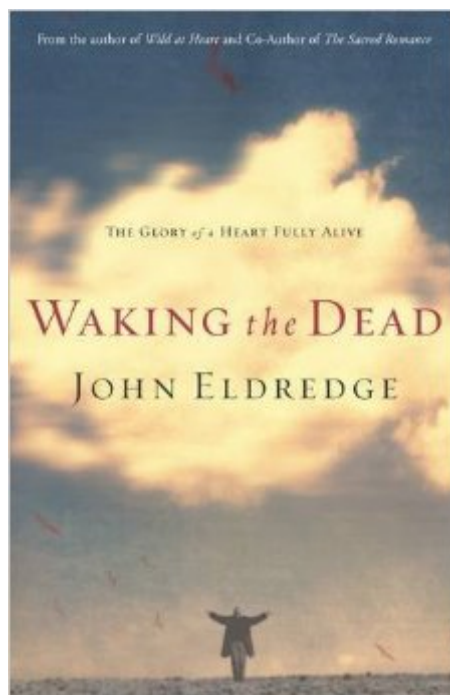


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Waking The Dead: The Glory Of A Heart Fully Alive



Synopsis

There is a glory to life that most people—including believers—never see. In this insightful new book, John Eldredge presents the heart as central to life. Not only is the heart essential; the heart God has ransomed is also good. Building on these foundational truths, Eldredge shows readers why real Christianity is a process of restoration, where the broken parts of our hearts are mended and the captive parts are set free. *Waking the Dead* leads listeners to understand how to live from the heart, care for their heart like the treasures of the kingdom, and give from fullness instead of emptiness. This message also shows how living from the heart can energize people to love God and others in a way they've never experienced, revealing to them life's purpose: fighting for the hearts of others.

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Customer Reviews

This is a powerful book, and not one that avoids controversy. Let's start with perhaps the most debated premise of this book: "The heart is good". The first reaction of many I know is to quickly exclaim that this is heresy. Well, perhaps not. Let's look at what he means when he says the "heart is good". First, he is referring to the "redeemed heart" specifically. Using the backing of Scripture (Romans 10:9-10, Ezek 26:36, John 3:7, Gal 6:15, Luke 8:15, Luke 6:44-45, and more) he claims that our hearts are transformed through Christ. This is an entirely Biblical concept. Second, the heart is not the same as the flesh. Eldredge acknowledges that "part of me doesn't want to love my neighbor..and it is that part I must crucify daily" (page 130) and "Yes, we still have to crucify the flesh on a daily basis" (page 76), and even "I take up my cross and crucify my flesh with all its pride, unbelief, and idolatry" (page 224). Obviously, Eldredge understands and acknowledges that the flesh

is sinful, so what does he mean by the "heart is good"? One example is found in Romans where Paul speaks to this very issue: "It is no longer I myself who do it, but sin living within me..For in my inner being I delight in God's law." Romans 7:17-22. (page 76) If it is "no longer I myself" who sin, and my "inner being" delights in God's law, then what exactly is his "inner being", and who is "no longer I myself"? Paul speaks of his redeemed heart and the battle with the flesh. It is critical to note this distinction. The third element is that our heart reflects God's glory. On page 75 he states that "we were created to reflect God's glory, born to bear his image, and He ransomed us to reflect that glory again". See Romans 8:30, Romans 2:29, 2 Cor 2:4-6, and the discussion in Chapter 4. Nothing in this book would indicate Eldridge is speaking of human glory, or some sort of humanistic agenda as he has been accused. In fact in a prayer he uses (page 176) he states that "I confess here and now that it is all about you God, and not about me", and "I surrender every aspect of my life totally and completely to you" (page 174). He states that "every morning we bring our lives fully back to Christ and under His Lordship." (page 174). The fourth element of his claim that the "heart is good" is one we have to look at subjectively. Eldridge is speaking of brokenness and its profound impact on our walk with God. The examples of brokenness found in his own life and the lives of others (pages 136, 144, etc) give us some insight into the lie we come to believe: namely that even after redemption we are not capable of being transformed. So deep is this lie that we are bad and unworthy that it keeps us from really living for God. In fact CS Lewis acknowledged (page 212) that "when Jesus told us to love others as we love ourselves it would be a horrible command if the self were simply to be hated." This is a powerful book, though his writing style may not be for everyone. Eldridge wants to really get close to the heart of the matter, and in doing so uses some often radical concepts as illustrations. However, a deep read here shows a solid Biblical foundation and humility, not humanism.

You must fight for your life, because whether or not you are aware of it, you exist in the midst of a war. This is one of the themes of *Waking the Dead* by John Eldredge. In it, Eldredge asserts that one of the major lessons of the Bible is that "things are not what they seem." According to Eldredge, the obstacles and suffering we all face are the result of humanity's enemy battling for our hearts. You have not blown it and God has not let you down, but this enemy daily attempts to prevent you from living in the glorious fullness of your redeemed heart, writes Eldredge. In *Waking the Dead*, Eldredge argues that God has redeemed our hearts, made them good according to his image. He also argues that most people fail to live up to their heart's redeemed state. *Waking the Dead* is about lifting them from the mire or status quo of their lives up to the level of the Spirit-filled

life illustrated in the lives of believers in the New Testament. Throughout this book, Eldredge expands on a quote by the early Christian writer Irenaeus, "the glory of God is man fully alive." The problem, Eldredge says, is that Christians succumb to the pressures and emotions of this world and to the lies of Satan and fail to experience the abundant life. Through a plethora of references to scriptures, quotes, and to stories and movies such as *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy*, *Wizard of Oz*, *The Matrix*, *The Perfect Storm*, and *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, Eldredge shares eternal truths of redemption and glory to illustrate the state of Christians in this world. He also shares many personal stories that relate how God has worked in his life and through his ministry. The emphasis of *Waking the Dead* is on four streams that Eldredge believes bring Christians to the abundant life to which God has called them. These streams are Walking with God, Receiving his Intimate Counsel, Deep Restoration and Spiritual Warfare. He expands the discussion of the four streams with a chapter focusing on the needs and blessings of Christian fellowship. Eldredge is trying to show readers that a closer relationship with God is available--a relationship bringing deep healing and freedom. In this relationship, the Christian can finally reach his or her full potential, becoming fully alive and bringing glory to God. *Waking the Dead* also includes a chapter offering specific prayers designed to help the reader experience the four streams. In *Waking the Dead*, Eldredge reaches deep into his soul and spiritual reservoir to share insights and references that will help the reader see his or her place in the heart of God. He comes to his points from so many different angles that he is sure to hit his mark with most readers. Craig Stephans, author of *Shakespeare On Spirituality: Life-Changing Wisdom from Shakespeare's Plays*

Is this book biblical? Should we be using "The Matrix" to learn lessons of the Christian life? Are our hearts "good," as Eldredge asserts, or has he bought into a humanistic spirituality? The answers, for those who choose to read to the end of this short work, are within. Yes, this book is biblical.

Although it's no masterpiece of homiletics or exegesis, it does hold to the heart and spirit of Christianity. Yes, it uses lessons from popular movies and novels to convey spiritual truths--and quite effectively, I might add! Eldredge makes it clear "The Matrix" will not save us. He does, however, use it to highlight ideas. In regards to the goodness of the human heart, it's true that I started to wonder how far he would take the concept. Was he suggesting that sin is no longer a struggle for us? Was he trying to say that the human condition is not seditious and in need of redemption? Quite the opposite. Eldredge makes it clear further on that we must be in relationships of accountability, that we must be confessing our sin and dealing with it on an ongoing basis. What he does want to communicate is that Jesus came to purchase our freedom, yet we still live with

slave mentalities. God reached out to cleanse that which he made pure in the beginning, yet we walk around with self-deprecating words and expressions instead of moving forward in God's kingdom. By the end of this book, I was convinced that the ideas were true to the heart of Scripture and that we could all benefit by the honesty and openness of living with hearts that are good, while never hiding from the impurities and assaults of life that try to drag us back into darkness. Easier said than done. But we have to start somewhere. Why not start by "Waking the Dead."

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