

Tackling the Top 5 Objections Young People Have to Christianity | with Cliffe & Stuart Knechtle

(January 12, 2024)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, what are the top five objections that young people have to Christianity today? And how have those objections changed over the past, say 40 years? And how can you address these objections in a clear, unoffensive way? Well, that's what we're going to talk about today, because we have two guests who have been on college campuses for quite a while. In fact, our older guest has actually been engaging with young people on beaches, on campuses, wherever they are, since 1980. His name is Cliffe Knechtle and his son, Stuart, is also joining him.

They're actually co-pastors at a church in Connecticut. And if you go to Ask Cliffe on YouTube, you're going to see some amazing interactions that these two gentlemen have with young people on college campuses. Go to the YouTube channel. You'll see it there. And I'm going to start with you Cliffe, because you've been doing it the longest. How did you get involved in going to college campuses right on the quad and start taking the most skeptical objections to Christianity?

CLIFFE:

Well, Frank, after graduating from Gordon Conwell seminary, I went on staff with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship to do evangelism. And we did book tables, but it was really hard getting to non-Christians, a lot of them. One day, my father in the LORD, a man named Leighton Ford, who lives near you, Frank, I think. He encouraged me to try open air because he was, I think, at the University of Arizona, and he listened to a hellfire brimstone preacher tell all the students they were going to hell in a handcart, and the students stood around and listened.

And so, Leighton said, Cliff, why don't you go out and present both the love and the truth of Christ and see what happens. And so, 43 years ago on the beaches of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, when those beaches were crammed with sunbathing bodies, I stood up and began to speak. And very quickly, I scrapped my outline because students were hopping up off their towels and firing difficult questions at me. And so, after an hour of dialoguing, I said, my voice is really tired. Have a great day. I went back to the hotel and some university students came up to me and staff and said, Cliffe, would you try this on our campus? So, that's how I started.

FRANK:

Well, Cliffe, you get a round of applause for having the bravery to actually do that. Now, in 1980. How old were you? You're going to give your age away, but sorry. People need to know. How old were you in 1980 when you started this?



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

CLIFFE:

Twenty-six.

FRANK:

Twenty-six. You're taking the most skeptical questions from atheists and agnostics out there in the open air. When you started this in 1980, what were some of the top objections you got to Christianity?

CLIFFE:

Why do you believe God exists? What about all the hypocrites who call themselves Christians? How can you believe in a religion that has so many hypocrites? What about televangelists? Aren't they just into moneymaking? What about the problem of suffering? How can God be all powerful and all good in light of how much suffering there is? And isn't morality relative?

FRANK:

Those are the big ones 43 years ago. What are the big ones now? And just list them later in the program. We'll get into some of this. But have they changed? Are they still the same top five? What do you see?

CLIFFE:

Those are basically the same top five. But there is more focus on things like slavery and racism. The LGBTQ agenda has been pushed very articulately, very strongly now for years on college campuses. And that's just getting more intense. There is more emotionalism riding around. So, the challenge is to take the emotional temperature of a person who's raising a question and seek to respond in as emotionally sensitive and intelligent a way as possible. So, those are some of the trends that I've seen.

FRANK:

And Stuart, how did you get engaged in this other than just observing your dad? Did you see your dad out there and you said, I want to do that? I mean, how did this happen?

STUART:

At Berkeley, when I was three years old, I would see him get pies thrown on him, spat on. A couple guys came out, dropped their drawers with John 3:16 on their cheeks. A guy came out with a fake gun. And then the costumes were just absolutely ridiculous. And fists would fly out there at Berkeley, probably Frank as you know. And so, I saw that from a very early age and probably still have some PTSD over it. But I never would have thought I'd be interested in something like this.

And yet, I ended up going to Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and then teamed up with my dad as well as my brother who's youth pastor at the church. And then it just kind of naturally flowed. I all of a sudden started picking up on apologetics books while we were doing drives up to Nova Scotia during the summertime. And I'd read literally, you know, off and on, for 18 hours.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

So, I think it was honestly the Holy Spirit's draw, because it really came out of nowhere, and I never thought I would enjoy something like it. But that draw came, and I never thought I'd go into ministry. But sure enough, pastoring came. And then, I just absolutely love being out there on college campuses, different debate shows online, just because it's such a huge need right now. And I hear the line all the time, you know, the internet is where religion comes to die. And so, trying to confront that, as well as being on the college campuses, is what we're all about.

FRANK:

Now, what is the name of the church? Cliffe, you're the senior pastor. Stuart, you're the assistant pastor. And where is it?

CLIFFE:

It's Grace Community Church in New Canaan, Connecticut.

FRANK:

Wait, wait, there's an evangelical church in New Canaan, Connecticut? Really? [Laughter]

CLIFFE:

You've got your finger on the pulse there, Frank. That's why you're so helpful for us. Because we're in a very secular part of the world.

FRANK:

Yes, you are. Well, I'm glad you're there. Did you grow up in that area? I mean, why New Canaan, Connecticut?

CLIFFE:

I grew up in New Canaan, and my wife and I built a log home on my parent's property 36 years ago, when we were expecting our first child. And we were still traveling a lot to college campuses. And so, we built that log home on their property, and traveled out from there.

FRANK:

Now, Cliffe, when you go to a college campus, and you've been doing it for 40 years, now. You do more open-air, whereas we tend to go in, and we set up a room, and call people to come into the room. And then we do a presentation and take Q&A. But you're doing more open-air. When you do that, what kind of permission do you need to have? And have you ever gotten kicked off a campus for trying to do that?

CLIFFE:

Yes, we've been kicked off some campuses. But the majority of campuses, I'm invited by a group of students on campus who get permission from the Dean of Students Office, or security, or whoever, for us to hold an open-air meeting in a highly trafficked spot on campus. So, the majority of campuses are open to it, if it is initiated by a student group. And then there are some campuses, like Texas State University, where we've been going now for about 10 years, that is

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

very pro free speech. And so therefore, we just set up on campus there and go at it. And I really appreciate the president of Texas State University, being so pro free speech.

FRANK:

So, when you go to a campus, you typically have someone hosting you. What's the best time to do these things? How long do you normally talk? Are you starting with some sort of presentation and then taking questions? I mean, how does it work?

CLIFFE:

We meet at 11:30 with the students to go over strategy and to pray together. At noon, we start. We give a four to five minute opening talk on some topic from a biblical perspective. And then we open it up for question and answer, and we go for 2, 3, 4 or 5 hours straight. All dialogue, all question and answer.

FRANK:

And much of this, ladies and gentlemen, you can see on the Ask Cliff YouTube channel. Just go to YouTube and type in Ask Cliffe with an E on the end of it, and you will see several 100 of these videos where Cliffe and/or Stuart are engaging students out in the quad, if you will, outside. And they get questions on just about every major topic you could imagine. And the dialogue goes on and on and on. And they have some clips that you can see. There's some shorts up here I'm looking at right now, so you don't have to watch the entire thing. If you just want to dive in to one particular topic or another you can.

So, just go to YouTube, Ask Cliffe, and you will see the kind of work they're doing out there. And when we come back from the break. We're going to get into a lot more with Cliff and Stuart Knechtle, who are doing great work on college campuses and elsewhere where a youth meet. We're going to talk about some of the top objections. How do you respond to these objections? What are some of the pushback you get? What kind of advice do you have for these people? If you're interested in getting involved in this, how can you do it? A lot more. So, don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. Back in two.

If you're low on the FM dial looking for National Public Radio, go no further. We're actually going to tell you the truth here. You're not listening to NPR. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist on the American Family Radio Network. Our website, CrossExamined.org. We present evidence for Christianity, and we cross-examine ideas against it. And a couple of gentlemen who've been doing this for many years, particularly the older gentleman.

Cliffe has been doing this since 1980, on beaches on college campuses, at churches, anywhere where people will listen, and even places where they won't. He'll go, and he will engage on any issue that students bring up. And if you go to the YouTube channel, Ask Cliffe, you will see hundreds of videos of Cliffe and his son Stuart engaging young people on these college

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

campuses, talking about all sorts of different objections that are brought up. Cliff, let me start with you on this. How have these students' reactions changed over the years to doing this? Because I remember Josh McDowell saying this years ago. When he first started going to college campuses back in the 70's, he would say, well, you know, Christianity is true. And they would say, prove it. And later, he would say, instead of them saying prove it, they would say, well you're a bigot if you believe that. I mean, have you noticed a shift from people interested in truth to now people calling you names?

CLIFFE:

Yes, absolutely. The definition of tolerance for many is, it doesn't matter what you believe. We are going to affirm everything. And if I'm an affirming person, it means I make no distinction between truth and falsehood. I just affirm everything. And that's a very sad, sad conclusion. And yet, it is a logical ramification of relativism. Because if relativism is true, then there is nothing except my choice. And whatever I choose to be my truth is true. So, it's a vicious cycle. And it's simply the outworking of moral relativism and relativism in general that began years ago on these campuses. And it's worked its way into the gutter today.

FRANK:

So, why don't they affirm your position then, if they affirm everything?

CLIFFE:

Because I'm standing up there saying that Jesus Christ is the truth. And for them, that is intolerance. That is arrogance. That is narrow-minded bigotry.

FRANK:

Stuart, how do you deal with an objection like that? Well, you're just a bigot. You're narrow-minded if you believe that Jesus is the truth, and the way, in the light?

STUART:

Well, it's so interesting. So many students love to say, oh, you're taking ad hominem attacks, to Cliffe and myself, just because we're attacking their position. But the funniest part is exactly like you're saying. They take part in the whole cancel culture, where they're saying something like, for example, oh, you have a racist friend. And we'll say, yeah, we have racist friends, but they're trying to change. And they'll say, oh, you're a bigot. You yourself should go to this hell that you've made up because you have a racist friend. And so, they try and cancel you.

But more theologically, the illustration that I'm sure you know, Frank of the whole elephant, and that everybody's grabbing on to a different part of the elephant. And supposedly, that's the best example of tolerance. And everybody should just stick with that because we're all just worshipping a type of God that we just have different manifestations of in terms of our worship. But we think that it is the most spiritual, highest level of egotism for the one who says I have complete vigilance and omniscience when it comes to all of your different faiths.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

And I can say myself, and I'm the only one who's not blind when it comes to grabbing different parts of the elephant and say that you guys are all worshiping the same God. So, why don't you just all get on the same type of level and understand this incredible piece of knowledge and spiritual insight? Which is just embarrassing. And Frank, you probably get it. We get it all the time. You know, one student came up to me not too long ago, and she said, oh, you said the word debate? No, no, I don't want to debate. You're attacking me as a human being. And then another student came up and she said, we have to agree on everything before we enter into a discussion.

FRANK:

How would you even do that? How would you know what the other person believes without first discussing it? That's kind of bizarre. Cliffe you've been doing this for 40 years. Would you send Stuart, if he was say, you know, 15 years younger, would you send him to a major university now?

CLIFFE:

It all depends on the personality and the makeup of Stuart. For some, I think homeschooling is the best route to go. For others, a Christian school is the best way to go. And Stuart went to Gordon College, a very fine Christian College in Massachusetts. And for others, like myself, it was very healthy for me to be at a very secular college, liberal arts college, because I got my faith challenged every single day. Not just in lifestyle choices in the dormitories, but also in the classroom. And for some of us, who have the type of obnoxious personality that I do, it's very stimulating to be in that environment, because my back is against the wall.

I have to re-examine all of my presuppositions, all of my beliefs. I have no choice if I'm going to be intellectually honest. And that can be a very healthy exercise. Now, what helped me tremendously was, we had a tremendous InterVarsity Christian Fellowship on campus. The staff worker was absolutely brilliant, far more intelligent than I will ever be. And he helped us think through these issues. And then we had InterVarsity press, where Christian professors, university professors wrote tremendously insightful books, from which we learned a great deal in order to explain why we believe what we believed.

FRANK:

What were some of the books that brought you to faith or strengthened your faith maybe is better put?

CLIFFE:

An old book by FF Bruce, an English professor from England, called 'New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?' That was very helpful. The English thinker, Michael Greene was a man who helped me tremendously, and the English author and thinker John Stott. The English helped me a lot, because the English have an ability to communicate clearly and concisely, that I really learned a tremendous amount from. And then to tell you the truth, CS Lewis was right at the top as well with those folks.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

'Mere Christianity' was an incredible help to me personally. And then people like Josh McDowell and JP Moreland, those types of folks really helped me a lot think through the faith. But to be honest with you, Frank, when I started doing open-air, I would often have to give the answer, I do not know. But I'll be back out here again tomorrow, and I'll find an answer for you. And I would go back to the InterVarsity staff workers, or the crew staff workers, or the navigator staff workers that invited me there. And I would say, guys, please help me. I don't have the foggiest idea how to answer this question. And that night, they would take me through the issue and would give me incredible answers. So, I will never be able to repay those people for all the help they gave me.

FRANK:

Now, Stuart, when you go to a campus event like this, are you doing a multi-day event so you can say, hey, come back tomorrow. Have an answer. Is that how you do it?

STUART:

I just defer. I defer to the guy who started in the 70's. [Laughter]

FRANK:

All right. Okay. All right. No, but I mean, do you do multi-day events at these schools so people can come back the next day and get clarification?

STUART:

Exactly. We'll finish, you know, sermon church on a Sunday. We'll always fly out about 2pm on a Sunday. Get there, start right on Monday at noon and go until four. If there are some very excitable Muslims, we'll go until 9pm. It'll be totally dark out. I'm actually not kidding. And then we'll typically go, if it's a commuter school, we'll go through Thursday. But most are not commuter schools. And so, we'll go straight through Friday, and it'll be incredible.

See, Frank, I peter out with my energy, right around two o'clock. So, I can last from 12 to two. Cliffe, it's an immense spiritual gift. He can go from noon until five without having a bead of sweat on his hair. So, I don't know what it is. He's able to relax and yet be intense. But for me, it takes that adrenaline high. And I know you're able to relax whenever I see you up there. It's amazing. You're able to have that energy and at the same time, you seem so relaxed.

FRANK:

Yeah, but after three hours, I've got to say, I've got to go to the bathroom. I mean, five hours? [Laughter]

STUART:

Bathroom breaks are becoming more frequent now, Frank. I understand.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

FRANK:

That's right. That's right. That's crazy. Well, let's talk about some of the top objections. You mentioned some of them earlier. Let's start with the biggie you always hear all the time, slavery, particularly Old Testament slavery. Where do you start on that one Cliffe?

CLIFFE:

I start with Exodus 21:16. If you kidnap someone, you will be put to death. Whether they are still in your possession, or you've sold them, doesn't matter. You will be put to death. The ideal out of Genesis 1 is we're all created in the image of God. Genesis 3, everything begins to fall apart as a result of human sin. And slavery, unfortunately, becomes a universal practice that is tragic.

Second point is, we are confronted by the Mosaic law, which is often different from God's moral law in the Old Testament. And that is where the confusion starts. And that's where the grad students at some of these campuses can really hop all over my case and get me sweating. Because there were some very difficult statements in the Old Testament about slavery, as well as Paul's statements, slaves obey your masters. So, to explain that one is very difficult.

But I was at Cornell University in upstate New York, and a student had raised that issue. And I was struggling to answer it as coherently as I was able, when suddenly an African American woman, grad student, stepped out of the crowd and said, wait a second, you guys have got to understand that the chattel slavery in America was radically different from slavery in the Roman Empire, which often was an indentured servanthood based on a financial need. Lawyers, doctors, businesspeople were often slaves, and they could buy their way out of that slavery. So, let's make sure that we understand the difference between slavery in first century Roman Empire, and slavery in the United States, as it was tragically practiced.

FRANK:

Yes, that is a big distinction that many people don't seem to understand. Also, how often do you get atheists who come up with some sort of moral objection to Christianity? Do you ever turn it back on them and say, well, by what moral standard are you judging that to be wrong? Because they don't appear to me to have a moral standard by which to judge anything as being wrong, whether it's in the Bible or not? Stuart, why don't you take that one?

STUART:

Isn't that called something like the Road Runner tactic?

FRANK:

It's sort of like that, yeah.

STUART:

The best word for it is embarrassing. There's so many contradictions, so many double standards that so many of them live by. One of the more interesting interactions I've had was at a school down south. There were eight to ten, BLMers who came up to me, and were talking about the

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

value of human life from their perspective and how we should treat all people equally. And they were also strong in the new atheist camp, I would say. And they talked about the value of life when it comes to suicide. And I pushed them on okay, as a mental health therapist, I deal with a lot of suicide, a lot of depression. I said, you've seen the show 20 Reasons. You've seen a lot of these shows that kind of glorify things like suicide and depression, right? And they said, Oh, yeah.

So, I said, okay. So, a 13 year old who's depressed and wants to take their life, do you think we should almost euthanize or at least allow them to take their own life? Because based on what you're saying, the only moral obligation is about human freedom. And they said, yes. We should allow them, and we should even aid them. Because eventually, they're going to take their own lives anyway. Very concerning.

FRANK:

Hold your thought, Stuart. Let's come back to it. Yeah, that's interesting that they would say that. They've bitten the bullet in that case. We'll talk a lot more with Stuart and Cliffe Knechtle, who are doing great work on college campuses. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Back in two minutes.

How can you make a case for Christianity and skillfully answer the objections? You can go to Ask Cliffe on YouTube and see so many of these interactions. You can also take the brand-new, 'Why I Still Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' online course, which is just getting started this week. If in fact you're a little bit late, that's okay. You can still join the course. Go to CrossExamined.org. Click on online courses. You will see it there. It's a brand-new course. A little over 10 hours of new video, a new workbook, the whole deal. Also, 'Let's Get Real' is a course for sixth to eighth graders that Shanda Fulbright is teaching. It's basically 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' for middle schoolers. Check all that out at CrossExamined.org and click on Online Courses.

My guests today are a father and son, pastor and associate pastor, and also a team that goes to college campuses, Cliffe and Stuart Knechtle. They do great work. If you go to Ask Cliffe on YouTube, you will see the work they're doing. And just before the break, Stuart, we were talking about a group of BLMers you ran into. Just complete the story there, because you were saying that you posed to them that if a 13 year old wanted to commit suicide, should you euthanize that 13 year old and they said what?

STUART:

Yeah, the only moral obligation they would have that's objective, pretty much, is freedom. And so, if the kid wants to kill himself, or if the kid wants to be a kitten for a couple of weeks, allow that kid to make that decision, and aid them, and lift them up. And say okay, yeah. Let's grow your self-esteem and self-confidence by allowing you and even aiding you to do these kinds of things. So, I really pushed him on it. I said, wow. You say this is somehow honoring the value of human life. And eventually, after about 20 minutes, they came around and said, alright, fine.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

Yes, I guess I don't think we should be euthanizing children. And I don't think we should be allowing them in their state of their depression. Which, as mental health therapists, 90% of those who are depressed, come out of their depression, eventually. And whether that's through exercise, whether it's through medication, whether it's through going to church, whatever it might be. And so, how interesting it is that so many of these people think, no. They're going to be depressed forever. They're going to be suicidal forever. So, why not just aid them in killing themselves now, instead of allowing them to suffer for so long?

FRANK:

It's odd too to say that the ultimate moral right we have is freedom when suicided itself would take away that freedom if you think about it. You're using your freedom to destroy yourself. So, how does that make any sense ultimately? Now, you've lost the ability to make any choices after that. Also, my friend Eric Chabot at Ohio State University, sometimes runs into these BLM people. And he will say, well, if there is no God, no lives matter. Because certainly, if there is no God, black, white, doesn't matter. Nobody matters. People don't seem to understand.

They're always using a moral standard to judge what particular right they think they have or what particular problem Christianity presents. And they don't have that moral standard, an objective moral standard in their own worldview. Yet, they steal it from God and then turn it on God as if somehow God is responsible for not seeing things the way they see it. Let's go back to the slavery issue for a second too if we can, Cliffe.

Sometimes you hear people say, okay, I get it. The slavery in the Old Testament, and even into the New, is not the kind of chattel slavery we had here. It was more indentured servitude. And you're right, that if we had obeyed both the Old and the New Testaments, we never would have had chattel slavery because kidnapping was punishable by death and all that. But they might still say, but why didn't God expressly outlaw in advance this kind of chattel slavery that we would have later? How would you respond to that kind of objection?

CLIFFE:

Very good question, Frank. Matthew 19, I think is a key passage in answering it. Because in Matthew 19, the Pharisees are asking Jesus. Hey, Jesus, if divorce is wrong, why did Moses say to guys who were going to divorce their wives, make sure you give them a certificate of divorce? And Jesus responds that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, not because God wants that, but due to the hardness of your hearts. So, divorce is allowable in certain situations. Why? Because of the hardness of human hearts.

Similarly, slavery occurs all over the world. And it is not God's best. It is horrible sin. And yet, due to the hardness of people's hearts, Moses puts together laws in the Old Testament, I believe, inspired by God, to put a limiting behavioral control on how slavery is to be practiced. Never once affirming slavery as something good, instead acknowledging that due to the hardness of people's hearts, slavery has existed, is existing, and unfortunately, will exist just in different forms. And now, we're going to try and tighten the noose, and try and wipe slavery out.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

And that's very consistent with the way the Bible handles it. When you read Genesis 1, slavery is obviously wrong because we're all created in the image of God. When you read Exodus, the second biggest miracle in the Old Testament is the freedom of the Jewish slaves from Egypt. Then when you go to Jesus' first sermon in Luke 4, you have Jesus making a direct frontal attack on racism, and almost losing His life for it. When you go to the parable of the Good Samaritan, you have Jesus making a direct frontal attack on racism as he tells how a Samaritan gets down on his hands and knees, and cleans up the cuts, and bandages the wounds of a Jew. And then Jesus says, go and do likewise.

Then we have Galatians 3:28. In Christ, there's neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. And then by golly, what do you end with? You end with the book of Philemon. And the main point of the book of Philemon is Paul writing to a slave owner whose slave Onesimus has run away, pleading with him. Except Onesimus back, no longer as a slave, but as a brother in Christ. And then in Revelation 7:9, we read that before the throne of Christ in Heaven, there are going to be people from every tribe, language, people, and nation. I don't think the Bible could make it any more clear.

FRANK:

Stuart let's talk about the other seminal issue of the day among the young in particular. And that has to do with sexuality, particularly the LGBTQ issues. What are some of the objections you get on a college campus regarding the alphabet, as we put it? And how do you respond? Suppose someone comes to you and says, well, why is God against homosexual behavior? How do you respond?

STUART:

Frank, it's such a personal one. We had a couple very gifted academics who, you know, during the last few years on our podcast. And sadly, at the end, we would ask them, hey, where do you stand on this issue? And they would take experience over what they knew that Scripture said. And by the experience, it was their son came out of the closet, or their cousin somehow was dealing with SSA. So, the experience piece is huge right now. And I have friends who are gay, and it is a tough one.

And so, I always start with just the personal side is challenging when it comes to this whole issue. Because so many Christians now, I mean 75% of Christians say that living with a girlfriend or boyfriend before marriage is totally fine. And those who are pro LGBTQ, it's not far behind that, evangelical Christians. So, when I go on a college campus, I always start with that yes, we have to empathize. But then secondly, I mean, you have right in Genesis, obviously, male and female, you know? Not Adam and Steve. So, starting right out of the gate, it's clear the diversity there.

And then the diversity model runs throughout the entire Bible. And you have Christ dying for the Church. You have bride and bridegroom, for example. And you have all the passages in Leviticus. You have Paul's vice list. All of them are always connected in many different ways.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

And you have Jesus talking about pornea. Yes, he doesn't explicitly state homosexuality. But He talks about how sexuality should be between a male and a female, and we need to honor that. And obviously, when He did that, He set up an incredible model to protect women, by saying it's between a male and a female, and now having an actual family.

No longer could the male be completely open to the fact of having to do whatever he wants to with any orifice of a female. And so, no longer could you have a wife, as well as a mistress, and a sex slave. So, this whole piece on LGBTQ and the confusion of sexuality in the Roman Empire, so many people don't realize that when you set up the nuclear family in a way where the Bible is describing to set it up as between a male and a female, that protected women unlike anything else.

FRANK:

Cliffe, this appears to be an emotionally difficult issue, but not an intellectually difficult issue. And how often do you see students led almost completely by their emotions? And then how do you get them to consider logic and reason, rather than well, my friend has same-sex attraction, so I have to be for it? How do you go about doing that?

CLIFFE:

First point, I try and blast apart the idea that if I was born with a certain drive, that makes that drive good. And I relate how when I was five years old and I was in a sandbox with a playmate, and he did something wrong to me. So, without ever having seen this behavior modeled, I picked up my metal truck and dropped it on my playmates head. To argue that because that came naturally to me in a sandbox, as a five year old kid, therefore it is good, is ridiculous. We as human beings have to exercise our consciences and our rational minds, and learn to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong.

Secondly, I try and go for issues where I know that they will have to agree with me. And most recently, Frank, I've been using Dr. Larry Nasser, the doctor who sexually abused 250 women on the women's gymnastics team of the United States. And he has several life prison sentences. Now, if morality is relative, what Dr. Larry Nasser did in abusing those 250 women gymnasts was not wrong. It was the expression of his sexuality as he naturally experienced it and wanted to express it.

And the majority of people will agree with me, that that was horrendous. That was abusive. That was wrong. And if they will not agree with me on that, I have them in an emotional pinch. Because the majority of other people who are listening know in the depths of their being that what Dr. Larry Nasser did to those women gymnasts was really evil, really wrong. And then the next point would be alright. The only way that there can be a right and a wrong is if there is some mind prior to the human mind, who defines what is right and what is wrong.

Because if there is no mind prior to the human mind that defines right and wrong, then it's obviously the human mind that defines it. Because you have to have a mind in order to know

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

what is right and wrong. A block of cement has no ability to perceive the difference between right and wrong, justice and injustice.

FRANK:

A lot more with Cliff and Stuart Knechtle right after the break. In fact, I'm going to ask them some more questions about some of the issues they're dealing with. They're the same issues you're dealing with, with young people in particular, and maybe even some older people. So, don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio network.

How do you address some of the most difficult objections to Christianity? We have Stuart and Cliffe Knechtle on with us. That's what they're doing on college campuses. In fact, Cliffe has been doing this since 1980. I've got a few more questions for them in this segment. But before I do, I want to mention that I am going to be near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, at Live Oak Church. It's actually in Denham Springs, I think it is, on the 21st of January. We'll do I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist in the morning, and then also in the evening with Q&A.

And then the following week out in Menifee, California revival Christian Fellowship. John Miller, great pastor out there. We'll be doing, 'If God, Why Evil?' in the morning, and then in the evening. We'll also be taking questions. Then we have Purdue University on February 1st, and several other events coming up in February. So, take a look at the calendar at Crossexamined.org. By the way, Cliffe and Stuart, where are you going next, college campus wise? Do you have anything scheduled so people if they're in the area, can go and see it in action?

CLIFFE:

We're going to be at Mississippi State University at the end of February. And then the University of Arizona in Tucson in March, probably early March. And then possibly Oregon State University in April, and University of Connecticut probably in April as well.

FRANK:

Now, where can people see the schedule? Where do you post it?

STUART:

They can see it on Facebook, Give Me an Answer. The name of the page, Give Me an Answer. And then they can see it on our Instagram account, which is Stuart_Knechtle.

FRANK:

All right, check that out, ladies and gentlemen to see them Live on these college campuses. They do a really great job. Hey, Cliffe, probably this didn't happen in 1980, or when you first started doing this. But today, how many students would you say retreat into post modernism? Where they'll say, well, you know, you have your truth. I have my truth. There is no the truth. You just have your own truth. I have my truth. What do you say to that?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

CLIFFE:

What I say to that is your zipper is down. And if they're being consistent, they're not going to look. If they grab for their zipper to make sure that it's up, it shows that they are not willing to live out what they say they believe. Secondly, Columbia University, a student said, my professor said this morning that it's possible we were just created by a very intelligent scientists this morning in a vat. And he put all our memories into our heads. What do you have to say to that? I thought the student was kidding. But he wasn't. Indeed, in humanities at Columbia, that's exactly what they had gone over that morning, which basically is epistemological nihilism, which is just a fancy way of saying how do you know that you can know anything for sure?

I think that that is an intellectual luxury, that real life does not allow for. A student at the University of Florida said, Cliffe, I can just walk through that tree. I said, I'm waiting. He could not walk through the tree. He could not create the reality of "walking through a tree," because the real reality would not allow him to walk through the truth. Truth exists whether you want to acknowledge it or not. And whether you want to acknowledge it or not, you believe in truth. Because the very statement, that I create truth in my own head, is a truth claim. It's a claim that I am the creator of reality. I am the creator of truth. Well, anybody who has half a brain when it comes to experiencing life knows that that's false.

If you're married, and your spouse hurts you deeply, and you say that really hurt. And they respond, well, my truth is that what I did to you was appropriate and good. That's wrong. What they did was really wrong, and they hurt you in your marriage. And you don't respond by, oh, that's right. I forgot. We just all create reality in our head. No, reality exists separate from us. And the challenge for us as thinking human beings is, getting in touch with reality. Because if you don't, you're going to get hurt.

FRANK:

Stuart, when you engage students, and they continue to move the goalposts on you, what really is the objection? Because I found most of the time, it's not evidence. What is the real objection that young people seem to have to Christianity today?

STUART:

Oh, it's all about sex ethics. And the honest and open ones will say, hey, look. I want to have as much sex as possible. That's why I'm not going to be a Christian, because I want to be consistent if I am a Christian. And I love that if they're being honest in that regard. And so, Thomas Nagel out of NYU talks about that. He says, it scares me how many of my colleagues who are so brilliant are Christians. And perhaps I could believe in God, but I'm not going to because I would never want the world to be run in that kind of way by God.

But moving the goalpost is such a frustrating one. Because we get that with the "celebrity atheists" we debate online, who will always say, there's no evidence. There's no proof. And we'll say, okay, well how much evidence do you need and what kind? Oh, I have no idea. I have no

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

idea. Okay, so you're just going to keep moving the goalpost then. It's like Richard Dawkins talks about he kept moving the goalpost, right? He started with my name needs to be spelled out with the stars in the sky. And then he moved even further. He said, actually, that's not enough. And he kept going, kept going for years. It's just comical how these atheists do it. So, it's typically the emotional bias connected to sex ethics behind it all. And then second one is identity. I've talked to a lot of college students who say, Ooh, no. I don't want any type of identity connected to a God. I want my own personal sense of self-definement. So, those are two big ones.

FRANK:

How about, Cliffe, the objection from the hiddenness of God? You know, if God really wants us to trust in Him, why isn't he more overt? Why isn't He more obvious? How would you respond to that one?

CLIFFE:

I would respond first of all, God has given more than enough evidence for any thinking person to believe in Him. But I have an inbuilt bias, a cognitive bias. And Paul articulates that bias in Romans 1. I have this problem with sin, this problem with God's authority, this problem with control. I want to be in control. And therefore, I will play all types of intellectual gymnastics in order to run away from God. I am convinced that the only reason an atheist doesn't find God, is for the same reason that a criminal does not find a policeman or policewoman. They are running away. God has left more than enough evidence.

And then finally, I would say, all right. If the evidence that I have given you for God's existence, and for the resurrection of Christ, and for the trustworthiness of the Gospels is not enough, I have no problem with that. But here's where I'm going to start having a problem with you. What do you believe in? And what's the evidence that whatever it is you believe in is true? And if you cannot give me more evidence to support whatever it is you believe, than evidence for Jesus Christ, I'm afraid we're talking about intellectual hypocrisy.

So, let's be honest. You say there's not enough evidence? Fine, I've got no problem with that. But what you're clearly saying is, I have a standard. And before I accept anything as true and reliable, enough evidence must be given to meet this standard. Fine, Christ doesn't meet your standard. What does? And the answers that I get to those two questions, what do you believe in and what's the evidence that whatever it is you believe in is true, is scary.

FRANK:

Give me some examples of what they might say back to you, Cliffe. I believe in what? Quantum vacuum, bursting into a universe, macroevolution, materialism? What are the positive things they believe in? And then when you ask them for evidence, they're pretty much out of intellectual justification for those things that they believe in. What are some of the things that they've said to you?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

CLIFFE:

Well, I'll often ask the question, why are you guys here in university? Why are you getting an education? And the overwhelming answer is, to make more money. And so, my point is, fine. So, the purpose of life, you're telling me is to make more money. What is the evidence that the purpose of life is to make more, and more, and more, and more money? Isn't there more than enough evidence that really what life is all about is relationships?

If you meet really wealthy people and their lives have been hammered and shredded by relational breakdown, that is scary. I don't think you want to go down that path of saying, yeah, my life is all about money. No, life is not all about money. Life is all about love, loving God and loving people. It's relational. And that's exactly what Jesus said. When asked what's the most important commandment? Well, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. So, come on, guys. Let's get honest. Let's get real.

FRANK:

And do they try and give you evidence that making money is the purpose of life?

CLIFFE:

When I say to them, essentially what I just said to you, it gets real quiet. Because there's enough relational pain in the typical university student's life in the United States today, that they know that relationships are really, really important. And if relationships don't go, well, there is deep, intense pain.

FRANK:

So, Stuart, what might a student say? And we've just got about a minute so do your best here. What might a student say if you convince them that relationships are important, but I just don't have enough evidence that a relationship with God, because I don't have enough evidence for God, is really possible? I can't have this relationship with God. What would you say?

STUART:

I would say, you certainly can. And, oh, well, it's because I cannot see God. I can't feel God. Well, you can't see atoms. You can't see electricity. You can't see photons, you can't see your brain, you can't see intangible love. And yet, you take these things, obviously, to the bank in terms of believing in them. So, why are you holding this God to such a higher standard than these things? And so, I'll say, you can get in touch with God. But you have to get in touch with him through an incredible manifestation that He gave us by breaking through space and time, giving us His only Son as a historical figure who we can truly get to know through the Gospels.

And so, I get that question from university kids all the time. Today, I got it actually a couple of times. And it's all about getting together with other believers. It's all about, if you're going to be so disciplined when it comes to your own studies, etch out time to actually have an hour. Put it down as a meeting in your own schedule to actually get to know Christ. And then secondly, go to church. You know, spiritual but not religious. That means I don't go to church.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

That's the religious type. You have to go to church to get to know Christ. You can be a Christian and not go to church, but you can't be an obedient Christian and not go to church. And then lastly, I talked about how important it is to really get to this point of head, heart, and hands when it comes to Christian faith.

You know, so many of my friends in seminary ditch their faith, because it was all about just a head trip, knowing Greek and Hebrew. And then it's terrifying to think that if I just get more apologetic head knowledge, that I'm going to be just, you know, so close to God. No, you're not. You have to have the head. But then the heart is emotionally connecting to God through prayer and meditation. And hands are social justice and serving others.

FRANK:

It's been great having Cliffe and Stuart on. I'm going to see if I can hold them over for the next podcast, too. They've got such great insights. Gentlemen, thanks for being on the program. Check them out at Ask Cliffe on YouTube. And we'll see you here next week. God bless.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**

