

*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
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with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

## Freedom Requires Restraint

(May 14, 2021)

Ladies and gentlemen, why do these problems exist? Why does crime exist, sin, abortion, poverty, addiction, guilt, divorce, fatherlessness, theft, slavery, sexual abuse, corruption, racism, oppression, loneliness, disease, disasters and even death? Why do these things exist? Just about every one of those problems I just mentioned exist because of a misuse of freedom, at least partially a misuse of freedom.

Many years ago, GK Chesterton saw an editorial in a newspaper that asked the question: What's wrong with the world? And Chesterton responded to this editorial with a two word response. He said to the question: What's wrong with the world? I am. I'm the problem with the world because I contribute by the misuse of my freedom to the problems that we have in the world. You know, the Christian worldview believes that yes, even disasters and death can be traced back to a misuse of freedom. We wouldn't be in a fallen world if we hadn't misused our freedom and fell. And the misuse of freedom continues to this day among all of us, Christians or not.

Paul, the apostle, writing his amazing treatises, on the Christian faith. The Book of Romans [chapter 7] says this...this is right in the middle of the book and he is actually talking about his post conversion state. He says, "18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. [3] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it." He's saying that even though he now has the spirit nature, he also still has the sin nature, and sometimes the sin nature wins. He mis-uses his freedom to do evil.

Now, in our culture today people want to use their freedom to do what I think is actually impossible to do. And I want to play you a video that the Family Policy Institute of Washington played about five years ago. They went to the University of Washington to see if students would affirm or reject the interviewer's chosen identity, which, although he's a 5'9" white guy, he said he was a 6'5" Chinese woman, and he wanted to see if the students would agree with him or not. His name is Joseph Backholm and he worked for the Family Policy Institute of Washington. He now works for the Colson Center. But keep in mind, Joseph is a 5'9" white guy asking students these questions. So, just listen to what's said here. Here's what he did.

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Joseph: "There's been a lot of talk about identity lately. But how far does it go? And is it possible to be wrong? We went to the University of Washington to find out. Are you aware of the debate happening in Washington State around the ability to access bathrooms, locker rooms, spas based on gender identity and gender expression?"

Student 1: "I think people should be able to have access to the facility."

Student 2: "I think bathrooms could, and potentially should be, gender-neutral because there doesn't need to be a classification for differences."

Student 3: "I think people definitely should have the ability to go into whichever locker room they want."

Student 4: "I feel like at least public universities should do their best to accommodate for those who do not have a specific gender identity."

Student 5: "You know, whether you identify as male or female, and whether your sex at birth is matching to that, you should be able to utilize the resource."

Joseph: "So, if I told you that I was a woman, what would your response be?"

Student 1: "Good for you. Okay. Like, yeah."

Student 2: "Nice to meet you."

Student 3: "Probably like, why? Really?"

Student 4: "I don't have a problem with it."

Student 5: "I'd ask you how you came to that conclusion."

Joseph: "If I told you that I was Chinese, what would your response be?"

Student 1: "I mean, I might be a little surprised. But I'd say, good for you. Like, yeah, be who you are."

Student 2: "I would maybe think you had some Chinese ancestor."

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Student 3: "I would ask you how you [unintelligible] came to that conclusion and why you came to that conclusion."

Student 4: "I would have a lot of questions. Just because, on the outside, I would assume that you're a white man."

Joseph: "If I told you that I was seven years old, what would your response be?"

Student 1: "I wouldn't believe that immediately."

Student 2: "I probably wouldn't believe it. But I mean, it wouldn't really bother me that much to go out of my way and tell you, no, you're wrong. I'd just be like, Oh, okay. He wants to be seven years old."

Student 3: "If you feel seven at heart, then so be it. Yeah, good for you."

Joseph: "So, if I wanted to enroll in a first grade class, do you think I should be allowed to?"

Student 1: "Probably not, I guess. I mean, unless you haven't completed first grade up to this point and, for some reason, need to do that now."

Student 2: "If that's where you feel like mentally you should be then I feel like there are communities that would accept you for that."

Student 3: "I would say, so long as you're not hindering society and you're not causing harm to other people, I feel like that should be an okay thing."

Joseph: "If I told you, I'm six feet five inches, what would you say?"

Student 1: "That I would question?"

Joseph: "Why?"

Student 1: "Because you're not. No, I don't think you're 6'5"."

Student 2: "If you truly believe your 6'5", I don't think it's harmful. I think it's fine if you believe that. It doesn't matter to me if you think you're taller than you are."

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Joseph: "So, you'd be willing to tell me I'm wrong?"

Student 2: "I wouldn't tell you you're wrong."

Student 3: "No, but I'd say that I don't think that you are."

Student 4: "I feel like that's not my place as, like, another human to say someone is wrong or to draw lines or boundaries."

Student 5: "No, I mean, I wouldn't just go like, oh, you're wrong. Like, that's wrong to believe. I mean, again, it doesn't really bother me what you want to think about your height or anything."

Joseph: "So, I can be a Chinese woman?"

Student 1: [laughing] Um...sure."

Joseph: "But I can't be a six foot five Chinese woman?"

Student 1: "Yes."

Student 2: "If you thoroughly debated me or explained why you felt that you were six foot five, I feel like I would be very open to saying that you're six foot five, or Chinese, or a woman."

Joseph: "It shouldn't be hard to tell a 5'9" white guy that he's not a 6'5" Chinese woman. But clearly it is. Why? What does that say about our culture? And what does that say about our ability to answer the questions that actually are difficult?"

That, again, is from the Family Policy Institute of Washington. You can actually see that entire video on YouTube. It has 4.7 million views as of right now. Just search for Family Policy Institute of Washington and you'll see the one with 4.7 million views up there. That's Joseph Backholm, who went to the University of Washington and is asking questions of the students and they just can't bring themselves, even though you can see it on their face that what they're about to say they know is wrong, but they can't say that it's actually wrong. They have to fight what they know is true in order to be politically correct, to say that Joseph, a 5'9" white guy, is not a 6'5" Chinese woman.

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What is this world coming to when we can't recognize clear facts in front of us? Actually, we can recognize them. We just somehow can't say that someone who claims a false identity for themselves is wrong. In fact, one girl on there you heard say, I feel it's not my place to say someone is wrong, or to draw lines or boundaries. The only thing that's wrong now in our society is to say that someone is wrong. Can you believe that? That's a self-defeating claim, as you can well see, and we're going to get into this on this program. The real question is: What is true freedom? And if we violate true freedom, what happens to us? You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with Frank Turek. We're back in two minutes.

What is true freedom? How can we think clearly about this question? Well, one way you can think clearly is to join us this August 12th - 14th at Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, one of my favorite churches in America. The great Jack Hibbs is the pastor there. We are holding the CrossExamined Instructor Academy there, CIA. It's not far from Ontario, California. In fact, that's the easiest place to fly into. And, as you know, if you've listened to this radio program and podcast long enough, CIA, the CrossExamined Instructor Academy is where we train people on how to present the evidence for Christianity and how to answer your questions well in front of a hostile audience. And what we do is, we not only present to you, you present to us. So, we can only take about 60 people in CIA because everyone has to present to everybody else. And so, it's a very focused program. If you come to CIA, you're going to be there with a small group of people and the following instructors: myself, Greg Koukl, J. Warner Wallace, Richard Howe, Alisa Childers, Brett Kunkle, Natasha Crane, Sean McDowell, and the great Jorge Gil, who is our Executive Director and a wizard at all things social media, certainly. And he, actually, is running a course right now in Spanish...I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. In fact, you may still be able to sign up for that.

Anyway, CIA is not something you just say you're coming to you have to apply for it. Go to [CrossExamined.org](http://CrossExamined.org), click on events and you'll see CIA there. And the beauty of this program is, not only is it a small group, but we do a lot together. We eat together, we hang out together during breaks. You'll be able to interact with all the instructors and make contacts that way. And you can really ask questions about anything that you want to know about apologetics, or starting a ministry, or how to answer questions, or any of those questions are on the table for the entire three days. So, check out the CrossExamined Instructor Academy (CIA) right there on our website, [CrossExamined.org](http://CrossExamined.org).

Today, we're talking about: What is true freedom? And I played that video in the first half of the break, from the Washington Family Policy Council, interviewing students at the University of Washington just to see what they think about a 5'9" white guy, who's about 40 years old,

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claiming to be a 6'5" Chinese woman. And sometimes he was claiming to be seven years old. Other times he was claiming all these different identities and virtually none of the students would say he was wrong. Is that really a good use of our freedom to deny the obvious? Here's my question: Can we change reality to fit our beliefs and behaviors OR can we change our beliefs and behaviors to fit reality? Let me ask that again. Can we change reality to fit our beliefs and behaviors OR can we change our beliefs and behaviors to fit reality?

The first, trying to change reality to fit your beliefs and behaviors, is a fool's errand. You may think it'll work for a short period of time, but it doesn't work. What we all need to do, whether we're Christians or not, is change our beliefs and behaviors to fit reality. And too many people don't want to do that. They think they have the freedom to actually create their own reality. And this comes from the idea...it goes way back. Carl Truman has written a recent book about this and he talks about expressive individualism, I think. This is the idea that we have the ability to actually create our own reality. In fact, Tim Keller, not quoting Truman, but he says this in his book, *Counterfeit Gods*. He says, "Western cultures make an idol out of individual freedom and this leads to the breakdown of the family, rampant materialism, careerism, and the idealization of romantic love, physical beauty and profit." I might add sex, as well, to this. Maybe that's what he means by romantic love, that somehow the individual has the capacity to create his own reality.

And we're at the point now in America, and in many Western cultures, that if you don't agree with someone's fantasy world, somehow you're evil and you need to be shut down. Yet this comes from the same culture that says it's wrong to say that someone is wrong. Well, wait a minute, you can't have it both ways. If everybody gets to create their own reality, then why can't someone create their own reality that says, I am the ultimate reality and I get to decide what is right for me and what's right for me is to tell you that you're wrong. See, I guess individual freedom only goes so far with these folks.

Now, the Proverbs are very good on this topic. In fact, Proverbs 17:12 says this, "12The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty." Of course, it also says in Proverbs 16:25, "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death." And we think that if we just follow our desires and follow our heart that somehow everything's going to work out right that we're going to have joy and true freedom and everything's going to work out. That is not true. The ultimate lie is what Satan said to Adam and Eve: Has God said?, getting Adam and Eve to question God. And unfortunately, when we questioned God... it's okay to question God. In fact, the Bible writers question God. But when

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we rebel against God and rebel against reality, that's when we cause all those problems I listed at the top of the program.

In fact, let me ask the question this way, because I think we have the wrong idea of what freedom is. What's the difference between being free from and being free to? The difference between being free from and being free to? When we think of freedom in America, a lot of times we think it's a freedom from all restraints. But freedom from all restraints leads to death. If you take away all restraints in your life you will not be alive very long. I mean, just think about driving down the highway. If you stay between the restraints, between the lines, most of the time you're going to get to where you want to go safely. But if you start going outside those restraints, if you start going outside the lines, if you start going off the road, if you start going through the guardrails, you are ultimately going to destroy yourself and possibly others. So, freedom from all restraints is not true freedom. Living by the right restraints gives you freedom to live more abundantly. You don't want freedom from, you want freedom to and freedom to requires discipline.

For example, you're only free to play the piano if you've embraced the restraints and discipline of practice. I'm not free to play the piano. I don't know how to play the piano. I can play the guitar a little bit but not the piano. Why? Because I haven't submitted myself to the restraints of discipline and practice. Look, you're only free to buy certain things if you've embraced the restraints and discipline of working hard enough to earn enough money so you can afford those things. You've got to embrace certain restraints in order to accomplish the freedom to do anything. So, if I embrace the restraints and discipline of working hard enough so that someone will pay me well enough for my efforts that I can afford these things, then I have the freedom to buy those things, but I don't have the freedom to do that if I try and free myself from all restraints.

You're only free to enjoy the benefits of a good marriage if you've embraced the restraints and discipline of forsaking all others and then serving, caring for and loving your spouse. You will not have freedom to unless you embrace freedom from, or unless you embrace the restraints that you need in order to enjoy freedom to. Freedom from all restraints is death. Freedom to do certain things requires you to have restraints in your life. That's just the way life is. Life is a dangerous place, the world is a dangerous place, and to try and change reality in order to fit your freedom from certain restraints is not going to end well.

In fact, when it comes to the transgender issue, as many of you have heard me say, that even those who have had transgenderism surgery have a suicide rate 19 times higher than the

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general public. They don't have the freedom to live life more abundantly unless they accept the certain restraints that reality puts on them. That's true of all of us, not just people who struggle with gender dysphoria, but all of us. We have to embrace certain restraints if we're going to have freedom to. CS Lewis, of course, put it well. He put just about everything well. In Mere Christianity, here's what he wrote about just following your desires without any restraint. He says, "surrender to all desires obviously...well, maybe it's not obvious to our culture, but it was maybe to Lewis's culture. He says, "surrender to all our desires obviously leads to impotence, disease, jealousies, lies, concealment, and everything that is the reverse of health, good humor, and frankness. For any happiness, even in this world, quite a lot of restraint is going to be necessary." And nobody wants to hear that restraints are going to be necessary.

Let me ask you a question. When you buy a new car it comes with a manual, right? Hyundai, Ford, Chevy, whatever you buy, you got a manual, right? And in that manual it says, here are certain things you need to do to keep the car running well and to protect yourself. And here are some things you ought not do to keep the car running well and to protect yourself. In other words, it tells you what restraints that you need to operate under in order to be safe and to use the car properly and keep yourself and the car from being destroyed. Are you mad at Hyundai, Ford, or Chevy or whoever when they tell you here are the restraints? No, you look at that you go, hey, this makes sense. I'm happy they told me about this so I can use the car. I have the freedom to use the car properly and the freedom to live my life abundantly in a way that's not going to hurt myself by blowing these restraints out of the water. These restraints are good. I mean, seatbelts are restraints. They protect you okay?

Yet somehow people are mad at God when God says, hey, do this and don't do this. Look, God designed us. He knows what we're here for. He's given us an operating manual. He's given us the manual that says do this and don't do this and somehow we're mad at him. Many atheists and non-believers are mad, even now some Christians, those claiming to be progressive Christians, are mad at God because he's put certain restraints on it for our own benefit. Look, you want to have freedom to you've got to accept restraints. Without restraints, you're not going to live very long. And we're going to talk much more about this right after the break. You're listening to Frank Turek. The show is I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist on the American Family Radio Network and we're back in just two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

What is true freedom? Is it freedom FROM or freedom TO? I submit to you it's not freedom from, its freedom to. In order to have freedom to you got to accept certain restraints in life, in reality. Look, the animal world knows this. When a whale beaches itself, it's actually leading to its own demise. In fact, I've seen pictures of whales trying to catch seals in the surf. You know,

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they're trying to eat seals. Killer whales go after the seals. The problem is, when they get too close to the surf, sometimes they inadvertently beach themselves trying to chase down their next meal. And obviously, that's counterproductive. If they don't accept the restraints of staying in the water, water deep enough so they can swim back out to sea, they are going to self-destruct.

And we do that all the time, despite the fact we're, allegedly, the most intelligent species out there. We sometimes want to be like a whale who gets too close to the shore and then beaches him or herself and destroys him or herself. You know, I think part of this, too, is motivated by the fact that we live in a world of over-choice. I mean, just in our lifetime, just in my lifetime. When I grew up in New Jersey, back in the 60s and 70s. we had maybe seven TV channels. And that was New York, so you know, you had more than most. Most cities may have had three or four channels. And you didn't have the internet. You didn't have video games. You didn't have Netflix. You didn't have YouTube. You didn't have all these different opportunities. You had a phone that hung on the wall with a cord on it and you had to dial it circularly. Most of you don't even know what I'm talking about. You had very few options for entertainment or information.

Now, think about the millions or billions of websites. Think about the number of YouTube channels you can go to. Think about the fact if you have cable, you probably have 500 channel. You have Netflix. You've got all these different services, Hulu, you've got Amazon. You've got all these different ways to customize your life. You have so many choices. We have so many choices that I think sometimes we think, well this kind of choice thing can go on into ad infinitum. I can now choose my own reality. I can choose my own gender. I can choose my own religion. Well, you can choose your own religion, doesn't mean your own religion is true, however. You have millions of jobs you can get now. You can search for them right from the comfort of your own home. You can shop from the comfort of your own home. You can meet with people on zoom from the comfort of your own home. I mean, you can just completely customize your life. And this world of overchoice, I think, sometimes gets us to think that everything is a choice, even our gender, even our worldview. We can just make it so. That's not the case.

In fact, a couple of weeks ago, three four weeks ago, I had John Stonestreet on this program. John Stonestreet is a brilliant apologist and cultural commentator. He basically took over for Chuck Colson on Breakpoint. You can listen to him every day on Breakpoint, four or five minute little informational piece that he does on the Bible and the culture. And when we had him on the program we were talking about one of the most important verses in the Bible. Certainly, this verse will determine the outcome of your life. And it's Proverbs 4:23. You say Proverbs?

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Not even in New Testament? Yeah, it's Proverbs 4:23. Here's what it says. "23Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

Now it doesn't say follow your heart. It says guard your heart. The heart is deceitful and wicked, who can know it, said Jeremiah. Jesus says, men love darkness rather than light. Our hearts are evil. They're bent toward evil. It's easy to be bad, it's hard to be good. If we were to follow our hearts all the time we wouldn't be here very long. We would destroy ourselves and others. In fact, think about this. If you follow your desires without restraint you wouldn't be at the age you're at now. You'd have killed yourselves long ago. But you need to guard your heart to make sure that you don't follow false ideas, false principles, that you don't try and create your own reality. What is truth? Truth is what corresponds to reality. Truth is what corresponds to reality and we have people out here trying to create their own truth, trying to create their own reality.

Ben Shapiro famously said this, "facts don't care about your feelings". If you go back to the audio that I played at the top of the program, you heard the students at University of Washington kept saying, well, I feel this and I feel that. Well, feelings don't necessarily tell you the truth. A lot of times your feelings are going to take you down the wrong road. Your desires and feelings can change. Facts don't change. Facts and logic make life safe. Feelings might make life delicious, but they can take you down the wrong road. You can't follow your feelings or desires without restraint. In fact, slavishly following your desires is a fool's errand. Why? First of all, your desires change, number one. And number two, they can lead you into harm. And number three, I might say your priorities can change too.

In fact, Tim Keller gives a great example of this. He asked you to just consider your own life. No matter how old you are now. Let's say, no matter how old you are now, you probably look back at your younger self with a certain amount of lament. In other words, you look back at your younger self and you go, you know, I was kind of an idiot back then. In fact, if you're 15 years old right now, you probably look back at your 10 year old self and go, you know, I was kind of an idiot back then. If you're 20 right now, you probably look back at your 15 year old self and you go, you know, I didn't have it all together, back then. I was kind of an idiot. If you're 30 right now, you're probably looking back at your 20 year old self going, you know, man, I've changed quite a bit. I'm much better now than I was. I was kind of an idiot back then. And what Keller points out is, he says, no matter what age you are now, you are always an idiot. His language.

In other words, as you mature, hopefully, you're getting more intelligent, your priorities are getting better and you will look back at your previous self with a certain amount of lament. But right now, you're an idiot, because five years from now you're going to look back at your

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current self and go, you know, I wasn't so great back then. I've learned a lot in the past five years. I've changed. Well, thankfully, you've changed. For those you that are a little bit older: Are you thankful that you're not the same person you were in high school? Did you have different desires and different priorities in high school than you do now? I hope so because if you haven't gotten past high school, and you're 40 or 50 years old, I shudder to think where you are right now in life. You've changed, you've improved, you've grown, hopefully. And so, at any one point, to make your desires the focus of your entire life, number one, is a fool's errand. Because your desires change, your priorities change, your interests change, with more information, with new circumstances, with age, with maturity. And quite frequently, the desires can lead you away from the truth.

Any married person knows that if you followed your desires anytime you had them, you wouldn't be married very long. Because you can always find somebody who seems attractive to you, even though you're already married. Every parent knows if you followed your desires, your kids would probably be dead already because they can frustrate you as you know, and you have to restrain your desires. If you want to have freedom to have a great relationship with people, you have to accept certain restraints. Not only physical restraints, but emotional restraints, financial restraints, physical restraints, psychological restraints. Restraint is necessary. So, we all know that desires change.

And here's, I think, things we all know, but sometimes resist. Number one, there is a God and I am not him. Of course, we want to be God, we want to set our own rules up, we want to create our own reality. And until we surrender and say, I don't create my own reality, until we do that, first of all, we're never going to be saved from our own sins, or the consequences of what we do. But secondly, we're never going to have joy. And I'll explain why here as the program unfolds. So, number one, there is a God, and I am not him.

Number two, God's commands are there for my protection. They're more like guardrails. They're more like the car manual which says, do this and don't do this. God's commands are not designed to keep us free from experiencing joy. They're designed to make us free to experience joy. He says, I've come to give you life and life more abundantly. If you love me, you'll keep my commandments. The commandments are there to help you, not to hinder you. And when I use my freedom to violate God's commands, I'm ultimately enslaving myself. I'm destroying myself. I'm hurting my loved ones and I'm separating myself from God. If you think freedom from all restraints is true freedom ask anybody addicted to pornography. Are they free to have healthy relationship with others? No, they're not free to anything. They're in bondage to pornography. Pornography changes your brain chemistry. It makes you addicted to unreal things, to people

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who don't really exist, to relationships you don't really have. It makes you addicted to pictures. Not real people, not real relationships.

If you think freedom from all restraints is the way forward ask any drug abuser, is that drug abuser free to experience an abundant life? No. The drug abusers not free. He or she is in bondage to that addiction. That's not freedom. If you decide that you don't want any restraint in your life, you will not be free. You will be enslaved. You will be in bondage. Is a person that follows every little heart patter they have for someone really free to have a vibrant, loving relationship with someone else? No. Because they're chasing every desire that comes into their mind or their heart. You need to guard your heart if you want to have true freedom. How do you do that? We'll talk more about it right after the break. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. Our website is [CrossExamined.org](http://CrossExamined.org). And we're back in two minutes.

So how do you find true freedom? Thomas Nagel, who is an atheist philosopher from New York University, wrote a book about 20 years ago where he admits that he's an atheist and he doesn't want God to exist. He says, I don't want the universe to be that way. He says, one of the, and I'm paraphrasing him right now, he says, one of the most scary things to me is that some of the most intelligent people I know are religious believers. That scares him because he doesn't want God to exist. In fact, he admitted, he says, I have a cosmic authority problem. It's not just that I don't believe there's a God. He said, I don't want there to be a God. I don't want the universe to be that way. So, it's not so much for Nagel that there's no evidence for God's existence, it's that for him, it appears it's about his resistance to God. It's not about God's existence. It's about his resistance.

This is why I always ask the question of atheists on a college campus: If Christianity were true would you become a Christian? The answer, the honest answer, from many of them is no. They don't want it to be true. They don't want there to be a God. They want to go their own way. They would rather give up ultimate truth for their temporal truth. In fact, Psalm 2:1 talks about this. It says this, "Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying, 'Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.'" In other words, the people who are rejecting God think God is putting shackles on them. In fact, Christopher Hitchens, the guy I debated a couple of times, the brilliant British atheist who sounded more brilliant than he was because he had a British accent said, that God was a cosmic North Korean dictator, peering into our sex lives. For Hitchens, it was the moral restraints that God put on us that really kept him away from God. When you when you watch a Hitchens debate, you're going to go, I like this

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with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

guy. He's interesting. But if you read a transcript from a Hitchens debate, you're gonna go, what? What is this guy talking about? There's no charm in reading it. He's not even talking about the evidence. He's not even on point. He's resisting God, or he did. He died about 10 years ago now. He's resisting God.

The Psalmist goes on to say, after the people resisting God say, let us break their chains and throw off their shackles. The Psalmist [in Psalm 2] says, "4The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. 5He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath." Yes, there are people who don't want God to exist. They're looking for God as much as a criminal is looking for a cop. They don't want God to exist. It's not about God's existence, it's about their resistance. You're not going to find true freedom if you're not open to it. And I think part of the problem here with our culture now saying that I get to create my own reality, I get to create my own gender, I get to create my own world, and if you don't come into my fantasy world and approve of everything I want to do, you're evil and you must be shut down.

Part of this goes back to where our culture has come from? Look, in the ancient cultures, you would follow your family, at least vocationally, you would follow your family. So, if your dad was a blacksmith, you were a blacksmith. If your dad was a potter, you were a potter. This is for the men. Usually the women were the homemakers, right. In modern culture, you don't follow your family, you follow your heart. Whatever your heart tells you to do you go do, and you're going to, you know, cross every river, swim every lake, climb every mountain, to follow your heart. Don't let anyone get in the way of your desires. Now, there's a kernel of truth in that, quite obviously. If there's something that is on your heart, that is a good moral thing to do, and you have the capacity to do it, and the opportunity to do it, okay, pursue that. But you need to guard your heart. Is that really something you ought to do? Is that within the moral limits that God has put us in, or has given us for our own good?

Just like a car company puts the right things to do and the wrong things to do with a car, are those guardrails there? Are they within the guardrails? If they're outside the guardrails, you're going to destroy yourself and others. Again, you need to guard your heart to make sure you're following the truth because your heart can lead you astray. So, the ancient color culture says, follow your family. Modern culture says, follow your heart. Religious culture says, follow the rules. And a lot of Christians are legalists blindly following the rules to think they're gaining favor with God. You don't gain favor with God by following the rules. God loves you infinitely already. Don't get me wrong, God is pleased with with obedience and displeased with disobedience. But you don't earn your way to heaven. You can't make God love you more by

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obeying Him. He loves you infinitely already. He can't increase that. He's an infinite being. He wants what's best for you.

And what's best for you is to worship Him, to know him and then to love others. After you love God, you can love others. That's what's best for you. That's why you're here, to know God and to make Him known, and then to love others as you love God. Or because you love God. That's what he wants for you. But he loves you infinitely enough already. You don't get brownie points with God by following the rules. Oh yes, you will get rewards for doing good deeds in heaven. Or you may lose rewards for doing bad deeds here, once you get to heaven. But the reason you're in heaven, the reason you're accepted and adopted into the family is not by anything you've done. It's by what he's done. That's why you're adopted, because he has paid the price. He does all the work.

So, while ancient culture says, follow your family, modern culture says, follow your heart. Religious culture says, follow the rules. Christianity says, follow Jesus. In other words, receive Christ's gift. You're adopted into the family of God. You don't achieve your identity you receive your identity. If you're trying to achieve your identity, you will forever be joyless because there will always be something else to achieve, or there will always be someone who does it better. You will not achieve joy or contentment unless you freely receive your identity rather than trying to achieve your identity. You receive it, you don't achieve it. Jesus said, as you know, he says, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. What does that imply? It implies that, if you don't have the truth, you're in bondage. You're in bondage to your own sin. In fact, Jesus went on to say in John 8, he said, "34Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

Now, I could say much more about this, but we're running out of time. I want to point to one passage that I think nails this quite well. And it's Philippians chapter four. This is a passage we memorized as a family when my sons were younger. We used to memorize Philippians 4:4-8. Here's what it says. "4Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.?"

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Ladies and gentlemen, if you want peace, if you want the peace which transcends all understanding and will guard your hearts, think about Proverbs 4:23 I mentioned. You have to guard your heart. Above all else, guard your heart. If you want the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, then you have to think and you have to follow the truth. There's no peace of God without truth. You will never have peace without truth. This is why the cancel culture is joyless. It is grumpy. It is hostile. There's no fun. There's no grace. There's no forgiveness because it's not based on truth. You're never going to have peace with God or with other people unless you follow the truth. Unless you think about what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. Unless you accept that reality is what it is and you need to change your beliefs and behaviors to fit reality.

You can't change reality to fit your beliefs and behaviors. So, if you want peace, if you want true freedom, which is freedom TO not freedom FROM, then you have to follow the truth and Jesus is the truth. You have to think about what's true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. You're never going to get it by trying to invent your own reality. You're never going to win. You're never going to get it by just following a culture which, as you can see by its fruit is joyless, hostile, unforgiving, ungraceful, and frankly, damaging.

Alright friends, hopefully this has been helpful. You want true freedom, you're gonna have to follow Jesus. Jesus is the truth. He is your identity. Not what the culture says. Frank Turek. Great being with you. Hope to see you here next week. God bless.

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