OG Pastors: Faith Over a Lifetime

Episode 6 – Paige Findley

"Just Keep Saying Yes"

STEW: Hey, welcome back. This is episode six of the OG Pastors podcast. Our guest today is Paige Findley, and the title is Just Keep Saying Yes. My name is Stew, also known as That Texas Podvangelist, and you can be too if you tell just one person about our podcast. Our mission is simple. We sow seeds. God takes it from there. Tell one person is kind of our tagline. And every conversation that we have is another opportunity to sow seeds and trust God with what he wants us to do next. Today's guest is someone I've had the privilege of getting to know through our church and our community. When I think about Paige Findley, I think about someone who has simply kept saying yes whenever God opened another door. And whether that meant serving on church staff, planting a church, raising a wonderful family with Lisa, or finding new ways to tell the story of our community through his business, FBG Live. Paige has lived a life of trusting God one step at a time. Paige Findley, welcome to the show.

PAIGE: Thank you, Stuart. Pleasure to be here with you today.

STEW: We are thrilled. And it's interesting, I've been a regular churchgoer for a relatively short period of time. And what's interesting is that if you don't know the program on what's going to happen. If you go week after week, you kind of know what's coming. But when you're new, there's people who go up to the pulpit there, and they read verses, and they say things, and they go cover the announcements and whatever it may be. And it's hard to tell who's the pastor and who's the elder and who's whoever. And so whenever you would go up, there is something about the way that you come at it that really resonated with me. And you taught our Sunday school one day, and it was the same situation there. So I'm hoping that we'll get to that as we have our conversation today. And I just kind of want to start it all off kind of at the beginning, which is the boy before the pastor. Before people knew you as a pastor and a church planter and a leader in our church, you grew up in Mission, Texas. Talk to us about where it started and what was life like where you grew up?

PAIGE: Well, Mission, Texas, that takes me back a little bit. My grandfather moved there in 1923, I believe, raised my dad, and my dad raised our family there. I've got a couple sisters that went through high school at Mission, Texas. I went through my freshman year before we moved to Boerne, and then later to Fredericksburg. But Mission still has a very tender, sweet spot in my heart. It has sure changed a lot, but grew up with two God-loving, God-fearing parents that started a little Christian school when I was just in kindergarten, I want to say. So I

went through elementary school through Agape Christian School down there, and then started with Mission Junior High School, and then went over to Mission High School my freshman year and was an Eagle there. Great upbringing, great place to grow up. Grew up skiing in the Rio Grande River down there in Mission, Texas, which was just a few miles from the house. But we attended a church in McAllen, Texas, called Calvary Baptist Church, and that's where I grew up. That was our home church, and it was special to me. My grandparents went there, my dad's parents, and yeah, so that's where I cut my teeth on scripture, or the scripture cut my teeth, let's put it that way.

STEW: Yeah, maybe that's the way, right?

PAIGE: Yeah.

STEW: So, if you can look back, I think a lot of us can remember a season when faith moved from something we knew about to someone we knew personally. And can you talk a little bit about that journey for you? It has to be different growing up in a church in that way with God-loving parents and family. I suspect that this happened early in your life, but how did Jesus begin to shape or influence your direction?

PAIGE: Boy, how didn't he might be an easier thing to answer. It was a Southern Baptist church that we grew up in, and I remember the altar calls were regular. It was just kind of a normal thing.

STEW: So tell us what an altar call—

PAIGE: Yeah

STEW: ... just in case people don't know.

PAIGE: Sure.

STEW: What's an altar call?

PAIGE: Yeah. Typically, in a Southern Baptist Church, maybe mainline Baptist churches, and I don't know if that's still the case anymore, I haven't attended one in a while, but at the end of the sermon, there would be an altar call. There would be a call that the pastor, preacher, teacher would give to people to come receive Jesus, to put their faith in him for the first time, or dedicate their lives to him, or rededicate their lives to him. And for me, as a little bitty one, I remember the conviction of the Holy Spirit. I knew I was not in step with the scripture, and I knew the scripture. I assumed the scripture was the truth. I'd never known any reason not to think otherwise. And so I fell under conviction as the pastor was talking about the way we should love the Lord and the way we should know him and want to strive to walk with him. And, I started walking the aisle regularly, Sunday after Sunday. And finally, one Sunday, the preacher would pray for me and send me back to my seat. I was just a little guy, maybe eight, nine, 10, 11 years old, somewhere in there. And finally he said, "Are you coming because you want to be baptized?" And this was probably trip number, I don't know, 931 down the aisle

or something. I was 12 at the time. He said, "Are you coming to be baptized? Is that what you're interested in?" I said, "I don't know. I just know I want to know Jesus." And I remember that, and he remembered that, and it reminded me of that often. And so I was baptized, and Mom had me write the date in my little children's Bible when I got it at the time, and just so we had like a firm, hey, if you're ever doubting, if you're ever fearful, if you're ever wondering, go back and look at that date and remember the decision you made. And so no doubt that kind of decision-based faith shaped the way I grew up and started thinking about the Lord. Some of that, of course, has changed as I've matured and gotten to know Jesus a little bit better. Not that there's anything wrong with decisions, but more of a everyday kind of decision to follow Jesus, I think is what he's after, rather than a once and done and turn your back on him kind of thing. And, so those early experiences of coming under the conviction of God, of biblical teaching and biblical preaching, I remember. I don't know why that God just pricked my ears with his word early. And that's not to say that I didn't stray from him. Still don't stray from that word that I know not to stray on occasions. But yeah, early on, I could feel the Holy Spirit saying, "Mm-mm. We're out of line. Let's get in touch with each other again." So yeah.

STEW: That's super touching. And as I looked at your story, one of the things that jumped out to me is that every time God opened another door, you walked through it. I can see you being a full-time pastor. Just myself, I can. And so because you're so convicted, and it's inspirational for a lot of us, right? It couldn't have always been easy. Can you talk a little bit about the trust required and how you learn to keep saying yes?

PAIGE: Oh. Ah. These are only going to get harder. No, I'm kidding.

STEW: Yeah.

PAIGE: They're not. Gosh, Stew, if I'm honest, I want to say that— God in his grace and kindness would close a lot of the doors that would have been no. I hope that makes sense.

STEW: Yeah, no, it does. It does.

PAIGE: Yeah, it felt like there was a leading or even a pushing, a gentle, I don't mean shoving like, "I don't want to do this," kicking and screaming like Jeremiah or something like that. But since, I guess, college, when the Lord finally really broke my heart about not walking in step with Him, there's been a hunger and thirst in my soul for not just attending or being a part, but helping the body of Christ to know Him and love Him. And, so the saying yes piece, I feel like it's been more of the Lord saying, "Here, here's a door, walk through it." And the yes was real simple then. Some of those yeses have led to some really painful and times of growth. And, so it's not been bouncing from angelic cloud to angelic cloud. It's come with some difficulty. But looking back, I could see a lot of things I wish I had

done differently, but in God's kindness, nothing that I would have wanted to work out differently because of where He's brought us today, so.

STEW: That is really, it's interesting to kind of hear you say that. I feel like there's doors— it's interesting you point out the doors closing. And part of it I think is in noticing, right? Like, huh, when I find myself going down a path and every step is something like a stumble. And that gets me to thinking like—

PAIGE: Is it? Yeah

STEW: ... this isn't, like God's telling me—

PAIGE: Yeah

STEW: ... give it another thought.

PAIGE: Right.

STEW: Think this through again, right?

PAIGE: Yeah.

STEW: And I wonder, is that kind of how it happens for you when... Can you give us a little insight into how God closed doors for you?

PAIGE: Sure. A lot of those kinds of things that you were just describing, kind of stumbling upon to something, trying some things out. I've had just the sheer kindness of the Lord in providing some very solid counselors in my life, some God-fearing men. And I may have mentioned my grandmother earlier. She's just a godly woman who prayed me through so many messes that I could have or would have or did get myself into, and having people like that to be surrounded by and to be able to appeal to for prayer, for guidance or, that has a way of opening and closing some doors or at least firming up some convictions. Yeah. So that's kind of where I would say is that choosing some of those doors to be... I've not been one to think that, gosh, if I don't make the right decision here, the Lord's going to abandon me. That's all there is to it. So I've been one of those that if I come up to a T in the road and don't know whether to go right or to go left, I've had, "Lord, do I turn my right signal on? Do I turn my left signal on? Would you just tell me which way to go? I really want to go the way you want me to go." It's been one of those experiences for me that I felt like the Lord reaches for the hazard light and clicks them both on. And the point being is, "I'm going to be with you right, I'm going to be with you left. And if right's not right, I'll let you know. And if left's not left, I'll let you know." And He has, and He's been faithful to bring that about, so.

STEW: It's interesting. I don't know how to put this exactly, but it seems to me that only God could write a story that includes planting a church in a bowling alley. I have spent a lot of time in a bowling alley. My family owned a bowling alley when I was a little boy.

PAIGE: Oh, wow. How about that?

STEW: And bowling was a really important part. It was really important to them, right? So take us back to those days. What was that season like?

PAIGE: I don't even know where to start with church planting in a bowling alley.

STEW: Sure.

PAIGE: Yeah. Oh, man. You're opening a big old wide door, Stuart. I'll try to keep it as narrow as possible. I was a student pastor at Hill Country Church. And I'd been there for about nine years when the church kind of blessed us in an outreach effort in our own community. And I knew we wanted to be different. We didn't want to swap sheep or chase after the same. We really wanted to try to fulfill that evangelical, evangelistic, seek the lost, seek the de-churched, if you will. That was a popular phrase at the time. And just go after kids that I went to high school with, or their parents, or their kids in our community that had either fallen away from church or had never been. So yeah, we planted in a bowling alley in an effort to just remove any kind of stumbling block from the Word at all. So if they didn't feel comfortable pulling up in their old beat-up truck or whatever case might be at a nice church parking lot and getting prettied up to walk in to see other prettied up people, whatever the case might be. And I'm not suggesting that any of those things are bad. Having nice cars or dressing nice, those are all very good things. But if they were a reason that someone could give to not wanting to enter the doors of a church or to be able to hear the gospel or be exposed to the truth of God's Word, I wanted to try to remove those. And the Lord blessed us with a group of friends and church family that felt the same, that shared those same convictions. And so the elders at E-Free launched us, if you will, with five families and some financial support for 18 months. That was a huge help. And so we planted South Church in the bowling alley in Fredericksburg. At the time, it was called BB's Bowling Alley, and we planted there and were there for eight years altogether at the bowling alley. And it was a dream come true for me. It was T-shirts and blue jeans, and had several very talented people that would pick up a guitar and lead us in song. And sometimes there'd be two or three people singing. Sometimes there'd be four or five with some drums or whatever. Just kind of Fredericksburg style music and let's sing worship songs to the Lord and hear a sermon. And then at the end of that time, we would have a time of response where people could take communion and commune together with the Lord and experience some of that common union we have in Christ. So it was terrific. Super thankful for that opportunity experience that the elders and our community supported.

STEW: That is super cool. I could see, as a serial entrepreneur, I'm familiar with that start from scratch, right? And it's like, "Hey, who's in charge of whatever it is?" And it's like, it's you. All roads lead to it's my responsibility. And it's similar, I mean, this podcast, what we're trying to do here is lower the barrier to entry. We always say we're planting seeds, right? And I always say we're planting those little sticky seeds that stay on your pants because you never know. It may take decades before that seed sprouts, but that's okay. Right? God's patient. It's our job to plant

seeds. It's God's job to take it from there. But people know you, this is going to get a little crazy, I'll just tell you up front. People know you as a pastor, but before any of that, you're Lisa's husband. And the father of nine, count them, nine children. That is an incredible ministry in and of itself, and we could do a podcast just on that.

PAIGE: Let me get Lisa.

STEW: So what has your family taught you? First of all, you got to tell us about the kids. Nine kids is larger than average in today's world. It's wonderful. I can't imagine. That enters into vehicle choice.

PAIGE: For sure.

STEW: There's no more two-door, there's no more crew cab is great, but not with nine.

PAIGE: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

STEW: So tell us about your family and what it's taught you about God's love and patience and faithfulness.

PAIGE: Oh, wow. We have nine opposite kids, and I didn't know that was a possibility to have nine kids that are all opposites. No, but we've got nine children.

STEW: All opposites.

PAIGE: Yeah. 26 to 12 are the age ranges there. And we've got six girls and three boys. The boys are on the ends and one near the middle. And it has been wonderful, and challenging, and difficult, and wonderful, and challenging.

STEW: And difficult.

PAIGE: Yeah. Yep. Lisa is amazing. She graduated from A&M with a teaching certificate in first through eighth grade, or kinder through eighth grade. And her emphasis was in math. And for the longest time, people thought, "Oh, you're not going to enter the workforce, so you're going to raise your kids at home and educate them at home. You're kind of wasting your education." Well, in fact, she put it to work. She's actually in the kitchen right now, educating our youngest two. All of the others are of high school age and beyond now. But—

STEW: What is the age range? What's the age range?

PAIGE: Yeah. So 12 on the bottom and 26 on the top. So our oldest is 26, and our youngest son is, I think he's 12. Yeah, that's right.

STEW: And are they in the area, or have they flown the coop?

PAIGE: Yeah. My oldest son, Tucker, has moved back recently with his wife. She's from Ingram, so right around here, but they were living in Amarillo. When she was pregnant with their twins, they moved back here, and now I have six-month-old twins.

STEW: Oh, great.

PAIGE: And my second daughter, or my first daughter, sorry, my oldest daughter, Madeline, is with her child and husband in the Amarillo area. I think I said Tucker was in Amarillo. Tucker was actually in Lubbock. My oldest was in Lubbock. So Maddie's in Amarillo. She's up there. They were here this weekend, in fact. But...

STEW: Oh, good deal. Yeah, that's awesome. And so most pastors, and you're not most pastors, Paige, most pastors don't end up helping build a community media ministry. So you and I are kind of— we're kindred spirits a little bit in that regard. Somewhere along the way, God gave you a heart for telling stories that bring people together. How did FBG Live come to life? Tell us what it is, obviously, and then— what have you discovered about the power of a good story?

PAIGE: Oh. FBG Live is a live video production in the Texas Hill Country, and it came about out of necessity, honestly. I had the ministry at South Church, where I was preaching and teaching for 10 years, came to a stop, an unforeseen halt. We'll just call it that. And when that happened, all I had left was a computer and a camera, a little Sony camera. And we had put our services online for folks that couldn't be there, that couldn't watch. And I had learned how to do that from watching my oldest daughter play softball in high school. I put a phone up one time and streamed on an old app called Periscope, streamed to my wife and friends. And next thing you know, FaceTime became Periscope. Periscope became lots of people watching. And so I had some experience with live streaming. And so when South Church dissolved, and we dispersed all the members to other churches in our community, and I was without work, so was one of my very closest friends who happened to lose his job the day after I lost mine, or the day before I lost mine. His name is Caleb Dale, and he's actually a very vital staff member at our church, and right now at Hill Country, and makes sure all of us are comfortable and don't notice any problems going on. That's Caleb. He takes care of us behind the scenes. So the two of us just sat together on the stage area at the new building. Shortly after we moved out of the bowling alley, things began to change at South Church. We started looking a lot more like every other church on the block, had a nice parking lot and a nice building, and that was kind of the beginning of the end. But towards the end there, after it was over, sitting on the stage of that building that we were in, Caleb and I were just praying through, thinking through, "What does this look like next for us? We both need to provide for our families." And so from that camera and a laptop, and Caleb's incredible experience with photography and his background and some videography, became FBG Live and live video production in the Texas Hill Country. We started doing high school sports, and that really took off, especially shortly after when COVID hit. We were actually— Billies Live is the name of that channel of ours, billies.live. And get this, Stuart. I didn't know it at the time, but coming out of COVID, we played a Thursday night game. That was the first high school game to be on video in the nation after COVID. Back in those days, high school video games, it wasn't very popular still for them to be... So there

was a game that started 30 minutes before ours in the Northeast, but in terms of video coverage, billies.live was covering a game for the local high school team in San Angelo, and it made the news in San Antonio. They were like, "Whoa, look at this. High school football is back in Texas." And so that was a lot of fun.

STEW: That's got to help. That's got to help awareness.

PAIGE: Oh, yeah. It was weird.

STEW: Yeah.

PAIGE: Yeah. Not the springboard we were looking for, but a springboard for sure.

STEW: So do you mainly broadcast sporting events, or do you do other things, other local stories as well?

PAIGE: Yeah, no. Anything that people in the area want to have live. If a viewing audience can't be or they want to spread it beyond the live attendees there at the venue, we'll do that. So whether it's a wedding, a funeral, civic events. We have the Gillespie County Fair Parade coming up Friday. Queens Pageant, debates here in the community, mayoral debates, things of that nature. Yeah, stock shows, just about everything that people want to share with the world beyond just the viewing audience, the live viewing audience. We do things for the Nimitz, the National Museum of the Pacific War. So there's big things, small things. Sometimes the goal is a big audience, like at a high school football game maybe. But sometimes the important piece is it's the one or two that can see. In the case of a wedding where a grandmother can't be there for whatever reason, or brother's overseas on tour of duty or something. Just things of that nature.

STEW: Yeah. I work with folks who travel for their job. And so they can't— I'm sure that that's wonderful for folks who don't want to miss their kid's game, but they don't have a choice, and they got to be at wherever it is. And that's terrific. How have you seen God work in the media? It's the same deal for me. It's like I'm hoping for the best here. Can you tell us a little bit about how you've seen God use media for good?

PAIGE: Oh, yeah. Very much so. There's a— Can't remember. I think it was the superintendent of schools when I was in high school here in Fredericksburg, and his daughter and I were in school together, so he was a friend of mine. But I saw him shortly after FBG Live had launched, and we were in the middle of COVID, nobody could go anywhere, and things were just starting to open up. And there was a church in town, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, where he attended or maybe still attends. And we were helping them. They were doing outdoor services to try to keep everyone healthy and free from COVID. And so we would set up for them a couple cameras outside and produce that online for their church family that couldn't be there. And he came up to me after one of those things. He said, "So you're no longer pastoring and no longer preaching?" And I said, "No, sir. I'm not.

I'm doing this full-time." And he said, "You know what? You might be reaching more people now than you were then." And that was a helpful thing to hear because— in a lot of ways, I was still very much in there's vocational, even though I wouldn't have said it at the time and would've argued against it. There was a lot of me that still kind of compartmentalized vocational ministry and day-to-day ministry for your average working folk. I remember Pastor John used to say from the pulpit, "Look, I get paid to be good. You people, y'all are good for nothing." I thought that was very funny. But anyway— but yeah, so when he made that comment, that was a ministry to me. That was a hope-filled blessing for me. But we have helped several churches, not just in the Fredericksburg community, but in Dripping Springs and Canyon Lake areas, just trying to help them expand their ministry to parishioners that either have moved away and haven't found a church family yet and are still needing to plug in and be a part. Or like you're saying, people that are traveling and can't hear the message. So being able to bring them, of course, audio's been around for a long time, but being able to bring them live video of those things. I don't know. When you see people pouring through the communion line, even though your heart goes out and you wish you could be there, there's something fellowship about that. You can watch a sermon online, but watching the service online, getting to take part in that whole thing, you might not rewind it and go through that piece again. But when you see people in the church family pour through that line or their kids running around, and it's just kind of a bigger picture of being a part of the fellowship. Just I think there's a ministry there, and I'm grateful that the Lord's given us opportunities to help churches around the community plug into that medium, that witness.

STEW: It's interesting. I know that you know Bill Wilder—

PAIGE: Yeah

STEW: ... who is the head coach of the Fredericksburg High School Battle—

PAIGE: Battle Billies

STEW: ... Billies.

PAIGE: That's right.

STEW: Absolutely. And so he was a guest. I believe he's coming after you maybe. But that was an amazing, in terms of reaching people, he has the opportunity to reach a lot of kids at really important ages. And sort of my story's different than starting really early. And you mentioned kind of as you've matured, your view has changed. Are there things that you believed 30, 20 years ago that you see differently today? I mean, one of the things I think that's— I am not the right person to be preaching, but I can help tell stories of people who have walked in faith a really long time. What has evolved for you, if anything?

PAIGE: I think at the core, Stuart, if I was just to look and what central aspect of my faith has changed or shifted that's caused the majority of it to shift as well or to

be rooted, could probably be summed up in a song I heard recently. Before I get to that, I used to think that my hope for life everlasting with Jesus, with the Lord, with God, was all on me and was all determined by me. And if I had a good moment or hour of walking with the Lord, then I felt better about things. If I didn't have a good day, or my patience had been shot, or I got angry or bit back or threw my keys against the wall because I was upset about not getting my way about something, who knows? Man, that would really send me in a tailspin. I just would become really fearful that I'm out of communion with the Lord again. And there's a song I want to say, I shouldn't even try to name the artist, but it's called "He Will Hold Me Fast." And it expresses well the idea that as much as I used to think, "God, help me hold on here, help me hold on here," the fact is that God is holding onto us. He's holding us on, if that makes sense, rather than leaving it up to us to hold on. And that has been very helpful. So the providence of God, the sovereignty of God, the goodness of God, those foundational core doctrines, if you will, if you want to get theologically sounding, have just been so helpful for me. I understand some people can twist those and turn those around to make them seem like a license to sin. Oh, just go do whatever you want because it's all on God's shoulders. But I don't believe that's biblical and scriptural, and that's the way things work. But certainly the hope of His grip rather than mine, oh man, that's really changed everything.

STEW: Yeah, that's helpful to me. I needed to hear that, too. I don't want to speak for everybody who is slow to attend, right? But you mentioned folks who might be uncomfortable with pulling into a church parking lot in their old truck or whatever it might be. I do think that there are a number of people who feel like they aren't good enough to go to church.

PAIGE: Mm-hmm.

STEW: Like they show up, and they see all these people who are happy, and they're—

PAIGE: Yeah

STEW: ... in fellowship.

PAIGE: Seem like they got it all together.

STEW: Yeah. And they listen to the scripture, and they go, "Wow, there's a lot of things I don't do right." What would you want those folks to know that might listen to this podcast and be like, "You know what? I'll never get there. There's so much to fix. I'll never get there."

PAIGE: Yep.

STEW: What's the message to that person?

PAIGE: You don't know the half of it is the message I would say. You are far worse than you think. And everybody in that place is just like you. There's not one of us. The reason we attend that fellowship is because we are needy and weak and sinful

and wrong, and we need weekly reminders and the fellowship of the saints to help us to get encouraged and to stay the course. So, I would tell the person that wrestles with the reality of, "I'll never make it," no one in there has made it or is going to make it by their own efforts and strengths and righteousness and ability and right doings and any of those things. So I would encourage them to just be aware that kind of spiritual arrogance that some of us, I won't say some of them, but some of us may convey at times is sin itself, and it is testimony. So if somebody feels shunned by the body of Christ because they don't have it all together, that's just evidence of that fellowship or that person's sinfulness, which is testimony to the fact that they need Christ just as much as anyone else. So that's the odd thing is when you're feeling— I think the hard part. The hardest person to save is someone who doesn't feel like they need anything else other than themselves, that they have it all figured out. And ironically, the person who is at the other end of that, that feels like, "I'm such a mess, there's no way," they are closer in that moment, perhaps, than they've ever been— to the place where God— The way I understand it, that is God probably doing a greater work in them at that moment than at some spiritual high, perhaps. He's the kind that leaves the 99 found to go pursue the one that's lost. That's our God. And, so anyway, all that to say is if they're feeling that way, and maybe they can't find themselves entering the four walls of a pretty looking building, but I hope they could find themselves reaching out to a Stew or to a Paige and saying, "Hey, I'm a mess. Can we go to coffee or something? Can we get lunch?" And then maybe from there, we get a chance to introduce them to some more of our friends that don't have it together either. And somebody said, "Those people are a bunch of hypocrites." There's always room for one more, right? That's encouragement. And it makes sense that the sick are gathered together in a hospital. That's what a hospital is for, is a healing place for people. So just keep in mind that church is just a hospital for the sick. And I don't say that to, as I'm afraid lots of people, to excuse sinfulness in the church. That's not good at all. But at the same time, man, we are all pretty needy. And our Savior is plenty strong and plenty able to save to the uttermost, to say the least of these. And, so there's a ton of hope for anyone in that place and in that moment where they feel at such despair over their mistakes or their lives or their decisions or whatever the case might be, their habits, their addictions, and just say, "There's no hope for me." Yes, there is hope for you.

STEW: Yes, there is.

PAIGE: If there's hope for this sinner, there's hope for you. It's the old, what is it? I forget the theological title of it, but somebody had said, "If there really is a good God, how can he allow so much bad to happen?" Now, if there really is a good God, how could he put up with every thought I've had in the last 48 hours— and still love me? Because He knows them all, not just the ones I'm proud of.

STEW: But He knows all of them.

PAIGE: And it's funny, I've had some remarkable— God has led me in some remarkable directions. The first Bible study I ever went to was led by Bill Counts. Like that's—

STEW: Wow.

PAIGE: That's like starting—

STEW: You dove in deep, brother.

STEW: Right. It's like the first baseball game I ever attended was game seven of the World Series.

PAIGE: Of the World Series.

STEW: Right? And you go, "Really?"

PAIGE: Yeah.

STEW: It's like, yep, that's the first one.

PAIGE: Yeah.

STEW: And then their Tuesday morning study, there's a lot of folks who show up there, and a lot of them are older than me. And I'm getting to this point that you just made, which is one of the things that I was surprised at is how many of those folks struggle with the same thing I do. And I'm like, "You've been at this a long time. I thought you had this figured out. These aren't issues for you anymore." Nothing could be further from the truth. To your point, we all struggle to try and stay on the straight and narrow, and it is really, I think, well put that you say, well, we go to church on Sunday to really encourage each other to say, "Hey, you messed it up, and you know what? Me too." So here we are, right?

STEW: You never know. I have a fair number of LinkedIn followers, but I have about four Instagram followers. And when we put out the trailer to this podcast, one of the guys that I ride with came back and said, "Hey, I'm going to listen to this. I need some changes in my life." And it's like, to me, it's uplifting to reach folks who— I always say planting seeds at Hill Country Church is like planting seeds on the Scotts Turf Builder Lawn of the Year, right? But there's lots of folks— who can be helped that aren't necessarily attending every week.

PAIGE: Right.

STEW: And I just think it was—

PAIGE: And even, not to interrupt you, Stuart—

STEW: Yeah

PAIGE: ... but even those that are attending every week.

STEW: Yeah.

PAIGE: We need encouragement—

STEW: Sure

PAIGE: ... to take another step closer to Christ. Yeah. Sorry, go ahead.

STEW: No, no. It's the same thing. It's like even people who have been at this a long time still say the same, they struggle with the same stuff that I do. And, it's like I feel like myself, I go, "I can't believe I would've done that. I can't believe I said that. I wish I could take that back," whatever. We all, I guess we're all kind of in that boat.

STEW: And if you were to give some encouragement to maybe somebody who started later, and this is extremely self-serving, Paige, by the way. What would you say to somebody who came to the party fairly late? You and some other guests on this show were raised in the church. And there's lots of folks who weren't. And there's misconceptions about everybody that goes there is perfect already, and I'm a loser and whatever else. What would you say to somebody who's a little later in the game?

PAIGE: I think C.S. Lewis in "Mere Christianity" said something like, talking about an unfair advantage that some people have, and then he made the point of, but isn't that how we all learn? Where would we be without parents or grandparents or somebody, a guardian, somebody to show us the way? If we all had to start from zero and learn for ourselves anything that we learn, rather than being taught or standing on the shoulders of those who had gone before us. It's only stupidity or arrogance to think that we're independent, that we're on this island by ourselves. That's not the way God designed humanity to work. So, I would encourage anybody who feels like they're starting too late, one, say, nope, that's not how it works. I find myself as somebody who was raised in the church and can't remember a time when Mom or Dad or Grandma wasn't asking me about it. I find myself jealous regularly, and maybe some godly coveting, if you will, of the zeal I see in some of the younger or older or late-coming brothers or sisters to the Lord, that walked not with Christ any part of their life and just in the last year of their 50th year of life or 30th year of life, or after their second child, or after their third grandchild or whatever, that the Lord has opened their heart to love Him and know Him and seek Him. And man, there's zeal and fervor for the things of the Lord. Gosh, it has a way of stoking the fires in my heart again. So I feel like a learner in that way. And so I really don't think that it works in that kind of tier. I realize we have seasoned saints like a Bill Counts. Gosh, just has been in the Word so long and knows it back and forward and probably every theological camp's personal stance and convictions and oddities and quirks. But our body is littered with those folks that have been in the Word for a long time like that, and so thank you, Lord, for that.

STEW: Yeah.

PAIGE: But bro, and— It is encouraging to be a mixed group of Christ lovers, and we all have more capacity to love him, whether it's this much more to go or

mounds more to go. The call is to love him. That's all. And so whether your heart is this big and you love him with three-quarters of that size heart, or your heart is this big for the Lord and you love him with three-quarters of that size heart, the command is the same, to love him and to love each other. And so, yeah, we just keep growing. As he pours in the capacity to love him more, it keeps growing. My favorite verse is Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." And the first time as a child or as a young believer, I read or saw or heard of that verse, I thought, "Oh, man, that's the key. Anything I want. I just delight myself in the Lord, and he gives me anything I want. This is great."

STEW: Anything I want. That's awesome.

PAIGE: "It's the magic formula." But as I got to know the verse more, delight yourself in the Lord, so the Lord becomes my delight. Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you more of himself.

STEW: Yeah.

PAIGE: Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you— that which you delight in. So delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you more of himself, which increases your capacity to delight in him. There's more of him you know, there's more you understand, there's more of yourself you regret, and yet at the same time, he says, "Ah, up here, eyes up. You know it's on me." So anyway, yeah.

STEW: In talking with you, it is inspirational. One of the things that's happened in my industry podcast is that I've had a chance to talk to some really smart folks, and some of that's rubbed off. And it's really a blessing from God to be able to be with you today and hear your message and the way that you present it. It's extremely helpful to me, and others. I know others. But someday, somebody might watch this conversation because a friend cared enough to share it with them. What would you want that person to remember or take with them about this podcast? What would your takeaway be?

PAIGE: If you're breathing, it's never too late.

STEW: It's never too late. What a great. That is great.

PAIGE: Yeah. And no matter the history, the background or the future, the foreground, he is there, and he is there, and he works all things together for good to those that love him. If that means that there is a tiny little mustard seed of love that you have been given to the Lord, if you will hand that back to him and say, "I want to know you more," he will be faithful. He's not hiding. He's not hard to find. He's not resisting us. We can walk a thousand miles, and we turn around in repentance, and he's right there. We're not a thousand miles away from him.

STEW: Yeah.

PAIGE: He's a pursuer of the hurting, of the lost. He is near to the brokenhearted. We have such a marvelous God. And our enemy would have us fix our eyes and navel gaze, fix our eyes on ourselves and all of our failures and insecurities and

flaws and mistakes, and that is a great way to keep us in hell. On this side and on the eternal side. Just keep us staring at ourselves and our own issues and our own problems, but fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. And for some people, that might be remembering a few lines of a song. For others, it might be, and I would hope, digging into God's Word, cracking open the Gospel of John, and just working through some of those things and learning who this man is, opening Genesis for the first time and digging into the first seven days of creation and how we are made in his image, and that we're the pinnacle, the tippy top of his creativity, and Jesus, the supreme of us. So I would just encourage them, if there's just a small mustard seed of love for him, of inkling toward him, and I know there is, or they wouldn't be watching right now. It's not by mistake. God doesn't make mistakes. He's perfect in his economy. He is not like us. That just ask him to do more. Here it is. It's tiny. It's fish and loaves. It's small. And watch him do abundant good things with it. He is faithful and good. And yeah.

STEW: I really appreciate it. I really appreciate the way that you've served your community and your family, your church. I appreciate how you've continued to sow seeds wherever God has planted you, and I really appreciate that you're helping encourage others to do the same. So we've been joined today by Paige Findley. Paige, thanks so much for being on.

PAIGE: Stew, it's been a blessing and an honor. Thank you for asking me to join these others that have gone before and those that will come after. You got a good thing going here, and God's blessing on you.

STEW: I appreciate it. I was blessed. I think I told you this story, but I was sitting in church, and I heard Rob talk about Jesus cursing the fig tree. And I was sitting there, and I was like, "Wow, am I the fig tree?" I mean, I am the fig tree, like walking. And so I started to pray, and as I mentioned, I've done a bunch of industry podcasts, and I'm like, you work in a studio. Why not interview? And in my journey, there's been a number of really wonderful people, you included, that have helped shepherd me, and what my thinking was is other people would benefit from this, too. And so that's why our mission is simple. We sow seeds. God takes it from there, and we just ask you if you would just tell one person. So thanks so much for being on. I really appreciate it.

PAIGE: Pleasure's mine. Thank you, brother.

STEW: Thank you. I'm Stew, also known as that Texas podvangelist, and you can be, too, by telling one person about our podcast. "Que Dios te bendiga." May God bless you and yours. We'll see you next time on "The OG Pastors: Faith Over a Lifetime" podcast.