

## **Presentation Interview with Jeremy Myers**

*Jeremy Myers is my go-to guy for all things technical. He's designed my blogs, moved my material from a Wordpress.com site to a self-hosting Wordpress.org site, installed complicated plugins, and solved a host of technical website problems I've encountered over the years.*

*Jeremy designed [TheDayIMetJesus.com](http://TheDayIMetJesus.com) and [The Deeper Journey Discipleship Course](http://TheDeeperJourneyDiscipleshipCourse) sites, and he's done most of the "back end" work on my main blog, [FrankViola.org](http://FrankViola.org).*

*In this interview presentation, Jeremy shares his experience and expertise around blogging.*

### **1. When did you start blogging?**

Jeremy Myers: I first launched TillHeComes.org back in 2001, but it was not a blog at that time. Since I was a pastor at that time, my website was a place to post my sermon manuscripts and sermon audio files.

I integrated the blog in 2007, and really started taking it seriously in 2011. Just recently I redesigned, rebranded, and relaunched my website as [RedeemingGod.com](http://RedeemingGod.com). This is sort of a provocative title, and if people want to know what I mean by it, they can learn more on the About page of my website.

### **2. Your blog has had a dramatic increase of traffic over the last few years; what were the main things you did to see this increase?**

Jeremy Myers: There are several things that contributed to my increase in traffic.

First, I focused on my site design. I wanted it to load fast and be eye catching. Experts say you have about 3 seconds to keep a reader, so I wanted to make those 3 seconds count.

To accomplish this, I chose a good hosting company, a beautiful theme ([I use themes from StudioPress](#)), post titles that create curiosity, and an opening line or two that generate an interest to read more, share the content, leave a comment, or join my email newsletter.

Second, I started writing consistently, and I focused on one main topic. Lots of bloggers are not consistent in their posting schedule or their posting topics. They write three posts one week, and then nothing for a month. Then they publish a post before taking two weeks off. Readers like a consistent schedule, so I tell bloggers who I work with to find a schedule that they can manage, and stick to it.

But it's not just about a posting schedule; it's also about a specialization. New bloggers often write a post about something in politics on Monday. The next day put up a few pictures of their family vacation. On Wednesday, they publish a devotional insight they had while reading the Bible, some gardening tips on Thursday, and a picture of what they made for dinner on Friday.

Bloggers need to find a topic they like to write about, and then stick to it. And the key here is a topic they *like* to write about. If bloggers pick a topic that is boring to them, they will soon get bored, and their posts will be boring, and they will either stop blogging, or readers will stop reading. Find a topic that is interesting to you, and you will always have plenty to write about. Your passion for this topic will come through to your readers, who will then stick around to read more.

So for me, I started focusing on topics related to Scripture. It's a huge topic, but reading and writing about Scripture has always been an interest of mine, and always will be.

These past two years, when I have seen a real surge in my traffic, I have been writing a lot about how to understand the violence of God in the Old Testament. This is a huge issue for lots of people, and many struggle with how God can be so violent toward the enemies of Israel in the Old Testament while Jesus commands us to love and forgive our enemies. I plan to write more on this in the future, but have taken a break right now so I can do some more reading, thinking, and studying.

The third thing I really started focusing on was my Search Engine Optimization, or SEO. There is always something more to learn in this field, and so I started trying to incorporate a few things about SEO each week into my blog posts, and over time, it has really paid off. I receive tens of thousands of visitors every single

month from search engines like Google and Bing. Many of these visitors subscribe to my blog, or return to read more posts.

### **3. What do you do specifically to optimize your posts for SEO – both your present posts and your previous (older) posts?**

Jeremy Myers: You don't want to write for search engines, but you do need to have search engines in mind when you write your posts. For me, I write most posts the way I want them, and then I go back through and make some small adjustments to the content of the post that will help search engines know what I am writing about and help them connect my post with readers who might be looking for what I've written about.

So after I write my post, I sit back and ask, "If I was search the Internet for a post which contained exactly the information I have written about here, what sort of search terms would I use to find this post?" Then I go through my post and add these search terms to the post in various places, but not so that the content sounds unnatural. It should still read like normal to the average reader.

If I were going to give one recommendation to bloggers, I would tell them to install the WordPress SEO plugin by Yoast. This plugin not only helps you with your SEO, but also trains you how to do SEO for your blog posts and pages.

Once the plugin is installed, it adds an area beneath the editing section when you are writing a new post or page. You put the primary search term you would enter into Google or Bing in the "focus keyword" box. Then, once you have entered this, click on the "Page Analysis" tab and the WordPress SEO plugin will tell you what you need to do to optimize your post for that keyword or keyphrase. The plugin gives you little colored circles (red, orange, and green – traffic-light style) for how you are doing in various areas. I never publish a post without getting all green circles. Well, almost never.

And of course, you can always go back and cultivate or curate your old blog posts so that they get all green circles as well. This will help improve the ranking of those older posts and page with Google and Bing. By the time I started using WordPress SEO, I had already written over 1,000 blog posts. I am currently going

back through those old posts to optimize them all for search engines. As I do, many of them are getting more visits now than they ever have before.

#### **4. What plugin do you use to promote your sites on various social media and book marketing accounts? Which sites do you use in particular?**

Jeremy Myers: I promote my posts through Twitter, Facebook, Google+, StumbleUpon, and Pinterest.

But here's a secret: While I do my best to interact with other people on Facebook and Twitter, the way I send my posts to these social media sites is completely automated. As soon as I hit "Publish" in my dashboard, I have a plugin that sends updates about my new post to Facebook, Twitter, Google+, StumbleUpon, and Pinterest. And in fact, I have two Facebook accounts and two Twitter accounts, so the plugin sends an update to both. I don't have to do anything.

The plugin is called the Social Network Auto Poster, and is a huge timesaver for me. There is a free version of the plugin, but I use the Premium version because it allows posting to several sites that the free version does not, and it allows posting to multiple Facebook or Twitter accounts, whereas the free version only allows one of each. When I bought it, the plugin was \$99, but at the time I'm writing this, it looks like it's on sale for \$49. You can go here to check it out:

<http://redeeminggod.com/out/snap>

Yes, that is an affiliate link, but I highly recommend this plugin. It has been a huge time saver for me.

#### **5. I've heard StumbleUpon described as a "lottery" for blogs. Tell us your experience with it.**

Jeremy Myers: Yes, a "lottery" is a good way to describe it. Except that it's free.

I send every post I publish over to StumbleUpon, and always get at least 5-10 pageviews every time, so sharing my link on StumbleUpon is worth it just for that. But every once in a while, a post goes viral on StumbleUpon. I have no clue how or why this happens (if I knew, I would make sure to do it more often). A while

back, I had a post about Writing Tips from C. S. Lewis that received over 100,000 pageviews in a few weeks, all from StumbleUpon.

## **6. What are some of the biggest mistakes you've made in blogging over the years?**

Jeremy Myers: I am also an author, and one of the big mistakes I made early on was in thinking that writing a blog post was like writing a book. But the two are not the same.

A book has pages and pages of text, often with very long paragraphs. I used to write my blog posts this way too. My early posts were often nothing more than big walls of text on the screen.

But then I started noticing that popular bloggers break their blog posts up into short paragraphs or only one or two sentences. They also include multiple headings to break up the posts. They also include several images throughout their posts. And they usually start each post with an attention grabbing statement, a teaser, or something provocative to draw people in.

I started writing my blog posts this way, and noticed that people started reading more.

Another thing I did was that I started writing for me. Early on, I primarily wrote for the reader. I tried to figure out what the readers wanted to hear, and then I wrote blog posts which I thought they might like to read.

But I quickly became bored with this, and it also sounded sort of fake.

So I started writing for me. I wrote about the things I was interested in. The questions I had. The things I wanted to learn.

As I did so, the passion I had for what I was writing came through in my posts, and more and more people started reading. My passion became contagious.

I realized that when I wrote for others, I lost both myself and the others. When I wrote for me, I found myself and others.

One final mistake I made early on is what I call “always tinkering; never writing.” I wasted so much time changing the colors of my blog, and adding special rounded borders to my images, and creating background shadows on my heading fonts, that I never got around to writing. I tell new bloggers that they need to limit the amount of time they spend tinkering with their blog so they can focus on what really matters – writing!

## **7. In what ways have you helped other bloggers with their blogs?**

Jeremy Myers: I pretty much can help anyone do anything for their blog, except for writing content. I don't write people's blog posts for them; they need to do that on their own.

I do a lot of blog migrations. This is when someone is on Blogger.com or WordPress.com and wants to start a self-hosted blog using the WordPress.org blogging platform. I can help them install the WordPress software on their site, and move all their blog posts, blog images, and blog comments over to their new blog.

I also do custom blog designs and theme installations. If someone hires me to do work for them, I often throw in a Free Premium Theme from either StudioPress or Elegant Themes.

Occasionally I help bloggers set up their email newsletters. They have to write the promotional content, the eBook giveaway offer (if they have one), and the welcome emails, but I create the email newsletter, the signup forms, and all the pages and emails for the subscription list.

One service I have recently started offering is for authors who also have blogs. These authors simply want to write, and don't want to be bothered with anything related to the technical or design aspects of blogging. So I maintain their blog software, plugin updates, and anything else they have questions about.

If someone uses the Buzz Seminar and has questions about anything related to blogging, I can probably help.

## **8. How can people contact you for help with their blogs?**

Jeremy Myers: The best way to contact me is to visit [GraceBlogger.com](http://www.graceblogger.com). There are various options on the homepage which they can choose from, but if they just want to contact me with a blogging question or to get a quote on a miscellaneous project, there is a form at <http://www.graceblogger.com/get-blogging-help>

I am also a member of “The Hive” Facebook group, and people can reach out to me there as well.

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