

# Carman Searches for Meaning in Cancer Diagnosis

When doctors [diagnosed Carman with cancer](#) in February, the artistic evangelist said time stood still. Everything turned white, like a big flashlight was shining in his eyes.

After he went home with news that he had myeloma (an incurable form of cancer) and just a few years to live, Carman turned to soul searching.

“As a minister and as a Christian, I started to look over the past 12 years of my life. I tried to see some sort of a pattern and how this cancer fits into the pattern and what it means,” says Carman, who is known for his devil-provoking songs like “Satan,” “Bite the Dust” and “Courtroom.”

“An artist has a peak, and then they move on and go into other art. It happens with every artist or actor or creator or writer. You just have that time zone and it seems like my time had come to a peak in the year 2000,” he shares. “After that it was a time to redefine. The invitations slowed down and there were no more albums coming out. And you start to feel like, well, am I just being dialed out? Am I getting fired from the thing I loved the most?”

With so many emotions rolling through his soul, Carman thought to himself, “Wow, is this how it ends?” The transparent minister admits it’s difficult to be the man of faith, waving the Jesus banner, when you get hit with a terminal cancer diagnosis.

“Ministry begins with a vision, but as people get old, life changes—that’s the hardest thing for any ministry because you start off supernaturally but you end naturally,” Carman says. “That’s what I was thinking.”

Of course, Carman soon determined in his heart to fight. His conclusion: The devil has messed with the wrong Italian!

*Stay tuned for the next installment from Charisma News' exclusive interview with Carman, where he discusses why he decided to go public with his diagnosis just a few days after doctors gave him the news.*

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## **Word of Faith, Kingdom Now, Missional ... Your View Changes How You See Scripture**

When I was a new Christian, I naively thought that everyone read the Bible the same way, with virtually one interpretation that all born-again Christians would have. One of the biggest shocks I experienced occurred about six months into my walk with God, when I met a fundamentalist Baptist preacher who was trying to convince me that all Pentecostals were being misled by the devil!

In the years since my conversion, I have been greatly impacted by the power that our paradigms or perspectives have in regard to how we read the Scriptures, why we read the Scriptures, and how we interpret the Scriptures.

For example, if someone reads the Bible from the perspective of just wanting to have a blessed personal life, they will overemphasize everything in the Word regarding God's blessing, and apply it to themselves. But, they may skip over some of the conditions of those blessings and vice versa.

If a person reads a book like *Radical* by David Platt, they can

easily be moved from a prosperity paradigm or individual paradigm to a mission/discipleship-focused paradigm that emphasizes surrendering all for the urgency of making disciples, just like the original apostles did in the Gospels when they left all to follow Jesus. But those with a kingdom paradigm (like myself) will filter the great teachings of Platt's book so that they fit with the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28, which can result in a contemporary application of getting a good education, developing our creativity and making disciples of marketplace leaders by infiltrating the systems and institutions of this world (which I am sure the author would also make allowances for).

This can fit nicely with the Pauline epistles, which seem to advocate a quiet and slow personal and cultural revolution, in and through the mundane in our lives, as we do everything unto the Lord (see Colossians 3:17; Ephesians 5); not just radical experiences like selling all we have and moving to an unreached people group to preach the gospel.

**The following are some of my opinions regarding 10 perspectives and their resulting interpretations:**

### **1. The Word of Faith Perspective**

Those who have been taught in the tradition of Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland and others in the Word of Faith movement (which started in the 1950s and gained great popularity in the 1970's) read everything in Scripture with the lens of using their faith to access God's promises, and Christ's finished work on Calvary to receive divine healing and prosperity. Because of this, they usually do not study much of the Old Testament, except when they refer to passages regarding healing in the Pentateuch (e.g. Ex. 23:25, Psalm 103:1-5, and Prov. 4:22). They read the New Testament to see who they are or what they have "in Christ." Thus, it is an individualistic, rights-centered approach to Scripture that is very weak on the corporate nature of vision, purpose and prosperity. Also, this perspective lacks a biblical worldview when it comes to the

application of the Old Testament law of God to civil society.

In spite of its weaknesses, this perspective can still be effective when it comes to learning how to believe God for the miraculous!

## **2. The Liberation Perspective**

Liberation theologians and their adherents emphasize the suffering of Christ because they read the Scriptures generally through the lens of class warfare, prejudice and victimology. Thus, the sufferings and cross of Christ (who was crucified by the majority culture) become a model for all suffering, oppressed people who believe Jesus has come primarily to give them economic and political liberty from their oppressors.

The challenge regarding this view is its potential to reduce Christology to anthropology and Christianity to a mere geopolitical/economic liberation movement.

## **3. The Perspective of Self-Empowerment**

In the past two decades, we have seen the incredible rise of motivational speakers (e.g. Tony Robbins). Many preachers have used this perspective in their preaching. The result is that many sermons are based on the practical issues of the Bible related to hard work, faith, focus, understanding our unique gifts and calling and how we are made in the image of God to do great works like God. The challenge with this perspective is the lack of balance: proponents often do not balance their message with other passages related to Jesus' teachings on self-denial, suffering, taking up the cross, and forsaking everything to follow Him. Scripture teaches us that before we can save our lives, we have to lose them (see Mark 8:35). Also, the emphasis in Scripture on long-lasting blessing is tied to personal transformation through holiness, humility and dependence on God—not self-empowerment through confidence in our own natural abilities, even if they are given by God.

## **4. The Pietistic Perspective**

The perspective of the pietist lends itself to searching the Scriptures primarily to bring inner transformation and a personal closeness to Christ. Holiness, walking in the Spirit, hearing the voice of the Lord and denying ourselves are all emphasized, which is great—and all true, and absolutely necessary.

The weakness of this perspective is that believers can become so contemplative and self-focused on their own emotional and spiritual transformation that they can neglect the proper emphasis Christ gave us when He called us to go to all the world to preach the gospel (see Mark 16:15-18), and transform culture as salt and light (see Matt. 5:13-16).

### **5. The Evangelistic Missional Perspective**

This perspective is all about winning souls and making disciples. Anything done by a church or believer that does not directly lead to converting and maturing people in Christ is jettisoned or viewed as unnecessary and lukewarm.

The weakness of this view is its tendency to be one-generational and not practical enough for the everyday lives of growing families. Also, it is not always conducive for those who have a long-term goal of producing wealth for the kingdom, and who want to put their children through the best universities for cultural credibility and access. There is also a possible lack of emphasis in regard to empowering influential marketplace leaders called to infiltrate the systems of the world (e.g. like the prophet Daniel).

### **6. The Reformed Perspective**

Those trained in the Reformed system of interpretation will read the Bible deductively through the lens of the sovereignty of God. Although I resonate much with this system, I have also seen some go to extremes and become passive in regard to fasting and prayer related to winning souls, and extending God's mission and kingdom on the earth, since some proponents of this perspective de-emphasize human responsibility more

than Scripture does.

## **7. The Free Will Perspective**

On the opposite extreme from the Reformed (Calvinist) perspective is a free-will (Arminian) perspective that over-emphasizes human responsibility to the extent that God's sovereignty is sometimes compromised. This leads to superficially interpreting difficult passages regarding divine calling and election (e.g. Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4) by replacing predestination with foreknowledge (Calvinists don't really separate the two), so that God chooses someone based on Him already knowing that person would (of their own free choice) choose Him in the first place.

Also, an over-emphasis on free will leads to process theology and open theism, which teaches that God doesn't really know everything in the future because much of it is unknowable! This extreme emphasis on free will makes it very hard to trust in the relevance of Scripture since, if God is still learning and growing as the future unfolds, it makes it extremely difficult to have a biblical worldview in economics, science, politics, law, ethics, morality, family and sexual orientation because of the inability to have trans-historical universal principles that we can trust! Also, if God is not sovereign, then humankind is semi-autonomous—which historically has flung open the doors to liberalism.

## **8. The Kingdom Perspective**

The kingdom perspective interprets much of Scripture and biblical themes as emanating out of the original cultural commission as found in Genesis 1:27-28. The primary theme of the New Testament is not the church, soul-winning or even discipleship; it is the kingdom of God, which is the rule of God over all creation. This perspective motivates people to understand the sacred calling they have in regard to stewarding their God-given gifts and abilities, to serve with excellence in the marketplace.

Discipleship in this perspective does not just involve the teaching of individual sinners, but the discipleship of whole nations in accordance with their interpretation of Matthew 28:19. They believe that the gospel is holistic and should not only redeem sinners but also transform the systems of culture (politics, economics, art, law, ethics, music, family, education, science, etc.)

The challenge for this perspective is the tendency to think we are doing God's kingdom work just by improving the quality of life in our communities, even if we are not winning souls and making disciples.

### **9. The Individualistic Perspective**

This is a common perspective that can arise out of our national culture (e.g. rugged American individualism as personified in our iconic action heroes like John Wayne and Rambo).

The weakness of this perspective is that much of the Bible was written either to the nation of Israel (Old Testament) or the Body of Christ (New Testament). Thus, we cannot fulfill our destiny and accomplish our mission in life merely by ourselves; we need to submit to a local church, and function in the corporate context of Scripture if we want to reap the fullness of the blessings of the promises of Scripture.

### **10. The Ecclesial Perspective**

Those with this perspective think that the church is the kingdom of God; that we are not called to infiltrate and disciple the nations of the world with the gospel, but that we are to focus on building our own subcultures within our congregations. Those with this view have a great understanding of the corporate nature of Scripture. But many in this camp fail to understand how the church should be sent into the world as salt and light.

In this view, the church is to function as heaven on

earth—which I agree with. But I believe they fail to understand the breadth of the mission of the church to bring God’s kingdom and will *on earth* as it is in heaven (see Luke 11:2-4).

In conclusion, there are many more perspectives I could have mentioned. For the sake of time, I have only mentioned ten of the main perspectives I have seen influencing the people of God today in the global church.

As stated earlier, these are only based on my observations and, because of this, they are limited by my own perspective and experience. I also realize that articles of this sort merely paint pictures with a broad brush and miss the nuances and overlap of many of these perspectives.

My prayer is that we will try to be more open in regard to the interpretive system we bring to the table, based on our perspectives, and that we ask God to help us see what ways we may be limiting our capacity to interpret the Word, based on the biblical authors’ original intent as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

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# Gay Marriage Advocates Lose by Winning

Homosexual activists achieved historic gains in the November 2012 election in the states of Washington, Maine and Maryland. These three notoriously liberal states passed laws extending marriage benefits to homosexual relationships by four to six percentage points. But will these legal victories ultimately deny them the sweeping Supreme Court decision they long for?

Judge Robert Jones of a federal court in Nevada has laid the groundwork for such a conclusion. In his ruling on a lawsuit which sought to overturn Nevada's ban on gay marriage, Jones wrote that the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) lobby's success in advancing its agenda means that it does not need help from the courts: "It simply cannot be seriously maintained, in light of these and other recent democratic victories, that homosexuals do not have the ability to protect themselves from discrimination through democratic processes such that extraordinary protection from majoritarian processes is appropriate."

In 1997, the General Accounting Office found that there were 1,049 references to "marriage" in federal law. Since then, homosexual activists and their friends in the media have referred to the "thousand federal benefits of marriage" as evidence that marriage must be redefined to include homosexual couples. But what exactly are these benefits homosexual couples are so eager to enjoy?

Unsurprisingly, a closer look at the relevant laws reveals that some of these "benefits" might be more accurately described as "liabilities" or "obligations." The most obvious example would be the cost in time and money of divorce. Ultimately, what homosexual activists want is state-mandated approval of their lifestyle. And waiting in the wings,

polygamists and polyamorists want the abolition of the traditional family altogether.

The Supreme Court's recent decision to hear *Hollingsworth v. Perry* and *U.S. v. Windsor* has come at a critical time for traditional marriage advocates. *Hollingsworth* is a challenge to California's Proposition 8 (which defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman), and *Windsor* is a challenge to President Bill Clinton's Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Both will be heard and ruled on before the current court's recess in June 2013, and, barring catastrophe, before President Obama has had a chance to appoint any more Supreme Court Justices.

The current court is headed by Chief Justice John Roberts. Four of the justices are now in their seventies: liberals Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Stephen Breyer, conservative Antonin Scalia and the unpredictable Anthony Kennedy. The likely retirement of Ginsberg (and subsequent presidential appointment) would not change the balance of the court, but the possible retirement of Kennedy might.

Naturally advocates on both sides of the marriage argument are scrambling to influence the court. Even long time observers are hesitant to predict an outcome, but all eyes are on Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Kennedy. Kennedy wrote two of the Court's most important recent decisions on related matters: *Romer v. Evans* (1996), where he affirmed the designation of "sexual orientation" as a protected class of people, and *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), the decision which struck down the last of the nation's sodomy laws. However, Kennedy clarified in his *Lawrence* decision that the Court was not addressing the issue of homosexual "marriage."

The present case does not involve minors. It does not involve persons who might be injured or coerced or who are situated in relationships where consent might not easily be refused. It does not involve public conduct or prostitution. It does not involve whether the government must give formal recognition to

any relationship that homosexual persons seek to enter.

Much of the weight will be on Chief Justice Roberts' shoulders. Some critics felt he succumbed to political pressure when the Court ruled on the constitutionality of President Obama's healthcare plan, affirming the package by citing an argument that its proponents never made: that Obamacare was in fact a tax, and therefore constitutional.

Much will rest on how Justice Roberts views the issue in the grand scheme of things. Does he see same-sex marriage as inevitable? He might then see himself as the preserver of the Court's credibility, and craft an opinion for it. Or does he see traditional marriage as a transcendent institution, larger than both the Court and the State itself? Then he might see himself as the preserver of timeless truths and the protector of an established practice which must weather cultural fads for our society to survive.

Whatever the Court decides in June 2013, the arguments will continue. May traditional marriage advocates hold their ground and make their arguments well. And in the words of the invocation that opens every Supreme Court session, "God save the United States and this honorable court."

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# Marriage: A Supreme Test of Rights

From the very beginning, homosexual “marriage” activists have sought to hijack not only the moral authority of the Civil Rights Movement, but also the legal arguments which liberated minorities from centuries of legalized oppression and discrimination.

After decades of aggressive activism, the common sense understanding of marriage has become almost hopelessly mired in incomprehensible legal terminology. It becomes difficult for everyday observers to navigate the convoluted logic homosexual activists employ as they attempt to remake one of civilization’s oldest institutions. The argument that redefining marriage to include homosexual couples is only “fair” rests on a specious interpretation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The clause reads as follows:

No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

As most of us know, the Fourteenth Amendment was enacted just before the end of the Civil War in response to the Black Codes of the South. The Black Codes were various state laws which, among other things, prevented blacks from owning property and imposed harsher penalties for crimes on blacks than on whites. The Fourteenth Amendment clarified that these laws were unconstitutional, and that the government was obligated to protect the rights of all citizens equally.

So what about the “right” to marry? Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and

Transgender (LGBT) activists argue that the state is abridging their privileges, often citing Chief Justice Earl Warren's words in *Loving v. Virginia*, the 1967 decision that overturned state bans on interracial marriage: "The freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men."

I agree with Justice Warren that marriage is a central ingredient in the pursuit of happiness. I disagree with LGBT activists about what "marriage" is. And it is very hard to have a reasonable or productive discussion when the two sides cannot agree on the definition of a central term. You and I may agree that it should be legal to walk a dog in a particular public park. But you may think that the term "dog" includes only domesticated members of the *Canis lupus familiaris* species, and I may think that the term "dog" can include large gray wolves. You may argue that "dog" should be defined by the laws and traditions that have governed dog ownership for generations, and I may feel that such an approach is unfair to people who want to walk wolves in the park. The point is that we cannot get anywhere until we agree on what a "dog" is.

Homosexuals are not being denied "marriage" rights any more than wolf enthusiasts are being denied dog-ownership rights. Last November, a federal appeals court in Nevada pointed out homosexuals are not, in fact, being denied the right to marry, as the term "marriage" has been long understood. A lesbian couple had sued the state, seeking to overturn Nevada's ban on gay marriage under the Fourteenth Amendment. Wrote Judge Robert Jones: "Like heterosexual persons, they [homosexuals] may not marry members of the same sex. A homosexual man may marry anyone a heterosexual man may marry, and a homosexual woman may marry anyone a heterosexual woman may marry."

Judge Jones went on to point out that homosexuals have little cause to identify with historically oppressed minorities in

the United States, observing that, "Homosexuals have not historically been denied the right to vote, the right to serve on juries, or the right to own property." Judge Jones starts with the assumption, as we all should, that "marriage" means what it has always meant in America: the union of one man and one woman. If we begin with that reality, the notion that homosexuals are being denied equal protection under the law becomes absurd.

The point of traditional institutions like marriage is that they encourage adults to fulfill duties they do not always feel like doing. The societal pressure to marry has for many generations encouraged restless young men to get jobs, settle down and be responsible. But when "marriage" comes to mean nearly any romantic liaison, the incentive it provides for responsible behavior is weakened beyond repair.

Judge Jones rightly pointed out that the state has a legitimate interest in the protection of traditional marriage, and pointing out the risk that heterosexuals might "cease to value" the institution of marriage the more broad the term becomes. As the Supreme Court prepares to hear oral arguments in two cases concerning marriage, I hope they will follow Judge Jones' lead, and rule in favor of traditional marriage.

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# Bonnke, Hayford Call Benny Hinn Remarriage a Miracle

Evangelist **Benny Hinn** and his ex-wife Suzanne were remarried on Sunday after being divorced since 2011.

The Hinns' divorce was widely reported and represented the latest of several high-profile Christian leaders who have recently divorced. Pastor **Jack Hayford**, Suzanne's father Roy Harthern and evangelist **Reinhard Bonnke** repeatedly referred to the significance of the Hinns' remarriage, calling it miraculous.

"This is too wonderful," Bonnke told the crowd, noting that this miracle of remarriage was even greater than the miracle of any marriage. "I see a river of the balm of Gilead flowing to millions of broken marriages." He said he believes those marriages will be restored as a result.

"It's a miracle of God's grace," said Hayford, who officiated, along with Bonnke and Harthern. Approximately 1,000 well-wishers watched the ceremony at the Holyland Experience in Orlando, Fla.

"We're experiencing the miracle of restoration," said Harthern, who performed the first ceremony. "I'm one delighted Papa to stand here a second time. This time it's going to work!"

The crowd responded to this with a chorus of "amens."

Many notable Christian leaders flew in for the event, including several from overseas—**Morris Cerullo, Marilyn Hickey, Marcus and Joni Lamb, Cindy Jacobs** and **Riva Tims**. But they did not participate. Instead all eyes were on the bride and groom in a rather traditional ceremony, mixed with plenty of praise and **worship**, that lasted two hours. The children and

their spouses stood with their parents as attendants.

**Benny Hinn** said nothing until the end when he prayed over Suzanne as the visiting Christian leaders crowded around. Hinn then told some personal stories including how his oldest grandson, Theo Koulianos, asked him at Thanksgiving about a year and a half ago (when Theo was 6) when his grandfather was getting back together with "Nana." He told his grandfather he was praying that Jesus would get his grandparents back together.

"God answered that little boy's **prayer**," Hinn said as the crowd cheered.

One of the most touching moments was a slideshow of Hinn family photos, apparently produced by the Hinn children, of the couple when they first married and as their children grew up. It was a surprise to their parents.

I attended the Hinns' first wedding on Aug. 4, 1979. I watched as their four children were born: Jessica, Natasha, Joshua and Alisha. I watched them grow up. Now the two oldest daughters are married and there are four grandchildren. The slides brought back many memories. I wasn't prepared for my own emotional response. Hayford apparently had a similar response. "Let me regroup my emotions," he said, adding that "we are the beneficiaries of this precious moment."

**Karen Wheaton** and **Judy Jacobs** provided stirring music, but a crowd-pleaser was when Hinn asked his 83-year-old mother-in-law Pauline Harthern to sing "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," accompanied on the piano by her husband Roy.

Today I'm returning to my roots as a reporter to write this account, even though my wife and I attended as guests. In my next report I'll write about how, as a family friend, I watched as the Hinns met and married, and how I saw their marriage disintegrate. I'll also expand on the true significance of what happened on Sunday as they remarried.

*Give us your thoughts and help send out this report via social media to communicate to the world what Roy Harthern said: "Divorce has no power over us."*

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## **Food Stamps: Policy or Political Payoff?**

In an early strategic preparation for the struggle to avoid the fiscal cliff, the president and several Democratic luminaries decided to redefine as essential several entitlement programs. In an old fashioned way of manipulating the public, they began to redefine commonly held beliefs. In the interest of time, we will share only one example.

Last December, Newark Mayor Cory Booker spent a much-publicized week trying to live the life of a food stamp recipient. And after a nationwide media tour, we learned many valuable lessons. First of all, we learned that giving up your daily Starbucks causes headaches, and leftovers are not as pleasant as five-star dining. Publicity stunts aside, food stamp usage is indeed at an all-time high. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported recently that nearly 48 million people were enrolled in the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). This is both the largest number of people and the largest percentage of the population ever.

In some ways this is unsurprising: we are in the midst of a weak economy. The program was intended to be supplemental; not a replacement for a family's entire food budget. It follows that an increasing number of families might have difficulty putting food on the table. A closer look at the situation, however, raises some concerns.

The first is that people are not necessarily “turning to” food stamps, as much as they are *being recruited* to receive them. Since 2008, the USDA has produced Spanish language radio advertisements about SNAP, with the expressed goal of *increasing* the number of Spanish speaking individuals receiving food stamps. The spots were created in the style of popular Spanish language soap operas. In each episode, characters talk to one another about the benefits of food stamps and how important they are to good health. Often they encourage others to overcome their “pride” of self-sufficiency and enroll in the program.

The USDA believes that increasing SNAP enrollment among the Latino population will improve their overall health and wellbeing. The USDA’s website, explaining why it wants to increase enrollment while the federal government is running a trillion dollar deficit, says the campaign exists so that everyone “can feed their families healthy, nutritious food.” Apparently, they believe there are many “unreached” Latinos who cannot do this without government aid.

This is not new territory for the food stamp program. During the early days of President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society programs, thousands of federal “recruiters” were deployed to the black community to persuade African Americans to overcome their pride and accept food stamps. The USDA magazine reported in 1972 that, “With careful explanations . . . coupled with intensive outreach efforts, resistance from the ‘too prouds’ is bending.”

The USDA accomplished its mission: approximately 25% of black Americans are now enrolled in SNAP, and many of those households have been receiving food stamps for two generations. Has this improved black American health, as the USDA claims it will for Latinos? African Americans, even after three generations of food stamps, have lower life expectancies than whites (74.3 years to 78.4, respectively). While starvation is largely a thing of the past in America, blacks

suffer from higher rates of heart disease, obesity and diabetes than their white counterparts. Ironically, Hispanic Americans currently outlive both whites and blacks.

As Professor Gary Galles of Pepperdine University points out:

*Studies find little difference between the nutritional adequacy of the diets of low- and high-income families, so that the problem is vastly overstated. Added food spending also often fails to improve nutrition, as less nutritious but more convenient pre-prepared food is substituted for healthier home-prepared food. Further, obesity is a more common problem among low-income families today than lack of food. Therefore, trying to force recipients to consume more food than they would otherwise by giving food aid instead of cash would probably do little to improve nutrition, but would worsen obesity problems.*

So it is by no means clear that increased enrollment in the food stamp program will improve the health of Latinos in our country. The aggressive USDA campaign goes to the heart of the program's mission. The federal food stamp program was begun in 1939 as a way to get rid of large agricultural surpluses that the government had purchased from farmers. Years of the Great Depression had made hunger a real danger for some Americans, particularly in cities, but the program was discontinued in 1943 when widespread unemployment and unmarketable crop surpluses were no longer issues.

Food stamps were revived in the 1960s as part of President Johnson's Great Society, and federal recruiters were dispatched to increase enrollment in the program. This marked a decided shift in the philosophy of what enables people to actually get out of poverty. One of the elders in my church, a PhD in economics, was actually apart of evaluating the effectiveness of the early food stamps program. The problems with the program are the same today as they were then. A man with "get-up-and-go" would rather have help establishing a new

business or leveraging the support he receives from the government. The American Dream was built on the idea of self-reliance: that given sufficient opportunity, anyone could succeed by hard work and determination. Despite slavery and Jim Crow, black income rose at a faster rate *before* Johnson's programs than it did afterwards.

Anyone who works among the poor in America today knows the rarity of that "pride of self-reliance," they also see the problem of generational poverty in both urban and rural America. Like crack cocaine, the government dole is very addictive. Blacks and Latinos need policies that will empower them, not federal recruiters to lure them into greater dependence. And at a time of unprecedented deficits—when our government needs to both raise revenues and cut spending—we need SNAP to enroll only those truly in need.

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## **MARCH 2013: 'The Bible' TV Miniseries**

### **✘ IN THIS ISSUE ...**

- The supernatural, behind-the-scenes stories no one else is telling from The Bible TV miniseries produced by reality TV king **Mark Burnett** and his wife, actress **Roma**

## **Downey**

- **Patrick Schatzline** explains why God isn't mad at you (despite what you may think!)
- Exclusive report on a downtown Cleveland church transforming an area that led the nation in foreclosures amid the recession
- Pop star Katy Perry's mother, prophetic evangelist **Mary Hudson**, shares about standing in the gap for a prodigal child
- Crisis expert **Dr. Paul Williams** offers tips on preparing for the worst
- PLUS: Guest columnist **Kenneth Copeland** on what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church

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# **Audio Adrenaline Bands Together to Help Orphans**

Legendary Christian rock band Audio Adrenaline is back with a new album, new lead singer and a new agenda: to be a voice for orphaned children in Haiti. The net proceeds from the album, *Kings & Queens*, will go to the Hands and Feet Project, an orphan-care ministry founded by band members in 2004.

The multiple-Grammy-winning group, which formed in 1986 under the name A-180, recorded and toured for two decades until

2006, when former lead vocalist Mark Stuart suffered vocal challenges. In the intervening years, members of the band turned their focus to their families and ministries. So when they were approached about going back on tour, they were a bit reluctant.

“Our first thought was, ‘No, we’re doing other things,’” says bassist Will McGinniss, who serves as chairman of the board of the Hands and Feet Project. “But when we heard the idea that this could really advance what we’re doing in Haiti, that’s what really got us excited about the project.”

The Hands and Feet Project hosts two orphanages in Haiti that house 100 children each in family-style villages. But in recent months, both facilities have reached maximum capacity, and the organization has had to turn away hundreds of children due to lack of space.

This month, the band returns to the tour circuit with new lead singer Kevin Max, formerly of dc Talk, with plans to raise funds to open two more villages.

The album’s first single, “Kings & Queens” showcases children from the orphanages and the miracles God has performed in their lives.

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## **Why King David Cannot Be Used to Justify Divorce, Remarriage or Adultery**

There have been numerous leaders who have referenced King David to justify their ability to continue ministering without

a hitch despite unbiblically divorcing their spouses, remarrying and even committing adultery.

Before we examine this subject, let us first establish some general rules as a foundation: 1) The moral standards of the law as found in the Ten Commandments (see Ex. 20) remain the same in the New Covenant; 2) The ceremonial Levitical sacrificial system has been done away with in Christ (see John 1:29; Heb. 9-10); 3) The sanctions for disobeying the law as applied in Israel's civic law have been modified in the New Covenant.

Regarding this last point: Punishments for disobeying the Ten Commandments as found in the extrapolation and application of Israel's civil law have been greatly modified because of God's grace as revealed in the New Testament. Specifically, the punishments for breaking the Ten Commandments regarding the sabbath, adultery, all sexual sins, blasphemy and disrespecting parents are no longer punishable by death. Those breaking these laws may be worthy of death as shown in Romans 1:28-32, but nowhere in the New Covenant do Jesus or the apostles advocate the death penalty for breaking these laws, including the sins of homosexuality and witchcraft.

Also, in John 8:1-12 Jesus affirms the punishment of stoning for the woman caught in adultery, but He doesn't enforce it. In addition, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 says that many in the church actually lived immoral lives before their conversion but because they were washed and sanctified they were not under the punishment of execution. Also of note: Christians in the first century were under Roman law and not Old Testament theocratic law.

The only capital offense that seems to be a constant in any age predates the Law of Moses and goes back to the time when God first instituted human government: the Noahic law in Genesis 9:5-6, in which a man's blood should be shed if he murders another human being. Also, Romans 13:1-7 seems to

indicate that capital punishment is still somewhat enforced with God's approval, even in secular society. Thus, this shows us that God's sanctions for disobeying His law are very different in both testaments with the exception of the punishment for murdering a human being.

Furthermore regarding King David, in light of clear Old Testament law David should have been executed for both murder and adultery (Ex. 21:12). But for some unknown reason God suspended this biblical standard by not putting David to death. Thus, we can see God's dealings with David were based on His sovereign choice adjudicated by the Prophet Nathan, possibly based on His divine purpose in using David's seed to bring forth the Messiah and not based on known biblical law.

Perhaps the biblical prophecies regarding Jesus coming from the line of David through Judah overrode the penalties of biblical law for the sake of fulfilling the divine purpose (see Gen. 49:10; Matt. 21:15, 22:41-45; Heb. 7:14). Hence, we cannot use David as a biblical standard when it comes to adjudicating biblical decisions regarding murder and adultery. Using him as an example on how to deal with a Christian leader who commits murder, adultery or divorces their spouse and remarries is not biblically tenable.

Which present-day prophet has the credibility and accuracy equal to Nathan to render such a subjective decision reflecting God's sovereign will? If there was such a prophet today, how would we prove we can make such a biblical exception based on their prophecy? And if we can make such an exception for one prophet or prophecy then what's to stop every so-called prophet or Christian who claims to hear from God from ignoring biblical standards based on personal prophecies?

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Furthermore, the New Testament actually brought the standard of marriage back to the beginning when Jesus referred to the model of one man joining one woman as Adam joined with Eve in the Garden of Eden. Also, Jesus taught that God's standards were lower in the Old Covenant. In Mark 10:1-12 He says that God allowed divorce because of the hardness of their hearts. Consequently, in the New Testament a person who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. Also, in Matthew 5:32 Jesus became more specific and taught that if a person divorces their spouse for any reason other than infidelity they cause their spouse to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced person (a biblically unlawful divorce) commits adultery.

In Matthew 19:9 Jesus flat-out says the only allowable biblical reason for divorce is when a spouse commits sexual immorality. Thus, we clearly see that the standard of marriage in the Old Testament is not the standard we should use when making decisions regarding divorce and remarriage in the church today since the Old Testament standard is clearly lower than that of the New Testament.

Furthermore, Deuteronomy 17:17 teaches that kings were not allowed to have many wives (which shows another instance of God suspending His law to allow David and Solomon to do this, to the demise of their kingdom and family!). But the New Testament brings the standard back to the one man-one woman model of the Garden of Eden. Paul teaches that church leaders (elders and deacons) are not allowed to have more than one wife at the same time (1 Tim. 3:2, 12) thus again nullifying the usage of King David's adultery and marriage experiences as a model of faith and life for today's Christian leaders. (By that time, Bathsheba would have been at least David's third wife after Michal and Abigail.)

I will be the first person to admit that unpacking all these verses in the New Testament is not that simple. It also gets real tricky today when we deal with instances of spousal

abuse, spousal drug addiction, child molestation involving a spouse with one of their children or another child, sexual abandonment (I know of an instance in which a wife never allowed her marriage to be consummated, with the husband divorcing her after a few years), and the like in which people claim they must divorce their spouses just to survive physically or emotionally. Also, 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 seems to teach that it is acceptable to divorce a spouse that leaves the marriage, but it isn't clear in this passage if Paul is giving them the green light to remarry or maybe just to stay single.

Since a detailed explanation of all these passages on marriage and divorce is not the purpose of this article, I will end by saying that the primary purpose of this article is to propose that before we can have a doctrine of marriage and divorce, or any other doctrine, we need to first understand the hermeneutical framework in which a passage of Scripture fits, based on which testament (Old or New or pre-Mosaic law) it comes from (with its peculiar standards, laws, patterns and rules of life). This is necessary before we can interpret any passage correctly and apply it to contemporary issues.

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# God Works Even When Doors Don't Open

When chaplain Lewis Culpepper went to deliver a Bible to one of the homeowners he had been ministering to in the Hattiesburg, Miss., aftermath, he was a little disappointed no one came to the door.

Hmmm. How's that saying go? *"When God closes a door..."*

"The lady next door was washing her car," said Lewis, one of 10 Billy Graham Rapid Response Team chaplains ministering in the Hattiesburg area.

And so just like so many chaplain before him—who have gone out with one mission in mind only to have their best-laid plans changed at the last minute—Lewis took the opportunity to talk to the woman spiffing up her automobile.

It started off with small talk, but soon enough the conversation started heading down a spiritual path.

"We got talking about her faith," Lewis said. "She said she wanted to be a Christian but was struggling with how to do that."

If you don't know much about the ministry of the Rapid Response Team, know this: They are there to be an encouragement and support through prayer and listening, but most chaplains have a heart to hear the line that Culpepper heard on Tuesday.

*"I want to be a Christian but I'm struggling with how to do that."*

Lewis, a crisis-trained chaplain, took out the Bible and started explaining the basic Gospel message – the same one Billy Graham has preached all across the world for the past 60

years.

“We actually sat on her step with the sun shining on her,” Lewis said. “We walked through the scriptures and she received Christ.”

No, this wasn't what Lewis had in mind for Tuesday. But God had other plans.

### **'They've Been in a Daze'**

Nearly 1,000 homes were damaged by the tornado that bounced through Hattiesburg last week.

As you drive down the road of Hattiesburg and neighboring Petal, you can't help but notice the randomness of which houses were saved and which were slammed.

“We've seen damage that's more like a basketball bouncing through the area,” chaplain John McLain said. “We'll have damage on a few streets for a few blocks, then everything's OK. Then we get over to the next area several blocks over and there will be more damage.”

The shock, in a lot of ways, is still fresh for these residents, but on Tuesday John noticed many snapping out of the glazed look.

“The people we've been seeing have been traumatized,” John said. “They've been in a daze, trying to figure out what to do.

“(On Tuesday) they've been very, very receptive to us coming to them.”

And for some, that's just having a listening ear as the regrouping begins.

“Just being able to talk through how they're feeling,” John said. “The emotional and spiritual support we give while we're

here is basically being present.”

[Click here](#) to read the original story at *BillyGraham.org*.