

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

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

The Best NEW Ideas from the Best Apologists

(April 8, 2022)

Ladies and gentlemen, we have an amazing program for you today because we're at the National Conference on Christian Apologetics. We're going to have Alisa Childers on, J. Warner Wallace, Gary Habermas. But before we get to them, we're going to have the Great Scott Klusendorf on the program with us. Scott is the top pro-life speaker in my view in the nation, and he's also the top pro-life instructor on how to teach people to make good pro-life arguments in a secular setting.

And so, I got to start off right now, Scott, with the question that I've been meaning to ask you. What are the top three most difficult objections you get when you try and put the pro-life position forward in the public square?

Scott:

Well, I wouldn't call them difficult, but I can tell you what the most popular are. And they're the ones your listeners and viewers are hearing. Number one, the pro-life argument is strictly religious, and therefore it's not logical, has no place in the public square. Number two, your pro-life argument is hateful toward women. You aren't rational, you just hate women. Third, the pro-life argument is actually going to hurt society, because it's going to make women die in the back alleys of America from illegal abortions. Those are the top three that you're going to get if you claim to be pro-life. And in the course that I'm going to be teaching, I want you to know, Frank, that we're going to dig into that and a whole lot more. But those top three are the big ones.

Frank:

Well, you know, you're about to teach the course, The Ethics of Abortion: Pro-Life Apologetics in an Uncertain Age. You taught it in the fall, and we said, we need to run this course again, because there's a big event coming up, Scott, we don't know how it's going to turn out. Look, we're Christians, we care about life at all times, but this case that's in the Supreme Court now could change the landscape dramatically. So, why should people be ready with arguments now?

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Scott:

If the Supreme Court guts Roe v. Wade, and Planned Parenthood versus Casey, which I think it will do, Frank, when that day happens and May it come, all of us are going to have to be pro-life apologists. Because what's going to happen is, the Supreme Court is no longer going to be the sole authority on abortion. Instead, the issue is going to get returned to our individual states, where our individual state legislative bodies are going to take the issue up. And that means you and I, Frank, have an opportunity to influence our culture in our own state in a way that we never did before. So, we now actually have the chance to do that. But let me give a warning. If we are not ready for that, if we are not prepared intellectually to persuade our friends to encourage them to consider the pro-life view, the overturning of Roe v. Wade might just work against us because the population will not be with us, and our local states may end up passing bad laws.

Frank:

Well, Scott, I'm aware that there's some bill in Maryland that's going to allow, and I think there may be a similar one in Colorado now, that's going to allow people to essentially let their children die up to 28 days after birth. Have you heard about this? This is going on, right?

Scott:

Oh, yeah. Colorado signed that bill into law on Monday. I was there when it happened, lecturing at Colorado State. California has a very similar bill. Maryland has one. New York's bill lets children who survive abortion procedures die on the table. Yeah, this is horrific stuff, Frank. But let's get real about why this stuff came to be in the first place. Christians were not prepared to engage the big and we got caught. We can't do that again. We've got to be prepared to make a defense for the pro-life view that can resonate in a culture that doesn't share our Christian worldview, that isn't prepared to say okay, your church believes that so I will too. No. We've got to be able to make a case that will be persuasive to people who are not yet pro-life and who are pro-life but don't do anything about it.

Frank:

Well, let's talk about the first objection you brought up, Scott. You say this is the most popular objection that being pro-life is just a religious argument. How do you respond?

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Scott:

Well, what we first need to do Frank is say look, that's a cop out. Arguments are either sound or unsound, valid, or invalid. Calling an argument religious is a dodge not a refutation. It's like saying, well how tall is the number three? I mean, it's a category error. What we need to do is look at the person and say, wait a minute, I made an argument. Premise one, it's wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings. Premise two, abortion intentionally kills innocent human beings. Conclusion, therefore, abortion is wrong. You didn't refute that argument. You called it a name. You called it religious. You got to do the hard work of refuting it. And of course, we'll be gentle with people when we make this point, but we've got to press in on them and say, you've got to do the work of refutation. It's not enough to just dismiss my argument with a label.

Frank:

Scott, there is a short video that you show people when you speak on this issue. It's 52 seconds long. I've used it myself. It's at CaseForLife.com. What is in that video and why should people look at it? Only 52 seconds long, Scott.

Scott:

Well, they're going to see the aftermath of abortion. And you know, people have no problem paying money to go watch movie like Schindler's List, Hacksaw Ridge, good movies. Why do we pay money to watch gruesome footage? Because, we know it conveys truths that words alone never could. And the abortion issue is no different. Frank, people, if they don't see it, they'll continue to tolerate abortion. And what the pictures do is they change how people feel about abortion as a predicate to changing how they think and ultimately behave on abortion. And this allows us then an opportunity to bring their moral intuitions up to the surface where we can reason with folks.

Frank:

You know, Scott, you've said this before. I think it was you who said this. Correct me if I'm wrong. But you said abortion is not intellectually complex, and it's not morally complex, it's emotionally complex.

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Scott:

Yeah.

Frank:

What will this video do to the emotional aspect of it?

Scott:

Well, what this video does is simplifies the issue. It lets people know that look, what we're really talking about here with the act of abortion is the intentional killing of an innocent human being. People think abortion is complex, because they think oh, you know, I feel sympathy for that 14 year old girl who's pregnant. Her boyfriend is going to dump her, her mom and dad don't understand her, her church doesn't want anything to do with her. And people think, well, I feel sympathy for that young woman, therefore, there's no right answers. Well, that doesn't follow. Just because it's psychologically complex doesn't mean it's morally complex. And the rightness or wrongness of abortion comes down to the question: What is the unborn? We've got to answer that question before we answer the predicate question: Can we kill the unborn?

Frank:

If you're not pro-life, if you consider yourself pro-choice, I dare you to go to CaseForLife.com and watch the 52 second video right there on the front page. That is Scott's website. He's written a book, *Case for Life*. In fact, he's working on a revision to it right now. Now, this course you're teaching, Scott, it starts April 18. If people go to CrossExamined.org and click on online courses, they'll see it there. What else are they going to learn in this course called, *The Ethics of Abortion: Pro-Life Apologetics in an Uncertain Age*?

Scott:

Well, we're going to survey the toughest critics that don't hold our view. We're going to look at people like Peter Singer, Michael Tooley, David Boonin, Kate Greasley, and others, and we're going to look at the best the other side is offering. Not the weakest arguments, the best. Another thing we're going to do is learn how to persuasively communicate on abortion in a public setting. Now, I know some people are going, wait a minute, I am not a speaker, don't even go there, don't even bring that up. I'd rather have a root canal than stand in front of people. Look, here's the question we need to wrestle with: Are any of the reasons I would give

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for not speaking up on this issue worth the price of children's lives that would have been saved had I been more courageous. So, we're going to give you a good dose of courage, we're going to give you a good dose of intellectual firepower. You're going to know the lay of the land, you're going to know who the major players are, what they think, and how to respond to them.

Frank:

And you're going to be able to ask Scott questions if you sign up for the premium course because you're doing several zoom sessions, right, Scott?

Scott:

Yeah, six, I believe.

Frank:

That's great. And you're going to learn how to do this friends. And we need to stand up. Courage is necessary. Go to CrossExamined.org, click on online courses. If you're hearing this after April 18, there's still time to sign up for the premium course, because the Zooms start a little bit later in the course. Check it out. Scott, thanks for being on the show.

Scott:

Thanks, Frank.

Frank:

Alright, that's Scott Klussendorf. Again, The Ethics of Abortion starts April 18. Go to CrossExamined.org, click on online courses, become a warrior for the truth. Don't go anywhere. We're going to be with Alisa Childers, J. Warner Wallace, and Gary Habermas in the next segment straight from the National Conference on Christian Apologetics. I'm Frank Turek. We're back in two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. We are at the National Conference on Christian Apologetics. I promised that we're going to talk to Gary Habermas, Alisa Childers, and J. Warner Wallace. We're going to start with the great Gary Habermas, who's about to do a presentation here. You're going to do one on the five facts from the resurrection. What's it called?

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Gary:

Five Historical Facts that Occurred by 36 AD. And they're knockout evidences for the resurrection. I mean, they really can't be refuted.

Frank:

Let's go through those. It's going to take you an hour to do it but we're going to do it in 12 minutes. So, go. What are they?

Gary:

Okay, well, you're going to start with the crucifixion of Jesus. That's not one of the five but that's ground zero. After the crucifixion, I changed around on what should be the earliest one, but probably James' conversion.

Frank:

James' conversion.

Gary:

Probably. And the reason is, we have we have multiple attestation that James was an unbeliever, twice in Mark and once in John. Here's an interesting aside: Why did Jesus give his mother to John instead of to James? That's a possibility that he wasn't in the fold yet. Possibly. We don't know that. But by the time the so-called Upper Room happens, after the ascension, he's there with mom and the boys, Jesus, and his brothers. So, it looks like the conversion is between the resurrection, and basically Pentecost. So, I say it's early. That's one.

Number two is the earliest Christian preaching, which according to people like Garrett Lüdemann and Bart Ehrman, atheist New Testament scholars, the preaching began immediately. And I just heard Bart and a broadcast this morning say, what does immediately mean? I mean, he said, is it a day, is it a week, or a month? We don't know. But it's very, very early. Well, I'd go with a month? I mean, that's immediately. And they started preaching right away. And the homologia is a Greek term in the New Testament meaning the central data that everybody to which everybody agrees. And those data, at a minimum, is the guys who do the specialized work, and let's point out, our minimum of the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus was preached from the beginning. So, first thing is James is in the fold. Secondly, people start

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preaching it. At that point, it's unstructured, it's oral, and there's no creeds, and it's just out there for people. But the estimate now is up to 90% of Jesus' listeners were illiterate. And because they are, it's one of the reasons the creeds start coming along. Now, creeds are oral statements.

Let's put this way. It's the homologia standardized. So, you take the data from here; deity, death, resurrection, homologia, and it's put into...a secular example would be Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water. A spiritual example would be, amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. And in both cases, a five year old could repeat those and not be able to write his or her name. That's how they taught it. They taught it so that everybody could memorize it, even if they were illiterate. So, these early creeds, it's hard to date them exactly. But the Pauline creeds are obviously before Paul's epistles, where they were written down.

And so, most researchers think we have, what they call, pre-Pauline creeds, and I'll date the pre-Pauline creeds as occurring, either prior to Paul's conversion...in other words, when he was on his way to Damascus, these things were already in existence and he hated them...or by his conversion, or by his first trip to Jerusalem in 36 AD. Right in that little, tiny window from about one to five years after the cross these creeds come into existence. And first Corinthians 15:3 and following is the best known one. It's very, very early and it gives us eyewitness testimony of the disciples, three individuals, well Paul adds his name later, but the actual creed to Peter and James, in three groups: the 12, all the apostles, and the 500. Very early, very powerful. That's number three, these early pre-Pauline creeds.

Frank:

Hey, let me ask you this, because you just said something that you went by quickly, but it's an unbelievable point. You said death, deity, and resurrection are all early, prior to 36 AD. What about the people, the liberals or the critics who say, well, the deity of Christ only developed decades and decades later? It just shows up in the Gospel of John. And you're saying, no, it's early. How?

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Gary:

It's very, very early. Bart Ehrman's latest view, he nuances some of his things he used to say. He believes, if I have him right, in his *How Jesus Became God* book, he says, Jesus did not teach his deity, but the earliest disciples did immediately, and it's a very high Christology from the outset. Which is, he was on the right hand of God, he was worshipped...I mean, right away...right hand of God, he was worshipped, and was pre-existent. And that was taught immediately. Now that's not one of the five points, but when I'm saying this stuff came all early, it came like it was shot out of a cannon. And the cannon, if you can picture this, the cannon is the resurrection. Everybody goes, he really was what he said. And that's when it dawned on him. So, we've got James' conversion, the homologia, the earliest preacher without structure, the earliest preaching with structure, the creeds.

Okay, four is Paul's conversion, because it's admitted by all critics. Something happened and Paul said, I saw the risen Jesus.

And five is, he dates it in Galatians 1, three years after his conversion, he made a trip to Jerusalem to meet with Peter and James and spent 15 days with them. And even Bart Ehrman says...he's funny here. He goes, Peter and James are two good guys to know if you want to do something on historical Jesus. And then Bart goes, I wished I knew him like that. And then he goes on to say, how do we get closer to the eyewitnesses than that group in Jerusalem in 36? I think it's the strongest eyewitness argument in the New Testament, because we have to do a lot of arguing to get one of the gospel authors. Who's the author? But that, we got Paul, James, and Peter right there. And when he comes back the second time...that's not part of my five, it was 14 years later. But when he comes back the second time, specifically here in Galatians 2:2, they were discussing the gospel, which is deity, death, the resurrection. So, those five; after the cross, James, early unstructured preaching, structured preaching, the creeds, Paul's conversion, Paul's trip to Jerusalem where he spends 15 days with these two apostles talking about the gospel.

Frank:

Now the reason we're going through this today ladies and gentlemen, is because Dr. Gary Habermas, whom I'm talking to right now, has been writing his magnum opus for several years. And although some of these discoveries aren't new, per se, the way that you are expressing

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them might be a little new, Gary, that people haven't heard yet. And I know you just sent off the first volume of this four volume magnum opus...

Gary:

Almost 1,300 pages.

Frank:

...and you sent it to the publisher yesterday. First of all, what's in the first volume? This probably won't come out for another year and a half. But what's in the first volume?

Gary:

Two words; the evidence. The evidence from the minimal facts. And the point of the minimal facts is, use only the facts that critics will allow, not because they will allow it, but because the data for them are so good. So, you got to backup those two. The main thing for the minimal facts, the evidence for them is really good. There's a lot of for each one. Secondly, the critics allow it because of that. So, I start with their data because they've got nowhere to run and nowhere to hide. They admit the data. And I admit that we have the same facts, but we don't always agree on interpretations, so we have to argue that the interpretation of the experiences that they thought they had were, indeed, appearances of the risen Jesus.

Frank:

Now, Gary, you point out that one of the reasons they don't interpret the data the way we might interpret the data, that Jesus actually did rise in the dead, is because they have a naturalistic bias or an anti-supernatural bias. When you confront these people on that bias, what questions do you ask them?

Gary:

Well, a couple things. I want to know where's your evidence for naturalism. Don't tell me I have to give you evidence from my worldview, but you can sit back there and pick on me and you have no duty to give me evidence for your worldview. So, I want their evidence for naturalism. That's the atheist's response because they don't have anything they can point to, not that we call evidence.

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Frank:

Yeah, how could you?

Gary:

They say the problem of evil. Well, the problem with the problem of evil is that God may or may not solve it. If he does, you lose. You go, how about evolution? Problem with evolution is you don't have a cause, you don't have any previous...what's before the Big Bang, or however you want to say before without time. But the point is, you have cosmological problems. I'm no evolutionist, but put God there, and you don't have a problem anymore. So, your arguments for evil and evolution are not stand alone arguments. They don't prove your worldview, in fact, you need God for both of them.

Frank:

Yeah, in fact, yeah, you wouldn't have evil unless there was a standard of good and you only have a standard of good if God exists.

Gary:

And if you don't have cosmology, you don't have the beginning. C.S. Lewis said, "If there ever was a time when nothing existed, nothing would exist now". So, when you go, well, something was there, I go, yeah God, now let's go on. It'd be like if I were using resurrection, but it can't stand alone. I need something else to make resurrection work. Resurrection isn't hook line and sinker, I mean, when it's the person who was raised. So, that's the biggest objection you get right now is worldview. And the big thing I'm coming back with is, we know there's an afterlife [unintelligible]. Someone just told me today that a leading atheist, I won't use his name and if I confirm the quote, but a very well-known top five atheist has said that 1/3 of atheists and agnostics believe in an afterlife. And it's like saying they believe in ethics. I go, that's not the question I asked. What's your basis for your ethics? And what's your basis for the third of you that believes in afterlife? So, these are tough, and they think, I don't have to answer. I'm here to question you. Well, I guess so.

Frank:

Well, you know, our mutual friend Norm Geisler used to say, "It's easy to smell a rotten egg, it's hard to lay a better one". They just want to smell a rotten egg thinking we got it wrong, but

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they don't have to give any positive viewpoint for their worldview. And of course, they do. And our egg isn't rotten. Because you've done some great work on this, Gary.

Gary:

That's the second volume. The second volume is 1,100 pages on naturalistic theories.

Frank:

Oh, is it?

Gary:

Yeah.

Frank:

Okay. And they don't take a position on naturalistic theory as much anymore, do they?

Gary:

They usually don't. Bart Ehrman says it himself. He says, well I was an evangelical. I used to love people to give me a naturalistic theory, because we had the data, and we would argue them in a corner pretty quickly, and they would look pretty bad. And then he goes on to say, I'm not gonna pick a naturalistic theory anymore. He goes, I'm not going to take a stand for anyone. And his reason is, according to David Hume, any theory is better than the resurrection. He says, the fact that the disciples stole the body...well, it's not a fact...but that the disciples stole the body is a dumb theory, but it's better than a miracle. So, he messes up Hume because that's not Hume.

Frank:

Right.

Gary:

He always gets on people for not being New Testament scholars. Well, he should be a philosopher if he's going to talk about David Hume. Don't talk about Hume and say your source is Greek.

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Frank:

What is the answer to that: Anything is more reasonable than a resurrection? What would you say to that?

Gary:

I'm going [unintelligible] worldview and ask those questions. First of all: What about beginning? What about time? What about ethics? What about an afterlife? But I also, that last one, I've been spending time with the afterlife scenario and going, let's talk about near death experiences. It's a neutral thing in the sense that it happens to millions of people. They're not miracles. And if there's an afterlife, you should be more open to my belief in the resurrection, because it's about the afterlife.

Frank:

That's right. And you've got documented evidence for vertical NDEs, near death experiences.

Gary:

[Unintelligible] evidence for resurrection.

Frank:

Yeah, that's true. You got them both.

[Unintelligible]

Gary:

And he's sitting there going, I don't believe it. I say, well, that's just fine. I'm not trying to convert you. You're the one interviewing me. If you don't believe it, that's fine.

Frank:

This is the great Dr. Gary Habermas ladies and gentlemen. It's been great having you on Gary, just for 13 minutes.

Gary:

13 whole minutes.

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Frank:

But GaryHabermas.com is where you need to go. A bunch of this you can see at Gary's website. ladies and gentlemen.

Gary:

I've got a YouTube site too.

Frank:

You have a YouTube site as well?

Gary:

Over 100 videos. That's only been up for about a year and a half or so.

Frank:

Alright, we're back with J. Warner Wallace and Alisa Childers, so don't go anywhere. I'm Frank Turek. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Our website is CrossExamined.org. And also check out GaryHabermas.com. Thanks. Be back in a couple.

Ladies and gentlemen, we're back at Southern Evangelical Seminary's National Conference on Christian Apologetics (SES.edu). If you want to get involved in apologetics at a professional level, in other words, you want a degree, this is where you need to go. And our emcee for the conference is the great J. Warner Wallace. He's sitting next to me right now. By the way, if you don't have his phenomenal Person of Interest book, you need to get it. We may talk a little bit about that in this segment. But Jim, you've been doing a lot of research the past couple of years. Give us a couple of things you've learned over the past couple of years that you think Christians ought to know about from an evidentiary perspective. What would they be?

Jim:

Okay, so this is going to be something...it's not necessarily evidential, but you know, sometimes you'll think about things, and it'll change, kind of like, from a 30,000 foot view, it'll change the way you look at things. And so, one of them has been that I'm more and more convinced that we are living in the identity generation. That people are making decisions about whether something is true, not so much because there's like evidence. That's a pretty old school way of

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looking at things, right. Or even that you've had an experience that maybe you've resonated with or demonstrated something was true. I actually think it's about whether or not you want to be identified with it. Is the worldview something that you want to take on as your own personal identity?

And I started thinking about this even with my own kids who are like, you know, all like Millennials or maybe older Gen Z's. They would say things to me like, yeah, all my friends will say if I have to vote a certain way in order to be a Christian, I'm not interested. Because they attached the Christian worldview, or the Christian identity, with the political identity. And, you know, this is where it's gender identity issues, there's identity politics.

I mean, we really are at the point where it's about: Do I see myself as this person? Two things. That's the first thing. I think that now I look at things through the issue of this is why when I wrote Person of Interest, I wanted to shift it not toward just what's the case for Jesus. But why is Jesus, why does he still matter? Like, why would you want to identify yourself with Jesus? Why would you want to say I'm in Christ? This morning, you did a talk on identity, and I took copious notes while I was there, because I'm just trying to think through how this changes the way I make a case. I very seldom will make a case now where I don't talk about the importance of our being in Christ as part of our identity.

And second thing I'm thinking about a lot more, and it's probably because of my work with Franklin Graham and Samaritan's Purse, is that I often will make a case for something, and I'd be called in to make the case. They call me to a conference. Can you make the case for this or the case for that? And I would be happy to do that, but I won't do it anymore without preaching the gospel. So, if you bring me in, at some point, at the end of this talk, I am going to preach the gospel. Because I feel like, maybe it's my age, but a lot of what I feel like we need to do, maybe I've been negligent in my own work, is that I have stopped just short of.

You know, I've said, hey, my job is to put the stone in someone's shoe, to do all the things we always talk about, but I never would go all in. And I think so many times you're at a place where you've made this case, and if you've made it in a compelling way, it's like you're really close, you're standing on the edge of an opportunity to share the gospel, and I won't do it. And I'm thinking: Why would I do it? No, from now on, I just have moved from simply making the case.

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And now how you put those two things together, is I find myself wanting to include something about identity, as I'm preaching the gospel, right. So, for a generation that is struggling to figure out...and they're putting their identity of these temporal things that change at a moment's notice, you know. It's the tattoos I wear or cover. It's the hair. I just grew this goatee. What am I doing? We're constantly shaping our identity and the way the world sees us. And these are all really quick. How's that working for everybody? We're more divided now. If there were only two identities in the world to choose from, we'd be divided in half on those two identities. But if it were three we'd be divided in three ways.

Well, if there are 3 billion ways to identify ourselves, we're going to be far more separated and divided than we've ever been before. And the idea that there might be a transcendent identity that doesn't change, that you could put yourself in that identity to be seen that way, it's like the only hope. I say all the time now that the gospel is a cure for every kind of stupid you can think of, including identities; stupid cops, stupid cultural, stupid whatever stupid it is you're looking at, there's a way to solve it and it's with the gospel. The case is powerful, but I feel like the gospel carries the Spirit of God as power, and if I can get to the Gospel, now I'm drafting behind the power of God.

Frank:

Yeah, in reality, most Christians become Christians, not because they've seen the evidence that it's true, necessarily, or they've answered every question. Nobody's answered every question that we have about it. But they do sense that there's something supernatural about Jesus when they read about him, and they go, there's something special here. So, then they become a Christian. And then once they're on the inside of the worldview, then things start to make more sense. It's hard when you're on the outside. Sometimes it doesn't make sense and it's almost like you have to believe first for your eyes to be opened sometimes to some of this.

Jim:

I think tomorrow we're going to do a talk here at SCS at the conference on deconstruction and I get to ask the questions of the panelists. And I will be asking questions about identity because what I've noticed is that when we first become Christians we're so delighted to identify ourselves as Christ followers. And I see that that's a name still that a lot of us would prefer to use, because it seems clear to us. Why? Because if we say we're Christians, now we're

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identifying with a group that people think of. If we say we're Christ followers, we're identifying with Jesus of Nazareth. And when I see people who deconstruct, they almost always, it seems to me, have a problem with their identity in the church...

Frank:
Right.

Jim:
...or their identity with the group. And so, I think a lot of it is about where you place your identity.

Frank:
Yeah.

Jim:
Identity matters to God. Our names. I first started thinking about this a couple of weeks ago and I think was one of the Jenners who decided she's going to rename her son. Her son is named Wolf and she decided I'm renaming him...he's like six or seven months old...because I don't think that that matches his identity anymore. Like it never did, right.

Frank:
Yeah, right.

Jim:
With a newborn, how do you know Wolf is gonna match your identity? But the point is that we still pick names that we want to be associated with. I hope when my wife married me she wanted to become a Wallace. It became her identity. And I started thinking about this, you know, in scripture this happens all the time, right. You're no longer Abram and Sarai. You're mine now. I'm changing your name. You're no longer Simon. I'm changing everything about you including your name.

Frank:
You're now The Rock.

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Jim:

Yeah. So, I think that part of this is really consistent. I think young people still want to know: Who am I? And this is the biggest struggle, right. And everything you pick is so fleeting, like you talked about this morning. As a detective, I achieved that position. My identity was in the agency. Even as a Christian, I could have said, I'm a Christian. But the reality of it was when I left the job, the last day I drove off the compound, I was miserable because I realized I was no longer an IS, I was about to become a WAS. And my identity was attached to that. And so, I think that's the struggle that most of us have, we just don't really maybe voice it that way. But I think we could voice our Christian worldview as through the lens of what it means to take on something that you could never earn, therefore, you could never lose.

Frank:

That's the beauty of the Christian worldview. It's the only worldview where you don't achieve your identity, you receive your identity. You have to achieve it. All the pressures on you. And as you just said, things change, you know, your heart changes, your desires change, your situation changes. If that's the case then your identity is going to change every 10 minutes, or you know, every couple of years or whatever. It's going to be fleeting.

Jim:

When I was in high school, I was so involved as a guitar player. I played guitar for hours and hours every day. When Peter Frampton came out with his solo album, his live album, Frampton Comes Alive, I memorized that note for note, every lick.

Frank:

Show Me the Way. Come on.

Jim:

I could do every single thing. And I identified myself as a guitar player until Eddie Van Halen's first album, and then I realized, I will never be that good. Because I could never achieve that level of excellence. There's somebody who can outdo you in the thing that you think is your identity. That's the struggle of identity, is that if you have to achieve it, there will always be somebody, there always be an Eddie Van Halen around the next turn. And you will find yourself feeling bad about yourself, because you put your identity in the wrong place.

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Frank:

You know, the amazing thing too Jim is, is that the identity that we receive is the identity of Christ. And you point out in Person of Interest that Jesus is the most impactful human being to ever walk the Earth. We got just a couple of minutes here. Why don't you tell people, other than the fact that it's true that He is our Savior, why should people want to identify with Jesus?

Jim:

Yeah, because everything that you think is important as an atheist, all the stuff that I thought was important as an atheist, and that was literature, and music, and art, and education, and science...those are the things we hold up...philosophy, high values we hold. And it turns out that those are the aspects of human culture that were forever changed by the one man who had more impact on literature, art, music, education, and science than any other person in the history of persons. His entire story can be reconstructed from every aspect of those aspects of culture. If you're interested in those things as an atheist, you are only interested in things that are as they are because of Jesus and his followers. So, he matters to you even if you haven't been paying attention to him, because the things that do matter to you are standing on his shoulder.

Frank:

What are those things again?

Jim:

Literature, art, music, education, and science. Now also, theistic worldviews are all grounded on Jesus. All of the theistic worldviews hat tip Jesus in some way.

Frank:

So, world religions too then.

Jim:

I was not interested as an atheist in world religions, but the things I was interested in; literature, art, music, education, and science, also are equally indebted. You can learn more about Jesus from the fathers of the major scientific disciplines, historically, than you can learn from the church fathers in the first 300 years. That's the impact that Jesus has had in the

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sciences. The major scientists in the history of science have all written about Jesus. And from their writings, you could reconstruct enough to know how to place your faith in Jesus as Savior, just from the writings of the science fathers.

That cannot be said for any other figure in history, let alone religious figures. You cannot reconstruct Buddha, from literature, art, music, education, and science, the way you can reconstruct Jesus. He's had that kind of impact. There are only three options. He's a piece of fiction, but you can't find another example of fiction impacting the world in this way, so it's reasonable to infer is more than fiction. You will also not find another living human being who's had this kind of impact, so it's reasonable to infer something more than just another living human being. The third option is, he's just the God of creation who enters into his creation and it has the kind of impact that, guess what, you see if you start looking for it.

Frank:

Person of Interest. You need to get the book. Jim, I keep forgetting to talk about this and it's coming up on us. We got to talk about CIA. CIA is coming the end of July in Cincinnati, Ohio. And you're going to be there. Why should people come to CIA?

Jim:

Because people listen to this, and they want to be more involved. They see a role that they need to play. Look, you're a full time, I call you a million dollar apologist. Not in the sense you're making a million dollars because I know we're not doing that.

Frank:

I wish it was.

Jim:

That's the kind of impact you're having doing this full time. But the rest of us who are just retired from one discipline or another, we are all \$1 apologists, but we can have huge impact that starts by coming to CIA. We've never done CIA in Cincinnati before. You know how I hate to travel, so I don't even want to go to Cincinnati because it's far from me, but I'm happy to do this for this cause, because we need to bring up another million \$1 apologists.

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Frank:

CrossExamined Instructor Academy ladies and gentlemen. That's CIA. We run it every year. We only take 60 students. myself, J. Warner Wallace, my next guest, Alisa Childers. We're all going to be your instructors along with Greg Koukl, Richard Howe, Brett Kunkle, Jorge Gil, and others. We've got a whole team. Go to CrossExamined.org and click on Events. You'll see CIA there. And go to Amazon or wherever you get books and get the Person of Interest book if you don't have it. Also go to ColdCaseChristianity.com for Jim's website. Phenomenal stuff. We're back in two with the Alisa Childers. Thanks, Jim.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the most inclusive, tolerant, and diverse podcast we've ever done because we got all great people on it. We've had Scott Klussendorf, Gary Habermas, we just had J. Warner Wallace. Now the great Alisa Childers is here from AlisaChilders.com. And you know Alisa. She's got a podcast going, she's got a YouTube channel, and she's got the book, *Another Gospel*, and a couple of new books coming out shortly. But before we get into that, Alisa, the 12 minutes we have here right now we want to devote to this question: What have you learned over the past, say, year or two? You've been doing a lot of research; you've been mixing it up in a lot of different fields right now. What have you learned in the past couple of years that you think Christians need to know?

Alisa:

This is a great question because I do think there's especially one thing that really emerges that I think every Christian needs to understand. And it has to do with the nature of truth. And I'll give you a little bit of a setup for it. Because, as you mentioned, I've got a couple of books coming out kind of shortly after one another. The third book that I'm currently writing right now...so, it's my third book...is on deconstruction. This phenomenon of faith deconstruction, where you'll see on social media, some celebrity Christian, say, hey, I had some questions, nobody could answer my questions, now I'm out. And so, as part of that research, I have of course listened to a lot of deconstruction stories, but I've also talked privately via zoom with people who have platforms in the deconstruction space, asking them questions, listening to their stories, trying to get my hands around what this is. And one thing that has become really clear to me, and it's linked with this phenomenon of deconstruction, and that is this, that I think most people, even a lot of Christians, are so influenced by post modernism, and they may not even realize it.

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Frank:

What does it mean? What would you say post modernism is?

Alisa:

Postmodern could be explained a lot of different ways, but I think there's two characteristics that make post modernism understandable to most people. Number one, its marked by its approach to truth, which would be relativism. So, what's true for you is true for you, what's true for me is true for me. It's also marked by a hyper-skepticism. And this is, I think, where we see a lot of it manifesting in people's worldviews. So, we're living in a time where a lot of people don't believe objective truth exists, and the ones who even would say, well, if it exists, we can't know it. And so, if we can't know it, anybody coming along...

Frank:

But they know that.

Alisa:

Yeah, exactly.

Frank:

It's objectively true. We know there's no objective truth, okay.

Alisa:

But you know, anybody coming along claiming certainty - especially when it comes to religion, or matters of faith, or in the Bible - anybody that comes along making truth claims about who God is or how he has revealed himself, this is viewed with a hyper-skepticism because they think, well, since nobody can actually know objective truth, anybody coming along saying, hey, you need to believe this or you need to believe that is viewed with a great amount of suspicion. What is the person's motives for making these claims about what they think is objectively true? Are they trying to control me? Are they trying to prop up a system or you know, what might be viewed as a toxic system?

And so, I think the thing that I really hope Christians can understand is that when we're engaging with people in this culture, a lot of times people are viewing your truth claims as

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power grabs. So, if you're coming along saying, hey, you have to believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins, the first instinct in the mind of the person who's wrapped up in post-modernism is to think well, what kind of institution are you protecting? Or in what way are you trying to control the narrative? So, they're not really interacting with the truth claim anymore, they're psychologizing it and looking for the motive underneath what you're saying.

Frank:

So, what would you say to somebody who said, oh, your evangelical Christian viewpoint is just a power grab? What do you say to that?

Alisa:

Well, the first thing I would want to do is ask some clarifying questions. First of all, what does evangelical mean to you? That would be my first question because that word is a loaded term.

Frank:

It means you're Republican.

Alisa:

That's right. I mean, and so many people think that evangelicals almost synonymous with somebody who's a white supremacist.

Frank:

Oh yeah.

Alisa:

It could mean anything to people.

Frank:

We're not judging though.

Alisa:

Right. Yeah. We're not judging. So, I would want to ask: What do you think that word means? And then I would look for creative ways to expose that, really, we're all doing the same thing.

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And maybe show that person, like you point out, there is no truth. Well, is that true? You've just made an objective truth claim. What are you trying to control? What is the power grab? Then they might think, well, I'm not trying to grab power. And trying to level the playing field a little bit. But honestly, Frank, it's very, very difficult to have conversations that surround objective truth with people that have abandoned it. In fact, there's teachers who will tell them, if you think in the either or categories, you know, that's childish thinking. That's dualistic thinking. We need to embrace contradiction. And that way, that author can go ahead and contradict themselves for the rest of their book and train their readers to be like, oh, this is a wise, enlightened person.

Frank:

So, you're saying I must use the either or logic or nothing else?

Alisa:

Correct. That's the point. There's a really, really popular book written by Richard Rohr that teaches that. You know, these either or thinkers, it's dualism. And they're just stuck in this childish way of thinking. But then he believes that either God is a God of wrath and judgment, or he isn't - and he believes he isn't - and so the whole book and that whole approach is just filled with contradiction. But, you know, we have to look for creative ways to show people that this just doesn't work. It fails logically.

Frank:

What do you do, though, with somebody who says that I'm not following truth because I don't think there is any truth? I mean, how do you get anywhere with someone who says that, when you show them that their view isn't true? Is it like they don't really care? I mean, is it apatheism, at that point? What do you do with somebody like that?

Alisa:

Well, we're talking with people from a completely different worldview. If you think about Gen Z, my kids are in the Gen Z generation, 13 and 10. They've grown up as digital natives, the internet is their native language, and because of that they have access to all this information, so any question they might ask, they can go online, they can Google it...and I mean, you know, with permission, or if they didn't have restraints they could go on and they could find

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somebody that says one thing, and then another person that opposes that, and then somebody that that contradicts that, and then...they could do that for the rest of their lives on one question. And I think that has made them deeply suspicious of people claiming no, this is actually true, this is the right way to go. And so therefore, I think, especially Gen Z, they're not looking for information that is true - this is so key, especially in a deconstruction conversation - they're not looking for information that's true, they're looking for information they agree with, or something that affirms what's in their...

And I don't mean to minimize it and sound like, oh, we're just following our hearts like Elsa. In a way that is what ends up happening. But it's a deep confusion of trying to figure out this world where people believe so many different things. That's why I think this whole mantra of live your truth - you live your truth, Frank, and all live my truth - we're not going to tell each other we're wrong. Because who can know anyway? There's just endless information out there. So, I think right now, the main thing that Christians need to be able to do is defend objective truth and demonstrate why, not only is objective truth true, but it's good, because that's what this younger generation thinks is that if you make those claims, that's not good, that's actually something that's morally dubious and suspicious.

Frank:

It's interesting then, they also have a moral standard that they're importing into the system. So, a couple of questions I think you can ask them is, well, first of all: What you mean by good? Why is that good to be skeptical all the time? Is that a moral good? And if someone is certain that say torturing babies for fun is wrong are they bad?

Alisa:

Right.

Frank:

It just seems odd to me. And then of course, the question we always like to ask is: If Christianity were really true, would you become a Christian? And I don't know, in the experience I've had asking that question most people, if they're honest, will say, no. They're not interested. Yeah.

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Alisa:

Yeah. Well, and I think, too, just even in this phenomenon of deconstruction - and you've talked about this before, and I think you're spot on in, in all my research, I think it bears out.

Frank:

That's just true for you. [laughing]

Alisa:

In all my research, it bears out, and that's that there is a moral underpinning to every deconstruction story. Frank, from every story I've listened to, to every deconstructionist I've talked to, even if it's not the main focus of their what they're saying there's this moral underpinning to it to where they have decided that what the Bible teaches about sexuality is not just wrong, but harmful. That's the words you'll hear. It's actually harmful to people. It oppresses people. And therefore, we have to get rid of that system that is oppressive. And so, again, this is where the postmodern approach to truth comes out, because it's really not about what's true, it's about what a person with their own moral compass believes is help giving and bringing wholeness or is it bringing harm to you.

But the problem with that is, you know, I remember taking my son to the dentist and he had to have a cavity drilled and he was too young to really understand what was going on, but it was a little bit painful for him. I remember him looking up at me from the chair like, what are you doing? And I'm sure in that moment he thought that was harmful, he didn't think that was leading him toward wholeness, but as his mother I have more information and I know if we don't deal with that cavity, that's going to burrow into the bone, it can cause a ton of health problems that would cause even greater pain in the future. And so, how much more information does God have than we do if we just follow our own selves to say, I think this is harmful or helpful for me. There's going to be a whole lot of things in the Bible that we say, I think that's harmful, I'm not gonna I'm not gonna do it that.

Frank:

That's right. Yeah, as Christians, we believe Jesus is smarter than us.

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Alisa:

Yeah. That's right.

Frank:

And the so many of these so-called progressive Christians, which you're really the expert in, they disagree with Jesus. I just find it hard to describe yourself as a Christian if you're disagreeing with Jesus. How do they get away with that? Why do they do that?

Alisa:

Well, that's because they don't define Jesus according to the Scriptures. So, in progressive Christianity, the Bible is really viewed as an ancient book that was written by people who were just trying to figure God out. This represents religion and Christianity in its absolute [unintelligible]...

Frank:

But those are all objective truth claims that they're saying there well, so they can't get away from it.

Alisa:

That's what's so interesting. In Pete Enns' book he says, the Bible is an ancient book, and we shouldn't expect it to act like a modern book. So, it doesn't represent God the way God really is. God isn't really like that. But that's the question I'd like to ask. How do you know what God is like? There's an objective truth claim being made about the nature and character of God, which he has the authority apparently to say the Bible gets wrong.

Frank:

That's right. We only got 40 seconds to go. What are you working on right now that people ought to know about? How can they learn more about you?

Alisa:

Well, I have a new book called *Live Your Truth and Other Lies: Exposing Popular Deceptions that Make Us Anxious, Exhausted, and Self-Obsessed*. That's coming out October 18th. I'm very, very excited about that book. And then not even a whole year after that one, the following August,

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will be the book on deconstruction that I'm writing with Tim Burnett from Red Pen Logic, and that will be untitled right now. So, we're not sure what that will be called.

Frank:

That is great. And of course, Alisa is one of the instructors we're gonna have at CIA. She went through CIA. Now she's a million dollar apologist, as J. Warner Wallace would say. Right? I mean, come on! You're not making a million dollars, but you're doing great work Alisa.

Alisa:

A \$10 one.

Frank:

\$20 at least. I'll give you \$100. Okay, that's Alisa Childers ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for being with us. I'm Frank Turek on I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. We're back next week, Lord willing. God bless. See you then.

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