

**Doug Smith:** 0:36

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 also recorded this episode live from the new returncom 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, as always, if you've been listening to the podcast for a while and it's made a difference in your life, it would mean the world to me. If you leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcast or Spotify or wherever you listen to podcasts, that really does help us to grow our listenership and to reach more leaders. So thank you in advance for that. Well, leader, in today's episode, you're going to hear my conversation with the one and only Reid Carpenter. Reid is a Pittsburgh legend. He is the founder of the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation. He is currently 85 years old and still making an incredible impact, and he has made a huge impact on my life personally through his leadership and through his vision. And in our conversation you're going to hear Reid share many, many things. You're going to hear him talk about how to make it to your finish line. You'll hear him share the story of getting a vision to make Pittsburgh famous for God. You'll hear him talk about the importance of gathering people, the importance of suffering in our lives and the role that it plays, and what he's learned about fundraising and so much more. If you've never heard Reid, you were in for a treat. Get ready. If you know Reid, this is so good, you're going to get so much out of this and I think it will add massive value to your life. But before we dive into the interview, 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](http://BeratungAdvisors.com). That's B-E-R-A-T-U-N-G-Advisorscom. Securities and investment products and services offered through LPL Financial, member of FINRA and SIPC. Beratung 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. My wife Laura and I got our engagement and wedding rings through Henne Jewelers and had an incredible experience. 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 [HenneJewelers.com](http://HenneJewelers.com). And I also want to thank our new sponsor, reiturncom, 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 [Reiturncom.com](http://Reiturncom.com) to learn more. That's R-E-I-T-U-R-Ncom. Anything involves risk. Please consult the Return Offering Circular if you're interested in investing. And with all that being said, let's dive right in. Here's my conversation with the one, the only, Reid Carpenter. Well, everyone, you are in for a treat. Today we are with a living legend, Reid Carpenter, and I was just telling Reid I can't believe we're almost 400 episodes in and I haven't had him on. I'm going to have Reid share his story, but the impact that this man has made in Pittsburgh, in our nation, in our world and for the kingdom really can't even be put into words. It's just been incredible and we're just so honored, Reid, that you would take time out of your day to invest in me and invest all the leaders that are listening to this. So welcome to the L3 Leadership Podcast.

**Reid Carpenter:** 4:02

Thank you, thank you for being with me.

**Doug Smith:** 4:07

Yeah, what I'd love to start with for people that are out of context. In Pittsburgh, you're famous for the story up on Mount Washington that really changed your life and I would love to start with that. Can you share the story about you joining Sam Shoemaker and others on top of Mount Washington? That transformed your life forever?

**Reid Carpenter:** 4:23

Yes, that was. I just had gotten to Pittsburgh, Doug, in 1962, 61, 62. And I didn't know anybody. I was there to do young life work, and the first person I met outside my little young life group was a guy by the name of Don James. And Don was an affiscable priest and we hit it off right away. Don was a rough stone. He'd come through the Korean War If he couldn't eat it, drink it or sleep with it. He wasn't very interested in it, and so he got converted through his relationship with Sam, and I won't go into those details. But the fact is that one day Don called me and said I'm going to pick you up and I'd like you to meet someone. And off. We went to Mount Washington. I had no clue, and I was 21. Very young and really had no clue what was going on. And so it was up there that the Holy Spirit just absolutely captured my soul and my mind and my heart. You know, I came to Pittsburgh to do young life and so I never had a vision for Pittsburgh. I had a vision for kids, but not for Pittsburgh. And so when we got up there without going into massive drama or detail, the fact is that, Sam, you know, we were on that concrete pad that's sitting in front of St Mary's Church, and so you know, the words out of Sam's mouth eventually were I have a vision that Pittsburgh will one day become as famous for God as for steel and, of course, the you know the smoke stacks are bustling and the barges are going up and down the river and so forth. And it was a very, very pregnant notion to me, but I didn't have any context for it until he said, after he had uttered those words turn around and behold your city. And even when I say those words, I just I am literally got goosebumps. And I turned around and I saw Pittsburgh for

the first time, and because what I saw Doug was going to try to describe this in some detail, because it's the essence of what changed my life. What I saw when I turned around was I saw domains, I saw the power of the city, I saw the sports world, I saw the university world, I saw the hospital world, I saw the working world. I saw it all sprawled out before me and I was overwhelmed. I mean, I wasn't looking for it, I didn't know what was going on and but it was very, very clear. Third largest corporate city in America. I mean, I saw from that little place, I beheld my city, and but in addition to that, Doug, I was really given insight that still, I think, is pretty unique and hasn't really been fully understood or captured. But I understood in that moment that God had a plan that he'd already put into place and that in each one of those domains which I was feasting on, he already had an army of people that he had prepared to go into those domains on a daily basis and that we didn't need to do anything except pray for and inspire those people who were already assigned to represent Jesus in those places. And they were already there. Wow, and it really freaked me out. And so that's in addition to that I heard I'm not sure it was the first time I was up there, or because I went up there many, many, many, many times and was spoken to in a variety of ways when I was there but at one point I saw clearly that Jesus was saying to Pittsburgh that I have a city prepared, already prepared. You know Revelation 21,. And behold, I saw a new Pittsburgh coming down from heaven, and it was as clear as a bell to me that this was not something that was of human concoction, but this was, for whatever reason, this was God's design and that Pittsburgh was going to be known not only for God but for the essence of his kingdom.

**Doug Smith:** 10:37

And so you got this vision, which I love, and, if my memory serves, correct me, correct me if I'm wrong. Within four years, the three or four leaders that you were with on that platform, including Sam, actually passed away, correct?

**Reid Carpenter:** 10:49

1965. And then Don James passed away in 1967. So kind of left me, you know, hovering in midair trying to figure out what we were going to do with this vision, but I might tell you that we were really flabbergasted. We were down on our knees, I mean, we knew that we'd been confronted by God himself, and so Don and I he was an ex-Marine man, as I said, he was a rough stone, and so we'd never prayed together in our lives, and so we decided we better go spend three days and pray together and figure this out. What the heck was this? And it was then that, sam, that Don asked me if I would commit the rest of my life to Pittsburgh. And, 21 years old, commit the rest of my life to Pittsburgh. And I wasn't even married, then I had no idea what the hell he was talking about. But then, you know, he immediately said that not only should we commit our lives to Pittsburgh, but then he said are you willing to commit your life to me, because we might be the only ones here? This is a forever commitment. And again I

said yes, because I didn't know any better. I didn't know. You know it wasn't a thoughtful response, but it was an instinctive spiritual response. And so I could go on, but that's the essence of what happened.

**Doug Smith:** 12:52

Yeah, and so so you have this vision from God. Behold your city, you see it an entirely new light. And eventually and you don't have to go through the details of how you got there necessarily, but eventually that led you to starting the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation. I guess I'm just curious can you talk to people who may feel like they have a vision from God but don't necessarily, like you say, have any clue of what they're supposed to do with it? And you know how did you process and ultimately get to the place where you felt like the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation was something you were supposed to birth?

**Reid Carpenter:** 13:22

Well, of course, I never even dreamed. I didn't know what a Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation was. Don't forget that that almost 20 years went by before PLF was established.

**Doug Smith:** 13:34

Wow. So what did you do in those 20 years?

**Reid Carpenter:** 13:37

Yeah, I mean I was doing young life work for all those years that by God's spirit I was led. I mean, if you were around them, Doug, you would have been at the heart of this, because I was looking for brothers and sisters who would meet with me so that we could pray together over whatever this vision was. We had, as you put it, we had the billboard Pittsburgh, famous for God as for steel. That is never left. I just had a long conversation with Bishop Zubick and that's still. That's what we're after. Yeah, and you know right here on my wall. I had the privilege of getting an award from the Pope and it was it's an award called Manifesting the Kingdom Award. Okay, so the desire of my heart was always to manifest the Kingdom of God and to get people excited about Jesus. I mean, those are my two trump cards and so, yeah, so, so that took. You know, we gathered. You asked me one of your questions. When you have a vision like this and you don't know much about it, but you also love Jesus and you're meeting the Doug Smiths of this world, you're going to bring them together, you're going to spew this vision upon others and you are going to basically take it seriously. I mean, we had a band of brothers that were willing to die for this vision, literally, and I mean John Guest was in that. You know that circle and I mean I don't know the names, but eventually it was called the Pittsburgh Offensive. The Pittsburgh Offensive met every month for a day. In the early stages we met overnight at the door of Hillman's house and you know

we'd weep, we'd cry, we'd laugh, we'd fart. I mean we'd be together, man, you know, like a bunch of soldiers.

**Doug Smith:** 16:12

And as you guys gathered. I think this is so beautiful because eventually you started the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation and you may know the number off the top of your head that I don't but through just simply gathering people praying, I think you eventually prayed. You know, Jesus, what are you weeping about over our city? You know through your efforts in those gatherings how many is it now? I feel like 70 plus nonprofits, churches, etc. Have been formed to do something about an issue that was happening in the city of Pittsburgh. Can you talk just more about that and how that came to be?

**Reid Carpenter:** 16:42

Well, yeah, yeah, I mean, I had the wisdom and the insight to basically know that we weren't there to discuss theology, we weren't there to discuss doctrine, we weren't there to discuss things that would downline us. We were there to talk about and pray about things that were on the heart of God, that he already had revealed. We didn't have to go very far to find out whether he wanted to feed the poor. We didn't have to go very far to find out whether he wanted kids out of jail. We didn't want to. You know, there's certain things that are self obvious, and so those things we began to pray about, and, of course, you know, the early, the earliest thing we took on in this spirit of what should we be doing together that we cannot do if we remain separated? We took on substance abuse, okay, and that was killing us, that was killing our city, that was killing kids, and we didn't even have a treatment bed in Pittsburgh to care for those kids, and so some of those issues became very, very self evident. You know, and I'll just name a few because you asked we took on healthcare for the poor. The East Liberty Family Healthcare Center came from that. We took on housing for the poor. You know Hill District Ministries and Garfield Jubilee and all these things came from that. We took on hardcore pornography and we took on, you know, the whole sex industry. We took on, we took on big things that you know we couldn't, no one could do by themselves.

**Doug Smith:** 18:46

And I am curious on how this happened. So talk about I want you to talk about empowering leaders, because I think a lot of times people may see a need like that and think, well, you know there's already someone meeting that need or how am I supposed to be a part of it when you guys would pray about that? It wasn't you that started all of those things. You would pray. Would it be that God would just deal with someone in prayer in those meetings of hey, Doug, you're supposed to go start this with substance abuse, or would it be people saying, hey, I see that need, I feel passionate about it, I

want to do it? And then you guys would come around and resource them. I'm just curious how did those kind of things just launch out of need?

**Reid Carpenter:** 19:19

I think. I think this is where I was given unique skills. I mean, I had the kind of personality humor. You know didn't take myself that seriously, but I was absolutely called to this. So when I spoke I wasn't trying, but when I spoke people got it, and then people wanted to go. I mean, they wanted to hit the ball. And the reason we started the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation was the fact that we needed, if you were going to, let's just say, you know, you set a table and you invited some people to that table because you decided on substance, most Christians didn't know anything about substance abuse. It just so happened that Sam had created AA, it was part of that, and so we had a group of people that understood recovery. But from the systemic issue of what are we going to do about this, okay, how are we going to take it on, you know, we realized that we in the Christian community, we didn't have any knowledge of this. So we started inviting. We started inviting, you know, the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health and we started inviting you know the institutions that really, really had energy around us. And we invite them to the table. Okay, Then my great gift and skill was saying look at it, we all agree on something. We're going to stay here long enough and pray long enough that, if we agree on it, I'll find the money Somehow. If the God wants us to do it, the money's there and we'll just go after it.

**Doug Smith:** 21:23

So I want to follow up on that thought. Before I do, I just want to encourage listeners. So this is the L3 Leadership Podcast. Obviously, we've done a lot with L3. I remember when I first got around, I went through a collaborative experience through the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, probably in 2011 and 12. And really it was the first time I had heard Reid share his story that he just shared with you about his time on Mount Washington and getting this vision for God being more famous than steel and Pittsburgh and looking at every single industry. And I got so fired up I mean, I don't know how my heart just exploded for that vision and I didn't know what to do something about what Reid's saying. And fortunately, I called Reid and he gave me an hour and a half of his time and I'll never forget, you know, my biggest takeaway from that. I said, reid, I want to do for my generation what you did for yours. And you just simply said just start gathering people and see what the Holy Spirit says. And you know I was waiting for hey, can you just? Hey, what's the game plan? Give me the specifics. But no, just just get people in a room and see what God does. And we've been doing that now for 10 years and you know I'm just amazed at what God has done, and so I don't know if there's anything else you want to say there, reid, but I just really wanted to encourage listeners. If you get excited about a vision, just start gathering people around it, and you know some people come and not be interested, but some people will come and be called to

what you see and be a part of it, and so that was just so life changing for me when you told me that would you. Is there anything else you would say when it comes to gathering people consistent, I think?

**Reid Carpenter:** 22:51

I think yes, doug, as I was perfectly preparing for this. I recognize the fact that without vision, people die. There is no work without vision, and that's something that you, as a visionary, need to really keep looking at. Okay, because a vision needs to be bigger than all of the sum of its parts. You cannot provide good leadership that you have in your circle with vision that is small vision that don't will not require from them Leadership. Okay, and when? When you talk about a city, when you talk about, you know, I mean, this is where I've spent 60 years, so I know a little something about what it means to take on a city. Okay, because we've got leadership foundations all over the world now that basically understand what God's purpose for cities are. You know we're going to end up in a city. I hope it comes really soon, but, but, but, I think, doug, this business articulating and having in your, not not in your head it can't be something that you devise. It's got to be something that's imparted. That's why prayer and and and clear humility. You know I've been truly gifted with a humble spirit. I don't want the credit for anything. You know, don James taught me that lesson more than I can. You know young life was running out of money and he was concerned about me and he looked in his bank account at the Pittsburgh experiment, said you know, we got \$21,000 in our bank account. Why? don't you take it Wow, You're. You know, I mean that. I'll never forget that as long as I live obviously so this business about who cares who gets the credit, as long as you're pursuing the vision that God has provided for you. Our problem in this space is the fact that we belong to so many organizations that we think are pursuing a vision, but they end up being competitive. They end up being people who slice each other up because they need the resources that that are implicit in the vision. That vision's got to be transcended, and that's what it transcends all that crap.

**Doug Smith:** 25:53

That's so good and I guess, as I've listened to you over the years, I wanted to ask you this because it relates you know you talked about. It's so easy as we start to grow as leaders, we become, you know, leaders in our organizations and that becomes a focus and it's so easy, like you were saying, just to focus on our little organization, not really focus on Kingdom. And you've consistently, every time I've been around you in the last decade, have challenged us. Every time we get together, go visit each other, be friends with each other. Friendship and that seems so simple. I just want to hear you talk about friendship and I want to hear you challenge leaders to get outside of the organizations and visit others and just talk about that. I don't really have a specific question about that, but I know you have lots of questions.

**Reid Carpenter:** 26:35

I was anticipating that question because it's a darn good question. Okay, friendships, relationships, friendships are. It's the strategy of the creator, it's the engine of creativity, it's what brings us together, it's what it's what creates new people, it's the essence of our sexuality, it's. It is God's design for recreation is relationships. The fact of the matter is, when I saw what I saw of a multitude of people going into those various and sundry domains to represent the king, okay, I realized that my fundamental job was doing what I'm doing now. Go dog, go baby. You got gifts that I will never have and I'm going to cheerlead your gifts right to the finish line because your gifts are required to create the kingdom of God. Okay, and I even cheerlead people who don't know Jesus. Okay, because they also were created by God. They just don't know it. Wow, their gifts have been created by God. They were created by God. So you know, I can walk into any domain as long as the people doing this are are doing good, not evil. We've got to be discerning of what evil is and not promoted, but we also have to be discerning as to what good is. So you know it's. It's an amazing thing to be broken free from institutional design to look at a bigger picture that you can cheerlead everybody and anybody who's doing their best to achieve goodness, and I think that that that is a fountainhead of love, of not having love be created on the basis of some smaller agenda or some criteria. Okay, because people were created to love.

**Doug Smith:** 29:09

I thought that's interesting because that's always stood out. I believe at some point you, through the PLF, created a fund to basically fund initiatives of people that were doing well or doing some of the Jesus weeping about. If I remember correctly, you would actually fund like non faith based organizations if they were doing good. Is that accurate? And I'm just curious, what was that like? Because I think a lot of people be like why would you fund something that's not in line with your values? Can you talk more about that?

**Reid Carpenter:** 29:32

Well, sure, I mean. The fact is that you know, take Pittsburgh right now, one of the biggest crises in Pittsburgh is hunger, and that that people are hungry and children are hungry. And so how much of Jesus do you need to know in order to feed the hungry? I mean, you just want good people willing to to roll up their sleeves. As it's going on right now as we speak. Amen to action. You know going to create a million meals, and the fact is that that you know you don't have to sign up as a Christian to get in on, to get on putting, you know, rice in a bag. And now I'm hoping that Christians obviously are the front and center of that enterprise, but it's not necessary.

**Doug Smith:** 30:26



Yeah, you mentioned fundraising. So going back to a little bit, to people getting a vision for something and wanting to go do it, I think that's something that always intimidates people and I know part of it is gifting. But you know, I've been fundraising for 13 years. I'm just curious. When it comes to raising money for initiatives, you know you said, if God gives you a vision for something, he'll fund it. What have you learned about raising money in capital to do what God's called you to do or others to do?

**Reid Carpenter:** 30:55

Clearly, the biggest thing I've learned is that it's based on the integrity of your relationships and the more trust that people have in you as a person not your cause, but you as a person, Doug Smith the more apt you are going to be a very decent fundraiser. Okay, because they trust your word. They like the sparks that fly when they see the good work that you do and if you persist in loving them, even if they don't give, if they become your friend Okay, in my case, Doug, I attribute I've raised billions of dollars in my lifetime, okay, and the majority of that money has come from widows. Widows are the most powerful financial instruments of God. Wow, because they understand. Okay, they understand. For one thing, they're lonely. For one thing, they looking for purpose. For one thing, they're. In my case, they're all women and in my case, I've always had to be very, very, very, very careful on that basis. But, nonetheless, when you get started getting handed checks by you know, million dollar checks from, from names of people that I, you'd recognize it's really based on their own spiritual development, their own hunger. You know, in one case, one of these women had a child that was born with great, great disabled body, and, and so I found out that this was her passion, and she didn't know what to do with her passion because her passion had to do with her own daughter. And when I made that discovery, which is what is the essence of fundraising, if you're always going to go after money for the things that you want or that you think, as opposed to what is in the heart of the person with the money, If you don't have an instrument that's large enough to incorporate the vision that they have for their money, you're in a very limited space. That's why this idea of a vision big enough to incorporate the gifts and the resources of other people the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation always received resources that were of that nature. Yes, we raised money for the things that we thought God wanted us to do, but when we found out what was on the heart of the people who had the money, and we love them into believing that we were there to help them. Wow. You're not helping us. You kidding me, we're, we're helping you.

**Doug Smith:** 34:20

Wow, anything else on fundraising.

**Reid Carpenter:** 34:25

Well, you know, I do believe that this is the most difficult area for most people. Okay, they stumble over it. You know, they've been massively hurt along the way by people

who promised and didn't come through. I mean, or they got massively hung up by their own inadequacies, or their own in my case. I had dreams for people that they didn't have for themselves, you know, and so I was. I always lived, you know, kind of on the edge of. I was expecting something that didn't happen and in fact I would announce it, and so I spent a little time in trouble, you know, and so my expectations were always a little bit larger, because the needs that I perceived were always pretty overwhelming. You see, kids die from overdoses or whatever issue that you've taken on. You know, for instance, the biggest dollars that we've received in the context of adolescent drug abuse you know I won't mention names, but you know you get to know. The president of the Westinghouse became my great friend. I found out a kid dying of alcoholism, and I found out that he himself had a problem with alcoholism. So it's in the family, and so that's the easiest money to raise is that when you connect, you know power. You know my theory of this Doug for your audience. It's not a bad theory. It's that when you, when I was in young life, I understood if I had wanted to get into a high school and I had to get the superintendent's permission. Okay.

**Doug Smith:** 36:47

Yeah.

**Reid Carpenter:** 36:49

I had the idea, but I didn't have the power in the authority to execute the plan. So instead of me trying to do that, I'd call Fred Federoff from Alcoa and I'd say Fred, would you mind calling the superintendent of schools and tell him you want an energy, introduce me. And guess what, he'd have a lunch with me the next day. So to know how to take power, authority and ideas and combine them was a very meaningful formula.

**Doug Smith:** 37:33

Maybe we're simplifying this, but again, one thing I admire about you is you have been able to build a trust influence in relationships with people in power that a lot of people would be intimidated by you. You mentioned CEO of Westinghouse, Fred Federoff. You know you can go on and on. I know you led Bible studies with people like that, maybe over simplifying to say they're just people. But do you have any advice for building relationships with people in positions of power, not for your gain, but truly just to build a relationship with them?

**Reid Carpenter:** 38:06

Absolutely. I mean, they were my favorite people, you know, I mean, I'm a human being. So the fact is that for me to say that a relationship with Fred Federoff was the same as my relationship with a bus driver, okay, you know, it just isn't true. It just is not true. My relationship with the bus driver must, might be far more kingdom, that might be far more important to Jesus, than my relationship with Fred Federoff, you know, but from the

standpoint of how I dealt with it and this might be sin, it might be plain old sin the fact is, I always understood that the relationship was not about me. This was about this vision, this kingdom. I mean no, I mean this is what we're going for. I'm still going for it, man Come on. I'm still raising a bunch of money. We're not there yet.

**Doug Smith:** 39:20

How old are you now?

**Reid Carpenter:** 39:22

85.

**Doug Smith:** 39:23

Let's go. I was talking about relationships. You know, in the NFL and in the sports world they talk about coaching trees and you know who came from these and you know, I think in the kingdom we talk a lot about discipleship trees. When I look at your discipleship tree, I'm amazed at all the disciples that you've raised up, that not only just went out and did great things but also raised up a whole another generation of disciples under them. Any advice on really making disciples, not just friendships, that people you mentor once in a while, but I'm talking people that you significantly impact, that go on and take your legacy and bring it to the next generation.

**Reid Carpenter:** 40:05

That's a tough one for me, doug. I think discipleship is more caught than taught. I think it's something that you got to look behind you. If you say you're a leader, you got to look behind you and see if anybody's following you. You can't be a self-professed leader, it's got. Leadership has to be endowed, it has to be provided, it has to be given by those who give it, and then you've got to have the integrity to play that part that you have in moving that person to the next phase of their development. I've never been a great teacher, doug. You're a great teacher. I mean, I just know that by this interview. I mean you're taking notes, you're putting things in place so that you can not only explain them to the other. That's the reason you do this blog is the fact that you are after something that you have clearly defined and that once you have it, you are able to not only define it, but you're able to provide the kind of resources that people need in order to take their next step. That's never been me. I've never been didactic, I've never done that and by God's grace I haven't had to, because the Lord has provided me a platform where that's caught by other people, rather than me having to teach it. Now, don't get me wrong. I've taught leadership, and in young life I mean my gosh, but you know what I'm talking about. It's never been. It's never been my trump card. Yeah.

**Doug Smith:** 42:08

You're 85 years old and still going strong, still got a lot to do. Is you're just saying getting fired up? I had a leader tell me once that he believes that only about 2% of Christian leaders make it to their finish line intact, doing what God's called them to do. I don't know if you would agree with that statement or not, but I am curious when I meet leaders who are in their 80s, still doing great things for God, decade after decade after decade. I would love to hear you talk about longevity and ministry and how to get to your finish line.

**Reid Carpenter:** 42:35

It's a fairly contemporary question for me. I get up every morning. I don't have to do anything, I don't have to go anywhere. The deeper I get into the notion that I am here only to exemplify and to work on God's will over my life. That's it. There's no other reason for me to hang around. I would rather be with Jesus than to just be talking about Him down there. But everyone has to work that out. But the deeper I go because I have a chance to go pretty deep. I spend a lot of time in prayer and a lot of time in mass and taking the sacraments. I'm in that phase of my life where I'm prepared. Here's what I would say to your generation whatever you do, take care of your soul. It's the only thing that's going to last. Your body's not going to last, your mind's not going to last. There's nothing about you that's going to last except for your soul. So soul keeping is really one of the most important things we can do. So I spend most of my time finding Doug Smith's to breathe into them Hope, love and life. That's the greatest gift I can give to you is making sure you know how much you're loved and how important you are in the scheme of creation and that the platform that you have is not something that you've achieved, it's something that you've been given. And what is that? It's your soul. It's your soul. I have a view of heaven. That is very exciting. I believe we're going to be in on the reconstruction, the new earth, the new heaven, the new earth that the skills that you're developing in front of that microphone and in the other demonstrations of your life are going to be fully maximized in the kingdom of God. And so you know we're going to build new cities. We're going to have so much fun, it's going to be incredible, and so I just think this is practice. This is practice, and so nurturing that part of you that's going to last is probably and that's what happens. At my age, you know you're working 24 hours a day. I know, I know, I mean, I know you don't have that much time set aside to nourish your soul, to go on retreat, to be with people who are going deep. You know you do that in your quiet time, you do that as you can, but the older you get, the more time you have, thank God, and it's a beautiful privilege. So the resiliency of people lasting okay is really depending on how they take care of their soul. My soul is more resilient right now, Doug, than it's ever been. I mean, I feel it, I'm in it, I'm of it, and the Holy Spirit is just laughing his head off because I'm pathetic.

**Doug Smith:** 47:01

You know we've talked a lot about vision and you've done a lot of great things in your life, but your life hasn't been perfect. It hasn't always been easy. I know you've gone through a lot of suffering as well. I'm always interested to hear how leaders deal with seasons of suffering, the pain and the pressure of leadership. What have you learned about suffering over the course of your life and leadership?

**Reid Carpenter:** 47:22

My greatest suffering was the 10 years my wife and I were separated, and that was a long journey in the night of the soul. I had to keep functioning, but every light in my soul was out. And it's not something I desired, it's something I contributed to, but it was not something of my desire. And so right here in my hand is called Sounds. Now it's like we all have. This is the fortress of. You know, I met Dor, I met Torre Corrie, ten Boon in Dor Hillman's living room, and I was going through this dark night of my soul and Dor said to her you know, he's going through some deep stuff, right? Well, compared to what? And so when you talk about suffering, you know it's compared to what. I mean, take a look at what's going on in all kinds of places in the world. But it's my suffering. And you asked me about my suffering, she said she sent me a note. I was on my way out and she put a note in my hand. Here's what the note said Remember, when you're under the wing, when you're under his wings, the lights are out. You can't see. And boy, oh boy, was that a refraud? And so I would say that the degree that you suffer and the lights are out, there's a deeper work going on in Catholic theology or Catholic thought. You know you release that suffering. You release your suffering to other people who are suffering. So when I was in my darkest nights I would release my own pain Sometimes I couldn't even breathe. I'd release that to people who were also suffering and I found great redemptive because once the light is back on, you realize that you've changed, you realize that the whole equation, you find new metaphors, and so those were some of the most. I read this every day pick it up and say here's where I was in 1975. I was in a KOA with my four children in the back of a truck and I was by myself and I was weeping and wailing in the middle of the night, broken-hearted. I've got all that recorded so I can go back and now say these are the ingredients that have made me the man that I am and I think all suffering you know my physical suffering as of late is in no comparison, none, zero comparison to that soul suffering that I experienced.

**Doug Smith:** 51:21

Wow, so much there. I guess you know. Someone asked me the other day you know, doug, what has caused you to grow the most? And I think they wanted me to say you know podcast, a conference or you know some leader. But the reality is, as I look back on my life, unfortunately it's been suffering, right, and you said, becoming a new person on the other side. You know, if you could go back to the beginning of your journey, is there anything that you would change? Do you have any regrets? I'm just curious.

**Reid Carpenter:** 51:50

No, no, no. Not one thing I mean. It's all folded into a narrative that has placed me in the most unbelievably blessed place. Listen, listen to us talk. How many people, 85 years old, are getting a chance to reflect on the questions that you're asking? Wow. Name them.

**Doug Smith:** 52:27

Yeah, you're blessed. I did want to ask this is a totally random question you mentioned you know you're a Catholic, but you converted to Catholicism usually and again, this is, I guess, anyway also it seems like historically in the last 30 years, more people have converted from Catholicism to evangelical Christianity than the reverse. I believe you're evangelical background and, if I'm not mistaken, I believe a Catholic bishop came to you and said Reed, give me seven dinners and I'll convert you to Catholicism. And if that's true, one. I would love for you to talk about your conversion. But what were said in those seven dinners? If that's really what went down?

**Reid Carpenter:** 53:08

That's not quite the spirit of what went down. You know, it was me searching and going to them. You know I think I'm pregnant, you know I'm ready to give birth to something here, and I would like you to walk through my pregnancy with me and see if I got a baby or whether I got nothing. That was the more the spirit of it. So I would come in each of those dinners with a list of questions that were permeating, like how would you come off believing that the bread and wine actually become the real body of blood of Christ, I mean, where's that from? And so I would ponder those questions that were very, very, very meaningful to me in terms of my questions about where I was entering, but the real drive for me to go in that room, you know, again in the spirit of the questions you're asking me, I led, by God's grace, a whole lot of people to Jesus in high school and a lot of them became pastors, and a lot of them became, you know, you know, some of them, and I watched with horror what happened to so many of them. That would break off and split, you know just, it broke my heart because of my vision, for the kingdom required us to be of one heart and one mind, not to be broken into pieces, and so I think the best way to look at my yearning and this is very private and very I'm not promoting it, I'm just saying this is what happened I began to yearn for the sacraments. I wanted to know Jesus in a way that wasn't in my, I couldn't figure out. It was mystery, substantive mystery, that I had to release myself. And every morning I go to Mass I release myself to a mystery that I can't figure out, I can't understand, but he does, okay. And as an evangelical, when I really was questioning this, I got in my car and I rode down and because I had led, I had been part of leading Scott Honda Christ in high school at a Laurel ville weekend and here he was now you know kind of the Catholic guru of, and so I got in my car and went down there. I said, scott, you owe me man. I got to talk. It was 11 o'clock at night. I woke him up because I had to see the bishop that night for

dinner and I had to figure out how to you know how to get into this. He was so unbelievable. I said where do you? I mean, I finally got. Where do you get all of them? He says you taught me everything I ever knew about the real presence. Wow, this is what they're for you talking about. And I felt the tears coming into my eyes, you know, because I knew. I knew I didn't know where we were going in the conversation you know, but I was kind of lit up and he said did you, were you the speaker Laurel Bill in 1978? I said yes, I was. Did you tell me about Jesus? Yes, I did. Did you tell me you died on the cross? Yes, I did. Did you tell me you rose from the dead? Yes, I did.

**Doug Smith:** 57:07

Did you tell me I could ever?

**Reid Carpenter:** 57:09

relationship with him? Yes, I did. Did you tell me that I could go outside and I could pray a prayer and ask him to come into my life and his real presence would come in? I said yes, I did, I did and he did. Now can you explain that to me? Can you explain that to me? No. No, and that's what I, you know. I folded right there, you know. And so I think with evangelicals and Catholics we get all twisted up. In our language we mean different things and we hear different things, but when you really get down to it, we mean in most cases. We mean the same thing.

**Doug Smith:** 58:05

Yeah, and you've been doing wonderful work uniting the body of Christ and Pittsburgh. It's been beautiful to see Catholics and evangelicals come together around the same table and I just love what God's doing here. So thank you for your leadership on that and thank you for sharing candidly One thing that came to mind when you were saying you know you've had the privilege of leading many, many people to Christ. I would argue you're an evangelist. But any advice to those listening on evangelism because you know, I think, we're called to it I don't think a lot of us either know how to do it or you know where to start any advice on how we can be better witnesses and lead others to Christ?

**Reid Carpenter:** 58:41

I think, the best way to do it, which is what I do now. I don't do much evangelizing, you know, but I will ask anybody anywhere, at an airport or anything else, or at a breakfast table Is there anything I can pray for you about? There's nobody ever that said no, wow, and that's all that. That's the lead, you know. Can I do it right here? Don't worry about it, man, like I do, you know you're going to get prayed for. Okay, well, that's a Ziploc bag, I mean, that's zips on zips lock, and so that's the closest thing I get. Or, if I recognize, if I were you, I would say to you I just want you to know, man, you know, every time I look at you, I see Jesus in you, man, Jesus in you, because I think I see him. Those are the

things that I think we can. You know, they're really, they're basically acts of love, because they trigger. They trigger the soul. They trigger the soul, not the head.

**Doug Smith:** 1:00:20

I don't know if we'll have time to jump in the lightning round, so much I want to ask. I'll leave this really open. Is there anything else you want to challenge leaders with or share with leaders before we start to wrap up our time?

**Reid Carpenter:** 1:00:31

Well, you asked me. You know, again, we don't have time to really get into it, but you know, you asked me what books that were important in my life, and let me just suggest I'm going to give you the names of a couple. But the thing that you can take away from this with read is the fact that I'm far more interested in what stimulates your soul than what stimulates your mind or your activity. Okay, because that'll, that'll follow if your soul's on fire, you know. And so my recommendation is only read things that fire, fire up your soul. Okay, not your mind, not your head, not, I mean, those are all things that are important, but they're they're for another day. If you've got a better theology of this eschatology than I do, who gives a rip right? I mean, I just, you know, tell me about your soul, man, you know what's firing you up, what's what's getting you up in the morning. And so the books that I've read that get me up in the morning and I read all the time I'm just going to list three. One is Henry Drummond, the greatest thing in the world. Two is Dorothy Sears, the greatest drama ever staged. And the third one, interestingly enough, is a book called the Birth of the Chaotic Age by D Hawk. Okay, and those books are things that challenge the essence of my kingdom, understanding and my calling. Wow. Okay, they're the, they're the king, they're the kindling that just absolutely keeps birthing new energy and new thought.

**Doug Smith:** 1:02:40

Thank you for sharing that. I think I've included links to all of those in the show notes. I guess if I had to hand pick a few other lightning round questions, I would love to hear you just share what is your biggest leadership, Pat Peeve.

**Reid Carpenter:** 1:02:52

My biggest leadership what pet Peeve?

**Doug Smith:** 1:02:55

What drives you crazy? Yeah.

**Reid Carpenter:** 1:02:58

Well, you know, I think that people who are are, but people who who think they're leaders and are not they're they're the most pathetic people in the world. They've been



given a platform, but they don't know anything about leadership. And you know, because anybody that's following a truly godly leader is going to basically have a testimony.

**Doug Smith:** 1:03:36

That's good. I don't know if you've had a bucket list in your life. I know you've had done a lot of cool things, had a lot of great experiences. What's something that you think everybody should do at some point in their life before they die?

**Reid Carpenter:** 1:03:50

I guess it would be go if it's. I don't know if there'd be a holy land after what's going on there now, but there's nothing quite as energizing to the soul is to actually walk where Jesus walked and and been on the journey with his, using his footsteps. And so you know a bucket list. You know, I'm just so happy that I got a chance to do that and experience that. Otherwise, I think that I have a favorite spot out in Colorado. It's a, it's, it's upon a mountain and you know, in Vale, and I've been out there for 34 years in a row and I have a. I have a mountain that I get up five o'clock in the morning. I drive up there and I started it had this little aspen shoot and I see this huge aspen tree. So I've been there that many times, that many years, and it's my, it's my all of us have something like this but it's my place where I really hear God, and I would say that everyone, you know it's I don't forget the question you asked, but it's, it's. What was the bucket list for me? Everybody should have, you know, a place like that that they, they go.

**Doug Smith:** 1:05:31

Yeah, and I guess I would just ask you 85,. Is there anything you still want to experience on this side of heaven that you haven't experienced yet? Before you go?

**Reid Carpenter:** 1:05:42

Well, like any father, you know, I, I have great desires for my children and my grandchildren and they're, they're, they're unbelievable people, but they're kind of tripping along in life spiritually, Like a lot of people are today confused and not liking what they see, and formal religion is left them cold and dreary, and and so yeah. I mean I'd love to, if I, if I were given the opportunity, I'd love to see them hit the finish line and would in full stride. I've got an unbelievable wife, dog, and that's another thing that I've been given. You know, even with all of our I mean the trauma we've been through as a couple. But the Lord has turned that around in ways that she right now she's a nurse, she takes care of me in ways that I cannot even imagine. She's been through with me what, what only an angel would endure. And so I'm convinced that that little girl that stepped into Wilkinsburg High School in 1961 and greeted me as the new young life

leader and who, with whom I fell in love instantly, you know, was sent, was sent by God right to me. So that's been a great blessing in my life.

**Doug Smith:** 1:07:22

And then, yeah, thank God for that testimony and that you guys are doing well. Last question that I have for you is you know, you've done a lot in your life. You've made a huge impact for the kingdom. When you leave this earth and people think about Reed Carpenter, what do you want them to think about? What do you want your legacy to be?

**Reid Carpenter:** 1:07:41

Oh, that's really simple. You know, whatever they know of me, did they feel loved by me, anything?

**Doug Smith:** 1:07:53

else you want to.

**Reid Carpenter:** 1:07:54

Oh good, I mean I, that's the privilege of age. You know, every time I make a move, I got to, you know, I got to. I got to list people every day, every day, I call and say how are you doing? You know, I just want you to know I was praying for you this morning. I love you and thanks for what you've done to please Jesus, because you certainly blessed me. Can't do much more than that, if I mean it, if I actually have prayed for that.

**Doug Smith:** 1:08:32

Oh, Reed, so grateful for your 85 years of faithfulness and just serving God in the kingdom. Thank you for the impact you've made on me. Thank you for being a cheerleader in my life and continuing to encourage me to go after what God puts in my heart, and I'm just so blessed On behalf of everyone who will listen to this. I know there'll be impact to deeply. Thank you for who you are and what you do.

**Reid Carpenter:** 1:08:51

Thank you, doug. Stay the course Get old, get old.

**Doug Smith:** 1:08:57

Well, I'll do my best. Thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Reed. I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did. You can find ways to connect with him and links to everything that we discussed in the show notes at [L3 leadership.org forward slash 397](https://l3leadership.org/forward/slash-397). And, as always later, I want to challenge you that if you want to 10 extra growth next year, then you need to either launch or join an L3 leadership mastermind group. Mastermind groups are simply groups of six to 12 leaders that meet together on a consistent basis for at least one year in order to help each other grow, to 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, which is why I believe every leadership being one. So if you're interested in learning more about launching or joining a group, go to [L3 leadership dot org forward slash masterminds](http://L3leadership.org/masterminds) or email me at Doug Smith at [L3 leadership dot org](mailto:L3leadership.org). And, as always, I like to end every episode of the quote, and I will quote the legendary John Wooden, who said this. He said a good coach can change a game, a great coach can change a life, and that is what it's all about. Well, leader, I hope you enjoyed the episode. Know that my wife Laura and I love you. We believe in you and I say it every episode. But don't quit, keep leading.