



The
153 Effect
by **SmartMatrix**

Compassionate Guide
Workbook

Welcome! We're Glad You're Here.

You know what it's like to lead as a follower of Jesus. You shepherd others and answer God's call. You work to sustain the growth of your church through uncertain, challenging times. (You know, like a pandemic, social unrest and political division.)

There is a lot going on, and there are a lot of ways you could choose to move your ministry forward.

We get it, and we're here to help. We've spent a lot of time with pastors and leadership teams. No matter where you feel like you're starting today, we're here to journey with you. In the lessons and this workbook, we share our expertise in growing churches, operating multiple campuses, using data for decision making and protecting your people and places.

Together, we'll help you see the challenges, find the tools, and thrive in the work you and your church are called to do.

Thank you for downloading this workbook and spending time with The 153 Effect. We think you'll get the most out of this workbook when you use it in conjunction with **our video lessons**. Grab a cup of coffee, your notebook, and find a quiet place to reflect. Get vulnerable and get inspired. Put pen to paper. Lean in to what God reveals.

When you have questions, reach out to us at hello@the153effect.com. We're eager to listen to your story and share ideas to help you discern your next right steps.

Together, we're fuel for your growing church. It starts here.



Amber Smart

Founder and CEO

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Start Here: Lead as a Follower

Before you begin the lessons, spend some time in reflection. Think about your awesome responsibility to lead as a follower. Think of your mission from God and how you carry it out through your church.

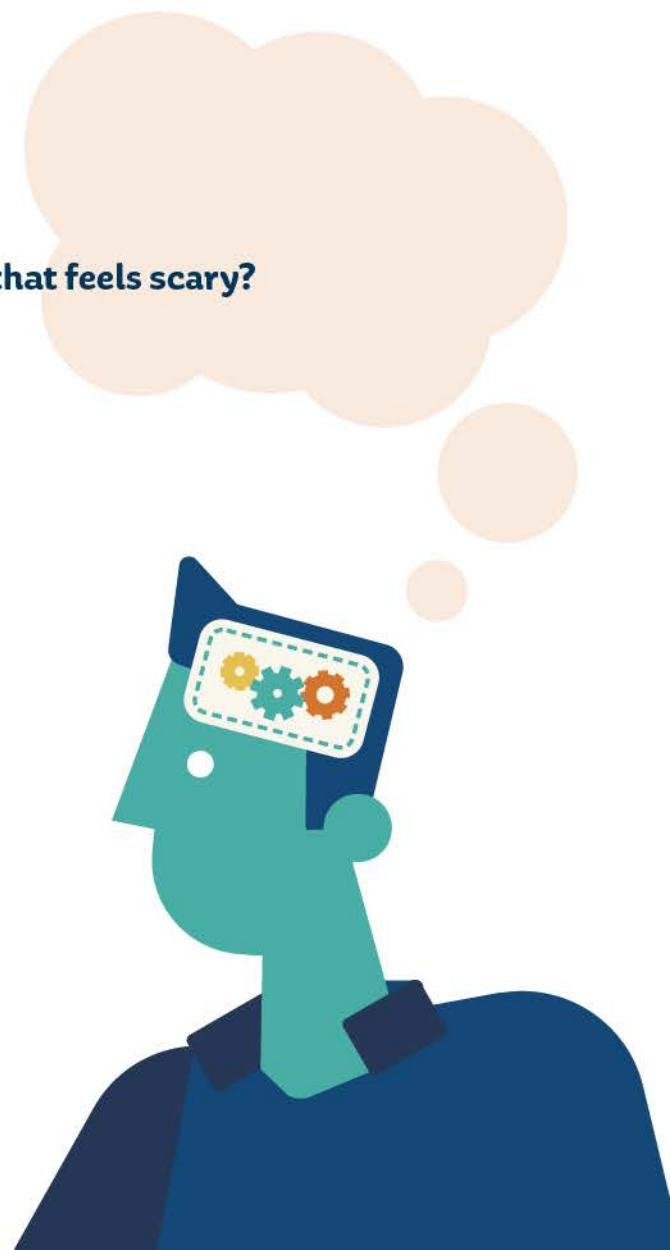
We recommend writing out your reactions in your journal or wherever you keep notes. Responses can be as long or as short as you need them to be. There are no right or wrong reactions to these questions.

What does it mean to lead well as a follower?

When did you first realize your calling to help other people know Jesus? What's changed for you since then? What's the same?

What's something about the future of your ministry that feels scary?

In what parts of your work and/or calling are you confident today?

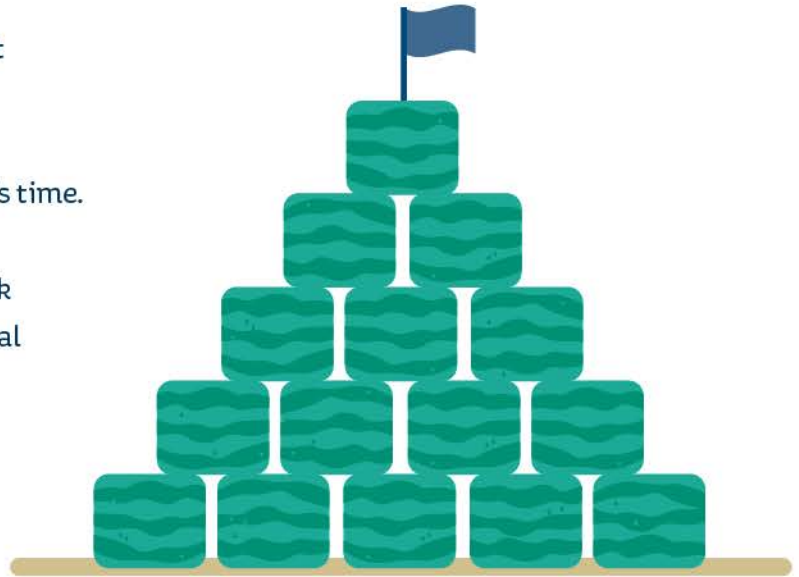


Lesson: Square Watermelons and Growing Your Church

Square watermelons are shaped by their environments. Something similar happens to us as individuals, organizations and even churches. We are shaped by the systems we live in and the processes we implement to carry out our mission.

When you start to consider how the environment shapes you, it can be startling. You'll notice misalignments, things you got right, and areas that could use a lot of attention. That's ok. There's time.

The self-awareness you develop through this work is invaluable, and thinking about both the physical and less tangible structures that shape you is a solid start to finding your next right steps.



Lesson Takeaways

- 1 What resonated with you? Jot down your own takeaway.
- 2 Identifying environmental factors and other influences can help you see what's shaping your work and your ability to operate on mission.
- 3 No matter where you start, the secret to success is to challenge the assumptions shaped by your environments. This allows you to live into the person God created you to be, your true authentic self.

Question A1:

What environments or influences are shaping your ministry today? How have those influences changed since you began your ministry? (Consider making a column to compare your environments of today vs. the beginning to create a visual comparison.)

Question A2:

Consider a time when you felt your work and ministry was limited by an environment/system/process. Summarize that experience. What did that feel like? Who was involved? How did it resolve? What has been your biggest takeaway from that time?

If you haven't felt constrained, why do you think that is? What have you done to manage the limits and influences on your ministry and work?

Question A3:

Influences and environments aren't always negative. What positive systems and processes have helped you build your ministry? What people furthered your work? What are the helpful factors shaping your work that God is helping you see more clearly?

Question A4:

Thinking about your response on a ranking/scale, does your church's worship space match your message? How so?

(Think a 1="No, not at all," and 5= "Yes! Anyone can walk into our space and get a feel for our work and mission". Two, three and four are fair responses, too.)



Question A5:

What is your attitude toward being shaped by environments?

- ___ a. I'm still not seeing how my ministry is influenced by these factors.
- ___ b. I think I'm getting it, but I need someone to help me work through some questions.
- ___ c. Wow! I'm seeing how systems, processes and more influence me and my work.

Question A6:

Are there people who've influenced your work that you need to thank? Can you invite them to help you lead in this next phase? Create a list of those folks and your next steps for thanking or engaging them.

Reflect Deeply:

Before we can fully see what's shaping us, we have to be willing to explore our influences and their impacts on us. What brought you here, and what continues to shape your abilities and work? Pray for a willingness to humbly see your ministry with open eyes and heart.

Scripture:

Ezekiel 11:19 and 36:26.

God alone is the source of spiritual eyes and undivided hearts. Only He can make blind eyes see, deaf ears hear, dead taste buds hunger, and hardened hearts soft.

James 1:5-8 (NIV)

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

Psalms 25:4-5 (NRSV)

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation.



Lesson: Your Church's Numbers Deserve a Seat at the Table: Using Data, Discernment, and Jesus to Guide You

Data is already part of your daily life and your church. It's things like the expenses and deposits in bank accounts. Size of your buildings. Number of guests and members you serve. Dates of baptisms and moments of transformation. All of those numbers and fragments of input – and more! – are data.

Data is a tool for getting curious about what's happening in your church and the impact you're having on lives every day and for the long haul. When paired with prayer and discernment of where God is leading, it's fuel for your church

Lesson Takeaways:

- 1 What part of the lesson are you still thinking about? Jot down your own takeaway.
- 2 The data you need depends on the outcome and mission you're working toward - and what you have to work with. Even if it means starting with just a few numbers today, that's okay.
- 3 Impacts and feelings are hard to measure. Using data to visualize trends allows you and your leadership team to make informed decisions with quantifiable numbers supporting your discernment.

Question B1:

What reaction do you notice in yourself when you hear the word data? Are you neutral? Does it make you nervous? Why do you think that is?

Question B2:

What type of data does your church gather today? Who gathers it? How often is it gathered? How is it used? How often? (Get as granular with this list as you can. This might be another good one for columns or a table.)

Question B3:

How could you incorporate more data in your decision-making? What are the areas of your church where you wish you had more tangible guidance to lead from?

Reflect Deeply:

Data doesn't have to be an all or nothing proposition. You don't have to rely on numbers to make every decision, and there's a place for data alongside discernment and prayer.

We believe you and your church are best served with decision-making fueled by BOTH data AND discernment. Where can you harness the power of the BOTH/AND in your decision making? Where have you relied more on one versus the other?

Scripture:

Philippians 1:9-10

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

1 Thessalonians 5:21

But test everything; hold fast what is good.

Proverbs 18:15

An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

Meaningful Data

Fuel for a Growing Church



Data Visualization In Practice:

The graph below shows monthly giving amounts for the current year and last.

- What are a few trends that you notice?
- What sticks out the most?

Imagine it is the month of November in the current year. What insights would you share with your team?



The graph below shows trending annual giving amounts for the current year and last year.

- What are a few trends that you notice?
- What sticks out the most?



Did You Know?

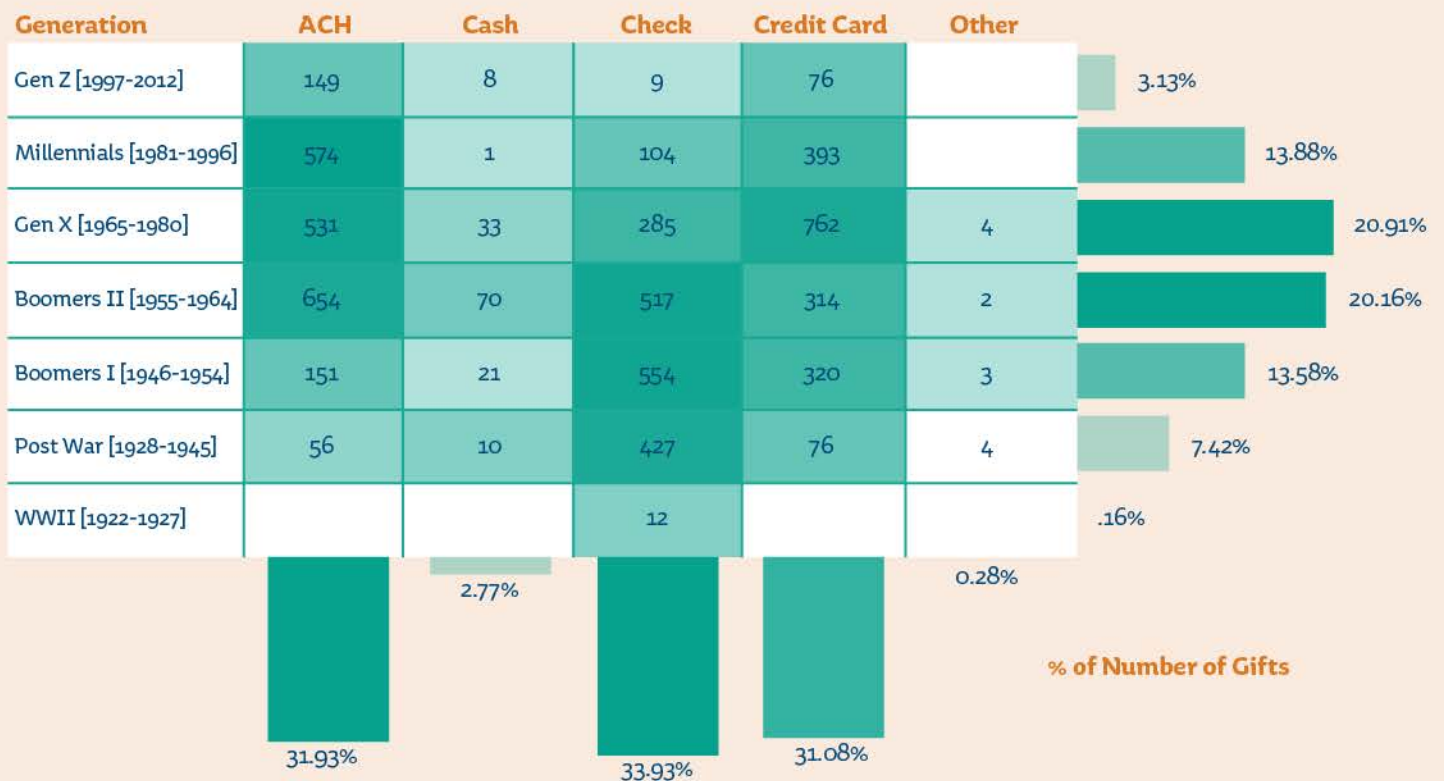
Looking at these two graphs, would you have guessed that they use the same data? They do! Did your understanding of the current year's performance change? Jot down what comes to mind.

The graph below shows the payment methods members and guests use for giving.

- What are a few trends that you notice?
- What sticks out the most?
- What generation gives the most gifts? The least?

Imagine you're planning an event for Gen Z that requires attendees to pay. How can you use this giving information to help planning what payment options are available for those who'd like to attend?

Method of Giving by Generation

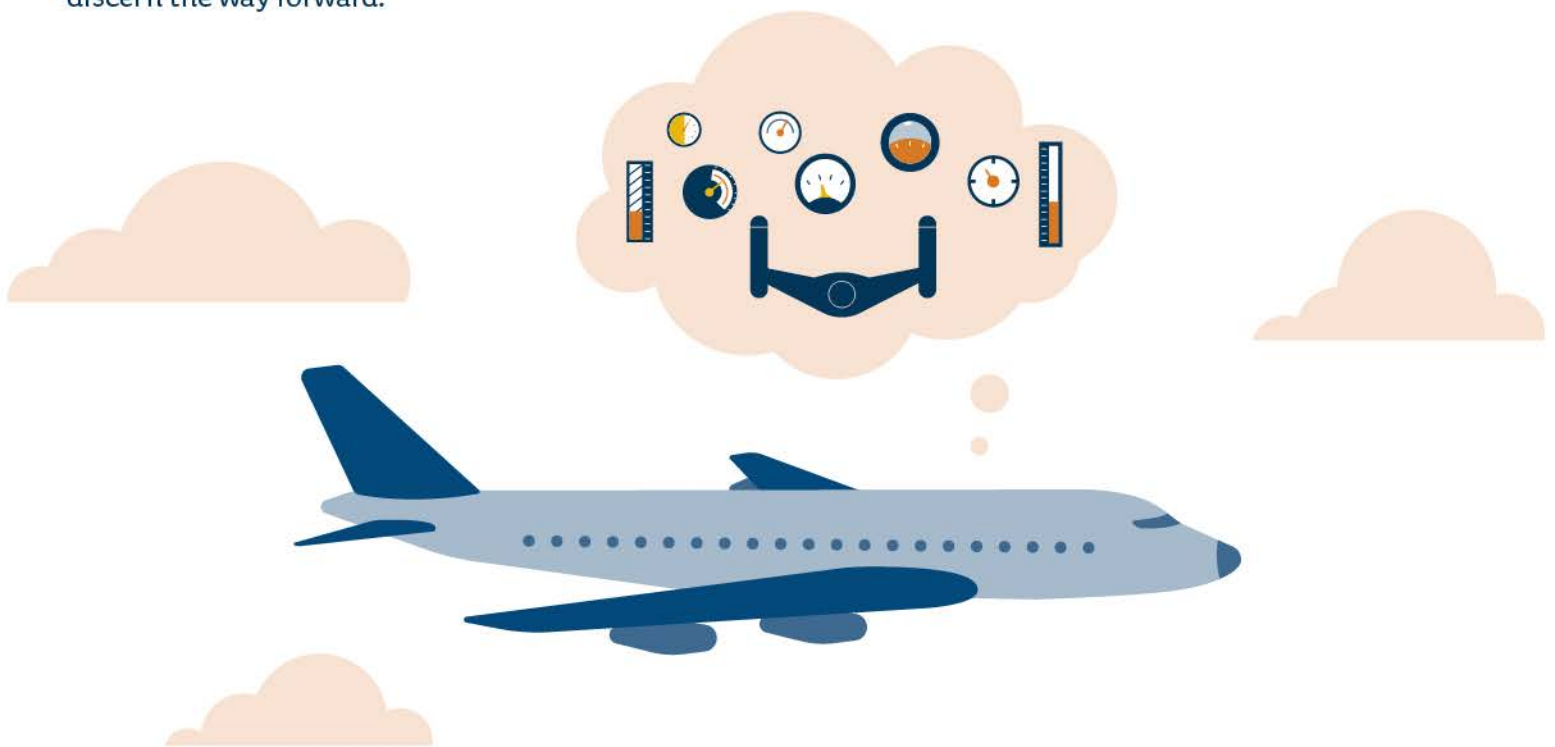


Lesson: Crop Duster Planes, Jumbo Jets, and Your Church

Today, your leadership, church and its ministries are entering a new season. The skills that brought you here have served you well - but you're also aware you might need more support to take your impact to the next level.

It's possible to confidently carry out the mission God has given you, and there are many tools and resources - data visualization, prayerful discernment, risk management and more - that can help you do the work.

Like your responses as you've worked through these lessons, tools and resources aren't inherently right or wrong. It's all simply information to help you be accountable in the work you've been given and continue to discern the way forward.



Lesson Three Takeaways:

- 1 What part of this lesson spoke most directly to you? Jot that down.
- 2 You know enough to start - and you don't have to have all the answers. Just like you did in the early days of your ministry, this new season can be fueled by learning, discerning and finding ways to keep moving toward your calling.
- 3 Start with what's observable and get curious about the trends you see and the gaps. You can start to ask questions that align with the mission you're working to live.

Question C1:

When you consider your ministry today compared to its early days, what's different? What has stayed the same or what has been different from what you expected?

Question C2:

What are the areas of growth/change that you feel especially challenged by? What are you lacking in those areas? Expertise? Time? Financial support?

Question C3:

What are your hopes and dreams for the future of your ministry?

Question C4:

What barriers and limitations are standing in your way of those hopes and dreams in question 3? Make a quick list - don't overthink it. Just write the first things that come to mind.

Question C5:

What support do you need to move forward? Again, don't overthink it. Make an itemized list. This could be names of existing team members, roles you want to fill, or even a vague "something to help with _____ (blank) challenge". Write honestly and openly.

Question C6:

You can't do this work alone. We're here to help, and we're guessing you have an internal team who's also with you.

Using the list below, rank each item with an honest assessment of where you and your team are. (We suggest 1="No, not at all" and 5= "Yes! We're there." Feel free to score between those numbers, too. Whatever is most helpful.) Are you mostly lower numbers or higher numbers on the scale?

___ a. The leadership team is open to improvement and feedback. They know there's more than one way to do things and are willing to learn.

___ b. Church leaders are curious and have a strong desire to know and learn more.

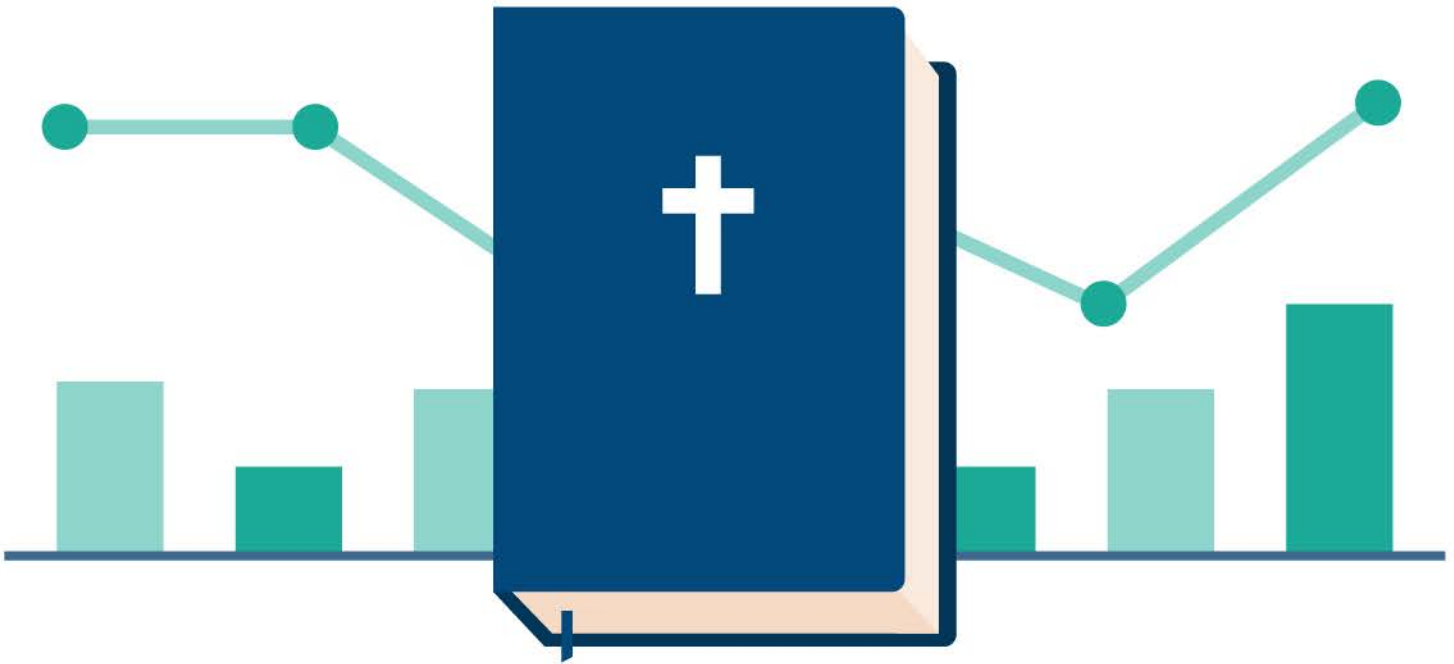
___ c. The leadership team is willing to test assumptions, knowing they may find things that don't work as often as they find something that works.

___ d. Church staff understand their mission can remain unchanged, even if the way they're working can change.

___ e. The leadership team is willing to invest in a data program with time and financial support.

Reflect Deeply Statement:

No one said answering the call God placed on your life would be easy. No one said you had to do it alone, either. Pray for openness to see the opportunities to bring others into your ministry and for a willingness to step into the work you specifically need to do. Consider what gifts people around you have been given that contribute to the mission of your church and where those gifts complement your own.



Scripture:

Colossians 1:16-18

We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment.

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Way to go! You're on your way.

Building the Kingdom is hard and holy work, and we're proud to walk with you in helping to discern where God is calling and how you can help people know Jesus better.

This is the end of the workbook, but not the end of the work. What's lingering for you? Where can we help?

We're eager to hear what resonated, what missed, and what questions you are curious about and want to explore more.

Want help specific to your journey? Get in touch at hello@the153effect.com to learn more about our workshops and assessments to help you move forward.

Still pondering and not ready to connect? That's okay, too. We'll have more lessons and content coming soon as you continue your discernment.

Together, we're fuel for your growing church. Let's keep going!

Visit www.the153effect.com for more information.

Lead as a Follower

See the Challenges, Find the Tools, and
Thrive in the Work You're Called to Do

