

**Doug Smith:** 0:07

Well, hey, leader, and welcome to another episode 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. We're also recording this episode live from the new reiturn.com studio. 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 made an impact on your life, it would mean the world to me if you'd leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify. That really does help us to reach more leaders and make a bigger impact, so thank you in advance for that. Well, leader, in today's episode you're going to hear my conversation with Trudy Cathy White. If you're unfamiliar with Trudy, let me just tell you a little bit about her. Trudy is a native Georgian and the only daughter of Jeanette and Truett Cathy, the founders of Chick-fil-A Inc. An ambassador for the family business. Trudy has held various roles within Chick-fil-A, including that of restaurant operator. At just 19 years old, Trudy and her husband, John, served as missionaries in Brazil and co-founded LifeShape and Impact 360 Institute. A developer and encourager at heart, white has served as the director of WinShape Camps for Girls from 2003 to 2017. She is a speaker, author, dedicated wife, mother of four and grandmother of 15. Every day, she is fueled by her passion to be intentional with her influence. In everything that Trudy does, she is led by her commitment to obey God's leadership, nurture family relationships and promote godly character in the next generation. More information on Trudy's life and family can be found at [TrudyCathyWhite.com](http://TrudyCathyWhite.com), and I think you're going to love this conversation, leaders. In our conversation, you'll hear Trudy talk about what she learned from her mom and dad growing up. You'll learn how to build a legacy that lasts within your family, how to create your family values, and so much more. I absolutely love my time with Trudy and I think it's going to add massive value to your life. But before we dive into that, just a few announcements. This episode of the L3 Leadership Podcast is sponsored by Baritongue Advisors. The financial advisors at Baritongue Advisors help educate and empower clients to make informed financial decisions. You can find out how Baritongue Advisors can help you develop a customized financial plan for your financial future by visiting their website at [BaritongueAdvisors.com](http://BaritongueAdvisors.com). That's [B-E-R-A-T-U-N-G-Advisors.com](http://B-E-R-A-T-U-N-G-Advisors.com). Securities and investment products and services offered through LPL Financial, member of FINRA and SIPC. Baritongue, Advisors, LPL Financial and L3 Leadership are separate entities. I also want to thank our sponsor, Henne Jewelers. They're a jeweler owned by my friend and mentor, John Henne, and my wife Laura and I got our engagement and wedding rings through Henne Jewelers and had an incredible experience. And not only do they have great jewelry, but they also

invest in people. In fact, for every couple that comes in engaged, they give them a book to help them prepare for marriage, and we just love that. So if you're in need of a good jeweler, check out HennieJewelers.com. And I also want to thank our new sponsor, reiturn.com And Leader. Let me just ask you this Have you ever had an interest in investing in real estate? Well, now, for as little as \$500, you can become a commercial real estate investor. Just visit Reiturn.com to learn more. That's R-E-I-T-U-R-N.com. If anything involves risk, please consult the Reiturn Offering Circular if you're interested in investing. And with all that being said, let's dive right in. Here's my conversation with Trudy Cathy White. Well, Trudy Cathy White, welcome to the L3 Leadership Podcast. It's such an honor to get to spend time with you and really looking forward to our conversation and you adding value to our audience.

**Trudy Cathy White:** 3:34

Well, thanks, doug. What an honor to be here with you today. Thank you so much for the invitation.

**Doug Smith:** 3:38

You got it And I obviously want to start. Just obviously you're a Cathy and grew up with Chick-fil-A And so I really, just to give people context of who you are and kind of your journey, can you give us the journey of your experience with Chick-fil-A?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 3:54

Sure, i love telling the story. We'll go back to before my experience. Actually, my dad was 25 years old and single In 1946 when he opened his very first restaurant, a very small diner about five minutes away from the Atlanta airport. Three years later he married my mom and she became a waitress in the restaurant with him And for about 18 plus years my dad ran that restaurant and learned how to take care of customers, serve quality food. Even for us as children, my mother used to put us in the car and take us to his restaurant and we would sing for the customers, if you can imagine Such a thing. We've got some crazy pictures of us dressed up in these little costumes, i don't know. I think my mother thought that was really the only way we'd have a whole lot of time to spend with our dad, because he was working not some long hours in those early years for sure. But my dad did decide to open a second restaurant about five years later, in 1951. And that restaurant ended up burning to the ground some years later. So it left him back in his original restaurant, which is where the Chick-fil-A story began, because my dad said he had a little bit more free time on his hands. He was able to be a little bit more creative and decided he could de-bone the breast of the chicken. He could season it to perfection, he could pressure cook it in peanut oil, serve it on a toasted buttered hamburger bun with kosher dill pickles and call it a chicken sandwich the first time anybody's ever eaten chicken as a sandwich before. So that was in 1964. I think we're all excited that he invented such a thing And my dad often would remind us

through the years that had it not been for the fire in that second restaurant, he probably would have never invented Chick-fil-A, which has always stuck with me, because I've learned that difficulties of we can navigate through our difficulties oftentimes. God's going to use that in a special way And we'll get into that, i think, probably later in the podcast. But it's just a great reminder how not to be discouraged when hard things happen. Because my dad was able to invent this sandwich and then three years later, in 1967, the very first shopping mall opened here in Atlanta called the Greenbrier Mall, and my dad had this brilliant idea that he would like to take and serve his sandwich at the mall. So he went to the mall developers and asked if he could lease a small area there at the mall to serve food for the customers that were in the mall shopping with them. And the mall developers said there is no way we are ever going to serve food in a mall. And so my dad didn't get too discouraged by that. He was pretty persistent and went back multiple times with meetings with the mall developers and said here's what I think people come to the shopping mall to shop with you, but they get hungry, and if they have to leave and get in their car and go eat somewhere, they're not likely to turn around and come back to the mall and shop with you. So if you'll feed them, they're liable to stay around a lot longer. And so the mall developers decided that might be a good idea. So they did lease them a small location not at all on the main drag, just on an off wing at the mall, because they weren't sure about the smell of food being in the mall and all the trash it might you know that we would have there, but it was a. It was a success from from the beginning. That was in 1967. So I was nine years old when my dad opened that first restaurant. I remember the day being there. I primarily remember it because I didn't have to go to school that day. So from my perspective, that was my was a big deal. Of course we had no idea of what the Lord would do to it in the future, how the family would, how the business would grow, but that has kind of been my journey. And then, when I was 19 years old, i became a Chick-fil-A operator myself. I took a year out of college. It was just a one year experience for me to be able to run a restaurant, but the benefit that got out of it was I met my lifelong partner, John White, who I married, and we've been married for almost 46 years. So I hired him to come and work with me. I had never met him before But I knew when he was filling out his application I needed to hire him because he was good looking. So that's how we got that's, yeah, that's how we got connected. So that's a big part of my journey with Chick-fil-A for sure.

**Doug Smith:** 8:11

Did you hold? so you were there for about a year. Did you hold other roles throughout? you know Chick-fil-A's journey, or what was it been your experience?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 8:19

Well, you know, the business is family owned, so the responsibilities that come with that, for for all of us I have two older brothers were very close in age. Both of my brothers, though, have been heavily involved in the management side of the business.

My husband and I actually ended up after we got married. We ended up overseas doing international work, lived in Brazil for 10 years, and so we actually did an international work for about 20 years, but I've always seen my role as an ambassador a representative, of course, for the family and for the business, wherever I've gone and whatever I've done, but we make a lot of significant decisions that are part of the business that we hold as a, as a family, so that we hold true to our purpose for being in business and hold true to our values that are important to us as a family, running this family business for sure.

**Doug Smith:** 9:08

Yeah, and this is a leadership podcast, And so I obviously I'd be foolish not to ask you, but is there anything significant that you've learned about leadership throughout watching? you know your parents, your generation, the next generation, leading Chick-fil-A. That is significant to you.

**Trudy Cathy White:** 9:22

Yeah, you know, most definitely. Several things kind of come to mind. One is that there are just no shortcuts to success in life. You know, hard work is a part of it. Determination, having a sense of wisdom, how to make good decisions are all important for good leaders, and we often remind people that success is great, the significance is greater. And so to find a sense of significance and what you're doing as a leader is important in life, and obviously there are no, there are no obstacles that are too difficult to overcome. We are a family who believes in our Christian faith. We base our belief on the trust in God. There's a wonderful verse in the Bible that says for with God, all things are possible. We really believe that when you lean into to the Lord, he allows you to be able to do things. He takes ordinary people and allows you to do extraordinary things. You just have to be willing to trust. And then I go back to those basic leadership principles that say start where you are, use what you have and do what you can. It is such a reflection of my dad's story and the Chick-fil-A story, because my dad started in that small little restaurant. He just started where he was, he used what he had. He said he didn't have room to have any other type of bread in his restaurant, so he had hamburger bread because that's what he served in his restaurant. So to this day we use typical hamburger buns to put our chicken in. And he put pickles on the chicken sandwich because that's what he had there and that's what he was putting on the hamburger. So it's oftentimes, i think, as leaders, we cripple ourselves because we look around and we think, well, i don't have what this other person has, i can't do what this other person does, and so we sell ourselves short in terms of our leadership opportunities. And if we will just take these principles to heart, to realize just start where you are, just use what you have around you and do what you can, god will take and do something extraordinary with it.

**Doug Smith:** 11:25

Yeah, it may be a similar answer, but you know, in my life personally, anytime that I see God using someone or something or organization you know in a significant way, like he's using Chick-fil-A I always just try to ask the Lord God, what is it about them that's allowed you to use them in the way that you're using them? And I'm just curious, if you had to answer that you know, based on Chick-fil-A, what God's been able to do in and through Chick-fil-A, you know, what would you? how would you answer that?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 11:50

Well, how's God using us? One really important thing to us in Chick-fil-A is that we recognize that biblical principles and good business practices go hand in hand. So when we merge those two and we look at what God has to say about life and how we treat other people and what it means to serve, a lot of our serve model, our leadership models, come from biblical principles. When God talks about going to second mile, that we're to go the extra mile in how we serve others. So in our restaurants it would not be unusual at all for maybe someone to open the door for our guests as they come in to eat with us. We have people that pop up in the umbrella to help moms with little babies to head back out to their cars. There's just lots of stories out there of how we're able to serve people not just serve them food, but serve and help them physically, emotionally, spiritually, and I believe that God honors that. My dad wrote one of his books. The title of his book is How Did You Do It? True It, and he basically says in that book there's no secret to what he's been able to do because, honestly, when you surround yourself by capable people that help you and you trust the Lord for that business and you build it around biblical principles. I mean it's a success recipe right there in and of itself. You've just got to dig into the truth and understand them.

**Doug Smith:** 13:17

Yeah, and I am curious, you know, over the history of Chick-fil-A. You know you said there's no shortcuts to success and clearly you know people can look at Chick-fil-A what it is today but they don't always see the journey. You know you mentioned your dad having his first restaurant burned down. Were there other pivotal moments that were that you look at now or look back on and say that was critical in God, taking us from where we were at that time to where we are today? And what were those decisions and or situations?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 13:44

Yeah, I think there are a lot of those in our story with Chick-fil-A. The earliest, other than the fire, might be that my dad actually opened his first restaurant in partnership with one of his two brothers. His brother's name was Ben and they were working side by side. My dad felt like Ben had some giftedness that my dad didn't have. My dad barely finished high school And so he and he actually was kind of a quiet young man. He had a speech

impediment when he was a young child that made it difficult for him to communicate clearly, and so partnering with partnering with his brother Ben made him feel a little bit more confident in what he was doing. But Ben died in a plane crash shortly after my dad opened this restaurant and that was devastating to my dad. Muley, married with young children and trying to start this business and to lose his business partner was a difficult time for him, and yet a guy has equipped my dad through the years, of course, to build that sense of confidence that he lacked during those times. I would go forward and say that probably another very pivotal time for us at Chick-fil-A was in the 1980s. During that time the economy was in recession. Our competitors were offering a chicken sandwich. That was driving the prices of chicken up astronomically. Barred money was in double digits. Interest on barred money was in double digits. It was a really difficult time to be in business And we were even beginning to question ourselves could we hang in there and stay in there? We had opened probably almost 100 restaurants within 24 months. So we felt like perhaps we had overextended ourselves a little bit for the way the economy was at this particular time And our leadership pulled away to try to see what we could resolve. But what they ended up talking about was why we're really in business to begin with. That's a question we all ask ourselves. When we kind of feel our backs up against the wall and we're not sure how to move forward, we kind of think why am I here? You know what's my purpose for life, and so asking this critical question about our business is why are we here? What is our purpose for actually even being in business? And after about two and a half days our leadership team walked away with what is known now is our corporate purpose, is the reason we open every door in our restaurants across the country, and our purpose for that, for being in business, is to glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that's entrusted to us and have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A. And so when people hear that purpose, you don't hear about sales, you don't hear about how much chicken we want to sell, but you do hear about influence and stewardship And that's what's important to us that we glorify God through those. That has been a pivotal moment for us in our in our business, because, like even in our personal life, anytime you define your purpose, then you get real clarity on your priorities. And when we got that clear on our purpose, we begin to realize, you know, we begin to pull away from the, from the competitors, we begin to focus on the things that were important in life And we could just honor the Lord in what he entrusted to us and that we could steward it well and use it to leverage opportunity of influence. So I'll let the secret out today that we're we're actually not in the chicken business, we're in the people business and we simply use the chicken sandwich as a tool to allow us to influence others.

**Doug Smith:** 17:07

Yeah, i love that so much. We've been talking about your dad Truett, and obviously he's legendary and you've written several books And you know, obviously I have an opportunity to spend time with you. I have to ask what you learned from your parents.

But one thing, you know, i've always heard about, true, and I guess I never really thought about your mom, but you've actually written a memoir about your mom's life, called a quiet strength, and I just want to leave this open ended. You know what were maybe two or three of the greatest lessons that either your mom or your dad, or both of them together, taught you.

**Trudy Cathy White: 17:36**

Yeah well, this book that I wrote on my mom is called a quiet street. The title actually comes from a verse in the Bible that says in quietness and in trust shall be your street, and my mother was kind of in the backdrop. You won't find a whole lot about her out there on the internet. She was a tremendous support to my dad. Our home office in Atlanta Chick-fil-A home office we call it our support center because it is the center that supports all of our operators that are out across the country. But actually the original support center started in our home where my mom and dad were, because my mom supported my dad in such a significant way. All of us in our family would say that our family and our businesses, who we are today, primarily because of the person that my mom was. So she taught us how, how important it was to be still and know that God was there with us. She was someone who was a prayer warrior for us. She was a cheerleader. She was always encouraging us my dad as well as my brothers, even her grandchildren and her great children. So the lesson that I've learned from my mom is to learn to be still and to learn to trust in the Lord in whatever you do, and probably my biggest lesson from from my dad. There are just a lot of things that I've seen in his life that I think the biggest one is is about consistency that you, how important it is that you're consistent in how you live your life. I think you can lead people well when you're consistent. It's when you get inconsistent with every facet of your life that people get a little confused. And my dad just is in the restaurant. We want, if someone eats a chicken fillet out in California and they have a chick play in Florida, we want it to be the same wonderful experience. We want it to be consistent. We feel the same way about our own lives. I've learned that from my dad. For me as a, as a wife, for me as a mom, for a grand mother, i realized that the more consistent I can be in how I live my life, the better example I'll be for those around me.

**Doug Smith: 19:35**

Wow And a similar vein. Do you have any any favorite memories or fun memories that you can share with us of your parents and maybe it was something you were about to talk about, your new book, a legacy, the last and values You know? were there any experiences that you had with them that you'd say, wow, that memory really implanted that in me.

**Trudy Cathy White: 19:53**

Well, when I think back about my childhood, growing up, some of the most memorable things were just that my mom and dad were so generous and hospitable to other people. My mom and dad loved to have people over to our house. Now, we grew up south of Atlanta in the country on a very small farm, so we had a lot of pasture and a lot of space to run and play, and so my dad loved that. We had some four-wheelers around to be able to ride. We had pony shetland ponies that we would ride for fun, and my dad just loved hosting youth, particularly to come to our house. So my brothers and I always enjoyed that. Those were used to Saturday afternoon events. We didn't like cleaning up and getting the yard ready for them to come picking up all those pine cones. We didn't like all that, but we sure enjoyed it when people would come, and I think that's really where we learned to be a little bit more generous with our life, to share ourselves with other people. So mom and dad were extremely generous and those are memorable times that we had growing up. My dad always had a positive outlook on life and always had a lot of fun for everyone, so we found ourselves laughing so many times just sitting around the table with my parents. I loved it. There was a lot of love and there was a lot of laughter in our home. It wasn't a perfect home. We didn't have perfect parents There are no perfect people in the world And I would say it was a happy time growing up with our family for sure, and lots of sweet memories of times with them, doing things with them. My mother also had a very positive outlook on life. Something about my mom that people probably don't know is that when she was a baby in arms, her earthly father walked out on her, so she was raised by a single mom, but when she was about five and a half years old, someone told her about her heavenly father and they told her that he could be her father that she never had on earth, and she would grow up in that incredible relationship with the Lord And she would often tell people don't feel sorry for me, because my heavenly father became my perfect earthly father, and so that positive outlook that she had on life was very memorable to all of us. She just took anything that was negative and spun it in a positive way, and we're so grateful for that, for those sweet memories of knowing her and all that she taught us.

**Doug Smith:** 22:12

Yeah, that's what makes me curious. Did your dad grow up knowing the Lord, or how did he come to Christ?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 22:17

Yeah, great question. My dad's parents were followers of Jesus and it was probably when my dad was about 12 years old that he made a decision to follow the Lord. So very fortunate that both my mom and dad shared that Christian faith And when they got married they were very intentional about reading God's word, praying together, seeking God's direction on things that they did. So I'm very blessed by that. But I would also say, if there are listeners that say, well, I wasn't brought up that way, I don't know much about the Lord, I didn't have parents that set a good example for me, I would say if you



look around you probably perhaps your local church you'll be able to find somebody that could help be a mentor for you and your life. You can find someone that may even help you spiritually to be able to grow. I know for our children growing up overseas in Brazil. Of course they had us as parents, but they had just wonderful older people that were around us that became kind of like substitute grandparents for our children. I feel like the Lord always puts in our past. If we look for them, he'll place people in our past that'll help us to be able to grow, particularly in our faith, to be able to understand what it means to have real peace and real joy, and that's been a comfort to our family all these years.

**Doug Smith: 23:34**

Yeah, i'm so glad you shared that and I'm not going to share my whole story, but that's very much in line with my story. God put so many spiritual fathers and mothers in my life to really help me grow up in God when I was a lost 17-year-old. So very, very grateful for all of you spiritual parents who think just beyond your four kids, or three kids, to think about others makes a huge, huge difference. I want to talk about your newest book, a Legacy of the Last. The tagline is preserving and transferring your family values. This is huge and it's beautiful that you have the credibility to actually write this book. I mean, you look now there's four generations. Oh, there's obviously more generations than Kathy's, but at least that I can see it's four generations of a really solid family. So can you just share. You know why did you write this book and what do you want people to get out of it.

**Trudy Cathy White: 24:22**

Yeah, well, thanks for giving me the opportunity to talk about the book. For sure, my dad passed away when he was 93 years old. It was in 2014. And just 10 months later, my mom passed away at the age of 92 in 2015. So, having lost both of our parents and with my husband and I are family living very close to my mom and dad's house that they lived in for 56 years I was the one kind of designated to clean through their house. So anybody that's ever done that you know what a big task that is. And for a couple to live in a house for 56 years, we all know what happens. You gather a lot, you collect a lot of stuff. You know and I always remind everybody they didn't take anything with them, so they left all of it and I had to clean through all of it. So, going through the drawers, through the closets, sometimes I would find things that would make me cry just because they were so tender to me and bring back so sweet memories and other things I would find in the house And I would think why in the world do my parents still have this in their house? You know how did it find a place and stay all these years. But once I had completely cleaned through their house, i began to realize that the most valuable thing that my parents left me actually was their legacy. And their legacy was just their life, that they lived. And I realized that the legacy that we all leave is the life we're living right now. So I thought, ma'am, decisions that we're making are super important. How we live

our life every day is it really matters, because that is the legacy that we're going to end up leaving. It's not like we wait till we get older and then we say now I'm going to live my legacy. It's actually you have already been living your legacy. So I got this idea to write this book and try to really give some practical things to people to help them. One just identify their values, what's important to them, because everybody has values. You just maybe hadn't taken the time to identify them. Also, give some real practical ways you might be able to preserve those values and live them out. And then the greatest reward is how do you transfer those values to the next generation? I saw how my parents transferred certain values to me. We have transferred those to our children and now we have 17 grandchildren. So we are busy trying to make sure that they are understanding values and how important they are as well.

**Doug Smith:** 26:47

Yeah, and let's just start there. So I'm a father of four kids, now all seven and under, so it sounds like I'm in your kids age. So yeah, i'm just curious if a family is listening to this and just saying, hey, i don't even know where to start, how can I set family values? What would you?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 27:03

encourage them to do? Yeah, well one. My book is very practical, so reading the book will help a lot, but what we did with our children? actually, some years ago probably the most significant thing we do with our young adult children was to ask them would they pull away for one week in a year and spend time with us, leave the grandchildren at home? And we began to go deep dive into things that matter in our life. And what we saw was they were young parents Some were finishing college, some were parenting young children And we thought one of the most important things they can do is to begin to wrestle with three questions, and these were the questions that our discussions revolved around. The first question was what really matters to you? So I would say everybody needs to identify what matters to you, individually and even together with your spouse. The second question would be what values govern how I make my decisions? Again, we all have values, so there's some kind of filter that we're using while we're making decisions. And then the third question would be what values do we want others to recognize in our life? And I think that's a really important question, because oftentimes we might identify a certain value and we say this is important to me, but if nobody else sees that in their life, for example, one of the values that John and I have is family, And so we carve out significant time to make sure we're with family. You look at my calendar and you'll see where it's highlighted in yellow the times that I'm dedicating to making sure I have time with family. No-transcript. If I didn't do that, people might look at me and say, well, treating cis families important, but I've never seen her spend in time with her family right. So if there's a disconnect between what we think to be of value and how we're actually living our life, we need to reevaluate that. We need

to kind of get it in sync. So the first step is merely just trying to identify those. In my book I've listed probably almost 100 values with a short little definition of those And what we do with our children. We say I want you to take all these words and I want you to spread them out and I want you to identify what's really important to you and what's probably not so important to you and see if you can get those down to about four, five or six words. Get them down to a manageable list and then begin to really concentrate on those values, live them out as you go, day by day.

**Doug Smith:** 29:22

That's so good And I love that. Third question, about the recognizing the fun story I had an advisory board for this L3 leadership and I was challenged to put together values and I always do way too much. I think I had nine values and one was excellence and in theory I think that's a great value, but one of my advisory board members was like, yeah, that's not a value. I was like, don't even hit it, so I'm not gonna with details, i'm not gonna follow up and follow through. So, yeah, it was really interesting to actually get feedback on hey, am I actually living these out? And if I'm not, why? So then you obviously identify your values. What are some things that families can do to actually start to instill these into their kids and the future generations?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 30:03

Yeah, great question. What we try to do is first just put a plan in place, a simple plan, and the first thing is just to be able to talk about those values. So John and I talk about them together with ourselves, we talk about them with our children, we talk about them with our grandchildren. Just talking about the values and having a conversation and saying, can I just share with you what really matters to me in life? And sometimes whoever you're sharing it with can give you some pointers on how you can dive even deeper into that particular value. But that's the first thing is to talk about your values to others. The second is to write them down. Sometimes we hold things in our mind that we tend to forget about them. Put them on a card, put them in front of you, put them by your computer, wherever you do work, maybe put them on your mirror. My mother was. She was always a fan of putting things on the mirror because she knew she'd be probably looking at the mirror at least once a day and she'd be able to check her notes, her list of things she's got to do or whatever is important to her. She'd put scripture, verse or mirror. So wherever you spend some of your time. Write these values down, put them before you so your mind will love them And even display them if you need to do that. We have our values, we have five values and we have them hanging just above our dining room table, where we, in our kitchen table, where we eat every day. And when guests come in our home, they see these words up on the wall and they say what is this? And we have an opportunity to talk about them and share about them, so they become a big part of who you are in your life. I remember a previous interview I was doing and the person was shocked. They said you really put them on your wall and your

house. And I said, yeah, you know what I do. There's a verse in the Old Testament, in the Bible, that says you're to share these things with your children. Talk about when you sit down or when you rise or when you walk along the way and when you lie down at night. So sometimes, when you put things in front of us, it allows us to be reminded to talk about them.

**Doug Smith:** 31:58

Yeah, i love this so much And I'm sure people will listen to this and say okay, trudy, what are your five values? Can you share those with us? And then I would love to take a little bit of a deep dive of what they look like in your life.

**Trudy Cathy White:** 32:09

Sure. So faith, our Christian faith, is one of our values. It is our filter for our decision-making process and everything that we do. The second value for us is family that I've mentioned already, that we carve out time to be with our family. The third is integrity. We'll go deeper about that as to how we live our life. The fourth value for us is generosity. Being generous with what we have, not just in terms of resources or finances, but in terms of our time, in terms of our talent, and even leveraging our influence is an opportunity for us to be generous. And then the last one would be gratitude. So those are the five that we focus on.

**Doug Smith:** 32:48

Yeah, i just want to dive into each of those. When it comes to faith, i've heard you speak in other interviews and you just talked about the importance of church in your life And I think they said statistically that the average church attender now only attends church once a month, sometimes twice, and I think that's a huge loss. Can you talk about, within your faith value, why is church so important to you and your family?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 33:14

Yeah well, church is important to me, first of all because I have a relationship with Jesus Christ, and having that personal relationship and realizing that I'm not God he is, there is something about me that realizes that my dependency is on the Lord, and if I'm going to live that kind of life, i'm actually going to need to surround myself with other people who believe that as well. That can help me in this journey. Nobody likes to live life alone. We weren't created to live on an island, and so going to church what it does for us and having that habit of going on a regular basis every week we're committed to being there actually gives us a chance to connect with other believers that are doing life with us and we're all learning. We're all growing our relationship with the Lord. We're growing and how do we live The life that God had created us to live? So we can be encouragers to one another, we can hold each other accountable, we can recognize that, oh, we got their difficulties. Look, there's some other people that go through difficulties as well. So

we can relate to one another and we can learn from each other's experience. So church is super important to us. My parents took us to church on a regular basis. We did the same with our children. They're doing the same with their children and learning that the local church is just a tremendous. It's your family. It's a support system that we all need and we appreciate not only going to church but also actually being involved in church. I work with children in the garden through fifth grade So I teach children. John teaches an adult class that every six weeks is maybe a different topical type class and stuff. So we've learned to not only go to church but actually serve And honestly, the more I serve, the more I learn. So when I can give it myself, i've actually learning as well.

**Doug Smith:** 35:03

Yeah, another thing under the value of faith that I knew you're passionate about is camps, and I would love I know you've provided leadership for camps. I'd love for you to talk about this. I gave my life to Christ at a camp in seventh grade, and so I just wanna hear you tell people why camps are so important.

**Trudy Cathy White:** 35:17

Yeah, camps are powerful. My mom and dad founded Wincham Camps back in 1984 or 85. Sorry, 85 we launched a boys camp and 87 a girls camp, and Here's the whole deal. You know, parents can talk to their blue in the face, but sometimes when you can send your, your, your children off to camp particularly overnight camp They have a chance to connect with friends. If it's a Christian camp, they have a chance chance to be exposed to to faith, like like you did, and they have an opportunity Just have a lot of fun and realize that Living out your Christian life can, can be fun, and it's all about how we can help young people in this next generation invest in their lives, to encourage them to be all that God created them to be through experiences. Experiences are valuable, experiences are memorable and so we all have our our, those boss, those of us who have gone off to camp. We have all kinds of crazy memories right Making new friends and camping out or learning how to build a fire, cooking around a fire. You get to do things that are somewhat unique when you go off to camp, so we're a firm believer in that. Honestly, i feel like camp is as good for parents as it is for children. It gives parents a little bit of a break from their children and it gives the children a break from their parents and so you can send them to To a great place that is a safe environment, where you know that they're going to have wonderful counselors That will be role models for your children. I am a huge supporter for for camps. I grew up going to camp myself. My parents saw some wisdom in sending us off the camp, although I will tell you that when I went off to camp It was in North Carolina, a wonderful camp there, and it was a five-week overnight camp. So my parents packed us up for five weeks to go off to camp. I'm thinking they were desperate to have a break from their children. Anybody that sends your children off to camp for that long. But that's just the way they did camp. Back in those days I think our summers were much, much longer. We had actually three full

months of summer summer time. So to go off for one month to camp, i think my parents thought that was that was great. But firm believer in in camps if they're, if they're Grounded and in the word for sure.

**Doug Smith:** 37:30

Yeah, indirectly. We've really been talking about family a lot throughout the interview already, but I am curious, obviously, to value. I'll just leave this really open-ended again. I fork it seven and under what parenting advice do you have for me?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 37:43

All right, here's my, here's my best advice for you, for pretty parents, what we've learned in raising our children. One is and you've probably heard this before that things are more caught Then they are taught. So if that holds true, then it means that you should not worry about the fact that your children are not listening to you. It's okay. You can just keep repeating it over and over and over and you kind of sometimes you get discouraged. You say, oh, i just don't think they, they they hear me. One time my mother took all three of us to the ear doctor because we were so not listening to our parents and things They were trying to tell us, and she thought maybe they literally can't hear very well, so let me get their ears checked. I mean, that is a, that is a true story. But here's the deal. I tell parents. I say don't worry if your children aren't listening to you, but be very concerned that they're watching everything that you're doing, because you are actually setting an example for them. So they're. They see your attitude, they see how you interact with other people, they see your work ethic. They are, they're watching you all the time. And so that's what I really tell parents. It is just try to model for your children the kind of person you want them To become. My mother used to tell me days are long but life is short. And Paul says in the book of Ephesians, in the Bible He says something like that. As he says so be careful how you live. Don't live like those who are fools, but live like those who are wise. And then he goes on to explain What it means to live like those who are wise and he says make the most of every opportunity. So, as a parent, make the most of the opportunity we have, even when they're little, to model for them the person you want them to come.

**Doug Smith:** 39:26

Yeah, you talked about the power of consistency in your dad's life, and just you seeing that modeled. You just talked about making the most of every opportunity. I imagine, just like all of us, your schedule has to be wild. You have 17 grandchildren and I'm sure you just feel pulled in so many different directions. You're serving a church, you have chick-fil-a responsibilities all these different things you want to be a part of. How do you personally Just prioritize your life in a way that you can actually focus on, on your values and what matters most?

**Trudy Cathy White: 39:53**

Yeah, well, it is an exercise of just prior to housing You. You wake up and you say, okay, what's important for me to accomplish today? I have a big to-do list kind of person. I map out my to-do list and see what all I've got to do, but I do make sure that I put the most important things at the top of the list. But I also realize that sometimes we can't get through everything because there are Necessary interruptions that come in our day and I'm trying to always be keenly aware of those because I feel like sometimes those are God moments for me. Maybe it's a phone call that'll come in a Request for me to go do something, or maybe it's something I see that my neighbor not my neighbor needs and I think I think I need to set aside What I plan today to go and and do you know, whatever it is. So just trying to be flexible, i think, is important. Be attentive to unexpected opportunities that might come your way, stick to those priority things that are most important to you and realize you can't do everything. So that's why I encourage people to understand their values, because one of the things that it does for you Not only does it help you to be a little more intentional in how you live your life, but it also allows you to say no to the good things and yes to the even better things, and I tend to be a very yes person. I want to do anything anybody asked me to do, because I'm a real people pleaser, and Understanding my values and focusing in on those really does allow me to be able to say notice of things. There are a lot of great things out there that we can all get involved in, and we can't do them all, so we have to learn how do we choose the better things to do?

**Doug Smith: 41:28**

Yeah, third value you talked about was just integrity and I know your dad's life versus I can't quote off the thumb ahead but it was all about developing a good name and the power of that. Can you talk about the power of developing a good name for yourself and just how can leaders and people just grow their character and integrity in general?

**Trudy Cathy White: 41:45**

Yeah, well, i define integrity is doing the right thing at the right time, no matter where you are or who you're with. I think that's so very important that we're making the right kind of choices. That is what builds character and integrity into our life. My dad's life verse is from Proverbs 22:1. I can't quote it. It says a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. So it talks about this idea of character. My dad never unpacked this a lot with me, but Actually the reason this became his life verse was because he was in elementary school And the teacher gave all the students an assignment to go home and find a bible verse and bring it back to school Written down on a card. And so when my dad went home with this homework assignment He never told me this side of the story, but he did but I just can imagine that his mom probably stopped him when he came in the door And said, son, do you have homework? and and he said, yeah, i got to find a Bible verse And he probably wouldn't all that excited about it. But His mom got really

excited about it because she was a believer, she had a well-worn Bible. So she pulled that Bible out, I would imagine, and she probably set my dad on her lap and said let's find us a verse. And she turned to Proverbs 22:1 and read that to him a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. And when it says a good name, there, of course my dad had that speech. Impediment was difficult for even to say his own name, but I imagine his mom took time to say you know, this is not talking about your name, true, at Kathy. It's talking about who you become in life, your reputation. And isn't it interesting that God says your a good name is much rather to be had than great riches? And I'm sure she explained to my dad you know, you're grown up in a poor family, you'll probably never have much the rest of your life, but how wonderful that the Bible says that's not what's important in life, but what is important is your, is your character and who you become. So I, when I get a chance to speak at graduations for high school or even college, you know, I just remind these students you know, whoever you want to, whatever you want to do in life is one thing, but who you become in life is super important, and that's what you want to focus on is who you're becoming, and not necessarily what you're going to do.

**Doug Smith:** 43:59

Another one of your values is generosity, and you obviously are all known. You have a good name when it comes to generosity. You're a very generous family. I am curious, though, and I do want you to talk about generosity on the front end. And again, I don't know generation, but obviously Chick-fil-A has done very well and God's trusted you with a lot, and I think we live in a generation. On Instagram, everyone wants to get rich quick and have all this money and buy a yacht and do all these crazy things. What have you learned about money throughout the course of your journey being a Catholic and owning Chick-fil-A?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 44:31

Well, the most important thing I have learned about money is that God owns it all. I don't own any of it. Everything belongs to the Lord. The Bible says that heaven and earth all belong to Him. So anything that I have, I am merely to steward it. Well, if God is entrusted to me whether it's finances, whether it's talents, whatever it is God is entrusted that to me, then I have to steward it. Let me tell you how my parents taught this to us. I mean, my parents drilled this into us from the time we were quite young, reminded us all the time this is not ours. This home that we live in it belongs to the Lord, and so forth and so on. But when we were almost pre-teens we were probably 11, 12, 13 years old my parents told us that if we would wait until we were 18 years old, they would get us a car to be our own car. And so when you're 11 years old, that sounds like a great deal. You're not even driving yet, so who cares? So you think, well, that's wonderful. But when we began to get 15 and 16, and we saw our friends getting cars, either they were buying them for themselves or their parents were giving them cars and



stuff. Then we began to kind of think well, we don't have a car. And my parents said but remember, we told you that if you'll wait until you're 18, you can get a car. We will get you your very first car. So we thought that's a pretty good deal and we were permitted to drive the family car. We had to ask for the keys, we had to turn the keys back in so we could get around. We had vehicles that we used that were our parents' cars. But I remembered the day that I got my car. Now my brothers had both already gotten their cars they're older than I am But when I turned 18 in December, i got a white Ford Mustang with a red interior, if you can imagine. So that was my car of choice, and when my dad and mom handed me those keys and took me outside to see that car that I had gotten and gave it to me, my dad clearly reminded me. He said, trudy, we want to remind you. You think your mom and dad are giving you this car, but we want to remind you, this car is coming from your heavenly father And as parents we are merely a channel to pass that to you. But this car belongs to God And we want you to conduct yourself that way to remember that he owns it And you're just a steward really well. Well, that put almost a big guilt trip on me. When I was driving the car, i would turn the radio on and that's what I listened to back in those days, and sometimes I would turn some songs on. I would think I'm not sure the Lord wants me to listen to that kind of song, and so I would have to turn the channel to another song. Or even my friends from school would jump in and ride with me. They would want to see the car and they thought it was cool. But they had, you know, had the Ford Mustang, and oftentimes their language was not according to my language. Sometimes their lifestyles were a little different And I would just remind them say, hey, in this car you can't talk like that. When you get out of here you talk out of the way you want to, but this is really not my car. So so it was. That was just the way we were brought up. And people listening. You may not even know, but every restaurant that we open, at Chick-fil-A, we have a dedication dinner for them before we open those restaurants, and that dinner is specifically with an objective to teach our team members, to remind them that this business is our business. This business belongs to the Lord. We are merely to steward it really well, And that allows us to be generous. To be honest with you when you realize that you don't own it, you've just got to steward it, and even Jesus was the one that said it's better to give than to receive. And when we can really accept that and believe it and live that way, it's wonderful. You find a lot of joy in being able to give.

**Doug Smith:** 48:16

Yeah, your final value is gratitude, And I'm just curious. It may be the exact same answer, but you're now the fourth generation of Chick-fil-A or kids that are growing up, And I forget all the statistics, but I feel like a lot of times they say by the third generation, that's when things go awry, everything goes away. That does not appear to be the case at Chick-fil-A. I think there's a lot of people and leaders listening to this who have done well in their lives And their biggest fear is I don't want my kids to end up spoiled. I don't want them. And how do you raise your kids to not be spoiled and have gratitude and to

be good stewards? Just simply reminding them that everything is God's? or is there anything else that you all have done that's been helpful?

**Trudy Cathy White: 48:58**

Well, I think my parents didn't give us everything we wanted. Children aren't smart enough to know what they really need anyway, and so my parents often said no to a lot of things. I think there was a lot of wisdom in that. I saw a lot of children growing up in wealthy families that did get spoiled. I saw what it did for them, so I didn't appreciate it then. I appreciate it now that my parents learned quickly how to say no to things that we wanted. We've also. I think what my parents have done and what John and I have tried to do with our children and grandchildren is to help them to go places and do things that allowed them to see where a lot of people who have are less fortunate than we are. That makes you appreciate what you do have and allows you to have a sense of gratitude for the things that God has given you. But I always say you've got to learn how to be generous first, and that helps you to have a sense of gratitude for what you have. We had an opportunity to take our children on a mission trip our grandchildren, excuse me, on a mission trip. And before we went on that trip we gave each one of them some money. And then we went to Walmart and let them buy some things that were on a list for the needs of the people that where we were going on this trip, and let them spend that money for other people. So anytime you can do that, I think that allows them to learn how to be grateful for what they have and just expressing gratitude. We have always tried to tell our children you know, say thank you to people when they do things for you, even if it's just open the door for you or if they provide a meal for you or drive you somewhere. Just instilling that from the heart that to express appreciation begins, and eventually they begin to appreciate just the little things that people do. I'm a big note writer. I think it's a lost art to write notes to people and I've kind of gone back to writing thank you notes. I know that people don't expect that anymore and it's unique to get a letter, maybe in the mail, but I am trying to encourage my children and grandchildren to do that as well. Whenever you can just sit down and jot a note to somebody and express gratitude to them for what they've done, so yeah, I love that.

**Doug Smith: 51:10**

And again, the book's called A Legacy The last. we've already talked about a few of your books, so, and again, if you're listening to this, we'll include links to all of Judy's books in the show notes, so make sure you check it out there. I did want to touch on one of one other thing, one other book that you wrote that was called climb every mountain. It's really about going through difficult things, and I also think we live in a world where, you know, people could look at you and your family's life and say, oh, if I own Chick-fil-A, you know my life would be up into the right. And I never have any problems. But the reality is, you know, Jesus said we all will have trouble in this world.

Why do you write this book? And really I know you've gone through many tough things as well. How do you process pain and grief and tough things in your life?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 51:50

Yeah, what a great question. Yeah, I wrote this book. I love mountains. Mountains are a reminder to me of how majestic the Lord is and how near he is and his beautiful creation. But I also say that mountains remind me of the difficulties in life and that we all face them, like you said. But what I've learned in my journey of life so far is that God never waste experiences that we have. Now. We may waste them, but God's intent is to never waste experience. He actually wants us to learn from every experience that we have And he uses them for our good, ultimately, and for his glory. So when I have realized that I grow more in my difficult seasons than I do when things are going perfectly fine, I need to lean in a little more to my trust and my dependency on the Lord. My husband has had cancer twice. We've both lost both sets of parents. We've had challenges in our marriage that we've had to work through. We're committed to our marriage, but that doesn't mean that life is a bed of roses every day. We've had parenting issues that we've had to deal with, raising children, but all of those have allowed us to recognize a greater dependency on the Lord And that's what's been important to us with trying to climb mountains that seem unsurroundable, that we can't make it, but we have certainly realized that we will not make it through our difficult seasons without leaning into a God who is so great and so full with love, who gives us hope and strength for every day. I love the verse in Psalms that says I will lift up my eyes to the hills or to the mountains. Where does my strength come from? My help? my strength comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

**Doug Smith:** 53:32

Amen, I couldn't agree more And again, thank you for sharing that. We'll include a link to that book in the show notes as well. As we wrap up, I just want to ask a few fun questions. I call it the lighting down. I do an interview and the first one's just real basic, and you've given so much advice already. But what is the best advice you've ever received, and who gave it to you, if you haven't already shared that?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 53:50

I would say my dad. My dad told me this when I was a teenager. He said Trudy, if you'll help enough other people get what they want in life, you'll eventually get what you want out of life. And I've had to put that into practice through the years.

**Doug Smith:** 54:04

If you could put a quote on a billboard for everyone to read, what would it say?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 54:08

I can't put eat more chicken, just curious.

**Doug Smith:** 54:13

Hey, yeah, that's awesome.

**Trudy Cathy White:** 54:17

No, i think I would say God loves you, trust him.

**Doug Smith:** 54:21

Do you have a book or two that's impacted you in a significant way, the recently or all time that you recommend The book?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 54:26

that I've just finished reading is The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry from John Mark Homer Yeah, great book. My all time favorite for leadership is Spiritual Leadership by Blackamy. Love that book.

**Doug Smith:** 54:41

Those two are wonderful You could spend time with a lot of high level leaders. I'm just curious When you get to spend time with someone that you admire, do you ever go to a question or two that you always ask them?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 54:51

I think with every leader I'm around. I always want to know who they're following, Because, yeah, I'm always curious. So who are you following?

**Doug Smith:** 54:59

I'm trying to figure out. Yeah, primarily I'm following the Lord.

**Trudy Cathy White:** 55:08

That is where my focus is for sure.

**Doug Smith:** 55:09

Okay, i don't know if you have an actual bucket list or not, but what's something you've done in your life that you think everyone should experience before they die? Oh gracious.

**Trudy Cathy White:** 55:20

I do have a bucket list that I'll have to tell you that a hobby is important. When COVID hit, i learned to ride a horse and I am taking a horse back riding lessons now And I'm really enjoying it. I think I would say I've never really had a hobby, something I've just

done for fun, for just myself, and so I think everybody ought to pick up some kind of hobby before they die. something you do just for fun, just for yourself. Love it If you can go back and have coffee with yourself at any age and you would have actually listened to yourself.

**Doug Smith:** 55:50

What age would you go have coffee with yourself and what would have you told that version of Trudy?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 55:54

I think I would go back to when I was probably 13 or 14 in that season of life and I would tell myself, Trudy, just be who you are, Don't worry about trying to be somebody else. That was something I wrestled with a lot as a teenager. I've always seen if I can be somebody else instead of just being myself. I've always seen if I can be somebody else instead of just be who I was.

**Doug Smith:** 56:16

And we've talked a lot about legacy already, but we'll just end with this one. What do you want your legacy to be at the end of your life?

**Trudy Cathy White:** 56:24

Such a great question. I really think I would want my legacy to be that I was a titill with my influence. That's where my focus is every day that I get up. How do I intentionally influence those around me?

**Doug Smith:** 56:36

Anything else you want to leave leaders with today.

**Trudy Cathy White:** 56:39

No, this has been great, thank you.

**Doug Smith:** 56:40

Trudy, this was wonderful. Thanks for adding value to me and everyone who will listen to this, and thank you for everything you're doing through your life, your world changer, and the world is better for having you in it, so thank you.

**Trudy Cathy White:** 56:50

Thank you for this time, appreciate it.

**Doug Smith:** 56:52

Well, Leader, thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Trudy. I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did. You can find ways to connect with her and links to everything that we discussed in the show notes at [l3leadership.org forward, slash 376](http://l3leadership.org/forward/376). And hey, Leader, I say it every episode, but if you really want to 10X your growth this year, then you need to either launch or join an L3 Leadership Mastermind Group. Mastermind Groups are simply groups of 6 to 12 leaders that meet together on a consistent basis for at least one year in order to help each other grow, hold each other accountable and to do life together. For me personally, Mastermind Groups have been the greatest source of growth in my life over the last eight years. So if you're interested in learning more about launching or joining a group, go to [l3leadership.org forward slash mastermind](http://l3leadership.org/forward/mastermind) or email me at [dougsmith@l3leadership.org](mailto:dougsmith@l3leadership.org). And as always, Leader, I like to end every episode with a quote, and today I'll quote Gerald Brooks, who said this you must make a decision whether you are going to build a name or the kingdom. I love that. Gerald Brooks is so good. Well, Leader, know that. Lauren, I love you, we believe in you, and I say it every episode, but don't quit, Keep leading. The world desperately needs your leadership. We'll talk to you next episode.