



RAY EDWARDS

LIVE WITH JOY. LEAD WITH PASSION. PROSPER WITH PURPOSE.

Jeff Goins; The Art of Work Episode 155

Have you ever thought about your calling? What your calling is in life or your passion? I see people get frustrated when they hear talk about finding your passion or discovering what your calling is because some people just say I don't have a passion. I certainly don't know what it is, I can't discover it. Now what? Well, if you get frustrated with this whole thing, I think you're going to love today's show.

I'm talking with Jeff Goins, who is the author of a brand new book called *The Art of Work*. He says that the answer to finding your passion and discovering what your calling is in life is to find the intersection between what you care about and the needs of the world. His book about this is awesome. You can get a free copy of the book I've got links in the show notes. If you go to RayEdwards.com/155, you will be able to click on the link to get a free copy of the book by Jeff. It's brand new and the free copy is for a limited time only. So if you're listening to this in the future, after March 2015, that offer probably still won't be good, but you can also go to ArtofWorkBook.com/ray to get this free book offer.

Today's episode will largely be a conversation with Jeff Goins and we will dig deeply into these matters. We'll talk about how you can, as Jeff puts it, abandon the status quo and start living a life that matters. That sounds really good to me and I bet it sounds really good to you, so hang on.

Spiritual Foundations

We're skipping the Tip of the Week this week because I've got this interview with Jeff. We'll be back to the regular non-interview format of the show next week, but I definitely wanted to have you take part in this conversation with Jeff this week so that's why we have the interview once again. So, again, to the people who asked, no, the show has not turned into an interview show. I do want to talk to you about the Spiritual Foundations segment today before we move into the interview and that's because the subject I'm going to cover is, I think, vitally important to a lot of people right now.

I've recently had the opportunity and the privilege to interact with so many of you, both online through the podcast, through emails, through webinars and then at our live event in San Diego that we just had at Permission to Prosper and, also, we just did a reader survey. I just realized as I thought through these communications and the common threads in all of them that there's a problem we have as believers, as followers of Christ.

I especially think of a conversation I had with a friend of mine over the last few days in which he was telling me how he simply could not figure out whether what he had done in a particular area of his life had been because of the Lord's leading or because of his own, as he put it, flesh. As I listened to him and watched his face, I realized he was struggling, really, with feeling like he needed to be forgiven for wanting to do something. It just washed over me then that even though we know as followers of Jesus that we are forgiven, that His sacrifice on the cross cleared our record of all sin we have ever committed or ever will commit, we so often fall into the trap of self-condemnation. We condemn ourselves all over again.

This is what Paul talks about when he says you render the cross of Christ useless. Not that it is useless or you've lost your salvation, but you're condemning yourself and cutting off the flow of grace in your own life. When you are free from condemnation and I mean totally free from it, you are empowered to live a victorious life and you won't be operating from you flesh because you're a new creation in Christ. We have been forgiven, there is no more judgment for us. We are forgiven because He was judged and He was condemned on our behalf, Jesus was.

There's another really important reason that I want to talk about this. While we were in San Diego, we actually saw a number of people physically healed during our conference, supernaturally physically healed. One person, in particular, was a lady who was an artist. I believe she crafted jewelry by hand and her hand, as a result of an accident, was in the form of a claw. It was frozen and she couldn't use it and over the course of the three days, as God began to work and the Kingdom began to manifest in the meeting, her hand became completely free, loose and flexible again for the first time since that accident. It was astonishing.

I believe it's because we'd spent a lot of time talking about the grace and forgiveness of Jesus. It's not just about getting your eternal fire insurance and not having to go to hell. It's not just about that. If that's all we got that would be the greatest deal ever, but it's also about physical illness. Forgiveness and healing go together, they're intertwined together. Remember in Scripture in Isaiah 53:5 it says, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed."

That's not spiritual healing, that's physical healing we're talking about there. How do I know that it's physical healing and not just spiritual? Because in the New Testament, in multiple places, this verse is quoted referring to physical healing so that's how the New Testament apostles and disciples understood it. That's how we should understand it, as well. So healing and the price for our forgiveness are intertwined in God's Word.

Many of us today try so hard to heal ourselves. We're trying to get healed from sicknesses or mental problems or depression or anxiety or from addictions we suffer from. I think it's important for us to understand that our forgiveness comes from Jesus and realizing, reveling and basking in that forgiveness every single day. Not just saying to ourselves oh, yeah, I know and shrugging it off, but really thinking about what it means to be totally forgiven by Jesus, by God Himself and becoming more and more conscious of it. The more forgiveness-conscious we become, the easier it will be for us to experience healing from every bodily illness we suffer from, every anxiety, every bit of depression, every destructive addiction or habit we have.

The key to receiving your healing is just being more conscious of the fact that you are forgiven and what happens to us as believers is I think we live with partial forgiveness. We can accept that we're forgiven in some areas of our lives, but in other areas deep inside of our secret heart we still feel that somewhere in us there's some kind of darkness that Jesus hasn't touched. As if He doesn't know. As if He doesn't know already. As if He didn't know in advance.

Whatever this is, probably something from your past, maybe from the past five minutes, just allow the forgiveness of Christ to flow over all of your sins and receive healing. Receive healing of your heart, your soul, your spirit and of your body, just let the past go. Let the mistakes you made this morning or five minutes ago, let those go. Just be free and learn to forgive yourself. That's what the opposite of condemnation is, forgiving yourself. Forgive yourself and have an open heart to Jesus' total, absolute forgiveness, which also brings His total, absolute healing.

Feature Presentation

I'm so excited to talk with you and share this conversation that I had with my good friend Jeff Goins who has written this brand new book called *The Art of Work*. I'm not going to give a lot of prelude, I'm just going to jump right into the conversation that Jeff and I had. Welcome to the podcast, Jeff Goins.

Ray: When you first had the idea for the book, what was in your head?

Jeff: Well, I was tired of people lying. I know that sounds sort of extreme.

Ray: Oh, you're in for a lifetime of disappointment.

Jeff: Shucks! I was tired of people lying about what it takes to find meaningful work, you know, fulfill your purpose. Even just in the world of career advice, I heard so many people talking about finding your dream job and describing it sort of contrasted the path that's described in *The Art of Work* as a plan, as do these five things and you'll be set. I'm really suspicious of that, I don't think life works that way and I don't think I'm weird.

I think most of my friends, most normal people I talk to and I'm not talking about gurus on stage, I wanted to write this book for everyday ordinary people who struggle with everyday ordinary things like what am I supposed to do with my life. I don't just know, so is there a guide or a story I can use to make sense of my life that I can follow that's not just going to tell me do these seven things. Be awesome and if you're not awesome you're a total failure and you should just give up. You're not one of the extraordinary people in the world and you just need to succumb to the status quo.

Is there an alternative to that? I just saw a lot of people saying that. Saying you've got to have a plan, you've got to set some goals. I'm not anti plan, anti goals, but when it comes this discovering your vocation, understanding what was I put on earth to do, to me, that is a little less pragmatic. Out of necessity it requires a certain amount of grace and I would say art to navigate.

Ray: I feel like there are two pictures that most people have. One is the beam of light from the clouds. The tablets are handed down and this is what you must do, my son, with your life. There's that view. We're waiting for that and I think many of us are going to be disappointed if that's what we're waiting for.

Jeff: I think so.

Ray: Then on the other end of it there's this whole totally self-determined I am making it up and I'm going to make it happen. How do you navigate between those two poles?

Jeff: I read a lot of books on this subject. I read a lot of religious books, Christian books and spiritual books, whatever you want to call them, and I read a lot of business books. I kind of wanted to find a happy medium between the two, between the beam of light and between the go after it, you can do anything, because both kind of felt not completely true to me. Again, I wasn't setting out to say it has to be this way, but maybe there's another way, a way for the rest of us who didn't get the beam of light and aren't amazing achievers.

I think a lot of people feel the life they've been given is less than ideal, that things have happened in our lives that aren't good, disease, pain, misfortune, bad luck. I think we all can feel at some point in life that we got gypped or just didn't get the opportunity that somebody else got. I think that's true, but I think, really, the big idea behind *The Art of Work* is what makes a life extraordinary, which is if you find your calling, you're going to live an extraordinary life. Maybe you won't be famous, maybe you won't be rich, but you'll get to end your life looking back on the things you've done and the things you were a part of and feel good about it, whenever that happens, because you found your purpose.

So I wrote the book to map out what that life might look like. Not just for my own experience, I've got a lot of life left to live, hopefully, but looking at lots of other people's stories and what kind of emerged was this path in between those two extremes that you describe, Ray, which is really an intentional process that you have to lean into.

Life doesn't just happen to you, you have to take some of the things that have been thrown your way and make the most of them, but at the same time you have to be open to the mystery, as well, that when things don't go your way, you might have to pivot or change midstream. So the big idea is that what makes a life remarkable isn't necessarily the chances we get, but what we do with them.

Ray: I agree with what you just said, but there's an irony to your view on this and the title of your book. A proven path to discovering what you were meant to do. Do you think that everybody can discover what they were meant to do?

Jeff: I do, yeah. I'm going to be so bold as to say yeah. Even though there's mystery, there's enough evidence for us to know how it works. Don't get me wrong. I started the book saying a calling is not a plan it's what happens when the plan goes horribly wrong. It's what you have left when life begins to fall apart and something in you, something noble, something virtuous has to rise up and you have to become not the person you thought you would be, but the person you were meant to be.

The people who do that, people like you, frankly, Ray, things happen. Bad things happen, unfortunate circumstances sometimes of our own doing, sometimes not happen. When people are building a legacy now that will be remembered later, something noble rises up in them and they respond. Not by going well, I was one of the unlucky people, I'm not special. I remember reading a Christian book where they said there are special calls and normal calls. There are special people like Moses and then there are average people like you and I thought this is the most depressing book in the world.

Ray: Really.

Jeff: We all want to feel like we are a character in a story and that our role matters. Maybe you're not the hero, although in the back of our minds we all kind of want to think of ourselves as the hero of our own story, but you are a character who has a significant role to play.

I think a path is very different from a plan. If you and I are going hiking on Mount Spokane or something and we are on the trail, if it is a marked path we clearly see where we should step and where we should not step and we know that based on what other people have done before us. So that's all I was trying to do in *The Art of Work* is identify here's what a remarkable life looks like and here's where most of these people have walked before and

you can safely guess if you follow in the majority of these footsteps that were taken where you end up is going to be a pretty good place.

Ray: You've got my wheels turning now and I've been thinking about this since reading the book. There are those who have figured out what their calling is and at some point along the way they say oh, I was wrong. What's going on there?

Jeff: One of the questions I hear a lot and you may hear this too, Ray, I've heard this a lot since I told people I was writing a book about this subject. They go well, what if it changes? My opinion on that is it doesn't change, but it evolves. I don't think there's a light bulb that goes on and then for the rest of your life everything is easier, you have total clarity. I think clarity comes with action.

In fact, I think even when we think of the voice from Heaven coming down and telling you what you ought to do with your life, when we actually read those stories, I think of a Biblical example. I tell the story in the book of the Prophet Samuel. This is exactly what happens. Most people, if they want to figure out their life's purpose, just want God, the Universe or whatever to speak to them in a booming voice.

Ray: Yeah.

Jeff: You know the story, I'm sure, Ray. This actually happens to Samuel and he doesn't know what to do. God is calling to him and he doesn't recognize the voice. What does he need? He needs a mentor. He needs somebody who can help guide him, his mentor the priest Eli. It takes him three times to get the calling right before he even knows how to respond and then you could say it takes a lifetime for him to fulfill that calling.

Lots of failure and confusion, anointing one guy and thinking he's going to become a great king and he turns out to be a bad guy and then anointing another guy, lots of rocky steps along that path. If that's the example we have were, best case scenario, a voice from the Heavens tells you what to do you're still not going to understand it. You're still going to have to learn as you go.

So I think this idea of epiphany really happen gradually, that we discover our life's work, the thing that we're meant to do our whole life. The book just tries to describe the path so that you kind of know I'm headed in the right direction, I'm learning things as I go and things are becoming more clear with each step that I take.

Ray: I often think if I did hear the booming voice of God out loud like Samuel did or like Moses did, I mean we read those stories and we think that would be obvious, that's the ideal, but I think many of us today would think oh, maybe I'm schizophrenic.

Jeff: Yeah, even those guys didn't get it right. Moses goes hum, no, I can't do that.

Ray: Right. What God said is not what they thought God meant, so it's not as easy as it looks. You said something earlier, that you're not talking about the gurus on stage, people who think they have it all figured out. I know people hear this, but it's surprising how many of those guys, the guys teaching about the 12 simple steps to having everything in your life work out perfectly every time, how many of those guys behind the scenes are scratching their heads saying I just can't make this work.

Jeff: Yeah. I just wanted us to be more honest about how do you make sense of your life and then how do you not just go well, whatever will be will be. I don't think it has to be that fatalistic.

Ray: Oh, thanks for putting that song in my head now.

Jeff: At the same time, I don't want to have to live under the oppression of the ideal that I've got to get it all just right. I have to line up all these steps in the right order; otherwise, it's not going to work. I think the path of your life's work, you creating meaningful work and finding purpose in your life, is a generous, gracious path with lots of room for failure. It's kind of cool to see how all those things that looked like really bad things at the time, and probably were, can lead to really great things down the line.

Ray: The title of your podcast, which is called The Portfolio Life, did that come first or did that part of the book come first?

Jeff: Yeah, that's a great question. That was me being sneaky. I was almost done with the book when I started the podcast and I had been thinking about these ideas for years, really, but I encountered that term The Portfolio Life years ago and I started writing the book. The book was basically written, at least the first draft of it, when I launched the podcast. So, yeah, the book came first. I love that idea that you aren't just one thing, but you are a multifaceted creature with different interests and your calling is not just one thing, but it's a collection of things. It's a portfolio.

That was another myth I kept hearing people say about their calling. It's just one thing. Just go do that one thing for the rest of your life. Well, come on. Who has a life like that? No, I think you're calling is a portfolio and the way you manage it determines whether or not it's a good one.

Ray: I love that, I love that whole picture. I love the idea that we can have some self-determinism. In other words, we can decide I'm not going to just have an ordinary life that doesn't matter. Like you said, I think we all feel like we want to be the hero of the story where we feel like we're called to something. Most people that I encounter, their frustration is they have no idea what it is and so I think your book really provides a way; I mean it really does provide seven, you call them stages, that you can go through to walk this path.

I love the analogies of the book, I love the honesty of the book and I love the fact that it recognizes that everything doesn't always work out the way we want it to, but we do get to choose our response to how we manage those things that happen.

Jeff: Yeah, I think that's absolutely true. If you don't know what you want to do with your life, well, there's good news. Join the club. I interviewed hundreds of people, seven or eight of them whose stories made it into the book, and then I've just read tons of biographies of people that I feel like they've got something figured out. Mother Teresa had something figured out. Walt Disney left quite a legacy. So what can we learn from their stories? One of the things we get to learn is they had no idea, they were just moving forward. They were acting out of what we call agency, they were agents in their own story.

Maybe it's not completely self-determined, but you can do something. You can do something with the life that you've been given. I open the book with a story of a kid who gets a brain tumor. He's five years old, they remove the brain tumor and he's left blind,

mute and paralyzed and he's given, at most, five years to live. I talked to that little boy. His name was Garret Rush Miller and I talked to him when he was 18-19 years old. He did not die, he recovered much of his sight, he talked very well, he wasn't mute and he was no longer paralyzed.

In between those past 13 years, he and his dad completed over a dozen triathlons, one of which he did on his own. He climbed Machu Picchu and became an Eagle Scout and when he's not at school or working at a climbing gym in Colorado Springs he's volunteering for Wounded Warriors, a charity that works with war veterans. That's a life worth living, in my opinion, and it had nothing to do with the special opportunities Garret was given and had everything to do with how he responded to what life gave him and how he made the most of those chances.

Ray: Yeah, absolutely. Part of dealing with the mystery is that moment when we have to make a choice. He had to make a choice not just one time, but over and over again that I'm going to just move forward and do what's in front of me and I'm going to do it the best I can. Not every story turns out like Garret's, some people have that same kind of thing happen to them and their child dies.

I had a dear friend of mine pass away a few weeks ago. I had just spoken with him a few days earlier and he had all these things that he wanted to do, all these things he was planning to do. He was not an idle person, he was always working on something and he left this earth with a big list of things left to do.

You mentioned Walt Disney. Even those people we look up to like that, I think we have this picture in our heads sometimes, I believe some of us, I have, at times, had this picture that Walt accomplished all these great things, he knew it and his life's work was complete, but that's not what happened. I'm sure he went out with lots of stuff still on the to-do list. I love the portfolio analogy. He managed the portfolio of what he was given and he multiplied what he was given.

Not all of us get the same opportunities. If you're born in Africa, you just don't have the same opportunities in front of you that somebody who's born in Tennessee has, but you still have an opportunity to have a life that matters and live a life of importance. I said something earlier that I want to correct. I said the word 'self-determinism' and I don't think any of us are completely self-determined, but I think we do get to make choices.

Jeff: Yeah. I think that's obvious, at least it is to me. You don't get to control everything that life throws at you and you don't completely get to control the story that you're a part of, but you do get to control who you are in those moments, which seems to affect the story in some way.

That's a mystery to me, that's above my pay grade, I don't completely understand it, but I think we all know people in life that we know who are just kind of head down, moping along, taking whatever life throws at them and just kind of accepting it, absorbing it into their identity. Then there are those who don't have ideal circumstances necessarily, but make the most of what they've been given.

I'm so sorry to hear about your friend, Ray, but as you mentioned, I think we all have that. We all have things we want to do that we don't get to complete. I have a friend who tells me that we all die as unfinished symphonies. We all have something that we don't ever complete. That's why I think legacy is important. I love that story of Walt Disney, his whole

story. He always had things he was working on. One of reasons why he loved Disney Land is because it was a project that was never complete. He could always make it better.

He did have a project that never came to fruition. It was the whole Tomorrow Land thing with Epcot. He had this vision that Epcot was going to be a place where people lived. It was going to be like a community of the future. He envisioned people living there and it was a very sort of radical idea, that it would be completely self-sustained, independent. Very interesting. What ever happened? You go to Epcot and you gorge yourself on eating from all around the world. They have cuisine from all around the world, which is my favorite part.

Ray: Yes, mine too.

Jeff: But I think that's why building a team, bringing people along for the journey, leaving whatever unfinished work you have to someone else, that could be children or protégés, but I think there's something about a calling that has to be so big that you can't complete it on your own.

Ray: I hope that's true. I hope I don't get to the end of my life and discover that the last couple of years have just pretty much been me twiddling my thumbs waiting to make an exit. That's not the way I want to do it.

Jeff: Yeah. Well, I don't think that will happen.

Ray: Let me ask you, is this book your magnum opus?

Jeff: That's a funny concept. I sort of played with that term a little bit. Magnum opus traditionally means master piece; your great work is literally what it means. I had a couple people read that part of the book and go this isn't really what a magnum opus is because I basically describe a magnum opus as more than one thing, a body of work.

I had a reader point out to me that there are sort of two definitions of it and this might get a little esoteric, but there's the musical version of it. Magnum opus is your great symphony or something and I tell the story of 'Mr. Holland's Opus', which was a great movie. Basically, he's working on this symphony his whole life and then towards the end of his life when he's retiring he's basically getting fired because they're no longer going to fund the music program he's been teaching for decades now.

I don't know if you now the movie, but he got into this work because he was traveling with a band and had to make some money on the side. They came back from travel, his wife got pregnant and he had to go work for a high school for a few years so that he could support his family, all with the intent of going back into music. Well, he never does. The movie ends with him coming to the end of his life and there's this sense of regret. He hasn't done what he thought he was supposed to do, he never finishes his symphony.

Well, at the end of the movie, he walks into this gymnasium full of all these current and past students that are all there to wish him well, thank him for all the years he gave to their lives and he realizes by teaching them music he did a lot more than that. One of the students is the governor of the state and she welcomes him and says Mr. Holland, you were working on this symphony, you never finished it. Maybe you thought it was going to make you rich or famous and it didn't do either of those things, but Mr. Holland, we are your symphony.

Then she pulls back the curtain and there are all these students. There's this orchestra of all of these kids who are going to play this symphony that he never finished. It was his opus, that's what the opus in Mr. Holland's Opus is. That was his great work and he realized it wasn't this thing one thing that I was doing, it was the whole life that I was living.

There's another definition of magnum opus that goes back to alchemy and stuff and it basically describes magnum opus as a process. It's something you go through to create gold. Alchemy is all about turning lead or another metal into gold and I think our magnum opus is our life. It's the whole process of taking what we've been given, which doesn't feel like gold sometimes, and turning it into something beautiful that's going to affect other people's lives.

So this, I think, is the best thing I've done so far, but it's just going to be one piece and, hopefully, the body of work that will be my magnum opus.

Ray: Yeah, I agree that it is one piece of the work you've done. I also agree that I think it's the best thing you've done so far.

Jeff: Thank you.

Ray: I love the fact that *The Art of Work* has that, if I may use this word, truthiness about it.

Jeff: Thank you.

Ray: It's not overhyped, it's not a blueprint that gives you guaranteed happiness and fulfillment for the rest of your life, but I think it's a great roadmap and trip guide for how to get started on the journey or how to continue on the journey you're already on. You do give some very concrete tools at the back where you go over the stages and the lessons that go along with them and some ways to know you've found your calling and there are discussion questions.

It's timely, this is a great book to give students who are graduating and it's also a great book to give to people who are making a transition in their life. It seems like half the people I know are making some big transition and wondering what am I doing here? I don't even understand what my life is for now.

Jeff: No, I agree. Most people I know either are making that transition or they sure want to.

Ray: Yes, yes. So it's a fabulous book, it's a beautiful work that does not compromise the truth, but also has, I feel, a very optimistic message. It gives hope and it's not false hope it's hope that's founded on good principles, so I just want to thank you for writing it.

Jeff: Thank you for reading it, that means a lot. Thank you, Ray, I really appreciate it.

Ray: I want you to say hi to my friends at the Frothy Monkey for me.

Jeff: I will, I will say hi to all the chimpanzees there.

Ray: I have missed that place.

Jeff: Yeah, I go there pretty much every day. I was just thinking. They should have cool names for the people that work there, call them chimps or something. They should really play up the whole ape analogy a little bit more than they do.

Ray: They should. Marketing to Maddox, they need to work on that. Get Don Miller to go in there and work on those guys.

Jeff: There you go.

Ray: Thanks again for writing *The Art of Work*, I highly recommend the book. It's available everywhere?

Jeff: Everywhere, it's probably under your pillow right now.

Ray: It's not under my pillow.

Jeff: Okay. Well, maybe it's not everywhere, but anywhere where you could acquire a book it should be there.

Ray: Ah, that's the key thing. So get not one copy, get several because this is truly a book you're going to want to give. You're going to know people in your life and think, they should read this book. How they react to that is totally your responsibility. So thanks again, Jeff.

Jeff: Thank you, Ray, it's my pleasure.

What to Do Next

That's going to wrap up the podcast for this week, thanks for listening to the show. Remember, get your free copy of Jeff's book by clicking on the link in the show notes. Go to RayEdwards.com/155 to get that free copy of his new book. Also, we would love it if you'd give us a rating. If you would, subscribe to the show in iTunes, give us a rating and ranking and if you write a review it helps other people discover the show. That's how we're able to help more and more people every single week. From the bottom of my heart, I really appreciate when you do that so much. So thank you if you've already done it, thank you in advance if you're going to do it.

Until the next time, I pray that the Lord's forgiveness washes over you, that you realize you are forgiven for every single thing and that He continues to bless you in crazy ways that you never expected because He's just that good.

Remember, transcripts of the show are available with each episode, courtesy of our friends at SuccessTranscripts.com, a great solution if you need your podcast, sermon, seminars, interviews, workshop, book or other audio/video transcribed into text.