



The Prosper Ritual: The 7 Pillar Practice Guaranteed to Save You from a Life of Poverty, Fear and Depression
Episode 183

Sean: Yes, welcome to the Ray Edwards Show. I'm Sean Edwards, son of Ray Edwards.

Ray: Does that feel awkward, ever, to say that?

Sean: It does, at times.

Ray: I'm Sean Edwards, son of Ray Edwards.

Sean: Son of Ray Edwards.

Ray: I like it.

Sean: Son of Mogue.

Ray: I don't think you're my son, son of Mogue.

Sean: All right, today we've got a fun show for you. We're going to be going over The Prosper Ritual: The 7 Pillar Practice Guaranteed to Save You from a Life of Poverty, Fear and Depression.

Ray: That sounds exciting!

Sean: It does sound exciting, especially when you say it really dramatic.

Ray: Like William Shatner.

Sean: And we're going to be talking about The Dangerous Duty of Delight: Why God is Happiest When You are Happy.

Ray: What! God wants us to be happy?

Sean: That's crazy.

Ray: He's not mad at us.

Sean: No.

Ray: He's not waiting for us to screw up so He can shoot us with a lightning bolt from the sky?

Sean: Well, maybe you.

Ray: Oh. That's not very edifying.

Sean: Inexpensive gear to start your podcasts and then we've got a great interview from a student and Regency member, Kirk Bowman. That should be fun.

Ray: It will be. It will be delightful. Kirk is fun to talk to, especially if you want to know how to charge higher prices for your products and services.

Sean: Or if you don't know that you should charge higher.

Ray: If that's a new concept to you, if you're like what?

Sean: What? Or I could never charge more for that.

Ray: Then you'll enjoy this interview immensely.

Spiritual Foundations

Ray: So we titled this section **The Dangerous Duty of Delight: Why God is Happiest When You are Happy** and that is news to a lot of people. John Piper wrote this book which he entitled *The Dangerous Duty of Delight*. That's where I got the title for this segment and he says in his book: "Each of us is hardwired to pursue our happiness." That is a radical concept for a lot of Christians. In fact, we know some people who actually said to us in a conversation not long ago, they were talking about the church they go to and they said well, you know, we're not those kinds of Christians that think you should be happy all the time.

Sean: Yeah, those crazy Christians.

Ray: It was called the Good News, not the be-more-depressed news. As a thought, just ponder on that a little bit. Piper says that we long for significant profound joy and he points out that a lot of people try to satisfy this need that we have, this hardwired need for happiness and joy, with things like gadgets.

Sean: But, gadgets are so nice!

Ray: I know. I like the gadgets. I like the iPhone and the MacBook Pro.

Sean: Hey, you went Mexican there.

Ray: I don't know what happened. But, he says some people do it through gadgets, I have done that. Career success, I've pursued that also, exotic vacations, sports, academics. I think that's interesting because a lot of people think that's such a virtuous pursuit. That it's okay, they don't have to feel guilty for wanting to pursue academics because it's "respectable".

Sean: Right, unlike that dirty profit mongering.

Ray: Yeah, profiteers and capitalists. Some people do it through drug experimentation or it can even become part of religion, like if you punish your body as some kind of spiritual ritual or something like that. There are people who do that.

Sean: Like fasting.

Ray: Yes, exactly. I saw 'The Da Vinci Code'; I know it can be worse than fasting. Oh and there comes a whole cloud of emails toward us right now because I mentioned 'The Da Vinci Code'.

Sean: Right and that we don't fast. Just like Chris Valtin, I fast every day.

Ray: Every day?

Sean: Every day.

Ray: How do you survive?

Sean: From about 10:00 p.m. to about 7:00 a.m. I fast every day.

Ray: Every single day.

Sean: Every day, all right?

Ray: You fast more than anybody.

Sean: I know, so...

Ray: I would that you would all fast as much as I do.

Sean: That's right, if you have ears to hear.

Ray: So in *The Dangerous Duty of Delight* Piper says that the one true object of human desire and our desire to be happy is God and he quotes Saint Augustine who said "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." Another way of saying that is the phrase that John Piper himself coined. He says: "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." Now, let that sink in and think about the implications of that. John Eldridge says that the Glory of God is a man fully alive.

So, all of this points us to the fact that God hardwired us. He engineered us. He built us with an operating system that requires us to be happy. We're driven to be happy and the object of our true happiness is God himself.

Philippians 1:12-26, I'm just going to read this to you. This is Paul and he's writing to the church at Philippi and he's in prison. So this is a guy in prison serving the one who came to set the captives free. It's just another one of the paradoxical things in the Kingdom. Paul writes: "I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel so that it has become known throughout the whole Imperial Guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

And for most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much bolder to speak the Word without fear. Some, indeed, preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love knowing that I am put here for the defense of the Gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition. Not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment." Pause...

Ray: That is so weird.

Sean: That is weird.

Ray: People said I'm going to preach the Gospel so that Paul's imprisonment will become worse for him. It's very strange.

Sean: Yes.

Ray: Just as a modern day reality, there's someone that I'm acquainted with who I know is an atheist and who is a very good marketer and just released a product that is targeted toward believing Christians. I read the copy with my mouth hanging open because he wrote all these words that are... It's very good copy. I'm not going to tell you what the product is, but it's very good copy and he's got the lingo of the church completely nailed. He's speaking Gospel truth, so I don't know what that means is going on inside of him, but I don't think you can speak the words that he wrote in this copy and not be affected by it, just as a side bar.

Again, that's an example of the Gospel being preached out of selfish ambition and what does Paul say about that, he says: "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed and in that I rejoice."

So this was a lesson for me as I read this copy written by my friend, who is an atheist. He's a vocal one, a vocal critic of faith. Yet, like Paul, I realized the Gospel is being preached. Even if it's for what I consider the wrong motives, I rejoice at the Gospel being preached.

Paul goes on and says: "Yes, and I will rejoice for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance." So Paul expected to be delivered from prison. "As it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Just as another side bar, that verse is often quoted out of context and with fine purpose. I don't dispute the reasons that people quote "For me, to live is Christ, to die is gain." There are different reasons people might quote that Scripture and I believe they're true in almost every case that I've heard it used, but think about what Paul is saying here.

He's saying that whether he is executed or he's set free, he's still victorious. He's still rejoicing and it doesn't matter because if he lives then it's Christ living in him, Christ living out the Kingdom in the actual natural world and if he dies then that's his gain because he'll be in Paradise, which is not the same as Heaven but that's another podcast.

I can't help myself, can I?

Sean: No, you've just got to drop them.

Ray: I just drop these little bombs.

Sean: Yeah, you do that.

Ray: So Paul goes on and says: “I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ for that is far better, but to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith.” Just another side bar, it seems as though Paul thinks he had the power to choose. Just something to think about...

Look at the Scripture I just quoted and you realize it seems like Paul feels like he has the options and he chooses to stay so that he can help the other believers make progress and have joy in the faith. “So that in me,” he says, “you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again.”

It’s okay if you’re that crazy kind of Christian who just wants to be happy because God wired you with that desire. It’s not a bad desire. You should not try to purge yourself of the desire to be happy, to have joy in what you do. It was placed there by your Father in Heaven and, as John Piper says: “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”

Tip of the Week

Ray: Let me break out my ukulele. [Music]

Sean: Wow! That sounds good.

Ray: It sounds almost as if I’m just playing a recording.

Sean: It does.

Ray: And that I’m playing drums. I can’t remember the song we made up last week.

Sean: No.

Ray: That’s too bad.

Sean: Yeah, but it was recorded.

Ray: We could whistle, though, couldn’t we?

Sean: We could.

Ray: Let’s do it. Let’s whistle. [Ray and Sean whistle along with the music]

Sean: I forgot there’s actually whistling in this track, so I thought you wanted me to whistle.

Ray: You just did it.

Sean: I just did it.

Ray: You’re just like okay, I’ll play. I’m ready. Okay, so inexpensive gear to start your podcast. I wrote about this on my blog in my new little feature that I call 6 Link Saturday, which is when I send out six links of things that captivate me that I think are cool. I stole the idea from Tim Ferriss who has 5-Bullet Fridays. I actually goofed up my own feature on my

blog because I originally called it 7 Link Saturday and then the next Saturday I forget it was seven links so I said six links.

Sean: Well, you just start counting down.

Ray: Five Link Saturday. What happens when I get to One Link Saturday? Guess the Link Saturday. There's a link I like, you should guess what it is. Have a great weekend.

So I wrote about these simple podcast tools because I've got an elaborate setup here, which I thank Cliff Ravenscraft for pointing me in the right direction to get all this stuff to make a great-sounding podcast, Cliff, thank you very much, but I've also wanted to take the podcast on the road and be able to record while I'm traveling and I would like a simplified setup. I wanted to try this this week and we didn't get around to getting the stuff we need, but we will in the next couple of weeks.

There's an IOS podcast studio app called Bossjock. So if you have Windows I'm sorry, they don't have it.

Sean: On multiple accounts, I'm sorry.

Ray: Yes, there are different levels of bondage that you're suffering from that we hope you get freed from, but Bossjock is like an entire studio on your iPad. It hasn't been that long since I started looking for this simplified, I would call it a minimalist podcast studio that sounds professional and this might be it. The only thing that's holding me up is trying to figure out how to plug two microphones into an iPad because I want to use the \$50 mics.

Check this out. I'm on the \$400 microphone and this is what it sounds like and Sean...

Sean: I am on like a what, like a \$50 mic?

Ray: Fifty bucks or so.

Sean: Fifty dollar microphone and this is what it sounds like.

Ray: And they sound almost identical.

Sean: Almost.

Ray: The \$50 microphone, I'll tell you about that in a minute. But, Bossjock is this studio, like I'm using different programs for my outline and for the different sound effects and music beds that you hear. This Bossjock IOS app has all that stuff built in and it even has automatic ducking.

Sean: Ooh.

Ray: If you hit the button and start talking, it fades the music down so that your voice is over the music. It's really, really cool. It also does post-processing, it levels out the sound. The different volume levels are made the same, so it doesn't sound really quiet in one place and really loud in another place and it kind of pumps up. We use some post-processing to make our voices sound like real radio voices.

Sean: That's right, real radio voices.

Ray: Only here on this show.

Sean: That's right.

Ray: Well, this software for your iPad... I still call it software and people don't call it software anymore, they call it an app.

Sean: Yeah, that's weird.

Ray: I know. It's just weird. I think it's about \$10 bucks, if I remember correctly, for this app and it's this whole studio that you can do a podcast from. Then the microphone you're going to need is about \$60 bucks, \$50 to \$60 bucks. That's the one Sean is using and it's the... What is it, Sean?

Sean: The Audio-Technica ATR2100-USB Cardioid Dynamic USB/XLR Microphone.

Ray: Wow! That is a mouthful.

Sean: That was memorized, so I just knew it off the top of my head.

Ray: It's because you're that good.

Sean: I am.

Ray: It's the ATR2100, that's how I think of it.

Sean: You can't forget the Cardioid Dynamic USB/XLR part of it.

Ray: No, I definitely cannot forget that. So it's about \$50 bucks on Amazon. That makes it about one-fifth the price of my Heil PR40 and it sounds almost as nice. Maybe even it does sound as nice, but just in case Mr. Heil ever listens to this podcast I want him to know that I love this microphone.

Sean: It is a nice microphone.

Ray: It is. It's comparable to the mics we used to use at the radio station, which were RE20s. Who makes the RE20? I can't remember.

Sean: I don't know.

Ray: Radio stations have used those for a couple decades and they're very dependable workhorse microphones. So, anyway, \$50 bucks for the microphone and then there's a program called Auphonic which gets rid of terrible podcast audio. It cleans up your audio. I guess you wouldn't need this if you have Bossjock, but I just thought this was a really cool app. Kirk Bowman, who we're going to interview later on in this week's show, turned me on to this app. It makes your mediocre audio sound magnificent, that's how I like to describe it. It analyzes your audio and does whatever is needed to make it sound professional. You don't have to know how it works you just need to use it.

So that's a pretty simplified podcast setup. If you have an iPad you could get set up for less than \$100 and start making a podcast. Now, if you want to go further into all of this

I'm definitely not the guy to talk to, the guy to talk to is Cliff Ravenscraft. I wanted to mention, I don't get reimbursed, I don't make a commission for telling you this, although, if he did offer a commission I would take one. I don't think there's anything wrong with that.

Sean: No.

Ray: I like it. It's capitalism.

Sean: Matter of fact, we might be teaching people pretty soon on how to...

Ray: Would that be interesting to you? Think about that. Would you be interested in learning how to make money just by recommending products that you like. If you would, then we're thinking about doing a training session for free that will demonstrate to you how to do that.

So if Cliff Ravenscraft had an affiliate program for his podcast and his eCourse I would sign up for it and then when I recommend it to you, like I'm doing right now, if you bought it I would make a little bit of money.

Sean: You just gave away the secret!

Ray: Sorry. So Podcasting A to Z actually starts up October 26, which is not long from now. There is something you should know. The price is going to go up, I think after this session this fall. Next year when he opens up the new session it will cost quite a bit more money.

Sean: Apparently, he talked to Kirk.

Ray: He did talk to somebody really smart, he did, who gave him some good advice to do that and he's going to do it. If you don't know, Cliff is the guy behind showing many of the top podcasters how to podcast, like Dan Miller, Michael Hyatt and John Lee Dumas, who I had an opportunity to speak with yesterday. I'm going to be on his show pretty soon Entrepreneur on Fire. I'm stoked about that. I had to crank up my energy level for John Lee because he is...

Sean: He's crazy.

Ray: He is wound up. Anyway, Cliff taught all these guys how to make their great-sounding podcasts. He can teach you how to get your podcast into the iTunes Store and you can be off and running. That's at Podcasting A to Z and there'll be a link in the show notes. Where are the show notes?

Sean: They are at RayEdwards.com/183.

Ray: That's where you'll find them, so I would check it out for sure. If you want to start a podcast or if you want to restart your podcast and be successful with it, this is the place to start.

Feature Presentation

Sean: Pillars, pillars, pillars...

Ray: What's happening?

Sean: I don't know. There's a scene in 'RoboCop' the original. The good RoboCop.

Ray: Yes.

Sean: Red Forman.

Ray: The good RoboCop. It is Red Forman.

Sean: It's Red Forman and he's sitting around with a bunch of drug dealers or something like that. They all go crazy and all the henchmen pull guns on each other and he just goes, like it's no big deal, "Guns, guns, guns".

Ray: That is a great Red Forman impersonation.

Sean: And so every once in a while I just get overcome with that spirit, pillars, pillars, pillars.

Ray: Okay, but that's not what our feature presentation is about.

Sean: No, but it's The 7 Pillar Practice Guaranteed to Save You from a Life of Poverty, Fear and Depression.

Ray: Ah, I get it. Now I get it. So this is a little sneak preview, it's a sneak preview for podcast listeners. You will know now that I'm working on this book called *Permission to Prosper*, which will be released after the first of the year. The core of the book is really a ritual for prospering and before you get scared off just let me say this.

A lot of people, especially those in I'll call it the Prosperity Gospel Movement -- and that will offend some people and freak them out and other people will say yep, that's me -- a lot of people who believe in God's Will for us to prosper act as if it's like magic. I'll just pray that God will prosper me because there's that verse that says that I would prosper and be in good health, even as my soul prospers, so I'll just wait for magic checks to show up in the mail.

Sometimes that happens. We have had it happen to us. I'll give you an example. One time we prayed that God would send us a big check just because He loves us. For no other reason, we don't have to do anything for it and within a couple of days we had \$1,000 show up in my PayPal account. Boom! So that does happen, but most of the time I believe God wants us to participate in what He's doing and that's how we prosper. That means we actually have to...

Sean: Do stuff.

Ray: It's crazy, we have to do stuff. Those puritans, they were overboard on some things, but they had some things right.

Sean: Imagine that.

Ray: I know! It's crazy, crazy talk. So this is a little bit of a preview for the book and then, also, if we get a good response to this episode, I may create a full training that I'll make for free that will be available for you to use before the book comes out so you can start practicing this ritual of prosperity. It's a 7-pillar practice and I'll just go through what the practices are. By practice I mean that it is something you do. I believe you practice these things every day and they will help lead you to this place of prosperity, deliver you from a life of poverty, fear and depression. So let's dive in to these seven pillars, shall we?

Sean: Let's do it.

Ray: That's a really mixed up metaphor, dive in to the seven pillars.

Sean: Yes.

Ray: That's freaky weird. Let's climb the seven pillars.

Sean: There you go. That's better. It's not perfect because you don't usually climb pillars.

Ray: No.

Sean: You just gaze at them.

Ray: Yes.

Sean: They hold up...

Ray: The ceiling.

Sean: The prosperity.

Ray: Yes, okay. So I should get into pillar number one, shouldn't I? This is part of a practice, something you do every day—

1. The Power Hour

I have a morning routine. Many people have talked about their morning routines. Tim Ferriss on his podcast often asks the very successful people that he interviews what is the first 60 to 90 minutes of your day look like when you get control of it, which I think is a great way to word that question.

Sean: When you have control of it.

Ray: Right. Because some days we're traveling or you're speaking or something like that and you're at somebody else's beckon call.

Sean: I was just thinking of like days when you exercise discipline versus days that you don't.

Ray: Oh!

Sean: When you have control of it.

Ray: That's more true for me than the other stuff. So when you have control if it, you need to have an Hour of Power. That means figure out what the most important things are for you to do in the day and do them the very first thing.

Now, my Power Hour is actually about two and a half hours long. I have books that I read. I take time to meditate. No, that does not mean that I'm an Eastern Mystic, so don't send me emails about that. I take time to pray. I read the Bible. I read a spiritual book. I read a nonfiction book. I have a whole routine. I didn't say this, but I'm saying it now, I'll give you a chart that shows you what my Hour of Power looks like and what yours might look like. I call it the Dragon Slayer because you slay all your dragons before you even start your day.

What usually happens is we have these good intentions. I'm going to read more. I'm going to meditate. I'm going to learn something. I'm going to feed my mind. I'm going to do all these positive things. I'm going to eat nutritionally. The day gets away from us and it's like 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon and we realize, I didn't do any of that stuff. I'll do it tomorrow. No, you probably won't. So slay the dragons early is what we're saying, first thing.

2. Rise Early; Get up Early in the Morning

I know there are lots of people who say well, but I'm not my best in the morning. I'm a night owl, so I can't do that. Even Pat Flynn, who was the consummate night owl, he has changed his morning ritual so that now he gets up early in the morning and he has his own set of things that he does. Bullet-proof coffee is one of those things that I do that Pat also does to get his day started off right. So you need to get up early.

There used to be an ad campaign, back when the Army had a good ad campaign, before they got off into weird land, they had an ad campaign that went like this: 'Be All You Can Be'.

Sean: Instead of an Army of one?

Ray: Which makes no sense, an Army of one, really? That sounds like a bad strategy.

Sean: Yeah, it sounds like a really bad Army.

Ray: I love our service men and women. Don't get me wrong, I love you guys. I appreciate you. I admire you.

Sean: We're criticizing the ad campaign.

Ray: I'm sure you could probably join us. Well, I won't speak on anybody's behalf. I'm just saying that they had this great ad campaign and the theme of it was 'Be All You Can Be'. When those ads ran, at some point in the ad Keith David, who was the voice in those ads (he still has that really deep voice that I don't have) would say, we get more things done before 8:00 a.m. than most people get done all week. That's what can happen when you rise early.

3. Offer Your Attention to God; Practice the Presence of God

There's a book by Brother Lawrence, it was written about 600 years ago, it has stood the test of time and it's called *Practicing the Presence*. What does that mean? God is omnipresent. He's everywhere, so how can you practice His presence? Well, so often in churches there's a prayer that will be prayed and it will be Lord, come, be among us. I always feel like well, He's already here. Maybe we should pray Lord, let us notice you. That's what we're talking about, just turning your attention to God.

If you're not religious, if you're not a person of faith, then can substitute your own practice for this one, but whatever makes you aware of the larger meaning and context of your life, that's what you need to focus on. I think you are missing the boat if you don't realize that's God, but that's my opinion.

4. Speak the Truth of God Over Your Life

We so often declare things about ourselves and about our life that are not true and what we say, what comes out of our mouth and goes into our own ears has an effect on us, which I used to think was crazy talk, quite frankly. I thought it was like Stuart Smalley, you know, he had his affirmations that he did. "Stuart, you're good enough, smart enough and gosh darn it people like you", wearing his sweater.

Sean: Can you get to a pound cake?

Ray: I would not normally this, but can you get to a pound cake? 'Stuart Saves His Family', look it up.

What you say your brain hears. Your subconscious, your sleeping mind hears and believes. So if you walk around saying things to yourself like, why does this always happen to me, I'm such an idiot, I'm such a loser, your subconscious mind is listening and believes you and decides well, I need to provide some evidence of that, so what can I do to be like a loser today.

Also, if you're speaking something opposite to what God says about you and about your life. God says that through Jesus you're 100% worthy and righteous and that you are ready to receive God's love, His blessings and His favor. If you're not speaking that truth out loud and, even more so, in specific situations. If you're not speaking with authority, the authority you've been granted by God in your life, then the enemy will take advantage of that and will say well, you gave up your authority, so I'll just move in here and I'll see what work I can do. Not a good plan, by the way.

5. Purpose Today's Victory

This you're doing in your morning Power Hour before you even start the day or maybe evening the evening before. Purpose what your victory is going to be for the day. I have three victories that I have recorded for today already before they've happened. One of them we're doing right now, which is recording this podcast.

Sean: Boo-yow.

Ray: Another one is to exercise because I haven't done that yet today.

Sean: Boo-yow.

Ray: It's going to happen, through, because I purposed today's victory. Pillar number six is to—

6. Evaluate the Day at the End of Each Day

I don't know where this was originated, but somebody once said: That which is measured improves. Then I've heard added to that statement: That which is measured and reported upon improves geometrically. So if you evaluate how your day went and you record it in a journal and maybe you share it with an accountability partner, then you'll see more improvement than if you just recorded it on your. So evaluate the day and ask yourself how you did. What lessons did you learn? Did you achieve the things you purposed to achieve that day?

7. Record the Results of the Day

Write them in your journal, you can either do this in the evening or do it the next morning and then be accountable to somebody. Accountability is not about let me tell you the bad things I did, okay? It's not about having somebody you call when you look at porn on the internet or when you have a drink. I mean that is part of accountability, but most people think of it as only that. It's also being accountable to doing the things you said you would do and telling somebody. I did this. I kept this commitment. I'm able to give account for my time spent doing what I said I would do. So accountability is a good thing.

So those are the seven pillars of The Prosper Ritual. I believe if you practice those seven pillars, you will find yourself delivered from a life of poverty, fear and depression and living a life of prosperity and joy, as we talked about earlier. So we should probably sum up the seven pillars, just in case you missed any of them and you're taking notes.

Sean: Right. So the seven pillars are:

Power Hour
Rise early.

Ray: Yes.

Sean: Offer your attention to God.

Ray: Good idea.

Sean: Purpose today's victory. Oh, no, speak the truth of God over your life.

Ray: Yes and don't skip over that.

Sean: Don't skip over that. That's a bad thing to skip over. Then moving on to purpose today's victory.

Ray: Number five.

Sean: Number six is to evaluate the day each evening and number seven is record the results of the day.

Ray: Try **The Prosperity Practice** and see if it doesn't work for you. If you would like a full teaching on this complete with notes and some handouts that may help you get this done every single day I'm thinking of forming a community on this.

So if you'd be interested in that, just drop us a note in the comments below at RayEdwards.com/183 or you can ping us on Twitter or Facebook and let us know yes, I would be interested in that and we will be happy to accommodate and create that. If there's enough interest, I don't want to do it if nobody is interested. Make sense?

Sean: All right!

Ray: It must be...

Sean: Interview time.

Ray: Interview time.

Sean: Because I hear that interview music.

Ray: All right, this week's interview is with Kirk Bowman and this is just another in our series of online business success stories. Kirk is one of our students and another of our Regency Mastermind members.

Interview

Ray: Welcome to the show, Kirk Bowman.

Kirk: Ray, thanks for having me.

Ray: If you would, just take a moment or two and give a paragraph about who you are and what you do and what kind of value do you bring to the world.

Kirk: Well, you gave me the lead in on the word value right there. I believe that everybody has value to offer. I believe that we have one of three issues. Either we don't believe we create value, we don't recognize the value we create or we don't see that value from the customer's perspective. I help people solve those three problems and if you solve those three problems then you can price in a way that creates a substantial return on investment for the customer and an awesome profit for you.

Ray: So how did you get started working in this area of helping people realize, ask for and receive their value for what they do?

Kirk: I've been in custom software development for over 20 years and billed by the hour for the first 15. There's a story that people can find on my website, but the short version is I met somebody who said this: If you bill by the hour there's an artificial limit on your income.

I am an entrepreneur at heart and the idea that anything I was doing would limit my income was something I had to explore. I came to realize that the Labor Theory of Value, which hourly billing is based on is false, that the true way that value is created and it should be priced is what's called the Subjective Theory of Value, which basically says value is the customer's perception.

Ray: Okay, I want to come back to the value question because that's really important to people that are listening. I want to come back to that in just a moment, but first you had this software development business and you still do, but you made a bold venture into something new. There are listeners right now who have already made the venture into something new or they're about to. Was this difficult for you? Was it easy? Tell me about that decision-making process.

Kirk: The decision to do it was easy because it was something I was passionate about. When I implemented the business model in my software business I saw a 56% increase in revenue the first year, 79% increase the second year. So there was motivation there, but what I found is I had a passion for the business model itself and for helping other people be able to do what I've done, which is create higher value for their customers and make more money while doing it. So, the decision to do it was easy, the implementation, that's where the rubber meets the road.

Ray: So what do you think are some of the first roadblocks people will run into if they're in a similar situation and they're starting something new? They're excited about it and they start doing it, what are they going to run into?

Kirk: If you're like me, the tendency might be to leap before you look, to start into it without a plan, at least a plan that goes far enough. I think maybe if I were to turn it into advice I would say channel your passion into coming up with a plan and getting counsel on the plan.

Ray: What's been one of the hardest things you've had to deal with as you've been building this new business?

Kirk: Focusing on the other business that needs to cash flow to support this new business because my heart is all in the new one.

Ray: Yeah, I'm sure. I'm sure a lot of people can relate to that, so how do you do that?

Kirk: It's not a fun word, but discipline. You have to be willing to put your nose to the grindstone and say, you know what, I'm going to keep my focus in dual areas. It's hard to be a dual-minded man, but in a sense you have to do that.

Ray: That 'D' word, it comes up so often in business, discipline. So let's go back to the value question. Let's say I've got entrepreneurs listening, service providers or freelancers and you were to sit down with them and talk to them about the art of value as it relates to their business. What are the mistakes they're probably making right now?

Kirk: The first one is they might be billing by the hour. I'm going to put this real succinctly and simply say how long something takes is irrelevant, what matters is the result to the customer. So if you're implementing that business model and you have a business model where there's a conflict of interest it's between the customer and you. It's in the customer's best interest for it to take as few hours as possible for a lower price. It's in your best interest for it to take as long as possible to get higher revenue. So that's a conflict of interest you cannot explain away.

If you're past that then the second thing is do you know how to have a value conversation. Can you ask questions to lead the customer through a conversation that possibly they've never had before? Do you have the communication skills to know what

questions to ask, to be able to ask them more than one way, to be able to say to the customer here's what I heard you say? Are you willing to be bold and press in with questions even when there's resistance? Are you willing to press in hard enough to where the customer says why are you asking these questions and if they ask that actually have an answer?

The answer is I'm asking these questions so that I know how to help you because many times you're coming to me because you can't do it yourself. If you could have done it, you wouldn't have called me. So trust me as your doctor, as your consultant, to go through a diagnostic process before I'm going to prescribe because prescription without diagnosis is malpractice.

Ray: Wow. That's so true, it's so powerful. You know, the conviction to say those things comes from, I believe, an absolutely integrity, belief and knowledge that it's all true. You cannot possibly help somebody if they're going to conceal some of the vital facts from you, right?

Kirk: That's right. The reason people conceal it is because of either fear or control, which I would say control is just an outward manifestation of inward fear. You've got to help them get through that. One of the greatest joys I've ever had is when I consult with somebody and they go wow. This is just pure consulting where basically what I've done has been a facilitator, ask great questions, provide insight, help them get to a place they couldn't get without me because they didn't have the outside perspective that I have and they say wow. I've gotten so much more value out of this than what I paid.

Ray: Now, you described in your own business you saw I think it was a 56% increase in revenue you're bringing in. Can you give us an example of another company you've worked with and what the results have been for them?

Kirk: Sure. I worked with another business that is in the same industry that I'm in and the owner had developed a custom software package for customer A. He got approached by customer B that said hey, what you did for customer A, we want the same thing and he had no clue how to price it. So we had a one-hour conversation and that one-hour conversation translated into a 33% increase in his gross revenue for the year.

Ray: Wow! You have to pause if you're listening and don't just gloss over those numbers. A 33% increase in revenue is enormous. It's really unheard of. So this is all coming back to the idea of understanding, creating and then asking for and receiving being compensated for the value that you create in the transaction. Am I right?

Kirk: That's exactly right. I would add, if you have had the great value conversation asking to be compensated well, there's no issue there.

Ray: Yeah, that's interesting because I have had that experience myself. Now, you've talked about working with software companies, yours and another. Does this work in any industry or are there industries where this idea of value-based business will not work?

Kirk: I believe it works in any industry. I've found, for example, lawyers want to talk to other lawyers, accountants want to talk to other accountants, but I've visited with people across different industries. Not only software development, but design and I mentioned accounting and legal. I'm even going to be visiting with somebody in construction. I'm constantly seeking people in other industries and I've found these concepts of value and

pricing are universal. It doesn't matter whether you're doing products, service, service and products, it does not matter, they apply.

Ray: Yes. What do you say to somebody and I'm sure you probably never have heard this, but if I'm your client or your prospective client and I say to you okay, that all sounds great, but I can't price on value because my competitors are all pricing on price and if they have a lower price I'm going to lose.

Kirk: Well, as soon as you start focusing on price you've lost. You've got to be willing to turn it upside down. Let me share an example of this and this is a true story that I attribute to my friend, Ron Baker. Ron tells a story of a company that basically filled dump trucks with rocks. You would think there's no way to do value on that. Well, they talked to some of their customers and figured out their customers would be willing to pay more to go to the front of the line to get their trucks filled quicker so they get back and get the job done. That had real value and so they offered it. If you can create more value hauling rocks, why can't you do it in your business?

Ray: Okay, that's about as down-to-earth example as I think I've heard. How can people connect with you and find out more about what you're doing and how they can apply the art of value to their own business?

Kirk: Thank you for asking. First, we do a podcast called The Art of Value Show. You can find it on our website ArtofValue.com/show, we just released episode 60. One of my favorite interviews we've done recently has been with someone who was the senior vice president at Disney that was in charge of pricing and revenue management and she architected something called The Brilliant Price Hike for Disney. That's a free resource and I would encourage you to check that out.

If you want to go deeper, I'm putting together a mastermind group where I'm actually going to facilitate a group of people who either believe in value or want to get to a point where they believe in value. I'm going to coach them through that as a group because I find iron sharpens iron. It's easy to do this if you're going through it with a group.

Then, third, I offer consulting. If you want to get my brain with you one on one, we can certainly do that. Those are actually some of the most fun engagements that I do because I can have the most impact.

So those are three ways people can interaction with me and, of course, the website is the best place to go ArtofValue.com.

Ray: I've seen the results. We're part of the mastermind group together and I've seen you work with some of the other mastermind members on their own value proposition and it's like watching a light bulb come on in people's eyes when they realize oh, now I see. Everybody has just this relentless praise. When they have a conversation with you they light up. They can't say enough good things about it, so I highly recommend that.

Kirk: Well, I appreciate that. It means a lot coming from you, Ray.

Ray: Well, thanks for being a guest on the show, I appreciate it so much. Keep on helping people understand the value they bring to the world.

Kirk: As I say at the close of each of my shows, I say go create more value.

What to Do Next

Ray: All right. Thank you, Kirk.

Sean: Awesome opossum.

Ray: If you've ever seen an opossum they're not very awesome.

Sean: They're not very awesome, but it rhymes awesome.

Ray: It does. Rhyming is reverse alliteration.

Sean: It's reverse alliteration. That's a secret, shush.

Ray: I'm sorry. I'm giving away all our secrets today.

Sean: You're giving away all of our secrets. Okay, so each week we plan to feature an entrepreneur who has made the jump into having their own business. We'll talk to people of all levels of success, from those just getting started to those who are achieving extraordinary things already. If you know of someone we should interview, please let us know by sending an email to support@rayedwards.com.

Ray: And tell Tami, "howdy" when you send that email.

Sean: Howdy.

Ray: That's Tami. What if I wanted to find the show notes for this show?

Sean: That's a great question. If you wanted to find the show notes for this episode, all you have to do is go to RayEdwards.com/183. You might also be asking well, what if I received value from this show.

Ray: What should I do to show my gratitude?

Sean: Exactly. Well, we would ask you to consider subscribing, giving us a rating and writing a quick review in iTunes. The reason is that helps make our show more visible to people like you, people who might benefit from what we have to share, so we'd appreciate your help.

Any parting thought?

Ray: Yes.

Sean: Any parting or party thoughts?

Ray: Um, let me think about that. I don't have any party thought. Well, I do have, but I won't share those. I will this share this thought. What if the healing of all that's wrong in the world depended on your ability to prosper? What if that were true? Now, I know you probably don't accept that it's true, but if it were what would that mean, what would you do with that? That could lead to party thoughts.

Sean: That's heavy, man.

Ray: So think about that and respond in the comments, if you want, at RayEdwards.com/183.

Until next week, I pray that God prospers you wildly like crazy and that He does things for you can't even think to ask or imagine.

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Sean: You can find the downloadable version of this show, as well as the show notes, a word for word transcript, and the links to any resources we mentioned, by going to RayEdwards.com/#.

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Dad, any final thoughts?

Ray:

So I encourage you to fill your mind and heart with the truth, and you can escape the bondage from these or any other lies that you may have bought into.

Until the next time I urge you to think true good and pure and empowering thoughts, and I pray that God will do more for you than you could possibly ask, think or imagine.

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