



# GOSPEL *for* LIFE

## **Making Time with Reagan Rose**

### **Season 2, Episode 1 Transcript**

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Gospel For Life podcast, we help churches make disciples, and now here's your host Darryl Dash.

[00:00:15] Darryl Dash: Hey, I want to welcome you to season two of the Gospel For Life podcast, and this season, we're going to do something a little bit different. I'm excited about it. We are going to look at *8 Habits For Growth*. Now I wrote a book by that name, it came out in August, but I don't want to look at it just to cover the material in the book. What I want to do is I want to talk to a guest about each of the 8 habits that I write about, somebody who's written or thought a lot about each topic. And the reason is because I really do believe that these 8 habits matter for everyone. For us as pastors to help our people to grow in these areas, as well as each of us as Christians who want to grow in our devotion to Christ. So I want to begin today with the first habit, which is making time.

Today I'm pleased to welcome Reagan Rose to the podcast. Reagan Rose is the guy behind Redeeming Productivity, a website and podcast that helps Christians get more done for the glory of God. He examines the subject of productivity from a Christian worldview, and I'm very excited to have him on the podcast to talk about making time, which is really essential for every habit that follows. So listen to it, I hope you like it, here's a Reagan Rose of Redeeming Productivity. Reagan, welcome to the podcast.

[00:01:48] Reagan Rose: Hey Darryl, it's great to be with you.

[00:01:50] Darryl Dash: So explain to me why are we all so busy?

[00:01:55] Reagan Rose: You know, I think that part of it is just the modern world we live in. We are so overly connected, so overly stimulated, and it seems like

every technology company, every social media, every media thing is vying for our attention to monetize it in some way. And so I think that we are in some ways under assault for our attention, and the opportunities before us are more than they ever have been in history. I also think that no matter when you were born or when you live or without the technology, you're always going to feel busy to some degree, and that's because we're creatures, we're not God. And I think that's a big part of it, is we are always bucking up against our own finitude because we never possibly do all the things that we would like to do or want to do.

[00:02:48] Darryl Dash: So it's both a human thing, but it's also our context and the two of them aligned to make things really difficult right now it seems.

[00:02:55] Reagan Rose: Yeah, that's exactly what I would say.

[00:02:57] Darryl Dash: So Reagan, tell me about how you started your ministry, Redeeming Productivity? I love the work that you're doing. How did you get into this whole topic and what made you concerned about helping other people with becoming more productive with their time?

[00:03:12] Reagan Rose: Yeah, well actually my journey started from me being a very unproductive person. When I was in my teen years and in college and my young adult life, I was addicted to video games. I don't have a problem with video games as such, I don't think they're evil or something, but I had a problem with video games. I found that I wasted a significant portion of some of my most energetic and youthful years doing things that were pretty pointless. And I let responsibilities and things like that slide for the sake of just doing what I wanted to do. So when the Lord got ahold of me and I started to recognize that my purpose in life is to bring him glory, and he put me here for a reason, I realized I needed to figure out a way to redeem the time. And so in college I started getting interested in that as the demands of life got bigger on me, I started reading about productivity. But when it really hit was when I was in seminary and the workload, the amount of reading, the amount of translations, all of that, was to be honest, pretty unreasonable. You know. And going through that, I realized I need to figure out how to manage my time and do it well, or I'm going to be in big trouble.

So through that process, I got really deep into productivity, literature, and podcasts and things, and I started to realize that there was kind of a hole there. That a lot of the people that talk about productivity were inserting their own beliefs, their own world views about what was the purpose of life. Why are we here? What should you be doing? And I realized that they were really stepping on things that the Bible has told us about. And so what I wanted to do through

Redeeming Productivity was offer advice and stuff on productivity, but from a very strong biblical worldview. I was convinced that the Bible is sufficient to tell us what we need to know to live lives that honor God, and that there had to be some way for us to get some of those principles from the Bible. And then hopefully on top of that strong foundation, use some of these things we can learn from people about how to manage our time with software or with different techniques on top of that.

[00:05:27] Darryl Dash: So it seems like what you're saying is that how we use our time is not just a productivity issue or maybe a pragmatic issue, but it's actually a spiritual issue too. Would you agree with that statement?

[00:05:40] Reagan Rose: Oh, absolutely. You know Ephesian 5 “Redeeming the time for the days are evil.” I definitely think it's a spiritual issue. If you think of time as a resource, which a lot of people do, they'll talk about how time is the most precious resource, then it becomes a stewardship issue. And the same way that we talk about how we use our resources of money, and that's stewardship before God, I think how we use our time, that's not really our time. If you want to speak technically, it's God's time that he's loan to us for the sake of bringing glory and honor to his name. And so in that sense, it's not just mine to do whatever I want with, I need to steward that well.

Darryl Dash: So Reagan, I was reading a book, I don't know if you've heard about it, *Four Thousand Weeks*.

[00:06:22] Reagan Rose: I'm reading that right now actually.

Darryl Dash: Are you really?

Reagan Rose: I'm on chapter... that's so funny.

[00:06:29] Darryl Dash: It's so fascinating because that the premise of the book is that generally speaking, we only have about 4,000 weeks to live which is just shocking when you think about it, especially how fast weeks go by. And he makes a point in the book that productivity can actually backfire, the more productive that we become, the more demands there are on our lives. So it almost becomes like this endless cycle of productivity. The faster we answer emails, the more we get emails, the faster we do things, the more people expect us to do things. And so how do we escape that productivity trap of maybe becoming more productive, but finding ourselves even more drained and more scattered.

[00:07:14] Reagan Rose: Yeah, absolutely. That is so funny, I was literally just reading that part yesterday morning of that book. And I loved it because he actually used as an illustration there, he talked about like after World War II, when all these time saving devices were coming out for Housewives. You know, here's the vacuum cleaner, here's the dishwasher, here's how you're going to have all this time. The promise was you're going to have all this leisure, you're going to have all this extra time, what are you going to do all day? But what happened was instead the goal posts moved, that instead of having all this extra time, the standards for what it meant to have a clean home, just went up, and the standards for what women were expected to do just went up. And I thought that was such an apt analogy because that is the case for us too. Even if you read a book on leadership, they'll tell you to give the most important projects to the people who are already doing the most. So even like managers and stuff at your job, they know that if you become more productive, they're going to give you more work. And so it does happen, it does backfire on us that we become productive and we try to do more and more and more, and then eventually you run up against your limits. I think a big part of that is understanding that you have limits, that's one of the things I've been enjoying about the book, is that you don't have all the time in the world. And I think from a Christian perspective, remembering you aren't God, he's timeless, you have a limited amount of time and energy.

Another thing I think is just your priorities, and I really think the most important productivity technique that we could all learn and be better at and always be getting better at is the practice of saying no. It is so hard, especially if you start to think of yourself as quote-unquote "productive person." If you think I can keep saying yes and I'll fit it in, I'm so efficient, but you need to learn to say no, and the basis on which you say no is your priority. It's having a firm understanding of who you are, and I think that starts with the gospel, knowing who you are in Christ Jesus, that you're standing before him. It's not based on what you're doing, but based on what Christ did and understanding how he's uniquely made you and gifted you and the works that he's prepared for you specifically to walk in. You don't need to do everything, you just need to be faithful with what God's giving you. So I think some of those are the things that you have to think through to avoid that kind of treadmill, that infinite trap of taking on more and more and more.

[00:09:53] Darryl Dash: I'm such a sucker for... I remember are reading David Allen and thinking this is going to be the thing that helps me finally get organized, and then the Covey Franklin system, right? Like, oh man, this is going to be the thing, and it feels like I've gone through Michael Hyatt. I mean right now I've got some stuff that works for me, but we almost think that the next productivity system or hack is going to solve the problem. And I'm getting from

you and from what I'm discovering, it goes much deeper than that. So help us understand that, like how do we actually get to the root issues? And it's more than a system, it's more than a book or a hack, how do we actually deal with the root issue of using our time well?

[00:10:40] Reagan Rose: I think it begins at bedrock with understanding the purpose for which God made us. Why did he make this world? Why am I here? It sounds like you're getting to like philosophical type stuff, but I really think a lot of believers, we don't pause to think about that. That from the beginning God created this world for a purpose, and he made humans with a unique purpose of burying his image, of showing forth to all creation what he is like and giving him glory. I think if you can know that sort of intellectually, but then you lose track of it and you start to base your life on other ambitions and other goals. And of course it's important to have other goals and we have to provide for our families and things like that. But all of it at root I found is that if I can just trace back and keep that effort before me, that the purpose of what I'm doing is to honor God, that is both focusing and so freeing in a way. Because it means that my path to success as it were, is not to compare myself to how much money am I going to make or can I be as famous as that person or even the Christianized versions of that? How can I look better and better, or get this kind of home or this kind of spouse, but really what God asked for us is something very simple, it's just faithfulness, just walk with him faithfully. And that's how we honor him, and we're going to do that imperfectly. But I really feel ironical that a lot of us believers, when we get into productivity, we forget about grace and that's absolutely critical to understand if you're going to walk before the Lord in any way.

[00:12:33] Darryl Dash: Oh, that's so good. I love that because yeah, I thought it was always me, but I'm discovering everyone's got such a strong inner critic, right? I think that's just part of the Genesis 3 condition we find ourselves in. That we're broken and we have that voice of condemnation and the gospel speaks with a different voice to us that we begin from the basis of we're loved. And so when we fail there's grace and not just a little bit of grace, but grace in abundance and that extends to productivity and every area of our life, so that's such a relief.

[00:13:09] Reagan Rose: Yeah, well said. I think that the Genesis 3 thing is something that I think should color our productivity uniquely as believers is understanding... You know, a lot of people that come up in the world and they have this sort of Utopian view that if I could just line everything up, it's going to be perfect. But the fact is work itself is cursed, like that's a reality and there are ways we can kind of deal with the thistles and thorns of life. The picture that guys like David Allen paint of like you being in this perfect state of calm reacting

to everything, you know, mind-like water, this big thing. I love his books. I love his stuff and I love his systems, but he's a Buddhist, and so he comes at it from a different worldview. I understand that I will never not in this life fully overcome all of those things, because work itself is going to be hard. God made it hard because of the fall. And so accepting that, and it's not a matter of giving up, we still try to be faithful, try to use our time well, but having this understanding that hey, I'm not going to get it all completely perfect. It takes the pressure off of you that you really don't need to have. God doesn't think that you're going to do everything perfectly efficiently. He understands, and he's given us grace because we're imperfect.

[00:14:32] Darryl Dash: I really appreciate that. You've talked a lot about the importance of habits in your podcast, what advice would you give to somebody on how to build habits? What's the best way to begin to build good habits in their life?

[00:14:46] Reagan Rose: I think they should read Darryl Dash's book. Yeah, I think we share a lot of similar thinking on this in building habits is I think you really have to start with the basics. A lot of people what they do is they take on a bunch of stuff at once. There's something super ambitious. I mean New Year's resolutions are the constant punching bag because no one keeps them. They're like, I'm going to go to the gym every day in 2022 or whatever, and you hadn't gone to the gym once the year before, like that's not going to work. So I think a lot of times we start with these big ambitious things and we think, oh I need to do all of this, but I really think it starts with basic simple stuff. And that's one of the things, and we were talking about this earlier, talking about in your book. Like some of the basic things about learning to get up at a consistent time, get enough rest, get rhythms and routines of simple things into your life going. A lot of times people will ask me what Bible reading plan should I do? I just say read one chapter, read one verse, read something every day. What is the minimum thing you can do until you get that consistent and then start to build on it. And so I think the biggest thing is we think that our future self is going to be a lot more discipline and this amazing superhero. And we can just make promises to our future self or make commitments for our future self, but we really need to start simple I think, and build from there.

[00:16:18] Darryl Dash: What would you say to somebody who thinks that they're not very good at habits?

[00:16:23] Reagan Rose: I think we're all not very good at habits, that's a good question. Yeah, I would say that the Bible speaks to the topic of discipline, which in my thinking, I kind of put habits under the heading of discipline. That's how I categorize them. And that is an area that you may be not as naturally good

as other people. You might not be as good as someone who is naturally more disciplined and you might never be that good, but that doesn't free you from the obligation to be obedient. And to put yourself in the way of God's means of sanctifying and growing you. So specifically with some of those spiritual disciplines, reading your Bible, being in prayer. Somebody will say, oh, well, I'm just not disciplined, I'm not a disciplined person, so I'm not going to do that. I don't think that we should be so quick to let ourselves off of the hook with some of those things.

[00:17:24] Darryl Dash: Yeah, that's good. Sometimes we see the end product and we just assume somebody who's very disciplined has always been that way, and maybe they just started out and they've been at it longer. That can be defeating, but it can also be hopeful because it's like man, they were where I am, and maybe with over a period of time, I can build that same growth in my own life, so that can actually be encouraging.

[00:17:48] Reagan Rose: Yeah, absolutely. I think people talk about that time bias we have like we always overestimate where we'll be in a year and underestimate where we'll be in five years. I think that that's so critical when it comes to habits. You're blown away when you look back five years ago on who you were and what you were doing, and it's really amazing what a really simple thing practice over the long term, how much that changes you.

[00:18:16] Darryl Dash: Yeah, absolutely. Well Reagan, I've discovered a lot of people, if you look at the stats or even if we talk with people, they would say that they're struggling to build a habit of say Bible reading. They maybe start every year January the first and they get to Leviticus or Numbers and they're like I'm out, or prayer. I don't know anybody who says that their prayer life is everything that they want it to be, and that goes to the people I think are really good at prayer. Even they feel like they're not good at praying, that they'd like to progress even further or they feel like they're weak. Speak to us about how can somebody begin to build some of these habits in their lives, like reading scripture regularly or praying because it just seems like all of us find it hard to differing degrees.

[00:19:02] Reagan Rose: Yeah, absolutely, and I'm no different. One of the things people often will write to me and it's like they think that I'm like a productivity guru. Like no, I talk about this stuff and I'm interested in it because I'm terrible at it. I have seen progress in my own life, but I have the same struggles, it's why I care about it because I'm trying to improve. But prayer especially, same for me, it's a tough thing. One of the things that I found that works for me and has been really helpful is having a morning routine and it's just literally carving out time that's dedicated to some of these things and it sounds so simple, but a lot of us

don't do it. A lot of us, instead of making a plan for how we're going to do a habit, we make a hope, but you're not going to do a habit unless you decide where and when you're going to do it. Most people never get past that, they just have an intention. And for me, even with having little kids, that's been the only time I've really been able to own for myself is getting up a little earlier than I would have, and that's time that I used to read the Bible and to pray a little bit and having a plan for those things too. What am I gonna read in the Bible, having a list of who I'm going to pray for. Those are really simple things, but I've just found that carving out the time and having a practical plan is the only way to actually start doing those and knowing that they're going to happen instead of just hoping.

[00:20:28] Darryl Dash: And you have a course on developing a morning routine, could you little bit about that?

[00:20:33] Reagan Rose: Yeah, absolutely. The course is called Power Mornings and it's an acronym for some of the things I suggest that you include in your morning routine. But I feature things like prayer, things like Bible reading, little time to plan your day ahead, and I just recommend anywhere from a half hour to an hour or longer. I have a longer morning routine that I don't recommend that everybody do this, but I've just found the benefit of it to be so great that I wake up very early. And I spend a couple hours each day doing some spiritual disciplines, planning my day, having time of just peace. Nobody's up yet, no one can bug me, I can read, I can journal. That's kinda the stuff I cover in the course, I try to give you literally just a step by step plan to copy and there's templates and things. You can just can do exactly what I carve out and tell you to do. I give you the reasoning behind it, kind of the biblical basis for it. And if you set aside this time, it tries to knock down all of the roadblocks that tend to get in our way with trying to do some of these things that we all want to do, but struggle to do.

[00:21:44] Darryl Dash: No I love that. Yeah, I think having that practical, having a brought down from conceptual to here's actually the steps you need to take can be so helpful. We learn best from either examples from seeing it modeled, and yeah, this is a way of doing that to learn from your experience and how to adapt it for our own, so that's so valuable. Maybe you don't struggle with this, but let me ask you, what about those mornings that maybe you're out too late at a wedding or the kids were up in the middle of the night? What about those mornings you fail, do you just reduce or are you able to even miss a day and say, that's okay, I'll pick up tomorrow? What happens when you don't do it perfectly?

[00:22:26] Reagan Rose: That's a great question. I have basically really two strategies for that. If I wake up and I know that I'm tired, but I'm awake enough, I

kind of will make this call on the fly and I'll say all right, I'm going to get up at my normal time and I'm going to do this. I'm just going to know it's going to be suboptimal, I'm going to be tired and it's going to be a sleepy day, and I try to do that most of the time. And the reason is it's very easy to break a habit, especially with something having to do with when you wake up, your sleep routine. I've just learned, and maybe this is just me, but if I wake up the same time every day, even on the weekends, everything's easier. I don't struggle, even though I wake up very early because I do that on the weekends too, I'm fine, and I know how easy it is to lose that, so I try to power through if I can. But if I don't, I skip it, and I tell people this in the course too, don't even beat yourself up, just skip it, sleep in, you need to sleep, but don't do it two days in a row. If you keep yourself to that covenant with yourself and say I will never do this two days in a row, whatever happens that next day, I'm going to power through and do it, you'll keep the habit going because that's where it starts to break. It's not when you miss one, it's when you miss two and then it becomes three and four and five. That's where you lose it and then months go by and you realize, wait, whatever happened to that habit.

[00:23:50] Darryl Dash: We're so funny, aren't we? The distortions we have, like we think on a day where we've blown it, it's like oh man, I may as well just never do it again, other than picking up the next day and going, okay. Like same with Bible reading, we start and we maybe miss a couple days and then we just chuck the whole program rather than thinking okay, let's pick up two days later or a day later and just keep going.

[00:24:12] Reagan Rose: It is funny. Yeah, I don't know what that is in our nature that makes us think that way, but I really think the way to combat it is just having that long view. It's just a core level of your philosophy of life, just thinking I'm becoming a type of person and the things I do each day make me that person. It's not about whether I did really well this day or tomorrow, it's about what was the pattern over the last however many years. In hindsight, missing a day here and there, it's not really going to have that big of an effect, and so it's not a big deal. The question is how do I make sure that the habit doesn't stop?

[00:24:50] Darryl Dash: What is the big picture of your ministry if you were to...I know we don't gaze in crystal balls as believers, but if you were to look into the future 20 years, what do you hope will have happened as a result of your work and your ministry?

[00:25:07] Reagan Rose: Yeah wow, that's a great question. My goal Darryl is I want believers to bring more glory to God. Like I said with my own little kind of testimony about productivity, I believe that if we use our time well, God gets more glory and I believe that's what we're here for. I want to help other believers

use their lives well, so that God gets more glory, so that when they stand before him, they will be glad for the life they lived, and the reward that follows that in eternity. So more crowns to worship him with as it were. And so that's kind of like the long, long term view, but in terms of the ministry itself, I would love to do more courses. I've thought about maybe doing a membership type thing that would allow people to have more accountability. That's something that I just keep hearing from people, is they want to be in this with other people, and that's the hard thing. So I just want to make more practical resources, practical things that Christians can use that are rooted in the scriptures. I really believe that God's mission on earth with believers is accomplished through the local church, but I believe that there's a way to help give some of the practical things that are hard for people to get at a local church. That they understand the principles, they understand what they should be doing, but they need help for exactly how to do it. How do I find other people who are implementing it in the same way? So that's kind of a vague and meandering answer, but that's kind of the big picture. That's what I'm trying to do.

[00:26:53] Darryl Dash: That's really good. I try to ask these questions of everybody I interview on the podcast, but I really enjoy the answers. What is something you're learning recently?

[00:27:04] Reagan Rose: Yeah honestly, it's probably from that book, *The Four Thousand Hour* one, that's been very much my mind, which is ironic because it's a book by an unbeliever. He doesn't believe in the afterlife, he said in there and what I've read so far. But I guess not learning it, but maybe it's sinking in a little bit deeper, my own finitude, the shortness to all of this. And specifically, what is it Lord that I need to do and how do I ruthlessly eliminate those things that are being distractions to me, or I feel like I need to be obligated to do all of this stuff. I know I can't do it all, but how do I make my life one that really is just the focus of it? It's doing those things which God's given me to do specifically. And so that's something I've been thinking about a lot, and meditating on and trying to implement a little bit better. Getting rid of the extraneous so that I can do what God's called me specifically to.

[00:28:08] Darryl Dash: What's been something that's been encouraging you lately?

[00:28:15] Reagan Rose: Probably the same thing, to be honest. That's not a good answer, but like that idea that the very thing that we were just talking about that I don't have to do it all. Like I know this and I tell people this, but it's encouraging to remember that this doesn't all ride on me. Look, I care about productivity, I'm not going to stop caring, I'm not going to have this laissez-faire attitude towards life. I believe there's work to be done and I want to do it well,

and I believe that counts for eternity, but I don't have to do it all. The God who has given me this good work to do also has numbered the hairs on my head, and he has counted the days and he's put them in front of me. I have exactly the right amount of time to do what God has called me to do, and to me, that's just so encouraging. Because it is true that all the things I might want to do or that the world tells me I should do, that I don't have enough time for, but I know that I've exactly the amount of time to do what God's called me to do, and that's encouraging to me.

[00:29:22] Darryl Dash: That's freeing.

[00:29:23] Reagan Rose: Yeah, absolutely. Jesus said, "Who have you by worrying can add a single hour to his life." I just love that. I was just talking about that on my own podcast recently, worrying is so unproductive, but we do that, we spend all this time as if the worrying will help, as if it's going to add time as if it's gonna make things better. But the God who feeds the ravens and close the lilies, he cares for us, and his burden is easy, his yoke is light.

[00:29:57] Darryl Dash: I really appreciate your ministry. I hope that people subscribe to your podcast and look at your course and sign up for it. Where can people find out more about you?

[00:30:08] Reagan Rose: Yeah, the best place is [redeemingproductivity.com](https://redeemingproductivity.com). You can find the podcast, the articles and newsletter videos, all that stuff there.

[00:30:15] Darryl Dash: Well Reagan, I really appreciate your time today, appreciate what you're doing and praying that God blesses you in your ministry.

[00:30:21] Reagan Rose: Same to you Darryl, appreciate you having me on.