

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

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

How to Evangelize Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses | with Dr. Brady Blevins

(January 19, 2024)

FRANK:

Some of you may know I have three sons. My wife and I do. The oldest two were in the Air Force. In fact, the oldest one still is. He is the one that I wrote the book 'Hollywood Heroes' with. Zach Turek, that's my oldest son. 'Hollywood Heroes: How Your Favorite Movies Reveal God.' The second son, also in the Air Force. He was a pilot in the Air Force for about 11 years. He just got out of the Air Force and got hired by American Airlines. So, he and his wife, and our two grandsons, just moved to Charlotte recently.

And so, this past Sunday, they wanted to check out a church in Charlotte. So, my wife and I went along with them. And the pastor, nice guy. His name is Chris Edwards, right down here at Graceway Baptist. During his sermon, he said he was working out. He goes to a YMCA or some sort of workout facility here in the Charlotte area. And he had a guy come up to him who had seen many times in this workout facility, this gym. And the guy said to him, hey, what do you do for a living? And Chris was thinking, oh, man. I don't know if I want to answer this. Because if I tell him I'm a pastor, I wonder what kind of reaction I'm going to get.

So, he said, first of all, he kind of made me take my headphones out when he asked me a question. And so, I took my headphones out. And I said, well, what do you think I do? And he said, I got you pegged for the medical field. The medical field, really? Why do you think? He goes, I don't know. I just get this sense that you're in medical sales. He goes, well, actually, no. I'm not in medical sales at all. He said, well, what do you do? And he said, well, I'm a pastor. And the guy took two steps back. And he goes, I would never think you're a pastor. He goes, why? What have I done in here?

He said, well, you know, you're just kind of big and intimidating. You think I'm big and intimidating? No, I'm not really. I'm a pastor. And the guy kind of made it known to him that he was not a believer. And Chris thought to himself, you know, God has put this guy in my life. Now I'm kind of responsible for at least sharing the Gospel with him at some point. He's now mine. God has put him in my life, providentially. So, I'm kind of responsible. And you know what? Pastor Chris is right. And guess what? You are responsible. I am responsible when people come to our door, claiming that they have the truth, and they want us to know the truth as well.

Now, unfortunately, many times when people come to our door with the truth, what they think is the truth, it's not really the truth. It's usually a Mormon or a Jehovah's Witness. But God has put that person on our doorstep. And if we just slammed the door and refuse to answer, are we really being an obedient ambassador for him? I mean, he went to the cross for us. Can we at least speak to people who have come to our door to talk about religious, spiritual matters? Can we at least open our mouths and make a good case for why Christianity is true? I hope so.

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But if not, you're going to have an opportunity today to learn how you can make a good case, how you can witness to people that do come to your door, whether they be Mormons, whether they be Jehovah's Witnesses, or if you ever have an opportunity to speak to a Muslim. Because we have with us today, Dr. Brady Blevins, who for many years has been with Watchman Fellowship.

And if you don't know about Watchman Fellowship, you need to go to WatchmanFellowship.org, and you will see that they deal with different religious beliefs, and how to approach people who are in those different religious beliefs. And he is actually going to be the lead instructor on a brand-new online course we'll tell you about a little bit later in the program. Brady has also been to CIA, the CrossExamined Instructor Academy. He's been with Watchmen Fellowship for 11 years. He's also taught at Arlington Baptist University. Is it Arlington Baptist University Brady? Is that the name of it?

BRADY:

Yes.

FRANK:

Down there in Arlington, Texas. So, it's great to have Brady on. Brady, first of all, how did you get involved in apologetics? Let's just start at ground zero. How did this happen? You told me before you have been a Christian since you were 10. But how did you get involved in apologetics?

BRADY:

Yeah, well, first of all, Frank, thanks for letting me come on your program. But for me, it all started in the eighth grade. I was sitting in the back of my Texas history class. I grew up in Arlington, Texas. And I'm sitting back there, and I've got two friends. They're right next to me. And of course, you know, we're doing what every eighth grade boy is trying to do at school. And that's not learn and have a good time. And we're chatting back and forth during the course of the semester. And something comes up about birthdays. And one of my friends looks at me and he goes, well, I don't celebrate birthdays. I'm like, what? What do you mean you don't celebrate birthdays? Everybody celebrates birthdays.

He says no, no. It's my religious beliefs. And I'm thinking, what religion are you in that doesn't let you celebrate birthdays? And he says, well, I'm a Jehovah's Witness. Now, I'm an eighth grader. And I looked at him, and I said, you're telling me you've never had a Chuck E. Cheese birthday party? Is that what you're telling me? And he goes, yeah. I never have. I said, I mean, this is crazy. If we had cell phones back then, I would have called CPS right then on his parents for not letting him have a Chuck E Cheese birthday party.

And so, what happened from then, is we got into this conversation. And another friend of his, a guy kind of sitting on the other side of me, he was a Jehovah's Witness, too. And so, we started this dialogue that went on through the whole eighth grade year, and even beyond, to where we

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were discussing. I'm like, okay, well, what do you believe? I've heard of Jehovah's Witnesses before and I've heard of like 144,000. Didn't really know what that meant.

I knew it had something to do with some numbers in Revelation and it wasn't what we believed as good Baptists. And so, I just realized then and there, I need to know what he believes if I'm going to be effective in being able to communicate in the right way what I believed to him. And so, it was from that moment forward. Now, you know, it wasn't really until my freshman year of college that I actually started, so about five years later, before I actually started learning about this stuff. And it was still a few years after that before I actually started getting involved in actually doing apologetics.

FRANK:

How did you get connected with Watchmen Fellowship? And give our listeners kind of an overview of what you do.

BRADY:

So, Watchmen.org is our website. Watchman Fellowship is a ministry that was started in 1978 in Georgia. And the whole purpose of the ministry, was and is to this day, an interfaith apologetics ministry. So, we're looking to educate the community, equip believers to be able to effectively evangelize those of other faiths. So, we're looking at, you know, like Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims. Those are the three most common groups that we see.

But you also have other groups out there as well. Like, you know, for example, Black Hebrew Israelites. They are on a huge rise right now in our country. They went from just a couple of thousand to now, well over 100,000, getting closer to a million. That's a huge group that's growing. But you also have these other smaller groups out there that affect people, affect families.

And so, what we look to do is, we research those groups. In fact, that's one of the things that I do. I research and I speak in churches all across the country, and we even speak internationally as well. Looking to just equip believers. We lead an annual mission trip to Utah. And that's a time where we're boots on the ground, training people, putting them face to face with Mormons, and being able to have effective Gospel conversations.

FRANK:

Well, we're going to talk about how you can have effective Gospel conversations with primarily Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Muslims here on this broadcast. And then we'll tell you about a brand-new course that Brady is the main professor for a little bit later in the program. We can go into a lot more depth and become a better ambassador for Jesus. Because when people come to your door, God has put that person on your door for a reason. At least make progress with them. How can you do it? We're going to tell you how you can do it. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio Network. We're back in two minutes.

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Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio Network. I want to mention that I'm going to be near Baton Rouge this weekend at a church near there. If you go to our website, CrossExamined.org, you can see it. Next week, I'll be out in Menifee, California, at another church there. And both of these churches, we're doing the morning sessions and then the evening sessions. In fact, the one in Menifee, California, we're going to be doing 'If God, Why Evil?' The one in Baton Rouge, we're going to be doing I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, and we'll be at Purdue University on February 1. Keep an eye out for that.

And then there's a really big event I'll tell you about in the next segment out in Dayton, Ohio, in the middle of February. I'll tell you more about that in the next segment. So, keep your eye out for that. Today, we're talking to Dr. Brady Blevins, who is going to help us interact better in an evangelistic way with Mormons, with Jehovah's Witnesses, with Muslims. He is the professor of a brand-new online course we'll be running next month called 'Conversations with the Faiths: How to Have Meaningful Conversations About Mormonism, Islam, and Jehovah Witnesses.' Brady's been doing this for quite a long time. In fact, Brady, your colleague there at Watchman Fellowship, James Walker, was actually a Mormon for a number of years. Tell me a little bit about James and what you've learned from him.

BRADY:

James has definitely been a mentor and kind of a father in the faith for me. I first met him when I was about 14 years old, right about the time I was in the eighth grade. My brother was a freshman in college, and that's how I got in touch with Watchmen. And the interesting thing about James, and I can't say enough good things about him. That's not because he's my boss and signs my paycheck. But he is a former fourth generation Mormon. He did baptisms for the dead in the Salt Lake Temple. And he has a really unique perspective, because he grew up Mormon. And it wasn't until he was in his early 20's, that he actually accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior, and became a Christian, became a Christ follower. And so, that's a little bit of his background.

FRANK:

Now, I know you're going to get into a lot of depth in the course. And we only have 40 minutes here or so on this program. So, we can't go into a lot of depth here. But can you give us an overview of how Mormon doctrine differs from Orthodox Christian doctrine? Because people think Mormons, are just another Christian denomination. When in fact, they are dramatically different in their doctrine. I mean, obviously, many of them are just wonderfully nice people. But when it comes to what they believe about God, and the Bible, and why we're here, and about Jesus there, it's radically different. What are some of the differences?

BRADY:

Yeah, absolutely. And one of the things, Frank, that the Mormon church is doing right now, is they're trying to sound a whole lot more evangelical in the way that they speak. And so, it

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becomes very attractive. But once you get in, you're going to notice some big differences from Orthodox Christianity. First of all, they're not a monotheistic religion. They're polytheistic. They believe not only has there been other gods before, but you can actually become God too.

In fact, the famous Lorenzo Snow, who was a prophet and president of the church, he said, something to the effect of, as man is, God once was. And as God is, man may become. They look at Jesus. I mean, we see Jesus as eternally existing, as to where they see Jesus as someone who came into existence. In fact, He was actually one of our spirit brothers in what's known as the pre-existence. Now I know some of you will be saying, what are you talking about? What do you mean the pre-existence? Yeah, that's another whole Mormon doctrine, which by the way, you can look at the Bible. There is no pre-existence ever discussed.

FRANK:

Well, it's interesting that you would say that they're polytheists because I couldn't believe it when I first learned this. When I came to Southern Evangelical Seminary 30 years ago, they were actually saying that if you're a good Mormon man, and you live a proper life in Mormonism, one day, you're going to become a god and get your own planet. And the God of this planet did that somewhere in history. So, there's not one sort of overarching God. There's many gods and the gods are physical beings. It just doesn't sound right. It sounds like I'm making a caricature of Mormonism up, but I'm not, am I?

BRADY:

No, everything you said is completely true and right along the lines with what Mormonism teaches. And here's the wild thing, because this is different than, I think any other religion I've ever studied. Because in Mormonism, it's not just up to you to be able to achieve godhood as a man. Your wife has to be a good Mormon doing all these things for you to be able to become a god. And then she, of course, becomes the goddess of your planet. And of course, like you said, there was a god before Elohim, which is the name that they refer to as what we would refer to as God, the God of the Bible. They say that's Elohim. And so, there was another god before Him. So, they believe in a multiverse. Even though, I guess that's for another whole show, but you see the differences. [Laughter]

FRANK:

Now, I know when Mormons come to our door, they'll wear a little nametag and it will say, Elder Jones. And the kid is like 18 years old, and he's got acne. And I'm going, elder? How does this work? And they always come in at least twos. When they come to your door, what are some of the questions you might ask them, Brady? Or maybe you can give us a story about you interacting with a Mormon and how it went. Because I have a couple of stories, too. But why don't you give me one of yours?

BRADY:

First of all, when they come to your door, we've got to realize they're not the enemy. They are a victim of false teaching. And we have to see them that way. Because if we see them as the

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opposition, as the enemy, we're not going to speak the truth in love. And so, we've got to understand that. Now, when they knock on your door, I always tell people, and I think this is a really good approach, is to go ahead and set up a meeting with them. Say, you know, this isn't the best time. How about next week? Schedule a time with them. They're going to be very thankful because nobody, I don't care who you are. Nobody likes to go cold-knocking on doors to talk about religious matters. These young men are getting doors slammed in their face. They're having ugly things said to them. The dog is sicked on them. They need some love and compassion.

And then you have a week to get yourself together. Because here's the reality of it. Even though with Mormon missionaries, this may not be completely true at all times. But they know the lie better than most Christians know the truth. So, chances are, you're probably not going to be ready on a cold knock. I mean, unless you're working at Watchman Fellowship for the past, you know, 10-15 years of your life. In which case, you probably are. But even then, I follow my own advice. Because it's better off just to review and have a good week of prayer, and start praying for these young men by name, and that God will bless the time. And so, I really think that's the best thing to say when they first knock on your door.

FRANK:

So, you could schedule some time later. You can get prepared yourself. You can have the right questions to ask. What kind of questions have you asked Mormons? And how has the conversation gone?

BRADY:

Well, there's a number of questions that you can ask them. There's a number of different methodologies. One of the ones that we talk about in the course is what's called the hunger and thirst model. It comes after Jesus Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 where He says, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. And in this particular model, what we do is, we use a counterintuitive method that begins using the Mormon scriptures. In the Book of Mormon, there's a book called Moroni. It's kind of set up like the Bible, in that respect, in terms of books, chapters, and verses.

And we'll take them to Moroni chapter 10, where the Book of Mormon says if you're perfect, if you don't have any sins, then God's grace will be granted to you. Now, I'm paraphrasing, obviously. And then I just simply ask them, what does that mean? And I let them interpret it. And from there, they'll give you three categorical answers. And we have other passages that you go through from there. And then we also have a longer sit down version, where we can train you to be able to witness to a Mormon with the Book of Mormon. We can test the Mormon prophets. There's a couple of different ways that you can go.

FRANK:

Have you found out that when you ask certain questions, you're planting certain seeds that maybe sprout later?

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BRADY:

Oh, absolutely. So, the research shows that from the time a Mormon first hears the true Gospel message, to the time that they accept Christ, is about seven years. So, you don't always know where you are in the process. The very first young lady that I spoke to whenever I went on my first mission trip to Utah in 2013, James and I were talking to her. James was doing all the heavy lifting Mormon stuff, and I just got to give the Gospel. I was still in the pastorate at that time. And I extended the opportunity for her to accept Christ, and she did. And I walked away thinking, man, this evangelism and Mormon stuff isn't that hard. I'm batting a thousand right now.

FRANK:

This is easy. [Laughter]

BRADY:

Yeah, piece of cake. [Laughter] Well, I can tell you that I'm still not batting a thousand. That has gone off the track. So, you don't know where in the process you are, especially if you're talking to Mormon missionaries. You've got to understand that if one guy shows a major crack, his companion could very well go to the state president and say, hey. You know, Elder Smith over here is not doing too great. And the worst thing that can happen for him is to be sent home. That would be a great disgrace to the family. And it's something that they just simply would not want to have happen.

FRANK:

Well, they really have to be perfect in order to approach perfection, in order to make it to heaven. Because they don't believe in grace alone, do they?

BRADY:

No, in fact, 2 Nephi clearly says for it's by grace that you are saved through faith, after all that you can do.

FRANK:

After all that you can do. So, Mormonism turns out to be just another works-based religion that would violate just about every book in the New Testament, particularly the book of Galatians and the book of Romans, and the book of Ephesians. And I could go on, which basically says you're saved by grace. In fact, Jesus, why did He come? He said, I didn't come to be served, but to serve and to give My life as a ransom for many. And yet, you still have these people putting these burdens on other people, trying to say, if you're going to somehow make yourself right with God, you've got to do X, Y, and Z. And that's not the message of grace. That's the message, as Paul would say in Ephesians 4, these are just the elementary principles of the world. That people have to somehow figure out a way to appease the god or gods. And that's not good news. That's old news. That's old teaching that tragically has people in bondage.

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And so, the Gospel is something you can liberate people with. And that's what you want to do. And you can do that, ladies and gentlemen, in a much more effective way when people come to your door. When God puts somebody on your door, or you just meet people out wherever you are, you can learn more by taking the course that Dr. Brady Blevins is going to teach, beginning February 5. It's called 'Conversations with the Faiths.' This is the way you can equip yourselves to be better, more effective, with Jehovah's Witnesses, with Mormons, with Muslims. We're back in two minutes. More with Brady Blevins.

How can you reach out effectively? How can you be a good ambassador for people that don't believe what you believe? Particularly Mormons, Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses. You can take the brand-new online course that starts February 5. Just go to CrossExamined.org and click on Online Courses. You'll see it there. It's called 'Conversations with the Faiths.' This is how you can be more effective. And Dr. Brady Blevins is my guest today.

He's given us kind of an overview of what's in this course and some tips on how to interact with people who are Jehovah's Witnesses, are Mormons, are Muslims. In fact, Brady, tell me a little bit about your interactions with Jehovah's Witnesses. Oh, actually, before we do, what are some of the distinctives between Jehovah's Witnesses and what the Bible actually says about Jesus and about Christianity?

BRADY:

Yeah, so there's some pretty significant differences. First of all, we'll start with Jesus because that's the most important one. They don't view Jesus the same way we do. They believe that He is the Archangel Michael, who has come down in flesh and blood. He didn't die on a cross. But He died on a torture steak, and there was no bodily resurrection.

FRANK:

No bodily resurrection. Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in the bodily resurrection, and they don't believe Jesus is God either, right?

BRADY:

No, no, no. Definitely not God. They're almost like Muslims in the sense that it's a very strict monotheism.

FRANK:

So, why call themselves Christian, in a sense? In fact, I had a conversation with Jehovah's Witnesses last month in Charleston. We were there in Charleston. They're standing out there, so a friend of mine and I just started talking to them. And they just are totally resistant to the idea of Jesus being God. And of course, if there's no resurrection, what's the point of all this, ladies and gentlemen? You know, that's the distinctive of Christianity, that Jesus is our sacrifice and He's resurrected from the dead, and one day we will be too. And by trusting in Him, you're not only forgiven. You're given His righteousness. And both this and Mormonism, Brady, began in the 19th century, didn't they?

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BRADY:

Yeah, it sure did. If you want to push back to its earliest background, it comes from a Baptist preacher named William Miller. And then from that, there comes multiple groups. You have a fellow by the name of Charles Taze Russell. He essentially is a haberdasher, has a clothing store. And it really falls into this idea that Jesus is going to return in 1875. And so, from here, he hooks on with another. They have a falling out. And he starts the Jehovah's Christian witnesses. And then from there, it kind of continues on. And he clings to this whole concept that Christ is going to return. And you would think that with every false prediction that these groups would just fall apart. But what happens is, they definitely lose people whenever the false prediction comes out. But there always is a net gain, even if it's just a few people. So, with every false prediction, they're actually gaining folks along the way.

FRANK:

Wow, that's kind of odd. And you're going to go into details in the course on how to witness to Jehovah's Witnesses, and also, you know, what are their core beliefs and all this. But give us an interaction that you've had with a Jehovah's Witness.

BRADY:

So, one of my favorite things to do whenever a Jehovah's Witness comes to my door, I still follow the kind of the same concept that I do with the Mormon missionaries. I do want to give myself a week. You know, get polished up, get ready for it, pray about it. But there's a question I always like to ask that really plants the seed. Because, you know, especially after you have a couple of really good interactions with Jehovah's Witnesses. They keep good records. They know where you live. And they will, as I have watched them before through the window. I've watched them literally stop on my sidewalk, look at my door, look down at their paper, and then keep walking to the next house. So, now I have to go run out the door and chase them down.

FRANK:

Yeah, what did you do to get them to do that? Give us an interaction. What happened?

BRADY:

Well, the last time they knocked on my door, it was two men, usually one a little bit older, one a little bit younger. And they had a little girl with them. And that's not normally the case. It was obviously one of their daughter or granddaughter. She's probably about eight years old. And of course, I know they're Jehovah's Witnesses. And I said, oh, so you guys are Jehovah's Witnesses. And they're like, yeah. And I'm like, I can never be a Jehovah's Witness. And they're like, why? I go, well, you guys are polytheists. Now, I know that they're monotheists.

They said, well, no we're not. I said, you have to believe in multiple gods. And they said, well, what do you mean? I said, open up to John 1:1 in your New World Translation and read what it says. Now, if you're not familiar with the New World Translation, it says, John 1:1, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. And so, they

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read it. I said, now you believe there's only one true God, right? And they said, yes. I said, so every other god is a false god, right? Yes. I said, okay. So, who's John 1:1 referring to? And they said, well, Jesus. I said, I agree. And I said, it says Jesus is a god. I said, is He a god, or is He the God?

And they said, well, He's a mighty God. I said, well, no, no, no, no. Is He the one true God? Because if He's not the one true God, He's a false god. So, is He the one true God? Or is He a false god? And of course, they can't say that He's the one true God, because, you know, only Jehovah is the one true God. So, now they're left with the only other option to say that he's a false god. And so, essentially, in one verse, you completely destroy their theology, especially concerning Jesus.

FRANK:

So, what happened after that? What did they say?

BRADY:

So, at this point they're struggling. They have no answer, and I know they have no answer. And this is where you speak the truth in love. And I said, listen guys. I said, you weren't ready for that question today. But what I'd like to do is, I'd like to talk to you about something that's bothering me even more than that. Now, at this point, their eyes got really big. Because they're like, you have other problems? I said, can you come back to my house next week? I said next Saturday would be a great time. Let's plan for two hours together. I said, just go ahead and give me your email address, and I'll send you an email, and we'll get it all confirmed.

Well, I'm noticing that they're not reaching for their pen and paper. And so, I shamed them a little bit. I said, come on guys. I said, why won't you give me your email address? You're sitting here on my porch now. Now, I pushed them because this little girl is locked in to everything coming out of my mouth, and she is watching these two men. And I said, guys come on. You came to my house to talk about religious things. I want to talk to you. Let's schedule a time. And so, finally, they pull out a pen and paper, and they start writing down their information. And this little girl looks up and goes hey. Make sure I get this information, too. I want to be in on this conversation. And, of course, I'm loving it. I'm like, oh, come on in honey. I'll tell you all about the real Jesus. My wife's making pancakes. Come on, let's go. And so, it was a great moment.

And what actually happened on that is, I didn't get those two guys back. Instead, I got back one guy, which is very strange for Jehovah's Witness. He was a much older guy, who had been a Jehovah's Witness for a very long time. We met a couple of times. On occasion, you'll get a real good group, and maybe you can meet with them. The longest I've had is a year, meeting with them every week for a year. That's been a joy. But this guy, I got him for a couple of weeks, and it was pretty awesome.

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FRANK:

Yeah. And you're listening, you might say to yourself, what good is it going to do? These people are entrenched in their position. And you might say, well, we're entrenched in our position, right? Okay, no one's going to...well, if nothing else, your job is not to try and convert or convert somebody to Christianity. Your job is just to be faithful. So, you just do what's right and leave the results to God. I can guarantee you this. If you did that for a year with a group of people, you would get much better at understanding your own Bible, because they're going to be bringing up stuff that you go, oh, I didn't know that. What's the context of that? Let me figure that out.

So, when you have to study to show yourself approved, because you know they're coming to your door again, that's just going to help you become a better ambassador overall. It's going to help you become a better disciple. You're actually in the game. You know, our mutual friend, J. Warner Wallace always says this. He says, don't teach people. Train them. Why? Because if you just teach them and say, there's not going to be a test. Here it is. They're never going to take it on board. But if you say, we got a fight, it's like being a heavyweight fight. You know, we've got a fight coming up in April. And if you're not ready, you're going to get embarrassed. You're going to know that material. Right?

BRADY:

Exactly.

FRANK:

You're going to know it. I know in this course you're going to teach people. They're going to have opportunities to actually use the material. It's not just going to be academic, right?

BRADY:

You're right on the money. There's a reason why an apologetics degree is a theology degree. Because I'm going to tell you, I have been in a lot of conversations over the years. And I've been asked a lot of questions that I didn't know the answer to. And that's why in this course, we're going to focus on what do you do when you don't know the answer to a question. Because that's a reason why a lot of people will try to act like they're not home or slam the door in their face.

But at the same time, it's great. Because when you're asked a question, you don't know the answer to, you want to go find an answer to that. And it's just like you said, Frank. When you know the test is coming, boy, that study time becomes a lot more important. And, boy, there's been a number of times where I was asked questions I didn't know the answer to. But boy, not only did I learn the answer to it, but I never forgot the answer.

FRANK:

'Conversations with the Faiths' is the name of the new online course. There's the premium version where you'll be with Brady for several live Q&A Zoom sessions. And then, the self-paced courses are divided up. So, if you just want to take Jehovah's Witnesses, you can. If you

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just want to take Mormonism, you can. If you just want to take Islam, you can, or you can take all three. But the premium course with Brady, with the live Q&A is called 'Conversations with the Faiths: How to Have Meaningful Conversations About Mormonism, Islam, and Jehovah's Witnesses.' And if you go to CrossExamined.org, click on Online Courses. You'll see it there.

I also want to mention the new Fearless Faith program that we're going to be running in Dayton, Ohio. And it's not just me. It's going to be Greg Koukl, Alisa Childers, Phoenix Hayes, Jorge Gil, John Ferrer. It's going to be a Friday night, all day Saturday, near Dayton, Ohio. It's actually, I think it's at the Athletes in Action headquarters. It's not even at a church. Go to DaytonApologetics.com. There's a VIP section you can get involved in. There's a lot of great information you're going to learn on the culture, and how to interact with the culture, how to be a witness to the culture.

It is going to be February 16th & 17th. That's a Friday night, all day Saturday, Athletes in Action headquarters in the Schindler Banquet Center. It's in looks like Xenia, Ohio. It's very close to Dayton, Ohio. Go to DaytonApologetics.com to learn more about that. Again, me, Alisa Childers, Greg Koukl, Phoenix Hayes, Jorge Gil, and Dr. John Ferrer. And we're back in two minutes. More with Brady Blevins.

When God puts somebody on your doorstep, or somebody in your life, you're expected to be an ambassador for Him. After what He's done for you, the least you can do is study to show yourself approved, so you can actually move people into the Kingdom. In fact, what a great privilege that is. You know, God doesn't need us to spread the Gospel, but He uses us to spread the Gospel, to give us what Pascal said was the dignity of causality, meaning that what you do everyday matters, not only in time, but in eternity. What a great privilege. And also, what a great challenge when you think about it. That what you do every day is going to impact not only time, but eternity.

So, maybe get off the Netflix binge for one night a week for the next six or seven weeks and learn something about what other people believe so you can be a better ambassador for Him. Take the brand-new course, 'Conversations with the Faiths' by my guest today, Dr. Brady Blevins of WatchmanFellowship.org. And Brady, let's talk a little bit more about Jehovah's Witnesses if we can, because you've been doing this quite a while. You've been interacting with people from the Kingdom Hall as we say it, or as they say it. What are some do's and don'ts that you can share with our audience right now when you do interact with Jehovah's Witnesses?

BRADY:

Absolutely. One of the very first things that you can do and that you ought to do, is be kind. Show the love of Christ. Because trust me, they've had a lot of doors slammed in their face.

FRANK:

That's true of everybody. Right?

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BRADY:

Yeah, I mean, to be a Jehovah's Witness, you have to log hours doing the kingdom work, which is essentially magazine distribution. I mean, you're going door to door. And so, therefore, they've had a lot of people, you know, hey, I'm a Christian. And you know, you're going to Hell. Listen, they've had enough of that. So, let's be kind. Let's speak the truth in love. Another thing that you can do is pray for them. But don't pray in front of them at the doorstep. Don't say, hey, can I pray for you right now here at the doorstep? Because they have been taught that when we as Christians are praying, and I mean, evangelical Christians, Orthodox Christians. When we're praying, we're actually taking part in calling down the devil. We're doing a dangerous spiritual act.

And so, they may not respond quite the way that we want them to. We also don't want to get engaged in what we call Bible ping pong. And what that is, that's where, you know, you throw out a verse, they throw out a verse. You throw out a verse. They throw out a verse, and you're going back and forth. And the reason is because, first of all, you're going to lose. Now, that might sound kind of harsh when I say that. But first of all, remember, it's two against one. There's always going to be two of them at your doorstep, one a little bit older, and one a little bit younger. And one of them, it looks like they're looking in their Bible.

But what they actually have at the back is they found out okay. You're Methodist, or you're Presbyterian, or you're Baptist, or whatever the case is. They have a laundry list of Bible verses divided by subject. And so, you want to bring that verse up? They've got 16 more verses. Now, you hadn't planned to talk to a Jehovah's Witness that day. When you woke up that morning, you didn't go, you know what? I bet this afternoon a Jehovah's Witness is going to knock on my door. But I'm going to tell you right now, that Jehovah's Witness, that's all they've been preparing for. And they knew when they got up this morning, they were going to be talking to people, probably a Christian, about their faith.

And so, it's not necessarily a fair fight in that respect. And you know, as Greg Koukl would say, never read a Bible verse. There's so much more that has to go into play. And we need to settle in on a subject. And that's why this course is so important, because we're not just going to tell you this. But you're going to have the opportunity to interact in a couple of the different assignments that we have with those of other faiths, and actually have these conversations for yourself.

FRANK:

Yeah, that's what we do in all our online courses. We give people very practical assignments, where it actually gives them permission to talk with people, they've always wanted to talk to but didn't know how to do it without it appearing awkward. You know, if you go to somebody and you go, you know, you want to start a spiritual conversation. In a minute, I'm going to ask you how you can do that without starting a fight. But if you want to have a spiritual conversation with somebody, it can almost seem like so awkward in our culture to try and get there. It seems forced. But if you go to somebody you love, and you've known for a long time, and you say, hey,

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You know, I'm taking this online course, and I got this assignment. You know, I wonder if you could be my subject in this assignment. I'm supposed to interview somebody about religious matters. Would you mind answering some questions? Oh, yeah, sure. I'll do it for you. Now you've been given permission to talk about what you always wanted to talk about, the real things that matter in life. And that is, is there a God? And if there is, how should we live? What is our future? What's our destiny and all that?

Man, these assignments give you the permission to do that. But let's talk about that for a second, Brady. Whether it's a Mormon, whether it's a Jehovah's Witness, or just somebody you want to interact with, how can you really start a good spiritual conversation without starting a fight or without making it seem so awkward? What are some tips that you have?

BRADY:

You know, an important factor of this is, when you are genuinely caring towards an individual, that communicates so much more than your words. And people can sense that. People can pick up on it, because it's in your body language. It's in your tone of voice. And so, sometimes you can even actually say the wrong thing, and they'll give you quite a bit of grace. Now, with that said, you've got to give grace back to them, when maybe they don't say something quite right, or maybe they're kind of rude about something. But the fact is, is that we can step in and just start the conversation by asking a genuine question. What exactly do you believe? And just let them start talking.

And then as you have questions, you know, the best thing is, is that when you ask a question, there's no knowledge needed on your part. You're not the subject matter expert in this. They are. And so, therefore, if they say something you don't understand, absolutely ask them. In fact, it's even a good idea to have them define their terms along the way. Whether they're saying something like, grace, or faith, or even Jesus for that matter. Okay, what do you mean? When you say, Jesus, who is this guy? Oh, well, He's the Archangel Michael. Okay. All right. Well, now we have something to talk about. When you do that, the conversation is going to flow well, and it's going to turn out really nice.

FRANK:

But when you say what do you believe, in what context? Do you say, what do you believe about God? Because that almost seems awkward in today's culture too to even say that. I normally start with saying, you know, obviously, after introductions, hey. What do you do? Where are you from? You know, that kind of thing. How did you get to where you are? You know, learn their story. But then, how do you transition into a conversation that will lead to a spiritual conversation?

BRADY:

Yeah, a lot of times with these folks, taking a direct route really isn't as bad as what it may seem. Now, obviously, if they're knocking at your door, you don't really have to try to start the conversation. It's already there. But maybe you have a Mormon co-worker, or a Jehovah's

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Witness, or a Muslim co-worker. Well, when it comes to that, through the conversation hearing their story, they're going to give you something. Or they may even say, well, I'm a witness of Jehovah. Hey, you know, earlier you mentioned that you're a witness. Is that like a Jehovah's Witness? What is it that you believe? I think that's really interesting. And you would be surprised that when you ask the people those kinds of questions, they're actually really excited to tell you. Especially in Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses. I mean, they have a responsibility to share their faith.

FRANK:

And so do we. [Laughter]

BRADY:

So, they're kind of itching to get in the conversation just as much as you are.

FRANK:

I mean, if someone were to ask you what do you believe, you'd be excited too, right?

BRADY:

Yeah, absolutely. Let's turn to the book of Romans. [Laughter]

FRANK:

That's what we want to do. We want to share the truth with people because we want other people to experience the truth of Christianity, not only now but for eternity. So, it's not an onerous obligation. Ah gee I've got to share my faith, or I've got to share the faith, you know? No, it should be that I'm excited, because I want people to know the truth. I want people to know Jesus. I want people to be forgiven of their sins. And I want them to be given the righteousness of Christ, and I want them to know it's all grace. And look, all these worldviews we're talking about, whether it's Mormonism, whether it's Jehovah's Witnesses, whether it's Muslims, it's all works driven. Isn't it, Brady?

BRADY:

It sure is. It sure is. In fact, every religion outside of Christianity spell salvation, D.O. It's only Christianity that spells it D.O.N.E.

FRANK:

Right. It's done. Yeah, Jesus has done it all. And so, we have to and should want to share that truth with people. I'm sorry to interrupt you. Any other do's and don'ts with regards to Jehovah's Witnesses?

BRADY:

Yeah, of course. You know, the first couple that I mentioned, those are the most important. One of the things that's essential to do, is again, to be inviting, to show that love and compassion. Don't try to make it a debate. Don't try to make it about pushing them to make a decision at that

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point in time. Because it's very similar to Mormonism, but it's even higher stakes. Because if you try to push them too hard, you've got to remember, it's always going to be either two men or two women at your doorstep. And very rarely are they related. Very rarely are you going to get like a husband and wife, team, or son father team, or anything like that. They're generally unrelated. And they do this for protection. Because here's what's going to happen.

Let's say you make a really good point, and that guy cracks and says, well, maybe it's not true? Well, his partner can go back to the Kingdom Hall and tell the elders, hey. You know, Fred, he's cracking. He's believing what this Christian or whatever guy is telling him. And they could actually have a trial and move into this opportunity to be able to excommunicate him, or what they would call disfellowship. And at this point, if he has children and they're Jehovah's Witnesses, and maybe they're grown children. They can't talk to him. If he's younger, maybe his parents are still alive and they're Jehovah's Witnesses, they can't talk to him. All his friends are Jehovah's Witnesses. And guess what? They're not talking to him.

FRANK:

It's a high cost item. Isn't it, Brady?

BRADY:

Yes.

FRANK:

Well, we're out of time. But we're going to pick up with Brady in the midweek podcast next week and talk about Muslims, how to interact with Muslims. But if you really want to know more about this, sign up for the new online course with Dr. Brady Blevins, called 'Conversations with the Faiths.' Go to CrossExamined.org. Click on Online Courses. You'll see it there. And we will see you here, Lord willing, next week. God bless.

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