

Lifeway: Jesus Wouldn't Be Calling If They Really Had Doctrinal Guidelines

BY [BUD AHLHEIM](#) · NOVEMBER 1, 2016

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“In a recent interview, [Hatmaker] voiced significant changes in her theology of human sexuality and the meaning and definition of marriage — changes which contradict LifeWay’s doctrinal guidelines,” LifeWay spokesman Marty King told Baptist Press today (Oct. 27). “As a result, LifeWay has discontinued selling her resources.” (Source, Baptist Press)

While many on social media and blog-sites were commending the bold stand **Lifeway** made in pulling **Jen Hatmaker’s books** after her views on the **LGBT issue** and **her position on gay “marriage”** hit the front pages of the Christian **“news”** media, I sat back somewhat slack-jawed.

Disregard the comment from **Lifeway spokesman Marty King** that implied **Hatmaker** had **“voiced significant changes”** in her interview with Religion News Service. Her comments in that interview were not breaking news. Her positions on this issue were known quite some time before. The discerning sorts among the Christian world easily, and early, recognized the politically liberal and insufficiently biblical positions of

Hatmaker. King's statement on behalf of the 185 store media wing of the SBC was, then, inaccurate.

Though the commendations of many for Lifeway's move to dump Hatmaker are themselves laudable, they seemed to fail to recognize the utter hypocrisy of this agency in doing so. Indeed, while we should applaud the removal of any unbiblical, false teaching proponent from the shelves of this purported "Christian" bookstore, the positive press Lifeway generated by their bold stand for "doctrinal guidelines" is bewildering.

Given what Lifeway has done with Hatmaker, when compared to what they yet allow to remain on their shelves and what they continue to promote – especially through the heresy-rich marketing sub-brand known as Lifeway Women – the tagline of the SBC agency should no longer be "*Biblical Solutions for Life,*" but something more akin to "**Doctrinal Hypocrisy For Sure.**"



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While women have been given countless opportunities to connect virtually with other women from all over the world, it never quite takes the place of connecting in person—hugging the necks of sisters in Christ and sitting down to conversation over coffee. But in 2017, (in)courage and LifeWay are teaming up to present Connect: (in)RL, an event for women around the internet to meet face-to-face and connect with God, community, and other women. This event is more than just a meet-and-greet—it's an immersion in the kind of love and encouragement that comes from women connecting in real life.

More details coming soon.



Dumping an author for her **unbiblical support for gay marriage** and her “an **LGBT relationship can be holy**” attitude was certainly the right move. But, given the abundant heresy that Lifeway hawks, it shows that they are more concerned about shooting press-gaining salvos for a socially conservative evangelical constituency than they are truly concerned about “**Biblical solutions for life.**” Your soul actually matters less than your perception of Lifeway’s care for it.

Lifeway deems it – again, rightly so – inappropriate to sell an author with **Scripturally-illicit views on homosexuality**, because of “**doctrinal guidelines,**” yet they find it doctrinally tolerable to continue promoting and selling works of known false teaching by known false teachers? Are **Lifeway’s doctrinal guidelines** merely tied to prevalent **cultural issues** on which they can act and make evangelical hay, in this case with an author who wasn’t evidently sufficiently lucrative to their enterprise that her forced departure would frustrate their financial performance?

When one goes to **Lifeway’s website**, there are some impressive “**Core Values**” listed under the web-paged banner of “**Vision, Values, and Mission.**” While lacking the soteriological import of the Scripture-gleaned TULIP, **Lifeway** touts its own five points of core values. They are: **Trustworthy, Collaborative, Innovative, Comprehensive, and Transformational.**

Though these *pithy statements* may serve sufficiently to quench the **SBC’s craving for a “Vision” statement**, they represent even less in the way of “doctrinal guidelines” as does the generally-palatable, if not – to some – doctrinally-loose Baptist Faith and Message. The BF&M, by the way, is **not** referenced on **Lifeway’s** site as their overriding doctrinal guideline. The five points of Lifeway seem to be all that’s needed.

But by doing the right thing with **Hatmaker**, even if for back-slapping, self-aggrandizing benefit, it leaves one wondering how seriously Lifeway actually takes their own first pointed claim to doctrinal integrity.

Under their point number one, “**Trustworthy,**” Lifeway has the heterodoxical boldness to claim, “**We believe the Bible is the eternal, inerrant word of God, and is the plumb line for all of our resources, and for everything we say and do. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**”.

Really?

“You know the most dangerous places for Christians to go? Christian bookstores. You’d be safer on a SWAT team.” Justin Peters

If you merely walk the aisles of your nearest **Lifeway store** – don’t do it; as **Justin Peters** says, you’d be safer on a SWAT team than walking into a Christian bookstore – it is evident to anyone with a modicum of Biblical literacy that these folks not only don’t use Scripture as a plumb line, they seem to have taken that line and choked to death any breath of astute, biblical discernment that may once have lived in the agency’s past.

Indeed, having choked discernment to death, they seem to leave a Tyndale-like impression on the doctrinally bewildered who stand in awe of the gross disregard for sound doctrine among their shelves. Where is the burning stake on which they’ve torched the remains of discernment and truth? To claim Scripture as the “**plumb line for all our resources**” not only tarnishes the integrity of God’s Holy Word, it illuminates the fact that Lifeway is ground zero for heresy.

The screenshot shows the Lifeway website's search results for the term "jesus calling". The top navigation bar includes the Lifeway logo and menu items: Shop, Events, Ministry, Articles, and Church Ordering. A search bar contains the text "jesus calling" and a blue "Search" button. Below the search bar, the breadcrumb "Home > 'jesus calling'" is visible. On the left, a sidebar lists "Products", "Events", and "Articles". Below this, a "Narrow Results" section shows filters for "Current Offers" (New Releases (4), Upcoming Releases (1), Sale Items (15)) and "Product Group" (Books (170), Music for Worship (16)). The main content area features the title "Jesus Calling by Sarah Young" above a book cover image. To the right of the cover is a description: "Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence, is a collection of prayers written by missionary and best-selling author, Sarah Young, who simply wrote down whatever she felt God was saying to her. She knew her writings were not inspired as Scripture is, but they were helping her grow closer to God." Below the description is a link "Click Here to view all Sarah Young titles." and a yellow "MORE INFO" button. At the bottom of the main content area, there is a "Products" section with a pagination bar showing "1 - 12 of 208" items and a "Display: 12 items" / "Sort: Relevance" dropdown.

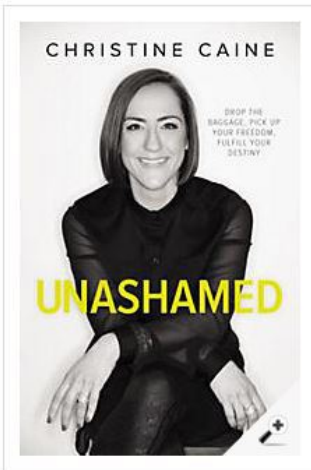
The most evident, Scripturally-vile **blasphemy** permitted by, promoted through, and profited from, by **Lifeway is the Jesus Calling franchise of heresy**. A search for this term on **Lifeway's site** returned 208 product "hits." (See Screen Clip to Left)

Jesus is apparently calling anyone and everyone – outside of His Word, that "**plumb line**" of **Lifeway**, by the way – by speaking to a charlatan. There's **Jesus Calling** for women (its most eager audience), **Jesus Calling** for children (because we certainly want to teach them that the Bible isn't sufficient, making future **Andy Stanley pew-sitters**, perhaps), **Jesus Calling** for men (because, yes, men too disregard Scripture and prefer to have their **itching ears scratched**; men like **Thom Rainer, President of Lifeway** who **permits** this **heresy** to be sold and even a former **SBC president, Johnny Hunt**, who heartily endorsed it).

"Jesus is not calling or equipping through a 21-st century bestseller. Rather He is calling and teaching by His Spirit through

a two to three-thousand-year-old bestseller.” Tom Pennington,
Strange Fire Conference

Search by title, author, isbn, etc.



Unashamed

Drop the Baggage, Pick Up Your Freedom, Fulfill Your Destiny

[Caine, Christine](#) (Author)

Description

Shame has no place in the purpose, plan, and destiny God has for us, because shame lies to us. It robs us of the very freedom we long for, and shackles us in the prison of our past.

But you have the power to move past your past, and step into a future that God has prepared for you in freedom. In **Unashamed**, Christine Caine reveals the often-hidden consequences of shame in her own life and the lives of so many Christian women, and invites you to join her in moving from a shame-filled to a shame-free life.

In her passionate style, Caine leads you into God's Word where you will see that God is bigger than your mistakes, your inadequacies, your past, and your limitations. You can deal with your yesterday today, so that you can move on to what God has in store for you tomorrow. You will discover how to define yourself not by shame's lies, but by God's truth.

Available Formats

Hardcover, Non-Fiction

\$19.99



The presence, then, of extra-biblical, contemplative heresy like **Jesus Calling** is evidence that **Lifeway** actually cares nothing about the “*doctrinal guidelines*” to which they profess to adhere. Add to that the works of **Trinity-denying modalist TD Jakes**, the **contemplative dangers of Lysa Terkheurst and Priscilla Shirer**, the **circle making heresy of Mark Batterson**, the **Scripture-twisting prayer teachings of Anne Graham Lotz**, the **word-faith, prosperity gospel pastrix Christine Caine**, and her **heresy-hurling gal-pal, the “I get revelations” Beth Moore**, and it’s plain to see that Scripture

isn't only **not** a plumb line for **Lifeway**, it's also not a **remotely referenced guideline** for them.

Whatever pressures were brought to prompt the agency to dump the **gay-endorsing Hatmaker** were not, be assured, primarily doctrinal in nature. But by claiming a doctrinal impetus for it, **Lifeway** has made one thing abundantly clear. It is assuredly the most hypocritical agency of the rapidly racing-to-downgrade **Southern Baptist Convention**.

The fact is, Jesus would not be calling if **Lifeway** indeed had doctrinal guidelines. But their driving guideline seems to be the bottom line, and that line can endure the occasional hit for the gratuitous sake of the rare, bold "*doctrinal stand.*"

Do the right thing, Lifeway. Dump ALL the false teachers. Start actually using that Word as the rule of faith and practice ... and, instead of selling **junk food for deceived goats**, start selling sheep food founded on the clear, sound doctrine of the Word. Doing that would truly be a bold move based on doctrinal convictions.

Otherwise ... well ... your hypocrisy is showing.