

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Cancelling the Myth: Sharing the Gospel Online is Not Effective

(May 1, 2021)

Jorge:

Are you wasting your time sharing the gospel online? Many people say that that is the case. Now evangelism is already hard but even more so when the other person is able to hide behind a computer screen or mobile device. That is why we invited today's guest to the show to talk about his online ministry do's and don'ts and to find out if we're really wasting our time when we engage with an unbeliever online. My name is Jorge Gil, I'm the Executive Director for CrossExamined.org. Welcome to the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast and radio show here at AFR radio network.

And today, we're going to be talking with a person who has been able to amass a huge online following by sharing the gospel online, dealing with difficult topics of culture and objections from atheists and other worldviews. So, without further ado, I want to introduce our guest today so he can actually give us some insight into this online ministry world that, because of Covid and the technology that we have today, it has been exploded in the last two or three years. So, without further ado, I want to introduce you to our guest today. He is Jon McCray from the "Whaddo You Meme?" channel. What's happening, Jon?

Jon:

Yo. What's up, man? Good to be here.

Jorge:

Well, it's a pleasure to have you here. We've worked together in a few online events, we met for a training awhile back, that we did on how to be able to reach the world for Christ, using these tools, these technological tools; live-streams, pre-recorded videos, short clips, and stuff like that. So, we actually want to start by asking you a little bit of your background. I know you have a very interesting story, pain and suffering, and none of that has stopped you from becoming one of the, I would say, bigger channels online, when it comes to apologetics and evangelism on YouTube. Tell us a little bit about your story.

Jon:

Yeah, not going to get into too many details. Like, basically, I wasn't introduced to Christianity, I didn't grow up in a Christian home or anything like that. And the first exposure I had to a church was when I was 15. My aunt took me to church, but I eventually left that church. And then in

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college I wanted to take a world religion course, but all the world religion seats were all taken. So, they said that I could take a philosophy of religion class, and so I didn't even know what philosophy was at that point. So, I just took a philosophy religion class, and then came across the arguments for God's existence. And I was really persuaded by the Kalam cosmological argument, which basically just says that everything that begins to exist has a cause, the universe has a cause, and then if you look at what kind of cause the universe would have to have, it would be something that looks a lot like God. I found that argument really persuasive. And to this day, I still find it persuasive. After, kind of, arguing and debating all of the objections to it, I still find it pretty persuasive. So, that was the first my first, kind of, introduction into this kind of philosophy and apologetic world.

Jorge:

Wow.

Jon:

...give it a shot. Yeah, that's how it started.

And then later on, in my time, too, I lost my hearing kind of randomly, which we won't get into too many details about here. But I lost my hearing randomly and I ended up having to get a cochlear implant, which is an internal component. There's an internal and external component, so you have to get surgery for it. And so, I was out of work for a long time. I wasn't able to communicate. So, I started getting on Facebook and stuff more. And I started having discussions about the arguments from God's existence, and stuff like that online, and I heard a lot of like...so, I'd go in groups and see these atheists debating Christians and I remember thinking, I was like, I could respond to that, or that doesn't sound right, and stuff like that. And so, then that's when I got into doing a lot of debates and stuff like that online. And then, eventually, one of the guys that was in one of the groups that I was debating on, he's like, you should start a YouTube channel. And I was like, not really, because I don't really watch. I didn't watch YouTube at that point. And then he's like, no. He's like, I'm buying you a camera. I'm sending it over to you. Give me your address and just give it a shot. And so...

Jorge:

That is incredible, man. Definitely God's hand is all over that. I remember when I started, my goal was to be on stage, you know, preaching and teaching apologetics. And now that idea has morphed a lot because I realized the power of these tools that we have at our disposal to be able to communicate to 1000s, if not millions, through the internet and social media. Now, a lot of people have mixed emotions about social media, okay. And now we have a little bit of

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context and background on why you started an online ministry. So, if I were to come to you and say, hey, Jon, tell me a little bit about this life of online ministry...because a lot of people think is, you know, you're a YouTuber, and it's all this glitter and glamour, and it's all, you know...the number one desire for kids today is to become famous YouTubers. That's in the back of the mind of our children today. Now, we can use these tools that Satan clearly uses to pull people away from the truth to actually bring people the truth. So, give us a little bit of the pros and cons and the obstacles that you have encountered in this journey in becoming a well-established channel online for apologetics and Christian resources.

Jon:

Yeah, for sure. Yeah. So, when it comes to the pros, like, the obvious pro is that you get to preach the gospel or get your message out to 1000s and 1000s of people like hundreds of 1000s. I mean, there's not really a limit to how many people you can reach. And so, like, that's a good thing because I get to talk about the gospel, you know, what I mean, full time, which is really cool. And that's something that I'm really passionate about is the gospel, so I feel really blessed to do that. But on the con side, there's a lot more work that goes into this than people realize. Like, you just watch a five minute video and you're like, oh, how easy is that. Somebody just gets in front of a camera and just, you know, spits out a video real quick, you know. But there's a lot more that goes to it, there's a lot of preparation work, you have to understand how YouTube works, you know, just on a functional aspect. You got to understand how it works psychologically. You know what I mean?

So, that way you can actually reach people, keep their attention, keep them engaged. And there's a lot of like, you know, SEO type stuff too, where you got to have the right title and thumbnail. And then it's just, like, it's easy to hit burnout, you know what I mean, because you constantly have to be putting out content. So, there's a lot of things that go into that, not to mention all the hate you're gonna get. You're gonna get a ton of hate. You know what I mean? And especially if you do like how I did with my project to David Wood, and then we had lots of death threats, and stuff like that as well, too. So, there's a lot of stuff like that. You know what I mean? So, you kind of really do have to give your life to this ministry, if it's a ministry that you feel like you're called to do.

Jorge:

Well, a lot of people, now that I hear this, I know a lot of people maybe are thinking, hey, is this move that I want to make, is this the kind of responsibility that I want to have on my shoulders? Because, you know, the scriptures are clear, they tell us that we, those who teach, are going to be judged more severely, because we have to share the truth with others, especially those of

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the family of God and those who we're trying to bring to the family of God. So, I imagine that you deal with a lot of fears when it comes to what's the next step. For example, I remember me and you talking awhile back, and you're actually leaving your day job to do this full-time. Now, tell us a little bit about that leap of faith that you had to take.

Jon:

Yeah, no, that was tough. Because I was doing the channel for, I want to say, two years, I think it was, before I decided to leave my full-time job. But it was tough because it was really hard to try to balance out work life and video life. You know what I mean? For what I was doing, it was really tough. And like, I was tired, because at that point, too, I had two kids, wife. You know what I mean? Trying to be a good dad, but I'm working outside of, you know what I mean, I'd go to work and then I'd come home and try to work on video stuff for a while and it was really, kind of, cutting in. And so, I was really wrestling with that balance. But at a certain point I was just gonna trust God, you know, and then just go forth with it. So, I ended up leaving my job and lost money for a couple months. But, you know, then God blessed it.

Jorge:

Amen. The Lord is faithful. Well, when we come back from the break, Jon, I want to ask you about a few things. For example: How do you measure success in an online ministry? And a few other things that I know they're interested to hear. We'll be right back.

We are back on the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist radio show and podcast on the American Family Radio Network. I am Jorge Gil covering for Dr. Frank Turek today and our guest is Jon McCray, from "Whaddo You Meme?", a YouTube channel dedicated to reach people with the good news of Jesus. Now, before the break, Jon, we were talking about your online ministry and how you got started. Now, I would like to ask you, based on the title for this show, Cancelling the Myth: Sharing the Gospel Online is Not Effective. Now, I used to hear something very similar when I started in my career as an apologist and people use to tell me all the time, nobody gets saved through apologetics. And this is a similar claim. People say, hey, sharing the gospel online is not effective, you are not going to have success doing these. And that is my next question to you, Jon: How do you measure success in an online ministry? Because it is so subjective when it comes to how churches measure success, and how businesses measure success, so tell our audience: How do you measure success in your online ministry? What it all entails?

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Jon:

Yeah, no, absolutely. I notice a lot of people tend to think if they're getting a lot of views or something like that, then that means that God's blessing it and they're successful. But that could be true but the way I tend to think about it is that the only way to gauge it is going to be in relation to your end goal, right. So, if your end goal is, like, numbers or views or something like that then you can say, yeah, I'm successful if I get 1000 views. But then you look at other channels, and you look at atheist channels, and all these, they also get numbers and views, right. So, I don't think that that's a good way to determine how successful we are just on its face. I think the better way to determine is: What is the goal that you're trying to get to? Right? If your goal is to share the gospel to X amount of people, or if your goal is to, you know, help bring a certain amount of people to Christ, then I think that that's a better way to determine like, how successful your channel is. And then having those goals, I think, is critical.

Jorge:

That is great. So, what kind of messages do you get on your, you know, direct message or your feed or your comments section, from people on both sides of the aisle? I know, there are tons of people interested in knowing this because the statistics show that YouTube is where this jet next generations live. Actually, one of the most popular, if not the most popular social media platform right now, to consume long format content for Gen Zers and millennials, Jon, is YouTube. So, share with us the kind of messages that you get, the kind of messages that make you feel good. You actually alluded to the fact that sometimes you even get death threats. And now I understand you guys were doing some counter Muslim apologetics, so counter Islamic apologetics. And that always is a touchy subject. But let's go ahead on and share with people what kind of positive messages or comments you get from maybe non-believers that admit that your material has made an impact on the way they see Christianity.

Jon:

Yeah, um, yeah, so my ministry has kind of changed over time, too. But when I was doing a lot of atheist stuff more, I used to get a lot of even atheists that said, like, okay, this is a theistic channel that I respect and, you know, I'd get some, you know, a lot of good kind of compliments from how I communicated to them and stuff. And yeah, and as I kind of morphed on, too, I tend to get a lot of comments where people say that I communicated a message clearly and that it convicts them and that it helps them get closer and understand Christianity better. So, you get a lot of these kinds of comments, from time to time too, and you also get comments from people who just don't, you know, that they weren't saved, and then from watching your content and other people's content and stuff like that, then maybe you know, they gave their life to Christ. So, that's what I think really makes it all worth it because that's

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what I'm here for. I love the gospel message, I love to try to get it out to people, and I love to try to get it out to them in ways that they can understand. And it can go along, you know, with how they see life and stuff. It will make sense to them because I think that's the challenge today is to make the gospel make sense to people today.

Jorge:

Yeah, make it culturally relevant without, you know, watering it down. I think that that's definitely a key. I tell you that, in our ministry at CrossExamined, we get some of these same messages and hearing just one person say, hey, your content made an impact in my life, and because of it today I'm a follower of Christ, that right there makes all the pain and suffering and the hard work worth it, Jon. I mean, it's amazing to be able to contribute to the greater cause, to the Great Commission. Amen? That's exactly what we are here to do.

Now, you said something very, very interesting while ago, in terms of, you will communicate clearly, you will share the gospel with them. And I think there is a dark side to online ministry. I hear it a lot. I understand that a lot of young people get into online ministry to make a change, and then they get swallowed up by the lights, they get swallowed up by the exposure, by the popularity, they become "Christian influencers". And now we see them left and right. And some of them are not as, I would say, grounded and well-rooted in the scriptures that they should be, and eventually, this is a perfect cocktail, a perfect storm for disaster.

Right now, I would like to ask you a little bit about this: You know, how can we maintain the focus on online ministry on Jesus and not ourselves? Remember that we cannot serve two masters. We have to make sure that everything that we do points back to Jesus of Nazareth. How can we do that, Jon? How can we guard our hearts to not fall into the spotlight and the idea that it is I who was responsible to get all these subs, and to get all these people to look at me, and it is my content that makes the difference in not being allowed to be led by the Holy Spirit and pointing people back to the risen Messiah?

Jon:

Yeah, no, that's a great question. And I think that that is a challenge for all Christian online YouTubers, and, you know, people that are online, because I think that our natural tendency is to focus on "I". You know what I mean? So, I noticed, like, for me, like, there was a long time too, and even some days still, where I'll see negative comments and they'll impact me. You know what I mean? They would impact me a lot more where I would just, like, you know, have my feelings hurt, or be defensive and mad, and all these sorts of things, right. But what I realized was, like, I noticed, every time that I'm offended, I start asking myself, I say: Okay, why

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are you offended? Right? What are you trying to protect? And so, then I was like, well, if I'm trying to protect my ego, that's not a good reason. You know what I mean?

And so, I'm like, if that's the case, then I need to remember where I get my value and my value doesn't come from what people say online, right. Because if you live for the applause, then you're gonna die by the boos. You know what I mean? When they boo you, right? And so, if my ultimate value and happiness and fulfillment, if that ultimately comes from Christ and what he did on the cross, then that was for me, I would have to replay that, in my mind. I'd have to remind myself every time I started feeling those things, you know. So, you really do got to stay grounded in that, though, because it's very easy to want all the credit for it, you know, to get a big head. And it's also easy, on the same token, to have your feelings hurt and to be depressed, and all that sort of stuff behind it, too. You know, but for me time, and time as it went on, and me really working through this, and you know, consistently I'm praying about it every day, the comments, and stuff, they just don't impact me like they did when I first started, or even last year, you know.

Jorge:

That is great man. I was talking to our mutual friend, cold case Detective, J. Warner Wallace, a couple of days ago. And one of the things that we were discussing was this idea, exactly what you just mentioned, it is all about me in this day and age. It's about, look at me, look at my TikToks, look at my stories, look in my reels, it's all about me. I'm dancing, I'm able to do X, Y and Z. And that's exactly what Gen Zers and millennials think about themselves and that is a danger for us. And Jim was telling me, hey, you know, here in the apologetics world we're looking to become authorities in the topics that we talk about, whether it is the resurrection or intelligent design, and that is the pursuit of power to become an authority. But you know that power, money and sex always come together, and if you're not putting the spotlight back on Jesus, the other two will inevitably creep in.

Now, you're a millennial, right? You are in that category, in that bracket. And you see a lot of these influencers out there, throwing shade or, you know, trying to discredit Christianity. Give us an idea, a couple of examples, of big YouTubers, because I've seen you deal with some excellent arguments against objections to Christianity. What do influencers today, of people who are in the spotlight with big channels, get wrong about Christianity? What is the main thing that you think that the culture gets wrong about Christianity? Now it without goes without even saying that we have an immense opposition out there, especially from these progressive ideologies. But in your experience as a YouTuber, as a sort of influencer for the gospel, what are the main things that you think influencers get wrong about Christianity?

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Jon:

Yeah, so the question is kind of twofold. I think the common misconception about Christianity is that it's just fundamentally about, you know, like your works, you know, and so, I think that that's always kind of an issue where it's just like, it's your works, because we're not saved by our works, we're saved by grace through faith, right. And so, I think that's kind of the popular level, kind of, misconception that makes Christianity different from every other religion. Now, when it comes to the atheist and the objections and that sort of thing, I noticed the trend years ago, because I came from a philosophy and apologetic background. But then whenever I got online, and would have these conversations with atheists, I would notice that a lot of their, actually, I'd say most of their objections, or almost all of their objections, tended to not be completely logical in nature, right. Because you can give them a logical response, and it wouldn't change their minds, it wouldn't move them. And that's when I started realizing how much overlap that that community has with culture, which is what makes them, I think, more effective, you know what I mean, at times.

Because in culture, I guess I want to say, your personal value is attached to how you feel inside. So, if something feels bad, it's bad. If something feels good, it's good. That sort of thing, right. And so, like, the feelings really do play a role in a lot of these atheist objections I hear over and over because a lot of the time they use emotional objections. And usually, they're going to be moral in some sense, where they'll say, God's bad, or Christians are bad, the Bible's bad, because they're playing on the emotional aspect. So, understanding that, I think, is really important if you're going to have an online ministry against a lot of these popular atheists...is realizing the moral and the emotional component to what they're saying, rather than just focusing on the intellectual responses to what they're saying.

Jorge:

That is so true, Jon. So, we're talking with Jon McCray from "Whaddo You Meme?", a YouTube channel dedicated to answering objections and sharing the gospel. We'll have more on this when we come back to the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist radio show and podcast on the American Family Radio Network. We'll be right back.

Welcome back to the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist radio show and podcast on the American Family Radio Network. This is Jorge Gil filling in for Dr. Frank Turek and our guest today is on McCray from "Whaddo You Meme?" YouTube channel, a channel that is focused on reaching the lost for the gospel and responding to objections to Christianity. Jon, before the break we were talking about what influencers get wrong about Christianity right now. I want to read something to you, and I want you to give me your take.

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This is taken from the public Facebook author page of a philosopher, Denver seminary Professor Doug Groothuis, and he is addressing Abraham Piper, who is John Piper's son and now an atheist. And the title that he gave this was, Abraham Piper TikTocking His Way to Fame. And he writes the following, and I quote, "The New York Times report yet another ex-evangelical son of the prominent writer and preacher, John Piper. His name is Abraham Piper. His cash is found on the intellectual, deep and serious medium of TikTok, upon which he has attracted a lot of attention. 900,000 followers. Piper is flip and glib, an opposer. He issues bombshells against Christianity, which have no logical or evidential force. It only takes him less than 60 seconds a pop. He, like Frank Schaeffer, makes his name by dishing dirt on his upbringing and even on Christianity itself. Of course, the New York Times loves it. I don't. I love Christ, so I had this spectacle.

Mr. Piper, you have no credibility, no arguments."...this is Groothuis talking..."and no gravitas. You are yet another social media celebrity a mile wide and not even an inch thick. It's now hip to ditch your evangelical faith and make a name by telling everyone about it. So, you take advantage of your defection. You have no life, no truth, no goodness to offer this broken world. I do. Christ the crucified and resurrected one who gives eternal life. Perhaps your upbringing was not the best. Perhaps you observe faults in the evangelical subculture. So, do I. But I do so from within the church, the living reality Jesus instituted and said that the gates of hell had no chance against it. They don't. You are blowing a peashooter at a golden mountain. Your nearly million TikTok followers mean nothing before the audit of eternity. What do you have to offer an addict to die from addiction? What do you have to offer someone seeking the meaning of life? What can you say against the arguments they made for the faith you now ridicule by the likes of Augustine, Aquinas, Pascal, C.S. Lewis, Alvin Plantinga, William Lane Craig, or J.P. Moreland? What do you have to offer civilization that is better than the Christian worldview? What kind of model are you for humanity?"

Now, Jon, we can say a lot of things but let's start with this idea that, really, you know, Piper issues bombshells against Christianity that have no logical or evidential force. And give me your take on this because this is a person who is influencing 1000s, if not millions, of young men and women, and he's pushing them away from the Christian faith.

Jon:

Yeah, no, that's good. By the way, Doug, I have met Doug a couple times and all too. So, Doug's really, he's really brilliant from what I've seen from some of his work. But yeah, when it comes here, I think the first question to ask is, why is he persuasive? Why is Abraham Piper persuasive to people? Gaining a million followers, you know what I mean, is no easy feat. You know what I

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mean? But I think that there is a reason why he's persuasive to people too. And I think that's the question we need to ask, because I think that in culture, it used to be the way where it was like, kind of like a top down, kind of, approach, where it's like, if people were mostly influenced by people in academia, and these sorts of things. But if you notice, there's been a shift more recently, we're now like, somebody like Kim Kardashian can post about her sandwich, you know what I mean, and then that's gonna get way more attention than somebody brilliant, like William Lane Craig or something like that, right?

So, culture's changed now where things seem to be a lot more from bottom up, kind of like crypto and stuff, for a different analogy. But anyway, so with that, I think that people can relate to the emotion that Abraham Piper espouses. And when it comes to that emotion, by the way, too, Abraham Piper, as far as I know, I've never seen anything where he's used his dad's name, or even implied that, you know what I mean. So, his whole platform is not based around, by the way, just doing that. I'm just trying to be charitable to him. It's not based around just bashing Christianity. He talks about a lot more things, but occasionally he talks about Christianity and bashes Christianity. But yeah, so when it comes to that, though, I see why Abraham Piper is popular, because he's persuasive, because he understands what people feel and they resonate with it. And he also has a background in philosophy, apparently, too. So, he thinks decently well as well. So yeah, so with all due respect, I mean, I think I do somewhat disagree a little bit with Groothuis, kind of, critique of Abraham Piper, because I think that's not given him enough credit for, you know, for how he actually goes about responding. You know, I think he's a lot more thoughtful than most of the YouTube atheists that I see online today.

Jorge:

That is super interesting, Jon, because we know that today there are ways to go viral. For example, you can have this fake virality when somebody like, you name it, Kanye West, Justin Bieber, or, you know, any one of these big names in the arts or the music genre and scene, can post about whatever in their post, just go bananas online, in terms of organic reach, shares, comments, just because of who they are. But in order for us who are sharing the gospel, which is already offensive in face value, because it's telling you that you're a sinner and you need repentance, these kind of people who come out of nowhere and are able to build these big platforms are influencing our young people. And we have to do something about it, not only by calling them out, but also by going back and engaging with our content and showing them that our worldview is way more reasonable in the power that we have in having the true worldview. The worldview that corresponds to reality is also a fantastic way to be able to influence others. What Lee Strobel called ricochet evangelism. Maybe Piper is not going to be persuaded by the

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response video that you make, but the people who watched that video, that have watched and maybe been persuaded by him can come back to the foot of the cross.

Now, Jon, speaking about Kanye West and Justin Bieber, I would like to say something along those lines, you know, the current panorama when it comes to content creators or artists that are espousing Christianity, or affirming Christianity. I know, I've seen you make videos around Kanye and Justin Bieber, not too long ago, in terms of what Bieber said about his ex-pastor. Now, what are we to do when we hear some of these big names claim Christianity? Are we able to leverage this exposure to Christianity? And how careful we need to be when, especially a person like you who has, you know, almost 200,000 followers on YouTube? How do you talk to your audience about this and how you can, I will say, suggest that other up and coming, you know, YouTubers, or Christian YouTubers, or people who want to share the gospel online, how should they address these issues?

Jon:

Yeah, that's a great question. So, the way that I tend to think about it is, I kind of looked at how Jesus and Paul, you know, how they really communicated with people. And what it seems to me is that they met people where they were. Because I was thinking, like, Jesus could have just dropped down a Bible from heaven on a string, right? He could have, but instead he came into our world to get to, you know, eye to eye level with us, understand where we're coming from, and then communicate effectively to different groups and different people based off of who they were and where they were coming from. So now, the end goal for me is always, like, to get the gospel message out, right. And so, I think about, okay, if this is something, you know what I mean, that is important to people, how can I tie the gospel to that in a way that's effective that they'll be able to hear?

Jon: And so, this is kind of going back to Abraham Piper where I think that he does very good at meeting people where they are, in terms of how they feel. I think that we want to do the same thing and show them that their feelings are valid. You can feel however you want to feel, but your conclusion is not valid. And so, you want to show them that in the smoothest way as possible. So, that way you can avoid some of these, kind of, you know, obstacles to getting people to hear. But you have to be offensive. Ultimately, you're going to be offensive if you give the gospel, because the gospel is inherently offensive. But I think that the way you come about it is going to be different.

But now going back to what you said about Justin Bieber and Kanye. Yeah, my kind of worry with the celebrities...so, the good news is that these people are telling people about Jesus,

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right. So, if they have a big impact and a big influence then they're going to get the curiosity of Jesus going. I remember when Kanye first came out and started talking about Christianity on Google Trends, what his Christianity was trending for a long time, you know what I mean, because Kanye started that conversation. Now, the only kind of downside to this is that it can be misleading, in the sense where, when they say something left, you know, like Kanye says something kind of crazy or goes on a rant or something, then people can associate that with Christianity, because I think that it's so easy for us to put so much of an emphasis on these leaders, rather than having the leaders just be a signpost or point to Christianity. You see what I mean? Because we're in a culture that tends to worship and idolize people, you know what I mean.

So, that's what I think is a big concern is because people's faith gets affected by people doing bad things that claim to be Christian, right. So, it can just fit that narrative. So, that's kind of the concern there, is that you want to tailor people's expectations. That's why I talk a lot about how nobody's perfect, you know, the problem is that we're all sinners and we need to be saved. It's the same problem for everyone. You know, big, small, doesn't matter who the person is, we're all the same before the Lord. And so, with that in mind, is how I try to really tailor those expectations that people have that leads to them having a loss of faith.

Jorge:

Yeah, that is great, Jon, and I think you touched on something very important. You said that when these big celebrities, influencers come to Christianity, and it may be still a bit on, you know, on the maturing side of things, and then they say something out of left field and get people questioning, you know, the truth or the validity of their faith and Christianity as a whole. That's the same way when leaders, you know, in the Christian faith, fall short morally and they just, you know, are put on the spotlight. Now, this is the idea of bearing God's name. I'm actually reading a book by Carmen Joy Imes called, Bearing God's Name. And the idea of bearing God's name of the, don't take the Lord's name in vain, is the idea of carrying God's name. In other words, doing things you ought not to be doing and at the same time saying that you're a follower of Yahweh, or that you are a Christian. So, that is one of the great issues that we have, and the dangers that we have, when it comes to, you know, looking at these celebrities and saying, okay, now they're, you know, they're representing Christianity.

But when we come back, we're going to be talking more with Jon about the main objections of Christianity that he's seen in the culture in his journey as a YouTuber. We'll be right back.

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Welcome back to the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast and radio show on the American Family Radio Network. I am Jorge Gil covering for Dr. Frank Turek today and our guest is Jn McCray from the "Whaddo You Meme?" YouTube channel. And before the break, Jon, we were talking about big influencers and artists that claim to be Christian and how careful we have to be in putting them on a pedestal. And then when they do something that goes against Christianity or Christian faith, then they taint the name of Jesus in the process.

Now, we said that we were going to talk about some of the main objections against Christianity that you see, or you encounter in your journey as a YouTuber these last couple of years. Now, your channel has almost 200,000 followers but you also contribute to channels like Acts 17 Apologetics with David Wood, who has over 600,000, I think by now, if I'm not mistaken, subscribers. So, give us a few of the objections from the culture that you see today that are more prevalent in your channel and in your viewer's, sort of, scope at all times?

Jon:

Yeah, one of the big ones, I think, today is people tending to reject Christianity based off of politics in some sense, right. Sometimes, people have certain assumptions about what it's like, you know what I mean, or what the other side is like, and then that causes a lot of tension in the church and then also causes a lot of tension with culture. If you look at the Barna statistics, they support that as well. But yeah, so this is why I think that, I guess, for me personally, for my mission, is I'm always trying to lead people to the gospel. So, I'm always trying to find ways that I can take these kind of conversations and point people to something bigger, something greater, you know what I mean. Because Jesus said, his kingdom is not of this world, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't be engaged in politics, because we're supposed to be the salt and the light in the world, right. And the salt is to preserve the culture, the good stuff in the culture, and the light is the distinction, you know, so we'll be distinct. But anyway, so yeah, so that's one of the big things.

Another big objection, I think comes around, is Christianity good or bad for the world? What is belief in Christianity like, right. Is it good or bad for the world? And this usually comes with, like, you know, that point to these things that Christians do that are bad, or come to these things like, the structure of Christianity is oppressive in some sort of way. Something along those lines. And so, yeah, so I think with that, that's another one of the big, kind of, objections in culture going on right now. But right now, as everybody kind of knows, what's really dominating the culture when it comes to talking points has a lot to do with, like, racism and stuff like that. So, that's why I think, like, slavery in the Bible is another topic as well. So...

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Jorge:

It sounds like most of these objections come from an emotional standpoint and not so much an intellectual one. Why do you use the tactics and the techniques of communication that you use in your channel? I know that you always try to, you know, tug on the strings of the heart, if you will, for your viewers, in order to help them to see the logic behind these things. Tell us a little bit about, you know, the tips and techniques that you can give people, when it comes to sharing the gospel online, to using the social media platforms to share the gospel and point people back to Christ.

Jon:

Yeah, I think that the first step is to understand before we try to be understood. I really think that's the first step because we want to try to understand where they're coming from so that way we can speak their same language, you know. It's kind of like a missionary. If a missionary just goes to some other country where they haven't had exposure to the gospel and just throws some Bibles written in English at them on an airplane and leaves, that's not very loving, right, because they don't understand what you're saying, you know. And so, you really want to make it clear as, like, you want to understand what they're saying and then think about, from their perspective, what would be persuasive, what would be convincing, that sort of thing. And I realize that there's different approaches to apologetics. But this is one that I think is the most influential when it comes to, kind of like, your average person that's engulfed inside of culture right now.

So, I think you want to understand, first, that feelings are the social currency right now, you know, so this is why shaming has taken place rather than responding intellectually. It's shaming, because if they can make you feel bad, then that has some social power. But it's like so, them wanting to feel good, you know what I mean, I'm looking inside and seeing who I am, and feeling good about that, and sharing it with the rest of the world. And that's currency as well, because if they can feel good, then they attach to that value. So, the only people that you can be mean to in culture today are the people who make other people feel bad, so you'll pay attention to that. So, they think that the only people that you can be mean to today are the people who are mean to other people and make those other people feel bad. So yeah, so that's kind of like, understanding that kind of foundational aspect really does help kind of shape stuff. But there's so much that can be said about this. Eventually, I'm going to put together a course where I go through a lot of these different things so that way people can understand a lot of this in depth and how it relates to all of these talking points and culture and what they're really saying, rather than what the words sound like they're saying.

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Jorge:

Wow, that's interesting. I want to make sure that we get to the bottom of this today, at least for all of our listeners that are interested in starting to share the gospel online or continuing to share the gospel online. Do you really think, Jon, that sharing the gospel online is an effective tool to reach the next generation? And if you think this, how can we get better at it?

Jon:

Yeah, that's a great question. I do think it's effective. And the reason why is because, so, people aren't trusting institutions and stuff as much lately, and like media and stuff like that. So, they're going to YouTubers more. I think this shows in the studies too, that they trust YouTubers more. The younger generations do for sure. They trust YouTubers more than they trust, you know, authorities and that sort of thing too. So, it's all about, kind of, how we do it, right. So, like, if that is true, what I'm saying, for the most younger people, then quoting, you know, philosophers and stuff like that...saying, well, this philosopher says that...it might not be as persuasive. You see. And so, that's why I think we really want to, kind of, understand what they find persuasive and work with that to illuminate the gospel.

And so, like I said earlier, that doesn't mean that the gospel is not going to be offensive, or you should just get rid of truth, or something like that. That's not true at all. That's not at all what I'm saying. But what I am saying is that you want to first understand where they're coming from so you can think about the smartest path to get there. So now, just to kind of re-clarify your first question: Do I think is effective? Yes, I do think it's effective in getting people to understand the gospel, but I don't think that that's the only way to make people understand the gospel. I think that discipleship is critical. You know, there's a lot that you guys can do in person, and that I do in person, you know what I mean, where I see people move a lot more, rather than people just being changed by a video I point out, you know. But God really does work all of these things together. I think it's cumulative. So, yeah, so I do think that it's effective and I've seen it, you know what I mean. I get messages all the time from people whose lives have been impacted by it.

Jorge:

Praise the Lord for that. And I think we need an army of influencers, not in a big scale, just like J. Warner Wallace's concept of the \$1 apologists, that we need \$1 apologists in each congregation. We need a person who is willing to tackle these issues online at a smaller scale to answer questions one-on-one, to make sure that they build relationships, real friendships, with the people that they meet online. Because at the end of the day, the best apologetics is that trust and an intimate relationship that we can build with someone else, that when with they're

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hurting we are there for them, and they can see the Christ-likeness in us, they can see that we are imagers of God, that the image of God is on us and that we're reflecting God's light, Christ's light onto others.

Now, Jon, for all of those who are listening right now that are interested, and they say, hey, this might be something that I want to do, this is maybe the answer to a prayer. Maybe I'm not an extrovert and can go out there and do evangelism like a Ray Comfort maybe can do. Give us your top tips on how to get started with this and, you know, we don't have to be worried about overcoming too many hurdles. Just in the last few minutes of the show, you'll share with us a couple of tips on how to get it started and what encouragement you can give anybody who is listening that believed before the show the sharing the gospel online was not effective. And now that myth has been canceled and now they know that it is effective. But it is effective in so far as the way and the method that you use and let us know, Jon.

Jon:

Yeah, no, that's a good question. Yeah, a couple things I would say is, first off, if you're scared, right, and everybody does have some sort of fear, probably before they start, because you're putting yourself out there. But realize that, like, that's why I think it's important to have your goal in mind, right. Like, what's more important, my feelings in this moment, right, you know, that I'm scared of, or whatever? Or but if you realize, too, you have the hope in Christ, and the trust and stuff, so you can make yourself vulnerable in that sense as Jesus made himself vulnerable when he came down to earth, right. So, that's the first thing.

The second thing, I think, is to try to create something that you would like to see, right, in that sense. So, from the creative side, you say, okay, if everybody's kind of doing this, you know what I mean, and it doesn't really like, you know, doesn't really resonate with me...that's how I kind of felt a lot when I, kind of, started too...and then I'm like, well, why am I not doing this too, and now since, right. I want to try to do something that I think is going to resonate with people as well, too. But yeah, I think the biggest obstacle, too, is there's ethics as well, too, that people don't really talk about.

You'll run into things like, for example, with Abraham Piper, I think, as far as I know, I was one of the first ones, or something like that, to talk about that story. And with that, when I did it he had about 750,000 followers. And then after I did the video, then a lot of other people started doing it, and then he grew bigger as a result, you see. And so, this is kind of those weird ethical dilemmas that you're like, should, you know what I mean, you have to think about these ethics, in that sense. You got to think about the impact that your words have. And for me, I think I try

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to choose every word carefully because what you say really does have an impact and an influence on people. So, you just got to be careful about making those sorts of, kind of, decisions too. And then just think, what's best? You know what I mean? Consider the ramifications of everything you say. So, those are some of the things that I would say.

Jorge:

That is great advice, Jon. Now let our audience know where they can find you online.

Jon:

Yeah. So, type in "Whaddo You Meme?" Now, I know that that's kind of like a weird way to spell it, but I had to do it because I found out there was a board game called, What Do You Mean, after I started my channel, so that's why.

Jorge:

Thank you very much, Jon, for being on the show. Ladies and gentlemen, Jon McCray or "Whaddo You Meme?". Find him on YouTube. And don't forget, we have the CrossExamined Instructor Academy coming in August. Go to CrossExamined.org and you'll see that there. See you next time.

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