


**THE
REVEALED
LIFE**

ACTS 1:8

FROM THE PITS TO THE PODIUM



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LIFE**

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FROM THE PITS TO THE PODIUM

Jeff Knight

FOREWORD BY ED YOUNG



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DEDICATION



To my beautiful, loving, spirit-filled wife, Melinda, and my vivacious daughter, Seven, for always being my biggest fans and exposing me to a life I never thought possible. Thank you, with my whole heart for my whole life.

To every friend, confidant, staffer, racer, crew and church member who has ever prayed for me, encouraged me, championed me, challenged me ... you are between the lines of every page. Thank you for being a part of my race of life. You make it special.



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FOREWORD BY ED YOUNG

The first time I ever prayed what I call a “high risk prayer” I was 20 years old and a sophomore at Florida State University. Through a crazy set of circumstances, I received a full-ride scholarship to play basketball there. Up until that point my dreams centered on basketball. But, while I was at Florida State, a pastor challenged me to push my faith and pursue what God had in store for me.

So one night, after practice, I knelt down in my dorm room, rested my elbows on the air conditioning unit, looked out over a darkened parking lot, and said a prayer that absolutely changed the direction of my life. It wasn’t a complicated prayer. It wasn’t necessarily an eloquent prayer. But it was a genuine, heartfelt prayer and it changed everything.

I simply said, “God, help me to point someone to You tomorrow.” That was it.

The next day, I was walking to class with one of my teammates. He was a guy who just transferred to Florida State from another school, because he’d gotten kicked off his basketball team due to drug usage. As the only Christian on the team, I was the one the coaches looked to as sort of a calming force on the team and in the lives of my teammates. So when the Florida State Seminoles picked this guy up, I did my best

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to help him. I never put my faith out there really, but I did my best to live the way God wanted me to live.

As we walked across the campus, we talked about all kinds of things, and I could tell something was heavy on his heart and life. All of a sudden he stopped, looked at me, and said, “Ed, there’s something different about you, man. There’s something you have that I don’t. I don’t know what it is, but I want what you have.”

In that moment, I was absolutely ambushed by the power of God. I just felt His presence and I knew He was cracking open the door for me to walk through. So I began to talk to my teammate about my past, how I came into a relationship with Jesus, and what that meant in my life. I just simply told him my story. And God began to take over.

About five hours later I found myself in my friend’s dorm room leading him in a prayer to commit his life to Christ. With tears streaming down his cheeks, I saw this guy step over the line of faith and become a believer.

That situation messed me up. My life has never been the same because of that transaction God allowed me to be a part of. What I experienced in that moment was the first real crank of God’s engine in my life. It was then I began to understand what *The Revved Life* is all about.

The Revved Life is all about a life of high-risk prayers like the one I prayed years ago. It’s about an impassioned pursuit of the things of God. It’s about a life of reaching out to a lost and dying world.

But like any pursuit in life, we cannot just hope it happens. We can’t just wish our way into making a difference. God doesn’t want us to just wander through this one and only life. There are steps we must take, actions we must engage in, if we hope to make the most of what God has equipped us with.

Jeff Knight is all about faith in action. And he pours his heart and soul into every page of this book so that you, the reader, can learn to take the kinds of actions needed to in order to experience *The Revved Life*.

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There are Christian leaders all across the world who, sadly, have mailed it in. They have become too comfortable in the La-Z-Boys of their faith. They have quit facing life head-on for God and left the hard work of reaching people to others. Jeff is not one of those leaders. It is clear through his story, his leadership, and his life he has a passion for Christ and a deep desire to empower you to live the same kind of life.

Be careful with the book you hold in your hands. This is a dangerous book. Why? Because it's going to change the way you live. While it won't provide you with a magic formula for your faith, it will motivate, encourage, challenge, and empower you to live the kind of life God has in store for you.

Remember, your faith isn't just about you. If it were, you would have been evacuated to heaven the moment you stepped over the line. No, it's not about you and it's not about me. The purpose of your faith is to reach other people—people who are in desperate need of a Savior. That Savior is Jesus Christ. And He is calling you to live the powerful life, the focused life, the eternity-altering life. In other words, Jesus is calling you to live *The Revved Life!*

—Ed Young

Founding and Senior Pastor, Fellowship Church

Author: *Outrageous*, *Contagious Joy*, and *High Definition Living*



ACT 1: THE DILEMMA

I am a Christ-follower.

I could say I boldly follow Christ.
But really, sometimes I keep my faith private.
Really private.

For too long now, my delicate self-image has depended on people liking me.

I have tried with all my efforts to please people and win them over to my way.

Some have accepted.

Many watch from a distance.

I have used my voice to promote a lot of meaningless stuff: Hobbies, Companies, Products and Agendas.

Instead of following Christ, I've brokered Him.

Only looking for what's in it for me.

And when there's nothing.

I stop.

Engaging.

Sharing.

Listening.

Being.

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And I've been emptied. And lost.

Every experience.

Every lesson.

Every encounter.

Every tragedy.

Every part of life.

Can become meaningful.

And purposeful.

As I reconnect with what God is calling me to do.

I'm getting back in touch with being a Christ-follower.

With the actual purpose of it.

Not the infection of popularity.

Or the virus of feeling important.

Or the obsession of, "What's in it for me."

I'm kicking my addictions to self.

And learning to follow Christ all over again.

This has been incredibly revealing.

I am finding that there are others.

Many.

Christ-followers everywhere are rediscovering Jesus. His words.

They are getting reacquainted with His final command: Reaching people far from God.

Not talking about it with friends.

Or writing about it on blogs.

Or simply "liking" it.

But ... actually doing it.

It's what I've come to call *The Revved Life*.



INTRODUCTION: THE MAIN THING

I've been a lead pastor now for fifteen years. Along the way, I've encountered many different kinds of churches.

Let me tell you, as a pastor, I love the church. I think every man and woman of God who serves, gives, and embodies the local church is a rock star.

And there is something I want to say to every single person in the local church. Something I think is absolutely necessary in these times. It's not an easy saying, so if this stings a bit I don't mean to offend.

What I mean to do is kick-start your faith again. Awaken the dormant dreamer within you and empower you to a bolder more risk-taking faith.

I mean to catalyze you to your original mission.

Here it goes ...

I've encountered churches that are devoted to community service. These churches feed the hungry and house the homeless. I've encountered churches that are devoted to political "justice." These churches promote social activism and work to improve society through political institutions. I've encountered churches devoted to religious ritual. These churches love pomp and ceremony, and they give rise to ornate cathedrals and impressive choirs. All are admirable, noble, and holy causes.

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But these things don't reflect the *main thing* that Jesus came to do. They do not reflect the *main thing* that Jesus told us to do.

Jesus came to impart spiritual life, to redeem lost souls from the inevitable fate of a godless eternity, and He told us to be witnesses.

The *main thing* in God's sight is telling unbelievers (people far from God) about Jesus (winning souls), and then helping these new believers grow in their newfound faith (making disciples).

This is the *main thing*. Because Jesus made it the *main thing* before He left his followers and ascended into heaven.

Other pursuits may be good and noble. But everything else we could possibly do is secondary to the primary work of Christ.

Soul winning is the heart of Christ. So *soul winning* must be the heart of every Christ-follower, and every Christian church.

We must not allow anything else to deter us or distract us from our primary mission and responsibility.

We touch people's lives and we meet people's needs so we can have the opportunity to share Christ and to tell them about God's solution for their greatest need.

Here's an example:

If you feed a hungry child in Honduras, yet you never tell that child about the love of God and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, that child may overcome his nutritional problems and actually live a long and healthy life. But when he dies, he will enter eternity without Christ.

And if you help a drug addict kick her habit and make something good of her life, that young lady may become a great asset to society and live a long and prosperous life. But when she dies, she won't know the Lord.

So what good have you done?

What good is it if we pour ourselves into community service or political activism or religious ceremony, and yet forget the most important thing, the *main thing* that Jesus told us to do with our lives?

That's the heart of *The Revved Life*.

It's living out the *main thing* Jesus told us to do.

INTRODUCTION: THE MAIN THING

You okay?

Good, let's keep going.

The Revved Life is what I call living courageously for God.

The Revved Life is fearlessly facing life head-on.

The Revved Life is born out of passion. It is born out of the fire I feel burning inside me to elevate evangelism and soul winning to the forefront of Christian thought and attention.

It's high time we get more intentional.

More strategic.

More focused.

More excited.

About reaching a far-gone world!

I believe the church should assemble to celebrate the goodness of God and the power of God, and worship the Lord with intensity and study His Word with an insatiable appetite for spiritual knowledge.

But I also believe that the church should come out from behind the walls we've built up, and go out one-by-one to infiltrate every nook and cranny of our culture and society.

We should infuse every arena. We should navigate our way into every sector. We should pry our way into and penetrate every compartment, every aspect of human life, in order to touch people with the love of God, and then tell them about the plan of God for saving their souls and changing their lives.

Jesus said, "And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?" (Matthew 16:26, NLT).

There is nothing to be gained if we improve society, advance justice, and bolster the quality of life for those around us, only to neglect their souls and avoid confronting them with the uncomfortable truth ...

People are lost and in need of a Savior.

But that is precisely what Jesus told us to do.

In fact, He told us to make this task our highest priority.

He told us to make it the *main thing*.

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SOUL WINNING

Because *soul winning* was the passion of Christ, it's disturbing the number of Christians who hide in churches and avoid humanity. I'm bothered by Christians who are forever studying, reading, and hoarding spiritual knowledge, yet never impart any of it to those who need it most.

The early church wasn't like this.

Sure, they were noted for being enthusiastic students of God's Word (see Acts 17:11, NLT). They were noted for their intimate camaraderie and their fervent prayers (see Acts 2:42, NLT).

But more than anything else, they were known for spreading their faith (see Acts 5:28, NLT), for unashamedly proclaiming the Gospel (see Acts 4:31, NLT), and for winning souls and planting churches (see Acts 19:10, NLT). In fact, every single chapter in the book of Acts has at least one reference to the resurrection of Christ.

Why? Because the resurrection of Christ was the heart and soul of the Gospel they proclaimed.

And that's the heart of *The Revved Life*. And that's the life I want you to commit to leading.

And that's the life that is not reserved for the spiritual elite.

Or the conservative pundit.

Or the right-wing Republican.

The Revved Life is available to everyone of us who have experienced the love of a living God, Jesus Christ! We matter. We have a sound. You and I have to raise our voices in this land. We have to tell the world!

So as you commit to *The Revved Life*, I want to share my own story.

I am going to tell you the story of my heritage, the story of my church, The Rock Church, and the story of how God taught me about winning souls by planting me in the most unlikely environment among the most unlikely people imaginable, so I could learn to showcase His love and proclaim His name in the most unlikely ways.

I will also share with you what I've learned about winning souls and, in the process, what I've learned about the Lord.

INTRODUCTION: THE MAIN THING

I hope *The Revved Life* will inform you.

I hope it will teach you something about God you don't already know.

But most of all, I hope *The Revved Life* will excite you about the possibilities of personally impacting people through your life, and glorifying Him by making a meaningful difference in the lives of those you encounter.

After all, that is the primary purpose for which God created you.

That is the return He hopes to realize for all He has invested in you.

And that is what I call, *The Revved Life*!

So fasten your seat belts and put your faith into overdrive, while I climb behind the wheel and take you on a high-octane ride to *The Revved Life*, right now!



PART 1



**THE STORY
OF *THE
REVVED
LIFE***



CHAPTER 1

MY JOURNEY TOWARD *THE REVVED* *LIFE*

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

—Hebrews 12:1, NIV

My father was a racer before he was a pastor.

My father taught me how to race before he taught me how to pray.

That wasn't an accident. And it wasn't a coincidence.

That was God's design.

As I begin this tale, the most important thing I've learned over the past fifteen years is that there's really no difference in God's mind between the "spiritual" and the "secular." We Christians tend to think of church as "holy," and work as "unholy." We tend to think of worshipping with other believers as "supernatural" while we think of golfing with our buddies as "natural."

We Christians have a habit of filling our schedules with "Christian approved" activities when in our hearts there is a gnawing sense something more exists for our life.

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In our minds, we separate the two aspects of our lives—the spiritual stuff and the everyday stuff.

But God just doesn't see the world through that paradigm. He doesn't look at life that way.

So what is *The Revved Life*?

The Revved Life is lived by somebody who “gets it.”

The Revved Life is lived by someone who has added Christ to his life, who is passionately pursuing God's best for his life, and who is consistently growing and improving in every aspect of his life, lifting others to new heights along with him.

He is prevailing in his struggles.

He is overcoming the obstacles that life has set before him.

And he is winning at life in general. He is winning people, as well, drawing them to himself and to the Lord through his words, his deeds, and his attitudes—but mostly through his involvement in the lives of those he touches and his willingness to come out of his hiding place to participate with these people in the events of their lives.

My journey toward *The Revved Life* began like so many others. A life-changing event ended life as I had known it, but became the entryway to an exciting new chapter.

It opened my heart to know God in a more fulfilling way, and opened my mind to a better understanding of my own purpose and destiny.

MY WAKE-UP CALL

It all began in the state of Washington on a cold, January evening in the year 2000.

My parents, who served as the lead pastors of our church, were on a flight, returning home from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. They had been doing missionary work for the past several days. My wife, Melinda, who is the worship leader at our church, and I were in a recording studio in Seattle, where Melinda was cutting her very first worship album.

MY JOURNEY TOWARD *THE REVVED LIFE*

My mother Linda traveled to Puerto Vallarta almost two weeks earlier. She went there to preach and to personally attend to the mission she'd established. It's in one of the worst areas of the city. My mom was a strong believer and a powerful witness for Christ. Since she was saved as a young woman, she devoted herself to ministry and to building clean water wells near a massive garbage dump in Puerto Vallarta. That project was very close to her heart.

As often as she could, she would travel there to personally oversee the details of the operation, and encourage the pastors and local believers who joined in her work. Shortly before her scheduled return home, however, my father Joe flew down to join her.

It was their 32nd wedding anniversary, and he didn't want to be apart from her on that special occasion.

To appreciate what they were doing in Puerto Vallarta, and why they were there, you'd have to know some things about my parents.

You see, Joe and Linda Knight were amazing people. Simple folks, they started life just like many other young couples, working and trying to get by. After my father got out of the Air Force, he worked as a contractor and as a radio ad salesman before he entered the ministry. He also owned a motorcycle shop where he sold and serviced them. My mom worked for the State of Washington, as part of a team of social workers, helping people with drug and alcohol addictions get clean and sober.

They were good people. They loved me and my little sister Jenny very much, and they always gave their hearts and souls to everything they put their hands to.

My parents delighted in the simple pleasures of life, especially in the people who were close to them. They didn't "jet-set" around the country, hobnobbing with the rich and famous.

Nor did they pursue affluence or notoriety.

Instead, my father spent his early years riding and working on motorcycles, getting just as dirty as a man can get. And my mother, an avid horsewoman, spent her time riding and showing horses.

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Before my parents were saved, and I was between the age of three and seven years old, my dad would compete in motorcycle races practically every weekend. And I'd go watch him. I also remember my grandparents, aunts and uncles, and our family friends going to the track to watch my father race. And later on, after my dad gave up motorcycle racing, he would still take me to the track to watch the auto races.

I loved watching my dad race motocross. Later in life, after he stopped racing, I would look into his competitive eyes as we'd watch the car races. He made me want to be like him. He was larger than life to me. And to this day, motorcycles or car races, it doesn't matter, are still what I watch the most.

Nearly 40 years later you will still find large quantities of Motocross, Supercross, and NASCAR™ on my DVR at home.

When I was a kid my parents turned everything into a family event and “people time.”

In fact, I learned my ABC's and how to count to 100 at the racetrack.

So you see, my dad introduced me to the world of racing long before the Lord called me to be a pastor ... a little “clue” to the shape of my destiny.

THE BIRTH OF THE ROCK CHURCH

Then on the night of June 3, 1978, both my parents met Jesus.

They were in two different places that night—my mom at home and my dad in jail for a crime he'd committed—when each gave their hearts to the Lord at the same exact time, without either one knowing it was also happening to the other, and without ever hearing the Gospel.

It was an absolutely miraculous, sovereign act of God and one that I'll share more details about later in my story.

After that day, all their passion and all their energy were suddenly focused on Christ. Everything else quickly became subordinate to their primary passion, the pursuit of the Lord.

This passion led them to start a small Bible study in their house.

MY JOURNEY TOWARD *THE REVVED LIFE*

And because my mom and dad were so passionate about God's Word and so energetic when it came to their relationship with Him, this little Bible study group quickly grew into a small congregation.

And then that small congregation evolved into a great church.

And suddenly and quite unexpectedly, my parents found themselves as the lead pastors of Cornerstone Christian Center, in the town of Woodinville, which would later become The Rock Church.

Neither of them had any ministry experience, or any formal theological training. But they had come to know Jesus, and both knew how to be bold in their faith.

They were able to believe God for anything, and they were willing to approach anyone, anywhere, to tell them about the glory of the Lord.

In the beginning, it was their childlike passion for Christ and their uninhibited ability to trust and share the message with others, which became the invisible pillars of their fledgling church.

It was this same boldness and confidence that caused that little congregation to grow until ministry became my parents' singular focus, and their full-time occupations.

In fact, the actual birth of The Rock Church could really be traced back to the miracle God worked to transform both of my parents, that night he brought them to a spiritual U-turn that altered the direction of their lives.

That's why my mom was in Puerto Vallarta, to follow God's calling. And that's why my dad joined her there for their 32nd wedding anniversary.

They wanted to celebrate together while serving the Lord.

They wanted to make a difference.

They wanted to leave a mark and a legacy for Christ.

They had already built a great church. Now they wanted to touch the nations and impact souls everywhere. They wanted to preach the Gospel and show the love of Christ to hurting people. And they wanted to be in the company of other believers in different parts of the world who were serving the same great God and fulfilling the same Great Commission.

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But their work in Puerto Vallarta ended that day, and they were both on their way home to me and my sister Jenny, who was 16 at the time.

And as that cold January day progressed and the time drew near for their plane to land in Seattle, I received a phone call at the recording studio in Seattle.

A close friend from the church told me that there had been a terrible airline crash, and that a plane went down in the Pacific Ocean, about 11 miles off the shores of Southern California. So I rushed to the little television set they had at the studio and moved the rabbit ears around so I could get a picture from the local ABC station.

As I looked through the fuzzy picture at the helicopter hovering over the blue water and floating debris, the TV announcer repeated the flight number: Alaska Airlines Flight 261. My heart stopped. My dad's personal assistant Rachel happened to be with Melinda and me at the studio that day, so I looked at her and asked, "Is that my parents' flight number?"

She was pale as she answered me. "It is, Jeff."

There was this long silence. Melinda's eyes met mine—I could almost see the wheels turning in both of our heads, as we both rejected the awful possibilities. In my mind I thought: *Survivors. There have to be some survivors.*

And as the night progressed, we eventually learned that all 88 people on board Alaska Airlines Flight 261 died when the plane suffered a catastrophic mechanical failure, and plunged into the ocean below.

HOW GOD USES EVIL FOR GOOD

No words can describe how I felt. I was devastated.

At the time, I was a young man, just 29 years old. My life would never be the same. My father and mother were my closest friends. They were my mentors and my spiritual guides. Since the day I was born, they made me a part of every aspect of their lives. And since the age of 7, the name of Jesus was on their lips and resonated in our home.

They were my heroes in so many ways.

MY JOURNEY TOWARD *THE REVVED LIFE*

And they were my inspiration for the future.

But now they were gone forever. Both of them!

After the initial shock wore off, and I started thinking again, I realized that the death of my parents affected a lot more people than just me. After all, they were pastors of a growing church, and pillars in our community. They had many friends, protégés, and everyday people who looked to them as spiritual shepherds and teachers.

What would these people do?

Where would they go?

What would their lives look like from now on?

What would become of our church?

Those were the questions that rattled around in my brain, for days and weeks afterward.

The days following the crash were frightening and uncertain, because the only thing I knew for sure is that nothing would ever be the same—for me or anyone else I knew.

But then God began to reveal His plan.

He began to show me how He was going to create something beautiful out of something devastating.

How He was going to use this tragedy to perpetuate my parents' legacy and actually build upon it.

How He was going to take something the enemy intended for evil, and turn it into something that God could use for good.

On the Tuesday night after the crash, the other members of The Rock Church gathered at my parent's home with Melinda and me. On that occasion, one of my father's board members approached us.

"Your Dad always talked about handing you the church one day, Jeff," he said. "The Board believes that time is now."

I looked at him with bloodshot eyes, on the verge of tears, and I gave him a nod of affirmation. And with that, Melinda and I became the lead pastors of The Rock Church, following in the footsteps and carrying on the legacy of my father and mother.

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For fifteen years, Joe Knight labored to build that spiritual house and to establish a strong Gospel witness in our community.

Now, in the blink of an eye, it was my turn to assume that responsibility.

So on the very next Sunday, February 6, 2000, I stepped into the pulpit to preach my first sermon as the lead pastor of The Rock Church.