



Left, Dave Corwin (Rob Reisman) reflects a rare lighter moment in **Standing Firm**.

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Standing Firm stands tall

MOVIE ASKS: IF GOD IS GOOD, WHY DO WE SUFFER?

BY RANDALL MURPHREE

Standing Firm, the first feature film from Praise Pictures, delivers a dramatic and gripping story that is remarkably strong for a start-up company. Praise Pictures was founded by Kyle Prohaska and Kevin Michael in 2007, the culmination of Prohaska's boyhood dream and Michael's inspiration to make Christian films.

Dave Corwin is the main player in this character-driven drama. Recently widowed, Dave questions the concept of God's goodness. God allowed Dave's wife Jen to die – how can He be good? The movie opens with scenes from Jen's funeral, setting the tone for an emotional ride through a man's struggle to survive financially, emotionally and spiritually.

The film uses flashbacks effectively, and through them, viewers learn that Dave and Jen's marriage had been in trouble for some time. Dave feels responsible for her death because she died in an auto crash after they had argued and she drove away to clear her head.

Jen had been a strong Christian, and the Corwins' young adult son Steven is a committed follower as well. After Jen's death, Dave's construction business is faltering, he can't make his house payments, he turns away from God, and he

totally avoids attending church. In that dark season of his life, he alienates his son and all of his friends.

If **Standing Firm** lacks anything at all, it might be action and subtlety. However, the emotional intensity holds the viewer's attention and carries the story well.

As for subtlety, Prohaska told the *AFA Journal*, "I'm more focused on the church itself and the many who need to be saved within it. People tend to forget the thousands sitting in the pews each Sunday with nothing but darkness in their hearts. I think that's a mission field forgotten, and it's something I don't mind diving directly into."

That being said, however, **Standing Firm** has the strength and depth to show great potential as an outreach tool. The Gospel is clearly presented, not so much preached from a pulpit but demonstrated in the lives and words of the characters.

"I consider the films I make to be digital tracts," Prohaska said. "Instead of a pamphlet, give them a DVD – something they're much more familiar with today."

Prohaska's youth makes his accomplishment even more noteworthy. At age 22, he has already made great strides toward a lifelong ambition. He says he first became intrigued with movies as a young

child and dreamed of making his own films.

Steven Spielberg, George Lucas and other filmmaking greats were his first heroes. But his own career goals took a turn from the secular after he gave his life to Christ at a youth event in 2005.

"Although my passion for filmmaking came from a secular source, I see God's hand in it regardless," he said. In recent years he has studied and/or worked with leading Christian filmmakers such as Sherwood Pictures' Alex and Steven Kendrick, Rich and Dave Christiano and Peter and Paul Lalonde of Cloud 10 Pictures.

Prohaska said he owes the Kendrick brothers a lot because his dream took a big step toward reality when Michael came to his office one day with **Flywheel** and **Facing the Giants** (Sherwood Pictures' first films), told him to watch them and think about making a movie.

Much like the initial Sherwood film, Praise Pictures produced **Standing Firm** with mostly volunteer cast and crew and a miniscule budget. Those factors establish the final product as no small miracle.

It will be available on DVD August 24, and Praise Pictures is scheduling church screenings via the company Web site (above). Michael has moved on to other pursuits and Prohaska now heads Praise Pictures alone.

"My prayer is that this film will edify the believer and bring the Gospel to others," Prohaska said. "Regardless of my hopes, I just pray that God will use this in any way He deems fit. Whatever that means, I have to be content." 