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by **Doug Van Pelt**

FORGIVING THE FRANKLINS

Here is an incredibly intriguing story about a family of believers that have a near-death experience (where they meet Jesus in an open field and are instructed to go back to the living, but not living the way they did). Their liberation from legalistic tendencies is fascinating to watch. Reminding me of *The Rapture* movie back in the early 90s (where Mimi Rogers converts to Christianity from a life of sex-addiction and pick-up bars, which is all graphically chronicled on the big screen), due to its unflinching use of flesh in bedroom scenes and the type of profanity-laced but honest prayers (like those found in the movie *Saved!*). The movie brilliantly shows an angle of grace and redemption that is precious. Many will find the full frontal nudity and the topic of homosexuality worthless, however. Jesus pulls a bloody apple from the back of the heads of this couple and their son, which the film makers refer to as "remove from them the burden of original sin." The judgmental behavior of their church friends after this life-changing experience is villainous. When main character Betty finds out that her old friends are holding a Christian Parents meeting without her (having told her it was cancelled), she confronts her friend Peggy as the other church ladies look on through a window. Peggy accuses her of not living the "good Christian life," to which Betty responds with a statement about "not acting like decent human beings." It really brings a zinger of a message home that should encourage believers to be about doing so many good deeds that people are in respectful awe. Like picking up a gem and gazing through its multi-faceted sides, this film offers a unique glimpse into the purity of an ongoing relationship with God and pulls a veil off the half-hearted and lazy attempts of so many of us in our walks. Getting some foundational doctrines wrong is not an area where believers are encouraged to go, but playing devil's advocate with an idea can certainly offer some food for discussion. I might have to interview this writer/director (Jay Floyd) for an upcoming "Intermission" feature in HM. That could be a fascinating discussion. Wow. I'm almost speechless after this one.