

Doug Smith ([00:06](#)):

Hey leader and welcome to episode number 327 of the L3 Leadership podcast, where we are obsessed with helping you grow to your maximum potential and to maximize the impact of your leadership. My name is Doug Smith and I am your host. And today's episode is brought to you by my friends at Beratung Advisors. If you're new to the podcast, welcome, I'm so glad that you're here. And I hope that you enjoy our content and become a subscriber, know that you can also watch all of our episodes over on our YouTube channel. So make sure you're subscribed there as well. And if you've been listening to the podcast for a while and it's impacted your life, it would mean the world to me. If you would leave us a rating and review on apple podcast or Spotify or whatever app you listen to podcast through, that really does help us to grow our audience and reach more leaders.

Doug Smith ([00:45](#)):

So thank you in advance for that. Well, in today's episode leaders, you're gonna hear a personal lesson by me. It's been a while, cuz life has been crazy. And today's lesson, I'll be teaching you a lesson. I called life at 37 and every year around my birthday, I try to do a personal lesson with what I'm learning at that age and that season of my life. And so that's what you're gonna get today. I think it'll really add value to your life. But before we dive into that, just a few announcements. This episode of the L3 Leadership podcast is sponsored by Beratung Advisors, the financial advisors at Beratung Advisors, help educate and empower clients to make informed financial decisions. You can find out how Beratung Advisors can help you develop a customized financial plan for your financial future by visiting their website at beratungadvisors.com.

Doug Smith ([01:26](#)):

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Doug Smith ([02:07](#)):

Oh, Hey leader. Today. I'd like to talk to you on the subject life at 37. And I recently just turned 37 years old. And for some context, every year around my birthday, I take some time to reflect on where I am at that age and what I'm learning. And then I try to summarize everything into one lesson and share it with you. And I do that for two reasons. One is to document my life a year at a time. So I will have a recording now of where I was at each age and what I was learning, what was important to me at that age. And the second reason I put together this lesson is to obviously add value to your life. And so I think the lessons I'll share today will be applicable no matter how old you are, you could be in your twenties, thirties, forties, fifties.

Doug Smith ([02:42](#)):

I think the lessons apply across the board. And so I hope that they'll add value to your life. And so let's dive right in here is what I'm learning at the age of 37 years old. The first thing I wrote at is at 37 life is nuts. And so let me just use this to, to give you some context of where I am in life. I'm still married to my

high school, sweetheart, who I love will be celebrating our 10th anniversary this year, which is hard to believe, although I will say we've been together for 20 years. Yes, that's right. It took me 10 years to grow into the man I needed to become to marry Laura. But I'm glad I did. It was worth every single day of those 10 years to get to that point. And I'm very grateful for Laura.

Doug Smith ([03:21](#)):

So we're married. We currently have three kids and we just went public and announced that number four is on their way expected in December of 2022. And we're really excited about growing our family this year as well. So that adds to the complexity of, of life right now. Laura and I both work full time. I'm currently the, the director of development at light of life rescue mission. And Laura is a sales manager and overseas north America manufacturing sales for her company. So we're both very, very busy at work. And then to add to that we've been in a townhouse for seven years. And so we've been looking to buy a house for a long time and we just found our dream home and purchased that. And so within the last two months specifically we have both bought and sold our house.

Doug Smith ([04:06](#)):

And so to say that life is nuts and, you know, with all the running around with kids is probably an understatement. But it's really sweet season. We wouldn't trade it for anything in the world and we really, really love it. But at, at 37 life is nuts. So that's where I am. So let's dive into some lessons number one, and I'll probably share this every year for the rest of my life, but at 37, I'm still more grateful for life than I have ever been. I'm still more grateful for life than I have ever been. And I would just tell you that I never take a day for granted anymore. And for those of who have been along the journey on this podcast, about two years ago in the fall of 2020, I, I had, I went through a really, really dark season and it was just terrible.

Doug Smith ([04:47](#)):

I had a mental breakdown. I didn't know if I was gonna be able to ever work again, all kind of things. And you can go back and listen to, you know, what I learned through that season. But I didn't know if I was gonna make it out of that and I wasn't suicidal or anything like that. I just literally with how my body felt. I did not know if I would survive. And so I am grateful for every day. I didn't know that I'd see 37, so I'm very glad that I am. And I'm just grateful for every day. And I would just encourage you every day is a gift and something I heard recently, I was actually watching a movie and I just thought this was so profound. It's just, someone said getting older is a gift. And I think sometimes in our culture, we look at getting older as the opposite of that.

Doug Smith ([05:24](#)):

We view it as a curse, oh, I'm getting older. But someone once said to me, every season of life gets sweeter and sweeter. And I couldn't agree more with that. And so getting older is a gift. And so at 37, I'm more grateful for life than I've ever been. And I hope that you are too. Number two at 37, I'm no longer a young leader. Now, now this was eye opening this year. I'm no longer a young leader. What do I mean by that? Well I remember that there was our executive director at light of life scheduled a meeting recently. And it was for the young leaders of our organization and I wasn't invited and usually I'm invited all of those things. And you know, I didn't care that I was invited, but I was just like, Hey, you know, I saw there was a young leader meeting the organization, young influencers.

Doug Smith ([06:05](#)):

Why, why wasn't I in that meeting? And I was told it's because you're over 35 and it was for 35 and under, and at that point I said, oh my goodness. You know, I've been in the, the young leader bucket, so to speak for so long. And now I'm no longer in it. Now, do I think, you know, a young leader, you hit a certain age at 36 or 37, all of a sudden you're no longer a young leader. No, I don't think that, but I would say experientially, I'm no longer a young leader. I've been in a significant leadership role in my organization now for, over four years and have been leading for a while. And so I do think I've, I've kind of transitioned from the emerging leader stage into the, the actual leadership stage.

Doug Smith ([06:48](#)):

And you lead in both. So don't get me wrong. If you're an emerging leader, it's not like you don't have leadership responsibilities. It's just the scope of what you're leading and managing may be a little bit smaller. And so you may have to, to grow some more. So anyway, it's more of an observation, but I would say that this was the first year that I actually observed that I've made that transition. So at 37, I'm no longer a young leader. And the only thing I would add onto that is I've shared this before, but when I turned 30, I did a decade review and every year I do an annual review and review my year. And then every decade I look back on the past 10 years of my life and try to extract lessons from that. And when I was doing my decade review, when I turned 30, God spoke to me and he said, Doug, in your twenties, I build a foundation for you to build your life on in your thirties.

Doug Smith ([07:30](#)):

I'm gonna give you something to say, and in your forties, I'm gonna give you a platform to say it. And I would say that that was definitely true of my twenties. God laid a, a really solid foundation. You know, I'm three quarters of the way through my thirties now. And I would just say, you know, in that transition from young leader to old leader, God has definitely given me a lot to say about leadership. I think for a long time in my twenties, I talked a lot about leadership, but it was a lot of theory. And so God has really used my thirties to move that leadership theory into leadership action. And so now when I talk about leadership, there's a lot more credibility. And I think there's something to that. You know, young leaders, it's great to study leadership and observe leadership and lead as much as you can while you're young.

Doug Smith ([08:10](#)):

But nothing will truly replace you actually being in the game on the field, leading at a higher level. And so if you're in your twenties or if you're in an emerging leader position, keep leading keeping faithful, your opportunity will come. If you're in your thirties, like me making that transition, just keep leading well and keep doing the best that you can. And just take it one day at a time. So I'm no longer a young leader. Number three at 37, I'm praying for clarity. Now I wrote this lesson two months ago. So I wanna give you some context, but at 37 I was praying this prayer. You know, I've had a lot of opportunities come my way. Recently just over the past few years, which has been wonderful opportunities are great, but when you have a lot of them it can actually complicate things cuz you really have to discern, Hey, what, what am I supposed to do?

Doug Smith ([08:55](#)):

What opportunities should I take? And so a prayer that I've been praying probably for, you know, six months to a year is God, what is my highest and best use? What is my highest and best use? I don't wanna waste time. I don't want to take opportunities that that God doesn't have for me. I want to be used at my highest and best use all the time. So that's what I've been praying. And it's so interesting historically how I would process this is as I would pray that I'd pray that prayer, but then I would go try

to process with all of my, my leadership friends. And so, and people that know me well, Hey, what do you think my highest and best use is? What do you think I should be doing? And I'd constantly ask people and the way my friend really challenged me, he said, Doug, I think you need to turn down the voices of other people in your life and turn up the voice of God in your life.

Doug Smith ([09:40](#)):

You need to spend time hearing from God in this situation. And you know, even though I was praying that prayer, I wasn't taking the time to hear what God had to say. And just personally, you know, I've had a go over the last five or six years spiritually to go on a silence and solitude retreat. For me, silence and solitude has always been a challenge. For me, prayer has been a challenge. I wouldn't have said it at the time, but my actions would've told you that I thought prayer was a waste of time and I would schedule silence and solitude retreats. But anytime I saw them on the calendar, something else would come up and I'd say, you know what? Like that sounds really fun. I'm gonna do that instead. And so I literally in five or six years of having a goal have not had a silence and solitude retreat.

Doug Smith ([10:19](#)):

Well, I'll tell you this, that, and I'll probably do a whole podcast on this, but just last week I had the opportunity to go to Montana on a spiritual retreat, with a, a bunch of ministry leaders that I have the privilege of leading a mastermind group with. And we got away and turned off. All of our email turned off everything and really just spend time with God on a daily basis. We prayed for each other. We spent two hours in prayer and worship each day we had ministers come in and minister us. And then I, and then Laura allowed me to have a few extra days in Montana. And so I really got to spend a lot of time with God. And you know, what's so funny when you actually designate time to spend it with God and listen to him and get quiet and pray and worship.

Doug Smith ([10:55](#)):

He'll actually meet you there and he'll speak to you. And again, I'm not gonna unveil or reveal everything that God spoke in my heart that week about what my highest and best use is. But I would tell you that he spoke to me very, very clearly. And my encouragement here to you is if, if you're gonna pray that prayer, God, what is my highest and best use, make sure that you give him the time he needs in, in your devotion to actually speak to you where you actually listen. And maybe you're like me. Maybe you constantly try to listen to the voice of others and turn the voice of others up. And maybe you need to turn that down a little bit. I know I did and, and turn up the voice of God like my friend said. So I, more than anything, I would just really challenge you to ask God, what is my highest and best use?

Doug Smith ([11:34](#)):

And I'll add one more thing. This will be a nugget just for free. One thing that God did speak to me very, very clearly that I think is worth sharing is, and it goes along with this, this, this idea of giving God time, he spoke to me when I was pray I was spending time in prayer and worship. He said, Doug, you must must like, that was very strong. You must lead your family in prayer and, and worship. You must. And he said, you've depended on so much of your walk with me of getting in the word and the wisdom of God, which is great. He said wisdom and the word are great, but you've lacked in prayer and intimacy and worship. And if you raise your kids that way, if they only have my word and wisdom, that won't be enough to sustain their walk with me for their life and they won't be able to sustain that.

Doug Smith ([12:18](#)):

And so you must lead your family in prayer and worship. So that's become one of my major goals. As I, as I guess I go from 37 to 38, that's gonna be a major emphasis on leading our family team. So I just wanted to add that in wasn't initially part of my lesson, but I thought it would add value. And it goes right into the next lesson at 37 family is everything. Family is everything. I mentioned, Laura and I are gonna celebrate 10 years. We have our fourth child on the way, and I'm not gonna spend a lot of time here, but I would just say that that marriage and family are heaven on earth. And I will say this, you know, I, it was funny. I posted the other day on LinkedIn about a lesson and, and I'll share the lesson here.

Doug Smith ([12:54](#)):

The lesson was very, very simple. My father-in-law, he told me, he said, Doug before I got married to his daughter, Laura, he said, if, if you'll always give Laura something to look forward to, you can do whatever you want. He wasn't obviously saying I could do whatever I want morally, but he was just saying, always give her something to look forward to. And, and, and she'll always be hoping, and you'll always have excitement in your marriage. And that has absolutely prayed played out. And one of our goals this year for not only our marriage, but in our family is to always have something to look forward to always. And that's created such joy in our family. But when I posted this, it was so funny on LinkedIn. This one woman, she said, when I see your post about marriage and family, it makes me wanna puke. Now she did say it was good advice, but she's like, I never believed that people's lives that they post on social are as good as they are on social in real life. And I just, I just wanna say, at least at this point in our marriage, we're 10 years in our marriage has been heaven on earth. And I'm not saying that because we're perfect. We're certainly not perfect. We have issues just like anybody else. But the why I wanna bring that up is because I, I mentioned earlier that it took me 10 years to grow into the man I needed to be to marry a Laura. We had, we went through a lot of hell and the first 10 years of our relationship learning each other, growing up maturing working through issues. And we didn't know it at the time, but God was really sending a foundation up for our marriage.

Doug Smith ([14:13](#)):

And so, you know, I'm, I'll just speak on behalf of us. You know, when you see or hear me say that marriage is heaven on earth or family heaven on earth. I want you to know that we put a ton of work into that. And, and again, we're not perfect. We're still putting work in. We continue to put work, work in week after week to make that. But you know, a quote that came to mind when I heard that that woman gave me that critique you know, was, you don't find a great life. You build one, you don't find a great life. You build one, you don't find a great marriage. You build a great marriage. You don't find great kids, you build great kids, you right? And so I just wanna challenge you that if, if family is truly everything and I did a whole podcast episode on how to lead, how we're leading our family team currently, and that's something we're always trying to grow and expand in, you can go back and listen to that on how we're leading our family team, but we're very, very intentional and and always looking to grow.

Doug Smith ([14:59](#)):

So at 37 family is everything is an absolute priority. Our vision is to raise a multi-generational family team on mission. We wanna have generations of Smith who will live and walk with God all the days of their life and make an impact on the world. And I mentioned I was on that retreat in Montana, and one of the ministers we had come in to pour into us was the great, great grandson of Smith. Wigglesworth, he's a fifth generation preacher and Smith Wigglesworth Smith. Wigglesworth was a man of faith in the 1800s was used greatly by God. And I was just sitting there and I was staring at this man and, and he pastors a church in South Africa of 12,000 people and is making such an impact in the world. And I just

thought, here's a guy in the 1800s Smith Wigglesworth who started a family who obeyed God and walked with God and raised kids who walked with God.

Doug Smith ([15:44](#)):

And now there's five generations of Wigglesworth that wasn't his last name, but five generations who are living and walking for God and making an impact how amazing it would be if a hundred years from now, our great, great grandchildren are making an impact in doing exploits for God. I mean, that is the vision. Family is everything next at 37. We're stewarding a lot for God. We're stewarding a lot for God. The reality is and man, I can't even put it in this word. We're so grateful. God has blessed us abundantly in multiple areas. And, but the way we view it is, is we don't own anything. We don't own our influence. We don't own our gifting. We don't own our money. It's all God's. We don't own our kids. It's all God's. And we're just simply stewarding the gifts that God has put in our hand.

Doug Smith ([16:26](#)):

And so a few areas that we're stewarding financially, Laura and I have started setting goals each year to increase the percentage of our income that we're giving away each year. And we're just trying to better steward him and be more generous for the kingdom of God, for nonprofits that we, we look up to, we're trying to steward our influence. Again, it goes back to that question of God, what is our highest and best use for our influence that you've given us? It's, it's, it's ours from you to steward, help us steward it. Well, we're stewarding our gifting again. God's gifted each of us in a unique way. God, how do we best use that? And then I mentioned our kids, God, how do we raise kids so that we can have a legacy like Smith Wigglesworth that I just mentioned at 37, we're stewarding a life for God next at 37, I'm still, this will always be a thing I'm still focused on making a difference every day.

Doug Smith ([17:15](#)):

I'm still focused on making a difference. Every day. I say this every day, it was a John Maxwell quote, but he says, I wanna make a difference. Doing something that makes a difference with people that make a difference at a time. That makes a difference. Now years ago, I heard a stat that the, the average person by the time in their lifetime will unintentionally influence 10,000 people in their lifetime. Isn't that crazy? The average person, if they do nothing, if they just live their life, they'll unintentionally influence 10,000 people. And my question to leaders is what if you intentionally influence people? What if you intentionally used your influence? How big of impact could you make? And I think I heard that step before, you know, social media was really on the scene. What if you intentionally used your social media and the platform that God's given you, how many people could you reach?

Doug Smith ([18:03](#)):

What if you woke up every day and said, God, I wanna make a difference. And you looked over your calendar and you looked at people that you saw online and said, how can I make a difference in their life today? And then you actually did something intentionally to make a difference at 37, I'm more committed than ever to making a difference in the lives of others. Few more at 37, I still believe character development is the most important development. I believe the character development is the most important development. And I've been saying this for years, and I'm not saying that my character's perfect. I'm always working, but a few thoughts here that I always challenge people is one who do you have in your life? Or who do you have in your life that you can be fully known, fully loved and fully challenged with?

Doug Smith ([18:43](#)):

And this is our whole vision for mastermind groups. We wanna create a community of people where in a mastermind group, you are fully known. That means you can fully be who you are, share what you're going through and be vulnerable, and then be fully loved. People will love you where you're at no matter what you're going through. And then yet be fully challenged that they'll just not love you and give you a hug. But sometimes, you know, when we want a hug, we need a slap in the face and that they'll get in your face and actually challenge you. So do you have a place like that? And if you don't, I really encourage you get in a mastermind group, you need a place in your life where you're fully known, fully loved and fully challenged. Number two is who do you have in your life that can tell, you know, now if you're in a mastermind group that should, that should meet that.

Doug Smith ([19:20](#)):

But do you have someone in your life that can tell, you know, that you'll actually listen to? If you don't, you need to find that immediately. And then number three, and I always have to add the God card. Are you walking with God? If you wa are you walking with God? I had a mentor. Tell me once he said, Doug, let God be the architect of your growth. And I love that. And here's what I love about God. Do you know that I gave my life to Christ when I was 17 years old, do you know that God knew every single issue that I'd ever go through in my life and have to work on. And, and he only allows me to focus on one issue at a time. Do you know there's issues in my life right now that I'm not even aware of cuz it's a blind spot and God knows I'm gonna have to deal with that in five years.

Doug Smith ([19:57](#)):

But, but he's saying Doug, here's the issues that you have to work on right now with 37. And I have some issues that I'm working on character wise. So man, we need to constantly be growing. And if you're constantly walking with God, he will grow your character. I promise you if you love and follow God, he will grow your character. Next at 37, I am more aware of the help than I need than I ever have been before. I am more aware of the help that I need than I ever have been before. And you know, as I've grown as a leader and as I grow older, I become more and more aware of my strengths, what I'm gifted at, what I'm good at. And then I become very aware of things that I'm not good at which is a lot longer of a list than the things I'm good at.

Doug Smith ([20:38](#)):

But I really am starting to learn of where do I add the most value and that's where I need to focus on. And that's what I need to be my sweet spot and everything else I need to, to delegate or get help with. And a phenomenal book that I read last year that really helped with this is a book by Dan Sullivan and Daniel Hardy or it's not Daniel Hardy. I apologize. I forget the guy's name. Ben Benjamin Hardy. Thank you. Benjamin Hardy. It's called who not, how, who not, how it's such a, it's such an awesome concept. He said, you know, a lot of, he was talking to entrepreneurs, he said a lot of entrepreneurs try to figure out how to do something. And it's like, how do I get that done? How, and they try to figure it out on themselves. He said, the question they should be asking is who, who can do that?

Doug Smith ([21:18](#)):

Cause I'm not gonna be able to figure out how I'm not gifted in that area. I'm not good in that area. Who can I get that can help me with this? And you need to surround yourself with who's who compliment you. Who's so start asking in your life who not how I think this is so good. And then another revelation that I've shared about this was I realized that I'm a, who to other people. There's things that I do that

other people need me to do based on my giftedness. And that's where I need to focus on. And so realize that you're a who and you add value to people and you need to surround yourselves with whos that can help you so very, very important. At 37, I'm more aware of the help I need now more than ever. And here leader, don't be afraid to ask for help.

Doug Smith ([21:56](#)):

You can't do it all. You need help get help. All right, last two at 37, the decisions I've made over the last 20 years are starting to compound in ways that I couldn't have imagined at 37, the choices I've made are starting to compound. I, I shared with you that God said in your twenties, I laid a foundation for you to B your life on. And fortunately I was surrounded by a great council and I was following God in my early, early, late teens, early twenties and all throughout my twenties. And I really do feel like the decisions I made during my twenties are starting to compound now shaping who I, who I became, you know, who I became ultimately attracted Laura and is the reason Laura married me because I became the man I needed to be. I became the leader I needed to be, to be in the position that I'm in now.

Doug Smith ([22:41](#)):

And all I want you to know is that your decisions matter, your decisions matter. My favorite decision or choice quote is from John Moon. He said, there's a choice that you make and everything that you do. So be aware that the choice you make makes you the choices you make make you. Now, maybe you're listening to this and you've made bad choices for the last 20 years and maybe they're compounding negatively. Well, here's what I know. You can start today and have a brand new end. You can start to make good choices today and it may not multiply overnight. It may just start to add to your life, but if you'll continue to make good choices, day in and day out over the next 5, 10, 15, 20 years, those decisions, good decisions in every area of your life, physically, relationally, financially, spiritually, et cetera. If you'll make good choices in all those areas, those areas will start to compound in your life.

Doug Smith ([23:26](#)):

And I know, and I can say that because that's what they've started to do in my life. And I'm just extremely grateful for, for all the people that have poured into me. It's one of the reasons I do the podcast and interview so many leaders, cuz I just wanna learn. I wanna learn what are the best choices I could be making. What's the wisest thing to do in the situations that I'm in. And fortunately I've been able to have that. And so very, very grateful if you don't have it, find it, you will not regret it. And then lastly, and this is really just a summary at 37, I'm in a great spot at 37, I'm in a great spot and I'm extremely grateful for another year. And here's the reality. If you're listening to this or if you see me post about this anywhere, you've probably in some way influenced my life.

Doug Smith ([24:03](#)):

And I just wanna say, thank you. You know, if you listen to this podcast, I do this podcast because of you because I wanna add value to your life and make a difference in your life. And so I don't take one listener for granted. So if you've listened to this podcast, thank you. You're, you're a part of, of me making a difference every day. And I'm just very, very grateful for all the people who've poured into me. And I'm very grateful for the life I have at 37. And so that's me at 37. I don't know what age you are as you listen to this, but I would love to hear back some feedback from you on what are you learning at the age you're at? And if, if this isn't a practice in your life, I really wanna encourage you. Maybe take some time and reflect on where you are in your life and start to do that every year.

Doug Smith ([24:38](#)):

And and again, I always talk about my annual reviews. I have several podcasts on how to do a year end review. If you don't do that every single year at the end of the year, I can't encourage you enough to it'll change your life. Thanks for listening. I hope this episode added value to your life and we'll talk to you next time. Well, Hey leader, thank you so much for listening to my lesson life at 37, I hope it added value to your life and you can find links to anything that I mentioned in the episode at [l3leadership.Org/327](#). And as always leader, I wanna challenge you that if you wanna 10 X your growth this year, then you DD their launch or join at L3 Leadership mastermind group. Mastermind groups have been the greatest source of growth in my life over the last seven years.

Doug Smith ([25:19](#)):

And if you don't know what they are, they're just simply groups of six to 12 leaders that meet together for at least one year in order to help each other grow, hold each other accountable and to do life together. So if you're interested in learning more about masterminds, go to [L3 Leadership.org/masterminds](#) and as always leader, I like the end every episode with a quote. And today I'll quote Joe Brooks, who I quote often I love this. He said listening to people's applause is a quick way to miss God. And if you listen to the evil lesson, you know, that that resonates with me deeply. So listening to people's applause is a quick way to miss God. I hope this episode encouraged, you know that Laura and I love you. We believe in you and we say it all the time, but leader keep leading. Don't quit. The world desperately needs your leadership. We'll talk to you next episode.