



THE PRACTICES OF A HEALTHY LEADER

Episode Seven: The Courage to Make Hard Decisions

EPISODE SUMMARY

Some of the hardest seasons in leadership are not created by the difficult decisions we make. They are created by the difficult decisions we continually avoid.

Sometimes leaders genuinely do not know what to do. But sometimes we know exactly what needs to be done and simply do not want to face what it might cost. We fear disappointing people, damaging a relationship, being misunderstood, or discovering that we were wrong.

The problem is not that leaders experience fear. That is human. The drift happens when stewardship quietly becomes self-protection.

Courage is not confidence that everything will work out. It is the willingness to faithfully steward what has been entrusted to us without requiring certainty about the outcome. Healthy leaders seek God, wisdom, counsel, and good information. Then, when clarity comes, they lead.

REFLECTION

Think about a difficult decision you are currently delaying. Do you truly not know what to do, or is what you believe needs to be done simply difficult?

What are you afraid might happen if you make the decision? What relationship, reputation, comfort, approval, stability, or outcome feels threatened?

Rick distinguishes clarity from certainty. Where have you been waiting for certainty when you may already have enough clarity to lead?

Consider the decision-making process you have used. Have you genuinely sought God, wise counsel, outside perspective, and relevant information? Is there anything you still need to become curious about?

Ask the question Rick returns to throughout the episode: What are you moving toward? Is this decision serving the mission and responsibility entrusted to you, or primarily protecting you from discomfort?



THE PRACTICE GUIDE

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SEPARATE FEAR FROM STEWARDSHIP

Take one difficult decision you are currently facing and give yourself enough space to get honest about what is happening internally.

Write these three statements:

1) Name the Fear | If I make this decision, I'm afraid that ____.

Don't sanitize the answer. Are you afraid of losing approval? Disrupting harmony? Damaging a relationship? Hurting your reputation? Being seen as incompetent? Losing control?

Name what is actually making this decision difficult.

3) Name the Responsibility | The responsibility entrusted to me is ____.

Separate what you are actually responsible for from what you wish you could control.

Your responsibility is not to protect everyone's feelings. It is not to guarantee the outcome. It is not to make sure everyone understands or approves.

What has actually been entrusted to you?

3) Name the Faithful Decision | The decision that best serves this responsibility is _____, and the cost I may need to accept is _____.

Then stop.

Take a breath and look at what you wrote. You have separated the fear surrounding the decision from the responsibility you have been entrusted to steward.

That doesn't necessarily make the decision easy. **It can make it clear.**

Remember: The goal is not emotional detachment from people. The goal is emotional detachment from the anxiety that has been making the decision for you. Stop letting fear make leadership decisions while pretending that it is wisdom.