

I don't have enough FAITH
to be an ATHEIST

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

No One Can Be Happy Without This

(November 25, 2020)

All right, ladies and gentlemen, complete the sentence for me. "No one can be happy without _____. What do you think the answer is? No one can be happy without _____. What should go in the blank? You say, Frank, it's God. You can't be happy without God. No, that's actually not true. A lot of people think they're happy. And let me define what I mean by happiness. You know, happiness is fleeting; it's a temporary feeling of well-being. Contentment is more stable than happiness. Happiness can come and go. Contentment, if you have the right outlook, as Paul did, as he's writing from prison to the church at Philippi, he had contentment that he can do all things through Christ who strengthens him. He's content in all circumstances.

I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about, just kind of this fleeting happiness. This feeling of well-being. No one can be happy without what? Well, let me put it this way, there's one thing you can't live without and that is hope. If you don't have hope, and hope for the future, it's really difficult to live. And that's why we've seen, in many ways, or for many reasons, a rash of suicides this year. COVID has certainly contributed to that. Suicide is up because people are living without hope. But I'm not talking about that.

There's one thing you can't live happily without and that is gratitude, thankfulness. Have you ever known anybody who is happy but not thankful? Who was happy but not grateful? Who was happy but never express gratitude? No, you've never known anybody like that. People who are down and dreary and morose and just basically unhappy, they're not thankful people. You can't be happy and be unthankful. Now people have fleeting happiness without God. They do. In fact, that's often why they reject God because they think being free from God's moral restraints will make them happy. That's why they do it.

That's why I'm always asking the question, if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian? No. Why? Well, when they're honest, they'll say it's because they don't want to live according to God's perceived moral restraints. They're not on a truth quest, or on a happiness quest, they're just going to believe whatever they think is going to make them happy. And they



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can make themselves happy over the short term, doing a lot of fun things that God does not want them to do, because God knows over the long term it's a disaster. And everyone who's listening to me, who's over 40 years old, knows what I'm talking about because many of us have tried to get happiness ourselves, doing a lot of immoral but fun things over the short term.

CS Lewis said, if I wanted happiness, a good bottle of Port would do that. No, if you want lasting contentment, lasting happiness, you got to be thankful. You've got to be grateful. You've got to have gratitude. In fact, you know, gratitude is part of the natural law; it's part of the moral law. You don't even need the Bible to know that you should be thankful, or you should be grateful. We just take a look at, say, the 10 commandments or the entire Old Testament. What does God say over and over again to Israel? I'm the God that brought you out of Egypt. And it's just assumed that, oh yeah, you're the God that brought us out of Egypt, brought us out of slavery. It's just assumed that the Israelites should know, oh yeah, this God brought us out of Egypt. We should be grateful. It never says, I command you to be grateful. It's just assumed that you should know that.

When God does something like that, you should be grateful for it. Just like you should be grateful to people in your life that help you that do good things for you. You don't need a command that says, you should thank everybody that has been good to you. You just know that intuitively. It's part of the natural law. It's part of the moral law. It's written on your heart. And it's very interesting to me that when you look at the greatest theological book in the Bible, which in my view is Romans, because Paul lays out to the church at Rome, really, what Christianity is all about. And after he goes through the introduction to the book of Romans, and he says that he's not ashamed of the gospel; the gospel saves. He gets into some bad news in verse 18 of Romans chapter one. This is where he starts to lay out our problem, because before you can have a solution, you have to have a problem.

So, he does the whole introduction in the first 17 verses of Romans and then he starts to lay out the problem. And he starts by saying this, "18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them." Stop right there. Everybody knows there's a God. God has made it plain to



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them. A creator God. Not everybody knows about Jesus, we get that, but everybody knows there's a creator God out there.

Why? He goes on, verse 20. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen..." How Paul? How have we clearly seen God's invisible qualities and divine nature? He explains... "being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse." When you see a creation, you know there must be a creator. You know, Christians, we believe in the fact that every effect has a cause. Creation is an effect; it must have a cause. If space time and matter had a beginning, which it did, then there must be a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent creator. If the universe is designed, and it is, then there must be a designer. If we have a moral law written on our hearts, which we do, gratitude is one of the things we know that is moral to be. If somebody does something good for you, you should be grateful.

Then there must be a moral lawgiver, if we have these moral precepts pressing on us. If we have these moral commands that are pressing on our hearts, this moral law written on our hearts, there must be a moral lawgiver. So, God's qualities are clearly seen from creation, from design, from morality. You don't need a Bible to know that. In fact, the Bible teaches, you don't need a Bible to know that. That's why Paul says it, right here in Romans 1 and in Romans 2, that it's plain. In fact, in Romans two he says the Gentiles do not have the law written on their hearts. They know this.

In fact, if you look at the book of Romans, chapter 1 is creation, and design, we could say. Chapter 2 is morality. And chapter 3 is Christ. We might want to alliterated creation of conscience, and Christ. Everybody has creation. Everybody has conscience. Not everybody has Christ. That's why we have preachers, that's why we're supposed to be out there as Christians making disciples, because not everybody knows about Christ. They know there's a God, they know he's a moral being, and they know they haven't lived up to the standard that God has provided. So, there must be someone to relieve us of the fact that we haven't lived up to those moral standards, and that happens to be Christ. So, there's nobody out there who's never heard of God. There are people out there who's never heard of Christ.



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But anyway, as Paul continues here in Romans chapter 1, he says about these people who have suppressed the truth. He says, "21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened." If you don't give thanks your heart is going to be darkened. You're going to become less and less grateful, you're going to become more and more inward focused, you're going to become more selfish, more irritable, more difficult to be with because you're not thanking God for what you already have. So, you cannot be happy over the short term, or content over the long term, without thankfulness.

We're going to unpack this further...and by the way, get to some of your email questions. The email address is hello@crossexamined.org. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. Website is crossexamined.org. We're back in just two minutes. Blessings this Thanksgiving.

AD: 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.

You can't be happy unless you're thankful. 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 about thankfulness today. And we're going to get to some of your questions. Let me complete my thought here in Romans chapter 1 because we were talking about how Paul says, people who don't give thanks have their thinking become futile and their foolish hearts are dark. And he goes on to say this, "22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles."

Let me stop right there. You know there's really only two religions in the world? Two categories of religions. You can either worship the creator or you can worship some aspect of the creation. That's it; the creator or some aspect of the creation. And Paul is saying here that, if you don't worship the creator, you're worshiping some aspect of the creation. That could be yourself. That could be your own autonomy. Everybody worships something. Everybody has something



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on the top of their priority list. Could be themselves, could be another person, it could be their autonomy, could be money, could be sex, could be power. Everybody's worshiping something.

Paul goes on to say, "24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen." There it is. You can either serve the created things; sex, money, power, or you can serve the creator.

Now, notice this phraseology that he uses, that God gave them over. What does that mean? God is allowing you to go in the direction that you've decided to go in. If you're suppressing the truth about God, if you're suppressing the truth about creation, about design, about conscience, because you want to go your own way, you don't want the moral restraints of God on you, you want to be your own person and go your own way, God will give you over to that and he will allow you to go your own way. He goes on to say, "26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts."

Now, you're not supposed to say the rest of this in polite society today because this is considered, this next section of scripture here, is too politically incorrect and the totalitarians out there don't want anybody to hear this. They think this is wrong. In fact, our show last week, with Rod Dreher, which I thought what he had to say was some of the most important things ever said on our radio program and podcast here. His book, *Live Not by Lies*, I think is critically important. If you haven't read it yet I think you ought to get, *Live Not by Lies*. He was my guest last week. Go back and listen to the program last week. And he's pointing out how soft totalitarianism is encroaching on our liberties here in America. To even say that certain sexual activities are wrong or unnatural, is to invite the totalitarian police to cancel you.

Okay, well, I have to tell you what I think is right and leave the results to God. So, here we go. Here's what Paul says, "26 ...Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error."



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Now for those of you out there who don't agree with what Paul is saying here, my question is, by what standard are you saying that Paul...Jesus, who claimed that sexual immorality is what makes a man unclean, and sexual immorality included pre-marital sex, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, rape, all these things? By what standard are you saying that Jesus, and Paul, and just about every other world religion in history, and natural law; by what standard are you saying all those things, all those people are wrong? Because you're assuming a standard when you say that what the New Testament teaches about sexual morality or sexual immorality is wrong. By what standard are you saying it's wrong?

Where are you getting the standard from? Because if it's just your opinion, it's no standard at all, other than your own. It's subjective. And then why would you be imposing that on other people? In fact, the idea that you ought not impose your subjective standards on other people presupposes an objective standard that you ought not do that. That everybody ought not do that. This is why when people say, you ought not judge, and they're doing the same thing that they're claiming you ought not be able to do, by judging you for judging, they're presupposing a moral standard that is objective, that it's always wrong to judge. Well, where they getting that from?

Of course, it's ridiculous to say, don't make judgments, because it's a judgment itself. Jesus never said don't make judgments. He said, judge not lest you be judged. You're gonna be judged by the same standard you judge others. He's not saying, don't make judgments. He's saying, don't judge hypocritically. Take the speck out of your brother's eye, but also take the log out of your own eye before you try and take the speck out of your brother's eye. By the way, when people ask me, well, you know, what do you think about these issues? What do you think about homosexuality, or premarital sex, or any of these issues that the culture thinks is just way out of balance to say these things are wrong...I always say, when they say, well, why are you trying to impose that? or what do you think about it? I always say, well it doesn't really matter what I think about it because I'm not the moral arbiter of the universe. I don't make this stuff up.

When people say don't impose your morality on me, first of all, I asked them, why not? Would that be immoral? Because you're imposing your morality on me right now. You're saying I ought not impose ought nots. You're doing exactly what you tell me I can't do. You're imposing your



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morality, that I ought not impose ought nots, on me. But actually, the better response, when people say don't impose your morality on me is this. Is to say, this isn't my morality. I didn't make this stuff up. I didn't make up the fact that murder is wrong, that rape is wrong, that theft is wrong, that men were made for women and women were made for men, and the best way to perpetuate and stabilize society, which is the reason the government's involved in marriage to begin with, is to legally recognize the man-woman relationship over every other relationship. I didn't make any of this stuff up. This isn't my morality. This isn't your morality. This just happens to be the morality. The one Thomas Jefferson said was self-evident. The one the Apostle Paul, in Romans chapter 2 we just mentioned said, that the Gentiles have the law written on their hearts. God put it there. We know this.

Now we might suppress it to go our own way, which is Paul's point in the beginning here of the section of Romans chapter 1, where he says, they suppress the truth and unrighteousness. We know the truth, but we suppress it. We don't want it to be true. That's why he says the wickedness of people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. Now if you Christians out here are saying, yeah, it's all those non-Christians doing this. No, we do this sometimes, too. We suppress the truth and unrighteousness to go our own way because we're human beings with a fallen nature. We just have to recognize it. So, when people say, don't impose your morality, I go, it's not my morality. It just happens to be THE morality.

Neither can you come up with a standard for everyone, unless you know what the purpose of life is. As I've mentioned to you before, just ask people the question, how do you know that your quarterback throwing a touchdown is better than your quarterback throwing an interception? Because you know what the purpose of the game is, right. You know, because you know what the purpose of the game is; that a touchdown for your side is better than if your guy throws an interception. Well, the same thing is true in life. You can't know whether one particular activity is better than another activity unless you know what the overall goal of life is.

What is the goal of life? To know God and to make Him known. And we're to be God's ambassadors here on Earth, which includes creating. Sex is primarily for creating new human beings and also for bonding two people, a man and a woman, and a lifetime of intimacy and parenthood, if they can do that, so they can create like God creates and bring those young people up to know God. That's the purpose. If there's no purpose, no objective purpose, you



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can't say that any sexual behavior, or any behavior for that matter, is either good or bad, right or wrong. It's just a matter of subjective opinion. It's a preference. It's not a right. It's not a good or a bad. It's just a preference.

By the way, Paul goes on in verse 28 of Romans 1. He says, "28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done." Notice this phrase; they didn't think it was worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God. I know some Christians will say, well, everybody knows there's a God because they know through creation, conscience, and ultimately Christ, if they've been introduced to Christ. Everybody knows there's a God, independent of Christ, though because of creation and conscience.

But Paul seems to indicate here that you can suppress the truth long enough to the point where God gives you over to a depraved mind. And he gives you over to your own desires, that you no longer retain the knowledge of God. I think there are people out there who have gone so far that they're no longer redeemable. Only God knows who those people are. We treat everyone like they're redeemable, but they've also gone so far that they honestly don't know there's a God anymore. They don't. This is what Paul seems to say. Just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God so God gave them over to a depraved mind. They no longer have the witness of creation or the witness of conscience. Their conscience has been seared by their own choice.

And then Paul lists a long list of negative behaviors. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossip slanders, God haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful. They invent ways of doing evil, they disobey their parents, they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.

Gee, just sounds like a typical social media feed, doesn't it? For all the people that were really upset in the first presidential debate between Trump and Biden, I submit to you, Trump and Biden, that they behave better than most people behave on social media. Yeah, they were on stage, but it was really us on stage. And the same people who criticize the other party, or the people in the other party they don't like, are the same people doing the things that they



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criticize. They're unkind. They're insolent. They're arrogant. They're boastful. They're slanderers. They're gossips. Right? They're on social media. They're full of deceit and malice.

That's why I rarely interact with people on social media. We post stuff all the time, but I rarely go and comment on what people have commented because there's really no use to it. It's as if they no longer have the knowledge of God, that God has given them over to a depraved mind. And Paul finally says, "32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them." Yeah, there's no better description of our culture than Romans chapter 1; that people who are doing evil things, not only continue to do these things, they applaud others who do them as well. Wow.

Anyway, I'm Frank Turek. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. We're back in just two minutes with your questions.

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You can tell a lot of what someone is trying to communicate in the Bible by what they say as they sign off. Particularly the letters, the epistles. And as you know, the apostle Paul wrote 13 of them. And I just want to highlight, speaking of thankfulness, that's kind of the theme of what we're talking about today, before I get to your questions, which I'll do here in just a minute.

I just want to highlight how Paul ends every single one of his epistles, just in the last line, or the second the last line. Notice if you see a pattern here. How does he end Romans? "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you." First Corinthians? "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you." Second Corinthians? "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Galatians? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be



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with your spirit brothers, amen." Ephesians? "Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with undying love." Philippians? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you in spirit." Colossians? "Grace be with you." First Thessalonians? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Second Thessalonians? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." First Timothy? Grace be with you." Second Timothy? "Grace being with you." Titus? "Grace be with you all." Philemon? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

It's quite obvious Jesus is trying to say that salvation comes through works, right? Of course not! It's all about grace. And if there's anything to be thankful for, its grace, ladies and gentlemen, that God has done all the work for us. That all we do is trust in what he's done. If there's something to be thankful for, that's it. Even if your circumstances here on earth right now are poor, give thanks for grace. Oh, by the way, unexpressed gratitude is viewed as ingratitude. Unexpressed gratitude is viewed as ingratitude. If you do something nice for someone and they say nothing, even if they are thankful, but they say nothing to you, you view that is ingratitude, even though they may be thankful.

So, if you haven't expressed gratitude, not only to God, but to friends and family, how about your parents, if you haven't expressed gratitude maybe it's time to do so. Oh, you don't know my parents? Oh, yeah, it's true. I don't. But look, I know they're not perfect. None of us are. But I submit to you, 9 times out of 10, your parents sacrificed for you in some way. Which is, by the way, why generally, parents care more about their kids than kids care about their parents. Because parents sacrifice for their kids, kids rarely sacrifice for their parents. Maybe they do later in life, but usually, quite obviously, early in life it's the parent's sacrifice and all for the children. And that's why parents feels such more of an affinity, or much more of a concern for their children, than their children are concerned for their parents. That's what sacrifice will do, friends.

Now, let me move on to some of your questions. I get a question from Larry, who writes and says, "I do not understand your position on Jeremiah 29:11, that it is no longer relevant. I disagree. Please explain." Well, you know, Jeremiah 29:11, which talks about the fact that God has plans, and oh the plans I have for you. People quote this verse all the time, it is on greeting cards, it's stitched into pillows. It is a wonderful passage. I mean, if you just read it out of context, which is what people do. Well, it's a wonderful passage, even in context.



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But who does it apply to? Here's the passage. "11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." That's just so, so wonderful. And it is a great passage. The question is, who is it written to? Is it written to Christians today? No, it's actually written to the exiles that were taken from Jerusalem in 586 BC and taken into Babylon. They're now in exile. And this is a letter that is being written to these people. And it's just a small part of a letter. In fact, let me back up to verse 10. It says, "10 This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Now, what's the context of this? After the 70 years are up in Babylon, I'm gonna bring it back to Jerusalem, back to Judea, because I know the plans I have for you. It's not trying to say to somebody on the street in America today, you know that gee, I've got these great plans for you. You're going to be prosperous and there's going to be no harm that comes to you. You have hope for a future. Remember, I mentioned earlier, you got to have hope if you want to live life. Without hope it's really difficult to live life. God is giving the exile some hope here, but it's going to come in 70 years. So, even if you want to say this applies to you directly, which doesn't, you got to wait seven years for these plans to come forth. For God to prosper you. People always quote Jeremiah 29:11 as if it applies to them.

Now it applies to us in the sense that it tells us something about God. That it tells us something about how God dealt with his people back 2600 years ago. That God is faithful. Yeah, we get all that. But it's not written as a promise to us. It's written for us, so we know how God deals with his people and how he dealt with his people 2600 years ago, but it's not written to us today as if it's a promise for us.

Because if it is a promise for us, then why don't you take the other promises in Jeremiah? For example, Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord". But what is Jeremiah 44:11 say? Jeremiah 44:11 says, "I will destroy you and all of Judah". You never see that stitched into a pillow. You never see that on a birthday card. You know, Jeremiah 44:11, you open it up, and it says, I will destroy you, love Grandma. Thanks so much, grandma.



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No, you don't see cards like that. Why? Because people are not consistent. They don't know the context. You have to know the context, in order to know what the passage really means.

This is why as I've said to you before, there are no verses in the Bible. There are no verses in the Bible. Jeremiah wasn't writing his letter and saying, here's Jeremiah, chapter 29, verse 11. No, the chapter and verse divisions were put in about 500 years ago to help us navigate the text, which is a good thing, because it's really hard to find your way around this long series of documents without numbers. The problem is, we tend to think, if it's got a number in front of it, that we can just take it out of context and make it say whatever we want. Well, that's not the way we should be interpreting our Bible.

In fact, we have a course, How to Interpret Your Bible. You can check our website about it. We talk about this. This passage and many others, in particular. Now, I know many people are mad at me, because you have that pillow on your couch right now, or it's on a needle point on your wall. I'm sorry. I'm just telling you the truth. Jeremiah 29:11 is not written to you; it's written for you. It's not a promise to you, but it's a promise that tells you something about God and how he treated his people 2600 years ago. That is for you; but the promise is not for you. Just like the promise that he's going to destroy people. The people actually went to Egypt. That's what the context of Jeremiah 44:11 is. The exiles who went to Egypt when God said, don't go there. That's not a promise to you that God's not going to destroy you because you went to Egypt during the Babylonian takeover of Judea. So, you've got to know the context of the passage.

Now, the closest thing in the New Testament for something like this would be Romans 8:28, which does apply to you, that God works all things together for good to those that love God and are called according to His purpose. Notice it's not a promise of prosperity here on Earth. It's saying that God can get his will done and work all things together for good even though all things aren't good. And you might not see that good this this side of eternity. It may all work together in eternity, but you may not see it here. So, let's quote the passages properly. Otherwise, we're not reading God's words. We're reading our own words.

Okay, let's see, Brittany writes in from Windsor, Ontario, Canada. She's talking about concubines she says, "I'm a Christian. I'm born and raised in a Christian home. When I bring this up, like, say, eight [unintelligible] concubines, or Solomon had concubine. When I bring this up



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with other Christians, they are horrified that I could even suggest such a thing. And the answer I always get is this 'and that's how it was at the time. I find this answer lacking...' I do too, by the way. "...and stirs up my next question. Does that make it okay? Isn't sex outside of marriage even in Abraham's time wrong? I'm not denying the redemption and grace at the conclusion of the story. I'm just trying to understand the dynamic of the relationships happening. Thanks for taking that time to read my email. May the Lord bless you and your ministry."

Well, thanks Brittany from Ontario. This is, again, an issue of interpretation. When you read something in the Bible, is it a prescription or a description? In fact, in our course, How to Interpret the Bible, we have an acronym S.T.O.P. Whenever you come up to a passage you're unsure of, you need to stop and figure out what's going on. I don't have time to go through the entire acronym but S stands for situation, T stands for type of literature, O stands for the object of the passage, and P stands for prescription or description.

And let's just look at the P for a second. Is this a prescription or a description when you read about it? The Old Testament people like Abraham or Solomon having concubines, or David having many wives, is that a prescription that David ought to have many wives, or that Abraham ought to have a concubine, or is that a description of what they actually did? It is a description. It is not a prescription. You will not see anywhere in the Old Testament, or the New, that God says you should have many wives, or that you should have concubines.

In fact, let me put it this way, the root of the problem between Christians and Muslims started with Abraham because Abraham couldn't wait on God's promise. He thought he was too old, and Sarah was too old, he's just going to take matters into his own hands. And so, he takes a concubine, Hagar; has Ishmael with her. And it turns out that Ishmael turns out to be, ultimately, the father of the Muslims. In fact, Muslims today think that Abraham didn't bring Isaac up to Mount Mariah to have him sacrificed. They think it was Ishmael. It says in the scriptures that Ishmael was a wild donkey of a man and the Muslims trace back their heritage to Ishmael. Of course, the Jews, trace it back to Isaac.

Now, that's just the root of what happened. Abraham couldn't wait and so he took matters into his own hand and took the concubine rather than waiting on God's promise. And I'll complete the thought after the break. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, with



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Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. Our website is crossexamined.org. Our app, two words in the App Store, Cross Examined. Check out our YouTube channel; 238,000 subscribers right now. Check it out, Cross Examined, two words there. See in two minutes.

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 crossexamined.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.

I want to mention if you're anywhere near Charlotte, NC, where I live, on the sixth of December I'm going to be at Moments of Hope Church in Charlotte. Actually, we're holding this thing in Fort Mill, SC. We're doing, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Q&A on Sunday night, December 6, 6-8pm. It's going to be at The River Place in Fort Mill, SC. Just check out our website, crossexamined.org, click on events. You'll see my calendar there. And I hope to see you out there. It's open to everybody. Moments of Hope Church is pastored by my good friend, David Chadwick. For many years was the pastor here in Charlotte, at Forest Hill church. Now he's the pastor of Moments of Hope Church. Wonderful man, David Chadwick. Looking forward to being with him on Sunday, December 6, 6-8pm. Hope to see you there, as well.

We're talking about a question that Brittany had written to me, and if you want to send in a question, I'm sorry, I can't get to all of them. But I try and get to as many as I can. Just send an email to hello@crossexamined.org. Brittany was asking the question about concubines in the Old Testament. And the point here is that there's a lot of descriptions in the Bible that are not prescriptions. God does not condone multiple wives or concubines. In fact, when Jesus is asked about marriage, he goes back to Adam and Eve, and one flesh. He says that a man and a woman are going to come together and be one flesh. That's the ideal. Who came up with concubines and polygamy and all this? Not God. It was people that did that.

And they did that because they, I guess, saw some utility in it. It could have been because many, many men died in battle and there weren't enough men to go around. And so, women wanted to have a husband. And in that kind of society, if you weren't married, you had a difficult time surviving, because you had to grow your own food, and take care of your own security, and all that, so that may have been one of the reasons that, at least some men had



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more than one wife, or had concubines. Others was because men just had power and they decided that's what they wanted to do.

God never condoned this. In fact, I think it's Deuteronomy 17:17, if I'm thinking correctly, I may have the reference wrong, where it says, don't multiply wives. And Jesus goes back to the beginning to say this is the ideal. And Jesus doesn't want divorce to happen either. But what does he say? It's because of your hardness of heart that Moses granted you divorce. God didn't want to condone this, but it was your hardness of heart.

So, always make the distinction between a description and a prescription. In fact, if I thought about this long enough, I'd probably say that the majority of the Bible is descriptive not prescriptive. You need commands for prescription. There's a lot of description going on. There's David committing adultery and David committing murder of Uriah. That's a description, not a prescription. But it's a good question. Thank you for the question, Brittany.

And there's much more on this. In fact, we're going to have Dan Kimball on the show here soon. I just got his brand new book; I endorsed it. It's called *How (Not) to Read the Bible: Making Sense of the Anti-women, Anti-science, Pro-violence, Pro-slavery and Other Crazy-Sounding Parts of Scripture*. Dan's a pastor out in California, great guy, and this book is coming out December 1. I just have an advanced copy in front of me now. Maybe we'll get into that. He covers that issue and many other issues, as you just heard from the title in that book. So, you may want to check out that book. Also, you can check out Paul Copan's great book, *Is God a Moral Monster?* goes into some of these questions, as well.

Question from Sandy, who says this. "Hello. I'm a great fan of you and the podcast. I was born again in May of this year." Wow. Welcome, Sandy. She says, "I hear a lot of Christians talking and speaking about God speaking to them and answering. And I've been praying for God to speak to me and give me some wisdom. How do you know when God speaks to you? And if he does, how do you know it's actually him?"

Great question, Sandy. I'm glad you're asking that question because I hear a lot of people say, God told me this, God told me that, and I think God can do that. Obviously. He's God. Right? The question is, is this normative? Does this happen all the time to all Christians or might this happen only on some occasions. And in fact, there's two views out there on this. Two views?



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Well, maybe more. But here are the main two views. There's what is known as the wisdom view and the traditional view.

Let me explain the traditional view first. The traditional view is that God does speak to you directly and he gives you little hints, he gives you little signs that you need to decipher, you know, who you're supposed to marry, what job you're supposed to have, where you're supposed to live, all these things. These big decisions you need to make, God has an X marks the spot, and you need to follow. You need to find it. He's giving you hints; you just need to find it. Have faith, find it. That's the traditional view and I'd probably say most Christians take that view.

The other view is what is called the wisdom view, that God has given his moral commands for you in the Bible, mostly the New Testament for a Christian, although Proverbs and some other writings in the Old Testament are also normative, but mostly the New Testament. He's given you wisdom and moral boundaries, in which you need to stay, when you decide on these issues like, who should you marry. What does the scripture say? Just marry somebody in the Lord, somebody who's a Christian. You get outside of that, now you're outside of the will of God, but marry somebody who's a Christian. That's the moral constraint that you have. Outside of that, it's up to you.

Now, it seems to me this is the right view. Why? Well, why would God even give you a Bible if he's going to tell you what to do directly every day? Why would he give you a book of Proverbs, for example? Which is really how to make good decisions. Why would he do that if he's going to tell you what to do every day? And I don't think it leads to maturity to ask God to tell you exactly what to do every day. Just like it wouldn't be mature for you, as a 30 year old person, to call up your parents and ask, you know, can I go play softball with my friends, mom and dad. You wouldn't be a mature person if you were being told all the time exactly what decision you need to make on every occasion. You would be a mature person if your parents gave you guidelines, and parameters, and moral boundaries; just stay inside these moral boundaries, the rest is up to you. You would become more mature that way than if you were just told what to do all the time.



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Now, my friend, Greg Koukl, has written fairly extensively on this issue. And you can get it for free if you just type, *Does God Whisper*, in Google. You'll find it. He's got like a three-part series, *Does God Whisper*. And let me explain Greg is not saying here. In fact, I'm just going to read a couple paragraphs from the first installment, the first part of, *Does God Whisper*. Here's what Greg says. He says, "I do not deny that God is capable of giving special revelation to anyone or to any church at any time. God can do whatever he likes, and I'm fully convinced there are unique situations where he does this today, just as in biblical times.

None of these things is in question, as far as I'm concerned. What is at issue for me, "... This is Greg speaking, and for me as well, because I agree with him... "is whether the Bible teaches everyone can be a prophet of sorts. Whether each Christian can expect to hear from God in ways described above," ...in the article... "with private personalized revelations. And whether this is a standard ordinary part of the Christian life that can be taught and developed, this, I do not think is taught in the Bible. And I would like to tell you why."

So just, if you would, Sandy, Google, *Does God Whisper*, and read that three-part series by Greg. You may agree with him, you may not. I think he makes some valid points in there. I think the way God primarily speaks to us is through the Bible. And we have to understand the Bible in context in order to know what he's trying to communicate to us. And I don't think it's normative for us to get special revelation. Might God do that on certain situations? Of course. Could he do it every time? Of course, he could. The question is, does he? How does it lead to a mature relationship if your parents are telling you what to do every single minute? You probably don't grow that way. You do grow if your parents give you, as I said, moral boundaries, and if God gives you moral boundaries, and wisdom, in which you need to stay.

So, the primary way God speaks, in my view, is through the Bible. In fact, I don't even see in the Bible characters getting a special revelation from God normatively. Of course, on some occasions, they do. But most of the time, they're not getting special revelation. In fact, Paul, as you know, is told by the Holy Spirit, don't go here, go here. There may be one or two other times in the New Testament you get that, but most of the time, they're just going through life, understanding the revelation that God has already given to them through the Scriptures and living life according to what the Scriptures say. And that's what we're supposed to do.



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Now, there's an entire book on this. If you really want to go into depth, Sandy, get the book, *Decision Making and the Will of God*. It's like a 30 or 40 year old book, but it's still very relevant, written by Gary Friesen. Gary Friesen is the main author. I think, Robin Maxson, may be the co-author on that. So, check that out, *Decision Making and the Will of God*. So, *Does God Whisper*, you can find right there on Google, and *Decision Making and the Will of God*.

Let me just go back to thankfulness, ladies and gentlemen, because it is a time to be thankful, quite obviously. It's always a time to be thankful, but we thank, as a nation, God for what he's provided for us. And we should thank the people in our lives for what they've done for us, as well, right now. And you cannot be a happy person, short term or long term, without thankfulness. Paul says, in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." You know, there's very few places in the Scripture it says, this is God's will for you. This is one of them; be thankful in all circumstances. Another is, it's God's will for you that you flee sexual immorality. There are very few places that it says, this is God's will right here. Be thankful in all circumstances.

I know it's been the worst year, probably, of your life. For most of us it has; 2020. But we should still be thankful for what God has done, and will do, and has done, with regard to His death, burial and resurrection in the form of Jesus to save us from our sins. You ought to be thankful for that, ladies and gentlemen. Grace to you, as Paul says.

Alright, great being with you. I hope to see you here next week, Lord willing. Hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving. God bless you. See you next time.

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