



[Editor's Note: When I first published this article, I linked to a previous article I had written about lessons I had learned from Ravi. In light of the recent report, I have taken that article down and removed the link to it here.]

In this day and age that demands we have an instant opinion about every single global issue, I wanted to take some time to reflect on the recent news of Ravi Zacharias' sexual misconduct before I put my thoughts to words. It's been a couple of weeks since [the findings of an independent investigation were released](#), so I thought now would be an appropriate time to talk about some lessons to be learned here.

For those unfamiliar with Ravi, he was certainly one of the world's most popular Christian speakers/evangelists/apologists in recent years. Earlier this year, he passed from cancer and the Christian world mourned. I didn't follow Ravi the same way I follow other apologists, but I did learn some very valuable lessons from him. And, I felt saddened that such a powerful piece in spreading the message of the gospel was no longer in play.

Shortly after his death, women who worked at spas that he co-owned came forward and made some disturbing allegations about Ravi's sexual misconduct towards them. As the story unfolded, the reactions from the apologetics community were varied. Many said we need to be open to the discovery of the truth. Many immediately attacked the source of the report - saying it had a vendetta against Ravi. One thing is for sure; *none* of us saw this coming. The Ravi we saw publicly was a shining example of what we pictured a Christ-follower to be - loving, gentle, winsome, and exuding the light of the gospel that he told everyone had transformed him.

After the allegations surfaced, RZIM (the ministry Ravi started) had an independent investigation conducted and in an interim report [they found the allegations to be true](#) (*Note: as of the writing of this article the investigation is still ongoing*).

Now, the reaction was even *more* varied. Some people leapt to immediate condemnation, some people leapt to immediate forgiveness, some people continued to cry "fake news". Almost everybody mourned. Again.

If the report is true (and we have no reason as of yet to think it is not), then the things Ravi did were out and out wrong. There is no waffling on this fact. We all know this. And, so, a few questions come to mind. Was Ravi saved? Did he believe in the Gospel that he proclaimed? What about all the work his ministry has done?

Most of the articles I have read have talked directly about Ravi and his eternal destiny. I



wanted to take a different angle, however. I wanted to take these events, reflect on them, and see how I can grow personally.

Christianity Is Still True

When prominent figures like Ravi are found to be doing things that go against what Christ taught, it's really easy to have your faith rattled. People see Christians living lifestyles they supposedly are against; the non-believer sees a bunch of hypocrites and says "no, thank you". But, whether a worldview is true or not has nothing to do with the people who hold it and everything to do with what the worldview claims. One must look at the teaching of the worldview and examine what the perfect embodiment of that worldview would be. For Christians, that's easy. The perfect embodiment of our worldview actually existed on Earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. So, rather than call Christianity false because Christians misbehave, ask if this particular immoral behavior is something Jesus would have done. Crusades? Nope. Slavery? Nuh uh. Sexual abuse of women? Not a chance.

Also, the fact that leaders of Christianity have been caught breaking every one of the Ten Commandments does nothing to change the fact that Jesus was executed, laid to rest in a tomb that was later found empty, was reportedly seen by hundreds of his followers after his death, and his followers lead transformed lives after witnessing his return. *These* facts are what make Christianity true. Not whether its adherents can follow its teachings correctly or not.

Ravi Wasn't King David

Once the findings of the investigation came out, people (wisely) turned to Scripture to see how God has handled similar situations in the past. One example that gets used quite a bit is the example of King David. King David committed adultery (it's possible this was even a rape), tried to trick the husband of his mistress, and eventually had him killed. That's pretty bad. And yet, even after his death, David is still referred to as a man after God's own heart.

The one element that is missing to be able to compare Ravi to King David is this; David made a very public statement of repentance. After his repentance, David drew closer to God again and walked with him to the end of his days. We don't know if Ravi did or not. We can hope that he got right with the Lord before he passed. Maybe he confessed to his wife or to others. We just don't know. Thankfully his salvation isn't up to me. For now, though, I think this comparison of Ravi to David is inaccurate.



Pray For The Victims

The first thing I would suggest we do is to pray for the victims. When stories like this come out, most of the talk is on the leader, of course. What were the details of the incident? How could this happen? What does this mean? Often times, it feels like we forget to think about the victims of these crimes. They may get a handful of words in a thousand-word article. They often get lost in the glare of the public figure who victimized them. But, the first people we should be praying for are the victims whose lives have been forever altered.

Pray For His Family

Ravi left behind a wife, children, grandchildren, and likely other extended family members. They are left here to deal with the backlash of Ravi's actions. We don't know how much they knew before the reports came out. Either way, they are all probably hurting right now so, we need to be praying for healing for them as well.

Pray For Ravi's Ministry

Despite the actions of its founder, there is no question how impactful RZIM has been since its founding. Apologists tend to take on the form of [Christian sheepdogs](#); we naturally keep a watchful eye on the messages being taught, the techniques being used, and the character of those who would share the good news. When Ravi was actively speaking, I don't think anyone would have called into question the impact, effectiveness, and content of Ravi's ministry. RZIM has touched the lives of thousands of people all over the globe. They send speakers into areas of the globe that have never heard the gospel before. [I listen to a few of their podcasts](#) and every one of the speakers I listen to has a heart for sharing the truth of Christianity.

RZIM, as an organization, is going through a lot right now. [According to this article published in the Miami Herald](#), many people associated with RZIM are calling for a complete wipe of the current board as a show of accountability for Ravi's actions. There are lots of other accusations, of course.

That RZIM is a force for good, I think, is undeniable. We need to continue praying for them as they work through how to deal with all this. And that God may help them to find a way forward with the good work they all desire to do.



Be Careful Who You Put On A Pedestal

When I come across someone in the public - in the form of a speaker, a teacher, a pastor, a celebrity, an athlete - it is really easy for me to elevate that person to almost untouchable status. They may have taught me some great wisdom or insight. They may have shown the fruits of the spirit in a way that was powerful. They may have embodied the principles I try to live by in their actions on and off the football field. When this happens, it's easy to prop these people up. I cheer, "yeah! He's on *my* side!" Because I feel he or she is on my side, I lean towards thinking they can do no wrong. And I immediately jump to their defense if anyone has anything bad to say about them. Because he's my guy. Or girl.

I didn't have that same connection with Ravi the way so many people did. Not because I thought he was a bad teacher or anything like that. I still learned from him quite a bit. But, I do certainly connect with other "giants" of the apologetic community. There are a handful of teachers and speakers who I cite regularly here or never miss a Youtube video or podcast episode they put out. I have my heroes, too.

I think the lesson here is not to expect too much from my "heroes". They aren't perfect. In fact, I should expect to find imperfections in their character. Just because we are saved doesn't mean we are sinless. Just because my heroes know a lot doesn't mean they know everything.

That last paragraph may sound like I'm preparing myself to be able to excuse what Ravi did. No so. The lesson for me here is that I should remember that no one is deserving of too high an elevation in this lifetime. No matter how much I agree with them or how much I have learned from them or many followers they have or how pointy their hat is. Which leads me to the final takeaway for me...

I Could Be Ravi

I don't care who you are, nobody creates content for an audience of one. I don't write these articles for myself. Does writing these articles help me in my journey and growth? Absolutely. But, if this was only for myself, I would just journal it privately. No, the whole reason I pay for the web hosting, put in the work to write the articles, and then share content on social platforms is because I want to grow an audience. I truly feel like God has pointed me in a direction to learn certain things and then share them with others. Not just keep it to myself.

As I have watched many Christian leaders fall over the past few years - some by the



discovery of some impropriety and some just flat out walking away - I've caught myself wondering why so many leaders are falling. And why so publicly? Again, these questions have nothing to do with whether or not Christianity is true. They speak more to the nature of humanity. I start asking myself if these people can fall, how easy would it be for me? Would I resist my *own* sinful nature and desires to be part of what the culture deems socially acceptable were I in a similar situation? Who's to say that if my writing or speaking "career" ever took off, I wouldn't also fall victim to some of my own personal temptations? I don't have delusions of grandeur. I'm not picturing myself flying across the globe and speaking to thousands as Ravi did. But, even so, with a rise in popularity, I can easily see how that might go to my head if I don't stay humble. Or the temptation of compromising the message for material success and comfort. Or other things...

So, where will Ravi be when the Final Judgement comes? I have no idea. When a man does such good and such wrong, it's hard to know what will happen. All I can do is try to take some lessons from the stuff that I *do* know. I need to pray for the people closest to Ravi, pray for those affected by him, and pray for those carrying on the good work he started. I need to praise and honor those who are doing good work but also be careful not to think of them as untouchable. And, I need to recognize my own fallibility, not dismiss what happened as something I am incapable of, and think of myself as too strong on my own.