



Discouraged in Ministry? Three Reminders to Keep You Balanced (Part 2)

[Transcribed]

Mike: I remember pressing so hard with people going like, man, you just got to work and if you just worked harder at this man, this would have happened, and that's not the case all the time...

Carter: Waddup everybody, it's Pastor Mark Carter, welcome to the Bible Leadership Podcast. You know, one of the greatest dangers for a Christian influencer, and that is likely you if you're listening to this, is to do life without a flowing heart that is connected to the living word. I don't just mean you interact with words on the pages of the Bible, I mean you interact with the living breath of life that is flowing through those pages into your spirit. It's too easy to even do things that involve the Bible but fail us in terms of connecting deeply with Jesus, that should be a lifelong progressing journey. That's why I always like to remind you, we need to keep our Bible connected to our leadership and our leadership connected to our Bible. If we are leading, it's because God wants us to go somewhere, so we need to make sure we're listening to Him through the pages of Scripture to go the right way. Well last week, we said that we need to be watchful that we don't too much carry the weight of the world on our shoulders, and the enemy is always going to try to get us to do this. And so, we talked to Pastor Mike Bryant, from Grace Community Church, and he reminded us of three biblical truths: I have a part, God has a part, and God isn't going to do my part and I can't do God's part. And then, other people have a part, or they have a part. There's people out there that we can't control; that they have to decide to participate at some point and so, we're going to pick up with they have a part with Pastor Mike Bryant. Let's listen in.

Mike: If you recognize these three areas that, you know, God has a part, is this His plan, has He called me to this, but I have a part too, and if I'm going after it, I'm being faithful in the things God's calling me. I'm growing, I'm learning, but I'm doing faithful ministry that people around have a part too, you know, the people that you go to. And so, if you plant in one area, and it's not fruitful, think about Matthew 10, when Jesus is sending out his disciples, and He's saying, hey, I'm sending you out two by two, if they receive you, you know, let your peace rest there, if not, kick the dust off your sandals and move on. So, like, in some senses, we're like, no, we gotta keep loving people and keep caring about people all the time, and we gotta keep investing and growth takes time. And it does, and some of those things are true; but the reality is sometimes too, you deal with people with hard hearts, you're dealing with a community that's got some idols that they're not willing to let go, or you're just dealing with a place that is completely dead and apathetic. And maybe God has called you there, just to be faithful in the midst of it, but you've got to discern that too, and you've got to wrestle with that, give the freedom, give grace to yourself to go like man, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus... love that phrase, it's one of those mottos around



Grace Community. But I think if you, if you recognize it's not all on you, like they've got a part in the place I'm planting, you know, you may be in one city, you know, rocking it, and then you go to another city and you don't rock it, you go to a different one, and that's what the Apostle Paul saw. You know, like he goes and preaches at Mars Hill, people are like, we'll hear you later, we'll hear you more about this. Some believe, but not many, you know, there were sometimes where Jesus did ministry, and you know, 20,000 are showing up and, and people are getting fed, miracles are happening. And then there's others where He's like, man, I couldn't do a single miracle because there was no fruitful ministry. I had an experience with, with a staff member early on and I could go on for how many mistakes I made, and leading staff I mean, as pastors, as senior pastors, senior leaders, leading volunteers, leading service, but also leading staff, like I made so many mistakes, but one of them was, just learning this lesson that they have a part, even in terms of establishing leadership. So, I had an associate pastor in the beginning of our church and, you know, very charismatic guy in terms of like, personal and people loved him, and just relationally, you know, but at the same time, he just wasn't effective in ministry, in fruitful ministry. Stuff wasn't getting done, ministry was getting stalled, rather than going forward. Things weren't being built; they weren't even being maintained necessarily. And I kind of scratch my head a little bit. And so I invested a lot of time in him, you know, I would send him to conferences, I would, you know, we chat about ministry discussions, I tried to give them insights, I'd set goals with him and plans with him, you know, trying to hold him accountable, you know, and I will tell you, man, just over a year, year and a half period, like he's just not moving forward, he's just not getting things done and I feel like, man, I'm failing this guy, you know, I'm failing this guy, how much more can I put into it? Because I had a wrong perception that if I just love people enough, I gave him enough time or input, or if I led them well and was inspiring as a leader, those kind of things, like they will come to the table, and they'll be fruitful and that kind of stuff. And what I realized with him over time is, just going like, it's not my issue. You have everything you need. You've got love, you've got vision, you've got equipping, you've got training, you got to do your part, you've got to come to the table, you've got to make the phone calls, you've got to plan the retreat, you've got to call, you know, you've got to do the parts of ministry that you're called to do. And he wasn't coming to the table with that stuff. Like, at some point, you feel like man, am I failing as a leader? And you're hearing it, even as I expose it. Like yeah, dude were you really that immature? And you're like, yea, I guess I was that immature and it was a lesson that God really had to teach me of going like, he's got a part, he's got to come to the table. Think about it with Jesus man. Like Jesus knew that, so perfectly wise, perfect leader. Matthew 25, you know, parable of the talents, you know, He gives some one, some three, some five and some don't come to the table with doing their part. He's like, you brought back the one? Uhhhh goodbye. Give that to the guy with five.

Carter: Well man, this is really good; so I have a part, God has a part, let's talk a little bit more about they have a part because I think sometimes there are people in our lives that, yes, maybe they're not doing what we wish they were doing. But do you think there's ever a place in us as people that are trying to be fruitful? You know, and maybe it's because it went so well, maybe it's because of our, you know, our family of origin someplace. But we are really used to like, I feel like I can just fix them, though. I feel like I



can just control them; I feel if you just do what I say, you know what I'm saying? If everyone just bought into more Carterology, everything would be great.

Mike: Yea, Michealogy. Yea, whatever, sure.

Carter: But they have a part. Like, I can't control what God's doing in them, I can't control how they're responding to God, like all I can control is, I'm sowing into you, and sometimes there's even these boundaries there. But I tell you man, I've found that I can design people's entire lives for them but that does not mean that God has gifted them the way I designed it, or He's given them the measures to do what I wish they could do. So, I've certainly found sometimes, you know, maybe they're being lazy. Sometimes, what I'm wanting from them, God did not give them. And I'm actually, you know, learning over time to say, and I think Christian leaders, especially I think in the church, it's easy; you want to give people grace, you want to give them like, I'm still believing and want to be like that great mentor and that you've got potential, and I see it in you, you're gonna make it, you know what I'm saying? But I feel like I'm coming to Jesus lately, understanding their potential is not the same thing as what they do. Everybody's got potential, you know what I'm saying? Everybody can go further, but the question at the end of the day is, but what did they actually do? Like, what did they do today? Because what they've been doing is a lot likely what they're going to keep doing at the pace that they're progressing. Maybe I'm wanting them to embrace a thing that dude, I'm sorry, God gave them two measures of that, and they would need ten to pull it off, you know what I'm saying? There's no way, and part of that is on me is they have a part and in their story, God has a part that maybe they haven't gone into yet. And so, as a leader, I have to be able to say, this is not my responsibility, like, I want to help you find what you're good at, but I can't keep hoping you're going to get good enough, with regard to this thing.

Mike: And there's freedom in that isn't there? There's great freedom for you as a leader, because you're, and ultimately, like, when you're pressing for something that's not a good fit, you know like, you know, square peg in a round hole that will do like, or, you know, just trying to get somebody into a role that's not their gift mix. Or maybe they just don't have the gravitas of leadership that God hasn't given them the anointing. And you're trying to force it, you're trying to press it, you're trying to develop it, and they don't have it. And they might have good intention, they might be like, going like, yeah, I'll try the work, but you're like, I don't know if this is going to work. And the more you recognize these three parts, the more you can have freedom with it to go, I remember pressing so hard with people going like, man, you just got to work and if you just worked harder at this man, this would have happened, and that's not the case all the time. Sometimes you can just go hey man, maybe there's a different place for you to serve. Maybe there's a different role, or just to simply say, hey man, I think God's leading us in a different direction not because you're like, oh, I heard this special word from the Lord or you play that manipulative card; but simply, you're just recognizing the move of God to say, I don't think you're gifted for this role.

Carter: Yea, and I found that that is, whereas I used to feel like I was letting them down, I feel much more now like I'm loving them. Of like, my friend, I'm sorry, you are an apple tree. Let me tell you now, because



you're not gonna make peaches, and I love you so much and I'll repent if you ever make peaches someday, but I'm telling you, like, my instincts have grown in this. You're an apple tree, let's make you the awesomest apple tree possible.

Mike: Correct.

Carter: And you're not disappointing me, you're really not disappointing Jesus, but you're probably a little bit kicking against the goes if you do this too much longer.

Mike: And If you can do that, in the truth and grace way, if you can do that in a way that is for them and they sense the love that you have for them and the vision you have. Many times I can go well, I mean, it's hard when it's staff related or well, dollars are in it, if somebody's livelihood is involved in that, because they're like, man, you don't want me on staff or now I gotta go get a different job to support it or, and honestly, with ministry, if you say, hey, you're not suited for this role, I think you're more suited for this. And if you don't have a position at your church for that yet, means they have to leave the church or go find some other church unless they go out into the marketplace and stay at the church and just do volunteer, that's hard. It's all those variables, and then it makes it difficult, but at the same time, you got to steward the church well.

Carter: You do.

Mike: You know, and you got to bring the most effectiveness for that ministry in that place, according to your part, God's part and their part.

Carter: That's totally true and I think it's also been helpful. One of these we try to message to our people around here is ministries of stewardship, not an identity, because there's something that's so in each of us, like, we want to be great at something, but it becomes idolatrous, almost like, but that's who I am, that's my thing. Well, it's actually not who you are.

Mike: Well, thank you for preaching into my heart right now.

Carter: You are a son of God, you are daughter of the King but your ministry is not who you are, and I feel like the Lord even opposes us, when we start to get our identity in the thing rather than in His Son.

Mike: Dude, preach it. Yup, c'mon!

Carter: I think the more we can make that up on the culture of understanding, hey man, but as you've known this whole time, it's not your identity, it's only a stewardship and it's keys you're going to turn in some day, you know, so you can get keys to a different thing, you know what I'm saying?



Mike: Yeah, well, yeah. Dude, you go on for that, that God's opposing me thing. I mean, that's, that's huge, because sometimes He does oppose us in ministry. Sometimes He does oppose us in life, and He does it because either we're not on His plan, which is ultimately for His glory, our good and the joy of everyone involved, who will surrender their hearts to Him. But it's also that sense of like, He's like, man, I want your heart, I want you, and I'm about you, and the way you're going about this is going to destroy you; so I'm going to oppose you and go against you; like, I have this with my daughter recently, like I was opposing her. She had a scheduled planned in her life, you know, like at school, you know, she's the firstborn wanting to like rock the world, take names and all that kind of stuff, and I'm like, man, you're not going to be thriving, you're not going to be experiencing joy; yea, could you do it? Yes, because I know you have the discipline, I know you have the willpower, I know you have the effort, and God's giving you the gift, but you will be tanking yourself, and I'm guessing your spiritual life will suffer. I'm guessing like you need margin in your life, you'll be drained as could be. And so, I had to oppose her and go no, I'm not gonna let you do that, and I think Scott does that with us.

Carter: I do too.

Mike: I think sometimes when we're not seeing fruitful ministry, God's like, hey man, I need to get your attention.

Carter: Yup. because he's a good father. Like He said, I made a promise to you, I'm going to conform you to the image of my Son; this is not the highest and best for you, I know what will be highest and best for you, so I'm gonna shut this down. And honestly, every time, I know probably in His loving discipline, He's allowed me to go down my own hallway when He could have stopped me but He's like, well, let me know how that bloody nose goes; and I'm like Lord, I've had enough bloody noses, and please don't let me. You know, be my daddy and don't let me do a bunch of stupid crap. I'm just, I'll just do it now, you know? I'll do what you want now.

So, Mike, this has been so helpful, man; so I have a part, God has a part, and they have a part. It's all about us remembering that God is super intending everything about our life because of His faithfulness to us in Christ. And there may be revelations that we need on one of these at different points, but we can always come back to trusting that God brings the growth, God brings the fruit, and part of His work is me, and part of His work is you. So, this has been super helpful. Anything else you want to say? Any last thoughts?

Mike: Nothing, we've said it all man; we could talk for hours. But no, I just appreciate your heart. I think seeing this in ministry over time for us has been exciting, you know, and that's the beauty of watching God work in our lives; because there's been times where I think we've all seen ministry wins and successes as we've done ministry together, been able to celebrate those but then there's the times where we're walking and we're going, now what is God doing right now? And I just I would say, man, it's a privilege just to walk through that with you, and just to see God move in the midst of all seasons.



Carter: Amen, I appreciate that bro. Well, hey, man, how can people get in touch with you if they want to?

Mike: They could definitely check out our website, mygracecommunity.org. They can get in touch with the church that way. We also have a church app as well, so they can reach sermons and stuff like that; just search My Grace Community or Grace Community Grayslake and they'll be able to find it in the App Store or the Play Store.

Carter: Well bro, it's been so meaningful today, thank you for sharing your wisdom and God bless.

Mike: Yea, awesome, brother, good to be with ya.

Carter: Well my friends, I hope you enjoyed hanging out with Pastor Mike and I, if you've got any thoughts about this, don't be afraid to leave a comment at bibleleadership.life on the post page. You can also while you're there, pick up a t-shirt or sweatshirt if you want to support the Bible Leadership Podcast. Speaking of support, can I just give a great big shout out to all of our patrons, the BOP family patrons. Thank you guys so much. We could not do any of this without you. For anybody else, we're still trying to reach our goal that would make the podcast a whole lot easier. You can check that out at patreon.com/bibleleadership. if you are curious. Don't forget, sharing the podcast goes a long way toward helping other leaders, so don't be afraid to help them find it by sharing it on social media or however you share things. Well my friends, thank you for listening. Don't forget you don't need to be perfect to lead, just lead toward the perfect Savior, Jesus Christ. We'll see you next time.

[END]