

Hillsong's Carl Lentz: No, You Don't Have to Be a Christian to Be in a Relationship With God

Oprah Winfrey asked Hillsong New York Pastor Carl Lentz point blank, "Do you have to be a Christian to believe in God?"

Without hesitation, the pastor said, "No."

While the initial conversation smacks of universalism, there is more to Lentz's comments that many have ignored.

"Our thing is to point people to say, 'Hey, if you allow God, if you will bow your knee and admit your need of God,' and if you do that, and you say, 'Lord ... there's a moment where my repentance matters, and it's right now, and I'm handing over the keys,' if you do that, God can drive this better than you can. ... In that moment, there's a rescue, a salvation, that you can't counterfeit any other way."

When Lentz says "no" to not being a Christian to have a relationship with God, he's not talking about heaven and hell and salvation. Rather, the pastor is discussing how God intervenes in daily lives to express His love to people who don't yet know Him.

"I believe that when Jesus said that 'I am the way, the truth and the life'—the way I read that, Jesus said that He is the road marker, He is the map," Lentz says.

"So, I think that God loves people so much that whether they accept or reject Him, He's still gracious and He's still moving, and He's still giving you massive red blinking lights, for chances to take a right turn where maybe you'd take a

left. I believe God loves people.”

Watch the video (beginning at the six-minute mark!) and let us know what you think of his response.