

## ***How To Get UnStuck In Your Field***

UnStuck- Part 4

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### **Introduction:**

Today we are going to be talking about how to get unstuck in your career. I thought since we are talking about being stuck in our jobs, *it might be fun to look at some famous people who got stuck in their job*. So, I have some people I want to put up on the screen and I want to see if you can identify them, and we will talk a little bit about their story.

- Can you tell me who this is? It's Harrison Ford, right? Before he became Hans Solo, did you know that for 15 years he worked as a carpenter and stage hand, even at one point making cabinets for then a lesser known producer named George Lucas. That's Harrison Ford.
- Steve Jobs. Did you know that Steve Jobs helped to found Apple. Then, he actually got into a conflict with the board and was fired. Did you know Steve Jobs had been let go from Apple? He got stuck. However, while out of Apple, he helped to found Pixar animation studios (remember *Toy Story?*)... Then, he went back to what was then Mac... and what came after that? The iMac, the iPhone, the iPod... he got unstuck and came back big!
- Does anybody know who this is? **Julia Child**. Somebody knows their culinary arts. At the age 30 Julia Child worked for the U.S. Government in Asia as a spy. She didn't take her first cooking class until she was 36 years old. That's when she began to find her true calling. She went from being stuck to being unstuck. Julia Child.
- Do you know who this is? **Walt Disney**. The creator of the happiest place on earth, right? Did you know that he was rejected by the Army in World War I and then after World War I he couldn't get a job? He finally got a part-time job at a newspaper and it was after that he got his first full time job at an ad company. That's when he took his first lessons in animation. You know what that led to. He went from being really stuck to being unstuck.
- How about this guy? **Harry S. Truman**. President Truman he started out as a bank clerk and then he became a bookkeeper, and then he and a friend started a hardware store that failed. He was really stuck until he became a politician and eventually president.
- Do you know who this is? **It's Vincent Van Gogh**. Van Gogh had a full resume. His dad was a pastor. He tried that for a while and basically got let go because he was too zealous. Sounds like my kind of guy! ☺ He tried to open an art gallery and school but got stuck when he had problems with a business partner. He started painting but was an artist before his time. *Did you know that Vincent Van Gogh only sold one painting before he died?* He died stuck. He actually committed suicide.

It was only after his death that his paintings took off, he started a whole new genre of art, and he became one of the best known artists of all time. He got stuck and stayed stuck. He gave up on work and life before he had a chance to get unstuck.

All these people were stuck and then found a way to be unstuck. Let me ask you this, *do you feel stuck in your career or in your job right now?*

- Maybe you feel like you have a ceiling at your job and you can't go any higher.
- Or maybe you are totally bored and disinterested in what you do. There is no meaning and there's no fulfillment and you are just. . .honestly, you are just going to work for the paycheck and you feel stuck.
- Or maybe you have a bad boss or you are in a toxic work environment. You aren't treated fairly. You are taken advantage of. You do all the work, but you don't get any credit. And you feel stuck.
- Or maybe you feel like a failure. Maybe you can't get your business off the ground or you recently lost a job and you are lost and you're not sure what direction to go in and you would just admit—I'm stuck.

Here's what I think. *There are more people who are listening to me right now who are stuck than who are unstuck when it comes to their careers.* **Recent studies show 60% of Americans feel stuck when it comes to their jobs and their careers.** They feel like they are dissatisfied in their jobs. And it's not that the other 40% are really happy, it's just the other 40% don't feel like quitting today.

But see, that's not how God wants it to be. I'm not saying that work should be easy. I'm not even saying that work has to be fulfilling and meaningful all the time. What I am saying is that God doesn't want you to feel stuck when it comes to your career, when it comes to your work.

Read Ecclesiastes 2:24 with me: *So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized that these pleasures are from the hand of God.*

Where does this verse say satisfaction in our work comes from? Underline that. It's from the "hand of God". *How many of you would like to find satisfaction in your work?* I think all of us do. And this verse tells us that that satisfaction is a gift from God.

In other words, if you want to move from stuck to being unstuck in my career, it's not necessarily about quitting. It's also not just about finding your dream job. Remember what we've been saying. *First equals blessing. When we put God first in our work- we find blessing.* Remember our definition of UnStuck: *Moving forward because we have put God in complete control.* We get unstuck in our career by making God first in our work. ***How do we do that?***

Today we're going to look at four choices that we can make to get unstuck in our career...

## 1. **Make God Your Boss**

A lot of times we struggle at work because we feel unappreciated. Have you ever been there before? You do the hard work, but it's your co-workers who get the credit. You're the one who is responsible for the project going through, but your boss gets credit from the supervisor and doesn't even share your name. When you feel unappreciated, you get stuck.

Maybe you work in a hostile work environment. Some of you deal everyday with a tough boss. A boss who isn't friendly. Who's harsh and doesn't treat you fairly and that makes you feel stuck.

Work is hard. Sometimes we feel unappreciated. Sometimes we get discouraged because the person above us doesn't recognize our efforts or makes things difficult on us. Here's a secret to deal with a difficult work environment. Make God your boss.

### **Colossians 3:23**

*Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.*

How are we to work? *Willingly.* Who do we really work for, first? *The Lord.*

This verse says—do your very best and do it for God. And listen, if you go to work and you have God as your boss, *He's the one you are trying to please.*

This can lower your stress level because **you know what God wants from you.** God isn't some fickle boss that can never be pleased. God isn't difficult to read or hard to understand. God isn't inconsistent. God is very clear about what He wants most from us. And, if we go to work with the perspective that we are working for God first—we can know what is most important in our day.

### **Matthew 22:37-40**

*<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."*

We can go to work and live out this command. We can make this the most important part of our day. *What would happen if you went to work everyday with the goal of going to work for God and loving God and loving others?* Instead of being constantly ticked at your boss or your co-workers, you loved them. You were patient with them. You sympathized with them. You cared about them. And you said—when you get up in the morning—today, *my number one goal is to love God with everything that I have and to do my best to love my co-workers.*

You can show love to your co-workers by serving them. Buy them coffee. Help them on their projects that they were struggling with. Instead of gossiping about coworkers, or talking about them behind their back, we must choose to speak positively of them and encourage them.

*So let me ask you this—who are you trying to please at work? Some of us really feel stuck at work because we don't get the approval we so long for from coworkers or customers or supervisors. Maybe we get passed over for promotions or somebody else gets the credit... Look at what Paul writes this in Galatians 1.*

### **Galatians 1:10**

*Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.*

*Who are you trying to please? You see, **the first step to getting unstuck is to change who you are working for and to make God your boss.***

## **2. Separate who I am from what I do.**

One of the big mistakes that we make that will rob our work of joy and it will add a lot of stress to our life is to connect who we are with what we do for a living. ***For many of us, our sense of identity comes from our job or our career.***

We do this all the time. We do it with our language without even realizing it. For instance, if you were to come up and to ask me—*Andy, what do you do for a living?* You know what my response would be? I would say—I'm a pastor. I'm a bus driver. Did you catch that. *You didn't ask me who I am, you asked me what I do.* But, how did I respond? I responded by connecting what I do with who I am.

We all do it. If I ask you what you do, you'd say... *Well... I'm a...* I am a banker. I am a nurse. I am a stay at home mom. I am a teacher. I am a student. *What did we just do? We just connected our identity with what we do.*

Here's a main point of today's message: *I want you to understand, **what you do is not who you are.*** What you do is what you do to make a living. It is how you provide for your family. What you do is not who you are.

Here's one problem with connecting what you do with who you are: *when you lose your job...you lose your identity. Or...when your job is not going well...when you are stuck...you feel like a loser. When I fail at work, I feel like a failure as a person.* And that can kill us.

**We need to realize that as followers of Jesus, our identity is not tied to our job or how successful we are at work. It's tied to who we are in Jesus Christ.** Look at **Ephesians 2:10**, *"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."*

Turn to the person next to you, and say this: *You are God's masterpiece. You are His wonderful creation.* Listen, ***don't let yourself and don't let other people equate your self worth with your net worth.***

I want you to think about this. This is a radical idea. This may be encouraging to you...or it might be a challenge for you. ***Could it be that your career is not your main purpose in life? Have you ever considered that?***

Paul says in Ephesians 2:10- that God has created us anew and remade us into His work of art. Why? ***So we can do the good things HE planned for us...Have you ever considered that God has given you the job that you have now so that you can pay the bills and pursue a purpose and a calling He has in mind for you outside of your work?*** Could it be that your job is an avenue to pay your bills so that you can live in the neighborhood you do to reach the people God has placed around you? Maybe God gave you your job so that you can pay the bills and then serve Him inside this church and make a difference for God here. *Maybe God gave you the job you have not for the work you are doing, but so you can be around the people you work with so that you can be a light in their life and share the gospel of Jesus with them.* It's a radical idea, but think about it. ***Maybe your job is not true calling, it's just a way for you to get to the place where God wants you to be.***

So how do you do this? How do you separate who you are from what you do? How do you keep your identity separate from your job? Well, here are three important steps that will help you keep a proper perspective. One of these is something you do daily, two of them are something that you do weekly.

- **Have a daily quiet time.** Find a time in your day to spend time praying and reading the Bible. Why is that so important? ***Because everyday I need to spend time reading and refocusing and reconnecting my identity in Jesus Christ.*** Every day I need to say—*my identity isn't what I am going to be doing today, but my identity is who I am in Jesus Christ. I'm a masterpiece.* I need to firm up my foundation every day. That's why having a quiet time can be so important. *(E100 Challenge)*
- **Protect a weekly Sabbath.** This is the one day of the week where you are not working. The Bible says you should work six days a week, and one day should be set aside for rest. It should be set aside for worship. It should be set aside for playing. It should be set aside for serving other people. One day out of the week-- you should not be doing your primary vocation. Taking a Sabbath day helps you to sort of disconnect from your job and recognize that your identity is in Jesus. It's in God. It's not in what you do.
- **Commit to a weekly small group.** This is so important to help you establish your identity in Christ and not in your work. You need to be with brothers and sisters in Christ in the middle of the week that will help you focus on your spiritual identity and growth and take a break from your vocational identity. I want to encourage you, if you haven't already, *sign up for a small group today!*

Now, Jesus shared a gut wrenching truth about what happens when we lose our identity in Christ to material things—including our job or our career. He says this in **Mark 8:36**: *And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?*

God wants us to work hard. God wants us to do well. But, we can't confuse our identity in the process. All the success in the world isn't worth it...if you've given up your identity in Christ in the process. *Do what you do, do what you do well, do what you do better than anyone else in the world, but do not mistake what you do for who you are.* Don't forfeit your soul.

So to get unstuck in my job, first, I need to make God my boss. Secondly, I need to separate who I am from what I do. Then number three—

### **3. Be faithful in the small things.**

If you want to get unstuck at work sometimes what we need to do is to *learn to do the ordinary things extraordinarily well.* Say that with me. Do the ordinary things extraordinarily well. If you do this, you will get unstuck quick.

Unfortunately, that's not how most people are. Most people just do enough to get by. Most people phone it in. Many of us feel that parts of our job are below us. We feel underappreciated and unfairly treated. We have lost interest. Maybe we've fallen into a half-hearted routine and find it tough to stay motivated. We start going through the motions.

*Have you ever done that at work? Now be honest, where you just sort of phoned it in? It was a small task that was menial. And you were sort of offended that you were asked to do it. And so you gave very little effort. You phoned it in. But at the same time, you are praying and secretly hoping that you are going to get a promotion. That God is going to bless you with a better job than the one that you have now.*

But here's the truth: Jesus teaches us that this is not how God works. *God is not going to bless you with something great and big if you are not faithful with the small things that you have now.*

Jesus tells a story in Matthew 25. In this parable there is a boss with three employees. And the boss goes off on a trip and he leaves the three employees with some responsibilities. They are relatively small responsibilities. And when he comes back he finds that the employees have had different results with the tasks they were assigned. One employee has been really good. He took the small responsibility. He was faithful and he turned it into more. One of the employees was sort of lazy. He must have thought the assignment wasn't that important and he didn't do anything.

Now, here is where we're going to check in with Scripture. Listen to how the boss addresses the two employees when he returns.

To the hard-working employee (Matthew 25:23):

<sup>23</sup> *"The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'* Did you hear that? He praised the worker for being faithful with what? *"This small amount."* And, since he was faithful with a small amount, the master gave him "many more responsibilities". And, then, the boss threw a party.

To the lazy employee (Matthew 25:26-27):

<sup>26</sup> *"... 'You wicked and lazy servant! And, then the master took away the small responsibility from the lazy employee and gave it to the hard-working one. Then, he kicked the lazy employee out.*

A lesson here for us is this: *If you want something more than what you have now, if you want God to bless you, be faithful in the small things.* Do those things well. As Christ followers, before we can ask God to bless us, we must be the best in the small things. **Ecclesiastes 9:10** says: *Whatever you do, do well.*

Be faithful in the small things. Here's the final choice that we can make to get unstuck in our career.

#### **4. Persevere when you feel stuck.**

*What's the easiest thing to do when you feel stuck? Quit. Right? Quit and give up. Try something else. This thing isn't working out so I'm going to quit and move on. My boss is making things difficult for me so I'm going to quit and go home. I'm trying to start this business and it's not going well, so I'm going to quit and I'm going to go do something else. The job's too hard, so I'm going to quit. But hear me—in most situations quitting does not get you unstuck. Quitting can get you more stuck.*

Here's an important spiritual principle for us to remember. *When we are stuck, before we quit, we have to look for what God is trying to teach us.* I don't know why you are stuck or how you got stuck.... But I do know that **God wants to use your being stuck to teach you to lean on Him.** To teach you to trust Him. To teach you to rely on His strength rather than your own strength. He wants to grow you.

Look at what **2 Corinthians 1:8-9**:

<sup>8</sup> *We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. <sup>9</sup> In fact, we expected to die. **But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.***

The Apostle Paul wrote this. What he's saying here is—we were under so much pressure that we wanted to quit. But, look at what he says. He found good in the struggles. **But as a result...we learned to rely on God... who raises the dead** (i.e.: who gets people unstuck!).

***Look, if you are stuck today, have you ever considered maybe it's the best thing that has ever happened to you?***

Maybe this is God's way of breaking through your busyness and your miss-placed priorities and your *I'm-going-to-do-it-myself* pride and reaching out to say: *Trust me. I'll help. What you need is me. Take this trial and give me your whole heart. Follow me first. Learn to rely on me and not on you. Friend, I want to tell you...from personal experience... it is worth being stuck right now if it teaches you to trust more in God, to lean more on Him and to rely on His strength.*

*Maybe God is using whatever tough time you are going through to prepare you for what's next. To prepare you for something big. To prepare you for something that He wants you to do for Him. So don't quit. Don't give up. Instead, let God change your heart during this time. During this time of being stuck, let it be where you learn to trust God and rely on His power. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead.*