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AN UNSCRIPTED FIELD GUIDE FROM DIGITAL CHRISTIAN COLLABORATIVE

# Get Found, Get Chosen, Get Paid

*The Christian Entrepreneur's Guide to Being Discovered in the Age of AI Search*

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## INTRODUCTION

## Get Found, Get Chosen, Get Paid

You did not start your business so you could hide. You started it because you have a gift, a craft, or a service that genuinely helps people. But here is the hard truth that keeps a lot of good, honest business owners up at night: you cannot serve the people who cannot find you. The most skilled plumber in Putnam County, the most caring counselor in Cookeville, the most reliable bookkeeper within fifty miles -- none of it matters to the customer who never discovers you exist. Visibility is not vanity. For a business owner, being findable is a form of stewardship. You have been entrusted with something valuable, and part of doing right by it is making sure the right people can actually reach it.

The way people find businesses is changing faster than at any point in my nineteen years doing SEO and digital marketing. It is not just Google anymore. Your future customers are typing questions into ChatGPT, asking Perplexity for a recommendation, and reading the AI summary that now sits at the top of a Google search before they ever click a single link. That sounds intimidating, and a lot of marketers want it to sound intimidating so they can sell you something complicated. This guide does the opposite. Drawing on real conversations from the Unscripted Small Business and Unscripted SEO podcasts, plus what I have learned in the trenches, we are going to walk through how to get found, get chosen, and get paid -- in plain language, one faithful step at a time.

*“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works.”*

— Matthew 5:14-16

## CHAPTER 1

## Chapter 1: You Can't Serve the People Who Can't Find You

Let's begin with the mission, because that is what makes all the technical stuff worth doing. Every product you sell and every service you provide is, at its heart, an answer to someone's problem. Somewhere nearby, a person is searching right now for exactly what you offer. When they cannot find you, two things happen: they stay stuck with their problem, and you miss the chance to do the work you were made to do. Getting found is not about feeding your ego. It is about closing the gap between the people who need help and the help you provide.

*“Get found, get chosen, get paid by AI.”*

— Mark Pearson, *Unscripted Small Business*

Mark Pearson framed this whole new era in five words that I have not been able to shake. The game has changed, but the goal is the same as it has always been -- connect with the customer who needs you, earn their trust, and deliver. AI search is just the newest road that leads them to your door.

Throughout this guide, hold onto that frame. We are not chasing rankings for the sake of rankings or gaming a system to feel clever. We are removing the obstacles between a real person and the real help you can offer. That is honest work, and it is worth doing well.

## CHAPTER 2

## Chapter 2: AI Search Is Not SEO 2.0

Here is the single biggest mistake I see business owners make right now: they assume that showing up in ChatGPT or Perplexity is just regular SEO with a new coat of paint. It is not. The old game was about ranking a page for a keyword. The new game is about being a trusted source that an AI is willing to repeat to a real human being who asked it a question. Those are related, but they are not the same, and treating them as identical will quietly cost you.

*“AI search is not SEO 2.0. If you keep treating it like just keywords and rankings, you'll get keywords and rankings -- in Google. If you're trying to show up in ChatGPT and Claude and Perplexity, you're not going to see it.”*

— Brittany Trafis, *Unscripted SEO*

Brittany Trafis put it more bluntly than I ever could on *Unscripted SEO*, and she is right. If you keep optimizing for blue links and rankings, you will get blue links and rankings -- in Google. That is fine,

but it is not where a growing share of your customers are looking. They are asking an assistant for a recommendation and acting on the answer.

The encouraging part is that this shift is not a threat to small businesses. It is one of the biggest openings you will get in your lifetime. Brittany also pointed out that AI search put everyone back at the same starting line, and that small businesses can move faster than the big, slow organizations they compete with. You do not need a giant budget. You need to understand the new rules and start before your competitors do.

## CHAPTER 3

### Chapter 3: Your Website Is the Hub of Everything

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Before you chase a single shiny new tactic, you have to get your foundation right, and your foundation is your website. Think of it as the hub of a wheel. Every spoke -- your social media, your reviews, your podcast appearances, your AI citations -- ultimately points people back to that hub. If the hub is weak, every spoke is pulling people toward a disappointment.

*“The website is the center of all your marketing. If that piece sucks, it doesn't really matter. Anything else you do is also terrible.”*

— Tom Malesic, *Unscripted SEO*

Tom Malesic said it as plainly as anyone has on *Unscripted SEO*, and after nineteen years I could not agree more. You can run ads, post daily, and show up everywhere, but if the website you send people to is broken, slow, or confusing, all that effort leaks away. Fix the center first.

Tom also gave the best, most practical writing advice I know for this new era. You used to need to satisfy three readers: the scanner who only reads the headings, the careful reader who reads every word, and Google, which wants to understand everything on the page. Now there is a fourth reader at the table -- the AI. Write clear headings, answer real questions directly, and structure your pages so a machine can read and quote you as easily as a busy human can skim you. Do that, and you serve all four at once.

## CHAPTER 4

### Chapter 4: Authority Is What Others Say About You

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Now we get to the heart of how you actually win in AI search, and it requires a little humility. The AI does not trust you because you say you are great. It trusts you because other credible places say you are great. Authority is built off your own website, not on it. This is, frankly, a very biblical idea -- let your work speak, and let others sing your praises rather than singing them yourself.

*“Authority is what third parties say about you -- not what you say about yourself. You can publish all the content you want, but if no one else is talking about you, the AI doesn't care.”*

— Jason Wade, *Unscripted SEO*

Jason Wade said it with the kind of clarity that sticks, and it should reshape how you spend your marketing energy. You can publish the most beautiful website in the world, but if no one else in your industry, your town, or your niche is mentioning you, the AI has no outside evidence that you matter. Mentions, citations, reviews, and references from other sites are the raw material the machine uses to decide whether to recommend you.

Mark Pearson described the mechanism behind this in a way that demystifies the whole thing. These AI systems are constantly crawling the web on our behalf, gathering evidence about who is credible. The more places your business shows up and gets cited, the more the AI builds confidence in you, and the more readily it recommends you to the actual humans who are asking. Your job is to give it plenty of honest evidence to find.

## CHAPTER 5

### Chapter 5: Get Cited -- Become a Source AI Trusts

If authority is the goal, citations are the currency. A citation is simply a mention of your business somewhere credible -- a local news mention, an industry directory, a guest article, a quote in someone else's content, a profile on a platform people trust. Every one of these is a breadcrumb the AI follows back to you, and each one adds a little weight to your credibility.

*“The key to all of this, especially to get cited, is to cite your sources. To point to Google, this is where I got this information.”*

— Drew Dorenfest, *Unscripted SEO*

Here is a counterintuitive move that pays off: cite your own sources, generously and visibly. Drew Dorenfest made this point on *Unscripted SEO*, and it is one of the most underused tactics I know. When you link out to where you got your information, you signal to both Google and the AI that your content is grounded in real, verifiable facts -- which makes them far more comfortable citing you in return. Trustworthy people show their work.

There is a related debate worth settling in your mind so you do not waste money. For years, marketers obsessed over third-party link scores. Bradley Benner cut through that noise on *Unscripted*

SEO, and he is correct. A link or a mention is valuable when it is genuinely relevant to what you do and who you serve -- a real connection between your business and a related, credible source. Chase relevance, not vanity metrics, and you will build the kind of authority that actually moves the needle.

## CHAPTER 6

### Chapter 6: Show Up Locally and Get Found 'Near Me'

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For most of the businesses I work with, the gold is local. People in your own community are searching for what you do, often with the words 'near me' attached, and the data here is staggering. Roughly 46 percent of all Google searches have local intent, and three out of four people who run a 'near me' search visit a related business within a day. These are not browsers. They are buyers with their shoes already on.

*“Recency in general is really, really good for AI to build up that trust factor.”*

— Mark Pearson, *Unscripted Small Business*

What is new is that these local searches increasingly happen through AI. About 45 percent of consumers now use ChatGPT or other generative AI tools to get local business recommendations. That means your Google Business Profile, your accurate name-address-phone information across the web, your reviews, and your local mentions are not just feeding Google anymore -- they are feeding the AI that a neighbor is asking for advice. Claim your profile, keep every listing consistent, and make it effortless for a machine to confirm you are real, nearby, and trusted.

Mark Pearson added a detail here that trips a lot of people up, and it is good news for the diligent. Freshness counts. An abandoned profile and a website that has not been touched in two years send a quiet signal of neglect. A steady drip of recent activity -- new posts, fresh reviews, updated information -- tells the AI you are active, present, and worthy of being recommended right now.

## CHAPTER 7

### Chapter 7: Reviews, Reputation, and the Podcast Shortcut

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Two of the fastest ways to build the off-site authority we have been talking about are reviews and podcasts. Start with reviews, because they are pure gold and most owners under-collect them. Around 93 percent of consumers read online reviews before choosing a local business, and AI systems read them too -- mining them to understand what you are good at and whether to recommend you. Ask every happy customer, make it easy, and respond with grace to the occasional hard one. Your reputation is being read by both humans and machines.

*“In the last six months of going from zero to 100 on SEO, I’ve learned that doing stuff right, you don’t see for a very long time and you just have to have faith. But when you do something wrong, you see it real fast.”*

— Mark Gilliland, *Unscripted Small Business*

The second shortcut surprises people, but I have watched it work again and again. Guesting on podcasts is one of the quickest ways to plant your name across the credible web. Jason Wade explained exactly why it works so well, and the speed of it is remarkable. A single good podcast appearance creates a web page, a Spotify listing, show notes, and a cluster of mentions -- all of it fresh citations and entity signals the AI picks up in a hurry. It is authority-building you can do in an afternoon of generous conversation.

Finally, be patient, because authority compounds. SEO works like a flywheel, not a light switch. Mark Gilliland captured the emotional reality of this on *Unscripted Small Business* better than any chart could. The right work is slow to show fruit and asks for faith, while the wrong moves announce themselves quickly. Keep doing the right things, keep showing up, and let the flywheel build the momentum that one big push never could.

## CHAPTER 8

### Chapter 8: Build the Flywheel and Keep Faith

Let’s bring it all together. Get your website -- the hub -- clear, fast, and structured so humans and AI can both understand it. Then build authority off-site through honest reviews, relevant citations, local consistency, and the occasional podcast appearance. Keep it fresh. Do that consistently, and you create a flywheel: each citation makes the next recommendation easier, each review strengthens the next search, each fresh page adds to your standing. Get found, get chosen, get paid -- in that order, and on a foundation that holds.

*“These AI agents are out there crawling the web for us -- the more places your business gets seen and cited, the more the AI builds up that credibility and recommends you to their humans.”*

— Mark Pearson, *Unscripted Small Business*

Mark Pearson described the engine that powers all of this, and it is worth sitting with one more time. You are not trying to trick anyone. You are giving the web honest evidence of good work, and trusting that as that evidence accumulates, the AI will do what it is designed to do -- point people who need help toward the person best able to provide it.

None of this requires you to become a tech expert or to abandon your real work to chase algorithms. It requires consistency, integrity, and a little patience. Plant the seeds, water faithfully, and trust that the growth comes in its season. The business you have been entrusted with deserves to be found -- so that the people you were meant to serve finally can.

## PUT IT TO WORK

## Your Action Steps

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- Audit your website first. Make sure it loads fast, clearly states what you do and who you serve, and uses plain headings that answer the real questions customers ask -- so humans and AI can both read it.
- Claim and complete your Google Business Profile, then make sure your name, address, and phone number are identical everywhere you appear online so AI can confirm you are real and local.
- Build a simple, ongoing review habit. Ask every satisfied customer for a review, make it one-click easy, and respond to all of them with grace.
- Earn relevant citations, not vanity links. Pursue mentions from sources genuinely connected to your industry or community, and cite your own sources to signal trustworthiness.
- Book at least one podcast guest appearance this quarter. It creates fast, fresh citations and entity signals across the web that AI tools pick up quickly.
- Keep it fresh and keep the faith. Post, update, and add reviews regularly, and treat SEO as a compounding flywheel -- the right work is slow to show fruit, so stay consistent.

### Keep Going With Digital Christian Collaborative

You do not have to figure this out alone. Digital Christian Collaborative exists to help Christian entrepreneurs in Cookeville and beyond do exactly this kind of faithful, practical work together. We host free group training sessions where we walk through these steps in plain language, answer your real questions, and cheer each other on. Come learn alongside people who share your values and your drive to serve well.

If you would like a focused, one-on-one starting point, Jeremy Rivera offers a 30-minute foundational consulting session for \$100 to look at your specific situation and map out your next few moves. No pressure and no jargon -- just nineteen years of experience pointed straight at your business. Whichever path fits you, the goal is the same: to help you get found, so that the people you were made to serve can finally find you. Visit [digitalchristiancollaborative.com](https://digitalchristiancollaborative.com) to take the next step.

Free group training in Cookeville • 1-on-1 with Jeremy (\$100/30 min) • [digitalchristiancollaborative.com](https://digitalchristiancollaborative.com)

### RESEARCH & SOURCES

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DemandSage — ChatGPT surpassed 900 million weekly active users as of February 2026, more than doubling year over year, signaling mainstream adoption of AI search assistants.

<https://www.demandsage.com/chatgpt-statistics/>

MarketingLTB Local SEO Statistics 2025 — About 45% of consumers now use ChatGPT or other generative AI tools to get local business recommendations.

<https://marketingltb.com/blog/statistics/local-seo-statistics/>

BrightLocal — Roughly 46% of all Google searches have local intent, and 76% of people who run a 'near me' search visit a related business within a day.

<https://www.brightlocal.com/resources/local-seo-statistics/>

BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey — About 93% of consumers read online reviews before choosing a local business, and reviews increasingly inform AI recommendations.

<https://www.brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey/>