

## Immortal: How Death Drives Us with Clay Jones

(January 16, 2021)

Are you concerned? Are you afraid? Are you upset? Maybe you're pessimistic because of what's been going on in our country. On the other hand, maybe you're happy, maybe you're optimistic. Well, here's some news. No matter whether you are happy or sad, it's all temporary. In fact, the state is temporary, but you are eternal. As Marx tried to say, that the state was eternal and the individual wasn't, it's exactly the opposite. You are eternal, the state is temporary. In fact, you are immortal.

In fact, CS Lewis said this in his lecture, *The Weight of Glory*, he said, "It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors." From CS Lewis.

We are immortal, and whether you're a Christian or not, you are immortal. And so, I want to talk about this because what can be more important than eternity? And my friend, Clay Jones, has written a fabulous new book. It's called, *Immortal: How the Fear of Death Drives Us and What We Can Do About It*. Now most of you know who Clay is, because he, for a very long period of time, has been at Biola University. He is now also teaching at Colorado Christian University under Lee Strobel, his new program out there. And a year or two ago, we had Clay on for his book, *Why Does God Allow Evil?: Compelling Answers for Life's Toughest Questions*. The brand new book is about immortality. It's always great to have Clay on. Clay, how are you?

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**Clay:**

I'm well thank you for having me on. Frank. It's always a pleasure.

**Frank:**

Well, Clay, I also got to mention that you are the president of Ratio Christi.

**Clay:**

Well, I'm the chairman of the board.

**Frank:**

Oh, that's right, chairman of the board. That's even higher than the president. I actually demoted you buddy.

**Clay:**

There you go. There you go.

**Frank:**

Ratio Christi is, most of you know, is doing some great work on college campuses. I speak at a lot of Ratio Christi groups on campus when we can speak on campus. And Clay is the chairman of the board of that fine organization. But Clay, this new book, *Immortal*, the first question I have is: Why did you write the book? What's behind the book? Why did you think this was important to write about?

**Clay:**

I wrote this book because I was reading a book by a Paris philosopher named Luc Ferry. And Luc said something that was fascinating to me. He said in his book in his book, *A Brief History of Thought*, he said, "the quest for a salvation without God is at the heart of every great philosophical system. And that is its essential and ultimate objective." And when I read that, frankly, my mind was blown. I don't consider myself a philosopher. I have a BA in philosophy, but that doesn't really make you a philosopher. I'm more of a theologian type fellow. But when I read that, I'd never heard that. So, I started doing a lot of reading of philosophers and Luc Ferry referred to some and I'll just give you one more. Plato said, "truly, then, those who practice philosophy aright are cultivating dying, and for them, least of all men, does being dead

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hold any terror." In another place he said, "practicing philosophy in the right way is, in fact, training to die easily".

And I found one philosopher after another saying that what philosophy is about, is about helping us to learn to die. And stoicism and epicureanism, by the way, were mostly about how to deal with death. Certainly, that was a major objective of epicureanism. And so, then I was just I was blown away by that. So, I started reading psychologists, other philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists. And there's this huge and growing very rapidly trend of philosophers, psychologists, sociologists; are all saying that the major driving force for humans is the fact that they're afraid they're going to die. And I was just struck by that.

And, of course, it says in Hebrews 2:14-15, that Jesus took on flesh so that he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives are held in bondage by lifelong slavery. So, in other words, the scripture actually says that the non-Christian is held in bondage by a slavery to the fear of death. So, as I started putting this together I went, I'm there, and that was the origin of the book.

**Frank:**

Now, I seem to remember someone saying this, I don't know who said it, maybe, you know. Someone said, death is philosophy's only problem.

**Clay:**

Well, I don't remember who that was. But yes, indeed, that's exactly correct. And it is. And as reading modern atheist philosophers, indeed, I find again and again, their thoughts are turned towards how to deal with death. There's a book by Alex Rosenberg called, *The Atheist's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life Without Illusions*. And he concludes his book, by the way, he says, philosophical arguments for, you know, dealing with death, he says, they don't really work. He says, take Prozac, or your other favorite serotonin reuptake inhibitor and keep taking them until they kick in. And so, in other words, here's this atheist writing on death and how to live your life here, and he goes, take drugs. And actually, I'm finding that more and more, and this is where our society is going.

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**Frank:**

Yeah, it's pretty amazing that Alex Rosenberg, who is a materialistic atheist, he writes a book on, *The Atheist's Guide to Reality*, and here he is denying reality exists. Right?

**Clay:**

Well, I mean, it's like, or I've got to take drugs to deal with it.

**Frank:**

Right. That's right.

**Clay:**

You know, I mean, yeah, let's get high.

**Frank:** Solomon famously wrote, of course, in Ecclesiastes, that God has put eternity on our hearts, Clay.

**Clay:**

Yes. Absolutely.

**Frank:**

And how has he done that? or Why is he done that? Why do we all have this sense that there is an immortality to us that we are going to go on after we die? I mean, I think if you're an atheist, you have to suppress that intuition.

**Clay:**

I think you do. And you have to suppress, of course, the obvious. Right? The Scripture says in Romans, when they repress the truth by their wickedness, what could be made known about God is plain to them. So, they have to suppress that there is a God, they have to suppress all that, they have to suppress that intuition. And also, then, of course, the scripture says that the Holy Spirit is at work in the world. So, they have to reject and suppress anything that he might be inclining us to believe. Say, hey, dummy, there really is a God. You need to wake up and hear this, see this. But yeah, they have to suppress this. One of the things in writing, *Immortal*, by the way is, I learned that every single person on earth is actually telling themselves a lie. There's

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no exception, except, well, there is one exception. Those who have a robust view of eternal life in Jesus do not have to tell themselves lies about the nature of reality. Everyone else is lying to themselves, or they're drugging themselves to death, because reality without Jesus is so stark and so hurtful that they have to do something.

**Frank:**

When we come back from the break, we're going to go to break here in just a minute, Clay, I want to ask you about that. What lies are people telling themselves if they're not Christians, if in fact, Christianity is indeed true? So, we're gonna get into that. Clay Joneses new book is called, *Immortal: How the Fear of Death Drives Us and What We Can Do About It*. And I did get some emails from you about last week's show, The Roots of Riots, and I'm going to get to that in a future program. But today, I want to talk about eternal things and immortality. So, that's why we're talking about this today with Dr. Clay Jones. Look, ladies and gentlemen, if Christianity is true, you are immortal. Whether you're a Christian or not, what does that mean? What should we do about it? We're back in just a couple of minutes so don't go anywhere. I'm Frank Turek. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.

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**Frank:**

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. So, that's what you're listening to. I'm Frank Turek, your host. My guest is Dr. Clay Jones. ClayJones.net is his website. Check that out. His new book is about immortality. It's called, *Immortal*. And Clay, just before the break, you had mentioned that you think that people who are not Christians and don't have a robust understanding of Christianity, and the fact that our ultimate life is going to be with Jesus in eternity, you think that such people are lying to themselves. What do you mean by that?

**Clay:**

Well, what they're doing is, they're trying to transcend their death somehow, some way. And so, people do it through literal immortality projects. And by that, I mean, a lot of people are

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literally hoping to live forever by diet and exercise and do everything just right. That one day science is going to find a way and I'm going to be able to literally live forever. Transhumanism is a crock, frankly, and I write at length in my book, *Immortal*, about transhumanism. That's a crock. We're never going to be able to upload our brains because, as you know, Frank, we're not just material stuff, we have souls and consciousness, and we're not going to upload our souls into a computer. So, there's literally immortality.

But the biggest way and I find all the atheists doing this, frankly, I mean, Richard Dawkins....well, Bart Ehrman considers himself an agnostic...Sam Harris, all of them see themselves as depending on symbolic immortality, that they're going to somehow live on past their death by doing things. And so, people are trying to live on through having children. That's a symbolic immortality project. It's not a very good one because after 20 generations there's only .000004% of your genes go on, and that might not even happen. Why? Because genes transfer over in groups and some are dominant, and some are recessive. You couldn't feed a mosquito after 20 generations with the amount of genes in your offspring's body.

But the biggest thing is, is I ask my students all the time...I kind of enjoy this, it tells you something about my personality, I guess. But I've said, how many of you know the first names of your great-great grandparents?

**Frank:**

Nobody.

**Clay:**

And the answer, nobody does.

**Frank:**

Even with ancestry.com we don't know.

**Clay:**

I think in every class I've asked, combined total, I haven't had more than three students say they knew the first names of their great-great grandparents. And then I asked them the follow

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up question. I say, do you care? No one cares. No one is, oh no, I really care. That means something to me. It means nothing to them.

**Frank:**

But, Clay, even if you did care, even if someone today did care about somebody that was their ancestor who lived 200 years ago, if that person is really dead, and there's no immortality to that person, they don't even know anything about whether their offspring care or not. And even if they did...

**Clay:**

They're still dead.

**Frank:**

...why would they care?

**Clay:**

That's right.

**Frank:**

I mean, it's vacuous, right?

**Clay:**

It's absolutely vacuous and there's no point to it. You're not going to live on through your children. So, procreation and adoption, obviously, I'm going to live on through my kids by creating something wonderful. You know, the classic example of that would be Homer's, Iliad. That's still around and so, people go, somehow Homer's living on. No, he's not. He's dead. He has no idea that people are reading the Iliad. He's dead. I don't have any doubt that he wrote it as a symbolic immortality project as a way to be remembered, because if you study the early Greeks, the Romans, the ancients, they were really consumed with how people were going to think of them in the future.

Marcus Aurelius, by the way, pointed out the folly of that he says, "Why should I worry about what future generations are going to think of me when the only thing that future generations

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are going to be thinking of is how they're going to get future generations to think of them?" I mean. But people, you know, write a book, you know, build a tower, do something great where you'll be remembered, do something heroic. Activism, I'm going to save the planet, see, and that way I can go on because I'm saving the planet. You know what? I've got news for you. First of all, our sun's going to supernova and burn our planet to a crisp, and then it's going to go to absolute zero, which is like 474 degrees below zero, and it's going to be just a bunch of debris. If there is no God, no matter what, you're not living forever, but people have to tell themselves these lies. They have to tell themselves that no, no, if I do this or that or the other thing I'll in some sense live on. No, you won't.

But by the way, people then that are saving the planet, the reason they're so vehement, because that's their immortality project, right. Symbolically. I'm going to save the planet, and that's what I've done here on earth, and if I save the planet, I will in some sense, live on because I've saved the planet. Well, you know what? The trouble with that is, if you argue with them, or disagree with them, or you don't support their point of view, then that's like killing them a second time, because you're killing their immortality project. And that's why these people become so vehement about you. It's not just, kind of, you know, hey, this is important, and we should do it. It's, if you disagree with me, I need to go to war with you. Well, why? Is it really because we have this altruistic love for future generations that we'll never meet? Is that really why it is? Or is it because, if I save the planet, then I have done something that's going to transcend my death? But anyway, so people are telling themselves that these things are going to somehow provide them a sense of immortality. And it's not.

**Frank:**

It's a religion at that point. That is what they're worshipping. They're worshipping the earth, or they're worshipping something about themselves, because they're trying to make themselves immortal. And as you pointed out, Clay, even if we were to get really good at taking care of ourselves, and improve our ability to live longer, the whole universe is going to go to heat death. It doesn't matter how...eat the chocolate, forget about the kale today, we're all going to death anyway, right?

**Clay:**

It's all going down.

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**Frank:**

Now, if you're a Christian, you do take care of your body, because you actually are doing something that's going to matter into eternity, if there is indeed an eternity.

**Clay:**

That's right.

**Frank:**

And so, the whole thing turns, as you point out in your book...and the book, again, is called, *Immortal*, ladies and gentlemen, by my guest, Clay Jones. The whole thing pivots on whether or not Christianity is true. And you talk about that in a chapter in your book, *Is Christianity Really True?*. Do we have evidence God exists and Jesus really rose from the dead? We can get into that maybe later if we have time. But Clay, this is so important, because people are literally lying to themselves, as you put it. They're trying to cover up their angst by trying to put something in eternity's place. They're trying to make eternity of their own making somehow. And this just doesn't work. In fact, I was reading a section of your book today, Clay. I want you to comment on this. You were pointing out people who are killers trying to get attention, and I think you mentioned the Charles Lindbergh kidnapping...

**Clay:**

Yes.

**Frank:**

...that there were over 200 people that came forward and said they were the kidnapper even though they weren't. Why did they do that?

**Clay:**

See, that's the amazing thing. Yes, over 200 people confessed to the crime...what was, at the time, called the crime of the century...over 200 people confessed. They later caught the actual killer. I mean, they knew it for sure. But 200 people confessed because they wanted to be famous and then somehow transcend their puny existence here. The Parkland school shooter, that killed 17 people, put on Facebook, tomorrow everybody's going to know who I am. The Las Vegas shooter, his brother was asked, why did he do that? And he says, well, my brother always

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wanted to be the best at everything, so I would assume he'd want the largest casualty count. The guy that shot John Lennon, Mark David Chapman said, I did it to steal John Lennon's fame. And all it just goes on and on.

In fact, the Secret Service did a study of people, five people who'd attacked presidents, and the number one reason was to be famous. That was the number one reason; I want to be famous. Why? Because then, at least in some sense, in my puny death, that I'm going to live on. At least people will know who I am. And frankly, this has gone on for centuries, people have done terrible things.

**Frank:**

Clay, isn't this part of the first lie, when you think about it, where the devil said to Adam and Eve, if you do this, you will be like God. And it seems like everybody's trying to be like, God. We're trying to get glory and we're trying to take God's glory upon ourselves and say, look at me, look at me. I'm famous. I mean, it's the celebrity culture. Right?

**Clay:**

Right.

**Frank:**

You talk about Madonna in your book.

**Clay:**

Yeah, I do. There's a fellow, I don't remember his name offhand, that I quote in the book and he says, as we're losing belief in the afterlife, there is a converse increase in celebrity, because people want to be famous somehow. And that's what, you know, I mean, and it's everything from, you know, well, Madonna, of course, to the hot dog people eating contest people. There's the guy that Guinness Book of World Records gave the award to having the longest fingernails in the world on one hand; 428 inches. I think it was. Why would anybody do that? It was like since 1952, he hadn't cut the nails on his left hand. That's dumb. You know, you've got the guy, you know, the most garden gnomes, the most toothpaste tubes, those are all in the Guinness Book of World Records. And it's so stupid. But it's a way of standing out.

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**Frank:**

It's filling a void.

**Clay:**

It's filling a void, and the void is, I need to be recognized.

**Frank:**

Right.

**Clay:**

I need to be remembered. I need to have, even if it's a tiny footnote somewhere, I need a little note about me that says that I did something. Well, often very stupid, right. I mean, there's the guy that broke the most toilet seats with his head in one minute. Which if memory serves, by the way, was 54. What made him one day go, you know, I think I have a talent for breaking toilet seats with my head. I mean, really. But see, this is the desperation for...

**Frank:**

That's a crappy way to get famous.

**Clay:**

[laughing] There you go. No, it is.

**Frank:**

I wouldn't do that.

**Clay:**

I wouldn't do that.

**Frank:**

So, it's really the idea that we have eternity on our hearts, and here is God handing us eternity for free, and yet, we want to try and create our own...

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**Clay:**

That's right

**Frank:**

...eternity, if you will, our own immortality, with these inane stunts we put on. What is wrong with us, Clay?

**Clay:**

You know, I think it's just the kernel of sin, as you know, Frank, is selfishness. And that's the real start of it is, I want me to be wonderful. And having to submit your will to God's will doesn't feel as wonderful. And so, people will do anything. I call them secular salvation projects; that's another name for it. Somehow I'm going to live on without God. [unintelligible] And Richard Dawkins says, you know, this girl named Anne who is terrified of dying, Richard Dawkins says, well, you need to just get some accomplishments behind you. He says, my legacy is secure, Dawkins said. I'm going on because I've accomplished a lot of things.

Skeptic Magazine publisher, Michael Shermer, said exactly the same thing. We're living on through our children, through our relationships, through our writings of things we've accomplished. But notice, these are all symbolic immortality projects. And they're all empty, as in completely and utterly empty. And they won't work. They're not going to work. You know, I think if you think of [unintelligible] famous movie stars I mentioned, one of them was Hedy Lamarr. Honestly, I really didn't know who Hedy Lamarr was until I started writing the book and then I looked her up. She was considered the most beautiful woman in the world. Nobody really knows who she is now. The movie Star Wars, I've asked a lot of people, hey... you talk to them about Star Wars. They don't even know what the movie was. They haven't seen it. So, anyway, that's not gonna last.

**Frank:**

We're back in just a minute with my friend, Clay Jones. The book is called, *Immortal*, and it's important to a lot of people, as you can tell. We'll cover more of it in just a minute. I'm Frank Turek. Don't go anywhere.

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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. My guest is Clay Jones. His new book is called, *Immortal*. We're going to get right back into it. Before I do, I want to mention, I'll be at Calvary Chapel Chino Hills this Sunday, January 17. All three services. We're going to be talking about, how are you being deceived. I hope you can join me for one of those services. And then next Saturday and Sunday in Lexington, South Carolina. That's just outside of Columbia, South Carolina. I'll be at the Calvary Chapel down there in Lexington all day Saturday, with my friend, Charlie Campbell. We're going to be doing an apologetics conference on Saturday, the 23rd. And then on Sunday, I'm doing the services that morning at Calvary Chapel. I think it's Calvary Chapel Columbia, but it's actually in Lexington, South Carolina. Go to [CrossExamined.org](http://CrossExamined.org), click on events. You will see my calendar there. I hope to see you at both those events Saturday and Sunday in Lexington, South Carolina.

Let's go back to my friend, Clay Jones. Clay, I hear atheists denying, sometimes, that life is objective. Or let me put it another way, they deny that, when we say, life can only be objective if God exists, they deny that. They say there is objective meaning. They'll try and say that. But clay, why is there no true objective meaning to life unless God exists?

**Clay:**

Well, one of the things that, as you know Frank, has got a lot of things we could say about it. But one of the things is, see, what atheists will do is, they'll try to come up with things that I'm going to change the world by. Like I say, I'll stop global warming. Or I think Richard Dawkins and some of his gang, I'm going to convince a lot of people that there is no God, this will be freeing

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to them, and this will transcend my own death. That's how they're looking for meaning. The trouble is, one, as you know, that's false, Two, there's no objective meaning, because the entire universe is going to go to, like, negative 473 degrees. So, what's the point? It's like, well, at least we had a good time while we were on our way to heat death. What's the meaning?

I think what people are talking about meaning, what they're really talking, again, is about something that's going to transcend my death. That's not just simply, you know, I lived, I died, and here I am. You know, but they're having a very, very hard time coming up with anything that means anything in that context. In fact, I would argue, as Bertrand Russell did, that we need to realize that the whole universe...and he talked about it...it's going to one day just be a bunch of debris in ruins. And so, there is no real meaning. And Bertrand Russell realized that. He said that straight out in his book. And I quote him in my book. But anyway, so, I don't see how you get objective meaning if there's no God. There's nothing that transcends our puny little fates here. And since, like I say, the whole universe is just going to be one big junkyard, one big frozen junkyard, how do you get any kind of ongoing meaning out of that?

**Frank:**

Yeah, there's no ongoing meaning, or objective meaning, and therefore, there's no objective morality either. If there's no true meaning to life, there's no right or wrong way to live it. Everything is just a matter of opinion. And yet, these same atheists are trying to, on one hand, while they say there's no God, they're trying to say, no life is meaningful, and you ought to live a certain way. Well, no, you can't have it both ways. You got to steal from God, in order to say such a thing...

**Clay:**

That's right.

**Frank:**

...while you're being an atheist. It doesn't work. In fact, I remember...you brought up Richard Dawkins... you know, he's the one that famously said, there is no right or wrong, there is no justice, there is no injustice, there's no good or evil. I think he may have even said in that famous quote, there's no meaning. We just dance to our DNA, right.

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**Clay:**

That's right.

**Frank:**

And then there was a biologist who studied under Stephen Jay Gould at Harvard. His name was Kurt Wise. And he did not turn out to be an evolutionist. You know, Gould was one of the most famous evolutionists of the last century. He actually turned out to be a young earth creationist Christian. And Richard Dawkins was lamenting that Kurt Wise was wasting his life. Now wait a minute, how can you waste your life if there's no meaning, there's no purpose, there's no good or evil, there's no right or wrong, there is no justice, we're all gonna die and become worm food? You can't waste your life. Yet he's saying that Kurt Wise is wasting his life so...

**Clay:**

I wasn't intending to say this. I think yours is the first program I've ever said this on. But let me quote W.H Auden, the famous poet. He says, "to believe in the value of art is to believe that it is possible to make an object, be it an epic or two line epigram, which will remain permanently on hand in the world. The probabilities of success are against them, but an artist must not attempt anything less. In the meantime, whatever is going to happen, we must try to live as E.M. Forster recommends that we should. "The people I respect most behave as if they were immortal and as if society was eternal. Both assumptions are false: both of them must be accepted as true if we are to go on eating and working and loving and are to keep open a few breathing-holes for the human spirit." I think that's exactly right. Here he is saying, for us to do anything meaningful at all, for us to just go on living, we have to believe that life is immortal, even though we absolutely know this is false. But we have to lie to ourselves and tell us that somehow it is, because if we don't, we're not going to be able to go on and do anything.

**Frank:**

Camus said, philosophy's only question is, should we all commit suicide? I think it was Camus who said that, right.

**Clay:**

That would make sense to me. I didn't know that quote. But that would make sense to me. Because if there is no God, what's the point? But see, if you get to that, what's the point, well,

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then you have to get into all the ways that we deal with death through denial and distraction, and so on. Because that's the only way you can deal with life if you really realize that, without God, there's just no point to it.

**Frank:**

Well, in your book, *Immortal*, Clay, you point out that people fear death. But there are some people that disagree with that contention. They'll say, no, I don't fear death. Why do you think they're wrong?

**Clay:**

Well, three psychologists who have long names, I won't go into their names, psychology professors, have put out a book and titled, *The Worm at the Core*. And in 1987 they began to start doing studies experience exposing people to their death fears. And they found that when they exposed people to their death fears that people acted extremely differently. Just one of my favorite examples is, in Israel they did a study where in this open courtyard there was a bunch of flyers, a stack of flyers. Half of the flyers are: Are you experiencing back pain? Call this number. The other half of the flyers were: Are you afraid of dying. And next to this courtyard, there was a there was a beverage stand that was selling a strong alcoholic drink or a nice fruit punch. Those that got the death fear flier 3:1 got the strong alcoholic drink over those that got the back pain flyer.

And think about it. That was just a flyer. What if they got the news that they really were going to die? But there have been over 500 studies and counting, over 500 studies, and every single time, if they expose people to the reality to the thought of their own death, it freaks them out. But most people, if you say, are you afraid of death, they'll say no, because that's the first step to dealing with it is denial. And then of course, the second step is distraction. And people are distracting themselves from the fact that they're going to die. That's what TV and the internet and all this is about. You know, people wonder why we pay sports stars and singing stars and actors and actresses so much money compared to teachers and the answer to that part of the answer is, is because they perform the most valuable task on earth. They keep us from thinking about the fact that we're going to die. So, it's not surprising they're keeping us from thinking we're going to die.

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By the way, drugs are the answer. If you don't have God, they really are the answer. I quoted you Alex Rosenberg. They are the answer. In fact, Paul agrees with that. He said, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die, if the dead are not raised to life. I mean, party on. Believe me, if all of a sudden I decided Christianity wasn't true, I'd buy the biggest big screen TV I could find, and I would drink my brains out. Because that's the only way you can deal with the fact that your life is meaningless and you're gonna die.

**Frank:**

Wasn't that the...I haven't seen this book in a long time but, *Brave New World*?

**Clay:**

Yes.

**Frank:**

Huxley, wasn't Huxley talking about a drug called soma that would just kind of mellow everybody out in that? That that was the future.

**Clay:**

That's exactly what Prozac is. And now people are legalizing marijuana. You know, I mean, our state just recently did. I mean, and but see again, the opioid crisis is really a lack of belief in the afterlife crisis. That's really what's going on. People have no hope, they're without God. Suicide, the fact that suicide is up, people commit suicide because they know they're going to die. That may seem counterintuitive. But as Stanford emeritus psychiatrist put it this way, Professor Irvin Yalom, he says, suicide is an active act. It allows one to control that which controls one. And so, I mean, of course, drug use, suicide, you know, I mean, as I said to you on the break, anarchy, hey, there's no God. I saw this guy right in the riots, about six months ago, he jumps on the hood of a moving SUV. He's not on it long. They shake him off. A camera goes up to him and goes, what are you doing? And he says, we're changing the world. And I'm thinking, you are an idiot. You're not changing the world. That was stupid. But notice, again, I've got to have something where I've made some sort of a difference. I can't just die not having made a difference in this world.

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**Frank:**

Now, why are Christians, do you think, afraid of death? I mean, if it's true that that's what we're all waiting for, we're all going to be graduated, and we're all going to be with Jesus and our loved ones, why would we be afraid of that, Clay?

**Clay:**

That's one of my favorite questions, Frank. And, you know, I'll tell you, when I was teaching in undergrad some years ago, a blonde came up to me, an undergrad, and she says, I'm afraid that I don't want to go to heaven. After talking with her and encouraging her, I went in and talked to a young woman in our office, a 20 something woman, I told that to her, she says I have the same fear. Satan has done what I call, Extreme Makeover metaphysical edition. And what I mean by that is, he has made heaven look like a place you don't want to go. We're all going to be sitting on clouds, strumming harps, sporting flightless wings, and singing forever and ever and ever and ever. I don't want to go to that heaven either. That's not what the Bible teaches. That's why the last three chapters of my book, *Why Does God Allow Evil*, are about heaven. And the last two chapters in my book, *Immortal*, are about heaven, to try to set the record straight. Your occupation is reigning with Christ. You are not going to be singing non-stop.

And I'm going to say something to just blow people's minds, Frank, and I'm not trying to be lascivious. But I think I'm to do a blog on it soon and entitled, The Lord Made Orgasms Possible. And the reason I bring that up is, is because people think God is anti-pleasure. But where did that come from? Where did the pleasure of sex come from? And people say, well, you're just trying to shock people. I am. I'm trying to shock you out of your notion that happens going to be a terrible place to go.

**Frank:**

Well, you've shocked us, Clay Jones and we're going to pick that up on the other side of the break and figure out what the conclusion of that is. My guest is Dr. Clay Jones, and his book is called, *Immortal*. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek and the American Family Radio Network. Our website is CrossExamined.org. We're back in two minutes.

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**Frank:**

Talking to Clay Jones, ladies and gentlemen, on I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek. Just before the break, we were talking about people having a misconception of heaven. Christians are not interested in heaven. They don't want to go there. You were talking about this young lady that came in your office, Clay, that was a Christian and didn't want to go to heaven because she thought it was sitting on clouds playing harps and singing hymns forever. That's not what it's about, so, Clay Jones, what is heaven going to be like?

**Clay:**

Well, you know, I think that's a great question. I think it's so important that we look at this more carefully. In my book, *Why Does God Allow Evil*, for instance, I talk about the fact that...let me put it to you like this. Here's what I look forward to in heaven. I've spent decades studying heaven and thinking about it. One of the things I look forward to is being with all of you who are saints of Christ. I look forward to that. I look forward to living without guilt. Can you imagine what it would be like to live without guilt? Without tears? There won't even be tears of joy because tears of joy come from when you've just gotten over hardship. I look forward to banquets. I would point out to you that, in the Old and New Testament, heaven is most often compared to a banquet. And I think that's incredibly important. I look forward to inheriting a new heaven and a new earth.

You know, I differ with Alcorn. I don't think we're going to be on this planet. I think the new heavens and new earth is a recreation of the cosmos. You know, the scripture talks about the tree of life. I've tasted a lot of fruits. What his life tastes like? And, you know, David said, in your right hand are pleasures forevermore. I think we just need to think this through. See what the devil has done, and I mentioned this briefly, Frank, is what I call Extreme Makeover metaphysical addition. For instance, heaven is going to be white. Look, that's not true. If you look in Revelation, heaven is jewel tone. It's not white. And as I said, and I won't use the "O"

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word again, but I'll just say, sexual pleasure, guess what? God created that. Wine, food, filet mignon. I mean, he created these things, because he's not anti-pleasure, as Lewis says in, *The Screwtape Letters*. He says, you know, he has the devil's servant, *Screwtape* say, you know, I mean, we haven't created a pleasure yet, but we're working on it. God is pro-pleasure. He's just against pleasure's misuse. And so, that's what we have to look forward to.

And like I say, that's why, with my two books combined, my book on evil and my book, *Immortal*, I spend five chapters between the two of them talking about heaven, trying to set record straight. Because honestly, let's face it, if heaven looks like a drag to you, you're not going to try for it, you're not going to hope for it. And, and for us to find heaven compelling, it has to be more than just, it's better than the other place. But I'm afraid that for many, many Christians heaven, in their conception, is no better than the other place. And that's not compelling. And we can't set our focus on heaven, and we can't relax and enjoy the fact that we're going to have eternity with Jesus and each other forever, if we're going to go, well, it's only better than the other place. That's a drag.

**Frank:**

Clay, when we say that someone dies today, this is before the new heavens and new earth, we say they're going to heaven, right.

**Clay:**

That's right.

**Frank:**

When we're in the presence of God. But it's not the ultimate heaven is it? What is it? It's a, kind of, an intermediate state, is it not?

**Clay:**

Right. Once you die, your body dies. And I talked about this at some length. Once your body dies, your spirit, it's seamless, immediately enters into the next realm. You know, Jesus said, in fact, that his servants will not taste death. Jesus wasn't living in denial. He knew very well that our bodies were going to die. What he means is that your spirit, your consciousness, is going to

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travel immediately, you're going to immediately be in the next world. It won't be like a computer reboot. It's seamless.

In fact, I like, and Dallas Willard was the first one I heard that said this, he says, it may take you a few minutes to realize that you're dead. You might have to look back and go, hey, there's my body in a mangled car or lying on an operating room table, and you go, hey, I'm dead. Because your consciousness is going to move on. And yes, you will be disembodied. I've heard some Christians go, well that sounds terrible. I would love to experience that until we get our glorified bodies in the kingdom. I think that would be a trip. People need to remember, you're not a body that has a soul, you're a soul or a spirit that has a body. And when our body dies, the real you, your soul and spirit, immediately go on to be in the presence of the Lord and with his people forever and ever.

**Frank:**

The book is called, *Immortal*. The author is my guest today, Dr. Clay Jones. What could be more important than eternity? Nothing.

**Clay:**

Nothing.

**Frank:**

If there is no eternity, nothing's ultimately important. That's the point. Now, Clay I've heard this phrase before, you probably have heard it as well. This objection, well look, if you focus on heaven, you're not going to be any earthly good. What do you say to that?

**Clay:**

What's the phrase? He who is too heavenly minded is no earthly good. I've got a blog entitled that. And I said, it's like...that's dumb. That's dumb.

**Frank:**

Why is it dumb?

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**Clay:**

That's just dumb. It's dumb because, as Lewis put it, he says, "if you study history, you'll find that the people that did the most in this world were the ones who were the most conscious of the next". Peter says in First Peter 1:13, being self-controlled and sober minded, set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed". And I'm working hard in my life and have been for, like, honestly over 30 years, to focus on heaven. And I don't find that means that I can just laze around and not be useful for God's kingdom here. Just the opposite, because I know I'm going to be in heaven and I know, by the way, that we're all, you and I and everybody else is going to be judged. And the Lord's gonna say, what did you do while you were in the body? Man, I'm going to be working hard.

But I have a joy, though, because of this joy of knowing that I'm going to be in eternal life of glory, because I know that, where the pleasures that are here in the Lord's...if he can do what he's given us here, he can do a lot better in heaven. Believe me. And so, no, this just simply isn't true. In fact, this is, as I say in my blog, that's the devil's talking point. The devil was the first one to say, those who are so heavenly minded are no earthly good. And he's been disseminating that to his minions ever since. That's just simply false.

**Frank:**

So, how does that jive then, Clay, with the people then who say, well, since this is the only life we have, I have to be an activist. I have to do X. I have to do Y. I have to do Z. How would you respond to that?

**Clay:**

Well, I would tell them that this, of course, as you would, Frank, that this life is not all we have. You know, people will say, well, you only live once. And when they say that I always think, I don't necessarily say this to them, I go but we can live forever. I'm going to live forever and ever and ever and ever and ever. If that's not true, Christianity is a false religion, and we should all be doing something else. But if it is true, if I really am, if we really are going to live forever and ever and ever, then, as Jesus said, he says, do not fear those who can kill the body and after that have nothing more they can do to you. He says, or COVID do not fear COVID. But fear him, who after the body is killed, can cast a soul into hell. He says, yes I tell you, fear him.

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By the way, now, I shouldn't have mentioned COVID. Let me make a disclaimer. Yes, we should be responsible. There. I'm not saying because I'm a Christian, you know, throw caution to the wind. I'm not saying that. But anyway, you know, I mean, for us, Colossians 3:1-4 says, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your[a] life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

So, with that, and First Peter 1:13, and I could quote many other verses, that scripture actually tells us to focus on heaven. It tells us to be heavenly minded, but in my heavenly mindedness, and knowing that I'm going to be judged, and not only that, then, when I'm judged, I'm going to judge...we all Christians are going to judge the world and judge angels, it makes me want to get busy for God's kingdom.

**Frank:**

Yeah, the people you mention in your book who have done the greatest good in society were Christians, people like Wilberforce, and Martin Luther King. I mean, just in our recent history. Abraham Lincoln, right. These are the people that are out there, knowing that the work they do on earth is important, because the work that happens on earth will live on in eternity by affecting people who will live on in eternity, right. I mean, as we've said before, at the top of the program, the state is not eternal, individuals in the state are.

**Clay:**

That's right.

**Frank:**

So, that's what we need to remember. We just got a minute or so left, Clay. Give us the real hope that we have in eternity. How do we have a hope?

**Clay:**

As I said, eternity, if you study the Old Testament and the New Testament about eternity, you'll find its most often compared to a banquet. We are not going to be strangers to each other. Heaven is not white. These are simply lies of the devil. That we're going to enjoy each other's

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company throughout eternity, enjoy him, whose voice is like the sound of rushing waters. We're going to eat from the tree of life. I've tasted, like I said earlier, a lot of fruits. I wonder what life tastes like. We're going to have bodies. In *Immortal*, I talk about the fact that we're not going to be disembodied, that we're going to have a body. Jesus's body could hug people and people hugged him. And he ate, by the way, Jesus ate fish after he was resurrected.

**Frank:**

Yeah.

**Clay:**

It's very important. We're going to be able to eat and drink things. [unintelligible] This is the hope that we have. And the trouble is, we get so caught up in this world, which is so little. Jesus tells us to be faithful over the things here but then he tells us that the things that seems so big to us are small. Well, one day we're going to be facing really big things and we're going to reign over them and we're going to do that with Jesus. And that's God's plan for our lives. And it's always been the plan. But Christians, as I say, what we need to do is we need to focus on these things because if we don't, then we're going to be this worldly minded and we're going to be terribly upset by all of the troubles and travails and trials that are going on around us all the time. But the Christian, of course, you know, as Jesus said, those who trust in me will not taste death. Why? Because it will be seamless. Our entrance into the next world will be seamless.

**Frank:**

Thank you, Clay Jones. That's Clay Jones, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for being on the show, Clay, and thanks for your book, *Immortal*.

**Clay:**

Pleasure to be with you, Frank.

**Frank:**

That's Clay Jones. ClayJones.net, ladies and gentlemen. And the way you can ensure you're going to be with Jesus is to accept the free gift he provided. Just trust in Christ and you will be saved. Don't forget I will be at Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, Lord willing, this Sunday, January 17.

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And then all day Saturday at Calvary Chapel, Lexington, South Carolina, the 23rd, and the service the next day, the 24th. See you next time.

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