

John MacArthur Responds to the Steven Lawson Scandal

Recently, Pastor John MacArthur returned to Grace Community Church for the first time since undergoing a medical procedure that kept him sidelined from preaching. MacArthur sat down for a Q&A session led by Nathan Busenitz, executive vice president of The Master's Seminary and an elder at GCC, as reported by Church Leaders.

The conversation quickly turned to the topic of leadership failures within the church, most notably the downfall of Steven Lawson. Busenitz asked MacArthur how GCC should process the "adversity that comes from inside the church when people that we respect and trust turn out to be different than we thought they were.

"I know you're talking about Steve Lawson, and I say that with the deepest agony in my soul," MacArthur says. Lawson, a former leader at the church and a long-time friend of MacArthur, had recently been exposed for sexual misconduct with a younger woman. MacArthur was candid about the pain of the situation but emphasized that God's hand is at work in exposing such behavior.

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"The first thing you have to understand is [that] God is blessing this church in many, many ways. And that is one of the ways He is blessing us: to expose someone who is in a position they have no right to be in to purify the church," MacArthur explains. He adds, "It is fatal to a church to have that kind of behavior in leadership."

MacArthur points out that God knew the hearts of the many pastors who have fallen into sin. "The Lord said, 'For Grace

Church, that's enough. For the Master's Seminary, that's enough'."

MacArthur sees this painful experience as part of a larger divine plan to purify the church. "As we get closer to the end, I think the Lord is purifying His church, and I'm so thankful for that," he says. However, MacArthur expressed deep sorrow for his former colleague, saying, "My heart and soul aches for Steve, obviously, a friend."

Despite his disappointment, MacArthur continues to pray for Lawson, adding, "I pray constantly, in fact, I find myself almost every night praying for him in some point in the middle of the night."

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The situation with Steve Lawson, and in churches around the world suffering from fallen leadership, is a sobering reminder of the biblical requirements for pastors and church leaders. According to 1 Timothy 3:2, a pastor "must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, able to teach." Leaders in the church are called to a high standard, and when they fall, the damage to the body of Christ is profound.

These reflections show the need for continuous prayer, not just for those in leadership but for all Christians. As more leaders fall into sin, it is crucial for believers to support their pastors in prayer, regardless of denomination. The spiritual war is real, and if the church does not stand firm, Satan's influence will grow unchecked. As MacArthur emphasizes, "We would be foolish to think that there wouldn't be an effort made by the enemy to plant in this church someone who could have a corrupting influence."

The church must remain vigilant, praying for purity in

leadership and trusting that God is at work in consecrating His people.

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