

In today's episode, we're going to talk about why the church doesn't promote every single thing that's going on all at once. How to help your church become a training center and the process of innovating. Hey, thanks for joining us.

Hey, Danielle.

Hey, Derek. Hi everybody. Hi. So I thought we'd start today a little more, get to know you kind of stuff. I would like to talk about your fascinating coffee journey.

Oh, wow. Yeah.

And you're going to have to do a little bit of history.

So the history was, I've never, so there are two things that I never drank growing up, coffee and alcohol, Right.

I was like a total tea toler for my whole life,

And tea took it

Anyway. And yeah, no coffee, just never got into it.

So

People are always amazed that I made it through college without either of those beverages.

It's like super Mormon of you

Kind of

Shout out to the secret lives of Mormon Housewives.

But here's what happened. My wife also was not a coffee person until much later in life, like our late forties. I don't remember what year it was,

But

We were in our late forties and she kind of got into coffee. My boys were already a little bit into coffee toward their late teenage years, and we were at a wedding and I got a migraine.

Right. I forgot about

That. And I was there without my medicine. And so I have this, we're at the wedding reception. I have this throbbing migraine, and both my wife and my kids looked at me and said, try some coffee. And so you should hear them make fun of this

Moment. Oh, I'm sure.

Because I came back to the table, I drank some coffee, and I think Caleb says, my quote was, it's like fireworks are going off in my head.

A Yeah, it has a little effect.

So anyway, it had an effect. It didn't totally take my headache away, but it was enough to mitigate it until I got home. Anyway, since then, I'm very much an espresso guy. So we have a nice little fancy machine at the house where Kim gets her coffee and I do espresso. I'm not a nurse, a cup of coffee person where I was like, I want to sit down with a long book

And

Drink a cup of coffee. It's like, get in there and do your job quick. And so I'll do a double espresso in the morning first thing, and then usually do a double espresso mid-morning some other time.

Oh, wow.

Yeah, I do two double espressos per day.

Oh, wow.

Dang. Which I heard is the equivalent of four cups of coffee, apparently an Espresso. Oh yeah. It's watered down is

The equivalent of a cup of coffee. So anyway, now I'm an espresso person.

That's a leap. That's a lot. I did not know that I liked the, I did. Coffee for me was a means to an end. Same as what you're saying with the fireworks. It was just like, oh, this will make me, but I didn't like the taste of it, so I was doing a disservice to myself because there was sugar in it. So I was counteracting the, so I went on a,

Is it worth it?

It's not. No, it's not, not. You might as well drink like a Coke. It's not. But I went to a friend's house in Florida. We stayed at her and she had a really nice machine, what you're talking about, and I had this illy espresso or whatever. I was like, I'm sorry, I didn't realize that these things could taste good. So I went on a quick journey semi recently. So now I'm just like, I still do coffee more often than not with some sort of cream. Just cream or half and half. I'm still not totally black yet, but I'm getting there.

Yeah,

Yeah, yeah. Coffee.

Coffee.

Alright,

Here's the coffee.

Here's the coffee

Later in life.

Correct. You don't stunt your growth.

Right. That's what I always

Say. If you take one thing away from today's podcast,

Don't stunt your growth. Don't stunt your growth by early coffee

Drinking. Exactly. Okay. My favorite segment,

The

Pastor's inbox. So I think probably earlier days, not as much anymore. It still has. It just depends. Yeah. Okay. So this is a topic I think that most leaders deal with in the church. And the general idea is you don't have a huge summary here of the emails, but the general idea is why won't the church promote my favorite cause during the worship service, during the announcement or bulletin time, or put it in the bulletin, whatever the case may be.

And there are a bunch of categories to this. So some of it is people who are leading their own ministry outside the church or their nonprofit, or maybe it's their ministry that they lead inside the church, maybe. I mean, I've had my cousin runs an orphanage in this foreign country. Why doesn't our church support them by telling the church what's going on? So it's not even necessarily that person's ministry, but it could be related ministries that that person is passionate about. So I know of this other cause that's drilling water wells or something like that. Why doesn't our church announce this as often as I think we should?

Yeah. Yeah. That's good. Yeah,

That's the key gist.

Yeah.

And like you said, I do think this is a universal drumbeat I think that a lot of pastors feel. And the tension is, and when I think about responding to an email, by the way, if nobody's picked up on this yet, we're not giving word for word responses to the

Email. Oh yeah, I should have said that again,

Sorry. No, it's okay. But it's like these are general ways to think about these questions, I think is what we're trying to do here. So I know that the tension that we have, especially in our church, we really try to empower people to lead ministries and to do things outside the walls and all that stuff. And the tension is we want people to take initiative. We want them to do these things. And then we also want the church to be supportive in those

Things to

Communicate to them, we love what you're doing. We want to encourage what you're doing. We want you feel support from the church, all that kind of stuff. So I know one of the things that we did early on, and this is a little bit bigger than an email response, but it's more structural, is that for us to define foundational and partnership conversations. And so ministries. Ministries, sorry. So what are the foundational ministries of the church? And we kind of define those as if these went away, the church wouldn't exist kind of thing. And so we're talking about weekend worship, we're talking about kids' ministry, we're talking about care and support ministries. We're talking about those key foundational things and having to just say, and I think it helps us give a framework to say, these are the kinds of things that we announce

Because

They're of central importance to the church's existence. Then it's not like, yeah. And then there's everything else. Then we defined some categories of partnership. So we said, the church will partner with these other ministries, ministries that maybe you're doing yourself and that sort of thing. And I think just to build those categories was very helpful to us, not only for us to think about it, but for us to communicate to people, here's why we do what we do. And some of those partnership ministries may get a little bit more exposure in the church and a little bit less depending on how central they are to the church's existence. But then it allowed us to identify some other ways that the church could partner with those people and those ministries, other than weekend announcements

Like leadership development,

Leadership development, can we give tips and tricks in terms of social media and stuff come around them in different ways? So the other thing that I would just say as a general principle that I think is important to communicate in these instances is that targeted appeals are far better than mass appeals.

Absolutely.

So in other words, this idea that, man, if I could just get my thing announced from the platform, everything would be fine. Actually, sometimes that has a negative effect in that. We've often said what that communicates is that anybody with a pulse could do that. When you just announce it to everybody, you're basically saying, any old person could do

This.

Where it's much, much more effective to sit across from a person or to look them in the eye and say, you would be perfect for this. All of a sudden, then you've got a really, really great volunteer or really, really great participant in what you're doing versus just that kind of broad appeal.

That's good

From a very, very practical standpoint. My last thing, and then I want to throw to you, because you as our communications director for so long, have had to deal with this too. But the other thing is just from a practical standpoint, I will often say there are a lot of people doing a lot of things in our church and in our community. And if we devoted a portion of time in every worship service to communicate all these things, we would no longer have a worship service. We would have a 75 minute

Commercial

For everything else that's going on around us. And so we do have to draw the line somewhere, and we usually draw the line with, we don't do any announcements like that other than what are the central ministries of our church?

And I'll say, just to even double down on what you kind of already said is, if you're listening to this and you don't have a strategy, you don't have some sort of framework, it is really difficult to have that conversation with people because if we're honest, there's no rhyme or reason to why you're doing what you're doing anyway. So it really does feel like, well, I don't like that. And a lot of having a framework like that really helps mitigate that. And I've always been a person who says, I care equally about all these things that we're doing from an organizational standpoint. So it lets me with that filter be very, I don't want to say, I just want to say non-biased. So I'm not like, oh, I love the youth ministry, so I'm going to do this for them all the time. It just helps. And I think if you can help people think through, one thing I've found helpful is thinking through scope and goals. So sometimes someone might say like, yeah, I'm really passionate about this ministry that I'm doing where I'm packing these bags for prisoners. How many people do you want to come to your house to do that? About 10.

If they say 10 people and you have a church that has 150 people in it, that leaves out 140 people from being able to do that thing. So if you can look at a scope for us, we landed on an 80 to 90% rule. So it needs to somehow apply to 80 to 90% of the people in the room in order for it to have an announcement. I think that helps, and it helps that person realize, oh yeah, I can talk to 10 people and that's great. Another thing that we do sometimes is we will tell our leaders what's going on. So life group leaders can say, Hey, let's go do this bag packing thing with so and so or whatever. We really try to get niche marketing. We try to leverage that as much as we possibly can because of what you said, because those conversations and connections can happen more effectively,

I

Think. And the other side of that is, this has happened to us a couple times where the ministry seems like it's going to be big and have this huge reach, but that ministry ends up having an infrastructure problem. So you might have a hundred people sign up for something, but that ministry only trained two leaders. So 75% of the people can't participate now. So for us, I think,

Which in the end then turns those people against your, they had a bad experience

And that just trickles down to tons of other things. And that's one way that we said, oh, let's help them in other ways. Let's help them learn how to develop, learn how to find volunteers, learn how to lead so that their infrastructure is okay and they can eventually lead larger ministries, whatever.

And I would thank you for that. And I know you've been the gatekeeper for a long time, which can be a very frustrating place to be because you have to feel like you're saying no to people that you want to say yes to because you believe in what they're doing. Yeah,

Absolutely.

But I do think that as we're on this reinventing church journey, this is going to become even more and more of an issue for us to have to deal with, I think all over again. The other thing I was thinking, we

never fully succeeded at this, but I do think there's something to be said even going forward with creating a place where all of these things can kind of be highlighted. So whether that's a webpage or whatever, if there's a spot where we can send people to go, we've given you a little thumbnail there with a little description there and a link to where we just say, listen, all the stuff that's going on at our church, you can find out about it here at this one stop shop. And so I do feel like that's probably something we need to talk about again and maybe develop going forward.

And one of the things we found through sri, we found there are a lot of companies that do this where they will let you give people access to put in their own information, and then you can just put it on the website. The one that we're playing around with right now is called Volunteer Matters, but there are tons of free ones that you can just embed in your website, and then you're not managing all the info, you're letting the people manage. So you're empowering people to put in their info and stuff, but then you're making it easy for people in the church to go to whatever page to get the info. Yeah, that's good. In the inbox from the inbox, if you want to submit something, you can go to derek sanford.com and submit an email or a question about an email. And also in the show notes, I don't want to speak for you, but I think the idea is if you like the answer, you copy and paste it or make it your own or whatever. It's there for you as a tool, so feel free to go use

It. Yeah, we're basically including all this stuff as bulleted points under that section of the podcast. So yeah, if you literally copy and paste, then stick it in your email if you find it

Helpful. Yeah. Great. Okay, so we're going to move on to a reinventing church topic, talk about becoming a training center, and we're going to invite Sarah Bur to join us. Sarah, thanks for joining us.

Yeah, glad to be here.

Yeah, thanks. This is Pastor Sarah Burt. Sarah has done tons of ministry at Grace all over the place, a lot of times circling the discipleship realm. And she is the mom to two elementary age kiddos, married to Nate mom to some barn cats.

No, those are Nate's

Cats. Nate's cats, right? That's true. To

Be clear,

You support Nate in supporting the cats. Sarah's the type of person, she's a lifelong learner, Enneagram five, and I would say Sarah around here is known for loving Jesus and loving God's word. Yeah, Sarah's just a really inspiring person that is very knowledgeable and super excited to have this conversation with you. So thanks. No, thank you. That was Thank you. Yeah, no problem.

Yeah, glad you're here, Sarah.

Yeah, so why don't we start with Derek, you talking about why we're talking about this?

Yeah. Okay. So the church as a training center, and I think this has been, as we get to these topics, I want to talk about some of the big moves, the big mind shifts that we're making. And so this is one of them. Sarah's been deep in creating some of our new experiences and that sort of thing to make this shift. That's why she's here. But one of, I'll just give a couple of quotes, and again, we're always referencing back to this journey that we've had with Clarity House with Shane and Dave and the incredible work that they've done. So many quotes that are going to come out here are from those guys. But I know that one of the things that they said that just arrested my spirit was what if we put as much imagination into our training environments that we did, that we do into our teaching environments?

And this concept that really if we're going to shift to a disciple-making focus, that disciple-making really starts with not with where you want people to be, but where they actually are. When you think about that, the preaching discipline or whatever, it really kind of assumes whether you like it or not that

everybody's in the same place or at least the same starting place, and they're actually not. And so when I started to take inventory of just much, how much teaching are we actually doing? In Dave's challenging comment, he said, basically, how much of your time, energy and resources is going to Sunday morning stuff, which is very one-sided, very luxury. And basically said, if that number's over 90%, is that a church or a production company? And it's like, okay, bro,

Calm down.

Shut up,

Calm down.

Yeah. So anyway, one of the things I talked about in one of my recent messages was this passage in one Corinthians four 14 where Paul is writing to the church in Corinth, which has a bit of a reputation. And he says, I'm not writing to shame you. I'm just writing to warn you that you have a lot of that 10,000 guides is the word. Or guardians, which is a word for kind of like a formal teacher

Or

A lecturer, a pedagogy. But he says, you don't have any fathers. And his conclusion is he says, so here's what you do about that imitate me.

And then he goes, and I'll send you Timothy to remind you again, not of my teachings, but of my ways. And so there's this idea that the church in America is a lot like the church in Corinth, that we've got an abundance of teachers. You can listen to podcasts of the greatest teachers in the whole wide world. But this resonates so deeply of going, but you don't have any fathers and mothers. And in those days, what that meant was mentors basically trainers. Because what fathers and mothers would do in those days is when the child would turn 12 for the boys, if they didn't become a priest, they would come and go into the family business. And so the father, if they was a farmer or if he was a whatever, he would take the child under his wing and teach him how to be a farmer. And the mother would teach the girls how to be a mother. So 12 years old, that's what happened. And so when he talks about the fathers and mothers, he's talking about apprenticing under someone. He says, you have lots of teachers, but you don't have any apprentices or people to apprentice you. And so his solution again is imitate me, imitate Timothy as Timothy imitates me as I imitate Jesus. And the question I think that we all wrestle with is, do I have a life worth imitating

In that kind of disciple making culture? And so we've talked around here that discipleship is really part information, but information is not enough. That's what teaching does, but it's also imitation. This is what Paul's talking about here be like me. And then it's also

Innovation.

And so I know Dave used this great example about learning how to paint. He said, I can give you a book about painting, and that's a great starting place, but that's not it. And he says, come to my studio so you can paint like me, but the idea isn't in the end so you can paint like me so that you can paint like me so you can paint like you. And so there's imitation, but then there's also that innovation of do this in your own way. And so that breakdown that we've looked at then is that in a disciple making culture, we need to do teaching and we need to do training, and we need to do tactics, which is really how does this play out in real life? And so that's kind of the lead in to this idea that what would it look like for the church, not just to be a teaching center where people come on weekends and hear lectures, but what would it look like for us to transition into a training center?

That's great. Well, do you have any initial thoughts before I move on?

I mean, I can just say that I think we can all think of examples where that's personally applicable in our lives. I was a Spanish major in college, and I learned all kinds of stuff. I read poetry, I learned vocabulary,

I learned how to conjugate verbs and all the things. And then it wasn't until I was immersed in a study abroad experience for months on end living with a family that then I was actually being trained through direct mentorship. You're talking about in the language. But not only that, I was learning because I was in a family to live as they lived. And so what does it look like for me, Sarah, as an American, to become someone who can integrate into a whole different culture with a different language? So yeah, that's good. I could have read all the books in the world and not have been able to live it out.

When I look back over my life, the most profound time of discipleship, there were two that I think of. One is anytime Derrick would have us to his house just because you're just watching life, which is what you're saying, but the long-term mentor that I had, the thing that changed for us was when it was

Dinner

Every Friday come with me grocery shopping. It was literally, watch me talk to my kid about this. Watch me talk to my kid about that. It makes a complete difference. And I think, yeah, I'm excited for this conversation.

And sometimes, sorry if I'm off track, but I feel like sometimes as the apprentice in that situation, you're well aware. You've made the intentional conscious choice of I'm going to be a learner and I'm going to learn to imitate and walk this out. And other times it's happening and it's hindsight that you were like, oh, they just apprenticed me to be their follower.

Yes. Yeah, that's good. So you have a little bit of a structure that you've thought through. Let's talk about there are some adjustments when churches are thinking of going from teaching to training. And again, this is on the ground level stuff. We're in the middle of it. This is not, oh, this is what we do now, this is aspirational. Some of it's happening and some of it is in process, but I think this will be a good discussion.

So there are four adjustments that we kind of talked brainstormed about a little bit of what this is starting to look like for us, as you said. And again, one of these other quotes that has arrested me is that the modern church is over inspired and undertrained. And so we've got a lot of people that are like, Yahoo, do it. Let's go be Christians, let's go. And really have no earthly idea how to live that out in their real day-to-day life. And so again, it's just this kind of call for the need.

And I think just to go back, if you were listening before we started this whole journey with those big shifts, and the one I think is the one that goes from wow to Aha. So sitting in a seat and just being enamored versus

What we can do. Yeah, it's the, wow, look at what they did in that worship service or that song was so great. Or I love that sermon to aha. I could do this in my real life. And so the first adjustment I think about is from big rooms to small rooms. And so that in itself is kind of a primary, if the only thing that we're thinking about or doing is that big room on Sunday morning for an hour or an hour and a half, whatever, we have to start thinking about other venues, other sized venues where we can actually start to work this out.

And we innately want to do that. It's why if you get in the car with someone after church,

You'll

Start having the conversation because there's something in this that needs to talk through, chew on, say out loud and process the things that we just heard that just came at us from that lecture style. But the question is, how can we help facilitate that active learning where somebody can chew on and get words out, ask the questions and all of that, so that those car conversations move into a space where there's somebody guiding that conversation, help people get to next steps, all the things. Yeah, that's good.

As you think about Sarah, because you've been navigating some of these small rooms, what are things that you've noticed that can happen in a small room that doesn't happen in a big room? I think in the big rooms, it's like the big rooms are great for

Inspiration. Absolutely.

Big rooms are great for momentum, for feeling like, man, we're all in this together and for those bigger movements. But even just experiencing what you've experienced in some of these smaller training rooms, what are the things that you can get in that room that you can't get in

A room? So you put together your big inspirational talk, you've got your five points, you've got your outline in the small room, then it's like that first point, even as the person with the material who came up with all of it, as soon as the discussion starts moving around it, you're like, oh, this is where the people actually are. You're saying this is where these people are in this moment. So you can do that pivot to where the person is, what their need is, what their actual question is. And I mean, you don't have endless hours in the world or anything, but you end up pivoting, tailoring, making it a unique experience for the actual people that are sitting there, which you cannot do when you're standing in front of 50, a hundred, 200 people. But you can, if you have five, 10 people in a room, it starts getting much more personal and distilled down from lofty ideas into granular things we can act on. That's good.

Yeah. I even think about this concept of breakthroughs. I think everybody's after these moments of growth, and in a big room, people can have breakthroughs and do have breakthroughs, just nobody really knows about it. Whereas if it happens in a small room like that where there's space, it's like we can recognize it, celebrate it, talk about it, break it down, analyze it. That's a beautiful thing when somebody can then, because it drives it deep into that person. If I can do that in that room, right, That's good. And then you're not just inspired, you are then motivated. There's this hunger, this motivation to be, okay, I don't want to stay here where I'm at. I want to be there wherever there is in the context. And I feel like that happens in life groups, which is our specific context for that smaller room where those things can happen. But then the question is what does it look like to add a skilled trainer to that space?

Yeah, I think that's a good question. We would say that our groups and our teams, when it comes to what are our already existing environments that are smaller rooms versus bigger rooms. Well, we have small groups, life groups we call them, and we have ministry teams, a bunch of them that exist around the church. And so we would say those are our smaller rooms for training to happen. I think what we have to buckle down and do is what does it look like for those environments to really lean into the training component and go even for life group leaders to go, what are some small adjustments that I could make to make this more of a training gathering or a training moment versus just social or just teaching or whatever. Because again, if people are going from a teaching Sunday to a teaching life group, again, we're not really embodying that training center vibe that we're going for. Yeah. Good. So the second adjustment I would say is moving from monologue to dialogue. So a one-way conversation to a two-way conversation. So in order for us to move from teaching to training, teaching is a one way, Training is a two way. So let's talk about that.

Why don't you talk about that? Well, you want me to talk about that? Yeah, I do. I

Want you to start,

So prior to this, I would've said teaching is more of the dialogue because as a classroom teacher, it was definitely more like that. But I will go with your definition

Of teaching and training. Let's start preaching. Preaching together. There we go. Preaching the monologue versus teaching the, and I feel the space for both, obviously, but I think I, if somebody comes

awake in a preaching moment where there's monologue coming at them, they come to life in that dialogue space. That's good. I think that there's a different kind of thing that happens when I'm going to use you as my student and you as the student when I ask you a question about something that we're learning and you give an answer, and I'm able to follow that up with a question that takes you deeper or has you think about it a different way or makes you unpack that, what are you actually saying makes you wrestle with what's going on inside of you and what you're thinking and the questions coming at you that stirs you up to more than just being inspired. It's stirring you to again, want to move from who you are to who you're discovering that you could be in all of these different ways. So I enjoy both spaces, but man, I mean, I come alive more when I get to dialogue with people than,

I dunno, just monologue. Do you feel like, I don't want to derail this, but have we thought through just being honest how our training has to shift for life group leaders and team leaders? I'm just being, well, you're saying this and I'm thinking, yes, Sarah, you'll be able to do this. Yes, Derek, you'll be able to do This.

Will my life group leader be able to do this? I don't know.

Right?

And maybe the life group leader doesn't have to be the trainer, but that there's a trainer in the group or that there's a trainer.

Well, I think that comes back to some of, I think Dave or Shane maybe said this, but how you train is how they will multiply. So if Timothy's imitating Paul, Paul has hopefully shown him, taught him how to, so I think that part of it comes back to, well, what has been our standard for procedure for training? Is it actually training

Or

Are we monologuing at people that we expect to execute something? And the way that we've modeled it is,

That's a fair question.

It was one of my supreme frustrations in the academic world is that those who teach are not always great at modeling how it's then supposed to be taught. Does that make sense? Yeah. So that might be, I could see us kind of stumbling through that as we roll these things out.

It's funny, I mean, I was just having a conversation yesterday with somebody who had just gotten one of our, not on our staff, just a person in our church who's gotten back from facilitator training and talking. We were talking about this very thing of like, are there principles that apply to some of our class facilitators, some of our life group facilitators that would, because what a facilitator does is really just draw out the wisdom and the conversation of the group. And I think there's great, again, we need teachers. You can't just be all that, but we have to have some environments where that's happening. What I was scrambling to look up, there's a statistic that I can't remember, so I'll just make it up.

Okay, great. We'll fact check,

Fact check. That's what pastors do. We

The

Actual, yeah, I heard one time. And then you just say whatever.

We'll put the actual info show notes,

But it's about how much people remember or internalize based on these different kind of teaching models. They remember 2% of what you said in a sermon, and then there's categories and it goes to

when they've discovered it for themselves or whatever. It's like 80% or whatever. So even just from a retention

Standpoint

Of just are people actually remembering enough of these biblical concepts to live them out in their real lives? And to assume that a sermon a week is going to accomplish that, it's not.

Well, we've joked forever about we could plan a year of sermons and just keep doing the same year over and over and over again and

People will be like,

Cool.

Well, except that if we've then taken that big space material and made it such that in a small space someone who is trained to facilitate can pick that material up and facilitate it. And that's what we attempt to do with our material for groups of teams is to provide leaders with the content they need to facilitate a good discussion. But yeah, solve training the trainers. It is, yeah, it's good.

And I think another way to think about this monologue to dialogue is to think about it as an auditorium or a class versus a lab

That's

Like a learning lab and it's like, man, I would love to see the church have more learning lab environments, but we've joked forever about what if, so we talk about spending time with God every day. We can talk about till we're blue in the face, do people actually know what that looks like? And what if we had little labs where people could workshop that together

Where

You could watch somebody do their devotions with God or read their Bible and just talk out loud about, and we've done this once or twice before, but it's like we even talked at one time, what if we set up little pods around our entryways at every location and just said, this is the time with God pod, and literally have people just experience it and practice it. And I would just love to see some innovation around what does it look like for us to move from just this one way

Thing

To where people are actually practicing

It. We talked about that with the leadership one day. We just took a drive the other day, and we're talking about the idea of having that exact thing where depending on what dream disciple role they're working on, their second part of the day would be going into a room where that room is completely made for whatever that lab needs to be. And as coaches. And so, yeah, I'm excited for that. I think that's going to be a fun thing to explore.

I heard Joseph Granny talk when he is talking about influence, he talked about how environments are so important for our learning. He calls 'em hot zones. If you put people into a hot

Zone, oh, that's cool.

Their propensity to change or grow becomes so much greater.

Oh yeah.

That's

Based on just the environment that you put them

In. True. Yeah.

One last thing with this, one is just this concept that the greatest gift that we can give someone is to help them hear the voice of God for themselves. And man, that was another one of those arresting statements of just as a pastor, as a leader in the church, as whatever, if you can help someone to hear God for themselves, that is better than a thousand sermons that you could preach at them. And so it's like then we ask, well, what environments will that happen in? And they will happen in training environments where we can talk about it and where they can process with somebody. And here's what happened this morning, was that God was that not God? And to have somebody to just process that with, and man, if we could have more and more people in our churches who are discerning the voice of God for themselves, man, it's an unstoppable force.

It's the ultimate teaching people how to fish thing. For sure. Yeah.

So here's another big one is the move from illustrations. And I would say sermon illustrations to tools.

Oh, good. I was never good at sermon illustrations anyway. Oh my goodness.

Well, I think that two of those kind of accomplish the same thing. It's like you're trying to show people a picture of what this looks like. And I think as we've entered this world of tools, and I want you to add definition to what I mean when I say that we've entered the world of toolmaking. And it's so funny, I was texting with Dave or Shane the other day, and Shane's like, you guys have become great tool makers. And he was so proud of us. They're like, oh my gosh. And we have very intentionally tried to enter that world of going, that's a great idea. Let's make it a tool. And so talk about tools

A

Little bit just in general and why it's become a fascination for us.

Yeah. I feel like it's your obsession.

Oh

Yeah.

I'm very fascinated. Yeah. There's a joke around the office, just so you know. People are like, if you want Derek to do it, say tool.

Yeah, tell him we need it to. Oh my God. Yeah. So I think for quite a long time, more than a decade, I don't know, when we coined the phrase Find your Chair, which immediately conjured an illustration and image in people's mind, and it was fairly effective in terms of as soon as you said it, people knew that we were talking about this is where you spend your time with God through prayer, through his word, whatever. What we didn't have was something tangible to lead people on exactly what you're talking about. So it's just this visual thing, but then how do we use it as I think it turns into a mirror, which then becomes a window is how that works. And so how can you sit down with a tool called my chair and literally move from, I don't know how to spend time with God to, oh, now I see what I've been missing and now I'm able to put this into practice. So I think our tools are just, they are illustrated. I mean, literally there's graphics on them,

And I think they can be used in that starting place of an illustration, but then it very quickly moves to something you're able to quickly and easily put into action sketch on a napkin, explained simply and clearly, and do actually do. And I think it's fun. My chair won because we've been doing it for so long, we had a pretty good handle right out of the gate of, okay, the legs of the chair are, where's my chair? When do I find my chair? What am I doing? When am I my chair? And who am I doing this with? And then there's a couple of questions, what's God saying to me and what am I going to do about it? But then we've developed some other tools that we've like, can I say this? Yeah. We presented one, oh, wait, I think this is your illustration for

Later. No,

I'm sorry. Am I going to No, that's, we presented one for the congregation, and within 24 hours we had changed it because it's an actionable item. You realize like, wait, this has to work for where people are, and if they're not there, we need to pivot. Otherwise we're just speaking to, I don't know who. But for someone to actually pick it up and engage with it and use it as a tool is intended to be used.

So it's funny. So my son is a robotics engineer, and we were having a conversation the other day. He's asking me about what's going on at church, and I'm telling him some of this stuff. And so when I use the word tool with Caleb, tool means something very different. And he had a hard time getting his brain around what I was actually talking about. And so I think what you just did in that breakdown is just to go, yeah, it's a concept. So the concept is find your chair where you meet with God every day in his word. And for us to create a visual image that, again, people could reproduce on a napkin that goes, well, what goes into that? Well, there's where, when kind of thing, pretend those are the legs of the Chair.

And there's two questions that are the seat in the back of the chair of what's God saying to me? What am I going to do about it kind of thing. So the tool is just taking those concepts, the illustrations, ideas, pictures, and these guys said it starts as a picture and then it turns into a mirror by which you see yourself, and then it becomes a window through which you start to see the whole world. And so our tools, just to give people context, we've created these four dream disciple roles that we want every person at our church to embody these four roles. And we're creating two tools per role that will help them to practice and live out and eventually reproduce those activities or those discipleship activities in their life. So Jesus tool was a parable. He used parables often. That was a key tool. And again, started as a picture, turns into a mirror, becomes a window. And with those tools, we've been talking about this kind of breakdown that these concepts start at an awareness level, and then they go to a competency level and then they go to a proficiency level and then they go to a mastery level. I think one of our challenges is we're trying to figure out how do we create those kind of, again, training environments Where we can walk people through that, okay, here's the tool now. What does it mean to be competent at the tool? What does it mean to be proficient? Does it mean to master it and then be able to reproduce it to others? So that's the process that we're in right now. Literally right now. Literally Right now. I literally had a meeting about it.

You had a meeting, and we're probably walking out of here and Go do another one. Yes. That's good.

Great.

You had a fourth thought about teaching to training.

Yeah. So this is really more toward the role of the leader or the facilitator is that you go, you have to transition from being a communicator to being a connector and then a coach and then a consultant. And again, you don't have to be all of those things, but I think rethinking our role, when you have a microphone in your face of just going, I'm more than a communicator

In this

Moment. I have to connect concept, I have to coach people, I have to connect them together, and then I have to, once they're doing it on their own, my job is more as a consultant.

That's good. Well, and I think that there will also be a challenge as we do this, who are our natural communicators who naturally gravitates to connecting and coaching and consult, putting some people in where their strengths lie. And even as we build our muscles in all four of those areas,

I

Think that that's an important thing. We need to grow in this as we are trying to lead people. Yeah, that's really good.

Yeah. I know for me, and I've had a couple of, actually, my mentors be really challenging me. This is kind of a personal thing, but just as you guys know, I'm a preparer and I tend to be an over preparer

At

Times. I will fixate on whatever it is I'm presenting and so that when I stand up in a room, I want to have every

Dot

D crossed. And also to make sure that I'm in control of the whole thing. I've thought about every angle, every detail. And one of the things I'm being challenged on in this specifically is that that's not all there is in a disciple making culture, it can actually work against you. And again, I'm always till the day I die going to be all for preparation. But also there's this element of you need to be in touch with where people are at so that, like you said earlier, you can pivot and adjust. And it

Is

Not just, I'm going to unload this dump truck on you of information, but I need to understand where you are so that I can help you take that next step based on where you

Are. Yeah. Because our goal is people development, not my ability to get all the information out. So yeah, it's just going to require letting go of this. Well-researched, well thought out, finally crafted thing that I had that was coming next and being willing to be like, no. Right. And now in this moment, this is the next thing you need for your development. We're going to sit right here.

That's tough. You gave the benefit of the doubt for that preparation. Sometimes it's, look how smart I am.

Oh wow, that's

Honest. Which is the dark side.

It's

Like, I've prepared all this. I have all these great quotes. Look at all this.

Look at

How smart I am. That can creep in whether we like it or

Not. Well, because there's that quick thing from I've got knowledge, which means I've got power, which means I'm in control. And so for me to suddenly be like, wait, you don't need all my knowledge about this right now, leaves me feeling like, well, you just stole my power and control in this room. Oh, it's about you. Oh, yes, it is. It's about somebody else. This is deep.

I mean, it's true though. I mean,

Sorry.

Well, guys, and honestly, it literally just happened with the tools. We were like, oh, we have all this research and all these tools and let's do all this thing and do all this. Wait, let's make it one page. Wait, take out all those options. Wait, you don't have to. Okay, let's get it to two questions. We reverse engineered from your guys' genius down to how can they read it and figure it out themselves? How can the tool help them help themselves?

So yeah, go ahead. Think about what God has done with his word for us. He is infinite in knowledge, infinite. And yet also in his perfect wisdom, he's like, you can handle this much. This is exactly what you need for you to be exactly who I've created you to be. Right? And so there's nothing wrong with us

gaining more knowledge. It's the wisdom to know this is what's needed at this time for this person, for these people. So it's holding our knowledge with this wisdom side and discerning rather than just being like you're saying, the knowledge is puffing me up with look what I know, and now that gives me control, whatever. Anyway. Yeah. No, that's

Great. That's great. Okay. Good discussion. Thanks for joining us, Sarah.

Yeah,

Thanks for letting me.

Hey, I think we have a place where people can go and peek at some of these tools.

Oh yeah.

And so we'll include those in the show notes. There's a

Good website

Where people can go if you're still like, what are these tools they're talking about where you can go kind of see what we're talking about.

That's good.

Thank you, Sarah.

Thank you. Yeah, thanks. Fun. That was a good discussion with Sarah.

That

Was really great. Yeah, it was. We'll have to have her

Back. She's brilliant.

I know.

We all love Sarah.

I know. So let's talk about anything that happened this week. One thing we talked about before we started is just this idea of re-imagining and innovating, I guess. So what do you think?

Yeah, so there was a conversation yesterday. This is one of these kind of stop start moments where you think you were on the right track. And then it's like, wait, I don't think that worked. So we have a couple of ministries here, big ministries, one called Sari, one called the Grace Leadership Institute, that as we're reinventing the church, it's like what do we do with those? I mean, we have leaders around them, we have staff people around them. We have volunteers that are loyal to those things. And so we had a couple of brainstorm sessions where we gathered people together and said, we're going to reimagine Sari and the Grace Leadership Institute into this new structure that we're doing. And they didn't go great because for a lot of reasons probably, but they didn't go great. It was kind of confusing. It was a little bit stop and start ish. We've been having more conversations about what do we do with that, with those people, with those people who are unbelievable, but also with these two ministries. And I think we came full circle around to both of those ministries are going to be part of what we're inventing new from scratch,

And they're going to come under that somehow. And what we decided was we should probably invent the new thing and then figure out how those ministries kind of fit into that new thing versus trying to re-engineer them to be the drivers of the new thing while the new thing isn't even invented yet.

This is an example of if you were flying an airplane and trying to build it at the same time, it's exactly what we lived it out. We're living it out. And yeah, I mean there are cases where you do it the other way, there definitely are, but because of everything you just said, all the things that are existing, and even just the timing of honestly what we as humans can handle, your capacity is very big. You can think about

a million different things at once, but maybe someone else on our team three steps down from you. No, what I'm thinking right now is we're all these gears that are like some are spinning really fast, some are spinning really slow, none of 'em are totally settled. And so I think our best foot forward at the beginning was, let's just do a little bit of everything. But until you put that clarity around, we are,

Well, there are things that we're tweaking and

Things

That we're inventing

Right from scratch, and we were trying to tweak everything,

Everything and invent everything and invent

Everything

At the same time. So yeah, I think the learning here is that we said we need to slow the process way down of the stuff that we're inventing from scratch and go, we need to walk that through a whole process of its own and get the people in the room,

Get the right people

That are going to be both inventing those things, but also be part of it

In

What already exists. But it's not around how do we make sense of what we already have. It's around what do we need to create and then we can all support and be excited about that. Yeah,

That's

Good. That new thing.

And I think a tangible learning too was just that we are lucky with the people that we work with, that most people are really pretty openhanded about their calling, not they're calling their job here. And so to be able to say, okay, for this season you focus on this now until we're ready to do this thing that you're passionate about on our staff. And people have been great about that. And it's helped us to put different people's genius to work in the right areas, which has been kind of cool too.

And I would just say, I think as a universal principle, I feel like if we are always starting with what we have and tweaking everything that we have, that's

Good.

We're going to end up with a menu so huge of all these zillions of things that we've just, and at the same time never really got to what we need. So I'm thinking about using an example from here from some years ago of Sunday school member Beck and the Sunday school days. It's like if we were thinking about how do we start with Sunday school, but tweak it to be a little bit better to what we want it to be versus going, what do people really need for discipleship?

Yes.

That's the question. Let's invent the discipleship thing and then see if Sunday School fits or doesn't fit into that. But when we always start with the existing programs, we will end up with a menu, a thousand items long.

Absolutely.

That makes it very hard for people to kind of navigate their way through a church.

And there is something, even I'm passionate about, the creative process and to be able to say in a room, Hey, there are no sacred cows here. Let's ask the right questions. Just exactly what you're saying I think

gets you so much farther, so quicker, and it actually gets you to where you need to be. Like you're saying, I'm just re-saying what you're saying, but that's a learning. When you go into a room to think about something, you've got to kind of,

I want to underline

That. Let

Danielle, because what you just said is so important. Because what tends to happen is if we start with the micro stuff, what tends to happen is we stop asking the actual right questions. And so we're asking questions of either, how can we make this ministry work? How can we keep these people happy? How can we not lose leaders? How can we not lose the momentum that we have? And you're asking those questions versus asking the big question of, again, the classic example, how do we reach women? Well, 20 years ago at our church, it might've been we're going to have women's tea. We used to have women's teas, and so we

Sure did.

Right now in 2024, women's tea is probably not the answer. There's a lot of churches though that probably haven't let go of the women's tea because there's three women that are super passionate about it, and this is the what we've always done. And so we keep it going and keeping it going is not the worst thing in the

World. No,

The worst thing in the world is somewhere along the way, we stopped asking the question, how do we reach women?

Right. That's a good example.

You know what I'm saying?

Absolutely.

So it's keeping those big questions forefront, that becomes what gets lost in the shuffle if we do this the wrong way and we just made the mistake again ourselves. So it's not like,

Hey, we look, it's like, Hey, look at us. Yeah, definitely. It's definitely Look at us,

Look at this train wreck and don't do it.

Okay. Good job. Cool. Thanks. So thanks for listening today. If you're listening, please rate this show, subscribe. If you're watching on YouTube, you can subscribe and leave a comment. That'd be awesome. And again, you guys can go to derek-sanford.com and get the show notes along with other resources, submit an email for us to answer, and whatever else you might need, you'll find a ton of resources on that website. So thanks for joining us, and we'll see you next time. Peace.