



## Episode 61: Pepperdine University | Teacher & Pastor, Jeff Walling

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Jeff Walling & Justin Herman & Kurt Johnston

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### Transcript:

- Mingo Palacios: [00:05](#) Welcome to the purpose driven Church podcast where we sit down with leaders in and around the church to discuss current trends and challenges and how the five purposes of the local church matter today more than ever.
- Justin Herman: [00:19](#) So here we are, another episode of the Controlled Chaos Podcast and this is a special one. I'm sitting here with Kurt and we're not in your office. We're not in my garage.
- Kurt Johnston: [00:30](#) Well, and the reason for that is multiple, but first of all is because the audio in your garage and my office are both horrific.
- Justin Herman: [00:36](#) Yeah, they're absolutely terrible and we've heard about that enough. I've heard about it enough for my wife who listens and just tells me all the time like, "You really need to make some...Have you thought

about?" And I'm like, "No, I haven't thought about it at all." But she reminds me. We're here at Saddleback on location, which we always are on location when we're at your office, but we're here for something special today.

- Kurt Johnston: [00:55](#) Sorry, I'm not replying very quickly because my mouth was full of chicken nuggets.
- Justin Herman: [00:55](#) Chicken nuggets and Chick-fil-A.
- Kurt Johnston: [00:55](#) Has to be a podcast faux pa.
- Justin Herman: [00:55](#) Yeah.
- Kurt Johnston: [01:03](#) To eat and podcast at the same time.
- Justin Herman: [01:06](#) It's an unofficial sponsor for this episode. There's Chik-fil-A everywhere.
- Kurt Johnston: [01:09](#) Yeah. I don't think they would want to be mentioned as a sponsor for this episode.
- Justin Herman: [01:12](#) No, it's a Christian company. They're closed on Sundays.
- Kurt Johnston: [01:15](#) That has nothing to do with anything.
- Justin Herman: [01:17](#) So we're here at Saddleback. There's a big gathering of youth pastors, youth workers and learning and growing together as teachers and we were able to be a beneficiary of the generosity of the Mingo and the guys from the PD Podcast letting us use their studio, their space, which is an incredible Gulf stream reimagined-
- Kurt Johnston: [01:17](#) Airstream.
- Justin Herman: [01:49](#) Airstream? Yeah, but I don't want people to... because Saddleback has no airplanes. This isn't a Texas church.
- Kurt Johnston: [01:49](#) Correct. Correct.
- Justin Herman: [01:55](#) So an air stream that has been redone into awesomeness and we're using that. This is going to

be great because we're not here at Saddleback on accident. We're doing this learning thing with a really smart guy.

- Kurt Johnston: [02:08](#) Yeah, so getting to that, Jeff Walling, a lot of people who listen to this podcast have probably been to a CIY event, most likely believe or mix or move or superstart. CIY is an awesome organization that does all kinds of youth ministry and children's ministry events. Jeff used to be a pastor. He is currently on staff at Pepperdine University.
- Justin Herman: [02:08](#) We love Pepperdine.
- Kurt Johnston: [02:32](#) One of his jobs at Pepperdine is get us a whole bunch of awesome Christian kids on our campus. That might be a job description. Literally get awesome Christian kids on our campus and he's also an amazing communicator and teaches all kinds of CIY stuff is on CIY's board. He's here today helping us learn more about communication and we bribed him with chicken nuggets.
- Justin Herman: [02:53](#) Yes. We left a trail of chicken nuggets into the airstream.
- Kurt Johnston: [02:59](#) So we're going to call this episode Nuggets of Wisdom with Jeff Walling.
- Justin Herman: [03:05](#) And you guys are in for such a treat. Jeff.
- Jeff Walling: [03:07](#) Hey guys, are there more nuggets I've run out?
- Justin Herman: [03:10](#) Absolutely. Can we get Jeff more nuggets please? Whatever you want, Jeff.
- Jeff Walling: [03:13](#) Thank you. Sorry. Sorry. Keep going. You guys sound great. Go right ahead.
- Justin Herman: [03:19](#) Can I ask you just for those who have heard you speak before, you're really hilarious with your voice impressions. Is that something you've worked on or is that just a natural God gifting that he gave you? That he just forgot to give me?
- Jeff Walling: [03:33](#) I've always been very. Excuse me, sorry.

Justin Herman: [03:33](#) No, it's totally good.

Jeff Walling: [03:41](#) It was a big nugget.

Justin Herman: [03:41](#) Of wisdom.

Jeff Walling: [03:46](#) You know, I would have to say I did not initially work hard at that. Humor was always my defense as a child. I weighed like 50 pounds or 60 pounds or something and in twelfth grade and so I just had to find some way of defending myself. And so it was often humor and I loved it. And so it still comes out now I do it for a different reason today.

Kurt Johnston: [04:10](#) It's hard to punch a guy that makes you laugh.

Jeff Walling: [04:12](#) You know. It is, it is. You can get them laughing. You have time to run away, run away. Yeah.

Justin Herman: [04:17](#) So here's the thing. You have been developing other youth workers for a while on how to connect with, teach, communicate to teenagers effectively. We want to try and get every one of those nuggets that we can in the time we have.

Jeff Walling: [04:33](#) Well, we're eating nuggets just as fast as we can here.

Justin Herman: [04:33](#) They're delicious.

Jeff Walling: [04:39](#) Yeah, they are. I'm hoping I can cook up some delicious nuggets for us here. Keeping that metaphor rolling. Well, let me start by saying that I am blessed to work at Pepperdine, but I also am on the teaching staff at Shepherd Church up in the Porter Ranch area. So props to Shepherd for letting me preach for them about 10 or 15 Sundays a year. My undergraduate work was in theater and speech. And so what you learn in drama is that drama is just communication using everything you got right. Using your body, using your face, using your space and voice. And I think for me, that was a super platform from which to step into youth ministry and then into preaching, which I've done for, you know, it's decades now. When somebody says they've done something for decades, you expect them to be in a wheelchair, you know?

Kurt Johnston: [05:33](#) Well, I mean, no offense Jeff but-

Jeff Walling: [05:36](#) But you have done things for decades.

Kurt Johnston: [05:36](#) I have. I have.

Jeff Walling: [05:38](#) Ladies and gentlemen, we're here with Kurt. Kurt, what was your last name? And the wheelchair. The wheelchair podcast. It's delightful. Hang on. I need to-

Justin Herman: [05:50](#) A knitting spinoff. We're really excited about.

Jeff Walling: [05:50](#) I need a little Ensure here.

Jeff Walling: [05:59](#) What happens when, you asked about the voices so let's just go there. If you are teaching students, you've got to use all your voice. What do all of his kids? Cartoons, right?

Justin Herman: [05:59](#) Yeah.

Jeff Walling: [06:08](#) And cartoon actors are people who teach themselves to communicate their feelings or their emotions through their voice. And I think as a junior high teacher, dude, one of the greatest practice you can do is think, "How can I communicate through my voice?" If I'm going to read a scripture, if you're going to read to the Pharisees, came up to Jesus and said, "Why do your disciples not wash their hands?" You can't read it that way too junior highers because you want them to see that Pharisee, you know? I mean, is he foghorn leghorn, you know. The Pharisees came to Jesus and said, "Excuse me, but why do your disciples not wash their hands?" Or is he some kind of nerdy little, "Excuse me how come your disciples don't wash their hands?" Now that may feel funny like we're on a puppet ministry podcast here, but the truth is your brain. Here's those things and starts painting a picture and the kids will remember the text or remember the story better if you have painted that oral picture for them, that picture with not only the words you're using, but the sound and the way you use your voice. So that's probably nugget number one, which means I get to eat a nugget.

Kurt Johnston: [07:18](#) So along those lines you have to follow up?

Jeff Walling: [07:18](#) Yeah.

Kurt Johnston: [07:20](#) It's real easy for me to go to, but that sounds inauthentic now. It sounds like I'm faking it. Speak to that for a second. You mentioned that in our training earlier before our lunch break that brought us out here.

Jeff Walling: [07:32](#) Okay. I'm just chewing a nugget. When somebody uses something, whether it is a louder voice or a softer voice. Inauthenticity I think is not based on that they did something but it is based on were they authentic? Were they real as they were doing it? If it's funny are they laughing? If it's silly, is there a twinkle in their eye? Are they doing it for performance or are they doing it like we were around the table here for the last few minutes laughing and joking. So it's a fair question to say, "I don't want to come off as a performer." And I get that, but to say, use everything you've got and let's just, let's get off the accents for a minute. Let's talk about a tone. You know, there's kind of four basic ways you can adjust your voice. You can adjust the volume of your voice, which is the one most of us grab onto, right? You know, speak really loudly to get their attention when the truth is we are trained since we were children, to hear somebody whispering and go, "What's going on? Mom and dad are whispering, man, shut up. I want to hear." And in the same way, you can modify your voice, loudness and softness to gain back, say to the attention of a junior high kid who might be drawn to his phone for some strange and weird reason, right? The second way of adjusting your voice is speed. Most of us have a typical speed at which we speak, right? There's some people that, they speak really fast, you know, 600 words a minute with gusts up to seven or eight, right? And then there's others who, even as we listened to them, we feel like, "Whoa, you know, they're thinking about this." My advice is don't become the fast speaker or the slow speaker. Become the speaker who's able to modulate that speed purposefully. If you've got a point you really want to make and maybe you're going to speed up and really be intense about it, right? Right. Now there are podcast listeners are going, "Whoa, what'd he say back that up. I missed that." Because as soon as I started speaking faster,

our brain goes, "Meet meet. Important, important. Pay Attention." right? The third thing that you can do with your voice tone. Most of us have a tone dynamic that we kind of live in. It's our natural place where our voice naturally sets. But if somebody's voice goes out of that natural frame for them, once again, our mind goes, "Ooh, this is important because mom comes in and says, "I am just up to here with you guys." And all of a sudden that, that change or dad comes in and says, "Okay, listen. Look at me. Look me in the eye." Right? By the way, I go southern because my dad was from Texas. So, no slam on any southern folk out there.

- Justin Herman: [07:32](#) Did he have a gulf stream though?
- Jeff Walling: [07:32](#) He did not have a gulf stream.
- Justin Herman: [07:32](#) I think it's a misconception I had about people from Texas, they all gulf streams.
- Jeff Walling: [10:30](#) Yeah, no, he was out in the dry. They didn't even have a gulf. He was out in the dry part of Texas.
- Kurt Johnston: [10:35](#) They have a decent golf swing.
- Jeff Walling: [10:36](#) Yeah. No, no, actually he didn't surprisingly.
- Kurt Johnston: [10:36](#) Yeah because that rhymes with gulf stream pun.
- Jeff Walling: [10:42](#) My father died when I was, when I was 21. So thank you for bringing up the painful memories.
- Kurt Johnston: [10:42](#) Oh for God's sake.
- Jeff Walling: [10:53](#) No. My Dad was a great guy and in fact he was, he was a preacher before me, but to be honest, he did very little modulation with his voice.
- Jeff Walling: [10:59](#) His voice was that classic preacher's voice that kind of always preaches in the same place and you can imagine a teacher can do the same thing, right? Right. And so here I am teaching this junior high kids who are used to listening to these varieties of voices of people on the radio with variety or people on TV with a variety of voices. And I get up there and if all

my teaching about Jesus sounds exactly the same. Oh man, don't make Jesus boring. Right?

Kurt Johnston: [11:25](#) So when it comes to voice speed volume, two of of four.

Jeff Walling: [11:31](#) You start with volume and then we said speed. And then we said tone. Tone is high or low. Right? And so, you know, I can take my tone way up here or I can take it away down here. Here's a weird thing. If you want the voice of authority, the voice of authority goes down at the end of each sentence. If you'll listen to someone making an announcement at the end of each sentence or sometimes even each phrase, they go down and when you hear that, you know they have the answer, why do we feel that way? We feel that way because it's the opposite of a question, right? A questions like this, I don't know. Why do you think so? So as a teacher, I can actually use those things within my teaching to say, "All right, how can I vary my vocal tone?" If you're going to ask your students a question, well ask it. "Why do you guys think Jesus did that?" Sometimes teachers wonder. They say, "Well, I asked some questions, but they never say nothing." Sometimes it's because we asked the question, "So why do you think Jesus did that?" They're all going, "You clearly know. We can tell by the tone of your voice. So I'm just going to be quiet until you tell us." Right? So we got volume, we got speed tone, we got tone. Oh, by the way, can I back up to speed for half a second?

Justin Herman: [11:31](#) Yeah, sure.

Jeff Walling: [12:50](#) There are two ways that you can adjust the speed of speech. You either adjust it with the vowels or you're just it with silence. So if I'm wanting to say to someone, you know, "God loves you desperately." I can say, "God-loves-you-desperately." I slowed it down with the spaces, right? Which feels different from slowing it down with the vowels. God loves you desperately. Now, at this point, I'm sure some podcasters are thinking, "Oh, my word, I'm already confused." It's like the golf thing, right? You know, bend your knees, lean over, tip your head. Just grab one of these. I'm begging you youth person out there,



youth leader, youth worker. You are shaping the eternity of those kids, so used that God given voice that God has given you and find ways to just maybe just modify one of these because the fourth one is the weird one. It's called timbre. Timbre is a vocal placement. All right? So, if I was to ask you to say a sentence in the Kermit voice. Give it a shot. Go for it.

Justin Herman: [14:17](#)

Uh I'd like to sing a song about rainbows.

Kurt Johnston: [14:17](#)

Wow. That was pretty good.

Jeff Walling: [14:05](#)

Now, what you did was you changed the timber, not only the tone, right? Your tone change too, because you know, you're like, "Hi, I'd like to sing a song." But you also took it in your nose because that's where Kermit's vocal placement with. I like to sing a song about rainbows, you know, although that's even a little too much. There's some other muppet character that has that one. Um, so timbre goes between up in my nose, way up here in my nose, I don't why your disciples don't wash their hands and that creates a picture in your head. But if you drop that all the way down from your nose all the way down through the middle of your voice, all the way down through. Way down here. Back here in your throat. It's almost, you know, Jabba the Hutt. So, now I'm here and it creates a different picture when I say the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Why do your disciples not wash their hands?" Right? So I've got four different things that I could modulator like knobs on, like a soundboard. Yeah, exactly, exactly. Um, and, and as I do, the more I practice that. So here's your podcast assignment from nuggets of wisdom and that is that you would practice doing this with your kids. Practice doing this with your spouse.

Kurt Johnston: [14:05](#)

Sounds cool.

Jeff Walling: [15:27](#)

Come home and say, "Oh baby, there was no gas in the car this morning and you drove it last." Just find ways. Find ways. So yeah, use your voice man. Use Your Voice.

Justin Herman: [15:38](#)

I know the direction I want to go next. I want to ask questions about like the seasoned speaker versus the

unseasoned speaker. And do you give different advice to both? What do you have on your mind?

- Kurt Johnston: [15:47](#) Well, on my mind, I think we should pop corn question him.
- Justin Herman: [15:47](#) Okay.
- Kurt Johnston: [15:52](#) Because it's nuggets of wisdom.
- Jeff Walling: [15:52](#) Yeah it is nuggets of wisdom.
- Kurt Johnston: [15:55](#) That was fantastic and amazing. That was like a chapter of wisdom.
- Justin Herman: [15:55](#) That was a whole chicken sandwich of wisdom.
- Kurt Johnston: [15:55](#) Yeah it was a chicken sandwich. Thank you.
- Jeff Walling: [16:04](#) Kurt. Did my wife call you? I know she did because she's always like, honey, just don't talk them to death. You just do. You just keep telling it's verbal diarrhea. Just stop.
- Kurt Johnston: [16:04](#) Oh Man.
- Justin Herman: [16:04](#) All right. I'll go first. Here's my question.
- Jeff Walling: [16:15](#) So let's popcorn.
- Justin Herman: [16:16](#) Okay, let's do it.
- Jeff Walling: [16:16](#) All right, nugget.
- Justin Herman: [16:20](#) I'm a youth worker. I have an intern this summer is a great time to get interns teaching and learning and doing the whole thing. They're getting ready to teach. What's the two things I tell them to get them ready to teach their first lesson, you know, 19 year old college kid getting ready to teach their first weekend, midweek, whatever.
- Jeff Walling: [16:38](#) First thing I'd say is know your thing. Know your lesson. If you walked up and realized you brought the wrong bible or your phone goes dead, no it cold. Do not let a rookie get up there with four pages of notes.

Just take them away from them and say, "You've got to know this." Which maybe it means it's got to be a shorter lesson right? Because what you don't want them to do is read the kid something. I mean it makes you feel like you're a little kid I'm going to read you this lesson.

- Justin Herman: [17:09](#) So read the content, read your stuff, know your stuff.
- Jeff Walling: [17:11](#) Know your stuff. And the second thing I would tell them is I would say bring the passion and energy. I mean I tell speakers, don't turn it into four. Don't turn it to five, turn it up to 10. Bring all the energy and passion you've got. And if you know your stuff and you bring the energy and I'm going to sneak in a third and you are real, just be you. Just be you. Be you really there in the room with the kids. Some of that's going to get across because they're going to lean up. And if the message is good, that content, God's content is good.
- Kurt Johnston: [17:41](#) So, push back on my push back. My pushback is in my mind, I'm going a 19 year old who's never taught before. I want him or her to have his notes. I would rather he or she read it word for word so they don't meander. So heresy doesn't slip in so they don't end up going 20 minutes when it was supposed to be a five minute message. But you're actually saying know it so well that you don't need those notes. So help me with those competing values.
- Jeff Walling: [18:15](#) First off I would say if you're wanting to raise up great readers, that is a super approach. But I'm imagining-
- Kurt Johnston: [18:15](#) See that was a zinger right there. That was a zinger. Wow.
- Jeff Walling: [18:27](#) I had a piece of nugget stuck in my tooth and it was hurting me.
- Kurt Johnston: [18:31](#) Jeff. Our friendship might've been affected by that. Our friendship might suffer.
- Jeff Walling: [18:38](#) Here's the challenge. Here's the challenge, Kurt. The challenge is that one, they can do it. They can get that five minutes under their belt. What it asks of them is it

asks way more practice than we typically ask these kids. We just say, "Hey, let's put it together and give it a shot." If you really want my opinion, I'd say one, don't have them do something longer that they can't get on a on a note card. Right? And two, you have them give it at least four times or five before they ever get up there and at least one of them ought to be for you. Now, the problem with most of us in ministry is I don't got the time, sit around and listen to that much, but if you want to help them grow, they've got to have chances to practice it. You know?

- Kurt Johnston: [19:21](#) It is interesting. You and I speak at a lot of the same events sometimes. One behind the other, right? You never have notes.
- Jeff Walling: [19:29](#) No actually do. You don't see them, but I do. Yeah.
- Kurt Johnston: [19:31](#) Where are they?
- Jeff Walling: [19:32](#) They're sitting in my Bible.
- Kurt Johnston: [19:34](#) See you take your Bible on stage.
- Jeff Walling: [19:36](#) I know I need to buy you a Bible that might be helpful for your ministry.
- Kurt Johnston: [19:44](#) I'm always running around backstage going, "I need a music stand. Why isn't there a music stand? I need a place to take my notes down somewhere." I never thought about just using the bible.
- Justin Herman: [19:51](#) Here's what I love about that insight. That it applies for interns, applies for volunteers. You know the youth workers in the ministry, it still keeps the value of excellence, but it keeps the value of you being willing, so youth worker in charge, willing to make the time. Except for there's a lot of moments that it's probably not documented in the bible of Jesus, like going through those moments of kind of tapped his pencil, listened to the disciples, and they're all like, "Listen guys, you guys are getting it all wrong." But he went through those times to develop them and good development takes time.

Jeff Walling: [20:23](#) It does. To be fair, and Jesus also sent them out and they screwed up. So you talk about heresy, "Lord, we found some people that were disagreeing with you, so we tried to kill them." Yeah, I mean that's going to happen. That is going to happen. In fact, if we don't let it happen then there's some growth that can't happen.

Kurt Johnston: [20:38](#) The beautiful thing about this audience is we all work with junior highers. They don't know heresy when they hear it. So it's not really, I mean, heresy isn't really all that dangerous when don't know the truth from a lie.

Justin Herman: [20:48](#) Until they go home and say, "Man, well this is what I learned." And their elder dad's like, "What? Tell me more about that. Where's my email account?"

Kurt Johnston: [21:00](#) Ok, Jeff, quick popcorn. We're not popcorning very well. Cardinal sin of a communicator. What's the cardinal sin?

Jeff Walling: [21:00](#) Phoning it in.

Kurt Johnston: [21:00](#) Phoning it in.

Jeff Walling: [21:10](#) Phoning it in. It's when you've got this message and you get up there and when you're done, you're not tuckered if you're not tired when you're done, if you're not worn out after given whatever it is you're going to give. I'm sorry, you got to leave it on the field, man. You got to leave it all on the field. And longer you do it. Oh, come on. I mean, there are guys listening to this podcast right now going, "Oh, he's getting a little close to the cuff here because I do this every Wednesday night and then I got to do this on Sunday and then we got to do this..." But we just, we cannot phone it in. Making Jesus boring is the greatest sin in the world.

Jeff Walling: [21:41](#) We have a live stream question.

Kurt Johnston: [21:41](#) Wait. Oh you're live streaming? Wow.

Jeff Walling: [21:51](#) Which is, "So some guys are preaching four services-

Kurt Johnston: [21:51](#) Yup.

Jeff Walling: [21:57](#) Five services a day, and if you gas out at the 8:00 AM, what do you have left for the 7:00 PM?"

Jeff Walling: [22:01](#) That's right. I would say one, get a bigger tank, but two I would say

Kurt Johnston: [22:01](#) Ooh. Full of zingers.

Jeff Walling: [22:01](#) Yeah I know, can't hurt-

Kurt Johnston: [22:01](#) The other guy's zinged.

Jeff Walling: [22:01](#) His graces reaches people.

Kurt Johnston: [22:01](#) Ladies and gentleman, the one and only appearance of Jeff Walling on the Controlled Chaos Podcast.

Justin Herman: [22:01](#) Our soft personalities can't take any more of this.

Jeff Walling: [22:27](#) No seriously. I appreciate it. Preaching Shepherd was good for me, I'd do five services on a weekend and I recognize that each time you step out, here's what helped me. I had to remind myself that one, these folks haven't heard this before, so 8:30 don't count at 10:00. Two, I remind myself that I get to make a choice. I get to make a choice that when I walk out here and I share it, I can choose to bring the passion. I want to say this without too hard a zinger all right? There are people who get up every day and haul bricks and move cement and build buildings and tear up asphalt. And at the end of their day, dude, they've done that for eight hours, right?

Kurt Johnston: [22:27](#) They fall into bed.

Jeff Walling: [23:09](#) Yep. And I get to stand up and talk. So I'm a little tense about when I start saying, "Oh, but you know, I preach two services and I'm worn out." When the guy out there who was the plumber, did that all week and then got his family up and got his family dressed and got them into church.

Kurt Johnston: [23:26](#) And also was a volunteer Sunday school teacher.

Jeff Walling: [23:29](#) Right. Amen. Amen. So I need to bring it because my work is just as important and I need to sweat just as much.

Kurt Johnston: [23:37](#) And I think it would be fair to say too that you got to know yourself, right? Yeah. So some people, the stage fires them up, then they can go out to the patio and being around people fires them up. Other people maybe are a little bit more introverted and so the stage giving it all does drain them. And so maybe you got to kind of factor out I got three services, I've got to pace myself. There's a little bit of the "To thine own self be true" how God's wired you and if you need to stay back in the pastor's study in between services because you've got three more.

Jeff Walling: [23:37](#) That's right.

Kurt Johnston: [24:13](#) And you've got to get some downtime so that you can be juiced up on the stage for that next sermon. I think that's okay.

Jeff Walling: [24:19](#) I'm just gonna keep the zingers coming here. I'm one of those people who love the people stuff, but sometimes the reason I go out in the patio is to get the pats on the back. It's to get the, "Oh my goodness. That was so wonderful." Right? What I really needed to do was go back to my office and sit down and take a drink of water and look over those notes again and say, "How can I do this better next service?"

Justin Herman: [24:42](#) All right, let me ask you this, when it comes to preparation, a lot of youth workers out there use curriculum. They'll buy something. How do you view the preparation process from, "I'm going to write my own thing from scratch" versus "I'm going to take some curriculum and make it my own." What's that preparation process look like given those two? Or are they different?

Jeff Walling: [24:59](#) Yeah. Let's see. Let me see if I hit this quick. One, nobody writes their own stuff from scratch. We're all stealing from Jesus, Paul, Peter. I mean, let's be real, right? So let's just move that, "I have to write my own stuff" out of the way. That's ego. So then I say, all

right, what does it mean to put in enough preparation? Though I may be telling a Rick Warren, and if you guys know Rick, great guy, super yeah. If I'm telling an Andy Stanley or a Rick Warren or a fill in the blank story, it's okay to use those stories and illustrations. Man, I lean on commentators. I lean on the folks who had translated the Bible. I mean, I'm, I'm, I'm working on their shoulders, right? But what isn't okay is for me to simply get brown and serve roles, right? Pop them in the oven and bring them out without owning it myself. So if I'm going to tell this Rick Warren story, I need to know and have pondered and understand that story and any to tell it with all the passion and energy that I tell it if it's my wife. And quite frankly if I've got a story from my own life, I probably ought to use that because it's going to come off differently than me saying, "You know, Rick Warren once said that. You know, I heard Andy Stanley say" but you can tell an Andy story or a Kurt story or Jeff story if you bring that passion to the table and tell it with that, I just found it feeling. You need to prepare enough. One, I've already said that you could do it without your notes if you had to and two, you need to prepare enough so that you own that message. This message is coming out of the overflow, not out of the, "Ooh, can I remember what comes next?"

- Kurt Johnston: [26:33](#) Hey, we need to begin to wrap up, but you mentioned earlier in the training time before he came out here.
- Jeff Walling: [26:40](#) Yep. You know, they weren't here, the podcastees.
- Kurt Johnston: [26:42](#) That's why I keep saying in the training time.
- Jeff Walling: [26:44](#) They're not podcastees. What are they? These, what are they poddies?
- Justin Herman: [26:44](#) We call them chaos nation.
- Jeff Walling: [26:44](#) Cast nation.
- Justin Herman: [26:44](#) Chaos nation.
- Jeff Walling: [26:44](#) Oh, okay. Cast nation.
- Justin Herman: [26:44](#) No, that's a bad illustration.



Jeff Walling: [26:44](#) Good. Thank you. Just keep moving.

Justin Herman: [26:44](#) I was afraid of that.

Kurt Johnston: [26:56](#) But you had us all write on the top of the. You said, "If there's only one thing, one phrase" So share that phrase and then give us the two minute- why is that your one most important communicating principal.

Jeff Walling: [27:15](#) The phrase, and actually Kurt gave me this phrase when I got here this morning and said, "Use it" is, "Kurt is a stud" and for me, I start with Kurt. If Kurt can be a stud, anybody can. And so it's an encouraging phrase to me. And a stud is a student teacher of utterly divine things. And so yeah, there you go.

Kurt Johnston: [27:15](#) Wow.

Jeff Walling: [27:42](#) You throw me the ball, man, I'm gonna drop it.

Justin Herman: [27:49](#) Here's what the real phrase is. Here's where the real phrase is.

Jeff Walling: [28:08](#) Change attracts attention. We're taught, I mean way back in our neurons when we were little babies, to note change, it got quiet, it got noisy, change attracts attention. As a speaker and a teacher, I need to make sure that my teaching method, I need to make sure my voice, I need to make sure my movement. I need to make sure that what I'm doing is changing enough to keep you focused.

Kurt Johnston: [28:21](#) But I'm the world's greatest at my way of doing it and so I do it that way every week. You would say?

Jeff Walling: [28:28](#) I would say that you are a gifted speaker and that you have a style. You don't have change your style, but just like a kid with a crayon box, if you only got eight crayons, right? It's tough, but if you develop these skills like vocal changes, those kind of things, you just get more crayons. Your drawings are still going to be Kurt drawings, but you're going to get the, you know, you're going to get the mauve crayon and the silver crayon.

- Kurt Johnston: [28:51](#) Kids today love video. They love Youtube, so we show a video clip every single week without fail you would say.
- Jeff Walling: [28:57](#) I would say, do you show it in the same spot every week? Do you use it in the same way every week? Now, you know, there's certain things that kids anticipate. That's okay. You know, dessert typically comes last, but every now and then serve dessert first. You may use it to get their attention, but then you ask, "Okay, what are ways that we could do it differently? It might be that we still use a video clip, but hey we had you guys vote on the favorite video clip of the week and we had five up there. Here's the one you guys got. Just ways of trying to keep it fresh.
- Kurt Johnston: [29:30](#) I say God's word is sharper than any two edged sword. I don't want to get in the way of the truth of the word. I just want to present the truth and let it speak for itself. You would say?
- Jeff Walling: [29:41](#) I would say that's fantastic. That is absolutely fantastic and as I teach, all of these tools are ways for me to become completely transparent, our ways for the message to get across so that when they walk out, it wasn't like, "That guy was really funny!" But it was "Whoa man, that principle!" I don't want them to hear my lesson. I want them to hear the principal. So, the better I am as a tool for the Lord, right? I've been told I was a tool before, but the better I am as a tool for the Lord, the more transparent I become and the more the message is what gets across. That sounds a little high falutin, but I really do believe it is.
- Justin Herman: [30:23](#) Here's what so important because you're not giving insights into making the scriptures better. I know you. The scripture is in high regard. You hold the bible, God's word in high regard. So as you, youth worker, are talking to your boss or sharing these insights with your boss, these aren't through the lens of we're going to make the bible better. The bible is already better. These are just practices to make sure we're connecting to the minds, to the hearts, the imagination of students.

- Jeff Walling: [30:52](#) We have the best news in the world. We need to share it in the best ways we can. I'll throw another challenge at our listeners. If you teach a Bible class, your reading of scripture should be the most exciting thing you do during that lesson. So when you open God's word, that means you probably got to practice. That means you got to decide which words you're going to hit. That means you got to use all that vocal stuff I've been talking about to read God's word so that when the person has listened to it, "Whoa!" And it's not, "So let's see what the Bible has to say." And all the kids go, "Okay, this is going to get boring." Let's see what the Bible has to say. And you read it and it may be the best thing you do during the lesson. Praise God. If you can implant that word on their hearts winner, winner.
- Kurt Johnston: [31:41](#) You know, what's interesting about that is about a year or so ago, every now and then I speak in the adult services at our church. Pretty rarely. The corporate gulf stream kind of has to go down before my phone rings.
- Jeff Walling: [31:49](#) I keep waiting to be invited to do that. It's only been 35 years now.
- Kurt Johnston: [31:53](#) This was a little bit of an audition. We're kind of auditioning.
- Justin Herman: [31:58](#) Who knows where this could take you.
- Kurt Johnston: [32:01](#) Going back, Pastor Rick pulled me aside in between services once and said, "Hey, great message. Let me show you a better way to read that scripture." And he took me into the back office and we opened up my main scripture. And he said, "What if you emphasize this word? Hey, you went through this a little bit too fast." And the way you read scripture should be the most important piece. Way more important than anything else or this running joke. We need to wrap it up. But you had a zinger and it wasn't like it wasn't a personal zinger. We didn't laugh at the zinger, but you got to a massive zinger that I think we should use as our closing before you wrap us up, Justin. You said, "We have the most" Say that part again.

Jeff Walling: [32:48](#) We have the best news in the world. We need to share it in the best way we can.

Kurt Johnston: [32:48](#) That's the zinger.

Justin Herman: [32:54](#) There it is right there. Absolutely. Jeff, thank you so much for spending some time with us. Every youth worker in America teaches and even if they're using video stuff, even though they're in front of people they're in front of students, they have opportunities at a school at an FCA. They have opportunities somewhere and we want to make the most of every opportunity. I think that you have helped a bunch of youth workers around the country make the most of their opportunities. Thanks so much for spending time with us.

Jeff Walling: [33:20](#) Well and thank you to those youth workers because on behalf of all the parents and kids that ought to be saying thank you to you, thank you for giving your students your passion and your energy in presenting the most important thing in the world man. God bless you and keep doing that and thanks for letting me be part of this.

Justin Herman: [33:36](#) Let me ask you one last question before we go. If you were to recommend a book or two to help youth workers in their teaching or are there anything off the top of your head you'd recommend?

Jeff Walling: [33:44](#) Oh Wow. You know, there are books I recommend, but to be honest with you, I would encourage them to get some audio books and listen to the way really great audio book readers read. There's one I've been listening to called The Undoing Project and it's about how we make mistakes in the way we think because we're really not thinking clearly about making our decision. The guy that's reading it is brilliant. I mean it's just really, really good.

Justin Herman: [34:12](#) And we're going to put links in the show notes. I know you're on Twitter and we'll put a link to Pepperdine.

Jeff Walling: [34:20](#) Twitter, Instagram, you betcha. Absolutely. Jeff, seriously. Thank you. So. Thank you, man. God bless you guys.

Mingo Palacios: [34:25](#)

We'd like to thank Purpose Driven Church for making this podcast possible. If you've been feeling burnt out or plateaued in your ministry, we invite you to join us for Purpose Driven Church conference happening this June right here in Southern California. You can learn more and register by visiting [PD.church](http://PD.church). We hope today's insights left you feeling inspired and propelled towards your greatest potential. Thanks again for joining us for another episode of the PD Podcast. Until next time.

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