

## Conclusion

# THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENTION TO DETAILS

To close out this book and tie together the seven principles of this book, let me tell you about the importance of paying attention to the details. I was reminded of how important this is several years ago when I took a guy, whom I will call “Joe,” elk hunting. Another friend asked me as a favor to take him hunting. I called Joe before the trip, and we agreed on a place to meet and the location we were going to hunt, just like normal. I learned some great life lessons later from the assumptions I had made about Joe by this point.

Joe and I met at 3:30 a.m. at a nearby gas station and we set out to hunt elk. We chit chatted on the way and he told me of his previous hunting exploits. He used words and phrases that raised some red flags for an experienced hunter like me. I was beginning to think that he had no idea how to hunt, but there was no turning back now.

When we arrived and began to unload I noticed that several things were wrong with his gear. Especially concerning was his bowstring, which was very frayed, and his quiver, which looked broken and in poor condition. I also noticed the cheap tennis shoes he was wearing. This alarmed me, because I knew the chance of rain was high that day

and North Idaho Mountains, plus rain, plus hiking, plus cheap tennis shoes *equals a bad day!*

Within a few hours, elk had come around us, and Joe had a perfect chance for a shot. I called the elk in close, but he was unprepared. When he finally drew his bow, a portion of his string broke, causing his equipment as a whole to fail. As a result, the elk ran and my blood pressure went high enough to cause me a stroke. Joe's poor attention to some *important details*, his lack of preparation, and his improper care for gear caused a failure of a hunt. I made a mental note to do everything in my power to avoid any hunt like this in the future.

Our day just got worse from there. The rain began to pour and we had to hike a mile out in mud. Joe slipped and fell more times than I can count! In the process of falling several times, he finished off his half broken quiver, breaking it completely into pieces. I bet the pieces of it are still on that hillside today!

Details in hunts matter, even small details like the condition of your bowstring or the soundness of your quiver. In the same way, paying attention to the details of the guardrail principles can keep us on the road to making disciples. Unless we are intentional about putting them in place we can find ourselves drifting quickly off the road. As Christians, disciple making must be a way of life, it must be intentional and always in the forefront of our minds.

Mastering hunting or any skill in life requires continued focus on the little things and doing what it takes to be successful. Ask any golfer, parent, preacher, teacher, mechanic, engineer, or entrepreneur about what it takes to be successful. For all these pursuits, we have to do the appropriate little things that will, we hope, one day lead to success.

In your walk with Christ, whether you are the lead pastor, an elder, or a lay leader, you are called to be a disciple maker. We live in a world

that is full of distractions. The church itself often holds onto older ways of doing things or sets up new structures of doing things—both of which can keep us from the very calling we have been given—to make disciples of Jesus. It's easy to drift or to get on the wrong road. So remember that it takes intentionality and effort.

I frequently remind the guys on my leadership team that discipleship is a grind. It's hard work, it's often messy, and it requires time, priority, and attention to the details. Even though it's difficult, we don't give up. We keep on the narrow path of discipleship because that's what Jesus commanded us to do.

My challenge to those reading this book is that you to begin putting in place these guardrail principles in your church and in your personal life. They are for your protection, to keep you on the right road. Commit to them and I know from experience that your focus will begin to shift toward the right measure of success—growing disciples who know how to disciple others! My prayer for you is that you find your God-given road and that you stay the course.