

Creed Frontman Scott Stapp Shares Views on Pentecostalism

Following years in the headlines for dramatic rockstar antics and several suicide attempts, Creed frontman, Scott Stapp, lay bleeding on the ledge of a Miami Beach hotel balcony in a delusional drug-and-alcohol-induced haze after an accidental fall in 2006.

It seemed Stapp had quite literally hit rock bottom.

In the years since, he has managed to turn his life around—albeit not without a few well-publicized bumps in the road.

Today, sober and re-energized by what he considers a God-given purpose, Stapp is now living with new clarity. And it shines through in the lyrics on his latest album, *Proof of Life*, which released this month.

Speaking with *Charisma* from the road on a press tour, Stapp shares how God has changed his life, why he was inspired to produce the record and what he thinks of the charismatic church today.

Charisma: You've lived quite the life already—a real rockstar existence, it seems. A lot of your very public experiences seem to have shaped your latest work with *Proof of Life*. Why the need to bare yourself like that at this point?

Scott Stapp: It's three things. Number one, it's important for me to set the record straight for myself and for those who love me, because they have to sit back and hear all the things that aren't accurate or may be hurtful.

Number two, part of growth and moving forward is recognizing

things you've done and taking accountability for your life—getting it out and making that confession. I've spent years holding things inside and not doing that. [But] I've found that it's really a liberating thing to express your inadequacies in your journey. It really frees you to be who you are because you're not living with pretense anymore.

And thirdly, I really felt that during a time in my life where I had made such a mess of everything and really questioned who I was, that I had wasted so much time in my life. I've found that in paying my experience forward and sharing this journey [on the album], it has really taken that death and turned it into a message. It's really allowed me to reclaim my life and given me proof that it all mattered. That it wasn't for nothing.

When I was in the throes of depression and addiction, I had lost all sense of reality and really just felt like "Is life worth living? Why is this happening to me? What's the meaning of this?" What began to get me through 24-hour periods at a time was telling myself, "I'm going to get through this to help someone who's coming behind me." That gave me purpose in that struggle, and I've found that mentality transformed my ability to handle the realities of this life. Because in every situation it's not, "Poor me, I'm such a victim." I look at it now like, "I may not understand, but I'm going to get through this so I can help someone else." When you give yourself, it's amazing how that can carry you through. Helping others through their journey helps you. It gives us purpose and hope to live another day.

Charisma: You've been open about your spiritual conflicts, so to speak. How have those issues impacted this particular album?

Stapp: I've finally gotten to a place where there's **resolution**. There aren't any conflicts anymore. I wasn't asking those big questions, I wasn't full of doubt and

wondering about things. So, with that clarity, I've begun to apply it to the content [of my music], to the themes of the songs—coming to the music with clarity and no doubt.

Internal frustration and angst that all those unresolved conflicts can cause you as human being really separate you from finding any resolution internally and spiritually. No longer having to deal with those things brought me to a place of clarity where I could finally turn that into the content of the songs.

It think it really came through the music. It allowed me not to get bottled up in frustration and angst and allowed me to evolve as an artist. The depth of the music that I was creating reflected the new inner peace that was going on inside of me. It set the table for the melodies and lyrics to come out and actually deliver exactly what I feel I was supposed to do, my purpose in life.

If I didn't find any of that resolution, this record would have never been born and have what it has on it.

Charisma: The album deals with some dark issues, but in sort of a positive way. Do you think that kind of "full circle" message is something other Christians can relate to?

Stapp: I'm reaching out to anyone who will listen. I didn't have an objective on who and why. I think that's the beauty of what I've discovered in my journey—I found God to be in places that God wasn't supposed to be; I found hope in places that I didn't think hope was supposed to be. I think that's in [the record].

I go back and read the Word, and I find that all throughout the **Bible**, in some of the darkest times, that is when some characters in the Bible felt the closest to God. That's when real change and transformation began to happen in their lives spiritually. I lived that, and I hope that comes through. I hope other Christians out there can see [where I've been] and

never let that victim mentality bring an ounce of doubt into their walk with God.

[When you're] in those places and dark times, that is exactly where you're supposed to be.

For me to get to that point in my walk, where I could finally say that I had really surrendered and just start letting God work in my life through those situations, I was able to get up every day and no matter how I felt, no matter what I wanted to do in my own efforts, that's when real transformation started to happen in my life. For every fear I walked through, that's when the renewing of the right kind of confidence, the right kind of faith, the right kind of trust in God could be developed. It's really an ongoing process that I think we all experience as Christians for the rest of our lives.

Really, it's been an enlightening journey for me, because so many truths I read for so many years in the Bible didn't make sense to me—and they do now, because I've lived it.

[But] you don't have to go to the depths of the darkness that I went to [in order] to feel this and experience it; they can happen at every single level no matter where we are in our walk with God.

Charisma: A lot has been made of your upbringing in what's been presented as a tough Pentecostal home. You've said your father was really against the kind of music you're famous for making. So how do you reconcile his views with your own personal faith today?

Stapp: I've found out that what my father's thoughts were aren't what God's thoughts were. I think we can all say that sometimes—about ourselves and our own thoughts. My father's ideology wasn't necessarily what God's ideology is outlined in the Word of God. What I've found, too, is that through the music I [make] and the path that I took with that music and that style, it brings me closer to God than I could ever get

any other way. That's the conduit to my prayers.

The Bible talks about the miracle that lifting your voice in song is for your spirit. At any time in your life, when you're feeling down, you can go right into where God wants you to be in your mind, soul and heart through song. That's what this music has been for me. And it may not be the flavor that some people understand, but that flavor works for me and my praise and my journey with God.

Charisma: Because of your past, what are your thoughts about Spirit-filled believers today? Does your past change your view of charismatics?

Stapp: No, not at all, not all all. I know the **Holy Spirit** works, because the Holy Spirit moves and works in my life all the time. And I can't deny what I've experienced in the **Pentecostal** church, in terms of the movement of the Holy Spirit. We know in Scripture it talks about the **gifts from God**, and that's something that we all have as followers of Christ Jesus. They manifest themselves in many different forms, as outlined in Scripture.

My thoughts about that haven't changed. [The gifts of the Spirit] are all right there in the Word of God for everyone who loves Christ.

Charisma: Favorite song on the album?

Stapp: Oh, that's tough, because they're all my babies. But, if I can pick three: "Proof of Life," "Only One" and "Dying to Live."

For more information about Scott Stapp, listen to or buy a copy of Proof of Life, visit his website, .