

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

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

## Who Is Your Authority?

(December 30, 2021)

There's one question we all need to answer, ladies and gentlemen. I don't care if you're a Christian or not, you need to answer this question. And we're going to get to that question in just a minute. But I want to relate a story to you I've told before on this broadcast a couple of years ago. It goes back to December 26, 1944, when Hiroo Onoda, a Japanese soldier, is dropped off on Lubang Island in the Philippines, and he's told to take a few men and go into the jungle and fight Filipino and American forces. Because the war had gone toward the Americans at that point, Japan was reeling, and the forces couldn't stand toe to toe with the American and Filipino forces. The Japanese forces there couldn't do that. So, Hiroo Onoda's commanding officer said, you just go in the jungle and conduct guerrilla attacks and keep doing it until I come back and tell you to stop. Well, long, long story short, Hiroo Onoda and his men go into the jungle and conduct guerrilla attacks on American and Filipino forces. But they don't stop when the war ends on September 2, 1945, which was about nine months after they were dropped into the jungle. They keep conducting operations through the 1940s, through the 1950s, through the 1960s.

It's not until 1974 that Hiroo Onoda walks out of the jungle 29 years later. And the reason he wouldn't give up is because his commanding officer told him, you keep fighting until I tell you to come out, to stop fighting. His commanding officer never came back and told him to stop fighting, so he kept fighting until he was convinced by his commanding officer, who was flown to Lubang Island in 1974, to tell him Hiroo, the war's over. It's been over for 29 years. Come out. And he did. He came out and gave himself up. By the way, he was still wearing his uniform 29 years later. He's in his 50s. He went in in his 20s. He's in his 50s when he gives up because his commanding officer came back to Lubang Island and said, you're relieved of your duty Hiroo. Can you imagine fighting a war for 29 years, 28 years of which the war had ended? 28 years which the war had been over. Why? Because he was not going to disobey his commanding officer. His commanding officer was part of a chain of command, as was he, that reported all the way up to, in their view, God. The Emperor. So, he was not going to stop fighting until his commanding officer told him to stop fighting.

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Now I tell the whole story in a recent presentation we put up on our YouTube channel. The presentation is about Critical Race Theory. It's called, Critical Race Theory versus Christianity. So, if you want to hear the whole story, go watch that. We posted it on December 20 of this year. It was a presentation I gave at a church in New Jersey back in October. But I tell the story of Hiroo Onoda and what happened. So, if you want the details, go there. My only point here is to point out that Hiroo Onoda had a commanding officer, and that commanding officer was his authority, and he was not going to disobey that commanding officer. The commanding officer had to relieve him of his duty 29 years later, 28 years after the war ended, before he would say I'm done.

Now, my question is: Who is your commanding officer? Who is your authority? Is it Jesus or is it someone else? Maybe it's your society. Maybe it's your culture. Maybe it's your church. Maybe it's your parents. Maybe it's your authority. Is that the case? Who is your commanding officer? You know, when I think about this question, I think about Pilate. Pilate and Jesus, you know. Pilate had Jesus before the Jews who wanted him crucified. They kept chanting to Pilate, crucify him, crucify him. And Jesus, of course, was innocent of the charge, yet the Jews wanted him dead. And Pilate said to them: Why? What has this man done that he should be crucified? And all they did was shout it louder. Crucify him, crucify him. And then as Mark records this event, he says this. And here's the key phrase, "Mark 15:15 - Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified." Who is your commanding officer? Is it the crowd or is it Jesus? Are you more interested in the culture's approval than God's approval? That's the question I want to ask today and delve into today. Who is your authority? Who is my authority? Who should be our authority?

Now, as you know, the apostle Paul wrote several letters. A couple of them he wrote to Timothy, his protege, somebody that he was mentoring, someone that he was discipling. And in his first letter to Timothy, in chapter four, he says this. This is what Paul says to Timothy, "15 Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. 16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." Doctrine. Watch your life and your doctrine. What is doctrine? Well, everyone believes in certain doctrines, everyone believes in certain truths about reality, and these doctrines, these truths about reality, govern not only what we think, but what we do and how we act. So, as we come into 2022, you might want to evaluate your doctrine. What do

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you really believe about reality? What do you really believe about God? What do you really believe about truth? What do you really believe about Jesus? What do you really believe about the Bible? Who is your authority?

Now, you may have heard someone say, look, I'm not a theologian. Nonsense. Everyone is a theologian. Everyone has theological beliefs. Everyone has doctrine of some kind, so everyone is a theologian of some kind. I mean, when people say, I'm not a theologian, what they really mean is, I'm just not a good theologian. I just haven't studied this enough. But you still have certain beliefs. You might not be a good theologian, you might believe in false doctrine, but everyone believes in something about the issue of God. Even someone who is apathetic about God believes that God, if he exists at all, isn't important enough to care about. That's a theological view. That's a doctrine that governs behavior. So, everybody has doctrines, everybody has theological beliefs. The question is: Are those beliefs true? And who is your ultimate authority? How do you make big decisions? How do you discover what's right and wrong? In fact, that is the question. Do you decide what's right and wrong or do you discover what's right and wrong? Do you determine what's right and wrong or do you discover what's right and wrong?

Now, when we come back from the break, I'm going to lay out five questions every person needs to answer, and then the ultimate question: Who is your ultimate authority?, will flow from those five questions. Now, as we come into 2022, there's a couple of things you may want to avail yourselves of. We have a couple of online courses. One is called, How to Interpret Your Bible. It begins January 10. I'll be your instructor. And if you sign up, sign up for the premium version. I'll be with you on six occasions on Zoom. And then right after that, on January 17, the great Gary Habermas will be conducting an online course for us on the resurrection. Nobody better in the world on that than Gary. Go to [CrossExamined.org](https://www.CrossExamined.org), click on Online Courses, you'll see it there. And I'll be back in two. I'm Frank Turek. Don't go away.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio Network. We're asking a key question today: Who or what is your authority? And I mentioned before the break that there are five questions that we need to all investigate, to even discover who our ultimate authority is. Every person, whether you think about these questions or not, they're important questions in everyone's life. Here are the five

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questions. And we laid this out in the book, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, in the intro of it. We say there are five key questions. The five key questions have to do with origin, identity, meaning and purpose, morality, and destiny.

Origin: Where did I come from?

Identity: Who am I? What is my identity?

Meaning and Purpose: What is the purpose and meaning of life?

Morality: How should we live then?

Destiny: Where am I ultimately going?

Now notice, you can't answer the morality question: How should we live then?, unless you answer the question before that: What is the meaning and purpose of life? If there's no purpose to life, there's no right or wrong way to live it. As we've asked before: How do you know that your quarterback throwing a touchdown is better than your quarterback throwing a pick six? The only way you know that is if you know the purpose of the game. Without the purpose of the game, you can't tell that a touchdown for your team is better than a pick six that your quarterback throws to the opposite team. You couldn't know that because you can't discover whether a play is good or bad without the purpose. You need the purpose to know that. And the same thing is true when it comes to real life. You need to know the purpose of life to know whether you should live it one way and not another way. You need to know the purpose of life to know that loving people is better than murdering them.

Oh, you say Frank, that's ridiculous. Everybody knows that loving people is better than murder. I'm not talking about how you know it. You may know that without thinking about the purpose, but if there was no purpose to life, there would be nothing objectively different from loving people or murdering people. That would just be their way. They would be different, but they wouldn't be objectively different. Love wouldn't be getting you closer to the purpose of life, and murder wouldn't be taking you further away from the purpose of life, if there was no purpose

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to life. You need purpose in order to know the right way to live life and the wrong way to live life.

Now all of these questions: origin, identity, meaning and purpose, morality, and destiny, depend on how you answer the question we're addressing today. Who is your ultimate authority? I mean, who should you trust for the biggest decisions in life? Many of us are making new year's resolutions right now, okay. Why? And how are you determining that a particular resolution is a good or a bad thing? Who's your authority? Maybe your authority, whatever you decide is right. Maybe your parents are your authority. Maybe the government is your authority. Maybe society or the culture is your authority. Or maybe there's someone or something beyond that. Who is your authority?

Now actually, it wouldn't make sense to answer, what is your authority, because what's don't issue commands, or purpose, or meaning? What's don't have authority, only persons have authority. You say, well, there are certain things that aren't who's that have some authority. Like gravity has authority. Yeah, okay, gravity holds us on the ground, but you're not sinning against the law of gravity when you go flying an airplane or try and dunk a basketball, okay. It's a description, it's not a prescription. It describes what happens, gravity does, but it doesn't prescribe what happens. You can violate the law of gravity and it's not a sin. You can't violate God's commands and it not be a sin, if God does exist, and he's issued commands. And of course, we believe he does exist and has issued commands. So, who is your authority? Is it you? If it's you, then you're essentially saying that you create truth and goodness yourself. Really? You create truth and goodness. So, before you existed, there was no truth or goodness? No, you can't be the authority. Do you determine truth and goodness, or do you discover it?

Dr. Geisler always used to say, make that distinction between determining something and discovering something. Most of the time we're discovering things, we're not determining things. We don't determine that two plus two equals four, we discover that two plus two equals four. We don't determine that murdering people is evil, we discover that murdering people is evil. In other words, it's outside yourself. You discover it, you don't determine it. And by the way, you assume there is truth and goodness outside yourself, even when you try to deny it. For example, if someone says, look I'm the authority, it's me. No one can tell me what to do. Okay, my question is: Why not? Would it be immoral to tell you what to do? By what standard

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are you saying no one has the right to tell you what to do? Because when you say that you're implying you have a right to do what you want? Well, there are no rights if you're the standard. It's just your opinion. Unless there's a standard beyond you, an objective standard that we're all obligated to obey, you don't even have the right to say, no one has the right to tell me what to do. See? You're assuming a standard even when you try and deny it.

If someone says I determine what is true, you're basically saying, there is no objective truth. I get to live my own truth. Well, that's an objective truth right there, that you get to live your own truth. And it's also a moral claim that you're making. You're saying, I get the right to live my own truth. That's a moral claim. Where do rights come from? If they come from you, again, they're not rights, they're preferences, they're opinions. But if they come from a standard of goodness, an unchangeable, authoritative, ground of all goodness, which is what all people mean by God, then you have certain rights. If God does not exist, you don't have rights. You might say, well, you have a right to live however you want, as long as you don't hurt somebody else. Right? Well, now you're importing a moral standard in there. Why is it wrong to hurt other people? Who said? You said, Well, everyone knows that it's true, Frank. Yeah, I know everyone knows it's true. I'm not asking the "no" question. I'm asking the "why" question. I'm not asking the epistemological question: How do you know that murdering people is wrong? I'm asking the ontological question: Why is murder wrong? Why is there such a standard out there known as goodness, and any deviation from that standard is what we call evil, and one deviation from that standard is murder? Why does that standard exist if there's no God? It doesn't, ladies and gentlemen.

That's the problem with atheism. That's the problem with people who deny there's a God. That's a problem with people who are apathetic about God, and yet, they claim they have certain rights. Of course, you can know you have certain rights without justifying them. It's like saying, I can know what a book says and deny anyone wrote the book. I can know what this book says and deny there's an author. That's true. But there would be no book to know unless there was an author. Likewise, you can deny God exists and say you have certain rights, but you wouldn't have certain rights unless God existed. See, you're claiming you have a right, but there is no right giver unless God exists. And if God does exist, do you think he says that you can do whatever you want? Is he the standard of truth, goodness and righteousness or are you the standard of truth, goodness, and righteousness? And if you say you're the standard or truth,

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goodness, and righteousness, then are you saying that truth, goodness, and righteousness didn't exist before you came into this world? That doesn't make any sense. There's something outside of you that you're appealing to, even when you try and say, I'm the standard. So, you're not the standard, you're not your authority. I mean, you have freewill, but you're not the authority. Do you determine right and wrong? You can discover right and wrong and choose whether or not you're going to obey rightness but you're not the standard.

How about your parents? Are they the standard? Well, yes, they are for a time until you're an adult yourself. But are your parents the ultimate standard of rightness and goodness? No. How can they be? They're human beings like you are. When you're a young person, you need that kind of guidance. And even when you're an older person, you need guidance from other people. Read the Proverbs, long as they line up with the scriptures. In fact, the Proverbs say that if you get many counselors, you'll have a better decision. But are they, your parents, the standard of rightness and goodness? No, they're not. We're obligated to obey them, we're obligated to honor them, because God has set up a system a hierarchy here. But that doesn't mean that everything they say is right or everything they say is good. And we don't have an obligation to obey parents when they tell us to do evil. In fact, we have an obligation to disobey, just like we have an obligation to disobey governments when they tell to do evil.

How about your society, or your culture, your government, are they the standard? Well, no. They change and they are sometimes, in fact, often they're wrong. Think about the Nazis. How did we, as the allies, convict the Nazi soldiers at Nuremberg? What did we say to them? We said, well, you committed war crimes. They said, hey, we're just following our government, we're just following orders. And we said, there's a standard beyond your government, it's called natural law, it's called international law. CS Lewis called it the moral law. Thomas Jefferson, in the Declaration of Independence, called it nature's law. In other words, there's a standard beyond governments by which we can discover who's right and who's wrong in a particular dispute, or who's closer to the right than the other government without that standard. Without that standard, you couldn't say the Nazis were wrong.

This is why, by the way, in my debate with David Silverman, who was at the time the president of the American Atheists, he happened to be Jewish as well. I kept pressing him on this question: David, you're an atheist, if there is no God, then the Holocaust wasn't really wrong.

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And after he tried to avoid that conclusion, he finally admitted, you know, you're right. It wasn't really wrong. The Nazis weren't wrong. I said to him, David, if your worldview is telling you that the Nazis weren't really wrong, you have the wrong worldview, you have the wrong doctrine. Because you know, in your heart, that the Nazis were wrong. So, you ought to take that effect in your heart, the law written on your heart, and reason back to a cause. That's how we know God exists, by the way. We know God by His effects. We see a creation, that's the effect, we reason back to a cause, a creator. We see design in the universe and design in life, that's the effect, we reason back to a cause, a designer. We have a moral law written on our hearts. That's the effect, we should reason back to a cause, a moral law giver. That's how we know God exists. We know God by His effects. We see a human being teach sublime truths, predict, and accomplish his own resurrection from the dead, that's the effect, we reason back to a cause, God.

So, your society, or your culture, or your government is not your ultimate authority. They all presuppose a standard outside themselves. Well, who is your ultimate authority? Is it the church? Well, we'll get to that 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). Check it out. We're back in just two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

Coming up Sunday, January 16, I'll be at Cottonwood Creek Church in Allen, Texas for the morning services. Hope to see you there. Great church, Cottonwood Creek, there just outside of Dallas. And then just a few days later, I'll be at UT Dallas, University of Texas at Dallas, on Thursday, January 20. And then just a day or two after that on Saturday, the 22nd, I will be at the unApologetic Evangelism Conference in Jacksonville, Texas. All the details are on our website. So, a lot going on in Texas coming up in the next few weeks. Just check our website for more. And then we have the University of Kentucky coming up on January 31, University of Louisville on February 1, Winthrop University here near Charlotte on February 8. A lot coming up, so check our website out for that at [CrossExamined.org](http://CrossExamined.org), click on events, you'll see Frank Turek calendar there.

We're talking about this question: Who is your authority? We said, you can't be the authority. We've also said, your parents aren't the authority, not the ultimate authority. Maybe temporarily. We get that. Your society your culture, your government can't be the ultimate

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authority. Sometimes they're wrong. There's a standard beyond them. In fact, they presuppose the standard outside themselves, at least good governments do. In fact, our government was set up on that, the American government. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Government...no, endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. And governments are instituted among men to secure these rights. Governments don't give you your rights, governments are there to protect your rights. And what the founders thought is that if the government basically decided it was not going to protect those rights, then the people had the right to get a new government. That's what the Declaration of Independence was all about, okay.

So, how about your church? Is your church your authority? Well, it is to a certain extent. But where does the church get its authority? They get it from Jesus. They're not just supposed to make things up. Jesus is the ultimate authority if Jesus is God. Now let me ask you a question. I'm gonna read some things that Jesus said here. Now, as I read these things, ask yourself, these saints of Jesus sound like they come from someone who is just a man. Are you ready?

Before Abraham was born, I am.

Your sins are forgiven.

I and the Father are one.

Whoever obeys my word will never see death.

I am the resurrection and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness.

I am the bread of life.

Can anyone prove me guilty of sin?

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Pray in my name.

Father, glorify me with the glory I had with you before the world began.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Ladies and gentlemen, do those sayings sound like Jesus is just a man? I mean, the very first one, before Abraham was born, I am. Who's he claiming to be? Who's he quoting from? Where is he quoting from? He's quoting from Exodus 3:15, the burning bush. Remember when God appeared to Charlton Heston? And Moses says to God, God, who should I tell the Israelites you are? And God says, tell them I am sends you. What does I am mean? I am means the self-existent Eternal One. The being that had no beginning, the being that will have no end, the being that just "be's", that has always existed. The foundation of everything else. The immovable, unchangeable standard of all goodness, of all righteousness, of all justice, of all love. That's what we mean by God. The maximally great being. If that being doesn't exist, there is no objective authority. Everybody gets to do what's right in their own eyes. As the end of the book of Judges said, it was anarchy. No, Jesus said He was God. And I think he proved to be God, quite obviously, because he predicted and accomplished his own resurrection from the dead.

Look, either what he said is true, or its false. Which is it? Who is your authority? And what do we mean by your authority? Your authority is whomever or whatever governs your behavior. Your authority is whomever or whatever will change your behavior. Who are you going to change your behavior for? Is your authority the world, as we come now into 2022, or is it a Jesus? Are you trying to satisfy the crowd or are you trying to, out of gratitude, follow what Jesus told you to do, and told me to do? I mean, think about it this way. When you're about to put up a social media post are you more concerned about what the world thinks of you or what God thinks of you? Are you looking for the applause of the world or the applause of God? If you change your behavior to please the world, rather than God, your authority is the world. You're serving it not God. And as Bob Dylan said, everyone's going to serve someone. Who are you serving?

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Jesus said this in John 5:44. He said, "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" Are you seeking glory from one another or are you seeking glory from God? That's the question we all need to answer. I have to ask myself that question all the time. Who are you seeking glory from? If you're seeking glory from the world, you're not actually seeking glory from God. In fact, James, the half-brother of Jesus, who wrote that little book in the New Testament called...thank you ladies, gentlemen, you're a bright group...James. Yes. He said this in James 4:4. He says, "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself in enemy of God?

Now, he is not saying that you shouldn't love non-Christians or interact or hang out with non-Christians. Of course, Jesus did. That's not what this is saying. This is saying that you should not love what the world wants you to do. You should not love the policies of the world, if you will. You should love the world's people, but not its policies. What are the policies of the world? Well, John writes in First John, I think, a very clear description of what the world is. Here's what he says in First John 2:15-17. He says, "15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. What's that all about? Well, we can sum it up in three words: sex, money, and power. That's what that's all about. Sex, money, and power. As you know, our mutual friend J. Warner Wallace, the cold case homicide detective, says whenever he finds a dead body that he knows has been murdered, he always says, look, there's only three reasons why this guy's dead, are one of three reasons, or a combination of the three. There's not 1000, there's just three. Either there was a sex issue, a money issue, or a power issue. That's what's in the world. Now sex, money and power are good things. The problem is, they're so good sometimes we'll take shortcuts to get them. That's how we sin.

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Now, this word lust, you know what it really means? We always think of lust as being sexual. It's not always sexual. I mean, lust of the flesh might be sexual, but lust of the eyes, that's more related to money. Lust means an over desire for something good. It's not a desire for something evil. We rarely do evil to get evil. We usually do evil to get good. Like, we'll do evil to get sex, right? We'll do evil to get money. We'll do evil to get power. But sex, money and power are good things. You're not doing evil to get evil you're doing evil to get good. And so, when we think about the issues that pull us away from the truth, when we think about our real authority in life, is our real authority, sex, money, and power? When we say power, we don't just mean the ability to do something, but we also mean pride or recognition or status, the approval of others. That's what we mean by sex, money, and power.

In fact, as CS Lewis put it, if you really think about the root cause of sin, it's pride. Here's how Lewis put it. He said, "According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil is pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that are mere fleabites in comparison. It was through pride that the devil became the devil. Pride leads to every other vice. It is the complete anti-God state of mind. It is pride, which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation, and every family since the world began." That's true because you're looking out for yourself. That's when the authority in your life is you, when you have pride that you want to get what you want. Forget the consequences. Someone put it this way. "A proud man is always looking down on things and people, and of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you". It's actually Lewis who said that. Pride is the ultimate sin.

Now, we're not talking about pride of being proud of somebody who did something good that you love, somebody you love. No, we're not talking about that. We're saying, it's the anti-God state of mind. It's my way or the highway. I'm the authority, not God. I'm the authority not Jesus. What I want goes first, not what God wants. Again, your authority is whomever or whatever governs your behavior. Your authority is whomever or whatever you will change your behavior for. Who is your authority? More 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). Check it out. We will see you in just two minutes.

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college campus we don't charge students a dime. All that happens because of you. And we have eight of these college campuses scheduled for this semester, as I mentioned last week. Thank you for your donations this year. 100% of your donations go to ministry, 0% to buildings. We're completely virtual.

Alright, back to our question here: Who is your authority? We were talking about First John 2, where John basically says that the three main problems in the world are sex, money, and power. He says the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. You know what he says at the very end of the letter? It almost seems like a throwaway line but it's not. This is the very last verse of the entire letter. First John 5:21. "Dear children, keep yourself from idols". That's how he ends it. Keep yourself from idols. Wait, you haven't been talking about idolatry. Now all of a sudden, boom, you're talking about idolatry. At the very end it's like he's saying, oh, I gotta get one more point in. "Dear children, keep yourself from idols". No, the whole letter is about idolatry, basically. That's the point. The whole idea, the whole letter, is really talking about you putting things above God. You're putting good things above the greatest thing, God. You're having an authority other than God.

Now, none of us likes the word authority. Why? Because it actually impinges, it interrupts, it interferes with what we want to do. That's a pride position. I don't want anybody telling me what to do. What if God is a benevolent dictator? Well, he is. What if God really knows what's right and wrong? What if God is smarter than us? What if God has set up this universe with a purpose, and he has a purpose for you and me and all of us and he knows what's best for us? Well, he does. So, we should gratefully follow his direction. In fact, ladies and gentlemen, if there is no God, all we're doing is polishing the brass rails of the Titanic. All our little personal purposes mean nothing, ultimately, if this whole world is going to end, and that's it, it's over. Nothing you do here has any ultimate meaning. We just end. But we're not polishing the brass rails of the Titanic.

There is a meaning and purpose to life. The meaning and purpose to life is to know God and to make Him known. Jesus says, in his high priestly prayer (John 17:3), "Now this is eternal life, that they"...meaning us, he's praying for us..."may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." The purpose of life is to know God and to make Him known. And there's a right way to live life and a wrong way to live life. He's the authority, not us. If we think

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our personal little project takes precedence over God, then suddenly we've become the authority. We have an idol that we're following, and these idols ultimately will disappoint us, will ultimately create trouble for us. In fact, that's why CS Lewis says, it is pride which has been the chief cause of misery.

In fact, we could say it another way. It is idols, which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. In fact, Dr. [Norman] Geisler, who started Southern Evangelical Seminary, where I went to school and where you ought to go, by the way, because it's just a wonderful place to learn apologetics, philosophy, and theology. In fact, if you go to SES.edu/Frank, you'll get some sort of discount off your first course. I can't remember if it's 10% or 20%, or something like that. But just go there. Here's what Geisler used to say. He used to say that idols can be metal or mental, and for most of us, they're mental. There are things that we want, that we think we can't live without. If I could only have this, I'd be happy. If I only had more recognition, I'd be happy. If I only had more people following me on social media, I'd be happy. If I only had this person, or that person, or this accolade, or that accolade, I'd be happy. If I only had this amount of money, or that house, or that car, I'd be happy.

Now, who is really your authority? We mentioned that we have God-given hierarchies or authorities in three institutions that were mandated by God, installed by God: family, government, and the church. But God is above all of those. So, is God your ultimate authority or not? Who is? Maybe we can look at it another way? Is your or my behavior more determined by the culture or by Christ? If there is a conflict between the culture and Christ, with whom will we side? Are we going to side with the culture or are we going to side with Christ? Are we going to side with the world or are we going to side with Jesus? I mean, do you agree with Jesus and his apostles on sexual immorality? Do you agree with Jesus and his apostles on money? Do you agree with Jesus and his apostles on power? What do you have to have so much that you will sacrifice Jesus to get? You say, well, Frank, no, I'm just following my heart. Well, no, you're not actually following your heart, you're following the culture. Why? Because the culture is telling you to follow your heart.

Ancient culture would have shamed you for following your heart instead of following your family, because in ancient culture, you followed your family. In modern culture, you follow your heart. But that previous culture, the ancient culture, would have said, no, you don't follow your

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heart, you follow your family. Or religious culture might say you follow the rules. The only reason you think following your heart is a good thing is because your culture is telling you it's a good thing, when in reality, it's not a good thing most of the time. Now, there is a sense where you follow your heart. If God puts on your heart something that you need to do that is consistent and commanded by him, then that's a good thing. If God has given you certain gifts or abilities, and by engaging in those gifts or abilities, you're helping build His kingdom, well that's a good thing. But we're talking about following your heart, in the sense that the culture means, that whatever you want to do, however you identify, whatever you think is right, you'll follow that. You know, you swim every stream, you climb every mountain, you cross every ocean. Is that a Disney song or something? That kind of follow your heart. And that doesn't work. Why? Because your heart is deceitful and wicked. Who can know it? If you followed your heart all the time, you'd be dead already.

In fact, Tim Keller has a interesting illustration where he talks about, you couldn't even follow your heart even if you wanted to, because quite often your heart desires are conflicting. For example, he gives an illustration of a Viking, say 1000 years ago, who had conflicting heart desires. One heart desire was, he had the desire to crush people to get what he wanted. The other desire he had, which conflicted with that, was same-sex attraction. But he thought he's attracted to people of the same sex. Now those are conflicting desires. Which do you think he would follow in his culture 1000 years ago? Well, he would follow the desire to crush people, because that's what his culture taught. But he would suppress his heart's desire of same-sex attraction. So, he's really not following his heart. He's really following what his cultures telling him to do. He's suppressing one heart desire and elevating another.

Now you put that same man today in Manhattan, or today's culture anywhere. Which desire is he going to elevate, and which desire is he going to suppress? Oh, he's going to suppress the desire to crush people because that's toxic masculinity, you know. We can't do that. And he's going to elevate same-sex attraction. Why? Because he's going to get applause from the culture for doing that. So, he's not really following his heart, he's following his culture. And by the way, not only are your heart desires often conflicting, they're changing. If you think back to when you were a young person, if you're not a young person now, you had different heart desires. Who didn't want to be a rockstar when you were in high school? We all did, right. Now you'd go, that was stupid. Why would I ever want to do that?

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In fact, when you look back at your younger self, you probably look back at your younger self with some amount of disdain, like, wow, I was an idiot when I was 15. Right? In fact, when you're 15, you look back at your 10-year-old self, you go I was an idiot when I was 10. You know, when you hit 20, you look back at your 15-year-old self and you go man, I was an idiot when I was 15. When you hit 30, you look back at your 20-year-old self, you know, I didn't have it all together. I was kind of an idiot when I was 20. You know what this means? We're always an idiot. Because when you get older, you're gonna look back at your younger self and go, man, I didn't have it all together. Now, thankfully, this slows down when you get older. Okay, I'm now 60. I didn't think I was really an idiot when I was 50. Maybe when I was 20. Yeah, okay. Hopefully, you start to get your priorities straight. Hopefully, while I don't have everything right, quite obviously, hopefully, as you get older and more mature, and you have the right authority, you're not an idiot anymore. But the truth of the matter is your heart is changing. And if you're going to follow a changing heart, you're ultimately going to end up in ruin.

In fact, that's the third problem. Not only are your heart desires conflicting, not only are they changing quite frequently, they're contrary to God's will. If you follow your heart all the time, you're going to wind up sick, broken, and ultimately dead. You're going to blow up every relationship you ever were a part of because there are times when your heart says you want to lash out. There are times when your heart says you want to go with the other girl or the other guy. There are going to be times when you're going to want to do something you know you really shouldn't do. You don't need to follow your heart. You need to guard your heart. Your authority is not your heart, your authority is Jesus as expressed through the scriptures. That's who our authority is. And if you want to change your world in 2022, that's the question you need to answer. Who is your authority? It's not you. It's not your government. It's not even necessarily the church. It's Jesus. So, think about that, ladies and gentlemen. And I hope to see you here next week. Don't forget about the online courses, How to Interpret Your Bible and the resurrection. Go to [CrossExamined.org](http://CrossExamined.org), click on Online Courses. See you here next week, Lord willing. God bless.

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