

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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

Help! My Kid is Deconstructing! With Alisa Childers and Natasha Crain

(August 4, 2023)

Frank:

Ladies and gentlemen, are your kids are walking away from Christianity? Is the culture bearing down on your household so much that you don't know what to do? You don't know where to turn. You don't know how to keep them in the faith or maybe they've already deconstructed, and they're gone. What can you do? And what does the secular mindset think? And how can you counter it? We've got the experts here to talk about this today, my friends, Alisa Childers and Natasha Crain of Childers and Crain, the new law firm! [Laughter]

Alisa:

It sounds good though. We should consider that.

Frank:

Actually, you may know that we together do a conference called the Unshaken conference, and it's coming to Tucson, Arizona. When are we doing that?

Natasha:

September 23.

Frank:

September 23, in Tucson. And where do people go to get information about that?

Natasha:

You can go to UnshakenConference.com. And the tickets are on sale, and they will be in Nashville on November 4.

Frank:

All right. And for people that want to bring this conference, and we'll tell you what it's about as we go, as we address those questions I just brought up. They can go to what website and actually request the conference come to their church?

Natasha:

Yeah, it's the same website. So UnshakenConference.com. And there is a link there where you can fill out a form, and you can tell us a little bit about your church. And we'll get back to you, and let you know if it looks like it can be a good fit for us to come there. And we're excited to have that opportunity because we've already done a couple of conferences, and we keep hearing online from people who are saying, hey, come to our church. We want you to come here. So, now we're making a way for people to actually submit their church for the process.

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Frank:

So, for 2024, go to that website, and we'll see about coming to your church. If it's possible venue-wise and location wise. We'd love to come there. Now, we're here at the CrossExamined Instructor Academy right now in Albuquerque, New Mexico. And Alisa, you did a presentation yesterday on deconstructionism. And you started out by saying that you thought deconstructionism or the idea that people were deconstructing from the faith (and we'll define what that means here in a minute), is the greatest problem facing Christianity. Why do you say it's the greatest problem?

Alisa:

I think it's the greatest threat, I would say, because deconstruction is a methodology. It's a process, it's not actually a destination. There are lots of different destinations people can end up in. But what deconstruction is, is really an all-out assault on the gospel. So, in all of my research into the way that deconstruction is manifesting online, and as it's connected to its postmodern roots, what we see happening is that in that movement, it does not matter where you land. It doesn't matter what you end up believing. So, you could become an atheist. You could become a progressive Christian. You could become a new age adherent or something like that. It does not matter, just as long as you do not remain evangelical.

Frank:

Who said? Where does this come from? Besides Hell? [Laughter]

Alisa:

So, it's all over social media. I would say it's largely social media driven. I almost don't even want to call it a movement. In fact, our friend Tim Barnett and I just finished writing a book on deconstruction, that will be coming out in January. And we're defining it less like a movement, because it's really not like a bunch of people moving together toward a similar destination. It's more like an explosion out from a singular starting place. And that singular starting place, is doctrines that define the core gospel, anything that would make Christianity exclusive. But primarily, and this is where Natasha's work interacts with what we're doing.

Primarily, it's a shift from the authority of the Bible, and even objective truth. Saying look, I know there's an objective reality about God, and I just want to know what it is. I'm going to search for that truth. That's not what it is. It's a shift from that authority to the authority of the self. So, in the deconstruction explosion, theological terms and ideas are not considered based on their truthfulness or, you know, is this true? Is this what God says? But they're evaluated based on how the person thinks they're making them prosper or not prosper? Are these doctrines helpful or harmful? Are they leading me toward wholeness? Or are they oppressing me? And all of that is decided really based on the self, not rooted in objective truth?

Frank:

So, it's all meology rather than theology. How is this any different than the prosperity gospel?

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Alisa:

Well, that's a good question. I suppose that the difference would be that people who adhere to the prosperity gospel, most that I know would still say, hey, the Bible is my authority. Now, I think they're interpreting it incorrectly. And they're actually abusing Scripture, and it's a false gospel. But with deconstruction, again, they don't care where you land as long as you do not believe the Bible is your authority. In fact, it's interesting, Frank, as I was writing the book, I've actually changed my position on this.

Because in my first book, I described my faith crisis as deconstruction. And I don't use that word to describe what I went through anymore, because I always wanted to know what was true. I didn't want to just find something that made me feel more whole or something like that. And so, in the book I actually say, I'm not calling that deconstruction anymore. Because deconstruction is really a postmodern process. I think it's the result of post modernism in the culture.

Frank:

What if someone were to say that what makes me feel whole, and what helps me live my authentic self is to follow the Scriptures as written and properly interpreted?

Alisa:

Then they will tell you that you are not deconstructing. And we actually cite examples of that in our book, where somebody would say, hey, I'm deconstructing. But I'm using Scripture as my authority. They have graphic memes mocking that kind of idea. So, they would tell you go back to the beginning. You're not doing it right.

Frank:

But then they're violating their premise. They're violating their goal that I have to believe something that's going to somehow help me. What if the Scriptures help me?

Alisa:

Well, yeah. Obviously, there's a lot of contradictions.

Frank:

Wait a minute. Contradictions from the progressives? Are you kidding me? [Laughter]

Alisa:

But the premise really is that in deconstruction, they've already decided that the core beliefs (anything that would be exclusive like judgment, heaven, hell, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross), they've already decided that this is what they call toxic theology. These, in their view, are doctrines the church came up with to control people with fear. And that's, again, based on post modernism. It's the assumption that a truth claim like that is a power grab. And so, the church is just doing that to try to keep people under control.

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Frank:

Natasha, as you evaluate this kind of movement, you notice that those statements that Alisa just made are all moral statements. I mean, they're saying, well, the church is trying to keep people under control. That's wrong. Why would that be wrong if Christianity or just basic theism isn't true? Why would that even be a problem?

Natasha:

Well, if basic theism isn't true, then you have no grounding for determining what is good, or bad, or right, or wrong. So, they're not thinking about how to ground their beliefs. They're just using their own definition of what is helpful or harmful. It comes back to feelings being the ultimate guide for your life, right? If I feel like this is going to be helpful, I'm going to hang on to this. So, it's not necessarily that they're throwing out the entire Bible. They're just saying, I'm going to decide what I find to be helpful in this.

And so, I think that that's a common misunderstanding that people have about deconstruction, when they think that people are just tossing the Bible completely. It's not that. They're tossing the notion that this is authoritative, that this is God's authoritative word for all time. And they're saying this is kind of reflective of man's best ideas about God over time, but we're getting better and better. We're understanding more and more as we go.

Frank:

Better meaning, what kind of better?

Natasha:

Well, they would say that we're learning more. We're becoming more enlightened, inherently better, even though they don't have the objective basis for determining what that is.

Frank:

Friends, do you see how if you just use the principle of the law of non-contradiction, and you try and discover whether someone has the grounds for what they're saying, you can point out that this really can't be true what they're trying to do here. I mean, to follow feelings over objective reality...well, that's what the entire culture is doing, isn't it? In fact, that's where your book is so insightful, I think, Natasha. It's the book "Faithfully Different."

So, when we come back from the break, ladies and gentlemen, we're going to uncover that. And you're then going to have a track to run on if you are trying to help your young person, or friend, or relative evaluate what really is true. And you'll be able to understand why they're doing what they're doing. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. My guests are Alisa Childers and Natasha Crain. We're back in two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

And after the break, we're going to unpack that a little bit because the mindset that people have, the secular mindset, and you've identified four basic ideas that people have who are secular. This has crept into the church as well. When you understand this mindset, then you can

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really evaluate why people come to the conclusions they come to, whether it's about Scripture, whether it's about a decision they're going to make with their life, whether they're going to side more with the Scriptures or side more with their friends on a given issue. It's what you uncover in "Faithfully Different."

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. My guests today, Alisa Childers Natasha Crain. And together, we do a conference called the Unshaken conference. Right now, we're in Albuquerque, New Mexico. And just before the break, we were talking about the secular mindset. Why do people who are not Christians do what they do? And even now, some people who claim to be Christians have this mindset and it's beautifully unpacked in a book called "Faithfully Different", which our guest here, Natasha Crain has written. Natasha, there are four basic principles that the secular world or the secular mind seems to govern themselves by. What are they?

Natasha:

So, secularism ultimately, is about the authority of the self. It comes back to the fact that people have all kinds of different beliefs. But at the end of the day, there's this commonality amongst them that is, they come back to themselves to determine what's true about reality, what is good or bad, right or wrong, harmful or helpful. And so, in "Faithfully Different", I talked about the fact that it might seem hopeless to actually identify the commonality there. Okay, everyone has the authority of the self. But how do you actually see that in culture?

But there are some things, some tenants of secularism that are very common to everyone who looks to the authority of the self. So, the first one is that feelings are your ultimate guide. If you're not looking to God as the external authority through Him and His revealed Word, then you're going to look to yourself. It goes without saying, right? It's feelings. It is the whole follow your heart thing like you talk about, Frank. And after feelings are the ultimate guide, you have to say, well, what are they leading you to? If they're guiding you somewhere, what is that? Well, that's to happiness. Happiness is the ultimate goal from a secular perspective.

And that's a really important thing, I think, for people to understand. Because even Christians sometimes think, well, doesn't God want me to be happy? Well, God has bigger plans, bigger priorities for us. It's not that he wants us to be unhappy. But we might have a lot of circumstances we don't think are great, or that are making us happy, that are for our good so that we can know Him, and we can love Him, and love others better. But from the secular perspective, that happiness being the goal leads people to say, well, as long as I'm happy, then things are good, then things are morally okay. So, that's the mindset. It's kind of like, this is the end. Whatever means I have to get there is going to be okay.

So, then that leads to the third tenet of secularism, which is that judging is the ultimate sin. So, the first two kind of relate to how you live your life. That third one is about, well, how do I see other people amongst all this? Well, if you're somebody outside of me, you better not come along and tell me anything about how I'm going to live my life. That's judging, that's judgmental.

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And from the secular perspective, that makes no sense. Because if I'm my own authority, you don't know what my feelings are. You don't know what makes me happy. So, how can you possibly judge me?

And the fourth one is God is the ultimate guess. A lot of people think that secular culture is godless. They say, oh, everybody's just atheistic today. That's not true. Actually, 90% of people in America still believe in some kind of God or higher power. But what is not okay today, is to believe in a specific God who has revealed himself, who has revealed who he is, who we are, and how we should relate to him. That's what's dangerous, because that threatens the authority of the self. So, all God can be is a guess, a very good guess of whatever you believe him to be. But then he stands comfortably in the distance away from what we want to do.

Frank:

You mentioned that sometimes Christians are guilty of this too. We might say to our kids as they grow up, we just want you to be happy. What does that even mean? How would you define happiness? What is that? Is that a feeling that you have? Is that a mindset? Is that I get whatever I want when I want it? I get to do whatever I want to do with whoever I want to do it whenever I want to do it? What does that even mean? What do you think the secular culture means by happiness?

Alisa:

Well, I think very often when secular culture is talking about happiness, they're talking about fleeting feelings, maybe the fulfillment of a romantic relationship or that perfect day at the beach. In fact, I don't know if you guys saw the show the Good Place. Did you ever watch that show?

Natasha:

I don't remember that.

Alisa:

It was about hell. And so, in the show, they're in this place called The Good Place, and they think they've gone to heaven. And it's ice cream every Tuesday. It's been a while since I watched it. But it's kind of like this Disneyland type of thing. And then you find out that they're actually in the bad place, because those things don't really fulfill and that kind of starts to turn on them. And I think that's an interesting kind of metaphor for our culture. Because it's just, it's like these fleeting feelings. But the Bible describes what we might just say, biblical happiness, is more of a deep abiding joy that is always there, no matter what the circumstance.

Of course, Corrie Ten Boone is famous for living this out as she was in the concentration camp in World War II. And yet, she found this deep abiding joy amidst all of that. And it was really more her sister. I don't know if you remember the scene from the book where her sister says that she was thanking God for the fleas because there were these horrible fleas. And she just let God use that in her life as something to draw her closer to Him, make her depend more on him.

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And so, I think in the Bible, it's more a deep abiding joy that is not dependent on circumstances. Whereas in secular culture, happiness is dependent on circumstances. If you're not happy in your marriage, get out of the marriage. If you don't have the greatest career that is your biggest dream, then go live on your mom's couch until you can make that happen. And it's sort of this backwards thing. And you know, I think about my grandpa who worked three jobs his whole life to provide for my grandma and leave her a paid for house. And I mean, was digging ditches his ultimate dream as a little boy? No. But his focus was on his family, on her. And so, he had this deep happiness with the work that he did, no matter what it was.

Frank:

Natasha, these four principles that the world governs themselves by: feelings, happiness, judgment, and God being a guess, has also filtered into the church a bit, hasn't it? We just talked about the feelings part of it, or the happiness part of it. How do you think feelings govern so much of what people do when they read the Bible? Because I know people that will just open the Bible, and they'll pull a verse out of context. And if it makes them feel good, that's what God wants for me. It has nothing to do with what the text is actually telling them.

Natasha:

Right. I think that we have done a poor job in the church in general of teaching people how to read the Bible. And so, when people go to the Bible, if they even open the Bible, when they go to it, they're asking the question, what does it say to me? There are so many Bible studies that are designed that way, that are just saying, how do I apply this to my life without asking first, some really important objective questions about what does it say about God? What does this say about mankind? What does this say about our relationship? What does this require of me?

We're not asking those kinds of questions. So, if we're not asking the right, objective questions going into it, it's all going to be about a subjective interpretation of how do I think I can apply this verse to my life. And if we're not doing better in terms of Bible study, then that's going to lead us astray, because we're just going off of our feelings about the text, instead of understanding what does the text say?

Frank:

And then if we read a text out of context, and it doesn't come true, like we thought it should, who do we blame? We wind up blaming God and he never said that. In fact, Hillary Morgan Ferrer is here as well, at the CrossExamined Instructor Academy. And she was speaking yesterday about how many people who may say they're Christians, read the Bible, or they think something about God, God promises them something, even though the Scripture doesn't say that. And when God doesn't come through, who do they blame?

Yesterday she was talking about some lady who was trying to be healed of a certain depression. And she read a verse out of context. And when that didn't happen, she became a bitter atheist. And so, parents, if you're out there, you need to teach your kids not only that the

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Bible is true, but how to properly interpret it. And not just use it as a fortune book where you pop it open one day, point to a verse and go, I'm claiming that!

Because that just feeds right into this secular mindset that first of all, the Bible is written all about me. Everything in there is about me. It's the authority of self rather than the authority of God. And God's lied to me now, because it didn't come true. What I thought the Bible was telling me actually isn't the case. Alisa, how are you seeing deconstruction affecting young people online and in places you speak?

Alisa:

Oh, goodness. The fallout from this explosion, there's no way to even measure it. Everywhere I go, Frank, even here at CIA, I've two people tell me a story that I hear just about every time I go and speak to audiences all over the country. What it looks like is that an older couple will come up with tears in their eyes. They'll say, my adult child has deconstructed. They've said we are toxic. They say that they grew up in a cult, and they've rejected us. And in some cases, Frank, they say they won't let us see our grandkids because we are toxic people to them.

And so, the fallout of that is just incredible. But here's what I'm also starting to see. I'm starting to have young people raise their hand in Q&A's and say, my parents have deconstructed. How do I honor my parents, but maintain my faith and not compromise my faith? That's a tough spot to be in too.

Frank:

What do you tell them?

Alisa:

Well, you know that's something I love to have a conversation more one on one. But I think that's a good question to be asking. How do I honor my parents? Because you know, biblically, you do want to honor your parents. But ultimately, you can't compromise your faith. And so, I think that verse that often atheists and progressives bring out to sort of use in a skeptical way, I think is helpful. Where Jesus said, if you want to be my disciple, you have to hate your mother, brother, father. And really what the skeptics will say is, oh, see, you disagree with Jesus because you don't hate your mother. And they'll try to use that to mess with your mind about it.

But really, that word that's translated to hate really means prefer one thing over another. And so, Jesus says, if you want to follow me, you have to prefer me even to your mother and father. And so, that's the encouragement I try to give the young person. Be respectful, but don't compromise. Let your parents see the peace and joy of the Gospel lived out in your life. But Frank, there's another dynamic I see all the time, and that's between spouses.

That introduces a whole different set of circumstances that require a different response. You might have a wife whose husband has deconstructed, and he's trying to pull her into deconstruction. And there are many cases like this. I've had at least three people tell me that

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their husband or wife read Glennon Doyle's book "Untamed", which we've talked about on this podcast before, and decided to leave their spouse and pursue a same-sex relationship, leaving kids behind, spouses behind, and families just in turmoil. And so, this ideology of the authority of the self wrecks lives, literally. And I see it every day.

Frank:

It's heartbreaking when you think about it. People will say that they are living their authentic selves. And in reality, they actually are, because they're living their sin nature.

Alisa:

That's right. Our authentic selves are fallen. I was on a radio show one day. And this host said, Lord, save me from my authentic self. And I'm like, I wish I thought of that. That's a really good line.

Frank:

Yeah, think about it ladies and gentlemen. If you just follow your every whim, your every impulse, anything that makes you happy, you are not going to be able to hold down first of all, a stable relationship. And secondly, you're probably going to wind up broken, addicted, and alone, and prematurely dead if you follow your impulses and whatever desire comes across your heart because the heart is fallen. The heart is weak. The heart wants what it wants when it wants it.

And if we don't follow the Scriptures on that, if we don't realize that we're fallen and we need a savior, we can easily...what does John say in 1 John, where he says all that's in the world is the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life. As our friend Jim Wallace would say, it's just sex, money, and power. And when we fall into that trap, as unfortunately, so many Christians have, we can't maintain our sanctification and we wreck our lives.

We're going to talk a lot more with Alisa Childers and Natasha Crain, both of the Unshaken conference, UnshakenConference.com. They also have a podcast together. We'll tell you about that here in a minute. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist on the American Family Radio Network. Our website is CrossExamined.org. We're back in just two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

If you've been listening to this conversation, listen to this podcast, listening to the Alisa Childers podcast, and the Natasha Crain podcast and you want a lot more. You want to learn more about theology. You want to learn more about philosophy. You want to learn more about apologetics and how to rescue people in this insane world. You need to go to southern evangelical seminary, SES.edu. I went there. You're going there, aren't you?

Alisa:

I am. I'm a current student. Getting ready for my fall class. I'm very excited.

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Frank:

Yeah, you were saying yesterday as we're here at the CrossExamined Instructor Academy that you want to make sure you're reading more than you're actually speaking. Why did you say that?

Alisa:

Well, it's just something that happens if I'm doing a lot of podcasts on my own or other people's, or I'm writing content. I start to feel nervous if I'm talking and putting out content more than I'm taking in and learning new things. So, reading my Bible every day, having my relationship with the Lord. But also taking in what's going on and learning new things about scholarship. I just feel like that's the only way to stay sharp, because otherwise, you're just going to be recycling your old stuff.

Frank:

Yeah. And there's so much new material coming out from so many different sources. And you have so many great people on your podcast, as you do too, Natasha. I mean, if you haven't listened to the Natasha Crain podcast or the Alisa Childers podcast, you guys need to avail yourselves of that. There's also a podcast you do together. What's that one?

Alisa:

Yeah. It's called Unshaken Faith. And so, the difference between the Unshaken Faith podcast and say Natasha's, mine, or your podcast is that our personal podcasts are longer form, maybe about an hour. But the Unshaken Faith podcast are bite-sized pieces of cultural commentary from a biblical perspective. So, 15 minutes, where we tackle just whatever's happening in culture.

Natasha:

Yeah, and we do it every week, every Wednesday. We're on hiatus for the summer, but we're coming back.

Alisa:

Coming back strong in the fall. Lots of thoughts that accumulated over the summer.

Natasha:

We've got a lot to say.

Alisa:

We've got some things to say.

Frank:

Let's go back to deconstruction for a minute. Because Natasha, how do you think people who claim that the Scriptures are not authoritative, that we can just take the Scriptures however we want, how do they even know who God is?

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Natasha:

Well, it's a great question. This is baffling to me, actually, because I never really see anyone have a good answer for this. And I don't know, maybe Alisa's seen people speak to this. But it's interesting, because people will make many claims about who God is, and what he wants from us, and who we are, and what love means, for example. But yet, they have no objective basis for doing that. So, they can know God exists. We know from natural revelation from what the Bible tells us. We know natural revelation, people can, of course, know that God exists and something about his nature. But progressives tend to go much further than that, when they're talking about what they believe about God.

And they say, well, God certainly wouldn't do this. You know, God certainly wouldn't have commanded this to happen to the Canaanites. God would not have done this. So, there are a lot of thoughts about what God would and would not do. But if you don't have any kind of authoritative Scripture from this God that you believe exists, how are you going to actually know what that God would or would not do? You don't know. You don't even know that we're made in His image if you don't have the Bible to tell you that. You don't even know that people are actually made equal. For all you know, God made people with freckles, and he loves them more. You literally don't know. It sounds absurd. But that is the practical implications of this. You don't know.

Frank:

Aristotle famously thought that some people were born to be slaves. He didn't have the revelation. I mean, he had natural revelation. We all have that. But he was under the impression that no, some people are meant to be slaves. And so, without the Scriptures, how would you even know who God is? Other than, you know, he's a creator. And you know, there's certain moral categories that you know, because God has written them on your heart from natural law. So, maybe Aristotle got that wrong and he should have said, yeah, maybe that isn't right, that people ought to be slaves.

But on the other hand, he may have thought, well, no. Some people don't have the capacity that I have, the intellectual capacity that I have. You're meant to be a manual laborer. That's what you ought to do. I mean, you could come to that conclusion, and he did. And yet, you have people in the progressive movement now, claiming that they know that the God of the Bible isn't the true God. How do they know that?

Alisa:

Well, I think it's also important to maintain a distinction when we're talking about deconstruction. There's a good amount of progressive Christians in the deconstruction movement, or explosion, I guess I should say. But you have to also remember, you have secular humanists, you have people who've declared agnosticism, you have people who have declared atheism. They're all in community together. So, when we're talking about the progressive Christians that are in that

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community, I think (this is my commentary), I really think that their whole foundation of their theology is assuming that universalism of some sort is true.

Because if everybody's going to be fine in the end, well, that means they can be in community with the secular humanists, the agnostic, and not have to tell them they're wrong about God because it's all going to be fine. It's all going to work out. And so, I think that is the foundational principle that allows the progressive Christians in the deconstruction explosion to remain in unity, and supportive. And not just supportive in a friendship kind of way, but even supportive ideologically, of their secular humanist friends and agnostic friends, and even people who are so angry.

It blows my mind. I see these conversations between a progressive Christian and someone else who just hates God, hates Christianity, hates the Bible, and the progressive is totally fine with that. Because I think the underlying principles, they just assume it's all going to be fine. Maybe I'm not right, this is what I think it might be. But everybody's going to be fine.

Frank:

This is one of the most frustrating things that I see about this. People don't seem to realize that when they're deconstructing from one set of beliefs, they're automatically reconstructing into another set of beliefs, and they don't have any support for those beliefs. So, you just mentioned something where you said you think these people generally are Universalists, that everyone's going to be fine in the end. Everyone's going to go to heaven or whatever, in the end, regardless of what they believe. Well, when they say that, that's a positive belief that they would seem to have to have evidence for. What evidence do they have that universalism is true? Why do they think it's true?

Alisa:

Well, and I suspect if I were to ask somebody, what's your evidence for that? This is what people have to understand. When you use words like truth, and evidence, and inference, when you talk like that with people in the deconstruction explosion, they look at you like you have crossed eyes. In fact, I had a Zoom call with a deconstructionist as part of my research. And when I was talking to this person, he said, don't you think you're just still caught up in the rationalism of the Enlightenment? See, they're not even having the same conversation. Words like truth and evidence, that's what they're trying to get rid of because they have adopted a postmodern mindset. And ultimately, even the progressive Christians, they're not sure they're right.

So, they're just giving their best guess. God is the big guess. Right? That's Natasha's line. That's totally true in that movement. When we make claims like the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, Jesus paid the price for your sins. They're not even evaluating whether or not that's true. Because they're postmodern and they see truth claims as power grabs, they're just trying to figure out why you would say something like that. Why would he say that? What kind of

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system of oppression is he trying to prop up? Or what system is he defending? Why is he trying to control me? You need to deconstruct, Frank, and get out of this oppressive system.

Frank:

There's nothing wrong with oppression unless God exists. There's nothing wrong with power grabs, unless God exists. This is what's so frustrating to me. But you're saying that I ought not use my mind to evaluate this because they don't use their mind to support it.

Alisa:

Well, there's a talking point in the deconstruction explosion. That what you see as what we would call the historic Christian gospel, in the deconstruction explosion, that is seen as just an oppressive doctrine that's the result of maybe, you know, white, Christian nationalism. This is truly what they say.

Frank:

Jesus wasn't white. [Laughter]

Alisa:

I know, but they would say we're getting Jesus wrong.

Frank:

Every negation implies an affirmation. When they say we're getting Jesus wrong, they have to know who the right Jesus is. So, what evidence do they have for the right Jesus? I ask you Natasha Crain, no, whoever. [Laughter]

Natasha:

The only person who can't say, well, this is what I find helpful. And this is what I find to be true is the person who believes that the Bible is true. So, basically, they would say that anything that they come to is okay, unless you're an evangelical Christian and you've come to the Bible being true, right? That's the one belief system you can't have under that paradigm, which is so ironic and contradictory.

Alisa:

And they might even say, you know, good for you. That's fine. But you're not a part of this group. And you're still oppressive. Like, for example, I don't know if you guys saw the latest music video from Derrick Webb, who used to be the lead singer of Caedmon's Call, big Christian band in the 90's and early 2000's. I even remember back in the day playing a couple of festivals with them. Well, Derek Webb has deconstructed. He's become quite a leader in the deconstruction explosion online. And he's making what he's calling his first Christian album in 10 years. And he's calling it a Christian album, even though he does not claim Christianity anymore.

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And in the video, the song is called boys will be girls. And throughout the course of the music video, he's being made up as a drag queen. And so, at the end of the video, he's performing as a drag queen. And he's not a drag queen, as far as I know. But he has a quote in the beginning, saying, if you want to really say you're someone's ally, you've got to stand close enough to them to be hit by the same stones they're being hit by.

So, in the mind of the deconstructionist, standing up for drag queens and fighting for LGBTQ rights, and the activism that comes along with that, is a part of being a healthy Christian. And so, they would say that for us to stand against gay marriage or for biblical marriage, they would say that's oppression. You are oppressing people because they don't all have an equal outcome. And this just all brings us back to the critical theories that have come into our culture through postmodernism that inform everything. You've got something to say, Natasha. I can feel it. [Laughter]

Natasha:

Well, no, I was going to say, that comes back to intersectionality. And that is the basics of everything, right? If you're oppressed in this group, then I'm going to come along with you being oppressed over here. And now we all have one large group oppression, and that's the basis of critical theory and that lens through which everyone is seeing everything today. So, it's interesting. I haven't heard that per se, from the deconstruction movement. But that makes total sense that they're taking away that social justice idea of what is the predominant, secular theory of social justice today. And they're applying it to themselves and say, well, we've got to stand by all these other marginalized groups so we can get together and have the new proletariat.

Frank:

Well, Natasha, I was on your podcast talking about the book "Correct, Not Politically Correct", and you made an insightful comment about why some young people who might be heterosexual, white Christians might want to claim a trans identity because of intersectionality. Can you unpack that?

Natasha:

Today, it's kind of like victim status is glorified because of this whole oppression, and oppressor, and oppressed lens. And so, people want to have the victim status. Because if you're not the victim, if you're not somebody from an oppressed group, you are an oppressor and that makes you morally evil. You're a bad person if you are not one of these identified groups. And so, there are certain things you can't change that are not acceptable to identify as.

Like, you can't be a white person who's now going to identify as a black person, for example. So, if you can't do that, well, what can you do that's socially acceptable today? You can change your gender. Doesn't mean you can objectively change it. But it does mean that society will accept that. So, now you can take on one of these marginalized identities. You can take on the victim status, and everyone is going to applaud you for being courageous enough to do that. And so, it's very tempting, I think, for young people who are struggling with their identity, and

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who they are, and what's going on in culture around them to say, I'm going to go that direction. I'm going to take on one of these identities that is applauded.

Frank:

Now parents, what can you do if your kid comes home and says they're trans or they are deconstructing their faith? What can you say? What can you do? We're going to cover that in the next segment, so don't go anywhere. I'm talking to Alisa Childers and Natasha Crain, UnshakenConference.com We'll tell you more about that right after the break as well. Back in two.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek. My guests today are Natasha Crain and Alisa Childers. I want to mention, by the way, we have several online courses coming up. One taught by Shanda Fulbright and myself, called "Train Your Brain." It's about logic. It's designed for sixth to eighth graders. And that's what the premium version will take six to eighth graders through it.

But if you haven't had logic and you're an adult, you can still take this course in a self-paced, and you ought to. Logic is necessary to be able to defend the faith in this hostile culture. So, check that out. Many other courses. In fact, Alisa you have an online course with us.

Alisa:

On Progressive Christianity, yeah.

Frank:

So, you guys can all go to CrossExamined.org. Click on online courses, you'll see it there. Okay, in this final segment, I want to talk about some practical things you can say or do when say, a young person, maybe your daughter, or your son comes to you and says, I'm no longer a Christian. Christianity is toxic. And then if we have time, they come to you and say I'm trans. What do you do?

Alisa:

That's a big question.

Frank:

Let's start with deconstruction, what do you do?

Alisa:

So, if your child comes to you, I would evaluate different scenarios. How old is your child? If your child is a minor, you have a lot of power. If your child is a minor, and they're deconstructing, I would say, number one, get them off social media. Complete blackout on social media, because that's where this is fostering and flourishing. Make sure they're in church consistently. Make sure you're living out the gospel in front of them consistently with family

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devotion time. And, you don't have to be perfect. It means also repenting to them when you blow it, letting them see what a real Christian lives like.

So, that would be for a minor child, but say it's an adult child. It's really important to understand what's happening with your adult child. First of all, they're probably not going to tell you they're deconstructing. That's the thing you've got to realize, too. It's not like they go to their parents and say, hey, I'm deconstructing. You're probably just going to start hearing them maybe back off from you a little bit. Maybe on social media, you'll see them saying things like, hey, this is toxic. Look for words like toxic, even abusive, oppressive, the doctrines that they were taught, maybe they think they grew up in a cult. And if that's the case, you need to understand that they do not think you are a safe person.

So, you're not going to be able to have a conversation of persuading them back to the faith through any kind of logic or something like that. So, in phase one of that, I would say it's okay to back off. Try to just stay in their life. Try to let them see the joy and the peace of Jesus in your life. Because I guarantee you, when they get to the bottom of the deconstruction thing, which I don't think we've even seen collectively yet, we're going to see people come up completely empty. And they're going to come back to you. And they're going to see the joy and peace of Jesus on you. So, it's okay to not try to convince them right away. Just try to stay in their life.

Frank:

And I think one good piece of advice with any of these issues is to not freak out. Because if you freak out, I mean, especially if it's a minor, is your kid ever going to come to you again if you just totally blow a gasket, and you cry, you get real dramatic, you yell? That's not going to help.

Alisa:

Yeah. And some parents may have already done that. And they're listening and going, oh, man. I've blown it. Now my kid's never going to come back to me. But I just want to speak to that person and say, it's okay if you've blown it. Give it a little time. Come back and repent to your child. Look, I totally blew that. Can we have a do over on that? I mean, there's so much grace in modeling that for them too. So, don't feel like if you did blow it, or if you cried, or got upset. But if you haven't had that opportunity yet, do try to just kind of take a breath, ask some good questions, and just give yourself permission to listen and understand first.

Frank:

So, are you saying that if you were to ask the question in a nice way, you know, honey, I'm just trying to figure this out. Are you saying that if Christianity was really true, if Jesus really did come to earth, live a perfect life in your place, died a brutal death in order to take your punishment on himself, and forgive you, and give you his righteousness for nothing because he loved you. Are you saying that if that were really true, you would not follow Him?

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Alisa:

I think it would depend on the relationship. If you have the type of relationship with your adult child where you could sit down and reasonably ask a question like that, maybe. But what you have to understand what's going on, is that child has already decided the idea that I'm a sinner is toxic. So, for you to present the gospel message of Jesus dying on the cross that they've heard all their life, they know the message. They already think, oh, dad's brainwashed, because he thinks he's a sinner. He thinks that he's got this fallen nature, and that's toxic. That's abusive, oppressive and toxic. And the church is just trying to control people by telling them they're broken. So, there's so much going on under the surface.

Frank:

So, it wouldn't help to point out that they think it's a sin to be an evangelical Christian?

Alisa:

It might. Again, it depends on the relationship. It might. But I would just say to parents, if there is conflict, and you sense your child trying to disconnect from you, that might not be the best time to pull out that question. Maybe a little bit down the road, if you can get that relationship back restored a little bit.

Frank:

Natasha, what about the trans issue? You mentioned before the break that there is a difference between people that truly have gender dysphoria, and people that have what we now know is rapid onset gender dysphoria, that probably comes from social media more than anything. If you think it's the second, rapid onset gender dysphoria, what might you do as a parent?

Natasha:

Well, first you need to get Frank's new book, "Correct, Not Politically Correct", third edition, which will take you through a lot of these things and help you out. But you know, the rapid onset gender dysphoria is where mostly adolescent girls are basically being influenced together to do something like we were talking about before the break in terms of taking on this victim identity. And so, this is a very difficult one. Because if they've gotten to the point where they're already considering this, and they're coming, and they're telling you this. You need to ask a lot of questions like you always encourage people to do Frank, to understand where they're coming from with this.

Because overwhelmingly, they're struggling with some kind of mental illness. Overwhelmingly, this is coming from a place of struggling with being on the spectrum in a lot of cases, having some kind of abuse in their past. There are a lot of things that are going on. I think the hardest thing for parents in this situation, honestly, is the fact that there are very few trusted sources that you can go to get help.

Because if you take your child to someone who is a so-called expert in this area, they're going to tell you that need to affirm this, that this child needs to transition. They're going to encourage

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them to go ahead with it. So, unless you're going to someone who is going to treat this specifically from a Christian perspective, they're just going to affirm whatever the child thinks. And that's going to put you in a very difficult situation.

Alisa:

And in many states, it's illegal for them to do anything other than affirm.

Natasha:

Right. So, you actually have to go along with this. And so, I think this is a very difficult situation. So, similar advice in terms of going with a social media blackout, getting your kids away from that is really huge, because that is where they're finding the community that they feel so appealing. So many of these girls are going online, and they're finding people who are saying, oh, you're so courageous. And this is so great. If you come to this community, this is the love you're going to feel. They're finding something that's going to fill this void that they have had, you need to cut them off from that so that you can pour into their lives and be that instead of what they're getting online that's driving them toward that.

So, you want to ask a lot of good questions about why do you think that you are another gender? And how did you come to this conclusion? The same things that we always talk about, but I really want to emphasize to parents that you have to be so careful with who you are taking them to get them help for these underlying issues. It's just a really difficult situation for every parent.

And you talk about in the book, too, about the emotional blackmail that comes a lot of times where people will say if you don't allow your child to transition, they're going to take their own life. You're going to have blood on your hands. And that's difficult because I know of parents who were told that, they refused to do anything, and their child actually did take their own lives. I can't imagine being in that situation. But I think as Christians, we have to understand that the mental health issue that underlies this, is what is driving kids to even contemplate those things in the first place. They need help for those things. No matter what, the solution is not going to be to try to be another gender, which you can't. You objectively cannot do this.

I just wanted to add one quick thing to what Alisa said to you earlier about making sure you're taking your kids to church. That's so important. At the same time. I think parents need to be aware that a lot of youth groups (I've heard this from parents) are actually fostering some of this kind of conversation that kids (especially if they're in public school situations where there are groups of trans identifying kids), they come into youth group. And thank God that they're there.

But there's influence that's actually happening within the church, within youth groups. Ask your kids what they're talking about in Youth Group. Not just what the teachers are teaching, but what are other kids saying? How are they communicating? How are they part of the conversation? What are they talking about? You will learn so much, not just about deconstruction, not just about trans issues, but about what's going on in their school

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environment, and much more. And so, church is not always (especially youth group or your teen girls) is not always the safe place that you would hope it would be.

Alisa:

Yeah, that's a great point. Especially when you have younger youth pastors who haven't been properly trained, they're likely to be more influenced by culture. One example, I went to speak at a very conservative church, and I brought my daughter with me. And they had a little youth event going on at the same time. And I said, do you want to go to the youth event? She said yeah, and she came back. This was when she was a bit younger and didn't really know about pronouns yet. She goes, mom, they asked me what my pronouns are, and I didn't know what they meant. That was when we had our first talk about pronouns. But she was first asked for her pronouns at a conservative church by a young youth pastor.

Frank:

My pronoun is your majesty. How's that? [Laughter]

Alisa:

She tells people her pronoun now is Yeehaw. And the sad thing is, they take it seriously. They'll call her Yee all day. And then she'll break it to them at the end of the day, like, that was a joke. [Laughter]

Frank:

I'm mocking you, all right. I just want to make one comment on what you said, Natasha. You said, the emotional blackmail that goes on, you know, you can have a living daughter or a dead son. Well, it turns out that if you do transition them, which is impossible, but if you try, the suicide rate is worse for these people. Especially 10 years down the road, they have a suicide rate 19 times higher than the general public. So, that's not the solution either.

There's an underlying mental health condition that needs to be addressed. They need psychiatry, they don't need hormones, they don't need surgery. They need psychiatry. They need prayer. They need counseling. We're running out of time. This is a great program, having both of you on to talk about this. Tell people again how they can have the Unshaken conference come to their church. Where do they go?

Natasha:

Just go to UnshakenConference.com. There is a banner link right there on the site. You click on that and there's a very brief form that just asks for basic information. And we'll get back to you if it seems like your church is a good fit.

Frank:

AlisaChilders.com is your website. NatashaCrain.com and also the podcasts.

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Alisa:

Unshaken Faith podcast. Yeah, if you subscribe now, we're coming back with new episodes in the fall. But subscribe now, so that you'll be notified when that first episode comes out in the fall.

Frank:

And then Natasha Crain podcast, the Alisa Childers podcasts are the long form podcasts.

Alisa:

Super creative names that we came up with for our podcasts.

Frank:

I don't know how you guys did that. It was amazing. [Laughter]

Alisa:

Yeah, worked hard on it.

Natasha:

You need to go to the Frank Turek podcast now to complete the set.

Frank:

Well, it's been great being with you guys and great being with you as well, ladies and gentlemen. Go to their websites. Check out their podcasts. Also, check out the book "Faithfully Different." Check out the book, "Another Gospel" and "Live Your Truth and Other Lies". It's the most recent one, and there's more coming out soon. So, great being with you folks. Lord willing, we'll see you here next week. God bless.

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