

Why 'Preachers of LA' Won't Turn Out Well for Rock-Star Pastors

I was on Facebook for a minute to check email and saw a friend's post about the new reality show *Preachers of L.A.* It simply said, "Preachers of LA, hmmm." That summed up my initial thoughts as well, so I turned it on and watched the first episode.

My first thought was, *Why would anyone serious about ministry subject themselves to the reality show game of posturing and editing by producers to get viewers, not necessarily to tell the truth?* I'm no stranger to this, as I was approached in 2006 to do my own show. The producers wanted a show about the life of an evangelist. I discussed it with my wife but deep down I knew no matter how hard we tried to show the realistic demands and passion about the ministry life the producers would edit it in ways that would not portray who we truly are just to sell the show. In other words, drama sells.

When I asked why they had sought me out their response was, "You have an interesting back story" I knew what they meant. I had been a firefighter in Oklahoma who had left to pursue a career as an actor. My desire was to help people at a greater level through the money and influence of a successful career. While I did experience some success, I also made some of the worst choices of my life.

As a nonbeliever at the time I was definitely not being Spirit-led in my choices. I chose to act in some low-budget movies and playboy vignettes. My justification was that the sex scene I was acting out wasn't any worse than you see in mainstream movies. The reality was being associated with this ruined any chance of a legitimate acting career and has come

up a couple of times in my 15 years of speaking.

I knew those producers wouldn't tell my story of restoration the way it should be told: my rededication at The Church on the Way and Pastor Jack Hayford's messages changing my life; my walking away from the entertainment world to become a speaker to both faith-based and secular audiences encouraging people to get their shout back and live their dreams. So I made the choice to say no to the temptation of reality television.

Which brings me back to *Preachers of L.A.* I spent 11 years in Los Angeles and have met a couple of the pastors on the show. I was even good friends with one of the pastors' wives from the days of The Hollywood Bible Study. I understand the L.A. culture and what it's like to minister in that city. But there is a reason you don't see much more high-profile preachers on this show. They knew better!

We must all have the guts to show our scars and tell our story to give others hope and set them free. But it's another to leverage that for our gain. I will not judge these men for putting themselves and their families in this position, but I think they need to look long and hard at what their motive was for saying yes. No matter what their motive was, this will not go well. The feedback on Twitter and Facebook has been 95 percent negative. The best we can hope for is that this creates dialogue that will challenge us all to stay humble and teachable no matter our position.

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