

LeaderImpact Podcast - Ep. 21 - Paul Jefferson - Building Personal Resiliency

Lisa Peters

Welcome to the LeaderImpact Podcast. We are a community of leaders with a network in over 350 cities around the world dedicated to optimizing our personal, professional, and spiritual lives to have impact. This show is where we have a chance to listen and engage with leaders who are living this out. We love talking with leaders so if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions to make the show even better, please let us know. The best way to stay connected in Canada is through our newsletter at leaderimpact.ca or on social media @leaderimpact and if you're listening from outside of Canada check out our website at leaderimpact.com.

I'm your host Lisa Peters and our guest today is Paul Jefferson. 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 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 nine years as vice president of the Western Beef Development Centre. He was the editor of the Canadian Journal Of Plant Science from 1998 to 2000. Paul and his wife Nancy have three children, one daughter-in-law, and one grandson. He retired in 2016 and consults on agricultural 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 ten 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. Join us now for a conversation with Paul about building personal resiliency. Thank you for joining us Paul it is nice to have you here.

Paul Jefferson

Thanks Lisa. Nice to be with you.

Lisa Peters

Well, we'll jump right in. I would love to know how did you ever get to be a billet parent with the Humboldt Broncos.

Paul Jefferson

Well, it actually started back in 2005. We were living in Swift Current and Nancy was working with Swift Current Bronco hockey players as an EA, educational assistant. She was helping them with their studies and at the high school there. And she recognized the need for people who care about them to be involved as billets. Of course I who focused on the fact that just a few years before, the sexual scandal of sexual abuse of hockey players had really broke out in Swift Current as it was a location where that had happened. And I knew some of the players who had reputations being pretty wild guys who liked the party and so I was against having a billet. And she said to me one day when we were talking about it that if good people don't take in these players and look after them, without being interested in financial reward or recognition or any of that, if people wouldn't volunteer to do this, who will be left to do it? And it was just another example of how Nancy opens my eyes, many times in our married life, to my own selfishness. And I thought yeah, she's right.

And so we started there actually. And then two years later when we moved to Humboldt of course a team name was the same here Humboldt Broncos but we took a year off for the year of the move and then we started billeting again here.

Lisa Peters

Wow! So in 2016 you had a few players living with you?

Paul Jefferson

Yes, so and in 2016 or 2018?

Lisa Peters

Oh 2018 my apology.

Paul Jefferson

In 2018 we had Tyler Smith and Parker Tobin come to stay with us. They are the 17th and 18th guys we've had in our house. So Tyler came and we got to know him. He's a very outgoing, very personable guy. And we liked him a lot. And then this fellow was coming for a few days just before Christmas. This goalie named Parker Tobin. So we checked him out with Tyler. Do you know this guy? Yeah yeah, he knew him and he'd be okay, he said. So Parker came and stayed the weekend and then we were well he can stay till Christmas sure that's fine. Yeah, he stayed till Christmas. And after Christmas, he had the opportunity to move to another billet and we kind of talked to him about that. No he wanted to stay wanted to stay with us. And I think because Nancy's a really good cook and Parker enjoyed that. So he was with us for about four and a half, almost five months. And so the two guys that were involved in the accident were with us from November, December until April.

Lisa Peters

They really do become part of your family, don't they?

Paul Jefferson

Well, it was really interesting because we always offer to include our billets in our family activities. But these 2 really engaged in that. And because Parker was a little more academic, a little quieter, he and I would get into these academic discussions and we really connected. And Tyler and Nancy would be laughing at Parker and I because we'd be debating something from history or the news or something academic. And they weren't interested in that, but Parker and I had these great discussions. We spent some time together and they really did become like our own kids. To the point at Easter, our own kids had come home for Easter dinner and they started to complain, in a joking teasing way, that Parker and Tyler were now the new favorites in the family. So yeah, they really did become part of our life.

Lisa Peters

So not quite the crazy boys you thought those hockey players were?

Paul Jefferson

They had their moments but we enjoyed those crazy times with them as well. And one of the things I did learn, becoming a billet parent, is that while you treat them like your own kids in many ways, that's how you integrate them in your families, treat them like your own. You have to remember that they are young adults and they're going to make some decisions that you're going to think well that really wasn't very wise but that's part of their growing up right? It's like your own kids. So yeah, we became very close with these 2 young men.

Lisa Peters

So getting into April 6, 2018, what do you remember most from the accident and the days that followed?

Paul Jefferson

We were going up to the game. So we were driving to Nipawin from Humboldt when we got a phone call from a friend that there had been an accident and it was bad. When we got to the crash site, of course, the emergency people were already there and wouldn't let us get close so they were already moving the victims to the two regional hospitals, local hospitals. So we turned around and went back to Tisdale and went to the hospital there to wait for word about what had happened and so forth. And when we were there, basically many of the families that had been on their way to the game girlfriends, billet families, had either gone to the hospital in Nipawin if they had already been past the accident site when it happened. Or they came back to Tisdale. So between the two locations, the families were gathered in rooms while the hospital staff did their best to kind of let us know what had happened. And that's where we were basically surrounded by people. We're all in shock and we're all grieving. We're all wondering what has happened. Wondering what's going on. And yeah it was a very tough time. I remember sitting and obviously in distress but praying and this counselor from the hospital staff said to me, Well this must be the worst night of your life. And I remember thinking, Well it's terrible. It's an awful tragedy and we don't know what's happened. But no, I think I have faith in Christ so I have hope.

And we found out there that Parker had been airlifted from Nipawin to Saskatoon. Nancy was able to see Tyler. He was actually at the Tisdale hospital and he was being taken to St. Paul's hospital in Saskatoon. So our two different boys were going to be in two different places. But we packed up from Tisdale. Drove back home here to Humboldt. Picked up some clothes in case we needed them and medications and whatever and we drove him to Saskatoon to be with the boys.

So we went first to RUH, Royal University Hospital, and we found out that Parker had some pretty significant injuries and was able to get into the ICU and see him. But his face, he had a facial injury, and his face was basically covered by medical equipment because he'd been put in an induced coma. He had a number of spinal injuries and they were really concerned so they had put him in a coma. So I wasn't able to actually talk to him and was just sitting there with him in the ICU. So I stayed with him and then Nancy went over to St. Paul's hospital, to the other hospital, to see Tyler. And in the morning, so we were there through the night, and in the morning Parker's parents had arrived and some family so I kind of stepped back and wasn't sitting with them as much. And of course it was pretty crazy in the ICU because they had many of the accident victims were in the ICU. And so a lot of family were coming and lots of visitors and it was a lot of crazy activity that the ICU staff were struggling with I remember that part. So on Sunday, Parker had surgery and was stabilized so we were able to get some sleep Saturday night Sunday morning. And then we were coming back for the vigil on Sunday evening back here in the rink in Humboldt. And we attended that. And then we got the call that Parker had woken up and said no I'm not Parker, I'm Xavier and Xavier Labelle. So that was quite a shock.

So popped in the truck. Drove back to Royal University Hospital to see for ourselves. And as soon as we walked into the ICU we could see Xavier sitting in the bed. Sitting up awake and looking out and as soon as we caught sight of him we said well, of course, it's Xavier and it's not Parker. So that was a second go-round of this is really tough. But again while we couldn't sleep and we were processing our own grief and trying to support Parker's parents and doing what we could there, we realized that I'm not alone in this. So that was probably as bad as the Friday night was Sunday night.

And then of course over the next several days you start realizing, Well we got to travel for our funerals. And we tried to do as many as we could, but we only we got to 10 out of the 16 funerals. And so some of the boys in Alberta we didn't get to their funerals but we were able to get to Parker's service. And that was very important to us and yeah, it was very big. You can imagine the hockey rink there was, in his hometown, was full. And then of course all the other funerals that we attended. It was a tough time but again our faith sustained us through that.

Lisa Peters

So earlier when the counselor had asked you this has got to be the worst day of your life and you said you said no, I think. If that wasn't, I have to ask you if that wasn't the worst day of your life but was? I don't know if you want to share that.

Paul Jefferson

It goes back a lot of years ago. I mean when I was growing up on the farm I think I realized subconsciously at least that my dad admired successful people. And I wanted my dad's approval. So I gave up things like music and even sports that I wasn't particularly good at but I enjoyed and I gave them up to focus on things that I was good at and had a lot of success at and one of those was school so I kept going. I went to university as you said and did just well enough as an undergraduate to get into graduate school. And about halfway through my master's program, that was about the toughest time in my life, I realized my master's degree was not going to produce anything publishable. Scientific publication is kind of the measure of your success as a researcher. And so I was very very down about that and then I had a long-term relationship with the young lady break up and that was devastating to me and I thought I'm a personal and professional failure. And I really struggled with that like everything had to be successful and I was going to fail. And I actually had suicidal thoughts at that time and I have to admit that it took me a long time to admit that that actually was how dark that time was.

Anyway, I met this young lady and we started dating and she was different than other girls that I had dated. And it turned out that one of the things that was very different about Nancy was she had a faith in Christ. And she began to talk about that with me and I said no I don't want anything to do with it. It's too easy. Just put your faith in this person named Jesus. I mean that that's too easy. And so we had many discussions about this and one night she said God doesn't want just smart people to be saved. And then hit me like yeah I'm making that complicated here. I'm asking God to make it so that intellectually I can grasp it when it's not that hard to grasp. It's not easy, but it's simple. And so later that night I was really struggling with this sense of failure and so I prayed that God if you're real, come into my life. Make me a success in life and professionally and just I need you. And in that instant, I can't explain it, but in that instant, something changed and I had hope. Had a sense of peace that I never experienced in my life. I knew that the inner turmoil, all this arguing with myself and with Nancy it was gone. And I knew in that moment that something had changed and I remember thinking. Yeah, I have hope that I had never experienced before and I've never really lost it. I mean there are times when you think Oh this looks hopeless. But then you remember that moment. No there is hope in Christ. So that was the point where. I think that was the worst night of my life, but in that I found faith.

Lisa Peters

So going back to your introduction I find it interesting. You're what I would call the science guy and I think people listening, your bio is again Science Guy. So how does science and faith, because that's quite a conversation. Many people don't believe science and faith go together. Yet you found this. It does.

Paul Jefferson

It was, I don't know a few months after this decision, I was studying a graduate-level cytogenetics class. And it was pretty intense and we were studying the structure of DNA the

thing that makes you who you are that chemical compound in your body that transmits genetic information. And we'd just gone over how complex it was the structure of it. The layers of structure of DNA. And I remember saying to my professor Well okay, where in nature is the simpler form of this because evolution teaches us that the simple things evolve to the more complex and this is incredibly complex. Where's the simpler version of this in nature? And my professor said to me Well there isn't one. You and I and viruses, the simplest form of life, all have the same structure of DNA.

And that's when it hit me. God had to have done that because that can't happen by chance. There's just no way. And I know that there are many people who say well yes, there's amino acids in the primordial soup of the world back billions of years ago. And I can believe that there were but I have a hard time believing that you can go from simple amino acids to this incredibly complex DNA structure just by chance. And if there were intermediate steps, there should be a record of it somewhere. And there isn't anywhere I can find in science. But that was the point where I started to think well Okay, if God is the great creator then science becomes a study of his creation. And that was really a step for me in that instead of arguing with myself do I believe in science or do I believe in God, I say I believe in both because science is the discovery of God's creation. So yeah, all through my career, and I mean I have to say that God answered that prayer from that night that tough night many years ago and I had a great career I got to do my Ph.D. I got to publish lots of research. Do lots of research with lots of interesting colleagues and I really enjoyed that. So God gave me success but even more than that, he helped me to realize that while that success was great getting to know him was the best thing.

Lisa Peters

So I want to go back to, and thank you for sharing that faith and science. I think that's really important and to hear from you, who you're my science guy, thank you. I want to go back to the hard times you go through, and you just talked about your faith. And how do you believe so strongly that your faith will get you through the hard times? And I don't know if you've been through so many hard times, this was just one of, but I mean there's many hard times in life.

Paul Jefferson

Oh yeah. There are. And I hope I didn't leave the impression that my life since that time forty-two years ago has been perfect because it hasn't been. There's been many tough times. We had struggles when my son was toddler. He had some health issues that were very scary. We went through that. I lost both my parents. My mom too early. My dad, he was 85 but still struggles to lose your parents. And Nancy had battled cancer ten years ago. And so there were times when we were facing tough situations in life. But in all of those things, we would say to ourselves do we really trust God?

I remember reading Job. The book of Job in the Bible about Job's loss where he lost everything, not just financial but personal loss, tremendous grief. And his wife, I think

naturally, said well just curse God and die because this is awful. She couldn't imagine going on. And Job asked God why? Why did you? And so you can hear him question that because he wondered why did God do this. And God's answer was amazing to me. It wasn't Well this is why. If you read Job the first chapter of Job, the storyteller tells the reason why but Job never knows that and God never tells him. Instead, God says just trust me.

And it reminded me that if we trust God and believe that yes he's in control. He is a good God. And whatever is going on, good or bad, he's still in control and he's working at all things together for good for those who love the Lord the Bible says. And so I claim that and then I remember that sometimes it's really hard to live that. But every time you go through it, it becomes another episode where you can look back later and say Well we trusted God in this. Can't we trust God for the Bronco accident?

Lisa Peters

Sometimes I think we wish I wished we knew the plan God had for us. We don't.

Paul Jefferson

No, and I've heard that. For many people, like why did God allow the Bronco accident to happen? I wish I understood that. And I remind myself that there's another great story in the Old Testament in the Bible is in Jeremiah. Where God allows the Babylonians to come in and destroy Jerusalem because the people had been so disobedient. And Jeremiah had warned them that this is going to happen. He was the prophet who told them this is going to happen. And they'd still refuse to repent. So it happened. Then God said to them well go, through Jeremiah, he said go to Babylon, which we call Iraq, Go to Babylon. Live there. In 70 years I will bring you back. And they didn't like that plan. He told them the plan. He told them what they had to do and they didn't like it. So some of them rebelled and they said no no, we're heading to Egypt. And they kidnapped Jeremiah and they took him off to Egypt. And there the war caught up to them and they died there instead of in Jerusalem. And if they'd obeyed God and followed the plan, even though they didn't like it, if they followed the plan, they would have been so much better off. And I think it's a perfect example of where we are today. God does reveal some of his plan to us and we say no, we don't really like that plan God I have a better plan. You follow my plan and I'll...No no, that's not what he's telling us. He's saying no this is the plan. I'm not going to reveal it all to you because you're not going to like it so here just trust me.

And I think that that's where a lot of people are. I hear that even today 4 years after the accident, I can still hear people say oh I wish the Bronco accident had never happened. Well, of course we all wish it had not happened but we have to accept that it did and that God's still in control. And so living in denial is not going to help us move forward here.

Lisa Peters

Speaking of denial I think of grief. And I think there are five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. So a lot of stuff going on when processing grief. So

my question for you is, how did your faith help you deal with the tragedy? Because there's a lot of it. There's a lot going on.

Paul Jefferson

I hear this many times people talk about stages of grief like they're kind of steps one after the other. And one thing I learned in all of this maybe it's hard to explain it. But it's not a stage. Like one, two three. It's more like there's a ball of yarn and it's all tangled up together. And one day you're feeling depressed and the next day you're feeling angry and the next day you're feeling both. And like you experience so many of the stages of grief simultaneously. And one of the things I learned was that when it's a sudden tragic event, very sudden and very traumatic, like this one like the Bronco accident. The emotions of grief that you experience, can be very very intense.

And since I am a science guy, I've always kind of downplayed emotion. I've always felt that logic and reason could be brought to bear on problems. And even things where it demands an emotional reaction, I would try to reason things out. And what I discovered in this time since the accident is that I needed to experience those emotions, the anger, the frustration, the loss, I needed to feel it. And in fact, one of the best statements I heard from one of the grief counseling that I got was lean into it. Like, feel the emotions because it's important.

Another comment that the counseling program said was grief is love that can't be expressed because the person's not with us anymore. So you're feeling that intensity of that love of loss. And if you deny that you're feeling that but because it hurts too much and you want to get away from it. Some people immerse themselves in work, some people find other releases sometimes bad ones like addictions to get out of the emotions that they're struggling with. When you go there, you're just you're burying it. You're you're denying that it's real. Then it pops up. That emotion pops up somewhere where you least expect it and maybe sometimes years later, you're still struggling with the emotions of grief. And so to lean into it was really good advice for me to understand that the more I felt it, the more I could understand it and the more it could lose its power over me.

And it was true. I didn't believe it when I first heard it. But as you lean into your emotions in grief, they actually do subside. And it's kind of like it's really intense at first. And then you look back a month later and realize yeah, they're still there. I still tear up. I have an emotional reaction to grief four years later but it's not as intense. And I'm able to think that yes, it is getting better. I call it processing the grief. And I think people get upset with that because they don't believe that grief ever, there is ever really healing. But I think like a physical wound, even grief there's a scar but it doesn't feel like an open wound anymore. And people who struggle with accepting that, they can get stuck. And that was another good thing that I learned is that sometimes people get stuck and so they're at the angry stage. Four years after the Bronco accident I know some people are still angry that it happened and they're angry at their loss. And I understand it but they're stuck there and they're not able to move forward.

And I think that's one of the things that Nancy and I do talk about. Like what would Parker say if he was still here? And I think he would say you've got to carry on with life. There are a lot of other people in my life that I want to connect with. Besides my own family, there are people that are involved in my life that I don't want to lose the opportunity to enjoy life with them because I'm stuck grieving. So yeah, I want to. I'm not forgetting Parker but I also want to move forward.

Lisa Peters

Does it help you to, because I know you so you speak a lot about this, does it help you to continually tell the story? Does it bring alive the memories, the good things or...

Paul Jefferson

Yes, and that's one of the things that I one of the reasons I do things like this is because I want to honor Parker's memory. And talking about him is a good way to do that. It's easier. The first time I did it was really hard. It is easier now to do it. But it's still emotional. Like I find it very draining to do this. And again because I'm Science Guy. I'm not used to dealing with the emotions right? So it takes more psychological effort, I guess, to talk about my feelings than it does to talk about science or agriculture or some of the other things that I talk about. All the time.

Lisa Peters

Yeah, if anyone listening only hears one thing today about building personal resilience because you've talked about hope and trust and emotions. But if they hear one thing, what do you want people to walk away with today?

Paul Jefferson

I think it's important that one of the things I've said anyway to it's important to remember that none of these things are done by me. Like these are all lessons I've learned through these experiences. I believe God's teaching me these things so that I have the resilience to deal with trials and tough times. God's changing me through tough times and I think that's the lesson that when we don't want to endure tough times, and when we take the easy road and say I'm not going to deal with this today. I'm not going to deal with this right away and I want to push this off into the future. Whatever or I'm not going to pay the price now for success down the road and some of the things that people say. It's not recognizing that the tough times are really the times when you learn the most in God for Christians particularly, tough times are when God's teaching you things that you otherwise weren't really all that interested in right? So when times are good we're awfully self-satisfied as Christians. And when times are tough, that's when God's really walking with us and teaching us what we need to know.

Lisa Peters

I wanted to ask you about, at the trial, there was the victim impact statements. And so I went on and I read a few of them and you gave a victim impact statement. And you actually asked them to be lenient with a driver. And I went through a few of them and I even wrote some

down. The wife of the head coach she had addressed the driver and said These are the days when the injustice and sadness and anger are definitely still there. But I have been forgiven for the things that I didn't deserve it so I will be(???) his name. And Melissa Dirkson, daughter of Glen Dirkson who was the bus driver. We're working toward finding understanding of forgiveness because that's what my dad would want. And then you had asked for leniency. I want to talk about forgiveness. And I'll ask you to start just how did you get there? How do you move forward and where does forgiveness...It's powerful.

Paul Jefferson

After the accident I was really angry at the driver. He was at fault. And his momentary distraction, carelessness caused tremendous loss. And I was so angry. And as I was going through our grief counseling, they talked about forgiveness I thought yes as a Christian I know Jesus calls us to forgive one another. And I thought how how can we forgive such a terrible, terrible tragedy? And yeah it was a reminder that God calls us to forgive. So I want to be obedient to that.

But the second thing that the grief counseling did was it pointed out that when you forgive you actually are making a statement that you accept that this injury has happened. So there's no more denial running away from it. You're accepting that this has happened and this permanent injury has occurred. But by offering forgiveness, you're actually receiving healing yourself. And I thought I want that. So it took me a while took me many months after the accident to get to the point where I could say yes I forgive the driver. So then if you say well I forgive then how do you express that? How do you communicate that you forgive? And lots of people, many people that I talked to between the the accident and the trial, they wanted him deported. They wanted him thrown in jail for life. They wanted all kinds of tough sentences. And certainly, that was within the bounds of the law to to have him serve a long time in jail for what had happened.

But I thought no if I am forgiving him, I'm going to ask for leniency because he's got a wife. He's new to Canada. He's trying to build a life here. Yeah, the trucking company was at fault. The people that taught him how to drive the truck were at fault. There's a lot of people can bear some responsibility for this besides him. Yeah, he made a mistake. And that was a struggle for some people when I said that in my victim impact statement. It's a terrible mistake but I choose to forgive. And one of the parents said it wasn't a mistake it was they couldn't accept that it was something that they could forgive. And it made them very angry that some of us talked about forgiveness. We were doing it, I don't know about Glenn's daughter, but I know Christina and I know her faith. We were doing it from our faith-based perspective that we're offering forgiveness. We're choosing to forgive. But some people who don't have that faith, they struggle with the idea of forgiveness. I know Parker's parents both said to me they wanted to forgive, but they weren't sure they were ready to do that and I thought that's fine because everybody needs to come to this point in their own way. But it is an important point to choose to forgive because the desire for vengeance becomes like a poison to you when you carry that in your heart. And I don't need that.

Lisa Peters

Wow! Thank you for sharing. I found it...So when I started talking to you a week ago, we prepared for this day. I was doing a seven day Bible plan and I chose one on forgiveness. And this morning was, and I got to put on my glasses, it was Colossians 3:13 and it said, Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember the Lord forgave you so you must forgive others and it was Colossians 3:13. And I remember when we talked last week, I too am a speaker with LeaderImpact Global Forum, and I talk about hope but I had a woman named Hope that helped me and it blew me away that God would send me a woman named Hope to help me during an earthquake. But Colossians 3:13, I also talk about the number 3, 13 and I won't go into my story. We'll listen to it one day. But all of a sudden that hit me today, 3, 13 the number came to me so I know that I have some forgiveness somewhere but I just want to thank you for sharing today. I'm having a moment. Thank you.

So I'm going to move on to LeaderImpact, a few questions. Because I wonder you telling your story now with LeaderImpact. How did you get involved with them and telling your story.. Like where did it start for you?

Paul Jefferson

Oh many years ago I was in a small group with Jim Ginther from LeaderImpact in Swift Current. And Jim had mentioned this global exchange program that they'd run and I should go. Okay I put it off. But when I retired I thought well I have no excuse anymore. So I went on one of their global exchange trips to Cali, Columbia and had an amazing experience there. Sharing my faith and then right after the accident I went to Paraguay with LeaderImpact. And in Paraguay, God knew what he was doing. All of the opportunities for me to talk about agriculture science and faith and scientific writing, which is kind of the the professional talks that I give, all fell through or weren't there. So I had lots of time just to pray and think about what I'd gone through and I started to write this story down about the Bronco accident. And that's where the staff from LeaderImpact said to me Yeah, you need to share this story. So I've been on three trips now with the global exchange and shared my story virtually in the last couple years because of the travel restrictions and I think it's 4 or 5 times I can't remember number of times now virtually but hoping to travel again with them.

Lisa Peters

Good. Yeah I have been asked to travel as well. I've done a lot of the virtual and it's really amazing. And you can see people and they're they're just their eyes are big and they're watching you. And they understanding a part of your story just even just a little part, they grab onto. So thank you for doing that.

So I see all the books behind you just wondering if there's a favorite leadership book back there that you could share with us.

Paul Jefferson

Oh yeah, well. I was a big John Maxwell fan for a long time. Read everything that I could get of

his and then I have one of his recent ones and I have referred to him a lot when I was still working. I was thinking about I really liked Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* blew me away when I read it because it just described so many instances in my professional career where we weren't able to work together effectively as a team. And so I like those two books. There's there's probably many others out there that I just haven't discovered yet but those two.

Lisa Peters

Yeah, and that's why I ask so that I can discover more books and people know what's out there. I actually do a social media post like what's your favorite...and I got...My list is huge so I have a lot of reading to do.

So before I go I always ask these two final questions. But before I go and ask these two final questions, I just want to ask are you currently billeting anyone.

Paul Jefferson

We had a Bronco again this year. I think Tyler was the 22nd or 23rd. I've lost track now. We were asked, like right after the accident, well will you keep on billeting? And in my response, well of course. Because we're not how do I put this. We're not afraid to build new relationships because of the the hurt of losing someone that you were close to in the past right. So yeah we had a Bronco every year even since the accident. And Tyler Smith came back the fall after the accident. Spent a few weeks with us and realized that he needed to do more than just his physical recovery. So he went home again and so that was a short period for that season. But then the two seasons, even last year in the Covid shortened season, we had a young man from Quebec with us and quite enjoyed him and I know it's been great.

Lisa Peters

That was a question really yes I have, but to say that you're gonna love again. We can't not stop. So thank you for taking that so much further than Yes. Because that is really important. We can't shut down. We have you have so much to offer. So my 2 final questions and I hope this isn't too hard but LeaderImpact is about making leaders having a lasting impact. So as you continue to move through your own journey, just wondering have you considered what you want your faith legacy to be when you leave this world?

Paul Jefferson

Yeah that's a really good question. And I mean forty-two years ago I would have said my professional career and my legacy and even six years ago I probably would have said my family and my relationships with my kids. Certainly lots of people consider those things as your legacy right? But as I think about it I'm not sure that I want anything more than when I'm gone people say that guy, that guy loved God with everything he had. And encouraged other people to do the same. And if I have a legacy that's it because everything else doesn't matter.

Lisa Peters

All right? Well you're that guy you're that guy. Thank you.

Paul Jefferson

Yeah I hope so that's what we're working towards. And I don't want people to think that hey I he's some super Christian. I'm not. Like I mean I had moments after the accident where I couldn't think straight for days. So there were times when Nancy had to make decisions for us as a family and as a couple that I should have been involved in I just couldn't function. So I'm not a super saint and I don't think there is any actually. People who say they are I just don't believe it. Anyway I'm not that guy but I'm the guy who loved God with everything he had.

Lisa Peters

You're that guy! So my final question is what brings you the greatest joy?

Paul Jefferson

Holding my grandson. He's a delight. And yeah I just have so much fun doing that teaching him. He loves the farm toys and while I didn't farm after I left home for university, I Love teaching him how to play with the farm toys and playing with him so that's awesome.

Lisa Peters

You're just the big kid.

Paul Jefferson

Lots of researchers are right? Wouldn't it be fun to try this and then we go and try. So yeah.

Lisa Peters

Well, thank you Paul this brings us to the end. But thank you for sharing your story on building personal resilience. I have enjoyed our time together. Thank you.

Paul Jefferson

Thanks for having me.

Lisa Peters

It's been a great time. So thank you. So this ends our podcast but if people want to touch base with you or find you how can they get a hold of you or find you?

Paul Jefferson

I have a professional page on LinkedIn. They can find me there. It's pretty obvious because it's Paul Jefferson and Ag Research Agriculture forage management and scientific writing I think is my byline there. They can look me up there and send me a message and we can connect.

Lisa Peters

You're that science guy right? Well thank you again. Paul for joining us I have truly loved every minute. Thank you all right? Well if you're part of LeaderImpact. You can always discuss or

share this podcast with your group. And if you are not yet in the LeaderImpact group. We would love to have you check out our groups available in Canada at LeaderImpact.ca or if you're listening from anywhere else in the world. Check out <http://leaderimpact.com> or get in touch with us by email info@LeaderImpact.com and we will connect you and if you like this podcast please leave us a comment. Give us a rating or a review this will help other global leaders find our podcast. Thank you for engaging with us and remember impact starts with you.