

Talking with Your Kids About Jesus with Natasha Crain

(May 9, 2020)

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant. He grew up in another village, where he worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30. Then, for three years, he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a home. He didn't go to college. He never lived in a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

He was only 33 when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his garments, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave, through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race. I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned--put together--have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one, solitary life.

That's a poem written about 100 years ago, and you can google it, One Solitary Life. And of course, it's talking about Jesus. The question is, do you know how to talk about the most influential human being in history? Do you know how to talk about that most influential human in history to your children?

I was at the University of Maryland a number of years ago doing, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, and after the seminar was over a bunch of atheists were hanging out. And one of them was really down on the New Testament, but he didn't seem to know much about it. And

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so, I finally asked him, I said, have you ever read the New Testament? And he was flummoxed. He had never read it. I said, Look, I don't care where you are, or where you grew up, or what your history is, or what your religious upbringing has been. Jesus of Nazareth is the most influential human being in history. If you're going to call yourself a seeker of Truth, you have to at least read what he allegedly said and did. You may read it and not agree with it. You may think it's bunk, but you have to at least read what he allegedly said and did.

And by the way, how could that one solitary life be the center of the human race if there was no resurrection? I don't have enough faith to believe that that one solitary life in those conditions could be the center of the human race today unless the resurrection occurred. And Jesus is the center of the Christian faith. And he's the center of human history. And now there's a book available that you can actually use to tell about this most influential human being in history to your children. And when you read this book, not only will your children learn, but you will learn, as well. The book is called, Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have. The author, of course, is the great Natasha Crain. This is her third book in a series. You know, she's done, Talking with Your Kids about God, and, Keeping Your Kids on God's Side.

Now it's, Talking with Your Kids about Jesus. And parents, can we just agree on one thing? When we read a book intended for kids, we learn a lot. Now this book is actually intended for parents, but you will learn a lot, as well, by reading it and teaching about Jesus to your kids. So, it's great having Natasha on the program. She's with me today. Natasha, how are you?

Natasha:

I'm doing great. Thanks so much for having me on. It's great to talk with you.

Frank:

Of course, it's great having you on. And you have done some great books, you've got a great blog, you're doing great work with young people and parents, especially helping bring up young people. You have your degree from Biola. You live in Southern California. Tell people your blog, just so we get that on the table before I forget. What is what is what is your website?

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Natasha:

My website is natashacrain.com. You can also get there by going to christianmomthoughts.com. That was the original name of the blog.

Frank:

Okay, natashacrain.com. Let's start with start out with this book, Natasha. It's the third in the series. Why did you write this one?

Natasha:

Well, the theme across all three of the books is that there are certain conversations that, as parents, we really need to have with our kids about our faith, given the challenges of today's world. So, these aren't just general conversations about Jesus, even though the title sounds kind of broad talking with your kids about Jesus. These are very specific conversations to point you to the big questions that people are putting to Christians today and to help you understand how to talk about those.

So, my first book, Keeping Kids on God's Side, was just kind of an Apologetics 101; a big broad sweep across lots of subjects for parents. And then parents said, well, where do we go from here? Where do we go deeper with this whole parent to parent conversation kind of style? So, that's why I wrote the next two books, Talking with Your Kids about God, focused on 30 conversations, specifically, about the god level. So, what's the evidence for God's existence? What's the nature of God? And so on.

And this one, now, focuses in on Jesus specifically. On lots of those questions that you would have talked about in the poem at the beginning. And really just gets into, who is Jesus? The identity of Jesus. How do we know that he was who He said He was? And what about his teachings? What did he teach and what did he mean by that? The death, the resurrection, and the difference that Jesus makes. So, this book is really intended to get specific with Christianity, whereas my last book about God, was more at a theistic level versus an atheistic worldview.

Frank:

Well, you've got 30 topics in here. 30 questions that you ought to be talking about with your kids. Now, if you don't have kids, you still need to get this book, because you're going to learn

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from it just reading it yourself. So, friends, the book, it is called, Talking with Your Kids about Jesus. There are topics in here though, Natasha, that you don't really hear about in church. Why don't we?

Natasha:

I think that most of the topics actually you probably won't hear about in church and there are a lot of reasons that that could be. But because the theme of these books is that these are challenges that kids are going to face today, they're very specific in nature, and unfortunately, a lot of churches have not caught up to this. A lot of churches are still very seeker friendly. They interpret being seeker friendly as really getting down to basics. Now, I would argue that being seeker friendly, we should actually be digging more deeply into these questions. But in the general sense of the word, churches tend to get really basic, especially in Sunday school and in youth groups. And so, they're not really digging into these questions.

And I don't mean to make a sweeping generalization there. Obviously, there are some churches who are doing a good job of this. But in my experience, and talking to lots and lots of parents, these are not the kinds of things that churches are addressing with kids. And I think it's important for parents to know that when they look at a book like mine, or other apologetics books, just because these aren't questions that you're hearing in church doesn't mean they're not important. These questions are extremely important. These are questions that have been raised to the surface by a lot of the research that's been done around why kids are leaving the faith today. And these are the things that we know from those findings that kids struggle with.

And so, it's not that we should look to church for, okay, here's what they're doing and therefore this is what's important. We need to be aware, as parents and other spiritual influencers in the lives of kids, of what the challenges are today so that we can disciple our kids accordingly. And we can address those things whether our church happens to be doing that or not. And that's the primary responsibility we have is to teach our kids. It's not the church, it's not the school, it's us as parents. And if you're if you have a child at home, you are still as a parent, most influential human being in that person's life, even if you don't think so.

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Frank:

Now the book is broken up into five parts; the identity of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus, the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, and the difference Jesus makes. And there's five or six topics under each one of those categories. Usually six, it looks like. And we're gonna drill down into some of these. Okay, we got about a minute to drill down into one of them here, and maybe we'll pick it up on the other side, too. How about this question, did ancient people believe in miracles because they were more gullible? Natasha, is that really true? Were they more gullible?

Natasha:

Well, in a minute or last, here's what I would say to that. A lot of the times, when skeptics are claiming that we're more gullible or that ancient people are more gullible, if you really look into what they're saying, such as Richard Carrier and the statements he's made; what they're really saying is that anyone with a supernatural worldview, believing that something exists outside of nature, is gullible. So, they're making claims about an entire worldview, not necessarily specific to the claims of Christianity. So, it starts there. And in that chapter, I talk about that as the starting point of just understanding that sometimes people are just making that assertion, as in carriers Carrier's case, that this is a supernatural issue.

Frank:

And there's a lot more detail in the book, whereas there's also questions; is Jesus God, what did Jesus teach about love, what about Jesus teaching about judging, should we not judge? We'll get into that after the break. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek. My guest today is Natasha Crain. Her new book, Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have. In fact, every parent must have. We're back in two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

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Frank:

We were supposed to be in Israel right now, or about this time, but of course the coronavirus put a kibosh on that. So, now we're going in September. If you want to join us on this amazing tour, with myself and Eli Shukron, the Israeli archaeologist who discovered the pool of Siloam right there in the city of David, go to crossexamined.org. Click on events. You'll see the VIP Israel Tour. We're going to stay at the best places and see the most amazing sights. I think it's September 6 to 17th, if I'm not mistaken. The details are up there. Don't worry about the coronavirus. No virus can survive in Israel in the summer. In fact, very few people can survive in Israel in the summer. So, we're all going to be there. We're all going to see some amazing things. And it's true, when you go to Israel, you really...I know it sounds cliché, but the Bible does come to life, because you can see the topography, see the geography, see where these things happened, stand where Jesus stood. And if you can be a part of it, check it out. Go to crossexamined.org, click on events, and you will see the VIP Israel Tour in September.

We're talking to Natasha Crain. Her new book, *Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have*. Okay, here's a conversation we have to have, Natasha. And this is in the book. Is Jesus God? Well, is he?

Natasha:

Yes.

Frank:

Why didn't he just say, I'm God, worship me. Come on, Natasha.

Natasha:

Yeah, well, so in this chapter, I talk about an acronym, actually, that is in a great book called, *Putting Jesus in His Place*. And the authors of this book use a fantastic acronym that's very helpful for kids to learn. And it's called H.A.N.D.S. So, H.A.N.D.S. And it talks about how the Bible shows that Jesus shares, number one, the honors due God. That's the H. Number two, he shares the attributes of God. That's the A. Jesus shares the names of God. That's the N. He shares the deeds that God does. That's the D. And finally, he shares the seat of God's throne. That's the S.

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And acronyms can be really helpful for teaching kids about these things because there's not a place where we would go and we would say, okay, here are all the verses together where Jesus says, I am God fall down and worship me. Instead, we have to really get into all the ways that Jesus claims to be God in these different forms, like I just went through with the acronym, and also the ways that other people claimed that he was God. Because sometimes people would look at this and say, okay, I can see maybe Jesus claimed that for himself, but did anyone else think that? So, these are kind of two different questions going on here.

But when you understand all the different ways that Jesus claims to be God, for example, just offering to forgive someone for their sins, which was something that the Jewish people believed only God could do. That is something that Jesus himself was claiming to do. This is a claim to deity. And when you learn all of these different ways, it's like an optical illusion, when you can't see something at first, but then when you see something hidden in the picture, you can never unsee it. And that's the analogy I use in the chapter. Once you learn all of these ways, now you cannot read the New Testament in the same way. Now you see these claims to deity in every way.

Frank:

I love that acronym, H.A.N.D.S; honors, attributes, names, deeds and seat. Can we just spend a minute or two on seat? Is that the Daniel seven reference there? Or is it son of man? Is that what he's talking about when they use the "S" for the idea that Jesus is God? Seat; he shares the seat of God? Is that what that is?

Natasha:

So, there are a few different references to that. But the authors explained that someone's sitting on God's throne and exercising God's ultimate prerogatives is in the least, a very practical sense, God. And I'm just kind of reading from this quote. They say, "he occupies God's position, and in doing so, has the rightful expectation that we respond to Him as God Himself". And so, there are a lot of references to this, that Jesus is pictured as sitting on God's throne in Revelation 22. Jesus said, to exercise universal rule over all things. And that's language that was characteristically used in Judaism to communicate God's unique sovereignty from the throne. And there are a lot of verses that reference that.

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And then finally, Jesus is said to be exalted above all of God's heavenly court, such as angels and other supernatural powers. So, this is in a lot of different places. And what I love about this too, and how the authors do this, is that they provide all of these references through all of the acronyms that you can take this, and you can go with your kids and point to these places in the Bible. And that's something that I really wanted to emphasize in the book that, learning about our faith isn't just about taking in what other people are telling us. That can actually end up being a very dangerous thing because sometimes self-identified believe some very non-biblical things. But rather, we want to keep going back to the Bible itself, and showing our kids, okay, here's what we're talking about. Here's exactly what it says, and where it says so, that they get into that habit themselves.

Frank:

Hmm. Yeah. I also think of when you said the seat of God, the throne. I think of Daniel seven when Jesus said, "you will see the Son of man", he kept referring to himself as the Son of Man, "coming in great power on the clouds". Under oath to Caiaphas he says this. Well, that's a reference to Daniel seven, when God is on his throne, and Jesus comes and sits there. Anyway, that would seem to be another way of pointing out that Jesus is God. Okay, the H.A.N.D.S acronym. I love that. I never knew that existed until I read your book here. And again, the book is called, Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have, by Natasha Crain. And she's my guest today.

You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek. So, the identity of Jesus is one of the sections. We just did a couple of questions there. Let's talk a little bit about the teachings of Jesus. Before we do, Natasha, I think a lot of people focus on Jesus's teaching rather than his identity. Why is that? Now, obviously, his teaching's important, but they don't spend enough time on the identity thing, especially in teaching the kids. So, let's just talk about what Jesus taught. You know, be nice to people, that kind of thing.

Natasha:

I totally agree with you. I think that parents, by and large, find it easier to work these conversations into their daily lives about, you know, what did Jesus teach, and he wants us to be nice, and he wants us to honor him, and respect our parents. It's really easy to communicate those things to your kids. But the reality is that, if we haven't taken the time to establish who

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Jesus was, as God Himself, as our Creator, and our sustainer, who has all authority for our lives, then our kids aren't really going to care about those teachings that we're talking about. They're going to have no reason to really listen and say, yeah, I hear you, and I care about this, and I'm going to apply it and Live. And so, we might get away with that for a few years, when our kids are really little, where they're not going to question, well, who is this Jesus anyway, because that's all they really heard about. But the older they get, the more they're going to question and need to understand why there's good reason to believe that Jesus was God.

And so, we have to start there. And that's why the book starts with those chapters on the identity of Jesus, because if Jesus wasn't who He said He was, the rest of the book doesn't matter. We don't have to talk about what his death meant, and we don't have to talk about whether or not he was raised from the dead. If he wasn't God, those things are meaningless. And so, all of this really starts with his identity and establishing it.

Frank:

Yeah. And if he wasn't God, then why follow what he says, as opposed to anybody else? I mean, that's really the point. You know, it may be good advice. Good in what sense? I mean, by what standard? Who said? You said? Jesus said? If he's not God and he's not the standard. Now the apostles weren't God, but the apostles were confirmed by Jesus, and Jesus promised that he would guide them into all truth. So, we can accept what they said about Jesus on the same level that we accept what Jesus says.

I'm reminded of Greg Koukl, our mutual friend, who talks about a tactic - What a friend we have in Jesus. Meaning that, look, if somebody asks you a controversial question about something like, what do you think of same-sex marriage, you can go... well, it doesn't matter what I think about it. Here's what Jesus said about it. He said, marriage is between a man and a woman. Oh, so, if you want to argue with that, you can argue with Jesus, not me. Because, what I say, I'm not the standard. It doesn't matter what I say. What matters is what Jesus says. So, you're absolutely right. We need to establish the identity. And that's what this book will do. We need to establish the identity of Jesus before the teachings really have more weight behind them.

And how about some of the teachings? Because, by the way, Jesus wasn't always nice. That's a myth, Natasha. And you point that out. What does he teach about hell, or example? Is it nice to

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talk about hell today? Jesus talks about hell and you have a chapter on what Jesus taught about hell.

Natasha:

Yeah, it depends what you mean by, talking about something that's nice. You know, it isn't pleasant for us to hear. Well, it probably isn't pleasant, but is it the right thing to do if hell is reality? Absolutely. And so, I think that parents really struggle with talking about hell, and they treat it like a PG-13 kind of subject. And I've actually had parents tell me before that, you know, their kids were getting to be teenagers and they thought it was time that they have a conversation about hell. And I just really was struck by that when I heard it the first time. And I've heard it so many times since because parents feel like it's not something that's appropriate.

But when we look at what Jesus taught about hell, we see that, number one, he taught that hell is real. So, we have to start there, you know, where sometimes people want to say, oh, well, maybe it's just, you know, a metaphor. He didn't really mean it like that. But Jesus absolutely taught the hell is real. He taught that hell is a punishment after final judgment. So, a lot of times, and I quote some of these people in the book. Sometimes people say that, well, we don't really know, you know, if there is a hell, or maybe it's just a temporary thing. Well, Jesus specifically taught about it being a punishment after final judgment, and not just some kind of temporary thing. And that's in Matthew 25.

And then finally, he taught that hell is not something to take lightly. That this is something he used very strong words and imagery to reflect this. And we don't necessarily need to take all of those images literally, in terms of you know, there's fire and there's darkness, there are a lot of things going on. But what we can say is that all of this is meant to tell us that hell is a bad, bad thing, and we need to pay attention to that.

So, I think what parents most need to understand, when it comes to the subject of hell, once we've established, okay, these are our parameters that we're working with that Jesus taught, how do we respond? And for Christians, we don't need to feel like we are fearful of hell because God has given us a way out of hell. He has offered us the free gift of forgiveness so that we will be saved. And so, our kids need to understand there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We don't have anything to fear. But if you're not in right relationship with

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God, that's when you do have something to fear. And I always come back to that, because skeptics so often say that Christianity is a fear based religion. Well, you shouldn't be fearful if you're in right relationship with God. But if you're not, then absolutely, there is something to fear. And I think that that's the reality of our world and what we need to understand about the subject,

Frank:

And if there is no hell, what's the purpose of Jesus? What are we saved from? We're not saved from anything if there is no hell. We just die and that's it. The reason Jesus came was because he came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. That's what he says in John 10:45. A ransom. If there's nothing to be saved from, then there's nothing to that statement, that Jesus said He came as a ransom, basically to save people from judgment.

Now, one of my pet peeves that you deal with quite well here in the book...and again, the book is called, Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have...judging. Didn't Jesus say, don't judge, Natasha?

Natasha:

He did. And I think that everybody knows that. That's the one thing in the Bible I think that everybody knows today, because everyone loves to quote that so much from Matthew seven. You know, Jesus don't say not to judge. But a lot of times people don't realize you have to read the rest of what he said in that exact same passage. This isn't even something difficult to do. I'm not talking about well, let's put together 15 verses across the Bible to make the case. This is simple. You just have to keep reading in Matthew chapter seven. And what you see is, he's not telling us not to judge at all. Instead, that is a prelude to a whole passage on not judging hypocritically. We don't want to be taking out something from someone's else's eye when we haven't yet removed from the plank from our own. We don't want to be hypocritical judges.

Frank:

Exactly. And we'll pick up that on the other side of the break, because there's more to say. We have more judgments to make about that in just a minute. In fact, we're talking to Natasha Crain. Her book is, Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent

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Frank:

Matthew, chapter seven, the Sermon on the Mount. "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. 3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. 6 "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces." That's Jesus. Natasha, was Jesus making judgments in this section of the Sermon on the Mount?

Natasha:

Yeah, it sure sounds like he is. He is making a judgment here. Now, somebody can say, yeah, well, he's Jesus, he can make the judgment. But of course, if you actually read what he's saying here is, you hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, then you will see clearly in order to take the speck out of your brother's eye. So, we're being called to make the judgment. And when we say judgment, let's be really clear, and I make this distinction in the chapter. We're talking about discernment. We're talking about deciding between what is right and what is wrong. We're not talking about condemnation. Condemning another meant passing a final sentence on someone's life. That's God's job. That's not our job. And that's where I think a lot of people go wrong with this, is that they think that if we're discerning, in some way, that we're also condemning. And those are two completely different things. There's no question Jesus tells us to discern rightly. And another place, he says to judge with right judgment. So, we are called

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to judge, to be good discerners when it comes to sin, and deciding between what is right and wrong.

Frank:

Yeah, you have to judge. Everybody makes judgments. Of course, it's self-defeating to say, don't make judgments, because it's a judgment itself. So, Jesus isn't defeating himself. He's telling us not to judge hypocritically, as you said earlier. And in order to take the speck out of your brother's eye, that's a judgment. You got to do that. Right?

Natasha:

Exactly.

Frank:

You know, at the end of it when he says, do not give to dogs what is sacred, that's a command to us. Well, you got to know what a dog is, you got to know what a pig is, you got to know what a pearl is, in order to do these things. So, as we said before in this program, there are no verses in the Bible. You have to read around the verse to figure out what's going on. And once you do, then you can see the complete context. Of course, everybody makes judgments. The only question is, are your judgments true? Atheists make judgments. They judge there's no God, they judge the Bible's wrong, that Jesus didn't rise from the dead. Those are all judgments. So, the only question is, are your judgments true?

Now we're talking to Natasha Crain. Her book, *Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have*. Let's talk about this, because I think this is the key to the cultural divide right now in our country, Natasha. And you talk about it on page 109. What did Jesus teach about loving others? Because the question is, does love require approval? Because some people in our culture will say, yes, you got to approve of what I do in order to love me. Is that what Jesus taught?

Natasha:

Right. The key to understanding this is in Jesus's teaching of the two greatest commandments. He says that number one is, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul,

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and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. So, let's come back to that. That's really important. The second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself.

So, he's talking about two kinds of love here. And the first one, when he says that something is the greatest commandment, then we need to pay attention, because that's going to give context for everything else, we do. Our definition of what it means to love others is going to come under what it first means to love God. As Christians, this is our worldview, or it should be, based on what Jesus says. So, when we love God first, it means that we respect what God has said, that we trust in God's character, that we follow His commands, that we are obeying what he said. This is going to define love, by his very nature and what he has revealed to us in the Bible. That will inform, then, how we go about loving others.

Now, if you look at this from a secular perspective, if a person doesn't believe in God at all, then of course, there's not going to be any kind of umbrella over their definition of love. Love is going to become a very subjective definition. It's going to be whatever I think love is. And in today's culture, the collective wisdom has sort of come around to, okay, love is giving to others whatever they want, whatever makes them happy. That's what love is. And that's the definition. But when it comes to a Christian worldview, love is not necessarily giving someone what they want. It's giving them what God wants for them, because we know that that's what is best. And I think that is ultimately the key divide here. And I think that's where we help our kids to really understand this is a story of two worldviews. In one, we have a definer of love over us. And in another one, we are our own authority. So, we're always going to differ on love. Even though it sounds like there's a very basic word that we should all understand the same way, and it gets thrown around like that, it's actually a lot more complex. And that's what we have to help our kids understand.

Frank:

Yes, love does not necessarily mean approval. In fact, that was the subject of last week's podcast. It's also the subject of a sermon I just gave at Calvary Chapel, Chino Hills, which you can see on our website, crossexamined.org. Well, actually the YouTube channel or the Facebook page. But this is what Natasha lays out, as well, in her book, *Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have*. And I love the way you set up the book, Natasha, because look, each conversation is what, like three or four pages long. And

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then you have key points, conversation guide, and a section on how to apply the conversation. So, you can actually have a conversation with your kids about this, which is really important. And look, if you don't have kids, you can do this in a small group, or you can just do it with yourself and learn about Jesus. These are all good questions you need to learn about Jesus and then teach them to your kids.

So far, we've taken some questions from the identity of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus. Now, how about the death of Jesus? That's the third of five sections of this book. And let me ask you this. This is one of the questions you have in the book, in that section, the death of Jesus, Natasha. What did Jesus's death accomplish?

Natasha:

Well, this sounds like a very basic kind of Christian question. But let me just preface this by saying that the reason this question is so important, and it belongs in a book like this, based on challenges in today's world, is that for a lot of people, what Jesus's death accomplished is a very subjective thing. It's whatever it makes us feel. It's how it's affected me personally. And of course, the death of Jesus is something that we all experience, and we process, but the Bible is very clear that Jesus's death on the cross accomplish some very objective things. In other words, some things that apply to all people.

So, I highlight several of those in the chapter. But just to give you a couple of them, number one, Jesus's death atoned for our sins. So, first and foremost, this is what our kids need to understand, and all Christians should understand, is that Jesus died for our sins. And I established earlier in the book that the Old Testament sacrificial system pointed forward to that and that taught people the severity of sin and how important being forgiven of sins was. And this, ultimately, pointed forward to the sacrifice of Jesus. So, Jesus died on the cross in our place to make satisfaction for us. And so, number one, that's what he accomplished.

Another thing that he accomplished is that that reconciled us to God. So, by dying on the cross, now we're no longer under God's wrath, but rather reconciled to him and our peace has been made. And another thing I talked about in this chapter, which maybe sounds so obvious to some people, but I talked about how this was not obvious for me, is that Jesus death demonstrated God's love. And I think that this is something that I never really understood as a

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Christian, for many years, because I kind of looked through the Bible looking for you know, I keep hearing that God loves me, but when I look at the Bible as a whole, I don't feel so much love. There's a lot of stuff going on, and I see God doing a lot of things, but I didn't necessarily feel the love. But it wasn't until I really processed that God's love was ultimately demonstrated by Jesus's sacrifice on the cross that that became personal for me.

So, this is kind of a personal point that has made a huge difference in my life. And that I think is important for kids to explicitly understand, to be told, here's how we know that God loves you, and why this was such a giant sacrifice, and what it accomplished for us and making peace with God.

Frank:

And it's also why Jesus is the only way. That's the only way an infinite God, who is infinitely just, can allow unjust people like ourselves to not be punished. He punishes, basically, himself. That way he remains just, and he becomes the justifier of those who have faith in him. That's Romans 3:26. This is all in the book, *Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have*, by Natasha Crain. Here's a question a kid would definitely ask. You ready, Natasha? I hope you are because it's in your book. The question is on page 172? If Jesus is God, how could he die?

Natasha:

That's a huge question. This is a question that my own kids have really grappled with, and I think that this came up for us because one day, my daughter was saying that, you know, God died on the cross for us and I kind of corrected her. And I said, well, Jesus died on the cross. And she said, well, Jesus is God, so God died on the cross.

Frank:

So, there.

Natasha:

So there, mom. And honestly, at the time, I was kind of like ah, you know, I have to think about that for a second. And I came back to it later. And I realized that the problem, in one sense yes, God died on the cross, because Jesus is God. So, you know if that's all we mean then okay. But

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God as a triune being upholds our universe. And so, God as the triune being, did not die on the cross. And this really requires an understanding of the trinity, which can be very difficult for kids to get. But they need to understand that Jesus, being part of the trinity, he was the member of the trinity who died on the cross. And so, it wasn't God overall. The universe didn't cease to exist when God, as a being, died on the cross. It was Jesus, specifically.

And so, sometimes these theological fine points, it seems like, oh, do we really have to get into that. But it has other implications for how they process who Jesus is, and how the trinity works together. And so, it's important that we take the time to be accurate and to help them understand how, in that chapter I talk about, you know, here's why it's important that we understand Jesus is fully human, and Jesus is fully God at the same time, but only Jesus in His humanity died on the cross physically.

Frank:

Yeah, and this is why another reason why this heresy, known as modalism, doesn't work. That Jesus was just in different modes. Because if modalism is true, when Jesus dies, there's nobody in heaven holding the whole universe together. So, it's important theologically, as well as just practically. And you cover that in the book, as well. Here's a quick one. I don't know if you can give us a quick answer on this, because I know Christians argue over this, but this is in the book as well. Where was Jesus between his death and resurrection?

Natasha:

Well, there's a lot of speculation about this, especially amongst pastors who teach the prosperity gospel. For whatever reason, it's popular to claim that Jesus went and fought this cosmic battle in hell with Satan during that time. And a lot of people are not even familiar with this teaching and the fact that it's out there. But this is based on a couple of pretty obscure passages, in First Peter, where this gets extrapolated from. And there are different interpretations of that. So, to be honest, this is one of those areas where, as Christians, we say, okay, you know, there are some different things that this could mean.

But the way that I take in this chapter is to say, okay, what can we affirm? Instead of looking at what we might speculate, what can we affirm between his death and resurrection? Number one, we know Jesus was still alive. So, his physical body had died, and this goes back to what we

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were talking about with that last question, that he didn't yet have a resurrection body because that happened on Sunday, but his spirit was still alive. Just as with the human body, the body dies, the spirit goes on. Number two, we can affirm that Jesus went to paradise the day that he physically died, because we're told that in Luke 23 when he says that to the thief on the cross. And number three, he was finished atoning for our sins. It was finished on the cross. That's it. He didn't have to finish that in hell, as some people claim.

Frank:

There's a lot more and we'll cover it after the break. Particularly the resurrection and what difference Jesus makes. That's critical. And it's Natasha Crain and her book Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek. Back in two.

Ad:

Hi friends. Frank Turek. You can only have two things. Either you can have hope, or you can have despair. Every day during this coronavirus season at 11:30am (ET) / 10:30am (CT), we will be live online with a new live stream called, Hope One. It's at crossexamined.org. Go to crossexamined.org and we're going to get you hope every weekday, Monday through Friday, 11:30am (ET) / 10:30am (CT). I hope you can join me.

Frank:

You got time in the next month or two, you might as well join me live on Zoom, because I'm going to be teaching, Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to Make Their Case. Just go to crossexamined.org. Click on online courses. You'll see it there to take the premium version. On seven occasions, we'll be together live on Zoom, to answer your questions. And we're going to go through the book, Stealing from God. And I hope to see you there. We've just completed the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist online course and the Fearless Faith course. We're moving on to Stealing from God. It starts May 18. That's like next week, okay? And you can sign up anytime during that week, if you want to be a part of the course but sign up soon before we fill up.

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We're talking to Natasha Crain. Her book, *Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have*. Here's one of the conversations under the resurrection of Jesus section, Natasha. What does it matter if Jesus was resurrected?

Natasha:

You know, I was so excited to write this chapter, actually, because I have felt that in studying apologetics in the last several years that something that apologists often skip right over is this question. Why does this matter so much? You know, we're talking about all this evidence, and did the disciples lie, were they mistaken, and all this. But let's step back a second and make sure that people understand, and in this case, in the context of my book, that kids understand why we're even talking about it. Because a lot of people today, especially in progressive churches, have turned the resurrection into some kind of symbolic thing. You know, Jesus has raised in our hearts and minds, for example. And I've been astounded at how many Christians feel that there's no problem with that. That, you know, they hear that and they're like, okay, I guess that could be possible. So, we really, especially given the confusion that we're seeing in some churches today have to start right here with this question and explain to our kids why it matters.

And the first thing that kids should understand about that is that this is ultimately the truth test for Christianity. So, in First Corinthians 15:14, Paul says, that if Christ has not been raised, our faith is in vain. This is my favorite verse in the Bible, especially as an apologist, because it gives us so directly the truth test for everything that we believe. If Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, none of this matters. We can pack our bags and go home. And the Gospels, and I talked about this in the book too, the Gospels make it clear this is a bodily resurrection. We're not just talking about any kind of belief in the resurrection. We're specifically talking about claims that Jesus was physically raised from the dead. And Paul says, if that didn't happen, forget about it. It doesn't matter.

So, when we talk about whether or not Christianity is true, that can seem like a giant question. And I sometimes see, when I talk to parents, that they look overwhelmed by even the thought of where you start with that. But Paul tells us where to go when we're talking about the truth of Christianity specifically. So, it's right here with the resurrection. So, this is a hugely important starting place for our kids. And beyond that, the resurrection, if we look at the claims of the

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Gospels, the resurrection validates Jesus's own predictions and claims to divinity. So, if Jesus was predicting that he was going to be raised from the dead, then we better see that he actually was. Otherwise, this whole thing doesn't take off.

And of course, we have to ask the question, well, you know, did he really make those predictions? I answered that in a chapter earlier in the book. So, that's one huge thing is that it validated his claim to deity. No person, just a human person, could choose to be raised from the dead in order to trick people into believing that they're a god. This is something that only God Himself can do. So, that's really important for kids to understand.

Second thing is that his resurrection confirmed that we're no longer in our sins. So, we see in Acts 17:30, that the resurrection is "proof" that God has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. And we know that those who trust in Jesus's sacrifice as payment for their sins will be found righteous on that day, Romans 8:1.

And then finally, His resurrection assures us that we too will be raised. So, Jesus's resurrection ultimately is God's pledge to us that we will be raised from death to eternal life. And we see that in First Corinthians, as well. So, all of this is just background into helping our kids understand why it matters. Why these questions are ones that we should even take the time to understand before just saying, okay, yeah, Jesus was raised from the dead, you know, and move on with our day. We celebrated Easter. Let's get deeper with this.

Frank:

Outside of that, there's not much to the resurrection. All right. How about the idea that some will put forth, Natasha Crain, that the disciples lied about the resurrection? What do you say to that? That's one of the chapters you have in the book here.

Natasha:

Yeah, so this is an interesting question, because I feel personally that this is something that we can psycho-analyze all day. You know, would they have lied? And, you know, what would that have taken? What were they thinking about? But instead of going down the whole psycho-analysis lane with this, and there's relevance to that, too, so I'm not saying that that's

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completely irrelevant here. I think the bigger question is, could they have done the things that would have been required in order to sustain this lie?

So, number one, could they have stolen the body? Well, that would be extremely difficult to do. If you look at if you look at all the points that the Gospels give us, that there is a huge stone, and we know from Matthew that there was this guard outside. You know, the disciples would have had to have been getting past them somehow. Or, you know, some people think, well, maybe they just bribed them. Well, does that really work? These people, their lives were in the balance here, because this was their job. And if you think that, okay, well, maybe the guards didn't see, or didn't know, then somehow the disciples had to sneak past the guards and somehow move this giant stone without anybody noticing. One disciple couldn't have done it by themselves. They would have to have this as a team effort. And to somehow then get the body out of the tomb and get away with it for however far they had to go, and no one notice. This is mind blowing, if you think about it, to consider all that would have been involved.

Frank:

What would their motivation be to do that to begin with?

Natasha:

It's hard to imagine what a motivation would be. I mean, you know, if you wanted to have glory, and power, and you were somehow going to be rewarded with material possessions, or fame, these kinds of things, then maybe you could make a case that they would have gone out of their way to try to find a way to do this. But we see that that's not what they were rewarded with. They were rewarded with suffering, and the threat of death, and being executed for what they were proclaiming. So, it is hard to imagine the motivation.

But I think that beyond the motivation, I think that it's just harder to understand how they even possibly could have done it in the first place. And then, as J. Warner Wallace points out, and I talk about his work also in there. You know, let's say for the sake of argument that they were on vacation, and that they were that they were capable of pulling this off, could they have continued this conspiracy? And he talks about this in his book called, *Cold Case Christianity*, which obviously is a fabulous book. And he talks about all the requirements that are there in order to [unintelligible] out a successful conspiracy. And he is a cold case homicide detective, so

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he's well qualified to talk about this in all of his experience. He talks about how there has to be a small number of conspirators, that you have to have thorough and immediate communication, that all this has to happen over a short time span, and that if there are significant relational connections, then they're less likely to give one another up. And finally, that there has to be little or no pressure. And he shows in his work that this does not match what we know about the disciples. This does not match the whole history of what we see. So, could they have stolen the body, is one question. Could they have even carried out a long term conspiracy in the conditions that they were in at the time? Those are two very difficult questions to get past, if we want to make the claim that they actually lied and were trying to deceive people?

Frank:

Final section of the book, and we're talking to Natasha Crain. The book is, Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have. You have the difference that Jesus makes. That's part five. Let's just deal with one of those. How is a person's view of God different as a Christian, Natasha?

Natasha:

Well, this is a really important question to. And I think I keep saying that, but all the questions in the book are very important. And the reason that this one is especially important is that a lot of people today maybe loosely claim to be a Christian, or maybe don't quite claim to be a Christian, but they're spiritual and not religious. And so, they'll make claims about God, and what's real about God, that don't match up with the Bible. So, as Christians, a few of the things that we can look at, in terms of how that makes it different for us, is that we go to the Bible as our authority and we believe that God has revealed Himself through the Bible.

And here's why that's so important. A lot of times, and I kind of work through these common quotes in the chapter, but a lot of times people will say something like, well, you know, I don't want to put God in a box. So, if you make some kind of claim about what God wants for us, or what he is has as moral requirements, you'll see that kind of comment that, I don't want to put God in a box, and I'm gonna let God be God, and I'm not gonna, you know, judge. I'm not gonna worry about that. But as Christians who believe that God has revealed himself in the Bible, we need to understand that God drew his own box around how we should understand them. So,

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we're not the ones putting him there when we share what he said. We're not claiming to know more than what he revealed, of course, but we also shouldn't claim to know any less. So, God has revealed himself. We pass that on. We need to understand we're not placing him in a box inappropriately. So, that's the first thing.

And then sometimes people will make comments like, you know, well, why do you think you know more about God than I do, or I'll let God be the judge of that. and I break those down in the chapter too. But ultimately, this these issues, a lot of times, come down to questions of morality. When people hear that you're making a claim, somehow, about what God has said, and they don't like it, they're going to take a step back and say, well, you know, I'm gonna let God be God. And the reality is that, if that God they're talking about has revealed himself, then we already know what God thinks about that. He's already been the judge of that.

Frank:

Hmm. Yeah. When they say they're not putting God in a box, well, that's a box right there that he has no attributes. Is that what you're saying? Every everything that exists has some kind of attribute about it. If you don't have definitions, then you're really not talking about anything. There's got to be boundaries, to a certain extent. Now, we think that God is infinite, but he's infinite in certain categories. Right? He's infinite in knowledge, he's infinite love, he's infinite in justice. Well you got to know what knowledge, justice, and love are, in order to even say that. And I think sometimes when they say, don't put God in a box, what they want to say is, I'm just going to create my own God who has his own attributes, and they all approve of everything I do. Those attributes approve of everything I do. That's really the issue. Well, this is a great book, Natasha. We're coming up to the end here. The book again is, Talking with Your Kids about Jesus: 30 Conversations Every Christian Parent Must Have. Again, give your website, so if people want to go further, they can.

Natasha:

It's natashacrain.com.

Frank:

And you have other books out there too, called, Talking with Your Kids about God, and, Keeping Your Kids on God's Side. They're all fabulous. By the way, someone by the name of Frank Turek

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actually endorsed this book here. I don't know if I trust that guy. But at least you got Lee Strobel, and Jeff Meyers, and Jim and Susie Wallace. So, this is a good book. You need to get friends talking with your kids about Jesus. Always great to have Natasha. Natasha, thanks for being with me.

Natasha:

Thanks so much for having me. Appreciate it.

Frank:

That's the great Natasha Crain, ladies and gentlemen. You can see she's articulate, she knows what she's talking about. She knows what I'm talking about too. And these 30 conversations you're going to want to have, so check it out.

Also want to point out that Stealing from God starts in a couple weeks. Go to crossexamined.org. Click on online courses. You'll see them there. And don't forget about CIA, the CrossExamined Instructor Academy. It's gonna be in August in Dallas. You want to be a part of it. You got to apply. Go to crossexamined.org. Click on events. You'll see it there. You'll also see our Israel trip coming up. See you guys next week. God bless.

Ad:

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