

A Chat With 3 Generations of Driscolls

- Alrighty. Well, hey, it's a very special day for me. I feel like I'm always short. I'm the shortest man in my family, and they gave me the short chair. I'm feeling particularly self-conscious. I'm here with my dad and we wanted to have just a brief conversation to honor you, Pops. And it's the last Real Men's of the semester. And tomorrow, my oldest, my youngest daughter, rather, is graduating from high school. So my mom and dad were in town and they got to hang out with us and come by. So maybe everybody just take a minute, kind of say your name, maybe how old you are, where you're at in life, what you're doing, and we'll let Grandpa go last.

- That's cool.

- You want me to start? 'Cause you're looking at me.

- Yeah. Okay.

- Perfect. Cool. My name's Zac, I'm 22, been married for 13 months to my wife, Chloe, and work here at the church, help run the student ministry of sixth through 12th graders.

- And how old were you when you met your wife?

- We were in, I was in eighth grade, she was in seventh grade.

- So like 14.

- Yeah, we've known each other for over seven years now.

- That's awesome. That's awesome. You're next Calvin.

- My name is Calvin. I am 20 years old. I'm at GCU, gonna be a senior. I also work here, get to oversee our internships. So if you see any interns running around, I get to be their boss. And if you have any toddlers, you have probably seen me because I spend a lot of time in the toddler class, so...

- [Mark] And what do you wanna do when you graduate?

- I want to go into ministry. Numbers and charts make, get me excited. So I want to be on more of the business side of church, more of like an executive pastor role, so yeah.

- Cool.

- [Landon] Cool. I'll go next, so I'm Gideon, I'm 16. I'm a sophomore in high school. I just started driving, so that's my next stage of life that I'm in right now, you know?

- And what do you do here at the church, buddy?

- I'm a junior intern. So I'm a step below what he does. He'll be my boss in around a year, but yeah, so I help out in Kids' and yeah, just serve in the backyard, so...

- And it's a cool story, we're here in the building. It was, uh, so before we planted the church, this building was not on the market, and we heard that it was potentially available. And maybe you tell him that story, son.

- Yeah. So I played baseball and-

- You're probably nine at the time?

- Yeah, nine at the time, it was right after a baseball practice and we just drove past and we stopped and then we pulled up and when we first got here, before I tell the rest of the story, there was a homeless man out front. So we had to deal with that first. We woke him from his deep sleep, but yeah, so we figured that out. And then I proceeded to pray over the building and I just felt the Holy Spirit tell me that this was gonna be our building and that we were gonna plant the church here, so yeah.

- And we planted the church 'cause the boys came home, called a family meeting, said they wanted to start a church as a family ministry and you felt like God told you it was gonna be our building and not the homeless guy's, so thank you for that.

- I'm Landon, I'm one of the pastors here at Trinity and his son-in-law, I'm married to his oldest daughter. She's awesome, she's the director of Real Faith. I get to oversee events, kids, interns, all the fun stuff. So yeah, it's awesome.

- I'm 25.

- [Mark] 25 and doing great.

- Yeah, we're in a great season of life.

- My wife and I appreciate you. Our daughter's the happiest and most relaxed we've ever seen, so, thank you.

- It's an honor to be married to her, I love her a lot.

- You're doing a great job, so, and Dad maybe introduce yourself.

- I'm the guy that started this mess. So Dad, maybe tell them a little bit, like where you were born and how you grew up, you know, back with the dinosaurs and stuff, you know.

- How many of you guys had an outhouse? This is a true story. Grew up in Minnesota on a farm as a kid. And we didn't have running water until I was six-years-old. So, here I am now.

- And so it was like, originally, it was, like, a thousand-acre family farm. What did you guys grow?

- Wheat, potatoes, hay, oats. Mainly just the wheat crops and potatoes, a lot of potatoes.

- And so that was the family homestead. We were all Driscoll, we came from County Cork, Southern Ireland, settled there as farmers. That was the homestead I was brought to when I was born. You've worked your whole life. You're one of the hardest-working men I've ever met. And I honor you for that, Pops. Tell us about, kind of, work growing up on the farm as a kid, first job.

- Well, we did everything on the farm. I mean, I come from a family that's unusual. I had my dad and my uncles and my aunts, were four brothers who married four sisters, and-

- [Mark] Small town. Rock, paper, scissors, who gets which sister, yeah.

- So, I grew up on the farm and, I mean, that's all I knew until I was like 10-years-old. 12-years-old, I guess, we moved off the farm, but it was everything to do with get the crops in and get the crops out. I mean, in the spring of the year you fought the weather, trying to get 'em in, and in the fall of the year, you were trying to get 'em out before the rains and the snow hit, so that you could get 'em into your barn and get 'em sold in the wintertime, hopefully for more money than what you put into it to try to get it out. So, it wasn't an easy life, but it was a fun life because you weren't tied to anything. You were out there in the country and you had your cousins down-

- [Mark] It's a lot of freedom for a boy. I mean, how old were you when you started driving tractor?

- Nine.

- And then how old were you when you started driving truck and even driving loads into town?

- 12.

- How old were you when you first got pulled over by the cops for driving a vehicle?

- 10.

- Yeah.

- Well, my cousin took-

- These are the stories we didn't tell the boys until they got older, yeah, We didn't tell 'em growing up.

- Well, my cousin took the truck to town and then he went somewhere, left the truck, they needed the truck. So my aunt grabbed me and said, let's go get the truck. And so she's following me, and the cop sees me trying to sit up as tall as I could in that seat, so I'd look like I belonged there. It didn't work. He swung right around.

- [Mark] Did you reach the pedals or how'd you do that?

- They had, on the old trucks, they used to have a throttle. And so, once you got the clutch in and out and you got it into gear, you just pull the throttle and away you go.

- [Mark] That's pretty good for 10, Pops.

- Oh, you had it all figured out by then. You've been driving tractors for three years.

- So then, how old were you and Mom when you got married?

- I was 21 and she was 20.

- And then I showed up about a year later. I did the math when I was a kid and I was legit. No, I did, really. I was like, "Wait a minute, that's close."

- True story, he wasn't the only one that did the math. I watched more than one person go...

- And so you and Mom got married real young and you had to work to provide for a young family. So maybe, how old were you when you started hanging sheetrock, and how long did you hang sheetrock for?

- I started my first time when I was about 15-, 16-years-old and I hung it pretty much my whole life up until 45 when the back broke.

- [Mark] Hung sheetrock 15 to 45, that's 30 years. That's not a young man's trade.

- No, that's why-

- Excuse me, that is a young man's trade. I mean, that is just physically grueling.

- That's why I look like I do.

- Yeah. So when I was little and sometimes there wouldn't be work, you would go out of town to hang sheetrock, and maybe explain some of those really tight seasons, financially.

- Well, when we first got married, there was very little work in Grand Forks, and so me and another gentleman, we just kind of went out on our own and we started doing apartment buildings for a company that was 80 miles south of us, in Fargo. And so we would go out of town, just the two of us, and there'd be a 24-unit apartment building. And we figured out that if you didn't hire anybody and you worked on your own, they had to cover your L&I and all your other stuff, so you were still covered under L&I and then you could keep all the money. And so, we would go into these apartment buildings, there was a group of us. There was a plumber, an electrician, and us, and the plumber would set up an area for a shower, and the electrician would wire up an area so we could have a hot plate, and everybody just slept on stacks of sheetrock. So, you didn't have to spend any money.

- [Mark] So what was minimum wage then?

- I think \$1.40 or \$1.35.

- Okay, and if you worked really hard, by the hour, hanging sheetrock, how much could you make? Well, we didn't work by the hour, we worked by the foot. That's why we slept on the sheetrock and did all of that. Because at that time, I think that we were getting three-and-a-quarter cents a square foot for hanging it. And seeing as how it was just me and Mel that were working together, and we had no overhead, everything we made we got to keep, other than what it cost for screws and tools.

- So, you'd hang sheetrock, 12, 16 hours a day, sleep on the sheetrock, and send all the money home to me and Mom, yep?

- Well, we'd come back about, depending upon the size of the job, we'd get back in town every two or three weeks and then have to go and turn our bill in, so we could get paid and get our money, so we could go to the next one.

- [Mark] So what caused you, around, you know, 45, to stop hanging sheetrock?

- Couldn't get out of bed.

- [Mark] Yeah.

- My back locked up and I just couldn't walk. I'd go to a grocery store and be walking down the aisle, and Deb would be walking in front of me, and she'd turn around and I'd be hanging onto a counter 'cause there was nerves in my back that were getting pinched and it'd just lock up the right leg, couldn't move.

- So even to this day, you live with serious chronic pain from 30 years of literally breaking your back to feed your family.

- Yeah, basically.

- And how long have you and Mom been married now?

- 53.

- That's awesome, that's awesome.

- [Audience] Aw.

- The woman's a saint.

- Yeah, yeah, she is. Mom prayed us both into the Kingdom, yeah.

- Yeah, she has.

- And so maybe talk about, you were raised Catholic, and when your dad died, your mom, my grandma, she became a nun. Order of nuns within the Catholic Church. And growing up, we were hit-and-miss in church, in Catholic Church and stuff. But when do you think it was, for you, that you really took your faith seriously and started, you know, praying, reading the Bible, saying, "I'm gonna actively live as a Christian?"

- In my early thirties- In our twenties, when we lived in Spokane, the Catholic Church had a movement that went through at that time, called the charismatic movement. And we went to a lot of the prayer meetings and stuff there and got really close with a lot of people in that area.

- [Mark] Mom got healed there too, right?

- Yep, yeah.

- Mom got healed. She was prayed over and healed there.

- Yep, and then, when we moved to Seattle, of course, you start all over and you lose that group, and so you kind of wayward for a while there. You kids went to St. Bernadette's-

- Yeah, I forgive you, but it was rough, you know.

- It's the only thing we knew.

- [Mark] Yeah, I know. Well, you didn't like Catholic school either.

- We won't even talk about it.

- How many days did you miss, your senior year, in the Catholic school?

- It wasn't my senior year.

- [Mark] Or seventh grade year.

- Seventh grade year, I come from the country school into seventh grade, and I disliked the nun that I had so bad, they would put me in the front door, I'd go out the back door. They'd put me in the back door, I'd go out the front door. I had good enough grades, but I'd missed 92 days of school. I didn't go to school enough to pass, so...

- And you ended up having us five kids, and mom stayed home to focus on us kids. And I just wanna publicly honor you, Dad. We're studying Genesis. We've been learning about Abraham, and then we just met Isaac, he was just born. Eventually, there's gonna be Jacob. And then, Jesus talks about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that's three generations. That's a grandpa, a dad, and the sons, and the grandsons. And you worked incredibly hard. I could still remember when I was a little boy, you'd go out of town and work, and Mom would tell me, "Dad's sleeping on the job site, Dad's sleeping in his truck. He's sending us all the money to make ends meet." And so she always really honored you. And she was always very grateful for your hard work, and I am too. And we got your work ethic and I appreciate that. And then growing up in my neighborhood, I was talking about it before. We were having just lunch with the boys. I don't remember any other kid I grew up with had a dad. I don't remember anybody having a dad.

- I've actually tried to look back, and there was only a couple kids that you hung around and they were further from our neighborhood. They weren't like within a couple blocks area, but, that had dads. I mean, there was a lot of kids that just didn't have dads in that neighborhood.

- No, I remember there was, next to me there was, next to us there was boys and they were buddies of mine. And then next to them there was another house with a couple of brothers, and both of those households, one of the boys in each household, one of my friends died, I think, in their twenties. And so, in those three homes, the only house that didn't have a young man die was our house. And our house was the only house that had a dad. And I remember in the neighborhood we grew up in, it was a little bit rough. I can still remember a lot of drugs and alcohol. Green River Killer, Ted Bundy, were in that immediate area, as well. I could still remember... I remember getting offered drugs as a really young kid. I remember first knife or gun pulled on me, probably at 10 or 12. First funeral I went to for a friend of mine that OD'd on drugs was around 12. She had an older boyfriend, I dunno what he was, 16, 18, or whatever. He had a car and got her drugs and she OD'd and died. And I remember riding my bike to her

funeral and it was an open casket, she was about 12. And so, there were no dads. And there was a lot of crime and a lot of mayhem, but I never did drugs, I never did alcohol, I never got into trouble, and I think a lot of that, Dad, was I had a dad. And so I just knew, if I come home, I'm gonna have to give an account to somebody who's in authority. And I knew what right and wrong was. And it kept me out of a lot of danger and harm. And it helped me kind of move on into the next season of life. And so, I still remember when there was no dads in the neighborhood, so I'll never forget, I showed up for baseball tryouts and there was no coach, 'cause there was no dad. Not one kid on the team had a dad. And so I don't know how that worked out. I think I came home and told you, "You're the coach, 'cause you're the only dad," so...

- Well, we went to sign-ups with you and they said, "We'll find a coach for the kids." And so the group of kids that he ended up being put with, he was, I think six- or seven-years-old, there was only like one dad, other than me. And he was an older gentleman. And so they kind of looked at me and said, "Well, can you coach?" And I said, "I've never even played baseball." I had to go read the Little League book in order to figure out how to play the game, you know? And that's how I coached for 17 years.

- Yeah, yeah, well you had three sons.

- I had three kids.

- And so you were the only dad, so you ended up coaching. And I remember, Dad, when I was little, you and Mom wanted to make sure we stayed outta trouble. So you guys tried to set up our home as the place where all the kids would come, so we'd stay outta trouble. Maybe explain that and what we did to Mom's garden.

- Yeah, well I got a good deal on a pitching machine and it had all the nets and the pipes and everything that had to go with it. And so we had to go tear it down and move it, but of course we did that. And so when you got a pitching machine in your backyard, you attract every little kid for about 10 blocks in a circle, and they show up at your house just to see if somebody's out in the batting cage. And so our house became the center of everybody.

- Yeah, and I'll publicly own this, too. We used to take that pitching machine, we were right up next to the airport and the planes would fly over to land, and we tried to shoot down the planes with the pitching machine, crank each wheel up to a hundred and . So, I apologize for that, Dad. But yeah, you guys had mini-bikes and you had sporting equipment, and I think Mom was gone one weekend and we put the batting cage where our garden used to be and didn't ask and she came home and was a little frustrated with that move. But our house was always set up as the place where all the kids would come, and you and Mom would always feed kids, clothe kids, and I still remember, we'd go shopping for clothes, for shoes or coats, when school started and Mom would always buy extra coats and stuff and I'd be like, "Mom, why are you buying extra coats?" She's like, "We're gonna hang 'em out. When the kids come over that don't have coats,

we're gonna give 'em a coat. When the kids come over, they don't have shoes, we're gonna give 'em shoes." And you guys always made extra food. And we always had kids stayin' the night 'cause they didn't have, oftentimes their parents weren't even home. And so they were alone. And so they would come over, do their homework. They would hit the batting cage, hang out, Mom would help 'em with homework, you guys would feed 'em, and oftentimes they'd stay the night. Maybe, you were telling us the story before, maybe like coaching Little League, and then the parents don't even show up, so you bring the kids home and then you're looking for the parents.

- Yeah, one night we had a little guy that played with Michael, our middle boy, and game is over, we come home, the game is over and we're looking around and his dad ain't there. And I said, "Well, come home and we'll give him a call." So we take him home and we call the house and he ain't there. And I asked the kid, I says, "Well, what about your mom?" "Well, my mom works at nights." I think she was a nurse or something. And he goes, "But my dad goes to this certain tavern," he goes, "It's right down by the waterfront." And he goes, "I've stopped there with him before." So we get in the telephone book and we start looking for taverns down in that area, and sure enough, we call three or four taverns and we ask, "Is so-and-so there?" "Yeah, just a minute." It's like 9:30 at night, I'm going, "Could you come and pick up your son so I could go to bed?" You gotta go hunt down the parents.

- Well then, over the years, I remember I'd even go off to college or get married and come back and anytime we were home, you guys have since moved, kids would just drop by then. Now they're grown and they'd knock on the door and, "Hey, want you to meet my wife. Hey-," you know? And so you guys were kind of like the mom and dad of the neighborhood and everybody'd stop by even when they were grown up.

- Well, a lot of that, my wife ended up working at the high school in the area and there was 1200 kids and she literally knew every kid's name. If there was a problem in the school with one of the kids, the security guards would come, the security people would come to her and go, who is it? And, "It's so-and-so and so-and-so, and they're in this class at this time." And because of that, even when our kids were grown up and going away, we still had kids that they felt like Mrs. Driscoll's always there. And for a matter of fact, we had kids move in with us because both of their parents moved and they wanted to finish school. So of course my wife goes, "Well, you can come stay with us till you graduate."

- Yeah.

- It's just the way it was.

- So, how many grandkids you got now, Pops?

- We keep adding, we got 23.

- Yeah. 23 so far. And you guys are down for the week and I just wanted to publicly honor you and I wanted to give the boys a chance just to share whatever they appreciate about you or good memories they have of you. You've always made your family your priority and growing up, you didn't do a lot of hobbies 'cause you were busy being a dad, coaching Little League, being involved in what we were doing and you didn't buy yourself any hobbies, so you weren't a boating guy or a fishing guy, or, you were a dad and you were working hard to- I mean, the fact that you literally worked until you broke your back and then had to go through surgery and then go to college and get a degree and then go into another trade and become a building inspector and all of that. I mean, you always did whatever it took to take care of our family. But I just wanted to honor you 'cause you always made family a priority. And when the kids were growing up, Friday nights, you, Mom, and- well, you and Mom and then Grace's mom and dad, would take turns watching the kids for date nights. You guys would go out dating on a Friday, and oftentimes they would stay at your house, and you were always at their sporting events. You were at their school events. You were at their tournaments. I mean, you were always, you know your kids and your grandkids. You've always been very, very, very invested and involved. So anything you guys wanna share, just what you appreciate about Grandpa or a good memory you have or something you're thankful for.

- Yeah, I'd just say, well, thank you, first off, for just being here, we appreciate it. And there's a lot of wisdom in what you're saying. I just remember as a kid really appreciating and enjoying time with my grandparents, which a lot of kids don't have grandparents and that's rare to actually enjoy 'em. So Calvin and I, when we were, how old do you think we were? I was probably 10, you were eight, something about that. First time we came to Arizona was with you and Grandma and you took us, we each had a baseball tournament in Arizona, and I just remember that being a fun time. Good memories. And you're just always present. You still are present in our lives, but always present. And that helped me, helped me develop a identity as a young man. I got to see my grandpa and who he was and the history that you had and the foundation of the family you started. And then I got to see my dad and you're both involved heavily in my life. And that helped me build identity as a young man from a young age, and I think that's a big part of legacy as we're going through Genesis. You have to see your history of your family and see what God's brought you through already. And you have to have hope for a future and just say, thank you grandpa for being there and showing us the history of what you went through to provide for this family and provide a legacy. And now we get to see the future of what we get to do through that, so thank you.

- Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it is cool that you think about it. You boys, the first time you were in Arizona, I think I was working, I think it was in Orlando preaching, and you and Mom were like, "Hey, we'll take 'em to Arizona, we'll take 'em to the tournament." And so it was waffles for breakfast at the hotel and Little League and all that. And you were just always willing, Dad, to say, "Hey, we'll clear the deck, whatever the kids need, we're gonna do that." And so it's interesting now that we're all here in Arizona and doing ministry in Arizona, that the first time you were in Arizona it was with your grandpa, which is awesome.

- One of my favorite memories that I share with Grandpa is we got baptized together. We were in Israel, we went on a family trip and my dad was baptizing my grandpa in the Jordan River, and then he turned around and got to baptize me. So that's a pretty special memory, but I, one thing I appreciate is how hardworking you were. We were just talking about that. And you taught my dad how to work hard and then he, in turn, taught us how to work hard. And I apologize for my generation. They are not hard workers. So being able to know how to work hard, it gives me a head start and my brothers a head start and, so thank you for that, Grandpa.

- Well, I didn't get baptized by him or go to Arizona with him. I was still, like, way down here when they were playing baseball. But my favorite memory with grandpa is the beginning. When I was about four years old, he put me on a tee and he'd put me on right side, left side. So he started my baseball passion and kinda from there, I wanted to play more and I took after Zac and I hit lefty now, but still it was a lot of fun just getting to be taught by you. And one thing that I've learned from you, kinda after what they're saying, is the hard work that you just put in. It's just really instilled into kinda all three of us boys. And like Calvin was saying, our generation kind of sucks at working, but you know, I feel like you've just really set the example and the bar high on just how to work and how to serve others, so...

- Well, I'm not your grandson, but I feel like it sometimes. So, we have cars in common, we hit it off right away. Grandpa Joe restores cars, and so do I. So we instantly became really good friends and it was really cool. One of the first times I met him, we went to Starbucks and he made me drink his drink, which was very endearing and it was a great drink. So I learned something at Starbucks, from Grandpa Joe, and I just really loved, we came up to Washington to visit you guys and you set the entire house up for grandkids. You got like 4 or 6 bunk beds ready to go for all the grandkids. You got cars for all the older grandkids. Like, you're totally set up so that people look forward to coming over to your house, spending time with you guys. And it's just an honor to know you and to see your legacy through these three generations. And I'm really thankful for who my wife is and she wouldn't be here today if you didn't take care of your family. So, I just wanna honor you and thank you for that.

- Yeah.

- And thank you too, Landon, you've been really good to my folks and they love you very, very much. And just, yeah, Dad, I think you- I have to ask you a weird question. So when you and Mom started, what did you start with? Like financially, economically, where did you guys start? I mean, here we are 23 grandkids and a few generations later.

- With nothin'.

- Yeah.

- I mean nothin'. When I met your mom, I was working at a pizza house and flipping, not even flipping pizzas, I was the chicken guy, I was making chicken. I think that was the last time you

made dinner, Dad. But I mean, our generation, you didn't have a lot. Back there, there was nobody that had a lot. There was enough if you had food on the table and you had a car that would start in the wintertime, which was a miracle, you pretty much, and you had a job, you just went from there and, and through God's good graces, it keeps going on. I guess if I was gonna, say, have advice for any guy getting married today is, it ain't gonna be easy, and you don't have to be the smartest, you don't have to be the richest, but you have to be present. You always have to be present, just be there. Because I found that that's the only thing I ever was consistent, was being there. And I've got five great kids and 23 grandkids.

- [Mark] You feel blessed dad?

- Absolutely. And what does it look like? What is it for you just starting with nothing, working hard and then even seeing your grandsons, and who your granddaughter marries, and all of that, and who your grandson marries and...

- Well, all of my kids, I mean, every one of you guys are what you'd call an A-type personality, where you go out and you get it done. You've proved yourself. Melanie, after a divorce, picked herself up and kept on marching and she's doing great, and Michael's gone through a divorce and now he's picking himself up and he's doing great, and Michelle's doing great. And, you know, Matt, all you kids, every kid of mine has had difficulty and has had times, but they do the same thing. They just keep going, don't stop. And in the end you end up pretty happy.

- [Mark] Yeah. That's great. Well, we love you dad. And I just wanted to publicly thank you and honor you, and it's good to have you and Mom down and thank you for staying married to mom for 53 years, or I should thank Mom for staying married to you for 53 years, yeah.

- [Joe] Exactly.

- And yeah, it's just, it's really cool because we all love you, we enjoy you, we like seeing you. And everybody here, you know, it's not a perfect family. We got our issues and I'm the most drama in the whole group, but everybody here loves Jesus and loves each other and feels really, really blessed and excited for all of your hard work, and kind of the, each generation taking another step forward. So you didn't have anything, and I started better than you did, and these guys are starting off better than I did, and, and just seeing that legacy move forward is super, super encouraging. So, anything else you guys wanna say before I pray for Grandpa Joe? All right, you're the oldest, Zac, why don't you pray for him?

- Lord, thank you for this opportunity to just seek wisdom, seek guidance, and to learn from people who have been through it. Thank you for the consistency and the presence of my grandfather. And I pray for each of the men in this room that your Holy Spirit would fill them, and that your Holy Spirit would be present with them so they can be present with their families. And we just pray for the legacy of not just my family, the Driscolls, but the families of every man in this room, and that we would think generationally and not make selfish decisions. And Lord we

just pray your blessing over the discussion tonight and the rest of our night. In Jesus's name,
amen.