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For Christian Men: The Lessons of Herman Cain

For Christians, the lessons of Herman Cain are too important to leave in the history books of the 2012 presidential campaign.



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Herman Cain “suspended” his campaign for the 2012 Republican presidential nomination on Saturday, ending one of the most interesting political campaigns of recent years. Cain’s energy and ideas had catapulted him into the front ranks of Republican candidates, even though he had never previously run for any national political office. This unlikely candidate ran an unconventional campaign that collapsed under the weight of unusual developments. In a matter of minutes, it was over.

“As of today, with a lot of prayer and soul searching, I am suspending my presidential campaign,” he stated. “Because of the continued distractions, the continued hurt caused on me and my family, not because we are not fighters. Not because I am not a fighter,” he said.



The “suspension” of his campaign means the end of his quest for the nomination, and it came in the wake of serious allegations of sexual misconduct that Cain, in the end, could not escape. It began with a Chicago woman accusing him of making an unwanted sexual advance years ago when Cain was head of the National Restaurant Association. Next, a second woman made similar charges. Then, it was discovered that two other women had made similar accusations against Cain. At least two of the women received settlements from

the National Restaurant Association in return for dropping their charges. It then became known that the two women received the equivalent of a year's salary as part of the settlement.

The final blow came when an Atlanta woman, Ginger White, accused Cain of recently ending a 13-year sexual affair. Though the candidate suffered from political mishaps and confusion on some key issues, the sexual charges are what, in the end, doomed his candidacy.

While there are any number of worthy angles of serious reflection left in the wake of the Cain campaign, there are lessons here of particular importance to Christian men.

1. The Christian man must realize that credible accusations of sexual misconduct or immorality are fatal to credibility and ruinous to Christian witness.

The Bible places an unmistakable premium on sexual purity and faithfulness. This expectation is revealed in laws, precepts, and commandments and it is demonstrated throughout Scripture in virtually every conceivable manner. The clear expectation is fidelity within marriage, and the Bible warns of both temporal and eternal consequences of sexual immorality.

The Church does not consist of those who have never sinned, but of those who have come out of any number of sinful patterns into obedience to Christ. When a credible accusation of sexual immorality is made against a Christian man, nothing less than his faithfulness to Christ is called into question. Nothing is then more important than to refute the charge with honor and credibility, or to make a clean confession and accept the consequences.

2. The Christian man cannot dismiss any charge of sexual immorality as being a private matter of no public concern.

We know better. One hard lesson from the experience of Herman Cain is this: A Christian man accused of sexual immorality cannot make the argument that moral concerns "end outside of one's bedroom door." The Christian man cannot say, or allow to be said on his account, that matters of "legitimate inquiry" are limited to actions which carry legal sanction.

The American people do not accept this evasion when it comes to their political leaders. Even when they have supported a candidate after such a revelation, they have not claimed that the immoral behavior was of merely private consequence or concern. Christians are held to a far higher standard than those who are merely political leaders. When the political leader identifies as a Christian, the importance of these issues is only amplified.

3. The Christian man must plan his life in order to assure moral accountability and protections.

When the first charges of sexual misconduct were alleged, the first problem for Herman Cain was his inability to dismiss them immediately and demonstrate his innocence with credible argument. Instead, Cain fumbled the charges badly. In retrospect, he fumbled them at least in part because he could not dismiss them — and this was fatal to his campaign.

Look closely at the charges. One woman charged that Cain had made a sexual advance after taking her out on a night of socializing and entertainment in Washington, DC. Cain's situation would have been radically different if he had been able to respond that he had always maintained a policy of never socializing alone with any woman other than his wife. If those close to Cain had been able to support his claim, the charge would have been very difficult to press. Cain made no such claim. There was no denial that he had been alone with the woman in this context.

The other women who made accusations of sexual harassment were also able to do so without any credible refutation — especially when it was revealed that at least two of the women had received settlements from Cain's employer.

Does this prove that Cain was guilty of what the women charged? We will never know. What we do know is that he had engaged in behaviors that no Christian man should allow himself, opening his life to moral vulnerabilities that no man can responsibly accept.

In some situations, an insurance company can decide to settle a potential lawsuit without the permission of the accused. This is extremely dangerous for a Christian man in the business world or in any leadership position. What the Christian man must not accept is that this would be the end of the matter. He must insist, at the very least, that the appropriate authority (such as a supervisor or corporate board of directors) be ready to state that there is no credible evidence of such misconduct. No responsible authority has made such a statement on Cain's behalf.

The Christian man must plan his life, including his business life and his professional career, in such a way that he does not allow himself to be in a situation in which he can be credibly accused of such misconduct. A Christian man does not socialize alone with a woman who is not his wife — period. Though this can sometimes add complication and cost, a Christian man should not travel or conduct business in a way that exposes himself to sexual temptation or opportunity.

4. The Christian man must depend upon his church, the congregation that is so essential to his Christian vitality and faithfulness, as a bulwark against sin.

Christianity is not to be lived in isolation. We are called together into congregations of fellow believers, living together in submission to Christ and growing together by the ministry of the Word. Christian men desperately need the strength and accountability that comes through faithful membership in a Gospel church.

The congregation must provide moral protections as well as moral instruction. The men of the congregation, old and young together, must be a band of brothers ready to pray for one another, to encourage one another, to confront one another, to admonish one another, to protect one another, and to stand together in faithfulness to Christ.

Do your Christian brothers know of your practices, patterns of life, and principles of conduct? Are they ready to defend you should an accusation come? Do you regularly seek the counsel of your brothers in deciding how to conduct your marriage, your business life, and your professional practices? If not, you are in trouble already.

5. A Christian man knows that his wife is his best defense against sexual immorality and sexual vulnerability - and his most important witness to character.

The campaign of Herman Cain started to disintegrate with the accusation of a 13-year sexual affair. Once again, Cain had no rational defense, other than to insist, as he did, that he had done absolutely nothing wrong. Why was that not credible? The press quickly learned, and Cain affirmed, that he had given the woman repeated sums of money and had exchanged frequent phone calls and text messages.

Then came the most damaging admission: His wife knew nothing of the relationship. Then came an even more bizarre development: Cain waited days to discuss the accusations with his wife in person. As *The New York Times* reported, the accusation was made the Monday after Thanksgiving. Cain did not return to Atlanta until Friday night “to meet and consult with his wife for the first time since Ms. White came forward with her claim.” Seriously? Americans watched day by day as Cain told the public that, by the end of the week, he would consult with his wife. That would be the wife who did not know of her husband’s “friendship” with a woman he had over the years given both money and much attention.

At his Atlanta appearance, Cain said: “I am at peace with my God. I am at peace with my wife, and she is at peace with me.” Mrs. Cain, who was at his side, said nothing.

Did the liberal press try to pull Cain down? No doubt this is true, but Cain’s campaign was not destroyed by the accusations, but rather by his inability to counter and refute them. Is any man vulnerable to such accusations? At one level, yes. But that is a very superficial level. What separates such accusations at this point is the ability of the accused to mount a real defense and refute the charges.

Herman Cain's situation would have been radically different had he responded by denying the charges, documenting his moral protections, demonstrating the untruthfulness of the charges, allowing his wife to attest to those protections, and then challenging anyone with evidence to the contrary to come forward and present such evidence in public.

Perhaps he could not. In any event, he did not. There was just too much left on the table after any fair-minded person looked closely at the charges.

Herman Cain would be in a very different position today if he had been able to say that he had never socialized alone with a woman other than his wife, and that he had never engaged in a relationship or friendship with any woman that was unknown to and unaccompanied by his wife. As became apparent, he could not make these statements.

It is too late for Herman Cain to restart his presidential campaign and start again. But it is not too late for many Christian men to act in order to prevent the day when they are caught in their own moment of trial in the face of such accusations. For Christians, the lessons of Herman Cain are too important to leave in the history books of the 2012 presidential campaign.

I am always glad to hear from readers. Write me at mail@albertmohler.com. Follow regular updates on Twitter at www.twitter.com/AlbertMohler

The media coverage of Herman Cain's presidential campaign is extensive, as would be expected. Within a few months, it is likely that even more extensive coverage and analysis will be available. The article cited for reference in this essay is by Susan Saulny, "[A Defiant Herman Cain Suspends His Bid for Presidency](#)," *The New York Times*, Sunday, December 4, 2011.

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