

I don't have enough FAITH
to be an ATHEIST

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Combat Operations and Christianity with Jason Sweet, Veteran USAF Special Operations

(July 24, 2020)

Ladies and gentlemen, there's only two ways to resolve a dispute. You can resolve a dispute through principle, or you can try and resolve a dispute through power. Principle or power. In other words, you can bring arguments and reason to a problem and try and get agreement, or you can just try and crush the other side through power, regardless of the argument regardless of the reasons. And as you see in our culture today, a lot of people are trying to do the latter. They're trying to cancel people. There's a cancel culture out there. They don't want to have a debate they want to cancel the debate.

Now, from a biblical perspective, God has instituted government to use the sword, this is Paul speaking in Romans 13, to establish and reestablish peace. You see, here's the problem. When people want to break the peace by resorting to power or force, the government has instituted police and the military to re-establish the peace. That's why we have police. That's why we have Armies, and Navies, and Air Forces; to reestablish the peace. And God instituted that government, first of all in Genesis 9, and then also reiterated in Romans 13. The main purpose of government is to protect innocent people from evil. And if you don't have government, you're going to have anarchy.

Now, unfortunately, there are many people in our society today...maybe their voice is bigger than their number, hopefully that's the case...who seem to think that we can have anarchy and have civilization. We can't. There's a fundamental error in worldviews that suggests human nature is inherently good, that it's not evil. Only Christianity gets human nature right. James Madison famously said that, if men were angels, no government would be necessary. Hence, however, men are not angels, so we need a government to protect innocent people from evil.

Now our friends at the Babylon Bee...I'm sure you've heard of the Babylon Bee, the Christian satire site...they have a recent headline from June 22. It says this, Navy SEALs to Be Replaced by Social Workers, and here's the story. "The Navy SEALs are being disbanded and replaced with a



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new branch of the military: The United States Social Workers. The social workers will be dropped into terrorist hideouts to talk with militants about their feelings and defuse the situation. The move was made as a push against police work and firearms continues across the nation. As people continue to call on police departments to be defunded, the next logical target was the Navy SEALS. "I can tell that you're angry at America -- do you want to talk about that?" one social worker asked after she was dropped off at a terrorist compound in Afghanistan. The terrorist replied by firing his AK-47 into the air. "Interesting!" she said, scribbling down notes. "Tell me about your relationship with your father." No social workers have returned from their deployments yet, but when they do, they will file a report and schedule a follow-up visit a month or so later."

That's the Babylon Bee, ladies and gentlemen. Now, they do a great job of pointing out how ridiculous defund the police is, or let's get rid of our military, because we need these people to protect innocent people from evil. That is not to say sometimes our military, sometimes our police, overstep their bounds, because they're human beings and they're fallen like the rest of us, but without them we would have anarchy.

And I have a special guest today who's going to help us think through some of these things and also draw some parallels from special operations to the Christian life. His name is Jason Sweet. He was in the United States Air Force. He's retired from United States Air Force. He was a military Special Ops person trained in the United States Air Force to be a Pararescue Jumper. He's a graduate of the University of Arizona. That's where I met him. I was at the University of Arizona and he was helping host me out there at Ratio Christi. He now trains people who want to be in Special Operations, whether they want to be a PJ, or they want to be a SEAL, or they want to be an Army Ranger, or some kind of special forces. That's what he does through his website and these hell weekends he puts on. His website is socomathlete.com and he's my guest today, the great Jason Sweet. Jason, how are you?

Jason:

Frank, what an intro. I'm doing great, man. Humbled to be here. Really appreciate the opportunity.



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Frank:

Well, this is exciting, man. I'm excited to talk to a Special Operations person, a person that served in Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world defending the country. First of all, let's start with your college experience. Because you went to University of Arizona, after you were in the military, correct?

Jason:

Yes sir.

Frank:

And you played on the football team?

Jason:

I did. I rode the pines a lot on the football team, Frank, but got to play a little football.

Frank:

That was great. And baseball too?

Jason:

Yeah, that was before the military, Frank. That's kind of the path that I felt that God had me on and it didn't work out. And then he led me into Special Operations afterwards.

Frank:

So, you've been in many training environments that were very taxing. And you were telling me before we started doing the show that, actually, some of the football training was even more taxing than some of the military training.

Jason:

It was. It was. And two parallel between the two, in Special Operations training, it's more diverse. So, you have water confidence exercises where you're going to have your ability to breathe taken away for a long period of time, whether it be doing drown proofing exercises, or swimming 50 yards underwater, or passing a snorkel back and forth with a teammate while an instructor tries to dunk water in the snorkel and tries to drown you and dunk you to the



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bottom. Something like that is going to be highly technical and highly mental. Versus something like running a 1.5 mile for a test, or three mile for a test, or doing a 12 mile ruck march in the mountains with 50 pounds of gear, or doing something like a 500 meter swim, push-ups, pull ups, sit ups, something like that, you're actually going to train for it. You can work on something like that.

But being a football player, in my opinion, when it comes to speed, speed is generally God given. Now you can bring out some of that, and you can do the best with your genetics, but speed, you either got it or you don't.

Frank:

Yeah.

Jason:

So, I'd say that was It was a little more challenging for me to get on the U of A football team, Frank, because I didn't have nearly as much God given ability to be a Division One football player as I did to be a Special Operator.

Frank:

Now let's talk about PJs. You call them PJs for short. What does that really stand for?

Jason:

PJ stands for Pararescue Jumper. There's about 500 of them in the Air Force and it is one of the Air Force's Special Operations entities. And I actually did six years, I did not retire, I just did my contract and got out afterwards.

Frank:

Well, I call it retired because it means you're not in anymore. I get the idea. You got out but you kept doing it. You're still training people. But tell people what a PJ does. What do you guys do?

Jason:

So, PJ, I think I remember the mission statement. PJs recovered down and injured aircrew members and pilots in austere and non-permissive environments. We also act as door gunners



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and scanners on fixed and rotary wing aircraft. We pick up NASA astronauts on space shuttle missions. We do humanitarian ocean rescue missions. We do humanitarian missions, whether it be rescuing somebody off the side of a cliff, or off of a glacier.

But our bread and butter is combat search and rescue, and personnel recovery. So, if somebody like yourself, Frank, back when you were in the Navy, and you're doing a mission and you have to eject out of your aircraft behind enemy lines, our job is to jump out of a plane, come after you, not get detected by the enemy, find you, operate on you, and coordinate how we're going to get you out of that enemy territory. And typically, the rescue aspect of this job is the most demanding part of the job. Medicine is a large part of it. We go through a two and a half year training pipeline. And in that two and a half year training pipeline, you go through a civilian paramedic course, as well as a military medicine course. You go through Halo jump school, so you learn how to freefall, skydive. You go through army airborne school before that as a precursor. The first school you go to is combat dive school, after you graduate our selection.

On paper our selection has the highest attrition rate in DOD. We started with 100 guys in my class and we graduated 15 two and a half months later for our selection course. And this is where you're just running every day, practically getting drowned in the pool, carrying around big logs, boats over your head, doing long ruck marches, evaluations every Monday, getting hazed by your instructors, sleep deprivation, food deprivation. And if you can make it through that, theoretically, you have what it takes to enter the PJ training pipeline.

Frank:

And we're going to talk a lot more with Jason Sweet right after the break and how this applies to discipleship Christianity. You're listening, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. Website is crossexamined.org. And we have an app; two words in the App Store, Cross Examined. Make sure you download that. We're back in two minutes with Jason Sweet. Don't go anywhere.

Ad:

Friends, can you help me with something? Can you go up to iTunes, or wherever you listen to this podcast, and give us a five-star review Why? It will help more people see this podcast and therefore then hear it. So, if you could help us out there, I'd greatly appreciate it.



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Frank:

Welcome back to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. We're talking today with Jason Sweet, who has been in the United States Air Force in Special Operations, a PJ. And he trains people who want to be in Special Ops across the different branches of the military. Go to socomathlete.co. In fact, Jason, we're here in Charlotte right now because this weekend you're running what you call a hell weekend down near Fort Bragg. Tell a little bit about what you do there. What do you do?

Jason:

Yeah, so first of all, this being a company that is run and founded by Jesus Christ, first and foremost. The hell day, no pun intended, is kind of a takeaway from Navy SEAL Hell Week, in which they spend five days being sleep deprived, getting absolutely crushed out on the Pacific. So, it is somewhat of a day of Navy SEAL training. But it's not just Navy SEAL PJ training, Green Beret training. It is a team building experience in which we teach young men, and now young women are authorized to try out for special operations. We work with them on how to be good leaders, selfless leaders, good communicators, how to take on adversity, how to deal with some of the stressors that you're going to have in the Special Operations Training Pipeline and deal with it now, get exposed to it now, before you start talking to a recruiter so that you know if you have what it takes, or you know what you need to work on before you go in.

So that's SoCom Athlete. We run about two events a month and different places in the country. We're a large online community. So young women and men that want to train for special operations can apply to be a part of our group chats. We've got about 1500 members across the country. And we will travel to these locations and work with these students who are civilians, some of them active duty before they actually enlist to get them ready.

Frank:

Now without revealing anything confidential, obviously, what kind of missions did you have in Afghanistan?



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Jason:

Right. So, to rewind a little bit, Frank, I actually didn't know about what a PJ was. My dad was a PJ, and he was a PJ in the late 80s in the early 90s, stationed at Eglin Air Force Base. And after my unsuccessful college baseball career, and I can tell this story later, but God led me into pararescue. And I would have never known about unless it was my father. And my dad actually ended up re-enlisting during the 2008 recession. Okay? It crushed my family and he ended up re-enlisting and the Air Force allowed him to be placed on the same team as me, at the same time. And we became the first two Special Operators in the history of the country, father/son, same team, same time.

Frank:

Wow, that's amazing.

Jason:

So, in 2012, we got tasked with a deployment to Helmand Province, Afghanistan. And that's where about 90% of the entire world's opium supply is, so the fighting is very heavy down there. And you have Camp Leatherneck, about 10,000 Marines. So, I got to deploy by AFI, Air Force rules, my father and I could not deploy together. We couldn't jump out of planes together. We could do shooting courses together, we could scuba dive, we could do high angle, low angle ropes, mountaineering, medicine, but we could not fly in military aircraft together. We could not conduct missions together or deploy.

So, I went out there to Helmand Province, Afghanistan. One deployment, my one and only deployment. And it's very humbling when you look at guys that have been SEALs, or PJs, or Green Berets for 10, 15, 20 years. They've been over there seven, eight times. You know, they spent years of their lives in the war zone. So, it's very humbling. So, shout out to you guys, shout out to my brothers who have just spent way too much time over there. God bless you and we owe you guys everything for this freedom here.

So, I went over there to southern Afghanistan. And my tasking was to be a quick reaction force/Casevac platform. And the name of our team was called the Guardian Angel Tactical Response Team. So, if it was the worst day of a team's life, pilot gets shot down, IED blows up a vehicle, British recon team gets pinned down by a sniper, one of them gets hit, British Special



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Forces in the zone, they get in the troops in contact (which is a tic...troops in contact), a couple of them get injured, there's no aircraft asset nearby them, they don't have anywhere to take this patient and they're going to die in a situation like that, we would have to come in. So, when we launched on a mission, it was the worst day of somebody's life. And we started this Bible study over there. And I would get on alert at 1:00am. So, I would start at 1:00am. And we'd end at 1:00pm. So, 0100 to 1300.

Taliban doesn't come out and fight at nighttime. They don't have the equipment that we have. They don't have infrared, night vision, etc. So, they fight during the day. So, typically, when you come on shift, you're not getting any missions until it's light outside. So, I'll never forget my first mission. It was pitch black, it was at 1:30am, and we had just done what's called a changeover. And that's where you get all of your gear onto the aircraft and the team before you take all their gear off.

So, we were attached to these HH 60 Pave Hawk helicopters, and each one of these helicopters has either 250 caliber machine guns on it with party packs (so, that's a splash round, tracer round, burst round) or two mini guns. That's 308 caliber. We got, typically, an enhanced battle rifle on there. We're carrying M4A1 assault rifles. I had an M203 grenade launcher on my rifle. So, we were a heavily armed platform. And we would keep our weapons and all of our medical gear and tactical gear on the helo. And then we kept our scuba gear, parachuting gear, mountain climbing gear, all of that in this context. And so, if we needed to take it, we would run it over to the helicopter.

So, on this particular mission we were doing changeover. So, the other team is moving all their gear out and we have a mini hospital set up in the back of this helicopter. So, they're kind of taking some of their IV bags out and we got blood, pack whole red blood cells, and inflow tubing, we got antibiotics back there, pain management kits, you name it. So, there's a lot of checklists that have to be done, and rehearsals that have to be done, in between changeover.

We got hit with the mission when we least expected it. And I'll never forget but it was only a 15 minute flight time to get down there. It was pitch black and it was in this poppy field. And right when we roll up, there's all these bearded guys, and you could tell that some of them were Americans, but some of them were Afghani. It ended up being a partnered Special Forces team



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and ODA (Operational Detachment Alpha). These are Green Berets. And unfortunately, they had hit an improvised explosive device while on patrol and it had blown off this one Afghani's arms and his legs, and it blew off this other Afghani's arms, and then we had another Afghani that just his legs were blown off.

So, we had three Afghanis, partner forces, okay, Afghan commandos, thrown on our helicopter, pitch black, 15 minute transport time, all of them are screaming, there's blood and mucus and fluids everywhere. And I could not get any type of organization from the chaos. And it was the first time in my life, first mission, by the way, that I couldn't really think or operate well. And I had to slowed down and take some deep breaths and tell myself, you got this, get with it. You've been trained to do this. You've worked on this over and over and over again. So, get with it and do the mission.

By the time we ended up getting back to Camp Bastion, which is where the closest level one trauma center is, so that means that you have a team that can do major surgeries, cardiothoracic surgeries, etc. By the time we got there, I had just tried to get an IV established on this guy, and he kept ripping it out of his arm. So, we couldn't give them drugs, couldn't give them blood, and those poor guys probably died. So, that was my welcome to Afghanistan. Landed in a poppy field and getting three guys with their limbs blown off onto the bird.

My third mission, 04 27 Alpha, we got dispatched to a British recon team. And our piece of information, called a nine line, stated that there was enemy in the area and that these guys were taking fire. We had one patient with a suspected gunshot wound, okay. And for our listeners out there, if you guys kind of know the 911 system, you'll see people that don't have health insurance, they'll abuse the 911 system by calling 911, faking an injury, so that they can get a ride to the hospital. It's a free ride, okay, so then they're able to work that system. Well in Afghanistan, the Brits had learned the PJs casualty evacuation platform system and how the guardian angel tactical response team worked.

So, what they did is they told us it was a gunshot wound to the right shoulder and that there was mild enemy in the area. It had been over two hours since they had any contact. Okay. So, as we're going out there, we start getting updates that his situation is more severe. So, it goes from a shoulder wound to a sucking chest wound, which means he's been hit in his thoracic



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cavity and that decompressed space now has air in it and it's pinning his lung down, okay. So, that's what we're getting into, okay.

We land in the zone, finally. Taliban throws a fake smoke to try to lure us into an ambush, so we end up getting an updated call that we're flying into red smoke. So, the Brits pop red smoke and they land us right in the middle of this poppy field. I mean, there's opium four or five feet high, I mean, what you can see. And typically, anytime that we were engaged by the enemy, it was in an opium field.

Frank:

To protect the opium. Of course.

Jason:

Yeah. So, we get off the bird, the helo, and we start sprinting through this field. And immediately we start taking fire from our nine o'clock. And I'll never forget the first time that I heard a bullet whiz by my face and impact this mud wall right behind me. And at the same time, there was this British recon soldier shooting from a wall above me. He was shooting directly at me, but he was shooting above me. And that was strange for me because on a shooting range, never have intersecting fields of fire.

Frank:

Of course.

Jason:

So, we're sprinting through this field and this Marine Cobra, an AH-1 attack helicopter, gets called in on a close air support fire mission for us. So, the marine comes in and starts doing a gun run, this AH-1, and our lead helicopter, so we fly in with two birds and I was on trail. Trail is the bird that lands and actually picks them up. So, they come in and they do a gun run, and we end up finally getting to this Brit, and he's dead. And he's been dead since the bullet hit him. So, we ended up picking this guy up under fire, we get him off the zone, we take him to the hospital, we do CPR on him, give him blood the whole way, and he's been dead the whole time. So basically, the Brits lied to us about the dispatch, told us that they had somebody that was



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salvageable to get our special unit out there to try to save him. But he was dead the whole time. So, that was the second mission that I did. And I know we're probably running out of time.

Frank:

Well, that's okay. So why do you think they wanted you in that field though?

Jason:

They wanted the guns. They needed the guns.

Frank:

Oh, they needed the guns.

Jason:

Nobody else is gonna help reinforce them. They're in the middle of nowhere. They call us and they get the guns and the medivac

Frank:

Well, maybe we can give them the benefit of the doubt. Maybe they thought he was still alive. Who knows? But this is the kind of thing that you guys had to deal with on a routine basis, though. You're going into unknown territory...

Jason:

Sometimes three times a day.

Frank:

...unknown territory. And one of the things that you guys would do, I know, is you would be so well trained for so many different kinds of contingencies. I mean, I was in the Navy, I wasn't in Special Forces in the Navy, but you had all sorts of different contingencies, Jason. And when that happened, you just said in your previous, your first mission, you just had to slow down and say, look, I can do this. This has happened. I've been trained for this. This has just happened, but I can do this. And that training would allow you to slow down and actually do what you knew you could do. And there's a parallel to this in the Christian life that we're going to talk right after the break.



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Frank:

You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek. My guest is Jason Sweet, who not only has he been in Special Forces himself, but he teaches people who want to be in Special Forces how they can get ready for it. It's socomathlete.com. And we're going to apply all this to Christianity right after the break, so don't go anywhere. We're back in just two minutes with Frank Turek and Jason Sweet.

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Frank:

If you're low on the FM dial looking for National Public Radio, go no further. We're actually going to tell you the truth here. I can guarantee you're not going to hear Special Operations and Christianity on National Public Radio. My guest today is Jason Sweet, former Pararescue jumper, PJ, for the United States Air Force. And he now trains people who want to be in special operations across all the branches of the military. And we were just talking as we were coming into the break just a minute ago how emergency procedures in the military, they're drilled into your head, you do them over and over and over again.

I had one guy who was briefing us once when I was in the Navy, he had to punch out of an F-14, and F14s are no longer used in the Navy. But he said it was amazing. When we had to eject from the F-14, by the time I came to my senses, my parachute was over my head, my raft was already deployed, I had already done the four line release, and I was just waiting to hit the water. And he said, I didn't think anything about it. It just happened because I went through so much training, that when it really happened, I didn't have to think. I may have been in shock, but it didn't matter. I went through it.



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Now the same thing is true, I think, when it comes to the Christian life. Emergencies in life can be almost automatic. If you've studied, and if you've practiced the scriptures before a disaster happens, you're going to be better able to handle it. Your discipleship training can save you when difficult times come. When should you answer the question, "if God, why evil?" Before evil hits you. When's the best time to get a friend? Before you need one. Right? You don't make friends when you're in trouble, you make friends before you get in trouble, and then when trouble comes, they're there. The same thing is true with Jesus, right? You get to know Jesus, you get to know the scriptures, you get to know the Christian life, so when difficulties come, you're ready to deal with it.

Now, Jason, you've had your own emergencies, I know. And we'll get to that here in a minute. But I want to ask you this, because this is really the kind of theme of what we're trying to get at here. And the theme is, how does Special Operations, the training that you got in Special Operations, how does that translate into discipleship training? What are the parallels here?

Jason:

Yeah, Frank, that's a great question. I could go on about that. But I know we only have so much time. Duty is the first. And having a sense of duty and purpose is what led me into special operations in the first place. And once you have that sense of duty, and that undying commitment to that duty, you're going to get the mission done.

Next would be, I set a commitment. After that would be courage. It takes courage to be able to do a freefall off of a plane at night when you can't see the ground. It takes courage to do a scuba dive at depth at night with zero visibility, when there's sharks around, you have a task to get done, you're dropped out 3000 meters from the shore; takes courage.

And then lastly, service before self. Understanding that your own personal desires and comforts come second to the mission. And if the mission is spreading the good news of Jesus, then you're willing to commit to that, and have the duty, and put in the preparation for it. It's not just, I'm going to tell you about Jesus, and I hope you get it this one time, because I'm ready for you to receive Jesus now. It's, I'm committed to this relationship, and even if you're not ready to



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receive Jesus now, I love you, and I care about you, and I'm in this for the long run. So, that was something that Special Operations taught me; that longevity, that commitment, as well.

Frank:

Let me say one thing about Paul, because you know, the apostle Paul related athletic training to discipleship. In fact, in First Corinthians 9 he says...this is verse 24 and following. He says, "24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So, run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control,[a] lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."

In other words, Paul is saying that he has beaten his body into submission so he could spread the love of Jesus. And we have to do the same thing. We have to beat our minds and our bodies into submission, because we are going for an imperishable crown, not just a crown we might get if we win a race.

Jason:

Yeah, amen to that. And, you know, just speaking of Paul, you go to Ephesians 6; 6:10-17. You're talking about the armor of God and being prepared. Well, you have to be equipped before you go on a mission, whether that be as an evangelist, or a disciple, or whether it be as an operator. You have to be equipped. Our motto was, these things we do, that others may live. And so, we had to be willing to sacrifice our personal desires and comforts to save somebody's life, much like Jesus.

Frank:

Yeah, these things we do that others may live. Yeah, that's what he did so that we may live. And Paul, as Jason just pointed out, we're talking to Jason Sweet. He was in the Air Force as a PJ, Special Operations, and now he trains others in Special Operations, through SoComAthlete.com. Paul, he said, put on the full armor of God. He's talking about spiritual warfare here. Spiritual warfare is not a power encounter, it's a truth encounter. You have to know the truth. And the way you know the truth is, you study the Scriptures, and you get to know the truth so when error pops up, you can spot it easily.



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By the way, do you know how they detect counterfeit bills; the United States Treasury? They don't study counterfeits. They study the true bills. They become so familiar with the true bill that they can spot a counterfeit very easily. In fact, my aunt used to work for the Federal Reserve, and she was so good at spotting counterfeits by just studying the original. And so, if you study the scriptures, if you know what the truth is, and you internalize that, like a military person would internalize an emergency procedure. If you internalize it, you're going to be able to spot error as you just go through life naturally.

Jason:

Yeah, amen, Frank. And another verse I wanted to share, it was very encouraging to me, is Hebrews 12. "1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

And Frank, to kind of go back to what you were talking about, as far as preparation and emergency procedures, I have one memory in particular where that actually worked out, and it actually did not work out for me. So, on my 55th jump, okay, this is a halo jump, so you're actually free-falling out of the aircraft for about 60 seconds from 13,000 feet, pulling your own parachute at around 3500 feet, and then steering your parachute in. So, I was trying to develop more skill in halo jumping and I was spending my weekends while I was in PJ training. So, I'm like an E-3, okay. I've been in the military for like a year and a half. I'm just a trainee. I'm nobody yet. But I have a little bit of money in my pocket that I've been saving up for the weekends and I have my halo wings, which means you have been trained by the military as a freefall parachutist.

So, I would go to Skydive New Mexico, when I was in the PJ training pipeline, and I would spend all my money skydiving on the weekends. So, I would have to use their own parachutes and I put on a parachute one time that was a little bit too small for me. And I was told that that was some of the factor that played into this, but upon getting into the aircraft, okay, I noticed that



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the parachute was sized a little bit strange. I didn't have any slack on my leg straps, but I didn't think anything of it.

So, I jump out, I'm flying through the air, life is good, I pull my parachute, and I have a really hard opening. So, the way that you pack your parachute can affect how it opens, how it catches wind. And if you pack it a little bit tighter, and you roll the nose a little bit more, it'll have a slower opening so that it doesn't shock you as much because you're falling at about 150 miles an hour at terminal velocity. So, when that parachute hits you, you're only going about 20 miles an hour. So, you're changed over 100 miles an hour at a rate of a couple seconds, so it's nice to have a soft opening.

I had an incredibly hard, quick opening, to the point where I heard this loud ping noise, and all of a sudden, my leg straps had come undone on the right side of my parachute. And this is like something that doesn't ever happen. Fast forward for a second. The drop zone safety officer said that this was a one in a million malfunction and he has no idea how it happened.

Frank:

And you had it.

Jason:

And I had it. So, my leg straps, come undone, okay. And the way you steer an elliptical parachute is, you have brake toggles on the left and the right side, and if you put about 25% pressure on that left side, that's enough pressure for you to do a sharp 90 degree turn. So, you can imagine what it's like, if you pull all the way down on your brake toggles, how sporty that canopy, that parachute can be.

Frank:

You're gonna be in a circle, aren't you?

Jason:

You're gonna be in a circle.



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Frank:

Yeah.

Jason:

So, picture all 200 pounds of my body on the left side of the parachute, not just steering it, all on the left side, because my right leg strap had come undone. And, Frank, you can see I got a pretty big chin right now. People been giving me a hard time my whole life, okay. Calling me Chinbacca, Osama Chin Laden, Jay Leno, I mean you name it, right. So, this big chin of mine, Frank, actually saved my life because my belly strap, okay, where my cutaway pillow is and my rip cord, which I'll explain to our listeners what that is in a second, that is typically around your lower chest right around your upper abdomen area. Okay? So, my leg straps had snapped, and the entire parachute, the belly had come up to my chin. So, I was holding on for dear life in this death spiral at 2500 feet. And at that point, I knew I was gonna die, if I didn't get rid of this parachute, or I didn't steer out of it. So, I look up for my other brake toggle and I can't reach it because my leg straps that snapped have wrapped around it and pinned it to the risers. So, I'm in a death spin, and at that point, I tell myself, you're going to die unless you figure something out.

So, I was jumping in a full face, kind of, astronaut looking helmet, so I didn't have any peripheral vision or ability to look down to see where this cutaway pillow in this reserve ripcord was. So, I had to throw my helmet off, look down, still couldn't find it. And for our listeners out there, the cutaway pillow is how you get rid of a bad parachute and as soon as you pull that your reserve automatically deploys. But I couldn't use my main parachute because my toggles were pinned down with my leg straps and so I'm in a death spin. So, I need to get rid of this main parachute and cut it away. And I had done 1000 emergency procedures, practice touches, as we call them, where I touched that pillow just by feeling it, because you can't see it.

Well the problem is, my parachute was about three feet higher than it normally was. So, the spot that I was normally touching, the cutaway pillow wasn't there. So, at that point everything slowed, down tunnel vision again, had to figure it out. I pushed the strap down with all my might, end up tearing my rotator cuff, got eyes on the little red pillow, cut it away at 2000 feet, started free falling through the air again, and I got a new parachute. It took me about 15 seconds to hit the ground, landed on the drop zone, a little crash landing, no harm, no foul. I



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had a torn rotator cuff and I got right back up and did another jump, so I didn't get consumed by fear. So, that was my life or death experience where everything slowed down and I had to relax or else I would have died.

Frank:

Yeah, well, it's still your training came into air. Even though the original emergency procedure wasn't going to work because your parachute was tangled up, you knew enough that you had to get to that reserve chute. Right? You knew that. And the same thing is true in the Christian life. You know, if your plan doesn't go just right the first time, if a disaster happens, what are you going to do? You're not going to give up, right? You're gonna rely on God and you're gonna go to plan B. And that's what you did here. And if it wasn't for your training, you wouldn't be here talking to me right now, would you?

And in fact, when we come back, we're going to talk a little bit about what parents ought to be doing with their kids before they go back to school, if they go back to school this fall. So, don't go anywhere. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Back in two.

Ad:

Friends, Frank Turek here. I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist is a listener supported radio program and podcast. So, if you like what you hear here, would you consider donating to crossexamine.org? 100% of your donations go to ministry, zero percent to buildings. We're completely virtual. So, if you can help us out, we greatly appreciate it. Thank you so much.

Frank:

Welcome back to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek. My guest today is Jason Sweet, Special Operations in the United States Air Force for six years. Now he's training other people who want to be in Special Operations. His website is SoComAthlete.com. Also has an Instagram page. He does what are called Hell Days across the country. This weekend, he's in Fayetteville, North Carolina, near Fort Bragg doing that.

And Jason, before the break, we were talking a little bit about what parents tend to do to their kids when it comes to sending them off to school. Let me ask you this question. You talked about some of your experiences there and Afghanistan. I think you have another one to share



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with us. Before we get to that, what would have happened to you if, out of high school, the United States Air Force dropped you into the middle of that opium field in Afghanistan with no training and no weapon? What would have happened to you?

Jason:

I would have got smoked.

Frank:

Like right away, right?

Jason:

A goner, for sure.

Frank:

No training and no weapon.

Jason:

Or I might have just curled up in the fetal position for a little bit.

Frank:

That's right. Well, this is what we do to our young people. We give them no training, none of the intellectual weapons they need to have to go to college, which is the most hostile place you can go, to the Christian faith in the United States, are most of our college campuses. We drop them in there without any real ammunition for why Christianity is true, and without any real answers to the main objections that people have against Christianity, and we expect them to maintain their faith. That would be like expecting you to accomplish the mission and come out unscathed if they dropped you in the middle of that open field in Afghanistan with no weapon and no training. It's crazy Jason, but that's what we're doing. You know?

And that's one reason CrossExamined.org exists. We're trying to give people the intellectual firepower they need to have, in order to know why Christianity is true, and also to winsomely deal with objections when people bring them up. That's why we exist. And as you know, we go to high schools, churches, and college campuses, and try and do that. We try and give people



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evidence. That's why we're here. So, the parallels between military training and training for discipleship are very great. And that's kind of what we've been discussing here today. But I want I want to hear some positive things out of Afghanistan if we could, Jason. First of all, how did you think that God led you into Special Forces in the Air Force? How did that happen? And then tell me something that really humbled you there in Afghanistan.

Jason:

Yeah, Frank. And by the way, Frank, I love you, brother. And you're a hero to me and it's humbling to be here on your podcast. So, you know, thank you for everything you do for all of us strengthening our faith. It's an honor.

Frank:

Well, thanks, brother. Thanks for helping me with this podcast. And hopefully, one of the things before we get into this, you're going to be at CIA in a couple of weeks.

Jason:

Yes, sir. I can't wait.

Frank:

He's coming to CrossExamined Instructors Academy, because one day Jason's going to be presenting this material to you, because he has some great presentation skills, some great presence, and a great love for the Lord. He just needs to get a little bit more on the content side so he can share that with others. That's why he's coming to CIA. But go ahead.

Jason:

And now I got a great mentor, Frank. I appreciate it.

Frank:

Thanks.

Jason:

Yeah, Frank. So, everybody knows what a Navy SEAL is, but nobody knows what a PJ is. I run these weekend events called, Hell Days, and there'll be 20 people that show up to the course



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for the weekend that all want to go into Special Operations. They're all going to enlist, they're all training for it, and this is like their precursor. Well, I can equip them, point out the discrepancies and whatnot, before they enlist. Well, typically, you see most of the guys that want to go under Special Operations, they want to be Navy SEALs Why? Because the title of a Navy SEAL is elite. The mystique behind the name, Navy SEAL, is there. We all know it. The movies are there. They got Osama Bin Laden. You hear about these guys. But who you don't hear about are Combat Controllers, Pararescue Jumpers, Recon Marines, Marine Special Operations Command, Raiders, Army Rangers, TACP; there are a lot of different career fields in Special Operations.

So, in 2008, whenever the recession hit, we got absolutely crushed. And I was playing baseball in college and everything fell apart for me. And I know we don't have a lot of time, so I'll skip over that story. So, I ended up wanting to consider being a SEAL. And that's kind of what I felt like my personality type what I would be successful at. But like I said earlier, my dad was a PJ, and God actually led me into Pararescue. And I know that the reason why he led me into Pararescue is because he wanted to teach me humility. If I were to go to a restaurant, or let's say I was dating a girl in high school, or right after high school, you know, I enlisted, and I'm telling her parents what I do for a living. I tell them I'm a Navy SEAL, they're instantly going to say, well, sit down, you know, come on over. I've got so much respect for you, you know. You're one of the baddest dudes in the planet.

But you go tell them you're a PJ, and that you're in the Air Force, and they're gonna say, what's that, only wimps join the Air Force. Or pilots, right? And so, you're automatically at a disadvantage. And you say, wait, wait, wait, but our training is harder than the SEALs on paper. Oh, get out of here. Wait, we jump, we dive Oh stop. Right? People don't want to hear it. So, what I learned is how to be a quiet professional, and how to be somebody that was elite and highly trained and at that level, but not seek the recognition. And learning true humility, learning how to be a true quiet professional, was the most beneficial thing that has ever happened to me. I don't know the verse right now, but there's a verse in the Bible, I think it's more referring to tithing, and it talks about, if you're giving somebody a gift, and you seek recognition for it, that's your gift. Like that's it; your recognition.



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Frank:

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

Jason:

Yeah, there you go. Yeah. And so, this was the first time where I felt like, I didn't need recognition anymore. I was comfortable in my own skin. And it took some time. Even being a PJ, you know, I kind of felt like an underdog and under respected because I was a Special Operator that people didn't know about. But it was the most valuable lesson I ever learned. So, that was, I know, why God led me into Pararescue, was to teach me how to put people before myself, and to be a true humble, quiet professional. And humility is where you can accomplish something great and you don't feel swollen up with pride about it.

Frank:

Well, you know, I do have a new book coming out, Ten Steps to Humility and How I Made it in Seven, which has really humbled me because I actually made it in six. But anyway. Okay, so...

Jason:

I'm still trying to figure out that math.

Frank:

But tell me about, because our listeners hear so much negative right now from the left about the military and all this, but you did some amazing work in Afghanistan for the good. Not just trying to keep the peace, but also rescuing some people. Tell me about the nine-year-old.

Jason:

The US military's primary objective, besides fighting and combating terrorism, is to free the oppressed and to try to take these unestablished third world governments and try to establish some type of order.

Frank:

By the way, that's what we're trying to do. We're trying to free the oppressed. That's what Jesus does, He frees the oppressed.



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Jason:

And that is the Green Beret motto.

Frank:

There you go. But anyway, keep going, man. We got just a few minutes.

Jason:

Right. Right. So, on our [unintelligible] in Afghanistan, we're trying to win hearts and minds over there, Frank, so we would be willing to rescue anyone, anytime; Afghani or American, British, Jordanian, you name it. So, this one mission, there was this nine year old Afghani boy, and he wasn't anyone special, but he got caught in crossfire during a gunfight; a troops in contact, TIC situation. And he got hit by two rounds, 7.62×39mm, in the upper abdomen. And so, at the operation center, like I told you guys earlier, you get this nine line...nine pieces of information...go sprint out to the helicopter, rack a round in your weapon, get all your body armor on, get your medical gear ready, get ready to rock and roll, get your updates.

So, we're on our way out and we're heading over to a city called Lashkargāh. If you guys want to look this up, Helmand Province, Lashkargāh, is the city that we are going to. And we get an update on our way out there that we're going to pick up a nine-year-old civilian boy, and that he's got two gunshot wounds, and he's in critical care. So, part of rescuing people is operating on them. You can do all this great stuff to rescue them, but if you can't fix them, then everything's in vain. So, we had packed whole red blood cells ready to go, we are warming them up just in case maybe has some thoracic protrusion. I had a chest start ready to go, for needle thoracentesis, to decompress his chest cavity. We were all prepped, ready for this mission.

And we get to the kid, we pick him up, and his dad comes into the helicopter with us. Okay. So, we're sitting here trying to save this boy's life. His dad is there watching everything we do. And talk about a lot of pressure, Frank.

Frank:

Yeah, right.



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Jason:

Okay. Now by protocol, if you have gunshot wounds above the belly button, you have to assume that there's thoracic protrusion, and that he is potentially getting attention pneumothorax, which could kill somebody in 5-15 minutes. So, I'll never forget man, we got these large chest starts. We don't have pediatric chest starts. And I pull this thing out, okay. My boy, Mark, is over here getting the blood ready. Popovic is getting the oxygen ready and warming the young man and getting pain management on board. And I'm over here about ready to dart this guy's chest so I can allow that air to come out of his lungs. The lungs have to be decompressed so they can expand and contract...ventilate.

So, I stick this needle into this young man's ribcage between the second and third intercostal space. And his eyes just jolt open. And, all of a sudden, he takes this big breath of air. And I'm looking over at the monitor and his O2 saturate, his oxygen saturation, had gone all the way down to the 80s. If it goes down to a certain level, he'll have brain damage for lack of oxygenation, so this is serious.

Right as I put that dart in, his oxygen saturation started increasing, increasing, increasing. And at that point, I felt that I'd save the boy's life with that medical intervention. It's always a team effort, by the way. You never save somebody's life by yourself, typically. I won't say never, but rarely.

Frank:

True in Christianity too.

Jason:

True team effort, right. So, we finally get this boy to the hospital at the base. The Afghans say no, we don't want you to take him to an American Hospital. This is our guy. We can take care of him ourselves, take him to Lashkargāh hospital. So, we take him to Lashkargāh Hospital, we drop him off, okay. Blood, chest start, everything's there. It's just a huge cluster, and we drop them off, and then we go back home. We're getting all of our stuff down, you know, about to start a movie, relax a little bit, maybe hit the gym, boom, nine line drops, get out on the helicopter, we're back out, we get the update. It's the same nine-year old-boy from Lashkargāh.



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So, we ended up picking this boy up. They screwed up his medical treatment and we had to take him to our base, okay. We ended up doing some more medical treatments on him. I give him ketamine to snow him out, knock him out. We get him to the hospital, turns out that the doctor had to take out his spleen, but the boy lived. And I ended up not being the one that saved his life, the whole pack red blood cells actually saved his life, the blood transfusion.

Frank:

Hey brother, we're out of time. But that's a wonderful story. Thanks for all your service to our country, to the young man and others.

Jason:

My pleasure.

Frank:

Jason Sweet, ladies and gentlemen, SoComAthlete.com. There are so many parallels between what the military does and what Christians do in terms of saving lives. Listen to this podcast again. We'll be back next time. God bless.

Ad:

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