

Today Counts Show Episode 79

Jim: Hello, everyone and welcome back to the Today Counts show. My guest today is Winston Harris. He's better known in the area of San Antonio as Pastor Winston. So here's what we got going on here. You may or may not know that I am a licensed and ordained minister, and Jim Piper, yours truly, is 63 years old. I am going to be speaking to Pastor Winston, who is, I believe, 34 years old. So there's nearly 30 years that separate us. I'm a Baby Boomer; he's a Millennial. So if I were to give this podcast my own personal title, I kind of let the team do that, but I would just call it a pastor-to-pastor conversation.

Winston has a pretty interesting background where he came from, we're going to be talking about that, his basketball career, becoming a pastor, becoming a father. Then we're going to get into this issue of work-life balance. We've got a lot of interesting sound bites that are going on today. We're going to be talking about the differences between the Millennials and perhaps where I've come from. We're gonna be talking about relative truth versus absolute truth, trailblazing leadership, those kinds of things, a lot of cultural stuff. I guess, the spirit is really kind of letting you eavesdrop into an honest conversation that we have. So welcome, Winston, and I hope that you enjoyed this as much as I did.

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Jim: Hello, everyone and welcome back to the Today Counts show. I have with me today, Winston Harris. Many in his community don't call him that; they know him as Pastor Winston. Winston, I would like to start right in. I'd just like to jump in, and I've kind of outlined your life starting with basketball, and that may not be the best place to start, but that's kind of where I see it. As far as I understand, you know your history. You can fill it in a little bit more, but my outline is basketball, husband, Pastor, father. Tell me about basketball, tell me about where you grew up and kind of how did that-- Because you've played basketball at a high level.

Winston: Yes.

Jim: So let's talk about it.

Winston: Yeah. First of all, thank you, Jim, for having me, and just so thankful to be here on this incredible podcast. Jumping in, grew up in Brooklyn, New York, born and raised. I've been

playing basketball as long as I can remember, and I was kind of sold on the pipe dream, right? The only way to make it out of an area like Brooklyn, which is economically impoverished and all those things, is to either be a rapper or an athlete. And I chose the ballplayer route. And even though I think you've, in so many words, said, sometimes when you're preaching, it sounds like you're rapping. I don't know.

Jim: I have to say that you are a good word-smith. If that's a word, you're a good wordsmith. I'm always amazed at how you coin a phrase and how you-- So maybe you could have done the rapper thing too, or you maybe you could have done both. I don't know.

Winston: Well, thankfully, we didn't go the rapper route, and we went basketball. Probably the only sport I've ever played, hate running without a purpose. That's out of the equation. I played Little League baseball for a little bit, got hit by a ball, and I was like, "Nope, this ain't it for me." And I was too scared to play football. So just stayed with the basketball route. 9/11 happens, and that was kind of the last draw for my parents. They were in New York up until that point for about 48 years. And so that was--

Jim: Now, how old were you when 9/11 happened?

Winston: I was 12. 12 years old.

Jim: You were 12. Wow, okay.

Winston: I remember that day vividly. I was in seventh grade. Actually, I was on a fourth or fifth-floor classroom. You could see from the classroom window the Twin Towers. And so I just remember one day, panic ensues. All this communication at the school about, "Hey, we're needing to evacuate and bus people out, bus the kids back to parents." And so, just a hectic day. You could see, mostly anywhere from the city, the actual smoke billowing throughout the distance in the sunset. And so it was a super chaotic time frame for us. So, two months later from 9/11, we ended up jumping on a Greyhound bus, my parents and I, a two-day trip across, who knows where we're at, parts of Iowa, Kansas, just random places I'd never seen, all the way to Brush, Colorado.

From Brooklyn to Brush, that, in and of itself, could be a book, because it was just an interesting journey. And Brush, Colorado, population 5,000 people, is probably 0.5 percent of people listening to this that know what Brush, Colorado, is. An hour east of Denver, Colorado, in the not-so-scenic parts of Colorado. To give you a frame of reference of what Brush, Colorado, might look like, feel like, sound like, smell like. Our mascot was the Beet Digger, the Beet Digger. So literally, beets, digging beets. That's a snapshot of--

Jim: That fires me up. I want to play football with that logo on my helmet. What is a Beat Digger? What is it?

Winston: I mean, I guess more or less a farmer, somebody who's literally digging up beats, but the mascot was a big beet with arms and legs.

Jim: Scary.

Winston: Yeah, pretty intimidating. And so, I played basketball--

Jim: But why Brush? I mean, of all the places, why there?

Winston: Super random. My uncle ends up moving out to Hillrose, Colorado, which is, 10 miles over, population of 100. My mom's brother, and he'd been out there for 20 years prior and always been kind of extending an invitation to my family, knowing kind of the tensions of living in New York City, which is a whole other podcast in and of itself. So this is kind of that opportune time to make an exodus, and I was kind of-- Looking back at it, God's hand was on my life because that was kind of that oppressive pit in my life about to head into High School. The high schools that I would have entered, it's kind of sink or swim in the sense of you either have to join a gang, you have to be a really high-level athlete. There's not many lanes in an impoverished area like Brooklyn, New York. And so my life would probably look totally different than it does now if I don't move to Brush, Colorado. I don't really lean into basketball and get into a church community, end up going to church at a small-- It was non-denominational, but probably Methodist, looking back at it, a small church in Hillrose, Colorado, with my uncle, with my parents, and really kind of leaning into my faith early on. But yeah, Brush was a direct relation to my uncle living out there, but it probably saved my life in retrospect.

Jim: So you're playing high school basketball, and you ended up playing basketball in Laredo, Texas. Did I get that right?

Winston: Yeah.

Jim: And so tell me about the transition. How did you go from Brush, Colorado to Laredo, Texas, and tell us about that team and that school?

Winston: Yeah, so coming out of Brush, Colorado, I had a handful of opportunities to play

college basketball. I ended up going to a junior college in Torrington, Wyoming, which is about two hours north of Brush, Colorado, population 5,000. I think we have Burger King and--

Jim: Big time, yeah.

Winston: That was the highlight. That was the highlight of Torrington.

Jim: I've been to Torrington, and it's an old mining town, and in fact, even to this day, I have a few friends who live in Torrington, and I went to visit there once or twice, and that's good. I'm done. Check that off.

Winston: Yeah, there's not many people buying at the bit to get to Torrington, and so I spent three years there, had three years at a two-year school, so you do the math. I have two associate's degrees that mean nothing. And I had the opportunity to develop as a young man, as a basketball player. I redshirted my first year there. For those who don't know what redshirting is, it's basically being held accountable to do everything that a scholarship athlete would do without actually getting to play the game, right?

Jim: Wow.

Winston: Practice, keeping up the grades, doing all of things: weight room, eating right, all the things but not getting to play. Development process. I ended up gaining 20 pounds of muscle and just a knowledge of the game that allowed me to play at a high level there, and then my coach knew a coach, and we ended up going to Laredo. What sold me on Laredo was not a site visit. I didn't get to travel. We didn't have that option to see the school, but there was a brochure that I was handed, and I look at this brochure, and I'm like-- I think the only other option I had was North Dakota, a school in South Dakota maybe, and I was like, "Yeah, I'm kind of done with this Brush, Colorado, Torrington, snowstorm, blizzards, walking to the gym and snow hit me in the face." So I look at this brochure, and I'm like, "Oh, Laredo, Texas. It was on the border. It seems tropical. It seems warm. There's diversity in this brochure," not realizing that me actually going to Laredo was the diversity that was in the brochure. I was the diversity.

Jim: You were the diversity. Okay.

Winston: And so, yeah, I took that option. It was either that or one of the Dakotas, and so I jumped in Laredo, and it was a Division II basketball, high-level basketball. What was extremely visible getting to Laredo, practicing, was the intensity, was the level of skill required to play. I actually passed out my first week there, partially because I was not hydrated enough for the

115-degree weather in Laredo, but also just the level of intensity that I was not accustomed to. The skill sets, the players. Everybody that was on the team basically was the number one player wherever they came from, their junior college, their high school. So it was, an All-Star team per se of players, and we had the opportunity to play in the Division II March Madness tournament. That's the caliber of team we were playing in the national tournament. So it was, an incredible learning experience, learned how to be mentally tough, learned how to be a team player. It was an incredible experience.

Jim: So Winston, what was the name of that school that you went to in Laredo?

Winston: Texas A&M International. Our mascot was the Dust Devil. So we go from Beat Digger to Dust Devils. It's better [unintelligible 00:11:45].

Jim: Okay. I'm really glad I asked that question. So you go from a basketball player down there. I mean, you really don't know anybody if I'm hearing you right, but you end up finding your wife down there. Tell me a little bit about that.

Winston: Yeah, my wife Stephanie. So, my teammate, the one who I was rooming with, my roommate, he comes into the dorm one day and he's pretty excitable, and he's like, "Winston, man, I've found the prettiest girl on campus." I can see it in his face, his posture, he is just super excited, and he's like, "Man, we have to go talk to her, she's at the info desk, and you have to come with me, kind of be my wingman." So, we walk over to the info desk, and as we're approaching the info desk and approaching this young lady, he just kind of diverts to maybe to somebody he already met and was more comfortable with, I don't know, he froze up and left me to speak to who is now my wife, Stephanie.

So, we meet at the info desk, and I think our first interaction, my wife said she thought I was weird. To be fair, I was wearing a hot lime green jacket, I was wearing a yellow minor league baseball team with flowers under the brim. So I probably, especially in Laredo, Texas, came off like, "Who is this clown? What is he all about?" But it took a semester for us to connect and for her to kind of feel me out, if you will. But I end up meeting Stephanie.

And what's funny about our connection is Stephanie grew up Catholic, Stephanie grew up predominantly around Laredo's Hispanic culture. Our marriage has been a total upheaval of anything she ever had planned for her life. She never meant to marry a Black man, she never meant to marry a Christian, she never meant to marry a pastor. Everything about our marriage and how we've walked our life together has been a total 180 from anything she ever envisioned in her life. We joked about it the other day at our event at church, but she didn't know she was gonna marry a pastor, and I didn't know I was going to be a pastor. So, it's just been kind of that story of seeing God rewrite both of our stories as we've connected.

So, yeah, Laredo was a hard season for me playing basketball because it was kind of the end of the road for many reasons. One of it was because it was such a high level of expectation and it kind of stopped becoming a game and it became a business, per se. I stopped having fun, I wasn't the guy anymore either, so that was a transition. I had to learn to kind of be a bench player and a supporting role versus being the guy who took all the shots and played the most minutes. And then, ultimately, I didn't really get an opportunity to play professionally, so it forced me to reconsider who Winston is, what does my life look like. Out of that season, a lot of rebirth happened, and I ended up meeting my wife as well, shifting the trajectory of my life too.

Jim: I think that happens to a lot of us who call ourselves achievers. We follow a certain path, we experience a significant amount of success, if we could use that word, and then things change. We have an identity crisis, we try to figure out where do we go from here, what do we do from here. We realize how much our identity was wrapped up in what we were good at or what we thought we were- our dreams or whatever. But it ended up bringing me to San Antonio, Texas. You started attending North Rock Church, and as I understand it, you were volunteering there while you had a corporate job. Somehow, over a period of months or years, I'm not sure which, you transitioned from the corporate world because I want to get into some issues today, but I want to talk about your transition. How did you go from working in the corporate world, volunteering at your church, to becoming a pastor? How did you do that spiritually, practically, relationally? What brought that about?

Winston: Yeah, for some context, I came to faith when I was 12. I wasn't necessarily practicing my faith until I had this identity crisis coming out of college. Not being able to identify as an athlete anymore and trying to figure out. I didn't have a plan B. I got my Bachelor's in Communications, but I was never thinking about, "Oh, I'm going to use this" or "I'm going to school for a specific reason," other than this is just, "I have to bypass this to get to another level of basketball."

And so, when this basketball option is off the table, I kind of have this crossroads of, "Okay, who am I spiritually? Who am I in this world? How do I find value? How do people receive me? What do I really do now?" And where I really leaned back into, in retrospect, is a faith worldview versus a secular worldview. I was preaching a few months back and studying faith, and one of the definitions of Faith in the Greek is *Vizio*, and it's just how do you see the world? Do you see the world based on everything is against me, things are happening that are limitations, or are you seeing the world as, okay, things are working for me, God's working for me, there are things happening that are necessarily limitations but they're opportunities for God to show up. And so I think that was a big piece of this transition, was having this worldview that, okay, God's in this. I don't know how he's working all these things out, but starting from that worldview, I believe that was able to allow me to step into some of the things that would end up taking place.

So, I get to San Antonio in August of 2013, and I just start applying for jobs. I knew I wanted to be with my wife, and she was kind of doing some hours for her speech and language pathology job. And I was just like, "Alright, we just got to pay the bills." So I start applying for roles. It was about November when I hear from J.Crew clothing, which they had a call center here, and I was

like, "Okay," they're the first one to hire me. I need a job." I jump in there, doing bare minimum, just showing up on time and leaving on time, doing nothing more, nothing less. And before I knew it, I kept being invited into leadership roles, and I'm like, "Wow, you guys have a high bar here. I'm just doing the bare minimum, and I keep getting invited into these leadership roles." Like, I'm not doing anything out of the ordinary, but apparently that was attractive enough to invite me into leadership roles.

I kept politely declining, and at some point, it started to get awkward. It was almost like, "Okay, I just can't keep saying no, and you keep asking me," so I'm trying to find ways to appease these requests, and so I start strategically looking for opportunities where there would be more qualified people that would go up for these roles, and then I would apply, knowing that the more qualified people with more experience would hopefully get hired for this position, this promotion, and then I could kindly say, "All right, well, I tried. Let me just go back to what I was doing." But what ended up happening was I kept getting promoted over these more qualified co-workers.

Jim: Why do you think you were dodging those opportunities? Have you taken the time to think about that?

Winston: 100%, I didn't want the responsibility of, okay, leading people that didn't want to be there. Like I knew I didn't want to be there and I knew they didn't want to be there, so I was like, "Why would I put myself in that seat to do something that I wasn't really passionate about or I didn't really have much teeth in the game?" But I kept finding myself positioned to influence, positioned to support, to walk alongside, to develop. And before I knew it, I was in a leadership role for two years of my four years there at J.Crew, and I just kept finding favor. We were successful in the department, things were trending upwards, and I was being put in positions and having to leave meetings and having to do things that I was like, "I've never done this before, I don't know what I'm doing."

I was placed over what was called the international department, which basically meant, "We don't know what this means, this doesn't fit anywhere else in the organization, and so this is the team where maybe they didn't have a special skill set and this is kind of the last resort before maybe being let go." And so it was an interesting season, and I just found myself more and more growing restless for more because I knew this wasn't it, this wasn't my seat, this wasn't the thing that I was looking for.

And, parallel to this season is where we find North Rock Church, my wife and I, and we start getting engaged in the community and serving in small groups, and something starts stirring. I start serving on the creative team and the production team, and I was like, "Oh, I didn't know I could add value to a church in this context." And so that kind of starts firing me up a little bit, and a mentor pulls me aside and he says, "Winston, I think God's doing something in your life, and I just want you to consider where your passions and your skill set intersect. God is usually doing something." And that was interesting to me because I was in this seeking season. I was like, there's more here, and it's not this job in a hat, and Ministry wasn't on the radar, but, I'm being

stirred up by some of this creative stuff. And so I start praying this prayer, and I'm just like, "God, what have you created me for? What makes me come alive? What are my passions? What are my skill sets?" And I just remember praying that for a year. And it wasn't just the prayer, but it was also the participation, right?

I started trying things. I bought a camera, and I was like, "Okay, maybe God's doing something--Photography, so let me start taking pictures." I did like one maternity photo shoot, and I was like, "Yeah, this is not it." I couldn't be out here at the Pearl taking pictures of people about to have babies. This doesn't feel like Winston. That was the track, and then I had teammates that played basketball, and they needed highlight films edited and sent out to teams they were gonna be playing for. So I started packaging their films and creating highlight films for them, and I'm like, "Okay, this is kind of cool. I like this, but this still just doesn't feel like it." So I'm trying things and doing things, making videos on YouTube, and doing stuff, and it's just nothing was clicking. It was just this process of trying and exploring and praying and looking for where God is in all this.

Fast forward to the end of 2017, I'm kind of just done at J.Crew, right? I remember driving home and I'm like, "This isn't it. Let me just quit." I get an impression right in my heart, a thought comes to my mind. It sounds like me, but I knew I wouldn't say this to myself. I'm saying, "I'm gonna quit," and all I hear is, "You're being prepared." And I was like, "Well, that's weird. Why would I say that to myself?" So I'm like, "Is that you, God?" So I'm asking mentally, "Prepared for what?" And then it's just silence, and then this internal dialogue is taking place over a course of months. I'm just like, "Man, I'm gonna quit. You're being prepared. Prepared for what?"

I'm like, "There's no way I'm having this conversation with myself. I'm not talking to myself. I'm talking to someone else in my worldview. I'm talking to God. God is talking to me in this way." And I just stayed at J.Crew, believing that something was happening. God was using whatever I was doing that felt like nothing at the time, felt like I was just showing up, doing my best, but I couldn't see any real evidence of anything I was doing being valuable.

Finally, I'm in the lobby one day at church, and one of our executive pastors walks up to me and invites me into a conversation. "Hey, there's an opportunity with our team for a creative director, and we'd love for you to interview." Once again, this theme of invitation and appeasement. I'm like, "I don't think I'm your guy, but I don't want to be disrespectful and say no to the invitation. So I'll go through the process. You'll quickly learn that I'm not your guy." I've never had any Bible schooling or whatever it takes to be a creative director at church. I had no context for that, and once again, I find myself in too deep. I get the offer, and I was like, "Oh, okay, I didn't plan for this." I'm kind of newly married at this point, and I have some decisions to make. Am I going to go into Ministry, which I have no context for? I do feel a stirring, I do feel like maybe this is the next step, but there's security in this job that I hate. There is security here. I do know what to do, even though I don't feel any life in what I'm doing.

So ultimately, once again, I'm praying and I get this impression, this thought. I'm asking God, "Hey, like, what's the promise here? If I take this step, what is going to hold me?" And I just get back, "I will be with you." And I was like, "Well, that's a weird thing to say to myself." It sounds like me, but I'm like, "Why would I say that to myself?" So believing that I'm hearing from God,

and that just settled my soul, talked over with my wife, and we agreed I would step onto staff at North Rock on January 1st, 2018. So I ended up stepping away from my corporate job and stepping into this creative director role which I was highly underqualified for, but trial by fire, just jumping in and being willing to learn. Hopefully, I--

Jim: And today, today you have the title campus pastor, and two years ago, you became a father. That's a lot. You've become a pastor now, you've been entrusted to teach from the pulpit at your church, you lead a campus, you are a new father. What has that been doing in you?

Winston: To your point, it is a lot. It's marriage, it's fatherhood, it's pastoring, learning what pastoring looks like, learning how to study yourself, approved, being privileged to help serve the church from time to time, sharing a message. And we've talked about this, Jim, a little bit, but work-life balance. Like, that's been a theme, I think, throughout my Ministry experience here, trying to figure out, okay, what if any balance does that look like? Where I've landed is, I don't know that there's even a biblical precedent for balance. It's almost like this false narrative that, okay, if balance really existed, how much more anxiety would you have if you achieved the balance to keep the balance? Many of us are trying to even just fight to get to whatever balance means for us, and then the thought occurred to me, if I was ever able to actually achieve the balance I think I'm seeking, how stressed would I be fighting to maintain whatever semblance of balance I think I have.

And so the experience of being a new father, which, man, being a father is hard. People tell you that more or less, but until you're really in it and you're living in it, being a father is like, you're constantly being exposed to the gaps that you have. You can't hide from yourself when you're a husband, you can't hide from yourself when you're a father. My daughter just turned two last week, and she's in this phase where she's mimicking and saying things. She'll say a phrase. She might stub her toe, and she's like, "Come on."

I was like, "Oh, I do that." When I might bump my knee, or I get frustrated with something that I'm hammering something. I'm not hammering anything. You know me, Jim, I'm not hammering anything. I might be trying to fix a router, maybe I'm trying to fix the cable on the TV, and I'm just getting frustrated, "Come on." You just constantly see this mirror, this small mirror of yourself. That's another part of fatherhood that I'm experiencing, and just being a husband as well. You can't hide from yourself. You can't hide **[unintelligible 00:29:33]** You're exposed.

Jim: And I think you're kind of opening up a can of worms, so I mean, let's just lay it on the table for a minute. You are a Millennial Pastor, if I could call you that, and I am a Baby Boomer pastor. I think we could have a very spirited conversation. What are the differences in worldview? Are there differences, and what are they? But I don't think I even heard the term work-life balance. At least, I wasn't paying attention, which is possible for me to not pay attention to new little things that come up.

I'm 63 years old, and I remember my first job. Nobody talked about work-life balance. They told me when I was supposed to be at work, when I would get off. And you got to work when you needed to go to work, and you got off when you got off. If you were involved in extracurricular activities, which most of us as achievers would be, whether it's running out to the softball field to get in that game, to pick up the kid and get to Little League, to do whatever, it's just something.

In fact, I do a lot of interviewing, I do a lot of hiring for organizations today, and I just got to be honest with you, I can't really go on without saying these things. And I've done some thinking about it, and sometimes I think it's just maybe nuances, or maybe we're just not hearing each other. Or maybe it's what I think it is. So, to get to my point, when someone in an interview uses the term work-life balance, I'm done. I'm done interviewing them. I'm absolutely done. I mean, I have no empathy, I have no understanding. Maybe I need to be put on the shelf, maybe I just can't connect to this.

So, work-life balance, and I think you're on to something here. You were alluding to the idea, and I believe this, I believe you were really close to a bullseye from my perspective. You said, "How much stress is it going to create to create balance and to sustain balance?" Well, that kind of reminds me of what we tend to say, "If I can just get through this, then life will be better. If I just make this amount of money, then life will be better. If this will happen, life will get better. Life will get better." And everything is looking for what is not versus what is. In fact, I just wrote this in my blog last week. I think that if I need work-life balance, then I just need to create it. And what I mean by that is I know when I'm emotionally spent.

Now, you have different gauges in your personhood. You've got a physical gauge, you know that you need sleep, you know that you need to eat correctly, you know that you should exercise. If you're not doing any of those things, it begins to, especially as you get older, it begins to reveal certain symptoms. But generally speaking, I'm not talking necessarily about a medical condition, a genetic issue of that nature. But I'm talking about the general bread and butter, meat and potatoes kind of thing. We know what to do.

If we have a spiritual problem, we're spiritually dry, we're kind of mission drifting from aligning ourselves with God, we know what to do. Whether we will it or not is a whole other thing. We gotta simply come home. We gotta get back doing the things that we're supposed to do because, in a general sense, God isn't insecure to where he's going to chase us down. Now, we do talk about his love and his grace that is relentless and in that sense, won't quit on us. But the picture I get is that he is sitting at home, waiting for you to come home. So he's not moving. So when you do get home, he will be there. He's not absent.

Winston: [unintelligible 00:34:01]

Jim: When I think of work-life balance, I get it. I mean, I get what people are trying to say, right? And maybe it's a shot at the Baby Boomers. Maybe it's a reaction from our generation because we love work, and they see that. Now, you want to say something? Go ahead, do it.

Winston: Yeah, I was just going to say, to the point of the generational perspective, this might be a question from your perspective versus my perspective. Do we think that the level of access to information and communication, social media, the internet, just having it literally at our fingertips, has created this urgency of life that is seemingly so overwhelming that we feel like there's more happening in this generation than there was actually happening in previous generations? Do we think that the need for work-life balance is any more now than it was previously? Because that's kind of the, playing devil's advocate, right?

Being in this generation, it feels like you're always engaged, you're always tapped in. There's more text messages, there's emails, there's all this stuff. And so, there seems like there's a need for more rest or self-care, right? We have a culture of self-care. Take a day off, treat yourself, take a year off. You see people responding to the culture around this differently. People are approaching schooling differently, right? They're taking gap years at a higher level. They're maybe not looking for a 9-to-5 like traditionally. They're trying to kind of curate their own careers and do multiple streams of income versus dedicating themselves to an organization. And it's all kind of this element of, "I'm overwhelmed, and I want to be able to have options to adjust my time and my commitment to things." And there's this boundary, the sense of, "Okay, I gotta protect my time, and I gotta protect my energy." Do you think all of that maybe is coming from a generation that is constantly connected? Or is there no difference between generations as far as work-life balance goes?

Jim: Well, I can certainly be philosophical about it, but I'm probably going to be more anecdotal just because we tend to look at the world through our own lenses. But you do bring up, I think, a valid point. And maybe there are several streams that flow into this lake that has created some stagnation between generations. I don't know, that sounded a lot smarter than I actually am. But, here's what I remember.

Before email, most communication happened either in person, by letter, or by telephone. When I walked up to my desk, we had those little pink pads, and my secretary (that's what we called them in those days) would write messages that so-and-so called and would like you to call them back at such and such a time. I would get back from lunch or I'd get back from a weekend, or maybe I was off or not in the office for a day, and there'd be a stack of them on my desk. I remember that I felt stress when I saw five or six or ten or twelve of those. My temperament is a temperament that goes after it and gets it done.

So, when email came around, I thought it was cool. But I don't know that I've ever really been able to deal with email the way maybe the Millennials have. When I get an email, to me, that's somebody knocking at my door. When somebody knocks at my front door, I don't just sit there on the couch. Unless it's somebody that I absolutely do not want to see. If it's a salesperson, yeah, then I'll hit the deck and crawl so they don't see me. But generally speaking, I'm going to get up. So, I'm leading to one of the issues I think between one generation and the next. I think, for the most part, the Baby Boomer generation is a very responsive generation. But, to your point, you have a hypothesis here that probably should be considered and talked about.

Now, before I get off this soapbox. I would say that for me, working with younger leaders that is a frustration for me because the responsiveness they're categorically, generally speaking, does not match my experience. So, if we could just throw a little bit of empathy towards the Baby Boomers because I think you were trying to throw some empathy towards the Millennials with your explanation, and frankly, it makes sense. So, here's what might make sense to the Millennials and whatever other generation we're talking about. My grandkids do the same thing, and I don't even know what generation they are.

Winston: Gen Z or the Alpha Gen.

Jim: Yeah, I've lost track. So, I'll send something to my 14-year-old, and three weeks later, I might get a response. And when I get the response, I don't even know what the response is about. Yeah, so, I'm learning not to take it personally. But, in the beginning, I think the beginning-- When did the beginning start? I'm not sure. I think when the Millennials probably came into positions of authority, positions of responsibility as a generation, as you saw them in society, in levels and places that we would have more interactions, that might have been when I was hit in the face, going back to your illustration of ice in your face or snow in your face up in Torrington or Brush. Yeah, that's kind of how it feels. We send a message, we get one back.

I think your experience with me, for the most part, is if you text me or if you email me or if you call me, you get a quick response. Not to hurt your pride or anything, but it's not because you're my friend, it's not because you're my colleague. Frankly, if you're a stranger, they would get the same response from me. Does that create problems for me? It obviously does because if I don't set the phone outside of my office, I might be fielding these things on a constant basis. I have clients all around the country, and when it rains, it pours.

But here's what I want to say. I think what we're trying to get to when we talk about work-life balance might be the whole alignment issue. Because from a mechanical perspective, alignment and balance, I don't know that you can separate those two. But for some reason, when I think about alignment, I think of something different than balance. When I think of balance, I think of this day that's perfectly broken up into these nice little categories. I just don't understand that. I don't know for--

I'll give you this example, then you can give your response. I'm trying to get a stinking book done this year. One thing I notice is I can't write for 15 minutes. If I'm going to pick up where I left off, it takes me probably 15 to 30 minutes to just get back into the context of where I was in order to continue. When I don't do that, I find that I repeat myself, or I find that I'm going off into some other direction. So, it doesn't make sense. When I write, I've got to have generally at least a two-hour block. And even then, you just start getting warmed up and then ding, the bell goes off. And so, for me, writing is like a half-day thing. It's a half-day thing. You're out of balance if you're going to spend a half-day writing or if I'm going to block two days writing or, whatever--

I was working with an executive yesterday, and I was going over his playbook. He's being completely unrealistic with himself. But, you kind of have to let the playbook play out, so to speak, for people to learn that. His playbook was so perfectly balanced that all it would take would be one grenade to blow up his life. So to me, I think what we're talking about is margin. I think what we're talking about is alignment. I like those words better.

When someone comes up to me and says, "I'd like to have a job, but I want a job that has a work-life balance," I don't even know what that means. You know? And so, if I had the patience, which I don't, I might say, "Can you explain what that looks like?" And they'd say, "Well, I'd like to enjoy my weekends." "Cool. I wasn't going to interfere with your weekends, you know? But if we're so fragile about it, I'm not sure we should talk because--" Think about basketball, right? Think about basketball. I mean, they're-- How do you explain this? How do you explain this?

There is a time where when you crank up the defense, you're doing that to change the course and the momentum of a game, and you believe that if you crank up the defense, a more natural offense will result in that. But the coach feels like he's got to get everyone aligned because there might be a wing. I'm thinking hockey now. But there might be a wing who, frankly--

Winston: A guard.

Jim: Yes, or a guard who's just got the shooting itch, and they just want to stand at the three-point line and try to get us back by hitting four threes in this quarter. And the coach can see that the team is out of alignment. And so sometimes, what a lot of spectators see about basketball is they see, "Oh, okay. We're trying to stop them from scoring." Of course, we're going to try to play a harder defense. But it's more psychologically deeper than that. It's getting the team to do the same thing and then it's rewarded. Does that make sense? So, I mean, I think I understand the spirit of work-life balance, but it feels-- I'm just going to say it. It feels lazy to me.

Winston: It feels soft. It feels weak.

Jim: It feels soft and weak. I mean, do you want to hire somebody who says, "Hey, tell me about your work-life balance culture"? I'm going, "Lord, we're trying to take the hill." I'm sorry.

Winston: That's the real Jim. That's the real Jim. I love it.

Jim: But I love people. I want to win. I want to win. Whatever it is that I'm doing, I want to win, and, dang it.

Winston: And to that point, like, the original question, right? You asked me, kind of, what is all this looking like for me? Pastoring, campus pastoring, fatherhood, ministry. And I think, to your

point, balance seems so rigid. Balance seems very mechanical. If we're going to come from the Christian worldview, this biblical precedent for rhythm. Rhythm versus balance.

Jim: Seasons.

Winston: And with rhythm--

Jim: Seven days of the week, 24 hours a day.

Winston: There's a cadence, right? And not every cadence is exactly the same. When we get to this work-life balance, I think, once again, the word balance gives this connotation that everything gets equal attention, right? Everything. My marriage is going to get the same attention as my career, as my hobbies. And that is not a real expectation because of seasons. There are certain seasons in a marriage or there are certain seasons in a family when you have a newborn. There are certain seasons when you get a promotion, you have new responsibilities, and there's a cadence to it. And so, it's about being flexible enough to conform and to move with the rhythm and the demand of the season and how do we prioritize, what is the need right here?

You told me this, and this has stuck with me. If anybody is to ask me what my leadership style is at a job interview, if I was to actually give them an answer, it's going to be the wrong answer no matter what--

Jim: It's the wrong answer.

Winston: No matter what, leading is what needs to be done now.

Jim: Right.

Winston: [unintelligible 00:46:30] a room, what do I need to do? Do I need to put my hands on something? Do I need to take my hands off and empower somebody? Like, I need to assess the context and then make a decision. And that's leadership. And I think the work-life balance question is a false question or false idea because it robs us of assessing the season. It robs us addressing what is God asking me to do right now and what does my family need from me? Then adjusting.

Jim: Yeah, absolutely. Everybody loves John Maxwell's definition of leadership influence, but it's just not robust enough. And context determines how we influence if you will. Granted, I can get analytical in this, but let me say it another way, Winston, and I've written this before, but this is

probably where I struggle with balance because it just seems so Disneyland. I wrote this short. "Achievers, team players, people who are trying to do something with their life know that they have to make short-term sacrifices-

Winston: That's good.

Jim: - from time to time for long-term gains. And so that's alignment. It's not balance, it's alignment. "We're entering a tough season right now, we're entering a challenging season right now. It's all hands on deck," and that's a short-term sacrifice for a long-term gain. So, I think that though they sound similar and there's certainly a lot of similarities in it, but I think maybe as leaders what we can do is help people understand it starts with their vision, their mission, their values, and then, how they're going to go about that.

Back in the old days, and I'm not saying the old days are better than today, and I think a lot of people misunderstand that because there's a lot of stuff in the old days that's junk and it's left behind, and I'm glad that we have. I mean, bullying, for example. I'm not saying it doesn't go on anymore, but that was commonplace. My boss meant well, but he was a stinking bully, and there's no doubt about it. I thank God for him because he used him to shape me up.

I never went into the military. My dad did, my son did, my son-in-law did. I've got my nephews and nieces who did. I never went in the military. And I've told stories that often gross people out pretty quickly. Being a dad will grow you up quick. Also, marriage shows you how selfish you can be. We want to move into some other topics, but I think you bringing that up is really important. And what I was going to say is I think that maybe what we can do, regardless of what generation we come to, is we can look at, yeah, how do we deal with today's realities? The world has become much smaller now than it was when I was a young leader. And I mean that by the media that you introduced. The constant--

I mean, it's like if you're not on every social media platform, for some reason, you're absent. Yet you get involved in everyone now. You've got to maintain that. For some strange reason, somebody wrote it in the sky that you've got to maintain your profile, and it's just a weird, weird rule. We don't have the capacity to do it yet. We still have people teaching us how to do it better, to get the most ROI on our social media platforms and stuff. And, frankly, it exhausts me, you know.

Winston: Oh, yeah.

Jim: It's not a rabbi approach. You know the rabbi approach is create a circle of influence and dump your life into it. Now, I'm not saying that we have to dump technology, but maybe we're getting used by technology and not using technology.

Winston: 100%. How are we stewarding it? Because I think, for me, the revelation I've gotten, even as a Millennial, and just-- I'm 34, and I've had the context of growing up without technology and now being a part of the advancements in technology. So I've kind of had a foot in both worlds as I've grown up. And one of the, I think crazy things to me is the more you're aware of, the more you're responsible for. And the more you give access to your life, whatever that looks like, whether it's one social media platform, two social media platforms, you give out your phone number, you give out your email, you've opened yourself up. And now that you're open to it, you are responsible for what comes. And I think that's part of the tension, even when we're talking about work-life balance. We've just become a culture of access and not understanding who are we supposed to give access to. Like, who should have what information? How do I prioritize that information? Because it can be overwhelming. But we've unknowingly given everybody access to us, and not everybody deserves access to us.

Jim: Well, and then, if we keep walking down this tunnel, then we all know that between streaming, and technology and platforms, you can't-- Can you? Is it possible to hide your pornography from your five-year-old, your eight-year-old, your 12-year-old? Is it even possible? And then, one of the things that shook me up when I was a young leader at the bank, I was a banking executive, I was over my head in every single way. And, we don't need to go into that story, the context of that story, but one of the things I noticed even in my generation, we all-- I've done dumb stuff, right? I've done some dumb stuff in my life. I think that I have the self-preservation gift, though, where when I do something stupid to myself, I usually go, "Well, that was dumb." And say, "Gosh, I'm not going to do that again."

Yet, when I would come to the bank on Mondays, I would see people making the same mistake over and over and over again. Hangover, shacking up with somebody, just doing-getting busted, just really stupid stuff. And in that generation, some of the humorous phrases-- Flip Wilson was a comedian back in those days.

Winston: [unintelligible 00:53:23]

Jim: Yeah, and he used to say, "The devil made me do it." Right? So my generation was, when they went sideways, it was, "I can't help it," or "the devil made me do it," or whatever. But there wasn't a war against absolute truth. And today, correct me if I'm wrong from your perspective, we are exposed to so many sound bites today. Some good, some meh, and then some really horrible. It seems to me that there is a movement to relativity wherein this generation, the UBU and the transgender, and, we can go on and on, the easily offended world we live in today. I ponder that, and, to be frank, it bothers me that I can't figure out its source.

Now, I know its source but I can't figure out how it has all of a sudden come out from underneath the bushes, and now, to be somebody who actually believes that there are standards and those standards come from absolute truth, and then to be labeled a bigot, someone lacking empathy, it's causing some who once maybe felt more secure about what they believe, question what

they believe and beginning to cower to the possibility of being ridiculed for their beliefs. How much are the Millennials involved in a discussion in this? Or are they culture creators? Are they culture reactors? What's your take on that?

Winston: Yeah, I think from my perspective, our generation has some of the leading voices in the conversation of culture right now. How things are being curated, the narratives in the media, whether it's, if you're on the left side or the right side, or even if you're speaking from a Christian worldview. And to your point, it's easier to build a theology. It's easier to build a life a lifestyle off of a sound bite versus having a conviction, taking the time to allow yourself to consider all of the factors to have a conversation with somebody and be willing to listen to them and be willing to be humble enough to say, "Oh, yeah, I didn't know that. I assumed some things, and now you've given me context to formulate my own perspective."

It seems in the urgency of our culture that we're willing to just take a sound bite that feeds our own, preconceived notions versus actually taking the time to have hard and difficult conversations, and, to the point of technology once again, you mentioned, before technology, you come into the office, and a lot of communication was face to face. I think our culture struggles to have in-person conversations, face-to-face conversations. Everything is easier to bypass the awkwardness of a face-to-face interaction, the discomfort of a face-to-face interaction.

As a staff and a team yesterday, we talked about how to have hard conversations. One of the basic principles of having a hard conversation is to do it in person, right? To see the person's body language, to hear the tonality in their voice. But it becomes very irresponsible to try to formulate, a worldview via text message, via 30 minutes on a platform, via hearing a sound bite from the president and say, "Oh, yeah, that didn't sound right," with no context of a two-hour conversation. You heard two seconds of a sound bite, and now that's your political stance, that's your theology about Christianity.

We hear all this about church hurt and deconstruction, and it comes from a documentary that is actually not even created by an objective source but a subjective source that has an agenda. And we're just not thinking about and taking time to consider all the factors of, "Why do I believe what I believe? Where does this communication come from? And what are my own personal values? Do the things that I'm interacting with even align with the things that I deem to be a priority in my life, a core value?"

To the point of some of the content you at Lead Today, right? why am I here? What's my mission? what do I believe my life stands for? And having some of these fundamental internal conversations that can then influence our external conversations. Half the battle is having a conversation. I think, Millennials and then you get into Gen Z and whatever the future is, technology and the ability to communicate with everyone has this not communicating with anyone, right? We have so much access to everyone that it's easier to just consume communication and consume content and not actually have meaningful dialogue.

The last time we talked, we talked about maybe one of the solutions is modeling dialogue, modeling how to have a conversation, inviting people to see what does it look like to disagree in love, what does it look like to have two differing opinions? And I don't think that really exists in our culture now and I know, that definitely starts in my generation. It's kind of bleeding into generations to come as we're getting so disconnected from each other and isolating our own thoughts. We just become echo chambers and we're just talking to the same people.

One of the things that freaks me out, my wife and I will be on Instagram, we'll scrolling through the timeline, the feed. She's seeing things that I don't see, and I'm seeing things that she doesn't see. And we've essentially curated our own world perspectives. I'm getting ESPN updates and I'm getting fashion updates, and she's getting mom stuff. And it's like she's getting news or information about certain things, but the information, the way that we're consuming it, it's being pushed to us based on what we want the algorithm.

Jim: Or what the algorithm has decided that we want at least for a while. I know I was laughing about that the other day because I was listening to a Christian comedian on Instagram, and having a good time. He's doing great. And then the next thing you know, two or three days later, I'm scrolling through Instagram and it was nothing but Church stuff, and I'm going, "Holy moly, I don't want to watch all this stuff." I mean, you got preachers preaching and you know all these things.

And, yeah, I think what we were talking about is, is it's not that it's really a new idea because I've seen it attempted before, but it was done in a more formal atmosphere where you'd go to such and such University. You'd have Mr. atheist debating with Mr. Christian scholar. And then the students were kind of forced sometimes to go and listen. But I think that what we talked about is what if-- Whatever the topic is, whether it's--

Winston: Abortion.

Jim: Yeah, whatever it is, could two human beings or more, two or three or four, get up there and talk about, to your point, abortion, and talk about everything about it, everything about it? I think what we talked about last time, Winston, is that are there people that are qualified to come in, share their opinion, share their stats, share their convictions, their experiences, all those things somehow without a burden of winning? Is it possible for somebody to do that?

I'm pretty darn competitive, so I may not be qualified to do that. But I know some who are very cerebral, and they actually have the capacity to go down a rabbit hole, go down your rabbit hole with you, and really try to understand you. But in the process, you are exposed to-- Because I've been in environments like that, is what I'm trying to say. I've seen it. I'm not talking about the debate. I've actually been in environments, very, very rare, but I've been in environments where very mature and secure people are talking about-- In fact, I was listening to a podcast and

maybe a podcast could do it. Maybe two or more people get on a podcast and they already know that they come from different perspectives.

But one of the things I've noticed that could make that work is if they're the expert in their field, but they're also not an expert in your field, then it might just feel like a grenade-throwing contest. I was listening to a podcast, The Jordan Peterson Show, and I forget the name of who he was talking to, but he seems like he was-- I think he actually used the term atheist but he was a bit removed from the possibility of a relationship with an intelligent designer and less convinced that there wasn't an intelligent designer, if that makes sense.

Winston: Yeah.

Jim: Somehow, and he's very mathematical in his mind. And then Jordan Peterson, who is a believer but extremely intellectual, the two of them bantered back and forth, probably for about 90 minutes. And though each of them knew something about certain things that the other one didn't know, it was few and far between. So when Jordan used biblical references that this other fellow that knew it, he talked about it, he was able to engage in it.

So I think that, I think that part of the problem in our conversations today is we think we know what we know, but we sure as heck don't know what we don't know. And I think that that creates difficulty in what we do. I mean, I've had people walk into my library who are very, very, let's just say Evangelical. I hate using these terms, right-wing, left-wing. I hate using those terms. I really do and I know that about what I'm about to say may not make a whole lot of sense, but if you just take the political side of things, there are some things, and I know my friends are gonna get mad at me for saying this, but there are some things on the left that kind of make sense to me and there are a lot of things on the right that do make sense to me. There are some things on the right that embarrass me, but the problem with me speaking out about those things to your point, Winston, is I'm not sure I have dug deep enough to know the foundation of those claims. So therefore I don't know the subjective sand in which it sits.

Winston: That's good.

Jim: Right? So I struggle with that. But anyway, so if you were to walk through my library, you would see religious literature from other faiths, and as a pastor, A) I was curious. B) I didn't feel like I could do a very good job representing the intelligent designer if I didn't have at least an adequate, and to me, adequate would probably mean at least an undergrad's understanding of these different- at least the three main religions. And the problem with that, of course, is you have to stay engaged with it because you can lose what you knew, especially as you get older. You can lose some of those things.

I think that as I get older and I look to people like you who are leading the church today and will continue to lead the church today and at some point, your generation will be in the first chair, predominantly in the church today. To be honest, sometimes as I'm listening to pulpits across the world I hear things that I think could be aligned with scripture, but I also know they could be out of alignment with scripture. There are some statements that you can make that could be coming from a good foundation or it could be coming from, and I think that's what scares me about media today. Does that make sense or does that sound too gray?

Winston: No, it makes 100% sense. And I think even as a Millennial, somebody who engages with social media and just content and listening to other communicators, whether it's TED Talks, other pastors and to the point of some of the conversation, we're talking about sound bites and snapshots and even a social media strategist or marketing content creator will tell you the best way to engage an audience and to get followers is to create content that can fit in certain windows, right? 15 seconds, 30 seconds. And so what starts to happen is you get a culture of communicators that are creating for a window instead of creating for an actual idea to be walked out.

To your point, you could misinterpret scripture or you could twist scripture or you could twist truth to fit into a window instead of laying it all out and being intentional about understanding all the nuances of the truth and how it needs to be communicated in totality. And so there's a real tension, I would say, for any generation in this current space where technology exists and how we consume information is that the majority of audiences are seeking to hear a soundbite. And communicators can either conform to the audience, right? And communicating with the sound bite mentality in mind, or are we willing to do our due diligence to communicate a whole truth? Because a lot of it is just half-truths, and half-truths are doing numbers. Half-truths are attractive because you don't-- Somebody might take a sound bite from this and be like, "Oh, yeah. Either I love these guys or hate these guys," but they're not willing to listen to the entire thing once again because everybody is just so on the go. We're so consumed with our own worlds, curating our own worlds, creating our own environments that please us. And there's so many options that you don't have to listen to somebody that doesn't scratch your itch. Scripture talks about that, right? We're going to turn to hearing things that we want to hear that benefit us versus being curious.

And you said it, I just love the idea of living with curiosity versus trying to go into every space with an agenda. And how does this meet my agenda versus, "Well, tell me more. Why do you believe that? Why do you think that way? Can you inform me a little bit?" And I think we've lost the sense of living with curiosity.

Jim: I think we can really help each other if we start doing that more. I believe, by the way, in mentors that are younger, not just older. I want to be direct with you here in just a minute with the time that we have left. I want to ask you about your own leadership. I think that you would agree with me to say that you are a trailblazer for your generation. You are stepping into leadership for your generation. We tend to make the biggest difference. At least, this is what we used to write. I don't know if it's still true. Maybe media and technology has changed this, I don't

know, but I was raised through seminary where I was taught that pastors tend to influence those 10 years younger to 10 years older.

I don't know if that's still true or not with how the channels of communication have changed. I want to qualify a couple of things and then ask you about how you're growing as a leader, what are you doing as a leader, what are some of your fundamental beliefs about leadership? And then I'd like to schedule another podcast with you or we just talk about that. But I'd like to at least touch on it a little bit today.

But I had some thoughts here while you were talking. I was listening to you and you brought up, you brought a recall in my mind, the Book of Proverbs when we were talking about sound bites. The Book of Proverbs, chapter and verse, I'm not sure, but it says, "The first one to speak seems right at the time until someone comes along and basically adds another perspective."

Even in long podcasts like this the great thing about technology is you don't have to get tired of listening to it. You know, if we've exhausted you, you can hit the pause button and come back. I know that's what I do. In fact, I have found that as I've become an avid listener - I'm an avid reader, I will continue to read - reading is at a certain pace that is different than listening to a conversation in a podcast. But I have come to prefer the long-form podcasts, conversations because of what you and I have talked about today.

If we were to split the time at 50-50, there's a lot to listen to - what you've said and what I've said. But I think you would agree that the baton is being passed, and you are a trailblazer, not just for your generation, but even for your heritage as you have shared that with me. How do you feel about that? How do you feel about creating a new path, being a leader, being out in front, and as you're forming convictions. I don't expect you to have the A to Z, but who is Pastor Winston Harris today? Maybe we could tease that for a little bit.

Winston: Yeah, when I think about where I continually seem to find myself, if I just have margin enough to think about my life, right? I would encourage anybody listening to practice this kind of reflection. Like, what are some themes of your life? What are some things that just seem to continue to show up in different ways? What's that thread? And when I look back, Brooklyn, the Brush, Laredo, basketball, all these different themes, one of the themes that continues to surface is me going first in some way, right? And we talk about leaders go first. First in my family to be a pastor, first in my family to own a home, first in my family to get a degree - all these different firsts.

And what's funny about first is it's frustrating. Going first is frustrating because there's no blueprint often times, right? There's no "How do I do this?" There's no mimicking. You're just putting yourself out there, being vulnerable, being willing to fail, being willing to fall. And not staying down. Right? If you're going to go first, if you're going to blaze a trail, you're going to have to run up against obstacles, against things that are going to trip you up.

And one of the things that I feel like was being formed in with it, if we're talking about convictions, is that if I have myself in mind as I go first, I'm probably not going to be willing to

fail. I'm not going to be willing to fail. I'm going to be in self-preservation mode. I'm going I'm going not take the risk. But if I have others in mind, if I have my wife in mind, if I have my daughter in mind, right now being a father, I'm thinking generationally, "Okay, what are some things that I have to fight now, so that my daughter doesn't fight those things? What are some mindsets, what are some perspectives, what are some spiritual practices, what are some practical ways that I live my life that I need to wrestle with, that I need to confront, that I need to fall, get up, and figure it out, so that those aren't even tension points for her as she grows up and engages life at her own pace?"

As I'm leading a campus or I'm leading other leaders, if I have them in mind, I'm going to be willing to lead sacrificially, just like the one who we put our faith in, right? Jesus is arguably, to maybe those who don't have faith, it's hard to argue, anyway, that Jesus is not the most influential leader we've ever seen. And one of the premises and principles of his leadership is sacrifice. And so, going first calls for being willing to lay down your life, to lay down your pride, to lay down your image - we were talking about that yesterday, right? Being image-minded, and being willing to sacrifice things that we hold dear, that we find security in or comfort in, to find the solution, to find new ground, to create spaces that weren't created before.

And I think those things are forming in me as I'm learning how to lead. I'm learning how to lay down in a way. I'm learning to lay down some things, some old mindset, some comfort zones. I'm learning to lay down things that have been inherited through my family, knowingly and unknowingly, right? Having a child opens up so many Pandora's boxes. I'm like, "Oh, I didn't realize I learned that from my dad," or, "Oh, I learned that from my mom." Or you start once again, the revelation of things that, "Oh, I'm living in such a way that wasn't a decided habit, that wasn't a thing that I woke up one day and said, 'I want to do that.' I've just been living and operating in that way because that's the way that I've been programmed, that's the way that I've been taught to do it from modeling."

There hasn't been a conscious decision to live life a certain way. And so, I think, as we're talking about leading, and finding ways to move forward as a trailblazer, I'm sure there are people who will be listening to this that they have the opportunity to do something that's never been done before, whether it's work at a certain level, or parent at a certain level, whatever that thing is going to be, it's going to call for a conscious decision.

Jim: Yeah and I think science adds to this. I think that when you, you take a step back, it's not just the things that you saw and no one's beating up anybody's parents here, or heritage. We're just trying to be observant and it's true for every single one of us that are that's speaking on this podcast and listening to it, is that we don't just carry with us the things that we saw, the things that influenced us, which might become muscle memory, if you will, from a psychological perspective, but some of them might even be implanted as deep as into our DNA.

We hear this term that practice makes perfect, that there is a correlation between the things that we do and the things that are innate. And sometimes, I know this is going to sound crazy, but a lot of psychologists have said that if you've practiced something long enough, it's almost difficult

to tell whether that was innate, or whether-- And so that brings up to me this whole idea of transformation. And you're not just fighting for yourself, you're fighting for Brooklyn, your daughter, and you're fighting for her husband, and her children, and her children's children. And so, the treasure is great, the victory is great, the process is worth it because of what can possibly happen. Yeah, I like where you're going with this.

Winston: Yeah, it's 100% correct. And to be fair, like you're saying you lose yourself in the midst of pursuing things that we've been taught are going to bring life to you, whatever you think that is, right? You know, for some, it's money, for some, status, for someone, it's position. And once again, you just find yourself operating and living according to a script that you didn't write. Your family wrote it. You know, maybe there's a tradition in your family to be a doctor, and you just inherited that script, and you're living that out.

Jim: We'll go back even further, did you decide to be born?

Winston: 100%. We're the only author of life, right?

Jim: That's right.

Winston: We're living in that conscious decision of, "What script am I going to live by?" And I think when we're talking about what I'm learning as a leader, and who Winston is, even to the point of culture, and to be transparent, as a-- I'm half half African-American, and I'm half Puerto Rican. The majority of what I grew up in in New York City, Brooklyn, New York, was African-American culture, Black Culture. There are things that until you take specific dedicated time to confront, you don't realize you're operating in cultural narratives and cultural perspectives and cultural mindsets.

You know, slavery is one big ideology that has so many Black men and Black people restricted into the life that God has for them, and that's just so bound by this victim mentality. And it's these things that if we never confront, it's hard for us to be the first of anything because we have not taken a conscious stance to say, "I'm not going to live by that narrative. I'm going to live by a narrative of **[unintelligible 01:20:08]**."

Jim: Exactly. Carl Jung said that if we don't make the subconscious conscious, it will control us, and we'll simply call it fate. And so to the history of slavery, to your point, and is it possible that this isn't just learned behavior, but it sunken into the crevices DNA? In seminary, Winston, we call it Deliverance theology, that there is an actual strain of theology that that seems to resonate most with those who have been-- I'm not talking about an individual, but those races, those

decades, those contexts that have been suppressed, have been persecuted, have been ruled and punished in such a way.

I don't know this is true because this is not my area of expertise, but in my broad liberal arts education just about every ethnic group has a story. And that's why so many of those communities are still going strong, good, better, and different, it's because it's what they know. Even if they want to separate themselves from it, they find it extremely difficult to do that. I can tell you were heading in that direction.

And let me just throw this at you, too. One of my convictions about leadership and theology is that I believe that every single soul has faith. When you talked earlier about visio, you talked about what you see, what you see. And so, if we could describe someone's faith as what they, that's a pretty powerful thing. And so, faith then is differentiated only by the object of one's faith.

Winston: Right.

Jim: And so, that is why I think that maybe what we're talking about as a broad theme here is maybe leaders are called to bring people into conversation, to challenge them to use their mind, to challenge them to protect their environments where-- Deconstruction is a bad word for me today because of what it represents, but in some ways, we do need to deconstruct certain things. But maybe a better word is transformed, because transform is forward-moving, it's pursuing something that I think is in the light, whereas deconstruction can maybe spend too much time in the darkness. I don't know. I'm pulling that analogy out of my head right now. I like that word because I don't know of a Biblical word that connects to deconstruction, but I certainly know of multiple words that not only our transformation but are transformational words and ideas and scripture.

So, in that sense we are being renewed, would be another example. Day by day, we are born again, we are being transformed by the renewing of our mind, we can do all things through Christ, and how many times the scripture talk about being found in Christ, in Christ, the preposition in Christ, in Christ. Something to be thinking about there. Did I cut you off, or did you have something else to cap that off?

Winston: No, I think you wrapped it up. You wrapped it up.

Jim: Well, you know how much I love you, you know how much respect you, how much I take joy and your convictions and the things and you curious posture. I think that you are a leader worth trusting and following. You are mentoring me in ways that you probably don't even realize. Rhonda and I got into a little argument, that's my wife for those who are listening. We got in a little argument this morning, where she wanted me in a certain context to appear more mature, and then I had to look at her and say, "Look at me, I'm 63, I'm trying to hold on to youth, so let

me be foolish for a moment." And I say that to say that I think it's valuable to learn from not just you, but from the Millennials. There's something to learn there. There are things to learn from the Millennials. I'm not coming against the Millennials.

I will come against anyone who I think has left behind common sense, and I have plenty of those in my own generation who have done that. Maybe our greatest sin is that we forgot that the Bible says that for the love of money is the root of all evil, and security should not be found in our checkbook or in our assets, but in who we serve and trust in God. Winston Harris, thank you for this time to get. I've enjoyed it very much, and I'm going to take you up on it. We're going to schedule another one, and we're going to talk about leadership.

Winston: Let's do it.

Jim: All right, God bless you.

[music]

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