

Live a Legacy

Jeff Reeter on an Extraordinary Life of Balance, Excellence, Service, and Truth

Program Summary

In this Tuesday edition of Mark & Friends, entrepreneur and author Jeff Reeter begins a two-day Pinnacle Forum message about moving from the idea of someday leaving a legacy to intentionally living one now. As he approached retirement after thirty-two years of leadership, Jeff expected his annual theme to be 'Leave a Legacy,' but sensed God redirecting him toward 'Live a Legacy.' He argues that an extraordinary life is not about making ourselves extraordinary; Jesus Christ is at the center, and life becomes richer as we pursue a purpose greater than ourselves by helping others pursue the life God created them to live. Jeff introduces his Legacy Life framework and the first four words of his BEST acronym: Balance, Excellence, Service, and Truth. Balance asks whether faith, mental growth, marriage, family, friendships, health, generosity, work, and community life are developing by design rather than default. Excellence rejects mediocrity. Service seeks first to love, care, matter, and make a difference in another person's life. Truth refuses both pessimism and relativism, choosing realistic optimism rooted in reality and God's Word. Jeff closes by connecting trials with perseverance and godly character and challenges listeners not merely to think about leaving something behind, but to live a Christ-centered legacy today.

Key Takeaways

Legacy is not only something left behind after life or retirement; it can be intentionally lived in the present. An extraordinary Christian life has Jesus Christ at the center; the cross is the reason hope and abundant life are possible.

A purpose greater than myself is found in helping other people pursue the life God created them to live. Pouring into other people's hearts and lives often makes my own life richer without requiring me to label myself extraordinary.

Balance means evaluating the whole life God has entrusted to me rather than excelling vocationally while neglecting faith, marriage, family, health, friendships, generosity, or growth.

Important areas of life should develop by design rather than by default.

Realistic optimism looks honestly at reality while refusing to surrender to pessimism because Christ remains greater than the circumstances.

Excellence asks where I am doing my best and where I have quietly settled for mediocrity.

Service seeks first to love, care, matter, make a difference, and become a catalyst in another person's life.

Biblical truth can shape workplace culture and leadership even when it is communicated wisely in language people outside the church can understand.

Integrating faith and work requires intentionality rather than treating Christian conviction and vocation as separate compartments.

Truth matters in an age of relativism and artificial intelligence; Christians should ask whether they truly want truth, can handle truth, and are staking life on God's Word.

Trials can produce perseverance and godly character when they are received through the lens of faith.

Living a legacy means allowing balance, excellence, service, and truth to shape everyday choices before anyone writes the story of what I left behind.

Scripture References

John 10:10, John 14:6, Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 1:7, John 8:31-32, James 1:2-4, Romans 12:2, Philippians 2:3-4, Colossians 3:23-24, Psalm 119:105

Quote of the Day

"You don't want to leave a legacy. You want to live a legacy."

Broadcast Notes

Mark introduces Jeff Reeter as an entrepreneur and author with decades of business leadership, including longtime service as a managing partner with Northwestern Mutual and Texas Financial Group. Jeff says he will retire October 31

after thirty-two years as managing partner. As he prepared for 2026, he assumed his theme would be 'Leave a Legacy,' but experienced a persistent spiritual check that redirected him toward 'Live a Legacy.' That became his 'Legacy Life' theme for the year. Jeff then plays with the word ordinary. Pinnacle Forum leaders are accustomed to pursuing more than ordinary results, but Jeff insists that Christian extraordinariness is not self-exaltation. He visually places the cross at the center of 'extraordinary' and connects the idea to John 10:10: Jesus came that people might have life to the full. His larger purpose statement becomes 'Helping Others Pursue Extraordinary' - HOPE. The more people pour themselves into the hearts and lives of others, the more an extraordinary Christ-centered life emerges. Part One then introduces BEST. Balance is illustrated through an integrity compass covering work, faith, mental health and growth, marriage, family, social life, community service, health and fitness, and finances. Jeff repeatedly urges intentional development 'by design, not by default.' He contrasts pessimism with realistic optimism - honest about difficult reality but refusing to become captive to a hopeless outlook. Excellence asks where people are doing excellent work and where they have accepted mediocrity. Service is expressed through his firm's repeated language: seek first to serve, love, care, matter, make a difference, and be a catalyst in another person's life. Truth becomes the final BEST word. Jeff contrasts biblical truth with cultural relativism and asks whether listeners really want truth, can handle truth, and are staking their lives on Scripture. He then recalls Hurricane Harvey flooding his Houston office building and watching coworkers serve one another. James 1 provides the closing connection: trials produce perseverance and ultimately godly character. Mark closes Part One by summarizing BEST and previewing Wednesday's BOLD framework: Be, Own, Love, and Do.

Practical Applications

Replace the question 'What legacy will I leave?' with 'What legacy am I living today?'

Ask whether Jesus is actually at the center of the life I am trying to make extraordinary.

Identify one person whose God-given potential I can encourage, develop, mentor, or serve.

Use a whole-life compass to review faith, mind, marriage, family, friendships, work, service, health, and finances.

Choose one neglected area that has been developing by default and create one intentional next step.

Name one area where pessimism has taken hold and write down the realistic facts alongside reasons for hope in Christ.

Identify one place where 'good enough' has replaced excellence and make one measurable improvement.

Seek first to serve in one conversation or decision before asking what I will gain from it.

Look for a wise, natural way to carry a biblical principle into my workplace or community without unnecessary jargon.

Ask whether I am compartmentalizing faith away from work, leadership, finances, or public life.

Spend time in Scripture this week as though I truly believe it is God's love letter and truth that sets me free.

When a trial appears, ask what perseverance and character God may be forming through it.

End the day by asking: Did I live today by design or by default?

Today's Challenge

Create your own one-page Legacy Life compass this week. Write these four headings: Balance, Excellence, Service, and Truth. Under Balance, identify one area of life that needs more intentional attention. Under Excellence, name one place where you have settled for 'good enough.' Under Service, name one person you can intentionally help pursue God's best. Under Truth, write one biblical truth you need to stake your next decision on. Choose one action from each heading and begin living the legacy now rather than waiting to leave it later.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the life You have given me and for the people, abilities, responsibilities, and opportunities You have entrusted to me. I do not want merely to leave a legacy someday; help me live one today. Keep Jesus at the center of whatever I pursue. Protect me from trying to make myself extraordinary and instead give me a purpose greater than myself - helping others become who You created them to be. Bring balance to the whole life You have entrusted to me. Show me where work, faith, marriage, family, friendships, health, generosity, learning, or service have been developing by default instead of by design. Call me toward excellence without pride, service without selfish motives, and realistic optimism without denial of hard realities. Teach me to seek first to love, care, matter, and make a difference in the lives around me. Anchor me in truth. In a world of competing claims, relativism, and rapidly changing technology, make Your Word my compass. Give me courage to integrate faith into my work and leadership with wisdom and grace. When trials come, form perseverance and godly character in me. Let the way I live today become a legacy that points people toward Jesus. In His name, Amen.

About Today's Speaker

Jeff Reeter is an entrepreneur, business leader, speaker, and author of *Do Life Differently*. He has spent decades in financial-services leadership, including more than thirty years as a managing partner with Northwestern Mutual and Texas Financial Group. His work focuses on helping leaders live intentionally, develop others, integrate faith and vocation, and pursue God-given purpose. In this Pinnacle Forum conference message, Jeff shares his Legacy Life framework and challenges believers to move from someday leaving a legacy toward living one now through Christ-centered balance, excellence, service, truth, and investment in others.

About Today's Host

Mark Burns is General Manager of the WLUJ Family of Stations and Great News Radio Network and host of *Mark & Friends*. For decades, Mark has been involved in Christian radio and ministry, with a heart for helping listeners know Jesus and grow deeper in God's Word. Through *Mark & Friends*, he brings pastors, ministry leaders, teachers, missionaries, authors, and everyday believers around the microphone for biblical teaching, testimony, conversation, and encouragement.

Proofread Broadcast Transcript

Reading from John chapter 10, verse 10.

Jesus said, I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. That was John chapter 10, verse 10. Oh, magnify the Lord with me.

Let us exalt his name together. It's Tuesday, October 6, 2026. And welcome to *Mark & Friends*.

For the fourth week, we're returning to the Pinnacle Forum National Conference held in Arizona this past April, where high impact leaders who follow Christ are engaged and equipped to influence culture for him. And today's speaker is entrepreneur and author Jeff Reeter. Jeff has spent decades in business leadership, including serving as a longtime managing partner with Northwestern Mutual and Texas Financial Group.

He's also the author of *Do Life Differently*, and his passion is helping leaders discover and live their God-given purpose. Today, Jeff talks about something many of us think about as we get older, legacy. In fact, approaching retirement after 32 years of leadership, Jeff thought God was leading him toward the theme, leave a legacy.

But the Lord began turning that idea around. Don't merely leave a legacy, live a legacy. And Jeff says an extraordinary life isn't ultimately about being extraordinary ourselves.

At the center is Jesus Christ and a purpose greater than ourselves, helping others pursue the life God created them to live. Learn more about Pinnacle Forum at PinnacleForum.com. Now here's Jeff Reeter on today's Tuesday edition of *Mark & Friends*. I am so excited to get to spend a few minutes with you.

I'm inadequate, but I'm prayed up. You know, I was thinking about this. Kelvin, unbelievable, and we did not consult.

You're going to think that Kelvin and I have spent hours consulting back and forth on how to present similarly. It's amazing. In fact, I'm kind of shucking and jiving some of my stuff because Kelvin covered it so well, you don't need it twice.

And so I'm thinking to myself, OK, they've got Kelvin who's academically extraordinary. He's basically a martyr in our society. So that's amazing.

They get Anne Graham Lotz. She's a saint. And so they're like, OK, we got to get this next speaker.

Probably ought to be a sinner. So they go on a national search. You know, it's like all across America.

Who's the sinner we can get for this stage? And they got me. So here we are. Bless your hearts.

I have some slides. And I did this collage. And I really, you know, thought about this collage more just as a thing for me to kind of think about what I want to communicate with you guys today.

That word abundance right in the middle is huge. Ride forth victoriously. Do awesome things.

This group of people, you know why you're so hard to speak to? Because you're so amazingly able to do beyond what's normal. And I'm not sure you even know it. And so how do we catalyze for purpose, powerfully focused on a future that's different? Every year, I kind of have a fourth quarter strategy that leads to a life book.

And so much of what Kelvin just shared is part of this book. It's a master action plan is kind of the focus of it. But I think about what should my theme for the next upcoming year be? And so in 2025, I was thinking about 2026.

And 2026, this year, on October 31st, I retire as managing partner of this amazing group of unbelievable people that I've gotten to serve as managing partner for 32 years. And so the old guy is stepping down. And I'm so grateful for it.

And so as I went into the fourth quarter, I really thought that I already knew my theme for the year. And it was going to be leave a legacy. I thought that's a perfect theme for that year, the year of my retirement, leave a legacy.

That's the focus. So I went into October and I said, OK, Lord, I already know the theme. He's like, no, I don't think you do.

I'm like, I think I do. And so we're back and forth again. No audible voice, but but I'm, you know, in my heart.

You know, I've got this real check in my spirit on leaving a legacy. My Lord, I want to leave a legacy. He's like, no, you don't.

And like, really? I mean, so then I think I get kind of freaked out. I buy two books on legacy, read them both. You know, I'm thinking I got to learn about this, you know, and here's what I got.

You don't want to leave a legacy. You want to live a legacy. I really challenge you with that, living this legacy.

And so I came out with legacy life as the theme for 2026. You know, I am here because of that theme. I'm so grateful to get to spend a little time with you.

It's just that I'm daunted by whether this is going to matter to you. Truly don't want to spend 45 minutes with you and have you go, yeah, yeah, well, I don't think that's helpful. Or you're too kind for that.

So you just say, yeah, it was helpful, but then it isn't. Right. And so what I want to talk to you about is this word.

Can you see it? Okay. Yeah. What do you think about that word? You like this word? What are some synonyms for this word? Plain.

Average. Status quo. Normal.

Regular. Boring. All right, y'all.

So it's not lost on me that I'm talking to a group of people that are not ordinary about ordinary. Let me ask you a question because I want to stimulate your thought on this. You just said the word normal.

If you're not normal, what are you? You're abnormal, right? I really want you to take a minute on this and think personally for yourself. Okay. You're like certain you don't want to be ordinary, which is normal.

Right. So now you're saying you don't want to be normal. Then that means you're willing to be abnormal.

And y'all, what I want you to know is different and called out is what God has called us to be. But it's different. And it is abnormal to this society.

In fact, we're freaks to the world we live in. And that's moving in a better direction. But the reality is you're going to have to be different if you want to be.

What do we need to do here, y'all? We're just going to add a, we're going to add a word. Aren't we? Just one word. Move in the board.

Extra. I got to keep going here because I want it to be a little more dynamic. Got one more color.

And I want you to notice the middle of extraordinary. Are you seeing the middle? That's Jesus. And it doesn't seem like it.

And that cross is the only reason why we have hope. And the only reason why extraordinary is possible. And you know what? Why we know that for sure is that he came that we might have life and have it to the full or have it extraordinarily.

And he is the way, the truth and the life. And everything we can do to be that person in our firm, in our community, in our country, in this crazy world. Has everything to do with the middle letter of extraordinary.

Life with a purpose that is phenomenally greater than us. A purpose that is greater than any and each of us. Can we grasp that and see it pursuing our best life? So I'm going to do some crazy acronyms.

Best bold hope. Best has four acronyms. You can see them on the board.

I'm going to cover them a little and then bold will have four acronyms. And then hope ties to legacy life. Helping others pursue extraordinary.

That is a purpose greater than ourselves. If we just dedicate ourselves to helping others pursue extraordinary. What do you think happens in your life? It becomes extraordinary.

And yet you don't know it. You would never be talking to somebody. Oh, yes, I've arrived at extraordinary now because you never feel like you have.

But the more you pour yourself in to the hearts and lives of others. The more the reality of extraordinary, which is in Christ, occurs. So balance.

Our firm. I love this. Our internal mission of our firm in Houston, Texas, about 170 financial advisors, about 400 people, 70,000 clients.

Our internal mission for our firm. My mission to them is for them to wholly develop a team of champions dedicated to excellence in serving others. Balance.

Now, on this crazy board, I'm going to flip this board and you're going to go, Whoa, he shouldn't put all that on that board. It's too busy. Really ties to a lot that Kelvin was talking about.

OK, that's busy. I know. We call this the integrity compass at our firm.

And so it's kind of thought to be a compass. You know what I mean? Compass. We don't really have we have GPS, I guess now, but we don't have compasses too much more anymore.

And I'm trying to find north. And then I give you a hint of that. But here's what I want to ask you about.

Time to Kelvin's thoughts. OK, so are you excellent at work? I bet by and large you are, although some people in the room are going and I have been, but I'm not or whatever. All right.

But that's usually an area that we're pretty. I'll say it this way. You're not in pinnacle form if you're not pretty good at what you do vocationally.

OK, so where's your faith? Y'all. And I just sat over here last night and was like, OK, Lord, excuse me, but I'm like a speaker here. And he's like spoke to my heart.

I was like, man, there's a few things. The church at Philadelphia for me. I keep getting to be in rooms like this and I keep being certain that I don't deserve to be there.

Shouldn't be there. God's made a big mistake. How do you get there? And it doesn't honor God.

Right. Where are we in our faith? Where are we mentally? All the mental health or our country is extraordinarily bad. And some of us are dealing with that personally.

And in our mental health ties to our faith. But some of us aren't. But we need to be far more aware that people around us are.

And we didn't meet them where they are, which, again, ties back to that cross. And then not just mental health, but mental growth. In other words, what books are we reading? Are we stimulating our mind or what are we learning? What are we choosing to learn on purpose? And what's our strategy for that by design, not by default? Say it again.

By design, not by default. Right. What about our marriage? I'm married way over my head.

Unbelievable. Bless her heart. I'll talk about her in a bit.

Family. We call our family Team Reeter. And we love family.

What about our social life, our friendships, our hobbies? Serving in our community, in our country? What about health and fitness? What about our financial lives? Does financial success lead to generosity by design and not by default? The isms. I think there are three ism words. Anybody got a theory already? What do you think the bottom ism right here is? Anybody? Okay, I got it.

Pessim. Pessimism. What do you think about pessimism? It's never helpful.

If you're pessimistic, your life will literally be shorter. Pessimism never helps. What's the top ism now you know? You guys are gamers.

Optimism. How important is optimism? If you're optimistic, you'll live longer. Optimism like pie in the sky? What's the middle ism? Did you get it? I think they got it.

That's unbelievable. Nobody ever gets it. See, you guys are really smart.

Never pessimism. Pursuing realistic optimism. Data-centric optimism.

What is reality? It is the truth that will set us free. You get to decide. You are a leader in your firm and in your community.

In your forum. You move people toward realistic optimism. We are not at the mercy ever of a pessimistic outlook.

And I would ask you, is there anything over here in the integrity compass that you're pessimistic about? It won't work. It's not going to be okay. So we're going to move from pessimism to realistic optimism by design and not by default.

Now, here's another funny thing. There's a guy named Garrison Keillor. So I'm the realistic optimism guy, right? I really want to be somewhat self-aware, which is not always easy.

Especially when you're leading a firm. Or you know what I mean? Do you have people that will tell you the truth? Or do they all just say what they think you want to hear? But I love this quote. And so I want to buffer realistic optimism with this one.

And here's what I want to tell you. I really feel like we live in a day and time. This crazy world where we live is nuts.

And it is nuts. Like it's biblically not germane. And yet we're going to look that reality in the eye.

And we're going to deny it because of the power of Christ. Next word. Excellence.

Not mediocrity. So when you look at the integrity compass, where would you say I'm excellent? And where would you say I'm mediocre there? Excellence. Good enough isn't good enough.

Especially for the people in this room. Service. Back to the firm for a moment.

The go-to-market strategy for the firm. Seek first. Tell me if you know where this came from.

Seek first to serve and love and care and matter and make a difference and be a catalyst in the life of another person and see if everything else doesn't just work out. And so seek first to serve and love and care and matter and make a difference and be a catalyst in the life of another person and see if everything else doesn't just work out. That's Matthew chapter 6 verse 33.

In my firm that I never talk about. So at work as it relates to faith, are we strategically intentional biblically? Are we learning a language? Because look y'all, the Muslim advisors in my firm love that we're seeking first. The Hindu advisors, the atheist advisors, the Jewish advisors, they love it that we seek first to serve and love and care and matter and make a difference and be a catalyst in the life of another person and see if everything else doesn't.

Now if I told them that it was in the Bible, several of them would not like that. It is kind of funny because I teach them stuff. I teach them overcome fear with power, love and discipline.

Have one of them. That's pretty secular. Walk through a YMCA and it's like up on the wall.

God has not given us his fears, fear, but a power, love and discipline. He calls me on his cell phone. He says it was the Bible.

He says, I said, excuse me. I know just overcome fear with power, love and discipline. I don't have to focus on exactly where that came from because God's word won't return void.

Now I am a little nervous that I'm going to get to heaven and God's going to say, you plagiarize me all the time. You kind of tend to declaim my stuff. But memorizing and hiding God's word in our heart and then correlating it around to other areas of our life by learning a language that is uncommon.

This whole separation of church and state and oh, we're not going to integrate our faith that our work. These are separate. And I know you know this.

I'm preaching to the choir, but I want you to go deeper on that because the truth will set them free. And so put the truth out as much as you can. And God's, I think, going to be OK when we get to heaven.

And he's like, yeah, you didn't always give me credit. I think he's OK with it because it's strategic, which leads us to the final word of best truth. Y'all, we've come through a period of relativism and we're moving to a period of AI.

So relativism said, I know the truth, the truth. I know my truth. Here's my truth.

I got sent to some high level thing where I learned, by the way, I'll just cut out of the bag. Woke high level thing where I learned that whatever somebody says to you is their truth. So you treat it as truth.

I mean, that was training by a 300 billion dollar company, Fortune 100 company. Whoa. And I'm like in the room going, OK, hang in there.

Just don't lose it immediately. You know, be strategic in how you offset this. You guys see the movie A Few Good Men.

Do you remember Tom Cruise's famous line? I want the truth. Do we? Do we want the truth? Do we want the truth? In the areas of our life where the truth is difficult or concerning or uncomfortable. And then there's Colonel Jessup, Jack Nicholson.

You can't handle the truth. Can we handle the truth? Do we want the truth? And can we handle the truth? And how deep into the truth are we going? And how important is this book to us? Like, are we staking our life on this book? Because if we are, we ought to be spending a little time in it. This is God's love letter to us.

How often are we going to read it? And then the movie Liar Liar by Jim Carrey. And the truth will set you free. Okay, Jim Carrey gets it right.

That's kind of crazy, isn't it? The liar gets it right. Y'all, truth is huge. The pursuit of truth leads to character.

And tough times are coming. This is Houston, Texas, Hurricane Harvey. That's my office, office building.

Three floors up, completely underwater on that office building. It was so amazing to watch that firm of people come together for each other and then reach out from there. Count it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you experience trials of many kinds.

Because you know that the testing of your faith will produce. The first word is perseverance, and then it goes all the way out to what? Godly character. How cool is it to be pursuing godly character by counting it all joy when we experience trials of many kinds? Okay, so best life, balance, excellence, service, and truth.

Listening friend, I like Jeff's challenge. Don't simply think about someday leaving a legacy. Ask God to help you live one today.

And notice where Jeff keeps bringing us back. Balance, excellence, service, truth. Not success in one area while everything else God has entrusted to us is neglected.

Not excellence merely so people will notice us. Not service simply because of what we might receive in return. And not my truth or your truth, but God's truth.

The truth that sets us free. Jeff also reminded us that an extraordinary life isn't ultimately about making ourselves extraordinary. Jesus Christ is at the center, and our lives become richer as we pour ourselves into helping others.

And we're not finished. Tomorrow on Mark & Friends, Jeff moves from living our best life into living a bold life and gives us four more words to consider. Be, own, love, and do.

We'll pick up there tomorrow. Learn more about Pinnacle Forum at PinnacleForum.com. And if you missed part of today's broadcast, want to hear it again, read the transcript, or explore additional scriptures, takeaways, applications, and ministry resources, stop by GreatNewsRadio.org or WLUJ.org and click on the Mark & Friends tab. Thanks for listening.

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