

Alumni Spotlight: Joe Styler (MDiv '02)



Current title: Product Manager for the Domain Aftermarket at GoDaddy.com

Family: Wife: Leslie, Children: Elijah and Sierra

Favorite professors: If I have to pick, it would be Dr. Haddon Robinson and Dr. Walter Kaiser.

Favorite class: Exegesis of Revelation with Dr. Beale

Favorite memory: The time spent with people is what I remember most, studying in groups on campus, playing soccer on the big field at the Hamilton campus, as well as bible study at Walter Kaiser's home.

What have you been doing since you left Gordon-Conwell and what are you doing now?

It has been twenty years since I graduated, and I have been doing so much, so I will only focus on a few of them. In the early years after graduation, I moved out to Los Angeles and worked bi-vocationally as a young adult and discipleship pastor as well as at a restaurant to make ends meet. I was able to start a bible study at the restaurant, and no one who attended was a believer. It was an amazing time as I was able to be both in church with Christians and interact regularly with people who did not know Christ and would never think about attending a church. One of the main highlights of working in LA was meeting and marrying Leslie, my wife of almost twenty years.

After we got married, she received a job offer in Arizona. We moved here to start a family and have been here ever since. We were blessed with two wonderful kids, Elijah and Sierra. I had just finished my time in my pastoral role and was ready to start something else when I found a position at GoDaddy through a friend of my wife's who is now a Pastor in Scottsdale. I was planning on staying a few months until I found something else, but I have been here seventeen years and enjoyed every minute of it.

As I have focused full time on a secular position, I have been given many opportunities to serve in ministry. A great benefit of being employed in the tech space is the opportunity to give money to friends who are in the ministry or serving in missions and invest in the kingdom in a way I might not be able to if I was working in full time ministry. One of the highlights of my many opportunities to serve was as a chaplain for the Chicago Cubs when they were here for



Spring training for many years. Unfortunately, I stopped too soon, or I may have gotten a World Series ring with the team! What an opportunity to connect with Christians and non-Christians in a setting many do not have the opportunity to be a part of.

I was also able to start a Bible study/prayer meeting with many people in the industry I work in. When we meet around the world for various conferences, we are able to spend time together in fellowship and prayer. We also have an opportunity to invite others who are not people who would typically attend a church service. All in all, my career has given me many opportunities to share my faith with others who would not be interested in hearing about God any other way.

What do you love about your work?

I love that in the tech space things are always changing and you have to challenge yourself to keep up and continually grow and learn to stay on top of things. I work in the area of Domain Names which are website addresses such as gcts.edu or godaddy.com. The names of the websites you go to. Those names can have tremendous value selling for upwards of 6 figures regularly and into the 7 and 8 figures. For instance, voice.com sold for \$30M dollars. My current role is running the auction for domain names on GoDaddy where people buy and sell these domains for profit or as the next brand for a new business.

One of the things I love about working at a big company is that it is never boring. You are always challenged and can change careers and continually challenge yourself. For example, I am currently in charge of some products such as the Auction, but I also have been in management as a Director, in sales, negotiation and brokering, as well as running support teams. Learning new roles helps to keep things interesting and challenging.

I also like how many people you can meet. I have made some of my best friendships from working and networking with others in the same space. I have lifelong friendships with people all over the world, and was even featured in the book, *Build Your Dream Network*, by J. Kelly Hoey.

Over the past decade I have been able to help acquire domain names for billionaires, big name celebrities, CEOs, sports figures, media personalities, business moguls, and many Venture Capital companies. These are people you cannot get face time with normally, but I have their cell phone numbers and am able to speak with them. At times, I am able to share my faith. This is a unique position that God placed a nobody like me into through my work. Something that the secular workplace does as a rule is the continual investment in their employees with training, classes, and mentoring. I think that is something that we can use more of in the Church today.

What are the joys and challenges of serving in the business/for-profit world in general and/or in your specific context?

There are certainly challenges. There are many things that are expected of you that do not align with your personal beliefs and it there is always a challenge balancing the two. It is important to remember that people are watching even when you do not think so to see if you walk the walk or if you are a hypocrite.

I remember one clear example that might help to illustrate this. When the new domain extension .xxx (like .com but for porn websites) came out, there was a big marketing push by the owners of that extension, and one of the conferences I was attending had them as a

main sponsor. It was one of my first conferences, and they had a whole night sponsored by them with scantily clad porn stars all over the place. At conferences, most of the new business happens at events where you can network and meet new people. So, I had a choice. My company had paid me to come do a job, and these conferences are not cheap or very long. That meant if I did not attend, I would lose about a third of the time I had to make deals happen, and my boss at the time definitely would not look very favorably on that say the least. Long story short—after praying I stayed back at the hotel and made more deals than I would have at any event and received one or two other job offers that night. Things do not always work out like this of course. Sometimes you stand on your beliefs, and it hurts, but it is important to know that there will always be conflicts in a secular business, and you will have many hard decisions to make. This is what almost anyone in your Church or current ministry has to deal with on a regular basis as they try and balance their faith and serving God.

Being in this industry for many years, I have learned that people are always watching you, whether you notice it or not, and that your integrity, both in business and your actions around your beliefs, are being scrutinized. It may take a decade for someone to mention it to you, but it is very important to always be faithful to what you believe and act in a way that demonstrates that so that you can make an impact in the workplace.

How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your past and current work?

There are so many ways that these overlap that it is impossible to cover them all. Some highlights would be the leadership training I received served me well in leading others and managing others throughout my career. My public speaking training at Gordon-Conwell has been invaluable as a foundation for the many times I have needed to speak or present in large meetings or at conferences. I also think that the missions classes are valuable in working in a large mission field like the business world and in relating to people all over the globe. Bigger picture, the ethics class I took with Dr. Kaiser was helpful for setting you up to make thoughtful choices and to avoid not only evil but the appearance of evil. You only have one reputation in life and in business – that is extremely important.

What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are considering serving in the business world?

Relax. Trust God. God has a way of doing things in his time and in his way. There will be many stressful times ahead in life, and in your career, that will challenge you to your core. But we serve a faithful, all-powerful God who works in ways we cannot even imagine. Trust him. Approach your work prayerfully while seeking the Lord and remembering that we do not work for a paycheck; we work for his glory. Try not to get distracted from that. It is easy to become enamored with the things the world sees as success. Instead, remember to ask God why he has you where he does and to ask the Holy Spirit to keep you open to what he wants you to do. One last piece of advice would be to ask God to provide you with Christian friends who you can talk with and pray with and will help to keep you focused.

Do you have any publications or links to share? (Feel free to give us the link to your business.)

Learn about my family's small business, [Sicilian Sea Salt](#).

Learn about [GoDaddy](#), their [Auctions](#), and [various articles](#) I have written for them.