

Lecrae: God Used Tim Keller to Save My Life

Grammy Award-winning artist Lecrae recently opened up about the critical role evangelical pastor Tim Keller played in saving his life.

While tributes poured in for Keller after his passing in May, Lecrae revealed in an interview with The Christian Post that he found solace and hope in Keller's teachings during one of his darkest moments.

Lecrae faced a massive backlash when he spoke out against racial injustice. The negative response drove him into a place of doubt and deconstruction, questioning the authenticity of his faith. During this time of despair, he stumbled upon Keller's book "Prodigal Prophet," which delves into the biblical story of Jonah pointing to Jesus as God's true prophet.

"I am literally on the verge of wanting to end my life, being honest," Lecrae shared. "And I'm trying to read this book, like, 'God, just speak to me.'"

Amid contemplating ending his life, Lecrae witnessed a life-altering moment in Mexico. As he read about Jonah and a giant fish, he saw a massive whale emerge from the ocean, and in that moment, he felt God's presence, urging him to persevere. This experience deeply impacted him, prompting him to get a whale tattoo on his arm in memory of the encounter.

"And as I'm reading "Prodigal Prophet," a story of Jonah and a giant fish, I see this massive whale come up out of the ocean, and come back down, and the water had been coming from its spout," Lecrae continued. "It was almost as if God was just saying, 'I'm here. I'm with you. I see you, and keep pushing forward.' And that was a life-altering moment."

Keller's influence on Lecrae's life and career went beyond this one instance. Fresh out of college, Lecrae encountered an article on missional living, citing Keller and Lesslie Newbigin, which resonated deeply with him. This led him to write the song "Send Me" based on the insights he gained from Keller's work.

"One of the things I admire about Tim Keller is that he was not there to teach Christians how to become pastors, but he was there to use his biblical insight and wisdom to unpack the scriptures for Christians so that they can be effective believers in society, whatever field of endeavor they functioned in," Lecrae said.

One key aspect of Keller's teachings that left a lasting impact on Lecrae was the concept of "humble excellence" and the freedom to express one's Christianity in secular spaces. This idea empowered Lecrae to navigate the music industry confidently while resonating with both secular and sacred audiences.

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Keller's pastoral ministry, particularly in New York, shaped Lecrae's views and enabled him to interact with secular society with grace and compassion. Despite Keller's perspectives on certain topics drawing criticism, Lecrae commended him for engaging with wisdom and grace in an increasingly polarized culture.

"He was very kind and generous and caring and nurturing toward those outside of the faith while still holding on to his views and his biblical beliefs," Lecrae recalled. "There's a way to do it where you're not obnoxious and you're not condescending, but you're, in many ways, saying, 'Listen, I'm a broken human being like the rest of you all. It's just this grace that is

transformed me ... and allows me to have the confidence in who God is and who I am in Christ."

The rapper admired Keller's commitment to biblical truth, emphasizing the importance of holding onto biblical values rather than aligning with any particular political agenda. Keller's pursuit of understanding society's trends and the centrality of faith in life was a crucial element in his approach to engaging with the world.

As Lecrae enters the next season of his life, he aspires to pass on the wisdom and insights he has gained from Keller's teachings and his own experiences to the younger generation. He seeks to invest in others, leaving a lasting legacy and providing tools to those who need them.

In a world full of noise and political divisiveness, Keller's teachings provided Lecrae an insightful perspective rooted in biblical values. The artist hopes to contextualize these teachings and share them with communities in need, believing that God has blessed him with unique insights that can positively impact others' lives. {eoa}

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