I don't have enough FAITH ______to be an ATHEIST

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

When Someone Calls You "Toxic", What Should You Do? With Natasha Crain

(August 8, 2023)

Frank:

Welcome to the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist midweek podcast. Have you ever been cut out of someone's life? Someone said, you're toxic. Don't ever call me again. And this person could have been a close friend or maybe even a child. That appears to be going on more than we think. Not just because you might be a Christian, but you might just be a conservative and they don't like who you vote for or who you support. And therefore, instead of tolerating someone they disagree with, they just cut that person out of their life. What can we do about this? And why has this phenomenon seemed to have arisen in recent times?

I'm going to talk today to my friend Natasha Crain about this. You all know Natasha Crain. She's written a great new book called "Faithfully Different" as well as several other books. And Natasha, myself, and Alisa Childers, do a conference now called the Unshaken conference. And if you go to UnshakenConference.com, you can see where we're going.

We're going to be in Tucson in September. We're going to be in Nashville in November. And you can actually bring us to your church for this conference by going to UnshakenConference.com and filling out a little form there. But Natasha, how did you come to know that this was kind of a rising phenomenon? That people were cutting off their parents, they're cutting off their friends. Where did you first hear about this?

Natasha:

I hear about it all the time, actually, from people who come up to me at the Unshaken conference, for example, or when I go and speak at a church, and I get emails about this. I just received an email the other day asking me to talk about this subject on a podcast. Parents are over and over again talking to me about how their kids are cutting them off. These are adult children. They've left their house. They feel like they have nothing else that they can do. And the kids are saying, we don't want you in our lives anymore. You are toxic. You're oppressive. You hold harmful beliefs. You're out.

And of course, it's extremely painful for parents to hear. And also, it means that they have no access to their grandchildren. So, a lot of times I hear about that, too. And sometimes this happens after the grandchildren have come along. The parents have a relationship with the grandchild, and then it's decided you can't be there anymore. You can't be around your grandchildren. We're taking everyone and we're going away. So, this is not an uncommon story at all. It is definitely sort of a trend that's going on. A lot of people call it the no contact trend.



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Frank:

In fact, Dennis Prager, you say has written on this relatively recently. What has he said about that? For those of you who don't know, Dennis Prager is conservative, Jewish author and radio host. And we would agree with him on many political issues. He does not accept Christ as God. In fact, I saw him having a dialogue once with Jack Hibbs, the pastor of Calvary Chapel, Chino Hills, a friend of both of ours. And I remember Dennis saying something like, I don't have a problem with Jesus being the Messiah. I have a problem with Jesus being God. That was his big hang up. In any event, we agree with Dennis on a lot. What does Dennis say about this no contact phenomenon?

Natasha:

Well, he wrote an article, it was around Christmas time, actually. I don't remember the exact headline, but it was something about why a lot of adults are not going to be spending time with their adult children this Christmas if they're conservative. And so, it was this whole thing about what we were just talking about, that they're getting cut off by their kids. And he actually did a follow up article to this, because he was so surprised by the reaction of a lot of leftists.

He thought that they were going to come back and say, oh, you're exaggerating. We would never do that. This isn't actually happening. No, you're totally wrong, Dennis. Instead of that, he said, no. They doubled down. And he heard from all kinds of them, and saw all kinds of commentary online, where they're basically saying, yeah. We are cutting off our parents. We are getting rid of that harmful behavior and those harmful thoughts in our lives. We don't want those Christians. We don't want those conservatives, whatever the case may be.

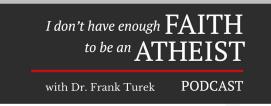
And so, he was really shocked by this. He actually published a bunch of the comments that he had seen from people. And he was just saying, this is what's going on. It used to be that if you disagreed with your parents, you still had this sense of loyalty, that you can still be in community with your own family if you disagreed with them. But today, your family is whoever agrees with you. So, there were some really interesting quotes that he had put in this. And one of them for example said, why do you invite people with dangerous views into your home voluntarily?

See, it's "dangerous" viewpoints if you disagree. If you hold a conservative or a Christian viewpoint today, not that those are one in the same, but there are a lot of commonalities there. If you hold something that really disagrees with the left, you are dangerous and you're toxic. And the person went on to say, that's especially true if you have kids. Parents want to protect their children, and that may mean protecting them from their grandparents, cuckoo bananas, beliefs. That's just one example of the kinds of things that people are saying.

Frank:

And we've talked about this before in a previous podcast. It frustrates me, and probably you to no end, that when people say things like this, and they assume a moral standard that these beliefs are toxic or dangerous...by what standard are they toxic or dangerous? Jesus, the man that gave his life to save us from our sins and wants to give us eternal life as a free gift. This is a





dangerous doctrine? Why would that be dangerous? And where are they coming up with this standard by which they define this as dangerous?

Natasha:

I don't think they think too much about their standard. I mean, it's the relevant question to ask as we know. But I don't know they can get a great answer out of that. But the standard is the cultural consensus today. That's what they use as their standard for everything. And then they treat it as an objective standard. They treat the cultural consensus as this is the thing that we all need to measure what's harmful or helpful by. But yet, there's no objective basis for that. Cultural consensus changes over time.

Frank:

The Nazis had cultural consensus. What did that mean? The whole society went to hell. And I assume these leftists wouldn't say, well, that was a good cultural consensus. They're assuming a standard when they say that as well.

Natasha:

It's very contradictory. No one's thinking about where they're getting that standard, but they're treating it as an objective standard, which is very hard to deal with.

Frank:

But Natasha, let me ask you this. This was the same group of people, generally speaking, not in all cases, that have been preaching tolerance for decades. Tolerance, tolerance, tolerance. And now when they run up against someone who might even be a family member who may disagree with them on a moral or political or religious issue, they don't even want to be in their presence. How is that tolerance?

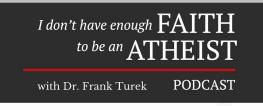
Natasha:

They don't care anymore about tolerance. This is my honest view about that. I think that culture has overwhelmingly moved on from tolerance. No one's preaching about tolerance anymore. Because if you really read what the far left is saying, they're saying that you shouldn't tolerate harmful ideas. You shouldn't tolerate these Christians, or these conservatives. You should not tolerate these things. This really became clear to me when I was writing Faithfully Different because I was still kind of in the vein as I was writing and research of thinking, well, don't they understand what's going to happen to free speech?

Well, that assumes everyone cares about free speech and thinks that's a good thing. But the more I started digging into that question, I started reading all these writings by leftists that were basically talking about the fact that free speech is harmful. You don't want to allow oppressors to continue to speak freely, because if you do, then you're only supporting them continuing to be in power so that they can oppress marginalized people. So, free speech is seen as a bad thing.







So, tolerance runs in the same vein as that. When you're saying, what happened to tolerance? That was something that they were preaching a few years ago. But today, they don't want to be tolerant anymore. Everything that I see written by people who are really activists in this area would say, tolerance is not a good thing. Tolerance is not a good thing of these kinds of viewpoints. We shouldn't be tolerating what's toxic.

Frank:

Well, generally, that's true. We shouldn't be tolerating evil. We might allow people to have obviously their own views on evil and express those views because free speech is such a high moral standard, or I should say, a high value that we have, because it's better to get all the ideas on the table, and then let rational people decide which of those ideas are best. So, I agree that we ought not allow certain evil ideas to be put into policy. We don't want racism to be put into policy. We don't want evil sexual practices to be put into policy. I agree with that. But why would we say that nobody can express those ideas even if we disagree with them?

Natasha:

Well, I think that's the big switch. I think that now it's not just we don't want to talk about it. But if they know that that's what you believe, that you're harboring these toxic beliefs, then you get cut off as a person. That's a big turning point, I think, of what has happened. In the past when you're talking about tolerance, tolerating or bearing with other people's ideas, that's a very different thing than what you're encountering today. They're saying we're not going to bear with your ideas. If we know you hold that idea, we're going to get rid of you.

Frank:

Instead of trying to persuade you the idea's wrong, they're going to write you off?

Natasha:

Yes, because you are toxic and harmful and an oppressor. It goes along with all the social justice ideas, all the critical theory. That if you're believing certain things, certain ideas that are considered to be oppressive by their cultural standard, which again, there's not an objective basis for that. But if that's where you're going with it, they're going to say, here's the standard that we have. You believe something different. Not only do you believe something different, but it's morally wrong.

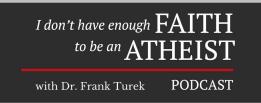
I think that's another key part of this. It's not just that you believe something different. But they believe that what we believe is actually morally evil. And so, they're cutting it off. And like you said, we would agree that you don't want to put anything that's morally evil into policy and things like that. But they're saying, if you hold the idea that's different than what they accept as their standard, then you are morally evil, and you have to go as a parent.

Frank:

We've gone well beyond tolerance. First of all, Christians are not commanded to be tolerant. We're commanded to be loving. And that requires that you stand in the way of evil. But the way







you love people is not to cut them off. Unless there are extreme circumstances. Paul talks about certain church discipline situations where you have to excommunicate somebody for the good of the congregation and the good of that person. So maybe they're going to come to their senses. See 1 Corinthians 5, and also Matthew 18.

However, it seems to me that we've gone from tolerance, they won't end there. They won't end with yeah, just allow me to have my viewpoint. They'll then require you to accept it as good. Then they'll require you to celebrate it. And finally, they're going to require you to participate in it. And actually, in some areas of corporate America, they want you to participate in an LGBTQ Pride event. Or they want you to participate in something that your conscience or your religion says you ought not participate in.

They can't just allow you to hold the idea. And now you're saying they won't even allow that. They want you to go from think it, to accept it, to celebrate it, to participate in it. And where do we go from here as Christians? What do we do, Natasha? They're asking us to participate now. And if not, they're going to cut us off. What do we do?

Natasha:

Well, I think that as Christians, we've kind of been a little behind the curve in terms of dealing with cancel culture in general. I think that we spent a lot of time talking about, you know, the problem with canceled culture is that there's no forgiveness. I think that we've spent a lot of time talking about that. And there are certainly things that we might do that require forgiveness. But I think the big piece that Christians missed in all of this is that, overwhelmingly, people are getting cut off not because they actually did something wrong. Not because they actually require forgiveness for doing something wrong. They're being canceled because they hold ideas that are actually objectively true and morally right.

So, we're talking about a move from talking as Christians about well, cancel culture is bad because there's no forgiveness, to needing to accept that cancel culture is what it is. And sometimes we don't require forgiveness, because we didn't do anything wrong. We were just on the wrong side of the mob, basically. So, I think that this is kind of what we need to grapple with now as Christians. We should be looking at this and saying that we might not be able to have meaningful conversations with some people at this point where they are in terms of what they're doing in cancel culture.

We need to continue to be bold and strengthen the church to stand up and be strong, and speak from the pulpit, as you and I are often talking about. Get more pastors to talk about these things so that congregations are emboldened to stand firm on truth. We have to keep speaking. I believe we're going to keep getting cancelled by the people who want to live that way, by the culture that's going that way. But we have to keep doing it. And so, I think that right now in the church, we're at a time where we really have to be emboldening people to stand up and speak truth, not be afraid of cancel culture, and recognize that cancel culture is going to continue to exist, I think, for a while.





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And that's unfortunate words for parents, as we started to talk about at the beginning of this. Because if your adult child is caught up in this mentality, it's very hard to break through that. I have no magical words of wisdom for saying, well, here are the right questions to ask the person. In most cases that I've heard, the child will not talk to them at all. There's no contact because of what you believe. They already know enough in their minds about what it means for you to be a Christian, and the beliefs that you hold, or are conservative (whatever the case is).

They already know enough in their own mind about that to say, I'm not going to have you part of my life anymore. It's a really tragic situation. I mean, we pray, right? We pray and we pray. Continue to do whatever you can if they are letting you in their life at all. In some cases, there's a small window. But other than that, I think you continue praying and you hope that with time people tend to see why this is not the right approach.

Frank:

Isn't it interesting that these leftists who hold these views and will cut you off for not agreeing with their views, don't evaluate you on the content of your character, but on a thought you have, or on a group in which you exist or identify with. It seems to me, it's almost like this whole intersectionality thing. You're an oppressor...you could be a saint. But if you identify as a Christian, we can't tolerate you. We have to cut you off. It's not the old Martin Luther King idea that we're going to judge you based on the content of your character, rather than the color of your skin, or any other way we identify you. Your behavior doesn't really matter. Who you identify as or what you identify with matters. And if you're in the wrong group, we're going to ostracize you.

That's where it seems we are, isn't it? Which is no fair way to treat somebody. And I wonder how many of these people who cut their parents off have ever asked their parents, why are you a Christian? Why do you think this is good, and right, and true? It's just, we don't like it, so we're going to cancel you. And of course, it violates the one commandment out of the 10 that actually gives you a promise, right? Honor your mother and father so you may live long in the land. And they won't honor.

And I understand there are times where if your parent has sexually abused you or has done something awful to you, it's got to be difficult to honor them. And there may be appropriate times where you might say, you just can't be in my life right now. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't pray for them. That doesn't mean that you can't acknowledge them. That doesn't mean that you have to act as if they're dead completely. It would seem to me there's some middle ground you can reach and honor the people that brought you into this world and helped raise you, even if you don't agree with all the behavior that they engaged in when they brought you up. And there's just no parent that's perfect anyway.





Natasha:

And those are certainly the hardest situations that you're describing there. I think that the people who reach out to me overwhelmingly are parents who are saying, I raised my kids in the church. I homeschooled my kids, in a lot of cases. They were walking with the Lord, but they go through deconstruction, whatever it is, that leads them to this point where they just abandon the idea of their parents being somebody that they can be in relationship with.

And I think that's sometimes the most hurtful because parents feel like, I tried to do everything right. I hear over and over again, from people who say, if I could ask for forgiveness for something, I would. I've said I wasn't a perfect parent. But I don't know what else to do, because it's just what I believe. It comes back to that. And one other thing that people should be aware of in all of this is that within the counseling world and psychology, that there is this whole push today that if you're in counseling, and you're trying to get help for some kind of issue, they're encouraging you to rewrite the narrative of your life.

Frank:

What does that mean?

Natasha:

So basically, what that means is, if there is something that causes you a pain point, if there's something where maybe your family doesn't agree with certain choices that you make. So, maybe your parents are Christians and maybe you have different choices. Maybe you want to identify as another gender, for example. If that's the case, and that's causing you any kind of conflict or inner turmoil, what they'll encourage you to do is to rewrite the narrative, recreate your reality now, and cut those people out of your life.

So, a lot of counselors are actually encouraging this to happen. They're not there to help you work through, hey, how can I be a stronger person and get over some of the wounds that I have? How can I be in healthy community with my family? That's not the goal of counseling anymore. The goal of counseling very much comes from the same perspective of this whole oppressor, and oppressed status thing where they're saying, if you have oppressors in your life, you need to get rid of them. So, I think parents need to understand that.

Because if your kids happen to be in counseling, if they're not going to some kind of biblically based counseling, which in most cases of this, they're not. They're going to be encouraged to let go of people in their lives that they think are problematic. And so, these adult kids are hearing this from all sides. Maybe they feel oppressed by their parents, they hear it from culture. Then they go to counseling to get help with something, and the counselors are saying, hey, change your life. Change your reality. Go and do this, and get rid of the people who are causing you trouble, and you're going to be able to move toward your perfect life now.



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Frank:

Why do you think so many kids are ready to cut off their parents, but there aren't many parents that will cut off their kids? I heard an answer from a pastor in Charlotte, Loran Livingston at Central Church of God. I remember he said this about 10 years ago. He answered the question this way. He said, because parents sacrifice much more for their children than children sacrifice for their parents. When you sacrifice for someone, when you bring somebody into the world, and it turns your world upside down...that life is no longer about you and what you want to do. You've got to bring this new person into the world and nurture this person for at least 18 or so years.

You have a bigger bond and a bigger reservoir of grace for that person than the child has for their parents. So, there may be exceptions to this, but that really resonated with me. I think he was right about that. And it's got to be so painful for parents, when their children whom they've sacrificed blood, sweat, and tears for, for decades, suddenly say, I don't want you in my life anymore. I know there might be no question you can ask. There's no silver bullet, as you mentioned before. But where could you start with such a person other than pray?

Natasha:

Well, maybe the answer to that is sort of in what you just said. That the hope is that as those adult children have kids that they raise, they start to process this differently. And I think that that's kind of the trigger point, probably for people. I hope that that's going to be the case. This is sort of a new trend, a new movement that we're seeing, this whole no contact thing. So, it's hard to know where it's going. But for example, it's well known that a lot of times when people haven't been in the church in their 20s, when they have kids, they suddenly start going to church again, right?

Because they start to see the world a little differently when they have those children. And what you're saying was just making me think that the people that I hear from whose adult kids have kids, so they've got grandkids, they're all very young. So, they seem to be young couples who are having young kids, who decide that they're going to remove themselves from their parents' lives. I can't think of one person I've talked to who says, yeah, my grandkids are in their teenage years, for example.

So I wonder, based on what you just said, if the older that those kids start to get, the more those parents sacrifice, the more they realize how much goes into parenting and that kind of bond, I wonder if that will start to turn some of those people's minds around to say, hey. This is worth more than just cutting people off because we have a different worldview. That would be my hope. Pray, of course. And my hope in terms of the life transitions, would be that that would lead people to start to rethink that some.

Frank:

And having grandparents in the lives of grandkids, I think is very important if it's possible. Because grandparents have so much more wisdom than just parents. They've been through it.





They've seen it. They're further down the road. You know, I used to have a joke. When somebody would ask me a question and I wouldn't know the answer, I'd say, you should have asked me that question when I was 17. I knew everything when I was 17, right? The older you get, the more you realize that you didn't really have it all together when you were in your 20s'. You know much more now.

And so, it's very helpful to rely on someone older when something comes up. My dad died three years ago, and I could remember calling him and asking him questions about certain things. I mean, my dad was not a spiritual giant. I mean, he was saved. But I don't know if he ever even read the Bible. He kind of came to Christ late in life. But whether he was a strong Christian or not, I would ask him questions about things, and he would always have some insight that I didn't consider, that I just never would have thought of that. And to have someone like that in your life, when you're going through difficulty, or just when you're bringing up kids yourself, I think is really important. And to cut that off, because grandpa voted for Trump...

Are you out of your mind? I mean, you're cutting off your nose to spite your face when you do that. To say nothing of the fact, you're completely graceless. And you're completely judgmental yourself. And you're completely toxic to the person that brought you into this world. I mean, you think grandpa's toxic? What about you to him? When you see the fruit of progressivism, it's not something that an objective person would say, this is really good. It's not.

If you have a disagreement with somebody, work it out. If you have to agree to disagree, fine. I mean, I remember one sports podcaster talking about this, who's not even a Christian. I think the guy's an atheist. But he said, we're going to break our relationship over politics? Really? I mean, that's going to cause you to say, I never want to talk to you again? Have we lost our minds?

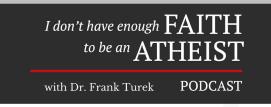
Natasha:

A little, yeah. I think sometimes, maybe there is something that can be changed for some of the parents who are having these problems with their kids. Because I know sometimes they'll say, I just wanted to find little ways that I could talk to my grandkids about things, or give them books, for example, about the Bible. That is the trigger event, sometimes. The adult kid parents say, well then, we're not going to be with anymore. So, in some cases, maybe if you find that you are pushing too much, and that you are trying to talk about things with the grandkids that didn't go in line with the parents' wishes, that kind of thing...

Then you might be able to say, hey, can we just agree to disagree? But let's be in relationship. There might be the opportunity for that, to keep the relationship going a bit longer. And then maybe eventually, as those grandkids get old enough, and you have the opportunity, then you can have time with them then. But I do see some parents who are with their adult kids, wanting to bypass the adult kids and their beliefs, and they feel disrespected by that if they go past them to get to the young grandkids.







So, there is some of that that goes on. And if that's the problem, then I think some of that can be mitigated more by kind of having the conversation. I'm respecting what you're doing here. We're going to agree to disagree, but let's be in relationship. And maybe down the road, you still at least have a relationship in place where you can talk to the kids when they're much older.

Frank:

I have a friend of mine who's actually on our board at CrossExamined.org. and he has three kids. They're all grown, and they're all married, and they all have grandchildren of his. And he sat them all down very recently. And he said, there's going to come a time, when I'm going to do something, or my wife, your mom, or your mother-in-law is going to do something that you're not going to agree with. I may discipline your kid when you're not there, or I may do something that you go, hey, you shouldn't have done that. It's going to happen. We see each other every week. Can we all agree right now, that if any of us have a problem with how we're treating one another, that we'll sit down and talk about it and not let it fester or not cut one another off?

Natasha:

That's great.

Frank:

And they all agreed. And so, hopefully moving forward. Because inevitably, you live close enough to somebody, there's going to be irritants. We're fallen people. We're sometimes going to do things out of line, or we're going to take offense to things that shouldn't be taken offense to. Can we agree that our relationship is too important, and God's commands are too important to allow something like that to divide us? And they all agreed. Maybe you want to do that really early in your relationship with your kids too.

Maybe say to them, hey, we're not always going to agree on things. We haven't agreed on everything growing up. But as we become adults, can we at least always keep the lines of communication open when something irritates either one of us and talk about it? That might be the way forward because this obviously is not the solution. I mean, to just cut people off completely. How cruel can you be? You've got your parent's grandkids, and you think you're more moral by cutting them off? That's just bizarre.

Natasha:

I love your point about talking to your kids about it before they get there. I have 14 year old twins and I have a 12 year old. And I've actually had a conversation about this with my 14 year olds, because when I saw this start to happen. And I think when I saw Dennis Prager's article, it kind of spurred conversation. And so, we did just have a conversation about that. People are actually cutting their adult kids off. And you know, why do you think people do that? Do you think that you should cut people off if you have a different belief? What if you decided that you believe something totally different than your parents? How do you think you would handle that?





And I don't know that it ultimately would change what happens when they're adults, you never know what happens, right? But at the same time, I do think there's a very valuable conversation to be had with teen kids, given the culture that there in and knowing that this is a movement and how people see things. Have that conversation early and just talk about what's going on and why that doesn't make sense. No matter what your worldview is, that just doesn't make sense. The fruit of it, like you're saying, is just so negative. It's just so terrible. And instilling that sense of family that we love you no matter what, we hope you're going to love us no matter what, enough to say we disagree, but we're still in relationship.

Frank:

That's right. That's right. Well, Natasha, we are doing a seminar together that we mentioned earlier called Unshaken. And of course, the great Alisa Childers is part of that as well. Tell people about that so if they want to be a part of it or bring it to their church, they can go to a website and go further. Where do they go?

Natasha:

So, the Unshaken conference basically talks about all of the big issues of today from the perspective of who's your authority? Is it God? Or is it yourself? And so, we work through a lot of the big issues today. And you can learn all about it at UnshakenConference.com. We're going to be in Nashville on November 4th and in Tucson on September 23rd. And we're just now announcing that there are going to be four more dates in 2024. And we're opening it up to hear from you guys. We want to know if you would like us to come to your church. So, if that's a possibility, if you're saying, I would love to have that come to our church, go to UnshakenConference.com. There's a link there. You fill out a little form telling us about your church, and we'll get in touch with you if it looks like it might be a good fit.

Frank:

Excellent. Also, check out the website, NatashaCrain.com and her podcast, which comes out how often?

Natasha:

Every couple of weeks.

Frank:

And then she is doing a podcast with Alisa, the Unshaken podcast. Which is going to be rekindled because you guys have taken summer off.

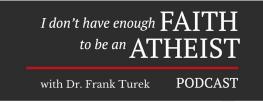
Natasha:

Yep. We'll be back in the fall.

Frank:

By the time you listen to this, there are going to be new episodes out there. So, check all that out. And if you would friends, if you don't have it yet, get the book "Faithfully Different." There





are a lot of great insights in that book. And you're going to enjoy it, and it's going to be a book that can help you navigate this secular culture. So, check out the "Faithfully Different." Thanks so much, Natasha.

Natasha:

Thank you.

Frank:

Alright, God bless see you guys next week.

