



# Lead out of Weakness and Vulnerability

## CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

- Western culture, including the church, places a high value on power and influence.
- Pride and defensiveness in a follower of Jesus, much less a leader or a church, is a glaring contradiction.
- Paul considered his great weakness to be his badge of apostleship and authority from God to the point that he boasted about it (2 Corinthians 12:8–10).
- King David knew that acknowledging imperfections was critical, not only for his own spiritual health, but also for the health of those he led.
- God built brokenness and weakness into the fabric of all life when he set in motion the consequences of the fall (Genesis 3:16–19). He did this so that our weakness would drive us to seek him and recognize our need for him as a Savior.
- While the larger world treats weakness and failure as a liability, God sees our weakness and vulnerability as a gift and the source of our greatest strength in him.
- God invites us to a posture of constant brokenness and vulnerability—one in which we lean into him in order to be lavishly overwhelmed by his love.

## DISCUSSION

1. What stood out most to you from this chapter on “Lead out of Weakness and Vulnerability”?
2. The author opens the chapter by detailing how his upbringing, ministry models, professional training, and theology contributed to his inability to be weak and vulnerable. Over the years, what did you learn or absorb about weakness and vulnerability from similar sources?

- 3.** In the book, briefly review the chart contrasting weak and vulnerable leadership with proud and defensive leadership (page 193). Which one or two statements on the chart do you relate to most right now? Briefly share why.
- 4.** We tend to think of vulnerability as an occasional and unwanted experience, but the invitation of emotionally healthy discipleship is to make vulnerability a lifestyle.
- The author uses a series of “Not” and “It’s easier to” statements to describe the ways he is tempted to not be vulnerable in daily life. In the book, briefly review the bullet list statements on page 204, and then complete the following sentences:

*One of the pressure points where I am tempted to not be vulnerable is:*

*Not \_\_\_\_\_, It’s easier to \_\_\_\_\_.*

- To be vulnerable is to be open or exposed, to be capable of being wounded. It requires accepting the fact that we’re not as put together or mature as we’d like to think we are. What is it about the vulnerability you just identified that leaves you feeling open, exposed, or not put together?
- 5.** Rembrandt’s painting, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, provides a picture of what it looks like to practice vulnerability each day, particularly in the postures of the two sons. The posture of the younger son is one of brokenness; the posture of the older son is one of lostness. Both sons have left home, which is the place of the Father’s love.
- If the image is a picture of what it looks like to practice vulnerability each day, how would you describe your posture right now? How would you depict yourself in Rembrandt’s painting?
  - What aspects of the younger son’s brokenness do you find most compelling?
  - Part of the older son’s lostness is his self-sufficiency and his attachment to his righteousness—he has done nothing wrong externally, but his heart is far from right. In what ways, if any, do you recognize this dynamic in yourself?
- 6.** When a church is characterized by weakness and vulnerability, “People enjoy a taste of God’s beauty and presence in Christ. A glimpse of the truth and goodness of heaven shines. God’s gentle power flows. People soften.” What comes to mind when you imagine this vision being realized in your context?



## READING ASSIGNMENT

- As a next step, read and discuss the following: “Implementing Emotionally Healthy Discipleship” (pages 211–223)
- Read: “Church Culture Revolution” (pages 225–234)

## GOING DEEPER

- Spend time meditating on Rembrandt’s painting, “The Return of the Prodigal Son” (page 205). Better yet, read Henri Nouwen’s book *The Return of the Prodigal Son*.

## NEXT STEPS

- See our website, [www.emotionallyhealthy.org](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org), to keep abreast of future equipping events and new resources.
- Sign Up for Pete Scazzero’s Weekly Insights on Church Leadership and Discipleship at [emotionallyhealthy.org/sign-up](http://emotionallyhealthy.org/sign-up).
- Do the Emotionally Healthy Discipleship Course first as a leadership team for your own formation, and then introduce it to the people in your ministry.