

## The Wrecked Sessions Session One

A Welcome again to the *Wrecked* sessions with Jeff Goins. I'm your host, Andy Traub. And on today's show we're going to explore the idea of how and why we can pursue a wrecked life, and then keep it that way. But let me begin by welcoming to the show the author of *Wrecked*, Mr. Jeff Goins. Hi Jeff.

J Hey, how's it going?

A Life is grand. Life is wonderful in South Dakota, and I was grateful to get to spend some time with you at the Quitter Conference. You spoke there and did a phenomenal job. And it was nice to spend some time with you over lunch. But at hand we have someone else that has been a part of the book. And why don't you introduce who he is; and, also, tell us how you got to know him?

J Yeah. Well, our guest is Mr. Stephen Proctor. And Stephen and I met not too long ago. I mean I met him towards the end of my writing *Wrecked*. And, you know, we just had some mutual friends. I think he actually reached to me. And we had met in passing before at like mutual events. We had different reasons for being there. And we just decided to get together for coffee. We both live in Nashville. And when we got together for coffee, I was just amazed by his story. And I said, "I have to include you in my book." And, so, I think afterwards I e-mailed him and asked him for some more details and found ways to put it in the book.

But what I love about Stephen's story – and I really open the book with it as one of the first examples – is he really exemplifies someone who's gone and gotten wrecked; and, then, come back to regular ordinarily life and had to figure out how these extraordinary experiences now fit into a normal life; and, also, how to structure a life around this idea of serving others, being more compassionate, having your life be about more than you.

A Well, welcome to the show Stephen.

S Thank you very much.

A We're going to talk about a lot of those details, but I guess I want to start with more of a philosophical question which is, a lot of people, I think, have an opportunity to go have a wrecked-type experience: short-term mission trip, walking into the inner city and handing out blankets, as Jeff talks about in the beginning of the book. You know, they have those opportunities. Do you get a sense that a lot of people are sort of one and done? And I don't ask in a judgmental way, but isn't that sort of the norm that we do something that wrecks us once?

S I would say yes to both. I wouldn't say "one and done." You're never done. Definitely, there are certain experiences that I've had, and trips that I've been on, or films that I've seen, or just whatever the medium or vehicle it was that opened my eyes and allowed my heart to be broken. You know, there is definitely those first couple of trips and experiences that you'll never forget that really kind of – was a catalyst and started the process. But, for me, it's just – it's definitely taking on a lifestyle of being

wrecked, and being wrecked in new ways. It's not just going overseas or seeking out experiences just for the sake of, you know, becoming addicted to those experiences in a weird way, always looking for an emotional rush. But – and we can talk about that later. But there's definitely a process I find myself in of subjecting myself to different experiences, and different cultures, and people's stories to kind of keep – keep it fresh, to keep it tangible, right there in front of me.

A Let me ask you, Jeff, this question which is, how do we keep the idea, or the process, or the experience of getting wrecked from becoming, as Stephen mentioned, just an emotional rush? You talked just a little bit about in the book, but how do we keep it from being selfish?

J Yeah, I mean, I think we have to begin with the understanding that this is not about us. And that's challenging, because the experience of getting wrecked, or getting your heart broken, or realizing the world is a bigger place than just you, it feels deeply personal and intimate. And, so, we mistake, I went to Africa, or had an experience in the inner city, or was a camp counselor for a summer like that's something that happened to make me a better person.

And, so, in a really subtle way it becomes selfish, because we think the experience was for us. But the truth was, it wasn't for us. It happened to us. So, that we could, then, take that worldview and apply it to living a bigger story, living a life that is more about others than about us. And, so, I think it really needs to begin with motive. I think we can go into the experiences with mixed motives, but we need to keep the understanding that what happened to us wasn't an adventure or something that happens to us just for the sake of it happening to us.

And this is where I think people go wrong is the feelings fade, and they feel like they have to have another experience to reinvigorate those feelings so that they can be a better person. But if you look at those experiences, you weren't trying to be a better person. Most likely, you were just going and doing what was required, or something happened that all of a sudden made you act in a way that you normally wouldn't act. And, then, out of that byproduct was you became a better person.

So, I think we have to find new ways to do that in our own context. And I think people mess that up by trying to replicate these experiences of going overseas, or whatever it is, and the reality it's the discomfort. It's the laying down of my own agenda, whatever it is, that wrecks us. And as I said before, I think Stephen is an entrepreneur, a businessman, a techie guy with lots of cool, neat gadgets. He's not somebody who lives as a modern monastic or something. So, I like his story, because he has this whole life, business, and all of this stuff. He's not an aesthetic.

And, yet, he realized all of these things are resources for him to continue to find ways to be wrecked in whatever context he finds himself in. And I think that's what we're concerned about: find a way to live in this tension of, "I have this stuff. I have these resources, and there's a world out there in need. How do these things connect in a responsible, scalable way that also makes me a better person and makes me feel like I'm contributing to a bigger story?"

A So, Stephen, I want to ask you about what Jeff mentioned about your schedule. So, what is it that you're taking time off for in your year, and how much time do you take off?

S Well, I mean, I definitely get to travel a lot for my work. I'm at different events and conferences and different types of gatherings all over the states, but I definitely have a rhythm of going overseas or subjecting myself to other cultures. I don't have like a set couple of months or set time. I'm not very systematic with it. But there is kind of a regular rhythm.

So, like last – because I'm in the events season, wintertime, I mean I work a lot of women's conferences, and worship conferences, and different types of those type events. Surely, there's a lot of youth camps, and other schedules that people are on, festivals and whatnot. The types of events that I work on I usually find my – the beginning of my year, January through March, really open. So, I like to be intentional about that.

I mean there's definitely lots of projects and events, kind of my own things for my business that I want to work on. Surely, I can be making more money. But I choose to go overseas and to help out different organizations, like ELIC, their annual gathering in Thailand where I get to sit with these English teachers and hear the stories of what God is doing all throughout Asia, and what's happening in the classrooms and hear different people's stories and sitting under those types of stories and connecting with those people. But taking my giftings and abilities through technology and production, and doing all sorts of projection work, especially when it relates to the gathering for worship.

So, I bring that in just to help serve them. Because I'm not the one that's living in Asia. I'm not the one that's in the classroom building these relationships with these students. But my – it could be that my greatest gift to the kingdom in this aspect is to simply go and wash the feet, and serve those who are the ones that are living full-time overseas. And that's what I love to do.

You know, I'm not looking to create some crazy nonprofit and build the next awesome clean water system in Africa, or revolutionize the way things are done, or whatever. I just want to simply serve those who are overseas serving. And, so, I like to – I spent my month of February over there.

This past year some of my family lived in Dubai. They were working in the labor camps. In Dubai there's about 4 million modern-day slaves building Dubai and Abada Bi and lot of South Asian workers are there. That's a whole 'nother story. So, my entire family went over to Dubai for Christmas to hang with my sister and her family. And, so, I decided, look, I don't have any work scheduled, and I don't want to schedule any work in the States for January. So, I spent six weeks in Dubai. Then flew from there to Thailand. We did some other work in Hong Kong. And, then, I went back to Thailand to hang out with some of my friends who are missionaries there.

I don't really call that a missions trip. You know, I'm not like out there myself proselytizing – that's such a weird word – or sharing my faith in a very verbal, active way. But I do like to come alongside those and just hang out those who are over there who are doing the direct work. And just, you know, sometimes it's – the mission trip is more for the missionaries than it is for the people you are trying to reach. And, so, that's what I love to do is to go over there and serve and serve them, and we have a lot of fun, and laughs, and eat together, break bread, do crazy adventurous things. But for me just being out of America and my own culture for a while, it just – Jeff, you started talking about your

worldview. And that's what I'm constantly trying to do is expand my worldview and keep my worldview expanded and ever growing and changing and evolving.

Because as soon as I just kind of stick in my own little hole in my own little job, and I just kind of stick to what I want to do, my worldview gets small again. It's like this gravitational pull or something that just constantly keeps it small. So, I'm always working to stretch it.

A And isn't that part of our built-in preservation that we – we work to make things easier, we work to create systems, or to move to a safer neighborhood, or just get into a – everybody says, "I'm out of rhythm. It's a crazy time of year." All those different things. But, then, there's this life that you're living, and that Jeff writes about in *Wrecked*, which is being intentional about getting out of that rhythm, being intentional – and I don't mean safety as in put yourself in harm's way, but to get – get in places that you're not always in control.

So, my question of that comment is this, do you wish you could have done it earlier? How do you view life after being wrecked versus life before?

S You know, that's a great question. If I look back, I don't think I have any regrets. I really enjoyed the journey and the process. I remember the first time I got invited to go on a mission's trip with Focus on the Family, this trip where we took all these teenagers down to Panama, and I had never done a trip on my own. I've always been with my family somewhere. So, I was a little bit nervous to do that. And I was, you know, I'd been out of college for a year. And I've been overseas. And I was around all the talk a lot. But – so, I felt like it was still close. But I haven't just stepped out and done it myself.

But I remember being nervous that we were taking these kids, and myself, in to visit this tribe that was off in the jungle in Panama, but they are topless. They don't really wear a lot of clothes. And I'm like, "I don't think that we should be doing this. We shouldn't bring – show teenagers that. They're too immature, and I don't feel like I'm comfortable enough with seeing this." And just having my walls up and – what food are we going to eat? Am I going to have to work my computer and paint and do all the work at the same time? Or can I relax? I don't know these people. This is going to be weird. I'm by myself. That – that trip and returning with those same group of people year after year for a while, I mean it was a great process. It was, um, some of the people that I met on those trips are still to this day some of my best friends and my business partner, actually, I met on that trip.

And, so, I wouldn't go back and – I don't think looking back, I wouldn't go back and do anything differently. It's fun to look back in hind's sight and see how all the dots connect.

A Jeff, in your conversations with the different people for this book that make up the – character isn't the right word, but the personalities that you've highlighted, did people talk about sort of life before and after a lot? Or was it just more focus on after?

J Yeah, somebody said it to me like this. I asked them, "What is like if you've" – they had just gotten back from this experience of traveling the world for a year. And I said, "What is life like now? How do you make sense of things?" And he said, "Well, what I tell people is this, it's like growing up in

Disney World and, then, one day you leave and you realize that the rest of the country, the rest of the world rather, is not Disney World.” And I thought that was a really interesting, powerful picture. I mean if you think of Disney World, it’s this place – I mean it’s a great place, you know? It’s a place of excess and everything is really nice and neat on the surface. It’s fun. And it’s a place to indulge. And we live in a culture that’s a self-indulging culture.

And, unfortunately, a lot of people just think that that’s it, that’s all that there is to life, or that that is all there is to the world. And when somebody gets wrecked they realize that that’s not all there is, that the rest of the world is not America. The rest of the world is not Disney World. And there is something really scary, but good, about that. You know, it’s like coming out of the Matrix. It’s freeing, and it’s good, because it’s true. But there is some hardship, and risk, and definitely some responsibility.

And I would bet that that’s one of the things that drives Stephen overseas every year. I mean he told me earlier that he’s going to spend some time in Scotland later this year. Not to do mission work or do anything super humanitarian, but I just love this idea of constantly finding ways to upset your discomfort to remember that the story is not about you, that the world is bigger than your backyard.

S Jeff, when you were talking about the Matrix, it made me think of something I really liked. When Neo was woken up from the Matrix and he saw that the – what the world that he had been living in wasn’t real, or I should say, it was probably real to a degree, because it definitely took place in people’s minds. But compared to the real world and the rest of the world, it just wasn’t fully living. You know, they were still asleep.

Well, Neo and Morpheus, and all the guys, they didn’t just go to Zion and enjoy being in the real world and condemn or look down or pity those that were still asleep, caught in the Matrix and had no idea what the rest of the world was like. But they went back into the Matrix. You know, they subjected themselves to their old realities and to help wake people up, to help them to see what’s going on. And, for me, what I do for my job, because most of my business and moneymaking endeavors takes place in America, you know, it’s – I feel like when I’m coming – I don’t want to – this might be a little one-sided, and it probably is, when I come back from having some kind of experience or having my worldview expanded and I just see whether it’s an impoverished country, or it’s just the weirdness of China, the craziness of China, or Scotland, or Ireland, or some place that’s everyone is OK, but it’s just a different way of thinking. And people drive on the other side of the road. Just things are different.

When I come back into America I almost feel like I’m coming back into my own Matrix world. But I want to come, and I want to help share the stories and encourage people, “Look, take an opportunity to give yourself that experience.” I mean – and I realize that I’m a bachelor, and single guy, no kids. It’s easy for me to just go, “Well, I guess I’ll just go overseas for a month.” And, yeah, I don’t have kids to feed. I get the realities of everyone else who have other responsibilities that I don’t. I do have a level of freedom that other people don’t. I understand that.

But that – I don’t like it when people use that as an excuse to say, “Well, I’m just going to stay and do what I do, and I can’t – I can’t do anything else.” No, there are definitely other ways you can get wrecked. Like my sister, she – she goes, “I would love to travel overseas with you, but I just – my

responsibility is to my children right now, and training them, and teaching them.” But you know what? They’re sponsoring a Compassion kid. And they’re writing them, and they’re praying for them. And she’s trying to – she’s been overseas. She gets it. But she’s trying to help bring her children up with that kind of worldview and understanding. And you know what? Once in a while, there does come an opportunity for them to take a trip as a family. And they – while we were in Dubai last Christmas they – the family took a side trip, just them, my other sister, and took the kids to Kenya to visit some missionaries there. And they just want to make sure from early on that those kids have an understanding beyond the suburban, Southern Baptist life, that they are growing up in, so.

A You know, I was thinking about that as it relates to – I’m a father of three – and, Jeff, you are father now – of how we can find ways to wreck things that deserve to be wrecked. And I would submit that Christmas needs to be wrecked in America. Like, what would be a way we could wreck Christmas? And, again, we’re not going to remove Jesus from it. But, you know.

J You could probably argue that Jesus was taken out of Christmas a long time ago for some people. Yeah, well, I think the best way to answer that is through a story. Because one of the best Christmases that I ever had was when a friend and I collected a bunch of blankets from churches, friends, coworkers, and got a bunch of candy canes and food, and clothes, and all kinds of stuff. And we went down to visit this community, this homeless community that we had befriended a few months before.

And this was one of the first things that wrecked me. I talk about it in the book. I met this homeless community kind of on accident. We found this group of, you know, on any given day it could be a dozen, or a couple of dozen people, living literally underneath the street in this like underground cave, basically. And, so, for I don’t know, an afternoon for several hours we went down. We handed out candy canes, and blankets, and sweatshirts, and I just – and just hung out with people. And somebody asked my friend who was with me, “Why are you doing this?” And he said pretty candidly, he said, “Well, you know, Jesus was born in a horse trough; and, so, I figured the best place to find him, you know, to celebrate his Birthday is in a place like that, in a stable.” And that’s exactly where we were.

There were all kinds of terrible smells of urine, and feces, and I mean it wasn’t a clean, well-kept place. And, yet, there was something really good about being in the mess of life, in this – in the dirtiness and grit of this community which is really kind of a picture of just life in general. Life is kind of messy. It’s hard to escape the messiness and brokenness of the world, even in the suburbs.

And if there was something really honest about celebrating, you know, the hope of the world, celebrating the birth of Christ and this idea of love and good will toward men, and all of these ideas that get wrapped up in Christmas, or something really honest about doing it in that context. And several days later we went to, I think, my parents’ house and exchanged gifts and had a big meal. And that was nice, too. And I didn’t feel bad about that. But it wasn’t as powerful as that one afternoon underneath the street.

And, so, I’m not saying you go and replicate that experience, but I do encourage people, especially during the holiday season, to do something to help you understand the depth and meaning of

this experience. And I know that a lot of people volunteer on Christmas and Thanksgiving at homeless shelters. I'm not saying to do that during the time that everybody else does it. But it might be good to do something during Christmas to remind yourself, "This is what this means. This is why this is important."

A Yeah.

J I don't think it's about removing something. I don't think it's about not giving presents so that somehow you can figure out, you can find the meaning. I know some people do that, and I think that's fine. But it's like fasting. You don't remove something for the sake of removing it. You remove it to replace it with something.

So, I'm much more – I mean Christmas, I think, culturally regardless of how much stuff is involved in it, and how much splendor, you know, you put into it, is pretty empty in our culture. And, so, I'm more interested in finding ways to add something of significance to the holiday. Do something different that causes you to understand this is what it means: That Christ came to save all mankind, or that this is the hope of the world, or that just love and good will towards men is – peace on earth are these ideas that we really believe in. I want to do something to get into my muscle memory that this matters to me.

A Hum. Stephen, what are your thoughts in a real practical way to maybe, you know, and again most people are going to celebrate this every year. So, maybe it's a good place to start.

S For – I don't have as many ideas on that. But I will just share my own story from last Christmas. You know, like I said earlier I mentioned Dubai. My oldest sister and her family moved over there to do some missions work in the labor camps there in Dubai. And my dad came to the family this time last year and said, "What if Christmas looked different for us?" You know, we all love to give gifts and exchange and have everyone together at our house where we all grew up and just, you know, the kind of traditional Christmas thing. "What if it just looked different? What if we instead of giving each other gifts we spent that money and let's" – and he was being very generous to help us out with all this but, "Let's go as a family to where Lesley and John are. Let's see the camps. Let's see what their life is like, and let's have Christmas together over there and give each other this experience instead of a bunch of gifts." So, that's what we did.

Granted, we had a lot of fun, because it's Dubai. You talked about Disney World. It's adult Disney World on steroids. Like it's insane. The world's fastest, biggest, most-expensive everything is there. It puts – it makes America look like an impoverished country. So, there is a plethora of entertainment and things that look and smell good.

But it's a different world culture. It's a different culture, I should say, and our family had never done anything like that. It gave the opportunity for my other sister to take her family and kids to Africa. We got to go into the labor camps. We got to tell on Christmas – we got to tell the Christmas story on the – on this beach where we gathered all these South Asians from the labor workers, except some of the Immaratis, this has never happened before. It's a relatively safe country, but some local Immarati guys wanted to cause some trouble. And, so, they actually called the cops on us which you do not want

happen in another country. And since they're talking bad against Allah, they're speaking bad – which we weren't. But it's their word against these foreigners.

A Sure.

S There you have no credibility. So, basic – and, plus, there was these labor workers from India and Afghanistan, and Pakistan with us. You know, just you can let your imagination run wild. I mean the racism is just crazy over there. It's like – if you've ever seen *The Help*, you know the movie *The Help* about racism in the South in the '60s, it's like that now with their labor workers. It's just insane.

And, so, we got the cops called on us. And there was a lot of kind of trouble. And we had to be very careful. And, basically, got kicked off the beach. And our whole family, even my little nieces and nephews were there. We will never forget that experience. And we weren't doing anything extraordinary other than just making ourselves available and just linking arms with those who were already over there and just saying, "How can we serve, and how can we be a part of this?" We'll never forget that. So, that was our Christmas last year.

J I like the fact that all of this begun with an experience of going to Papua New Guinea and just what Stephen had to give up in order to do that, random trip to – a lot of people know nothing about or never heard of. So, I thought that would be cool for you to share a little bit about that, Stephen.

S Yeah, I'll try to make it short. So, in 2004 – 2005 were those initial trips to Panama and Peru, and I met this guy named Nate Griffin who had lived – had grew up overseas with New Tribes Missions in Africa. His parents were missionaries. And, then, he spent two years in his 20s in Papua New Guinea, which for those of you who don't know where Papua New Guinea is, it's the large island that's just north of Australia. It's in the South Pacific, kind in the Micronesia, Polynesian area, Melanesian, whatever.

So, the more Nate would talk about Papua New Guinea and his experiences there, and life in the tribe and the village, it was something in me was like, "Man, I would really like to go experience something like that. I love the South Pacific, and I've never been on any kind of trip like that." And he really encouraged me to do that.

In the meantime, he had moved to Nashville. We had gotten to know each other. He moved to Nashville to be my roommate and through a series of events – I won't go into the details – we launched a company, and we named our company Grateful Inconvenience: GI, Inc., is kind of the abbreviation.

So, Grateful Inconvenience really embodies this lifestyle. And we wanted that lifestyle of making ourselves available to God at any given time and place. We wanted that to be what our business is about. And we wanted it to be the culture of our business.

And, so, completely making ourselves available to God, which when you do that, he's on a quest to obliterate your earthly agenda. So, in a sense it's a very inconvenient thing to subject yourself to, by giving up control. But there is a gratefulness and a contentment, and a joy that you will get from that that you could never manufacture on your own. So, this is a life of grateful inconvenience, and that's what our business is about.



But our business, or actual skill in practice, is in the world of creative production, and technology, and making films, and Nate is art directing these videos – I could name drop all day long these amazing people that he gets to work with. And he is actually now in Beijing, you know, fast forward a few years, to today. He's in Beijing expanding our company in the Asian market which is very exciting.

But, anyway, in 2006 we started the business. And through 2006 was the process of me really just this idea of going overseas and just really kind of shaking some things up in my life was taking place. And, so, in January 2007 I went over to Papua New Guinea for five weeks to go through a program that Nate had worked at called Interface. And it's a college-level experience. They don't call it a mission trip. It's a college education experience where you go and you learn about the life of a missionary who lives in the tribes. And you kind of get a 360-degree view of what this life is like. And it helps expand your worldview and the – we took classes like learning to adapt and infiltrate the culture, gaining influence, and in learning the language along the way, and how to contextualize your language and the words that you use.

Because you can go over and say, "Jesus is living water," and to us what does water mean? In Africa, what does water mean, clean water, good water? In Papua New Guinea water is where the evil spirits live. And, so, you never want to touch the river. So, when you start talking about this river of life the cultural context of that is completely different. So, you have to really rethink your message and the story that you're telling.

So, we are learning all of these things, as well as living within a tribe and interacting with the guys every day, and just being completely unplugged from technology which is another whole amazing thing, especially for someone who works with technology 24/7.

So, I did this experience this month-long, about five-week-long deal, and I'm the guy that knows how turn computers on. I know how to put in the right password for the e-mail. Nate is not that person. I'm like, "I don't need to leave when I'm doing this." And I had even business advisors who were saying, "Why don't you work and really build your business up first, get some money, and then later on down the road you are able to take – you're going to be in a better place to be able to take these types of trips and – because you're not going to make any money. It's going to cost you thousands of dollars to do this." That money which I did not have. I had to raise support. And I'm putting my life on hold. And allowing my less-than-one-year-old business to survive, which that first year is the kind of make-it-or-break-it time for most people.

But you know what? I just felt really called to say, "You know what? We both decided early on that it doesn't matter if an opportunity costs us money, or makes us a lot of money. If God puts something in front of us, we're going to take it. And we're not going to be the type of business, and the type of businessmen that says, 'You know what? We're going to wait until later to when we have more money and we're more established and in a position to do better things like.' Where from the very get go we're going to sacrifice and give and go."

You know what? While I was over there, we got a News Boys gig. We got the entire video production job for one of the big News Boys tours, and I had no idea, because I was offline. I come home. And the day I get home they had – I was so proud of Nate. He – it caused him to grow, because he really had to like figure it out and reach out to the right people to bring the right team, assemble the right team, together.

And you know what? He did it. And it was great. And he would have never gone through that experience with me being gone. And it really grew our business and stretched us. And we returned that next summer to actually create a film for New Tribes, because we're film guys, and media and technology guys. We wanted to help them tell their story better. So, again, that experience wrecked me, and everything that I want to do is to share that experience with as many people as possible.

So, I came to the organization. I said, "Can we, please, produce a film to help tell the story of what this is all about?" And, so, we went back the next summer and spent a lot of money. Didn't make any money at all. And created this film for them. And that film turned into many other films for the organization. We did make a little bit of money in the future with that. So, that was good. But those films, we put our passion into it, and that has opened up so many more opportunities and work, and we also tagged on a trip to China after Papua New Guinea that summer. And one trip to China led to another trip to China, which led to another one. And now Nate is living in Suho across from the Apple Store in Beijing expanding our business there through film technology and creating media.

I mean it's just like mind blowing to me how everything keeps coming back full circle through our giftings, through what we've sacrificed in the beginning, and continue to sacrifice, too. Because we're – there's still a lot of risk involved. But it's so much more fun this way.

A Stephen, you had mentioned using your gifts to go back to where you were before to help them. So, can you tell us more about how we should pursue getting wrecked, but maybe include our giftedness in that process?

S Oh, absolutely. There's definitely the temptation when you are exposed to various ways of doing missions, or social justice, or humanitarian work. You immediately start to think, "Well, how can I – I don't know anything about building wells." Or, "I don't know anything about planting a church in Papua New Guinea, or whatever - whatever it is – fighting human trafficking, going into brothels and rescuing girls. I have some friends that do that. That's not really – that's not me. And, though, I could kind of stop what it is that I'm doing, and quit my day job so to speak, and learn those abilities, that's not necessarily always the answer.

I don't want to say that that's not – that you should never do that. Some people might actually do need to quit their day job because maybe you're not passionate about it and learn a new skill set. But, for me, I already had a really God-given talent and a skill set was very unique with projection, and media, and creating atmospheres for concerts, and worship experiences, and everything. And, so, I loved what I do. And, so, I started thinking, "How can I apply what I do overseas in different places?"

Like I said, I go to Thailand every year and help serve a conference. And just – I play one small part, but it's the part that I play really well to help just breathe life and energy and something different into the lives of those who are living overseas full-time. And doing the work over there.

I've been to Uganda, and I've held the camera and shot Beeroll, and I'm not even a good cameraman, but I got what I – what the organization was needed. And, then, more and more I'm getting asked to go through the power of Twitter and social media, I'm meeting these worship leaders, and tech guys, and creative guys, who are trying to start the conversation about creativity in their communities, and in their countries.

So, I've been to Poland and just got back from Brazil. And I'll be going to Ireland in a couple of weeks. And I get to take my talents, my gifts, over there. And, again, I'm not making any money when I'm doing this. I'm not trying to brag about that or anything. I just – it's the reality of – it's not like I'm on some big concert world tour like charging tickets for anything.

But I just realize that there's a need, and I realize, look, they could learn from something that I've discovered. And you know? I can learn and grow, and be stretched by living with them and hearing their stories and experiencing what their culture is like. And, again, it just expands my worldview.

So, I'm a huge fan of just finding out what it is that you're gifted at. And, then, there are so many roles to play. And it seems like there's a few popular roles out there. And everyone wants to play those. And that's – there's nothing wrong with that. There's definitely those needs. But think about what your unique gift set is, what your talent is, what your skills are, and how can you apply that and really serve people in other areas. And that might be downtown at the homeless shelter and creating a unique experience for guys that would never experience that before. Or it may mean going overseas.

But I'm a huge advocate for that and always want to challenge people to really think about it. For me there's a phrase that Ian Krahn, you guys both know Ian really well. Andy, you do his podcasts. And Ian said a phrase one time that really – I really latched on to. He called it, "The Missionary of Beauty." And I think he quotes either Richard War, N.T. Rider, one of those awesome guys about – I don't want to go into this too deeply, but there's the Path of the True, the Path of the Beauty, and the Path of the Justice or Goodness, and how we – different people lean into different areas of doing a lot of good of people in justice in missions work, and then there are people who are all into truth, and doctrine, and theology, and preaching, and the text; and, then, there are those that are really into the beauty, into the art, into the life.

And I'm a really – at least in this season of life, I'm a beauty person. And, so, beauty is an aspect of the kingdom. And I remember hearing one time that Mother Teresa told this art director, tech director from a Broadway show, this Broadway show producer wanted to go over, just quit everything, leave, and go to India and do the really, quote, important work. And Mother Teresa corrected her very kindly and said, "No, no, no. There is a poverty and a famine of the body in my country. But in your country there is a famine of the soul. And beauty, and art, and life, and goodness really can bring nourishment to our impoverished souls."

Yeah, our bodies are well-fed in America. But I feel like our souls are dying. And I really feel called to be a missionary of beauty and to bring life whether it's an American church, or a church in Poland, or Brazil, or Africa. We're all in need of beauty. And I've really come to understand the power of that. So, yeah, that's kind of where I'm at these days.

A       Awesome. Well, Stephen, thank you for your time today. And I encourage folks to check out Stephen's story; page 30 of *Wrecked* is where you can read about Stephen. Stephen, again, thank you for joining us today. And, Jeff, thanks for bringing him on the show. We look forward to more of these conversations in the *Wrecked* sessions. So, Stephen, again, thank you for your time. And, Jeff, thank you.