

Can't Cancel Calling: Applause to Matt Chandler and The Village Church

Read Time: 5 Minutes 11 Seconds

One bold woman saw the grey—though not an affair. She saw that her pastor and her friend were growing overly friendly.

Rather than staying “out of it,” she had the hard conversation directly with her pastor, in love. The pivotal next step is that he humbled himself and not only heard her, but went to his elders to confess. They, in turn, put serious biblical guard rails in place, not as an act of shame or scandal, but out of bold, courageous love for their pastor and the entire church.

Now, the pastor is slowly resuming his responsibilities, corrected rather than cancelled.

Shades of grey are rarely entered into without a witness. Texting or meeting for coffee can seem harmless when in a “shepherding” role, but the slope to over familiarity is usually not in a vacuum. Sadly, blind spots due to our own lack of healing, thinking your leader has it covered or it's not yours to address are the norm.

However, speaking up directly and immediately must become our new normal. The most vital reason is that our leaders are under attack and it's time to rise up and protect them. The most loving and courageous act is to guard destiny and calling at all costs, with truth and love.

This is the exact protection and direction needed for the church to thrive. The Village Church handled it swiftly, beautifully and powerfully—the true biblical way. No covering

up, no shaming the woman that brought it up or blaming only one party. But rather from a macro lens of true biblical protection with a goal of restoration.

Desensitization is growing, as the constant headlines of some of our most influential and inspirational church teachers are falling from their platforms. They are clearly called by God, anointed to do His work and yet somewhere along the way, the shades of grey became darker and darker.

Unhealed areas and secrets lead to greater and greater compromise, coupled with blind spots in their guards, allow the enemy a true open door, which has grown to epidemic footholds. The lack of accountability or oversight with the courage to give boundaries, combined with the “fame” of modern-day ministers, has created a platform that is too high and falls that are deafening.

Sadly, the media’s focus and conjecture call for immediate cancellation, rather than seeing the truth, that the enemy one by one is picking off our greatest teachers and leaders. Rather than the blanket “off with their heads” reaction, we should instead be working to get to the root of why countless leaders are falling in the first place. Once those root issues are addressed, we can then restore them to who they were ordained to be—shepherds to lead, not snakes to be trampled upon.

Sin occurs, yes, but that doesn’t cancel calling. Romans 11:29 says, “for God’s gifts and His call are irrevocable.” If scandal cannot revoke their calling, neither can we. How can we help our church put systems in place to get to the root and protect? We know that the enemy works overtime on our leaders, to take out those with the greatest gifts and potential for winning others to the kingdom. Let’s become the impenetrable army we were called to be. It’s time for the church to step into its full power and turn from this season of hypocrisy, secrets and judgement.

Matt Chandler and The Village Church deserve to be applauded for how they handled this situation. It was a very small thing, but that's how it begins, shades of gray that lead to places you never thought you would go. A church member saw a red flag, she spoke up and my hat is off to leadership for listening. Many churches might have dismissed this as a controlling spirit who was just trying to make trouble. By looking into the issue, recognizing this might be an "early warning sign," the elders acted exactly as they should have, asking the pastor to take a break and uncover what led him to this point.

The church needs to get to the root. Why are leaders feeling the need for this hit of attention where inappropriate relationships begin? How are we helping those who are drawn like a magnet to power recognize they may have an unhealed spirit of abuse, rejection or seduction? The inability to examine these wounded places allows the perfect opening for the enemy to orchestrate a dance which keeps the church powerless.

This is not about exposing a pastor, cancelling them or erasing their gifts. We need their gifts. The enemy is the one creating the headlines and the shame. We want our fallen leaders to be restored. Billy Hybels was my pastor since I was 11 years old, and I pray daily for his return. I believe we have a mandate to help our wounded leaders get to the root of what led them astray, or how their guard was not in place to see the spirits that circle power, ultimately to build complete churches of wholeness and healing. We need to introduce and normalize the tools, such as REAL TALK, that they need not to repeat the cycle, but to be restored to serve God's undisputable purpose for their lives.

King David, a man after God's own heart, committed the worst of sins, sexual sin, and used a direct report to cover it up, resulting in murder. His story could have come from today's headlines, yet God's hand did not leave him. Prophets with the

heart to guard spoke truth, resulting in confession, repentance, humility and changed behavior. David was recorded as one of the greatest kings of his time, fully restored.

We need to take advantage of our exact moment in history—we are now finally, slowly discussing topics of sexual abuse and exploitation in the church—to change our trajectory. We need to tell these leaders' stories to initiate discussions about what the church may or may not be doing well and make the necessary changes.

Love, true biblical accountability, heartfelt confession combined with root level healing and repentance, should lead to full restoration with calling still intact. Sadly, the church has been derailed by the tactics of the enemy, and a called leader is swiftly canceled.

The future of the church is at stake, and we cannot afford to waste the gifting's and callings of our leaders, which can even sever generational calling on a family. It's time for a reset, time to get real. {eoa}

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Elizabeth Fisher Good is the founder/CEO of *The Foundation United*, and the creator of *REAL TALK*, a catalytic new ministry tool that provides tools to guard the congregation from kindergarten through top leadership. It emphasizes transparency and accountability, providing a language and a framework to normalize conversations about what we may have been groomed previously to consider as "taboo". She is a passionate pioneer and inspirational thought leader with a desire to expose the root issue behind sex trafficking—childhood sexual abuse. In her book "Groomed" (HarperCollins, 2020), Good uses her own story of abuse, blind spots and healing to help readers find true freedom and purpose.