to find where this noise I keep hearing is coming from. I come to the front, and there is a guy lying on the ground, and he is manifesting. There is this chair with a Jewish prayer shawl blanket basically with a shofar kudu horn sticking out the side aiming at the sky, and every time the demon goes 'Roargh,' it's blown. Like a shofar is going to drive the demon out. I mean, I do not know how that works, so I tapped on that, and the oak lifts his head, and I grabbed the shofar I am like "What you are doing?" It is like one of those meetings from hell. Unfortunately, when you lead a church,

you are going to have some of those, and they just go out of control. Still, you must be walking in faith, and you must create moments where that can happen.

I do hope that as you lead in whatever context you are, that you also have a moment like I did. No jokes. I pray that you would have the courage to lead. Lead wildly, man. Lead with the Lord. God is wild. He is outside the box, He does not fit in our little paradigms, and if you let God be God, anything can happen. When a culture comes into people where we believe anything could happen when we get together because Jesus is among us, then anything does happen. It is one of those incredible life-changing glorious moments.

Session 10

Discerning Health

In this section, I want to talk very practically about running a meeting. What are the things to look for if you're leading a meeting, remember that ultimately what happens, happens because you organized it, if you don't organize, it will not happen! You should either do the organization yourself or delegate to people that will make it happen. The way things flow on the day ultimately lies with you, and the team that works with you.

I think the best churches are built outside of Sunday, although Sunday is a big part of church. You can pick up a lot about how the church is doing by looking at the Sunday meeting. I'm going to show you how to do what I call a "church audit". From now onwards you're going to visit every congregation and ask how is this congregation doing? I'm not sharing this to give you the knowledge, I'm sharing this with you so that you, if it's not happening, can then help to make it happen. You cannot sit there and say, "oh, it's not happening," and do nothing to change it. No, go and become the difference, go and make the difference, it starts with you.

I'll never forget, an example to illustrate this; we were the young guys coming to the front in worship, no one did that in any of the churches that I'd ever seen in my life. In those days when you worshiped you stood by your chairs, nowadays it's become more like a rock concerts in some churches, but in those days, it was just people standing at their chairs. We went to this conference years ago, I was a saint at this time, not yet in leadership of any sort, not even leading a homegroup. At this conference, there was a fantastic breakthrough in worship, and we came out from our chairs to the front of the auditorium. I remember the first time, we stood in the front of this conference, and we worshipped like we never had before, it was wild! I think in one of the sessions a guy staged dived from a balcony and broke his leg, to give an idea of how wild we were. In this high praise, God was doing something; it felt like we were going to turn the world upside down.

The first Sunday back in our church in Port Elizabeth, worship started, and it was flat, it wasn't going anywhere. I'm sure you must have felt that as a leader, if not, you will most definitely feel that at some point. We've just been to this killer conference. I remember looking at Julie de Lisle, who's now my PA and another friend of ours, Chanelle Rossouw, she's now a prophetess in New Covenant ministries circles, good friends of mine. I said, "let's go break worship open," and we climbed out of our chairs, and

the three of us came to the front, and we just went wild. Everyone else must have been thinking, "what are they doing or what are they trying to prove." We didn't care what you thought, we were going to break worship open here, we're going to break praise open in this place. Eventually two or three others came out and joined us, the next week a few more, the next week a few more and the whole culture of that church changed. Now churches all over the world in our circles have changed and most often in all our Four12 partnering churches you'll find that during worship people will come out from behind their chairs and come to the front. Something broke all those years back, we could have sat there and said, 'well that sucked,' but we did something, we were the change to break a new level of worship open for the whole church.

If you are a leader, you will need to start thinking; how do I make what's not happening, happen? If you're a saint, ask yourself, how do I get behind the leaders who are trying to lead and help them to make their job easier, not more complicated? As a leader, it's very hard to drag people with you, what you want instead is to take people with you. We often use the phrase, "they're in my kidneys." If you've ever seen a rugby player running for the try line, you will notice how the forwards get behind him, they literally hold him, almost carrying him forward through running with him so that he's got more momentum to break through the enemy lines. In some ways as a leader when you are on your own, you're quite vulnerable, but to have people running with you trying to break it open with you, makes it much easier. Become the kind of person in the church that, even now, you are in the kidneys of your leader, you're not the guy sitting at the back with your arms crossed.

To be honest, no one wants to lead a person that's going to sit there like that. Be up there, saying, "let's do this for Jesus." You want to lead people that are running with you, and as you run together, there is something of the presence of God that breaks in. Become the kind of person that when the leaders close their eyes, they feel you're there, you're running with them for the Glory of the King. Remember you'll reap what you sow, what you don't realize is you're breaking this open over your future, and future of others, in God. You are going to get what you give, that's a principle in the Bible, so give like you'd like to get given to one day.

You are here because you want to be a church planter, or you want to be part of a church plant. You must learn these things now, which means even when you don't feel like praise, you praise, because the Bible says I'll offer a sacrifice of praise. I'm not going to live by my feelings. I'm going to live on what God wants me to do now. Get that into your DNA now because that will be what breaks you through into the more of God.

What I am going to be sharing with you in this session could sound very carnal, but they are practical things that I've found there is no spiritual route to.

Let me illustrate this; if you walk into a traditional church meeting and it's dead quiet, you come, you sit down in the same chair you sit in every week. You would be very quiet. You tiptoe in because if you don't, everyone's going to turn around and look, why are you making a noise? If you talk it's going to be a whisper, because it's awkward and you end up just sitting there waiting for the meeting to start. As a charismatic, you're even a little bit intimidated by the silence, which is quite deafening, it stops communication. Versus walking into a meeting and there's music playing in the background, people are chatting and connecting, when worship starts people are pushing you out of the way to get to the front. Realize that in that place, it's so much easier to break into the presence of God. There's a hunger, passion and a zeal in the people for God and for the things of God.

There are certain things that you can do that can make it easier for people to breakthrough. Here is an interesting fact; I used to work as a waiter years ago and the restaurant industry knew how they could make you spend more money just by the music they played. If it was a quiet night and we wanted you to stay longer and order dessert because there's no queue waiting for tables, and we needed you to spend more money, we would play slow, quiet, mellow music and the candlelit ambiance would make people feel like 'let's not go home, let's have another cup of coffee, a dessert maybe.' On the other hand, if we've got a string of tables and a queue waiting and you're going to order a cup of coffee, well, what we would instead want is that tables order a steak. Upbeat music would be playing, and you'll find people are eating faster and not talking much. Eager to eat and go. They can turn tables over just by the music that is played. Now that you know this, you'll sit in the restaurant and see when they want to move you out fast, or they want you to stay.

Here are some things that you want to look for when you walk into a meeting. If you're leading, these are things you need to think about and put in place. You will develop the culture with everything that you do, so when people walk in, and it's easy to talk, they'll talk, and in talking, they're creating a culture. They're creating a church based on friendship. If they walk in and it's dead quiet, and no one talks, you're building a culture where friendship doesn't flourish. The difference isn't that you prayed harder. The difference is that you had music playing, and it just made people feel that they could talk because it wasn't deadly quiet when they walked in.

When I walk into a meeting, I look to see what's working and what's not working. It's a question I ask myself all the time. How do I access if it's working? Well, it gels, it feels like it flows, it's got life on it, I feel the presence of God in and on it.

How do I access if it's not working? Have you ever been in a meeting where the worship is not working, the people are giving it their all, but you know you're singing the words, but God's not in the words, it's every worship leader's nightmare. They know that 'Jesus you're not in this worship, I'm trying my best up here, my heart's longing to take these people somewhere, but we just don't seem to be able to break through.' If you are leading, ask yourself, 'can we do something to make it work, or do we just change tactic'? In these times I ask myself and the leaders that are around leading with me, do we push through and try to find some way to find where God is, or do we cut it at the first song and end it right there and go to the preach? We need to be led by the Spirit, "God, what do you want right now?"

The other question is when God does come, where do you stop, should you stop? These are real questions for you as a leader to ask. What if the presence of God comes into the meeting, and people are on their faces. You're leading this community, and you've got the berserkers (those that will not stop until you tell them, they are crazy sold out for every minute of the meeting) pushing into God with their whole being. You've also got others who are trying, still others who are perhaps new believers and don't quite know how to do this. So, the challenge is this; if every meeting is wild the berserkers are going to love it but everyone else might find themselves more and more isolated. You want to try and get everyone to make the jump, if the gap is too wide, they will never get there. As the leader, you've got to try and say okay we're 'berzerking' it here and I'm going to try and pull you closer to these guys, but at some point, I will need to stop this because I know that not everyone can carry on for three hours of worship, as much as I would love that, so where do I stop?

Another scenario or challenge is; if you're running a course like this one and I told you it's a six-week course, that's easy for you to keep it up, but if I keep it running indefinitely, you'll find a drop off in attendance. The challenge is when and if you run a course, say for instance it's a foundations course for all those who are new Christians and you run it for too long eventually people are going to be saying, "Tuesday night, again? I have missed so many episodes of my favourite program," or whatever it is. The next time you call a course, people will be reluctant to come because the last, even though it had some good moments, went on for far too long. If, however, you ended the last night when the presence of God was there, the Shekinah Glory, the angels singing and no one could minister, on such a high, then the next time you call a course, they remember how they felt after the last one. They felt like they could run through the walls for Jesus, now January comes, and I say guys I'm going do another course, I guarantee everyone is there again. The memory of the last course is what's going to keep them from coming or not.

Are the leaders responding to what God is doing? Are you watching them trying to pick up where God is going? Ask yourself the question, are they going somewhere with God and then a big question, "how

much of God was present in this meeting." Do you know what I mean by that? Let us look at the worship, for instance. I'm singing songs about God. I'm singing songs to God, and now and again there's "life" on something that I'm singing, maybe I sing about when you created the world and that for me as I'm singing it, is a moment, 'you are big God,' but it's not more than that, it's wow God you are big, you are good, I get it. Then sometimes its, oh my goodness, God you are BIG, the one goes from I'm seeing this through a peephole, but there are other times that the glory is there and I'm thinking people, I don't even want to sing about how big He is I'm just too scared even to use the word God right now. This time I just want to be on my face before Him. There's a difference; there's more of God in the one than in the other one.

It could be the same in a meeting or in a preach. Sometimes when you hear a preach, it's a good word it teaches you, you take your notes, and you say I'll apply this, I'll do this it's great. Thank you, thank you that was a good Sunday. Then you have that meeting where from the time you sit down, the Holy Spirit has shone a light in your eyes, and everything that was said is spot-on. You are feeling convicted, you're feeling stirred, and at one point you're thinking; I just want to get on my knees right now because God is talking to my heart and I'm weeping, and it's obvious that God is more in this meeting than in the other one for you.

So, the question is this, how much of God is in the meeting? It is a huge thing for me because I can tell you this, if you go to a meeting, and God is profoundly there, you will want to come back. In a meeting that the presence is not as profound, where you don't sense it as strongly, you will come back out of duty and faithfulness. I always want to be hunting for God to come. I want to do it in my own quiet time too. This afternoon I was before the Lord saying, "Lord I know you but Lord I want to see you, I want to see with unveiled eyes, I want to get to that place where I've been with you so many times Lord, where I'm undone." Those times for me are the best times, and as a leader, those are the times I hope we can find together as a people.

To get to that takes a lot of work, you've got to make this place so attractive to God that He wants to hang out with us. He says in His word that where there's unity, He comes, and He blesses. Where there's no unity, where there's division, a house divided will not stand. If there are divisions in us, and I am the leader, I know it's going to be harder to see the presence of God come. If there's a gossip or a slanderer amongst us, it can cost all of us encountering the presence of God.

Do you remember Achan in the Old Testament, in Joshua 7? God says to the Israelites that they are not to take anything for themselves from the cities that they are conquering. Everything has to be destroyed, except precious metals that were to be added to the treasury of the Lord. Achan finds some treasures in

Jericho, and he takes it and buries it under his tent. God has said to Joshua be bold and very courageous for I'm with you and you will inherit the land, that's all good and well until they go to the next city, Ai, and they lose this battle against a much smaller group of people that they should have had no problem conquering. Now what, happened God? We had people die in this battle. Jericho, we walked around, and the walls fell down. God, didn't you promise?

Ultimately it was one man in a nation, one man that caused the presence of God to lift so that they lost their battle. Until they dealt with that one man, they would not win any more battles. Leaders, one man can take the presence of God from all of us. The Bible says in James, it talks about gossip, about how with a tongue we praise God and with the same tongue we curse, we slander, and we undermine. He uses the picture of a tongue being like a fire that's lit and can destroy a forest that can take a hundred years to grow. One word, one spark, and the forest is gone. God builds something for a hundred years, one slanderer, and what God has built is gone. These are real challenges as leaders, remember we're getting broken people coming into our meetings, and broken people break things, this is the reality

Again, the question is how much of God is in this meeting and if He is not in the meeting, why not? When I walk into a congregation, do I get the feeling that there is a genuine sense of love here or is this just a bunch of people coming to church on a Sunday, sitting down waiting for the meeting to start? The one is going to a meeting, and the other one is being the church.

Atmosphere is one of the things you want to look for if you are leading a church. In the early days of JoshGen, I was administrating everything every Sunday, from what background music should we play, is it too loud, is it loud enough. Are there enough chairs out, let's say there are 300 of us here now, so you set up 300 chairs and 10 people come, so you imagine walking into this hall and there's 10 of us? The thing I noticed is if I set up the chairs in this hall in a certain way, those at the back are so far away from me they can't even see my face properly. Then they start to get into spectator mode. You will notice in all our halls we set chairs up sideways. There's a reason for that, the person that's farthest away from me is actually quite close. This way, when we are talking, it's interactive, you even feel like you could ask a question. Wrapping chairs around the front is one of the things I'll always try to do. When people are wrapped around me like this, it feels like everyone's close. Straight lines feel regimental and orderly. The difference between a great meeting and a not so great one could simply be how you have laid out the meeting place. These are little things, practical things, but they make a huge difference.

Ask yourself, how is the meeting running? Are people connecting before the meeting? Is there a vibe, are people arriving early, walking around greeting, hugging and loving on each other, or are they arriving late, halfway through worship and then they leave immediately after the meeting ends? There's

something wrong with that. These people don't understand what church is, they are coming to a meeting they're not being the church.

Let's look at the prayer meeting. Before a meeting, I'll ask myself the question, how many people are at this prayer meeting? From the beginning of my walk with the Lord I knew how crucial praying was. If people are not coming to the prayer meeting, it tells me something about their love for Jesus. One of the men that mentored me said this; he wouldn't ask people how big their church was because that's not actually the church, he would ask them how big their prayer meeting was, and that's how big their church really is. In the prayer meeting, I'm listening to peoples' prayers, how are they praying? Are they praying prayers of faith? 'God, you're big, and you're amazing, and we are trusting you for great things today,' or are they saying, 'Lord, we pray for aunty Suzie who kicked her toe this week, please be with her right now.' One is a faith-filled community, the other one is just a survival community. I'm listening to see if there someone hijacking (taking over) the prayer meeting?

You are going to find as a church leader; people want to hijack the prayer meeting because the prayer meeting becomes a place that you can do this very quickly. It will look something like this; we're all going in one direction, and then there's this one guy who has their own doctrine. I remember one guy had this pet doctrine; we don't pray to Jesus, we pray to the Father, through Jesus by the Holy Spirit, he was extreme about it all the time. He would pray; Father we come to you through the Lord Jesus Christ and at the time we are praying for the lost, now he's going on about the theology of what the Trinity's like and he's making a point in the prayer that he knows better than we do how to pray to God. I don't think God is okay with what he's praying because he's not praying in unity with us. He's just standing in arrogance, thinking he knows better than anyone else. This could happen at every prayer meeting; they will start praying and go on and on. They don't give anyone else an opportunity to pray. They are using eloquent big words and showing off. They are trying to show everyone 'I am a deeply spiritual person, and I'm going to use words like sanctification and justification, letting everyone know that I am very mature.' They might not even know this themselves, but deep down inside, they are trying to find a place that they can have some light shine on them.

You the leader watch as that person starts and you're thinking, there goes the prayer meeting again, and you know that you need to go to that person and as awkward as it can be, you tell him to keep quiet in the prayer meeting without him leaving the church. Let me tell you; you are going to touch a sacred thing in him. Take them out for a coffee and pray, 'oh God give me wisdom, I don't want to lose this person, I want to help him to pray, not his pet doctrine, just to pray.' So, you're sitting down, and let me tell you leading a church is terrifying because you know at the end of that meeting he could light fires

through the church, tell everyone, go to the newspapers, report you to the Human Rights Commission. Who knows what he's going to do?

We will talk later about how you bring correction, but the bottom line is those are scary moments for a church. When you're only 20 people, and one person goes belly up and starts fighting, it's very hard because your credibility can be ruined. You know the devil accuses on "sort of truths," and he'll say, "Andrew is a very strong leader he's controlling. He doesn't want anyone else to pray but himself, you know that I prayed, and he stopped me praying at a prayer meeting can you believe it? I recorded it on my phone, listen, 'listen, John, when you pray, you're going on too much. Please don't pray for a few weeks just try and hold it back, then we can deal with character' ", but he cuts out that part and the next thing you know it's Sunday, and there's no one there. Suddenly you're asking yourself where's everyone? 'oh we've left the church, we're going to a church down the road because you're a control freak.'

As a church planter, the problem is you're so desperate you'll take all of them and kick yourself afterward. Your hair starts falling out and going grey because of the pain people will cause. These are your challenges as a church planter. This really happens, I'm not making these scenarios up—thick skin, soft heart.

You can hear the climate of faith in how people pray to the Lord. What are they trusting for? What are they believing, and is there a problem in their prayers? "Oh God, we are so sinful God, you're so Holy, no one is worthy of you," and it's true, but if that's your prayer every week, you've got a twisted concept about Him. Yes, there are times that we are there, but that's not the fullness of who we are, we're also sons. Is it every week "we are more than conquerors, and we will take Cape Town," this too is unbalanced. I've been in a prayer meeting when one of our young guys got up and actually said this; "Satan, we come against you in Jesus' name. For too long, you've been ruling in the city. I come against you right now, and I bind you, and I cast you right now, satan, I cast you into the abyss, and you will stay in the abyss until Jesus returns to the earth," and while he is praying people are agreeing, amen, yes! I'm just thinking no, the devil's looking and listening to this and he's responding "what! You don't have the authority to do that." This is a perfect opportunity to work good theology on this subject through the community. Somewhere, someone read a book that told them something that's not true, and now you need to try to work through the theology of what this person believes.

Do you see how important it is to listen to those things? You learn a great deal from how people pray. Now you are all going to be nervous next prayer meeting that I'm in. Whatever is inside of you, get it out, go for it, and we'll coach you on the job, don't be scared because if that stays in you and you don't get it out you're never going to walk in leadership anyway. We can correct you over coffee, and then you'll get

better, more like Jesus, and we can all move forward. Don't pray long prayers at prayer meetings because it's a little bit intimidating for everyone. If there's a guy that's just saved and he walks into his first prayer meeting, and you start using long eloquent words eventually, people might think that unless I can pray like that, I would rather not pray at all then.

Good leaders make complicated things simple and easy. Bad leaders make simple things complicated. Ask yourself the question, do you use different words when praying than you do with normal people? Why is that? You read the King James and now suddenly when you pray you speak in English from a hundred years ago? Thee and thou, how great thou art. I've never heard you use that language for anything else, and now suddenly you use it when you pray? Rather, 'goodness God I'm a little freaked out by how big you are!' The one is a show, it's bravado, trying to be spiritual with words. God's not interested in your words. He's interested in your heart. Listen to yourself pray because remember people are going to come in, and they are going to learn from you. If you pray weird, every person that gets saved in the church will learn to pray that way because they will think they should talk like that. The next thing this new Christian comes in, he's raw out of the world, and you know it's such a beautiful thing just hearing what comes out of him, and now he's suddenly praying all these righteous religious prayers.

You will also need thick skins to walk in the things of God. Many things will trip you up in the house of God. As a saint, you must be as thick-skinned as your leaders must. You will need to trust your leader, you might say I don't get what they are saying to me, but I trust them, and I'm following them as they follow Christ, God put me here. Deacons, are you backing up the elders, is there a sense of team, a standing with each other no matter what?

Also, have a look at how much participation there is. Are the same three people praying every week, or are all the people coming and pressing in?

We are wild if we do this thing properly, but we shouldn't be weird. One of the things you've got to take into consideration biblically is that, even Paul says if you're all speaking in tongues which we all understand and then a visitor walks in who doesn't understand what he's hearing, he will be very confused about what's going on. You need to do things in such a way that the unbeliever, or the new Christian, can understand what is happening. Ask yourself the question, are we making it plain and simple, are we communicating with them during a meeting when these things happen and explain in the moment why? If we are flowing in the power of God, you've got to be able to communicate in such a way that the unbeliever will understand and say, "oh my goodness is that what that was?" The aim is to help them come from where they are to where we are.

If you have your prayer meeting in the main auditorium on a Sunday, finish it before your visitors start arriving or at least communicate with people what's happening if they come in. Remember, you walk into church for the first time, and you feel like I need to try and do what these people do. I remember going to church the first time and seeing people lifting their hands, clapping, and showing emotion. This made me very uncomfortable. I wanted to run out. I've learned the best thing you could have done for me in that moment is to have said, "if you're a visitor you don't have to do anything that you're uncomfortable with, you can watch us, you're welcome to join us. We're not going to slow down for you, but there's no pressure on you to do anything. I don't even want you to give to the offering. Just enjoy it. You've come to our house, we prepare the meal, and you can enjoy it. No pressure, you don't have to do the dishes you don't have to do anything, you are the guest."

In doing that, you create a place where people feel no pressure because when you feel pressure, you start pushing back, and I don't want people ever to push back from Jesus. In making it clear from the front to visitors that there is no expectation on them. Then maybe when they're not feeling pressure, they will watch us without a feeling of, 'oh, I'm so uncomfortable' no, they watch and think 'what is it about these guys? I want this.' Now I've just made it easier for the unbeliever and visitor to engage and understand. I'm not going to tone down the meeting, but I'm going to try and make it easy for them to re-think their perspectives.

These are very practical points I'm giving you, sometimes we over-spiritualize things. There are basic practices that we can apply that can make it much, much easier, its most often the little things that help us do this. I'll give you an example; we invite people to have coffee with us after the meeting. We set up a great coffee and tea area at the back of the church, or we have a coffee shop. If this place to hang out with each other weren't there, most people at the end of the meeting would leave. All that coffee does for us is it creates a place that we can connect, and if we're going to connect around a coffee shop, the chances are we're going to start building relationship. You start to build a relational church potentially because you create a space where people can easily interact and meet. Build a culture in everything that you do. You could have coffee shops that don't build a culture of community. Some churches have great coffee shops, but it's just the same people that sit at the same table every week and connect with their friends, never inviting anyone else in. This is of no use then. Use a coffee shop to build a culture of reaching out and loving people.

I've only gotten as far as a prayer meeting; we haven't even begun to get into the meeting yet! Every time you come into a meeting, whether as a saint, elder or deacon, you need to be asking yourself these questions. As a leader, I've got to bring the community through with me.

As I finish off this section a scripture in Psalms 78:72 comes to mind. David led Israel with the integrity of heart but also with skilful hands, as much as the Lord was with him in the battles that he faced, he was a skilful commander who understood how to deploy his troops and how to get his army functioning as it should with rank and file. I've seen it's like that with the church too, and my prayer is that we learn both, to have good hearts, the integrity of hearts but also skilful hands - that God would train each one of us for battle. The Lord is bringing us to places where we will be on a front line somewhere, it might be in a homegroup, it might be in worship, but somewhere we will be on the front line needing to break open something of the kingdom. I pray that each one of us will become fire starters, fires of His presence, fires of His anointing. Let us become those that where ever we go; there would be something of the life of God breaking out of us because of the things that God is equipping us and training us in. Let each of us be game changers because of who it is that lives in us. I pray that the Lord would teach us how to be Spirit-led, that we would follow the things that the Lord is doing, and that we would not trust too much in our own understanding. That we would instead lean on the Lord and walk with Him as a friend. As we do this, God will cause His kingdom to come through us in ways that we can't even dream of or imagine because of Him who lives in us. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead now lives in our hearts. The Lord needs to help us live that out to the glory of His name.

Session 11

Loving Visitors

In this section, we will continue focussing on the practical aspects, just the hands-on, nitty-gritty kind of things, that you have to get down to, to make sure that things run smoothly. One of the things you have to realize is when you lead something, you have to be very clear, and things have to run very smoothly so that people feel like they can follow where you're going. One of the biggest mistakes new preachers make is they put too much detail in a preach. If you put too much detail in a preach, it gets watered down, and eventually, people aren't sure what they should respond to or even what the response is that you're calling for. You'll find that you won't get breakthrough just because you weren't clear and concise in terms of what you were trying to say. Running a meeting is very similar. If it's very blurry and people don't know what's going on, it creates a feeling of instability, and so people are not able to effectively follow you where you're going. And so, some things are just very, very practical; they don't need prayer, they're just basic things that we've got to think and put together in such a way that it works well.

So, in running a meeting, there's a lot of ingredients that make a good meeting run well. And I'm not talking about just the anointing, the anointing is the anointing, and the anointing does what the anointing does. But there's a lot of practical things that we have to do, which can ultimately help us effectively make our meetings run smoothly. That means if you're leading the congregation or if you're part of a church plant, if you're thinking this way, you will pick up things that you can get involved in and fix and help so that the meeting runs smoothly.

Remember, when we meet as a church, we know what's going on, but people that come in don't. When you're a church planter, no one knows what's going on because they're all joining you. They come in with no understanding of your value system and your ethos; they don't know what they don't know. So, you have to teach them everything which means there is a lot of work here. As a church leader, or a planter, when I planted, every meeting I would run through in my mind. I eventually had a little list of things; "is this working? Is this working? Is this working?" And now, it's so much a part of me; I walk into a meeting, and if one of those things isn't working, I'll pick it up immediately, and I'll go, "Hey, there's no music playing in the background. People are not going to relax, and I want people to relax. I want people to socialize before the meeting starts." I don't want them to sit there with a mouth full of teeth because they're feeling awkward because it's so silent. Just music in the background creates a feeling that I want because I want them to feel relaxed until I bring them the word of God.

We went through several things in the last section about the atmosphere and prayer meetings, and now I want to run through what happens before the meeting starts. Remember, it has been said that most people decide whether they're going to come back to the church within the first five minutes of walking through the doors. In other words, in those five minutes, no one's preached yet. Before your notices have even started; they've decided whether they're coming back, often, before anything has happened. When I walk into a church I've never been into before, I immediately try and find out what they're about. I'll look at their notice boards if there are any; I'll look at their articles, the things on their walls. I'll watch the people and see how they are, and very quickly I'll decide. You know, if people are all sitting there in a suit and tie, dead quiet, I won't be coming back. In fact, I want to leave now, can I leave before the meeting starts? Because I know this meeting is going to feel like a waste of my time. I'm already put off, and once I'm put off, you won't get me back easily, you're going to have to preach up a serious storm to win me back.

Do you understand what I am saying? You kind of walk in, and you go "hang on," and if there's life, "I'm interested." Why am I picking up what I am picking up? So, your pre-meeting feeling that the people create is essential. If I'm watching people loving and hugging and connecting, and people are walking up and greeting me, that is a very attractive thing. Remember that people are lonely, and so if people love them when they walk through the doors, there's a good chance they're going to go, "Whoa! this is quite radical." I'll give you an example of that; when we planted the church, we grew very, very quickly. Everyone would ask us, "Why are you growing so quickly?" and I didn't know why. So, we did a survey, I asked the people, "Why did you come back to JoshGen when you came the first time?" I have to confess that I was secretly hoping they were going to say it was because the pastor was good-looking, or because the preaching was good. That didn't even feature at all! What featured over and over again was that the people said they have never felt so loved before. And I thought, "Wow! I hadn't even opened my mouth." It's not about the eloquent preaching or the things I'm doing; it's just that feeling they got when they walked in of how people engaged them and cared for them, and that was the drawcard. Jesus said, "By your love, they will know that you're my disciples" (Jhn 13:35). Love is our best ingredient. If we can train our people to love visitors and to reach out, you're going to find that people that aren't even saved might keep coming back because they found love in your church.

Years ago, before I planted JoshGen, I was on eldership in a church in Port Elizabeth and one Sunday, there was a couple that visited us for the first time, and I remember they sat, it was about a church of 300, and I knew they were visiting. They were sitting probably about two-thirds of the way from the back, and we worshiped, we went through the meeting, and they didn't respond, and we hoped they would come back. Next week they were back again, and they were in the second row, and when worship

started, they climbed out of their chairs and joined us in the front. So, I thought, "Oh, wow, they're obviously Christians." That week they were slotted into a homegroup. They were having meals with people. They ended up coming on outreaches with us. They came to our national conference. They were traveling the nations with us; they were pretty much at everything we did. And in one of our elders' meetings after about a year and a half, two years, one of the elders said, "I wonder if these guys aren't potential leaders. Maybe we need to look at them as possible deacons or homegroup leaders because they're just so devoted."

About two weeks after that, I was preaching, and at the end of it, I explained the gospel; I explained how Jesus died on the cross for us, and if you've never responded to Jesus, this is your moment: lift up your hands! They both, at this point they were sitting in the front row, they both lifted their hands! I remember thinking, so sometimes there's a deeper commitment, and I get that; so I thought, well maybe it's a deeper commitment, maybe something in the preach really grabbed their heart, and they're going, "Jesus I want to give you more of my life." They came to the front with about three others, and we said the sinner's prayer, and then they went off. I asked them afterward, "Why did you lift your hands?" And they said, "We got saved today." Shocked, I went, "What do you mean you got saved today? You've been coming, and you've been devoted in everything." And they said, "No, today's the first day we understood what salvation was, and we've accepted Jesus." I asked them, "Why have you been coming as you have? Some of the guys are thinking that you could be leading a homegroup, you are so devoted." They said this, "When we walked through these doors the first time; we had never experienced love as we have here."

And at that moment, it hit me, they had felt the love of God through the saints, and it had drawn them in completely. For a year and a half or more, they had come to everything we'd done because of horizontal love, and then finally, they connected with the One who is love, the vertical love, and they were saved. Today, they are leaders in the church, and they're still flat out for the Lord. I just thought what an incredible picture of what it looks like when the church loves properly.

When you plant a church, if you're helping a plant or if you're leading that plant, that, for me, is one of the most key ingredients that you have to get down: that you are thinking about visitors. The challenge is when you're in a church plant, you're kind of a little bit intimidated. You're in this little holy huddle of like "us four, no more." When visitors come, you have to break your group down and almost have conversations with your team. I remember saying to Julie and Melanie, who were some of my best friends for years, "You know, I love you. So, here's the thing, I need you to bring others into the

relationship that we've had. The love that we've had - would you be to others what we've been to each other?" And they did that. I said to them, "That means I'm not going to see a lot of you."

For a season, I saw very little of them because each of us, instead of keeping our friendship to ourselves, reached out of our friendship to draw others in, which is exactly what God did for us. He reached out of the Trinity to draw us into a relationship with God. I think when a church plant gets that into its DNA, and every member thinks that way, you find the world knows that you are disciples of Jesus because of the love that you have. For me, that is one of the most vital ingredients in any church plant. Even if your preaching is bad, they'll probably come back because they felt loved. At some point, after feeling this horizontal love, they'll start to connect with His love.

So here are some more practical things. Before the meeting, you have to get your saints ready to be reaching out. The other thing is when people walk through the doors, it's a scary thing to walk into a church, especially a church like ours, because let's be honest, most people walk in and they're expecting people to sit in their pews in a nice comfortable way, no one talks, everyone's quiet. But when they come into our meetings, it's chaos; everyone's running around hugging, kissing, and people are praying on the one side, and visitors can be like, "What is going on?" It's wild, even for Christians, we're wild, and so they walk in, and they think, "What I have walked into?" I remember when I walked into a charismatic church for the first time, I was so freaked out that I wanted to run.

The challenge is when you're with a group of people that you don't know, and they're all doing something, it's kind of like a bit of a pressure that you think maybe you should also do what they are doing. But if you don't know why they're lifting their hands, if you don't understand why they're praying like they're praying, you start to put your defences up, you start to feel like resisting because you're uncomfortable. One of the things I always feel we need to do as a church and church plants is to help people understand that when they're visiting us, they do not have to feel that they have to do anything that we do. In other words, I want people to feel like, and I'll try and communicate in various ways, if you just sit there and watch, that's great; it is just so cool to have you in our meetings. I've used pictures of: if you visit people for a meal, you don't go and cook in the kitchen, you don't clean up afterward, so feel free to just enjoy the meal with us.

One of the biggest bugbears people have about the church is, "It's just about the money." So, I made a point from the start to say, "If you're here and you're a visitor, I don't want your money; when that offering bowl goes around, please don't put into it. If you really want to, you can, but we don't want your money. If you want to give to God, that's between you and God." I want to draw a line between the people of God who understand the ways of God, and those that are not yet in that place. If you don't do

something out of conviction, it's useless to do it. What I've tried to do is make unbelievers sit there thinking, "Hang on a minute, I don't understand this." But in a good sense, like, this is different, this feels real. Unfortunately, the body of Christ has damaged these things so badly, that I think we have to be extra careful in how we present them. So, those are things that I found have helped. I want visitors to feel there's no pressure to do anything out of the ordinary, and I'll say that if I need to.

I also want them to know where they can find things, you know, where's the toilet? There's nothing worse than being in a meeting and not knowing where to take my kids. We all know that the guy with the green shirt isn't an alien, he's just the guy that's doing kids ministry, but if a visitor walks in, they have no idea. If somebody comes alongside them and says, "Hey, it's your first time here. I see you have kids. Do you know how kid's ministry works? Let me just show you. We'll sign them in, we've got these amazing kid's workers." You just help people to feel like, 'Oh, okay'. At the end of the day, it's much easier for them to engage. It's little things that often make a huge difference. But if everyone's just looking out for themselves, the visitor just feels like a spare part and you will watch visitors; now that I've told you this, watch a visitor. You'll notice he's a visitor because he sits in his chair when everyone else is going, "Hey Fred, bro, how's it going? How's your week been?" When the visitor arrives, he's got a pamphlet because he's trying to look like he's doing something. He's reading it, because he doesn't know what else to do. It's like, "I feel like a spare part here, and so I'm just going to act like I'm sort of doing something worthwhile." It up to me to help the people understand that we need to reach across and find those people and love them. Just help them to feel at ease. It is huge!

So, I used to train our church, our guys, when we planted. I took more than a whole Sunday to train our early church on how to connect with people they don't know. Because people don't know how to do it, so train your team. I had things like; write this at the front page of your bible, "Hi my name is I've never seen you before, is it your first time here?" Just a couple of questions that can start a conversation. Because if you break it down and make it easy for the saints, they'll do it. You have to break it down and teach them how to reach out and love practically.

When you call for people to respond, you have to consider ways to do this. If there's four of you in a room and you're planting a church, and you ask, "Are there any visitors here today?", it may show that you don't know your people. Most people don't want to get put on the spot. Even in a church of 400, make sure that you've connected that visitor.

Here's another key: if you're leading the church, that is a big drawback for people if you connect with them as visitors. It's more of a drawback than anyone else connecting with them. People still have the impression that the pastor is something, A visitor might not remember the saint that greeted them when

they phone to connect, but they automatically connect with the pastor that got up there to preach. When you preach, the anointing flows, and people can see your heart. So even though they haven't met you, you might have shaken their hand; they feel like they get you. And so, imagine this, the pastor phones you and says, "Hi, I'm Andrew, I was preaching on Sunday. I came and shook your hand. Do you remember me? It was so cool having with us. I just thought it'd be great to connect. How did you find the meeting?" Immediately, you have a much bigger chance of connecting that person into the life of the church.

If you're one of the pastors, use that badge because, for people, that means something. I'm trying to make it easy for people. You don't have to do this, but when you are a church plant lead elder, you're going to be visiting lots of people because they connect to you, and then they connect through you into the people. You have to work hard at being that bridge, which means you neglect a lot of your friendships because you have to work hard at drawing in the new, the lost and the lonely. Those are things that just are a reality to a church plant.

If you take over a church, it's another story altogether, because now you have a community that knows each other. You now have to break into that community and win hearts to yourself, because they've got to follow you. That's whole other story. I would probably be working more on those people until I've developed a sense of us, and then I'll be trying to reach out. I will try to stabilize those people. If I had taken over a church, I'd be working hard at building relationships. Relationships are very, very, very important, especially when the church is small. When it's bigger, they'll form relationships around other people they know, but when it's small, they want a relationship with the leaders, and it's something you've just got to be aware of, and you have to build. In some ways, as a church planter, your home becomes a thoroughfare. If you have an idea of owning a little house that you can go to and escape, then don't plant a church. Your home is going to become a railway station. People are going to come through it all the time. When it gets bigger, you have to, at some point, push that away because you'll die. It's just that the burden is too much; you have to hand it over to others. But when you plant, you're it.

And then again, before the meeting, are the notices communicated well? In terms of "What's happening now?" Remember, we know the order of service, but others don't. So, are you communicating well in terms of what's happening or what's expected? We had a meeting now in Namibia, during one of the Regional Equips, and one of our young pastors was leading that session. I was trying to give him a shot to grow his wings a little bit, and at the end of the session, he got up after guys had preached, and he called for a response. He said, "Guys, I feel like we need to respond." When he called for his response, it

was a bit blurry about what he wanted. He didn't say how to respond or what to do. He just said, "We need to respond, guys. I really feel we need to respond." The people sat there going, "Okay, I want to respond, but how exactly do you want me to respond?" He says, "Guys, I think it'll be good if we stood." But then he carried on talking, and because he carried on talking, it was like ok, "do we stand now? Do we stand just now? You're not clear." Now he's wondering why no one's standing, so now he's getting flustered and he's digging his hole deeper. He's going, "I really feel like we need to respond."

I could feel people are like, "I want to respond, but if I stand up on my own, and I'm not sure if I'm supposed to stand up now, I'm going to look stupid." Eventually, I got up, and I just saved him and took the mic, and I said, "Okay guys, I feel like if you need to respond, right now, I want you, with every eye closed, I want you to stand." People stood. This guy was like, "How did you do that?" I was like, "It wasn't anointing. I just communicated clearer than you did." I sometimes think as leaders; you just have to be clearer in your communication. What do you want people to do? How do you expect them to respond? Make it clear what you want. Otherwise, they don't know, and if they don't know, it creates instability, and that in our spirits isn't a good thing. People naturally want to be led clearly, and so you have to think these things through as a church planter.

Whenever I prepare my preach, or I start my meeting, I think about where I'm going to land. I hold that in the back of my mind the whole time. I consider where I'm going to land this, who am I going to call for? So, the whole time I'm moving in that direction, because if I know where I'm going, then when I get to that place, I've built my whole preach to that point, and I'll land it clearly. The big mistake most of us make is we get lost in the moment. We don't think of where we're going to land. We preach ourselves out, and then we finish, then what? What response? What am I hoping for? You haven't thought through where you're going to land it, and how you're going to land it. That's one of the biggest mistakes leaders, and church preachers make, so think those things through.

Audit a meeting. How does a meeting work, are visitors being greeted? Watch and listen. You can get up and do this, "Guys, could we please connect with visitors?" And everyone will go, "Yes!" Even respond in tears, "Lord, we want to commit to connecting visitors," and then next week they come, and there are five visitors, and no one connects with them. Often people don't know how to process what they are feeling at that moment practically. So often what I'll do is, I'll go to people, and I'll say to them, "Hey, do you remember we just spoke about visitors? You see those are new guys, would you guys mind just going and connecting with them?" As I'm taking people with me, I am training them in the things of God. Don't get frustrated when people don't respond, because people don't join dots. Remember when you were a little kid, and you had those dots, and you would draw to find out what exactly the picture was.

People do not join dots, you have to join them for them, and then once you've joined the dots for them, they forget. I once heard it said that leading the church is a bit like a clown in a circus, spinning plates. I remember going to a circus as a young boy, and there was a clown that came up, and he had a stick with a plate on the top; he would spin a plate on top of the stick, and because the plate would spin like a top it would balance on the stick. Then he'd put another stick down, and he spins another stick and plate, and another one, and another one, and another one. And when the first plate was losing momentum, he would go across and just spin it two or three times, and it would keep going, and then he'd keep going and then go back.

That is leading a church: that's what it feels like. You put the value into the people, you spin. "Let's love visitors," and everyone's like, "Yeah, we're going to love visitors!" Then you move to the next thing, "Okay, let's pray," "Yeah, we are going to pray!" As you touch prayer, they're starting to forget about the visitors. Then you go to the next thing, and the next thing, and suddenly you look back and no one's connecting with visitors. If you don't catch it before it drops, you have to rebuild that whole thing. So, you spin that plate, and that's very much what church leadership feels like most of the time. You're just spinning the plate that's wobbling the most to try and get it moving forward, and if you get it before it breaks, you'll keep a culture going in a church.

You thought it was more spiritual than this, hey? No, it is spiritual, but I'm touching on the practical aspects here as well. Notices is another crucial thing and notices are an interesting thing because, in some ways, your notices can set the values or the tone of what the church values. In other words, do you know what a value is? Something important to you. So, for example, if your house has caught fire and you had time just to get in there and take two things out, what would those be? Those would be the things you value. When it comes to the Kingdom, there are certain things that we value and certain things that we don't value naturally. As a church, we have to put the values of the Kingdom into people. So, we've got to train them to love what they don't naturally love. I'm doing that all the time with you. How many times have you heard me push for visitors over the years, connecting and loving them? Here's the thing with a leader: people are selfish, including you guys, including me, so I've got to show you why it benefits you. So, if it doesn't benefit you, you won't do it. Then you can have a good benefit and a bad benefit. Here's the thing, when you first get saved, you have no understanding of God or the ways of God, so it's just me, selfish.

I was with the TMT guys. One of the guys asked me a question, what was it? Do I really love God because I love Him, or because I'm going after Him for what He can give me, like eternal life and a whole lot of things? Which are pretty big things. My answer probably wasn't what he expected, and I said, "I think we

all start with the wrong motive, we all come to save ourselves, we all realize we're dying and going to hell. We don't come to God because we suddenly love Him. We come to God because there's no other way to be saved, and we realize that. It's purely selfish. But then when you come to Him with your selfish motive, He's okay with that, and He starts to love you in your sin, and it's His kindness to you that starts to lead you to repentance. So, you start to love Him. You learn to love Him because you realize you don't deserve the kindness that He's showing you. Your motives are wrong at the start, but as you walk with Him, your motives become purer and purer, and that's how it is with God and us. That's how it is with the church."

So, I've got to show you why this benefits you, if I can't show you why it benefits you, I know you're not going to do it. In some ways, I've not just got to show you why it benefits you; I've got to show you also that if you don't do it, it could cost you everything. In other words, I'm cornering you. I'm not giving you an option to escape. That's why some doctrines are very dangerous for the church. The hyper-grace doctrine, which says that no matter what I do it doesn't change how God feels about me, is very, very dangerous because it takes away the consequence of disobedience. It takes away that you might grieve God, that you would quench the Holy Spirit; it takes away those things. What it does is it makes you numb. It teaches you that God will love you no matter what; and if God will love you no matter what, then you will be whatever no matter what. It is because we're not that pure that we just do it out of love. We need the concepts that there could be huge consequences of disobedience. And that keeps us sometimes. But at the same time, that God is kind and gracious and loving.

So, as a leader, you have to try and steward the mysteries of these things in the hearts of your people. You have to lay in the foundations that they learn to love God, but also to fear Him. Because as you do that, they realize they're following after Him, they've got no option. So, you have to be thinking that way all the time. When you're going to introduce something into the church, you have to make it clear.

Here's how I've done it: "What you do for the least of these little ones of mine; you did it for me" (Matt 25:40). You've heard me teach that haven't you? You know, maybe somebody comes in for the first time, and you offer them a coffee, but I want to show you that by offering them coffee, you are offering it to Jesus, and in doing so you have blessed Him. Do you know what Jesus' love language is? Works of service. He says, "this is how I know you love me because you obey my commands." So, I've got to teach you that value system, the value system of God, and then I've got to lay in how you can show that you love God. Saying I love you isn't going to cut it for Him, He wants to see what you do. I've got to show you how, when you do it, it's through the grace of God. I mean it gets complicated, because now you have

works and you have to wrestle that thing through and help people understand, but at the same time they've got to realize that what I do counts into eternity.

The thought of one day, like Stephen, who was stoned to death but because he held his witness, the Lord Jesus stood to receive him. And just maybe if you live as he did, the Lord might stand to welcome you. But then at the same time, many will say on that day, "Lord, Lord," and He will say, "Who are you?" So, what I've just done is, I've motivated you, and I've terrified you, intentionally, because I'm shaping your life to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. That's good leadership, and it's good stewardship of the gospel. We've got to hold these tensions all the time to bring people with us on the journey. Does it make sense? Now you know all the 'tricks'; they're not 'tricks'. They are actually in the gospel; they're in the Bible. These are the things that God does when He speaks to us but unfortunately, because of some of the doctrines sweeping the church, we've just neglected a lot of them. It's like we've taken a lot of the ingredients out of the cake.

So, coming back to notices, in some ways, your notices establish your values. So be careful who does the notices. Let me show you how notices will establish a value system. We've got a Four12 conference coming up. I could announce it like this, "Hey guys, you know last week there was a conference that Shofar did and the week before that there was another conference that somebody else did, and this week we've got our conference. So those of you that would like to come along, it's from Wednesday to Friday, you can take off work if you want to and join us for the conference. Next notice." Most people are like, "I don't want to come to that. I only have so much leave in my year." So, they're not going to come, and you'll wonder why no one came, and you get frustrated with the people. But you didn't communicate clearly why this is an important thing. You didn't create a value system through how you presented that. You have to be very careful about how you present what you present and in some ways, you have to let them know, this is important, and why it's important; whereas this is not that important, you can come to it if you want to.

It's a bit like having a child. You are training people ultimately to obey you, and that's what you have to do. The problem is that, if I give you an option in everything that I do, you'll start picking and choosing the one that serves you. "I'm battling with money or I've got a marriage problem, so Mac and Naudine's thing is the one I'm going to go to." But Mac and Naudine's thing will help you in one thing individually, but it doesn't take us together as a people somewhere. So you end up with a fragmented people that are all just serving themselves. If you give too many options, they'll pick and choose the ones they like. So, I've got to cut down your choices. As a leader, I've got to think about how many options I'm going to give you. How many can you cope with? Then I'm going to present your options in such a way like; this

thing is life and death, and I'm going to sell it to you with everything in me because I want you there. If you're going to die, die after that meeting. I'm now presenting what we call a red flag event. Red flag events are 'the trumpet that was sounded to rally Israel to war', versus, hey, if you want some help on farming, you come to this little thing it'll teach you how to plough better.

We've got to be very clear in that as well, because remember everything you present upfront, ultimately teaches people to obey you or to develop a consumer mentality, simply by how you do notices. Do you realise that? I'm shaping you to decide, or me to decide what's important, and if you decide what's important, I'm not leading you anymore. Our generation wants to be the centre of its universe, they want to decide. They want to pick and choose what their itchy ears want to hear. The culture that we're in builds us towards a place of, "I will go where it serves me." That thing is of hell, so, as a leader, I've got to squeeze that out of you. I've got to work that out of you, I've got to make you understand that what you want is maybe good for you; but what I want, because I'm hearing the Lord and I know where we're going, is good for you. Does this make sense?

That's why an elder has to have impeccable character because the position can be badly abused if a man isn't after God's own heart. After all, you have to obey Him. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:17, "Obey and submit to His authority, for he keeps watch over you, as a man who will give an account." Be careful who you follow. I can tell you this, if you're following, you have to follow. It's the way of the Kingdom. As a leader, you have to help establish that value system. And can I say this again, the things that you're doing now in the secret place will one day qualify you for the things that you may be doing. Character is formed in the secret place; integrity is formed within the secret place. A heart for the people, not for yourself, because it's very easy to build for yourself as a leader. "I want to look successful," but that's an impure motive, that's destructive. So, we've got to carefully work these things out. I'm jumping around a bit, but these are things that we've got to wrestle with and get right.

So, notices, they're massive! Are they easy to listen to? Are they too long? There comes a point where it's just like, "Is he explaining what's important and how?" Can I say when you want to establish a culture, it's interesting how you do that. So, we announce Four12, (this is how a good leader builds) you announce Four12; "This conference is a must-do, people's lives have been changed forever, my life was changed at these things. If you want to serve Jesus - and I've been spending a whole year teaching you that you should want to serve Jesus. (So, I've already laid that foundation) - if you want to do this, here's the door. This is going to give you the keys to that thing." So, you come, but not everyone does, and it's like, "ah!" because the people that should come don't. The people that really would have broken through, they're the ones that don't come.

Now as a leader you're pulling your hair out because you're going to get six months of life and momentum out of those that come to the conference. You know they're going to come back frothing, they're going to be going, "I want to run through the wall for Jesus!" I wish everyone would do that. Those that did come, are up at the front devoting themselves, but the rest of the people want to be entertained. So now I'm thinking, "Okay, how do I get you to realize that you messed up?" Because I called it red flag, and so I'm going to get people that I know had a massive God encounter. The Bible says take special note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. So, Ozzy, I saw him in tears the whole conference, I go up to him and say, "Ozzy, what was happening?" "I've been a Christian for 25 years. I've never experienced Jesus as I have in this conference. I feel like my whole life has changed; my marriage just turned around." I'll ask Ozzy to come and share what happened at the conference. So, Ozzy gets up there, and he's in tears, just remembering what Jesus did to him when he was there. And then Fred, "What happened?" and Fred's up there just talking. And I'll even help them.

The problem is when people testify - here's another thing about notices - they don't know what details are important. So, they'll do this, "When I was three..." I'm like, "Too much detail - not relevant!" I'll even ask in the early stages, "So, what are you going to share with the guys?", and he's going to start "When I was three," and I'm like, "Hey just cut the 'when I was three' part out." I'm also going to try and help him hone down on to what is going to move us forward. "Ozzy, I want you to say what you said there; that thing, maybe just say that. Say that a little bit clearer than you just did. Here's the microphone." And then Ozzy knows; he's a tool in my hands, but he's shaping a culture. Then the next guy does it, and then every person that wasn't there is going, "Oh man, oh man!" and they watch Ozzy moving forward in the things of God like they were all in a row together, and suddenly Ozzy is just moving forward. And who loves to be left behind?

Then I'll sit down with the person who wasn't there at some point, and I'm going to have coffee and say, "Do you know why you're left behind? Because you're not given, you're not following." I'm building a value system and remember this: a church is made up of individuals, so I need every single person running with me; so, ultimately, we can be a body that every part's doing its bit. So, you have to be thinking about these things when you do notices. You just thought it was notices; no, there's much more to notices than just announcing things.

Here's the other thing, is the technology working? This is always a nightmare and the AV guys, bless their hearts; but sometimes, you know, they haven't practiced with the worship team, they don't know how the songs go. So, the worship team's up there, and there's the presence of God and an anointing. The problem is this when the anointing's flowing, it flows because everything's running smoothly, and we can

also understand, we can read the words. There's nothing worse than when you're in the presence of God, and suddenly the AV breaks down, or the guy is three lines behind, and then you don't know the songs. The worship team is taking us on like, 'How great you are, you are so amazing, what you've done' and you're standing there. Then you mouth a word at the end of the sentence, but you've lost that heart to heart, spirit to Spirit connection with God. Now your brain is trying to work out, "Where exactly are we going in worship?" Then, because your brain is working, your heart has stopped working, and you've just lost the presence of God because you don't know where it's going. Do you know what I'm talking about?

How many of you have been in a new song, and suddenly the AV stops? Or it's like 4 lines behind, you know? It's a little thing, but it makes a huge difference! Where if the AV guys have been practicing with the worship team, and they know the songs as they move into it, the words are up there, and you can just flow with the team. A little thing, but the difference is, "Oh my goodness! We encountered the Lord today". As you sing the songs with the words that are up there, you're actually reminding yourself of who He is and what He's like. Then the Spirit is there to take those words and to make them alive to you. That as you sing about the One who made the universe, you see Him; you know what it's like, it's like you see Him. The spirit of God takes the words and makes them alive to you. It's not just like you're reading the lines, it's like, "You are the one! I see you are the one who made the universe with a command! Oh, my goodness! What kind of God are you? If you could do that with a command, what could you do in my life with a command?"

So, it's a little thing, but it's a difference between people entering into God's presence or not. Can I say, when people enter in, and they encounter the Lord in any part of the meeting, that's the take-home meeting. Let's be honest, if you come to church and you encounter Jesus, is there anything better? When we encounter Jesus; it's a mystery; there's faith. Where there is faith, He responds, and there's something of His presence. The problem is when there's confusion; there's no faith. So, it's like the very thing that fuels this thing dies. It's a little thing: the AV was too slow. There are obviously more aspects to it than just that, but you can get all the other aspects right and that wrong, and you'll find it won't go anywhere.

When I preach, I normally will put a scripture up on the AV. Do you know what a difference that made to my preaching? Before that, it was "Turn in your Bibles." The problem is you all turn into your own translation, like the Jehovah's Witness Translation, or the King James Translation. Then when I'm reading it in my Bible, actually one out of six people are reading the same version, and your version's got the text the wrong way around or the other way around, and so mine would be using slightly different words, so it's hard to follow what I'm saying. Then I'm saying, "It says here 'family,'" but yours says 'son', and I'm

raving on about how family is so important and yours is saying 'son', and you're going, "But mine says, 'son'." So, the whole thing is lost because you're struggling to follow me; versus, put it on the board and we're just reading it together; and because we're all reading and it doesn't mean I have to stop my preach for three minutes for everyone to find where the book of Amos is.

What happens is, you're sitting in your pew and you're struggling to find that book. The guy next to you opens his Bible right there and you're like "Oh flip, I'm going to look like I don't read my bible!" Now there's peer pressure to find this book, you know! You're so stressed about where this book is that you've forgotten what I'm saying and you've forgotten the train of thought. It is like that, isn't it? Finally, I found it! You're so stoked you found it that you don't care what I'm saying. Just put it on the board; here it is, let's read it together. It's funny, its little things, it's the little foxes that destroy the vineyards, and it's these little things. Just having them on the board, it's quick, could we just look here, they've got my notes, they put it up, we read it together, and I can break out words and explain it to you.

Then we go into worship, and this is a big thing, hey, I often say this; if I plant a church again, I want a worship leader that knows what he's doing! Please Jesus! Because I've learned this, when people encounter Jesus anywhere in that meeting, it's a life-changing meeting. Yes, they can encounter Jesus when I'm preaching, but worship just seems to have something on it that preaching doesn't. There's a sense that if the worship leader is with me, they can break open the presence and the life of God. It puts a whole lot less pressure on me, and it means that we can flow together. Worship is massive in every meeting, and I don't think we understand how massive worship is to the church. It's really our love language to God. It's where we just let our guard down and be intimate. It's out of worship that the Spirit of God often flows. Jesus said if I am lifted up, in worship, people are drawn. God says He's enthroned in the praises of His people. That means as we worship properly, thrones are being established in the hearts of those that are singing. So, there's a mystery to this into which I want to tap. If I've got somebody with a guitar, playing poorly, like we had when we planted, it's hard. We can worship when we're really mature, and we love the Lord, but it's hard; versus, you know, Mervis gets up, then it's like, "Daddy loves you!"

Then there's song choice, and song choice is a big thing because song choice is theology. In some ways, it's a teaching in itself. This week, there were three people that died in JoshGen Edgemoor AM. That's huge. In all my church life, I've not known of three people in one church that's died in one week, separately, not in one accident. So, when the church comes together, I understand that people are processing different things, their faith is being tested. They're full of questions, they're going, "What exactly happened, was that the devil? Was that God? Was that just the fall of Adam's sin that's just

worked its way out in bad luck that we got 3 in one week?" Now They come to church, and they're not walking like this, "God is so good! Hallelujah!" They're coming in like this; "Are we in trouble with God? Are we under attack? What's going on?" If you don't find them where they're at and start answering those questions, they're going to keep floundering, and you'll wonder why the meeting didn't have life on it; because you didn't lead them with the word, you didn't lead them in worship.

Those kind of moments are moments that you have to be thinking, how exactly are we going to help people understand what's going on, what exactly this is? Is this the devil? Because if it is the devil, we've got to pray, and we better do warfare in this meeting. Then we've got to plan that, how are we going to war? If you're going to war, you start getting your armour, and you begin reminding people how you swing the sword. But if it's not that, then you're doing the wrong thing, you're picking the wrong battle. If it's something else, you have to respond to that. Worship will set the tone for that thing. When someone's just died that you know personally, and you sing songs like this, "Every knee will one day bow, every tongue will one day confess that you are Lord. For you are coming back soon, Lord. And you're coming back to test the quality of what we've done. One day our lives will be before you." Now it's not one day; man, it's now for this person, and I know that. They are experiencing something of that now. That means something to me, because, oh my goodness, the song suddenly has a whole lot more weight on it than it did last week. I realize that death is real, and she's coming for me too. Now when I'm singing about the resurrection, about the coming of the Lord, it's a whole lot deeper than it was last week. So, your worship leader must, and you got to help them, pick those songs that are going to help the church process and pick up what God's doing and flow with that.

Instruments are key. Sometimes a drummer, just the drummer, can break open in the presence of God. Remember, David, only with a harp, drove demons out of king Saul. A man anointed with an instrument can bring the presence of God. There's a sense that sometimes there are specific instruments or ways you use instruments that create a feeling of like, "Yes, we are going to battle! We are in spiritual warfare!" Sometimes you need to sound the trumpet for battle. So, work with your teams. Work with your worship leaders, because they've got to pick up what the Spirit of God is doing. We have to help them develop an understanding, in the community, of what's going on. You have to be Spirit-led, if God moves somewhere else we must go there, but there also has to be at least a thinking. In other words, if I'm a worship leader and I know three people died this week, I'm going to be before the Lord saying, "Lord, what exactly do you want me to say? What are we going to say in our worship? What do you want to say to us?" I'm not just going to pick the latest three songs on the Bethel album that I enjoyed. I'm thinking what songs pick up the moment, what songs are going to build our faith in this moment?

Another thing is, if you can find music that fits what God is doing in that season, you'll find God is in the music. If we're going into war and music goes that way, God will be in that music; if we're going into a time of awe, whatever it is, God will be in the music; He's in the worship. So again, that's it's a very key thing. I'm going to watch that when I'm in a meeting. Are the worship team, and the worship leader, bringing us into what God is doing now? Can he change tack if he feels God's going somewhere else? Another thing, and it is very small in comparison, but is the music too loud or too soft? Again, in an African context, maybe that doesn't count because it's always going to be too loud for us westerners; it's just the guys are used to that, that's fine. But in a western context, loud music, when it's really loud, is unpleasant. If somebody gets up to the microphone to share a prophetic word and it's too soft, then people won't hear, and everyone's stops for that moment, and wonders what exactly just happened? Where are we going? Again, that's a little thing, but it makes a difference because people can follow what God is doing and what God is saying, versus it being too soft and no one knew what happened.

As a leader, you're thinking all this; this is what you think about. Sunday morning for you guys is, "Man, that was an awesome meeting," for the rest of us, we walk burdened because we've had to worry about all these things. Can all the people see and hear and participate? You know, at the end of the day, if you're sitting somewhere in the meeting and the sound is terrible, can you fix it? Because if you can't hear, you can't hear. When you church plant, unfortunately, you don't have a lot of resources, so you have to get creative. If they can't see, they can't follow you in worship. So, think those things through when you layout your chairs.

"How does the church worship?" is another question to ask when you're auditing a church. Is the church worshipping, or is it just the worship team? I've been to some churches, where the worship teams have been singing like angels, and the church is drinking coffee. They have no concept of how to worship God. Please don't lose sleep if your worship team's terrible when you plant a church, because they usually are. You can teach your people how to worship past your worship team. In the early days of JoshGen, our worship went way past the worship team. At some point, the worship team got left behind; because our people were so passionate in terms of their worship, they just went for it whether the worship team could take them there or not. But you have to work hard to develop that culture.

Is the band in synergy? In other words, are they working together or are there factions? The lead guitarist is miff because he wanted to play his little lead guitar riff at that moment, and he didn't get his shot. You see the thing is, we don't see his heart, but God does, and God says where there is no unity, there's no blessing. So, we're just wondering, 'Where was the presence of God today?', well, the worship team had a bit of a fight before the meeting. You have to watch those things in your teams. Let me tell

you; musicians are temperamental creatures. They need a lot of care. They put it out there every week. You have to work these things through with your team. You have to pick those things up as a leader. If you're leading that team, you have to make sure that that thing is working. If there are issues, you need to work those issues out before you lead worship.

This is another challenge; when you plant a church, you are pretty desperate. So, you get this worship leader that comes because he's got this dream in his heart of being the next superstar, that's going to sell a million records. He's up there, and in his mind, this is his doorway to fame and he's just going; he's just going mad, he's just doing whatever he wants to do. The Bible says that it is the elders who lead worship. You can look in Revelation, it's the elders that are leading the worship in heaven. They are the ones closest to the throne. They're the ones who are closest to the Lord. They're the first ones to see what He does. So, in any good church, there's an understanding that the elders are the ones in charge of worship. The worship leader is an instrument, but the elders are the actual leaders in this thing. If the worship leader thinks it's all on him, he's not going to watch the elders, and he's just going to do whatever he wants to do. But the Bible says the elders direct the affairs of the church, not the worship leader. Let me say if the worship leader is flowing, and he's with us, I'm going to let him flow because he's got a grace that I don't have. But at any point as an elder, I've got to be able to step in, and he needs to watch me then.

You will have to teach him that he can't stand with his eyes closed, he has to be looking, because you want to lead the meeting somewhere. If you feel a prophetic word that's going to change the course of the meeting, and he has his eyes closed, and he's got his next song, you can't just stop. When he moves from one song to the next, you can't just suddenly stop him. I can tell you now, everyone was just getting into it and then it's like, "Woah! What just happened?" The prophetic word's got no anointing. Now you must wait for him to give a break again. The person next to you, he's bursting with the word and the worship leader has got his eyes closed, and you see that moment, and you're going "Hey!", and he goes into the next song, and you're like, "I can't lead this meeting anywhere!". So, I need my worship leader to know that he has to keep his eyes on me; if I'm leading the meeting. I'm leading the meeting, not him. Look at me; we're working as a team here. If you're going for it, go for it; but if I want to step in, you have to be sensitive to me. You have to teach your team that. It doesn't come naturally.

Session 12

Godly Leadership

One of the things you learn is that there is a lot to be done. We need to train up people that can help with each of these aspects for it to work. Once we train guys, we can delegate; and that is often where people start to find their place in ministry. For many of these things, you would start delegating as soon as you could, but you need to train people like I'm training you now, so that they know what you expect of them. Start by just giving them one thing and then help them. Then when they do it, if they did well, commend them; if they are kind of not doing it well, maybe come alongside them and help them; encourage them. In this way you can train up the teams around you. Ultimately, there's too much for one man to do. That's the brilliance of God. In some ways, the leader's a bit like a conductor. There's an orchestra, and his job is to get every part of the orchestra playing its part. He does not play every role. Unfortunately, though, when you plant - you're it - and so, it's just a reality, but as fast as you can, you want to try and raise up and hand over.

King David was the best King Israel ever had, under his leadership, Israel was the most effective and the most successful. They took the boundaries that they were promised to them under his reign. He actually took the whole promised land, and more than God promised Israel. In a way, he took Israel beyond the promises of God. That's an amazing thing. The Bible says that David led Israel with integrity of heart and skilful hands. Those are two attributes that are vital for good leadership in the Kingdom of God. In other words, your heart must be right before God; but even if your heart is right and you don't learn how to use your hands, people won't get to experience your heart. Your heart by itself isn't enough. Conversely, if you have skilful hands and an evil heart, you're a very dangerous person. Then you can manipulate and hurt people because you can work their hearts to get them to do what you want them to do, but your heart isn't after God.

In this way, you can start to make the church yours. You can build it towards yourself, instead of towards the Lord Jesus Christ. You may ask the questions, isn't some of what we've been teaching about manipulation? In some ways, it is manipulating people; but I need to say this; the word manipulation has been warped. I have a daughter who's 13, and I can use the word manipulation when I think of how I lead her, because I am manipulating her heart and her values to shape them in a certain way. She's like a piece of putty that I am shaping that one day will be formed. So, in that sense, I am manipulating her. But the challenge is, the word manipulation has an evil or an ugly undertone to it. It speaks of using

someone for selfish gain. Therefore, the word manipulation maybe isn't a good word, as much as it does speak about what I'm doing. I am shaping and moulding her; I'm leading her. The difference here is this: if I shape and mould her, it's leadership, and as her father I am called to shape and mould her.

I've often said that one of my jobs is to indoctrinate you. Now the word indoctrination is a terrible word, isn't it? But actually, if you think about it, it's to put doctrine into you. If you don't have doctrine in you, you have nothing in terms of the Word of God. So, I am indoctrinating you all the time. But the difference is this; if I'm shaping my daughter, it's a good thing because I've been given a trust, and she's under my care, so, I need to shape and mould her. If she instead learns how to shape and mould me, that is now a dangerous manipulation. She learns to do that because of the flesh. For example, when she goes, "Daddy, can I please have ice cream?", and I say, "No." She then goes to her mom and asks her. She's now trying to manipulate me to get me to do what she wants. Now that is an evil thing. If I get her to do what I want, it's not an evil thing, because I've been given a trust. If I just abuse my authority, one day, I'll have to give an account before the King. But if I'm doing everything I do with the heart of a father to care for her and to shape her towards what will bless her, it's a good thing.

So, as a leader, you have to understand; I did a preach years ago, called the difference between leadership and control. In many ways leading you means I'm taking you where you don't want to go and that's part of what my calling is, what I have to do. Otherwise, I'm not leading you; I'm not taking you somewhere. Control is when I start to use you in an ugly way to manipulate you. There's a difference, but the difference is my heart. That's the only difference, my heart, and my position, and that needs to be said. My heart is to do the right thing. My heart is to shape you in the ways of God, not towards some selfish evil motive. So, it's not then an evil thing. But you must know, I want to shape your life, I do! I want to make you a disciple, teaching you to obey everything that Jesus commanded us to do. Here's an interesting thing, I've got to, the Bible says, teach you to obey. That's what Jesus said, go make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything I've commanded you. So, I can't just tell you what He wants. I've got to train you to obey what He wants.

There's a difference between teach them what I taught you; and teach them to obey. Teaching you to obey, means that I have to present the truth of Jesus in such a way that you are obliged to do what He asked you to do. So, I don't just teach just to teach; everything that I do is intentional, everything that I do is trying to build a ground forward so that we can move somewhere. I don't pick preaches because I read a book somewhere that I enjoyed, and I thought, "Wow, let me just share that revelation with you," which some pastors do. I believe that if you do that, you're not leading the people. You have to be

thinking as a leader, "Why am I teaching what I'm teaching?" There has to be a point to it; I've got to take you somewhere.

Back to worship, here's another thing about songs. Are the songs singing true doctrine? That's a very important thing because we learn theology through what we sing. A lot of songs teach bad doctrine. I mean, there'll be a lot of songs that would talk about, you know, fear being a bad thing. Is fear always a bad thing? No, it's not! The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If songs are presenting the fear of the Lord as a bad thing, they are effectively disarming the gospel from shaping a part of your life. There's a good fear, and there's a bad fear, but we've got to hold the nuances right. Look at if the songs are scriptural? That's something you want to go through and think about carefully. Is this song saying what God says in the Bible? Because what we think will ultimately become what we live. So, if your people are singing songs that are rubbish, their lives are going to become rubbish. They learn that by singing those songs because you didn't shepherd them well. So, those are things you have to be thinking through.

Another thing is, and this is a very practical thing, there is a difference between praise and worship. I'm giving you broad strokes, it's not quite this clear in Scripture, but you'll understand what I'm saying. Praise is often singing about God, about the bigness of God, what God has done, how He's a good and kind God. Worship is often like, you're sitting over a candlelit dinner with Jesus, looking into His eyes, and hearing Him whisper and you are whispering back to Him, it's intimate. When I'm in worship, I don't want to start dancing and singing. So, then the question is this, is your worship team picking up and leading the people in praise and in worship? Here's a little thing, when you plant a church, I'm going to give you a tip, worship works better than praise does.

I'll tell you why, because praise is often the declaration of the bigness of God, and the victory of God and so, when there's four of you in a room, and your guitarist is still learning how to play those three chords, it's tough for those four to start going, "Yeah, we're going take the nation's for Jesus!" So, your praise isn't going to be up there. It's a funny thing. This is going to sound so unspiritual; when we started our church, we started in our lounge in our house and it packed out very quickly, and you know how lekker it was to have a packed out room! I remember at some point; if I jumped, the whole meeting moved; because we were all so tight together. It was so lekker, it was like, 'Wow!' We moved to the Life Saving Club at Big Bay, there was an old building there, and quickly we filled it up. Again, it was like, 'Yeah!'

Then we moved to the Leibrandt van Niekerk hall, which I don't know if it was this size, but it felt this size then. When we moved in there, we were probably about 80 people, and the hall could seat maybe 400. During our worship the week before, we were praising like this, "Table view, we are taking you out for

Jesus!" And the next week, we're in a hall where the ceiling was high, we walked in, and the hall intimidated us. I could feel how this hall made us feel so small suddenly. We felt so big a week ago when we're packing out the house, but now we felt like a bunch of long hair hippies. If you told me then, a week before, we were going to take Table View, and the week afterward we were like, "Oh, Jesus help us." I felt it! I felt it myself as the leader!

Suddenly, this didn't feel as exciting as it was before. It was weird that a hall could do that to us, but it did. I felt it in us; I felt it in the people. So, I realized praise wasn't going work in that moment. We needed ridiculous anointing to break this thing. But actually, worship was probably going to be easier for us and so, we worshiped the Lord, we just worshiped. We got intimate with God and in our intimacy, we started to grow again; and at one point I looked across the hall and we were there again, we were like, "Yeah, God's going to do amazing things!" When we sang it, we believed it, and we moved forward again. These are real things, I mean, it's a funny thing how a hall can intimidate you, but it can. So, these are things as a leader you have to help your people through.

Let's look at when prophecy starts coming. Firstly, it's awesome! I want you all to prophesy, and you should. I think prophecy is the one gift that all of us can do. Because if I can hear God for me, it's not a big jump to hear God for you. Jesus said, "my sheep will hear my voice." Paul said, "I wish that you would all prophesy." I think it's something that we can all learn to do. It's one of the few gifts that we can all flow in. But the challenge is this; now the worship is going somewhere and the worship team's working, and you have this thing going down, and the next thing somebody comes up to the microphone, and they say, "I feel like I've got a word." Okay, now we've just jumped into another awkward moment because this word could sink us, or this word could really break open the presence of God for us. It's going to break the flow of what we're doing.

Sometimes in some of our meetings, you'll see a queue of people waiting to prophesy. These are the most challenging meetings for any leader; because now you have 20 people that want to prophesy, and you know if 20 people prophesy, we're going to be here for the next hour and a half just listening to prophecy, and not even responding to it. So, what do I do now? But prophecy, the Spirit of prophecy, is the testimony of Jesus. So, prophecy might break open the presence of God for these people and so, it's this fine line. Now you have to weigh the prophecy. You have to watch when you're leading the meeting, are all the prophecies coming through in a way that it doesn't break the flow of the meeting.

Remember, the Bible says, the Spirit of the Prophet is subject to the control of the Prophet. So that means if two people have a different spirit, let's say, Fred has got a prophetic edge in a bad sense; you know the prophetic edge is that black and white kind of guy, like you know, "Thus saith the Lord!" Then

you have Pete, he's highly pastoral. So, there is like a black and white prophet and highly pastoral guy, and God comes to both of them with the same word, and God says, "I have more for my people than what they're walking in tonight." Fred interprets that through his own spirit, and Fred gets up, and he says this, "The Lord says, I'm not happy with what's happening. I called you to so much more, and I'm expecting you to rise up into it." That creates a vibe, good or bad. Then Pete, he gets up with the same word, interpreted through his own spirit, and he says, "Guys, the Lord just loves us so much, and He just wants to give us so much more than what He's giving us right now." It's the same word, same prophecy but different spirits.

Let me tell you, that makes it quite challenging because now you're thinking, "Okay, what spirit is this thing going to come in?" You, as a prophet, can put a heavy on us that we can't get out of. As a leader, you'll have to navigate that with the guys, and then work out if this word is going to take us forward; and when I say take us forward, I mean move us into more of God, or is it just going to break the flow of what God's doing? Even how the prophet presents it, can break that. You now have to try and manage that, and steward that, and go okay, "What are you feeling?" Listen for the spirit of what he's saying, as much as you listen to what he's saying. Does it line up with what I think God's doing here now?

Again, I mentioned before, sometimes someone will come with something I had not felt was for that meeting, and I'm like oh my goodness, either he's hearing God right or I'm hearing God right, but one of us is wrong, and it could be me. So, what now? I am leading the meeting, but that doesn't mean that I can't blow this meeting, too, you know. Now the Lord has to help out here, because he's hearing something that I'm not hearing. But one of us is missing Jesus. So, in those moments, you have to get around your elders if you need to, get guys with you. You know, the Bible says wisdom comes to the counsel of many. You say, "Will you just share this word with this guy," then afterward you ask the elder, "Did you pick up God in that word?" He says "Yeah, I thought it was awesome!" Okay, maybe I'm the one who heard wrong then. I have learned this, and this is going to sound very weird, and I can't explain this scripturally, but I think sometimes the devil knows who's going play a vital role in any meeting, and he fights to stop that person walking in faith.

Sometimes I've been in a meeting, and it feels like all hell broke loose against me, somewhere I am like heaven just went brass on me, where is God; I'm struggling with all sorts of things, and thought what is going on. I've been in meetings, and I can feel I am I'm hemmed in. I can't explain it, it feels like I can't break out of this thing; and I've learned, "Okay, obviously the devil knows something I don't." In moments like those I'll just pass the ball to one of the other elders. If I've got five demons on me, it means there's not many left in the room, and so, it's going to be easier for this guy. The breakthrough

comes; I've seen it so many times, the breakthrough comes. But it's learning there are nuances of like "Lord, I can't."

I would suggest always explaining the supernatural when it happens in your meetings. You know, if someone gets up with a tongue; imagine this: you're a visitor, and it's all going quite well, and then somebody gets up, and he goes "Karrrare se bandede," (speaking in tongues) and you're completely confused. The Bible speaks about; if people don't understand it, at the end of the day, they can't process it. If they don't know what it is, it's just stupid for them. You know, if you're all speaking tongues, Paul says it's not going to help anyone. No one would know what's going on; if the trumpet doesn't sound clear, no one goes to war.

So, now you have to think, "How do I communicate this?" How you communicate it, can massively impact how people process it. A guy just shared a tongue; this is new and not everyone knows what that is, so you get up, and you explain, "Guys, just keep your eyes closed because we don't want to break the moment, just listen to me. The Bible says," and you start explaining it. "The Bible says, when this happens, it's a spirit, you know, man's spirit praying. And the Bible says there needs to be an interpretation. Now, does someone have an interpretation? You'd feel it's the Lord because something in you is about to pour out of you, you could feed it as that was coming". With that, you're starting to help people. Now your faith is growing, and suddenly, a person comes, who's never done it before, and they bring an interpretation, and God breaks out. They walk away thinking, "God used me," and everyone in that church goes, "Wow!" All that happened was that you managed to steward it well. If you don't explain it, a person might be sitting there wondering, "Why am I feeling God so strongly? I don't know what to do with it." Leadership just means creating those pathways for people to walk in. In other words, help them understand what the Spirit of God might be doing

Here's another thing: do you worship after the preach? It's a big question. Do you know David Pawson? He's a great teacher. He said this, and I'm paraphrasing but he basically said this, "Biblically; you should probably always worship after the preach because worship is often a response to a revelation of God. When Israel went through the sea and saw the Egyptians destroyed, they worshipped; how great is our God! Miriam led them in worship." So, when God comes through the word, often at the end of the preach, worship is powerful. Now you are worshiping with faith; you've seen something of God that you didn't see before! So, again, that's a question you want to ask yourself if you are leading the meeting; "Do I want to bring worship at the end, or do I do worship at the start?" Can I say, even if you're leading a homegroup, you need to be thinking like that.

Here's another thing: if it's not working, just stop. If God's not in the worship, find where He is. Sometimes He's just not in the worship. Why is He not in the worship? I don't know. Where is He? One Sunday, I did this, this is how you learn to teach values, I was talking about the need in the early days of the church to love people, to care for people and how we need to practice the concept of 'I am my brother's keeper'. So, one Sunday, we arrived, and these are the worst Sundays for any church leader; it's that Sunday that everyone is sick or went away, it's so depressing. It's like you've prepared the whole week, you're full of faith, you come there and like one-third of the people are sitting in the pews. It's just like, "Where's everyone?" "What did I preach last week?" Like you're starting to think, "Have I done something wrong?" Then you start worrying if they are all backsliding, or what's going on.

So, I've been preaching about how we need to care for one another and then one Sunday, we had one of those Sundays, like no one was there. I arrived, and I kept thinking, "Oh God, please just tell me they are late." Only about one-third of the church was there. I was just bummed; my faith was down. So, we started worshipping, and the worship guys came up. I was standing there, and I had no faith for worship. Suddenly, the Lord spoke to me, and He said this to me, "Andrew, where do you think I am right now?" And it dawned on me as He said it, just like the Bible says, He leaves the 99 to find the one. If two-thirds of our people aren't here this week, then where is He? Is He here, or is He trying to find them? I realized suddenly that this is a teaching moment. So, before we worshiped, I got up, and I said, "Guys, look around you, are you noticing that some of your friends and their families are not here?"

People looked around and agreed. I continued, "So, Jesus said He leaves the 99 to find the one. I've been teaching us for how long about being your brother's keeper. Are you noticing some of our brothers aren't here? Do you think that bugs the Father? Where would He be then if He leaves the 99 to find the one? Do you think He's here, or do you think He's trying to find them? So then, where should we be now? This meeting is officially closed, go and find someone that's not here, and love them. See you next week!" What I was doing was establishing a value system, that we are a people and that we care for one another and that you can't just miss a gathering, because we're family. We all have a part to play, and we need to make sure that everyone is there. We need to all carry that, not just me. I think people didn't know what to do. There was a moment of silence. The next week, I heard people had found people, prayed for people in their homes. It was amazing! A lot of guys learned a value system that day.

Okay, let me move to the preach. Firstly, just to give you the heads up, when you plant a church you have no credibility - realize that. So, when people walk in, they're going to look at you, and everything you do says something to them. I learned this, if the anointing is ridiculously strong on you, you'll get away with murder. But most of us don't have that kind of anointing. In other words, if you look like John

the Baptist, and you have got camel-hair clothing, and you have a locust hanging in the corner of your hair that you didn't eat properly; but the presence of God is so strong, when you do what you do, they'll come back. But if you look like that, and the presence of God isn't breaking out powerfully, they will never be coming back. You've just made it too hard for them to get across that bridge. Most of us don't have that kind of anointing, and even those of us that might carry something of that anointing, we are still going to have off days.

I've learned this, when I planted the church, I realized at one point that I need all the help that I can get here. So, I'm going to be careful in terms of how I present myself. I'm not going to wear a suit and tie because that's too much for me, but I'll dress up a little bit, just a little bit. I'll dress down now, but if I'm in an African context, I'll dress-up again. I preached at our Dunoon congregation on Sunday, and I wore a collared shirt. Why did I do that? In that culture, it's just too much of a jump, even though the JoshGenners would be fine; I realized there's going to be people that are not JoshGenners in that meeting that might not be able to make the jump, if I don't dress appropriately. We had, eight responses to salvation and 7 commitments this Sunday. I realized that there's something of how I came and presented myself there, which made it easier for them to listen to me. Remember, don't put a stumbling block in front of people that doesn't have to be there. If wine can offend you, then my clothes can also offend you. So just realize that and be mindful of that, because if you offend them, they're not going to listen to you. You will need a ridiculous anointing to break that offense. I'm just giving you very practical pointers here.

While I'm preaching, watching a meeting, auditing it, or leading it, I consistently consider where are we trying to take the people. For me, I often say to our elders on the ground, "Why are you preaching what you're preaching?" Because most pastors do this: they read a book, and it really ministered to them; and so they take that book and then rework it into their own thing, and then they preach it for you. Which means you end up going, "Wow! My pastor has an amazing revelation," but, it's somebody else's revelation that he's just regurgitating for you. The point is this; what is the point of just teaching something that's just something? For me, I think of leadership in terms of Moses walking with Israel towards the promised land, there's a journey that we are on, and right now, we're hungry, and we need food. Right now, we're thirsty, and we need water. Right now, we've got an enemy attacking us, and we need to have faith. We are a people who are going somewhere and for me in leadership, I'm always thinking; "Where are we going? What are we doing?" I'm taking you somewhere, and so everything I do is building you in a specific direction.

Then I've learned this, as a church planter, the Gospel is very, very powerful. It has a power in it that I don't understand. When the Gospel is preached properly, the most hardened person, under the anointing, can just suddenly soften and believe. He may have come in with a million questions, you could debate with him forever; but the anointing was there, and the gospel was preached, and suddenly, he's on his knees. How does that work? It's the power of the Gospel! When you church plant, remember the Gospel is the doorway to the Kingdom. You need to preach the Gospel a lot. So, when we planted the church, I used every Sunday to preach the Gospel unless God led otherwise, but generally, that was my general overriding theme.

On Wednesdays, I built values because when you plant a church, the church doesn't have any values yet. So, if you give somebody a homegroup, what's he going to teach your people if he hasn't got your values yet? He's going to teach them what values he's got. So, I'm going to take the homegroup and when we planted, I led the homegroup until it was about 70 people and I used Wednesday nights to teach values. This is why we love as we do; this is how we treat visitors; this is how we break bread, let's break bread together and I would teach them values of the Kingdom. Then on Sundays, generally, I would teach the Gospel; how Jesus died on a cross, what it means, and I might weave values in there but it was predominantly the Gospel message.

When it comes to preaching a hard message, you have to know that it hurts me more than you, honestly. I walk away from a hard message and I feel bruised afterwards, and I don't sleep after that. I'm wrestling with, "Did I say that too strong?" It's very exhausting for me. So, I get tired quickly when I preach, because it's like I've stood against a storm. So, you'll see me, very quickly for your sake and for my sake, if I preach again after a hard message, I'll preach a very funny message or a very light message. Why do I do that? Because if you get a diet of hard all the time, it'll kill you and me. God is full of grace and truth. It has to be both. As a leader I've got to try and find those nuances. I have to ask God how to bring balance to the people. So, these are things you have to be thinking as a leader. How do I bring my people through in grace and truth?

Session 13

The Good Shepherd

In this section, I will be sharing a little bit about leadership, specifically looking at how to care for and pastor the people of God. To begin, remember that people are the most important thing on the planet because they are what Jesus died for. As leaders, we haven't died for people. Jesus died for us, and we have now been given a trust - a trust that we would care for the people of God. The Bible calls these people sheep, and leading the people of God is a unique challenge. Whether you are a homegroup leader or an elder, or leading an eldership team, you have the task of caring for and leading the people of God. In this session we will be looking at this from a biblical perspective.

To begin let's look at 2 Corinthians 11:2-3. This scripture captures so much of the heart of what we need to have for the people of God:

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (2 Cor 11:2-3 NIV)

It's amazing that we can feel a divine jealousy for the people of God. In fact, if you don't feel a divine jealousy, you are going to struggle to care for them properly. JoshGen, including children, is around 4000 people, and I still lose sleep over those people. When I know someone is struggling, I still follow where they are. If I think of one of the sheep backsliding, it produces so much pain in me. There is something that you carry for the people of God as a leader because God has given you a divine trust. You should be able to feel that as a leader, especially if you're going to plant a church. A church plant is not about your little dream and vision. It's about caring for the people of God and bringing them into health. We have got to catch something of the heart that Paul has. We see in this scripture, in Corinthians, that he has betrothed them to one husband, to present them as a pure virgin to Christ.

We see this picture that on the Last Day, every single person that I have shepherded or cared for, I will have the privilege of presenting them to Christ. In this scripture's case, the picture is of a marriage, a betrothal. Did you know that we are engaged to Jesus, we are not married to Him yet? We are called the Bride of Christ, but that's because of Hebrew thinking, not Greek thinking. We are not married; however, we are betrothed. The challenge is that there are a lot of things that can draw our hearts away from Jesus. Paul speaks in this scripture about being betrothed to this husband, and he wants to present

them as a pure virgin. That picture of a virgin literally means that you are morally pure. You are betrothed to Him and to no one else. You haven't given your heart and your life to anyone else. The challenge is that there are a lot of things that try to draw our hearts, a lot of things that we can give our lives and our attention to. But Paul wanted the churches to be betrothed to Jesus and Jesus alone. In other words, Jesus is the One you wake up for and the One you go to sleep for. Paul's job here in this scripture was to present them as a father would present a daughter on her wedding day.

The Bible speaks about a wedding feast on that last day. This is a picture of Jesus standing in front of all creation, and leader upon leader will come to present that part of the Bride that has been entrusted to him. I love that picture because a dad spends his life preparing his daughter for her groom, so likewise, we spend our lives preparing to present you to the Groom. All that I'm investing and doing with my 13-year-old daughter is ultimately to give her away. The things that I shape her in now, her husband will get the benefit from, not me. I'm going to do all the hard work and present something of a finished product of her life to one man. At that moment he will take my place. I am important to her now, but at that point, I become less important. Somebody else will take my place.

The picture of a wedding is a lovely picture. Everyone is waiting, and then the bride appears. Normally, the father walks with her down the aisle to the front. Everyone is standing and looking at the bride. You can see that the dad knows that his daughter is beautiful. He is so proud at that moment and no-one even sees him or takes notice of him! Ironically, this is his moment. This is what he has given his life for! He would then shake the groom's hand and then disappear into the crowd. All the attention remains on the bride and the groom.

This is what leadership is all about. We live to present somebody else to Jesus. This is our job, and this is our life. We have that privilege on that day of presenting what we have built to our Lord Jesus. But then Paul carries on in this scripture, saying that satan will try to seduce those that have been entrusted to us. He will try to pull them away from their sincere and pure devotion to Christ. As a leader, and as a father, you will watch those that have been entrusted to you be seduced and tripped up. Sometimes even as I teach, I can feel that it is tripping people up, and I lose sleep over it. But it is something that you must carry; you have been trusted with something very important.

Our job is ultimately to present each and every person pure and spotless to Jesus. Leading a church isn't so much about the crowd. Jesus would stop the crowd for an individual. Every single person that believes in God and has joined themselves to this Church, comes under the care of these leaders. If you are a church planter, they come under your care. Even if you are a homegroup leader, you are partly responsible for those people. You all have a part to play in keeping the people pure for Jesus. Like

parenting, it's hard work. There is joy in the moment when presenting people on that Last Day, but there is also fear in that moment. In Corinthians we also read:

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. (1 Cor 4:2 NIV)

If I have done a bad job as a leader, and I was found to be unfaithful, that is not a good thing. The Bible says that I, as a leader, will then face a stricter judgement. We get respect and honour now, but this is so that we can lead faithfully. One day we are going to give an account to the Lord, and we must be proven faithful. We need to be asking ourselves questions like: Is this going to help the people of God stay true to the course? When something comes in that tries to take them off course, we need to intervene. People's hearts are fickle. They very quickly get led astray from their sincere and pure devotion to Jesus. Leaders do lose sleep and get grey hairs, because they are caring for many children that they didn't die for – that Jesus died for. If Jesus died for these people, do you understand the weight of looking after one of these people?

As a young person, I had this dream of being a leader in the church and the glory that came with it; but as I am getting older, I realize that it is a huge responsibility. There is a great reward for being faithful, but it is a massive undertaking. At the end of the day, when I stand in front of Jesus as a leader, I want to be able to say this: "Lord I was faithful." Even if others weren't faithful, I want to be a good shepherd. I want to say that I was able to give the people what they needed, even if they didn't want it.

The challenge for those that are wanting to plant churches is that people around us are learning bad theology. This makes it really hard work to hold them on course and to teach them to trust you and to walk with you because there are so many voices out there. You need to realize that as a leader, you ARE going to face these challenges and are going to have to carry these things. The only way you will be able to effectively lead people, is if you radically love Jesus. Jesus speaks to Peter in John 21 and asks him this question: "Peter, do you love me?" He asks Peter this three times, and at the end, Jesus says, "Feed my sheep." If you are not madly in love with Jesus, the price of looking after and feeding His Sheep will be too high. You won't be able to care for the people; you will care for yourself and your own comforts. Leadership is not a comfortable place; it is a place of service and sacrifice. As a leader, you must love Jesus more than you love your own life, and the Lord will test you on this. Jesus says that if you love your own life, you will lose it, but if you lose your life for His sake, you'll find it. There is a sacrifice in leadership, but also a great joy that comes from caring for the people of God.

I want to ask you that question right now. Do you love Jesus? Because if you do, feed His sheep. Do you really love Him? Then care for the sheep. Look out for them and try your best to help them come

through. Be part of the solution in their lives, not part of the problem. Even if you're not in leadership, we are called to care for and love what Jesus loves; and He loves the church. The church is the vehicle He has chosen to reveal His Glory through.

So how do we effectively lead people? People are individuals, unique – and that makes leadership challenging. There is no template on how to lead everyone the same way. Let's look at Psalm 23. It is a beautiful picture of the Lord being a Shepherd:

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Ps 23 NIV)

Elders are called to shepherd the people of God; this is a New Testament command. To understand what a shepherd is, we look to God as the Good Shepherd. We are under-shepherds who imitate how He shepherds His People. David was known as the shepherd of Israel. He was a good under-shepherd because he saw the Lord as His Shepherd. Psalm 23 is all about how David expresses this. Every single person in the church should be able to look at an elder/shepherd and say that Psalm 23 is describing how they feel about the way that you lead them.

The first thing we see in this passage is that David says: "The Lord is my Shepherd". He uses the word Yahweh to refer to God because he understands that the Lord is close and personal. What this teaches us is that a shepherd is a person and NOT a system. You might have systems running in the background to make sure everyone is cared for, but every person should know and feel like they are being shepherded by someone. The question you have to ask when church planting, is when do the people coming to this church become my responsibility? Some visit and never come again, but then there are those coming back. For those that keep coming back, there is a point where they need to become part of a family; and not be like an orphan. God did not design us to be orphans. He puts us into the church and a family. We need to ask these people 'is this your family?' because if it is our relationship changes.

Every person that joins the church needs to understand that our relationship (elder to the saint) changes. Now the elder is placed over them as a leader and shepherd in the Lord. You have to teach the people how to relate to you properly, because they come in with baggage and orphan mentalities. They've possibly been messed with and hurt in other churches; and they will struggle to trust. Your challenge is to get them to the place where they can say that you are their shepherd. Ultimately Jesus is

their Shepherd, but you are their under-shepherd. These are things that we need to be thinking of as a leader; otherwise individuals will just become a face in the crowd; and people are definitely not that. Biblically, people are individuals that I will give an account for.

Today we unfortunately have a terrible picture of what it is to be a shepherd in South Africa. Somewhere along the line, fences were invented. Now on a sheep farm, we see a fenced-off area with grass where the sheep are. The shepherd comes in once a week, and he moves them from one pen of grass to another. He arrives, throws rocks at them, and rushes them to their next grazing place. He then closes the pen, makes sure there is water, and leaves again. He only comes back if there is something serious, like a jackal. This way of shepherding is not personal. A lot of churches try to build this way. They try to put people in a pen somewhere and hope that it will all be alright, but this is not a biblical picture of shepherding. David understands this. God has not put him into a system, but rather into a relationship with Himself. Jesus Himself said, "my sheep know my voice, they follow me." So as an under-shepherd, the people must know your voice. What do I mean when I talk about 'your voice'? They need to know what you stand for, what you believe, what you fight for, and where you are going. They need to know you personally, and they need to follow you. If they don't follow you, they are not your sheep.

Sometimes sheep do get rebellious, and you have to break their legs and bring them back to the flock. But at the end of the day, it's important to see that their hearts are postured to follow you and the other under-shepherds.

In our western culture, we hear people say, 'I just need Jesus; I don't need anyone'; but that is not a biblical picture of church. The Bible speaks clearly about obeying and submitting to leaders because they keep watch over us as men who must give an account. So as people come into our churches, we need to teach people these things. Otherwise, the people will become like goats, doing whatever they want to do; and they are then never able to reflect the way of their King and their Great Shepherd. My job as a shepherd is to make sure that the sheep have every single thing they need for life and health. It's like when you have a lack in your diet, and you start getting cravings. We, as shepherds, need to make sure that the people have what they need and what they lack so that they won't be in want.

It's important to note that God's Kingdom does not advance through missionary organizations but through the church. God did not say, "I will raise up mission organizations," He said, "I will raise up the church." This means that it is ultimately through the church that people should be able to find their destiny. The challenge is that the church doesn't help people find their destiny, and so the sheep will start to eat in other pastures because they are in want. When sheep begin to eat in other pastures, this should worry you, that means that something is potentially deficient in the life of your church. The other

possibility is that the sheep could be rebellious, and in that case, they will do what they want no matter what you do. You need to ask yourself this as a leader: 'What diet do the people need, and am I giving it to them?'

We can run around addressing and talking about every trend that makes headlines, but is that what the people need? The issue might look like something at face value but be much more profound when we look closely at it. For example, we see that the femicide movement is getting a lot of attention on social media and in the news; but the real and much more profound issue in our country is that we don't have fathers. If you just look at something from face value, you'll end up trying to fix the wrong thing. Here is a sobering question: what can we, as leaders and shepherds, change in this country? If there are no consequences for sin, we will sin. Without the fear of the Lord, we will bend the rules. I see that in my daughter. If there is no consequence to her actions, she will do whatever she wants to. But she knows that if I look at her a certain way, and she then goes any further, there will be dire consequences. This then will make her pull back and stop doing what she was doing.

God designed pain as a good thing. Pain teaches you not to do certain things. Leprosy is a disease where you lose the ability to feel, and so you could keep hurting yourself and not realize it. Eventually, your body is going to get damaged and infected; and at some point, you start to die because you have lost the ability to feel pain. In a way, pain is your friend. It teaches you what is enough. Nature itself teaches us that the consequences of our actions caution us not to do stupid things. If you take consequence away from society and society will run amuck.

I can't fix my country. It's not my job. I'm not here to make South Africa a better place. I won't fight that battle because it's civilian affairs. The world belongs to the devil, and I personally believe that the world is just going to get worse as the devil gets increasing power. I can't stop that, that is something that has been preordained before time began. The Bible says the world will go mad - it's something that God is allowing, and I won't try to fight against that. But as the world goes mad, I hope that I can build something that shows the world that the church cannot be shaken. The church is a refuge. While the world is drowning in a flood, we have an ark; and all who want to join are welcome.

These are just some examples of battles that we as leaders are going to face, and we need to decide what we will address or not address. What is your fight as a leader? Your fight is to build the church. Good questions to ask are:

1. What are you asked to fix by Jesus?

2. What area of responsibility has He given you?

We are called to build an ark while the world starts to sink. The good news is that as things get worse, everything that was once secure becomes insecure. The Bible says that everything that can be shaken will be shaken; so that that which cannot shake will be shown. So do not shake when our country shakes. Don't run because everyone else runs. You are the Lord's and not your own. Your life is not your own. You belong to Jesus. Jesus has put you somewhere on purpose; you do not have the right just to pick up your life. If you pick up your life and run off somewhere, you might end up running away from Jesus. As a leader, you need to think about how you can teach people these things. How do you help the people have nothing wanting; that even when they see the flood coming, they are not shaken. You need to give the people true security, not a false one. You could quote a Scripture out of context that makes it sound like nothing horrible will ever happen to them. A lot of pastors do this, but this is false security. The reality is that bad things can happen to us, but when it happens, shine Jesus. Remember that your life is a little blip, and then it's gone, but your life is valuable and precious to God. Remember that you live for eternity and not for the present.

If we build well with our people, then when the storm comes, the church won't shake. If we choose to build with things that are not secure, there will, unfortunately, come a collapse at some point. We can't give what the Bible doesn't provide. We need to provide the people with things that will keep them established and firm in their faith. Green pastures in Psalm 23 speaks of the food that you eat to live; this for us would be the Scriptures. Our job as leaders is to present a good and balanced theology diet. People will ultimately behave according to what they believe.

An example of a bad diet is a story about my horse. I grew up on a farm in Elgin, and I had a horse named Molly. There was a pasture next to our house that grew lucerne, and one day my horse got into this pasture. Now, lucerne is extremely rich food, it's the equivalent of ice cream for humans. The next morning when I went outside, she was standing still, unable to move, and her stomach has swollen to about twice it's normal size. I could see that my horse was in absolute agony. We phoned the vet, and he ended up telling us that she had eaten so much lucerne that if we don't do something to help her, she will die. The vet then had to puncture her stomach to drain out the food and flush her system. Moral of the story: any truth that is taken too far, any truth stretched and taken out of context, becomes untruth, and then starts to kill. Good leadership is the ability to hold these truths in tension so that people understand and get the diet they need.

If we are honest, most of us prefer hearing about the love of God rather than the wrath of God. If I told you every week that God loves you, you would think it's fantastic. But when I start saying things that

people don't like to hear, I get flack. Why? Because people want what they want. The Bible says that the end time generation, our generation, will gather teachers around them to tell them what they want to hear! This means that I can say something, and if they don't like it, they can Google and find something different. But as a shepherd, you are called to give people what they need, not what they want. If you are planting a church, get perspective about what you are teaching. Ask guys to provide you with feedback on what you have been saying and teaching. If you are preaching 'God loves you,' every single week, you will have a problem. If you are preaching 'God is going to judge you,' every single week, you will have a problem. You have to give them green pastures – the Scriptures.

How do we lead people without putting bondage on them, and how do we lead them so that they start to see what they need? Leading someone means taking them where they don't want to go. Ideally, a good leader will be able to make the people want to go, because there is good pasture for them. As a leader, you need to help the sheep understand that you want what is best for them, not for yourself. Leadership is a big part of what shepherding is all about. When our church was much smaller, I would go through the list of the people in our care and pray for them each week. I would ask what God sees for them. I would ask what is in their lives, that's getting in the way of them walking into all that He has for them. Are you looking at your sheep and asking: 'What is their destiny in Christ Jesus?' When the sheep sense that you think this way about them, they find it easy to follow you. Don't think corporate, think individual. Never put a full stop at the end of a person, when you try to define them. Never do that. People change, and God gives them fresh grace. If you leave a comma at the end of each person, you're leaving space for them to become more and more and more. People can surprise you, and it's because in the secret place they are walking with the Great Shepherd. Teach the people how to walk with the Holy Spirit. Teach them how to drink from the One who is life itself.

People will come into the Church broken, broken marriages, families, and relationships and even when sheep are doing well, some backslide. They slip away. It is then a shepherd's job to find them and draw them back – to restore them. In Ezekiel God says the following about the shepherds of Israel:

You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. (Ez 34:4 NIV)

If you wait too long when a person starts to slip away, you will lose them. If you notice that someone wasn't at church, phone them. Check-in and see if they are alright. The Bible says, not to forsake the gathering of the saints. We come together on the Lord's day to worship the Lord and to grow in our faith. The Bible commands us not to miss that time. If you miss meals, you will become malnourished,

and you're not playing your part in the body of Christ. If someone is not coming to church, check up on them, phone them, try to meet with them. Until a sheep says that you are not responsible for them anymore, you are still accountable before Jesus. It is, therefore, essential to know what is going on in their lives.

This way of leading the people teaches them that they are, in a sense, your children. That they have a part to play in the house and that they are not orphans. What they do affects the whole household, and we belong one to another. Paul says the following to Timothy:

Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Tim 4:2 NIV)

You cannot bully people into the Kingdom, teach them to obey for the right reasons. Teach them Kingdom values and help them to desire them for themselves. Would you rather be in a church where no one cared what you did, or in a church where someone was thinking about, and considering your destiny in Christ? Wouldn't you want to be under a leader whose goal is to present you perfectly shaped, moulded, loved, and cared for? Leading the church properly is all about caring for it.

Remember, if you are faithful with little, God will increase and enlarge your sphere of influence. There are not a lot of people who love God's sheep enough to do and endure these things, but I pray that you will. I pray that you will do your job well as a shepherd of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Session 14

Church Discipline

I want to start this section with the following question: 'What happens when there's somebody that's been in the church for several years, they know all the things that I've been saying, but they're still kind of doing Jesus on their terms and not really coming through, listening, or you know, following in any sense?' What do you do with them? This is what I've done with them; I've said to them, "Could we have coffee?" Then I'll sit down, and I'll say to the person, "Look, the Bible says that I'm going to give an account for your life as a shepherd, but you never listen to me, so obviously to you, I'm not really a shepherd. So I'm going to ask, you're welcome to keep coming to JoshGen, you're welcome to keep visiting, but could I take you off our membership because I don't want to give an account before the Lord for your life. So, you're welcome to keep visiting, we love you, but I don't want to give it account for you. So, could you agree to release me from that?"

Normally, most people at that point think, "What?!", and realize that you're not messing around and come through. I'm not joking when I say that I don't want to give an account for some people. Again, with a new Christian, cover with grace, allow them to grow, but if they're wilfully, stubbornly not obeying the Lord, I don't want to stand before Jesus for them. So, I would ask if they could release me from the responsibility of their lives?

I did that with a church recently, a church in Hoedspruit; Uncle Ivan wasn't listening, I asked him to release us. He tore away from us at the end. But then everything that I said would happen happened, and he ended up coming back repenting, phoned me and apologized. Today, Hoedspruit is partnering with us, and Ivan will be at the conference. That was a whole church, it wasn't just an individual. Does this make sense? Remember that God's not mucking around with these things, He died on a cross, and so we're not mucking around. This is serious stuff before the Lord Jesus. Does that answer the question?

So, I'm going to jump off of shepherding, because one of the things in shepherding is, 'Your rod and your staff, they comfort me' (Ps 23:4). It's interesting because it's a rod, and it is used to comfort. What we maybe don't realize is that because the shepherd understood that the sheep would need to follow him when he walked, but some sheep don't - they get excited, they smell flowers, and they run off. So, the shepherd will generally go, and he will take that sheep and try and draw it close. At some point, if a sheep keeps wandering, he's got one or two options. He's going to lose that sheep, so what a shepherd

would do, and I kid you not, the shepherd would break the leg of the sheep so it couldn't walk, it couldn't wander, and then he would put the sheep on his shoulders and carry it on his back for the time it took for that sheep's leg to heal. The hope was that through nearness to the shepherd over that time; the sheep would become accustomed to him. Then, when its leg finally healed, he could put it down and the sheep would follow him. When David says, 'Your rod comforts me,' it actually speaks of discipline, and a rod can bring comfort because it brings security.

I know that I'm saying things that go against what our generation believes. Remember, though that our generation has been brainwashed. So, I don't have time to reason through why the rod is a valuable lesson that God uses. The truth is that the word used for the discipline of God is that he beats us with a rod. Who has ever been disciplined by God? Didn't it feel like a big stick to you? It has felt like that to me. It's been like, "Oh my goodness! God, that was sore, I never want to do that again." Because the Lord is a good father and the Bible says that, if you're not being disciplined, you're not a true son, the Lord needs to discipline us. So, as much as our generation might not like that, this is the way of our Father. This is how it works in His house.

So, one of the things that happen in every church is you come to that point where somebody in the church for whatever reason starts to wilfully, stubbornly just ignore the things of God, and sin. I'm not talking about slipping away or backsliding, I'm talking about sin; like he falls in love with somebody that he shouldn't fall in love with, and he does things, or she does things that she shouldn't be doing, or they steal money, or they do something else, and it comes out and they're still saying, "No, Jesus loves me. I'm a Christian." As a shepherd you have a problem now. David spoke about the rod comforting. Now we have to consider how to apply the rod biblically in that situation in the church. So, I want to look at church discipline, which is arguably one of the most difficult things that any leader has to do in the house of God. Especially today, because this generation is allergic to the concept, which is why it's such a mess. We have to teach it as a way of the Lord. So, in 1 Corinthians 5, Paul tells us how it works, and I'll start with the bomb, and then we'll take a step back and start building up nicely to it.

So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. (1 Cor 5:4-5 NIV)

So, Paul's speaking, he's not there, but as an apostle, he's saying, 'I'm telling you what to do. I'm not there with you, I'm standing with you in spirit' So, Jesus is in the house, it's a church meeting, a full church meeting. This man that he's talking about was a young guy in the church that thought he was under grace. We can guess that his father had remarried, probably his wife had died, and he had remarried,

and the son decided that he liked his new mom, and so they started having a sexual relationship. The Corinthians thought this was amazing, and they were filled with pride, and they thought; 'isn't grace amazing, that a guy can sleep with his mom, and God loves him no matter what he does?' So, Paul writes to correct this bad teaching, he says, 'When you're together like that, you're to deliver this man to Satan.' In other words, hand him over; some translations say, 'give him over to Satan, for the destruction of his flesh.' Did you know that a shepherd is given the keys of authority, which is something again we don't like: authority. But Jesus said that it is a responsibility given, but with responsibility comes power.

The power given to shepherds is actually to hand somebody over to Satan. In other words, you're under the protection of God, the angels are watching over you, and that the church is there to care for you; and, when you are wilfully stubbornly sinful, the elder, the shepherd can say at this point, "God would you lift the protection off this person." Something happens then, in the spirit realm, that protection lifts and at that point, Satan has full access into the person's life, which means life is going to suck. Who wants to be handed over to Satan for a few weeks? He wants to steal, kill, and destroy - this is the New Testament. Then he says, and there's a point to this, "So that his flesh would be destroyed." Again, his flesh meaning the things in this world that he loves so much will start to kill him. Why would you want something in him to die? So that he might repent and that his spirit may be saved when the Lord returns. In other words, he's still alive, and he's still breathing oxygen, he can still turn back to God. Hopefully, the devil makes his life so horrible that he'll come to his senses like the prodigal and go, 'Jeez, I remember in my father's house even the slaves eat better than I'm eating.' This is in the hopes that he will return to the father's house and find grace in his time of need. But he must come to his senses; he must wilfully turn back so that he's saved when Jesus returns.

Have you got what I'm saying? Okay, how many of you heard this taught on a Sunday? It's one of those scriptures that doesn't often get brought out, but it's quite clearly done. So, this is quite serious; this is severe and to be honest, unfortunately, very seldomly does this happen. This, for me, is indicative that shepherds today in the church of God are not shepherding correctly because this is part of what it means to care for people. The point is never to hurt people, it's always to save; the point is always salvation on the day of the Lord.

So, I'll tell you a story about a young girl we had years ago, she's part of our church again, (she said I could share this story). She got saved with us and was coming through really well in her faith. She had a very broken past, a bad self-image and struggled with feeling a sense of worth. Growing up, she learned that men could give her a sense of worth; and so, she used to sleep around with guys a lot, because ultimately when a man showed her sexual affection, she felt that he loved her; even though he didn't

and he was just using her sexually. She became addicted to feeling that moment where somebody needed her, to the point where she kept having sex with guy upon guy, upon guy, upon guy. Then she got saved, which was in our church, and she was growing, but the challenge is that old problem, that old demon, that old situation in her, came back to haunt her, and she started feeling lonely and empty in the church. So, she started again falling back on what she once knew to give her security, which was men. She started sleeping around again, even though she was now in the church. It was quite a challenging situation, the church was still young, early days of JoshGen.

I remember trying to walk her through that process and praying with her. We fasted with her, and we trusted God with her. She would come weekly and say, "I've slipped again," and every week we would try and just be like, "come on," her name was Robin, "Robin, come on. Robin, come on, turn back to the Lord. Come on, let's stand with you." Every week, she would slip, but she would repent and the Bible says that God's mercies are new. The question for me always was this, was she genuinely repentant every week? I felt she was. I prayed it through, and it felt like she was just so broken, she didn't know how to get free. So, every week, there was forgiveness. Every week we prayed with her for the Lord to cover her sin. Then after a few months, she started doing a bit better, doing a bit better, and then eventually we were praising God when it was two weeks, then two and a half weeks, and I was like, "Yeah! We are growing."

Then she brought a guy to church one Sunday, he got saved that Sunday, and she took him out of the meeting, and she slept with him. We found out about it, I sat her down, and I said, "What happened?", and she said, "This is not a sin anymore because I love him, and he loves me, and we are going to get married." I said, "No, no, you don't understand, you're not married. One day when you're married, it's not a sin, but you are not yet married." She said, "No, but we are married spiritually. We've made a commitment to each other." I was like, "No, now that's not marriage. You are sinning." I explained it to her, and she said, "I'm not sinning." I begged her, and I said, "Please, please turn back, please!" She said, "I won't, I love him, he loves me, and God is happy with us when we do this." I had to say, "I'm going to have to discipline you. Please don't do this!" I prayed, and I begged, I said, "I'll wait for you outside the church on Sunday. Please, please, if you come to your senses, I'm waiting for you outside the door; but if you don't respond by Sunday night, I'm going to have to bring it to the church."

Sunday night came, and I remember we still met only in the evenings those days, and she didn't arrive. I stood outside for as long as I could, and I went in. For the first time, I think it was one of the first times in JoshGen, that we had to discipline one of our members. It was extremely difficult, I had to explain the whole teaching, try and help the church understand that it was redemptive, that God does this because

He loves us. I remember the church just weeping, and I think some of you were there. So, we wept, it was one of our sisters, we had fought for, we had prayed for, we'd, you know, really contended for her, and then she was gone.

For about a year she was gone, I never saw her, she just disappeared. That's heart-breaking because it's somebody that you love. About a year later, I was in the kitchen washing the dishes. This doesn't happen often, so I remember the moment. I looked down into our driveway, and I saw her car pull in, and she climbed out of her car. Her hair had fallen out of her head, and there were big bald patches. It had only been a year, but she looked like she'd aged 20 years in one year. She knocked on the door, and we went downstairs, Emsie and I, and she was standing there weeping and she was just saying, "Please take the discipline off of me." I said, "Are you repentant?", and she said, "Since you did that thing, my life has become hell. He broke up with me, and everything's gone wrong. I'm sick. My hair is falling out. It's like my life is hell. Please take me back." I said, "Are you repentant?", and she said she was.

We prayed with her and taught her about the forgiveness of God and how that covers. Then that Sunday, she came to church, I begged her to, she came to church, and she was restored and restored fully as though she had never sinned. I remember that evening; there was such a presence of God. We were weeping because a prodigal had come home. But there is a sense that as a shepherd, this is what the church has to learn to process. Because at the end of the day, that person's eternal soul is more important than that moment or that time of separation. The hope is that that separation will create such a pain in them that they would come back and remember that in the Father's house there is good food and there's a safe, secure place. So, I share that with you because we've had to do this.

I know of one situation where someone has been handed over to Satan, and the man dropped dead as it happened. It's not Mickey Mouse stuff; I don't think we understand the authority that Jesus gives to elders in our generation. It is not something to be trifled with; but this is something that is ultimately for redemption, and maybe to realize also what sin does, because I don't think we understand how dangerous sin is.

We'll look just now at different kinds of sin, because there are different kinds of sin. But in Joshua chapter one, God tells Joshua, to go into this land of Canaan, He's giving him this land. He's going to give him a victory, and He's going to give him success. They come to Jericho, and they won. They won the battle, the walls fell, and everyone celebrates. But then God says that Jericho is set apart for Him, nothing in Jericho must be taken: no treasures, no silver, no gold, nothing. This city is dedicated to the Lord. The rest of the cities they could take treasures from, but Jericho was the Lord's. And one man called Achan, in Joshua chapter seven, takes a treasure. No one sees it, and he hides it in his tent. Israel

goes into the next battle, and they get whipped. They go, "God, what happened? Why did we get whipped? People died!" The story goes that; God by the Spirit eventually leads Joshua to Achan's tent, and he gets singled out, and he confesses, "Yes I took what God said I mustn't take." What he did caused Israel to lose a battle, and it caused people in Israel who were innocent to die.

The Bible speaks about us being a body, that we're connected. The Bible also speaks about a little bit of yeast working through a whole batch. In other words, if I put a little bit of yeast in bread, the whole bread rises; so, if one part of the body sins, the whole body sins. So, what you do in the church is a big deal. Again, we don't think that way in our western thinking. We just think it's just Jesus and me. No! You were put into the body; you were put into a church. Maybe to illustrate a story of what that is like - I'll tell you my spider story. Several years ago, I was bitten by a spider on my leg and literally, that thing got worse and worse and worse, until eventually I was told that I might lose my leg. They were talking about amputating my leg, which wasn't really what I wanted to hear. I went through excruciating pain.

I'll tell you the story for those of you that haven't heard it before. So, I get this little mosquito bite on my leg, the next day, it's a bit sore, next day it's a bit sorer. I think on the third, or fourth, night I woke up in agony. I woke up because the sheet had touched my leg. My leg was bright red, and there was a big hole now starting to form in my leg. I phoned Morne, who is now one of our elders, he's now in Mossel Bay, he was a pharmacist; and I said, "Morne, there's something wrong with my leg." I was flying to America the next day. I said, "Please come and help." He takes one look at my leg, and he said, "Andrew, you've been bitten by a spider, it's a violin spider. They climb in your bed at night, and they bite you. It's the same poison that a puffadder has. The poison eats your flesh. Your flesh has been eaten to the point that you've now got septicaemia. In other words, the infection has gotten to the point that your cells are starting to destroy themselves. You need antibiotics, and you need a serious operation. You could lose your leg." I was like, "You're kidding! I could lose my leg?!"

I phoned a doctor, his name was Edwin, and I said to him, "Edwin, I've got this serious problem. I'm flying to America tomorrow. Please come and look at my leg." He came to my house, looked at my leg and says, "You need to go to the hospital now, you could lose your leg. You might die if we don't fix this." I was like, "You're kidding?!" He says, "No, it's a spider bite, your body's now reacting to it." In other words, that little bit of yeast has now started to affect everything. He says, "You need to go and get put under, and they'll operate." I said to him, "No, I'm flying to America tomorrow because one of the guys that I see as an apostle has asked me to come and spend two weeks with him. There is no way that I'm going to miss that. Operate on my leg here, just inject me locally and do it." He said, "No, a local injection won't work because your leg is too far gone. So, we have to put you out." So, I said, "No, then just operate

without anything." So, he did. My leg was so sore I couldn't touch it; I kid you not, I couldn't touch it. That's how sore it was. He pulled out a scalpel, he loaded it onto this like blade thing, and he went, "Ready?"; and he rolled up a towel, wet it, and put it in my mouth - and it was at that point that I was a little bit nervous. Then he went, "One, two, three", and he stabbed it and 'bang!' into my leg, and pus just popped. I remember I was just in agony; they had to bring a bucket because I wanted to start vomiting from the pain. I had these cold feelings coming up inside of me.

So, then I thought, "Okay, it's done, and I'm fine." Now he goes, "No, no, no, I've got to clean the wound out." So, he starts squeezing it with both hands. At this point, I was biting the towel and I was in and out of consciousness from the pain. I've never felt pain like that is in my life. Finally, he squeezes everything out and at this point, I'm so weak, and these two guys are holding me down on each side. I almost pass out. Then he said that he needs to clean it out properly. He boiled the kettle, and got an injection, like a horse injection, those big ones, and fills it with boiling water; injects into my leg and goes, "one, two," and squeezes boiling water into the wound, so that he can cauterize it from the inside out. At this point, I fainted. I was out, they carried me downstairs. I vaguely remember being dragged down the stairs and put into bed. I flew to America the next day. But I can tell you this - the pain of that experience was so bad, that had I known, I would have rather had my leg chopped off under anaesthetic. That was pain that I'd never experienced before and all that started because of a little spider bite that didn't get attention when it should have.

The Bible says, 'A little bit of yeast works the whole batch of dough,' and in the Corinthian church, I want to remind you that, because some people were sinning in that church; Paul said to them, "Some of you are sick, and some of you are dying because you're breaking bread in a way that is not reflecting the Lord Jesus properly." So please understand, when you're part of a church, it can bring a huge blessing, but it can also bring a huge curse. The bottom line is, if you're in a church where this is not being done correctly, it can kill you.

I always ask people when they join our church, how many people have you ever seen church disciplined before? Very few churches will ever do this because they don't care, and they don't understand God, the Word of God, and the ways of God. God is very clear about how this needs to be done. Martin Luther, the great reformer, said this, "There are seven ingredients that are vital for any church to be a church. If these are not in place, it is not a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ." I'm going to give you his fourth ingredient, and I'm quoting him, "God's people or holy Christians are recognized by the office of the keys, that's discipline exercised publicly. That is as Christ decrees in Matthew 18:15 - 20." We will look at this scripture:

"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector." "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (Matt 18:15-20 NIV)

"If a Christian sins he should be reprov'd, and if he does not mend his ways, he should be bound in his sin and cast out. If he does mend his way, he should be absolved. That is the office of the keys." Did you hear that? For Martin Luther, if church discipline is not being done, it's not a church. So, let's look at church discipline in a bit of detail. What does the Bible say about it?

Firstly, I want to say that there's sin, and there's sin. Did you know that? Most people know that sin is sin, and it kills. But there are different kinds of sin. All sin kills when it comes to God - but there is sin that is wilful, and there's sin that's not wilful. There's blatantly rebellious sin, and there is sin that's just, 'You don't know better.' There are consequences to these different kinds of sins.

If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray, and God will give them life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that. (1 Jhn 5:16 NIV)

Here we read, "If anyone sees his brother committing a sin." Now, please note this is not leading to death. So, he defines a kind of sin that doesn't kill you, okay, not leading to death. There's a sin that leads to death, and there's a way you deal with that. Then there's a sin that doesn't lead to death, and there's a way you deal with that. Did you see that? So, what's a sin that leads to death and a sin that doesn't lead to death? The bible does give us sins that lead to death. Sins that don't lead to death are probably this: if you see your brother speeding, maybe he's still smoking cigarettes - it's not a sin that leads to death. It's a sin, but it's not a sin that leads to death. Making bad decisions, like not tithing - is another sin that doesn't lead to death. Let's look at sins that the Bible gives us that lead to death. In other words, if these things are not dealt with, they'll ultimately start to affect all of us.

But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. (1 Cor 5:11 NIV)

When sin comes that starts to lead to death that is clearly marked out in scripture, there's a response that the church needs to take. Paul says, "I'm writing to you, not to associate with someone who bears the name of brother," In other words, he is talking about a Christian. Here Paul mentions a few sins. Firstly, sexual immorality, in other words, if you sleep with your girlfriend or if you sleep with your boyfriend, it's a sin that leads to death, and it affects us. Paul tells us that there has to be a response. The church has to try and stop you doing that thing; because that thing is not only going to kill you, but it's going to kill us.

How about greed? Greed, have you ever seen someone disciplined for greed? This guy's a greedy man. He just lives for money. Or an idolater? Someone who worships something more than they worship God. A reviler- a slanderer, someone who gossips and speaks out against others that he doesn't have a right to speak out about. A drunkard, drug addict, same thing. Or a swindler, in other words, someone that is stealing money on the side. These are some of the sins that Paul gives us here that are sins that we have to deal with if he carries on in sin, if he's not repentant, such a person. If they are doing that, then he gives us how the process works - the consequence of a person that doesn't repent for these sins is, don't even eat with a person like that. Are you with me? You guys are looking shocked, "Like is this actually in the Bible?" To remind you of how dangerous sin is;

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. (Rom 16:17 NIV)

In other words, don't spend time with them. Don't hang out with them; because, like yeast, they will spread throughout you and infect you.

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! (Gal 1:8 NIV)

Here he's talking about people that are causing divisions in the church and creating obstacles contrary to the doctrine. They're teaching bad doctrine. If someone preaches false grace, don't spend time with that person; it's like he's cursed.

If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. (Matt 18:15 NIV)

This is the process that we learn; if you see your brother sinning against you, maybe your brother steals from you, or he's doing something against me; I need to go to him just between the two of us and say,

“Leonard, please stop what you’re doing. You’re preaching false doctrine, and I heard you preach it, and it's actually affecting me. Please would you stop it.” Leonard, if he listens, you have won your brother. Leonard goes, “Geez bru, thanks for loving me enough to care. A brother speaks the truth. The wounds of a friend can be trusted. I'm sorry.” Then it's under the blood of Jesus, and we move on. But if he doesn't listen, and he says to me, “No, no, no, no - I'm right, you're wrong.” Take one or two others along with you.

Then you're going to get on the phone to Russell or one of the other guys, and you say, “Hey, we've got a situation here. I've spoken to Leonard, and he's teaching guys that they can sleep with their girlfriends; I've been saying they can't. Please could you help.” Then the elders get involved, and others get involved, and they say, “Leonard, you need to stop it.” Two or more, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Because this is now becoming a big deal. Okay. So, two or three witnesses are there, because Leonard is going to twist the facts. If you speak to Leonard, he's going to say that he was right, and they were wrong. That is normally how it goes down. So, we need witnesses now to make sure that what the elders are saying is true. Then if he refuses to listen to all of them, tell it to the church.

Now we jump to the scripture we started with, “When you are together in the presence of the Lord Jesus, bring it to the church. If he refuses to listen to the church”... in other words, he's still not repentant... “treat him as a Gentile or a tax collector.” He’s talking to Jews here. I'll give you an example of how Jews despise Gentiles. When I was in Israel for the first time, I went to the Wailing Wall. I went to the bathroom afterward, to wash my hands and have a glass of water. I was at the tap, I touched the tap, and a Jewish rabbi came in, or a proper devout Jew, he walked to the counter next to mine, he was about to touch the tap, and he saw me next to him, and he jumped back from the tap, like in horror. I was completely surprised. I saw there was a jug there, and he washed his hands with the jug. He wouldn't touch the tap because to a Jew; if a Gentile has touched that tap and he touches it, he becomes unclean. Somehow my sin could infect him. The Bible says that we should hate even clothing stained by corrupted flesh. In other words, sin is so dangerous that if someone sins in clothing, that clothing could somehow corrupt you. That's the New Testament. Remember, hankies that had been touched by the apostles were passed out to sick people, and they were healed. So, materials, inanimate objects, can actually carry sin and blessing. Did you know that?

So, when the Bible says, hating clothing stained by corrupted flesh, do you understand how serious sin is? Paul goes on to say, “I'm not talking about the world, you are in the world, but you're not of the world.” They are not part of the body that you are, and so they can't infect you, because they are not

bound to you. So, you can spend time with sinners in the world; they can eat, drink, and party. You can sit with them, and it's okay. Just don't you get corrupted by what they're doing, because you'll open the door into yourself, and then through that into the body. Does that make sense?

The point is this; remembering how good your supper was, is supposed to make them want to be restored. If you have supper with them, you're just going to be corrupted potentially by them; because they don't feel the pain and the consequence of the relational break, which is what the Bible wants them to feel. They've lost relations with God actually, and the proof of that is, they've lost relationship with His body. Does that make sense?

So, the challenge is this: a lot of people feel that they could be the one that could bring that person back. Please understand, it's the elders who sat at the city gates in Israel, they were the ones who opened the doors and closed the doors for who would come into the city; the elders are the ones who lock him out, the elders are the ones who will bring him back. It's not your place. It's not your calling. The elders are given the keys; you are not. So, don't go around the elders and say, "Well, I love him, and he's still my friend."

I'll give you the example of my sister, who is here tonight. My sister was involved in leadership in another church and started having an immoral relationship outside of her marriage. So, we had this challenge, because she's calling herself a Christian, but she's acting like she's not one, and she's my sister. Please understand, we are a close family; she's sitting there because I think she'd take a bullet for me even now. If you came in with a gun, I think she'll dive in front happily and take the bullet for me. That's the love we have between each other. She sinned, and I went to her, and I said, "Janette, you need to stop it." She said, "No, I'm not going to." So, what we did as a family, our whole family, my mother and my father who weren't even properly Christians then - they got saved after that - we all had to cut her off as though she were dead.

For a year, I didn't see my sister. I mean, you must know what that did to us as a family. After a year, she came to her senses, and she repented, and she came back, and she was fully restored. Today they're on eldership with us. She said this, and she's given me permission to share that, she said this, "If the family had not cut me off as they did, I would have carried on in my sin. But it got to the point that I couldn't bare being cut off from those that I knew loved me." There is this redemptive nature of discipline, that, you see, for me, if we had not done that, forever and ever and ever, my sister might have been cut off from Christ, and would spend an eternity separated from us. But because she repented and came to her senses, I'm going to spend forever with her. God has restored to her what she messed up, and that's the

nature of our God. God always wants to redeem. He's a father that wants to fix. But where we wilfully sin, there are consequences to our actions.

The church needs to have the courage to love in this way. So, the Bible says we have to confront the brother in sin.

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. (Gal 6:1 NIV)

Don't go, "You sinner!" But go, "Hey, please, what you're doing is wrong, please stop it." Remember, there's a nature to that sin, it might even pull you in. So, when someone sins, they justify themselves. When you speak to someone that's offended in the church, you just sit down over dinner with one of those people; they would tell you stories about us that aren't necessarily always reflecting the truth because of offense. The danger is that now you are going to be infected by them.

Every matter must be established by two more witnesses, everything. Does this make sense? So be careful, but you must try and bring them back. And then in Corinthians, Paul says:

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked person from among you." (1 Cor 5:1 -12 NIV)

This is the guy I was telling you about earlier. Let him be taken away from you. Let him be cut off from you. In other words, Paul's judged this guy, and he says you've got to do the same, but where does that

happen? In Ephesians 5, we're told to expose these things in a public place. In Matthew 18 verse 11, we are told that we must tell it to the church.

Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. (Eph 5:11 NIV)

For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. (Matt 18:11 NIV)

So, at some point, these things have to be brought to the church. As a church leader, it is your responsibility to steward this well. Remember that the heart is to restore. To restore, to fix, to redeem, it's the nature of our God, but there are consequences to what they're doing.

So how do you treat a person when they are in that place when they're unrepentant? Well in Matthew 18:15, it says like a pagan or a tax collector. In other words, you won't touch the plate from which he's eating. In Titus it says,

Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned. (Tit 3:10-11 NIV)

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. (1 Cor 5:9 NIV)

Do you get this? There's a cutting off until repentance happens. But what happens when repentance happens? In 2 Corinthians 2, the guy that Paul disciplines in 1 Corinthians repents, and Paul writes a second letter; and let's see what he says about how to bring this guy back once he's repentant:

If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (2 Cor 2:5-11 NIV)

In other words, it hurts to do this for me, but it hurts you also to do this to a brother. Then he says, there had been a punishment, and he'd felt it. So now that the guy's repentant, comfort him. So, when someone repents, what happens? We treat him as though he's never sinned. In other words, when that lady I told you about earlier repented, I said to the church, "If one of you looks down your nose at her - woe to you. All of us have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God, and we've all found grace and

mercy in our time of need. Now that she's come to the Lord and said 'forgive me' - God has forgiven and if God forgives, it's as though she's never sinned. He has thrown her sin into the sea. Now we treat her like a sister, we love her, and we want to see her restored. Because the heart is always to redeem."

What happens when the leader sins? There's a different standard. Remember that we've been given a trust. There's a different authority, but with that comes a different standard. So, when a saint sins, somebody's got to go to them first and say, "Stop doing what you're doing," and they get a chance to repent and say, "I'm sorry, I've sinned." Then it's under the blood, it doesn't come to the church; it's covered. In other words, if you sleep around and you come to the elders, and we say, "What are you doing?" You say, "I messed up, can you forgive me?" "Are you repentant?" "Yes." "You're forgiven, Christ forgives you." Then it's under the blood; no one needs to know, we move forward.

If you're pregnant, okay, now it's a little complicated, because everyone's going to see the consequence of your sin. So, we can't just ignore this because it's not immaculate conception, and we're a community. So now, while you've been forgiven, we might have to help the congregation understand that there might have been sin, but that that sin is dealt with by the blood of Jesus. This child will be brought up by us as a community as though the father had died. That child will be brought up in the blessing of this community because her forgiveness sanctifies the child, and we treat that child like she had a father who died. That child is blessed; he or she is under the blood of Jesus. But if she's not pregnant, the church doesn't need to know; she's repentant, it's gone, it's under the blood, let's move on.

But those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning. (1 Tim 5:20 NIV)

As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. (1 Tim 5:20 ESV)

Here we look at what happens when a leader sins. The ESV gives us a difficult translation, I'll explain why now. It's talking about elders who persist in sin. So, what does it mean by 'persist in sin'? The NIV says this, "those who sin." The King James says, "Those who sin." The New King James says, "Those who sin." In fact, most translations, the New Living Translation and the New Century Version, will also say, "Those who sin." The ESV actually translates it correctly; it's a more literal translation than the others. But when it's translated correctly, we've got to be careful to understand what is actually being said. Because it sounds like if an elder carries on sinning; in other words, after you've gone through the Matthew 18 process, and he's still sinning, now he's going to be rebuked publicly. But that makes no sense, because

why is an elder sinning? So, the persistent sin doesn't mean that he's stubbornly carrying on sinning. It means once he's made an elder, and we find out that he's still actually living in an area of sin. That's why the NIV and other translations don't use the word 'persist'; because the translators are going, "Man, people are going to misunderstand what the guys are trying to say here in the Greek." Does that make sense?

If an elder sins; and remember the example of this to back us up is when Peter sinned once. He was with a whole lot of Gentiles enjoying bacon, and some Jews arrived from Jerusalem, and he lived in fear of man. So, what he did was he moved away from the Gentiles because, remember, Jews didn't hang out with Gentiles, and he acted like he wasn't eating bacon. What did Paul do? Did Paul go to him quietly and say, "Peter Matthew 18 says, I need to come to you quietly, and just say do you know that what you've just done is sin. You might put the Gentiles into bondage." He doesn't do that. What does he do? In Galatians 5, he gets up in front of everyone and says, "Peter, you're a hypocrite!" Everyone was like, "Oh my goodness, what just happened in this church meeting?" He carries on, "And your hypocrisy has even led Barnabas and the other brothers astray. You know you can eat pork, you know you can hang out with Gentiles. But now in fear of these guys, you're compromising your faith." He rebukes him publicly because he's got a public office.

If I've got a public office, what I do is public; the Bible says that is so that others can learn from my example. In other words, if I have sex with somebody outside of marriage and I repent, it's still a public thing because I've been given a public office. So, if an elder sins, it needs to be brought to the church's attention, so that you can learn from the example.

He is talking about a leader/elder here, or can I say, an apostle or prophet - he's referring to someone in upfront governmental ministry, not deacons. Although if a deacon sinned, he would be stepped down. It might not be brought as much into the light, but he'd be disqualified from being a deacon because he's failing the character qualifications in Timothy and Titus. But if an elder sins, that sin will be named.

If I have an argument with my wife, it's not necessarily a public thing. But if I have regular arguments and our marriage is breaking down, then we would need to be brought into the public light. In fact, even if my children are acting too unruly, the Bible says I would need to be stepped down. Because if I can't bring my children up in the ways of the Lord, I'm disqualified from caring for God's spiritual children. So, these are the consequences of being an elder. It's a big thing.

So, remember we've got keys, we've got authority, there's a trust given, but at the same time you've got a public office, and you need to reflect Jesus well. In our church, if any of us sins, you'll know about it and

when you see elders getting stepped down in our church, and wonder why somebody else is getting stepped down, it's because we deal with it. The heart is always to redeem, always to restore. As much as you need to know, we would let you know. If it's an elder, if he sinned, we'll let you know. If it's something that's maybe is a bit more complicated, you'll just see the guy getting stepped down. You can be sure that if he's being stepped down it's because either something's broken that needs to be fixed or there's a sin that needs to be dealt with. If it is a clear sin, we would have to try and name it, so that you understand why we're doing what we're doing. The heart is so that there can be peace in the community, that the church can understand the ways of the Lord, and that you can learn and go, "Oh my goodness, I better not do what he just did." So that you learn from his example, the good example and the bad. Does this make sense?

If you plant a church, you might not have membership yet. Membership is something you have to teach on, and train and have people want. So, what do you do with a brand-new Christian, he's just got saved; he just got baptized, but he's still doing things he shouldn't be doing? I always feel that there is grace that covers for a season with a new Christian. So, you don't get on his case for everything that he's doing wrong, because you want the Holy Spirit to convict him. If he's living with his girlfriend when he joins your church, or he comes to your church, and he gets saved one Sunday. Now you've got a guy sleeping with his girlfriend, and that is not a good reflection of Christ. If that thing doesn't get dealt with, that will become a value in the church. Everyone will be sleeping with their girlfriends.

So, what do we do? This is what you do as a leader, "Jesus - please speak to him. Please speak to him." Then you teach foundations, you teach about sin, and you allow him to come to his senses. Invariably, if he's walking with the Holy Spirit, it's not long, and God will begin to convict him of that thing and he'll bring it up on his own, and he'll say, "Man, I'm starting to feel so weird about sleeping with my girlfriend." You will be going, "Thank you, Jesus, that you've done that." Then you'll then walk him through the process and can I say as a church planter, you've got to help him because he might come up with, "But we can't afford to live if we don't live with each other." Now you've got to say, "Okay, we love you enough to help you. Move into our house if you have to. But actually, we are so passionate about you breaking free from your sin, what can we do to help you?" So, you help him through from that place.

If he's been coming for three to four months, and if he's going to be joining the church as a member, I'm going to bring that up and say, "Okay I need to speak to you about something; I'd love for you to be a part of us, love to walk with you, love to present you before the Lord one day. But there is this one thing, you've been a Christian now for three months, has the Lord been speaking to you about sleeping with your girlfriend?" Then he does this, it is always complicated, "I did become convicted, and I'm not

sleeping with her anymore. We're just living under the same roof." So, it's never black and white. Now, what do you do? Because now are you saying, "I'm not sinning, I'm just living under the same roof." Is that not sin? The Bible says that you must not have even the appearance of evil among you. "Can I be honest with you?", I say to him, "I've slept with my girlfriend before I was saved. If I'm sleeping under the same roof as her, there is no way - and even if you can somehow, for the sake of others, you need to move out. If you love the brothers - move out. We'll help you to move out." So, you helped him walk through that process.

If he doesn't, don't let him join. If he is a member and he's part of the church, you've then got to start to challenge him. If he's sticking around for six to eight months, I'm going to challenging him anyway, even if he hasn't joined. I'd say, "Listen, actually what you're doing doesn't reflect Christ well. You call yourself a Christian, you call yourself a brother. You can't keep coming to us until you deal with this thing." So, you have to deal with these things.

I'll tell you a story. This is one of the most challenging parts of every church. The first time you do it, do yourself a favour and teach on it systematically because people struggle with this stuff. I remember in the early days of JoshGen, we dealt with these things, and it was so difficult. Eventually, people are like, "You're that legalistic church, and you're those guys..." Just the stories that got out. I was just like, "Jesus; I don't need this in my life. I'm just trying to be a good shepherd." Eventually people learned if they were sleeping with their girlfriend, they knew we'd find out because we're a community, and we'd go, "Hey!" Then he's like, "I'm leaving the church." I must confess I did this, as a coward, "Thank you, Jesus, that I don't have to be the bad guy. He's leaving the church. He knows he's wrong, I know he's wrong. Thank you, Jesus, that he's just leaving." We had two or three guys leave that way. I was just grateful that I wasn't the bad guy, disciplining them and handing them over to Satan, which kind of makes you look quite gnarly.

Then one Sunday, I was worshipping the Lord, and the Lord spoke to me, and He said to me, "Andrew - you're nothing like me." I was shocked, I got on my knees, and I asked, "Lord what do you mean?" And He said, "I discipline those that I love." That's when I realized that I was a coward, I wasn't dealing with them because it made me look bad. I realized from that point onward, no matter how difficult it was, I would do my best to reflect the Lord Jesus. It didn't matter what people said, didn't matter what churches around us said, this is the Word of God, and I need to do this well. What we found afterward is those that we disciplined, Mike Davies did this survey, and he said with those that left - none of those have ever come back, none have been restored; but those that we've disciplined, over 70 percent have repented and come back to the faith. I think there's a beautiful picture that discipline works, God's ways

work, our ways bring death. I've learned that as a leader. I wanted to give that to you as you go out there.

When someone leaves the church, we would normally call the community together and say to the guys, "Guys, this person is leaving the church, here's why: there is wilful, stubborn sin." We need to do that because the community needs to understand. Because let's be honest, when someone leaves the church, what does it do to you? What do you feel when someone leaves the church? Doesn't it feel horrible, like a divorce? It is like a part of the body that has been cut off. Where are they? Why have they left us? Sometimes they've left because they've loved sin more than they've loved God. It's good for us to know that so that we can also learn and go, "Oh my goodness, sin kills!" Then we'll even know how to pray. Because if you meet them on the streets, they're just going to say, "The Lord led me to another church, who won't deal with my sin." It's amazing how we spiritualize these things. But we live in the light, as He is in the light. The Bible says that is where true fellowship is found. We need to learn as a people of God to be more robust, and more in the light, because that's where God is.

One day everything done in secret will be shouted from the rooftops. Guys you are battling with porn, we're all going to know about it on that day. Everyone on that day, every single thing done; the things done in secret will be made known before the nations of the world. I just figured we need to get over that this side of eternity, that there are no surprises for us on that day. Because on that day it counts. I know most of you are here because you look up to me as a leader - you wouldn't come if you didn't. Imagine on that day, the day that really counts; my life video starts, and you see me looking at a woman with lust all the time, masturbating. What are you going to think? Because the Bible says everything that I do, everything will be made known. There'll be nothing hidden. Then God will judge, and we'll all know why He judged as he did.

As Christians, we know that day is coming, so I'd rather you know all my sin. Like - you need to know. If my video plays, I'm going to go: "Okay, my video is playing, you're going to enjoy this." Versus "Oh no!" Because you'll remember the stories I told, how I was a coward, and when you see my heart, you'll say, "He told us those things, but he was faithful because he dealt with it and his sin is under the blood." Does God reveal the fathers of our faith's sin? Did Abraham sin? Yeah. Did Peter sin? Yeah. Did Isaac? All of them! Do you love them and respect them? Yes. Because they walked with their God, and they found grace, and they broke through. We don't have anything to be ashamed of on that day, but deal with your sin. We'll all see your battles, but we'll also see your victories. To him who overcomes, Jesus says, "I'll give you the right to eat with the tree of life. I'll give you the right. I'll give you a crown. I'll give you a reward."

Break free from sin! If you need help, go and speak to brothers, say, "Pray with me, stand with me." Don't hide your sin. You won't prosper. Bring it into the light because that's where freedom comes.

Session 15

Growing Together

In this section, I'm hoping to pick up on the subject of, 'Bringing Change'. Leadership is all about bringing people from one place into another place. If you're not taking people somewhere, you're not leading them! A lot of people don't think about that when they join a church, they kind of think; "I'm going to join a church because it's a comfortable place and I like the preacher, and I like the worship." But a true biblical church is a place where your leaders should always be developing you into more and bringing you into more. While that's great in theory and everyone thinks, "Yes, I do want to be more for Jesus!", change is a challenging thing to go through. Think of it this way, walking is change. If I stand still, I'm in a pretty secure place and I'll be comfortable; but when I move forward, I have to lift a foot and that puts me in a vulnerable place until I find my next step.

When you're moving, often where you're going is unknown, you've never been this way before. It's scary, and we tend to want to go back to what we're comfortable with, what we know. In church plants, or if you take over a church or even in a homegroup, the reality of it is that people have usually developed several bad habits, bad patterns and sometimes bad theology. Our job as leaders is to try to help them to move out of that space and into a new space; and that is arguably one of the greatest challenges of leadership. Because people, as much they say outwardly that they want it; inwardly they often don't! We're creatures of habit, and it's easier to go back to what we know than changing into something different; or moving forward.

I hope to help you bring people with you on the journey, because that's what you have to do, you have to make disciples. That means you have to develop people into all that God has for them to be. These principles that we're going to look at will work whether you lead a church or you are an elder, a deacon or a home group leader, whether you are a mom or dad, or whether you are a pet owner! Even in the marketplace, there'll be some of these principles, although the marketplace often operates very differently, that you can apply too.

One of the key things you learn when you plant a church is that moving forward happens one step at a time. When we planted JoshGen, there were none of the values that we live in today. I mean, there was a bunch of us that didn't have jobs, meeting in a home, and we had a dream of a church that would worship a certain way. We had a vision of a church where people would hang out with each other. There

was a certain way we wanted to pray etc., and so each of these things had to be taught. We were taking this raw group of people and starting to try and develop them into something that could become a model or prototype, so that others could learn from them. The crazy thing is that we keep growing, new people keep coming in, and we need to develop in them these new cultures and new areas as well.

Often you don't realize how much your life can make a difference in the lives of those around you, even if you're not the one doing all the hard work in terms of setting the agenda. Even if you're "just" catching and modelling, that is a massive part of how change comes in the church! I need to say this, as a leader you need to realize that change happens one person at a time! One of the biggest mistakes I've seen leaders make is that they think they can vaguely do a broad teaching, and then expect everyone to move forward. When you do broad teachings, no one changes. You have to do broad teachings but then you have to apply it one-on-one with individuals.

If you're leading a congregation, when you're not seeing the saints you need to be thinking about them individually and you need to be thinking, "How do I help Pete develop into more?" You need to be doing this all the time, with every single individual. When you do this well, it's a beautiful feeling but when you don't, it's very depressing; especially when people fight you because they don't want to change, they don't want to move forward. You realize as a leader that you will often want people to change into the more glorious version of themselves, you'll want this more than they have want it! So, you have to try and take your time to help people discover what they could be; otherwise, they feel dragged somewhere by you, which no one likes. So, it takes quite a lot of skill if you are the one bringing the change. If you want to help others change, then become the change! You'll quickly become a role model that others will learn from. If you have to bring the change, it takes a lot of patience and a lot of skill. We have to learn and remember that a church changes one person at a time and from there other relating churches and nations change, one church at a time.

So ultimately, we always come back to the individual, that's where we have to start as leaders. I would encourage you if you are leading something, get the list of people that you are responsible for and spend time in prayer over those people! Spend time in prayer, asking God what He has for them because if you don't know what God has for them, how are you going to take them there? You almost have to dream with God about what He has for a person, really wait on the Lord until you have a sense of what it is. Then sometimes it's good to go over that list praying and trying to find out where each person is. In the early days of JoshGen, I would often go through the list, and I'd get to whoever it was, and I'd suddenly have this burden for them and invariably, I'd find out that this guy was going through something.

We have to bring people into a biblical culture. You have to bring people into what the Bible teaches, and you have to show people that it's what the Bible teaches. One of the great difficulties is that people come to the church with their own habits. You're saying that you want everyone to worship this particular way and they will say, "Well, that's just how you want to worship, that's just your style of worship. Different strokes for different folks; I'm a more conservative person. Why should I worship the way that you want me to worship?", and at the point you are at a checkmate. If you push it hard, they'll simply leave and go to a church that will let them worship the way they want to worship. You must show them that this is how God wants you to worship, that this is what the Bible says. If you can't show it to them in the Bible and convince them that it applies to them then ultimately, you're not going to get them to change. Instead, they're just going to leave. So, whenever you want to bring change, first ask yourself, "Do I read this in the Bible?"

Culture has to do with my values, for example, when I was brought up in the Anglican Church, I had a particular church culture, a particular Christian culture. My culture was this, I'd go to church on a Sunday, because that's what I thought God wanted, and that was what the church taught. I was never taught more than that. I would sit in church, and the priest would come in, and I would say, "Hello, father," and he'd say, "Hello, son," and then he would say, "Would the congregation please stand," and I would stand. Then, there was a little book we used to read through called the pew liturgy book, and the priest would say, "The Lord be with you," and we would say, "And also with you." Then he would say, "Praise the name of the Lord," and we would have a set response to that too. This was Christianity; this was the culture; this was what I thought church was. When I visited a charismatic church for the first time, and people were lifting their hands and speaking in tongues and clapping, I was freaked out! I thought they were very strange. I felt that I was probably more reasonable as a Christian, and they were the weird ones. I wanted to get away from them. I thought, "I don't like these people. I don't want to be near them." So, the culture that I had, that Christian culture, actually stopped me from seeing what I needed from these people. It wasn't until I had an encounter with God that I was convinced that I didn't know God, or what God wanted. That was my born-again experience.

When people join your home group or the church you're leading, you have to realize they come in with their own idea of what God likes. That is very challenging because the first time you do something different to what they think they know they write you off as being a bit of an extremist. They're going to find a sub-category box that they can fit you into and if they can keep you in that box, then they don't have to become what you are. They'll think, "You are just an extravagant, extreme person and I'm not so it's fine. Good for you, you go dance in the front and do your little wiggle, but God sees the heart, and God sees that I love Him. I can stand at the back." Then they're going to find scriptures to justify what

they do. They'll say, "The Bible says, 'Don't do things for others to see' and it looks like you may be doing things for others to see. Why do you have to stand in the front, waving your hands? It's more spiritual not to lift my hands because then I'm not doing it for people."

So, you're thinking, "How am I going to help this person to change?" Pretty much any visitor that walks into this church is going to sub-categorize us. They'll say, "These guys are the extreme edge of Charismania. They don't know how to read their Bibles. They're weird and extreme. So, I'll endure the meeting, and then I'll leave." Unless they encounter God powerfully or you can show them that your culture is biblical; you won't keep them. So, a church plant is challenged, and in fact, all of us are challenged. We have a small window in which we can try and hook those people with enough of the truth that they will stick around long enough so that we can start to help them to change; and that is a journey of note.

Leadership takes a lot of patience, and you have to be very careful. Imagine you're in the church, you're single, and God tells you that you're going to marry this person. This is not how to do it, you don't say, "Hi. I've never met you, but God told me I'm going to marry you." Because very often the likelihood is, unless you look like Brad Pitt, the chances are she's going to run a mile! She's going to think, "This is too much, too fast! I can't process this!" So, you should move slowly! In many ways, as a leader, you have to do the same. Sometimes I'll hang out with an unbeliever, and they can make the most outrageous statements about Jesus, and I'm won't correct them because I haven't got a bridge yet with them. If they blaspheme, I'm not going to stop them. I'm not going to say, "Oh, don't do that!" When people were ripping out Jesus' beard, Jesus didn't say, "Do You KNOW Who I Am?" He simply prayed, "Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing." So, I'm just going to wait; I'm going to take my time and little by little, I'm going to build bridges with you until I can cross some of those bridges. It's the same when people join the church.

If you come across too strong too quickly, visitors will run a mile, unless they are radically switched on for God, and they want that kind of thing; you have to discern! There was a young couple who came to me, and quickly I could pick up they were believers, that they had even been in ministry and I immediately asked a few questions and picked up that they were looking for a church. Then they started sharing about how they'd walked in here and that this was different from anything they had ever experienced, in so many ways. They had a lot of the questions, and the longings of their heart felt like they had found answers with us.

In meeting this couple, I could sense that they needed what we have and long term, I thought that this couple could one day even possibly lead something. It was going to be a journey, but there was

something on them. I felt there was a strong bridge that was starting to form, and so I did something I don't easily do, I said to them, "You know, I think God brought you here because He wants you to join us." I think I've only ever done that once before. I said to them, "You must understand, I don't say this easily; I don't say this every week." This couple had said that they had found me incredibly honest in the preach, so I said, "I know you can discern that I'm going to tell you what I believe. I am not a man-pleaser." They answered that yes, they knew that would be the case. I said, "I'm going to tell you what I think God's saying, and please weigh this up, measure this." For me right there, I'm trying to see if I can bring change quickly. I knew I had that bridge there but until I've got that bridge with you, I'm going to wait. I'm going to love you, and I'm going to make it so cool to be near me that you want to come back. I'm going to make it so that you get something here that's attractive enough that you will want to come back.

In the apostolic ministry, when I come into a church for the first time, I do not preach my hard preaches, because they're just going to think, "This guy is nuts!" It's too strong. Instead, I start like this, "Jesus loves you guys so much, you're the apple of His eye!" Then in listening to me they're thinking, "Aah, I love it when this guy preaches!" What I'm doing is, I'm bringing you my nicest gentle Jesus. Then once they've got the idea that they like to listen to me, then I'm going to start cranking it up. Once I can see that I have their hearts, and you have to gauge it carefully. I think in many ways as a leader, you have to realize you have to build a bridge with a person before you can dare to demand change. So, take your time. Realize that it takes time! Joshua 1:3 says:

I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. (Josh 1:3 NIV)

God was saying to Israel, "Every step you take, step by step, you will inherit the promised land." It's like that with people, it's step by step. But the cool thing is that every step taken is easier, because you start realizing, "Oh my goodness, it's kind of cool changing. I'm growing!" A culture of change becomes part of what happens. Fundamentally our job as leaders, in any shape, size, or form, is to CHANGE the way individuals think, see, act and to change the things they devote themselves to. So, if you're not thinking like that, you're not going to take anyone anywhere.

If you came to JoshGen when I was leading, if it was your first time here, I would change a whole message for you, to reach you. If I had prepared to build on, say, understanding community, and then I saw there was a new couple that I had met before the meeting started, and I picked something up there, I would change my whole message for them. I would neglect all my friends to connect with the new people. In fact, if I really like you, I'll probably neglect you. It's true, because you KNOW I like you, you

know I love you, and you know ME. You don't need me. I don't need people to know ME; I don't need them to love me, but I'll reach out if I believe that what God has given me is essential for them, and ultimately crucial for His Glory. So, all the time, I'm reaching out from my comfort zone to find people that are not in my bubble, trying to draw them in.

When I was still leading our Sunningdale congregation, if you visited, I would probably have supper with you that week or the following week. Because if I can't get you to know me a little bit, and like me, you're never going to follow me. I don't need you to follow me, YOU need you to follow me, to follow a Godly leader and follow well. So, it's a labour of love, especially because my life is people and sometimes, honestly, I get peopled out.

I have a little salt chlorinated pool, and I asked Julie de Lisle, my PA, to buy me some salt for the pool. So, she arrives at my house with the salt, and she says I'm going to have to get it from the car myself because it's two 25-kilogram bags of salt, so it's too heavy for her. So, I figured I'm going to do this once, I'm not going to walk twice, I'm lazy by nature. I picked up the two bags, one 25kg on each side, and I started trying to walk into the house. But, oh my goodness, this was a bit heavier than I thought it would be. By the time I got to the swimming pool, I was absolutely broken, and it was because I'd carried a heavy load. Now, if I wasn't carrying that load, I could have jogged that distance 20 times easily but because I was carrying a load, I got tired very quickly. This is the same principle when it comes to carrying a heavy load in ministry.

I carry a big load right now. The amount of stuff I've got to get to, and the people I've got to phone; I'm just permanently tired. So, when a Rugby World Cup happens, the thought of coming to a hall filled with people doesn't seem appealing. This would have been delightful for me when I was still leading just one congregation. I would just be thinking that there are people to love and find there! In reality right now though, I know a lot of you don't get a chance to get close to me, so if I walked through those doors a lot of you would forget about the rugby, and you'd just be thinking, "How do I get near that guy?" I know what it's like, I've been on the other side of things, but the reality is I won't just relax and enjoy the rugby. So, in the natural, I'd rather phone one of my mates and just watch rugby at their house because I don't have DSTV. But my life is not my own, so this Rugby World Cup, my friend, said, "Hey, a couple of us are going to get together at our house," and the flesh in me is like, "Hallelujah!" because they're my friends. They're not going to draw anything from me. But my friends don't need me, and I'm not around a lot, so I could use that as an opportunity to touch base with a lot of people.

So I arrived at the church for the final, and if you watched me, I was going up to people all around me, people that I did not know, and shaking hands and saying, "Hi, I haven't met you!" An African guy was

sitting next to me, and there were a lot of white people watching the rugby. He was the only black guy in a hall that was full, and the prevailing culture was very Afrikaans, and no one was connecting with him. It was bugging me so badly. This guy is not even in his own cultural framework of values, but he's here, and all the whitees are like, "Ja, hey, boet! Lekker!" I'm watching this guy sitting there, and I'm thinking, "Why is no one connecting with this guy?" So now I'm walking over to him, and I'm trying to chat with him. He didn't talk a lot; he was quite quiet. I was trying to engage with him like, "Hey! That was a cool try!" and he was like, "Mmm..." and I didn't even know his name. I mean, he did tell me his name, but for me, this is a moment to love people!

Now let me tell you something, when you're a leader, the new guys don't come up to you easily, only the confident ones will. You know, sometimes as leaders, we're also shy. I remember as a pastor, someone in the church, their mom died. It was the first time this had happened to me as a pastor and I was thinking, "What do I do? What do I say?" I phoned them, and I was so nervous, I didn't know what I was supposed to say. I was so nervous that I would maybe say something stupid, and it hurts them or offends them! But I've learned if I don't reach out, they're never going to know the love of God. So, I'm always reaching out. Watch guys whose home groups are growing the fastest, watch them on a Sunday, they're there with the visitors.

You would be amazed; it's not such a common thing for people to feel loved. Jesus said that they would know that we're His disciples by our love for each other. When people feel loved by you, it's very attractive to them. You become attractive to them because they feel a warmth coming from you and there's not a lot of warmth in this world. So, if you want to be an effective minister of the Gospel, you have to learn to reach out to others like Jesus reached out to you.

I want to remind you that it's not you that's attractive. When Jesus reached out to you, he was already perfectly happy in the fellowship of the Trinity. The members of the Trinity enjoyed each other. They are all so similar, all God. Jesus said, "If you see the Father, you see me!" Yet Jesus reaches out to us, those who are nothing like Him and not at all easy to love. He reaches out to those who are going to hurt Him and betray Him and let Him down and He loves us! That made Him attractive to us.

If I am in Christ, then He would want me not to just hang out with my friends, but to be always reaching out, always making space for one more. There is that song, "Make the circle bigger, bigger, bigger!" As a church planter, that's your theme song, you have to make the circle bigger. You want everyone in the community to join the church, so, make your circle bigger; don't close it down! Don't just be you and your three friends, reach out and draw others in!

We were growing very quickly at one stage, and people were asking us why we were growing so quickly and honestly, I didn't know. So, I thought, well maybe we should ask the people why they keep joining us. So, we put out an anonymous survey, "Why did you join JoshGen?" I think that by far the majority said this, "I have never in my life felt loved like I did when I walked through these doors." Honestly, I was a bit bummed that it wasn't like, "The preaching was so good."

Nicki and the guys had a house and Melanie had a house, and when people visited the church, they'd get invited to those houses. Almost immediately there would be prayer for them, and guys would be prophesying over them. When I think of the number of people that came through, who streamed through those houses, it was because people felt loved.

If you want to plant a church, but you are not a warm person where people feel you're interested in them and you like them, you will not grow very quickly unless you have a ridiculous anointing. If the anointing is very strong, that's attractive! I mean, let's be honest, if I'm not friendly to you, but I get up, and when I speak, you feel Jesus, and your mind is being blown as I'm speaking and you think, "Where did he get this stuff? I've never heard these things in my life! I feel like I'm seeing Jesus, hearing Jesus!" Then you'll come back for that but it's not a lot of us that can do that. So, most of us have got to do it the hard way, and it's through loving people. It's by reaching out and finding people, bringing people into the circles that we have.

I really want to encourage you guys to start doing that now. I don't remember how many of our early Christmases were shared with church family! Christmas was not for just our own family. God said He puts the lonely into family, that's Church! In the early days of JoshGen, we would just say, "Hey, if you have nowhere to go on Christmas, we're going to have something at our house. Bring something, and we'll do Christmas together." Do you know what it did? People found family! My family felt neglected, but I told my family things like this, "Don't organise a birthday party on the night that I have got something to do at church." This was even before I was in leadership. In fact, this year my birthday is on a Friday, but my daughter's got youth on Friday. I'm a very busy person, and I do not have a lot of nights off and that Friday was an off day for me. Now Enyah has just been on a youth camp, and she's so on fire for Jesus at the moment. The family is saying, "Let's get together, we can all do Friday." Now I could say to Enyah, "It's my birthday please stay home from youth." But I don't want to do that. We phoned my sister and mom and said, "Sorry, we're not going to be doing anything on Friday." All because I want my daughter to go to youth.

People need to feel that we love them! They need to feel that we're interested in them and that happens when you go out of your way to find them! When I walk through those doors, I'm constantly saying,

"How's it?", to everyone, one after the other. I approach them, I don't wait for them to approach me. Sometimes Emsie comes with me when she's feeling strong, health wise, and then she says, "Honey, introduce me!" and I'm thinking, "Look, I know their faces (I'm good with faces), know their hearts, but their names escape me." There's just too many people most times; so I've actually taught Emsie now that she must reach out before and ask their name. So, true story, one time there's this person's coming closer, and I remember his name is Richard. So, I say, "Richard, meet..." and I forgot Emsie's name. I think all those drugs years ago did something to my brain! It's terrible!

JoshGen is bigger now, it's thousands and thousands of people, but I still get bugged when someone leaves us. I'll hear the elders say this person's left, and sometimes I don't really know them, and I'm asking myself, "Who's that person?" Then I am on Facebook, and after finding him, I think, "Oh no, no-not that guy!" It's weird you know, you didn't ever have dinner with that guy, but somehow you still feel, "God, you joined them to us, what happened?" There's a sense that if you want to be a church planter you have to get this into you and if you're a shy person, you have to get that out of you! If you're a leader and you're shy, people won't understand that. They'll just think you're rude. They'll think, "Oh, you just think you're better than me! That's why you just walked straight past me." They didn't realise that you're just shy and you don't have the privilege as a leader of saying, "Well, I'm just shy."

Lukas has got this new Apple watch, and we were counselling somebody a few days ago. Afterwards, I said, "Lukas, the whole time, your watch beeps when your phone goes off!" I had been watching and thinking, "Oh my goodness, you are sending a very scary message that you don't even realise." People don't always understand. They walk out of the counselling meeting, and they're just thinking, "That pastor couldn't wait for the meeting to finish, he just kept looking at his watch like I was not worth his time." So, if you have an Apple watch, put it off when you are in meetings. Even if you need to look at your watch, you have to do it very carefully, because people are really sensitive and very easily hurt. As a leader, you must always think like that. If people feel your love, your home group will just keep exploding with growth, just because you're going out of your way to love people.

Imagine it's Christmas and you invite new people to join you. There is laughter and friendship and worship together. They sense the presence of Jesus, and you're blessing them, you even give out little Christmas presents. Most times, they're going to come back for more, and they'll end up joining your comm group. As a leader, you need to make them feel special, you need to make them feel like you're interested in them. You mustn't just teach all the time.

This is what Paul the Apostle says, in one of the great templates of how to bring change into a church. He writes to the church in Thessalonica.

"Because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so, you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore, we do not need to say anything about it." (1 Thess 1:5-8 NIV)

The first thing Paul speaks about is the power of the Gospel. Now let me just say, when people come to the church, sometimes they've already been saved for a long time, and that's a little bit of a challenge sometimes. When you're a new Christian, the Bible speaks about how you crave pure spiritual milk. Do you remember when you were born again? I remember I was 21 years old that first time and I remember realising that I was totally deceived! I had thought I knew everything, but I realised that I didn't know what I didn't know! I thought I knew God, but I realised I didn't know God! So, my posture changed for a season, I felt like a baby. Whatever you gave me, I took. You said I needed to get baptized, and I was baptized. I didn't understand it, but I was keen to do it. I needed to taste the Gospel otherwise when you put those things on me, I felt like, "Why?"

Until a person is born again, you can't really help them, but once they're born again, you have that window where they're like a baby. They'll take whatever you give. That's a sweet season, enjoy it while it lasts. When you take over a church, you have what we call a honeymoon period. There's a season where everyone's excited about the new thing, and you're the new thing, and they love it; it's so exciting. Everyone wants to serve, but give it two years if you're lucky, then suddenly it's not as exciting. People start thinking, "I've had to make tea for two years, and I'm still not an elder, why should I carry on making tea?" Their motives are sometimes wrong in those things and now the congregation knows you, and you're not as cool as they thought you were. Familiarity breeds contempt, you know. Before the guys were eager to make you coffee, now they're thinking, "Ruan never makes me coffee!" Now you have an uphill battle.

When you get Christians that have been around for a while, you don't have that window. In fact, they've already learned a lot of things, and now it's challenging because they've passed that milk stage. They want to choose their own diet, and they don't necessarily like what you're going to bring them. So, now you need some serious skills to help them get hungry for what you're bringing.

Paul says, "The gospel came to you with power..." Guys, if you're leading a church or whatever you're doing, the message of the Gospel is where the power is! We can't change people, the Gospel creates that new heart, that is the change. If you're leading a church, you should be preaching the Gospel pretty much all the time. You should be preaching the Gospel somehow in every message you bring. It's not that difficult to weave the Gospel into everything you're saying, and you need to bring the message in such a way that people understand it.

The Bible says that we all sin. Do you know that most people today don't know what the word "sin" means anymore? We're living in a post-Christian era. I remember going to church and, one of the ladies in the church had made a banner with a sheep on it and written on it was, "The Lamb of God." There was another one with, "The Lion of Judah." Do you know that unbelievers have no cooking clue what this means? They walk in and you have a picture of a sheep on one wall and a picture of a lion on the other side. If you can't explain it to them, it's confusing and distracting. You have to be thinking all the time when you're communicating, "How do I make this relevant?"

Here is a tip for anyone who wants to reach the lost for the Lord, you should have at least one really unsaved friend, just to remind you of how they think and how they speak. If you hang around with Christians all the time, eventually you don't realize that you talk like this, "The Lord is glorious and wondrous and stupendous!", and your friends look at you thinking, "You didn't talk like that five minutes ago before you got the microphone in your hand..."

I visited a church years ago on my apostolic travels, it was a different church for me culturally. It was in Namibia, and it was the Afrikaans coloured culture. So, I met this leader, he was a very cool guy, a very normal guy and I'm chatting with him, we're just connecting, talking about Jesus, it was great. Then I got to his church, and I was sitting in the front, and he got up, and suddenly he put his jacket on and I was thinking, "Okay, that's a bit different. Then he starts the service, and he says, in a completely different voice, "God, here tonight, in the power of the Holy Ghost, we have Apostle Andrew from Cape Town. The glory of the Lord is going to be in this place tonight!" People erupted and they were shouting, "Hallelujah, hallelujah!" He handed over to me, "Apostle Andrew," and I'll never forget getting up there, and I said, "Hi, my name is Andrew and I lead a church in Cape Town. It's really nice to be with you guys today." I have never put people to sleep so fast in my life, people were going from running around their chairs, shouting "Hallelujah!" to sleeping! So, I changed my tack! When people come to your church, you have to realise that we are here to ultimately explain the Gospel in a way that people can hear it and understand it.

When you're sharing the Gospel, be careful of being weird! One of my mentors taught me, "We're wild; we are not weird!" Be wild but don't be weird! It's sometimes good to ask your friends, "Am I weird when I talk?" I came out of the Assemblies of God movement, and I didn't know this, but we learned this habit of talking a certain way when we were under the anointing. So, when we joined this new church and people laughed at us because there was a certain tone that our voice would take on when we ministered or prayed. Eventually, my friend, Julie de Lisle, just said to me, "Please stop talking like that." I said, "Like what?" She said, "So weird, you get all weird when the anointing is on you." I hadn't even realised it!

Be honest, when you pray in a group, do you pray different to how you talk normally? I mean, think about it, if you see a beautiful sunrise one day, what do you say? When the sun's rising, and you're with your wife or your friends, what language do you use? I would probably say something like, "How sick is that sun? It's awesome! Oh, my goodness, my mind is blown!" Then you get to church, and you use words like 'Majesty.' I mean, seriously, do we think that God is impressed with us when we do that?

I did a baby dedication two weeks ago, and there were just unbelievers everywhere, maybe around forty unbelievers. It was awesome! The best thing that I heard afterward was unbelievers saying, "That guy is so real. I've never seen a pastor that down-to-earth and that real. Does he lead a church in Somerset West? Because if he does, we're going." I didn't share something amazing, it was a very simple message, but I think that they could relate to me. They could hear me, so I could talk about spiritual things in a language that wasn't weird. God finds you where you're at, so don't be weird when communicating these amazing things. Be careful and listen to yourself!

I remember going through a season where I said, "I am not going to use a Bible word in this prayer." I'd use the name of Jesus, but not words like majestic or glorious because I never use the word glorious in normal life when I'm talking to Emsie. Think before you pray, try thinking, "How do I say glorious without saying the word 'glorious'?" It's a good lesson to learn for any church leader. We need to make that which sounds complicated, simple again, whereas most people make the simple, complicated!

You might be thinking, "It's just language!", but remember, if people don't understand you, the Gospel isn't relevant to them! When I use the word sin, what does that mean? How do I explain it? If I use the word, I need to explain it! "The Bible says we have all sinned. Let me tell you what that is!"

If you're a church planter, you have to be reaching out to find people outside of the bubble that is church! One of the things I encourage church planters to do is to get into the community. Join a gym or find a sport where you can meet people. So, when we arrived in Cape Town and I didn't know anybody in Cape Town, I remember going to Spur at Bayside, and I remember sitting with Emsie and feeling like,

"Dear God, no one's going to come to our church. I don't know anyone here!" I had this long hair and I looked like a hippie. We had no building and we had no money for advertising, we had nothing. So, I thought, "I surf! I am going to find people at the beach and it's nice to go to the beach in the mornings to pray."

Eventually, I got into kite surfing, and I got sponsored by Cabrinha because I was good at it. So, I used to go to the shop because there were unbelievers all over the place. The shop was filled with kite surfers and surfers, they were sexually immoral. I'd hang out in the shop, and I was always trying to build those bridges with guys. One day one of the guys, he was an SA champ at the time, he was chatting to me, and he said, "Hey bru, I had a dream last night and I know you're like a pastor so maybe you can help me with this." Then he said, "In the dream I was sitting on a bed, and there was a Bible on the bed. Which is weird because I don't even have a bible. Then there was this creature in front of me that looked evil. Like, I don't know, like a devil, and he wanted to kill me. I could feel he wanted to take me out. Then I saw the Bible on the bed, and I thought, this thing's going to be mad that there's a Bible on my bed. So, I tried to hide the Bible behind me because I was scared of what that thing was going to do to me."

At this point, everyone in the shop had stopped browsing, and they're standing in a circle, about eight of them, listening to him and me. I looked at that situation, and I just thought, "I have a captive audience!" I looked at him, and I said, "Grant, actually you know, I think God might be trying to speak to you. Sometimes God does use dreams." I began to explain the Gospel and I got to sin, and I remember saying, "The Bible says that we sin. Let me explain what that is. If you've ever looked at a girl and undressed her with your eyes, the Bible says that that girl is God's daughter because He made her. By undressing her with your eyes, Jesus said if you look at her that way, it's like you've raped her." Then in the middle of a conversation explaining sin, this American guy walks in, and he goes, "Hey man, what's going on here?" because we were all in a circle talking. Grant then looked at this American guy, and I'll never forget it, he looks at this guy, and he swears outright! Then two of them said, "How do we make right with God?" So, I started explaining, but he said, "No, no, no! We need Bibles - now! Where can I get a bible?" So, I said to him, "Come to church and we'll get you one." But he said, "No, I need one now!", and I said, "Well, there is a Christian bookshop at Bayside." The next thing I knew he was in his car, gone. Both of those guys got saved and baptized. All that I did was explain the Gospel in a way that they could understand.

Think carefully about how you communicate as a church planter, because the reality of it is you don't have a lot to offer! So, you're probably going to get more unbelievers than believers visiting you and they

need to understand what you're saying. Paul said the message came with power, there is power in the message, but it has to be communicated in a way that they can understand it.

Session 16

Momentum

Let's carry on with Paul, and look at that template of how to bring about change into a church culture. Paul starts off with the Gospel, and again we've looked at the importance of laying the Gospel as a foundation and preaching the Gospel as much as you possibly can, but then he says that people knew how he lived among them for their sake. There's a real sense that people need to get to know you before they will change with you and before you can bring change in anyone's life. You have to take the time to build a bridge with them and let them feel that they know you.

Sometimes when you preach, the people can quickly catch your heart, and that's a great thing; if your heart comes through when you preach, you can get a lot of mileage very quickly, but sometimes someone's heart doesn't come through, then it's harder. You have to work harder to build that bridge, and until people feel like they know you, they are not going to follow you. You have also got to know that the Bible says one should think of themselves in accordance with the measure of grace that God's put upon them. We all have a different grace capacity, so some of us can do things that others can't. I saw Mervis sitting at the back, and Mervis for example is ridiculously anointed when he gets up and plays the guitar. When Mervis gets up to worship, he's attractive immediately. Do you understand how many find Mervis attractive in the Spirit? In the Spirit, it's not the perfume that he wears - it's the anointing that he carries. When someone carries an anointing as he carries, he carries a very strong grace, a very strong anointing; there is an attractiveness that comes through that person. A strong prophet might do the same thing or a strong teacher. If someone has that grace capacity, they can get away with not doing other things as much. But, if you don't have something that big on you, you just have to work harder. You can still win people's hearts, but you will have to work harder.

I remember realizing something with Russell Fraser, one of our elders. Russell is a lovely guy, but he doesn't carry the same wattage as I do when he preaches. I'll never forget though, as he came onto leadership with me and we started going to weddings, in the early days it was always about Andrew and how Andrew had changed their lives, but then Russell worked hard, and it wasn't long before I wasn't getting mentioned weddings. People started saying how they knew how much Russell loved them and that Russell had been there for them. I hadn't been there for them; Russell had been there for them, and he had worked at those things and won people's hearts. You have to work with the measure of grace given to you. Now people love me because of the anointing, but they love Russell because of his love for

them. So, realize what you have and work with it. When I planted the church, you need to know I out loved Russell, I really did, but there came a point where I just could not do it anymore, and then Russell came into his own. So again, for me to love is most important; love, love, love people, and don't waste a moment. Think in your mind; "Make the circle bigger!" People have got to know you!

Paul then says that the church knew how they lived among them, and one of the biggest ingredients in bringing change into any culture, into any person, is that people learn by what they see others do. To illustrate, you know if you come into a church, especially as a new-born Christian, you have these cravings for pure spiritual milk. You have no filters, you're just learning, and you're a conservative person. If you get saved into a church where one third is in the front going crazy, one third is in their chairs worshipping quietly, and the other third is drinking coffee during worship or just sitting, the danger is that you're typically going to fit into a category that you are comfortable with. So, if you're a conservative or shy person trying to learn how to worship God, you're learning from those around you. You will end up thinking it's okay to worship God like those sitting, drinking coffee, or those standing behind their chairs because one-third of the church is doing it, and the problem is every single person that does that dilutes the church more and more until eventually, you get a negative. You will actually get a negative learning; you will end up learning bad things in that church and not good things because too many people are modelling bad things.

So, Paul mentions how the church knew, 'How he lived among them for their sake, ' so as a leader, you should be able to say the same. It's an interesting thing Jesus says, don't pray your prayers to be heard by others, but then sometimes as a leader I want to say, and I will qualify why I say this now, you have to say your prayers to be heard by others.

Let me illustrate what I mean by this, Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees when he says don't say your prayers to be heard by others; the rebuke is for when you want to do it for yourself. It is for when you want to be the Pharisee with the long paragraphs and the 'I am so spiritual, listen to how eloquent my prayer is!' That's the wrong motive with which to pray! But, if you as a leader are setting an example for others in everything, in speech, life, love, and in doctrine, then sometimes I'm going to pray even if I don't feel like it because I'm going to be an example for you! I'm not doing it because I need your love. I'm doing it because I know that I don't want to be a bad picture, a bad model, for you. I don't want to model that when I'm in a little bit of a bad mood, it's okay not to pray; I'm just going stand there and do nothing. So, I'm going to be upfront, and I'm going to bring a sacrifice of praise, even if there's no praise in me. So, as a leader, the motive here is I'm going to live my life in such a way so that when you look at

me, you're going to learn everything you need to learn, whether I feel like it or not. My motive isn't me, and so Jesus is happy with me doing it for you. Does that make sense?

So, as a leader, your worship will reflect in others; they will imitate you. Your prayers, when you're giving everything, will be modelled. Everything you do will be modelled. Here's the thing, when you plant a church, you need to get some others that'll start modelling the culture you want, and quickly. The reason is that if you walk into a meeting and everyone falls on their knees, how easy will it be for you to do it? I was at a wedding recently, and I lifted my hands, I felt like such a nana, it felt like I was just trying to draw attention to myself by lifting my hands. Actually, with people around you, it's easier or harder for you to do something. So, one of the challenges in a church plant is you need people that will quickly get the values that you are living, and they then need to model it themselves. It wasn't long when we planted our church with Julie and Melanie, the Nikki's and the Jaco's of this world, before we would come together, and we would be doing things that could be modelled. We were spending time with people that we wouldn't usually hang out with, and we were able to model something; it became DNA others could imitate. So, when you plant a church, you need to get people with you that'll carry the values, DNA, and the culture that you want, and you need to get those guys to get it quick.

In the early days of JoshGen, I used Sundays to preach the Gospel, and on Wednesdays, if a visitor came, I preached the Gospel there too. But Wednesdays were mainly times where I would teach values. I didn't break us into home groups because the problem is this; if I give somebody a homegroup, he becomes something to imitate. If he's not carrying the values that I know we must carry, he's going to dilute the DNA that God's called us to have. So, until I see leaders that are carrying the values that we have to carry in everything, I'm not going to make anyone a home group leader, let alone ordain him as a deacon. I need people with me that'll model, with me, the things that we are building. When I go to the front, they need to be with me! When I give, they need to give, when I pray, they pray! Then, as more of us do that, very quickly others start learning from that, and you start to develop a culture! People suddenly find it easier to change! There's a brilliant video I wanted to show you quickly about how to create a movement, and ultimately do you know that we've become a movement, and it happened basically like in this video. The video is funny, but it illustrates what JoshGen had and how we worked.

Please note, you can watch this video by using this link on your computer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fW8amMCVAJQ>

This is how it was, the Melanie's and the Julie's, Nikki's, and the Jaco's; they were those first followers. They came and modelled something, and then others came in, and eventually, it grew. So, for each of you who get out there, you need to be very careful and do your best to win people that will follow you,

model with you, and ultimately create a movement. There is something about most of us that we share; we want our lives to count! Be honest! If we can show people that their lives could make a difference if they run with us, you'll be amazed at how hard they'll run! One of the great challenges and skills we need is to be able to help people see how, that by being a good second follower, they can help create a movement.

Deep down inside, you know when you plant a church, there is a deep dissatisfaction in the body of Christ. It's like everyone is sick of the smoke, lights, and action. I mean, there are a few people that go there, but it's not long before people start to think, "Seriously, is that it?" Inside people there's a hunger to count for Jesus, there is a hunger to be a part of something more, something bigger and if we can provide a place where we can show people how to do that, they'll come! They'll be that first follower even though it's a little bit uncomfortable because at the end of the day if they stick with you, their life might make a difference for Jesus. You have to give people that opportunity!

When you plant a church, these are things you have to work at to win those guys in order to encourage and strengthen them. Celebrate when they breakthrough with you because they're creating a new culture. You need modellers; you need people that'll live it! I was in our Sunningdale congregation this Sunday, and the challenge is that as new folk are coming, each one has the potential to dilute us or to help us, depending on how well we transition that person. The danger is, if you're not transitioning people and bringing leaders through and developing all the time, eventually, they start outnumbering us, and then you get a negative momentum. Once you have a negative momentum, it's very difficult to recover! So, the challenge for us as leaders is that we need to be those that are moving forward all the time, and we need to be bringing and inviting others with us, to be a part of the journey.

I'll give you an example of this; we had a conference now recently, our Four12 Conference, every person that came to that conference you know is now in that crowd going for it. There are people who are leaders, some of them have been leaders, and in leadership in other churches, some have been with us for a year, and they weren't at that conference. Now, those are dangerous people because those have the potential to start watering us down if they don't make the transition at some point. As a leader, you've got to try and win those people. They are the potential future leaders; they're the guys that if you win their heart, if they deal with the baggage that they've come with, they can make a huge difference in the community. They've got skills, understanding and knowledge, but they can't stay where they are. You've got to try and show them why they need to get up off the ground, stand with you in the front, and do that crazy dance. So, this is how you have to be thinking all the time as a leader. Please realize that every person that's not coming with you, and not moving your way, is starting to move you the other

way and negative momentum is a killer. Does this make sense? Watch it, watch it in your homegroup, watch it in the church. Then remember this; you can't make people change, you have to show them theologically, which we'll get to now, why it's important that they join in with you.

Modelling is key, and Paul says in Philippians;

"Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do." (Phil 3:17 NIV)

You see, I didn't do this for this reason, but I took note of Niki and Jaco, and how they helped us to break open a culture by taking note of what they did and sacrificing, actually, you also should create a culture because of something inside of you. You should have thought, and I heard Sheldon say this a few times, "I wish I were there in those early days!" Here's the thing, we're still growing, we're still creating a culture, and if you will dive in and be a Niki in your context, or Jaco in your context, and learn from their example and learn from the fact that I've just honoured them for their sacrifices, you do you, two will make a difference. So, taking note of those that live according to the pattern is so key in creating a culture. You've got to be continually celebrating those that are breaking through, and when they break through, get them to share!

I'll never forget this story; I don't know if I've shared this here. We were doing some leadership training a few years ago; we had a lady in our church who was very conservative, and she was very broken. One Sunday worship went moggy, and it was high praise, it wasn't worship high praise; it was more like running around the hall screaming and shouting for Jesus. At one point, people started stagediving, and stagediving in the church is pretty out there! People are like this doesn't happen in pubs, let alone in Church! So, you have to understand this, if there is a religious person out there, they will get freaked out by this, and they're going to find some reason to be offended. As a pastor, every time that kind of worship happens, you're going to have work on your hands! So, I was excited, but I also knew it was going to be a busy week! Anyway, the next Sunday, I asked this lady, that had come up and stage-dived the previous week, to get up and share her story.

It was amazing because I took special note of her, I spoke to the church, and I'm actually killing thirty coffee dates and maybe five people leaving as I'm allowing her to share. If I didn't do that, I was going to be very busy and have some people leave the church. It's often like that in leadership. All that I did was get her up and share what happened the previous week.

She came up, and she started crying, and I remember this hush in the church, and she said, "I was molested as a young girl by my father, my uncles and my brothers. Every male figure in my life pretty much molested me. When that worship started, and people started stagediving, and guys were catching, I said, 'I'll never do that because I don't trust men.' Then the Holy Spirit said to me, 'But I want to set you free from that! I want you to go up, and I want you to stagedive!'" She said she immediately broke out in a sweat and thought, "I could never dive into the arms of men! Men have always failed me; they have always let me down," and the Holy Spirit said, "But you must!" So, she told us that she came up, she got up front, she stood out on the platform, and I remember when she did it because she stood up there shaking with fear!

The whole congregation got behind her in that moment, and we were like, "Go, go, go!" She was shaking with fear, but eventually, she dived, and she said, "As I dove and those men caught me, I felt something lift off of me! I felt something break off me, and I felt a freedom and a trust like I've never felt before! God did something in me!" You see straightaway any person going, "Huh," you've just broken down every defence. I could then follow on from that story and say, "Sometimes God is going to ask us to do things that we are highly uncomfortable with, but our freedom lies in our obedience! Sometimes there'll be things happening we don't understand, but God is working!" As I do that, I'm starting to create a culture in the community that I'm leading. A culture that says, 'Sometimes stuff will happen that's a little bit weird, but it's okay! It's okay; you create a culture that way!

So, you need your leaders to get it! In fact, one of the worst things that you can have in any church is a leader that does not model your values. Jesus spoke about this in Matthew 23:1 – 5. He was talking, and He was rebuking the Pharisees, and one of the reasons why He rebuked them is because they were the leaders of Israel. So, Jesus is talking to His disciples and the crowds, and He says the teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, so they must obey them and do everything they told them. He says that what they were teaching was the truth; and that the disciples and the crowd, must obey the truth. Then He says, "But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach." In other words, they are not modelling the message! Then He says when you don't model the message this is what you do spiritually, you tie up heavy loads of truth, and you put them on men's shoulders, but because you're not modelling it, there's no grace flowing through you to them. You're actually not helping them to move!

When a leader models the truth, it comes through with life and an ability to break you through! The load is easy, and the yoke is light. When a leader tells you to do something or teaches what he's not modelling, it becomes a heavy burden, and it is very difficult for the people to break through. So, if a

leader gets up and says, "Guys, we need to dance passionately before the Lord," but you never see him do it, it's tough for you to obey properly. But if you know every Sunday, he's that nut up front going for it; it's easy for you to follow. Leaders, you need to choose other leaders that will model your values; otherwise, you will kill your church.

I heard an incredible story about this, maybe it's not my favourite cup of tea, but this is a great illustration. A few years ago, Bill Hybel noticed that his church wasn't growing in evangelism, so they met with their elders, and they said, "What are we doing, we're not seeing unbelievers getting saved? We're not seeing sinners coming to Jesus!" So, they decided they were going to preach the Gospel, and they were going to do all these events. They did these events, they preached the Gospel, and after six months, nothing had changed, people still were not getting saved. Then they got before the Lord, and they asked what's wrong, why was it not working? Bill then realized, and he calls it the power of modelling with the power of example, he asked his elders at one point, "So, when last did any of you witness to an unbeliever outside of a meeting? Do any of you know a non-Christian?" All of his elders said no, they were too busy to have time for relationships with non-Christians.

That's when he realized that's where the problem was, that's what was happening. They were tying burdens for the people, but they weren't modelling it. So, they repented, and they got before the Lord, and they said, "Lord, we're going to change." I remember he said that he started sailing with a few clubs, just so that he could meet people. Other guys started going to the gym. People started trying to build relationships with unbelievers, and immediately he said something broke in the church, and they started growing incredibly fast through evangelism. You need people that will imitate and live the message, as hard as it is, because if they live the message, something breaks out through them, and it becomes easy for the community to start living. Does this make sense? So, make sure you live the message! It's so important!

Paul says, 'You know how we lived among you for your sake,' and again it's for the people, they have to feel that it's for them. Also, we need to realize this; we need to focus on little changes, not too many things at the same time. Sometimes you have these moments with your spouse where you say, 'Okay, let's speak into each other's lives. Is there anything that you see that I'm doing babes, that you think I can do better as a husband?' Now, pick your moment well because I've opened my heart to you, and we've learned this with each other, and you need to learn this in leadership, bring one thing at a time, don't bring ten! In other words, "Honey sometimes I feel like you're too strong with Enyah," she might say as an example. "Really? Please explain that for me," I might respond. She then explains it, and my response should be, "I am so sorry, I get it! I'll change!" But, if she drops that on me and then she says,

"Oh ya, and sometimes I feel like you neglect me. Then sometimes I feel like you're...." At some point, I'll break and feel like I am failing at everything. So, give me one thing at a time and let me process that. Let me win that, and then we look at the next thing.

As a leader, you have to realize that you can only really bring one thing. Then, when you bring it, here's another lesson, you see it's a bit like raising children, your word must be your word, and you have to teach the community that. So, for example, I often say to parents one of the biggest mistakes they make with kids is when they're not consistent.

So, when your child is small, and this principle holds true for every part of life for the child, church is exactly the same, it is basic training. It's basic disciplining if you say to your child when they ask for ice cream, "Enyah, not now." So, she wants to work the system, and she starts pushing, you have actually effectively said something which she's totally overridden, the worst thing parents do is this, "Enyah, I told you to stop," now you are raising your voice, "I told you to stop it! If you don't stop this right now my girl..." and she does it again. Then some parents have got this thing, it's a terrible thing, and they start counting, "One, two, and if I get to, three and you are still doing this, there will be a consequence." Because the problem is you've taught your child to ignore you until you get to two, which means everything else you say with a raised voice she's actually training you to have to scream at her, and eventually, count to three before she's ever going to obey you. In that moment she has trained you, you didn't train her. So, as a parent, I speak once, and if you do not obey me, there is a consequence. Now, that sounds really hard at first, until she learns it, and once she's learned it, she doesn't question anymore; her boundaries are safe.

Now, in a church, it's exactly the same if you ask the people to do something, and you lay it down strong and well, and you show them in the scriptures why they should, and they don't do it, you are training a rebellious generation. In fact, the Bible says their hearts will grow calloused; they'll become ever hearing and not perceiving. In other words, you in your leadership are now making them rebellious, and the more they get away with it and the more you have to keep saying it, the harder it's going to be for them to change.

So, I want to say this, as a leader, pick your battles well! I remember with raising a child, Emsie is quite generous with her food portions, she would put this big plate of food in front of Enyah. The problem is there is nice stuff on the plate for a three-year-old, and there is not so nice stuff. The nice stuff is the steak, and the not so nice stuff is the cabbage. So, Enyah would eat the steak at three and would leave the cabbage. Then we would say to her, "Eat your cabbage," and she would go, "I am full," and she would be full until there was ice cream. So, I had to say to Emsie, "Ems, you have to be consistent, you cannot

put more on a plate than she can eat because otherwise she's always going to eat the nice stuff and leave the not so nice stuff. We need to be consistent; if it's on her plate, she eats it." That means she can't leave the cabbage because it's not enough; in fact, she has to ask for seconds to get a full portion. It's a little thing, but it trains your child to eat whatever's on their plate.

The little things in the church could be something like when you call the church to worship. I have learned this, and again you need to explain this carefully to the church, you need to lay the foundation for them. I remember the one Sunday I did a really good job at teaching on worship, I laid it in and taught it from every angle I could. After laying such a good foundation in Scripture, I told the guys that we needed to worship the next Sunday, for the whole service. So, the next Sunday, we came together, and the congregation's worship hadn't changed! I picked up on worship again after that because if I had moved on to the next subject, I would be breeding a rebellious generation. So, I went back the next week, and I reworked my worship sermon encouraging the guys again that we needed to break through. Needless to say, we didn't break through!

If you were with us the next Sunday, you would have arrived, and there would have been no chairs. I said to the guys, "I know this feels awkward, but guys, I've preached for two weeks on what God expects of us in worship, and we haven't changed! You know the chairs have become a place of comfort for us, and we hide behind them in our little bubble. If you can't break free in worship, how will you ever break free in the big things of God? How is your life ever going to count for Jesus if you're not even faithful in how you worship God? We need to repent! So right now, we are going to worship, and guys, I want you to break through like you've never broken through before! I want you to do something you've never done before! Do you get why I'm doing this? Do you get that I'm not just a dictator? If we don't do this, we're not leading you well because you're going to become calloused and being calloused is a terrible thing. When you're calloused, you become hearing but not perceiving, would you like that? No? Well then, can we do it and do it properly?"

As the guys started breaking through, breaking through, breaking through, you know what happened? God honoured what they did because God always honours obedience. So, people were lifting their hands for the first time and sensing God for the first time. I found out who the people were who were getting breakthrough, and I took special note of them. I then went the next week and said, "Pete, I noticed you broke through in worship last week. You've never lifted your hands before then, tell us what happened!" Pete then gets up there, and he is crying, "I have never lifted my hands in worship, I have never cried in church, but I felt I needed to do it! I lifted my hands, and I felt God like I have never felt Him in my life!" You then move on, "Richard, come tell us what happened to you. I see you clapped!"

Richard then stands up, and what you're really doing is creating a culture. Everyone in that room is going, "I also want to break through!" You create a culture that way, but you have to consistently build this way.

Now, back to Paul, he says modelling is essential but also that the message he brought was not simply with words but also the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of deep conviction! We need to teach the theology of why they must do what they do. In other words, if I say to you, God wants you to worship, that's enough for some of you. But, if I said this to you, "Do you want your life to count for God? Well, let me say that God wants one-tenth of your income." Then you go, "So, the Bible says that if you're not faithful with the little, God won't trust you with much. Now, the Bible calls money little, so one of the things God sometimes does with us is He makes sure we don't have enough; to test our faith. Because, if you've always got enough, it's not hard for you, is it? So, God will sometimes make sure you don't have enough to see if you will do it even when it's hard, and you don't understand. If you don't pass that test, forget ever counting for Jesus because you haven't been faithful in something as silly and arbitrary as money." See? Now suddenly there's a whole new motivation! You've just given me some theology, some teaching, about why this is not negotiable. God is never a negotiator. When God says it, it's not like it's a good idea or a maybe, God said it, and you obey.

If you're not going to obey Him in the little things, you will never break through into the big things. So, you have to lay that into the people and lay that in repeatedly. Can I say that even in your home group, this needs to happen because I guarantee you, you're going to counsel someone that says, "But I can't afford to tithe this month." My response to that would then be to say, "Okay, you obey God, and I will buy you food for this month!" You will be creating a culture by teaching and showing that this is important. So, we have to teach people these things; in fact, they will never break through unless we get this right! Okay, so you have to teach it! Again, pick the thing you need to address, model it, show why to value it and win it!

Remember that another challenge you'll have is when people come to you from another Church. You will have big issues, often because they come with bad theology. They come to you with this understanding that God loves me no matter what I do, and as I taught at the conference, He can love you and hate you at the same time. So, the fact that He says He loves you doesn't mean that He might not have an issue with you or might not get really mad at you. In fact, Russell shared a scripture with me earlier, in Isaiah 30:26,

"The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted." (Is 30:26 NIV)

God inflicted those wounds. Then he says in verse 30:32,

"Every stroke the Lord lays on the with his punishing club will be to the music of timbrels and harps, as he fights them in battle with the blows of his arm." (Is 30:32 NIV)

Okay, so how many of you like the punishing rod of the Lord? Hebrews tells me if you're disobedient to the Father, He will punish you, and the word in the New Testament in Hebrews is 'scourge you', which is the same word used for when the Romans whipped Jesus. Hebrews says the Father will scourge you, beat you like the Romans beat Jesus. Did you know that that's in the New Testament! You're going to be made in every way like Him, which means you're also going to have to pick up a cross. He was crucified for you, yes, but if you don't pick up a cross, you're not going to be saved. So, for me, it's not negotiable, and if the Father says don't, then I am okay because I crossed Him once, and He only speaks once, He doesn't count to three. Does this make sense?

Next, I would say this is something we've battled with through over the years, and it's something you better make very sure your people understand, and that is that there's a difference between conviction and conforming. Conviction is something that people are convinced of for themselves, conforming can be when they do something because you're doing it, or because you've told them to do it. The problem with that is, if it's conviction, I believe it, and I will face the consequences of it going wrong. But, if I'm doing it because you told me to do it, I'm ultimately scared of what you think of me, and that's not going to set me into freedom, and it's not going to break me through. So, as a leader, even as a home group leader, you have to ask the question, "Are they tithing because they are convicted or because they're scared I'm going to ask about it next week again? Are they worshiping because they are convicted that this is what they should do, or do they think I want them to?"

One of the things that we've had over the years, especially in the earlier days of JoshGen, was that people would say that we didn't allow dating. Now personally, I would push for people, my daughter included, to not date and rather wait for the person they would marry before entering into a relationship and for their wedding day before they kiss. But, to just put a law out there that no one can kiss, it will become an external law, and it would make you want to rebel. If you understand why, though, and I can show you why, why it's more beautiful to do it that way than even what your flesh wants, you begin to be convicted, and then you will do it out of your own and when no one is watching. So, we need to as people make sure that those that are following us are convicted of the things we are teaching and not just conforming outwardly. That means you have to be careful when you communicate. You need to give them the theology of it because then conviction comes by the Word of God versus, 'In JoshGen we do it

like this...' Does that make sense? So, when you're going to bring something to the people for change, you have to communicate logically why this is not negotiable. Remember, when the Word comes properly, it brings deep conviction.

I'm going to give you one more example. One of the lessons you need to learn is this, whenever change comes Paul says,

"For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our Gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit." (1 Thes 1:4-6 NIV)

When you bring change, suffering comes, and I'll give you an example of this. I took Mervis surfing a few years ago, he was so sore and stiff afterward. When you do something new, it's quite difficult; there's often a kickback, especially as a leader. When you bring something new to the people you are leading, there's always a kickback; there's going to be somebody that's upset and wanting to leave the church. This sucks, and eventually, you just think that you would rather not bring anything new, but you can't choose to opt-out, you have to keep leading forward. So, here's a challenge, whenever something new comes, you'll see that communities of people are funny things. They tend to get swept along quickly by individuals, and one individual can destroy a whole church if you're not careful. So, when change comes, it's a vulnerable moment, that's when that individual starts to manifest and starts infecting others with what upsets him. In Numbers 13:1 – 3, and this is an example of how bad it can go in a church, God says to Israel that He is going to give them land, and they must go in and take possession of it. That's a promise, right? God says He's giving it to them, it's theirs and He is with them. So, Moses sends some spies in to check out the land and the spies come back, and in verse 27 we see that they say this;

"They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there." (Num 13:27-28 NIV)

They gave Moses the account, and they start off saying that what God said is true, it's a remarkable land that God's going to give us. Then, somewhere along the line, they start moaning and saying that they think the change isn't as good for Israel as they think it is. They end up saying that they think the change could actually do damage to the nation. Now, in every church, in every movement, you will find those people; you'll find them in your home group, you'll find them everywhere. They are people that if you were sitting around, they would start going, "Yeah, I know you guys think this is cool, but actually there's

another side to this that you don't know." That is the beginning of a lot of trouble because in verse 28-33, we read:

"But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan." Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, 'The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.'" (Num 13:28 – 33 NIV)

Alright, so, there are big problems with the guys that spied out the land. In verse 30, Caleb gets up and says to Israel that they can indeed follow Moses and take the land God had promised them, but now there are two groups. So, listen to me; whenever the church moves forward, this can happen; it doesn't always happen, but it can happen. There are times when you can get one, two, or even three people that start moaning or complaining, and as a leader, you have to be aware of this, you have to anticipate it. You can normally pick them out when you preach. If you're sensitive, you'll feel it; you'll feel resistance coming from them. You just sense it, and if you don't get to that guy quickly, he's going to start infecting a whole group of people. You know that at homegroup on Wednesday night, he's going to be sprouting eloquent phrases about how this thing that the leaders are telling us to do is a really bad idea. There is a story that goes like this; bad news goes around the world six times before good news has got into the starting blocks. Bad news spreads faster than good news.

So, listen to what happens in Numbers 14: 1 – 4, and this is every leader's nightmare, guess which way Israel goes,

"That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, 'If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness!'" (Num 14:1-2 NIV)

In other words, the church went from being behind Moses and excited to take the land to grumbling against Moses, the leader. So now Israel thinks their leaders suck, and the whole assembly says to Moses and Aaron it would have been better if they had died in Egypt. In other words, getting saved in your church is worse than being in the world.

"Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt." (Num 14:3 - 4)

So, in other words, they say, "We are not following you anymore, we're tapping out."

Then, in Numbers 14:10

"Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones." (Num 14:10 ESV)

I mean, are they serious? Moses & Aaron have bravely and courageously led Israel into everything God has for them, and now they want to kill them? At some point, there will be people who, when you bring change, will want to turn on you as a leader and wish you were dead. If you don't get to them quickly enough, the whole community will wish you were dead! One of the most dangerous things in any church is slander/ gossip/ negative talk, and you have to watch out for that! Please, if you're going to run with us into the Kingdom, watch that, watch that in yourself, watch that in your communities! If you're leading something, you have to get on that very quickly. You need to give people places that they can communicate and vent but be careful that they don't vent in places where it is going to bring destruction to others. Do you realize that that whole generation died out, and they did not inherit what God had for them because of their rebellion? If it happened to a whole nation, it could happen to JoshGen. How would it start? It would start in your homegroup! How would it start in your congregation? It only takes a few people to start moaning, and you not getting to it fast enough for things to make a turn, especially in times of change.

Then finally, Paul says you've pushed through, you came through, you have dealt with that thing, and he speaks about a joy given by the Holy Spirit. As the church breaks through, there is a joy that comes over it. Where there is breakthrough, there's a sense of God being with us! Then Paul says that because the church is now living in what was modelled to them, it has now become a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. In fact, their faith in God has become known all over the world, to the point that he doesn't need to speak about it; people already know. One group of people, one group of berserkers that join in, become known all over the world. This church has become known all over the world because they did the things that Paul taught. They broke through, and because they broke through other churches looked at the model, the example in them, and said, "If you can do it, we can do it too." Their faith in God began to ripple all over the world! I don't know about you, but I'd love my faith to ripple across the planet. I'd love our faith to ripple across the planet! We're a community, and we have to get

this right, we have to work together to push through this template, to model these things and become what God's called us to.

You have to teach these things in your home groups, and if you lead a church you have to teach them in your congregations. Model it so that your leaders model it. Push through the suffering because there is a world to reach, nations to reach, for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to bring change, this is the way you go through it.

Session 17

Vision and Devotion

In this section, I want to give you some basic principles. I don't know how many of you watched the Rugby? I want to use an illustration about Rugby to illustrate some principles of church growth. I think the South Africans had a program, a procedure, a strategy as to what to do for the World Cup, and they have employed that strategy fantastically. They did the basics well and in Rugby, that is the scrum. You know, scrum is king! If you're winning the scrums, you're going to be pushing the forwards back, and you're going to be going forward and that's what they did; they did the basics properly. We need to do the basics correctly in terms of church growth and church planting, we have to do the basics well.

I started in the ministry in 1982, I went to the United States and spent a year there visiting churches of all denominations. I had somebody who sponsored me to go straight after my ordination. So, I went and just visited churches, attended conferences, visited ministries, and embarked on a strategy of learning, as much as possible, about how church worked. Years later, when I bumped into JoshGen, I was totally fascinated with what was going on. I loved what Andrew and the guys were doing. I loved the whole concept of multi-site. I loved the fact that they were reaching people, that we in the denominations and the little charismatic churches that I was a part of, didn't. I loved their expression of passionate faith and just their focused intention. You know, Andrew is an intense guy, when he sees something, he goes for something. I love that passion and that enthusiasm. I saw this and thought, I want to be a part of this bunch of guys. JoshGen was only about seven congregations 10 years ago when I joined, and now it's grown to 27!

So, now we are going to go back to the basics. The first thing that I'm going to talk about is evangelism. It's essential to evangelise. If you don't evangelise, you'll fossilise. Jesus said in John,

*"Again, Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.""
(Jhn 20:21 NIV)*

I'm sending you, that's the command that Jesus has given the church. It is more than a fellowship of those that are religiously inclined. It's more than a community group that sings choruses. It's more than just getting together. It's a group of people that are commissioned by Jesus Christ to carry on His

ministry, to complete His work and to make His redeeming love known to all mankind. In Luke, Jesus says this,

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Lk 19:10 NIV)

Jesus expects us to be a seeking church. Whenever we see Jesus in the New Testament, He's out seeking people, looking for people, reaching out for people, loving people. He went to the blind beggar who was asking for sight, the woman of ill repute, the rich young ruler, the woman of faith weeping at her brother's side. Jesus was concerned for all of them and He gave himself to all of them. His enemies jeered at Him and said, "You're just a crook, and you're a sinner, a friend of sinners. You're a drunkard, and you're a glutton". But this is how Jesus appeared to the religious ones as He moved amongst the forgotten. He walked amongst the despised people, like Zacchaeus, the woman of Sychar, touching the diseased flesh of the lepers, gathering himself with tax collectors, fishers, and the riffraff of society. He was the Bread of Life, and He was the Living Water, and He was seeking them out.

Jesus instructed us to go into the world and preach the gospel to the whole of creation. Go, into the highways, and to the byways, out where men's hearts are broken by sorrow, and their souls are scarred by sin and take His love to them. Jesus came to seek; Jesus also came to save. "As the Father has sent me so I'm sending you" is the heart of Jesus, for us. Jesus not only is seeking but He is saving. He's lifting people into a new relationship with Jesus Christ. It's all about transformation, it's all about producing something spectacular in our lives. Jesus' power didn't come to an end at the crucifixion, but it was only released. His work is salvation in the world today. He defined His ministry by saying,

"On hearing this, Jesus said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'" (Mrk 2:17 NIV)

Jesus has commanded us to go. One of the things that we have the privilege of seeing in churches still today, though I think that might change in the years to come, is that people come to the church.

When Andrew asked me to share as part of this course, I said that I'd be doing some really practical things, and he said that's great! So, I'm going to share just a little bit about what we do at Somerset West. I'm sure that you do it as well, and Andrew, I think, has shared something similar on a couple of occasions.

Sometimes, when I'm speaking to one of the members on a Sunday morning, and I see a new person coming in for the first time, and they haven't been spoken to or greeted by a friend or one of the

deacons or elders, then I'm excited. If you are that member, I'm actually not listening to you anymore. I don't care about your story; I want to get to that person as quickly as possible. It really, really pulls on my heartstrings to get to that person and to greet that person. We have to be friendly to folk.

One of the things that we have come to understand at Somerset West is that it's a huge basin. Years ago, when we were still at Stellenbosch, and the Stellenbosch congregation was growing, I said to Andrew, "I want you to think about something," we were at a meeting, "I want you to think about Somerset West." This is a huge catchment area of about 55,000 homes. Over 200,000 people live in Somerset West, in the Strand and in Gordon's Bay Area, it's a vast catchment area. There is probably a maximum of about 50 churches. So, you are still shy of about 170,000 people that are not going to church. It's a huge unchurched area! So, we decided to go to Somerset West and be a part of that work there, and that's how we started.

Do you know essential that, in order to grow the Kingdom, you have to plant churches? I think it's the best form of church growth, it's the best form of evangelism, to plant churches. There are 7,000 churches closing down every single year around the world. There are 4,000 churches that are starting up every single year around the world. So, my philosophy is it's easier to make babies than to resurrect the dead! I really believe that! So just plant new churches! God blesses that kind of growth.

The church is there to take Christ's redeeming love into that community. Young churches are popping up all over the world and people are going to those churches. They say that in a church that is ten years or older, it takes 89 members to bring one person to the place of baptism. In a church that's five years and younger, it takes three people to bring one person to baptism. That's exciting! The more churches, the better!

One of the challenges that we had with Somerset West was we couldn't find a venue. It took two years to find a venue and it was that wonderful, anointed person sitting at the back whose name is Leonard, that got me the venue. He said, 'Richard, I found something!' I had looked for two years and couldn't find anything. We got two properties, right next to one another; one for the children's church and one for the church service itself. It's the only facility in all of JoshGen that's air-conditioned, so eat your heart out guys! Summer is coming!

People asked the Church Growth Institute, "What is the thing that impresses you or depresses you the most about going to church for the first time?" Without a doubt, they came up with this one principle, friendliness. John Wimber said, "There are many reasons why people go to church, but there's only one reason why people stay, and that's because of friendships."

Listen, it's tough to go to church for the first time! To go to a bunch of strange people, in a strange environment and a strange atmosphere, is difficult. Some have been told about it, and they've been encouraged to come with friends, but others just come. It's been very interesting how many come through because of Google when you plant! There are two significant times when you can show your friendliness and appreciation for the guests who have graced us with their presence. Just before the service and straight after the service. I have a five-minute rule after the service is finished. The rule is that our regular guys are not to speak to anybody that they know for five minutes after the service. The worst thing when you're visiting a church is when the service ends, you stand up, and everybody gets into little cliques. You think, "Okay, the service is over, I enjoyed it", and you walk out into the foyer. You think, "Okay, let's get a cup of coffee," but there's nobody that talks to you. It's a terrible thing! So, you need to have the five-minute rule. The five-minute rule says, don't talk to friends. You can talk to them afterward; you can speak to them any day of the week! But for five minutes, you have to hone in on the visitors who are there, especially for the first time. That is the five minutes before the service, five minutes after the service rule.

Then, when people come back, I make a point of remembering their names. First thing on a Monday morning, I give them a phone call, "Hey, it was great having you in church!" I don't let the other elders do it, I do it, the lead guy. It's essential, let me tell you if a visitor makes contact with the lead guy, it makes that much more of an impression. So, I phone them, and I memorize their names. On a Friday or a Saturday, I go through the file, and I say, "Okay, that person, he was a tall guy, he had a bald head, his name is Simon, and he's a SAF air pilot. His wife's name was Caitlyn". If they make an appearance the following week, I walk straight up to them "Hi, Simon!" Now, let me tell you, there is no sweeter sound in a person's ear than the sound of their own name. You can see the person gasping like they're taken aback. They're so surprised. That's what we do.

I kept a record of the folk that visited over three months. In the beginning part of the year, there were 45 visitors, only sixteen of them stayed. I wasn't happy with that statistic. That's about 35%! I was not happy. I would have loved it to have been 50%. But we keep records, and now and again we have something special. The 30 odd visitors who have visited us for the last three months will get a personalized SMS to say, for example, Andrew is coming on Sunday or Mervis is coming, or that we are having a guest service, a special evangelistic guest service, so bring a friend. We get special invitations going out. We try to do something at least once a quarter with that.

So, when the guests come, I've got six checkpoints.

1. The website is one. We've got a very good website.

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2. Parking. Our parking in the Playhouse area, we rent a theatre in Somerset West that can seat 200, it's just over half full now, and the parking situation is pretty dismal. So, we have rented a Voortrekker facility right next door, where the kids go to Next Gen. I ask the members, all the leaders, and regular members, to park next door to make space. You will find there is a sociological strangulation if people are coming to church, and it's 80% full, or if the parking lot is 80% full, people start to turn away. We have to make space for people parking. So, we ask the regular guys to go and park somewhere else! Their job is to make space for those that are visiting for the first time so that they have a parking space available right outside the venue. Us members can walk, it's part of our service!
 3. The entrance needs to be pretty jacked up. Guys need to have their bibs on. Our kids workers wear these brightly coloured bibs. So, as the visitors walk in, if they need to check their kids in, they can see where to go. We have 104 members, and we've got 48 children, so it's almost 2 to 1 in terms of adults to children. We've got a lot of children! The children need to be signed in for kids' church, but in Somerset West, our kids' venue is across the road. I've said to our guys, when families are there for the first time, instead of just pointing, please don't ever point, instead explain it's around the corner and then say, 'Let me walk you.' Then walk them over and just chat with them about incidental stuff and walk them to the NextGen facility.
 4. You need to have a place where they can be welcomed. Fortunately, we've got a lovely facility! Our first-time visitors are entitled to the free cup of coffee, so I say, "Come, let me take you to get your coffee right now." It's a nice cup of coffee!
 5. Then obviously the worship itself.
 6. Lastly, it's the church service. The service and the worship are the shop-window of the church. Don't tell them more than they need to know; just answer their questions. Don't bla bla bla bla bla and talk a whole lot of stuff about the church. We're in the hospitality business, and we need to show lots of care, lots of appreciation, lots of love to the guests who are there. Why should they return? When they return, they return on an emotional basis. It's not about the theology of the church. It's on an emotional basis. You know, it's the same old adage, I can't remember what you said, I can't remember how you said it, but I can remember how it made me feel. With that first experience, their antennae are up, and they are feeling and sensing stuff. If they walk in and they're not greeted, and they don't get a cup of coffee, and they don't feel warm and appreciated, if they get pointed to the NextGen facility, chances are it's not going to happen. It's essential to show great appreciation and hospitality to those that are there for the first time. You can't be a friendly church if you don't have friendly leaders. Leaders have to be friendly. You mustn't be absorbed with other things. Try and

deal with all the administrative stuff; try to deal with all the sound equipment, before the guests start arriving. You must be focused on being super, super friendly to those that are visiting for the first time.

Mervis came on Sunday, and afterward, he came for a meal, and he asked me a question. He said, "Richard, what is the one thing that is required to plant a church?" Any takers? What's the one thing, the superior thing? Any suggestions? Without hesitation, I said, "Perseverance". You know there are times when you plant a church, and it's one of those Sundays, you don't anticipate them. They don't come with banners beforehand that say, "This is going to be a terrible morning," but you get those mornings where it's just like, blah. Nothing happens. It's dead. When you get home after one of those services, you just go into the bedroom, and you flop on the bed and you just start to groan. Uuuurrrrrhhhhh. Fortunately, the Bible does talk about praying with groanings.

*"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."
(Gal 6:9 NIV)*

"Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy." (Ps 126:5 NIV)

Samuel Johnson says, 'Great works are performed and not by strength but by perseverance.' Calvin Coolidge said, 'Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not. Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Education will not. The world is full of educated derelicts. Genius will not. Unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.'

If God has called you to plant this church, I want to tell you, I want to confirm with you, there are going to be bad days. There are going to be awful days. You need just to persist and persevere through those times. Next week will be better. Please, God, may it be better. So often, we don't see progress when we persevere, but just keep plodding on.

I love the story of the Chinese bamboo tree. When you plant the seed of the Chinese bamboo, you fertilize it, you water it, and in the first year, nothing happens. In the second year, you fertilize and water, and still nothing happens. In the third year, you fertilize and water and nothing happens. In the fourth year, you fertilize and water and nothing happens. Then in the fifth year, within six weeks, it grows to ninety feet. That's 27 meters in six weeks! Does this thing grow in six weeks, or does it grow in five years? It grows in five years. If you didn't persevere with that, you would have rooted it out and planted some other crop.

One of the ladies in our church, that's just joined us, she started attending the Stellenbosch congregation the first year, 'No, no I'm not ready. I'm not ready for orientation, I'm still traveling. I'm still away a lot, I'm not ready, but I love the church. I love what it stands for.' The Second year, the third year, the fourth year nothing changed. Then we told her we were going to move to Somerset West. 'Fantastic,' she lived in Somerset West! We saw her once a month, once every two months and then, all of a sudden, Boof! The lights went on, the door opened, and she became a member. It took seven years! Thank God, not everybody takes seven years!

I watched a documentary recently about climbers that climb Mount Everest and how many people have died on that mountain. Many more people would have reached the summit of that mountain if they had not given up about a hundred meters from the top. They don't give up at base one or at base two, they give up when they're almost at the top. They just can't get to the top. So often we give up just before that time where there's breakthrough, when something spectacular begins to happen.

I was fortunate enough to have a whole bunch of guys coming from the Stellenbosch congregation to join us at Somerset West. We needed to take people because, within the Somerset West area, you must have some form of Next Gen children's ministry. In Stellenbosch, it's okay because it's primarily students, and slowly but surely, the Next Gen grows. But we've got a huge number of children, and it was important to get stuff going for the kids. If parents come with children and there's no children's church, you have a big issue. DL Moody said that children are the renewing force in the community. A statistic Andrew wanted to share at the leader's meeting the other night was 85 percent of Christians become Christians before the age of 15. 1 in 10,000 people become Christians after 30 years of age and 1 in 3/4 of a million people when they are over 70 years of age.

If I could say anything to you about church planting, it would be, take huge steps of faith. I'll talk a little bit about faith towards the end. You're going to meet lots and lots of doubters, but possibly the biggest doubter will be you. You'll doubt yourself many, many times. You'll have great friends, and those friends will leave you, and it won't be pretty. It'll be nasty. But there will be many others that will come alongside you and will become unbelievable friends. You need to be more passionate for the things that you're for, than the things that you are against. You need to choose not to please the insiders, but to reach the outsiders. Don't ever quit. You will experience a whole new dimension of spiritual warfare when planting a church. The Bible says, Go. Go and do it. That's my first point.

Second point. Have a good vision. Before the Holy Spirit was able to work in people, He implanted vision in people's hearts and people's minds. Before He stirred a nation, He stirred the people. Before He moved the nation, He breathed vision into people.

"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions." (Jl 2:28 NIV)

Men and women who have stood out in the scriptures more than any of the others have had a God-ordained vision. They could see what others couldn't see. They were aware of God's intentions and how they were to act with courage in a situation.

Noah was viewed as a mad man by his contemporaries while he was building a boat. A huge boat, bigger than what was ever seen, in the middle of the wilderness. But Noah's vision provided salvation for himself, for his family, and the animal kingdom. Others could have been a part of that salvation, but they didn't share in that vision, and they perished.

When David was King of Hebron, he looked at Jerusalem, and he thought, "That would be a good place to house the Ark of God." But it was a Jebusite stronghold, and the Jebusites taunted David. But we see that he took that stronghold because he had a vision for the Ark of God.

"The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They thought, "David cannot get in here." Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David." (2 Sam 5:6-7 NIV)

Nehemiah returned with refugees back to a Jerusalem that was in absolute devastation. It had been razed to the ground. The gates had been burned, but he had the vision to rebuild the walls. Once again, God used people who have vision.

"He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ." (Eph 1:9 NIV)

He made known His will.

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people." (Eph 1:17-18 NIV)

It's essential that you have a vision for that area and for that Church. Vision is essential. Bill Hybel says, "The definition of vision is a picture of the future that produces hope and passion." For a leader, it's indispensable to have a vision. He paints the target; he moves towards that. It fuels the fire within him,

and it draws him forward. It's the firelighter that those who follow the leader don't have. Show me a leader without a vision, and I'll show you somebody who isn't going anywhere. Max Dupree, in his book on leadership, says that the only kind of leadership worth following is based on vision.

"Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint but blessed is he who keeps the law." (Prov 29:18 ESV)

Society perishes, the people perish, and the church perishes where there is no vision, even the leaders perish. Where there's no vision, you and I will perish. We have to have a vision. Vision also gathers resources, it draws in resources around it. As you declare your vision, you'll pull in people around you. John Maxwell says, "The greater the vision, the more winners it will have the potential to attract." The greater the vision, the greater resources that will come. Vision is always for other people. If the vision is for somebody else's benefit or for the leader's benefit, it's not a good vision. It's always for other people. When we have a vision, as a church leader, it's always to bring people into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and for them to experience His redemptive love and salvation.

So, what is the JoshGen vision? Anybody? Any takers? Let me tell you. I did some research. JoshGen's vision is to live out authentic Christianity, Biblical Christianity. We are a family of believers who passionately desire to lay down their lives for God and one another. Our hope is to be the Church that Jesus Christ called us to be in Cape Town and the nations of the world; to be an authentic church. Our mission statement is Acts 2:42-47. If you plant a church within JoshGen, this is going to be the situation.

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe[a] came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." (Acts 2:42-47 ESV)

Look, the first three words of that passage, the first three words were, "they devoted themselves..." If we're going to be an authentic church, we have to share that vision over and over again. We have to work towards devotion. That's the first three words that describe the first-century church, the early church.

Unfortunately, the leadership in churches today comes from the top down. We phone people, "Why weren't you in church?" We are cajoling them, we are persuading, we are pressurizing people. But, they

said, "We are devoted all by ourselves!" Let me show you an illustration here. You know, reluctance is awkward. I've got this beautiful water. This is life! This is the most wonderful thing on the face of the earth! In the past, people went to war over oil, I think the next war is going to be fought over water. This is water. "You want to drink? It's nice, it's cold, it's delicious, it's good. Do you want water? No? Oh, you have Coke!"

You see, that's the reluctance. That's just the unfortunate reluctance that people have, and you can't cram it down people's throats. I mean, I could wrestle him and open his gullet and try to make him drink water, but he just is not interested. So, what do you do? Reluctance is an absolute killer for leaders. Where we emphasize this authentic church, where they devoted themselves, we want guys to come to us and say, "We are devoted all by ourselves! You don't have to come and watch us. We're in your kidneys; we're right behind you, we support you in everything."

Listen to some of these statistics. 1700 pastors leave the ministry each month around the world. Each month! They leave because of spiritual burnout, contention in their churches, or moral failure. 4000 churches begin each year, but 7000 close. 50% Of pastors are so discouraged that they would leave the ministry if they could, but they have no other way of making a living. 80% Of pastors and 84% of their spouses feel unqualified and discouraged in their role as pastors. 70% Of pastors constantly fight depression. 80% Of seminary and Bible students enter the ministry and leave within the first five years. 80% Of children's pastors surveyed need to seek professional help for depression. 85% Of pastors said the greatest problem is that there are sick and tired of dealing with problem people. 50% Of pastors' marriages end in divorce. 3500 Members a day left the church last year. A day! Man, we need to return to this thing, they devoted themselves. That's the hidden key!

I heard of an ex-Baptist pastor in England who, for many, many years had given his life to the church. He and his wife had poured their heart and soul into the church and over the years they were constantly met with reluctance. Eventually, they said, "No, we can't continue with this." Their members were not buying into the vision. They were not buying into the direction. So, they left the church. He was on medication, and the wife was on anti-depressant medication as well. They weren't sleeping at night because of the massive effort they were putting out and not receiving any kind of response. So, they decided to leave the ministry. Do you know what he became? He became a pub landlord. He found from there that his members were devoted all by themselves! They used to come early! They used to knock on the door, wanting to get in! He said he never saw that in all the time that he was leading the church. At night he not only saw the incredible generosity of people wanting to buy the last round of drinks, but at

night he used to flash the lights and say, 'Last round!', and he had to chase people out! He never had to chase people out of the church because they just left very quickly afterward, anyway.

There are many people out there that need to be challenged with this thing about how they sit like wooden statues waiting for the leadership to do something sufficiently inspiring, sufficiently revelatory, something exciting, and emotionally heart-rendering to get them to serve and to commit a little bit more. When you plant a church, what kind of church do you want? That needs to be part of your vision.

Years ago, I heard of a pastoral strategy of a church in the United States. They were going to phone all those that weren't in church, the next day. When people came to church, they noted all those that weren't there, and they started phoning people. They had a recorded message from the pastor, "Hi, this is your pastor. We noted that you weren't there; we would love to see you again next week." I mean, that's a terrible strategy! Why focus on those that are negative, those that are reluctant, and those that are not there? Focus on those that are there and push into their lives. Make phone calls to those people, "Wasn't that a great service that we had yesterday? Didn't God move most incredibly?" Focus on those things.

"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (hn 1:12 NIV)

He gave them the right to become everything that God wanted them to be. When I was leading a community, my worst, worst, worst phone call was on a Wednesday night as I was sitting down for supper. Guys used to phone and say, "Tell me, what are we doing at comm tonight?" Have you ever had a phone call like that? Yeah? What they are asking is, "Do I really need to be there? Show me, show me something spectacular that's going happen tonight." If I don't say, "Look, Francis Chan, himself is going to be there, and he's going to talk about his most recent interview with the Archangel Gabriel, where he's been dealing with and fending off Lucifer." If I don't give them some big story, then they're not going to come.

Then, when they do come, they sit there and say, "Joh, you lied to me."

I call them Hokey-Pokey Christians. Do you know the Hokey-Pokey song all you youngsters? The older guys know the Hokey-Pokey. It's, "In, out, in, out, you do the Hokey Pokey, you turn around, that's what it's all about." They're the Christians that go:

'Hey Rich, hey, I'm in. You can rely on me! No wait, I'm not... Hang on, I'm there; I'll be there! Actually, no, I'm not going to come... Right, I'm right behind you; I'm supportive! Oh wait, no, I'm not."

I call them Hokey-Pokey Christians. That's what it's all about. I said, that's what the church is all about. You need to teach them how to be devoted to one another. That needs to be communicated all the time.

When I was still a youngster, I was a big guy, and unfortunately, super arrogant. When I was in my thirties, I was just as ugly arrogant, but God helped me through that, and despite my arrogance, I was fairly successful. So, a guy comes to the Church in Milnerton that I was pastoring, he says, "I've been coming here for three weeks, and my life is an absolute mess. I'm in debt, I've lost my home, and my wife has left me. I've been coming here for three weeks, and my life is no better. I just want to tell you that I'm giving you one more week." So, that arrogance just bubbled up inside of me and he was dead serious. He was dead, dead serious.

Somebody had invited him and told him, "You come to church, and they'll sort you out." I thought, "No! You come to God, and He'll sort you out!" "I'm giving you another week," he says. I stuck out my hand and responded, "Well, if you're giving me another week, let me shake your hand right now and say goodbye because I'm not interested in your one more week. Let me deliver you from expecting something from us that I can't give or produce in you. Please release me from worrying about what I need to come up with to give to you. Goodbye." Then I paused, "Or you can give us a year. You give us a year, and we spend time with you, we ask God for help, and you do for a year what we believe God is telling you." "A year! A year?! Are you kidding me?" he said. I am six foot two, and I towered over this little fellow. "Listen! Listen to me!", I said, "How old are you?" "I'm 56," he said. "It's taken you 56 years to get your life into this train smash where you've lost everything. You're totally in debt, your wife has left you, your kids want to have nothing to do with you, and you're telling me you're giving us a week? No! I don't think so! Forget it!" Then, I went, and I found out who had invited him, and we had words.

As leaders you are only supplementary, you need to plug into God. Your primary relationship is with God. We need to push people into God. As the psalmist said, God is our keeper. He will keep and bless you. Pastors, elders, leaders don't have enough grace, faith, patience, and love to be your keeper and that's why people leave the church. 'There's not enough love here,' because they expect everything to be done in a week. You're dreaming!

Session 18

People of Conviction

Annie Nakos had a prophetic picture and word about devotion that she has had in the past, but I thought what she said was excellent and relevant to the previous session. So, I've asked her to share it.

"When Richard spoke about the hokey-pokey Christian, I was reminded of something the Lord showed me. Graphite and diamond have the same chemical composition, but the structure is different. Graphite is in your pencil; it's black, easily breakable and falls apart. Diamond is the hardest substance known to man, and it reflects light. In a diamond, all the electrons in the outer shell around the nucleus are totally committed because of the pressure used to form it. Graphite has one little electron in the outer shell that is looking for another connection. This is what God said to me, it's not that some of us are formed under pressure, because I think Jesus took the pressure, it's that we have to commit with our whole heart and everything, and then we can be a diamond, and Christ can be reflected through His bride."

I have a quote by CS Lewis, "I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity." I've never seen a decreasing attendance that coincides with an increasing devotion. So, get your people to devote themselves.

In this session, we will look at how to be people of conviction. Firstly, let's look at allowing the Holy Spirit to have His way. The experience of the Holy Spirit should take place often in your church. David Watson says this, "It is a rather inescapable imperative command, receiving the power of the Holy Spirit is one of the most important discoveries that we can make." Andrew Murray, in his book *The Believers Full Blessing at Pentecost*, writes, "The greatest need of the church and the thing which, above all others, believers ought to seek with one mind and with their whole heart, is to be filled with the Spirit of God," and that's what happened on the day of Pentecost. Fifty days after the crucifixion, Jesus had promised the empowerer, the Holy Spirit, to come. He came with fire, and with tongues, and the triumph of the gospel began to take place. This was the supernatural surge of God that took place on the day of Pentecost, and we need to allow the Holy Spirit to have His way in our midst today.

When I came to Christ, it was a very dramatic experience for me. I had the infilling of the Holy Spirit about a month later. I had two separate experiences. When I came to Christ, I didn't go to Him as a historical figure, I went to Him in all His entirety and never looked back from that day forward. When I

came to Christ, it was an all-or-nothing experience that was the end of me. It was the beginning of my Christian life and meant giving up a whole lot of stuff, at the ripe old age of 15! I committed myself to follow Him totally and entirely. I loved reading the New Testament, I love the fact that Jesus did and said the most outrageous things. How He multiplied the bread and the loaves, how He walked past a fig tree, and He just went, "Uurgh" and it died. I just love that He went to Lazarus' tomb, and He said, "Come forth," and Lazarus came forth, resurrected from the dead. When I became a Christian, I thought that that was what we needed to do.

My dad was a Presbyterian minister who had recently come into an understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. As a result, there was a revival taking place at the church. When we gathered together, I thought that we would go out and that we would do what Jesus did, and that we would go out after the service and that we would speak to people, we would cast out demons, and we would pray for people to be healed. But that wasn't the situation. I said, "When are we going to do this?", and my dad said, "Do what?" and the elders said, "Do what?" I said, "When are we going to do what we believe?" He said, "No, we've already done it, we don't do that." I thought that's crazy. We cry about it, we sing about it, we preach about it, we give because of it, we pray about it, but we don't do it. So, I got a little disillusioned. But who listens to a 15-year-old? How weird is it that when I was fifteen years of age, I did stuff for the devil, being a non-believer, and my dad allowed me to do it. But when I became a Christian, he didn't allow me to do what I saw happening in the Bible. We need to go out, we need to be quite serious about going out with the Holy Spirit's power and being very forceful and relying on the Holy Spirit to do what He needs to do.

The first century Christians were controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and they turned the world upside down. We need to rely more and more on the Holy Spirit to do things in our lives. When Peter and John were walking through the temple gates, there was a professional beggar asking for alms. Peter looked at him and said,

"Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.'" (Acts 3:6 NIV)

"So, when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present." (1 Cor 5:4 NIV)

The power of the Holy Spirit is present! May that begin to take place. You see, on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:12, it talks about them continuing in amazement and great perplexity. What does amazed and

perplexed mean? Sometimes you'll see somebody who's been so under the inspiration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit that you think this is beyond their experience or their explaining. I was involved with the Toronto movement 20 odd years ago, and we had prayer for folk. During this time, there was one little girl. She must have been about ten years old, and she was a darling little Christian. People had prayed for her, and she was just lying on the ground. To this day, I've never seen anything like it. I stood there and watched what was happening, and she was bouncing about 6 feet off the ground, almost levitating! I mean, we talk about Jonathan Edwards' wife levitating, and I'm thinking, "In a Presbyterian church, seriously?!" I'm just amazed and perplexed. We have to allow the work of the Holy Spirit to take place in our churches.

Secondly, Be people of the Word. The Word is the thing that changes and transforms us. It breaks and melts our cold hearts, breaks our stubborn wills. The only thing that does that is the Word of God.

"Is not my word like fire," declares the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?" (Jer 23:29 NIV)

That's what the Word of God does. If we place our emphasis on our conversion, even the baptism of the Holy Spirit without the emphasis of being immersed with the Word of God, then it just becomes an emotional experience. The Bible is to us what good nutritious food is to the body. It transforms us! In the prison cell that supposedly imprisoned Paul, there is an inscription, "The Word of God is not bound". Paul writes to Timothy and says,

"Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained." (2 Tim 2:8-9 NIV)

God's Word is not bound. It will transform our lives, it will transform our families, it will transform our communities, it will transform our towns, and it will transform our nations.

The Word of God convicts us of sin. On the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2:37, Peter got up, and he preached. The people responded and said they were pricked to the heart. God convicted them to such a point, that they said to Peter and the other apostles, "What shall we do?" Out of those 23 verses that Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, 12 were pure Scripture. This was probably one of the most biblically scriptural sermons that have ever been preached, and it was preached on the day of Pentecost. We need to apply the Word. We need to be doers of the Word, people who practice and do the word.

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (Jas 1:22 NIV)

The American Standard Version says, "Prove yourselves doers of the Word and not merely hearers who delude themselves." The Living Bible says, "Remember, it's a message to obey, not just to listen, so don't fool yourselves." James is speaking to those who go to church. You think that listening to the reading of the Word, listening to the preach, is going to be good enough? That you can go out, and not practice the Word? We need to practice the Word. That's one of the scariest verses in the Bible for me. You think you're doing it, but if you're not walking in it, then you're deluding and deceiving yourselves.

Henry Stanley, the guy that came to David Livingstone and said, "Dr. Livingstone I presume?", was an atheist and a journalist when he met David Livingstone, and this is what he said, "He made me a Christian and never knew that he was doing it." Stanley went on to say it was not Livingstone's preaching that converted him. It was Livingstone's living. We need to have a religion that works. Each day you should ask yourself, "What have I done today that nobody, but a Christian should do?"

Robert Ingersoll, in the 19th century, was regarded as the great agnostic. He wrote a book that slated the Bible and sent a copy of the book to his aunt Sarah who was on the Pacific Coast (the west coast of the United States). She was a devout Christian, and this is what he wrote on the inside of the book, "If all Christians lived like Aunt Sarah, perhaps this book would never have been written." If anything can turn people away, it's the hypocrisy that comes from the Christian faith. Let me tell you, we have to believe what we believe, and we have to act and behave in a way that is in accordance with the Word of God. The world is looking for that.

I have a number of statements about the Bible:

- The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, the happiness of believers.
- Its doctrines are holy, and its precepts are binding, its histories are true, its decisions immutable.
- Read it wisely, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy and pure before God.
- It contains light to direct you, food to sustain you, and comfort to lift and to cheer you.
- It's a traveller's map, it's a pilgrim's staff, it's a pilot's compass, it's a soldier's sword, and the Christian's character, Christ, is its subject.
- Our good is its design, the glory of God its end.
- It should fill your memory, rule your heart, discipline the flesh, guide the feet.

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- Read it slowly, read it frequently, read it prayerfully.
 - It has been given, and it has given life to you.
 - It will be open on the Day of Judgment, and it will be forever remembered.
 - It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest effort and labour, and condemns all who make light of its holy precepts.
 - We need to be people of the word!

We've had many testimonies, particularly from Somerset West, and they're fantastic. I have to admit humbly, sometimes a three-minute testimony can be more impactful and more powerful than a 30-minute preach. A personal testimony of a life transformation is why we do what we do. Your story, a personal experience, can be one of the best ways to bring people into an awareness of Jesus Christ. It's the best way to assess the health of that church as well. Stories of salvation, how marriages can be restored, addictions conquered, and sicknesses healed need to be recorded. We need to tell them often and the best way to do that is through baptism. If they haven't been baptized, baptize them.

Remember what I said earlier, a church ten years and older takes an average of 89 people to bring one person to baptism, and a young church five years and younger takes three people to bring one person to baptism. One of the things that drew me out of the Presbyterian Church was this issue of baptism. When I read the Great Commission, the words of Jesus say, "Go into all the world and make disciples, baptizing..." I don't think that Jesus got His words mixed up and muddled up, and it doesn't say, "Go out into all the world, baptizing and making disciples." Discipleship always comes before baptism, and that's the thing that drew me out.

One day, I was baptizing a baby in the Presbyterian Church, and you know there was this inner conviction. I didn't hear the angels singing, I didn't hear the voice of God saying, "No more," there was just this inner conviction, saying I can't do this anymore, I can't baptize babies. This is not right. Baptize people as much as possible only once you get them to the place where they say, "I believe in this Christian thing, I live by faith, and I'm going to surrender my life to the Lord Jesus Christ daily."

"They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death." (Rev 12:11 NIV)

Thirdly, the word of their testimonies carried power. Testimonies can stir worship. Isn't God amazing? It can generate hope when you, yourself, are struggling through situations. It can foster an understanding

of who a person is. It can unite the church family and convict unbelievers. When David stood before Saul before he went out and fought Goliath, Saul asked him how he knows he can kill this giant, and David referred to a testimony.

"But David said to Saul, 'Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.' Saul said to David, 'Go, and the Lord be with you.'" (1 Sam 17:34-37 NIV)

He went out and, with a guided missile stone that went right through his forehead, killed Goliath. What did David do? He took Goliath's sword, cut off his head, and took it home, showed it to everybody. This was a trophy. We need to do that. We need to show trophies of God's involvement and God's action in our lives. Over and above that, David collects all his weapons, and he puts them in this tent. When he's falling asleep at night, he sees those big weapons, those things that look like tree trunks compared to his spear and says, "Thank you, God," when he wakes up in the morning. His mercies are new every morning, thank you, God. They're trophies.

Next, we need to mobilize the lazy. If you're going to start a church, it can't be run like a Boeing 737 where you have three pilots, twenty crew, and so many passengers. I loved the World Cup. It was so exciting watching it, but 30 guys were running around that field exhausted and 50 000 people were in the stadium needing some action. The church is like that too. Some of us are running around absolutely exhausted, while others watch. People have referred to the church as the greatest indoor spectator sport in the world. It shouldn't be. Similarly, as Moses appeared before Pharaoh and said that God had spoken to let His people go, we need to let people in the church go, so that they can be released to perform the ministry.

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." (Eph 4:11-12 NIV)

This is the Four12 passage. It is our job as full-time elders to equip you so that you do the work of ministry. 1 Corinthians 12 refers to the church being a body. It's where Paul talks about the responsibility for all of us to be participators. We are not called to be spectators, but to be participators. He talks about parts of the body that everybody might want to be, like a hand. The hand gets a lot more attention than the feet, you don't see praying feet on the mantelpiece, but you see praying hands. Many advertisements show beautiful hands, for example, that have rings and jewellery on them, but we don't

see many adverts about feet. People don't like to be feet, but how far will you get if you don't have a foot? Everybody wants to be an eye. When people see pictures, it's the eyes they see. Who wants to be an ear? That's one of the only parts of the body that continue to grow as you get older. The nose is a subject of ridicule. "Look at that beak that guy has on his face, goodness, gracious; he has nostrils that you can park a bus in." Who wants to be a nose? You can't just have eyes though. There are three tiny little bones in an ear, the malleus, stapes, and the incus that may look insignificant, but if you didn't have one of them, you wouldn't be able to hear.

Acts 9 tells us about Dorcas, a lovely woman, who had the gift of helps (acts of service) and died. People cried because she was such an influence in the church. She just helped people, but she was so influential that the people cried out to Peter and said, "Go and pray for her, resurrect her from the dead," and he told everybody to get out. "Lord, resurrect her," and she sat up, and they walked out together. It's a lovely story of the power of God in that situation, but I really believe that the redemptive work of God today is not going to be done by a few flashy superstars and charismatic personalities. It's going to be done through the majestically integrated, finely tuned body of Christ, where people come to understand that they play a part. It will be done when they get involved as participators and not spectators in the Kingdom of God.

The fifth point is that we need to be people of prayer. You need to pray. I think we had a lead elders' meeting recently, and the general consensus was that God is saying something to us about prayer. We need to pray. In praying, we come to that place where we say, "God, it's about You." Nothing that we can do in our lives can bring that person to that supernatural experience of salvation and being filled with the Holy Spirit. It's about God, and we need to pray. It's God's church; it's not ours. We don't have the charisma to enable people to experience God in any way. It is all about Him.

I have made some mistakes in ministry, and they're not all mistakes of Commission. I think my biggest mistake is the mistake of Omission. I've not prayed enough, and I'm very aware I've been too pragmatic. My father was a minister, my uncle was a Baptist minister, and it's just been in the family. I've come out of this place where I know the stuff, I know how to do this in my own strength. I haven't relied more on God. We are called to do something beyond our human competency, beyond our human reasoning, beyond our human connections, beyond our human efforts. In that in-between stage, we get to that place, and then God does the rest. We need to allow God to do the rest.

The most exceptional quality in a leader is that he's able to hear God, and he's able to obey what God is asking him to do. That's your finest quality. You need to spend time on your knees. I must confess; that's my sin, that's my mistake, I haven't prayed enough. As I get older, I'm learning to do that more and

more. Does your leader have smooth knees, or does he have calloused knees? Smooth knees, he's probably not a man of prayer. Calloused knees, he probably is a person of prayer. Smooth knees tell us that he's perhaps not humble, calloused knees tell us he is humble, and there is brokenness in him. Smooth knees probably say that he's self-absorbed, calloused knees say that he's probably focused on others. Smooth knees say that he has a personal agenda, calloused knees say that he puts others ahead of himself. Smooth knees say that he probably recognises God's voice, but calloused knees say he recognises God's voice and wants to obey him. Corrie Ten Boom asked this question, "Is your prayer a steering wheel, or is it a spare tyre. Do you use it every day or only when you're in a pickle?"

In the late 1700s, the French Revolution took place, terrible bloodshed, and death took place in France. England started to follow that same route, but it didn't because John Wesley, who was responsible and involved in the first Great Awakening, began to pray. He had little groups of 12 people all over the United Kingdom praying for this nation, and they avoided going the same route as the French Revolution. Satan fears nothing from prayerless Bible studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray. Hudson Taylor was a great missionary to China. Taylor's daughter in law, Geraldine Taylor, wrote a book, called *Beyond the Ranges: Biography of J.O. Fraser*. She writes about two Chinese villages, one where he stayed, where he worked, where he had believers, the other one over the mountain range for which he was responsible.

The interesting thing is that where he worked, the village wasn't doing well. There was trouble, friction, and issues. But the village on the other side of the mountain range did phenomenally well. He went to God, and he asked God, "What is this? I'm here, I'm involved with these people, why is the other village doing so much better?" The Lord showed Fraser although he was spending a lot of time counselling and preaching and teaching those he lived with, he spent much more time in prayer for the village over the mountain range. He concluded that four basic elements were required in making disciples. The first was prayer. The second was prayer. The third was prayer, and the fourth was the Word of God. We need to be people of prayer.

English evangelist, Leonard Ravenhill, wrote extensively about revival. He was in the same league as A.W. Tozer, a great man of God. He said this, "No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere."

One of my favourite stories is this one by David Watson. He wrote many books, was a fantastic conference speaker, pastored for many years, was a friend of John Wimber, and in the 80s, he was diagnosed with liver cancer, which we know is terminal. He believed that God could heal him. Not only did he have many of the folk that were under his ministry praying for him, but he flew over to California and had John Wimber and the Vineyard team pray for him, but he wasn't healed. As the cancer started to grow, he got asthma, and he tells a story right at the end in his last book *Fear no Evil*, where he got up one night, struggling to breathe, and he went downstairs to make himself a cup of tea. He sat there, and God had been speaking to him and dealing with him.

God spoke to him with such clarity that he wrote about this. These were his last words, "David, all your ministry, all your writing, all your speaking, all your conferences pale into insignificance in comparison to the times that we spend together. David, seek My face, seek My face." Seek God's face; seek it with all that you've got, with all that you know how, and then those dried-up little riverbeds will begin to feel the gush of the Living Water come pouring in.

Lastly, a healthy church is a generous church. In *JoshGen*, we are taught a lot about money. I'm not going to give you a finance teaching tonight, but a healthy church is always a generous church. The healthiest, happiest, holiest churches are lavishly open-handed. When Paul writes to the churches in Macedonia, he says,

"In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity." (2 Cor 8:2 NIV)

Philippi was the largest church in Macedonia, and the New Testament reveals that it was the healthiest and the happiest of all the churches. In the book of Philippians, we see that Paul writes to the Philippians and has no word of correction to them as he does to the Corinthians, and many others. In my 38 years, I've never seen a healthy church that's been stingy, and I've never seen an unhealthy, generous church.

Why did Jesus speak so much about money? Jesus spoke more about money than anything else. He started the gospel and he said, "Repent and believe." Throughout His ministry, He emphasized the necessity of repentance, but He spoke about money more than He did about repentance. He talked to people about forgiveness, about happiness, about eternal life. He spoke to them about faith, about the strength of love, but He spoke to them about money more than any of those. One-third of His parables and one-sixth of all the verses of the gospel were about money. Why did He speak so much about money? Nowhere do we ever see that Jesus took a collection for Himself. He spoke about money with His disciples because we see in Luke 16:13 that man cannot serve God and mammon. Mammon, or

money, has an influence. It has an influential power behind it. We go to work every single Monday morning, we kill ourselves until Friday night, and then on a Sunday morning, we are too tired to go to church. This tension is real, so when teaching your congregation one day, teach them about money. Teach them that there is this huge rivalry that goes on between money and God. Richard Foster said that the un-consecrated wealth of Christians is the greatest hindrance to the church's progress.

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." (Gal 6:7 NIV)

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Lk 6:38 NIV)

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.'" (Mal 3:10 NIV)

When God speaks to you about planting a church or being involved with the church plant, trust Him, trust Him. Don't be concerned with what's going on around you. Don't be worried about the when or the where, or the. 'Is it going to be financially secure?' Just trust Him. Nehemiah built the walls of Jericho even in troublesome times (Daniel 9:25). There's never a right time for a building program. We are going into a huge economic recession, and we're building our biggest campus in Durbanville. These are troublesome times, and we're building.

"Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap." (Ecc 11:4 NIV)

If you're looking at the situation, you're not going to get involved with planting for the future, so it's important to trust God. The early Christians stepped out in faith, and they trusted God to meet their needs. They sacrificed, they served, and the gospel spread across the world. When we start asking the question, "Is it safe" rather than asking, "Is it God's will?", then we are in huge trouble. Ten of the spies that came back from going into the promised land at Kadesh Barnea said it's not safe, and what happened was that they ended up forty years in the wilderness because they said it's not safe. Faith believes despite evidence and obeys despite consequences. The guys that are recorded in Hebrews 12 as being people of faith were high-risk people, but God. But God! Because they trusted God, they are recorded as great people of faith. In the parable of the talents, the guy with the five talents multiplied and he got double, the two talents doubled, and he got four, the guy with the one talent buried it. He wanted to play safe, and what did Jesus say to him? "You wicked and lazy servant." If we play it safe,

that's the kind of thing that Jesus is probably going to say to us. What happened was that he was cast out into the darkness. We can't play it safe. We have to rely on God.

Planting churches is the best form of church growth, and we are commanded by God to go and to do this. So, trust God for the future. A young student came to Charles Spurgeon one day and said to him, "Dr. Spurgeon, I'm confused. When I stand, and I preach the gospel, and I extend an invitation to Christ asking people to come forward, I don't get the same results as you, Dr Spurgeon. In fact, I often stand and extend an invitation, and nobody comes forward. Why don't I get the same results?" Spurgeon asked the young man, "Do you expect people to come forward every time you extend an invitation?" The young man says, "No, not every time." Spurgeon said, "That's why they don't come. You have to believe it. You have to believe that they're going to come." Growth is going to happen. Trust God.

Session 19

Stand Firm

This series has been a fantastic time of building, and hopefully shaping, your heart and your understanding. In this section, I will share a couple of thoughts, and it might be useful to do a little more practical stuff. I'm going to be looking at the ingredients of a church planter and some of the things that we need to look at, and then in the second part, we'll see how far we get. We might go into different sized churches and how you need to lead them differently, and that'll be an interesting thing if we get there.

I want to start this section with the ingredients of a perfect church planter. Let me just say this, certain people are wired differently to others and sometimes a church planter on his own, especially if you're going to send someone out into the middle of nowhere to go and start a work with no credibility; there is a unique grace that's often needed. Sometimes, God will just do something supernaturally, but in a Western context, the challenge we face is that there is a lot of competition, if I can use that word. In other words, there's a lot of churches offering a lot of stuff that's very different from us. So, to have enough charisma, which you need, to draw people from what's comfortable to what's sacrificial, you're going to need some serious skills. So, that's when you're out there on your own; you're going to need not just some serious skills but you're going to need some serious anointing as well.

We now have a measure of credibility because of who we are as Four12 and Josh Gen. There is a feeling within certain parts of the body of Christ that we are carrying something which is needed and vital. That is a game-changer for anyone planting a church because now, if you plant a church, there are people that have been in our churches that are going, "We want that kind of church, we believe that's what Jesus wants," and they find us. So, you tend to find it's a lot easier now than it was and if you plant in a multi-site like Josh Gen, it's even easier because a lot of the difficult stuff can be supplemented. Because we're very connected, we can literally fly in the troops as needed, and we can fill in the gaps, so they're not as obvious, as blatant.

So, when I say church planting, there's a lot of ways of doing this; and some are harder than others. Obviously, sometimes church planting is that you're just that lucky person if it grows quickly, that hits the right place at the right time, there's a vacuum, and you fill that vacuum, and then it's effortless. While other times you can put a really good guy in difficult ground, it can be hard. I do believe the anointing

eventually breaks the yoke, but the thing we have to remember is this, it's not actually about the size of our church that counts. It's about the people getting saved and growing. If you keep it that way, you can keep your heart; because sometimes church planting is very demoralizing. People are people, and they do really stupid things, and they really can hurt. Often, the ones you give the most time to will be the ones that hurt you the most. So, there are real challenges in any church planter, in any leader and those are the sorts of things you have to be aware of when you go into leadership. There is pain involved. Still, if you love the Lord, and if you have nowhere else to go because you know He's called you to it, you'll pay that price and keep going, you won't give up where many do give up at times because they have forgotten that.

In Western culture, it is harder. In a non-western culture, you could pretty much be a terrible teacher and know very little about the Word of God, but you know more than somebody else, and you bring the gospel. Because there's nothing else there, it will grow. But when you come into a Western context with Hillsong down the road, and View, and all these churches down the road; it's going to be a lot harder for you because people can kind of pick and choose. Why should they choose you? Now, that's a very important question.

If you don't know why they should go to you instead of Hillsong or View Church, you're going to battle. Let's be honest; if I'm moving into the area and you're no different from them, you have nothing different that you're going to bring me into than they will, why would I choose you. If they've got cooking worship; a super cool pastor who preaches the skin off his rice pudding; and the worship team are so good I get goosebumps looking at them and you're in your house with your dog and your cat and your wife - why am I going to join you? You don't have children's ministry. Why am I going to join you? If you can't answer that, you're going to struggle. So, the question is, and this is something you need to work through, why should I plant a church where there are churches around me? If you can't work that out and believe it, then don't try. You have to be so convinced that people need what you're carrying, not what they're carrying, and if you're not convinced of it, they're never going to see it. So that's a crucial thing.

You know, when I came here, to give you an example, I was part of New Covenant, and they said we could plant; they were going to send us out. We prayed, and God clearly told us the Blouberg area. We were all excited, we had the elders' endorsing, and as we decided to go, we heard the terrible news that there was another New Covenant Church, called Life Changers, that was planting the same week as us. I was like, "What? How can two churches that supposedly have the same values, plant literally down the road from each other?" For me, I struggled with that, I thought if we're going to do the same kind of

church, why don't we just join? I met with the apostolic team, and I said, "I'll lay down my vision, I'll lay down what's in me to serve." There was a guy called Wally Gerstmeier about whom I said, "I'll serve Wally," and the apostolic team said, "Ah, no. But you have a bigger gift than Wally." I said, "Well then, tell him to serve me; I'm happy to serve him. What's going to be best for the Kingdom?" They said, "No, no, no, no, no, no."

So, Life Changers started the same week as us. That was the hardest part of the church plant because every time I preached a hard message and somebody came from New Covenant and they were checking us out; I knew if I didn't make it cool for them, they were just going to go to Wally down the road, and that would be the end of that. You're desperately trying to grow. So, it was extremely hard. It was kind of like, "Why am I here, why is he there?" We did become very different, and Life Changers is different from us now in terms of values; but at the time, it was really, really challenging. I could still understand why we needed to be here, in my mind, when the AOG's were around because we're very different. Or when there's a Dutch Reformed Church down the road, we're still very different. But that made it difficult for me, does that make sense?

So, when you plant, why are you needed in that community? You can say, "Well, people need to get saved," and that's a good reason. For me, you have to have a dream, an inspiring thing that you've seen worth any sacrifice and I have; I've seen the church in the New Testament that's different from the consumer churches. I don't want a consumer church; I can't give my life to that. I'm ruined by what I've seen in the scriptures. So, if you hear what I'm saying, it might ruin you too, and then you're spoiled for those things. But now you'll want to help me because we need a church beautiful for Jesus, and you could help me to build it. So, now people will sacrifice even though there's no kids ministry or other things. But those are things you have to settle in your heart, and you have to be able to communicate to those coming to your church.

If you're planting a 'Josh Gen', just the name will carry you. Now, Four12 will also start to carry you in some contexts. Like HJ in Bloemfontein. HJ went in, as a Four12 church, the first Four12 church in Bloemfontein. Listen, HJ had it easy compared to what we had because he went with credibility immediately. There's a big vacuum in terms of our kind of churches. People have been going, "When are you going to plant in Bloem? When are you going to plant in Bloem?" "Okay, we're going to plant in Bloem!" People are like, "Whoo!" But if you just arrived in a place where no one knows you, no one knows what Four12 is, or Josh Gen is, it's much harder. In some ways, I think it's good news that our credibility is now serving us and making it easier for us to continue to advance. I'm grateful to God for

that; we worked hard to get that credibility, and that makes it easy for all of us to continue to plant churches.

Another important thing to do, if you're going to plant a church, is to realize that if there's an anointing on you to lead something, it's probably going to show itself in some form before you are leading. In a church like ours, it should be evident that there's something on you that's attractive spiritually. When I say attractive spiritually, I'm not talking your face, I mean that there is something about you that is attractive, there's something about what God's put on you that draws people. Remember, Jesus said, "If I am drawn up, I will draw men." So, a person that's able to lift Jesus up in a home group or wherever it is, will then naturally draw people. So, you'll find your best church planters are those that draw people. You'll find that when they join the church, they'll suddenly bring in their unsaved friends, and their friends are coming and sticking. If they plant a homegroup, that home group grows; people are coming, enjoying it, and finding life there. Those are early possible ingredients for a church planter.

If a young guy has led a youth effectively and well, that is a brilliant ingredient for a church planter. Because youth are tough to lead. They are high maintenance; you have to keep them entertained. Remember, there's a difference between entertaining the youth, and building into the youth. They have come out of an entertainment culture, if you are able to bring them into being semi-devoted to Jesus, you've done quite well. So, can I say this? Kid's ministry is one of the best training grounds for preaching. I'm not doing a promo for kid's ministry here, but if you can keep kids' attention for an hour, it's a really good way of learning how to communicate.

By learning to teach kids, you'll find it easy to lead adults. The best preachers are understood by young children. I want to again say to you that if you feel called to preach, there's an opportunity. It's going to stretch you and you're going to think, "Oh, God, what am I going to do with these little guys?" That's what it feels like every week for a church planter. You often feel like, "What am I going to do this week, Lord? What do you want to do, what do you want to say, and how will I say it? How do I communicate these things?" So, it's a great training ground for you to start developing the various muscles needed to plant a church. So, you must begin developing in those areas, and I want to encourage you, if you're leading a homegroup, you can grow a home group just by loving people. If you take the time to get out of your comfort zone and love people, you'll find people find love attractive. They find the love of Christ attractive. So, you'll grow. But you have to start, if you can't do it in a home group in a church like this, you're never going to do it if the buck stops with you. So, it's good training ground, it's like training wheels on a bicycle.

Again, if you feel that there's a church plant in you, start working at these things and be faithful to the homegroup, and you'll see God will add to you. The other thing is this, not all of you here will lead a church, but to plant a church with an attractive person, again, a person that can draw people, is so awesome. Do you know how good it was to plant a church with Julie, Lisa, and Melanie? I mean, they change the atmosphere in a room. You came in probably through them, and you stayed because of them. What you would find is they are naturally gregarious and naturally loving, they move in the Spirit, they prophesy, they pray, they love people, and they're serving people. So, people come to the church and go, "Wow, I feel truly loved!" When I joined the New Covenant Church out of the AOG, nobody knew me. It was about 300 people. I walked in with Ems, and we sat down. I had long hair, and I promise you this is what they thought, we heard later because I became an elder in that church, the elders went, "God promised us that the prostitutes and the drug addicts would come!" They thought Emsie was a prostitute, and I was a drug addict; this should give you an idea of how we looked at that time. I was about to get given a church in the AOG, and they literally went, "Yes! This is a fulfillment of a prophecy! A drug addict and a prostitute!" It was funny, because no one engaged us. I did see the love of God in that church, it was very attractive, but no one came and engaged us.

I don't think they knew what to do with us. We were so different from that church. Except for Julie, Julie de Lisle, a single mom, and a little boy Aiden, probably around three, came to us and said, "Hey, come to my house after church. I'll make lunch for us." We went to Julie de Lisle's house, a single mom with a three-year-old boy, a hairdresser, who didn't earn a lot, and she made rice taste awesome. You should get her recipe; I don't know how she did it. She didn't have a lot of money, but she loved us, and actually, that's what made us stay, I mean, we would probably have stuck anyway, but we were in relationally because of her. Again, to have people like that with you when you plant is fantastic.

I would think of Nikki and the guys when we planted down here, they drew people in, and they loved people in! So, even if you're not leading, if you're someone that'll continue to reach out and draw people in, you make it so easy for the leaders. Again, I would say you don't have to lead the thing, just keep being like that, just keep doing it. Also, look at Jules Goldswain and those guys! Julian, I don't think, at the moment, is the best preacher on the planet, but how many people have been drawn in through him and Chantal as they've loved and served people, and even broken open new areas? So sometimes, just the people that are with you can make it much easier. Even in the church or congregation that you are now in, just do it. Start living that way, it's a great way to live.

So, how does a church planter look? Please note, I'm talking in an ideal world; in other words, we're looking at the supermodel of church planters. We won't all be that good, but this is the ideal ingredients.

You will start to recognize certain things from this and the first thing that I need to say is, the leader is very, very important. The person themselves is very important, and their wife with them, because she has to have faith. She might not have gifting, but she has to have faith to walk with you through a trying, testing, faith-filled journey. So, the person leading is very, very important, ultimately because they're going to reproduce who they are.

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." (1 Tim 4:12 NIV)

Think of it like this, when I think of Josh Gen, John writes about the churches he was responsible for and calls them 'my little children.' You know, this may sound weird, and some of you are older than me, but when I think of you, it feels like you are my children. It feels to me like you are my little children, even those that are 80 and 90. In many ways, it's a weird thing, when I was younger it didn't feel like little children to me, now I feel like you're my children and I've got to shape you, and mould you, protect you and nurture you. But there is a feeling in our hearts as leaders of actually wanting to bring people into family, into our community, and into our lives. So, a church planter will always be one who reaches out and draws people in, into a deeper relationship with Jesus, into the love of God, into family. You can train yourself to do that.

Remember this, you're the parent if you're the leader. So, the culture is set by you; if you're shy and you don't deal with that and go out of your shyness, guess what happens? Well, no one reaches out of their bubble. You have to think, "I've got to reach out of my bubble to draw people in." So, as a church planter you've always got to be, you have no personal space, you are literally just arms; "Come, come, come! Come with me, come into my family, come into my relationship with God, come into my life." You're drawing people in all the time, it almost feels like if they don't come back, it's like you fell in love, and they broke your heart. When they don't come back, it feels like, "Aw! Feels like they've rejected me!" You will feel that as a church planter. It's weird because you're trying to draw them into who you are in Christ, and if they pick something down the road, it feels like, "Aw..." Because you give your heart, and you give your all, and you're reaching out all the time.

Here's some bad reasons to plant a church:

1. I don't get along with the leaders here.
2. I've got an outgoing personality.
3. No one recognizes my ministry.

These are terrible reasons to plant because remember this, what you lay in as a foundation will be built upon spiritually. So, if you 'went' versus being 'sent,' you're laying in a foundation that's very, very dangerous for you. What you give is what you get. So, if you 'went' instead of being 'sent,' guess what's going to happen to you? You are going to have lots of 'wents' instead of 'sents,' which means you're going to raise a rebellious generation behind you because they will catch who you are, not what you say you are. So, what you do now, the tests you pass will ultimately set you up, and them up - your children - for blessing or for cursing. So, again, think now, follow like you would like to be followed. That's a very important thing.

I remember saying to Emsie years ago, we were struggling in our marriage in the early days, and she just didn't want to trust me for a number of reasons; she'd come out of a broken home. I remember realizing, "I am struggling to lead her; she is not following, she doesn't trust me." Then, she was watching me grappling with my own heart with leaders, because I, as much as she had to follow me, I also had to follow somebody. I remember one day sitting down with her and saying this to her, "Honey, how do I follow?" In those days, the leader was Tom Tapping, "How do I follow Tom Tapping?" I said, "Follow me as I follow. Do you see it's hard for me sometimes? Yes? Well then, what do I do, babes? Can I say this, if you think I'm messing up, you have the liberty to go and speak to Tom, and he can sort me out. But follow me as I follow." I think as leaders, as husbands, to be able to model it, and to live that, "Follow me as I follow." What you do now, your children will naturally inherit, both physical and spiritual children. So, follow well. The best leaders, I think, have been good followers in the Kingdom of God. That's a crucial thing to get right, and those are things you can get right now.

If a church plant fails, I want to just look at this quickly; it's sore because every church plant is born out of faith, and how many of you know, and hopefully we've taught you well enough, that just because you have faith doesn't necessarily mean it's going to go like you think it's going to go? By the grace of God, we have built the theology into you, I hope, that teaches you that just because you're obeying God doesn't necessarily mean you're going to walk in all of His blessings. You do know that, hey? I know that the prosperity guys say, "God's going to make you rich, famous, and good-looking." In reality, I mean, I was just looking through Job now, and again, the theology of this thing is so important. You know most of the Old Testament was written down to teach you that Israel was told, "If you obey God, He will bless you; if you don't obey God, He will make life suck. He's going to raise up enemies against you; it's going to get horrible, you'll be handed over to your enemies."

So, Israel developed a theology that went like this, "When we do good and obey God, we get blessed; when we don't do well, we get cursed, or damaged, or hurt, or chastised by God." So, Job is doing well,

he was doing so well, God's boasting about him in heaven. He's literally like, "I've no one else like Job, he's righteous!" God's calling him righteous and then what happens to Job? Everything goes wrong. Like every single thing; he loses his kids, he loses his wealth, he loses everything! He ends up sitting on a street corner with boils. His wife says, "Just curse God and die! Because you're obviously not walking in the favour of God." Then, Job has four friends, it looks like three, but there's a fourth one that opens his mouth later, a young man, and his friends come to Job, and their counsel is bad. Their counsel goes like this, "Job, God blesses obedience and curses disobedience; you're obviously cursed. I mean, you must have done something wrong for God to let all these horrible things happen to you."

I think the worst part of the whole torment that Job goes through is those four friends because basically, he goes, "But I've done nothing wrong," and they go, "No, Job! You don't understand anything! Let's just tell you about the ways of God!" He goes, "But I'm righteous!", and they're going, "You can't be righteous! Look at your life!" So, Job is written for us to learn that even if you do everything right, it doesn't mean it's all going to go right for you, certainly not now. When you die one day, maybe before you die, but definitely when you die there will be a reward, but before then, you just don't know.

I've told the story before, when I was still within the AOG, we were taught of a man who had been sent with a mission organization, I think it was to Mongolia. I think it was one of those countries in that kind of part of the world. He thought he heard the Lord tell him very clearly to go and plant a church there. Preach the gospel, plant a church. So, he went in, and he literally preached, I think that it was something like ten years, and never ever did he see one convert. Now you have to imagine; you're in another country; it's so cold there in winter that if you don't want your stuff to freeze, you put it in the fridge. If it's out of the fridge, it's going to freeze; the fridge is how you keep it from freezing. I'm not even kidding you; the fridge is insulated.

So, you must imagine how cold it is in winter, and then some kind of plague comes through the place and his son catches it first. They nurse him, pray, trust God for a miracle. The little boy dies; this is their only son, and he's just mortified. Like, "God, it's been ten years, not one convert!" So, he goes to the cemetery to bury his child, and they say, "No, you can't bury your child here. We're Buddhists, and you're a Christian, you can't bury your child in our cemetery." He was gutted; it's like, "Ah, come on!" So, he can't afford a piece of land in the town, but he buys a little piece of ground up on the hillside that's very cheap, and he buys it thinking, "Well, one day if there's a church, that'll be our gravesite." So he buries his son. I remember reading the story, how he had to break through the ice, the ground was rock solid, he had to break through the ice to bury his son. He goes back down the mountain, and his wife catches

that same sickness. He ends up going back up that mountain and burying his wife, spending the rest of his life in that country, and dies in that country, and never sees one single convert.

Now, you have to imagine that as he's dying, he's questioning, "God, what was the point of that? Seriously, that was a total failure. What was the point?" About 20 years later, missionaries try to go back into the country, and they can't get in, the government has shut the borders. So it comes down to a legal struggle, and the only way they can get in is if they can find evidence that Christians have been there before; it's the only way they can get back into the country. So, they think, "Well, that guy was there before," and they look, and they can't find anything, he never got a church going. But then they find a little piece of ground up on the hillside, that he'd bought thinking it would one day be the church's cemetery. He'd bought that ground in the name of the church that he'd always believed would happen, and through that, they were able to go back in, preach the gospel, people got saved, and today there are Christians in that country because of his sacrifice. He never saw that happen, not in his lifetime, but it all made sense when he got into heaven.

I sometimes think that as a church planter, you have to realize the value of one single soul, the value of one soul, and the mystery of how these things work. There's a mystery to this, and if we are obedient to the Lord, He sees the sacrifices, and if no one else comes, if no one else acknowledges it, if it never looks like we're successful, and we've obeyed the Lord; we've been successful. We have to have that kind of theology when we plant because if it doesn't go the way you think it's going to go you can get sore.

So, we've got to teach you a theology, and develop a theology, that you have to obey the Lord whether it looks like blessing or not, whether it looks like success or not because that's what success is, success is obeying the Lord. Maybe success is that you didn't even get anyone saved, but that you gave your life faithfully to the end without any reward. Maybe there's a greater reward for you if you did that than if you did have success because you know once you have success, people are all like, "Ooh Andrew, Andrew, he's the man." Does this make sense? I'm sharing these things because this has got to become our theology; otherwise, we're going to have casualties. You will get hurt, some of you are going to get hurt, and your faith will get shipwrecked, because of thoughts like, "Why did God make me do this, and it hasn't worked? I've lost this, and I've lost that." You do it because this is what the Lord asks you to do. It is very, very, very important for you to get that. I think sometimes the theology of the church around us is just so damaging, you know, it teaches us such rubbish. This is the Word of God, this is how the ways of God go, and we've got to root you in these things. So, don't ever get disillusioned.

One of the key things of a church planter, I often say, is having the ability to bounce back. Have you ever seen Garfield and Odie? Garfield's this cat that's just got a bad attitude, and Odie's this super happy dog.

They live in the same house, and Odie's permanently panting happily while Garfield's moaning and complaining! He's like always tormenting Odie, and Odie's always bouncing back happily. I remember Emsie once saying in our church plant, "Honey, I feel like we've got to be like Odie, or we're never going to make it. No matter what smacks we get, no matter what Garfield does to us, we need to bounce back happily like Odie." The ability to bounce back as a church planter is so important because you will have many disappointments. Your faith will be stretched, everything will get challenged and stretched. You have to develop that, "God is good no matter what happens." You have to keep your joy, because if you lose your joy, what will you give others? You know, it's often said in the Navy, that if a ship gets hit too many times, it goes down, and then, in the old days, the captain went down with the ship. But in the church, the captain takes the hits; and when he takes enough hits, he goes down, and the ship goes down with the captain. So, you can't go down; you have to learn to bounce back.

Can I say this, depression is real even if you've never battled with depression, it's going to come for you in a church plant. It's real. You're going to find your faith stretched; your understanding stretched, your heart broken, and many disappointments. There will be times that you will want to lie in bed, sucking your thumb, not wanting to get out of bed because it's too sore to get up and to do it again. I've felt that, and I've had success. Sometimes, you've just got to walk with the limp of what you're carrying. But you have to find grace and faith in the Lord. God does use people that are depressed; you know that hey?

Job, at one point, got depressed. He said this, "Cursed be the day of my birth! I wish that day never happened! I wish I weren't alive!" What about Jonah! Jonah is cursing God and says, "I wish I could die!" What about Elijah? These are men and people that were used by God, and they had real struggles with depression. Remember this, the taller the tree, the more of the wind it's going to hit. I've often just felt so brittle in ministry; I have felt that, if I take one more hit, I would be out.

I keep coming back to this, Jesus says to the disciples, "Unless you eat of my flesh, drink of my blood, you have no part of me." They are so offended by this, and then He looks at them, and He goes, "So, are you going to leave me because everyone else is leaving?" Their response is, "Where do we go? You have the words of life." I'm kind of stuck in this thing, even if I wanted to give up. You asked me to do this, and I don't have the right to give up. I mean, I have many times, honestly before God wanted to, you see, from your side this place looks very glorious. I know, because I've sat on that side of this conversation. "Oh God, make let me count like that. I want to count like Andrew is counting. I want to preach, I want to count, I want to plant!" I'm on this side, and I look at you and go, "Oh God, I wish I was just sitting over there, just enjoying You and leading a homegroup, just loving people without the pressures." You'll be amazed, Emsie and I have often had conversations just saying, "Oh, I wish I could just lead a small group

of people again. Just like ten people. I'd be so stoked! All these decisions, all these big things, all these issues and problems, and challenges! Oh God, just to have ten people in my house. Just to go to the beach and enjoy each other and love Jesus and worship!" We do it, and we keep bouncing back because we've got nowhere else to go, this is what He's asked us to do; we want to be faithful.

So, these are things you have to settle in your hearts; and you have to realize, honestly, that with church planting, as soon as you lift your head, you're going to take hits. You have to know that God has called you to this, you have to believe it. If you don't believe it and you take too many hits, you will just think, "Well, I don't know if I need to get up again." Look, I might fall into sin, which I hope I never do, and that might disqualify me which is different because I'll be disqualified, and hopefully, I'll work that through, and I'll be brought back to repentance. But if I walk away from what I'm doing, for me, that has a bearing on my salvation. Because for me, I'd be walking away from Jesus. Jesus called me, and He said, "My servant must be where I am." In other words, I've got to be where He wants me to be, and He's asked me to do this, and He talks about obeying Him as my master.

For me, I don't have the right not to do this. This is what He's asked me to do. I must be faithful until He says otherwise. I am stuck! There are beautiful moments; there are moments that I think, "I've got the best job in the world! Thank you, Jesus, for what I'm doing, it's so awesome!" But there are days that I go, "Dear God, could you kill me now, please? Could we just end it? Because I don't know if I want to face tomorrow. I've just taken too many hits." That's the feeling you will feel in leadership, so, settle it now. I'm telling you these things because I want you to remember, when you're sucking your thumb, lying in bed saying, "I don't want to get up, I don't want to see anyone! But woe is me if I don't! Lord you've called me to do this." Settle that in your heart that you're called to this. All right?

So, you have to have a sense of God's call. There was a guy called Todd Hunter; he surveyed church planters, and it's quite interesting some of the things he found. So, when he looked at people that didn't succeed in church plants, that closed their doors, half of those that failed were unsure that they were called to plant in the first place. In other words, 50% of the guys that didn't make it weren't sure that they should have started it in the first place. You see, that's a recipe for death. You have to know, "God, this is your way; this is what I am called to." How do you know that? How do you settle that? Have you ever wrestled with those things? Like I knew like I knew like, I knew I was called to lead. I mean, first, it was a burning desire in me, and then the prophecies started coming, and there was a sense of, you know, "You're called to be a leader." "Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord!" I did not know what I was getting myself into. "Yes, Lord, pick me!" "Okay, I'm picking you." "Thank you, Jesus!"

I sensed it in the Spirit in my prayer times, people started confirming it, the life of God began pouring out of me, and then others recognized the grace on me, "It's obvious you are called of God." I knew, like I knew, like I knew. So, when I finally got the reins, I was like, "I know that I'm called to this." God tricked me you see, but you have to settle that you're called to this. Ask Him if you're not sure, ask Him. Remember this, you don't have to lead to help plant a church, or even to help an existing church come into health. We need every single person to play their unique roles. Not everyone's called to lead, but some of you are. We need leaders, and we need leader-like-followers that'll help those things become a reality.

You want to plant a church with guys who don't seem to get down, those people who are full of faith. When you walk into a meeting, and someone's left the church, and you're ready to slit your wrists, and you're just like, "Boo hoo!", they are like, "Come on! God's going to do something!" The next thing you know, you're feeling a little bit of faith rising; it's their faith rubbing off on you, because they are berserkers. Berserkers are fantastic when you plant a church; berserkers are God's gift to church planters.

Berserkers work like this, did you ever see Braveheart, or those movies where you have them going up against the enemy? I remember in Braveheart, this is historically accurate, the Scots are facing an army that's never been defeated, an armed cavalry. In the history of mankind, the armed cavalry has always won and they've got no cavalry, they are pretty much dead meat, and their numbers are much less than the English. You're standing across the field, and the chances are about 99.99% that you are going to die today on the end of a stick. People start fading away, you see it in the movie, people fade thinking to themselves, "They've got armour; they're trained, they've got horses! I'm a farmer with a pitchfork! Seriously? We've got no chance." So, people start fading away, they're just like, "Now that I see what we're up against, it sounded exhilarating to be a part of this, but now that I see what's going to happen today, I think I'm just going to drift off."

Then you would have a berserker, and they would employ berserkers. The concept of cheerleaders comes from berserkers. They would get guys to come up who will go raving mad in the front lines. They would stand in front of the guys, and it would just be like, "We are going to kill these guys today! They don't know they picked on Scots! Do you know what Scots are like? We are the craziest group!" They would just go berserk, and eventually, the guys who were drifting would be like, "Hey, yeah, I'm a Scot! Yeah, maybe we can do this! Who do these English think they are? We're going to sort them out! Who do they think they are?" Suddenly the whole climate, the whole atmosphere just changes, that's cheerleaders, that's what berserkers are like.

You remember when you were at school and you would sing like, "Who are, who are, who are we? We are, we are, we are..." Basically, we're going to whip you! it works! You start believing it! In every church plant, you get a berserker, and he's one of those guys, he's just like, "We can do it! God's going to do it! We're going to get breakthrough!" Then you get those that do the opposite. You know, the 12 spies in the Old Testament, 10 of them are like, "Yeah, I know God made some promises, but you do not understand..." So, they do the opposite! The whole community is just like, "Argh!" and coming to a halt. You have this fight between your berserkers and them, picking holes and finding problems.

Berserkers are gifts; I don't even know what to call these other people, but they are just a pain in the bum, and you wish they weren't there. They just kill everything; they kill the life of God; they start fires in the church that you have to put out because they are gossiping and slandering. Rather be a berserker. You know, even if you're not leading, just be a berserker for the guy leading, "Come on, God can do this." Be a 'God can' rather than an 'Oh no' kind of person. Because at the end of the day you have to realize this people, even leaders, are people, and they have doubts and fears and worries, and they've got to try and get up there with faith. Just having someone with them saying, "Come on! I'm praying for you! I know you can do this!", it's like, "Thank you, Jesus! I don't feel like I'm on my own; I've got someone who has my back." We need like a million 'Kassies', you know he's praying for you. You just know he's giving me a prophetic word like, "Hey, we prayed at about 3 in the morning, and this is what God said!" It's just like, "Okay, someone's praying for me. I can do this." Listen to me, you know that in terms of church success, there's not a lot of people that have had the kind of success I've had; and I still am blessed with berserkers.

Often, they just find me in my weak moments and pick me up, because I've got to wrestle with faith like everyone else. So those are real, real things. Okay? Be a blessing; don't drain the life out of your lead elder. Some people are like vampires; you know a vampire, sucks the life out of you. You walked in loving Jesus and full of faith, and five minutes with the guy and you're like, "I'm a loser, this church is useless." He's sucked the life out of you. Don't be a vampire; be a berserker. Run from vampires; they'll kill everything. Every church has got them, and they're terrible, but you've still got to love them and all. Again, that doesn't mean you can't say there are problems, but you know, the way you bring these things across in your context is so vital for your leader. You have to realize he's got to take what you're saying and do something with it. Don't give him a hundred things wrong with the church. It's enough to make anyone want to slit their wrists. Just tell him you love him, you're excited to be with him, but hey, what about this? Because he has to take that, he has to keep himself buoyant and lead through that. If you wound him so badly, how is he going to get off the ground? So, this is for those that are helping church planters, be a blessing.

Another thing that I think is so key for us as church planters, and I did touch on this a little bit earlier is, you have to have an inspiring vision, a picture of why this is important. Why is this, that we are doing, going to make a difference into eternity? If I can't show you how this thing is going to count into eternity and help you to count into eternity, you're going to struggle to get people to buy-in. There has to be a feeling like, "I will never walk in my destiny if I'm not with this person." Have you ever felt that? I have. I remember meeting Dudley Daniel. When I heard the guy talk, I thought, "I will never walk in my destiny without this person. I'm not going to find my way into what I need to without this guy," I never even got close to him, but just listening to him preach shaped me and moulded me, and he formed me.

I realized, that it was so precious to find that for me, that I left the Assemblies of God, I left a church house, I left a salary, I left a medical aid, and I went back to waiting for five years, just to stay near him. The AOG couldn't buy me, nothing they offered me would keep me there, because I tasted something in this guy. I think for me, you know, to have a vision like that where people feel like, "Being with you, my life is going to count." The thought that you will help me make a difference for the King and the Kingdom is so crucial for us as church planters. You know, you're chatting with guys, you're coming into a new area; you have to be able to show people why this, that we're doing, is essential to God.

I'll tell the story of Steve Corkill, we didn't have kids' ministry when he came to us, we didn't have kids, and he's the first guy with kids. So, he tells me he's going to go to the church down the road because they've got a great kids ministry. I remember saying to him, "You could do that, and you'd just be a number in a church with lots of other kids. Or, you could be the first person that sacrifices and lays a foundation here for others. If you sacrifice, other people will come one day and see your kids, stick, and find it easier to stay. One day, when there are hundreds and hundreds of children in our church, they won't know, but God will know that you were the one that paid the price for all. Yeah, you could go to the church down the road, or you could count with us." He stuck, he came, and he sacrificed it all, and God honoured that sacrifice. His children are serving the Lord, they love the Lord, and he is now an elder in the church in Mossel Bay. He's led some of our works for seasons, and he's a man that's really counting in the Kingdom of God. God honoured his sacrifice, and one day when we get to heaven, we will see how many children are going to heaven because Steve Corkill got the privilege of being the first parent to pay the price? You see, God sees that. We have to be able to show people that, you have to show people how their sacrifice will count.

I was with the Bible school, the TMT guys, this morning. Looking at these young guys and girls with potential; I was just thinking, ultimately, I was hoping, that they would feel that something of the future of the truths of God that we have fought for, are resting, and will come to rest upon their shoulders.

They will have to fight for those truths. They will have to break those things open in their generation in the future. I'm not always going to be here, and the other elders won't be either.

The time will come when they're going to be on the front line paying the price, but you see that's a very exciting thing to think about; the Lord is going to put me like a David on a front line, and I'm going to face the Goliath for the people of God. I want to be David; I want my life to count. I want to see the enemy vanquished. I want to honour Jesus' death, and once I see that, it's like a pearl of great price, there's no price too high! But we've got to be able to show people that, and so even when you're leading a homegroup, and you can't show people why they need what we are, you're going to struggle. But if you can show them and show them how their life can make a difference, you'd be amazed what happens. Because deep down inside, there's a frustration in the body of Christ; because we are all dressed up and we've got all the biggest parties and the coolest preachers, but actually, we're just spectators. We were bred, we were made by God to count; we were made to be priests unto our God. Inside of us, there's a longing to serve God somehow, and we've got to show people that with us, they can.

Session 20

Lead by Example

I was hoping to look at different sized churches; because you have to lead them very differently, but I don't think I'm going to get there in this section. It's a bit like parenting a child; when they are born, you have to be a certain way with that child. But as it grows, you must adapt your parenting. A church plant is the same. The leadership style you start with is not the same style with which you finish. You have to adapt your leadership and sometimes you need to make huge adjustments.

As a church planter, you're it. You might have berserkers, and you might have people with you that are helping, but, as a church planter, in the end, you're it. As a church planter, it only really happens because you made it happen. Then later, you need to move to training up leaders. Of course, when I say, "You made it happen," you understand I'm talking about in the Lord. God ultimately makes it happen. But you have to come to the place where you're inspiring others and helping others to start helping you!

It's the ability to develop leaders; that's a very key ingredient to take a church forward. You could grow a church to 30 or 40 people on your own, but then you have to start developing leaders, and that's often where guys get stuck. You'll find that a lot of guys will grow to a point, but they don't know how to develop leaders; they can't make that adjustment. In that situation, you either have to move them into another role and put a leader in that can take it forward, or you just keep planting those guys. They'll grow the plant to 30 or 40, and then you put somebody else in. Some people will never be able to make that adjustment and grow it further.

If you want to keep growing the church, you have to learn to make those adjustments, and the ability to develop leaders is very key. Todd Hunt, when he did his survey of failed church plants, said that 95% of unsuccessful church planters were unable to identify, recruit, train and deploy lay leaders. 95%! It's the biggest reason for failure. It's not just to be able to bring leaders through, though. It's often that church planters choose the wrong leaders. Choosing the wrong leaders is the fastest recipe for death!

The challenge is that if you choose someone who has the wrong heart or the wrong motive, once they're in leadership, you will have serious problems! Now it's a leader against leaders. Now you're fighting in the house rather than working as a team! You exhaust each other, rather than leading the people forward. So again, I would say, you need to be training and developing leaders, and teaching leadership principles. But ultimately, don't appoint anyone in a church plant without a good apostolic perspective.

Once you've appointed them, it's tough to un-appoint them! Despite all my current credibility, when we had to step down some leaders here, I took a lot of hits in this congregation and I've got more credibility than most leaders. So, if you're a church planter, un-appointing leaders is enough to take you down! You have to be very careful with who you choose as leaders!

Here's a question for you, what do you have that attracts people? What can you use to draw people into the church and ultimately into a relationship with Jesus? What thing do you have that people would be drawn to because they're drawn to you before they're drawn to Jesus in you? You need to understand that when people come into a new church, I've got to get them to like me. Once you like me, you'll listen to me. I don't NEED you to like me. I'm not insecure, but I know that, until you like me; until you think that there's something in me that is going to be helpful to you, or good for you, representing Christ, you're not really going to follow; you're not really going to listen to me.

So, the first thing that I'm doing is I'm working for you to like me. There are little things which you need to be aware of. Like if you have a quiet personality, people will be insecure around you and when people are insecure around you, it's not comfortable for them. Have you ever been with a person where you don't know what they're thinking? How nice is it to go hang out with them? You're sitting there, and they've got this look on their face when they say something, and you're thinking, "What exactly does that look mean?" It's tiring for people because now you're starting to second-guess yourself and you become careful about how you say things. So, you just think, "Okay, I don't really want to go hang out with that guy. I'm rather going to watch rugby at somebody else's house."

Then you get those people that when you're with them, they're just warm and embracing. You feel accepted. You feel like even if they saw the worst of you, they would still love you. Now those are the kind of people you WANT to hang out with; you know where you stand with them. You have to be that kind of person as a church planter, that when they walk in they feel like, "This guy likes me! He's for me; he wants God's best for me." So, you have to watch your facial expressions; you have to watch how you come across. You have to be careful of those things; because you're the leader; you're the parent. Think about if you have a grumpy-looking face. Do you know Len from Swellendam? When their Church joined us, one of the first things I remember saying to him was, "Len, smile! Just smile!" Don't be too intense all the time. Laugh sometimes! It's exhausting to be with someone that's intense all the time. Yeah, there is time for intensity but there's also time for just, "Hey, let's hang out and shoot the breeze and just enjoy each other."

When I came onto eldership in Port Elizabeth, my house was always exploding with people. People would come through our house, they would meet Jesus, and they would stick. I have never led a

homegroup in my life, but at that time, I would often have 30 or 40 people in my home at a time. They would arrive, and we would just go to the beach together. I had a Hobie Cat, and we'd go to the beach together. We'd take people sailing, and people would be hanging around on the beach. Then we'd go from the beach, and we'd have a break somewhere. We'd pray and worship together and enjoy Jesus. But we also had the whole day on the beach, just flipping the Hobie Cat and swimming. We were friends, and we were friends that love Jesus! It was very attractive, you know. Now that's what I miss! I don't have the time for that these days. I don't have the luxury of that anymore, and that's what I miss. We'd just be enjoying life together and then we'd have deep Jesus moments, and we'd be talking about Jesus but then talking about other things too. We just did life together, and it was very attractive. I didn't try to be; it was just, that's what it was. It was just fun, but then when we talked Jesus, we were also serious.

You will learn more about the people in your congregation by going on a weekend away camping with them than you will ever learn in a homegroup or on a Sunday. Because at church, they've got their "Christian face" on. But when they wake up at 6 a.m., and they've been chowed by mosquitoes the whole night, and they've got a runny tummy, and the toilet's a long way away; then you start to see what they're really like. So again, as a church planter, do life together; just do things together.

The other thing for me was that I would always be thinking, "Lord, I don't want to just meet and do the same old, same old." I'd be thinking, "What do you want to do, Jesus? What do you want to do?" I have a dream, what I would love is for people to arrive on a Sunday, and we'd be doing something totally different because Jesus is not in our little box of how we do things. It's not about a meeting with five songs; two slow songs, and three fast songs, or whatever it is, but that our heart would be, "Jesus, you can do whatever you want in our meeting." I think that also creates a faith in us that anything could happen. We'd be thinking, "Don't miss a meeting because Jesus is probably going to pull in somehow." If you miss a meeting, everyone's going to be saying something like, "Oh bru, you missed out so big! Jesus pulled in, and this guy was crying..."

One of the keys to growing a church is good communication skills. You can grow a church to a certain point just by loving people, but then you must start to develop the ability to talk and to teach. If you feel you're called to plant a church, or lead a church, you need to be working on this because sometimes it's the little things that we do that just get in the way. The classic mistake of most new church planters, or even new teachers, is that they try to say too much. It's like you've had 30 years with Jesus, and you bring 30 years into one preach! There's so much information that's not earthed and rooted! Eventually, people just overload, and they can't follow you. So rather say one thing well! Slow down! Get people to critique your preaches. Go to a preachers' club, they'll teach you! "How do I learn to preach better? What

am I doing wrong? What's getting in the way of my preaching?" Sometimes it's a stutter or you have a little line that you keep repeating over and over again, and it is just annoying, and you don't even know it because it's a nervous response. I remember Ryan Kingsley, who's now up in Benoni, Joburg. Ryan used to do this deep inhale and exhale and we had to say, "Ryan, you need to stop that. It's distracting."

Another thing is, "How do I come across?" It's an important question because sometimes I'll walk out of a preach, and I came across quite heavy. If I come across heavy every week, it'll be too exhausting! At a conference, sometimes I preach back-to-back sessions. So, sometimes I'll first preach a preach that's heavy; like you're all bleeding afterward. Everyone just feels like sinners, and I've just smacked the secular humanism in you. But I won't do that two preaches in a row. Watch, the next preach I'll be funny, and we'll be laughing. Why? Because I know you can't take it and I can't take it. I get to the point where I can't give you another one of those for a while. We're all still too bruised. If you're that guy that's always heavy, remember that they came to Jesus because He had life. He spoke the truth, but He also gave them life.

I remember watching the Gospel, according to Matthew, the Jesus movie with Bruce Marciano. Before this movie, in all the older Jesus movies we grew up watching, Jesus never smiled. The focus of portraying Jesus was only on how holy and spiritual Jesus was. He almost had this little halo. Jesus was shown like this in all those older movies. Then there was Bruce Marciano, this American guy. Bruce Marciano studied the Gospel of Matthew and, from the Bible, portrayed a Jesus that was smiling and happy! It was so liberating watching it! Jesus was portrayed in a way that was like no other movie I'd ever seen. Jesus actually laughs in this movie! At some points, Marciano took the literal words of Jesus from the Bible and, the way he acted them out, literally word-for-word, but he's ripping the disciples off, teasing them! I had never considered that possibility before and all of a sudden you have this Jesus that is real to us. He was a human, like me, although without sin, of course, but He wasn't like this angelic being who we could never relate to.

The emotion of Jesus comes through in this movie with Marciano. In those older movies, the Jesus portrayed looked so "perfect" on the cross; that Jesus didn't show emotion. In Bruce Marciano's portrayal of Jesus, Jesus cries! He looks at the disciples, and you can see the pain in His eyes! What Jesus do you present? Jesus was heavy sometimes. But sometime the problem is your personality; sometimes it's your personality that's heavy. Make sure you're bringing people Jesus, not just your personality. You have to work on those areas and think about how you come across. Are you heavy all the time?

You've also got to ask yourself if you're light all the time. Because that's also bad; if you never have a heavy moment, if all you're focusing on is having fun. One of the churches in Cape Town had this advert;

I couldn't believe it. It said, "Come to church, where Sunday is a fun day." I thought, "Help them, Jesus!" Because if that's the point of your Sunday meeting, that Sunday is a fun day; there's something fundamentally wrong there! At times it might be fun, but Sunday is not always just going to be a "fun day" It's not our motive, and it's not what we're aiming for. Of course, yes, sometimes you will have fun, but not all the time. If you're never having fun, that's a problem. We're not aiming for fun, but we will have fun on the journey. These are things you have to work on because if you're always fun or always heavy, it's just not healthy. So, ask people how you come across.

You have to have honest friends; because if they don't tell you, you can't change. Yeah, it isn't fun to have those conversations; but they're helpful because you can change now. Rather than every week, wondering why the church isn't growing. That's way more painful, pouring my life out and wondering, "Why is there no fruit?" You have to consider things like, maybe it's because you never smile! Perhaps you don't look like you're enjoying yourself and if you're not enjoying yourself, how are we going to enjoy listening to you?

I remember when I was younger, and I did a church planters course for three months, we travelled around the country, and we got to preach in front of the apostolic guys. It was scary. I got up, and I did this preach, and I remember afterward they critiqued us. You're sitting there, and they're telling you what you did well and what you didn't do well. One of the things the guys that critiqued me said was this; he said, "The thing that works; the thing that you've probably got the most in your favour is that you enjoy yourself when you're upfront!" I didn't even realise this before. Do you enjoy yourself? When I'm preaching, I enjoy the moment.

When I'm preaching, because I'm trying to keep in step with the Holy Spirit, I sometimes say things, and I'll be thinking, "Where did that come from? Like seriously, that was profound," and I know that it wasn't from me! I remember one time saying, "Could someone write that down because I know I'm going to forget that. Could you write that down and remind me what I just said? Because I don't know where that came from!" It's awesome, and I'm loving it! I'm walking with God while I'm doing this! I'm telling my God stories, and I'm sensing Him. I'm enjoying it; I'm enjoying His presence, and that makes it easy to listen to me. So, these are the things you have to work on.

Something else you must consider when you're communicating is how much you use stories to illustrate your point. If it's just Scripture, Scripture, Scripture, not a lot of guys can do that. Some teachers can just grind through Scripture, but most of us have got to stop, pause, tell a story and illustrate. Do you know the things you'll remember out of what I've said tonight? I haven't used a lot of scriptures tonight, but you'll remember the story of that guy that went to that country and buried his wife and kid. That's what

you'll remember. I might have told you that God works all things for the good of those who love Him but then I tell you the story and you understand. "Oh my goodness, yes! God actually does do that and maybe He'll do that for me too." I'll remember the story when I'm burying my own wife and you're going to bury someone, somewhere in your life, someone's going to die. You're going to experience loss somewhere. Jesus said that, He guaranteed it. Jesus said that you're going to go through much suffering. When the suffering comes, you're going to remember that story and that story will keep you. So, make sure it's a story rooted in the Scriptures and tell stories people can relate to.

In 1 Timothy 3:2 one of the qualifications of an elder is to be able to teach. At some point in the not-too-distant future, I have a sneaky suspicion that we're going to have to go through persecution. We are coming to the days where a lot of us are going to have to lead things in our homes probably, and there will even possibly be scatterings at times. So, what we're trying to do is, even here, we've rigged this hall so that every single Sunday, there'll be a preach videoed. We've got a truckload of preaches that you can download right now off the internet. So, even if you're not a good preacher, there are values and ideas that are taught well in these videos. If you can gather a couple of people in a home and love them, you can supplement your leadership with some videos of teaching that you know will be decent. This will help people learn about the values of God. For example, there's our Starting Point (orientation) course that most of us have been through. The full Starting Point series has been recorded on video. Guys come into a Four12 church, and some of the pastors show them this Starting Point video series, and these guys are saying, "I've never seen Church like this!" So in many ways, we're able to help a weak teacher or preacher with these videos.

Now I never want it to be about my face on these videos. We don't broadcast Andrew Selley preaching every Sunday across JoshGen. That's not how I want to build. But I do realise, at the same time, that if the Apostle Paul wrote letters, I'm pretty sure that if he had had this technology, he would have used it. In our congregations, most of you only get to see me outside of these training times or meetings, once a year in your congregation; if you're lucky. I haven't built around me. So, we could plant churches with a guy that can just gather people, and churches could even be birthed out of that. You could then supplement an inability to teach, with these videos, because at the end of the day, it's about people getting saved and coming into a healthy community.

Speaking of evangelism skills, we've got to learn those if you want to lead a church or plant something. How do I lead someone to Jesus? Do you know how to lead someone to Jesus? Would you know what to do? If someone came to you and said, "I need Jesus in my life." Okay, that's too easy. Do you know how to get a person to that point? Do you know how to pray a person to that point? How to walk a person to

that point? Have you ever led someone to Jesus? If you haven't, it's probably because you just haven't tried. It's horrific how few Christians have led someone to the Lord and it's often just because we don't try.

When we planted our church there was a guy called John who joined us for a while. He ended up falling away from the Lord eventually, but he was passionate about evangelism. He wanted to see people saved, and I remember us talking about evangelism. He would take notes on exactly what to say when leading someone to the Lord. He used to drive around praying, and then he would see a hitchhiker and would pull over to pick up the hitchhiker in the hope that he could lead the guy to the Lord. He even used to say, "Where do you want to go?" The guy hitchhiking would say, "I want to go to the Cape Town Stadium," or whatever. Then John would say, "It's okay. I'll drive you to the stadium, on the condition that you let me preach to you the whole way." The guy would think, "Okay, free lift to the stadium! I'm going to be hitchhiking a few times, and I might end up walking, or he's going to talk to me about Jesus the whole time." So, he'd say, "Okay, I'll get in; talk to me about Jesus." John would drive him the whole way to the stadium, but no one was getting saved!

John came to me, and he said, "I'm so frustrated, Andrew!" Then John would eventually get them to come to church and I would preach, and they would get saved, but then John got cross with me. He'd say, "I'm cross with you, Andrew, because you always get them saved, and I don't." I remember saying to him, "John, now Jesus said, 'Ask; Seek; and Knock.' Do you ask God? Do you pray?" John said, "Yes, I ask God for them!" I said, "Are you seeking?" He said, "Yeah, Andrew, I'm driving around. I'm literally picking up hitchhikers, seeking!" So I asked, "Are you knocking? Are you coming to the point with them where you're saying, 'How would you like to respond to Jesus right now because Jesus is at the door of your heart? Now that you've heard what I've said, how would you like to respond? Do you want to respond to that?'" Then John said, "No, I've never done that!" I said, "Well, that's where you got to start. You have to pick that up."

Within a week, he had led his first person to the Lord. I think, in total, he led over 50 people to Jesus over the next few months. It's just one little missing ingredient that can make the difference. But some of us, we're too scared to knock. We pray, "Oh, God, please!", but we don't seek, or we don't knock. But if you don't give people the opportunity to respond, they're never going to! They might come to church, and they might lean that way, but getting them to the point where they make a commitment, this little thing can make a world of difference!

You need wisdom with the little steps in a church plant; I mean the seemingly tiny things. You have to be thinking, "Okay, where are we going to meet?" Now, if you have a ridiculously strong anointing on you,

you can get away with murder in these things. But most of us don't have that. So, we have to think, "How am I going to reach these people?" If you're in a very conservative area, you have to think about how easy it is for people to come to your home. It's quite difficult; conservative people will think meeting in a home is a weird concept. They'll probably think it's like a cult. So, you might have to look for a hall. You may need to find the faith for it if you think you can't afford a hall. You have to think about these practical, seemingly little things.

Don't plant a church in October, at least not officially. You can do a soft launch maybe because the problem is this; people visit you, and they're all saying, "A new church! Woohoo!" Then October ends very quickly, and November comes, and then everyone leaves. Now it's just you and your wife again and everyone else has gone. I'd advise you to instead start with a soft launch if you want to start in October. So, you might begin to try to build some values into the people. But you should only begin officially in the new year because the new year always feels like it's an "official" fresh start for people. This might sound "unspiritual," but these practical things make a big difference!

Another little practical thing to think about would be, "How are we going to do an offering?" One of the most difficult parts of leading in the early days was teaching about the offering. When we planted JoshGen, I had seen so many of these guys preaching, "Give us your money, and God will bless you!" So, I never wanted to talk about money, and so we never had money! Then I remember one of the apostles came through, and he challenged me. He said, "I noticed you didn't talk at all about money." I was like, "Yeah, I'm just so over that you know. All of these guys are just into the money, and I don't want people to think our church is just about the money." He said, "Andrew, Jesus spoke about money a lot. Paul talks about workers deserving their wages. You have to talk about money!" I realised then that I had to talk about money!

I probably started talking about it like this, "I'm super uncomfortable right now talking about money, guys! We all know that this has been abused," and I'm cringing. But I told them, "We've got to talk about this because I've just been rebuked. If I'm not listening to a rebuke from the apostolic, how am I ever going to lead you into the things of God?" I told them, "I've got to talk about this. I'm uncomfortable, and you're uncomfortable, but let's just talk about this." I think people sensed that I was for real and that I wasn't doing this to get a buck out of them. They could see that I had dragged myself there because I knew I had to do it. After all, the Bible tells us to talk about money, and people started giving! As a result, JoshGen has been very generous over the years as people have been faithful with their money.

You have to think about how you are going to take up the offering, even though it seems like a little thing. Some guys put a little bag in the front, and when you want to, you can come and give your

offering. Well, we had Ivan Senior join us years ago, from Hawaii, and we didn't talk about money then. We would send a little box around. Now he's been in ministry since before I was born, and after being with us a few weeks, he said, "What are those boxes?" So we told him, "That's the offering." He said, "So I get this little silver box, and I just pass it down the row?" He said, "If you don't tell me what it is and give me a chance to prepare for it, I'm just going to pass it down the row without giving anything."

Now Ivan came out of a whole prosperity church background, they would teach for about 30 minutes on money, and then people would give. I was like, "I'm never going to do that!" I thought about it some more, and I was like, "No, but JoshGen does give. They're faithful! JoshGenners do give their tenth." I kind of just walked away thinking, "No, we're not going to talk about money." Then the Lord spoke to me, and He said, "Try it!" So, I went to the elders, and I said, "Okay, guys, for the next while, could we just do a two- or three-minute teaching before we do the offering. Just two or three minutes and let's not talk about 'Give and get blessed!' Not that stuff! Just say something about money." The week we did it, our income jumped 30 percent and stayed there!

I thought, "That's JoshGenners!" I mean, I think JoshGenners are pretty devoted people. But, I realised, people forget! They just forget, and they'll forget again and then the month's gone! When you have a time when somebody's saying, "Hey, money is important to God," then faith comes! People find faith to give. So, now we talk about money because without money we can't do this. We can't send what God has given us, out! Because of money, we're able to advance the Kingdom of God.

These are things you have to think through. Say you're planting a church and you've decided you're meeting in a school hall. It's going to be the first week, you have to think, "How's it going to feel when you start? What are they going to walk into?" Think about the little things. For example, if there's no music in the background and it's dead quiet, people don't talk; they just sit down. They're just thinking, "Be still and know that I am God," especially when they're not yet part of a church family. So, you're going to walk in, and it's got this eerie weird, uncomfortable silence, and everyone is sitting down. Then you will have to get up and say, "Hi, everyone! Welcome to the first meeting of this church," and it just feels awkward! You should always organise music in the background before you get going with the meeting. Then people feel, "Hey, I can talk," and it's not like everyone can hear them. So, they talk, and you're developing a culture of community.

These are little things you can do. We end a meeting with, "Coffee at the back!", but do you know why we make coffee? It makes people stick around longer! If we want to be a church that's a family, a community, we've got to get to know each other. With visitors, it's great because if you get free coffee, chances are you're going to hang around! So, all those things need to be thought through. We're

thinking about the little things that will help us build the kind of church that we believe God is looking for.

It's sometimes very practical things, little things, make a huge difference. For example, I've found that if the chairs are in straight rows and the hall is long, the front two or three rows connect with you, and then everyone else just goes quiet and hides. So, in most of our halls, we'll turn things sideways, and we'll wrap the chairs around the front because when you're wrapped around the front, you feel closer to what's happening. I couldn't believe the difference the chairs make. It's the little things! As a leader, you're thinking about all of that. You have to be thinking about when the worship starts, what songs are you doing? Who is going to be leading those songs? If you don't have a worship leader, you can use CD's. On your iTunes, you could probably even create a little playlist, and you just play that. It'll be difficult for the Holy Spirit to break in, but hey, it's better than nothing! You just hit pause, so what? It is better than nothing, or do you have someone that can play guitar? Those are all things you have to be thinking through. Who's going to put up the sound equipment? Who's going to take down the sound equipment? Where will you keep the sound equipment? What if the school says you can't use their hall to store your equipment? Where are you going to store your stuff?

You have to think about where the kids are going to meet? Who's going to teach the kids? What are they going to teach the kids? That's why, if you're part of JoshGen, it's just like, "Phil, help! We need a kids worker, and we need a worship leader!", and it's easier, but if you plant on your own, all those things are on you! You have to think about how they're going to work.

You have to be thinking through the practical steps. You have to think, "Financially, how are we going to do this? How am I going to live? How much salary will I need? How much money have I got to carry me, for how long?" Again, there are times of faith, and there were many times when we planted where I was like, "God, we are so dead if you don't come through!" But you have to be thinking! You can't just say, "I've left my job, and I'm going to Pietermaritzburg to plant a church." Don't presume! Unless God is very clearly leading you and you have a track record of proving that when you hear God, He does come through because I've met those guys who say, you know, "God's told me to give up my job!" and when I ask, "So what do you now?", they say, "I'm just living by faith..."

Now hang on! The Scripture says, 'The man who won't work, won't eat,' so how did God tell you to not work? Because you're not doing anything! Are you just sitting at home living by faith? You just contradicted the Word of God. You have to walk through those things yourself and help people through those things. You will meet those people, I guarantee you. A guy comes to you, "Great news! I've resigned!" "Awesome," you say, "Have you got something else?" "No," they say. "Why did you resign?",

you ask. "I just felt like I needed to," they say, "I'm living by faith now." I would be thinking, "Oh, you mean we're going to end up having to pay for you because you're a brother and we can't let you starve!"

Then the guy starts living by hints. You know, I've seen guys on Facebook saying, "Really trusting God for a new car!" Seriously? Do you put that on Facebook? You're starting to live by hints now. Don't you know the difference between the Lord vs. Facebook? Pastors are the worst! "Trusting God for a..." Oh my goodness, that's not something you advertise! Let God meet that need. Don't put it on Facebook! You're just using the people of God because out of their generous hearts they might actually do it, and then you're going to say that it was a miracle! It wasn't a miracle; you just used the people of God.

Can you dig your own wells? This is an important one, in other words, can you find Jesus for yourself? I remember when I first got saved, I needed to go to church. It wasn't like, you know, the Bible says you mustn't miss the gathering of the saints at church. I couldn't afford to miss a week because if I missed a week, I would fall away from God. When I first got saved, I came out of drugs. I was very broken, I was demonized; I had demons cast out of me, and then they came back into me because I didn't know how to stay free, and the deliverance courses weren't done well, so I had demons for my first year of being a Christian. I was suicidal, I was depressed, I was sick all the time; my mind felt like it was going! I thought I was going mad! My friends had bailed, Nicky had backslid, Joey was taken to the army. So, it was really tough.

I needed to go to church! Basically, I felt like I'd been held underwater the entire week. Sunday morning, I'd walk into a church feeling like I was the worst sinner on the planet, that I was going to die! I felt like I'd sinned so badly during that week, and I probably had, because I was very messed up and broken. So, I'd come to the church feeling guilty, separated from God, broken, and feeling like I needed to get saved all over again. I would hear the preach and, for the first year of my life, when the pastor said, "Is there anyone here that wants to accept Jesus for the first time?" I lifted my hand every week for a year! Because I felt like I needed to get saved all over again! Then I would feel God's presence, and He would come, and God was very gracious to me. He would fill me with His presence, and I'd feel His love. It was so awesome, and I'd drive home feeling amazing. Then Monday would come, and I'd go back to so many of my sinful habits, and His presence would fade in my life. That was my Christian walk! So, I couldn't afford to miss a meeting! If I didn't go to church, I was going to die! I knew it. I would hitchhike to church; I would walk to church, I didn't care, I was not going to miss it.

The thing is though that I had to learn somewhere how to dig my own wells! In other words, I had to learn how to find Jesus without needing others to help me. As a leader, I've not only got to find the well; I've got to become a well for others because others will now drink out of my relationship with Jesus. So,

as a leader, you have to find the ability to dig your own wells. You'll find certain people will refresh you; when you're with them, it's like you're drinking in God's presence. It's like when you're with Mervis, and he pulls out his guitar wherever he is, and you just drink in God's presence.

I listen to some teachers, and I want to say to them, "I wish I could shrink you and take you out of my pocket every time I needed a pick-me-up, and just listen to you for five minutes and feel so refreshed!" You know, you get those people. They just pick you up! It's like faith comes by just listening to them. But the thing is, as a leader, you have to become that kind of person! You have to find the pick-me-up in Jesus, and people will draw from you. They'll draw from the life of God in you, and so, you have to be able to find Jesus; to the point where, if there's no church; if there's no one there; if the world's falling apart, you can find water! That's an essential thing for a church planter. You must be able to find that water; you must be able to find God's presence, His life. You must be able to tap into Jesus to the point where His Spirit starts to move.

If you can do this, people will be drawn to you; they can't help themselves. Everyone knows what living water is, what it's like when you taste living water. It's like you've been thirsty your whole life, and suddenly you get to taste what water's like. It's so liberating! So, does living water flow from you? Do people fall in love with Jesus when they're with you? Do they feel the life of God flowing free from you? Do they feel encouraged and strengthened, by the Holy Spirit, in their faith when you pray? Is there a sense of the presence of God when you are there? Those are very important things. People come because you, in the secret place, are walking this thing out with God. God honours our secret-place walk, but you have to find that because if you can't find that and you're out there, the buck stops with you! What are you going to give them if you haven't got Jesus, you know? You're not enough! No matter how good looking you are, you are not enough! It's Jesus that they've got to find and taste. So, you have to find Jesus! Jesus spoke about streams of living water flowing from you. The river has to flow from you somehow, and if you can find that river and tap into Jesus and let Him flow, however, He flows through you; then the people will come. It's like there is a drought in the land, and the people will find you if you have that water. It's amazing!

Here's another important point, are you and your wife a team? If your house is divided; if you're fighting all the time; if she's not in agreement with you and you're dragging her with you all the time, you are going to struggle. You have got to win that battle at home. You have to have your wife standing by your side, saying, "I am with you, my love! We're a team. I'm standing with you. I'll do whatever it takes, we're in this together." It's so important! If you are not married, be very careful who you marry! If you marry the wrong person, you could be throwing it all away! Seriously, be very careful who you marry! I wanted

to find a woman that feared God and when I say, "feared God," I actually wanted someone scared of God. I wanted a wife who loved God, but who was also scared of God. Emsie would say this, if she didn't have a fear of God, she would have destroyed our marriage. It was her fear of God that saved our marriage. At one point, she realised that she would be responsible for destroying our marriage if she didn't stop doing what she was doing. When she realised that, she repented because of her fear of God. If she didn't have the fear of the Lord, I would be divorced today. No matter how hard I could have tried, I wouldn't be in ministry if she didn't fear God and I don't know where she would be, herself.

Be wise! You need to get the elders to talk to the person you're considering marrying. You need to know this guy or girl is going to be a good choice for you. You need to know that you're a good choice for them! If your wife and you aren't a team, and you're married, you need to work that out! You need to talk that through. You need to lead her as a husband and maybe God gave you a difficult wife to teach you how to lead! Seriously, sometimes God gives us difficult women to teach us how to lead, she will not let you get away with leading her badly. If you do not lead her well, she will eat you for breakfast! You have to learn to lead your wife well! If you're the wife, be kind! It's hard to lead; make it easy for him. He's trying his best, especially if you can see he's trying. Man, just fold sometimes when you see he's trying. Just say, "Okay, my love, I'll go with you. You're messing this all up, but, honey, I'm with you!" Just give him a little bit of confidence, so he feels like, "Hey, I can do this!" It's a principle in the Kingdom of God. When you come to God, and you realise who you are, and you see yourself the way He sees you, in His grace, it's incredibly intoxicating. You're thinking, "God, I'm a loser!" Then He says, "But you're my son." You're immediately thinking, "But I'm not worthy of love," and He says, "But I love you." You're thinking, "Lord, I'm a wreck! I've messed my life up with drugs. I don't have a brain anymore, you know! Please give me wisdom!" God says, "But Andrew, I'm actually going to use the foolish, broken things to destroy the supposed wisdom of the wise! I want to use you!"

God calls out things in you that weren't even there before, it's intoxicating! It's incredible! Somehow it empowers you! You start believing, "With God, I can do this! With God, I can climb over challenges. I can leap over them, with God!" God empowers us by believing in us, and saying, "You can!" Even when you know that you can't, and sometimes I think wives don't understand this principle in God! Listen, if you're telling him what he's doing wrong all the time, you're sowing into and adding to those weaknesses. Eventually, if he believes he's a loser, he's going to be a loser! If you tell him what he's doing wrong all the time, he's going to keep doing wrong. Sometimes God's love has just got to cover over. You have to just cover him in love and believe in him, but by faith! Love always trusts. You have to say, "I believe in you, honey. God gave you to me, and He gave me to you. I am with you, babes." If he messes up, you

don't have to tell him, he'll know when he's messed up. You don't have to say anything, just love him. Say, "Honey, I still believe in you!"

Listen, you will empower your man in ways you've not dreamed of! He will become the man you've always dreamed him to be. You have that power in you! God has given you an incredible ability as a woman, as a helpmeet, to come alongside him and to help him, not to hinder him. Sometimes, in helping, you just need to be there and say, "Babe, I'm with you. I believe in you!" Maybe no one else believes in him; don't tell him that, he already knows that. Just say, "I don't care about them. I believe in you!"

The Bible says if one falls, it's a beautiful thing to have someone there to pick them up. Very often in ministry, you will pick each other up. There have been many times that Emsie's faith has carried me where I've had no faith. I thought, "Dear God, we're not going to get through this! We are so dead! Like seriously, we are so dead!", and she will just say, "Babes, God is going to get this!" I'm would still be thinking, "You're so naïve. You have no idea how bad the situation is. I don't even want to tell you how bad it is, you know." All she says is, "Honey, we're going to get through this!" Her faith has carried me through these times; God has had us every time! You have to work with each other. You have to help each other, run with each other. You know, in some ways, you, as a wife, are his first follower. So be a good follower to him! Man, back him; believe in him! He's not perfect, but he's the one God gave to you, for you to help! That's your job, you are his helpmeet. You're actually not there to have your own career, your own life; you are his helpmeet. So, help him, and you'll find your own destiny!

Listen, ladies, I know it's tough. I know sometimes you think, "Dear God, if I'd known what I was marrying..." But he's the one God put you with! The Bible says, "...what God put together..." He put you together! He knew what He was doing! Husbands, if you have a tough wife, maybe God believes in you, and that you are able to do more, in terms of leading, than you realise. Maybe you're lazy, and she's not going to let you get away with that. You have to rise up and start leading and loving; start doing things that don't come naturally to you; if you can't do it with her, you'll never do it with the people in the church. Maybe as the wife, you have to get there and start believing in a total loser, like God believed in you! You can; you can choose to believe in him. You can say, "Babes, I believe in you! I believe in the God that's in you! I believe you're the man! You're my husband. God has put me with you. Together we're going to do this! We're going to get this right! I'm with you, babes." Oh, my goodness, to have that!

I will finish with the following, in a survey to husbands and wives, the wives were asked the question, "What thing do you want more than anything else from your husband?" About 90% of the wives said, "I need to know that I'm loved." They then asked the husbands, "What do you need to know from your

wife?" Around 90% of husbands needed to believe that their wives respected them. That's amazing! It's how God wired us! Women need to be loved, and men need to be respected. So men, love your wives and wives, submit to your husband. Respect him and honour him in the Lord, that's what the Bible says. Wives, honour and submit to your husband. Yield to him, follow him, and you'll be amazed at what he becomes! But that's all the stuff that happens in the secret place. When you get it right in the secret place, with Jesus, you'll start to find, as a couple, it'll cause breakthrough in those that you lead!

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