
#233: Cliff Ravenscraft, “I Am Not Spock”

Ray: Ray Edwards Show episode 233, Cliff Ravenscraft I am not spock.

Cliff: Hey there. This is cliff Ravenscraft from podcastanswerman.com and you're listening to the Ray Edwards Show.

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Ray: Gandalf did he have a backup plan. There's this line in the movie, it's also in the book, and he says, "Fly you fools." That's right before he falls into the pit of hell will the balrog and we think he's dead. Oh he is dead or he is some other plane of existence. Looks a lot like hell and then he came out, he slew the balrog which looked a lot like the devil. Then he came back and he was Gandalf the White, more powerful than he was before.

Sean: There's no imagery there.

Ray: No, no tie in it at all. Any theological metaphors you may see are in your own mind.

Sean: Right. They definitely were put there on purpose.

Ray: The question is, this has been speculated about, did Gandalf have a backup plan? Did his words "Fly you fools" mean run away right now or was he actually saying fly as use the

eagles. It makes a lot more sense, does it, to have the eagles take Frod and fly him over Mount Doom and they just drop the ring in and they're done.

Sean: Or even if the eagles just flew them to the entrance because as we found in the third movie, there's like no one at the entrance.

Ray: We think Gandalf had a backup plan-

Sean: Because in the Hobbit they used the eagles.

Ray: Why didn't they use in The Lord of the Rings?

Sean: He wanted to go over the mountain, remember, which is where the eagles were and he really didn't want to go Minas Tirith. Not Minas Tirith-

Ray: Through the Mines of Moria.

Sean: Yes. That's a new mistake.

Ray: Mines of Moria. Anyway, there's a lot of compelling evidence that Gandalf had a different plan

Sean: ... and he was also not spock.

Ray: But wouldn't it have been interesting if Leonard Nimoy had played Gandalf. That will never happen-

Sean: No unfortunately.

Ray: Maybe it will if we have movies in heaven or CGI.

Sean: There able to rebuild Arnold Schwarzenegger in Terminator Genesis-

Ray: And they did a good job.

Sean: They did. Come with me if you want to lift. It's my new favorite shirt.

Ray: If I remember I'll have to get a photo of you wearing that shirt and put it on this episode which you'll find at rayedwards.com/233.

Sean: Tangent done.

Ray: Cliff Ravenscraft.

Sean: Awesome guy.

Ray: Part one of the interview was last week. It was great. It was a conversation that went on a little long, so we split it into 2 interviews. Cliff and I decided to try something new and different, so we're actually both running the 2 part interview concurrently. He ran part 1 last week just like I did and he'll be running part 2 this week just like I'm doing and that way both of our audiences get to hear from each of us. I do encourage you to check out what's happening at podcastanswerman.com. This week we're going to pick up and get back on track with our discussion about many things but one of the things we discuss is how Leonard Nimoy declared 'I am not spock'. You should just listen, so let's do it. If you haven't listened to the first part of this conversation which took place last week as far as you're concerned we just pause for about 10 seconds as far as Cliff and I are concerned, I just picked up right where we left off.

We were just talking about Cliff your journey with Hamilton and think through your 20 year for what you wanted your life to look like, how much money you wanted to make, what things were important to you. Then you've come to kind of a new place in your life where some on those goals that you shared so publicly, some of those ambitions that you shared so publicly, from where I sit, there's been something of a shift. Can you talk about that a little bit.

Cliff: Yeah. Last week you had mentioned something about not being so tied to the outcomes, can you just briefly rephrase that or cover that again so that I can actually jump right off that one?

Ray: Sure. What I was saying was I think it's important ... This is a good place for me to say. I said earlier in the first interview that I think 5 year plans, I didn't say exactly this way, but I think 5 year plans are bs and you can let that stand for whatever you want it to. I'll give you a safe out, a belief system. They're just a belief system. That's not really what I was thinking but for those of you who need a safe way to think about it, that's what bs means. Here's what I experienced when I was in business in the corporate world I used to be the guy pounding the desk saying, "We need a 5 year plan." What I noticed over time was they were always wrong and nobody ever referred to them after we put them in the nice binder and had them on the shelf or we put them on a pluck on the wall. We had our 5 year journey. They never worked out.

Here comes another Star Trek reference, what was the 5 year mission of the Star ship enterprise? The boldly go where no man had ever gone before. That soon became more politically correct and it became to build a gap where no one has ever gone before. There's 2 camps of thought on that change but their mission was to seek out new life and new civilizations, to explore, to discover that was their mission. It wasn't to get to Antares 3 by June 3rd Star date 2564.2.

Cliff: Or to map at least so many light years of space.

Ray: For those of you who this is not resonating with let me try another analogy. My point was it's important to have a general, I believe, somewhat ambiguous goal for the future that you're pointed towards but to be flexible enough to realize you're not married to that outcome. You're not so slavishly devoted to that specific outcome that you ignore what crops up along the way because that is what forms the fabrics of

your life. Those are the threads that weave together into the fabric of your life. Just like with Alexander Hamilton who did not start out thinking he would be the first Secretary of Treasury of United States of America, he just started out knowing that there was something more that he could do with his life and he took the next right step to do that.

Cliff: You had said, I love that, intentionally leave it ambiguous otherwise you become too married to the exact outcomes. To answer your question, one of the things that I had said in last week's interview I had mentioned that I had created what I want my life to look like in 20 years. I answered the 4 questions like how much money am I making and exactly how am I making it. What products and services are generating that? It's very detailed and not only that but I asked myself another question. How do I want to be known? One of those things that I "got married to" was that I wanted to be known for something beyond the scope of podcasting and podcast answer man. This ties into last week when you talked about type-casting and Mr Spock in William Shatner.

I didn't want to be type-casted as the Podcast Answer Man. I almost felt like my calling in life is not podcast answer man, if anything it's the encouraging others through Chrisman, encouraging others through content if that makes you feel better. The idea is that I want to encourage people, I want to entertain, educate, encourage and inspire others based upon my life experience, the things that I'm learning and I want to use all of that to help other people so that they can benefit from what I've learned that. I come alongside them, encourage them, inspire them to take everything they're doing in life to the next level so that they can become more of the person that God has created them to be.

That's what I want to be known for and I don't want to be ... What happened was while I'm putting this out, what do I want to be known for, I kept saying, "Today everybody is like who's Clifford? He's the guy who can teach you how to do a podcast." Then my emails consistently everyday filled with

hundreds of emails. "Cliff I have a quick question for you. I've got this mixer and I want to do a Skype thing, I want to be on the road and I have this microphone. What cables do I need and how do I hook I up?"

Ray: Don't you get so excited when those questions come in? Don't you just like, "I can't wait to answer that."?

Cliff: It wouldn't be so bad if it was 1 or 2 or 3 a week. I would love to spend the 25 to 45 minutes clearly spent answering an adequate answer to that. I just can't keep up with them and the thing is though Ray, is I have to respond to all of those in polite ways that allow me to ... I can't give them the detailed answer that they want but I still respond to everyone. Boy, I so wish somebody would say, "Cliff I just listened to this episode and you mentioned this, I'm just ready to give up. It's just no worth it anymore." What I mean by 'give up' I'm talking about stop their podcast. I'm not talking about life.

Ray: Thanks for clarifying.

Cliff: In fact to give you a perfect example of this, podcastanswerman.com/448. This is episode number 448 of my podcast and it's titled 'Getting past episode number 7'. This is a student who just graduated from my \$2,000 podcasting course and after her 5th episode she writes to me and says, "Cliff, I'm throwing in the towel. It's been 5 weeks and I asked somebody to listen to it, granted they're not in my target audience, but they listened to my podcast and I asked them for some feedback. They told me that I wasn't entertaining, that I was boring and all these other things." She's like, "This is just too much work, I can't move forward. I'm done." After 5 episodes.

Ray: Wow! Was this a friend? Is a friend that she sent this request to?

Cliff: I think it might have been a friend, yeah.

Ray: Wow! Nice friend.

Cliff: Yeah. Anyway here's what I can tell you, if anybody wants to hear the way that I'm wired and what I feel called to do in life I believe God has given me the gift of encouragement. To come alongside someone who has told me and I'm going to read for you word for word what she told me in the first week of my podcasting A-Z course. I said, "I need you to explain to me before we talk about anything else. I need to know your clear reason why you want to create this podcast because what you don't know is how much hard work is going to go into this. You pretty much going to be horrible at it first. It's going to take ... You're going to need a big enough reason why to get you moving forward." Her response was and I'm reading this word for word, "My life's mission and purpose of my podcast is to share my experience, strength and hope around recovery from compulsive spending to help others who feel powerless over the obsession to buy, shop and spend."

Ray: Wow!

Cliff: She's telling me that after 5 episodes, which by the way are pretty damn amazing for her first 5 episodes, you can check it out Ican'tstopspending.com. She has one of the best websites of any podcaster I've ever seen who's just launched a podcast. Incredible investment in this and she's doing an amazing job. She says, "My life's mission and the purpose of this podcast is to share my experience to encourage and empower people who feel powerless over this. That's my life's mission." She's telling me that after 5 weeks ... She's already invested if you include equipments and if you include the cost of my training, you include the website, artwork, she's got at least \$4000, \$5000 invested in this and after 5 episodes she telling me, "I'm throwing in the towel. I quit."

Here's what I want to tell you, I love that question. Give me that question any day of the week because this is not about the nuts and bolts, wires and cables, by the way this isn't

even about podcasting, this question. This question is can you have a life's mission and purpose, and just give up the first sign of somebody telling you they're not so excited about what you're doing?

Ray: What I'm hearing you say is, your mission, the way you're wired is to encourage people and help them see, remind them of they why and encourage them to keep going?

Cliff: Exactly. I want to get them to ask the question, who am i created to be, not that they're going to have a clear picture right out of the gate but she at least came to the place that ... She at least told me, "My life's mission is to do this." She didn't say my life's mission is to podcast, she said my life's mission is to do this. "Okay, let's start there. Now how do we accomplish this? Where are you today and what are the opportunities for you to actually live out that mission and that purpose? You say you want to do it through a podcast, I'm here to help you through that. That's cool." But when she came to me and says, I'm ready to give up after episode #5, what I didn't tell you is she says, "I'm having an identity crisis and I'm not sure I should be doing thing particular podcast now. I know you can't make a decision but I'd like your feedback about my concerns.

Ray: They do stupid things to get out of their boredom.

Cliff: Or a new brand or a new business opportunity.

Ray: Yeah, guilty and forgiven at the same time. Tony talks about how these first 4 needs are in direct conflict with one another. It's not really conflict, it's balance. We need certainty and we also need variety. We want a good balance between certainty and the unexpected in a way that is healthy. The next 2 needs are number 3, significance. We want to know that we matter and I don't believe this is ego. I believe this is the way God made us. Tony doesn't say that. I say that. The 4th need is, because I believe it balances significance again is love and connection. You can't be mr.crazy ego person if you are also

deeply wired to need. These are not desires, these are not things that we want which would be nice. We all need these things. We need love and connection and so we need to be significant, we need to be seen and heard and acknowledged and we need love and connection. Those 2 balance one another out.

I think that this whole drive for significance thing where we worry about especially as believers, faithful people, whether you are Christians, Muslims, Jewish or I have friends who are atheists who struggle with the same thing. Like I want to be significant but I don't want to be an egotistical weirdo. I think that the reason for that is, I personally think Cliff. We are born with a desire to be something more, to be something great, to be something astonishing because that's how God made us. For me the quote that defines the text of this comes from CS Lewis who wrote, "If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world." That is what I think is driving us. That's the inside feeling of I'm meant for something more than this. That something more might be that you are going to deeply minister to and help your ageing parents as they live out their final days on earth. That may be the thing.

It may be as a pastor that you are not going to be the pastor of a mega church. It may be that you are going to be the minister of a congregation of 7 in the hills of south east Kentucky. It may not be that you are going to run a billion dollar enterprise, it may be that you are going to operate a copy shop in a small town of 5000 people and you make photocopies for people but you encourage them, you make their day, you brighten their life. It's not about achieving external things to give you value. It's because you have value that you end up achieving things, results.

The last 2 needs are the 6 human needs as I get off this rabbit trail. It's not a rabbit trail. It's really important. The last 2 needs are growth. For us to be fulfilled, the first 4 needs are

basic you must satisfy these needs and then the last 2 needs are ... You will those first 4 needs by the way, everybody satisfies them somehow. Some people make good choices about how to satisfy the need for certainty and variety and some people make poor choices. The same for significance and love and connection. The last 2 needs are where we get our fulfillment from. They are growth, need number 5 and contribution is need number 6, to be part of something that is bigger than yourself and to grow and make the most of your potential.

I think that's the explanation why we have this feeling that we are destined for something greater and we constantly want to be growing, we don't want to stagnate. In biology in life, you are either growing or you are decaying. You are dying. I know this is going to be a roundabout way to get here but you came to this point I your journey where you abandon the slavish marriage to the 20 year plan but you still have goals and things that you want to accomplish. You have identified what you ... You've reaffirmed, you've taken your vows again to your marriage to your why, your real why. Where does the blue smoke of selfishness come in to this story?

Cliff: I love that. The blue smoke of selfishness. You are referring to a conversation that Wayne Jacobson and Brad Cummings had on a podcast called the God Journey I assume.

Ray: Yes, how did you know?

Cliff: Because I just recently listened to that episode myself.

Ray: I did for the 1st time listen to Wayne Jacobson on hearing you talk about this episode. I thought, "That's interesting, some of it kind of rubs me the wrong way. I'm going to have to listen to it and hear what they say." Share about that a little if you would.

Cliff: It's this talk about ambition, this idea that we have this constant feeling that we need to do something to be

significant in life. Specifically there are some people who struggle with the idea of performance and that we have to do do and be something specific for God. That we need to help save more people, we have to get the message out or preach the gospel to tens of thousands and we have to build orphanages, we have to build more schools, we have to do something that is impressive otherwise why am I here to just waste this opportunity that God has given me. I need to work around the clock to do everything I can. That would be the right thing that God expects people to do or whatever the case may be. The idea is that, God doesn't need you to do anything to be pleased with you. You are significant just by the fact that God created you. You don't have to do anything to be significant. You have to believe that you are significant.

Ray: It's like a gift that's given to you. To receive a gift, if you refuse it then you don't have it.

Cliff: Exactly. What happened was that, last week I talked about episode 624 of my old podcast called Pursuing a balanced life which could be found at podcastinstrument.com/20years. In that episode, I talked about what I'd like my life to look like. It's so far I'm like I don't want to undershoot this thing and stuff like that. I'm going to dream big. There's big dollar figures on there and I'm going to speak to large audiences and at some point I see myself potentially speaking in front of a stadium full of 40,000-50,000 people. I'm like, "What the heck!"

Ray: Who do you think you are?

Cliff: Exactly who do I think I am? I'm like those are some pretty radical things. Part of me thinks, "Gosh, if I've made it there, if I attain the opportunity and the privilege to do that, that many people would come there and they would have any desire to hear anything that I ... Then I must have achieved some level of significance or something like that." The funny thing is Ray, it's that I'm certainly not at that place today. What I am coming to is 2 things, number 1, I don't need to speak on a stage in front of a stadium of 40,000-50,000 people to be significant

and to have an impact in this world. The other thing is that I can honestly say in this moment and time and in my mindset that my clarity of my identity in God and Christ jumps all over the place depending on certain things.

I get all wishy washy in how I feel God's viewing me but at this very moment I can tell you right now that I am confident that I am worthy of standing in front of a stage in front of 40,000-50,000 people at this very moment in time to deliver a powerful message that I believe people need to hear.

Ray: I believe that you are.

Cliff: I already have that significance. It's not because of who I am, it's not of anything that I have achieved. If God desires to put me in that situation, that's enough. The interesting thing is that I don't know that I ever really thought to myself that I desire to speak in front of a stadium of 40,000-50,000 people. Really I don't.

Ray: I did. I'm just going to confess and tell you that I did.

Cliff: I desire ... I can't tell you that there is an appeal to having the clout that says, "Yeah I've spoken to audiences of 40,000-50,000 people." I'd like the bragging rights to go on with it and I'd like the 'aura' of success that would surround that. I am enticed by some of those things.

Ray: I'm just going to be transparent. I wasn't enticed by it, I was obsessed by it. I felt like if I don't become famous like Tony Robins, if I don't become more wealthy than, I never believed I could become more wealthy than Steve Jobs or Bill Gates so that may say something in itself. I had my targets picked out. If I can't become that wealthy, if I don't have this kind of impact, if people don't remember my name, if the world doesn't know my name, then I have failed. That's how I used to feel.

Cliff: If the history books don't write about ... People need to be reading about me in their history books in the future. That's where I want to be.

Ray: Exactly right because there's a million things that I haven't done but just you wait.

Cliff: Just you wait. I'm not going to throw away my shot. It's all back to Hamilton right? Here's what I can say Ray, I don't think that I, I'm being honest and I see the enticement and some of the exciting things that will go along with that but man! I know what kind of preparation that goes into putting together a talk for 650 people. How much stress and anxiety I go through to try to pull off something that I think is valuable enough for that audience. I know that when I'm actually very well known ... I've actually made it to this place where I am this thing. Have you ever heard of the phrase, I'm a big fish in a small pond?

Ray: Oh yes.

Cliff: I've actually achieved the level of success where I am a pretty big fish in a small pond called the podcasting space.

Ray: I get it.

Cliff: If I go to a conference made up of primarily podcasters, if there's a thousand people there, there's about 700 of those people that probably would love to have 5-10 minutes of my time.

Ray: Oh man that is crazy. It's like you are Beyonce or something.

Cliff: It is insane and it feels weird. There's 1 time I was actually the director for podcasting for a major conference on social media. When I was the director of the conference, I was responsible for everything related to podcasting. I was responsible for bringing in keynote speakers like Leo Laporte who is just amazing. Everybody is like, "Cliff, how did you do

this? How did you do that?" There is 1 time Ray where I needed to use the restroom and I tried and it had been 2 and ½ hours and I had not made it to the end of the hallway yet. This guy his name is Matt Level, he says, "Cliff, is there anything that I can do for you? Would you like me to go and get you a drink?"

I said, "Would you do this thing? I've only heard about this. It's called being a handler. Could you be my handler and help me get to the bathroom?" What this means is that you kind of need to say, "I'm sorry Cliff has a place where he needs to be right now." You are the person that's actually saying he is not available at this moment so that I don't have to say that. He is like, "Yeah I can do that for you."

By the way, Matt Level was like 6'5, 6'6. He is a big guy and he does this. He's like, "I'm not a football guy." He is like that guy, I'm the quarter back, I've got the football and he is like this whole line of offense that's pushing people out of the way so that I can get to the bathroom. What happened was when we got to the bathroom, he is like, "Cliff do you need me to go in with you?" I'm like, "No I'm fine." I'm not kidding you Ray, I walk into the bathroom and I'm on my way to use the restroom and this guy just finishes washing his hands, thankfully. He says, "Cliff Ravenscraft," and he stops me and talks to me for 20 minutes in the bathroom. I say all of that because what I can tell you is I'm an introvert.

Those social situations, while I love the adoration of people, I'm the words of affirmation guy, I love what these people say and stuff like that but being in a conference with 1,000 people and having just a few hundred people who would love to talk to you and get your thoughts and all these other things and some encouragement, how can I turn down encouraging anyone Ray? How can I do it? I can tell you that going to a conference where there's just 1,000 or 2 or 3 thousand people and a lot of them want my time, I can honestly say that when I think of the idea and the prospect of 1 day speaking where 40,000-50,000 people actually came there to hear

something that I said, honestly I don't want that much attention.

Here's what I can tell you. I probably want to make sure that 10-20 years from now that my wife is travelling with me and I would want to make sure that she and I can break away and that we can go and have lunch together and dinner together and have quiet and peace and maybe go and take in an attraction and something like that. If I'm in a town where there's this event, I don't know that I want that thing where I'm walking down the road with my wife and we are having a conversation and 5 people come up and say I want a selfie every 3 blocks that we walk down.

Ray: That's the experience of so many celebrities. That's the source of when you see these stories about so and so the movie star knocks some camera man on his rear end outside a restaurant. It's not because the movie star is a jerk probably, it's probably because they've reached their breaking point. They don't get privacy. I totally get that. By the way you mentioned being a words affirmation guy. Are you referring to a book called the 5 Love languages?

Cliff: I am.

Ray: Which I highly recommend to people. We will link to it in the show notes in case you want to check that out. It will be helpful to you if you are married, or you want to be married or you want to stay married. This is a good book to read.

Cliff: It is, absolutely. I can honestly say Ray that I still can't shake the idea that some point down the road I might speak to some audience that big. I can honestly tell you that I don't believe that it's selfish ambition because I don't want it.

Ray: I believe you because I believe that you will have that moment or maybe more than 1 moment. I feel as though I have seen that and that's a real vision of something that is going to happen in the future. I will not profeli over you but I feel that

that's true. I think there's a point where we have to be, and I'm going to get a little biblical now but it's okay. For those of you who are not into the bible, think of it as a story book that has great morals that you can live your life by. It's more than that in my belief but if you are uncomfortable by that idea, you can just think of these as good principles because they work for everybody.

I believe that you need to be safe for that level of success. I think that God does his best and we have free will. We can choose to accept his help or not. I think he does his best to prepare us so that we can be safe for higher levels of success. I don't think he wants to give us anything that will destroy us and so I think that you are more and more reaching a point where you are safer and safer for higher and higher levels of success. I teased, you look like you have a thought.

Cliff: I do. I just want to say very interesting. Where I am today, the level of income that I have today, the opportunities that are available to me today and all of these things, I'm able to have what I have today and still be rooted at the heart of who I am and what I'm doing with only momentarily losing touch with my why. I can tell you that while I would have loved to be in the position that I am in today with all the things available to me today 10 years ago, I can tell you right now if I would have had them 10 years ago, they would have destroyed me. What I have today would have destroyed me 10 years ago.

Ray: This is what happens to child stars. This is why they become unglued because at the age of 14 they're multi Deca-millionaires and everybody around them wants a piece of that including many times their parents. There is nobody they can trust, there is nobody to tell them no and they go completely off the rails most of the time. Every once in a while one of them perseveres through that and they come out on the other side healthy and whole. I believe that's because there's a deep spiritual element of their lives that keeps them grounded and because they're extraordinary individuals.

What I wanted to share, I'll try to make this brief but a I teased, I'm not going to make it briefer than it needs to be. I teased at the end of last week's episode if you haven't listened to it you should go back and listen to it because there's some really good stuff in there that Cliff said. 1 or 2 things that I said were not so bad either but I teased about why I think it is important for you to make as much money and have as much impact as you possibly can and to live out that potential. I believe that is actually an act of stewardship. I know that on that episode of Wayne Jacobson podcast to God Journey he talked about how often times, I'm paraphrasing him now, I don't want to put words in his mouth. What I heard him say was, often greed and avarous and deceptiveness even are covered over in nice Christian ease language that usually refers to stewardship or just stewarding the gifts that we have. I think it can be abused in that way but just because something is abused doesn't mean it's useless.

We can make an error in one direction and then we can over correct for it to make an error in the other direction as well, the other swing of the pendulum. The example that I would like to point to about this is actually in the bible and it's the story in the gospel of Mark. You've heard it I'm sure Cliff, it's about the rich young ruler. The rich young ruler comes to Jesus and his disciples and says to Jesus, "What should I do that I can inherit eternal life?" and Jesus says to him, "Why do you call me good, nobody is good but one that is God. You know the commandments do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor you father and mother." I think it's interesting that he stopped there because he was very selective in the commandments that he named. Then the rich young ruler says to Jesus, "All these things I have kept from my youth. I've done all these." Jesus looking at him loved him.

Cliff: I never read that. I never remember that it actually says so and Jesus looked at him and loved him.

Ray: This is in the New King James Version.

Cliff: Okay.

Ray: It's not some crazy we made up the words that we wanted to say version of the bible. That's another rabbit trail that we won't go down. He says and it's funny because when it's taught in churches, it's usually taught from the paradigm of you shouldn't have money it will destroy you. They don't emphasize this but Jesus, I'll read it for you verbatim, 'then Jesus looking at him loved him and said to him 1 thing that you lack go your way sell whatever you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come take up the cross and follow me.' The rich young ruler it says was sad at this word and went away sorrowful for he had great possessions.

Always whenever I hear that I always think he had great stuff. He had like the latest Nintendo, he had great possessions, it means of course he was very wealthy. It's interesting that Jesus loved him and said this to him. A lot of time, this is taught to tell people you should sell all your stuff, not have any money and give everything to the church or to charity and only then can you enter into heaven. The next part is, Jesus looked around and this is what gets quoted so often, and said to his disciples how hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom God.

Cliff: It's easier for the camel to go through the eye of an eagle than a rich man to enter the kingdom God.

Ray: That's the next thing he says because his disciples were astonished at his words. The reason they were astonished is because in their Jewish religious culture, what they were taught in the temple was if you have God's favor, you'll be rich. If you're rich you must have God's favor. I'm sure that sounds familiar to many of us, we've heard a message like that in modern society and probably on television. They were astonished because he just turned everything they believed

about what they'd been taught completely upside down. He just basically said all the stuff you've been taught in the temple is totally wrong. They were astonished and they said among themselves who then can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said with men it is impossible but not with for with God all things are possible. Now here's the interesting part, this is where it almost always stops when it's taught in church. It almost always stops there and the moral of the story you'll be told is, you should not have riches because that will make it hard for you to get to heaven if not impossible. God can get you into heaven.

With you it is impossible but with God it is possible but that leaves out the rest of the story as in the next sentence. Then peter said to Jesus, "See we have left all and followed you," in other words we're good right. We're all set. Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly I say to you there is no one who has left house, or brothers or sisters or mother or father or wife or children or lands," that pretty much covers everything, "for my sake and the gospels who shall not receive a hundred fold now in this time." Houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and lands with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life but many who are first shall be last and the last 1st.

Without going into big theology lesson, I'm going to give you my interpretation on what this story says. Jesus says to the rich guy, get rid of everything because it's making it hard for you to get into heaven, it's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to get into heaven. Side bar there is this story that preachers tell about what he was saying was, there is a gate called the camels gate and for the camel to get through it the camel had to get on his knees to pass through. What that means you have to be penitent and be on your knees in order to get to heaven if you have a lot of money.

That's a great story but it's totally untrue. There was no such gate it's apocryphal, it's totally made up. You can erase that if you've been told that. He says it's easier, he's literally saying

it's easier for a huge animal, a camel to pass through the eye of a sewing needle than it is for a rich man to get into heaven. Like the rich man we just saw, 1 who is worshiping or in love with his stuff.

If you have left your house, your brothers your sisters everything you own all the riches, if you've given up everything for me then you'll get it all back. The point of these to me is, it's not about the stuff, it's not about the money, it's never about the money, it's never about the recognition, it's never about the fame, it's never about the number of listeners, it's never about how many books you've sold, it's not about that. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with those things, it's about what is your treasure. What is in your heart? What do you most treasure? If its money then, you're worshiping the god of money. If it's fame or accolades, then you're worshiping the recognition of other people. That is the problem. I would like to sum this up by, there's 2 ways I would like to sum all this up. What this means to me, 1 is that we don't want ever want to use people to make money, we want instead to use money to love people.

Cliff: Say that statement 1 more time.

Ray: We don't want to use people to make money. let me put it more symmetrically because now my point might make sense.

Cliff: That make sense I love that.

Ray: We don't want to use people to make money we want to use money to love people. The other way I would like to sum this story up is he is telling them that they're going to get all this stuff back is that you don't have to give away everything to follow Jesus but you do have to give everything up.

Cliff: Yes.

Ray: If you're not a Jesus follower, it still applies. You can substitute your own language in there, it still works it's a

universal principle and that is to me the resolution of do I have to choose love over money.

Cliff: The universal way of saying it if you're not a Jesus person is you don't have to give away everything, you have to give up on having that as your primary focus and goal in life.

Ray: Exactly because it's not about how much you have, it's about how much you help, what effect you have on other people.

Cliff: How do you make people feel?

Ray: Exactly. I heard a wise man talk about that one's upon a time. I also like to put it like this, money won't make you rich but poverty won't make you holy. In the light of that whether you think I'm right or whether you think I'm wrong, how do you think that ties into the idea of we all have a certain amount of potential that God has placed within us, certain gifts and talents, how does it relate to our responsibility to maximize that potential or do you have any thoughts on that?

Cliff: Here's what I think, I heard the question, I want to hear the question 1 more time and see if it triggers how I want to communicate.

Ray: Okay, what do you think our responsibility is when it comes to the potential, the gifts, the talents, the potential for success and impact that God had has given us, what is our duty in terms of stewardship to maximize that potential?

Cliff: All right, responsibility and duty are 2 words at this moment and time that I'm a little bit, you'll learn Wayne Jacobson has the yuck meter.

Ray: What words will he use instead?

Cliff: I don't think that we have a responsibility or duty because that means, it's in my own words, I think of that it's required that we do these, I don't like that.

Ray: Okay I'm with you with, I actually totally agree with you, I don't like the language that I just used, let me rephrase it in a way that reflect what I actually believe. If God has given you certain potential and capacity to achieve certain things in life, what do you think are the opportunities and the potential dangers that are contained within that capacity?

Cliff: Here's what I can say is that we have these opportunities, we have the capacity to be all that God has created us to be. I believe God has designed us for great things. I'm not meaning significance and Wayne Jacobson in his podcast he calls it Scale and Scope. I love the scale and scope thing. A life of significance can be like you said, it could be the ministering to 7 people on the hills of Kentucky. It's not Scope and Scale but its significance. I believe God has put us all here for a purpose.

I think that God desires for us to live into all that he has created us to be. I believe that that means that there are opportunities for many of us to succeed financially and to have opportunity for money that would be able to do things that we wouldn't never be able to otherwise. Look at the hospitals that we benefit from today and the universities over the years in the past when knowledge wasn't as immediately available via the internet today which is a much better form of education than current state of affairs but that's a whole another podcast for another time. I love this stuff Ray.

Here's what I can say is that, I believe that we should pursue whatever opportunities that are there but I don't think that it's our responsibility or duty or obligation to do so. I believe that once we uncover our identity in Christ and the grace that has been given to us as a gift, I believe that we could squander every opportunity and it's not going to ultimately to affect the outcome eternally for us.

Ray: Yes, I'm so with you. I totally agree with what you just said. Can you say that again?

Cliff: I don't know.

Ray: It's a good thing that we're recording this.

Cliff: I don't think that if we squander every opportunity to live into all of the things that could be available to us, to achieve those things that we could, if we squandered every single one of those opportunities and did nothing with them, the fact is that we are who we are in Christ. As a matter of fact there's a quote in a book that you just shared with me and I hope that I still have it right here, I believe I do. Let me go back one more page, this is so good. You cannot be under grace and not be holy anymore than you can be underwater and not be wet. You're going to be holy and righteous even if you screw up every opportunity and don't pursue any of it, live out and achieve any of the things that God had opened up for you in this life.

Ray: Isn't that freeing? Doesn't that take a lot of pressure off?

Cliff: It does and at the same time, what I can say is that I do believe that God's giving the opportunity, why not pursue it? Because we have the benefit of playing into God's will. God can achieve His ultimate will with or without us but I believe he's put us on this earth to be a partner in it.

Ray: Yes. Exactly. By the way, what book was that in case people are wondering?

Cliff: It's called Grace Revolution. A good friend of mine recently told me about it.

Ray: We'll have a link to it in the show. It's by Joseph Prince.

Cliff: My friend by the way is Ray Edwards, he gave me this book recently as a gift. Here's the thing, why not participate with it, why not go? I think there are these opportunities and here's

what I also know. What is it called? The blue smoke of selfishness. Is the blue smoke of selfishness?

Ray: Yes.

Cliff: I think that it is possible for us to go out and try to achieve ... By the way I think it's possible for us to go out with all of the wrong motives and to be so focused on the money, to even serve the money for a period and lose track of what you're doing and achieve great wealth. Totally do things for the wrong reasons and yet still achieve a place and a station in life that gives you great opportunity in wealth, to serve and help others, also influence and attention of large audiences. Even though you got there out of all of the wrong motives and it was all your own blue smoke of selfishness that got you there, I still believe it's completely possible to be holy and righteousness through the whole process.

The reason why I say that is another book, it's called ... It's by Brennan Manning. Wasn't *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, it was something it talked about his life. David Foster gave me that book as a gift and I can't remember the name of it right now. Basically it was Brennan Manning as an older man reflecting on his life, talked about the ministry that he had. He literary spoke in front of thousands and thousands and thousands of people preaching a gospel message of Jesus Christ. Having a profound positive impact in people's lives. People would tell you that their lives were changed, they were introduced to God and they discovered God's grace in a way that you can never imagine and that he is responsible. God used him in the lives of tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of people around the world. What he's doing in these memoirs, he's talking about the fact that he was drunk as a skunk most of those nights after he spoke. He was an alcoholic throughout most of his life, throughout most of his ministry. Off and on the bandwagon.

Ray: Do you mean that God can use imperfect people who screw up to accomplish his goals?

Cliff: Absolutely. God can use people who are right now in the moment willfully disobeying what God would want for them in their lives.

Ray: I believe you're right and I think one of the key realizations I've had over the last few years is God's not mad at me. I can give you a list of things I've done that I think that I think He should be mad to me about but He's not. I'm ooh so glad. Well we covered a wide range of topics. There's 2 quotes I want to share that have been very powerful for me that I believe to me, if they don't tie a bow on this 2 conversations that we've had which are really one conversation split in 2 episodes so that you could bear it. We have many things to share with you but you could not bear it all at once. Those 2 quotes are, one is by Saint Irenaeus who said, "The glory of God is a man fully alive," and I believe that also means woman. Then the other quote is by John Piper who wrote in his book *Desiring God*, he wrote, "God is most glorified in us when we're most satisfied in Him." That means we're satisfied in Him whether we're rich, whether we're poor, whether we're base or we're bound, it doesn't matter, we're always content and satisfied in him because we know who we are in Him.

Again, if you're not a Jesus person then I know that you can relate to the fact that if you can free yourself from ambition, the thing that causes you suffering is your desire for things outside yourself, to satisfy you, to make you feel like you have some worth or worthiness or value, if you can detach from those things and just be who you were made to be, the best way you know how ... To me what we've just been talking about Cliff allows us the privilege to look at all these challenges and opportunities we face in life as the most incredible game we have ever played. It's fun, it's an adventure, I feel so lucky to be alive.

Cliff: I love that you say it's a game to it and it reminds me of the idea in most games you have many lives.

Ray: Yes. Wait a minute are you a reincarnationist?

Cliff: No, not that. I'm talking about the fact that Pacman you get 3 lives ... I'm going out and I'm going in this direction. I know I've been advised not to, I'm going in this direction and I'm going to try it and it's like, "Start over. I'm going to try this path instead," and I'm like, "Yeah, that's better." I get further along in the game, I even get to the next level. Then I get to the next level and I got new challenges, there's the things and I get down, it's like, "Oh I'm on my last life." The interesting thing is Ray, is just like all the bonuses, God gives us extra lives all the time. In fact we have an unlimited supply of lives. It's kind of like when you bring a cabinet home, you set it up, you go into the settings and it's like, "You know what, unlimited play."

Ray: Yes. I think of it sometimes like this. I think that God's like a GPS for our life and we're constantly driving off on some wrong road or something and so I can hear Him in the back of my head saying, "Recalculating." He's going to help us find a route to get to where we want to go. I often explain it to people like this, I tell them, "I do this because it's intentionally curiosity invoking." I say, "I am a reversed paranoid," and they usually say, "What does that mean?" I will lean I and say, "I believe that the entire universe is conspiring to do me good."

Cliff: I love that.

Ray: One of the good things it has done for me is given me a friendship with you and I don't know whether these 2 episodes will bring more listeners or run many of them away but I am totally satisfied that we've had this conversation because I think it's being meaningful. I think it will help people and I so appreciate you and what you do my friend.

Cliff: It's an honor to be your friend Ray and a delight to be here in this time with you.

Ray: I would say to you listening right now, don't throw away your shot.

