



LEADING
SECOND

EPISODE GUIDE

Episode 225

Leading Second in the Negative World ft. Brandon Stewart

As Second Chair Leaders, we have to be realistic about our strategy and where we stand in the world today. Brandon discusses the importance of leading in the "negative world" we find ourselves in today.

THE GROUND HAS CHANGED.

The book, [Life in the Negative World](#), brings language to how Christianity has been viewed in the world through recent years.

- Pre-1994: Christianity in the United States operated in what was called Positive World.
 - This was where Christianity was a social asset.
 - I was positive to be a Christian.
 - To be a clergy would have placed you in a high standing in a culture/society.
- Mid-1990s: We entered Neutral World.
 - This was the world in which Christianity was one option of many.
 - It was tolerated at best.
 - It was neither positive nor negative to be a Christian.
- Mid-2010s: We entered Negative World.
 - The realization of this may not have been fully felt until 2020.
 - Christianity was now viewed as a liability in mainstream and elite spaces.
 - To be a Christian would be considered a negative mark.

The strategies for engaging the world are no longer good anymore.

ENGAGING WITH A DIFFERENT MINDSET.

Some areas in life have started to get some major pushback in our world.

1. Authority.

- To lead from the middle means we have to have the right mindset toward leading underneath someone else.
- Our current culture is presenting authority as oppressive.

2. Work.

- Work is oppressive in today's culture.
- Volunteering and leadership have not recovered nearly at the pace as people attending church since the pandemic.

3. Sacrificing.

- Being asked to go the extra mile, especially if you aren't getting paid to do it, is oppressive in our current culture.
- **Matthew 10:39 (NIV)** "Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it."
- **The ways of the Kingdom are higher and better than the ways of the world.**
- We serve and lead with a higher loyalty, standard, and commitment.
 - That is our standard as God's people.

A FAITHFUL CHURCH.

Jesus is the one who appoints pastors.

Brandon referenced [True North: Pursuing Truth in a World Full of Lies](#).

Pastors need to be able to stand before God and answer for how they lead their churches.

As Second Chair Leaders, our number one job is to hold up our pastor's arms and to align with our pastor.

If you can't align with your pastor, go find a pastor you can align with.

If you are feeling misaligned with your pastor on how they are addressing an issue, you should humbly go to them and receive clarity.

LEADING SECOND.

At the end of the day, the mission at Leading Second is to help church leaders be found faithful in the second chair.

Let Jesus be your standard.

Keep open communication with our pastor. Let them guide you. Let them shepherd you.

Our prayer for you is, like Daniel, that you would be uncommon. That you would be distinct.

We are uncommon when we are leaders who carry Biblically faithful standards and definitions in a world full of confusion and lies.

Dig Deeper

1. In what ways have the world's definitions of authority, hard work, and sacrifice quietly shaped your expectations and motivations in ministry without you fully realizing it?

2. Jesus declares in John 18 that his kingdom is not of this world -- how does that reality practically change the way you measure success, effectiveness, and faithfulness in your role as a second chair leader?

3. Daniel distinguished himself through an excellent and distinct spirit as described in Daniel 6 -- what does it look like for a second chair leader to carry that kind of distinction in a ministry culture that may be drifting toward the world's definitions?

Additional Resources

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Goff Companies:

[Goff Companies](#) works with churches through the building process. Their team of experts, designers, and pastors walks alongside you to make church facility expansion simple and mission-aligned so leaders can build places that inspire worship, connection, and growth.

Leading Second Camp:

Leading Second Camp is our annual, flagship gathering for leaders who are all-in for their pastor, their team, and the local church. This year, we will be hosting an Executive Strategy Day on February 3rd, 2027, focusing on creating an intimate learning environment for Executive Pastors and executive-level leaders. On February 4th, 2027, we will host a full day of powerful worship, preaching, and ministry for all Second Chair Leaders. Brandon & Lindsay Stewart will be joined by Larry Brey (Elevation Church) and Marcus Mecum (7 Hills Church) in Dallas-Fort Worth, TX for this special time together. To learn more, watch past years' messages, and register your team, visit leadingsecondcamp.com.