



Christians in the Age of Outrage: How to Bring Our Best When the World Is at Its Worst

Ed Stetzer

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Christians in the Age of Outrage: How to Bring Our Best When the World Is at Its Worst Ed Stetzer **Are you tired of reading another news story about Christians supposedly acting at their worst?**

Today there are too many examples of those claiming to follow Christ being caustic, divisive, and irrational, contributing to dismissals of the Christian faith as hypocritical, self-interested, and politically co-opted. What has happened in our society? One short outrageous video, whether it is true or not, can trigger an avalanche of comments on social media.

Welcome to the new age of outrage.

In this groundbreaking book featuring new survey research of evangelicals and their relationship to the age of outrage, Ed Stetzer offers a constructive way forward. You won't want to miss Ed's insightful analysis of our chaotic age, his commonsensical understanding of the cultural currents, and his compelling challenge to Christians to live in a refreshingly different way.

Christians in the Age of Outrage: How to Bring Our Best When the World Is at Its Worst Details

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Stacy says

I won this book as a FirstRead.

Christians in the Age of Outrage is a book that desperately needs to be read by Christians of all denominations and political persuasions. There is so much in the news these days that can lead to anger, and while there are situations where anger is justified, much of the anger we see these days (especially online) is not constructive or being elicited for the right reasons. In this book, Stetzer talks about the outrage in the world today and how Christians contribute to it. Next, he looks at the lies that people use to justify their outrage. Finally, he lists ways Christians should be responding instead. Stetzer's personal political leanings occasionally creep in, but he does a good job of dissecting the way the Christian right and the Christian left each tend to get wrapped up in outrage. Each chapter is full of Bible verses and statistics to back up his points.

Rob says

A good read, even if you disagree with Ed's theology

I'm what some would classify as an ex-evangelical. I left my Baptist church in 2012 and now classify myself as a Lutheran. While I don't agree with Ed's views on certain theological issues, I still find him an insightful voice to follow. This book illustrates why.

Ed reminds us of some basic manners we all seem to have forgotten. Listen to others politely. When disagreeing, do so respectfully. Not everyone will share your worldview, and those who don't aren't your enemy. Not behaving in this way damages our testimony and closes people's minds to our words.

Julie Stroud says

Long read, a bit of a commitment to get through it. Although worthy of your time! Stetzer is a theologian with sociology and politics thrown in... seriously, this book gets at the questions many of us have these days about our changing culture and the fractures we are seeing and feeling in evangelicalism. My chief disappointment was the author's political bias creeps in. Still looking for an author that is the right blend of theology-sociology-political science. Stetzer's work is notable but not quite my cup of tea.

John Haydon says

A good read and well-thought out. Stetzer tries to walk a middle ground and tries to please everyone. Maybe it's not that simple. Yes, it is vital that we show love and kindness, and see people from God's POV, but we must defend values. This defense can be done with love and not giving in to the slippery slope of trying to

please everyone. People of faith need to unite and that means making coalitions and not living in our own Christian world-view. It means uniting with Catholics, Mormons, Baptists, and Muslims to stand up for God-centered values.

Stetzer does make some great points.

Ben says

I listened to the audio version, so there are definitely some pieces I missed along the way, but this is one of those books that is a must read for any follower of Christ who is looking to engage this world that we live in. Outrage never changed someone's mind. But, love has. How do we, as followers of Christ, Christ's love in a world that is filled with so much rage and emotionally charged "conversations" that tend to turn into shouting matches where I simply want to get my point across and I do not want to listen.

Pick up this book and read it. You will be thankful you did. And so will those in your sphere of influence.

Petermathieson says

Highly recommended. This was a great read on how Christians can navigate through today's culture of instant outrage. Stetzer is fair in his critique of both right and left sides of the political spectrum. He offers lots of relevant examples and statistics to go along with his points. I especially liked his thoughts on disgust and, how Christians should approach social media. The book also covers topics like winsome love and how to neighbor. It was great.

Maggie Boyd says

Ed Stetzer is someone I pray for and admire. A minister who provides an important voice of reason in his blogs, I've been pleased to see him strike for balance and integrity among conservative Christians. This book's plea for rational, compassionate discussions on subjects upon which we disagree was lovely in many ways but I found it lacking in several key factors.

For example, in the chapter Christians Are the Worst! Ed speaks of divorce rate in the bible belt and offers a truly dizzying array of reasons why this is the case. There is a higher rate of marriage and therefore a higher rate of divorce. (That's not how statistics are calculated, but I'll let that slide.) Next up is that people in the bible belt marry younger and have more financial difficulties, which is a zero excuse factor for divorce when applied to Christians. Jesus didn't say, "Follow me - when it works but don't sweat it if it's a problem for you." So, nope, sorry if Christians divorce because they marry younger or have financial trouble, they are still divorcing and it is still a problem. Then comes the subject of "Nones in disguise". His argument seems to be they aren't really us, therefore we can't really be held accountable for them. Here is his tight rope walk on the issue:

Christians cannot blame nominal believers as a way to avoid dealing with the very real and destructive contributions we have made to the age of outrage. On the other hand, we must reject the cultural narrative that says Christians are responsible for every self-identifying Christian with nothing but a nominal faith.

Two big issues here: Does the bible really teach that there are nominal believers? I would be interested to see

the scripture on this. Living the Christian life can be difficult, if there's an easy way out that actually works I'd love to read about it. (No more forgiving people who bug me! Bliss!)

The second issue is, we aren't being judged for some random couple from Alabama mouthing off. The idea that non-Christians are so unreasonable that they are pulling strays from obscure areas and demanding that we explain XYZ opinion held by that questionable soul is ludicrous. When you hear calls of hypocrisy from the masses it is almost always because prominent Christians will say something like "character matters" when looking at someone who doesn't hold their political opinion but will suddenly find grace when a truly deplorable person agrees with them on something political. Case in point is Donald Trump: Cheats on his wives, divorced three times, pays off porn stars and appears in Playboy videos. Lauded over Jimmy Carter, married for decades to one woman, teaches Sunday school, never cheated on anything. Prominent Christian voices like Franklin Graham and Jerry Falwell Jr., the very men complaining of the character of other candidates, say Trump is a "blessing" to the church. So no, please let's not pretend those calls of hypocrisy are being made because some "nominal" believer stumbled. Let's be honest and say we have a real hypocrisy issue in our church. And clearly, a discipleship issue as well if we find ourselves dealing with a lot of "nominals"!

I think the book also didn't deal with the clear issue of church discipline. Perhaps there is a copy being distributed to pastors and church congress dealing with that but the fact is that for too long the church has taken a very lenient tone to the sinners among ourselves and saved our outrage for the those outside the church, in clear contradiction to the teaching of 1 Corinthians 5. It is all well and good to be nice to each other but it does us little benefit if that niceness includes ignoring the danger and reality of sin. Some Christians hold views that are dangerous, merely backing away and saying, "Be blessed" has had them taking over our fellowships. I recommend reading books like *When Sheep Attack* by Dennis R. Maynard or *Antagonists in the Church* by Kenneth C. Haugk which deal with the reality of churches/church members finding themselves on the wrong end of bad Christians. The idea of right and wrong is a core belief of our faith, why are we so reluctant to deal with it in our bodies?

The author's overall message is a positive and important one but the book contains some fatal flaws that kept it from being very helpful to this Christian.

J. says

Karl Barth once said, "Take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible."

Christians in the Age of Outrage by Ed Stetzer is a bit like a valuable commentary on the 'newspaper' of our contemporary world. With refreshing analysis and insight, Stetzer spotlights our turbulent age. This commentary is filled with unclouded, razor-sharp and crisp cultural observation and exegesis that is immensely helpful for Christians who want to map out, understand, and navigate the foggy roads of this age of outrage. So if you want to better understand and engage with the intricacies and anomalies of our age, this book is for you.

The foundation of this book is not fluff or speculations. Instead, it is built upon two solid pillars: Scriptures and research. Stetzer has soaked this book in the Scriptures. Also, he has utilized modern research as a point of reference to highlight the nuances and complexities of this chaotic age. This intersection between research and the Scriptures is done with integrity and insight.

By reading this book, Christians can be equipped to engage with the age of outrage in constructive ways, being challenged to see and overcome their blind spots and winsomely commend the gospel.

I thank Tyndale House Publishers for providing me with a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Steve Briggs says

I think that Stetzer has correctly identified the values associated with being a Christian and also attempting to navigate today's social media and regular media. It is a quality read and provides exceptional insights in discussing today's current issues from a standpoint of firm loving values. I cannot recommend this book enough!

Jim Keating says

In this day and age, Christians can take on a lot of criticism from skeptics, some deserved. Stetzer lays out his case for Christians engaging with current culture, social media, the non-churched and respond as Jesus would, with radical grace, winsome love, generous compassion and prayerful hearts that break the brokenness of the world.

Lots of stats boost his case. Definitely worth your time if you really don't want to retreat if you feel like your being attacked in this hostile environment toward Christians

Becky Van Daniker says

If there's a book that every Christian should read, it would be "Christians in the Age of Outrage" by Ed Stetzer. We live in a world where outrage seems to be all the rage, especially when it comes to politics and social media.

Stetzer explains how we got to this point and how we as Christians are to stand out and live as a light in a dark world. He uses sound theology and scripture to back up his claims. He challenges his readers with practical applications and truly makes you think. He also shares a ton of statistical research.

I may have to check out more of his books in the future because this one was awesome.

Highly recommended!

Disclaimer: I won a digital copy of this book in a Goodreads giveaway.

John Sagherian says

Just finished reading Ed Stetzer's "Christians in the Age of Outrage." A very timely book with practical and much needed observations and suggestions. Ed's challenge is to live "the Good News that changes us from

outraged spectators to Grace-filled participants in God's redemptive plan for the world," something I need to be reminded of.

Don says

I found this book to strike just the right balance between astute cultural analysis and sound Biblical exposition. I regularly follow Stetzer's writings in my work as a pastor. I usually agree with him, but even in those cases, he still challenges and stretches me. That was true with this book. He doesn't just diagnose the issues; he also prescribes Biblical remedies that would really help if and as we apply them. I was struck that much of the solution comes down to basic discipleship: the more professing believers live like Jesus, the less we will contribute to the outrage du jour and the brighter our Christian witness will shine. I warmly recommend to anyone troubled by the heated tone of so much of today's public "discourse."

Rodney Harvill says

For the record, I obtained this book as part of a Goodreads giveaway.

When I studied James and took a long hard look at the passages on controlling the tongue, I couldn't help realizing that the way Christians interact with each other in person and on-line often falls short of the high standard presented by James. It was very convicting, especially in the context of social media. While I have had some very productive and mutually agreeable interactions and discussions, I have also had some moments when I let my anger get the best of me, usually in the context of politics. So, I have since kept my eye out for books that might offer suggestions on managing the tongue (and the typing fingers) and was thrilled to get a copy of this book. While I have some criticisms of its content and don't necessarily agree with everything the author suggests, I have found the book to be insightful and profitable for Christian growth.

As should be obvious from the title, the target audience is Christians, especially those in the United States. The author has rightly noted that we Christians have become frustrated with our waning influence over our culture and political system, a frustration that often manifests itself in outrage, ranting over issues increasingly beyond our control that affect our lives. I remember being amused at the people who assembled on the first anniversary of Donald Trump's election to the presidency to scream at the sky. In recent years I have seen plenty of screaming on my social media feed over from Christian conservatives like myself, Christians who should be able to constructively air their disagreements without doing so in an unchristian manner. So, I think the author has a legitimate criticism.

The author also notes that Christians often look to political power to protect them, and I am inclined to agree with him. For example, consider the 2016 presidential campaign, which pitted Donald Trump, a very ungodly man known for unchristian conduct who reached out to Christians, against Hillary Clinton, an ungodly woman whose platform would likely continue President Obama's policies that empowered those who were trying to force Christians to choose between their livelihoods and practicing their professions consistent with their Christian beliefs. Given that a conservative Supreme Court justice had just died, and Donald Trump had promised to replace him with a conservative, many Christians held their noses and supported him, contributing to his victory, and he has pursued policies favorable to Christians. Although I didn't want Clinton to become president, I chose not to vote for Trump on account of his character, but am

completely sympathetic to those who chose to do so. They didn't want a Clinton presidency, and the only way to avoid it was to vote for Trump. The principle of sowing and reaping has never changed. That said, there is a difference between supporting a certain political candidate or party because you think it will do the most good and putting your hope in them to save you. When Donald Trump was elected president, I saw it as nothing more than a temporary reprieve from political changes that are increasingly adverse to Christians, an opportunity to build up my faith and that of others for the hard testing that is sure to follow. So, I agree with the author. Don't put your faith in politicians or political power. Such is more likely than not a broken reed that will wound the hand that leans on it.

Although I found much to agree with and benefit from in this book (and there is a lot more content than I have discussed above), I did find something to criticize. All his criticism seems pointed at the Christian right. As noted above, the conduct of the Christian right too often less than praiseworthy and unworthy of its Lord and Savior. However, my social media feed includes members of the Christian left, as well, and I haven't been impressed with their conduct either. Furthermore, I have seen on-line opinion pieces characterizing as idolatry such things as supporting Trump or standing when the national anthem is being played. Not too long ago, a Christian coworker was talking about Trump supporters with such a condescending tone that I actually envisioned him as a Pharisee in the temple thanking God that he wasn't like one of these Trump supporters (see Lk. 18:9-14). Whenever I see such things, I can't help but notice that whatever stands their political opponents are taking seem to be idolatrous, and whatever stands they are taking are always the epitome of righteousness. How convenient! Although this may simply reflect my cynicism, I envision Christian leftists reading this book and its strong criticism of the Christian right only to conclude that they are the guests of honor at the I'm-ok-you're-not-ok corral. They need to recalibrate their values to Christ just as much as the Christian right does.

Aside from the above criticism, I enjoyed the book and hope to be a better Christian influence on account of its suggestions.

Joan says

Stetzer notes that our world is awash with anger. How are Christians to walk through this? Stetzer is quick to point out that there are areas that should generate Christian anger, such as human trafficking. But how do Christians keep from allowing unrestrained outrage?

The book is divided into three sections. Stetzer first looks at what causes the outrage and how Christians have contributed to it. Next he identifies the lies that reinforce the outrage. Stetzer then suggests ways Christians can counteract the outrage by developing a Christian worldview, by loving others, engaging them thoughtfully, etc.

I gleaned many insights from this book. Because of the influence of Christianity in the past, Christians came to think they "owned" culture in America. American Christians have not learned how to flourish in a minority situation, as did early Christians. Another insight was about tribalism and having a win/lose attitude, like in sports, rather than one of coexisting.

Perhaps the most disturbing insight was about trading a kingdom-based identity for a world-based identity. Stetzer identified what we Christians have done to have others outraged at us. The most glaring has been to use kingdom-based identity to achieve world-based ends, such as in politics.

The bottom line is that, “Outrage is a product of the flesh.” (2224/5424) Stetzer offers practical suggestions on engaging others in the Spirit, placing the focus on God and His glory. He also includes resources for further study.

I recommend this book to Christians who are ready to own up to how we have helped create the negative environment we now experience. You'll be encouraged to discipline your minds to think more critically and to engage others with the gospel, not hatred.

Food for thought: “You see, you can't hate people and engage them with the gospel at the same time.”
(2252/5424)
