

How to Stand for Christ in a Collapsing Culture |with Dr. Erwin Lutzer

(May 9, 2023)

Frank:

When the Soviet dissident, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, left the Soviet Union (he was actually kicked out of the Soviet Union in the early 70's), he told his citizens there in the Soviet Union to live not by lies. And there are so many lies now coming to America that Rod Dreher wrote the book *Live Not by Lies*, based on what Solzhenitsyn said. In fact, some of the former Soviet dissidents are so worried about America, because of this totalitarianism that's coming down in our culture. Not as much from the government, but it's starting to increase there.

A lot of it is coming from big tech, and universities, and censorship, and that kind of thing. We don't want to live by lies. We want to speak the truth. But what happens when you try and speak the truth? You know, there's an old saying from the Soviet Union that said, the tallest blade of grass gets cut first. If you stand up, and you say, I've had enough of the speech codes, I've had enough of the sexualization of our children. I've had enough of this kind of cultural Marxism going on, you might lose your job. You might lose your career. What do you do about this?

Well, my guest, who was my guest on the last podcast we did (the radio program, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist), Dr. Erwin Lutzer has written a book, *No Reason to Hide: Standing for Christ in a Collapsing Culture*. We covered a lot in that last podcast. But in the midweek podcast, we want to talk about some practical ways that you can deal with the threats that are out there. Because Dr. Lutzer, no reason to hide, actually, I think there probably is a reason to hide. You could lose your livelihood if you speak out against this. So, what do we do?

Erwin:

Well, first of all, Frank, I want to commend you for putting out there exactly what people are facing. And I think if I might say this on behalf of pastors, it is so important for pastors to help their people to understand that there comes a time when you have to draw a line in the sand. There are some things you can go ahead with and accept in our culture. But there are some things that you cannot accept without violating your conscience. And what it comes down to is the question of, are you going to violate your conscience and take the consequences? Or are you going to go with the flow?

To show you how practical this is, somebody sent me a text not too long ago that said, I'm in a business and I'm asked to sign this statement about diversity. Can a Christian sign it? And I said, well, the first three or four things on that statement you can sign I think, with a clear conscience as a Christian. But if you have the issue, for example, of using multiple pronouns and calling a man a woman, then I think that you really do have a problem. Now, there might be a way around it. By the way, in my book, *No Reason to Hide*, I try to help people think through



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this. And my view is, if a boy is born, and his name is Bert, and he wants you to call him Betty, I think that's fine because names are not gendered.

So, if he wants to call himself Betty, you can go along with Betty. But if he's a boy, and he wants to be called she, you have a serious problem because you know right well, that your conscience is being violated because you know that he is not a she. And you know that men can't have babies too, and all the rest. So, there may be a way around it. Namely, always call him Betty instead of using the pronouns. But the other thing that you have to do is to share with your employer your convictions. And if it is true, they say, well, what about my truth? Then what you have to do is to say, well, what about my truth?

Why is your truth so important that I need to bow to it? Can't I live by my truth? So, those are the kinds of consequences you get into. And if the time comes when you can no longer live within this situation and violate your conscience...I know that this is hard. I wish I had a magic wand to help people to say do this. You actually might have to look for another job. Now, in the podcast that we did previously, I mentioned a man here in Chicago, who teaches in the school system who was told it is not enough for you to tolerate same-sex marriage. If you don't celebrate it, you could lose your job.

Okay. Now, let's take this practical situation. He cannot celebrate what God has condemned. Therefore, if he loses his job, my question is, is the church going to come around him and say we support you? We are going to help you financially and in every other way, because after all, you do have a wife and family, and you need to live. I think, Frank, that our present situation is going to force us to even rethink the role of the church. We live with a lot of individualism. And of course, as we know, watching church online has increased that, where everybody is at home in their pajamas, having a cup of coffee as was certainly true during the COVID era.

But we're going to have to learn that. Now, my wife and I were in the Soviet Union. We were in Russia before the wall fell. One of the things we noticed is, we go to people's homes, and all of these foods show up. And I asked privately, where did all this food come from? And they said, you must understand that we work together. Everybody brings something, because we can no longer depend on certain individuals because they don't have enough money. They don't have enough resources. So, we're going to have to rethink church. So, the answer to many of the problems is that.

The other thing that you have to do, is to find good answers when confronted with certain issues. And nobody does this better than you do, Frank, as you try to help people think through the logical consequences of their viewpoint. But in my book, *No Reason to Hide*, I try to help parents think through, what do you do when your child comes home from school, and says, I think I'm trans? Well, listen to that child very carefully. But then you must help them to understand that self-perception is not an accurate guide as to who you are. You could actually go into a psych ward and find people who do believe that they are Napoleon, and they believe so very genuinely. But that doesn't make them Napoleon.

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Perhaps a more practical example, is a girl who is struggling with anorexia. And I've known some. They look into the mirror, and they believe that they are overweight when in point of fact, they are not. They are starving themselves to death. So, is self-perception an accurate guide? No, not necessarily. And what you need to do is to recognize that we're living at a time when the cultural streams are so powerful, in fact, to become part of the in group, you should say that you are trans. And we must help them to understand that there are certain factors in creation that made them a boy or a girl, a man or a woman.

And they must go along with what the Creator designed them to be, and not think that if they rebelled against that and they go in a different direction, that they are going to be satisfied and more happy. The fact is, over and over again, we're having more and more people who have taken the various hormones and so forth, deeply regretting it. And many of them say that there are plenty more out there, but they are afraid, because they know that they will be vilified. And there are plenty of stories of that.

So, what we must do is to help people to know that we are in a new era here in America that we are not used to. Namely, standing for Christ and taking the consequences. As a matter of fact, in my book, *No Reason to Hide*, the last chapter is on persecution because I think that we in America have to rethink what living for Christ is all about, and the consequences of having a clear conscience before God.

Frank:

Let me recommend a SexChangeRegret.com on the trans issue. That's the website of Walt Heyer, who tried to live as a female for eight years. Walt then found Christ and came back, detransitioned and set up a website. He has helped thousands of people who have come back too. It's called SexChangeRegret.com. Let me go back to your first comment, Dr. Lutzer. You seem to be saying the same thing that Rod Dreher said in his book *Live Not by Lies*. He went back and looked at the history of, I think the Czechoslovakian area he was talking about. At the end of World War II, they knew that the Nazis were going to lose the war. But they also knew the Soviets were going to come in and put an iron curtain around them.

And there was a Catholic priest over there. I can't remember his name. But he told his congregation, if we're going to survive this, we need to get into small groups now. And then we need to stay into small groups to support one another. Because when totalitarianism comes, we have to support the individuals in our small group if they get picked off by the tyranny. So, if somebody loses their job, we're going to come around that person, find them a new job, and financially support them until they do find a new job. And that's what needs to happen now friends.

You need to get into small groups. You need to get into a church group, and then a small group within that church. And you guys need to pledge to one another, that when you stand for truth in the public square, and you get picked off, that you're going to support people in your group that

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do get picked off, and they're going to support you as well. That's the only way forward. In addition to speaking the truth and giving people good reasons why you ought not be discriminated against for your beliefs, when you are discriminated against for your beliefs, you have to have a support system around you.

You also need to call ADF, the Alliance Defending Freedom. Because if it's a religious liberty issue, they may just come to your rescue. ADF is great. They come to the rescue of a lot of Christians who have their religious freedom taken away by the people who say they're fighting for tolerance, diversity, and inclusion. They're not fighting for that at all, Dr. Lutzer, as you well know. They're fighting for a one view way. And if you don't see it their way, they are going to hurt you.

Erwin:

Always remember, in a totalitarian state, there's no neutral ground. You either have to go along with the totalitarian ideas, or you're going to be persecuted in one way or another. And mentioning ADF, the Alliance Defending Freedom, I spoke at their devotions just over a year and a half ago, and a wonderful organization that is really standing for truth. Let me give you one example. My wife and I were having breakfast with an attorney that works for them. And she was defending two women that were in a store, actually a chain store, but I won't mention the name. They were expected to wear the rainbow flag on their lapel. They had served in the stores 20 some years, and they said no. And so, both of them were fired.

Now there's an example where the ADF came in and is fighting the lawsuit. I don't know exactly where the lawsuit ended, but I would like to think that ADF won. But that's the kind of issue that people are going to face today. And you know, if people think that elections don't have consequences...and really sincerely as a pastor, I've never endorsed a political candidate or a political party. But there is a school in Missouri, a Christian school that has filed a lawsuit about a year ago against the government, because the government is saying if you receive Pell grants, you have to give equality to the trans community. Now, Frank, do you have children?

Frank:

Children and grandchildren, yes sir. Just like you.

Erwin:

Yes, and we have children and grandchildren. Now, let's suppose that your daughter or your grandchild, your granddaughter, were applying to a school, a Christian school, and the roommate assigned to her was a boy who now says he's a girl? So, how would you respond to that, Frank?

Frank:

Yeah, that would not go down. If I had a daughter and they gave her a trans roommate, a boy who's dressed just as a girl...no. That's not happening. And that's what's happening all over the culture now. They're in the same bathroom, the same locker room. They're competing in the

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same sports. They're going in prisons now, as you know, Dr. Lutzer. Men who are claiming to be women in prison are now put in women's prisons, and then they rape the women. This is madness.

Erwin:

You know, I was told the other day that it's so important that when we talk about the darkness of America, we also give people hope. And so, I want to do that. It is so important to recognize that ultimately, God is sovereign. And let's remember what the Bible says in Psalm 2. "The Lord is in the heavens. The Lord laughs at the wicked." Someday, I'm going to preach on the laughter of God. There's also a verse in the psalms that talks about, God laughs and keeps them in derision.

So, what you and I need to do, is when the culture begins to close in on us, rather than despair...though there are going to be moments of despair. It is a reminder of the fact that we are ultimately in God's hands, not even in the hands of Satan, though we may be thrust into that sieve (to quote the words of a German pastor to his congregation during the Nazi era). He said, Satan is swinging the sieve, (this was [unintelligible] Mohler), back and forth to discern the difference between the wheat and the chaff. And that's what it's coming to here in America.

But we need to know that God is with His people. Now, the reason that I think, Frank, we as Americans need to rethink our understanding of persecution and faithfulness to Christ is this. We think to ourselves, if the church were what it should be, we'd always have freedom. We'd be able to preach the Gospel. We'd be able to spread it without censorship. Well, that's not been true historically, as you well know. The Church has always been an island of righteousness in a sea of paganism. So, we need to rethink and realize that Jesus said, "Blessed are you when men revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my namesake. For great shall be your reward in heaven."

And in history, to your point that you were making about sticking together as a small group. Someone as well said that when somebody stands for truth, and takes the heat, the spines of other people are strengthened. There are people in your church and in your community who believe just like you do, but nobody has the nerve to say it. And if you say it, you might be surprised at the number of people who agree with you and will stand with you. But also, about suffering, and that is that the Apostle Paul and others saw suffering as bringing about a new way to witness for Christ.

During the Nazi era, a pastor said this. "The time has come in Nazi Germany when we can no longer witness for Christ simply by words. We must witness by our lives, by the consequences, and even, if necessary, by death." I think it was Bonhoeffer who said the idea of picking up the cross of Jesus Christ is a great idea, until you realize that it took him to Golgotha. So, I want to say to all the people out there, look at this differently.

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Look at it through the eyes of God. God is with His people. Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." And if you don't know what to do, what you do is seek God. James 1:5, He gives wisdom. Stick with other Christians in small groups, as you mentioned, Frank. And realize that the only thing that really matters, is what matters forever. So, that's the motivation we have to have as believers in a world that has lost its way.

Frank:

Exactly as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4, he says, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us a greater weight of glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen. For what is seen is temporary. We fix our eyes on what is unseen. For what is unseen is eternal." And any difficulty you go through here, ladies and gentlemen, is going to enhance your capacity to enjoy God, not only now, but in eternity. And as Dr. Lutzer just said, when you go through difficulty, when you are persecuted, rejoice because your reward is great in heaven.

So, we don't wish persecution on ourselves. But when it comes, we can rejoice that there will be a reward at the end of it. We're to fight evil and leave the results to God. We can't remain silent. In fact, I've heard it put this way Dr. Lutzer. I may butcher how it was said, but the thought went like this. Be less concerned with whom you might offend by speaking, and more concerned with who will remain misled when you don't speak. Because we're so concerned about offending people. When in reality, if we had spoken up and said something, we could have actually helped someone get out of their deception. But we stay silent.

Erwin:

I want to emphasize this because I think it fits. In my chapter in *No Reason to Hide*, I have a chapter on the Christian left. I'm talking about Christian churches, and I give two examples of real churches. Number one, racially, they were making progress, then critical race theory tore them apart. But the other one has to do with sexual issues, which are so predominant in our culture. And one of the reasons that you'd find Christians capitulating, is because of their view of love. What we have to do is, we have to love one another.

Now, let's be clear that love can be evil. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, they didn't stop loving. They kept on loving, they just started to love the wrong things: lovers of pleasure, lovers of God, lovers of themselves, lovers of money. The Bible says this. It says, Jesus said, herein you are my disciples, that you love one another, yes. But if you know the truth, the truth shall set you free. And love, actually, is keeping His commandments. If you love me, keep my commandments. And of course, 1 Corinthians 13, says very clearly, that love rejoices in the truth.

So, I want to leave my heart. This isn't just an intellectual exercise that Frank and I are having right now. I want to leave my heart with you. I know that many people who are listening are struggling with these issues. But we have to love the truth. It is better to speak the truth than it is

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to tell lies, even if you tell those lies compassionately. You shall know the truth. The truth shall set you free.

And of course, we all know that there is truth. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes on to the Father, but by me. And as Frank would like to tell you, truth for all of its power, has a problem. There's only one way to be right and many ways to be wrong. Two plus two doesn't equal five; it only equals four. And there's almost an infinite number of wrong answers. So, go to Jesus to find the truth, and you know that that truth sets you free.

Frank:

Well said my friend. As we've said before, love doesn't mean approval. Love means seeking what's best for the other person. And that often means you have to tell them inconvenient truths. So, we have to do that, ladies and gentlemen, if we're going to truly be ambassadors for Christ. Dr. Lutzer, it's always wonderful having you on the program. The two books we've spoken about, *No Reason to Hide: Standing for Christ in a Collapsing Culture*. And also, *We Will Not be Silenced*.

Either of those two books are going to be very valuable to you at this moment in history. And as I know, as you say in the books, Dr. Lutzer. This is a great time to be alive, because you can make a difference for Christ. By getting the word out there in a period where it's kind of easy to get the word out to a lot of people on social media and elsewhere. So, friends, get out there and stand for Christ. Dr. Lutzer if you would, please give your website one more time so our listeners can learn more about you and hear more about you.

Erwin:

Yeah, MoodyMedia.org if you want sermons and blogs. If you want the books, probably ChristianBook.com or Amazon. But go to MoodyMedia.org. You can find a lot of materials there. And they will certainly benefit you in your walk with a God.

Frank:

Excellent. Alright ladies and gentlemen, it's great having Dr. Erwin Lutzer on. Look for the next program. We're going to have Tim Mahoney on. His brand new documentary on where is the real Mount Sinai. So, don't miss that, coming up this Friday and Saturday. See you here next week, Lord willing. God bless.

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