

Lesson 1: Choosing to Become an Internet Entrepreneur

Introduction

Welcome to this course, Become an Internet Entrepreneur! Hold on to your seats because this is going to be an exciting ride!

I'm Mrs. Beasley and I'm glad you are joining me on this journey! The ride to becoming an entrepreneur is packed with thrills. It's a lot like riding a roller coaster or riding a rocket. So are you ready?

What are you going to learn in this course? What will you get out of our time together?

In these upcoming twenty-four lessons, you will learn how to start a business, create a brand around that business—whether a real one or a mock one—and learn how to promote that business through Internet marketing and traditional media. Throughout the course, you will learn foundational skills of marketing and timeless business principles.

Here are some goals I have for our time together through this course:

1. You will discover your passions, purpose, and callings in life and career/business through hands-on opportunities of exploration. This means yes, you are going to have FUN!
2. You will learn how to use the media arts to share the Gospel and be a light in a dark world. Now we all know that the world is pretty dark. Did you know you can shine like stars in the universe? Did you know that God wants to use your talents and gifts for His glory? This course will help you begin that journey! And I will always point you toward the Bible for solid instruction.
3. Discover excellence in twenty-first century media arts. Sadly, excellence is sorely missing from the arts and from business. People have become lazy these days and complacent. What if you learned how to do things to the best of your ability? Would that make you stand out in a job interview or with project proposal, on a blog, or even in a future college class? This course will show you why excellence is so important and how you can be a witness for Christ in just this one area alone.
4. Learn, discover, and create your own artistic logo, business card, multimedia portfolio presentation, video/film, and website, all based on a real business endeavor or a mock one. Yes, you are going to learn basic graphic design skills. You will learn also how to make a video, how to create a website, and how to design a business card. You will have tangible results of your time in this class. You can decide if this business is real OR if you are going to make a mock business.

So what are you going to need for this course to be a success?

You will need a computer and software capable of design and image manipulation. You will also need a video recorder. A smart phone (iPhone or Android) will do just fine for videos and photography! You may also need a scanner.

Don't worry. I will let you know both free and paid options so it will fit within your family budget. I will give you alerts so you know what you will be needing around the corner.

It would be good to have a 3-ring binder. This class is something you are going to want to hang onto for years to come and reference over and over again. You will have ample opportunity to fill this notebook with a wide range of projects and create a great portfolio to use in years to come.

What about homework?

Yes, there will be homework in this course, but rest assured you will really enjoy it. And it's entirely up to you how much time you spend on each lesson. Just remember that you get out of it what you put into it. At the end of each lesson, I will give you a homework assignment. I will also give you ideas for further study and tell you about resources that I have found helpful. I will give you vocabulary words.

You and your parents decide what assignments to complete and how much time to spend on them. The essential assignments I have marked with an asterisk (*). Plan on spending at least an hour on these.

What about grading?

Art is a very subjective topic, but your parents can grade you on completing assignments, quality, creativity, innovation, and using the elements and principles that I share in this course.

You can create a fictional business or one based on reality that you plan on actually creating. This can be something you want to start immediately, like jewelry-making, or an endeavor you want to pursue in the future.

So who is this Mrs. Beasley anyway?

Okay, so at this point, you may be asking, who is this crazy Mrs. Beasley? I mean, she's taking about rockets and roller coasters and strange stuff like branding, callings, and marketing. How in the world does all this stuff mix and why should I learn from this person?

Most importantly, I am a whole-hearted follower of the Lord Jesus. He is my CEO, my boss. He's the best boss I have ever had! I never want another.

I am passionate about entrepreneurialism. Even more so, I am passionate about teaching others how to be entrepreneurs. I have been honored and blessed to help a few homeschooling families achieve this goal. Allow me to share with you some of my clients: LeeAnn makes her own candles and soaps, Clarinda helps people overcome health issues with essential oils, and my husband Travis is an architect working at home on his business!

All of these persons mentioned above, including my husband, took a course I wrote called Brand Identity Quest. They learned step by step how to launch a business through strategic branding. This in part is what I'm going to share with you, as well as the specific ways to promote a business through today's media.

Though I love everything about business, primarily I am a homeschooling mom to my teenage son. This will be our seventh year! We enjoy hands-on activities and having lots of fun together learning. One day I want him to have the option of becoming an entrepreneur. He is why I do what I do. I love teaching and have been teaching in one form or another since I was in college, which was—yikes—over twenty years ago! So I am happy to be teaching this course for SchoolhouseTeachers.com!

My other passions revolve around the graphic arts, writing, and Internet marketing. I have been involved in the graphic arts field for over twenty years. I got started in college as a creative writing major/journalism minor when I created my own arts anthology.

Then I worked for The Navigators, an international, interdenominational Christian ministry, as a graphic designer. That is where I learned so many graphic arts skills! I became proficient in Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and QuarkXPress. That is also where the idea for this course first popped into my head!

In 1998, I resigned my position and married my husband, Travis Beasley. At that point, I became a stay at home wife and then a few years later, after having our son, I became a stay at home mom! I wanted very passionately to always stay at home; however, I also had a deep desire that God would use my talents for His glory. He made me to be a person with big ideas. I am always asking "what if?" Being an entrepreneur just runs in my blood. It's how I naturally think. I've come to accept that's how God made me, but it has been a long journey. The Proverbs 31 woman has motivated me for over twenty years!

With the economic downturn in 2008 came much hardship for me and my family. My husband's job was cut back and his paychecks were unsteady. His job had no future. At that point, we had a rental property and it foreclosed. I was afraid that I was going to have to go back to work, that we would lose our own home, that my dream of being a stay at home mom was going to end. I was afraid we would have to put our son in public school. This idea was devastating!

But I remembered back to those years at The Navigators and my idea about teaching people graphic design. Branding was a subject I avidly studied. I loved working on logos and had a knack for it. I realized that with the unemployment rate skyrocketing, more people were going to want to learn how to become an entrepreneur. I also saw that the Internet is the new gold rush. I learned everything I could about this new marketing venue. I have enjoyed growing in each medium and seeing more and more success as I work in the various kinds of media.

So I wrote my original course, Brand Identity Quest, which I later turned into homeschooling curriculum. I also taught media skills to teenagers in a homeschool enrichment class in Monument, Colorado.

It was because of Facebook that I got this wonderful opportunity to teach this course to you! So that is how Become an Internet Entrepreneur came to be! And that is a little bit about me so you know who I am.

I will be sharing more of my journey as we progress in the course. I hope you find it inspiring; not so much because I've done everything right. Not at all; I've made many mistakes along the way. I hope you find this inspiring because the grace of God has covered my life and through many twists and turns and the school of hard knocks I have come to have a deeper understanding and trust in Him. That is the TRUE point of the entrepreneurial journey!

Now that we have covered the preliminary information, we can dive into the meat of this lesson. This lesson is unusually long because it is the introduction, so bear with me!

Are you ready for that wild ride I talked about? Then come along with me on this journey to become an Internet entrepreneur!

Choosing to become an Internet entrepreneur

As a teen, you have many choices ahead of you. What do you want to be when you grow up? What kind of career will you pursue? What kind of job will you get? Will you go to college?

I can remember back to my teen years and it felt very daunting to me, the idea of my future. But also exciting! I wish I knew then what I know now!

That is another reason why I am so excited to share my journey with you. Perhaps I can save you some of the heartache and pain that I felt as I found my way through to adulthood! If I can help one person, my pain would be worth it.

It all starts with your callings. That's where it begins. It took me until age 27 to understand this. I muddled my way through, but it was fuzzy and unclear to me. I lacked clarity.

I had ambitions and I had dreams, but they were small. In college, I realized that God wanted to use me. This was a revolutionary thought to me. When I finally landed my full-time career job, I wanted something more. I wanted to live for a bigger purpose than just to go to work 9 to 5 then come home and watch television.

But I didn't have clear goals, and so I made huge mistakes. I got off the track, but by God's grace I was brought back. Through that process, I began to seek out God's will for my life. I realized that I didn't have to have one role in life, that I could pursue several callings at once. I envisioned a life where I went from calling to calling. It was in those months when I sought God about my purpose, mission, and callings that it all became clear. I created a roadmap that still guides me today. It was the beginning of the seeds of entrepreneurialism in my life. It was the beginning of massive changes in my life, starting with meeting my husband. Being a wife and mother was the biggest role that I felt God had called me to. And there were no prospects in site at that time!

Why you should become an entrepreneur

So I told you some of my personal reasons, but you probably want to know more reasons than mine. Here are a few reasons to become an Internet entrepreneur that I hope will get you inspired and excited:

- It will help you develop into the person God made you to be, becoming closer and closer to Him.
- When you do what you love, the money follows and it doesn't feel like work.
- You will be prepared for your future.
- You will be protected in a recession if you understand about earning multiple streams of income.
- You won't be dependent on an employer for a paycheck.
- The days of graduating from college, getting a job with a good company for thirty years with excellent benefits, and then retiring are all but over. This scenario is few and far between.
- It makes you dependent on God alone.
- It allows you to live life abundantly by fulfilling the destiny God has given you.
- The Internet makes it possible like never before!
- It provides you a way to help your future spouse. (My skills in graphic design, marketing, and finances are proving invaluable to my husband. This is how I am his helpmeet.)
- It helps you avoid the high debt of college as well as all the politics of the Common Core.
- It helps you experience the freedom to homeschool your future family if that is what God has for you.
- It frees you from being dependent on a government increasingly hostile toward Christians.
- It makes you able to make healthcare decisions for yourself.
- It enables you to support other homeschooling families rather than "big box" stores run by corporations who have sold out to "crony capitalism" and have a political agenda against Christians.
- If God calls you to be a stay at home mom, you can use the gifts He's given you and contribute to the household like the Proverbs 31 woman. That is a truly liberated woman!
- You can impact your community for Jesus.

Now let me talk about this last point. Do you realize that as a business owner, you sometimes have the opportunity to impact more people than a church does? Pursuing a business is an amazing place to fulfill the Great Commission and to bring the transformative love of Jesus into people's lives.

In the day and times in which we live, we are bombarded by horrible news. But don't let anyone tell you your future is not bright! With God at the helm, anything is possible. Trust in Him. Trust that He has a future and a hope for you (Jeremiah 29:11). Becoming an entrepreneur is not so much about becoming wealthy or economically secure. Sure, that would be nice. For my

husband and I, we want to be givers. We want to be able to take care of our family. If God gives us a huge harvest, we want it to be used for the Kingdom.

Becoming an entrepreneur is about walking with God on a moment by moment basis, trusting Him for everything and being completely dependent on Him. In this topsy turvy world, that is the best place to be!

You are an individual uniquely gifted by God. Ephesians 2:10 puts it this way: You are God's workmanship! In other words, you are God's masterpiece.

There is only one life to live. How do you want to live it? How can you make the most of it?

One very significant way we can make the most of this life is to use those talents God has given us for His glory. One way we can do that is to create our own economy by becoming an entrepreneur. In essence, this is creating a career or job for yourself, one that you can do at home if you desire.

Once we learn this skill, we can empower other family members to grow into the people God designed them to be. We can be a model and help them create their own opportunities. This will mean that your household will have more than one source of income. That is going to enable you to continue a homeschooling lifestyle in the future when you create your own family! It is going to bring you economic freedom.

The other reason why this is such an amazing option when it comes to the future is how it brings your family together. Let's face it: families are being torn apart more and more. Sometimes it's just plain busyness. It's the way of our society to pull us in different directions.

But running a family business can mean more family closeness if you are wise. It means children can be involved as well. It's truly how family was meant to live, before the rise of industrialism. Before factories, families were involved in running a family business, usually a farm. They were called cottage industries. Our world is returning to this concept as high unemployment and uncertainty pervades the economy. After all, many college graduates can't find jobs whatsoever! Just because you have a piece of paper doesn't guarantee anything!

The family is meant to be seed planters, and God is to be the harvester. Think back to the origins of humankind. They were partners with one purpose, to cultivate a garden.

God is the provider (Matthew 6). He owns a thousand cattle on the hill. He is a God of abundance and longs to give us life so that we can live it to the fullest (John 10:10).

Entrepreneurialism is an incredible way to contribute to the betterment of society. Think about how Steve Jobs has transformed the way we live. Or Edison. Or Robert H. Goddard. These men were innovators who had a dream and did not give up until it happened. And our lives are changed as a result. Without them, we would not have smart phones, electricity, or satellites.

Here's one interesting fact I learned recently: A few years ago, God gave a dream about a device to a woman from Denver. This device was the Palm Pilot, which was the precursor to smart phones. The woman is a Christian, and He used her mightily! God can use anyone from any background! The woman I just told you about came from a ghetto. Will you let God use you? Getting an education to become an entrepreneur is extremely valuable. College may or may not be a good fit for you. In fact, you can finance your education through being an entrepreneur rather than get a high-priced loan that will take you years to pay off.

That's what one of my nephews did. He paid for his college with the money he earned with his own consulting business. After he got his master's degree, he landed a job with one of the most well-known aeronautics companies in the country. His experience as a consultant not only paid for his college education, it also positioned him for the job! Because the age-old quandary once you get a college degree is the lack of experience. How can you get experience if you can't get a job?

That's what happened to me after I graduated from college with a degree in Creative Writing. I remember one job I really wanted: it was to be a communications coordinator for a college seminary. Lo and behold, someone with five years of experience came along and I didn't get the job! I was devastated!

After that, I had to become a temporary secretary. To me at the time, I felt it was a step backward. I worked for many different types of businesses and it turns out I was very adept at it. It became the foundation of my entrepreneurial business skills, though I didn't know it at the time! God is sovereign!

Then I landed my career position at The Navigators. I started out as an editorial assistant and then became a graphic designer. I am grateful that my colleague saw my potential and poured his years of experience into me. He is the reason I can pass on this information to you!

But I can tell you, I didn't like doing the administrative work at the time, especially when I was put in charge of the department finances. But God didn't waste one bit of my trials. Now today, those skills are crucial when it comes to running my business AND I also manage the finances for my husband's business!

I hope I have given you a glimpse of what your future can be like as an entrepreneur. It won't be easy. There will be many ups and downs. It's not a magic pill. You can't wave a wand and have it all done for you. It takes hard work and dedication. But the rewards are worth it! My Scottish ancestors had it right about the work ethic. This life I'm sharing with you is not going to be handed to you on a silver platter! You have to desire it and go after it with your whole being.

That in the end is going to give you a deep sense of purpose; a trustworthy character that people will look up to, admire, and count on; and a happiness that nothing or no one can take away. It's a journey of faith, step by step, and that is why becoming an entrepreneur is such a great choice!

So I have shared why you should become an entrepreneur. But how do you become one? And where do you start?

15 Basic Building Steps

I am going to give you a basic overview:

1. **Thoroughly analyze your passions and callings.** What do you love to do? What are your skills, gifts, talents, and experience?
2. **Choose one of these passions and consider business ideas.** What is the purpose the business will serve? What kind of business model do you need? Will you buy into an opportunity (a franchise or direct selling) or start from scratch? For the purpose of this class, it would be better to think of something that you can start from scratch.
3. **Once you have selected a business concept, select a target market.** Whom do you serve? Who desperately needs what you have to offer? Once you decide, get to know your audience.
4. **When you have gathered this information, decide on a name.** Do you want to use your name or a descriptive name?
5. **Have a professional photograph taken of yourself.** People do business with *people* they like, know, and trust. Put a face to your business, and you will foster credibility.
6. **Choose an image that represents your business.** Build a brand that communicates the essence of who you are and what you do.
7. **Set up your business systems.** For Internet businesses, set up your sales funnel. How are you going to sell your products? What mechanisms do you need? What different levels of products or services are you going to offer? What kind of legal structure will you have?
8. **Purchase a domain name for your business.** Develop your website. Offer something of value free in exchange for email addresses.
9. **Sign up with an autoresponder like MailChimp or Constant Contact.** Use this list to promote your business on a regular basis, always offering your subscribers something of value in the process.
10. **Make your business and marketing plan.** What is the balance of online and offline advertising you will do? When will you do these activities? What business strategies will you employ?
11. **Create a Facebook page and profile.** You might also go with Twitter and LinkedIn. Definitely have your parents help you with this, and as a teen be careful. Having a social media presence and learning to use it wisely will help your business grow.
12. **Develop a blog and gather a following.** You can collect raving fans through a blog as you offer them content they need or want. You can even monetize that blog using AdSense.
13. **Develop your product or service.** After you have developed it, test it. Create a beta group to help you refine it.
14. **Make a launch plan.** Think about how you can grow excitement with the launch of your product or service.
15. **Launch your product or service.** Work your marketing plan consistently. Have systems in place for finances and administration. Have fun and enjoy your new business!

Now, I know that's a lot of information. Don't worry! These steps will be explained throughout the course. For now, I just wanted you to get a birds-eye view.

Grappling with the Fears and Setbacks and How to Overcome Them

Okay, so like I mentioned before, this is not an easy road. There are many times I have wanted to give up. Yes, I have experienced stress, late nights, and failure.

My husband has experienced these kinds of setbacks, too. It was not in his nature to take risks, but he knew that if he stayed in his job, he would get nowhere.

It takes time to fulfill dreams. It even takes agony. I am not going to sugar-coat it for you. Many people out there, gurus they are called, promise an easy life and easy sales. I am not going to promise that. I can't tell you what your future holds for you.

But I do know that if you know why you do what you do, you will not quit. When setbacks come, you will move on. The more you know why you want to become an entrepreneur, the more you will stick to it.

Not long ago, I was preparing for a homeschool resource fair. I stayed up late creating a display board and marketing flyers. As I worked, I thought "why do I work so hard? Why do I put myself under all this pressure?"

Then the next day at the fair I got my answer. It is because I am reaching toward who God made me to be, and I have the blessing of helping others do the same. I had an extraordinary response to my entrepreneurial and homeschool programs. I am serving a need and people are looking for what I have to offer. I took even more bold steps for this coming year. Something that I never dreamed would happen looks like it will.

But through it all, I knew an even more inspiring reason to work so hard. My biggest "why" is my son. A young man with Asperger's, I want to model to him to never give up. I want to always be home to homeschool him. Any other choice would be devastating to him.

It took me years and years of developing my programs to get where I am today. I am standing on tiptoes of excitement to see what God does because really, I have had to struggle with not feeling like I mattered. I have struggled with whether or not anyone cared what I thought or offered—or even cared about me! I felt ashamed for many years that I had talents, ambitions, and big ideas. I have had to overcome a great deal of self-confidence issues. It's the number one thing that has held me back over the years.

But through all the setbacks and fears, this is what I focus on: I am nobody and no one without Jesus. He can use anyone. He is my CEO. He will bring the harvest. I just have to plant the seeds. All I have to do is to be faithful in doing what He has called me to do on a daily basis.

Sometimes I mess up. I'm not perfect. But after I have fallen, I pick myself up and move on! When the enemy attacks or when I am criticized, I shake the dust off my feet and walk on! I

spend time in the Word and in prayer, sweet time with Jesus, because I know the more I am with Him the more successful I will be. I don't mean success in a worldly kind of way, but success in becoming the person He made me to be. That is ultimate success to me.

It's all clear in my favorite parable: the parable of the talents. I can choose to bury my talents. I did so for many years. I hid in shadows where I thought it was safe from rejection, but it was actually suffocating me.

I would rather invest my talents for the Kingdom, which is one of the reasons why I am teaching this course! It's not easy to put myself out there, but if I can help one person, it will be worth it! If I take the talents God gave me and multiply them, I will be faithful in the little things. Then He will give me more because He knows I can handle it.

And then at the end I will meet Him face to face and He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

That to me is the biggest "why" of all!

So now are you ready to join me on this journey? Come along with me and you will skyrocket your future!

Assignment

Answer the following questions:

1. *Why do you want to start a business?
2. What is the history of work? What does God set up in the Garden of Eden in Genesis?
3. Study Proverbs, especially chapter 31.
4. Read Ephesians 2:10. The Greek word for workmanship is "poema." How are we like God's masterpieces, His poems?
5. How does lack of faith hurt your dreams? What is the role of faith in becoming an entrepreneur?
6. Read the stories of Gideon, of Abraham leaving Ur, of Joseph becoming the second in command to Pharaoh, and of the Israelites crossing the Jordan. How did faith play out in these stories, and how can you practice that kind of faith in your daily life?
7. Read the Parable of Talents. What do you want God to say to you when you meet Him face to face? How are you burying talents versus investing in them?
8. *What is your plan for achieving your dreams and reaching your goals?
9. What is something completely out of the ordinary you want to do, just for fun?
10. How do you feel when someone serves you to the utmost of your satisfaction?
11. What fears do you have, and how can you overcome them?
12. *Talk to your parents about the Internet: what are your family rules? Talk about Internet safety.

What's Next?

Next week we will talk about:

- Being a light in a dark world
- Becoming a Christian communicator amidst a sea of corruption
- Identifying your passions and callings
- Creating a business plan

You will need to plan some extended time in prayer (at least an hour). You will need some paper and a pen. Also, you will need your computer to research some resources I'm going to be sharing with you.

Until next week!

Mrs. Beasley
Publisher, AngelArts

SAMPLE