

Identifying Traveling for the Leaders



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Let me tell you a little bit about Henry. Henry's a clinical psychologist. He's the author of numerous books, including *Boundaries*, *How People Grow*, and *9 Things You Simply Must Do*. Would you please welcome Dr. Henry Cloud?

Thanks for being here and continuing this series with us. You know, one thing on the last broadcast—I don't know if they made clear or not—is how this whole series came to be. Tell us a little bit about that.

The long story is I started out as a psychologist working with individuals, but the place where I worked the first time in my life was in a leadership consulting firm. So I started my clinical practice working with leaders, which is kind of . . . if you really want to work with dysfunctional people, work with leaders, right? So my entire clinical world was in the context of people in leadership, and over the years I got more and more into helping leaders develop and study in leadership, per se.

As I would work with organizations over the years, leaders kept saying, "Where can we go with other leaders to not really have a seminar but to process our lives and process our issues?" So we started the Ultimate Leadership weeklong experience. We conduct those in Southern California, where leaders fly in, spend a week with us and other leaders, small groups, and we kind of crank their lives. So a lot of the material we do in the broadcast is the kind of thing that we do there, except that we go in-depth and processing.

I know at the end of tonight's broadcast we're going to talk more about how people can go to that. But this is an intensive one week that people can go to now.

One week we start them. They're there throughout the year, and John and I direct those, and we have a team that facilitates the

groups, that we've been working with for a long time.

That's a nice excuse to go to Southern California.

Yeah, you're out there in the tundra. You can come join us.

We'll talk more about that at the end. Tonight's broadcast is entitled "Identifying Traveling for the Leaders." What are we going to talk about tonight?

As I was saying in the broadcast, a lot of times we think our goal, or mission or calling, is what we're supposed to do, and that's what we go do first. But really it's not what you should do first. First thing you've got to do is get your team around you that's going to help you get there.

We're looking forward to tonight, so I'm going to turn over the podium to you.

Thanks, Bill. Well it's good to be here. And especially not only in the context of leadership, but from where I sit, as I said. From a clinical psychologist is how I started, and I was working with leaders in a lot of different contexts, really on managing what I refer to as the gap. Now, let me tell you a little about the gap and how tonight's topic really gets exciting.

There is... Once upon a time, way back when, there was a creation, and that creation was ideal. If you recall the story, that was in the garden of Eden, Adam was a pretty good leader, especially when there was no one to lead. 'Cause you can't screw it up then. But later, what happened was what's referred to as the fall. Then we fell down to reality. Reality means this is where we are at any given moment, and we're supposed to be up here.

Now, this is where leaders live every day. They have reality situations that come knock on your door as leaders, and there's some ideal way that you're supposed to handle that. There's a better way to manage, a better way to reach goals. There's a better way to do everything, and sometimes this reality is pretty brutal. This gap right here and managing that gap is what leadership is about on the personal level, because, actually, when we talk about leadership, it's not just the discipline of the leadership, but it's the person of the leader who's the tool in the organization that's got to lead people in the organization to closing the gap.

Now, the problem is that we have our own gap. We who are in the process, who are trying to lead anything or accomplish anything, we need abilities, we need knowledge, we need talents, we need a lot of things, which we'll see tonight. Oftentimes we don't possess those and we need to grow. So what we are going to talk about tonight is one of the key tools in managing this gap to get you from here to there.

Now, the reason I say this is one of my most favorite topics in leadership is because it is the one—in one in a handful—I think that has the most power to get you as a leader from where you are today, no matter where you are, to where you need to be, number 1. Number 2, it has the power to keep you from wherever you are to falling further in the wrong direction. Number 3, as a consultant—and I get called in to situations a lot of times when there is a big gap or there is a big fall—it is one of the key ingredients to turning those around. So what it is we're talking about tonight is choosing your traveling companions wisely.

Now, I want to start out by sharing a story with you. I remember it like it was yesterday, but it might as well have been every day. I've seen this over and over and over throughout the years, the contrast between people who make it and those who either don't make it or don't make it as far in their call or their mission as they ought to. Here's what happened. I'm talking to this guy. He was referred to me by an organization to grow and to deal with some stuff. He comes in one day, and he's particularly angry, and I can tell he's just bugged. So I said, "What's wrong?"

Here's what he told me: "I can't believe what he did to me."

I said, "Who?" Who he was talking about was a well-known leader in his industry that he had gone to. He had kind of humbled himself. For him it was a big step to go and ask him for advice. Now, what he was asking was, this other man had actually started a company in that industry and grown it to about a half a billion dollar company in the course of a handful of years. He saw him as a model and a great success story. He was in the same industry and he was going to go do a similar thing, so he humbled himself and went to go talk to this man.

He basically said, "Tell me how you did it. When you first started out, what did you do to start and build your company?" That's what he went to ask.

I said, “Well what are you mad at?”

He said, “I can’t believe what he told me. I go to him for this advice. I want to know, like, how did he do it, where did he get the funding, how did he get his board together, how did he raise the money, did he outsource everything, etc., etc. I’ve got all these great questions that are part of the plan, and you know what he tells me?”

I said, “What?”

He said, “Well here’s how I built my company. The first thing I did was I went and I selected five or six wise men that I knew that were committed to me, but also had a lot of wisdom and were supportive and spiritual, and would tell me the truth. And I put a support group together, and I told them, ‘I want you to be my support group as I go through this to pray with me, give me feedback, to tell me what you think of what I’m thinking, whether it’s crazy or whether you think it’s a good idea, to keep me accountable in various areas of my life, etc., etc. And we began meeting.’ And I think he said at that time . . . twenty years before, and he said they’re still together.”

He said to this young man who was starting out, “That is how I built my company.” So the young guy’s really, really upset. He goes, “Yeah, but what about marketing? Did you do that? You know, outsourcing? Or did you hire the people? Did you get somebody from another company, did you do it yourself in the beginning, where did you raise the money, did you go public, did you go to a hedge fund? etc., etc.” He didn’t want to answer those questions. He kept bringing it back to, “I’m not going to answer anything else until you come back to me with your group.”

Okay, now the guy was ticked. He didn’t want to hear that. Here was how to reach the goal, how to follow his calling, how to accomplish his mission. I’ve seen pastors and people who lead ministries do the same thing. The big mistake is they think that their number one goal is the goal. Let me say that again. The big mistake that leaders make is they believe that the number one thing on their priority list, or the number one thing on their to-do list, or the most important thing to do, is see the vision, stay committed to the call, and accomplish that. In actuality that’s number two or somewhere down the list.

Number one, the most important thing that you could ever do

is to put your group together, is to put your team together. I'm not talking about your employees; I'm not talking about the team that accomplishes the goal.

One of the great things in the book *Good to Great*, if you've ever read that, is he talks about how important it is to get the right people on the bus if you're going to get an organization . . . to get the right people around you to do the work. Then he talks about the importance of getting the right people in the right seat. All that's great and all that's essential, but that's on the tasks side. What I'm talking about here tonight (if I can find my pen) is not on the tasks side, but on your personal team, your personal team as a leader.

Now, what does that look like? Many of you probably . . . because you're in some kind of leadership capacity, you probably have some teams around you. You've probably got a board of directors, a management team, may even have a lot of other structures like that in place. But here's the problem with that. All of that is related to the task. See, all of that is related to the goal, and part of the problem in that team is all of those people have an interest in how the goal is doing that's personal. They may work for the organization, they may be on the board that is somehow invested in it . . . there's a lot of different ways that they may be connected to it.

What I'm talking about apart from all that is you as a leader. And I've seen this over and over and over again. The ones who make it are the ones who have this team in place. The ones . . . invariably when I'm called in to a situation something has gone wrong in that there's not a team there. And in that kind of crisis I'm called in, for the first thing they have to do is put it together.

What I'm here to share with you is what I've seen over and over and over again, that the ones who make it, apart from their organization, apart from the board . . . they have traveling companions in their lives that are committed to them. And this may be mutual, it may be part of a mutual support group. Or I would suggest for leaders, if you're in some significant place of leadership . . . what I would suggest to you in addition to your mutual support group is that you have a personal team that's committed to you that exists for you.

Let me give you an example. There's a great church in Southern California that we do a lot of work with, and for the last

however many years—I think it’s, like, six or seven or eight years or something—the board of elders at that church . . . they commissioned a separate committee. And there’s six men on this committee (not that that’s right or wrong), six men on this committee. And you know what that committee’s one mission statement is? One mission statement is a commitment to the personal and professional development of the senior pastor. Now, I’m going to say that again. Here’s your board of elders, here’s probably the pastor’s own support group that he meets with every week and prays and shares life with, but there is a separate team whose mission statement of that team—and again commissioned by the board—their mission statement is the personal and professional development of the senior pastor.

I actually called before the broadcast today one of the members of that committee to just kind of refresh my memory about that and ask him about that. Because I was going to be sharing it today. What he said was, it’s just been amazing, an amazing growth experience for everybody and very fulfilling for everybody, especially for the pastor. Because what they do is, there are ten areas of his life that they bring to him continually, putting those right in his face and having him look at those ten areas of life. We’re going to go through them in a moment. They not only hold him accountable, but as we’re going to see, one of the most important things that your team does is they don’t offer police action to, “Are you screwing up in your . . .? How close to perfect are you?” and “Let’s kick you around and police you and confront you, so you get back up there.” They assume, and this is the way the gospel operates . . . See, what God does is, God has the goal out there, but God assumes that we’re not there.

You know, one of my favorite stories in the Bible is where Peter . . . You know, it’s in the life of Jesus, and Peter’s going to be the leader and he’s going to go for it. Jesus predicts to him that he’s going to fail. “You’re going to fail,” and He says this three times. There’s this phrase in there where He’s talking to Peter, and He says, “But after you have returned you will become the source of strength for many.”

Now, think about this. God looks at you as a leader, and here’s where He wants you to get one day and He assumes that you’re not there. Now think about this. If this is where you’re supposed to be and this is where you are, how are you going to get there? Are you going to get there through willpower or commitment? No, because, see, we don’t have what it possesses to get there. The

cool message of the gospel is that the law gave us the standard. Told us to reach it. We fall. We feel guilty. They sacrifice a few animals and have a guilt cleansing, but there's no change. All we do is recommit, try harder. What the gospel does is . . . what we need to be comes down to where we are and joins us. It's grace. So the difference in the law is, "Here's the standard. Get there," and the gospel is, "Here's the standard. You can't get there. Let's bring what you need down to you."

That's what Jesus did for us. Let's bring what you need down to you and let's build it into you and raise you up to the standard. That's the difference in our faith and religion. It's also the difference when we look at successful leaders in organization, in churches, in companies. What they do is, they don't just assume that everybody's there. They have all sorts of systems in place to go meet the person where he is and to build into him what they need him to become.

So let me tell you what I've seen . . . and I know that it's true as I'm talking to a lot of leaders out there. What you've done is, you've been put in a position of leadership and nobody's ever told you this before. You see the task and you see the goal and think you're supposed to meet it, and you're wearing yourself out. You're overburdened and you're burning out. Yet you've got a master that said the load is supposed to be light, and you're going, "How can this be light?" One of the ways it can be light is by choosing your traveling companions to come and bear that load with you and help you become what you need to be.

So tonight what I want to do first of all is to give you the point that your first goal is not the goal. Your first goal is to get your traveling companions and get the group that's going to help you get there together, apart from the people that do the task. These are the people that are committed to you as a person for your own development.

Let's hop into it. What does this have to . . . what does it look like and what are the components that have to do with how we get there? Well first there's two problems with the whole traveling companions. Everything in life has the good and the bad. Right? So one of the problems with traveling companions is—I want you to look at this very, very, hard—one of the problems is there is an absence, a lack, an absence or a lacking of what we need. Okay? Sometimes you are being called on to reach a goal. You're being called on to reach a goal that requires a number of things. Courage,

wisdom, knowledge, structure, and a bunch of other stuff, and you don't have that in and of yourself. You're continuing to try and produce it, when what the Bible says—and all the research shows this is when we're lacking something—that we have to get that from somewhere.

I was on a consulting project not too long ago, and a guy said, "Well I know I need to be more self-disciplined." Yet his history was that he didn't have a lot of self-discipline. So I said, "Well I thought you were undisciplined as a person."

He said, "I am."

"But you just said you're going to be more self-disciplined."

"Yeah, I need to be more self-disciplined."

I said, "Well wait a minute. Are you the problem or the solution?"

Now, think about this. If your car is out of gas, does it say to itself, "Oh, I just need to have more gas, produce more gas, make more gas?" No, it has to go get that put into it somewhere. Well you know everything we need for our sense of self-discipline always comes from structure and discipline we get from the outside. People holding us accountable, people producing structures that we have to abide in, instead of somehow it coming from ourselves. And as we'll see, courage and a bunch of other things are like that as well. So the first problem with traveling companions is sometimes you don't have anybody in your life that's giving you what you don't possess. So you're trying to do it on your own.

The second problem is not only the lack of good people, but the presence of bad ones. The presence of bad ones. One of the realities that the Bible talks about . . . and all that research . . . all everybody that goes in and works with organizations and works with leaders will ever tell you (in fact, we're doing an entire program on dealing with toxic people). One of the big problems that leaders have, that leaders encounter, is not only do they lack the good people that they need, but they have people around them that are the last people that they need. People in their personal lives, people sometimes within the circle of people that they turn to and look to, that are not only not giving them what they need but they're giving them a bunch of things that they don't need.

Let me give you an example. I was working with a woman one

time who had just come out of a shift, and she was looking at some leadership things. She was taking some risks and taking on some more responsibilities, and had been put in charge of some things, and for her it was a big growth step. She had, you know, kind of stagnated for a while, and she was doing a lot of growth in the area of leadership and learning a bunch of stuff. Had gone back to do some graduate work and a bunch of equipping kinds of things. She was really down a path.

I live in LA, so we're on the West Coast, and what happened was she went back to the East Coast to be with her family for a month or so over the holidays. She spends a month back home. Her family and her extended family, a bunch of siblings.

You know the old phrase, a prophet is never welcome in their hometown? They still had this vision of her, and they were dysfunctional, and they were pretty critical, and they were negative. And she goes back and she's in this environment, where her mother actually was the one that starts saying, "What is this crap? You're too old to be doing that. Why don't you just go back to your old job? Why don't you do this, that, and the other?" And she had some other relationships that are siblings, and she's in kind of this negative environment for a while.

She comes back after a month of that. She walks in my office and she didn't say anything, but I could sense that it was like the light dimmer had been turned. You could see that the life inside of her that had been building in her leadership capacities was getting dimmer and dimmer. I didn't know what happened, but I could tell. I could sense it. I didn't say anything in the beginning, but what I said . . . not about that specifically, but what I asked that was just the standard shrink question, was, "How's it going?"

She goes, "You know, it's going okay. It's fine. You know, I'm working on . . ."

But there was something missing, and I said, "Okay, level with me. What's going on here?"

And she said, "What do you mean?"

And this is what's interesting. She didn't even know. I said, "What have you been thinking about?"

She goes, "Well what are you talking about?"

I said, “Something’s different.”

She said, “Well you know, it’s interesting, I have been kind of thinking, you know, this whole leadership thing. You know, maybe I should just go back to what I was doing . . .” Etc., etc. We started to unpack that and the life that God had been birthing in her, the vision, the belief that she could do this, the building of her skills, all the hope about the future she had going back into the environment previously.

It’s the same thing. You know when God delivered Lot and his wife out of Sodom and Gomorrah? He said, “Remember Lot’s wife.” Jesus said that later. “Don’t look back. You’ll turn to salt.” That there are dysfunctional ways of being, or dysfunctional systems or histories. There are relationships that really are kind of infectious and they get in your veins. See, for her it’s sort of the boiling frog who doesn’t know he’s headed for death. She didn’t even know that this had happened, but it had dulled her.

Now, I’ve seen this with leaders over and over and over. They can have the presence of people in their lives that may not be, like, bad people, but the reality is they’re not really getting them closer to where they need to go. Don’t misunderstand me here. What I’m not saying, in any measure, is that you just want a bunch of people that say positive, wonderful things to you. What we’ll see is that one of the worst things you could have is a team that never says anything negative, never is critical, never confronts you, etc. What we’re talking about here is toxic people. The people that are giving stuff that keeps you from developing or even makes it worse.

What have we said so far? So far we’ve said that your goal is not your first goal, not your first priority. Your first priority is getting the right team together. But the second thing is—remember, there’s two parts to this—you’ve got to find the good ones, and you’ve also got to shield yourself from the bad ones. This is the lesson that’s taught over and over throughout the Scriptures. So we’ve got the good ones; we’ve got the bad ones; we’ve got the need for better ones. Let me talk about specifically what they’re going to provide for you.

You’ve probably heard me mention this passage in this context before. It’s one of many in the New Testament, and it’s one that all leadership bears out and everything that’s ever been studied about how to grow people. It’s out of 1 Peter 4, and what it says

is this: that when we use our gifts with each other . . . Now, let's . . . before we go on, let's think about that. When we use our gifts with each other.

So when somebody is giving wisdom, when somebody is giving feedback, when somebody is teaching, when somebody is supporting, when somebody is creating mercy, whatever it is that is the need of the moment, it says that when we're giving that to each other, 1 Peter 4:10 says, that when you're doing that, that you are administering the grace of God in its various forms.

Now, remember what I said about the gospel and the gap? You've got to get from here to here. One way to get there . . . And that's through grace, and what grace is, is unmerited favor. And it's actually where God comes to you as a leader no matter where—whether you're in a church, in a business, or your life, or as a parent, or whatever it is—grace says that God looks at you and says, “I want to help you get here.” And one of the ways that He gives you that grace is through administering it through the gifts of other people. So it's very important that you realize that the ingredient to get there is going to come from the outside. It's going to come in the form of people that have things to bring to you.

What are those gifts specifically? What are the things that we need? Let me give you a list that you can start to look at. Here's what I want you to do in your life. If you're taking notes tonight, I want you to look specifically . . . sort of in the outline form . . . First of all, if you believe me that your highest priority is putting this team together, and reaching your goal is number two, I want you to take inventory of who your team is. Hopefully it's going to get better because you're going to fix this, but I want you to look at the last six months, for example, and look at where do you go regularly. I'm talking about regularly, not “I think I'll be with my team,” “I think I'll call . . .”

No, no, no, that's not going to work. This has got to be a structured place that's in your schedule. You meet regularly. You know, there's support groups that meet once a week, groups like this not as frequently, but that's not the issue as much as that it's structured and there. Take an inventory in the last year, the list that I'm about to go through. How many times have you had a systematic, structured place in your life where these gifts are brought to you as a leader to help build you and hold you and make you grounded?

Secondly, how many toxic leaks are there? Who in your really close system is able to get you further away from where God has called you and made you to be than they are to getting you closer?

So that gets you looking at three things already. The structure, how often it's happening. Number two, what good ones are there. And number three, which are the ones you need to shield yourself from a little bit.

So now having said that, let's look at some of the ingredients you're going to need in that small circle. To sort of start out, lest this becomes too overwhelming . . . How am I going to do all this? In my experience there are organizations that are highly structured, highly resourced, like the one I mentioned earlier that the board of elders actually put the committee together for you as a leader to do this. That's rare. What I find more often in smaller organizations, smaller churches, or even you people that are business people and are listening to this today because you want to grow as a leader in your own nonministry, company, or organization . . . what usually happens—and I like to tell our people in our leadership classes on our last day, tell them you have got to be the CEO and the steward of your own company for you as a person—now what that means is your organization probably isn't going to put this group together. You've got to put it together. To the degree that you realize that and take ownership of it, you'll be very proactive and going and figuring out who the people are going to be who can give you the list of what we're talking about.

I know for me personally, I don't really work in a big organization, sort of like a very small firm. What I've had to do in my network of acquaintances, friends, etc., is I've learned this over the years. What I've learned and what I suggest a lot of you do is that you approach individuals that you respect and you know have these gifts. Ask them and make a very humble place and say, "You know, look. I respect you for what you've done, and I know you respect me and love me and I would like for you to be part of my team. I'm going to lay my life out for you, and I'm going to lay out what I'm doing for you, and I'm going to lay out my goals and my gifts and my screwups and all of that. I want you to be part of a group that speaks truth into my life and helps me get there."

Now, I've done that, and a lot of people in leadership do that who don't have an organization that does that for them. It's one of the most enriching, rewarding experiences that you'll ever have. It's usually the same for them, but not only that, but it's essential to

getting where you need to be as a leader.

What are the ingredients? Number one, the first thing that you're going to need is support. Now, a lot of times we think of leaders . . . the leader's the strong one who doesn't need anything. I've just never seen that be the case, that the leader never needs support for anything. The problem is everyone is coming to you for support, and you weren't designed to be the Creator; you're a created one. You're not God. You're not the source of everything. So it's very important that you are getting things plugged into you from outside as well.

I was on an airplane not too long ago, and I was talking to this guy about what he does. He was a human resources consultant for really big companies, and he was flying back from a foreign company. This is a funny story. The president from a multinational organization had called him on a consulting project. The consulting project was that the president had to go fire one of the vice presidents that headed up one of those . . . I think it was a country. So he had been consulting with him about how to do this.

Now, a president is somebody that has huge responsibilities. You know, the president of some multinational thing like this . . . What a strong guy. Well certainly he's a strong guy. He's talented, gifted, etc., etc. But there's something about this one relationship that was difficult for him, and he had to call in the consultant to help him to get up the courage. Really, I mean, he gave him some skills and abilities, but to get up the courage to go deal with this guy? Isn't that interesting? You would think that a president wouldn't need that, but you know they all do.

Well here's the funny thing about it. So the guy goes as the consultant to coach him on how to go do it. Then the president's getting on the plane to go fly and fire the guy, and what he does is, he calls the consultant and he says, "Would you go with me?"

And the guy says, "You're joking, right?"

And he says, "No, please you just go with me."

So he thinks he needs him to fly on the plane and continue the coaching. So he flies on the plane with him, they get off the plane, they're going their separate ways, and the president turns to him and said, "You do it." Sort of bails out in the end. The guy had to do it for him. My first thought was, where was that president's

support group? Where was his team? Because what you hire consultants for is not to do your work for you. What you hire consultants for is to help you see what you need to go do.

I was thinking of all those successful leaders that I know that need to be encouraged to go do something like that and they need to find the courage. They would have had their team together that was supporting them in that effort and showing them how, and that they could call, and etc., etc., to deal with that situation. They would have had them in place. If I'd been the consultant, one of the things I would have asked long before was, "Why are you leaning on me to do this? Let me help you to put the team together that should be, as Paul says, that you're rooted and grounded in to do these kinds of things." Now, that's a hard leadership task. Let me tell you the other things I find that people need support for.

There's a situation not too long ago—very successful leader, very successful pastor, but cancer struck his family. I've seen situations like this where a pastor, leader, couple, or a family . . . they have friends and acquaintances, but they don't have the buoyancy of the support system that it's going to take to go through a crisis like that. What happened was the organization actually didn't fall apart, didn't get divided, didn't stall for a long time. What happened was he had such a good team around him in the personal area of life that all of the horror they went through in this situation, he was able to weather it. On the personal side that team was together.

Let me give you another example. I was called into a situation where the pastor was—must have been about twelve or fifteen years ago—he was head of a denomination, and the marriage just went poof. It just blew apart. Very, very visible role, a lot of responsibility. What happened was he found himself so focused on the task, so focused on the goal, that when the marriage was—and it was about out the door—it was one step away from being done, to lean on his support system would be like falling through a trap door with nothing down there.

The first thing we did was, as I worked with the organization and the denomination, we got a personal team round him. And what that team did, over the course of about a year and a half, they held him together, they walked with him daily, they built the skills into him that he needed, and they helped him weather this very tough situation. And if you went back there now, you would see him thriving in ministry and leading a lot of people. You would see

that couple standing up and sharing with other couples, who are about to split up and everything has gone south, how to make it. Had the organization not had the courage and the guts to stick it out and put a team around him, that couple would be split up, the church would be divided. Who knows what would have happened at that level with the denomination?

It had been a big deal. It was the team that did it. All I did as a consultant was give them templates, guidance, some information, but it was the team, the traveling companions, that helped this leader continue down the path of reaching their goals. You don't know in your own life—whether it's work, or ministry, or whatever—you don't know when you're going to have somebody who's impossible to deal with, to fire, or whatever it is. You don't know when the markets are going to crash. You don't know when anything bad is going to happen. You don't know when cancer is going to strike. You don't know when a family crisis is going to occur. But you can know who's going to be there with you. That's the difference. So the first thing we need is support.

The second thing, which is similar, and whether or not it's a manifestation of the same . . . but you just need some love. You were designed to be fueled by love. The reason I put this in there is support is generally oriented towards doing something. You need support to go do this, that, and the other. Love is a place where you are grounded and you know that people are for you. We only become good achievers—really in the full sense of the word—to the level at which we're grounded in love. If not, our achievements are always paranoid, because we're afraid. Because people without love are fear-based, suspicious, and they're trying to get more, and something else is driving that. The problem is, when we fail, we need to have this bedrock to fall down on and know that people are for us and they can identify with us where we are.

I think in an earlier broadcast I told you a story about a time in my life where I really, really failed as a leader in terms of the way I organized some stuff and some delegations I made and a bad hire and everything was falling apart. It was just one of the worst periods in my life. Right at that moment, one night, I'm out on my patio in the midst of this crisis, and one of my mentors, one of the guys who has built a lot into my life and I always turn to for feedback and help, etc. . . . he calls on that night when it happened, while I'm standing on my patio praying. That's not the person I really wanted to call. He's real successful and does everything

right all the time, it seems to me.

He calls me and says, “How are you doing?” And I’ve got to say, “I’ve really screwed up and I made a mess.” And I really didn’t want to tell him, but I told him, and I described the whole thing, and I’m really ashamed, and I feel like a goofball, and here’s one of my heroes and I’m, like, stalling out, and the phone kind of goes silent for a moment. I think I’m about to get the spanking here.

I’ll never forget the first thing that came back over the phone. You know what it was? He goes, “Well we’ve all been there.”

I said, “We? Like you’ve made mistakes like this?”

Then he went on to share with me a situation in his—he’s probably twenty years older than me—in his life and work and how he had done a similar thing and the mess that it had caused. I just knew that at that moment things were going to be okay. It was that somebody was for me and they loved me in the way that God loves us. Not to hold a bar over our head, but they can actually identify where we are.

Now, I want you again to take your inventory as a leader. This sounds not a lot like a leader, but I’m telling you it’s bedrock. If you’re not loved somewhere . . . I’ve seen leaders who aren’t loved, and when things start to get pressurized, they go find love. They go find what feels like love to them. It may be an addiction, an affair, some sort of spending, lust, or whatever it is. You know, more achievement or a new project or whatever it is. What they are doing is that they are looking for something that makes them feel good. God has designed us that this is most basic to what makes us feel good even when everything is bad. So make sure you have this in place. You need people that love you, and they need to be sustaining you in that.

Let’s get to the harder things, number three. I’ve already sort of talked around this, so I’m just going to mention it real quickly. One of the things that we do not possess to the degree that we need it is courage. Now, some of you think you’re courageous. Absolutely leaders have got to be courageous, but if you as a leader have all the courage that you need to go do all that you’re attempting, you’re not attempting anything big enough. That’s the bottom line. If you’re not scared at what you’re trying to build or what you’re trying to pull off, then it’s not big enough. That’s

not the way leadership works. Leadership is about taking the hill when you're at the bottom of the hill and you look, like, "Good night, how am I going to get up there?"

You know, remember when they sent the ten spies out to look at the Promised Land? Ten of them came back and said, "There's no way we can do that." But there were two that said, "We can do this." What we find is that's not an easy battle when they go forward. They need continual encouragement. One of the most important things that we can have is people that encourage us. Do you notice that the Bible always says to encourage people? Why is that? Encourage? I guess because we don't have it.

I've got a friend, sort of a big leader type. And what he told me one time is that if there's not one moment during the day—if he really thinks about everything he's trying to pull off that's new and past whatever they've tried before—he said, "If I don't get a total panic attack by thinking about how big and audacious this goal is, then I'm not trying something big enough."

Okay? We need to be pushed. Why do we need to connect to an infinite God if our little bitty goals are so small that we have enough courage to pull them off? That's not really what excites God. He wants to see you walk on water, go into a lion's den, pull off stuff you never dreamed could be done but see you need to be stretched to do that, and to be able to do that is going to take courage.

Let me give you an example of . . . Remember my personal board that I talked about? A handful of years back I was making a shift in some paths and directions to take, and it meant that I had to leave a lot of security, and things were set, etc. And the new path I was going to take was literally like taking a step off into darkness and there wasn't anything there. But I was pretty certain it was where God was leading me and telling me what to do. One of the things that it meant was I was going to have to sever some ties with some situations and stuff that was, like, I had to leave, I had to go forward.

One of my board members . . . I had a meeting with him and one of the groups and we were evaluating this, that, and the other. Right after the group leaves, we're doing a sort of debrief, and he says to me, "You see what's not the fit here, right? Why this isn't going to get you to where we've talked about that God has called you to get."

I go, “Yeah, but I think—”

And he says, “Can’t you see that it’s not the right fit?”

And I go, “Yeah, I can see that.”

And he says, “How do you see it?”

I told him, “A, B, C, or D?”

He says, “Okay. Now let me ask you something. Do you want us to, five years from now, sit down and have this same conversation about why this isn’t right?”

You’re going to have the courage to do the Abraham thing and go do what God has told you to do. Sometimes, even people in leadership, because of what they’ve got to leave or whatever they’ve got to deal with or what they’ve got to go risk . . . You know, sometimes the familiar can be very alluring. It can be very good for a lot of people in a lot of different ways, but sometimes we need the people to push us into the unknown and to push us into what you’re called to do. Sometimes it’s just that itty-bitty push that we need in order to do it.

The next one we need is feedback. We need feedback. Let me give you an example of what the Bible says about this. This is out of Proverbs 25:12 (and I need some good light in here to do this). Here’s what it says: “Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man’s rebuke to a listening ear.” Let me say that again. It’s like an earring of fine gold, or a piece of fine gold, is a wise man’s rebuke to a listening ear.

Now, you as a leader, you’re the listening ear. The ring of gold that you receive, or this gift, is when you have people in your life that can rebuke. If you do a study sometime on the book of Proverbs, of what wisdom is and about the qualities that make people good leaders, one of them is not that you have it all together and have all the talents in the world, but one of the real hallmarks of wisdom is what happens when people give us feedback. Do we receive it? Do we see it as a gift? Let me tell you. The leaders that I’ve seen that have accomplished great things, this is one of those most important qualities that they have.

Do you know they don’t do this casually? They go seek people to throw up all over their plans. They go seek smart people and say,

“Tell me where I’m off here. Tell me where I’m not going to make it. Tell me where this is a bad idea, point out my flaws.” And they get bad news, and they see it as a gold earring and say thank you.

As the Bible says, rebuke a wise man, he’ll love you for it. Here’s what I’ve seen about the ones that fail. They got their plans: “Look, don’t. I got my opinions. Don’t confuse me with the facts.” They don’t want people throwing up over their plans. They don’t want people giving them negative criticism—this, that, or the other. That’s not how the good ones do it. The good ones entertain the bad news because they know that it’s like going to the doctor—if you catch it early then you can fix it, but if you ignore it, the tumor’s going to catch up with you later.

So if your team . . . if you have constructed your team of a bunch of just “yes” people, and you know there’s a lot of leaders—“I don’t want those negative people”—well those negative people may save your life. I’m not talking about people that are negative as a character trait; I’m talking about people that have wisdom, that see something that’s wrong in you or in what you’re doing or your plans, and they see the flaw and they can point it out. Those are your friends. They aren’t the enemies. The enemies, the toxic ones, are the ones that are critical like a dog barks. That’s what dogs do, they bark. Well critical people, they criticize. They don’t have anything good to say, ever. They never say, you know, “Great idea.” Whatever it is, they’re going to find something wrong. That’s not what we’re talking about here.

The next one is wisdom. Wisdom. You know the Bible says, “Buy wisdom.” If you need to sell everything, you have to go find wisdom. Find wisdom. If you find wisdom, you get it all back. If you don’t have wisdom, you can win the lottery, and as research shows—I don’t know the numbers, but it’s like two-thirds of lottery winners are bankrupt within, like, three years. How can that be? We think money’s the answer to everything. Never. Wisdom is the answer to everything. They didn’t have the wisdom to make it, so they don’t have the wisdom to keep it.

What happens is a lot of times leaders will find themselves in situations where things grow because the factors just happen to be right. But they don’t have the wisdom to stay in it, to lead the organization, and keep going. You can buy this, actually. Now, buy it . . . sometimes you get consultants and people who know what they’re doing, but in your small support group, the team you’re putting together . . .

The man I was talking to earlier today about that committee for the senior pastor? One of the ways they selected that team was the wisdom that's in that group. They have one guy in there who has had twenty-five years' experience in human resources and developing people, and also working with leaders on how to handle difficult situations, which is one of the big stresses leaders have. So they got an HR guy there. They got a guy in there who has had a lot of experience entrepreneurially in casting and reaching and accomplishing visions that don't exist. That's a lot of wisdom the pastor needs. They got another one in there who successfully managed an organization in a business for a long time and can bring wisdom in those ways. They've got another person in that committee who's a sort of marriage and family kind of counselor who's got a lot of wisdom and experience that can speak into this pastor's personal life. They have another one who's just sort of a good guy and spiritually mature.

So the point is, you know life has a lot of different components, and we need wisdom and we need information from all of those. It's so funny. We think we have to kind of reinvent the wheel. I was called into a situation not too long ago in an organization, and there was an addict—you know, a high level of staff responsibility. The senior pastor was trying to deal with this guy with a substance abuse problem. The pastor was a good leader, had a lot of good experience in life, was good in leadership and all of that. But what he was doing with this guy was just the wrong thing to do.

I finally turned to him and said, "How many drug addicts have you dealt with in your life?"

And he said, "None," but he was doing everything that seemed right to him.

"I hate to tell you, but you're doing it all wrong."

He said, "What do you do?"

I said, "Do A, B, C, and D."

He goes, "I never thought of that."

Why do I know how to do that? Because I'm in the addictions business. I mean, I've dealt with thousands of addicts over however many years. Not because I'm smarter than him, but because I have experience I can bring to the plate for this situation.

Now, in your circle of traveling companions, somewhere on the team you're going to need the wisdom that you don't possess. You don't need to know how to do everything; you just need to know people that know how to. They can speak this into your life or they can lead you in the right direction to find it.

A couple more that I've talked around that I want to leave you with are that you need models. You want to be around people that you kind of want to do life like they do. One guy I worked with was a leader that just came from a very difficult situation, and he sat down to tell his team about how it had gone. When the team said, "How did it go?" he said, "Well . . ." and he turned to one of the men in the group and he said, "Dan, I think I handled it pretty well, and it's because of you."

He said, "What are you talking about?"

He said, "Well in this situation I had to really stand up and speak some hard truths, to, actually, somebody on the board of elders. It was a really tense situation, and I had to say some really hard things. Because of seeing how you have said hard things to me, and modeled that in our relationship, I was able to do it. The whole time I was in this sort of split-screen experience. I'm talking to the board member, but I'm hearing you and seeing you in my head. The model that you've been of that in my life, I was able to do it there."

You know, research—one of the biggest bodies of research that we have about leadership—says that leaders who are followed well are leaders who are a certain kind of models. If you look at the Bible—not only does research say this, but the Bible says over and over and over that we are to imitate. Jesus says, "Do it like I have done it." Look at Paul's letters. He tells people to imitate "the way I have been with you." That's modeling. The reason that's there is that God has designed your brain to learn information, but also to soak in experience. And we rarely can do that which we haven't seen done before.

Now, one of the things about us is we don't think that way. We think we can do it all. I've got a four-year-old daughter I'm teaching how to play golf now. It's so funny, because the first handful of times that I've taken her out, getting her to take instruction is the hardest thing in the world. So I finally said, "Fine, hit it your way." Well after enough misses, finally, she'll say, "Daddy, now how do you do . . .?" And finally I can help.

Well the wise person . . . hopefully we grow out of that. And if you look at those around you and have those around you that do it well, watch how they do it, watch how they love, watch how they parent, watch how they lead, watch how they manage. Have people on your team that can be those kinds of models.

A couple more. Values and accountability. Now, here's why I put values up there. Two reasons. One is our values aren't really built in a vacuum. What I would like you to do with your team, with your traveling companions, is to be continually going through a values clarification process. There's certainly universal values that we would hold to especially as people of the Bible. The Bible is very clear about those. But there are specific values that you need for your own leadership or whatever you're trying to do.

For example, I know one leader . . . As he went through this, his organization came up with three specific values. Faith was one of their three. Effectiveness. For example, in everything that they did they wanted to do it effectively. And the third one was excellence. So not only do they want to do it well, it's got to have results, and it's got to be based in faith, which means that it's larger than what they can already do well or already have results in.

See, that's . . . certainly there's other values like honesty, and compassion, and grace, and all of that, but you've got some specific ones that are really ordained kind of in who you are and what God has called you to be in your particular mission. You need your team to forge out the values that you're going to have. But past that you need your team to hold you accountable to those values. Broader than that is the big picture of accountability, and what I find is that leaders need to be held accountable in a handful of specific areas.

Number one, how they spend their time. I don't mean these in priority, but how they spend their time and how that's divided. How much is divided to their own spiritual life and their time with God? How much time are they spending in their significant relationship, and in their marriage and their family? How much time are they spending in their personal development and their growth? What kind of time are they giving to work? Sometimes it's too much. Sometimes they have to be reined in. That kind of reining in . . . one of the best things it can do for a leader is it forces him or her to a higher level of focusing on what they ought to be doing instead of being pulled down into the details. So accountability for time.

Accountability for self-development and growth. One of the best things your team can do for you is say, “Look, when’s the last time you took a sabbatical? When’s the last time you went to a conference? When’s the last time you took a day off to go think about where you’re going?”

For your own growth and your resources that you’re putting aside to spend on that . . . You know, one of the ways you can tell how committed you are to growth is what you are actually spending to do that. What part of your budget or the organization’s budget is spent on increasing capacity?

The next one is sin. Accountability for internal attitudes or external behaviors where we put all of that out and somebody evaluates it.

Then the next one is for the goals and the mission of the organization. And personal goals. And how you’re spending all your resources and your personhood. How accountable are you being held to whether or not that’s getting you to those goals and accomplishing that mission? One of the biggest problems that leaders have is working very hard and not much of it getting them to the big goal that they’re supposed to be getting to. What it’s doing is kind of maintaining, and they’re spending their lives and sort of kind of missing the call or the big mission.

The last one is your own growth and character. I can’t say enough about this one because it’s what it all boils down to anyway. We got the fruit; we got the tree. The losers go after the fruit. The winners, as Jesus said, they make the tree right and then they accomplish the fruit. So what your team should be doing is building your character, holding you accountable for character growth, and just helping model to you and build into you what you need to get there.

That’s a lot to go think about, but it’s kind of a path for you to do. Whether you’re in secular work—people do this in organizations and corporations—or in ministry, it’s going to be the same thing. That you cannot get there by yourself. Whether or not you get there and how you get there is going to depend a lot on the team you have.

I’m going to leave you with one of my favorite . . . I thought I had glasses on my head. My traveling companions forgot my glasses. I have a bad tape. Okay, that was a joke. Feel free to laugh.

Let me read you one of my . . . if I can read it without my glasses . . . one of my favorite passages along these lines, which says . . . You know, these little Bibles make this print so small I can't read it.

Here we go, out of Ecclesiastes 4, and it says this, "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man or woman who falls and has no one to help him out." Also, "If two lie down together they can keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

My prayer for you is that you're not a strand out there by yourself, that you have a cord, a support group, a system, a team, and all that it takes to turn you into the leader that can get from here to here with something greater than your own willpower. Okay? We're going to invite Bill back and take some questions.

Actually, what we're going to do since we're almost out of time, we're going to go ahead. And before we conclude I do want you to explain one more time about your Ultimate Leadership workshop, that anybody watching around the country or anybody in the studio audience can participate in that takes place in Southern California.

It's a weeklong experience. What we do is we have constructed a prayer retreat center about a half hour from Orange County Airport. You can fly in right there. It starts on Sunday night and ends up on Friday afternoon. We limit each one to about forty or forty-five leaders, and sometimes they are from corporations and companies, a lot of times from Christian organizations, a lot of pastors. Tends to be about 50 percent of the people are in ministry and the others are in business, but they're all interested in a place where leaders can go. Not just to learn new things. We have two teaching groups a day where we take some concept of how the personal side of leadership works and we teach on that, but we also have two process groups a day.

What that means is that you are assigned a team that you are with throughout the week, and you meet with that group, and there will be, like, six or seven of you or eight of you and you have a professional facilitator who has been with us for years and years and you work through the issues that we talk about. What happens is people have breakthroughs. If you want to read

about it, if you go to our website, Cloudtownsend.com, click on Ultimate Leadership and read the testimonials. You'll just be really encouraged about what can happen.