

# Are You Giving In to Satan's Mind Games?

What a week ... business problems, church problems, people problems. It seems all of a sudden that nothing but problems are in my life.

A few months ago, I felt as if our business was unstoppable—boy, was I wrong. Business has slowed almost to a stop. I do see light at the end of the tunnel; I just hope it's not a train.

The strains of church have taken hold as well. With the economy, the world problems and individual struggles, people are starting to become depressed and despairing—through which comes with lots of counsel.

With all of this going on, it has taken my focus off of God and placed it on me. That's not a good place to be. I don't know about you, but when I do that, depression and desperation kick in. This seems to be where the whole world is right now.

We are all so focused on ourselves that we have forgotten others are suffering as well. We are focused on the physical instead of the spiritual. This is where Satan wants us, because now he's in control. Taking our focus off of God and focusing on ourselves gives Satan the opportunity to play games with our minds—thus the depression and desperation.

So yesterday, as I am wallowing in my own pity, a ministry opportunity came about and I was able to help someone who was in need. This person was in desperate need of some help, counsel and prayer. I was able to help, and for a moment all my depression and despair went away. It was a wonderful feeling.

Imagine if just for a moment we took all our self-centered

focus and placed it on those around us. How awesome would it be? Imagine how little depression and desperation there would be in the world.

Now imagine if we stayed in the Word every day, we applied it to our lives, and we stayed focused on the others around us. That's a world I want to live in. We would be rid of depression and desperation once and for all. But any time we take our focus off of God, sooner or later the double-Ds will kick in.

So try this with me. Let's all stay in the Word, keep our focus on God and others, and then see how you and I feel. Let me know the success you have.

I would bet it's a better place than being depressed and despairing. I saw a glimpse of that yesterday in Psalm 32:7:

"You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance" (NASB).

God bless, and share your faith.

**Jody Burkeen** is founder of Man Up God's Way Ministries, birthed out of his desire to help change the way Christian men "do" Christianity.

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## Why You Shouldn't Let People Fill in the Blanks

I have to admit, one of my biggest leadership challenges is simply responding to people.

I have great intentions of doing so. And if I'm totally

honest, I do respond 100 percent of the time—in my head.

And that's the problem. People don't receive the responses that never leave my head.

I've worked hard to improve this one thing this past year. And one of my personal goals for 2014 is to make that even better. (Ask me in 12 months how that's gone.)

The reason I'm focused on this is based upon my own consumer experience in communicating with two different online companies. Both companies provide a service to which I have an annual subscription, both of which have developed tools and resources I find valuable and have become dependent upon. In short, I'm not looking for a better product. I'm satisfied with what they offer.

However, at different times this year I had a problem with my account with both entities. In each situation, I sent an email to the help desk requesting assistance. In both situations, my need was met, but in very different ways.

In one situation, my need was addressed and I received a return response letting me know how it was resolved and offering additional assistance if needed. There was no apology. It wasn't needed. But there was a kind, light-hearted response that let me know they were concerned about my need as a customer.

The other situation was different. Although my issue was addressed and need met, I received no response. To this day, I'm not sure how the issue was resolved. I don't even know if the error was on their end or mine. I don't know if I'll encounter this again or how to avoid it in the future. I don't know.

And that's the problem. I've been left to fill in the blank. And that can be dangerous.

Building loyalty begins with communication. When others communicate with me, I find I trust them more. Those that do not, I find my trust diminishes because I'm left too much room to fill in the blank.

This is a convicting leadership lesson for me. I don't want people to perceive my lack of response as a lack of caring. This elevates my need to improve my communication, even if it's a simple acknowledgement. A timely response goes a long way toward building trust.

*Gina McClain is a speaker, writer and children's ministry director at Faith Promise Church in Knoxville, Tenn. Her marriage to Kyle keeps her marginally sane, while their three kids (Keegan, Josie and Connor) keep her from taking herself too seriously. Visit her blog at [for more information about her ministry.](#)*

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## And What if Obama Is a Marxist?

It's getting harder even for sincere media supporters of President Obama's signature legislative achievement—the government takeover of health care known as **Obamacare**—to defend the indefensible.

Kirsten Powers has spoken up for the compassionate idea of covering everyone. But she signaled on Fox News that it is getting harder to defend the botched rollout and, now, losing her own coverage, she is looking less and less willing to stand up for this deeply flawed program. Powers attributes all this confusion—and the 35 “fixes” Mr. Obama has unilaterally mandated—to incompetence.

“Why I’m Getting Sick of Defending **Obamacare**” was the blunt title of Ron Fournier’s recent column in *National Journal*. Like Powers, Fournier once hoped this measure would bring greater equity in health care to millions who lacked coverage.

The failures of **Obamacare** are not a surprise to conservatives. We have been hostile to this thing from the outset. Not only do we oppose a government takeover of 1/6 of the economy, but we also have the deepest concerns about the dangers it poses to freedom. Under Obamacare, the states lose their unique standing in the federal system that is the United States of America. They become mere branch offices of HHS. Corporations, nonprofit organizations and individual citizens lose a great measure of freedom from the mandates that **Obamacare** imposes.

As columnist George Will has noted, if Congress can require you to buy health insurance, why can’t it require you to eat broccoli? After all, if health is the rationale, many things contribute to a healthy population. Might we someday see weigh stations on our interstate highways—not for trucks and not for cars but for the occupants of those vehicles?

Most troubling of all is the HHS mandate that forces corporations, nonprofits and citizens to violate their conscience by subsidizing drugs that can kill unborn children. This HHS mandate represents the gravest expansion of abortion since *Roe v. Wade*.

In the midst of all this, and at a time of the most lethal threat to religious and **civil liberty** in 225 years, it is understandable that some on the conservative side get overheated. For example, in northern Virginia in 2012, a GOP fundraiser showed a zombie portrait of the president—with a bullet hole in his forehead! On a gun range in the South, one overly enthusiastic backer of a presidential challenger yelled to her favorite candidate, “Pretend it’s Obama!” The candidate probably never heard that comment as he fired away at the profile target, but the liberal media sure did. It was an ugly

episode that did no credit to our side.

But when our cooler heads prevail, they often go too far in the other direction. For example, the claim that President Obama is a Marxist is offered as an example of right-wing *rodomontade*. If we want to keep the dialogue civil, we are lectured, then we need to avoid such lurid charges.

Well, what if the president is a Marxist? Stanley Kurtz was one of those cooler heads in 2008 who rejected the claim that Barack Obama was a Marxist, a socialist. Then he researched the record and wrote *Radical-in-Chief*. Kurtz's book is a long, detailed and very carefully researched analysis of the Obama record.

Kurtz finds Obama acknowledging in his own words, in *Dreams From My Father*, that he was mentored as a teen growing up in Hawaii by a man he identifies only as "Frank." We know now that that man was Frank Marshall Davis, a lifelong Communist. Grove City College professor Paul Kengor has documented Davis' attachment to the USSR in his book, *The Communist*.

On campus, **Barack Obama** sought to prove he had not "sold out" to the system, so he consciously sought out the Marxist professors on campus. *Sought them out*. We can understand why President Obama may not want his college course grades spread all over the Internet. But there is something more than a little weird about the fact that he won't even disclose the college courses he took.

Stanley Kurtz provides incontrovertible evidence that young Barack Obama attended the April 1983 Socialist Scholars Conference at Cooper Union in New York City. This big confab is doubly significant. It's important because it brought together committed Marxists from all over the country. It's important because it was held to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Karl Marx's death.

Kurtz notes that Barack Obama himself admits he went to this

meeting (and Kurtz believes but properly adds that he cannot prove that young Mr. Obama probably attended the follow-up socialist meetings in the 1980s as well).

What Stanley Kurtz does *not* offer us in his otherwise very well-documented book is the historic context of these socialist conferences. The first of these was held just a month after President Ronald Reagan had warned of an “evil empire.” And a month after, he called for a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

The successive conferences were held *after* the USSR had shot down the Korean airliner KAL-007 and murdered 269 passengers and crew in cold blood.

Even when making the case—a powerful case—that President Obama is a socialist, a devotee of Karl Marx, Stanley Kurtz does not engage in hysterics. He suggests that Obama seems to be tracking with the left wing of the Swedish Socialist Party. He is seeking to bring Marxist socialism to America, but not by employing the brutal methods of the Soviet-era KGB.

Well, that’s a relief. But it would explain **Obamacare**. Is it really incompetence? Is it really just a “botched” rollout? Or is it, as *The New Republic*’s Noam Scheiber says, “a deceptively sneaky way to get” single-payer socialized medicine?

For a man as intelligent as Barack Obama is, it is hard to imagine that all of this trouble is accidental, that it all is the result of “folks” who just made some mistakes in their zeal to do good.

If President Obama actually is a Marxist, then all of this suddenly makes sense. And he has never given us any indication he is anything else. That alone can explain the current crisis for this Great Republic.

**Ken Blackwell** is senior fellow of family empowerment and **Bob**

Morrison is senior fellow for policy studies at Family Research Council. This article appeared on , Feb. 14, 2014.

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## '12 Years a Slave' Wins Top British Film Awards

The harrowing drama *12 Years a Slave* won the Best Film award at Britain's top movie honors on Sunday, cementing its status as favorite for the Oscars next month, but it was the space thriller *Gravity* that claimed the biggest trophy haul.

*12 Years a Slave*, by British director Steve McQueen with Hollywood's Brad Pitt as a producer, had been tipped as the night's major winner and also won Best Actor for Chiwetel Ejiofor as a man tricked and sold into slavery in the pre-Civil War United States.

But *Gravity*, starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney, took home six prizes from its 11 nominations, including the Best Director prize for Mexican Alfonso Cuarón and the awards for Cinematography and Outstanding British Film.

McQueen, 44, said it was horrifying that 21 million people were still living in slavery around the world now.

"I hope that, 150 years from now, our ambivalence will not allow another filmmaker to make this film," he told the ceremony at London's Royal Opera House.

McQueen, a video artist as well as a director, previously won kudos for his 2008 film *Hunger*, about an IRA hunger strike in Northern Ireland, and won Britain's top visual art award, the Turner Prize, in 1999 for a video based on a Buster Keaton

film.

Pitt, whose partner, Angelina Jolie, accompanied him to the ceremony, dressed like him in a tuxedo, said he was proud of the film, based on the real story of Solomon Northup.

“It is a story that says we are all the same, and our freedom and dignity is everything, and that is what we are fighting for,” Pitt told a news conference.

The Hollywood power couple were among a list of stars who descended on London for the British Academy Film Awards (BAFTAs), which come two weeks before the Academy Awards and are widely seen as indicators of Oscar success.

On the red carpet ahead of the ceremony, the most watched film awards outside the United States, stars including Leonardo DiCaprio, Oprah Winfrey, Tom Hanks and Britons Judi Dench and Emma Thompson mingled with fans.

### **Award for Mirren**

Britain’s Prince William arrived last, chatting to the crowd gathered outside the theater on a cold, dry evening before heading inside to present an Academy Fellowship for outstanding contribution to film to the British actress Helen Mirren.

Mirren, 68, won an Oscar for playing his grandmother Queen Elizabeth in the 2006 film *The Queen*.

Bookmakers had expected *12 Years a Slave* to be the big winner ahead of *Gravity*, *American Hustle*, the Somali pirate thriller *Captain Phillips* and the British drama *Philomena*, starring Judi Dench as an Irish woman hunting for the son she had given up for adoption.

Vying for the Best Actor prize alongside Ejiofor were Christian Bale in *American Hustle*, Bruce Dern in *Nebraska*, DiCaprio in Martin Scorsese’s tale of American greed *The Wolf*

of *Wall Street*, and Tom Hanks in *Captain Phillips*.

DiCaprio said it had taken seven years and a lot of luck to get *The Wolf of Wall Street* to the big screens.

“This is the second film in my career that I really got behind and did everything I could to get made. This is a very proud moment for me,” he said.

The Best Actress award went to Australian Cate Blanchett for playing a riches-to-rags socialite in Woody Allen’s tragicomedy *Blue Jasmine*. She beat Dench, Amy Adams from *American Hustle*, Emma Thompson in *Saving Mr. Banks* and Bullock in *Gravity*.

Blanchett, 44, dedicated her award to the actor Philip Seymour Hoffman, who died of an apparent drugs overdose two weeks ago.

Barkhad Abdi was named Best Supporting Actor for his role in *Captain Phillips* and the award for Best Supporting Actress went to Jennifer Lawrence in *American Hustle*, a con-artist caper set in the 1970s.

The Italian movie *The Great Beauty* won the award for Film Not in the English Language, while the documentary prize went to *The Act of Killing* by Joshua Oppenheimer.

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*Editing by Andrew Heavens and Kevin Liffey*

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# Mine, Ours or His: How God Uses Negative Role Models

My first paid position in ministry was as a part-time youth **pastor** while I was in seminary. The church had been outstanding at one time, but it was in a long, slow decline. While the pastor was kind to give me the job, he became a negative role model for me.

Young ministers don't always realize they may be able to learn as much from a negative example as from a positive one. Even though an early experience in **ministry** might be negative, if they can survive, they will be OK. They just need to make sure they learn *not* to be like their first "mentor."

The pastor I first served under was a great **preacher**, but he had a strong ego. Everything in the church was his. There is a legitimate use for the expression "my **church**," but with him, it really meant that everything belonged to him. He even introduced me by saying, "I want you to meet my **youth pastor**."

I confess to having a **rebellious** streak that wants to push back at things I don't like. And I would be saying under my breath, "I am not your youth pastor. The reason this church is in trouble and declining is that everything is yours. I am the Lord's youth pastor; this church is His, and it's not yours."

Obviously, I didn't stay there for long. But I never took issue with him in public. My job was not to undermine his **leadership**. If you ever find yourself somewhere that you just can't live with the authority in place, you need to get out.

My negative experience helped shape a good habit in me. When I became a pastor, I tried to avoid using the first-person singular personal pronoun. It was "our church" or "the Lord's church." I introduced staff members as "our youth pastor" or "the youth pastor of the church." I avoided any nomenclature

that suggested everything is mine.

Even bad experiences are good experiences. You may feel beaten down, worn out or even rebellious because of a negative situation, but it offers you a chance to learn. God refines and teaches us through having to **submit**, for instance, to someone who is unfair, egotistical or self-serving. By humbly accepting a less-than-desirable state of affairs, you can grasp valuable **lessons** that might not sink in as well under better circumstances.

**George O. Wood** *is the general superintendent of the Assemblies of God.*

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## How God Speaks in Silence

When Tony and I moved here to the States in 1987, probably the toughest part of our lives so far at a spiritual level kicked in. Why? God became silent. He stopped talking to us.

Back in the U.K., nearly everything had gone well. It was relatively easy to know what God was saying. In fact, when He spoke to us about moving to Texas, His leading was so clear that we sold our house and moved here, knowing no one. We felt a bit like Abraham but were confident He would continue to lead us clearly.

And then silence.

Nothing. Nada.

No clear direction.

It wasn't so much the little things. It was that clear sense of direction, knowing we were following Him, in the center of

His will, that was missing.

To start with, we confessed every sin, real or imaginary, that we could think of. After all, we reasoned, sin separates us from God.

Still nothing.

We tried everything. We had faith. We prayed against the enemy.

Then I got angry with God. How could He bring us here and then drop us? Needless to say, that didn't work either.

Finally, I came to the place where I realized my total dependence on Him. If God chose to leave me on the shelf and never to use me again, that was His prerogative. He is the potter; I'm mere clay in His hands.

A number of things died at that point: any desire for limelight, any sense of entitlement, any hankering to be anything beyond ordinary.

It was then, after nine years of God's kind of seminary on the backside of the desert, His training in the school of wilderness experience, that God, in His mercy, started speaking again.

*Adapted from **Felicity Dale's** blog, Kingdom Women. Felicity Dale is the author of numerous books including Simply Church. She is an advocate for women in the church and trains people to start simple, organic house churches around the world.*

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# A Little-Known Link Between Alzheimer's and Heart Disease

Alzheimer's is a progressive and deadly disease that currently affects as many as 5 million people in the U.S. In fact, 1 in 3 older adults dies from Alzheimer's or another form of dementia.

Alzheimer's disease is now the sixth-leading cause of death for Americans and the most common type of dementia, which is a general term for memory and cognitive loss that interferes with daily life.

Most people don't realize it, but Alzheimer's disease and heart disease share a connection. This connection is actually a common gene known as APOE-4. This gene is found in about 40 percent of those with late-onset Alzheimer's, but only 25-30 percent of the normal population. Scientists know that having the APOE-4 gene raises the risk of developing Alzheimer's but do not yet fully understand how or why that happens.

APOE contains the code for making a protein that carries cholesterol and other fats in the bloodstream. Those with the APOE-4 gene are not only at higher risk for Alzheimer's, but for heart disease as well.

Atherosclerosis, or a buildup of fatty plaques in the heart's coronary arteries, reduces the heart's ability to pump blood throughout the body, including the brain. And since the brain uses as much as 25 percent of the blood pumped by the heart, researchers believe that a reduction in blood flow from atherosclerosis may damage the brain and put it at higher risk for Alzheimer's disease.

The shortage of oxygen resulting from decreased blood flow may also activate the production of amyloid protein plaques found in the brains of those with Alzheimer's. These amyloid plaques

and other accumulated proteins called tau tangles are also associated with the formation of Alzheimer's disease.

Accumulating evidence indicates Alzheimer's may actually be a vascular disease, similar to heart disease or stroke. Following a heart-healthy lifestyle is good for your brain health and your memory.

**Dr. Chauncey Crandall** is Florida based and one of the most-well known cardiologists in America. His book, *The Simple Heart Cure: The 90-Day Program to Stop and Reverse Heart Disease*, is available online and at book retailers. Connect with Chauncey Crandall, M.D., on LinkedIn.

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## Who Changed Things?

Who changed things from the vibrant, Spirit-empowered "by life or by death" faith of the New Testament to today's spineless home-and-garden Sunday-morning **religion**?

Who changed things from "Leave everything and follow Me" (see Luke 14:33) to "**Pray** this little prayer and you're set for eternity"?

Who changed things from "All who live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (see 2 Tim. 3:12) to "Ask Jesus into your heart and enjoy a comfortable life"?

Who changed things from a fearless proclamation of the truth, whatever the cost or consequences, to a watered down, compromised message that is afraid to offend anyone?

By what authority, by whose decree, based on what new revelation have we so blatantly departed from the faith of the apostles? Who changed things?

Who changed things from the New Testament faith, where even the disciples couldn't minister without the Spirit's endowment, to today's version, where whole ministries are run with hardly any evidence of the Spirit's work?

As A.W. Tozer once said, "If the **Holy Spirit** was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference."

This remains true of most of the contemporary church in the West.

Who changed things from a God-centered faith to a man-centered faith, from "Take up your cross and deny yourself" to "Bypass the cross and empower yourself"?

Who changed things from holiness being beautiful to holiness being bondage, from the early church being known for its high standards to the contemporary church being known for its scandals?

Who changed things from the people of God being a threat to the powers of darkness to the people of God being active participants in darkness?

In the early church, Paul instructed the Corinthians to separate themselves from people who claimed to be believers but were living in outward, unrepentant sin (1 Corinthians 5). Today, some of those people lead our churches and preach from our pulpits. Who changed things?

Who changed things from a faith that was so focused on the life of Jesus and so infused with the reality of His death and resurrection that no sacrifice was considered too great and no act of service considered too extreme—to the contrary, suffering for Him was considered a privilege (Matt. 5:10-12;

Acts 5:41; Phil. 1:29)—to today’s convenience-store Christianity, where we have to “sell” salvation to the sinner by spicing up the deal with perks and benefits?

When did Jesus stop being enough?

When did obedience become an option?

When did keeping God’s commandments out of love for Him become “religious” (in the negative sense of the word)? Didn’t Jesus say that if we loved Him, we would keep His commandments (John 14:15, 21)?

Who changed things?

If we belonged to another religion that claimed to have other books that supplemented the Bible or traditions that superseded it, that would be one thing.

But we don’t. We believe the Scriptures alone are God’s Word and that nothing that comes after the Scriptures—no tradition, no alleged revelation, no consensus—can undermine or countermand the written Word of God.

So, who changed things from the biblical version of the Jesus faith to the modern American version?

We can debate church history and blame this group or that group, and we can point out what’s wrong with this denomination and that denomination. We might even have some great historical and contemporary insights.

But unless we get back to believing what is written and acting on what is written, we will continue to perpetuate our merry-go-round Christianity with lots of noise and action and bells and whistles but with little authority, little purity and little effect (if any).

I didn’t get the memo that God’s Word and Spirit were not enough, and I’m far more concerned with what He says than with

what the latest polls say.

Really, now, since when did the Lord command us to fashion our preaching and our style of worship and even the way we look based on what's trending?

If some church leaders choose to trust in worldly business models and carnal consulting firms, that's their choice. I say that we go with the power of the name of Jesus and the wisdom of the Word of God and the fullness of the Spirit. I say that we go with the New Testament model, applied with boldness and with compassion to the needs of the day.

Years ago, Leonard Ravenhill said, "One of these days some simple soul will pick up the Book of God, read it, and believe it. Then the rest of us will be embarrassed."

I want to be that simple soul. How about you?

**Michael Brown** is author of *Hyper-Grace: Exposing the Dangers of the Modern Grace Message* and host of the nationally syndicated talk radio show *The Line of Fire on the Salem Radio Network*. He is also president of *FIRE School of Ministry* and director of the *Coalition of Conscience*. Follow him at *AskDrBrown on Facebook* or at *@drmichaellbrown on Twitter*.

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# **Biblical Womanhood and the Pariahs of the Church**

pa·ri·ah

1. an outcast
2. any person or animal that is generally despised or avoided
3. a member of a low caste in southern India and Burma

A few years ago, a friend in the process of divorce encouraged

me to write on the topic of pariahs in the church. These are the believing women around us whose life circumstances make us uncomfortable—the Ruths and Naomis in our culture. Maybe they lost a child to death or are estranged from one in rebellion. Maybe they could never get pregnant in the first place. Perhaps their husband left them for another woman, or maybe their husband died. Perhaps they never got married and are heavily involved in their career.

Whatever their life story, the thing that makes them feel like a pariah to others is that they don't want a pariah's life circumstances as their own. Perhaps their story plays to our fears for our own, and therefore we reject or avoid them. Of course, few would use the word *pariah* to describe someone in circumstances that we don't want for ourselves, yet the larger church often treats women like they are outcasts if their life story doesn't match the norm.

Unspoken fears play out in real ways:

“If we embrace this divorced woman in our church, won't other young women think divorce is an option when their marriage gets hard?”

“If we embrace this single working mom, won't other young moms be tempted away from raising their children at home?”

“I don't want to enter into this widow's suffering, because I don't want to consider the possibility that one day I might face my own similar loss.”

In contrast, I've found deep comfort watching the overcoming faith of my limping friends enduring seasons of brokenness or loss. And I admit that I, too, have circumstances in my life that others may find uncomfortable, causing them to want to distance themselves from me. Whatever the loss, these struggles are not denials of God's good plan for women!

Any of us in such circumstances did not fall off the bandwagon

of biblical womanhood. Instead, the purity of God's good plan for women becomes clearer as we hold on to faith in the midst of our losses. The enduring faith of "pariahs" motivates me when my own fears become my reality and I am faced with my own unique set of circumstances that test my own faith.

Our understanding of biblical womanhood has to include such women. The divorced. The widow. The single mom. The working single mom. The single woman with no kids. Ruth and Naomi were as much God's daughters created for His purposes when they were widowed without children as when they were married with them, right?

Carolyn McCulley says in her new book, *The Measure of Success: Uncovering the Biblical Perspective on Women, Work and the Home*, concerning her view of herself as a single woman in the church, "I had been deriving more identity from an adjective ("single") than a noun ("woman"), which was not the emphasis I saw in the Bible."

Carolyn Custis James, in her book *Half the Church*, reminds us that most women in Third World countries, where the majority of modern Christians now live, would find our American, evangelical stereotype of biblical womanhood completely foreign and often simply physically impossible. Whatever the Bible says to women, it should be as relevant to the single mom in an African hut as to a middle-class American woman with a spouse who provides for her and her kids.

All of Scripture speaks to women, right? But it's good to also think through specific parts of Scripture that speak particularly of women. Genesis 1-2 speak of the woman created in the image of God as a strong helper after His example. Proverbs 31 gives wisdom about a woman in a very different context from our First World American one. Ephesians 5 gives a vision of womanhood empowered by the gospel to reclaim the image of God as He intended in perfection. How do these apply to any woman with any adjective? Single woman. Married woman.

Divorced woman. Widowed woman. Woman with kids. Woman without kids. Working woman. Stay-at-home woman.

When we remove all of the adjectives, God says something about us made in His image that transcends all the specific things that define us individually. Some of those individual characteristics give us status. Some of those characteristics make us feel like outcasts. Yet God's image in us transcends all of those adjectives.

I am thinking today that biblical womanhood is best understood when we understand it in our worst-case scenarios. When we boil it down to what God most wants any of us to reflect about Himself regardless of the adjective in front of *woman* and then expand that back out to the specific circumstances in which we find ourselves, we are much better equipped to endure the waves of life that come at us at each stage as a woman after God's own heart.

*Adapted from Wendy Alsup's blog, . Wendy has authored three books including By His Wounds You are Healed: How the Message of Ephesians Transforms a Woman's Identity. She is also a wife, mom and college math teacher who loves ministering to women.*

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## **Why Pastors Like Rick Warren Are Renting Out Theaters for 'Son of God' Premiere**

Christian leaders, including megachurch pastor Rick Warren, plan to rent every screen in numerous multiplex theaters across 10 cities for the premiere of Mark Burnett and Roma

Downey's upcoming Jesus film, *Son of God*, on Feb. 27.

The unusual move reflects the confidence **Christian** leaders have in Burnett and Downey's work in the wake of *The Bible*, a hit miniseries on the History channel.

*Son of God*, an adaptation from *The Bible* series, opens in theaters nationwide Feb. 28.

Many religious leaders are citing the movie as a natural opportunity to evangelize. Warren may have a vested interest in the film, since he wrote a curriculum tied to the movie and published by LifeWay Christian Resources.

Cinemark Theaters is scheduling a few large-scale buyouts on Feb. 27, said James Meredith, head of marketing and communications.

"The interest level for meetings, events, screenings and buyouts seems to be on par with that of major blockbuster, tentpole or franchise movies," said Meredith.

The couple behind the show, producer Burnett and former *Touched by an Angel* star Downey, have enlisted interdenominational support from religious leaders such as Texas megachurch pastor **T.D. Jakes** and Roman Catholic Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles.

The couple has also tapped Compassion International, a large evangelical relief organization, to distribute tickets to churches. The couple are close with Houston **megachurch** leaders **Joel and Victoria Osteen**, who flew to Morocco to see the filming and have bought 8,000 tickets to distribute.

Burnett, who has produced shows like *Survivor*, *The Voice* and *Shark Tank*, said he's never seen a buyout before.

"There aren't many things that could garner this kind of support," Burnett said. "People are going to watch the movie collectively, in community."

After Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* made \$612 million, observers expected to see more films about Jesus. Several upcoming Bible-related films are now in the pipeline.

LD Entertainment is backing the upcoming film *Resurrection*, a drama set immediately after Jesus' death. American Trademark Pictures is set to release *The Resurrection of the Christ*. And the nonprofit In Jesus' Name Productions is planning to release a film on the life of Jesus called *The Messiah*.

While **evangelicals** are often credited with shoring up support for movies like *The Passion of the Christ* and *Fireproof*, Washington Cardinal Donald Wuerl has commissioned discussion guides and videos for Catholic churches and schools, and Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami is planning to rent a theater for thousands of Catholics in Miami.

Several business leaders are also donating tickets to churches and nonprofits, including Mart Green, heir to the **Hobby Lobby** family of companies.

The film is about two hours long, featuring actor Diogo Morgado playing Jesus during his life, crucifixion and resurrection. Downey plays Mary, the mother of Jesus. Recording artist CeeLo Green, who stars on *The Voice*, will sing "Mary, Did You Know?" during the closing credits.