

FROM **STALLED** TO **FREEDOM**

HOPE AND HELP FOR PASTORS WHO
THOUGHT THEY'D BE THERE BY NOW

Session Handout & Looking Inward Journal

95 NETWORK

Potential Schedule of Day

Schedule is subject to adjust and flow based on interaction and conversation throughout the day.

Session 1 -- Why Can't I Get There? The Look of the Past

9:00-9:15am -- A Welcome LIVE From the Place the "Stalled" Message Was Born

9:15-9:25am -- Looking Inward Prompt #1

9:25-10:10am -- Session #1: Why Can't I Get There? The Look of the Past

10:10-10:30am -- Small-Group Discussion

Session 2 -- What Will I Find There? The Look of the Present

10:35-10:45am -- Looking Inward Prompt #2

10:45-11:30am -- Session #2: What Will I Find There? The Look of the Present

11:30-11:50am -- Small-Group Discussion

11:50am-12:20pm -- Lunch

Session 3 -- The Fulfillment of Living There: The Look of the Future

12:20-12:30pm -- Looking Inward Prompt #3

12:30-1:15pm -- Session #3: The Fulfillment of Living There: The Look of the Future

1:15-1:35pm -- Small-Group Discussion

1:35-2:00 -- Closing & Q&A



INTRODUCTION

A disturbing trend has developed in our culture over the past few years. Thousands upon thousands of churches are closing at alarming rates. In addition, according to the Hartford Institute for Religion research, 95 percent of American congregations average fewer than five hundred people in attendance each week. The research goes on to point out that 87 percent of them average fewer than two hundred and fifty in attendance.

These numbers show that small and midsize churches are the backbone of the 300,000+ American church. The notoriety of many megachurches can lead us to believe they are more numerous than they actually are. This mistaken assumption is due mostly to the broader visual platform and reach they have each week. Yet, in reality, they make up fewer than 5 percent of all churches.

We can never forget that the Church is the instrument chosen by God to advance His Kingdom.

What led to me becoming Stalled?

I personally believe one of the contributors to rampant church closings and the consistent smaller number of attendees is the unhealthy condition that many of our pastors and church leaders are living in each day. It's highly likely that many pastors are dealing with something similar to my experience. I had developed a deeply held belief that kept me in bondage for most of my ministry life: **I believed that I was a failure because of my inability to get there, wherever there was.**

Back then, my typical daily prayer routine included something like,

“Jesus, please don’t come back until I fulfill my purpose.”

Or,

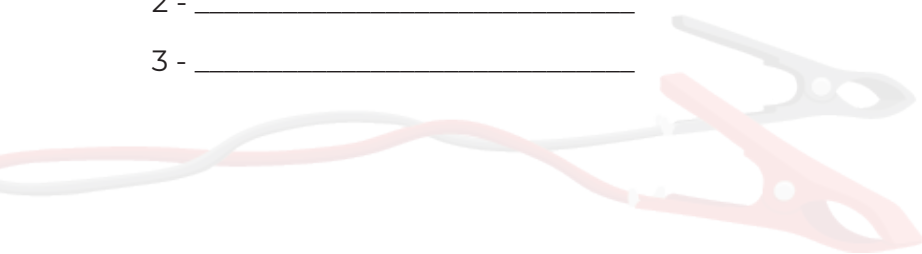
“Jesus, please don’t let me die until I fulfill my purpose.”

The defeated view I had internalized about myself showed up in obvious factors:

1 - _____

2 - _____

3 - _____



However, each of these was a symptom rather than the real problem. They served only as daily reminders that I wasn't close to getting there.

I was continually worried that He would be disappointed with me when I finally saw Him face to face. I wanted so desperately to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23 NKJV). Yet I believed I couldn't do enough to earn those words of affirmation. To be honest, I had no idea what purpose I was trying to fulfill. It always seemed elusive.

My freedom experience was set in motion through the words of a dear friend:

"You can't let God down because you're not holding Him up."
– Shane Duffey

Pastor, God is not keeping _____.

That encounter with God provided an opportunity to hear how He felt about me. I discovered He wasn't keeping score. I also began to see that my life could have a lasting impact not by me working for Him but by Him working through me. How had I missed that truth for more than thirty years?

My ultimate hope in sharing the "Stalled" message is to expose a plan devised by Satan himself to destroy the church of Jesus Christ.

Simply put, a _____ pastor will create a _____ church.

When you're in a raging battle that won't relent, you can become so inward focused that you miss the bigger purpose of the war. While defeating the church of today is always Satan's mission, he is fighting to win a greater war that we can't afford to lose.

I want you to discover that what you've been looking for out there has actually been with you the whole time. It's time to turn self-doubt into confidence that He who started something in you is the One who will finish what He started (Phil. 1:6). No matter the size of your ministry or organization, you are a vital part of advancing the Kingdom today and ensuring its success for generations to come.



LOOKING INWARD PROMPT #1:

What results in your ministry so far make you feel unsuccessful?

Where did you envision being at this point in ministry?

Before we dive into each session, we'll give you some space for self-reflection. Take about 10 minutes to consider these questions and actually write down your honest thoughts.

[illegible]

Session 1: Why Can't I Get There? The Look of the Past

In our instant drive-through culture, we've become accustomed to quick fixes and immediate results. Every arena of life pressures us to turn things around quickly.

There's a high possibility that you have fallen into this trap if you are a stalled leader. Maybe you are frantically searching for the right conference, the hottest podcast, or a bestselling book that will reveal what you need to do to get there quickly. If so, you need to know that the magic bullet of success doesn't exist. However, there is an immediate action you can take if you're ready to get things rolling in the right direction again.

I started moving in the right direction when I finally told someone how I honestly felt. Confessing to a friend that I felt like a failure began the process of change. It obviously didn't solve all my problems in that moment. But allowing myself to open up to someone did put me on a course toward healing.

When you find yourself stalled out, the best thing you can do is

_____.

All of this came to the surface while I was pastoring a small church. Our congregation grew from 30 to 300 and then back down to 150 because of a nasty church split. That split revealed three key areas of my leadership that had played a part in the problem.

I was **UNABLE** because of a lack of training.

I was **UNAWARE** of what was really happening.

I was **UNFULFILLED** by what I was accomplishing.

UNABLE: What Causes Us to Develop the Look?

Maybe your current experience in ministry could best be described as STALLED. Has the stress from thinking you would be there by now caused you to adopt the look of the leader who doesn't know what to do next?

The Process of Developing the Look:

- 1 – Internal _____ that increases due to the constant _____ of the job.
- 2 – Having a sense that I've _____ and that _____ defines me.
- 3 – Believing that I am no longer able to _____ the _____ upon my life.

4 – Creating the _____ or _____ of having confidence.

5 – Continuing to _____ actions that have proven to be _____.

God must first do a work in His _____ in order to do a work in His _____.

When honest confession doesn't happen, we usually build cocoons of protection around ourselves in order to help us hide in plain sight. The cocoons make it possible to carry out our daily responsibilities while our problem goes undetected by those we lead. At least, we hope it does. Seasons of setbacks are hard to overcome.

Results of Constant Setbacks:

1 – My dreams are _____.

2 – My emotions become _____.

3 – My relationships end in _____.

4 – My heart is _____.

5 – My outlook for ministry is _____.

6 – I begin to _____ myself.

The Pastoral Pandemic of Comparison

The problem that continually tormented me was _____. And this is not uncommon among church leaders.

I developed a sense of shame due to the false beliefs that I lived with continuously. My shame manifested itself in a sense of failure because the results I had produced in life did not meet the standard I believed He had set for me. And it's a hard cross to bear when you believe that Jesus is disappointed with you.

The _____ in my life that brought me shame are actually the _____ He shines through the brightest.

Traits That Constant Comparison Can Reveal:

- 1 – The notion that I’m not _____.
- 2 – The stronghold of _____.
- 3 – The impact of _____.
- 4 – The _____ to accept that I’m not in control.

UNAWARE

The story of Elijah is a powerful example of getting to a place of despair. After running from Jezebel, he prayed, “Enough of this, GOD! Take my life—I’m ready to join my ancestors in the grave!” Then “exhausted, he fell asleep under the lone broom bush” (1 Kings 19:4–5).

Elijah’s story has always fascinated me. How could a man of God who had just prayed for fire to fall from heaven get discouraged enough to want to die a few days later?

What happened to Elijah is the same thing that makes all of us think we should be there by now. He got blindsided. The lesson for us is that it doesn’t matter whether you can call down fire from heaven or if you’re leading a church of thirty. Any leader can be blindsided.

The reason you get blindsided isn’t just to stop you from being effective today. It’s much more than that. The ultimate purpose is to destroy your ability to be effective in the future. We will dive deeper into this long-term hidden agenda a little later.

Compounding The Effect Of A Blind Spot

The precursor to being blindsided is developing blind spots. The biggest problem with my blind spots is that I can’t see them, although many of the people around me can easily identify them. I find it fascinating that we can be oblivious to things in our life that are obvious to others.

Progression

_____ a Blind Spot
_____ a Blind Spot
_____ a Blind Spot
_____ a Blind Spot

Age

20’s & 30’s
40’s
50’s
60’s & up

Cost To Change

Inconvenient Cost
Increasing Cost
Insurmountable Cost
Impossible Cost

It's time to stop carrying the weight of _____ that was never intended for you.

I wonder whether you also have developed the blind spot of shame. Have you resorted to using your own abilities to grow the church, only to find them ineffective? Or have you reached the point where you actually try to hide from Jesus while leading His church? Is the pressure to perform exacting a heavy toll on your life?

Sitting vs. Serving

As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home. She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said. But Martha was pulled away by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand."

The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing. One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it—it's the main course, and won't be taken from her." (Luke 10:38–42)

There is something in His message to her that really convicts me today. Jesus said, "One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it—it's the main course, and won't be taken from her" (v. 42). Only one thing is essential. Just one. **That one thing is to enjoy His presence.** That truth is so convicting to me. Jesus even reinforced its importance by saying this one thing wouldn't be taken from her.

Consistent, life-changing ministry happens only when He speaks His _____ to us in an atmosphere of _____.

It's only through complete _____ on Him that we can experience a lasting and fruitful ministry.

UNFULFILLED

Common Discouragement Culprits:

- 1) _____ : Blaming the larger ministries in town for stealing our people.
- 2) _____ : Talking more of what God did instead of what God is doing.
- 3) _____ : Defining and measuring our success against other ministries.
- 4) _____ : Focusing on our needs instead of the Source of our provision.
- 5) _____ : Becoming resigned to having little kingdom impact.

Leading on Empty

"We tediously create calendars filled with empty duties,
and then we foolishly let those calendars empty us."
– Craig D. Lounsborough

Some of us actually believe that Jesus has called us to lives of _____.
Yet, in reality, our focus should be healthy _____.

By studying 1 Kings 17–19, we can see the warning signs that preceded Elijah stalling out. You can likely relate to them.

WARNING SIGNS:

Warning Sign 1: Doing ministry _____.

Warning Sign 2: Lack of congregational _____.

Warning Sign 3: Frustration from needing to go back and _____.

**Every good leader knows it's a waste of time to blaze a new trail without
addressing the unresolved issues that led to being stalled in the first place.**

Warning Sign 4: Refusing to _____.

WAYS TO AVOID THE WARNING SIGNS:

1 - Build a healthy _____.

2 - Trust God with the _____.

3 - Take time for honest _____.

4 - Do not become another _____.

**Effective ministry is more about what Jesus can do _____ us
than what we can do _____ Him.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share some of your insights from the “Looking Inward” prompt at the beginning of the session.
2. Are you living with an unhealed wound? In what ways does that affect your ministry?
3. Has a lack of church growth caused you to become inward focused? What is one thing you could do immediately to shift your focus outward?
4. What excuses do you find yourself giving for ineffectiveness?
5. Discuss several ways in which you can begin doing ministry from God instead of for Him.



A man in a blue shirt is standing at the front of a room, presenting to a group of people seated at tables. Two large screens on either side of the presenter display the '95 NETWORK' logo. The word 'VISIONDAY' is overlaid in large white letters across the center of the image.

VISIONDAY

One day to ensure a stronger future for your ministry.

LEARN HOW IT WORKS

Clarify your vision. Create a plan.

Every church needs a vision for the future. They need to know where they're headed. And they need to have a plan for how they'll get there.

But here's the problem: the urgent. Especially in small churches, the everyday of ministry can easily distract from important tasks like vision-casting, planning, and yes, leading. Next thing you know, it's been months (or years!) since you last took some time to clarify where you're headed and how you'll get there.

Why VisionDay?

VisionDay is not just an event. The heart behind it is to connect your church with someone who cares deeply about your ministry. Here are 5 reasons VisionDay is valuable:

Gain perspective. During VisionDay, you'll have the opportunity to gain perspective on each aspect of your ministry. Where are you at now? How did you get there?

Develop a strategic plan. Why do you exist at this time in your town? VisionDay will help you identify who you are and where you're headed.

Participate in the process. VisionDay is unique because our team will facilitate a conversation among your team without "consulting" about everything you should do.

Build a connection. The goal of VisionDay is to form a life-long partnership between your church and your certified coach. This is about relationship.

Remain accountable. Once the plan is in place, a process of accountability will be put in place to follow-up and celebrate the small successes that come in the days ahead.

Learn how it works: www.95network.org/visionday

LOOKING INWARD PROMPT #2:

If you decided to pray for a resurrection and expected it to happen, how do you think your life and ministry would change? Where do you need it the most?

Before we dive into this session, we'll again give you some space for self-reflection. Take about 10 minutes to consider this question and actually write down your honest thoughts.



Session 2: What Will I Find There? The Look of the Present

*This section is designed to help you uncover where you are currently. We will approach some topics that have most likely caused the look you currently wear. This look reveals that you think you have failed and that failure defines you. The topics of **traits**, **transition**, and **transformation** require a fresh approach from an open heart, which will help you find your way out of the woods.*

Whether you are aware of it or not, how you respond to each of them will have a profound impact on your ability to fulfill your calling. Could it be that you have been so focused on finding what's waiting there that you have failed to pay attention to how you got here?

As we proceed, I invite you to consider that you may have allowed some wrong concepts to shape your thinking. It's going to get personal. Like me, you may have adopted ideas and beliefs that are more traditional than biblical, which may be what brought you to this point in your ministry. I know how hard it is to admit that my thinking may be my problem. Yet unaddressed, these misconceptions perpetuate your inability to see an alternate path that could lead you out of the woods and into your God-given calling.

TRAITS

Approval and Acceptance

“Ministry was never meant to be a journey to find approval. It's actually meant to be spent showing others what it means to be approved. Ministry becomes an idol when its main objective in our hearts is to fulfill our need for approval.”

- Dan Lian

“Any pastor who becomes addicted to the approval of others will eventually be slaughtered by their disapproval.”

- Dan Lian

Three issues at the core of approval addiction:

- 1 – A need for _____.
- 2 – A resistance to _____.
- 3 – A self-worth defined by _____.

The Power of Words

Words said over us, to us, or about us -- whether intentional or casual -- can cripple our _____.

It's not enough to simply purge yourself of the _____. It's imperative you also replace the bad with _____.

If Only...

Have you ever had a moment in which you confidently knew that Jesus was going to come through for you? Your expectations were at an all-time high. After all, you have a track record of choosing what is essential, just as Mary did. You have been faithfully serving Him for years. I mean, look at the fruit you have produced. But the moment passed, and you were left wondering where He was. If only You had been here, then _____ would not have happened. (Fill in the blank with your own experience.)

TRANSITION

Generational Transfer

I'm constantly amazed at how much people dislike change. You've probably discovered, as I have, that this is especially true in the church. We seldom hear stories of congregations that celebrate the transition from doing church status quo to eagerly embracing a new way of operating. In truth, effective transition usually happens through great leadership.

**The next generation is depending on leaders like you and me to _____
_____ for them.**

Throughout the Bible we can see how the people of God didn't do such a great job of creating successors. Pastor Willie George said, "There is no such thing in the Bible as a guaranteed generational transfer." In other words, just because the current generation is going strong by impacting the culture and community for Jesus doesn't mean that the next generation will do the same. Willie taught that we must be intentional about raising up the next generation through our mission, our strategy, and even our budgeting.

Success is best demonstrated by raising up a _____.

Judges 2:10 states, "Another generation grew up that didn't know anything of GOD or the work he had done for Israel." Wait a minute. What happened? How did the narrative change so drastically? It went from the leaders left behind after Joshua's death being worshippers of God to the next generation not knowing anything of God or the work He had done for Israel. How could that have happened?

Issues we don't deal with don't _____; they _____.

You can't become an agent of change by avoiding confrontation.

Here are a few of the excuses I have used to avoid confrontation:

- 1 - People will _____ the church if I confront the problems.
- 2 - I'm too _____ to confront people older than me.
- 3 - Confronting the problems will stop our _____.
- 4 - Most people aren't even _____ we have problems.
- 5 - Confronting them openly will _____ the problems to the congregation and community.
- 6 - Leaders who disagree with me will _____ or _____.
- 7 - Given enough time, maybe the problems will _____ themselves.
- 8 - Maybe I can create enough good activity to _____ the problems and reduce their effect on the church.

As leaders, parents, and grandparents, we must be committed to making sure that future generations not only know _____, but also actually _____.



TRANSFORMATION

For many leaders who felt like they would be there by now, at some point they became more focused on **transportation** than **transformation**.

Transformation is all about being changed from the inside out, as Romans 12:2 describes. **Transformation** takes place as we renew our minds with God's Word. The Greek word for "transform" is metamorphoō. Our English word metamorphosis, often used to describe the process of a caterpillar changing into a butterfly, comes from it. HELPS Word Studies defines the root word morphoō this way: "changing form in keeping with inner reality."

Transportation is all about how we look as we proceed on the journey. At some point along the way, I began to focus on the image I wanted everyone to see. I had inverted the process from inside out to outside in. Therefore, instead of allowing God to patiently transform me, I fixated on my abilities and performance.

4 Effects of a Transportation Focus:

- 1 – _____.
- 2 – _____.
- 3 – _____.
- 4 – Relentless _____.

The Example of Moses: Standing in the Gap

Moses faced some incredible issues when leading God's people to the Promised Land. Have you ever thought about what that next generation experienced in the desert over those forty years? There were some really good things. But there were also some difficult things. Here are a few that come to mind:

Good Things –

1 - God's _____. He nourished them with manna and water from a rock. Also, their clothes and shoes never wore out (Deut. 8:15–16; 29:5).

2 - God's _____. God continued to meet with Moses and give him direction.

3 - God's _____. None of their enemies were allowed to wipe them out during this time.

Difficult Things –

1 - _____. The distance to the Promised Land should have taken only a few days to cover. The Israelites basically walked in circles for forty years.

2 - _____. It wasn't their fault they were stuck in the desert. Their parents and grandparents were responsible for their fate. They must have felt like they were being unfairly punished.

3 - _____. Most speakers rarely discuss this aspect of wandering in the desert for forty years.

There are three things he prioritized in his transformational leadership:

First, he **cared** for them.

Second, he **taught** them God's truths and mentored them.

Third, he **raised up** a next-generation leader in Joshua.

The _____ never changes, but the _____ have to.

Jesus addressed this issue as He confronted the reluctance of people who refused to accept the gospel because they were satisfied with the old legalistic system they had always known:

"No one ever pours new wine into old leather bags [wineskins]. Otherwise, the new wine will break the bags, the wine will spill out, and the leather bags will be ruined. New wine must be put into new leather bags. No one after drinking old wine wants new wine, because he says, 'The old wine is better.'" (Luke 5:37–39 NCV)

Here are some enlightening parallels we can draw from His teaching in this passage:

1. The wine is _____. The new wine needs room to expand during the transformational process (fermentation).

2. The wineskins are _____. The containers that hold the new need the flexibility to expand.

3. The old wineskins won't _____. Attempting to put a new, transformative process in old containers results in everything being lost.

4. New wine can only be _____ in new wineskins. Jesus removed the possibility of ignoring the need for new. In other words, we can't refuse to do things God's way and expect Him to bless our efforts.

The Message states verse 39 like this: "No one who has ever tasted fine aged wine prefers unaged wine."

5. Old wine _____ better. All wine connoisseurs know this. They will always choose an older vintage over a newer one.

I'm so glad Luke included this verse at the end of this teaching. And through this Jesus gives us a great illustration of the modern church, in my opinion. So much depth and comfort come with our former experiences. The character and faithfulness expressed in our church traditions are as priceless as a bottle of wine that has been aged for decades.

The glaring issue that must be resolved is the reality that we will eventually have no wine if we enjoy only the old wine. The only way to ensure we have plenty of old wine in the future is to make sure we create plenty of new wine today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Traveling forward while looking backward always causes us to wind up in the ditch. In what ways have you or your church tried to do exactly that, and how can you lead a change there?
2. What specific attacks has the Enemy used to discourage you from being a transitional leader? Name some ways your ministry can be more effective at connecting with the next generation. Think outside your normal church programs as you consider this.
3. What areas do you tend to avoid approaching because of your fear of confrontation?
4. In what 1 or 2 areas do the people you lead need to transform their thinking the most? How can you lead them there?





Freedom is a conversation away.

Growth doesn't happen in isolation. That's why we offer specialized coaching for pastors in small and mid-size churches.

Our certified 95Network Coaches are unique. They are not the consultant with all the right answers; rather they ask the right questions and share best practices to help move the needle of growth and impact. Here's what each coach brings to the table:

- 1) Every coach serves and leads in a local church.** In other words, they are on the frontlines of ministry every day. They practice what they preach.
- 2) Our coaches are trained and certified through our 95Network Strategic Small Church Course.** We have unique tools to help pastors discover lead through change and create vision buy-in.
- 3) Our coaches are serving or have served as a lead pastor in a small church.** Our coaches have experience of leading small churches to growth and impact.
- 4) Our coaches legitimately care about the pastor and the church.** For real.

Here's how 95Network Coaching helps churches get healthy:

- 1. DISCOVER THE PULSE.** Determining health begins by feeling the pulse of the church. What's the current rhythm of ministry? What needs optimized? What needs help?
- 2. CUSTOMIZED COACHING PATHWAY.** Coaching takes place once per month via one-hour video calls. Because every church is unique, each coaching experience is unique. Coaching has two parts; the sprint and the marathon. The sprint happens first. Your coach will help you discover low hanging fruit that will help move the needle the quickest. The marathon are the things that require more time (leadership development, discipleship path, etc.).
- 3. TIMELY PRACTICAL RESOURCES.** You will receive resources and planning tools throughout your coaching relationship to supplement the content of your coaching conversations. One of our objectives is to equip you to lead your team to the next level.
- 4. PRIORITY ACCESS.** When the unexpected happens and you need advice or additional counsel, pastors in our monthly coaching have priority access to schedule additional time with their coaches to process or work through solutions to a current issue.
- 5. NO CONTRACT.** There is no contract involved. You can start and stop anytime you like.

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LOOKING INWARD PROMPT #3:

What is your baggage composed of?

If there were no barriers, and finances were not an issue, what would you do if you couldn't fail?

Before we dive into this final session, we'll again give you some space for self-reflection. Take about 10 minutes to consider this question and actually write down your honest thoughts.

Session 3: The Fulfillment of Living There

In this last section, I intend to expose some strongholds that held me back. Maybe you will relate to them too. Remember, Satan has a strategic plan in place to keep us ineffective by reminding us that we should be there by now. It's time to shatter the strongholds and renounce the beliefs that are holding us back from being a blessing to the Kingdom.

You can't lead God _____ because you're not holding him _____.

What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?

What dream do you have in your heart? It's not enough just to have a dream inside. At some point, you must _____!

God taught this principle to Joshua in the most stressful of times. As he was preparing to lead the people into the Promised Land, Joshua faced an impossible situation. The challenges before him required that he carefully follow God's direction in order to bring about success. Attempting to do this on his own would guarantee certain failure.

I have identified six major issues Joshua faced:

1. Moses was _____. Joshua was then charged with following the greatest leader the people had ever known. Moses had brought them out of bondage and led them for forty years. No one ever wants to follow such a revered leader.

2. The Jordan River was at _____. During that time of year, it can be a mile wide in some places.

3. Joshua's followers didn't have the best track record of _____. They had probably become more accustomed to wandering.

4. The _____ of caring for that many people are astounding. There were millions of people who needed to be led into the Promised Land. The daily task of coordinating food, water, and firewood alone would be overwhelming.

5. Joshua had seen the _____ personally. He knew what awaited them on the other side of the river. Remember, he and Caleb had been there forty years earlier. He knew about the giants in the land.

6. The promised _____ was supposed to come from the tribe of Judah. Failure would mean the loss of His bloodline.

A review of Joshua 1:1–9 reveals that God’s advice to Joshua was to meditate on His Word both day and night. That’s it. If I were Joshua, I probably would have been thinking, Seriously? Moses gets a staff and I’m told to meditate. Where’s the power in that?

Meditate means “to speak to yourself in a low tone of voice.”

What you _____ most often will be what you _____ most strongly.

This is why God told Joshua, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth” (v. 8 NKJV). The meditation that God commanded was designed to build and sustain Joshua’s faith as he led the people through an impossible situation. It’s vital that we understand the influence the speaker has on the hearer. In this case, the speaker was Joshua himself.

Allow His _____ to awaken the _____ in your heart.

The Problem Jesus Came to Solve

**Jesus did not come to make _____ people behave (or perform) better.
He came to make dead people _____.**

Thinking it Through

Life’s hardest lessons have a way of appearing during _____.

Looking back, I can see two things that affected me a lot. **The first was the impact of isolation.**

Over time I discovered that it helped me not feel so alone when I learned that other leaders deal with the same issue. This awareness didn’t necessarily solve my problems, but it did help me realize I wasn’t the only leader working through this. Isolation can be a harsh taskmaster. We just weren’t meant to live this way.

The second was understanding where the battle is being fought.

In reality, the most intense battles take place in our minds. It’s unlikely that anyone in your life really knows what you are thinking continuously. Even the most talkative leader can carry on conversations that are more fluff than fact. The battlefield of the mind is where the greatest conflicts occur. I’m sure even Moses could relate to us.

Do you ever wonder what Moses thought about while tending his father-in-law’s flock?

When we read the burning bush story in Exodus 3:1–5, most folks focus on the burning bush and God speaking to Moses from it. However, there is a valuable lesson in this encounter for leaders who thought they would be there by now. The lesson comes from God commanding Moses, “Remove your sandals from your feet. You’re standing on holy ground” (v. 5).

Why did God tell him to take off his sandals? I first heard this explained by Pastor Jack Hayford at the Promise Keepers pastors’ conference in Atlanta years ago. He taught three reasons Moses needed to take off his shoes when he was on holy ground:

1. He would have stepped in sheep dung at some point in the _____.
2. He most likely made his sandals _____. (Payless Sandals didn’t have an outlet in the desert.)
3. The sand was hot under his feet, so he had to keep _____ them.

How does this relate to you and me?

First, *you can’t step into your created purpose as long as you have the poop of the past stuck to you. At some point you’re going to have to stop thinking about the past.*

Next, *you can’t fulfill your purpose using your own talents and resources. You must depend on His ability to work through you.*

Then, *you will need to stay in step with the Holy Spirit and keep moving in the direction He leads you.*

Who’s In Charge?

You cannot win the conflict of “Who’s in charge?” if you engage from a position of misinformation. Here are three challenges you are likely to encounter as you begin to change.

Challenge 1: Assess Your Giftedness _____.

Challenge 2: Evaluate Your Leadership _____.

The Sequence for Leadership Success:

1. Leading _____.
2. Leading your _____.
3. Leading your _____.
4. Leading your _____.

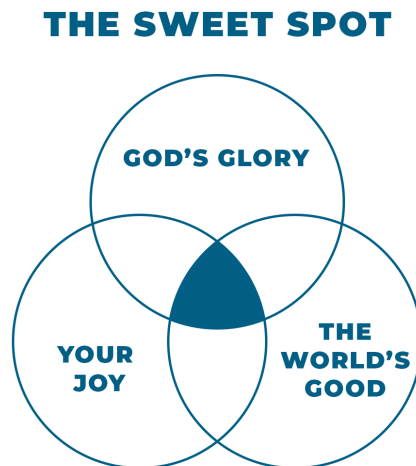
You perpetuate what you tolerate.

Challenge 3: Embrace the Role of _____.

News flash: the call in Ephesians 4 to become an equippier isn't optional. Equipping others is the only way to achieve effective and lasting impact. While this is true in all fields, it especially applies to the local church. For decades the priority of developing leaders has been completely ignored in most Christian circles. I think this is why 95 percent of American churches remain small. They can only grow to the level of their leadership.

_____ is the only way to achieve effective and lasting impact.

The Sweet Spot



A time may come in which you find yourself in the same place I was. You are finally content in your sweet spot, and suddenly opportunity comes knocking. Jesus begins to whisper to you about your unknown sweet spot. Like me, you might resist the first nudges. **If you do, please remember this: your sweet spot can become a sour spot if you stay there too long.**

One of the biggest challenges you and I will face in leadership is not being able to recognize when the current season is over and it's time for a change. It is possible for a wonderful season of fruitful ministry to turn sour when your time has come to an end but you resist acknowledging it.

Here are **8 indicators** that you are on the verge of allowing your sweet spot to turn sour:

1. You can no longer _____ those you lead to take action.
2. You no longer _____ the day-to-day tasks required by the job.
3. Your _____ in those around you is severely diminishing.
4. You seldom see new _____ in your ministry.
5. Your _____ about sermon prep shifts from anticipation to going through the motions.
6. You invest the majority of your _____ in activities away from ministry.
7. You have no desire to _____ resources to reach the next generation.
8. You would not attend your church if you weren't getting _____.

The Handoff

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” - Hebrews 11:39–12:2

“And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be **made perfect** apart from us.

perfect(ed), teleioo (tel-eye-ah-oh); To complete, accomplish, carry through to the end, bring to a successful conclusion, reach a goal, fulfill. In an ethical and spiritual sense, the word signifies a bringing to maturity, a perfecting.

The Type of Race We’re Running:

- 1 – It’s not a _____.
- 2 – It’s not a _____.
- 3 – It’s a _____ race.

The most important part of the race happens in the exchange. When the exchange is botched or dropped, momentum is lost and you fall behind.

The race is lost if we:

- 1 - Miss the _____.
- 2 - _____ the next runner in line.

We simply can not afford to _____ when it comes to handing off healthy churches to the next generation.

Freedom is a Conversation Away

Who can you share your problems with? Here are some suggestions to consider:

- 1 - Find a trusted _____.
- 2 - Hire a trained _____.
- 3 - Talk to a fellow _____.
- 4 - Talk to an _____ or another leader in your denomination.
- 5 - Share with your _____.
- 6 - Connect with _____. You can reach us at 95Network.org.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the dream in your heart you wrote down at the beginning of this session.
2. Does your current role match up with your gifts? Would you attend your church or participate in your ministry if you were not being paid to serve there?
3. Are you leading your home well? Would your spouse and each of your children answer this question the same way?
4. What and who comes to mind as you think about handing off the baton?
5. What stood out to you the most from today?



HOW WE HELP

95Network exists to connect small and mid-size churches with BIG resources. We do this through **content**, **conferences**, and **grant funds** for coaching and consulting services.

Take your next step by getting started with coaching (95network.org/coaching) or scheduling a VisionDay (95network.org/visionday).

CONGRATS ON COMPLETING FROM STALLED TO FREEDOM!

MY BIGGEST TAKEAWAY IS: _____