



*Dr. Henry Cloud*  
Experience: President of Cloud-  
Townsend Resources

Today we begin a very special series called Ultimate Leadership with our guest speakers Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend. Let me tell you a little bit about both of them. They are both clinical psychologists. They are the co-authors of numerous books including the awarding-winning *Boundaries*, *How People Grow*, and *God Will Make a Way*. Please welcome Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend.

**Can you guys tell us a little about what the series is and how it came to be?** We came into it not knowing we were getting into it, because a long time ago as psychologists we found ourselves working more and more with people in leadership. We became the leaders' shrink, if you will, and sat there for literally over twenty years and listened to leaders as they had to take their growth steps with the internal things that they deal with and the interpersonal things. It's a different kind of series. It's not so much the kinds of things you hear about the discipline of leadership itself as that skill set, but it's more about you as a leader and the growth steps and development you have to make to pull it off.

**What can people expect to get if they stick with this series throughout the year?** We are going to cover the gamut of not only leadership as something that you do, but something that you are.

- How you are in relationships
- How you handle stress
- How your personal development affects leadership
- How your character affects everything about your outcome, your vision, and your mission

**What are we going to be talking about tonight?** We are going to be talking about the forgotten essential of leadership—the part that we don't get a lot of training about—and about a way that

you can diagnose where you are so that you can decide where you want to go from here.

I know you have the first presentation, Henry, so we will see John in a little bit.

Thanks, Bill. We are excited about this series that has grown out of real work with leaders. We will be sharing with you over the upcoming broadcasts real-life experiences and stories as we work with leaders in real contexts like you find yourselves. I want to take a poll. You are spread out there all over the country. I want you to look around your audience where you are. How many of you leaders have it all together? You lead perfectly, you never have any conflicts, you're busting at the seams, you're over the top, everybody loves you, they send you flowers, it's just going really, really well? Could you, right there in your audience, raise your hand? I'll give you a second to do this. Everyone look around in the audience to see who has it all together. Okay? All right, now we have these monitors watching you. We know that a bunch of you are being humble and you're not raising your hand, but we also know, and expected, that most of you, hopefully, have a gap between where you are and where you ought to be. You are aware that you have things you would like to do better and ways you would like to improve. That's what we were prepared for, but CCN, being the groundbreaking network that it is, has for two months (you didn't know this) sent out surveys to your staff members to grade you on your leadership and find out how you were doing, if you're doing it perfectly. We were surprised. Do you realize that your staff members at your churches rated you all perfectly? You don't have anywhere to grow. We had this series planned to help you, and now we find out that all your staff members have rated you to be the perfect leaders all over America. There's no improvement, so we had to change the series. Tonight we are doing a broadcast on "How to Deal with Staff Members Who Are in Denial." That's our topic. We know that's not true, but that all of us have some ways to grow in leadership. We are going to get into it in the first half. I'm going to talk about the kind of work that John and I do with leaders as well as what we think is really important that will be good for you to look at as well.

I want to start out with something I call the three components, or the three traits, or the three aspects of a successful leader. Let me tell you how I came up with this. It was unexpected about fifteen years ago or so, and I've researched it ever since and I've come to believe it even more. I was at dinner one night with some friends

of mine. At that time they had sons who would have been 19, 20, 22ish years of age. They asked me if I would take their sons out and talk to them about success, how people became leaders, and how they became successful.

I thought for a moment. "That's not really my field. You should call Zig Ziglar or some successful person."

They said, "You work with a lot of leaders, you can tell them something, make up something."

"Ok," I said, "I'll make up something."

The wife says, "What are you going to tell them?"

And I go, "I don't know, you just asked me. I said I'm going to make it up."

She says, "Okay, well, make it up. What are you going to tell them?"

I said, "I don't know, give me a moment."

*What are you going to tell them?* She was pressing me there in the moment. How was I going to describe what a successful leader is and how somebody actually grows from success to becoming a leader? I thought for a moment. Something came to mind that I think is true. I think I will tell them three things. This is what I've seen.

One, when people become leaders, as opposed to workers, there has to be a set of competencies. You can only fake it for so long. A lot of people try to do that. Over time not much is going to happen if you don't know what you're doing. That is why it is very important to get training in evangelism, or preaching, or youth ministries, or this, that, or the other thing. That involves some real skills that we're not born with even though we have talent, and we have to develop those competencies.

Two, not only do you have to be competent, but if you're going to become a leader there are a lot of competent people in the world who do very good jobs, yet they don't tend to be what we refer to as leaders. Leaders end up building things, moving things, and having things get from A to B. To do that, what I've seen is that leaders tend to be alliance builders. They have this ability to take

what they do well and build alliances with others and take what the others do well and leverage that to doing something greater than they could do without those alliances. In the business world, for example, if you start a company you have to build alliances with the financial markets. You have to build it with where the money is going to come from. You have to build it with a customer base. A lot of times you have to build alliances with the regulators.

There are a number of things that a leader has got to do. On the church side of things, if you look at the people who become leaders and they lead a movement and the church begins to do things, we see the exact same skill set. They are able to build alliances with the board of elders, with the congregation, past the walls of the church. Let's say they outgrow their building and need a place to meet. They build an alliance with the city or the school district that is going to give them the high school gymnasium. They want to do an outreach and they know how to go to the city council or the right officials and get the park for the day. Or on and on and on. What they do is they tend to have the ability to take their mission and to go join others who are not really about their mission, but about their own mission, and join that and do those relationships in a way that leverage things to something bigger.

Now here is the thing. Even though these are hard things to develop, there is no shortage of leaders out there who can do these things. There are a lot of them. You have all seen leaders, served under leaders, and you've all known leaders or read about leaders, who have had these two things and did them well. They were charming. They could motivate people. They could inspire people. They could build alliances. They could sell themselves. They could do all this stuff and then something happened. There was a great moral failure, or they fell somehow personally, or blew up in some way, or in some way it didn't get to where it needed to get to because the third component, and this is what I was going to tell those boys, to begin to focus on this early in their careers.

Three, you have to have the character to not screw it up because that is what enables this thing called leadership to go the long haul. Not only that, we're not just trying to avoid the train wrecks, we are also talking about the character and how you are glued together. Your makeup is actually going to serve everything that you do and cause it to grow and cause it to get better.

So the three components are a *set of competencies, ability to build alliances, and the character to make it all work*. Primarily, as John

and I go through this series, as we spend our life's work, what we do is we spend time with leaders focusing on this third area. There is a lot of good training out there by people who know a lot more about leadership than we do, but we know a lot about what leaders go through to have to make the shifts inside to be able to pull off number 1 and number 2.

Let's unpack character for a moment. If you do the Jay Leno thing out there on the street, if you go out there and say, "What do you think character is?" and you start to talk to people, you'll hear a lot of good answers. But if you listen to them, what they tend to do is fall in this set of answers (whatever you call it), it's kind of in the world of integrity. When you talk to people about character, what people generally think of is a leader with good character is a leader with integrity. In other words, they don't lie, steal, and they don't cheat, you can depend on them, they are faithful, and they are good, for lack of a better term. It tends to talk about the moral dimension when we talk about integrity. That is extremely important. It is absolutely foundational. We know, for example, that when people lack this you have the corporate scandals that we've had in recent years that not only ruined individual leaders' lives, but they ruined their companies, pension plans, retirements, and the future of literally thousands and thousands of people. It didn't stop there. It went past that and started to even affect the financial market; and it went past that to affect the people's ability to invest in Wall Street, because we don't know how we can trust the numbers anymore. Then it goes past that to even the place where the economy starts to have ripples, all because people did not have a good moral foundation.

Now let me share with you that with over twenty years of working with leaders I've found, especially in the Christian arena, we work hard, as a group, as a whole, as a church (this is foundational), we work hard on this. We have accountability groups and we are involved in the process of sanctification, and most people in leadership in the church that I've worked with are people of high moral integrity. How many of you have ever worked under a leader, known a leader, or have felt yourself as a leader before, who had a lot of integrity and yet things were not growing? The mission was not going where you wanted it to go. There were ways in which it could be done better, and [you thought], *Why can other people make it happen, and I can't?* The reason is that the moral aspect of character is necessary but not sufficient. Without it everything falls apart.

I'm going to assume—for what I'm talking about here, and most of this series—that you guys are working on this and focusing on sanctification and integrity etc., etc., etc. But there is more than this when it comes to character. In fact, if you do a word study and you look up *character* in the Bible, the word *character* only appears a handful of times. If you go to the King James, New American Standard, and the NIV, for example, you are going to find it, I think, between five and seven times. What you find there though, as you look at it, is character tends to be talked about much more in what it delivers. Character tends to get described in the attributes of the way that a person is fruitful in some major areas that we are going to talk about in a moment. If it's not just moral functioning, what is character? And if we look at character and how we develop character, what other definition besides integrity can we use? I'm going to give you one for the purpose of what we are going to be describing. Character equals the ability to meet the demands of reality. There are moral realities. There are temptations. The person with a certain kind of character is able to meet those when they show up.

But think as a leader about the other kinds of realities that come across your desk. Think about this one. I was on the airplane with a guy who was a human resource consultant for major companies. He was telling me about a story as we were talking about character makeup and the ability to meet the demands of reality. He was telling me about a CEO of a major financial institution that he was a consultant to, and they figured out that this guy had to fire a top-level vice president. He coached him in how to do it and how to have the conversation. The CEO had a lot of anxiety about this. Comes time to fly to the other continent to fire the guy. The CEO gets on the plane, calls the consultant, and says, "I need you to come with me," because he is already having fears about "this is too hard," you know, all the stuff that goes on inside of us.

So the consultant says he'll go with him and help him. They travel across the ocean and discuss what they are going to do. The guy is concerned about the fallout. He is almost getting sick in his stomach. The consultant can't believe it, because this is the CEO of a multibillion-dollar organization, and he is watching him having anxiety about firing somebody. They get there. He thinks he's got him coached up and revved up and ready. They get there. Go to the place. The CEO, right as they walk in the door, turns to him and says, "You do it." He just couldn't do it. He had the HR guy do it. That sounds unbelievable, right? That's an extreme example, but it shows you how people can get to the top and yet certain



interpersonal situations can pull at things within us. Sometimes making the hard call is a tough thing to do.

There are millions of other kinds of realities. Let me give you another one. What if you know you have to raise X amount of money to get the mission done that the whole organization has signed up for. Everyone is rallying. You do the drives and you get the reports back and you need this much, and it came here. What happens inside of you? What we are talking about is what your character, your makeup, turns out to be. How are you glued together? Do you know that some leaders get bad news like that and instantly all sorts of things start to happen inside? They get creative, their juices start flowing, and they think of eight million options just when the bad news comes, because there's something about them that kind of kicks in to go build things and go do things. Other leaders get that same bad news, and you know what happens? There is a shut down inside. Their makeup starts to get frayed at the wires and they begin to question themselves. Why did I ever think of this anyway? Why did I even go into the ministry? Why did they pick me? I can't . . . and all the self-doubt. Other people might get angry, or others might come up with a lame brain idea to instantly make themselves feel better.

What we are talking about are aspects of our makeup that when these realities come across the desk or sometimes interpersonal staff relationships, you know, tough things that are going on in the team, difficult board member on the board of elders. I know not many of you have to face these things, but some churches do. These things are tough. And what do you do when you're trying to think through merging with another church or on and on and on? These realities are going to call for more than leadership skills out of the *Harvard Business Review* or even the best of the Christian world. They are going to pull at you and who you are as a person—how you are glued together. That's what we are going to be looking at in this series. So it's more than integrity. It's about your ability to meet these reality demands and about your makeup and how you are glued together and what happens there.

Now here is the good news. If you begin to work on this, anybody see the pain in this? You know the growth steps you have to make. What does the Bible call that? What's the Bible's broad word for pain? Everybody knows it. This is one of the questions I know the answer that I'm looking for, so I'll tell you. It is suffering. Growth is about suffering, but what happens, Romans 5, for example, when we invest in the suffering, the hard work, denying ourselves the

easy way out, avoiding the growth step, or avoiding the anxiety. But the suffering of growth or inner growth or personal growth, Romans tells us, we should take joy in that because that produces perseverance. Have you ever seen a leader who, as soon as things got tough, they bailed? Wasn't getting what he wanted. That's not a leader. That's a leader who wants reality that meets his/her demands.

But a leader is one who is able to meet the demands of reality. What do they do? They persevere through that. These growth steps begin to change us. It says that perseverance produces character, that's what Paul says in Romans 5, and then it says something interesting. From character comes hope. Now that is amazing. Did you know that as you work on who you are as a person that you will be able to look at any daunting challenge, any tough situation, and you won't know the answer. You won't know what the right answer is. You won't know how to fix it 99 percent of the time. But you will, inside of yourself, having developed the makeup and the skills and the abilities to meet these realities, have the sense that *God is with me. And as He is growing me and I am developing these abilities, whatever reality comes across my desk, I don't know the answer but we'll figure it out.* That's what character is going to do for you.

In this series what we are going to be doing is we are going to be taking you through not a bunch of theoretical stuff, but we will be taking you through our twenty-five years of experience working with leaders, the actual kinds of growth steps that leaders go through to get better glued together to be able to meet these demands of reality, to be able to deliver.

Speaking of deliverance, how we need to deliver to the realities that we face, once that happens there are some areas where that's important. Let's look at what happens with character, both good and bad in terms of the fruits, the fruits of character. When you begin to think about character and begin to unpack it, what we begin to see is that character as makeup; character as you are glued together. We struggle with how to define that and what it means. One of the ways that I like to think about it is it's a force. You know if you go to the Old Testament, one of the closest things that we see to character is the word that is translated virtue. Virtue is kind of like this. It's the person that the good character is, a force that moves through a situation, and the force of their character is able to deliver the goods. Now this is what character does. When somebody moves through an organization, they



are a force. Now if they are of questionable character or broken character—haven't you seen this?—or bad character in one way or another, they move through an organization and it's a force, not a good force, like a storm moved through there and it leaves fruit.

Other people move through a community, or organization, or department, and they are a force for change, life, and light. Everyone says it is so much better since so-and-so came here. They feel that they are grateful to him/her; and then they say it is so much better since so-and-so left. You have all experienced that, and the Bible talks about that. What happens in this force is when somebody moves across something—I like to think of it like a boat that goes across the ocean. You know, if you're in a boat, and you're headed out across the ocean, if you sit back there on the aft deck and look out behind you, it leaves a wake. The force of going through the oceans churns the waters, and it leaves a wake on two sides. A leader is like this.

A leader's makeup is going to leave a wake and basically that wake is going to be in two primary areas. First, one is going to be in the area of task. Did they accomplish the mission? A leader is there for a purpose and a mission and the force of their character, of who they are. They are going to be able to look back, and there is either going to be a wake of mission accomplished (growth, people were saved, or communities were reached, or the poor were taken care of, or whatever your particular mission is), the leader looks back and everybody looks back and goes, "Gosh," when he or she was leading the singles group, the church, or those married, "look what we got accomplished, look what happened," and we have fruit there. Other times we look back and there is not much of a wake, not really much that happened. That's the wake that it leaves. That's the reality. The Bible says we will be accountable for our fruitfulness in that area.

The second area, the other task, is we leave a wake of relationships. When leaders go through an organization, the ones with a certain kind of makeup leave people in their wake who are better people for serving under that leader. I was talking to somebody yesterday about an organization, and they were just beaming. "It is so much fun!" It was a Christian organization, and they said, "It's just so much fun to come to work here. I get excited. Our leadership challenges me, and it's tough and I'm growing. They build into me, and they care about me." The wake that these leaders were leaving had a lot of people out there just swimming strong and doing well. There are other leaders who leave a wake and there

are people bobbing out like shark bait. They are bleeding and beat up. We all know that kind of wake that leaders have left. In reality, all of us are kind of a mixture of this. We could do better in completing our mission. That's why we are here. We could do better with the kind of wake we leave with people. So there is a wake that we leave behind in terms of task and relationship.

As we go through this series, these are good things to think about. I find myself worrying about these things all the time. I have people who help me in my own makeup, the way I'm glued together, and the ways I need to grow. We all need this because we can work on our skills of competencies, skills of alliances, but ultimately you are the tool. You just have to get the first two done. If the realities that come across our desk are realities that tend to break us, it's like a metal. I flew up here on an airplane. An airplane is made of metal. Way back when, I went and talked to some engineers and they said, "We need an airplane that will go 600 mph, from 0 mph to 600 mph in however fast, 30,000 feet, this kind of heat, this kind of cold, and propelled at this kind of force. Build us an airplane." All the smart guys went into a back room and said, "Okay, what kind of metal will we need for that?" They called the metallurgist and gave him the realities of the kind of demands that are going to be put on this structure: This kind of heat, this kind of force, these kind of g's. If we use aluminum—I don't know my metals—but 20,000 would be okay; 30,000, it would melt. Or if we put a compound in, it would do okay with that much torque, but then it's going to bend. It'll look like bacon. They want the character of the metal to be able to meet the demands of the realities. That's what we are talking about. John and I are committed to helping you make the shifts in your makeup to where if you have a tough staff member, a daunting call, a challenge from God, a tough board situation, or a community that doesn't care about faith—whatever the kinds of winds and storms that are going to be pushing on you as you go through those demands—we want your metal to be strong enough to deliver. How are we going to go about that in this series?

There is a path that we are going to take you through. We think this path is taught in the Bible and that God has actually wired our brains to know how to do this. There are two tracks on this path. One is one way of knowing there is some information. We are going to give you a lot of information. We are going to talk to you about the aspects of character, skills, growth steps, and the things you need to face. Second, not only is there information, but there is experience. We are also going to outline some experiences for

you. We want you to follow us in this series as we go through the next year or so. As we talk about this information, we want you to be thinking. John is going to be talking about how to put your system together, diagnose yourself, and know where you are. We want you to be in the laboratory of taking what we are talking about and putting it into practice and going through the experience that builds perseverance, the perseverance that builds character, and the character that builds hope. We know that you can do this because we work with leaders in our retreats all the time. When leaders get with leaders and they are away from everyone that they have to perform for, then they get real, they start to share, start to work on these things, and they change and grow. That's what we want for you.

John is going to share with us.

Thanks, Henry. Thank you for having us here and being interested in this concept. Leadership is not only involving your vision, your calling, and your strategies, it is also you and who you are as a person. What I want to do in this section is give you some ways to evaluate how you are doing. Like a checkup before you take your suburban or minivan on the road, what do you do but check the tires, oil, and windshield wipers. My kids are almost of age now and what they say is you get in the car and go. I tell my kids, no, if you don't learn this you won't be driving until you're forty. So learn this now because we need to know how we are doing as leaders.

I was speaking to a bunch of leaders about a week ago. I was talking to this volunteer group. A paid leadership staff in a church was having a bunch of volunteers over for a large singles' conference—singles' leaders. Talking about how you as a singles' leader can be the person that you need to be. The guy who ran that was a friend of mine, and we could joke around together. He asked me if I could tell some aspects about leadership. I said, "There are several aspects. Now one of those is the ability to sometimes say no to your own leader, because in a singles' ministry, in a volunteer ministry, what are you going to do, fire me?" It was a volunteer thing anyway. As soon as I said you have to be able to say no to your leader, the guy who had me speak got up and said, "You can ignore that comment." He said, "I don't want you guys to hear that. I want you guys to be here for me all the time." To which I said, "The second thing is you have to be able to recognize toxic leadership when you see it and get rid of it." What happened at that moment is the conversation began changing into, "How do

you know how you are doing? I don't even know how to evaluate." You know, most leaders, as I talk around the country, you know how they figure out how they are doing? Busy. They're busy. Every Christian leader I know is super busy. There is just more than they can handle. There's the I'm-busy ones and then there's the out-of-control ones. I haven't met a leader yet who says, "I have too much time on my hands and I'm looking for hobbies." That's not their nature. Just like when Jesus said "the fields are white," we have to get some workers in the harvest. What I want to provide is a way for you to think in your own little area: check the tires, oil, windshield wipers; five different capacities to be able to evaluate just how you are doing as a leader—not to demotivate you or discourage you at all, but to give you some tools to say, "This is the next way for me to go."

Let me start by positioning a passage in Scripture, which I think is helpful here: Psalm 139 where David is crying out to God, and he says, "Search me and know me and try my anxious heart, and see if there are any hurtful ways in me and lead me in the everlasting ways." A lot of times we don't have the ability; nobody has ever showed us how to search and to be searched. This can really be done so you will know whether I'm doing okay in this area or there is something else I can work on.

Here's your checklist. You don't need a PhD to do this. Take a look at the gap. Henry mentioned the gap a minute ago. The gap is that space between where you are right now in your leadership, in your job, and where you'd like to be, the ideal. None of us are reaching all of our goals as leaders. Whether you are a pastor, worship person, in evangelism, small groups, a businessperson, own a business, or in a Fortune 500 company, every leader has got a gap. The way to understand is that it's not having no gap, it's how big the gap is. Gaps are normal. People who say, "There are none. I'm doing a perfect job," as Henry mentioned earlier, they are the people in denial. Gaps are normal. In fact, it's a good thing to have a gap because otherwise you really have no challenge.

Paul said, in Philippians 3, "I press on to the goal, not that I am who I am right now or that I'm going to be, but I press on for the sake of the prize." In other words, the gap helps to motivate you; it's a good thing for you. I have a friend, a pastor—a very creative person who is always thinking of new ways to make his church grow. He came up with the idea of having—that he wanted to have—a liturgy service for the people in his nondenominational church with a liturgy background. What a great idea for those

people who want to have a little bit more of their tradition's kind of thing. And he did that. I just thought it was wonderful. I used to visit. I got a lot out of the worship experience, and it just so happened that that community really wasn't into it. He tried it for a while, maybe six months, and the gap was so great between what the church had to put into it and what the results were that very few people went. Some people it meant a lot to. But the church had to do one of those painful decisions. It was time to go and do something else. He was the kind of person who just said, "Yes, it's time to go. It's not worth it, the gap is too large." He changed to something else which exploded and a million people came to, and everything was fine. I always remember that pastor because he didn't get discouraged because there was a gap. Let me tell you the three levels of "gapton," we'll call it.

First, if there is no gap, you are going to be bored. If you are reaching all your goals, you are the leader that you would like to be, you are going to be bored. Every leader that I know that achieves a good goal, the ones that I know, never sit; they always say there is something next. There is something about being a leader that makes you edgy, and I don't know how to explain it well, but you are always looking over the next horizon at the next challenge. That is a good thing. So level one is boredom.

The next-level gap is discomfort. "I'm not yet where I need to be; I don't like it. Where can I get resources?" or "Things aren't working here. I have a problem with my staff," or "We're not reaching our goals here." The important thing about this is that's a good place to be. That's the best place to be, in discomfort. A very comfortable ministry many times means there is death or stagnation. Allow yourself to have discomfort.

The third level is what I would call is where the gap is so large that there is an echo. Like you are in the Grand Canyon, and here you are and here is where you would like to be; and there is so much distance between the two, that you say "hello, hello, hello" and there is so much reverberation because you are so far away. That's when, like my friend decided, that gap is too large.

So, number one, look at the size of the gap. If there's an uncomfortable gap, that is good to have. Then you are motivated, challenged, having to trust God, having to be on your knees because you're not yet able to reach your goals—and that's a good thing for all of us.



Second, look not only at the gap, look at the fit. How do I fit this task, role I'm in, this leadership persona I'm in? Am I a good fit or a bad fit? God makes us different, and we all have different strengths and weaknesses and styles, and sometimes . . . did you ever notice, some people have a desire for something but they just aren't that person. Like, for example, I have a friend who is a CPA. He is a highly talented CPA-type person, one of the best CPA persons I have ever met. He understands numbers greatly. His goal was to be a worship leader in his church. He loved leading worship, but the CPA part couldn't leave him. Instead, he would go over the history of the song before they would start. Try to get everyone motivated and say, you know, "In 1876 this author was walking down the street . . ." because this song has eighteen verses and some of them are in Greek. The people would be sort of snoozing. We worked with him because he had a love and a passion. Finally, he realized, I'll help other people, but this doesn't fit me.

Sometimes our dream and our desire is just not a fit for who we are inside. I know other people who are great motivators, great upfront charismatic people, but I would not lend them a nickel because they have very few abilities to have structure, organization. I would lend the nickel to my CPA friend. What does that mean? It's not a good or bad thing, but the best people I know and the leaders who do their best, they understand that their giftedness, strengths, and their weaknesses fit what they do. There is a dream thing you have to do. We all have dreams. Dreams are good. The Bible talks about how good they are. Dreams are like a honeymoon period. When you were first dating your spouse, there is this idealized honeymoon time where everything is great; and sooner or later when you marry and you wake up next to that person you say, you know, "This person isn't perfect and neither am I. Now what do we do?" They're no longer the ideal. That's when fit happens. How do I adjust myself to be with the person I love, the church I love, or the organization I love and at the same time be content, happy, and know that I'm a good fit for this? Look at the fit. Am I trying to put apples into oranges or oranges into apples? Is this who you are? Or is there a dream that you have to have another way? I think about the guy who has to work on the auto line who doesn't get a lot of fulfillment from his job because he is turning widgets all day. You know what he does? He gets a hobby or he goes to his church and he does things that are fulfilling to him. People sort of insist that their job meet all of their dreams and demands. That's not the way mature people think. That's the way that kids think. Mature people say they will



start with a dream because that's the motivation and then I'm going to find out where I am and how I fit.

The next part has to do with one of our favorite sources of knowing where to go and who to be. That's the good old-fashioned feedback loop. Feedback from people: What are the people saying? Are they buying your product? Are they following you? Are they showing up at your meetings? Are they giving you kudos? Or are they giving you good or bad feedback? Where do you go to get your feedback? One of God's greatest sources for information about you as a leader is what people who are above you in that organization and below you say about you. I found that those people who go after feedback do very, very well in their leadership. They are hungry for it. I found there are certain people that maybe they had a lot of criticism in their life, maybe they had authority structures that were condemning or judgmental, so for the rest of their leadership life what they do is they will only go after the "strokers." They will get the feedback from the people who are positive and affirming saying only good things about them, and they never get any kind of correction or never any kind of helpful sort of in-your-face material. What you want to find is people who will give you feedback who have two capacities. The first is that they are on your team. They are on your side. They have no agenda to keep you, to control you. Their agenda isn't whether you are in their church or in another organization or another ministry. They really don't care because they want your best. So number one, they are on your side.

Second, they are also people who can speak truth into you and speak reality into you. The Proverbs are full of information about how a wise man loves rebuke and how a foolish man, a hundred blows won't even stop him from doing his foolish ways. Make sure the people you are with do not have a condemning bone in their body, but make sure they will tell you the truth too. What I've found is that the people who go after reality-based support, reality-based boards, and reality-based support networks do the best.

I have a friend who has an organization. His board of directors was just kind of a rubber stamp thing. Everything he said to do, they would do. Like he would walk in the room, and they would all say, "The anointed has just come in," things like that. Not a good sign. He finally realized that he wasn't getting anywhere. He wasn't growing. He would tell his board, "Tell me where I'm screwing up. Am I doing bad things with the budget? Is my selfishness coming

out, or am I disorganized?” They would say, “We are just lucky to have you, you’re a great person, and let’s all just sing ‘Kumbaya.’” He got nothing from them. You know what the guy did? He got rid of the board. Gutsiest thing, he fired his own board of advisors, saying he had to get honest people in there. He got some people who loved him but no longer idealized him or thought that he was the fourth member of the Trinity. They would say, “We love you but sometimes your ship is lacking in a couple areas.” Did it hurt his feelings? Sure, but if you’re a leader you have to have some thick skin. You are not out here to get stroked. You’re out here to have a mission. You had a burning bush and you had to follow it, and no matter how much it hurt your feelings you’re going to follow that burning bush. He’s got a board of advisors here that are so dedicated and committed to him, and they give him the feedback that he needs. He knows how he is doing. In fact, they tell him more than he would like them to tell him sometimes. But you know what? That is in the New Testament. Go to Hebrews 10:24-25: “We should not neglect the assembling together of ourselves so we can provoke each other to love and good works.” Get people who are going to provoke you. Not in a mean way but in a way that keeps you thinking, changing, and self-correcting. What I have found in good leadership organizations are loving confrontations. Not as the exception, but as the norm. When there is no loving confrontation, it should be seen as an aberration and a problem. We should be saying, “Why aren’t you guys telling me anything? I know I have things to work on.” That’s the feedback loop.

Then this has more to do with outside your organization. We will call it “parallel context.” That is, how are other organizations that have sort of the same level of person that you’re at, how are they doing? If you are an executive pastor, how are other executive pastors that are similar doing? If you’re in middle management or an executive in a 500 company, how are those people who are in your sphere doing? You find out a wealth of information by understanding . . . so, in Idaho, Seattle, or Washington, this is how people are doing who are in my level. So, I’m not doing so bad. Or you come away saying, “I have a long ways to grow.” That’s why Henry and I think it is so important for everyone in leadership to be interdependent in a network. There’s kind of a cultish thing sometimes that churches do. We are going to be self-sufficient. We’re in this bubble. It’s only us, and we have all the answers. That’s kind of one of the sickest things you can do. One reason we love CCN so much is because it networks churches together to say, “Here some ideas you might not have had.” It brings it together.

You kind of get rid of the bubble mentality of, we've got all the answers; we've got all the resources. You look out and say, "There's another person across the country who is doing something similar to what I'm doing. What can I learn from them?" You come away finding out there are a lot of things I didn't know that I can now learn from and grow. I go visit that person. We'll have seminars together or continue training together, whatever that means. But the parallel context is important.

What you also find out is that we have a tendency to do unfair comparisons to ourselves, and you need to watch for that. I have a friend who is a senior pastor of a 7,500-member church. He was thinking I must not have accomplished any goals when he compared himself with other pastors. Well, he was comparing himself to pastors who had 5,000 to 7,000 members, 40 to 50 pastors, and he's the guy mowing the lawn and turning the lights on in the morning. Make sure your context are a true parallel: They are doing similar tasks, have similar goals, similar resources, and similar responsibilities. That's another way you can evaluate yourself.

This last one is a little more nebulous, meaning it's going to take a little more intuitive work. You need to be able to listen to your insides here. It has to do with a word that we call your gut, meaning if all these other areas are in place—the gap is not too big, the fit's pretty decent, you get good feedback from safe people who are sane, other people in the same context are doing about the same—you better listen to your gut too. You better have a gut you can listen to. Leadership has to do with the ability to have the right character to pull through and pull off the vision. It's not just having good morality, good integrity, it's having sum and substance inside of you, and sometimes that's going to come out in your gut. The Bible talks about your gut. Jesus said you're supposed to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. That's your insides. I've known situations where everything was in place but they got lost, and that was a sign that there was something that needs to be done. I have a friend who was a pastor, that from all intents and purposes he was doing the right thing. He was involved with singles' ministry and family ministry. Ran both of them. Multitalented, lots of people were becoming Christians, people were getting saved, being disciplined, families were doing better. He got good reviews. People liked him; the executive over him liked him. Everybody appreciated him. But after maybe four years he started hating it. If you looked at him from a piece of paper, you would say, "Why would he be unhappy?" He didn't

know. He just knew he'd wake up every morning and feel like he was turning the crank, feeling like the gerbil and treadmill. Something's wrong here. So he did a lot of soul searching and talked to people who knew him and loved him. He finally realized that even though he could do all these other things and he was a good fit, it really wasn't who he was. His gut was saying, "Go a different direction."

I've had that happen to me. Everything looked good if you could put it on a spreadsheet, but something inside you, could be a lot of things, the Holy Spirit talks to us, the still small voice that the Scriptures talk about. Sometimes it's just a part of yourself connected to what God's saying, "I'm changing things," and everyone will think you're crazy. Everyone thought my friend was crazy until he finally pressured his church and said, "I need another position. I want to stay in this church, but I want to work in a pastoral care ministry. I want to work with small groups, community outreach." He did that. That department is just doing incredible because now everything fit. We have kind of a distrust of our gut sometimes because we feel like Am I being too emotional or too objective?

I was glad Henry talked about knowing by experience. There is the knowing. We need the paper. We need the CPA part of us. That's very important. We also need the other part, the right-brain part. A lot of times we are assimilating information that we don't understand. It's like we've been around a person, had dinner with them, and you go, "This person looks great, but I don't want to have dinner with him again." And your wife says you're crazy. I know I'm crazy, but that's a different question. The point is I don't feel good about this person. I can't even put my finger on it. You find out a year down the line there was a moral problem. Sometimes your gut is a good source of information.

Having said that, it's important on a regular, intentional, structural level to ask yourself, How am I doing? What does this mean? As you get in the whole process of "search me and know me and try my anxious heart," what you begin finding is that information comes realizing I don't have to make a ninety-degree move and leave this whole organization. I can make these small self-corrections that fine tune and make a better fit for who I am and who God has made me to be. We want you during this entire series to know not only what leadership is about, but who you are and how those things work together.

Bill and Henry are going to come up here and we are going to talk about next steps and all that kind of stuff. I'm sure you've all been encouraged and learned a bunch.

**This is the first part of an ongoing series.** This series, Ultimate Leadership, actually has come from an intensive one-week retreat that you are doing in Southern California. Can you tell us a little bit about that? Although these broadcasts are great and we encourage everybody to be a part of it, there are these intensives going on where you can go deeper. Tell us a little about them.

For over twenty years now, we have been working with leaders and a lot of times we were called into situations where a leader hits the gap or a board of elders says to a pastor, "You have some growth steps," or the team discovers that or whatever. We were working with a lot of leaders, and what we continued to hear over and over and over, literally all over the country, was leaders say I wish I had a place where I could go with other leaders away from all of this, away from the people that I have to compete with down the street or whatever. Really deal with some of these issues. So, why can't we do that? So we started something called the Ultimate Leadership. It's a week-long intensive where we take a group of leaders (about forty or so). John and I do the teaching. We have a team of facilitators, psychologists actually, that we have worked with for many years, who do a lot of group work with the leaders, with each other working on the issues we talked about. It has been the coolest, most fun thing that we have ever participated in.

**John, would you add anything? Why should a leader come down to Southern California for these?**

We have people come for different reasons, Bill. One of those reasons is that some people know they just need a checkup or tune-up. Some people know I'm headed for burnout, too much stress or whatever. What they find is: I learn what the Bible teaches from these principles on a teaching level and then I also learn in my small groups, in a safe setting, how to process those out and grow through them with the facilitators and my peers who are other pastors from across the world and across the country. So they find that people do it preventatively; and some people do it because it's time to get something worked out.