

Vibes

BOOKS

The Upside of Adversity

By Os Hillman, Regal, hardcover,
256 pages, \$.

Reading about the apostle Paul's multiple hardships makes one wonder how the prosperity doctrine ever sprouted such strong roots within various segments of the Christian church. Businessman Os Hillman takes a corrective approach to the disputed doctrinal viewpoint with an illuminating account of the collapse of his marriage, business and finances—and how God used the calamity to strengthen him. A leader in prosperity's counterweight doctrine, the "faith and work movement," Hillman pulls no punches in revealing how God shaped and molded him into a new person. The author deserves high marks for his candor in discussing the fear, pride and personal idols that used to drive him, even as he was teaching a men's Bible study. One of the book's most profound statements appears in the first chapter: "We must get beyond the immature notion that God is only interested in making us healthy, wealthy and happy. God wants so much more for us than that." Hillman's teaching will help you discover divine purposes for adversity in your life.

Ken Walker

10 Curses That Block the Blessing

By Larry Huch, Whitaker House,
Softcover, 224 pages, \$.

In *10 Curses That Block the Blessing*, Larry Huch teaches on what he proposes is the full benefit of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. He believes that Christians are entitled not only to eternal life in heaven but also to an abundant, prosperous life on earth. Describing how he has been freed from anger, drug addiction, crime and violence, Huch uses his own life as an example of the success behind the "10 steps to removing the curse and releasing the blessing" that he teaches in his book. Huch stresses the importance of knowing and receiving all that God intended when He sent His only Son into the world. This book can be used as a teaching tool for anyone who desires to move "from poverty to prosperity, from sickness to health, from battlefield to the victory."

Jevon Bolden

The Unusual Suspect

By Stephen Baldwin with Mark Tabb,
FaithWords, hardcover,
304 pages, \$.

The Unusual Suspect: My Calling to the New Hardcore Movement of Faith chronicles actor Stephen Baldwin's journey from party animal to apostle for the faith. He offers his story as a passionate demonstration of God's power at work in one man's life and as a testament to the responsibility every believer has to live out their faith fully and radically. Baldwin does not fit the conservative Christian mold, and he makes that evident. He believes God is sending into society today a new breed of apostolic messengers who will preach His message in a radical, more relevant way and that they are turning contemporary Christian culture on its ear. The book's title is a takeoff from one of the movies Baldwin is best known for, *The Usual Suspects*. Although *The Unusual Suspect* is entertaining, it is also a personal and inspirational look at a changed life and not just another celebrity biography.

Expect to be challenged, perhaps affronted at times, but to come away with a new view on effective evangelism.

Sandra Carroll

Out of Your Comfort Zone

By R.T. Kendall, FaithWords

Softcover, 224 pages, \$.

R.T. Kendall's *Out of Your Comfort Zone* is not for the spiritually squeamish but for the Christian who dares to pursue the great God of the Bible. Kendall writes from a level of experience that testifies to his many years of going after God—from serving 25 years as senior minister of Westminster Chapel, London, to staying active in public ministry today from his home in Key Largo, Florida, where he bases his teaching and writing ministry. If you desire to go deeper with God, this book should ignite a driving passion in you to pursue Him more and more. It expresses the joy, fulfillment and freedom Kendall has experienced from accepting God for who He is. You may laugh, feel conviction or even cry. But in the end you will have the tools to evaluate how your image of God measures up to the almighty God, and you will discover ways to close the gap and draw closer to your Savior.

Jevon Bolden

The Missing Gospels

By Darrell L. Bock, Ph.D.; Nelson Books;

Hardcover; 256 pages; \$.

Author Darrell L. Bock, Ph.D., gives believers ammunition in the battle for truth with his book *The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth Behind Alternative Christianities*. He explains why certain texts were selected and others rejected as the Bible was assembled. He reviews the Gnostic gospels and

explains why they are not reliable. Bock reassures readers that the Bible can be trusted as Holy Scripture. What he does not do, unfortunately, is word his arguments very readably for the layperson. The Missing Gospels is without a doubt an academic book—the writing style will be OK for some readers but difficult for others. It is a pity that many who pick up The DaVinci Code for a suspenseful read will not likely plow through books that can point out its faults. Yet for those who are able to break it down for other people, The Missing Gospels will prove to be a good resource.

Deborah L. Delk

MUSIC

Don't Get Comfortable

By Brandon Heath, Reunion Records.

A thought-provoking song from newcomer Brandon Heath, "I'm Not Who I Was," looks to offer hope in the midst of feeling wronged: "I used to be mad at you / A little on the hurt side, too / but I'm not who I was." The forgiveness-centered song is a highlight of Heath's debut project, Don't Get Comfortable, a collection of memorable pop tunes. On the grand "Our God Reigns," Heath delivers a probable new worship classic, ready to be included in corporate settings. The title track is an empowering call for listeners to wake up and seize the day. Heath may elicit comparisons to Bebo Norman—a natural connection because the two have collaborated before—but he has a decidedly more radio-friendly, pop sound.

Dewayne Hamby

Broken Things

By Kim Hill, 33rd Street Records.

Kim Hill, who in recent years has morphed from performer to worship artist, returns with a vengeance to her rock roots on her newest release, *Broken Things*. With the help of producer Paul Ebersold (Third Day, Sister Hazel, Three Doors Down), she explores a bluesy American-rock atmosphere, all the while projecting a message of unapologetic faith and worship. The folk-rock of "Here Inside of Me" is done in a spirit of thanksgiving, asking God to make Himself at home in her heart. The solemn "Wide" is a heartfelt message of forgiveness, and the rock-praise of "Lover of My Soul" soars with electric guitars. The acoustic "You Don't Belong Here" is a biting commentary on judgmentalism. Hill bears similarities to Ashley Cleveland, Bonnie Raitt or even Tori Amos. Younger listeners will wonder why they haven't heard of her before, while longtime fans will enjoy the homecoming of one of the industry's most notable voices.

Dewayne Hamby

Woman to Woman

By Vickie Winans, Verity Records.

A wife, daughter, mother, sister and friend, the Grammy-nominated Vickie Winans is familiar with the roles of being a woman. Her desire to express the different facets of her life led to her recording the double CD *Woman to Woman: Songs of Life*. A part live, part studio recording, the project contains 33 songs that include the uplifting hand-clapper "Everyday Is a Good Day," the spirited African-tinged "Alive Alive" and the churchy "Stretch Out." She pulls out a gospel favorite, the Walter Hawkins' classic "I Love You Lord" and gives it her special twist. The bouncy urban sound of "It's Alright" and the smooth jazz styling of "Never Separate" make for definite standouts as well. "Falling in Love" is a relaxed prelude to "Madly in Love," an infectious, urban-groove track that focuses on the ultimate spiritual love affair. Hitting the

listener with great music and relatable topics, Winans has delivered a project that many women will love.

Andrea R. Williams

NEW ON DVD

Thou Shalt Laugh
Warner Home Video

\$

This is stand-up comedy you can actually watch. The stars, director and producers all are Christians. Patricia Heaton (Everybody Loves Raymond) hosts a concert that features seven comedians: Taylor Mason, Thor Ramsey, Michael Wright Jr., Teresa Roberts Logan, Gilbert Esquivel, Joby Saad and Jeff Allen. Get ready for 98 minutes of humor and laughter.

Akeelah and the Bee

Lionsgate \$

Akeelah Anderson is an 11-year-old girl from south Los Angeles. In her quest to enter the Scripps National Spelling Bee, she overcomes her own insecurities and unites her community. The DVD's special features include "Making of Akeelah and the Bee," "All My Girlz" music video by Keke Palmer, bloopers and much more. This film is rated PG for some language.

As It Was

ZRG

Productions Inc.

\$

As It Was is a DVD series of reality-TV-style stories of biblical personalities such as Elijah, Ruth and Samson. Each 30-minute episode is offered in English and Hebrew with subtitles and includes a downloadable study guide. This is a collaboration by American Christians and Jews and was filmed on location in Israel. Four episodes are now available individually or in a set.