

LeaderImpact Podcast – Episode #21 – Paul Jefferson - Building Personal Resiliency

Release Date – October 12, 2022.

Episode Summary:

Paul studied agriculture at the University of Guelph where he obtained his undergraduate degree in Crop Science and his Master's degree in Plant Breeding and Genetics. He began a 26-year research career with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and in that time he studied Range Management at Utah State University where he completed his Ph.D. in 1987. His career also included 9 years as Vice-President of the Western Beef Development Centre. He was editor of the Canadian Journal of Plant Science from 98 to 2000.

Paul and his wife Nancy have 3 children, one daughter-in-law and one grandson.

He retired in 2016 and consults on agriculture research and scientific writing and is an adjunct professor at the University of Saskatchewan. He has published 88 scientific (peer-reviewed) research papers and has given many technical presentations.

Paul believes that no research project is complete until the results are published in a peer-reviewed journal article. His personal discovery that science and faith are not contradictory but complementary has impacted his work and life.

Paul and Nancy have been billet parents of teenage hockey players on the Humboldt Broncos team each season for the last 10 years. On April 6, 2018, the team bus collided with a semi-truck resulting in 16 fatalities and 13 injuries. The crash made news around the world and prompted condolences from public figures and celebrities, vigils, and tributes, such as people leaving hockey sticks outside their doors.

Paul has shared with many groups how his faith sustained him during the tragedy.

How to Contact Paul:

- LinkedIn

Books and Authors Mentioned:

- *The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni
- John Maxwell

Show Notes:

0:00 - Show introduction

0:47 – Introduction of Paul

2:30 - How Paul became a billet parent with the Humboldt Broncos hockey team

- 2:37 - Began in 2005 when they were living in Swift Current and became a billet parent with the Swift Current Broncos hockey team

4:27 - The players they billeted in 2018

- 5:42 - How these players became a part of their family

7:17 - What Paul remembers about the night of the crash and the days that followed

- 7:28 - They were going to the game when they got a call from a friend that there had been a bad crash involving the team. They went to one of the two regional hospitals to wait to hear what had happened.
- 8:52 - A grief counselor approached him and said that this must be the worst night of his life. He said no. He thought about the hope he has in God through his faith in Jesus Christ
- 12:55 - Attended 10 of the 16 funerals. Was tough to go through all of those funerals, but his faith sustained him.

“In the worst night of my life, I found faith.”

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13:45 - What was the worst day of Paul’s life?

- 13:55 - He wanted his dad’s approval, so he gave up things he enjoyed and did things he was good at. One thing he was good at was school.
- 14:32 - He realized halfway through his Master’s degree that his research would not produce anything that was publishable. He also had a break-up with a girl with whom he was in a long-term relationship. He thought he was a personal and professional failure.
- 15:29 - He started dating a girl who was different from the other girls he had dated. One is that she had a faith in Jesus Christ.
- 15:44 - He thought that having faith in Jesus was too easy.
- 16:00 - One night she said that God doesn’t just smart people to be saved, and he realized that he was making things too complicated. He wanted to intellectually grasp faith.

- 16:28 - Prayed that God would come into his life. He had a sense of peace and hope right away and he knew something had changed.
- 17:28 - That was the worst night of his life, but in that, he found faith

“Success is great, but getting to know God is the best thing.”

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17:40 - How Paul has combined his faith and science

- 18:06 - a few months after his decision, he was studying the structure of DNA and realized that God must have created that because it couldn't have happened by chance. He stopped believing in God or science, because if God is the creator, then science is the study of his creation.

20:48 - How he believes his faith will get him through hard times

- 21:23 - His life hasn't been perfect since his decision to follow God. There have been many tough times. but in those times they asked themselves if they really trusted God.
- 22:13 - The loss of Job is mentioned in the Bible. Job asks God why he did this. The reader knows why mentioned in Job 1 and 2. But God never tells Job, instead, God tells Job to trust God and believe he is in control.
- 23:38 - Every episode where you had to trust God is a chance to look back and see how you trusted him in the past.

23:58 - We often would like to know the plan that God has for us.

- 24:13 - An account in the Bible where God told the Israelites his plan but they didn't like his plan, so some of them rebelled and did what they wanted to do. If they would have followed God's plan, they would have been better off, even though they didn't like God's plan.
- 25:27 - Many people still say that they wish the Humboldt Bronco accident had never happened. We all wish it hadn't happened, but we must accept the fact that it did and God is still in control.

“Grief is loved that cannot be expressed.”

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26:04 - How Paul's faith helped him deal with the tragedy of the crash

- 26:27 - Healing from grief does not happen in steps, rather it is a like ball of yarn tangled together where your emotions go back and forth and you have feelings simultaneously.
- 27:07 - He learned when there is a sudden tragic event, the emotions of grief can be very intense. He has downplayed emotions and tried to reason things out. Since the accident, he has needed to experience those emotions and feel them.
- 28:52 - If you deny yourself those emotions then those emotions can pop up in places you least expect them. As you lean into your emotions, they do subside. He still has an emotional reaction 4 years later, but it is not as intense.
- 30:20 - People can get stuck and still feel emotions and cannot move forward.

31:28 - Does speaking about the crash help him?

- 31:43 - He wants to honor the memory of Parker and he can do that by speaking about him.

“Tough times are when God is teaching you things you weren’t interested in.”

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32:37 - What people should walk away with about resiliency

- 33:00 - These are lessons he has learned and God is teaching him through the tough times.

34:22 - Paul gave a victim impact statement of the trial of the semi-truck driver and how he was able to forgive the driver.

- 35:35 - He knew that he needed to forgive, and was a reminder that God tells us to forgive. When you forgive, you are accepting that the injury has happened and when you forgive, you receive healing.
- 37:04 - How do you express that you forgive someone? Paul asked for leniency for the driver.
- 38:56 - Everyone needs to come to a point of choosing to forgive in their own way.

40:41 - How Paul got involved with LeaderImpact

42:46 - Paul’s favorite leadership books

- 42:56 - Books by John Maxwell
- 43:15 - *The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni

43:56 - They continue to billet players

45:38 - The faith legacy Paul wants to leave

47:51 - What brings Paul the greatest joy