



## Episode 96: Pastoring MarketPlace Professionals Part 2

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Pete Sanchez & Robert Cortes

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### Transcript:

Mingo Palacios:

Hey, welcome to the PD Podcast. This is Part 2 in a conversation with some marketplace leaders specific to what it looks like to be involved in and members of local ministry. If you haven't listened to Part 1, you've got to go back and listen there. There's a disclaimer on that episode. It's so valuable that you understand that these are the people that God is using and working uniquely in the lives of – and it may not translate to you; you may not understand them at first.

But it's so valuable to hear their stories, because I think in understanding their stories, you'll understand best where to meet them and how to use your personal walk with Jesus to deliver things like hope, perspective, and to articulate purpose in a way that maybe might be the one thing that gets them to understand that God has gifted them in a unique way that serves a purpose in the larger Kingdom. I hope you listen to the convo, I hope you get something

great out of it, and I hope you share it with somebody. Thanks for listening.

Robert Cortes:

Went from that to losing millions in a restaurant endeavor with a celebrity to losing money in the stock market when the crash happened. I just kept going. I was just driven to be successful, because at an early age I was taught that you need to be successful and you need to own your own business so you can own your own time. I had one button, “go.”

Mingo Palacios:

You said the one thing you lacked was a mentor?

Robert Cortes:

I didn't have mentorship. I was trying to do it all on my own. It was just brutal to learn it the hard way, but I did learn a lot from that. The head came to the point where I got married 8 years ago and another business, a potential restaurant fell apart, the deal. The stock market crashed. I lost a lot of money, a lot of cash. It put our marriage in a really tough spot. Right out of the gate, literally Month 3 of our marriage, we were hitting walls.

Finally, a couple years pass, our marriage increases and grows. It becomes a really great marriage, and it still is. I love her more every year, actually. It seems to grow and grow. I love talking about my wife. I won't go too far down the rabbit trail on my wife.

Mingo Palacios:

Hashtag loving husband.

Robert Cortes:

That's why my Wi-Fi connection says “happy wife, happy life” in the house. [laughs]

Mingo Palacios:

Happy spouse, happy house is more gender appropriate.

Robert Cortes:

I like that. Maybe I should try that.

So the crossroads was, in 2013-ish, I had lost everything. I needed a job. I'm bartending downtown at that Chinese restaurant – I can't remember the name of it. Anyway, it was Panda Inn, but it was their dining version. I got a connection through the guy who grew the entire billion dollar chain, a friendship to another friendship, celebrity friendship. He's like,

“Yeah, I’ll hire you. You’ve owned restaurants before. I’m sure you can bartend.” [laughs]

So I served and I bartended. I picked up hot plates of soup. I was the guy carrying the big old tray of hot soups, and all these Asian people, and I’m the only big Cuban-American guy. I was showing them the ropes. I was like, “I can roll wontons in front of the table. I can do all this cool stuff.” I just decided that, like Pete, I’ll do whatever it takes to take care of my family. I think we’re all like that in that way.

Mingo Palacios:

There’s an appetite that exists inside of the business owner that I imagine most pastors pray that everybody has at their church – a desire to see something accomplished. Not just a consumer, but a contributor. Not just a taker, but a partaker.

Robert Cortes:

The last, where it really hit me hard, was I came home – after the bartending, I was of the mindset I’ve got to move up, I’ve got to level up. So I started putting my resume out to be a general manager for a restaurant. I was like, “I owned a major celebrity restaurant, did everything, cooked. I’ll just start from the bottom. Whatever.” I went right back up to general manager. That restaurant, I turned it around in a year and a half.

The problem was the owner one day called me and said, “Hey, we’re closing the restaurant.” I’m like, “It’s in the black. Are you kidding me? We’re starting to turn this thing around.” “I haven’t been paying the full rent for over a year since you came onboard. I was hoping that we would turn around so much so that it could pay back rent for a year.” I’m like, “Are you crazy?”

He’s like, “You can work and help me move the furniture out and clean the place and sell it and get rid of stuff, and I’ll keep paying you for another 30 days.” I’m like, “Okay, I’ll do it,” because I was willing to do anything.

So I came home depressed. I remember I was telling my wife, “I don’t know what’s going on and why I can’t” – there was no traction. Like, why am I not able to get back to where I was? What happened?

I had been thinking about Impact 195 for some time, because my wife – God bless her soul, she is the reason why I’m the man I am today. One of our marriage agreements was one Bible study together and going to church together. She’s very effective that way, keeps me focused, because I’ll meander. She’ll herd me back to where I need to go. [laughs]

I remember her distinctly saying to me – because I was depressed, I was upset when I got home that few weeks, and I said, “I don’t know what to do.” She said something really profound. She said, “Just because you’re good at something, doesn’t necessarily mean that’s what God wants you to be doing with your life.” That blew me away. She goes, “You’ve been thinking about Impact. You never had the time, but in the past you had the money. Now we don’t have the money, but you have the time. Best time to do it is now.” She just encouraged me.

Mingo Palacios:

She sold you, bro. She got you in.

Robert Cortes:

She sold me. At that moment, Jeff Doria, who we all know, in my Facebook notification it popped up that he became the administrator/admissions director for Impact 195. I’m like, “Okay, that’s God. I’m going.” So I signed up, I did whatever I had to do, went through the interview process.

I didn’t have the money to do this program, but my wife being the amazing woman that she is, they teach you how to ask for stuff – because I couldn’t humble myself. I had to humble myself to ask people for help. I remember I got home and my wife’s like – wow, I can still feel it. I’m just feeling the love that I have from my wife. She actually called everybody in her family and she said, “Robert wants to go to this amazing school. He wants to change his life. He wants to know God.” So all of them, all four sisters, mom and dad, some uncles, they’re like, “We want to help him. We want to donate to him going to Impact. But we want to hear from him why he wants to go.”

I’m like, I’ve got to call and explain why I want to go. So I made the phone calls, and they all donated. It came up to maybe a third of it, and then when I went

to the first day of Impact, or the second or third day, some anonymous donations came in, and that was two-thirds. Then I did the ultimate bad boy thing: I opened up a credit card and paid the balance off. [laughs]

Mingo Palacios:

Rick did that to start the church, so you're not alone.

Robert Cortes:

All right, good. [laughter]

The reason why I get emotional is because that was the pivotal point in my life where God came through. I mean, God came through in other situations where I had those encounters with Him, where I knew He was real and I knew and believed, but that moment just threw me for a loop.

Then through that process of going to Impact, I knew I was at the right place, I knew I was going to learn my purpose. I got to the point where I even thought to myself, "I don't even care about business. You know what? I'll be a janitor at the fricking church, and if that's what you want, God, I will do that." I was totally open to that. I totally in my heart was like, "Whatever you want, I will do." So that's where I landed with you.

Mingo Palacios:

I hear a common denominator between both of those stories. Despite your successes, you both found yourself at a rock bottom point. That may be the pivotal space that a leader needs to know, they need to find themselves at. You need to be in a place where somebody can be rock bottom, and the first hand they shake is yours as a ministry leader.

That means some ministry leaders are going to have to hang out at the bar more, probably, because that's where a business leader is going to find themselves if they're at rock bottom. Or they're going to wander into church because whoever they're trusting their life with – in Robert's case, it was his wife – somebody else is going to say, "Hey, maybe church." Like you said, Pete, it was your friend who said, "Let's go."

So what do we do? What does a pastor do having the kind of caliber of individuals in their flock – how have

you been ministered to in a way that a pastor might be able to minister to somebody else?

Pete Sanchez:

I've seen both sides of the spectrum. I've seen where a pastor sees the potential in me and he's like, "I'm going to put my arms around this guy for a whole year and I'm just going to pour into him," and that's what happened to me.

I've also seen the other side, where I didn't get chosen to lead let's say a small group and it was in my heart. I was like, "but God's given me a heart and I'm in the right mindset to disciple people." I'm like, you know what? I'm going to listen to God here on this one. I ended up doing my own small group, and 90% of the room was people that don't go to church, that don't really know the concept of God. We saw so many breakthroughs. I was just like, wow, Lord, thank you so much that I stepped out in faith here and I trusted you and I didn't let some man tell me that "maybe you're not ready."

So you want to be very careful how you approach the business owner. Let us run wild, in a sense. I would say get that person disciplined first and then oversee what he's going to do, but you've got to let us run wild. We have that apostle mindset. We have so many ideas and so many things, and we're hungry.

The key word is we're so hungry. Sometimes I wake up at 4:00 in the morning because the Lord wakes me up and He's like, "All right, you're ready to go. Get in the Word." I just get downloads, like boom. It just makes a big difference of how I'm going to approach the phone calls that I do. I'm going to show up more loving, with the mindset of "how can I reach more people for you, Lord?"

Mingo Palacios:

Does it help when a leader says, "Hey, I've got this idea," share the vision, "Can you help me add to it? Can you help me manage it?" Or do you come from the perspective or the posture where you'd rather have the space to articulate where you see the gap, and then you get to determine what the next potential step or ministry might be? Which do you prefer?

Pete Sanchez:

I think as a man, we all love to be affirmed and acknowledged. Anybody does. So when a pastor comes up to us, especially because we look up to the pastors – we're like "oh man, I love this guy" – so if they come up to us and say, "Hey, I've got this project, and God has gifted you with all these gifts," we light up. We literally light up and we're like "Oh my gosh, thank you so much."

Just like what you were telling me earlier about the DVOs and stuff like that. I was like, oh my gosh, yes, that's awesome. Let's take this all over the world. Pastors have got to be able to recognize that yes, we're business owners and our businesses make a profit, but when you get somebody who's really all about Jesus, man, we want to go all over the world. Like, I'm ready to go. Let's go share with everybody and steward our influence and our money to reach more people for His Kingdom.

Mingo Palacios:

I've got a question, only because as pastor, I watched the first people that Jesus called to ministry, business owners – he calls the fishermen out of their fishing company and he says, "Come follow me. I'll make you become network marketers of men." That's what he says. In your case, Pete, that's what he would say. For Robert, he'd say "I'm going to make you a restaurateur for souls."

In that exchange, do you believe – I'm not going to put the word into your – I have a thought about it, but what has that spoken to you specifically as a business owner? When Jesus goes after his first disciples, it makes me wonder where we as pastors should be inclining our first discipling efforts. It was to people who had a hunger and a desire and a gusto to accomplish something in their own right. He called well-to-do business owners and he said, "Stop doing your business. Come follow me." There was a call to pivot. What does that mean to you on the receiving end as a business owner?

Pete Sanchez:

It's to change our mental paradigm from going out there and creating wealth in all these businesses to going out there and making disciples.

Mingo Palacios: Robert, do you ever sit on that and just think that could've been you?

Robert Cortes: Yeah. [laughter] Definitely could've been, I think. But I believe that I ran into different situations – because I had never been in the church before, other than my encounters at a small church.

Mingo Palacios: The “CEO,” right? Christmas/Easters Only.

Robert Cortes: Yeah. So when I met my wife, it changed me because she saw the potential, and I wanted to date her. She's like, “You need to go to church with me. Find a church” – because I don't have a church; I just moved here – “You're welcome to date me by going to a church service.” [laughs]

So I ended up courting her, going to every single church in San Diego to find a church, and then in the midst of falling in love with her and marrying her, and then having all this failure – big failures, big successes, finding Jesus, to the point where I came across some weird things where it was like, “if you belong to a church, that's where you need to stay forever.” Or “you've got to give up everything, you can't have everything,” because certain leaders would say certain things or behaviors. And they're just doing the best they can, and we're just trying to interpret our walk with Jesus.

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