

Greg Laurie Unveils the Salvation of an American Icon

Evangelist, Bible teacher, pastor, radio host and the creator of more than 70 books and films, Pastor Greg Laurie of Harvest Ministries, released his newest book, *Steve McQueen: The Salvation of an American Icon*, Tuesday, June 13.

McQueen, who is often referred to as the “King of Cool” and was in his day the No. 1 movie star in the world, is still, nearly 40 years after his death, identified as a point of reference for masculinity and “coolness.”

Kept alive in pop culture’s collective consciousness through such films as *The Magnificent Seven* (re-made in 2016), *The Great Escape* and *Bullitt*, McQueen’s legendary car chases, death-defying stunts and love for motorcycles continues to inspire an army of modern day fans. In fact, a recent story about the discovery of one of the Bullitt Mustangs driven by Steve McQueen in the 1968 classic film went viral, picked up by news outlets all over the world.

“That story was so fascinating to so many because the mystique of Steve McQueen continues to this day,” says Laurie. “Steve McQueen wasn’t cool because he drove the Bullitt car. The Bullitt car was cool because Steve McQueen drove it.”

“Notwithstanding all his fame and wealth, a colossal vacuum lived rent-free in his heart, a yawning chasm,” adds Laurie. “A lot of people do not know about McQueen’s hardscrabble beginnings. He was born into the home of an alcoholic mother and a father that left him early in life, he found himself on the wrong side of the law more than once. McQueen chased after every pleasure this planet had to offer.”

McQueen’s search led him through Hollywood, the best and fastest cars money could buy, multiple women, including two

divorces, well-documented drug and alcohol abuse, and much more.

Steve McQueen: The Salvation of an American Icon is co-authored with Marshall Terrill—the acclaimed expert on all things Steve McQueen— who has written five other books about the American icon who died of malignant mesothelioma in 1980 at the age of 50. Together, Laurie and Terrill traveled the country interviewing many of those who knew McQueen best and were with him in his last days.

“In a significant turn toward the end of his life, ironically, just before he found out that he had cancer and while still the top movie star on earth, Steve did something that showed me that he really was ‘the coolest of them all.’ He put his faith in God and became a believer in Jesus Christ,” says Laurie.

While the book charts a virtual road-trip taken by Laurie, everything else in the story is real: From Laurie’s own exact replica 1968 Bullitt Mustang to all the facts, personal stories and interviews of those who knew the American icon best. The journey recounts McQueen’s troubled early years, his international fame, his tireless search for purpose outside of Hollywood, and ultimately his conversion and early death.

“In many ways, our lives ran in parallel,” adds Laurie. “I don’t mean to suggest I am on McQueen’s level of ‘cool’ in any way, but we both had troubled early years, fathers that left home, we were both raised by a single mother and we both got into more than a little trouble. Our stories diverge around the age of 20, when I came to faith in Jesus and McQueen went to Hollywood. Ironically, they came back together again when he became a Christian. That’s the life-changing story we uncover through this amazing journey, and it’s a story McQueen, in his own words, worried he’d never be able to share with the world. Now, almost 40 years after his step into heaven, he’ll finally get the chance.”

Pastor Laurie is also currently in production on a documentary film about McQueen by the same title. The film is directed by filmmaker Jon Erwin (*Mom's Night Out*, *Woodlawn*, *October Baby*) and includes on-camera interviews with many of the same characters mentioned in the book as well as current Hollywood icon and avid Steve McQueen fan, Mel Gibson. The film is set to release in September, but you can view the trailer [here](#).

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