

CNN LARRY KING LIVE

Interview With Joel Osteen

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LARRY KING, CNN HOST: Tonight, Joel Osteen, evangelism's hottest rising star, pastor for the biggest congregation in the United States. He literally filled the shoes of his late father who founded the church, and wait until you hear what he had to overcome to do it. Pastor Joel Osteen is here for the hour. We'll take your calls. It's next on LARRY KING LIVE.

Joel Osteen is the author of the number one "New York Times" best-seller, "Your Best Life Now." There you see its cover. "Seven Steps to Living at Your Full Potential." There is now a compendium been published called "Your Best Life Now Journal," a guide to reaching that full potential. Joel Osteen is pastor of Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas. His father before him. He has been called the smiling preacher. We met.

JOEL OSTEEEN, EVANGELIST: Yes.

KING: Long ago with your father.

OSTEEEN: We did. We met at a charity event for the Heart Association down there with Dr. DeBakey, I believe, or Dr. Cooley (ph).

KING: Dr. Cooley -- about seven, eight years ago.

OSTEEEN: You were my dad's favorite. And you were sitting up at the table and I said, I didn't know any better then. I said, daddy, let's go, I'll introduce you to him. Like I knew you or something. And I did. It just made his day. We didn't meet for 10 seconds, but he loved you.

KING: Why are you a preacher?

OSTEEEN: You know, I never was for 17 years. I worked with my dad there at the church. He tried to get me to minister. I didn't have it in me. I worked behind the scenes. I loved doing production and things. But when my father died, I just knew -- I don't know how to explain it, it sounds kind of odd, but I just knew down to here I was supposed to step up to the plate and pastor the church. And it was odd because I had never preached before. But I just knew I was supposed to do it.

KING: Did it come easily?

OSTEEEN: It did. It came -- it came somewhat easily. I had to study. I was nervous. Still get nervous. But it did. I believe God gives you the grace to do what you need to do. And the great thing about it is the people were so loyal to my father. They wanted one of his sons to take over. And daddy had never really necessarily raised anybody up under him.

KING: What do the other sons do?

OSTEEEN: Well, my brother Paul is a surgeon and he works with us there at the church. He gave up his practice to work with us and I have other sisters and brothers that work, as well.

KING: Is -- have you always believed?

OSTEEEN: I have always believed. I grew up, you know, my parents were a good Christian people. They showed us love in the home. My parents were the same in the pulpit as they were at home. I think that's where a lot of preachers' kids get off base sometimes. Because they don't see the same things at both places. But I've always believed. I saw it through my parents. And I just grew up believing.

KING: But you're not fire and brimstone, right? You're not pound the decks and hell and dam nation?

OSTEEN: No. That's not me. It's never been me. I've always been an encourager at heart. And when I took over from my father he came from the Southern Baptist background and back 40, 50 years ago there was a lot more of that. But, you know, I just -- I don't believe in that. I don't believe -- maybe it was for a time. But I don't have it in my heart to condemn people. I'm there to encourage them. I see myself more as a coach, as a motivator to help them experience the life God has for us.

KING: But don't you think if people don't believe as you believe, they're somehow condemned?

OSTEEN: You know, I think that happens in our society. But I try not to do that. I tell people all the time, preached a couple Sundays about it. I'm for everybody. You may not agree with me, but to me it's not my job to try to straighten everybody out. The Gospel called the good news. My message is a message of hope, that's God's for you. You can live a good life no matter what's happened to you. And so I don't know. I know there is condemnation but I don't feel that's my place.

KING: You've been criticized for that, haven't you?

OSTEEN: I have. I have. Because I don't know.

KING: Good news guy, right?

OSTEEN: Yeah. But you know what? It's just in me. I search my heart and I think, God, is this what I'm supposed to do? I made a decision when my father died, you know what? I'm going to be who I feel like I'm supposed to be. And if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. Not the end of the world if I'm not the pastor ...

KING: Where were you ordained? OSTEEN: I was ordained from the church there, Lakewood, under my dad's ministry.

KING: So you didn't go to seminary?

OSTEEN: No, sir, I didn't.

KING: They can just make you a minister?

OSTEEN: You can, you can.

KING: That's kind of an easy way in.

OSTEEN: Yeah, but I think it happens more than you think. But I didn't go to seminary. I have a lot of great friends that did. But I didn't. But I did study 17 years under my dad. You know ...

KING: Are you a pastor? A reverend? Legally what are you?

OSTEEN: I'm a reverend and a pastor. A pastor of the church. I go by usually pastor.

KING: You can marry people?

OSTEEN: Yes, sir.

KING: So the church in a sense ordained you?

OSTEEN: Right. And then you're ordained through the State of Texas.

KING: How'd it grow so much?

OSTEEN: I don't know, Larry. I don't know if there was one thing. I think part of it was my dad had such a great foundation. Then all of a sudden here comes somebody 40 years younger, just new energy. New life. You know. I think one thing is my dad had a television ministry to start with. So all of a sudden here I was 36 years old and I was on television. Well, most young men that age, they're building a congregation and it costs a lot of money to be on television and all that. So all of a sudden there was a young minister across America. So I don't know if it's part of that. I think part of it is the message of hope and that I'm for people.

KING: You're nondenominational?

OSTEEN: We are, we are.

KING: Your father, though, was ...

OSTEEN: He was Southern Baptist. But he left that way back in the early '60s. And then he just started Lakewood Church. And we've always been independent and just for everybody.

KING: Many evangelists feel that the church, the church itself, the religion, has failed. You share that view?

OSTEEN: Well, I think in a sense when you see certain things in society you would think that. But in another sense I see faith in America. Faith in the world. At an all-time high today. When I was growing up it was a big deal to have a church of 1,000. Now there's churches of 10,000. So many of them. So I think in one sense I can agree with that point. But in another sense I see a real spiritual awakening taking place.

KING: How many people come to your church?

OSTEEN: We have about 30,000 each weekend.

KING: How do you hold them?

OSTEEN: We have multiple services. It holds 8,000. But we're about to move into a new facility. But we just do a lot of services.

KING: You work all day Sunday?

OSTEEN: We do. And Saturday. We do one Saturday night and then four -- three Sunday and one Spanish. So it's a lot of work.

KING: You write all your own?

OSTEEN: I do. I do all my own research and do all my own service.

KING: And when are you on television?

OSTEEN: We're on different times. We're in the top 25 markets on one of the network stations.

KING: Sundays usually?

OSTEEN: Yes, sir. Usually Sundays.

KING: Are you asking for money?

OSTEEN: We never have. Never have. Since my dad started. I started a television ministry for my father back in '83. That was one decision we made. We just don't ask for money. We never have, we never will. You know, it's -- I don't criticize people that do. Some of them have to. But I just, I don't want anything to pull away from the message.

KING: How do you get the money to get the time on television?

OSTEEN: The church supports it.

KING: How does the church get the money?

OSTEEN: Well, they just give. There are just a lot of them, they're faithful, they're loyal people, they believe in giving. And the other thing too, what's interesting, Larry, we don't ask for money on television. But people see your heart. People send in money like you wouldn't imagine to underwrite it. KING: Really? Without your ever saying order this medal?

OSTEEN: Exactly. It's a testament to, you know, I think if people can see your heart is right. I'm certainly not the only one. But I don't get on there and beg for money. People send it in. You'd be amazed.

KING: Do you think there's too much of that, send in this, my new book is out?

OSTEEN: I think in general there probably is. Because people are so skeptical anyway. Why are you on there? You just want my money. We just try to stay away from it. I don't know if there is or not. To me sometimes I think, you know. I would -- I think people get on and they have to make the television audience underwrite it. And then they spend their time doing that.

KING: So it's self-fulfilling. Billy Graham was here last Thursday.

OSTEEN: I saw.

KING: Might have been his last interview. Is he a hero to the evangelists?

OSTEEN: He is a hero to us all. His life of integrity. Somebody that can stick with for that long and just stick with his message. What I love about Dr. Graham is he stayed on course. He didn't get sidetracked. That's what happens to so many people today. It's a good lesson for me, a good example for me to say, you know what, Joel, you may have a lot now but I want to be here 40 years from now sitting with you.

KING: Do you share Billy's beliefs of life after death in a sense of going somewhere?

OSTEEN: I do. I do. We probably agree on 99 percent. I do. I believe there's a heaven you know. Afterwards, there's, you know, a place called hell. And I believe it's when we have a relationship with God and his son Jesus and that's what the Bible teaches us. I believe it.

KING: Our guest is Joel Osteen. The senior pastor for Lakewood Church in Houston, the author of "Your Best Life Now," amazing bestseller. We'll be right back.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

OSTEEN: See people are watching you. Especially your children. They're taking in every single thing you do. They are like video cameras with legs. And they are always in the record mode. They learn more from what you do than from what you say. Like that old saying, I'd rather see a sermon than hear one anyway.

And when you are tempted to compromise and just take the easy way out, I challenge you to think generationally. Know that every right choice you make you are making it a little bit easier on those that come after you.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Our guest, Joel Osteen. Why do you think "Your Best Life Now" did as well as it did?

OSTEEN: It surprised me.

KING: There's a lot of books about improving yourself.

OSTEEN: Yeah. I don't know. I think coming from the Christian base, and I think the fact that I don't know, it's a book of encouragement and inspiration. And to me it seems like there's so much pulling us down in our society today. There's so much negative. Most of my book is about how you can live a good life today in spite of all that. So I think that had a big part of it.

KING: But it doesn't quote a lot of biblical passages until the back of the book, right?

OSTEEN: It doesn't do a whole lot of it. My message, I wanted to reach the mainstream. We've reached the church audience. So I just try to, what I do is just try to teach practical principles. I may not bring the scripture in until the end of my sermon and I might feel bad about that. Here's the thought. I talked yesterday about living to give. That's what a life should be about. I brought in at the end about some of the scriptures that talk about that. But same principal in the book.

KING: Is it hard to lead a Christian life?

OSTEEN: I don't think it's that hard. To me it's fun. We have joy and happiness. Our family -- I don't feel like that at all. I'm not trying to follow a set of rules and stuff. I'm just living my life.

KING: But you have rules, don't you?

OSTEEN: We do have rules. But the main rule to me is to honor God with your life. To live a life of integrity. Not be selfish. You know, help others. But that's really the essence of the Christian faith.

KING: That we live in deeds?

OSTEEN: I don't know. What do you mean by that?

KING: Because we've had ministers on who said, your record don't count. You either believe in Christ or you don't. If you believe in Christ, you are, you are going to heaven. And if you don't no matter what you've done in your life, you ain't.

OSTEEN: Yeah, I don't know. There's probably a balance between. I believe you have to know Christ. But I think that if you know Christ, if you're a believer in God, you're going to have some good works. I think it's a cop-out to say I'm a Christian but I don't ever do anything ...

KING: What if you're Jewish or Muslim, you don't accept Christ at all?

OSTEEN: You know, I'm very careful about saying who would and wouldn't go to heaven. I don't know ...

KING: If you believe you have to believe in Christ? They're wrong, aren't they?

OSTEEN: Well, I don't know if I believe they're wrong. I believe here's what the Bible teaches and from the Christian faith this is what I believe. But I just think that only God with judge a person's heart. I spent a lot of time in India with my father. I don't know all about their religion. But I know they love God. And I don't know. I've seen their sincerity. So I don't know. I know for me, and what the Bible teaches, I want to have a relationship with Jesus.

KING: The Senate apologized last week for slavery. You think the Southern Baptists and a lot of the churches in the South owe some apology, too?

OSTEEN: I've never thought about it. Because I just didn't -- wasn't raised in it.

KING: But you know its history.

OSTEEN: Oh, absolutely. I think that it would never hurt; anything we could do to make amends, the better it can be. That's what I love about our church. It's made up of all different races. That's what life should all be about. That's what God wants it to be.

KING: Doesn't it hurt you that people 50 years ago talking about God and Christ also didn't -- Martin Luther King call 11:00 a.m. Sunday morning the most segregated hour in America? Does it bother you to know that predecessors of yours ...

OSTEEN: Yeah, absolutely bothers me. It's not right. It's a shame, and I don't know how they could do it with a pure heart to God but, you know what? It happened.

KING: I want to get to the seven steps. But when the people call you cotton candy theology. Someone said you're very good but there's no spiritual nourishment. I don't know what that means ...

OSTEEN: I think, I hear it meaning a lot of different things. One I think a lot of it is that I'm not condemning people. And I don't know, but Larry I talk, I mean every week in our church we're dealing with people that are fighting cancer, that have their lost loved ones. That are going through a divorce. I mean, I talk about those issues, and to me I don't see how it can get any more, you know, real than that. So I don't know what the criticism is.

KING: What is the prosperity gospel?

OSTEEN: I think the prosperity gospel in general is -- well I don't know. I hear it too. I don't know. I think

what sometimes you see is it's just all about money. That's not what I believe. It's the attitude of your heart, and so you know, we believe -- but I do believe this, that God wants us to be blessed. He wants us to be able to send our kids to college, excel in our careers. But prosperity to me, Larry, is not just money, it's having health. What good is money if you don't have health?

KING: Also many in the Christian belief are wary of too much material, aren't they?

OSTEEN: Yeah, I think some of them are. But to me, you know, I hope people get blessed if they can handle it right. Because it takes money to do good. You know to do things for people. To spread the good news. So I think it's all a matter of your heart.

KING: You think other preachers are envious of you?

OSTEEN: If they are, I don't feel it. I've got so many good friends. And the ones I know are encouraging me. I don't hear anything but good things from them. I hope they're not. Because we're all in it together.

KING: You want to do this the rest of your life?

OSTEEN: I do. I do. I know it's what I'm called to do. I feel like this is why I was born. Even though I never dreamed I'd be doing it. But I know now I never dreamed I'd be able to get to help people like this. I never dreamed it was in me. I didn't know I could get up to speak in front of people and impact people's lives. I didn't know I could do that. I was shy.

KING: We'll get to those seven steps in a minute. We'll be taking your calls, as well. Don't go away.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

OSTEEN: And our attitude should be, I refuse to dwell on the negative things that have happened to me. I'm not going to go around thinking about all that I've lost. I'm not going to focus on what could have been or should have done. No, I'm going to draw the line in the sand. This is a new day and I'm going to start moving forward knowing that God has a bright future in store for me. If you do that, God will give you a new beginning.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: We're back with Joel Osteen. The book "Your Best Life Now" a major bestseller. "Seven steps to living at your full potential." The new one "Your Best Life Now, A Journal." It's a guide for the earlier book, right? You used it as a compendium, in a sense. OSTEEN: That's exactly right. It's just something to put your notes in. Kind of help you get along there.

KING: Don't you ever doubt?

OSTEEN: No. I don't -- I wouldn't say that I do. I guess I do and I don't think about it too much.

KING: Well, 9/11.

OSTEEN: Well, yeah.

KING: Didn't you say what? Why?

OSTEEN: You do. You definitely do.

KING: And how do you answer?

OSTEEN: To me it comes back and God's given us all our own free will. And it's a shame but people choose ...

KING: The people in the building didn't have free will.

OSTEEN: But the thing is, people can choose to do evil with that will. And that's what's unfortunate. But you

know, of course you always doubt. I mean, you have to override it. But we see in the church every week, somebody's coming up and my baby was not born properly and you know, all these other things. You just ...

KING: But don't you want to know, why would an omnipotent -- assuming he is omnipotent -- God permit that?

OSTEEN: I don't know, Larry. I don't know it all.

KING: A deformed baby had nothing to do with free will.

OSTEEN: Exactly. I don't claim to know it all. I just think that trusting God means we're going to have unanswered questions and God is so much bigger than us we're never going to understand them all. And I tell people that have lost a child or that have gone through some kind of tragedy, you've got to have a file in your mind called and I don't understand it file. And you've got to put it in there and not try to figure it out and not let it ruin the rest of your life and not get bitter. And that's what we see so many people do.

KING: But you're not asking for blind faith. Don't you want people to question?

OSTEEN: Oh, I do. I think you do at a certain point. But I don't think you can let something ruin -- I've seen too many people angry at God and they live the rest of their life that way. You've got to say God, I don't understand why this happened to me but I'm going to move on. The worst thing we can do is wallow around in self-pity. I talk in the book, too, about letting go of the past. I know it's hard. I'm making it sound easy, it's not. But sometimes you've got to say I don't understand it. We were all praying for my dad. He was 77 when he died. You'd think we've got a church full of people praying but I don't know. It was probably his time to go, obviously. But I don't understand until (ph) some of the others.

KING: Do you ever involve politics in the sermons?

OSTEEN: Never do. My father never ...

KING: Never mention President Bush?

OSTEEN: Well, only to pray. Only to pray. We prayed for President Bush, Clinton, all of them. But I've never been political. My father hasn't. I just, I have no ...

KING: How about issues that the church has feelings about? Abortion? Same-sex marriages?

OSTEEN: Yeah. You know what, Larry? I don't go there. I just ...

KING: You have thoughts, though.

OSTEEN: I have thoughts. I just, you know, I don't think that a same-sex marriage is the way God intended it to be. I don't think abortion is the best. I think there are other, you know, a better way to live your life. But I'm not going to condemn those people. I tell them all the time our church is open for everybody.

KING: You don't call them sinners?

OSTEEN: I don't.

KING: Is that a word you don't use?

OSTEEN: I don't use it. I never thought about it. But I probably don't. But most people already know what they're doing wrong. When I get them to church I want to tell them that you can change. There can be a difference in your life. So I don't go down the road of condemning.

KING: You believe in the Bible literally?

OSTEEN: I do, I do.

KING: Noah had an ark and Adam and Eve?

OSTEEN: I do. I do. I believe that. I believe it all.

KING: Isn't it hard to accept that one day appeared two people and they ate an apple and ...

OSTEEN: It is. But it's also hard, too, to look at our bodies and say, my brother's a surgeon, how could our bodies be made like this? We couldn't have just come from something. It's just hard, when my child was born I thought seeing him in the little sonogram I thought look at that. He's got eyes. How is that developing? It's just, I don't know. I look at it like that.

KING: The book describes seven steps to living at full potential. I want to ask you about -- Choose to be happy. Now, how the heck do you do that?

OSTEEN: Well, I think, Larry. It's just an attitude we've got to get up and make a decision every single day. I mean, what so many people today do, they focus on what they don't have instead of what they do have. They focus on what's wrong instead of what's right. And I believe that all of us, if we want to, can be happy right where we are. We may not be laughing our heads off but we can get up and say, you know what, I'm in a tough situation, but this is where God has me and I'm going to make the most of it. And I think that that's where so many of us miss it today. We're waiting to be happy one day.

KING: How about the Eastern philosophy that says you're not entitled to today. Today is a gift. So -- it doesn't matter if it's raining. It's a beautiful gift today.

OSTEEN: I've not heard it. But I'd degree with it.

KING: You aren't entitled to today.

OSTEEN: Well, that's right. It's a gift God gave us. What if we weren't here? To me, I say it all the time, every day we live negative and discouraged and unhappy, that's a day we've wasted. And I'm not going to waste you know, just because I don't get my way or something happens.

KING: Another seven steps -- one of the seven steps is live to give, charity is, in the Talmud, the greatest thing of all.

OSTEEN: Yeah. I believe it is. I believe that's the whole spirit of Christianity is, you know, having a lifestyle of giving. Not giving at Christmas, not giving every once in awhile but having an attitude to give. I've always said this, if you'll get up and make it your business to make somebody else's day, God will make your own day.

KING: I love to give.

OSTEEN: I know.

KING: Giving is selfish. You get a great reward.

OSTEEN: I know, you really do. That's what life is all about. We were not made to be ingrown. I believe, maybe I'm off. But that's probably 95 percent of unhappiness is selfishness. I'm only focused on my problems or thinking about how I get ahead in my career. And certainly we want to do some of that. But we need to get up and focus on others.

KING: Find strength through adversity. Bad is good.

OSTEEN: Well, I think the way I believe that god won't let something come into your life unless he's going to use it for your good. Now you've got to keep the right attitude for that to happen. But that helps us in our struggles to, say you know what? God's going to get something good out of this. This is a tough time but I'm just going to believe, I'm going to trust. I may not see it for a year or five years but I believe it's going to turn around. And a great example is in my dad's death. My dad and I were best friends. Worked with him for 17 years. I told before my wife I don't know what I'm going to do when my dad dies. I loved him. We were good friends. But when my father died the darkest hour of my life is when I felt that stinging here, that I was supposed to step up and preach.

So I see how in my darkest hour something new was born. I believe that God always opens up a new door.

KING: Do you know you're getting through to people? Billy Graham used to know it because they came down and gave themselves to Christ. How do you know?

OSTEEN: I feel the same way. I can see it there in the church when I see my book do what it did. And when we go to arenas across the country and every one of them's been sold out. Its just, you know, we get thousands of letters and stuff. And you know, I feel like we are, you know. I feel like we're making a difference.

KING: We'll be right back. We'll include your phone calls for Joel Osteen, senior pastor of the Lakewood Church in Houston. Reportedly the largest, fastest growing congregation in the United States and the author of "Your Best Life Now" and now "Your Best Life Now Journal." Don't go away.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

OSTEEN: And there's nothing the enemy would love any more than for you to go around thinking about your faults and weaknesses, all the mistakes you made last week and all the times you messed up last month.

No, don't even go down that road. Quit dwelling on what you've done wrong and start dwelling on what you've done right. You may not be all you're supposed to be, but at least you can thank God you're not what you used to be. And we all make mistakes. But you know what? You need to learn to just be quick to repent. Say God, I'm sorry, forgive me. Help me to do better next time.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: We're back with Joel Osteen, the pastor of the Lakewood Church in Houston. The author of "The New York Times" best-seller "Your Best Life Now." He's been called the smiling preacher. You like that?

OSTEEN: It doesn't bother me. I like it.

KING: You do smile a lot.

Fontana, California. Hello. CALLER: Yes -- Joel?

OSTEEN: Yes.

CALLER: I have a question for you. We're a small congregational church here and we'd like to come and see you next month, but you charge to get in and we're a very poor congregation. Why do you charge to get in to your appearances?

OSTEEN: Yes. The only reason we charge -- I hated to charge. The only we charge...

KING: You charge at the church?

OSTEEN: No, no, never. Never.

KING: When you travel?

OSTEEN: Yes.

The only reason we did is because when we went New York to Madison Square Garden they wouldn't let us do an event without doing a ticketed event because of the crowds. We sold it out two nights and we turned so many people away in Anaheim and Atlanta, it was just a shame to do that.

Hey, you know, you need to write the church, because we'll make a way that anybody can get in to those events. I don't like charging.

KING: What do you charge?

OSTEEN: \$10.

KING: To Milford, Delaware. Hello.

CALLER: Hi, Joel?

OSTEEN: Yes.

CALLER: I have a question for you.

OSTEEN: OK. Go ahead.

CALLER: OK. I heard years ago that your mother was healed of cancer. Do you know why it's not God's will that everyone is healed of cancer?

OSTEEN: You know, I can't answer that. I think it's a good question...

KING: Do you wonder, though?

OSTEEN: Sure, sure we all do. I don't know what it is and I just know that I'd rather believe and just stay in faith and just hope and you know, that's the best thing to do. That's better in case...

KING: So, you've never had an answer to why he lives and he dies.

OSTEEN: No. We don't. I don't think we do. I think that's in God's hands and I don't understand it. I don't claim to understand it all. I just thank God that my mother was healed and we pray for others and ask for that same mercy on their lives and we've seen it happen. And you know there are others that don't.

KING: How do you balance the personal appearances with the church?

You need to pastor.

OSTEEN: Well, I'm just very careful in that I put my first priority there at the church and I'll take a -- I'll preach the -- a lot of times the same message there at the church on Sunday that a preach on a Friday night event. So, I don't let them take away from the church, but we just wanted to get out and be with the people. So...

KING: Are you out every week?

OSTEEN: No. We went -- we're out 20 weeks this -- or 20 dates this year, but like 15 weeks.

KING: Like concert tours dates?

OSTEEN: Exactly. Just like that.

KING: You're in big arenas?

OSTEEN: Big arenas. Big arenas.

Yes. It's something, Larry, we never dreamed of. I wanted to do some last year and we -- when we went to -- we picked a couple cities and I told some guys on the team, "I don't know if we should get an auditorium of a thousand, or 5,000 or 10,000 and finally I said, "Let's get a basketball arena and we'll turn off the top, you know, the top lights if nobody shows up. We did it in Atlanta and the building was filled up, you know, an hour before and hey had to shut it down. So, you know, God's blessed us.

KING: Do you get a lot of young people?

OSTEEN: Yes, lots of young people. It's good. A lot of young people.

KING: Studio City, California. Hello.

CALLER: Hi, how are you?

KING: Hi.

CALLER: Hi, my name is Tricia (ph), Joel. How are you?

OSTEEN: Good, thank you. CALLER: Good, thank you. I was just interested in finding out: You're such a busy man, how do you juggle family and your personal life and what do you like to do for fun?

OSTEEN: What I like to do for fun is to play basketball, play with my kids, hang out with my family. They're my main friends, my family and I think it's just what you said, we just -- you just have to balance your life. I don't -- it's a big church but I have a good staff. I don't -- unfortunately I don't do the weddings and the funerals and a lot of things that a pastor of a smaller church does.

So, I just -- you know, I made a decision that I don't want my kids to grow up and not know me just because I'm so busy and on Dr. Graham talks about that -- I just I stay at home.

KING: How have you handled fame?

OSTEEN: You know, I never think about it. I never think about it. I don't feel like I changed at all. I haven't changed my routine. I haven't, you know, I don't -- I guess the main thing: I feel a bigger responsibility. I spend plenty of quiet time in the morning searching my heart, staying on the right course and just staying humble before God.

KING: Not let it get to you?

OSTEEN: Not let it get to your head.

Because I've seen too many.

They've been where I am and way past and they've come falling down.

KING: Many people have been calling here telling me -- asking about your schedule. Is it printed anywhere? You know, when you're appearing?

OSTEEN: Yes. It can be on -- it's on the Web site.

KING: And what's that?

OSTEEN: That is JoelOsteen.com. I guess just my name dot-com, I think.

KING: OK. You just go to JoelOsteen.com.

OSTEEN: Yes. They can get it.

KING: And you get the schedule.

OSTEEN: Exactly. We're going to be in Anaheim and back to Madison Square Garden. We have quite a few more dates this year. Love to have people come out.

KING: Do you ever use a show business term: Bomb? In other words, do you ever not connect? Are you ever speaking and like a third of the way in saying, "I don't have 'em?"

OSTEEN: I think so. I think so.

KING: Can't be perfect all the time.

OSTEEN: Even at my own church, sometimes I feel like: You know what, I don't know if they're receiving this and sometimes it's me because I'm tired. Sometimes when I feel I've done the worst, people come up to me and say, "Man, that was great today."

And sometimes, you know, you're looking for a little bit of feedback and if you don't get -- but I just try to stay focused, say, "you know what, I believe this is what I'm supposed to be doing." I'm not perfect.

KING: What do you wonder about the most? Now, I mean, you accept things as they are: He gets cancer, she doesn't. What do you -- what though, boggles your mind about this world?

OSTEEN: What do I wonder about? You know what, Larry?

I don't know. I don't know. Nothing comes to the forefront of my mind. I just...

KING: There's no great searching?

OSTEEN: There's no great thing

KING: Or on going problem?

No, no. I just...

KING: Let's take depression, it affects over 20 million people.

OSTEEN: Sure. Yes, I just think that, you know, I speak a lot about that, and you know, I don't -- I just think, you know, that's just one way that we all have to deal with -- sometimes it's clinically. A lot of times, it's an attitude and it's that we've gotten so focused on, like I said, ourselves and things like that. So, I don't know, Larry. I don't have any great wonderment.

KING: "Let Go of the past," is another one of your seven steps.

That's not easy to do, since the only thing we have right to this minute is our past.

OSTEEN: It is and I should have said let go of the negative things of the past and really my thing is this: You can't receive the new things God wants to do if you won't let go of the old. And by that I mean, we talk with so many people -- they've been through a bitter divorce and they want to live their life angry. Maybe it wasn't their fault, somebody hurt them and I just think that, you know, dragging yesterday into today, the negative things, is only going to ruin today. So --

KING: You think we choose to be angry? OSTEEN: I think we do. I think we do and over time it becomes a habit and all of a sudden, you know, we think that's just who I am.

No. That's who we've developed into being, because I don't think we have to be like that.

KING: Back with more of Joel Osteen.

More of your phone calls right after this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

OSTEEN: Archie and Jack argued for years whether Jesus was white or black. Archie was certain that Jesus was white and Jack was just as sure that Jesus was black. As fate would have it, they both died on the same day and they rushed to the pearly gates and they said, "St. Peter please tell us: Is Jesus white or black? we've been arguing our whole lifetime."

About that time Jesus walked up and said, "Buenos dias."

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

OSTEEN: Some of you ladies have been wearing the same flannel bathrobe to bed every night that your grandmother gave you 30 years ago. It's got holes in it. It's as ugly as it can be, and you know it doesn't do anything for you, and it certainly doesn't do anything for your husband. One of the best things that you can do for your marriage is to throw that thing away, and go down to Victoria's Secret and get something good that you can wear. You wonder why Victoria and I have a great relationship? It's called Victoria's Secret.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: Good line. Houston, Texas, hello.

CALLER: Yes, hi.

KING: Hi, go ahead.

CALLER: I was just wondering what Joel -- hi, Joel. I just finished your book on Saturday. Actually it was audio that my sister sent me two weeks ago and I think it's the best thing I've ever listened to in my life, and I just wanted to thank you. But my question was, I was wondering how old you were?

OSTEEN: I'm 42 years old.

KING: You look 14.

OSTEEN: Thank you.

KING: Bellbrook, Ohio, hello.

CALLER: Yes, my name is Matt Maynard, and Pastor Joel, I'm calling to tell you, my grandma Bebbie (ph) and I, we watch you every day and we love you so much and your mom and Victoria, Lisa and Paul, and we know you came from behind the scenes to being the pastor of the church, and I would like to know, what gives you strength to get up in front of all those people every single day? Is it knowing that you touched so many people? And do you get nervous?

OSTEEN: You know, I still get nervous, and I think what gives you strength is, god gives you the grace to do it. You know, just -- now I've done it for six years, so I've got a little more confidence, but yes, it's...

KING: It's only been six years, though?

OSTEEN: That's right.

KING: Grand Forks, North Dakota, hello.

CALLER: Hey, I was calling -- I'm Jerry Lundabee (ph). I attend Bible Baptist Church in Grand Forks, North Dakota, and one of my -- I have a few questions here. I wonder if you might entertain all of them. My first question was -- is, do you believe that the bible is god's inspired word? I haven't heard you answer that question yet.

KING: And your second question is what?

CALLER: My second question would be -- I don't know -- I heard him talking a little bit ago about how he sees faith getting stronger in America and across the world, and I believe that it's the opposite, that -- we're seeing higher rates of divorce, higher rates of drug and alcohol use among young people, and old, and with abductions, and things like that getting worse and worse.

KING: What do you think, Joel? First, inspired word.

OSTEEN: Yes, I believe the bible is god's inspired word. As far as the other we kind of talked about, I can see his point, but I think there's another point. How can we be moving our church into our basketball arena that seats 16,000 people? I mean, people are hungry for hope and encouragement.

KING: But there's never been more division than now in the United States, politically, certainly.

OSTEEN: That is true. That is true. So, I don't know. You can look at it. We could debate it...

KING: You're a glass-half-full, right?

OSTEEN: I am. I see, like I said, you look back 10 years ago, there was, you know, not that many churches that had over 1,000 or 5,000 people. It's a different day today.

KING: We'll be back with more, and later, in a little while, we'll meet Mrs. Osteen. Don't go away.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

OSTEEN: There's been eagles spotted as high as 20,000 feet, up there where the jets fly. The point is if you want to get rid of your past, you've got to come up higher. Don't ever sink down to their level. Don't ever sink down to their level. Don't try to argue. Don't try to pay somebody back. Don't give them the cold shoulder. Be the bigger person. Overlook their faults. Walk in love. Learn to even bless your enemies. Somebody's talking about you. Somebody's doing you wrong. Just bless them and move on anyway. Let me tell you, in the long run, crows can't hang with eagles. You do that and you'll rise above all that junk.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Hillsboro, Wisconsin with Joel Osteen. Hello.

CALLER: Good evening. Joel, I had the privilege a year ago February of attending Lakewood and got a chance to meet you, and it was really a wonderful experience. My question is, I was just in a conversation with a friend recently, and he said he believed that Lucifer was going to be the last one to enter heaven after the rapture because he believed that god is a forgiving god, and even Lucifer will be forgiven. And that just blew me away. And I wondered what your thought would be on that.

OSTEEN: That sounds odd to me. I've never heard that. And it sounds very off-the-wall to me. So...

KING: I asked Reverend Graham if god loves the devil. Didn't -- couldn't -- he'd never been asked it before.

OSTEEN: I never thought of it either. I don't know.

KING: He loves everything. Does he love...

OSTEEN: I don't know. I'll leave that for Dr. Graham.

KING: Phoenix, Arizona. Hello.

CALLER: Hello, Larry. You're the best, and thank you, Joe -- Joel -- for your positive messages and your book. I'm wondering, though, why you side-stepped Larry's earlier question about how we get to heaven? The bible clearly tells us that Jesus is the way, the truth and the light and the only way to the father is through him. That's not really a message of condemnation but of truth.

OSTEEN: Yes, I would agree with her. I believe that...

KING: So then a Jew is not going to heaven?

OSTEEN: No. Here's my thing, Larry, is I can't judge somebody's heart. You know? Only god can look at somebody's heart, and so -- I don't know. To me, it's not my business to say, you know, this one is or this one isn't. I just say, here's what the bible teaches and I'm going to put my faith in Christ. And I just I think it's wrong when you go around saying, you're saying you're not going, you're not going, you're not going, because it's not exactly my way. I'm just...

KING: But you believe your way.

OSTEEN: I believe my way. I believe my way with all my heart.

KING: But for someone who doesn't share it is wrong, isn't he?

OSTEEN: Well, yes. Well, I don't know if I look at it like that. I would present my way, but I'm just going to let god be the judge of that. I don't know. I don't know.

KING: So you make no judgment on anyone?

OSTEEN: No. But I...

KING: What about atheists?

OSTEEN: You know what, I'm going to let someone -- I'm going to let god be the judge of who goes to

heaven and hell. I just -- again, I present the truth, and I say it every week. You know, I believe it's a relationship with Jesus. But you know what? I'm not going to go around telling everybody else if they don't want to believe that that's going to be their choice. God's got to look at your own heart. God's got to look at your heart, and only god knows that.

KING: You believe there's a place called heaven?

OSTEEN: I believe there is. Yes. You know, you've had a lot of the near-death experiences and things like that. Some of that is very, to me, not that you need that as proof, but it shows you these little kids seeing the angels and things like that.

KING: We'll take a break, and when we come back, the better half, Victoria, will join us. Don't go away.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

VICTORIA OSTEEN, EVANGELIST/WIFE OF PASTOR JOEL OSTEEN: You see, if you have someone in your life today, and you don't like the way they're treating you, I want to encourage you to take a look at how you're treating them. If you will begin to treat them differently, then you will get a different response. In other words, say your spouse isn't giving you enough love. They're ignoring you. They're not being kind and considerate to you.

Well, see, human nature is to give them a taste of their own medicine, to treat them the same way. But when we do that, we're just going to continue to reap what we're sowing.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK) KING: Joining us now in our remaining moments -- the screen obviously improves -- Victoria Osteen, Joel's wife. How'd you two meet?

V. OSTEEN: In my family's jewelry store. He came in to buy a watch battery. And I sold him a watch. And he says, I've been taking his money ever since.

KING: When did you get into the preaching business? We saw that clip of you?

V. OSTEEN: Well, when Joel went through the transition after his father died, I just -- he wanted me to take part in every service. So I do. I take part in every service. I do just a little encouraging piece. And then, this is my fourth Mother's Day message to bring. So that was on Mother's Day.

KING: Why do you want her in?

OSTEEN: Well, one, she's fantastic. And you know, she just has so much to give. And two, I think it increases our whole reach, to be a team, to do it together. I mean, here's some young people that are excited about God, and you know, there's not a lot of women in the, you know, ministry.

KING: Were you always a believer?

V. OSTEEN: Yes, I was raised as a believer, yes.

KING: What happens when you -- do you two disagree?

V. OSTEEN: Sure. We agree to disagree sometimes, you know.

KING: You ever disagree on biblical philosophy?

V. OSTEEN: No, no. We're very -- we're very much in agreement with the way we believe. And you know, Joel, what's so interesting about Joel's message is that we've been married 18 years. So...

KING: Eighteen years?

V. OSTEEN: We've been married 18 years.

KING: He looks 15 and you look 22.

V. OSTEEN: Oh, OK. Golly, you're younger than me. I'm going to have to do something about that. What I was going to say was, what he speaks every week is exactly the way he lives. It's the way he's always lived.

KING: There's no phony here?

V. OSTEEN: No. And you know, that nonjudgmental, when he sits there and says, you know, I just don't judge that. Do you know that's always the way he's been? He does not judge people. He does not...

KING: I'll bet you do sometimes.

V. OSTEEN: Well, you know what? I've gotten better. I've gotten better living with him. You can't do a whole lot of judging around our house. You'll get in trouble.

KING: (INAUDIBLE) drive you crazy? He's nice. I like him. He wasn't so bad. Don't hang up. He's nice.

V. OSTEEN: He's nice. He's real nice. And he always is nice, but I'm getting nicer. And I like myself better.

KING: What did you think about the Victoria's Secret sermon?

V. OSTEEN: I thought it was probably we all needed to hear that. We can all do better.

KING: Did you think twice before saying go to Victoria's Secret, to prop up the marriage?

OSTEEN: I thought about it, because I write my sermons, and I knew I'd get some letters. But I thought it kind of made the point. And I liked it. And I don't know if it was worth all the heat, but it was fun.

KING: Was there a hush in the crowd?

OSTEEN: No, they laughed. They were dying with me, so.

KING: The natural scheme of life is temptation. It's in front of you every day.

OSTEEN: Sure.

KING: Have you ever been tempted?

OSTEEN: Absolutely. I think we all are, you know. But you have to resist, and you have to keep your mind and your thoughts pure. But I think we all are. And the Bible talks about, you've got to pray to not enter into temptation. It doesn't say to pray that you won't be tempted. We all are.

KING: Had a near slip?

OSTEEN: I never have.

KING: Victoria?

V. OSTEEN: No.

KING: You get tempted to?

V. OSTEEN: Yeah. I eat that pie when I know I shouldn't.

(CROSSTALK)

KING: I'm not talking about that kind of temptation. V. OSTEEN: No, no. Sexual temptation?

KING: Yeah.

V. OSTEEN: No, no. I don't. I don't put things in me which, you know, like a lot of times you can watch a lot of things and you can put things in your mind as a seed, and they can give birth to that kind of thing. But we really try to guard what we watch. We guard what we -- what we allow to come in. And you know, I think

that's a lot of it. You have to guard your mind.

KING: Do you think your children have pressure on them to growing up with a famous pastor?

OSTEEN: I don't think so. I mean, maybe they do.

KING: Do you want them to be in the church?

OSTEEN: Oh, I would love them to do something. But I don't know what. Maybe they'll sing. Maybe they'll make movies. Maybe they'll do something -- maybe they'll be a minister. I don't know. But my father never pressured me, and we don't pressure ours. But I do like to expose them to it. Because to me, it's such an opportunity, and we just have such a heritage.

KING: Would you like to do some sermons, just you?

V. OSTEEN: Yes.

KING: Take a rest one week and why don't you do it?

V. OSTEEN: Yeah, well -- I -- well...

OSTEEN: As often as she could. She is more than welcome. And she's great at it. And she does those (INAUDIBLE).

V. OSTEEN: He's so good, though, you know. I like to sit and watch him.

KING: All right, what makes a good evangelist?

OSTEEN: Well, I don't know that I really know, but I think that you have a sincere heart, that you're pure before God and that you've got a relevant, practical message. And I think that's one reason the church has grown is because we've changed with the times. I mean, the music is upbeat. My message is what's going to help you during the week and things like that.

KING: What makes a good evangelist's wife?

V. OSTEEN: Helping him keep his focus. Complimenting him.

KING: Criticizing?

V. OSTEEN: I don't criticize, but I make suggestions.

KING: Does he read you his sermon each week before...

V. OSTEEN: No.

KING: No, you don't know what he's going to say?

V. OSTEEN: No. I don't. I could go up to his office and read it if I wanted to. But since I'm going to hear it so many times...

(CROSSTALK)

KING: You ever get tired of repeating it?

OSTEEN: It gets -- it's -- yeah. It's tiring physically.

KING: You do it five times?

OSTEEN: Yeah, it's physically tiring. But you know what, you just see the people out there, and it's like you said earlier, I realize this is the first time they've come this week. I've got to give it all I've got.

KING: What do you worry about the most?

V. OSTEEN: Probably my children. My children. I don't -- I'm concerned, you know. Because I'm a mother. And I want the best for them.

KING: It's not easy growing up.

V. OSTEEN: It's not. But you know, you have to trust. But I fight that. I fight, you know, not being so fearful, and I just -- but yeah, that's -- my kids.

KING: Do you have a doubt?

V. OSTEEN: I fight doubt, I do, sure. But I resist it. I try to change my thinking. Because it's kind of like this, Larry, you know, Joel says we can choose this. Well, it just makes you aware that there is another way. It makes you aware that there is a possibility. You know, if you've had a tragedy in your life, and you have someone like Joel telling you, you know, you can get over this, and this is how you can do it, you know, it just opens you up to see another way. And unless someone gives you another way to think, you'll never know. So I think that's where it comes, the choosing comes. It's to say, there is another option out there.

KING: You're going to win the award as the happiest people ever to be on this program.

OSTEEN: Thank you.

KING: Thank you, Joel.

OSTEEN: God bless you, Larry. My pleasure.

V. OSTEEN: Thank you. KING: Joel Osteen and Victoria Osteen. Joel is senior pastor of the largest and fastest growing congregation in the United States, the Lakewood Church in Houston. He's called the Smiling Preacher. And you can see why. And his number one "New York Times" best-seller "Your Best Life Now: Seven Steps to Living at Your Full Potential." The companion now published, "Your Best Life Now Journal," and Victoria Osteen, as well.