



Course 7, Recurring Revenue Models: Subscriptions, Retention, and the Engine That Keeps Giving

Block 7 of the Crown Revenue Academy. You can build an offer, market it honestly, sell with integrity, and steward the money. Now we build the model that turns one good sale into an ongoing relationship of value, recurring revenue, the steadiest and most mission friendly way to fund a Kingdom business.

Course Overview

Most businesses live and die by the next sale. You close a deal, you celebrate, and then you wake up the next morning starting again from zero. It is exhausting, and it makes giving and planning almost impossible, because you never know what next month holds. There is a better model, and it is closer to how God Himself provides. God does not give His people one enormous dump of manna and walk away. He gives bread daily, mercies new every morning, an ongoing relationship of provision. Recurring revenue works the same way. Instead of chasing a one time transaction, you build an ongoing relationship where you deliver continual value and receive continual support in return.

This course teaches the modern science of recurring revenue, drawing on the best secular frameworks, especially the work of Winning by Design, and running all of it through a biblical filter. We will treat the customer not as a one time mark to be closed, but as a person to be served faithfully over time. That is not just better business. It is more honest, more stable, and far better for funding the mission.

Who it's for: Anyone who wants to move from one off sales to dependable, repeatable income, course creators, coaches, agencies, software builders, membership and ministry leaders, service providers, and anyone tired of starting from zero every month.

Format: 6 bi-weekly sessions, 60 to 75 minutes each, always free.

What you'll walk away with: - A clear grasp of **why recurring revenue** beats one off sales for stability and mission - The **Bowtie model**: getting the customer is only half the work - An **onboarding plan** that gets customers to real value fast - An **expansion strategy** that grows existing customers (the enlarged tent) - A **plan to fight churn** by keeping covenant with the people you serve - A **freemium or free on ramp** that gives genuine value before asking for payment

The rhythm of every session: Big Idea, Anchor Scripture, Biblical Case Study, Teaching Points, Real Application, Discussion, Go Deeper (a linked book and a linked podcast).

Session 1, Why Recurring Revenue

Big Idea: A one time sale feeds you once. A recurring relationship feeds you and the mission again and again. Recurring revenue is the steadiest, most God like pattern of provision.

Anchor Scripture: Lamentations 3:22 to 23 (His mercies are new every morning); Exodus 16:4 (daily bread from heaven).

Biblical Case Study: Manna, the Daily Provision (Exodus 16). When Israel was hungry in the wilderness, God did not drop one giant pile of food and leave. He rained down manna every single morning, enough for that day, gathered fresh each dawn. The pattern was ongoing, relational, and dependable. They woke up, and provision was there again. That is a picture of recurring provision, and it is a better model than the one time windfall. A windfall is spent and gone. A daily, renewing supply builds a relationship of trust and steadiness over time. Recurring revenue brings that same steadiness to a business: instead of one feast followed by famine, you build a dependable supply that renews, so you can plan, serve, and give with confidence.

Teaching Points: 1. One off sales mean you start from zero every month. Recurring revenue carries forward. 2. Recurring revenue is more stable, more predictable, and far easier to give from and plan around. 3. The shift is from a transaction (close and leave) to a relationship (serve and stay). 4. God models recurring provision: bread daily, mercies new every morning, not one dump and gone.

Real Application: - *In the room:* Look at your current offer. Write one way it could become recurring (a membership, subscription, retainer, ongoing service, or renewing program). - *This week:* Calculate what your income would look like if even ten customers paid you monthly instead of once. Feel the difference stability makes.

Discussion: - Where does the start from zero every month cycle wear you down, and what would change with recurring income? - What ongoing value could you genuinely deliver every month that is worth paying for again and again?

Go Deeper: **Read:** [Subscribed by Tien Tzuo](#) · **Listen:** [Winning by Design Podcast](#)

Session 2, The Bowtie, Getting the Customer Is Only Half

Big Idea: The old funnel ends at the sale. The recurring revenue Bowtie shows the sale is the middle, not the end. Keeping and growing the customer is the real engine.

Anchor Scripture: John 10:11 to 14 (the good shepherd knows and keeps his sheep); Proverbs 27:23 (know the state of your flocks).

Biblical Case Study: The Good Shepherd (John 10:11 to 14). Jesus contrasts the hired hand, who runs when trouble comes, with the good shepherd, who knows his sheep, stays with them, and lays down his life for them. The hired hand cares only about himself, the relationship is shallow and temporary. The shepherd is committed for the long haul, he knows each sheep and keeps them. This is the heart of the Bowtie model that Winning by Design teaches in Revenue Architecture: the traditional sales funnel treats the sale as the finish line, but in a recurring business the sale is only the knot in the middle of the bowtie. What happens after, onboarding, adoption, retention, and expansion, matters as much as what happened before. The hired hand closes and leaves. The good shepherd stays and keeps the flock, and that is what makes recurring revenue work.

Teaching Points: 1. The funnel ends at the sale. The Bowtie shows an equal, vital second half after the sale. 2. In recurring revenue, the money is made in retention and expansion, not just acquisition. 3. Know your

customers the way a shepherd knows his flock, by name, by need, over time. 4. The hired hand mindset (close and move on) quietly kills recurring businesses.

Real Application: - *In the room:* Draw a bowtie. On the left, write how you get a customer. On the right, write what you do after the sale to keep and grow them. Be honest about which side is emptier. - *This week:* List your current customers by name and note who is thriving, who is quiet, and who is at risk. Start knowing your flock.

Discussion: - Be honest: is your right side of the bowtie (after the sale) nearly empty? What would fill it? - Where have you acted like the hired hand, closing the sale and moving on instead of staying?

Go Deeper: **Read:** [Revenue Architecture by Jacco van der Kooij \(Winning by Design\)](#) · **Listen:** [SaaS Podcast](#)

Session 3, Onboarding, Get Them to First Value Fast

Big Idea: A customer who never reaches real value will leave, no matter how good your product is. The fastest path to retention is getting them to their first win quickly.

Anchor Scripture: John 1:39 (Jesus says, come and see); Mark 1:17 to 18 (follow Me, and at once they followed).

Biblical Case Study: Come and See (John 1:35 to 39). When two of John's disciples began following Jesus, He turned and asked what they wanted, and then He said simply, "Come and see." He did not hand them a doctrine to study first. He invited them into an experience, they came, they saw where He was staying, they spent the day with Him, and that direct taste of who He was changed everything. That is onboarding. The new customer does not need more features explained, they need to experience the value quickly and directly. In recurring revenue this is everything: the research is clear that customers who reach their first real win early stay, and those who never get there leave, no matter how impressive the product looked at the sale. Your job after the sale is to say come and see, and get them to a genuine first value as fast as possible.

Teaching Points: 1. The first days after the sale decide retention. A confused or stuck new customer churns fast. 2. Define the customer's first win, the first moment they feel real value, and rush them to it. 3. Make getting started simple. Remove every obstacle between signup and the first win. 4. Onboarding is not paperwork. It is the experience of come and see, delivered quickly.

Real Application: - *In the room:* Define the single first win for a new customer, the first moment they feel real value. Write the shortest path to get them there. - *This week:* Map your current onboarding step by step and cut one thing that delays the first win.

Discussion: - What is the first real win for your customer, and how long does it currently take them to reach it? - Where do new customers get stuck or confused right after they buy, and how could you remove that?

Go Deeper: **Read:** [The Automatic Customer by John Warrillow](#) · **Listen:** [Lenny's Podcast](#)

Session 4, Expansion, Enlarge the Tent

Big Idea: Your most likely next customer is the one you already have. The steadiest growth comes from serving existing customers more deeply over time.

Anchor Scripture: Isaiah 54:2 to 3 (enlarge the place of your tent); Genesis 26:12 (Isaac sowed and reaped a hundredfold).

Biblical Case Study: Enlarge the Place of Your Tent (Isaiah 54:2 to 3). God tells His people, “Enlarge the place of thy tent ... lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left.” The picture is growth from an existing center, you do not abandon the tent you have, you expand it outward as the family grows. Recurring revenue grows the same way. The most reliable expansion is not constantly hunting brand new customers, it is deepening the relationship with the customers you already serve, offering them more value, new levels, added help, the next thing they need. Winning by Design measures this as net revenue retention, whether your existing customers are worth more to you over time, not less. A business whose customers expand year over year breaks forth on the right hand and the left, growing from a strong, well kept center.

Teaching Points: 1. It costs far less to grow an existing happy customer than to win a brand new one. 2. Expansion means offering existing customers more genuine value: new levels, add ons, the next step. 3. The health metric is whether a customer is worth more to you over time, not less. 4. Enlarge the tent from a strong center. Keep current customers thriving, then grow them.

Real Application: - *In the room:* For one existing customer type, write the natural next thing they will need from you, the expansion offer that genuinely serves them. - *This week:* Reach out to one current customer, not to upsell aggressively, but to ask what they need next. Listen.

Discussion: - What is the honest next level or add on your best customers would genuinely benefit from? - How do you grow a customer's spending without ever crossing into pressure or selling them what they do not need?

Go Deeper: **Read:** [The Membership Economy by Robbie Kellman Baxter](#) · **Listen:** [Winning by Design Podcast](#)

Session 5, Fight Churn, Keep Covenant

Big Idea: Churn is a broken relationship, and most of it is preventable. Reducing churn is about keeping covenant with the people you serve, listening and caring before they leave.

Anchor Scripture: Ruth 1:16 to 17 (Ruth's covenant loyalty); Malachi 2:16 (God's heart against breaking covenant).

Biblical Case Study: Ruth's Covenant Loyalty (Ruth 1:16 to 17). When Naomi urged Ruth to leave, Ruth answered with some of the most loyal words in Scripture: “whither thou goest, I will go ... thy people shall be my people.” Ruth models covenant, a committed, faithful relationship that does not quit when it gets hard. Churn, in a recurring business, is the opposite of covenant: it is the customer quietly leaving, the relationship breaking. Here is the key truth most owners miss: by the time a customer cancels, they checked out long before. Churn is almost always a relationship that was neglected, a customer who stopped getting value, felt unseen, and drifted. Fighting churn is not about clever cancellation traps, it is about keeping covenant, staying

close, noticing when a customer goes quiet, and re engaging them with real value before they are gone. You keep customers the way Ruth kept Naomi, with faithful, attentive loyalty.

Teaching Points: 1. Churn is the silent killer of recurring revenue. A small monthly leak drains the whole tank. 2. Most churn is preventable and starts long before the cancellation, the customer drifts first. 3. Watch for the quiet customer. Disengagement is the early warning of churn. 4. Fight churn by keeping covenant: stay close, deliver ongoing value, re engage before they leave.

Real Application: - *In the room:* Write the top one or two reasons customers leave you. Then write one early warning sign you could watch for before it happens. - *This week:* Reach out to one customer who has gone quiet, with genuine care, and ask how they are doing and whether they are getting value.

Discussion: - What are the real reasons customers leave you, and which of them were preventable? - How do you keep covenant with customers at scale, staying close and faithful as you grow?

Go Deeper: **Read:** [Revenue Architecture](#) by Jacco van der Kooij (the retention chapters) · **Listen:** [Protect the Hustle](#) by Paddle and ProfitWell

Session 6, Freemium, Give Real Value Before You Ask

Big Idea: Giving genuine value freely builds trust and opens the door to a lasting paid relationship. The ultimate model for this is grace itself, come and taste before you buy.

Anchor Scripture: Isaiah 55:1 (come, buy without money); Psalm 34:8 (taste and see that the Lord is good).

Biblical Case Study: Come, Buy Without Money (Isaiah 55:1). God calls out, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat ... without money and without price.” God leads with a free invitation. He gives first, He lets people taste His goodness, and that genuine experience of value is what draws them into a lasting relationship. Psalm 34:8 says it plainly: “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” This is the deep logic behind freemium and product led growth, the model Dave Boyce of Winning by Design teaches in his book Freemium: you give people a real taste of genuine value for free, you let the value itself do the convincing, and the experience earns the lasting, paying relationship. It only works if the free taste is genuinely good, not a crippled tease. God's free invitation is real water for real thirst. Your free offer should be real value too, an honest taste that earns trust and opens the door.

Teaching Points: 1. A generous free on ramp (a free tier, trial, tool, or resource) lets people taste real value first. 2. The free taste must be genuinely valuable, not a frustrating tease. Honest generosity earns trust. 3. Value before payment is the pattern of grace: God gives first, and the goodness draws us in. 4. Free is a doorway, not the destination. The lasting relationship is the paid covenant it opens.

Real Application: - *In the room:* Design one genuinely valuable free on ramp, a free resource, tool, trial, or first session, that lets a new person taste your value with no risk. - *This week:* Give that free value to five people this week, with no strings, and watch who leans in.

Discussion: - What real, genuinely useful thing could you give away freely that would let people taste your value? - Where is the line between honest generosity that opens a door and giving away so much you cannot sustain the mission?

Go Deeper: **Read:** [Freemium by Dave Boyce \(Winning by Design\)](#) · **Listen:** [Lenny's Podcast \(product led growth episodes\)](#)

Expanded Resource Pack (Course 7)

Reputable resources on recurring revenue, subscriptions, and retention. Each links to where to find it. Run every secular framework through a biblical filter: the customer is a person to serve faithfully over time, not a number to extract.

Books

- [Subscribed by Tien Tzuo](#) (the founder of Zuora on the subscription economy)
- [Revenue Architecture by Jacco van der Kooij, Winning by Design](#) (the Bowtie model)
- [Freemium by Dave Boyce, Winning by Design](#) (product led growth)
- [The Automatic Customer by John Warrillow](#) (building a subscription business)
- [The Membership Economy by Robbie Kellman Baxter](#) (membership and retention)
- [The Forever Transaction by Robbie Kellman Baxter](#) (lasting customer relationships)

Blogs and Publications (free, reputable)

- [Winning by Design blog and resources](#) (the Bowtie and recurring revenue frameworks)
- [Harvard Business Review on the subscription economy](#) (research and case studies)
- [a16z on SaaS and consumer metrics](#) (the standard on growth metrics)
- [Lenny's Newsletter](#) (retention, onboarding, product led growth)
- [Paddle and ProfitWell retention research](#) (churn and pricing data)

Free Online Courses and Tools (free to start)

- [Winning by Design free resources](#) (frameworks, templates, the Bowtie)
- [HubSpot Academy](#) (free courses on retention and customer success)
- [Coursera, subscription and SaaS business courses](#) (free to audit)

Watch (reputable YouTube)

- [Winning by Design](#)
 - [SaaSr](#)
 - [a16z](#)
 - [Tien Tzuo and Zuora on the subscription economy](#)
-

Devotional: Provision That Renews (a 6 Day Reading Plan)

Each day, read the verse, sit with the insight, answer the question in writing, then pray.

Day 1: New Every Morning ([Lamentations 3:22 to 23](#))

"It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." God's provision is not a one time event you have to ration for the rest of your life. It renews. Every morning there is fresh mercy, fresh supply, fresh faithfulness. That is the heart behind recurring revenue too: a steady, renewing relationship instead of one desperate windfall. As you build, ask God to make your provision and your giving steady and renewing, rooted in His faithfulness rather than the anxiety of the next sale.

Reflect: Where are you living in windfall and famine anxiety instead of trusting God's steady, renewing provision?

Prayer: Father, thank You that Your mercies renew every morning. Build steadiness into my work and my giving, rooted in Your faithfulness.

Day 2: Daily Bread ([Exodus 16:4](#))

"Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day." God could have given a year of food at once. Instead He chose daily, recurring provision, partly to keep His people in a daily relationship of trust. There is wisdom in a model that renews regularly: it keeps you close to the people you serve, and it keeps you dependent on God day by day. Recurring revenue is not just convenient, it is relational, both with your customers and with the One who provides.

Reflect: How could a recurring, ongoing relationship with your customers keep you closer to them, and to God, than chasing the next big sale?

Prayer: Lord, teach me to receive daily bread and to build work that serves people faithfully, day after day.

Day 3: The Shepherd Knows His Sheep ([John 10:14](#))

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." The good shepherd is not a hired hand who closes a deal and disappears. He knows his sheep, by name, by need, over the long haul. A recurring business rises or falls on this kind of knowing. The sale is only the middle of the story, what comes after, the keeping, the caring, the knowing, is the real work. Ask God to give you a shepherd's heart for the people you serve, so that you stay, you notice, and you keep them well.

Reflect: Do you know your customers like a shepherd, or close like a hired hand? Who have you stopped truly seeing?

Prayer: Father, give me a shepherd's heart that knows and keeps the people I serve, long after the sale.

Day 4: Enlarge the Tent ([Isaiah 54:2](#))

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes." Growth in God's economy often comes by enlarging from a strong center, not by abandoning what you have to chase something new. The most faithful growth in a recurring business is deepening your service to the people already in your tent, giving them more genuine value as their needs grow. Strengthen your stakes, keep your current customers thriving, and let the tent grow outward from there.

Reflect: Are you neglecting the customers in your tent while chasing new ones? What next value could you offer the people you already serve?

Prayer: Lord, help me strengthen what You have already given me and grow it faithfully from a strong center.

Day 5: Whither Thou Goest ([Ruth 1:16](#))

"Whither thou goest, I will go ... thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth models covenant loyalty, a faithful relationship that stays. Churn is the breaking of relationship, the customer quietly drifting away. And almost always, by the time someone leaves, the relationship was neglected long before. The cure is covenant: staying close, noticing the quiet ones, re engaging with real care before they are gone. Loyalty is built, not assumed. Ask God to help you keep covenant with the people who entrust their business to you.

Reflect: Who in your care has gone quiet, and how could you keep covenant with them this week before they drift away?

Prayer: Father, make me faithful to the people I serve, attentive to the quiet ones, loyal like Ruth.

Day 6: Taste and See ([Psalm 34:8](#))

"O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." God does not force or trick anyone into relationship. He invites, He gives first, He lets people taste His genuine goodness, and that real experience draws them in. Isaiah 55 says come and buy without money. That is the pattern of grace, and it is

the deep logic behind giving real value freely before you ever ask for payment. Let your generosity be honest, a true taste, not a tease. Give people something genuinely good, and let the goodness do the work.

Reflect: What genuinely good thing could you freely give, so people can taste real value before they ever pay, the way God invites us?

Prayer: Lord, You gave freely so we could taste Your goodness. Make me generous with real value, and let it open lasting relationships.

Instructor Notes (for Fred)

70 minute run of show: Welcome and recap (5), Teaching (15), Case study read through (15), Application built live (15), Discussion (15), Assign plus book and podcast plus prayer (5).

Tips: - This course leans on real frameworks from Winning by Design (the Bowtie in Session 2, expansion and retention in Sessions 4 and 5, and Freemium in Session 6). Teach the framework, then immediately run it through the biblical filter so it never becomes cold or extractive. - The strongest sessions for your audience are usually 1 (the relief of steady income) and 5 (why customers really leave). Give them room. - Connect this course back to Course 5, recurring revenue is what makes the generosity engine dependable, because you can finally plan and give from a steady base.

Where this leads: A business that no longer starts from zero every month, and a ministry that can give and plan with confidence because the provision renews.

Crown Revenue Academy · A ministry of Crown Revenue · "They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." Lamentations 3:23