

Phil Robertson: The Best Thing That Ever Came Out of My Past

In 2012, *Duck Dynasty*—a show about our God-fearing, gun-toting, redneck family—swept Middle America. We owned our time slot and had millions of viewers.

Over 11 seasons, we drew viewers from across the country, particularly from the South and the Midwest. We were unconventional for a television family. We didn't curse or drink. We prayed on television. We spoke about God openly. We loved each other and lived out God's intention for a family as best we could. And as we did, our popularity only rose.

I can't exactly say why *Duck Dynasty* was so popular, but I have an educated guess. I reckon the American people were waiting to see a functional family they could identify with, maybe even aspire to. They wanted to see men who were godly men, who worked hard, played hard, taught the gospel in every facet of their lives and weren't mocked at every turn by their wives.

They wanted to see godly women who honored God, cared for their family and community, and were loved by their husbands. The American people needed to believe the God-centered family was still important to American life.

We've done our best to create the kind of family the Almighty honors. One man, loving one wife, raising children to love, honor and serve the King. But if you've followed me for any amount of time, you know I didn't always practice these godly principles. In fact, for the first two decades of my life, I was pretty unruly.

If you wanted to drag a skeleton out of my closet from all

those years ago, it wouldn't take you long to find one. Truth be told, I've dragged out plenty of my own skeletons over the years in an effort to be honest about who I was before the Almighty got hold of me.

I recently broke the news that 45 years ago, I sinned and had an affair outside of my marriage. This was at a time in my life where I didn't know God's love and forgiveness.

Before I met Christ, I didn't give a lick about the King or the ways He'd instructed His people to operate. I didn't care to be the head of my family or to partner with Miss Kay in bringing up godly children under my roof. Instead, I wanted to party and leave Miss Kay to raise the children. I was more interested in flirting and carousing with any woman who crossed my path. I denied the godly order of family, and what did I get for it?

A wife who left me.

Children who didn't know me.

A life that was tearing apart at the seams.

Miss Kay could have divorced me, could have thrown me to the wolves. She didn't, though. Instead, she prayed for me, and when I realized how miserable I was, when I asked her to take me back, she first took me to the preacher, Bill Smith. He helped me to see how broken my life was, how wrecked I was with sin. He shared the Good News of King Jesus with me.

I followed Christ into the waters of baptism and was introduced to a group of men who taught me what the Bible had to say about becoming a man of God. I'm happy to say I learned how to be a godly husband to Miss Kay, who took me back. I learned to love, honor and lead Miss Kay the way the Bible teaches and how to partner with her to raise up our children. I learned how to discipline my children and teach them the good news of the Almighty. I learned the power of embedding

our family in the local church.

When I walked away from those years of lawlessness, when I walked into the saving work of the Almighty, I found a God who forgave every sin and dealt with me in great mercy. I found a church full of people who did the same, who didn't hold any of my past sins against me. Why were these people so forgiving? Why were they kind to me? They followed the way of King Jesus.

I experienced this forgiveness when I repented for my affair 45 years ago. Truth be told, I repented for a whole lot more than one affair. I repented for my rebellion against the holy God. I felt His mercy, and now, I have a newfound daughter who is a blessing to my life. Miss Kay and I agree she is the best thing to come out of my past. She is a beautiful, God-fearing woman, and I am proud to be her father.

This is how God works. He takes our wickedness and turns it into something beautiful. For me that "something beautiful" is my precious daughter. Some of you reading this have made a mess of your life. You think that there is no way to find meaning to your life and an identity not overshadowed by shame. For others, this describes someone you love.

Here is my message to you and those you love. There is a way. Jesus says that He alone is the way. He is the truth and the life. None of us can get to the Father except through Him. So, give up, lay down your arms, repent and turn to the only one who can save you.

Turn to Jesus, who is the fullness of deity in bodily form, God in flesh. It's never too late. {eoa}

Phil Robertson is a professional hunter who invented his own duck call and founded the successful Duck Commander Company. He also starred in the popular television series on A&E, Duck Dynasty, and is now the host of the new subscription television series In the Woods with Phil on . He is a New York Times' bestselling author of The Theft of America's Soul,

Happy, Happy, Happy and UnPHILtered. He and his wife, Kay, live in West Monroe, Louisiana. He has five children, 18 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. His newest book, Jesus Politics: How to Win Back the Soul of America, releases August 4, 2020. and will be available wherever books are sold.

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