



The Leadership of C.S. Lewis | An Interview with Crystal Hurd

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When someone begins to question their faith, the last thing church leaders want to do is say the wrong thing or handle it in a way that will further push them away. With so many historical concerns or doctrinal questions, what does a leader supposed to do? I'm happy to report that leading saints is here to help with the questioning saints library. This is a full library of 20 plus presentations related to how to minister to an individual who is questioning their faith. We cover topics like how to answer tough questions, maintaining a relationships when someone leaves the church, and how to embrace doctrinal ambiguity. If you want to review all the sessions from the questioning saints library, no cost for 14 days, simply go to [leading saints dot org slash 14](https://www.leading-saints.org/14). That's [leading saints dot org slash one four](https://www.leading-saints.org/14). While you're at it, we'll give you access to all of our virtual libraries that cover several leadership related topics. So click the link in the show notes or simply visit [leading saints dot org slash 14](https://www.leading-saints.org/14). C. S. Lewis was a British writer and theologian. He held an academic position in English literature at both Oxford University and Cambridge University. And well, a few months ago, a good friend of mine named Tyler snow reached out to me and said, hey Kurt, there's a book coming out called the leadership of C. S. Lewis. And if you've been listening to general conference the last few decades, you've probably heard several quotes from C. S. Lewis. He's often labeled as the most quoted non latter day saint in general conference. And so I reached out to the author of the leadership of C. S. Lewis, the subtitle is ten traits to encourage change and growth. Her name is crystal heard, and she agreed to do an interview. And since my good friend Tyler snow was the one who started this conversation. I

invited him to co host the interview with me. And this interview is a little bit different. Obviously the book talks about various leadership principles and traits that see us Lewis had. He's often not thought of as a leader. So we sort of talk about his history and I think it's really interesting for Latter day Saints to learn more about C. S. Lewis, the impact he had not on only our church, but on the Christian world as a whole. And crystal is I quickly learned is the person to go to all things C. S. Lewis and add some interesting perspectives to share. So I'd love to have you listen and give me feedback on this type of episode where we jump into a specific figure who is sort of tangentially related to leadership and explore their life. So here is my interview along with Tyler snow with crystal heard the author of the leadership of C. S. Lewis, ten traits to encourage change and growth. Today I'm sitting down through the powers of the Internet with crystal heard. How are you crystal? I'm great. How are you? Awesome. Now we're going to be discussing your recent book called the leadership of C. S. Lewis, but I first have to introduce my co host today. I don't typically have a co host, and that is Tyler snow. How are you? Not bad. How are you? Good. Now, do you want to tell Tyler the listening audience? How we're connected? How do we know each other? So in my last ward, I was one of the bishops in the stake and Franklin was a member of the state presidency. So I got to know the I guess no crew through that relationship. Yeah. And before that, when I was bishop, we were like our offices were next door. So we would go and cry on each other's shoulders on the tough days. It was good. Talk about welfare interviews, all of that stuff. Yeah, and we'd often just sort of talk about leadership inside conversations, you introduced me some great resources and whatnot. And you've always been a C. S. Lewis fan. And I think you originally sent me a link of crystal's book and said, hey, this book is coming out. You should reach out to the author and here we are. And then I said, well, you got to help me out, Tyler. And so you're going to be my co host today. So it should be pretty fun. Sounds great. Yeah, crystal is a member of the official C. S. Lewis, Facebook group, and I'm in that group as well. And she had posted that the book was coming out, and I thought this was good. Perfect for what you do and what I'm interested in as well. Nice. Very cool. So crystal, this was part of your PhD dissertation.

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But what led to when we think of C. S. Lewis, we don't always think leadership. So how did you marry these two worlds? Yeah, so yeah, in 2012, I was studying for my ADD and educational leadership and policy analysis. My day job is as a high school teacher, teaching dual enrollment courses. And they kind of said, you know, you're going to be married to this topic for the better part of a year. So you better enjoy what you're going to research. So I remember thinking, why not, I'd love C. S. Lewis and I'd love to do something on Lewis. And I was actually attending a secular public university. At that time. So I said, you know, this would be a good excuse to read all it was this stuff. And kind of get something out of it. So I actually approached the dean of the department and said, you know, this is what I like to do. And he was like, absolutely not, no. Oh,

really? Yeah. Why did he respond that way? I think he just didn't want any religious affiliation. Oh, I see, okay. Yeah. And so I went to one of my professors who is also a Christian and was like, I'd really like to do this topic. And she said, well, I'll share it. So we had to sort of craft this nice little, it's not you. It's me. Type thing for the Dane and switch. Switch over. Because that was her boss. And sort of switch over to her and then it was just like, oh wow, you know, everything just sort of lined up. And so I just, it was great because it was really mixed, really. I had a lot of people who said, oh, that's a really great idea. And then I had a few who were like, no. No, I don't think that he would not want to call himself a leader. And I said, no, that's true. I had to completely believe that. He would probably chuckle at the book title if he saw it. But I think, you know, when I started studying all these leadership models and I thought, gosh, you know, he hits so many of these. And not because he intentionally wanted to be a leader, but because he was a servant. And because he gave his life fully to, you know, to the kingdom. And the epitome of a Christian, right? Exactly. Yeah. And that's how that's how he became a leader. And he became so, to so many, he was a mentor and a guide, you know, if you read the collected letters, which I know is not an easy beat read. Of course. So grab a Snickers, you know, when you read it though, you see how daily he was instructing and guiding people. And all the while he was like, you know, he was very humble about it. You know, he was saying, you know, I'm just another pilgrim like you are, but here's what I've learned from reading of scripture. And here's how I think you should handle that. And just through that, even just a daily correspondence. He did that. But also, I think a lot of his impact came from the wartime broadcasts, which became mere Christianity. Yeah, yeah. So in our faith tradition, we have a strong long history of people giving sermons or talks. And for decades and decades, we typically just quote ourselves. A latter day saint leader will typically quote another latter day saint leader. But for decades, there's been this C. S. Lewis character that somehow worked his way into so many talks and it's sort of been this factoid that we share that C. S. Lewis is that the most quoted non latter day saint in latter day saint discourses. And so, but if you could help us out there, maybe people listening who aren't as familiar with C. S. Lewis or they've heard this name just assume he's a smart guy that lived long ago or something. So maybe you just give us a summary of who he was and sort of a life scope of him. Oh, well, C. S. Lewis was actually born in Ireland. He's Irish. From Belfast, yeah. And so he grew up in a really interesting really with religious turmoil, really surrounding him between Catholics and protestants. So from a very young age, he was he understood that there were differences and denominations and approaches to God. And so I think that's kind of what led him to write mere Christianity, right? Is sort of saying how here we want to see differences, but look at all these similarities. Let's try to find some common ground with that. So Lewis was sent off, his mother died when he was 8.

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She had abdominal cancer. His father was a police court solicitor, which I've done some work on his family. I'm actually working on a book now on the Lewis and Hamilton families and how they inspired he and his brother warney. But they raised him in a an Anglican tradition, which is like the Church of England. Protestant. And so after his mother daddy was sent off to England, eventually, to go to school. During that time, he hated school. He loved stuff. Really? Well. Yeah, he wouldn't think he would, yeah. Yeah, he loved studying, but he hated prep school. He was an introvert, and he was not, you know, not athletic at all. So he didn't like that, but he loved to study. He loves sequestering himself in the library, just getting lost and Homer. Which a lot of teenagers do just. I think maybe they did. In the original. But as a teenager, he begged his father to go study with kirkpatrick, William kirkpatrick, who was his master's headmaster. His father's headmaster. So he ended up going there. And he was an atheist at that point. A lot of a lot of things, including his mother's death, had sort of persuaded him against God, and so he kind of rebelled again for a while. And then while he was training with kirkpatrick, he ran across fantasies by George MacDonald in a train stall. And that just awoke something in him, spiritually. And so he was a war one vet. He was an incredible student of languages and literature. Incredible. I mean, he quotes huge chunks of the Bible even while he's a professed atheist. When he is writing to his father and his father, his father, nobody didn't know. His father knew he was, you know, his first book, the first book that Lewis ever published was spirits and bondage, which was basically atheistic poetry. And Louis father got it and said, this is not what a Christian. And prayed for a soul a lot. So eventually, Lewis gains employment at Oxford University. He was studying at Oxford, the war, he went and fought the war World War I. Came back and eventually got a job, became a dawn. And was riding marvelous literary analysis. I mean, just great stuff. And then he met Jared Tolkien, and he go Dyson, and they talked to him about the true myth. And then Lewis said, it really took about two years for the whole thing to happen. It wasn't like a one of those Christian babies were doves fly, and then magic. I've seen a few Kirk Cameron movies in Monday, but. It had to hit it, it had to be processed through his mind first before. So eventually, you know, he was literally on a motorcycle, you know, when he, when he figured out that he was, he went from theism to Christianity. They really wow. Yeah, he was literally in warny sidecar, warning his brother, his older brother. And warning had a motorcycle, and Lewis is a lot of people know it doesn't drive. He didn't really drive that much. He occasionally did, but he had a driver usually. And so yeah, so he was sitting in the sidecar and there were going to the zoo. And then he just decided God was real. Wow. I love that. So yeah, he was on a motorcycle, right? When all that happened. And so basically that, that moment, which seems kind of insignificant. I don't really have any spiritual experiences when I go to zoo. But I haven't been to a zoo in a long time, but that moment was transformative for so many in so many ways because then here he was this amazing mind and this writer and then he started writing about spirituality and it just resonated with so many people. And a lot of his stuff because he writes on a wide wide spectrum, right? He wrote poetry. He was super successful at it. At least lucratively. And then he has first, the allegory of love was his first academic book.

And that came out just shortly after his conversion. And then in the 40s, here comes, you know, all the broadcast talks. And the problem of a pain, which was how he got the broadcast talks was someone at the BBC had read the problem of pain. And so this would be so great to talk to an audience that is in the throes of a war and needs that sort of inspirational sucker to survive all this stuff. And so he ended up he hated being on the radio, but he did it because he wanted to get the message out. You know, like you guys are and so he eventually started writing more and more and then the 50s, he came Narnia and there's so many, I mean, he was so prolific. So I'm going to get things. So there's a lot of ways to I'm actually very interested. What was the first thing you all read by Lewis? Oh man, I'm thinking, I want to say the screwtape letters was probably what I read first. Tyler, you've read them all like ten times over. Not quite. I would say when I was in third grade, I had a teacher that showed us the line in the witch and the wardrobe, the animated version of that. So I read the book and that got me hooked at that point. Yeah. I've never I've read the first book. The magician's nephew, is it? I forget the title of it. But to my kids, but I've never read the I've just seen the movies of the other ones. There's so many different ways to get to hammer. And that's why anytime I talk to people and I meet people, you know, they'll say, I actually met him through my Christianity. Later on when I was older and somebody just happened to because I went to a secular university from my undergrad for an English lit degree, and I was like, you know, I spent all this time studying all these wonderful marvelous riders and a lot of them had spiritual underpinnings, right? Dante, and all these great people. I was like, is there anybody that's alive? A hundred years who does this stuff? And then someone said, well, you should try out C. S. Lewis. I don't know where that person is now if I can remember I will send them a fruit basket because that was life-changing to me. And then when I met him, I met told gain I met McDonald, Chester Jen. I'm at all these Dorothy sayers and all these marvelous people who were writing about the gospel through a modern lens. And so yeah, that's some people know him as a children's book author. Some people know him as an apologist. Some people know him a few people know him as a science fiction writer. So there's so many different ways to have met Louis, but at the end of the day, he was just, he loved to write and he loved to imbue all these works with this spiritual perspective. This religious perspective and that's what we know him for. Yeah, so you mentioned some of the leadership models that you've explored C. S. Lewis's life through. Is there one that you think is the most fitting when you think of C. S. Lewis as leader? What model do you think captures the best, what kind of life that he lived? I'm going to cheat inside transformational leadership because that's what I wrote my dissertation on. So actually wrote it on transformational leadership and just as it suggests it's about transforming people. That leadership model specifically, it says it basically says in all the George McGregor burns was one of the leadership, one of the leadership writers who wrote about that and actually sort of pinned that title. That transformational leadership sort of defined it. And he talks about those leaders are good at arousing the morale and the motivation. Of people. So he says there's actually a moral component to that. So when we look at leadership as a whole, a lot of people see it as very transactional, right? I show up, I do this. I get this. Transformational leadership is not at all transactional. It's very much about understanding the person as a whole and not only guiding them and helping them, but transforming them into better people. Into their own leaders. So for

me, transformational leadership that I looked at, they were different components. And one of the most charisma intellect, which I talk about it a little bit in the book. And individualized attention. Here's a man who wrote every single person who wrote him, he responded.

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Imagine you're amazing. You had to write back every single email that you were saying. I would get nothing else done. Right. Hopefully you got a lot less spam than we do with modern technology. I've actually seen and studied some of my friend Charlie Starr is a handwriting expert, a Lewis handwriting expert. He's actually seen bits and pieces. Sometimes we're paper was a little scarce back during the war. He would just have these little bit he would cut up papers into smaller strips and then just write a couple sentences on there and sign it. Because he was trying to save paper. But even if the brief response, it was a response. And towards the end of his life, I mean, in the 50s, you know, he was riding two to three hours a day. Just responding to letters. Wow. Wow, that's fascinating. And I love the transformational component that if I just think generally about the various writings that I've read or the quotes, all these mic drop quotes that he has out there that get passed around like there's always at least some component of transformation to it. Not only did he experience the transformation power of the grace of Jesus Christ like he preached it so powerfully. And that's what I love about reading Lewis's quotes is just that I just feel the power of the grace of Jesus Christ when he articulates Jesus. And that was his gift. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it really was. He said that in letters, he was like, I think this is the only thing I can do. Basically said, teaching is in writing is the only thing I can do. He's like, I'm pretty much, I'm pretty much clumsy with anything else. And we're like, no, you're doing a good job. You're good. Keep on back. Keep doing it. Yeah, he was really devoted to it. And honestly, you were mentioning this great type letters. You know, he had, he got a lot of criticism for the screw type letters. No, really. Yeah. I'm just trying to figure out why maybe giving voice to the adversary. I don't know. Because when John Milton wrote Paradise lost, a lot of people criticized him and said, you are arousing sympathy for the devil. Because you're talking about the fall and you're not focusing on you're focusing on bills above and all that. And so Lewis actually kind of does that as well. He sort of flips the script and he focuses on, oh, this is what the devil would say. This was what this is what I have on training would say. So a lot of people criticized him for that. And it's really interesting. I was telling my husband the other day because I have a copy of his Time Magazine cover in my office and it's interesting because they play on that, right? If you've ever seen this cover, it's sort of a drawing of Lewis with a devil. On his shoulder and then like a wing oh really? Yeah, well, yeah, but the devil is fully in the picture. The angle is not. So even Time Magazine was playing on that, you know, on this quote unquote advocacy of the devil's voice. Characterize him as that. Yeah. He hated that. He hated that article. I bet. Yeah, I hated it. So many people were like, oh, I saw you in town magazine. He was like, oh, that's all right. He was really upset about it. He's like, don't believe a word. He was

on a big fan of the media anyway. But you know, he was really, yeah, he was upset about that. He didn't think they characterized him very well. But it's funny. And that was interesting. They would play on that because that was so the opposite of what he was trying to do. And he kind of got characterized as this man who's got some inspiration about what the devil would think. It's funny. Now we read the screwtape letters and this is brilliant. Yeah, it's a fun. Yeah. So I'm curious, going back to this transformational component of the type of leader he was, how he wrote. What perspective do you have on as far as the influence he had on bringing people to Christianity? Well, I think he spoke honestly in genuinely about the Christian experience. I myself was grew up in church and I was sort of raised in faith. And I had one of those sort of crises of faith in my 20s. You know, were you questioning everything? And that's just part of a lot of people's faith journey.

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Just sort of checking checking to make sure that these things are real, you know, to you. And so I sort of had that and God very quickly showed me that, you know, he was real. He was the real deal. I mean, and so I feel like, and I've had people say, do you think his atheism was contribute to his message of being a good communicator? And I absolutely think that's true. Because he can speak as someone who's lost, who had lost his faith and found it, then he understands people's doubts and he understands those journeys we go through and the questions that we want answered, you know. I remember mere Christianity the first two or three chapters, I think I highlighted whole pages, the first time I read it, I'm one of those people that writes all over the book and writes in the margins I'm one of those. I'm one of those scoundrels, you know, that destroys a book. Totally. You know, when I read it, and I just remember being so it's like, this person has reached across decades and across an ocean and across cultures, and he knows exactly how I felt. And to me, that is that's what Lewis does. He echoes the things that are in our hearts and on our minds before we even sometimes even have the courage to ask those questions. Yeah. Would it be safe to say that he was sort of a minister or a missionary to the intellectual crowd or the academic crowd? Absolutely. Yeah. Because again, I kind of grew up in a very fundamentalist background. And so if you ask questions and people didn't know the answer, they're like, oh, you don't have enough faith. As somebody who went to college and had enjoyed inquiry, right? And enjoyed doing that and sort of interrogating all the things I read. I said, no, I want to interrogate these things. And I think Lewis gave us permission and then he gave us the tools we need. To sort of critically approach these things. And not feel like it's irreverent or feel guilty because we're trying God or something like that. I feel like the way he approached our day to today life and the issues we face and the issues of our faith as well. I feel like he was always authentic in the dialog of what we struggle with on a day to today basis. And so I think that I think he gave us he gave me permission to ask those questions, which I am very grateful for, because it made me a better person. And it made me a better Christian. To go

ahead and ask those questions. Because God can handle it. That's funny. But yeah, absolutely. And I think that was important because a lot of people were, and if you look at the timeline, you know, he was part of that college going crowd. And he was, and he was, you know, he was even in Belfast, even though there was a lot of working class there. His particular family was actually very sort of upper middle class. You know, they had help in the house and they weren't poor by any means. But you know, he was because he had that intellectual background. He was able to adapt that message to different audiences. And be successful. Yeah. Yeah, you wrote in your book about there was a tweet on Twitter where the son of a famous theologian questioned the relevance of C. S. Lewis to modern day Christians. Can you comment on why do you believe that CSS is relevant to modern Christians? Today. How can he still, how can he answer the questions of faith crises and people falling away from Christianity and religion today? Yeah, that was an interesting, I got a lot of when that tweet came out in the tweet came out like ten years ago, I think, but my phone kind of blew up. How many people hit me up in cyan? Jump on it, crystal. Save the day. Okay. And I think, you know, I think he's relevant because he taps into the root of something that is fundamentally human. And fundamentally spiritual. Not every writer can do that.

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Some writers are more timely, you know, it's like, as a student of literature, which most of my degrees are in literature and writing, you know, we say what makes a classic, right? What makes a classic? And why do people still read beowulf? Or why do people started the Canterbury tales? And Gilgamesh. Why do we read all these things? And it's because there's this sort of taproot of wisdom that we can still pull from. And I think Lewis is able to do that. I do feel like in response to the tweet, I do feel like some people in my generation want to and Lewis called this chronological snobbery, right? Lewis wanted, a lot of people just say, well, that was in the past, that's old. That doesn't, that's not relevant anymore. And I just felt like that's really unfair. Dismissed somebody because your dad's into them, which was kind of the case for this particular guy. This guy's dad was a major theologian who credits Lewis with as a major part of his inspiration. And I was like, what just 'cause your dad's into it? You know what I'm saying? It doesn't discredit Lewis. And if you look, I mean, how many people are in that group Tyler, like 20,000 people on that Facebook page? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. The amazing. Yeah. And there's so many Lewis societies all over the world and people wanting to watch the movies and obviously this guy has something to tell us. That's relevant. And so I feel like he kind of has that he understood literature because he was a literary historian, you know? That was his day job, right? Stay tuned mid April renaissance literature. So he knew the aspects of the old texts. And he talks about that. You know, as a whole essay, where he says, you know, I'm talking about the reading of old books, right? And about the wisdom from those. And I think he understood clearly what the fundamental things are about something that makes it relevant for every generation.

And so to me, that's what he does. He taps into those needs and wants that are just emphatically human. And we don't grow out of them and we don't age out of them. You know, there's just parts of us as humans as a humans made by God that is just doesn't change. And he hits right on the things that are important to us. Yeah. What would you say to a modern day pastor or bishop or someone who's leading a congregation of people? Is there a certain way they could really leverage C. S. Lewis writings and whatnot? Is it for maybe that individual who's struggling with their faith? And maybe they're more intellectual or academic or not. Is there any other advice that you give as far as inserting the works of C. S. Lewis as a leader as you're leading other Christians? Yeah, well, one of the I guess you read in my introduction, one of the goals of the book was to sort of empower everyone from all from all walks of life, not just pastors or managers and coaches. And I think all of us are ambassadors. And when we go out into the world and we tell people we have Christ, then we are his ambassadors. We are the ones who represent him. And so, you know, we've talked about this a lot, especially in the last couple of years about the importance of kindness and love. And drawing people to Christ and I just feel like that was something that he did. That was something just in his day to today interactions. He was, you know, the most thoroughly converted man in England, right? So I think it's so sad, right? He was a person who once he committed himself. To the Christian lifestyle, that was it, game over. You know, he's on a 100%. And that means it's going to be painful or inconvenient, or difficult. On some days, but that was something that he wanted, you know, he felt, you know, he felt he had to empower other people to do that. So on one level, in my book, I'm sort of talking about the fact that we a lot of times we want to default to other people, like other leaders, when really there's we have the power as individuals to help lead people towards a better lifestyle.

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Illustrating that. And embodying that living the biblical truths, like he did. And being administered is a tough job. It's a tough job. So having a lot of the, you know, I mentioned courage and humility and a lot of the good qualities that I think that leaders really need to embody, which are all biblical, are things that I would sort of encourage people to use. But you know, it's not, it's not on every Sunday thing. It's an everyday thing. Yeah. Yeah. For these ten traits that you refer to these leadership traits that C. S. Lewis is exemplified. How did you come up with these ten? Are these are these ten that are universal that you think every leader should aspire to or these ones that were more specific to C. S. Lewis that he exemplified? Oh, that's a great question. Most of them came from leadership models. That I had worked on. Again, the leadership models I used were all secular. But people like the ones that I specifically mentioned, which were authentic leadership, servant leadership, transformational leadership, all of those have a core of being moral and ethical. And that sort of part of the part of being a good leader is having that innate morality that moral compass that sort of leads you so a lot of them came from several of them

came from some of the basic sort of transformational leadership trades and some of the ones that were mentioned. And then a couple of them, like, I was trying to think there were a couple of them that creativity was one that I kind of threw in because creative leadership now is on the come up, really. And there's a lot of talk about, especially with the pandemic and everything, you know, we were talking a lot about how can we, you know, in church or in school. How can we continue this instruction without meeting together? How can we, we need to be creative and how we handle being a part, which was part of our labs for a year and a half. And I don't know, and I know you guys are out west. I don't know if you were meeting in person now. Are you all back to being? Yeah, but now we are. Yeah, but definitely there was a time a long time where we were not yeah, it's a creativity was kind of one of a perseverance, I think, was one that I wanted to put in because every leader has failed. At some point. And I think it's important that in our leadership training, they say failure is a breeding ground for greatness. You need to fail and you have to be criticized and go through that. That's just part of being a leader. So I sort of added those and I talk specifically about Lewis sort of failing creatively. And I talked about when he, when he wanted to be, he wanted to be a poet so bad. And he just, he just couldn't say all the books. He wanted to do that. And when he switched to peruse, it was just so natural. I'm not saying he's a poor poet. He's not a right poet. Better than all of us. Yeah, there's a lot of ideas. He was working them out. Yeah. As we all did. Once the conversion happened, a lot of things got better. Not just his lifestyle. I was writing too. He was riding actually got a lot better. You know, he was and he talks about how even when he wrote when they republished it in the 50s, I think he wrote this thing for it, and he was just like, I was working out a lot of my adolescent anger in this. Basically says that, you know? So it's interesting. Yeah, I mean, so we see Lewis sort of, you know, even as an angry young man. We see those, you know, those things that we felt and were dealing with in early in life. And we see that he was echoing those two. And he was working those out too. And I always mentioned that Lewis is one of the few writers that can walk us through the whole journey. We can start in Narnia, and then as we go older, we can get into more of the more adult works and into the apologetics. And he can walk us through the journey for a whole lives.

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In sort of leading a spiritually and not everybody can say that. Yeah. And you mentioned early on in this interview and also in the book is that C. S. Lewis probably be so confused why someone would write a book about leadership in him, right? And he did have some he did have some formal leadership roles on different committees or in his academic roles and whatnot. But what would you say as far as the dynamic of somebody like Lewis, he wasn't this great pastor or leader per se with all these titles. But he still exude leadership. What can we learn about better being a leader without having a title? Yeah, that was yeah, he hated hated the normal stuff. He actually was vice president and this in the book he was vice president a little bit for a little while.

And they kind of kicked him out of the job. He was like, yeah, you know, dictating letters and stuff like that. They kind of abbreviated his son. And to college, 'cause it was one of those deals where they kind of pass it around, you know, the different people and it sort of alternates between people and he was like, oh, good grief, you know? And my turn. So he didn't really enjoy that. But I think. It has a lot to do with, like I said, just sort of the daily walk. With him. Because he understood because he had been on both sides of the debate. And one of the things I want to mention the Oxford socratic club because he welcomed atheists and agnostics to that meeting. And as I mentioned in the book, there were some meetings that had 80 to a hundred people in attendance. To watch these debates and to sort of soak up the wisdom of what was being said. And he welcomed that, right? I mean, we're kind of in a time right now where people don't want to hear divisive opinions and they want to get really upset about it. And the truth is, you know, we understand each other better when we listen. Instead of talk too much. And so he was, I think he exemplified that they said he was always incredibly courteous. Even to people who wildly disagreed with this premise, you know, whatever. They said he was always a gentleman. He never got angry or belligerent. You know, he was just, he always just sort of lived what he believed. And that's really what made the difference. I think because he was so obedient. He was asked to do a lot of things he did not feel comfortable doing. He didn't want to be on the radio. But he did, because he felt like that was, you know, he was actually on a show called brain trust. That was on the BBC. A couple times. Dorothy Cyrus, I was on that show. Yeah, so he was and he was people just loved him. I mean, people love listen to him. He was just a smart guy, and there's so many stories and I put a couple in the book of where he would be out somewhere. I think I talked about the cab driver talking about him. Sitting at a restaurant with like a bunch of night truckers and just like bang in the middle of this huge G following crowd, making jokes and, you know, because he was from the working class in Belfast, you know, had that, you know, the common touch is Rudyard Kipling, which I, you know, and he was able to speak with people on all levels. And that this increased his influence because he never thought in a many people said this, he never thought he was better than anybody else. Yeah. So he embodied the scripture, right? And what it is to be a believer. And I think that was, he would still say, I mean, if we could examine him right now, I mean, he'd probably be like, nah, that's hogwash. He probably like, no crystal. No. But look around and see if all the wonderful things that people are doing in his honor and his name and doing things and coming together and it's amazing what his legacy is doing. And I don't believe that's an accident. One thing you mentioned earlier was the servant leader model of leadership and I think he exemplified that pretty clearly one example of that is the two or three hours a day responding to people's letters. What are your thoughts on finding a balance between being the servant, where you're willing to help people respond to letters or in modern times responding to texts, emails, phone calls, how do you find the balance between being that servant, where you're trying to help people around you that do need help, but also establishing boundaries for yourself, whether it be in a church situation or whatever situation it might be.

That's a really great question. That's a great question. I think one of the, one of the important things about servant leadership and transformational leadership is the creation of leaders, right? If we look at tyranny, that model, that autocratic leadership says, I'm the one in charge. I'm a micromanager. I want to do everything. A transformational and servant leader will say, I'm here for you, but I want you and want to push you to do, you know, to go out and do those things. I was talking with the lamppost listener a couple weeks ago about the line the witch and the wardrobe where Peter has to fight the wolf right and he's like, oh, as Lin, help me. And as I was like, no, you have to do this. This is your job. If you want to be king of Narnia, this is the time where you buck up your courage and you do it, and you do what's best, even if you're scared. And so he makes leaders out of Peter and eventually Edmund and prince Caspian. There's some great leadership lessons in prince Caspian. He makes those leaders. So I think one way that you could, that you could try to bounce it and I completely understand because my husband's a school administrator and he can everything is like, this needs to be done right now. One of the things is about delegating to people, like one of the ways that you foster leadership is that you find out what a person's skill and talent is and then you sort of delegate to that person and say, you know, hey, this sounds like something you'd be really good at. So that's one of the things I would recommend for people. Is to sort of delegate, find people around you, get people around you who are great at what they do and compassionate. And do that. In the school, because work is at a high school. I have English degrees, people upstairs, I have my degrees. People down the hall have history degrees. We all have different competencies, but when we come together, we compliment each other. So I feel like the church kind of works that way too. Because I've done I've done worship arts before. In church. And so I was like, this person can sing. And this person can play bails. And this person can read, and so in this person makes the band. It's just like, whatever you've been given, use that to God's glory. And so I feel like that's kind of one way because you're absolutely right. It can swallow you up if you're not careful. But there are ways to serve others in the meantime. Also, you can serve them by building them up as a leader. And helping sort of delegate and enhance their leadership skills. Because, you know, we're fine not human beings, right? We're not going to live forever. And what we do in our legacy and our legacies in Christ is what remains after we're long gone. So it's really about, like I said, as a teacher, that's something we talk about a lot. It's like help these kids build them up so that when they leave you, they can do a lot of great things on their own. You know, kicking my other nest. Let them fly. Yeah. So yeah, I think you're right though. I think it's probably one of the situations where you need to be prayerful about what those boundaries are and protect those boundaries because I know with people who serve administrative mental health is really important. And you can give to your poured out, right? So it's important to keep to keep something in your keep something in and build up, too, because I've been in and honestly, I've been in that position myself where I've been in worship ministry and you pour out so much and then you're empty and then you can't serve God to the degree that you want to because you're so exhausted. You know. So yeah, that's a great question. It's a great question. And I sort of have a random question, but some of you said that spurred it on in my mind. But he's such a deep thinker and had such a way of words and articulating concepts. And maybe he would articulate a doctrine or a religious concept in a way that almost seemed brand new, just how he

was framing it and talking about it. Do you think he had any radical beliefs? Compared to maybe that the common Christian community would say that some of his beliefs of Christianity were more radical or atypical.

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There's a couple he does admit in some of his letters that he thinks there are parts of the Bible that are allegorical. Like some of the Old Testament stuff, not all of it, but he does wonder if it's sort of like sort of the past down version versus and there's a great book by Michael Christiansen on it's a few years old, but he wrote a great book called C. S. Lewis and scripture. So you can check that out. That goes into a lot more depth about his views on scriptural adherence. And things. He also mentions and a couple places that he was not, he was not an evolutionist at all. He was not a darwinist, but he's just the imagination. He and Freud had a lot of disagree on. It was a big fan, but he does talk about them. Maybe parts of evolution where God designed, so maybe God designed animals to evolve in a certain way. I'm not saying about us from monkeys or not necessarily. But you know, he says, God creates, for example, I have a friend who works in science. And he studies like snakes and stuff. Not my deal, but he was talking about if you have a he was telling us a while back that if you have a creature that stays in the dark cave, it'll eventually kind of go blond because it adapts to the darkness. And so it's like these sort of capabilities where you evolve to survive or you're evolved to adapt to your environment. He felt that those could be something that God designed, right? So he never, ever talked about monkeys or that type of evolution. But he did feel like maybe certain evolutionary things that occurred maybe just because, you know, God created us to be adaptive. Yeah, no monkeys, or anything like that. A lot of things we've talked about with ceaseless, obviously he was a remarkable individual, obviously, a saint and almost problem of too much. But he was a deeply fought individual as well, and had his own struggles. What not anything to say as far as his personal struggles and. Was reaching for a christlike habits, even though he's a mortal. Oh, sure, yeah. Of course, just recently, he has come out that. He did have a relationship with miss Moore's sexual relationship. There are some people who still debate that. I sort of feel like me personally reading the letters, I do feel like he was very he had a very uncomfortable or uncharacteristic relationship with her because she was in her 40s and he was in his 20s and he was riding her pretty much every day when he would go in the Belfast to visit his father and also the letters that she wrote to him did not go to little Lee where he was living. They went to Arthur his friend Arthur's house. So that his father wouldn't get the correspondence. So to me, that's like, you're obviously trying to hide something if you don't want your dad to see the letters you're getting from this 40 something year old woman. And of course, you probably know this, but Walter hooper passed away of COVID about a year and a half ago. And a lot of that stuff hit was sealed until after his death. So once he passed and we have a lot more stuff that's going to be coming out. There's a lot of cool stuff on the horizon. But that was sort of one of the things that

was released after Walter's death was that he did admit to having a sexual relationship before he converted to Christianity. After he converted he stopped. Which is probably why I miss more didn't like Christianity. Yeah, she was not a spiritual woman at all. I mean, warning was just like, what do you see in her? You know, she's never got along with her. 'cause he moved in later into the kilns when she was there and he could, you know, take her lever, you know? But I think he was a young, he was young and impressionable. You know, she probably presented herself and it was a mother figure to him. He does call her mother and later letters, like post compartment. And did take very good care of her. But yeah, I mean, most likely it is.

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But like I said, there's still a lot of debate going on about it in the Lewis community. Some people still believe that they did not have a sexual relationship. Some of them do I really don't care either way. I mean, you know, I mean, we all say in all the time, so and we get back up. And that's the grace of God, man. So to me, it really, I don't pay attention to it. And honestly, you know, I think about things that he wrote, like, I mean, he wrote about Christian morality and Mirko shandy. He wrote about Christian marriage, right? And he wrote that great there was a great essay called, we have no right to happiness, which is about casual sex and how we shouldn't be doing that because it damages the spirit. And I think looking back on now that we have, you know, basically sort of confirmed, you know, stuff about probably what that relationship was real. To me, you know, to me it only makes Lewis Lewis words even more emphatic because he experienced that. He knew what it was like to be in a situation where, you know, with casual intercourse or whatever because he had experienced that as a young man and he knew how horrible that was to your spiritual well-being, right? So he was riding with authority. Does that make sense? About these things instead of just sort of like, I'm going to give you a righteous sermon today. That's something I've never experienced. Now looking back on a lot of the things he's written, he did experience a lot of those things. And so he was talking from experience. With the authority and as a center who struggled every day, you know, he could say to other people, yes, I understand your struggle. It's hard. You know, for me, it just made me sort of admire him more because, you know, like you said, so many people say, oh, saint Claire, right? And he was, he was just as human as you and I are living every day. You know, drinking pour it, smoking a pie, just riding his heart out, you know? Trying to do the best he could every day. And that's what we're all just trying to do. Minus the cigarettes and pour it and stuff. But I think it's what we all try to do is just, you know, we just read the word and try to be good people and follow, follow scripture. And help each other. Just continuing that thought briefly in the letters that he would write with all through Greece when he was young. He would talk about his sexual impurity that he was dealing with that time his addiction at that time, right? And is there a sense that he was kind of a wounded healer? Do you get that sense from his life and his writings? Oh, certainly. Yeah, yeah. I think for me, that's why he has so much relevance.

Because he's experienced all these things and you know, one of the things that I do in the education world is we talk about trauma, a lot of us in the education are being sort of trained on trauma, dealing with trauma. And you know, one of the things that works so well is where you can sit down across from a kid and be like, I know what you're dealing with. I dealt with that at your age. There's something just incredibly powerful about saying, I understand because I've been there, because I remember, I remember as a kid, like, I remember, like I said, I went to pretty fundamentalist church and some people were like, well, I don't really deal with send that much. I don't know what you're doing. Yeah, I mean, I remember I was like, listening to DT talk, you know? Back in the 90s and the newsboys and all that stuff and they were just like, oh, that rock and roll stuff is not Christian. And I was like, yes. Get through all my teenage angst, you know. They were just like, you know, one lady was like, well, God only loves the blue grass. That's what I was told. And I was just like, no. No, that's weird. There's something, there's something about, there's something about sort of getting on someone's saying, I look, I survived that, you know, I went through that and I survived and you can do it too. And like I said, I actually teach at my Alma mater, which is where I graduated from 25 years ago. This isn't great. It was just crazy. To me, but one of the things that I like to do, because I teach at a school that has a lot of poverty and stuff, is say, hey, man, I was just like you.

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I grew up, you know, and we didn't have a lot of money, but I worked really hard and I strived and I stay focused and you can do that too. You can work your way out of that too. And there's something really powerful in somebody saying, you know, I've dealt with that. And for me, that's what, like I said, it humanizes Lewis when I read about all the things that he was dealing with. Even while he was riding these amazing works of literature. Some of his daily his daily life was tough. It was hard. I mean, he was getting criticized, like I said, I mean, the Time Magazine article basically all, but, you know, defamed him. He was, you know, he was really frustrated at that, you know, because he didn't want to be famous, but if you have this platform, you can reach more people, so he was really reluctant to do that. But he knew that was sort of what he was. Not a lot of people know this. I mentioned this in the book, but when World War II rolled around, he wanted to do war work and they asked him to work for the propaganda office. And he was like, nope, and he turned it down. Because he said, I'll have to write lies. And that just seemed to be a horrible waste of my gift. Yeah. I can't go to bed at night. Having written lies, even if it's for the good of the country. You know, say I ended up being on the Home Guard in Oxford. And so to just walking around at night and doing the talking with the RAF pilots and doing the mirror Christianity broadcasts, so you did a lot of world work. It was with a gun anymore. But yeah, he turned that down because he was just like, I don't, I can't write lies. I can't sleep at night. Knowing that I'm taking this thing that God's giving me and I'm twisting it. And sort of, you know, making it making falsities about and that's the kind of guy he was. Yeah.

Well, Chris, this has been fascinating. I really appreciate your research and you putting this book together. Anything you'd say as far as if people want to check out the book, obviously it's available online and Amazon and whatnot. But if people want to learn more about your research anywhere, you'd send them. Sure. I do have a website which woefully I don't update very often. But it's a crystal hard cry, STA, RD dot com. So you can check me out there. I'm also on Twitter. My handle is at DOC to HRD and I'm also on Instagram under that same handle. I just post a lot of book and dog pictures mainly there. But I do talk about some of the stuff because some of the additional things I've talked about with Lewis is Lewis and gender. Which I've done a chapter for the Lewis and women book on that in 2015, and then my most recent research is on the Lewis family. So I've got I'm actually in negotiations now with the publisher for that book. And there's a lot of cool stuff in his family, so I'm really excited about getting that out in the world. Nice. Well, my last question for you, Chris, as you reflect on just your research and your own journey of leadership, even in the context of studying the life of C. S. Lewis and his leadership. How is being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ? Oh, wow, that's a great question. You know, my first chapter was humility. And that was intentionally done. I feel like humility is the first thing. The first thing. To humble yourself. And Louis writes about it in mere Christianity. There's a whole chapter. On the great sand, which is pride, which he feels is the worst. You know, he feels like that's the worst of the deadly scenes, right? His pride, and you know, without sounding too much like St. Augustine, we are, we are nothing without Christ. We are nothing without Christ. Period full stop. We deserve so much worse than we have, and we are incredibly blessed. By God, and so, you know, I think part of what's really hard, I think Diane and day out is to kneel and just say, you take it. And I feel like for leaders, that's the first thing you should do.

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Always is Neil. Neil before God and give everything you have to him. Because that's what Lewis did, you know? He didn't want to do all that stuff. He just wanted to sit in the library and read books. And he became this sort of Christian icon. Accidentally, really. Because obedience was like the first thing in his life. And so what he's taught me more than any of the leadership experts is that kneeling is job one. That is job one. And when you, when you see the world through God's eyes, it completely transforms the way you see the world. And the way you see other people, you know, there's a lot of people that I see online who are just really angry all the time about things. And yes, there are things that would that grieve God's heart. You know, they're happening in this world, but I also know that he is the great healer. And that he's in control, and at the end of the day, you know, I cling to him. He's my, he's my anger. He's my rock. And so all of us, that's what we do. We kneel, and then we go out and we try to do good. Every day. That's how I feel like this research is impacted me. You know, I mean, Louis read the Bible every single day. You should, I mean, look at his letters. He quotes generously from the Bible. I mean, just

pulls stories out. I mean, it's just, it's a marvel. To have his words so on our hearts. You know, it's amazing. And I just hope that I can, you know, I can live like that. Every day. That concludes this episode of the leading saints podcast. We'd love to hear from you about your questions or thoughts or comments. You can either leave a comment on the post related to this episode at leading-saints.org or go to leading-saints.org/contact and send us your perspective or questions. If there's other episodes or topics you'd like to hear on the leading scenes podcast, go to leading-saints.org/contact and share with us the information there. And we would love for you to share this with any individual you think this would apply to, especially maybe individuals in your ward council or other leaders that you may know who would really appreciate the perspectives that we discussed. Remember to access the questioning saints library for 14 days, visit leading-saints.org/14. It came as a result of a position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and when the declaration was made, concerning the all and only true in living church upon the face of the earth. We were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we can not shrink nor run away. And to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability