

GNITN

#911

The Idol of the Platform Rethinking Christian Fame

Shocking News

As a Christian who's been one since the 1970's I've seen my fair share of so-called stars come and go. Some were promoted to Heaven and their lives celebrated. Others simply decided that the limelight wasn't for them and decided to do something else. Still others turned their backs on Christianity altogether and used their talents for secular endeavors. And unfortunately there are some who were living double lives, professing a public life of ministry while being involved in private sin that eventually was exposed. To be honest, the pressures of fortune and fame are always going to affect people differently and avoiding the traps and dangers of those two are nothing new whether in the Church or outside of it. So if the Lord should tarry I imagine there will always be a preacher, evangelist, singer or other Christian minister that will fall and disappoint us. Some would say it's just the way of the world. However, it still stings and disappoints when it happens. It leaves us with raw emotions initially and then that can turn to doubting anyone in the public spotlight and then it can actually cause Christians to turn their backs on God entirely. Now, in the day and age where the news cycle is practically instant nothing is easily hidden and everything is over scrutinized. Bad news comes at us so fast that we are left to wonder if anyone is really who they say they are. The shocks to our individual and corporate lives don't seem to end now.

Not Good News Boys

This week a story broke that the lead singer for the Christian music band *Newsboys* Michael Tait left the group which wasn't recent news since he left in January, but why he left is what is causing all the flack. A [report](#) on Tait's less than Christian behavior going back to 2004 opened the door wide for speculation and rumors and is still making major waves in and out of Christian circles. Here is how a [report](#) from *CBN.com* recounts things:

The members of the Christian rock band Newsboys released a statement Thursday in response to allegations of sexual misconduct and drug abuse against former frontman, Michael Tait, saying they are "devastated" by a recent report outlining his behavior.

Band members Jeff Frankenstein, Jody Davis, Duncan Phillips, and Adam Agee released the joint statement days after an investigative report by The Roys Report detailed accounts from three men who say Tait groomed and assaulted them while on tour.

The report took time to put together:

The more than two-year investigation alleges the men were assaulted between 2004 and 2014. After reading the details it was very unsettling to say the least. If you want to take a deep dive into it, you're free to do so. The man on the proverbial hot seat hasn't spoken up yet:

As of Friday morning, Tait has not responded publicly to the allegations.

The band members did, though:

"Last night our hearts were shattered when we read the news alleging drug abuse and inappropriate sexual actions by our former lead singer, Michael Tait," the Newsboys wrote in a statement released on their social media page. "While Michael has not addressed these allegations, we are devastated even by the implications."

"First and foremost, our hearts are with the victims who have bravely shared their stories. If you are a victim, we urge you to come forward. We absolutely do not condone any form of sexual assault," the statement continued.

A Little More History

The CBN article gives us some history on the story from the band's perspective:

After years of singing with DC Talk, Tait was invited to be the frontman of the Newsboys in 2009 following the exit of lead vocalist Peter Furler. He recorded eight albums with the Newsboys before his departure in late January.

Frankenstein, Phillips, and Davis joined the band a decade earlier in the 1990s, although Davis took a five-year hiatus in the early 2000s. Agee joined the band in 2023, Crosswalk.com reports. Corporately, their statement was heartbreaking:

"The four of us are husbands and fathers. Between the four of us, we have fourteen children. Our wives and children have made many sacrifices while we have dedicated our lives to playing music together that glorifies God. We are horrified, heartbroken, and angry at this report, and in many ways, we feel as if we and our families have been deceived for the last fifteen years."

The band knew generics until now which makes some wonder how such subterfuge could have been hidden from them for so long:

In a May interview with the Christian Post Agee said Tait surprised the group with his departure and initially told them "he was going to focus on himself."

"I know that he left and he just gave us a few reasons why he was stepping down, and he just said he's going to focus on himself," Agee said at the time. "Other than that, I don't really know, because we didn't really discuss it further. Hopefully, he'll make some kind of a statement soon, but that, again, is just up to him."

When Tait left the group at the beginning of this year he did give them a hint of what was to come:

However, in the recent statement, the group admits, "When he left the band in January, Michael confessed to us and our management that he 'had been living a double-life' but we never imagined that it could be this bad."

That's an understatement and a sad one at that. But those are the current events surrounding this, however what is the Biblical perspective?

It Will Happen Again

As believers we surely know that until we shuffle off this mortal coil we're going to be tempted to fall into sin just like Tait. And the Bible is replete with examples of this going all the way back to the Garden of Eden. So why is it still so hard for us to understand that a person who we respected and thought so highly of does the same? Could it be that we played some part in the fall by putting these artists on pedestals in the first place? I think that does factor into it, but I'm not as interested in this happening as much as I want to explore how it can be avoided in the future. The [pressures](#) of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are things we all face regardless of our lots in life. One major thing to do to avoid these sad reveals is to

have only one God in our lives and to avoid making idols of anyone or anything. That is after all [one](#) of the Ten Commandments. It's the Word of God that changes our lives and the vessel is just a sinner saved by grace. That should never change. Music is a wonderful gift from God that touches us in ways like no other. Just because a person has that gift and uses it for the kingdom doesn't make them better than anyone else. Yet we pay big prices for tickets to watch them perform just like we do for secular acts as if there is no difference. The worker is worthy of this hire as we read in [1 Timothy 5:18](#) so it's not wrong to be paid for a concert, but when does that pay become exorbitant and become a source of pride? Keith Green would never charge for his records of concerts and one artist I helped was angry with me when I didn't give away his records for free to anyone who couldn't afford them. I get it. But should we make big events and shows out of Christian music concerts just so we can show the world we're just as good as they are? Perhaps a little soul searching is in order here. But I'm not sure that just this would have avoided the Tait debacle.

Being Held To Account

When the Promise Keepers movement was all the rage one of the things that they preached was that men needed to be accountable to each other especially if they were in ministry. They developed an [iron sharpens iron](#) process that many men use to this day. Men would ask each other seven questions that would force them to stay on the straight and narrow. And then there are programs like [Covenant Eyes](#) that help anyone struggling with pornography. Each of these could have helped Tait deal with his sexual sins and I think if these performers were involved in disciplines like this it would be a great thing. Of course being a part of an on fire, Bible believing and teaching church where one's celebrity status is put in check and their Christian walk is put into action by say volunteering to help others consistently helps. Many of these bands and artists tour non-stop and don't take time off to rest and recharge. They live on buses and hotels where they can hide their lifestyles for long stretches of time. So disciplining themselves to slow down is not a bad thing as well. The higher the pressure, the more of the limelight the greater the need to be submissive to authorities that will make you take account for your weaknesses and affirm your walk with the Lord. There is no substitute for those things.

Don't Throw Stones

The infamous atheist [Madalyn Murray O'Hair](#) is known for saying Christians are the only army that shoots its wounded and regardless of whether she actually said that or not isn't the point. The sad part is that it's an accurate portrayal of what the Body of Christ does when people fall into sin. It is actually not a trait of just Christians, but it shouldn't be. The golden rule is the standard we need to follow, but our flesh usually encourages us to pig pile on to people who should know better. Trust me when I tell you it is an easy knee jerk response to those who make Christianity look bad. Yes, Tait is making us Jesus Freaks regret he ever was a part of that song, however he needs us more than ever if we want him to get right with God. And that is the ultimate goal. If God [cares](#) so much that He doesn't want anyone to perish eternally then we should care that much, too. While there is an element of judgment needed which is to not white wash the sin, there should also be a greater element of a loving call to repentance, restoration and in some cases restitution. We should all grieve for Tait and those he violated but that shouldn't be the end of the issue. We should, at the very least, pray for them more than we criticize or pass judgment on them. If they want to be made whole again then we need to be first ones to make

that happen if we're in a position to do it. Those who exposed things are playing a part in the healing, but oftentimes it's left at that and people turn things over to the legal system to provide justice. As the Body of Christ we must see a higher purpose for the exposure. I hope and pray that there will be good news that will come from this. And if we are open to it, that will happen.