

Listening to God's voice in leadership

TRANSCRIPT

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NOTE: This transcript was AI-generated and has not been fully edited.

[00:00:00] **Dr. Mark Turman:** You're listening to the Denison Forum Podcast. I'm Mark Turman, Executive Director of Denison Forum, and I also get to host the conversation that we're having today. My mentor used to tell me when I was getting into ministry that pastoring a church is a splendid misery. And sometimes a miserable splendor.

If you've tried to lead a church as a pastor, a staff member, or as a lay leader, you kind of know probably what he meant by splendid misery. And we want to have a conversation today that we hope will encourage and equip you in the work that God has put into your hands, that you might find joy, that you might find purpose, and that you might find greater effectiveness.

In the things that God has put in trust to you. My conversation partner today is Robin Pou. Let me introduce him to you. Robin is an executive coach, author, and founder of a leadership development firm. He created a tool called the leadership doubt index, which just by the name is intriguing all on its own.

But it is a pioneering workplace survey that reveals implications that successful leaders need to understand. Robin also founded what is called the National Confident Leader Week, an annual nationwide initiative that aims to enhance effective leadership by better understanding how leaders sometimes question their abilities, manage their doubt, and ultimately cope with those experiences.

That sounds like every week. In a church pastor's life, Robin's work has been featured in publications such as Bloomberg, Forbes, Associated Press, as well as the Dallas Morning News. He also publishes a weekly newsletter that you can subscribe to called the Confident Leader. And we encourage you to do that.

Robin is a native of Dallas. He lives here with his wife, Karen, their three kids. And also their puppy. And you can find him also doing strategic work and advising many numerous church and nonprofit leaders. Right here at the beginning, Robin, I want to make sure I get this correct. People can find and follow you at RobinPou.com.

[00:02:10] **Robin Pou:** robinpou.com.

[00:02:11] **Dr. Mark Turman:** And that is R O B I N P O U. com. Robinpou.com. And you can get there and follow him, subscribe to the newsletter and get to know him better. Did I get all of that right? Robin?

[00:02:25] **Robin Pou:** I'm telling you, Mark, I don't know that the conversation could be any better than that introduction.

That is fantastic. So thank you very much. I appreciate it.

[00:02:33] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Well, I, I gotta tell you, I, I was really glad to hear you say your last name on one of the video leadership lessons I watched, because that's not the way I would have said pew. Okay.

[00:02:45] **Robin Pou:** yeah, it's, it's spelled P O U. And for the entirety of my life, I just listened for the P sound and anything that follows but because we're in this faith based audience, we always say it's, you know, like church pew, which makes it very easy to remember. So,

[00:03:01] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Well, give us do you know the background of that name? I'm like, where did that come from?

[00:03:06] **Robin Pou:** yeah, you know, what's so fascinating is that I do know the answer and nobody else knows the answer except me. I was early voting the other day, and the guy that was checking me in saw my last name, obviously, and he goes, Oh, that's Catalan! And I said, how do you know that? So Catalan is in the North region of Spain, the Basque region.

And that's where all the way back to like 1258. So the coat of arms says the, the name goes back and it's pronounced Po. In Spanish or in Catalan, and it means the well. And so our coat of arms has a well on it. So we theorize that we were the keepers of the well, right? So if you wanted to displace a group, you would poison the well.

So it was very important to make sure that everybody had safe and clean drinking water. So perhaps we were the keepers of the well way back when.

[00:04:00] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Well, that was probably really important back then for sure. And in some ways, symbolically and figuratively seems to apply to a lot of the things that you're doing now, I would think so tell us a little bit of your backstory that we can't get from the book cover or on the website, a little bit of your.

Personal story and, and maybe your faith story. How did you get to where you are now? Where did it start?

[00:04:24] **Robin Pou:** You know, it's always funny.

I listened to the introduction and I'm like, wow, who is that person? Because I'm just little old Robin Pou from Dallas, Texas fourth generation Dallasite, which is not very common. So for everybody that might be listening who doesn't know Dallas, we've had such an influx of people moving to Texas that to find a native Dallasite is really Potentially a challenge.

And so, deep roots here. My grandfather on my dad's side was a two star general in the Air Force. So he was a pretty big character in Dallas at that time when it was much smaller and my mom's family had come from Oklahoma across the red river. And so this is just where they chose to, to start a family.

And You know, born and raised in Dallas, went to the University of Texas down in Austin, and then went to SMU Law School. So practiced law for five years, which Is sort of a circuitous, interesting route to leadership development coach. And then owner operator of four different businesses with a group of partners.

And so just a real collection of experiences that You know, that have landed me in this spot, married to my high school, sweetheart, we've got these three kiddos that we love so much and attempting to, to lead them in a, in a faith based way, you know, just God's designed for them. And you know, just like I said, just little Robin Pou, and all of a sudden God's got a story.

And I always think of my life as the fifth gospel. So if God works in and through his people. people, well, his people were Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John amongst others. And they had a pen or a pencil or some, some sort of writing instrument that they, they wrote the four gospels. Well, it's Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Robin, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Mark, Turman, and so we are a living testament to God's work in and through his people.

People. And so whenever I hear the stories that might be part of the introduction or that are in the reluctant disciple, which is a book that I wrote that we'll talk about in a minute it's just a testimony. And, you know, I, I've borrowed the testimony, the story of other people along my faith journey, and if I can share back God's work in my life, may others borrow that while they're understanding God's story in their life.

So, I, it's just, it's kind of the way that I think about our time here on earth from a, you know, a story perspective.

[00:06:54] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. Well, yeah. And it absolutely applies to all of us for sure. So tell me a little bit of your faith journey grew up in a faith oriented home. You know, like, like my wife in in some degree, but more like my wife in, in church from, you know, three weeks after being born, is that kind of the environment you grew up in and we'll get to end of the book,

I guess we'll, we'll reveal some of the faith pivots that you've had, but is that kind of where your story started from a faith perspective?

[00:07:21] **Robin Pou:** Yeah. In fact, part of the overlap is that my mom's family they were in North Dallas and they would drive South to Park Baptist Church, which, you know, I'm sure everybody that is a listener knows that that was Jim's Church for so long. And so she grew up there and then my dad grew up in Lakewood, which is a district or a neighborhood in South Dallas.

And so, he, they were at Lakewood Baptist church. So for generations have had this faith component to our, our family and. You know, I think what's notable about my journey is that I got confirmed at Highland Park Presbyterian Church, which is a local church in town. And my youth pastor, Murray Gossett, who's at First Presbyterian not Lubbock, but Amarillo.

He really just poured into me as youth pastors should and ought and do, but he just had an outsized impact on my life. And that set a trajectory that always just brought me closer to the faith, even though a little bit wayward during the college years, but just always being drawn back to God and back to a relationship with him.

And then had a pretty significant spiritual transformation. That was the, original catalyst for the book that I mentioned, The Reluctant Disciple.

[00:08:46] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. So thanks for that. Let's talk about the reluctant disciple. When I saw that name, I immediately went to C. S. Lewis. And some of the ways that his story gets told. But tell us all the things, some of the backstory of what came to lead you to write a book. And kind of the follow up question is, is that there's a lot in here about learning to listen to God.

I think, and the reason that question intrigues me, Robin, in some ways is I think maybe the hardest thing for a Christian whether they're a church leader or not. Is to be able to distinguish, okay, how do I know I'm hearing God's voice and not my own voice or the voice of another person or a group of people.

I go back to that part of the gospel in John, where Jesus is teaching. He says, my sheep know my voice and they follow me. They won't follow anybody else. And I think that's really been one of the biggest challenges that I've seen in my own faith and that of others. How do I know this is God's voice?

So what triggered the book and how did that lesson of listening to God come into your

[00:09:48] **Robin Pou:** book and how did that lesson of listening to God come into your life? in his deep desire and longing to have a relationship with God and listen to what God's calling him

to do all the while being exceptionally reluctant because he's a businessman. He's called to the marketplace.

He's not called to vocational ministry. So unlike the people that might be listening to this podcast who are in vocational ministry, they preside over a flock of people that are called to the marketplace. And those that are called to the marketplace are not second class citizens in God's world, in his army.

And so, his reluctance to step forward for what God's calling him to do is what really gives him the, the title disciple, but also reluctant. And it's written as a fictional parable, but it's It is loosely patterned after a series of experiences that I had back in 2006 and 2007, which culminated in a missions trip that went awry, a near death experience.

And, Sweet God was on me for years to write this book. And patient as the Holy Spirit is, right? He's a gentleman. He will wait on us, which is just the beauty of our free will. We get the ability to choose to be in relationship with Him. And I say that I was semi disobedient in not having written it.

Sooner than, you know, it being published this year but, but I completed it. And so I, it was an obedience project for me to do this. And so that was kind of the, the catalyst which I'm happy to go into more detail, but to, to your second question, just about the listening piece, if you want to go there at this point,

[00:11:54] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah.

[00:11:56] **Robin Pou:** what I have discovered lately.

So this is pretty fresh over 2024, is that The best way for me to hear and discern the Lord's voice is to be in relationship with him. Because if, if I only saw my wife once a month or twice a year, I might confuse her voice with somebody else's voice because I don't really have it seared into my hearing or into my brain.

[00:12:27] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Right.

[00:12:27] **Robin Pou:** And so the more that I have adhered to a daily discipline that I only adhere to about 80 percent of the time, but a, you know, daily discipline in scripture or, or having conversation with God, I I'm hearing his voice with much greater clarity than I would have when I would ask myself the question, Hey, is that me?

Or is that God? And sort of prior to the past decade, I would say if it's counterintuitive, it's probably God. If it's intuitive, then it's probably me. Like I'm only going to think of things that

are sort of logical, but if it's crazy, it's probably something that God's calling me to. So this concept of my relationship with God, which is mainly prayer.

And I think of that as a conversation with God. What do you want me to know today? What do you want me to see? Who do you want me to engage with? Like asking the Lord how he wants to work in and through me. I just, I kind of go forward with whatever comes to me. And if it's not of the Holy Spirit, if it's not of the Lord, I just pray that it goes by the wayside.

Like I don't want that, those seeds to land. So long answer for the two parts of your questions, but you know, I wanted to offer that.

[00:13:51] **Dr. Mark Turman:** So we may go off script here. So,

[00:13:53] **Robin Pou:** Yeah, feel free. I'm, I'm happy.

[00:13:56] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Let me, let me ask you, Robin, in your, in your dealings with leaders and with people in various environments, do you get the sense that people that are not in quote unquote vocational ministry, do they sometimes see themselves as second class Christians that, well, my work is a business person as a doctor, an attorney, or a, what, you know, whatever role they may be playing.

Well, you know, I'm glad to do this work. It's what I like to do. It's what I was called to do, but it's not as important as what somebody at the church is doing or somebody in a parachurch ministry. Do you ever get that vibe from them?

[00:14:34] **Robin Pou:** Yeah, I the way that I would answer that is that I think that they're seeking, what I'm finding in the people that I've chatted with is that they're searching for some sort of meaning or understanding as to how their work really matters. So when they see a pastor in the pulpit, they're like, I get it. There's the sermon. There's the, you know, the congregation that's receiving it. This is a purpose driven life. This is a purpose driven church. And does God really care about what I do vocationally? Does he really care about this deal or that deal?

And. If he does, why does he care? Cause I don't, I don't feel like it's purposeful other than for sort of. Advancing the organization's growth or the measuring stick of materiality, you know, materialism, I mean, and so I think it's more of a question of what, what's the purpose of all of this and not so much.

You know, second class citizens, if they were to be compared directly with the pastor, they might, you know, otherwise think that, but these are successful individuals who they've been gifted with the ability to win in the marketplace, but at some point they asked themselves why.

[00:15:57] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. Yeah. And how do you, how do you connect that purpose up to it? Even though it doesn't seem to have that obvious cloak of, of eternal significance, maybe. But let me go back to for a moment, that sense of relationship in, in the evangelical world, we use this language pretty regularly about, Hey, it's not about religion, it's about relationship.

Talk a little bit about that in how God has led you to understand that having a regular encounter with God through scripture. The one lesson that the disciples the 12 that walked with Jesus for three years, the only question they ever put to him directly was teach us to pray. You know, I'm, I'm sitting there thinking you, you don't want to know how to resurrect somebody from the dead or heal them from their, their illness directly.

What is, what is that journey deeper into relationship? This very unique thing of a spiritual faith relationship. How has that kind of developed for you? And then kind of building off of that, your reference to the Holy spirit, that growing to a place where you really trust that the spirit of God is in you.

Not just leading you to kind of crazy out of this world kind of directions, but in the day to day, how's that developed for you?

[00:17:20] **Robin Pou:** Yeah, I think we read Henry Blackaby's book which is experiencing God and that set my wife, Karen and I on a journey to really discern where we saw the hand of God in our lives on a daily basis.

And so we. love family dinners. And so as the kids were growing up we would have as many family dinners as we possibly could. And we asked two questions. The first one was, what are your highs and lows? What are your highlights? What are your low lights for the day? Which is fairly common, I think. And then the second one was, where did you see the hand of God?

Today, because we were wanting them to discern on a daily basis, either God exists and he's active in our lives or he's not. And that's your seminal question as it relates to having a relationship with God. And so I was at an event actually at Park City's Baptist church. Now that I'm thinking about it, Sean Toohey.

So this is the blind side, the couple that wrote the book and the screenplay. And he was talking about all the little miracles that happen to actually make that book into a movie. And he was describing him, he said, you know, in our house, when we see a miracle, we just call it a miracle and we get on down the road.

And I really just, I loved the, the way that he just said, it's a miracle. Like, why are we questioning whether or not that's the hand of God? Let's just call it a miracle and get, get on

down the road. And so. Probably a collection of that thinking had me seeing my life through a completely different lens and all the coincidences That were otherwise playing out where God shouldn't be active in my business life.

I just started at attributing to him. Let's just call it a miracle and get on down the road. And when you see the hand of God in your life, you're like, okay, that, that's, That's something supernatural that's happening. And I'd rather not question it under some sort of skepticism. I want to know more. And that probably drove me deeper into scripture to say, okay, well, who is God?

What are the promises of God? What are spiritual disciplines that I should be focusing on? So that, that's how I would kind of describe my experience. An

[00:19:44] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Okay. Yeah. And it's just an ongoing experience that, you know, hopefully becomes more familiar the more we participate with him in that way. Right. Which is, which is what every pastor and every church leader would want for their people to. To experience so talking about the book. So how much of the book is really autobiographical for you I was reading Around the book but also on your website so much of your work has dealt with this idea of being confident leaders this idea of Understanding and managing your own doubt how much of that comes into this story?

And why is it important for leaders to grapple with that sense of doubt, confidence, and understanding how to manage that?

[00:20:30] **Robin Pou:** Yeah, so two parts there, just how autobiographical is the book and then also from the leadership development side, what of those pieces are in the book? And so I had the, the opportunity to coauthor a business book called Performance Intelligence at Work coauthored it with a woman named Julie Bell.

And she's PhD sports psychologist and I was the business guy. And so it's basically the principles of sports psychology brought to the business world. And it's a very deep science, but it's simple at its core. Thoughts lead to actions, actions lead to results, what you think you'll do, what you do gives you the results that you want.

So this was the start of my career as an executive coach, which is now since turned into a leadership development firm. And. Everything that's in the book is rooted in scripture, even though we don't quote chapter and verse. So take captive your thoughts and make them obedient to Christ, or write the vision plain on tablets so that he who runs may read it.

And so, When we're coaching, we're coaching on these tried and true principles, these ancient, you know, principles that are found in scripture because there's nothing new under the sun. So

that's the body of work from the professional side. Well, I had this near death experience on this missions trip that God was just after me to write this book.

And so I mistakenly, hearing the Lord, thought that it was going to be a personal memoir, literally a minute by minute account of this horrendous event. And I ended up meeting a business coach, a devout Jewish man, as a matter of fact. And he said, well, what's the purpose of the book? And I said, if I could engage through the reading of this book, the single largest sitting army in the world, men aged 33 to 65, sitting in the pews at church to really get into the game for God, utilize all of their influence for the kingdom.

That would be a successful book. And he said, okay, well, based on your story and what happened to you, your personal memoir, you had to get fired from a job. You had to go on a missions trip to Kenya. You had to have a machete to your neck, a gun to your head, and you had to almost die in a ditch. And you expect that that's going to awaken the sitting army.

And I was like, yeah. And he goes, they'll read it. And they'll be engaged, but I don't know that it's gonna have the effect that you want it to have. And I said, okay, Big Shot, what do you recommend? And he said, a fictional parable. And I said, oh, okay, that will never happen.

[00:23:23] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah.

[00:23:23] **Robin Pou:** Because I don't know how to write a fictional parable.

I had co authored a nonfiction business book. How was I going to make up a fictional story? So this is a huge long preamble to your question, which is if I wrote the story about what happened to me, but through the veil of this fictional parable, I could write that story. So Peter Christensen, the protagonist ends up in a ditch in a completely different way than a Kenya missions trip.

But the stories that he recounts over his healing were all true stories. Like the dialogue is almost identical and And these two good Samaritans helped disciple him and see God's hand through his historical stories whereby he thought God had dismissed him. But in reality, he had dismissed God because he didn't have the ears or the eyes to see God's hand on all of those situations.

It

[00:24:23] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Wow. Okay. Yeah. It reminds me of a, another writer, Patrick Lencioni, who writes in parable so oftentimes, but so much as at the core of this book, as I understand it is a really an important insight and dive into the principle of forgiveness and that's, you know, obviously that stock and trade for where pastors and church leaders live.

So let's go down that road a little bit and let me set this up Robin in this way. So we live in Dallas. I don't know if you're a country music fan, but I am. I wake up to one of the local country

music stations every morning with my wife. One of their morning segments that just tries to wake you up is about trying to help people to have a date with each other and usually to get a second date.

And they tell a story every morning during the week. And what's so incredibly profound as a thread through almost all of these stories. Is the reluctance of one of these two people to say the simple words, I'm sorry, can we try again?

[00:25:29] **Robin Pou:** And.

[00:25:30] **Dr. Mark Turman:** so many of these people who are trying to basically fall in love and look for their life partner, go out on a simple date, something goes wrong.

And when they're, when they're called out about it, they're unwilling to simply say, Oh, wow, I'm sorry. So how does this. Problem of forgiveness shaped the story of the reluctant disciple and what you're trying to get to with these leaders.

[00:26:00] **Robin Pou:** Well, Mark, if I'm right, why do I ever have to ask for forgiveness?

[00:26:06] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Well, I just remind you of the eternal words of Jimmy Hoffa. I may have my mistake. I may have my weaknesses, but being wrong is not one of

[00:26:14] **Robin Pou:** may have my weaknesses, but being wrong is not one of them. Were not necessarily intended when I, when it was on the, you know, drafting table, so to speak, because I was just going to be telling these stories of the, and they were remarkable stories.

And so I'm teasing the book. And they were a lead up in the 12 months directly leading up to the Kenya missions trip debacle or, or story, so to speak. And the thread through it is exactly what you. You know, just mentioned, which is this idea of forgiveness and the, it's so powerful. And so of course, learned pastors understand all the scripture related to forgiveness.

And if we don't forgive and we have the root of bitterness, it's like taking a poison pill, expecting somebody else to die. I mean, like we know all these things. And yet there's pride and ego. So it's, it's a direct opposite of the humility that God calls us to. And so he's desperate for our heart and he will humble us even when we're We are not actively participating.

So one of the key stories is that I got, you know, fired from a job and I had my identity identified as the COO of this organization. Well, he said, I can't do anything with you when you think your identity is in a title in a business. So he rescued me. He ripped me from that. He humbled me in that moment.

And so it's that humility that says, you know what? I got nothing. And so it doesn't cost me anything to ask for forgiveness, to say I'm sorry. And so, It's so fascinating that even though I didn't necessarily intend it, there is this, this forgiveness thread throughout the book. And I have had that mentioned back to me multiple times.

Of course I knew it once I had written it because it's, it's plain and it's clear there, but it wasn't otherwise architected. Originally.

[00:28:39] **Dr. Mark Turman:** so you, you've, you've obviously spent a lot of time, not only in the business world, but with pastors and with nonprofit leaders. Do you see them struggling with forgiveness in the same way that you have and with other people in other industries?

[00:28:54] **Robin Pou:** Do you think

[00:28:55] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Those that are in quote unquote, a spiritual context. Do you think that they are more quick to forgive, less quick to forgive about the same?

What's, what's been your observation,

[00:29:06] **Robin Pou:** Yeah, I, I think if we were to put a label on them as pastors, it somehow dehumanizes them as if they're not experiencing life like the rest of us. And think about the role that they have.

They're putting themselves forward and they're espousing a very clear, inerrant word of God, a belief system that is completely counter cultural. To an audience that is trying to reconcile their belief system, their crooked stick of belief with the straight stick of true truth. Don't you think they're going to get some blow back?

I would imagine that pastors and your audience, of course, will, will resonate with this. If it's happened to them, they probably have the most reason to not forgive because they've got the moral high moral upper hand. And here's all these people, the delivery of the message is horrible. They're constantly getting voicemails and texts and emails about their sermon.

I mean, all the different things. It's like, why are you people not listening to me bringing God's word to you? So they're the lightning rod. So I would imagine that they have plenty of opportunity to wrestle with forgiving the people that shouldn't actually even be forgiven. Like, if we're in a court of law, they're right.

So I would imagine, I, I just, I don't want to put them on a higher pedestal from, oh, quick to forgive because they're a student of, you know, forgiveness. I would imagine that it's a daily discipline to say, I have got to forgive. And that's really the key in the book is somebody told me, you just need to forgive him, Robin, and let your heart catch up after.

Okay. You're waiting on the feelings to catch up or to

[00:31:09] **Dr. Mark Turman:** you're waiting on the feelings to catch up or to lead you, you're probably going to be waiting a

[00:31:13] **Robin Pou:** probably going to be waiting a long time.

[00:31:28] **Dr. Mark Turman:** well, and it's, and it's so common to all of us. Right. And and yet it's, it's. It really is just at the core of the gospel, right? I mean, that we're following a Messiah who did absolutely nothing wrong and literally is praying for forgiveness when he's having nails driven into his body. And to, to be following some body who is that counter cultural, it really is, I mean, it's right at the heart of what the gospel is all about.

It's the most difficult thing probably that any of us have to deal with, which is. Okay, how am I going to love and forgive this person who's done this horrible thing to me, or at least I think they did a horrible thing to me. But it, it really becomes the, the lock that needs to be opened up so that we can have the, the life, the abundant life that Jesus promised and is really in some ways, almost a part of every situation one way or the other.

So your goal, as you said, a moment ago was to unleash and, and to. Motivate and to raise up this, this sitting army in the workplace that all of these people, men and women going to work every day, spending oftentimes years, getting ready for a career and then jumping into it and somehow not seeing it as the ministry and mission that God has called them into, that it

[00:32:53] **Robin Pou:** it is as sacred as if

[00:32:55] **Dr. Mark Turman:** They had been called to lead a church or, or a mission or a missionary calling it's just as sacred.

What is keeping them from actually connecting those dots? What's keeping them from seeing their job, their career as their platform for honoring God and pointing people to him. What's, what's the problem.

[00:33:20] **Robin Pou:** what's the problem? Which is, you remember the, the parable in Luke about the rich man? And so he had a bumper crop and he tears down his barns and builds bigger barns and then the Lord demands his life.

I heard a sermon once that said that the Lord did not demand the rich man's life because he was rich. Because I think some people say, Oh, rich man can't get to heaven. You know, the camel through the eye of a needle, et cetera. I'm mixing scripture, but you get what I'm saying? And I, the, the point of the sermon was it wasn't that he was rich.

It was that he didn't know why he was rich. And that was profound to me because I think it speaks to the, the man and the woman who's called to the marketplace. So you're not called a vocational ministry. You're called to the marketplace and you are succeeding. Why? For what purpose? And so, what I realized was, in writing, wanting to write the book, is that the pastors speak a particular language that the rest of the congregation might not be fluent in.

So, if I just paraphrase and say, the pastor's saying, Hey, every, you need to go out and love on everybody. Or you need to go out and forgive. Like, fill in the blank. Which is all, you know, true and good. And part of what God is, is calling us to by his design, right? To forgive is by his design for our wellbeing, just to reference back.

But if the person sitting in the pew is saying, how do I do that? I swim with the sharks Monday through Friday. I don't know how to love on other people in the way that you're calling me to. So there's a mismatch. There's a lost in translation piece. So, I'm using this story and this protagonist, who's a home builder, to try and reconcile, well, why are you a home builder?

For what purpose has God put you in this place? Meaning, you know, what's the, the churchy phrase is, bloom where you're planted. So, either God has a plan for you or he doesn't. And his plan for you right now is right where you are. He may have a different plan tomorrow, but either you're God and you think you should be somewhere else, or he's God and you're right where you need to be today.

Just because you don't know why doesn't mean that that's not his plan for you.

[00:36:02] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Right.

[00:36:03] **Robin Pou:** So searching for the why piece of your current present circumstances is the single largest sort of obstacle or hurdle to being content or satisfied with your present situation. So Habakkuk 2. 2 write the vision plain on tablets so that he who runs he she who runs may read it.

Habakkuk 2. 1 tells you how to go do that. Go to a high place, stand your guard, make your petition and wait. Stand your guard through the lens of Robin based on what God shared with me is that's being content with your present circumstances. When I'm frustrated with my present circumstances, I'm not tuning a humble ear to the Lord and having him share with me what I need to be doing for him today. I desire to be some other place out into the future. I'm itchy. I'm discontent. So if we're not content with where we are based on the fact that the God of the universe has plans for us, plans to not harm us, plans to prosper us, then we're our brain and our body is not in the same place at the same time and we're not gonna be tuned into what he's sharing with us on any given hour

[00:37:23] **Dr. Mark Turman:** And like, and like I said, just knowing that you didn't end up in this particular place, time and role by accident, right? That in all of that, God has been working. And I love what you said that it may change tomorrow. God may reposition you in a day or a month or a year, but where you are today is a place for you to be content and a place for you to rejoice and a place for you to connect.

To the purposes that God has for you in this moment. And, you know, I, I used to hear people pray. I used to pray this way a lot myself. Lord, I'll be happy when I'll be happy. If you just do this, if you just do that, if you, you know, when you get me to this place, that's when I'll decide to be happy. When the Psalmist is saying, no, I'm going to rejoice today.

This is the day that I'm going to rejoice. I'm gonna make that decision right now. So the book, The Reluctant Disciples has been out a little more than five months. How's it been received? Any surprises that have come your way because of that release?

[00:38:26] **Robin Pou:** Yeah, you know, it's been so fun. Number one, I mentioned that it was an obedience project, so just completing it and getting it published.

I sort of feel like my job is done. If, if God desires to do something with it, to multiply it, that's, that's his math. You know, I, I routinely say to people who say, Hey, how are book sales going? And I'm like, they're going great. And they're like, Oh, why? I was like, because I'm not trying to get anywhere. When you're not trying to get anywhere other than where God wants to take you. I mean, book sales are going great, which they happen to be which is. Fantastic. And so I'm just relying on God's crazy math and letting this be a journey. You and I would not otherwise necessarily have reason to meet or have this conversation, but for the fact that there's this thing called a book, which may be a good resource for the listeners, which is fantastic.

And I want that to be the case, but what a journey that you and I get to have this conversation and then that be broadcast to whomever the listeners are. The surprising thing to me, to answer one part of your question, is that I literally wrote it for, with the avatar, the profile of the man in the pews, age 33 to 65, who is earnestly desiring a deeper relationship with God, going, is this it?

Like, like this is it church on Sunday, 20 minute sermon brunch, like, like this is it. And so when they're asking themselves that question, this book says, Hey, there's a whole lot more. There's a fully integrated life. There's a sold out for God life that doesn't necessarily require you to sell your possessions, go be a missionary in Africa and you know, drink dirty water or whatever people are afraid of.

But what I did not know is that the women who love those men are. equally fascinated and enjoying the book.

[00:40:22] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Hmm.

[00:40:22] **Robin Pou:** And so that has been such a sweet blessing because there's a good Samaritan couple, a male and a female, and then the male protagonist. So there's a three part conversation that happens for most of the book.

And what they're saying is the, the husband and wife, the two good Samaritans People have never had a discipleship conversation like they had with Jim and Mary, the Good Samaritans in the book ever in their whole life. And so that sort of two halves of one whole male and female, it's really resonating with them and also helping them understand the journey that their husbands or their loved ones are on.

And so routinely women are buying the book and putting it on their husband's, you know, nightstand. So that's been a interesting surprise.

[00:41:13] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. It makes me think about this couple that we meet in the book of Acts and a couple other places, Aquila and Priscilla, who become fast friends with the apostle Paul in Act 16, I guess it is. And you see them becoming not only fast friends, they become business partners with Paul. And then they become mentors to a guy named Apollos, who is also a church leader, ultimately becomes a church leader in Corinth and that, that dynamic and that, that may be one of the funnest days in heaven when we get to bump in and meet Aquila and Priscilla.

And find out that, you know, their journey was very unique. And they played a pivotal role, probably way beyond our imagination in terms of what happened in Paul's life, what would happen in Apollos and also in those churches, their names get reversed, which is probably an indication of how important Priscilla was in that journey.

And sometimes we underrate our spouse in terms of their importance and influence, right? And but you know, my wife has helped me to learn that everything that I've gone through professionally and in ministry, she went through it as well. She usually just didn't get to say as much to the people she wanted to say it to, you know, which is often what happens for people in all kinds of vocations.

Robin Your leadership work in addition to authoring this book is not only with business professionals in different walks of life, but also with people in nonprofits and ministry settings.

[00:42:42] **Robin Pou:** The

[00:42:43] **Dr. Mark Turman:** I would love to ask you today is, is there something different about leading in ministry that is different from leading in business?

[00:42:53] **Robin Pou:** Yeah, so the, the thing that comes immediately to mind is that leading in ministry requires a lot more honed skill of influence.

[00:43:06] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Hmm.

[00:43:06] **Robin Pou:** As opposed to think about kind of a traditional org chart and a nonprofit and a for profit organization leaders can work their way up through the ranks of the org chart with a little bit more of a command and control approach.

It's not effective any longer. Like the. Most generations past Baby Boomer, half of Gen X have completely rejected the command and control leadership model. So it's, it's not effective, but it is still utilized just because it's not effective. Doesn't mean that people don't utilize it because, Hey, if you don't do this, then I'm going to demote you or I'm going to take responsibility away, or I'm going to fire you.

And now you don't have a livelihood. So there's, there's this interesting sort of. imbalance from a leadership perspective. And so this is why Linceone has been so successful because his five dysfunctions of team talk about at the top of the pyramid trust and you've got to be in a healthy relationship for both parties to trust one another.

Okay. So that's on the for profit side. On the non profit side, I think you've got to be able as an effective leader to cultivate the relationships that allow you to be able to utilize the influence that you're otherwise going to deploy for the growth and benefit of the organization. So that requires humility that requires, you know, self awareness that requires relationship building, like true, meaningful relationships.

Because sometimes the ask, the request is really big. And if the relationship is smaller, then there's an imbalance in what you're asking them to do relative to what the relationship is. And that imbalance makes a very brittle organization for the long haul. And so if you don't have this extra currency, you know, compensation wise, if I could, you know, sort of generalize that nonprofits, you're going to make something slightly less than if you're going out into the for profit world, you've got to be able to lead from a different perspective.

And so I would say honing those skills of your ability to influence influence others both inside the organization and outside.

[00:45:24] **Dr. Mark Turman:** great, great insight there. You know, we had those conversations when I was leading churches from time to time of, well, that's just different out in the business world, or it's different in here a lot of it's the same, but I think that's a good call out. So, as we kind of bring this together, got a couple of questions to finish up with, but how would you encourage pastors and leaders of nonprofits to How could they use your book?

How would that become a tool for them that could strengthen their leadership and that of their teams and those that they are trying to influence and lead?

[00:45:59] **Robin Pou:** Yeah. That's a great question and I appreciate that. I had a vision for this book let me back up. Our church did the Purpose Driven Church or Purpose Driven Life long time ago when it was, you know, hot. And he did such a great job of really being able to put into the hands of people the ability to really understand, you know, what is our purpose for the church and individual congregants.

And so since having on my heart to write this book, I've had this vision of being able to come alongside of pastors and support them in translating the life of their congregants who are in the marketplace. And so sometimes those pastors have been in the marketplace and they speak that language, but being an outside especially with a leadership development, vocational component to it, being able to support the church and, and the pastors in connecting with their marketplace leaders, because it is through their generosity that the church then otherwise creates that relationship where the church is able to do their work through giving.

And so, let's take Jim Dennison. He had a prayer triad. So if they pick up the book and they read it, I will go anywhere, anytime. I will sit with that prayer triad, you know, that accountability group and talk through, this is what you're experiencing when you're talking to your congregants that are in the marketplace.

Or if they have a men's ministry and they want to be able to have a speaker come to their retreat or just for their, you know, weekly Bible study that they may have with their men's group. Or for some of their Sunday school classes, their community groups, because a lot of couples in their community groups are using this as a book club.

This is the, the book that they're using. I wrote it with. Six main sections. And so it's a good six week study. And then some have reached out to me and said, will you come speak to our entire congregation? Will you, you know, come just tell your story, your Kenya story. And, and it's a story about purpose, purpose on the trip, purpose of my life, purpose in life.

So it's a real You know, component to the, to the keynote. And so I'm giving very specific examples. What I would say is I'm called into service. I'm deployed by God. I'm employed by God. And so whoever needs me based on whatever God puts on their heart, I will go, you know, and I will do anything that is needed in the realm of this book sort of being a, for, for a relationship to support them and their men's ministry or beyond.

Doesn't even have to be the men's ministry per se.

[00:48:47] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. All right. Awesome. Well, I want to take a moment before we close here and ask you a little bit about something I read in your most recent newsletter that goes out to leaders. And that is about this quote that you saw up in New York at the U S open tennis tournament a plaque on the wall.

I had no idea that this was there. I've taken my wife to the U S open. She loves tennis and we loved being there. But I didn't know that this plaque was on the wall, a quote from Billie Jean King that says pressure is privilege. Now, Robin this podcast is going to come out to pastors and church leaders, many of whom, if they're not teaching from the pulpit, they're teaching in a small group, they're teaching in a men's ministry, they're teaching in a women's ministry, something like that.

And most of them, if they are taking the time to listen to this podcast, they are taking time away from getting ready for the next lesson that they're supposed to teach. And they're already feeling that pressure. If it's a Monday or a Tuesday. They're wondering, you know what? The next Sunday comes around really fast and they already feel that pressure.

So explain to us what you understand about that quote, pressure is privilege. How in the world can it be a

[00:50:07] **Robin Pou:** in the world can it be a privilege? So here's how you hit your golf swing, or here's how you do a forehand in tennis.

So very action oriented. In the professional world, we coaches are also action oriented coaches. I'm picking a slightly different lane, which is not actions coach, but a thinking coach. I'm here to help you reframe your thinking so that every thought you have puts in motion and action that gives you the results.

Because when I asked the question, Hey, for a golfer, what percentage of the game is mental? I usually get, Oh, 90, a hundred percent. You know, they recognize that the mental game is so important. And then I say, Oh, what about business leaders? And they're like, Oh, like 60%. I'm like, wait a minute. It can't be different for business leaders and golfers.

So what we recognize is that the mental game is really important. 2 Corinthians 10 5 Take captive your thoughts and make them obedient to Christ. The Greek of the word thoughts in that scripture is your spiritual capacity for truth. So think about a sponge, your capacity to soak in spiritual truth. So take captive your thoughts, your spiritual capacity for truth, and make it obedient to Christ.

Well, the word obedient is Shema, which just means to listen. Take captive your spiritual capacity for thoughts and make it listen to Christ, true truth. So when I say there's nothing new

under the sun, by God's design, He knows that the mental game is so important. So when we have the opportunity to be in a situation where there is pressure, you know, you're up to something and pressure is the force applied externally.

We put it as a synonym with stress, but stress is different. Stress is our reaction to the external force. God does not want us to feel stressed. We're taping this the day before the elections. A bunch of people are really stressed out, which is their internal reaction to the pressure of uncertainty. What will happen?

But what's so great is that when we walk with Jesus, we have no stress. He bears our burdens. Our yoke is light. And so when we have this pressure, this force that's being applied externally to us, we know we're up to something. And that's why the phrase is pressure is a privilege. It represents an opportunity that you have to step forward because God's calling counterintuitive and he rigs it to use the people that are the weakest.

Yes.

[00:53:15] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Hmm.

[00:53:15] **Robin Pou:** Because he gets all the glory when it happens, because we couldn't have done it under our own power. So, the weak are absolutely going to feel the pressure, but we don't necessarily feel the burden. It's such a wonderful thing to think about,

[00:53:30] **Dr. Mark Turman:** It's such a wonderful thing to think about, you know, and you know, next to forgiving people. That whole thing of what you're talking about of taking all of your thoughts, all your capacity for truth hostage for the cause of Christ may be the second hardest thing that we ever have to do.

And I saw on your website, a related deal of

Believe all your thoughts.

[00:53:56] **Robin Pou:** Don't believe everything you think.

[00:53:58] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Don't believe everything you think. That's right. Because there's a lot of stuff that's going through your head that really did not come from God and just needs to be dismissed. Right. And yeah, and that's just part of what it means to be a fallen sinful human being. So there's a whole, a whole lot in there that needs, otherwise the spirit would not have asked the apostle Paul to write that statement.

Right. Right. Take every thought captive to Christ. If there wasn't a need to do that, he wouldn't have been led to write that statement. But that's anyway, folks, that's the kind of great insight

you're going to get from Robin Pou through the reluctant disciple. Robin, you can find the book everywhere, Amazon, every other book

[00:54:37] **Robin Pou:** Amazon. com. It's also Barnes and Noble. The URL, the website for the book is thereluctantdisciple. com,

[00:54:47] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Okay.

[00:54:48] **Robin Pou:** thereluctantdisciple. com. So that's another place that you can go to get some additional information. We've got discussion questions and some other things available there for the readers.

[00:54:58] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Okay. So you can get the book and you can get supportive material there. And as I said, you can follow Robin at Robin pew, R O B I N P O u. com. You can follow him there and you can also subscribe to the confident leader, which is his weekly leadership. Newsletter, Robin, thank you for this work. Thank you for the conversation.

It's been really enjoyable and I think it'll be really useful to folks and I hope they go out and buy a lot of the book and share it with many people

[00:55:28] **Robin Pou:** useful to folks and I hope they go out and buy a lot of the book and share it with many people.

[00:55:46] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Glad to do it. Hopefully we can have you back again sometime. I want to thank those leaders that are listening to us today. Thanks for following Denison Forum. And if this has been helpful to you, encouraging to you, please rate, review us on your plat your platform, and also share this with other pastors and leaders, as well as family and friends so that they can be a part of the conversation with us.

And until next time, God bless you and we'll see you soon.

[00:56:10] **Robin Pou:** All

[00:56:13] **Dr. Mark Turman:** All right.