

The Lazy Approach to Evangelism with Eric Hernandez

(February 20, 2024)

FRANK:

Are you afraid to evangelize? Most people are, and one of the reasons they are is because they don't think they know the answers to the questions that might be asked them if they begin to try and tell somebody about the truth of Christianity. Also, in our culture, it can be awkward. Oh, you're one of those Jesus freaks or what are you? Some kind of bigot? You know, you may get shouted down. You may get insulted. So, people don't want to do it.

But what if I told you there's a lazy way of doing evangelism, a way that you can actually make progress, even if you don't get somebody to the foot of the cross? And as we've said before on this program, you don't have to get everybody to the foot of the cross in one conversation. In fact, most of the time you won't. People take a long time to change their worldview. And you might just be someone who is advancing the person toward Jesus or getting them to move away from the beliefs they already have.

And the lazy approach to evangelism can help you do that. And the person who actually wrote a book on this is Eric Hernandez. You may have heard of Eric Hernandez. He does a lot of work in apologetics, particularly down in Texas. He also was a contributor to the book called 'Faith Examined' that we talked about a couple of months ago. 'Faith Examined' is a book that CIA graduates put together. 'New Arguments for Persistent Questions, Essays in Honor of (yours truly, me) Frank Turek. I'm very blessed by this book. It's called 'Faith Examined.'

And Eric wrote an entire chapter on it called 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be a Physicalist.' But we're not going to talk about 'Faith Examined' today. We're going to talk about how you can be better equipped to evangelize people by simply asking certain questions. And, Eric, it's great having you on the program. In order to get into this, relay to us your experience with a philosophy professor when you were in college. He was an atheist. And actually, the atheist college professor actually, sort of encouraged you in an indirect way to get answers. What happened with this guy?

ERIC:

Yeah, so that's a great question. So, freshman year of college, you know, I needed to fill up some electives. And I'm thinking, what's an easy class I can blow off and even skip? And I saw philosophy. And I thought, well, philosophy is sharing your opinion and making stuff up, and I can do that in my sleep. So, I take my first philosophy class. And I remember, to rewind a little bit. My youth pastor once said, if someone tells you to prove to them God exists, you simply say, prove to me He doesn't. And I thought, that's brilliant. I'll put it in my back pocket.

But first week of philosophy class, this professor says, for this first week, we're going to talk about the burden of proof. And then he said, as a random example, which I later found out was



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

not a random example, because he was an atheist. He said, if you're a Christian here today and someone asks you to prove God does exist, you cannot respond by saying prove to me He doesn't, because you're inappropriately shifting the burden of proof. And if you make the claim, you bear the burden. Well, I felt like my house of cards collapsed at that point, but I was intrigued. I was hooked.

He allowed me to ask questions, unlike, you know, some churches I've been to. And suffice to say, he was very even handed, and I learned a lot. Then I wanted to take another class in philosophy for the next semester. Well, everyone warned me not to take Professor Pena's class, because not only is he an atheist, he's antagonistic, and condescending, and his goal will be to try and make me lose my faith. And my response was, well, where can I sign up? Obviously, not because I wanted to lose my faith, but I had genuine questions. And call me crazy, but I knew that if God existed, then I shouldn't be afraid to learn truth because all truth will be grounded in God in one way or another.

So, fast forward to the pivotal day in my life and ministry. It was one class that sent me to where I am now. He walks into class, and he starts a lecture by holding up this antidepressant pill. And in a nutshell says, religion wants us to believe in a soul which is supposed to be material. And according to Christianity, your thoughts, and emotions, and sensations are also immaterial within your soul. But the problem is, if I were to take this antidepressant pill, which is physical, it has the power to change and affect the alleged immaterial states of my soul.

But how could that be? How can something tiny and physical have the power to affect the immaterial? Because when scientists look at the brain, they just see neurons firing. And when they look at the body under a microscope, they just find, you know, base elements of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. But no scientist has ever found anything even remotely close to something like a soul. And how do we explain that? And he said, well, the answer is simple. The answer is there is no soul. There is no heaven, there is no hell, there is no God, there is no afterlife. You are just a physical brain and body, a meat machine. And we need to learn to live with this fact, get on with our lives, and stop believing in these fanciful foolish fairy tales. Class dismissed, essentially.

That bothered me for a few reasons. One, I had never heard an argument against a soul. I thought everybody believed in it. But even more troubling was, I recalled Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, to paraphrase, he essentially says, if there is no resurrection of the dead, Christianity is false. And it goes as far as to say, not only is it false, but people should actually feel sorry for us for how dumb and gullible we were to believe this. And so, biblically speaking, if there was no resurrection, Christianity cannot be true. And I won't go into the details here. But I would submit to the listeners that if there is no soul, and a biblical view of the resurrection is not just a body, but you the soul that has a body been resurrected, well, then if there's no soul, there can be no biblical account of a resurrection.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

And once again, according to Paul, if there's no resurrection, Christianity cannot be true. So, for the first time in my life, because up to this point, I had heard a lot of complaints against Christianity. But complaints don't make Christianity false. So, for the first time in my life, I hear an argument that, if true, I would say, would prove Christianity false. I didn't know what to do with that. You know, it didn't cross my mind to go to my church and ask questions. I had learned that lesson already. And so, I thought, well, I can either sweep this under the rug, or roll up my sleeves and learn some more philosophy and metaphysics. And that's what got me here today.

The second bit of that story is to fast forward, sparing some details. This professor was my very first one on one public debate on God's existence at a church I didn't even attend. It's a whole long story behind that. But I like to ask people if they've seen 'God's Not Dead.' And when they raise their hand, I first say, well it's a terrible movie. Don't watch it. But it's a similar situation to where I had a professor who really challenged me and ended up being my first public debate. Sometime after that debate, which by the way, it was a youth pastor who put this together. And the church wasn't really behind it. They didn't expect a lot of people to show up.

But lo and behold, there were over 600 people, including online. No seat was empty. And there were more atheists than Christians at church that night, because of how influential this professor was. And sometime after that debate, I approached him and I said, I don't know what you're going to think of this, given that you're an atheist. But I just really want to thank you for allowing God to use you the way he did in my life. Because if it weren't for you, I wouldn't be where I'm at today.

FRANK:

It sounds similar to a book that was written recently about how Richard Dawkins has brought several people to Christianity inadvertently. By giving so many bad arguments against God, that people are going, wait a minute. This doesn't really make any sense. I wonder if there is a God, right? His vitriol actually backfired. And it seems like it did for you. By the way, is that debate that you had with this former professor of yours available anywhere? Can people see it?

ERIC:

On my website they can. If they go to my website, there's an option to download that.

FRANK:

Gives us your website.

ERIC:

EricHernandezMinistries.com.

FRANK:

EricHernandezMinistries.com. Check it out. All right, Go ahead. sorry.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

ERIC:

On a side note, what's sad to me about the story in general, and there's lots more details to it. But, you know, I didn't know what apologetics was at this point. I hadn't taken a deep dive into theology. I just knew that this was intriguing to me, and I was hooked, and I was learning. And, you know, even if God wanted to use a pastor, or Christian minister, youth leader to encourage me to get into apologetics, He couldn't because there were none around me that did. So, what's sad to me is that it wasn't some religious leader that inspired me to get into apologetics. It was two atheist philosophy professors. And I'm reminded where Christ said, if you don't cry out to Me, the rocks will. And so, in my life, these were two rocks that God used to cry out in my life because the Church wasn't doing it.

FRANK:

Isn't it interesting friends? Sometimes people will ask the question, why did God create people He knew would go to hell? Well, obviously, God can't force free creatures to do what He wants. So, some people are going to go to hell just by their own free choice. But here's an instance where God can actually use someone who is not a believer for his own purposes. Right? He can actually cause people to go, wow, that atheist argument didn't really work. Maybe I ought to look into Christianity. It's what happened with Eric. Well, you actually were already a Christian at the time, Eric. But you just got more answers as to why Christianity is true. And since then, you've written a really good book, man. There's so much great stuff in this book. It's called 'The Lazy Approach to Evangelism: A Simple Guide for Conversing with Non-believers.'

Think of it almost as a cross between 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' and 'Tactics,' Greg Koukl's book. There's a lot of tactics in there. There it is. For those of you watching on the community, you can see it. Eric's holding it up right now, 'The Lazy Approach to Evangelism: A Simple Guide for Conversing with Non-Believers.' I want to jump ahead, Eric, in this book. I read most of it, actually. And I want to go to page 159. And before we actually interact a little bit and roleplay this, I want to ask you the distinction that you make in the book, which is a very important distinction. It's a distinction between a rebuttal and a refutation. What is the distinction between those two?

ERIC:

Great question. And this is something I learned from JP Moreland. So, whenever you're responding to an objection or an argument, you can boil down two types of responses. You can give a refutation or a rebuttal. In a refutation, your aim is going to try and prove the person's conclusion is false. Whereas with a rebuttal, you're not necessarily saying that their conclusion or their argument is wrong. You're simply pointing out how they haven't proven what they're arguing is true.

So, the example I like to use is take something as simple as take this claim. It will rain today because I'm wearing brown shoes. If I want to give a refutation, I have to prove it's not going to rain. And that's going to be a little difficult because it would have to sound something like this. No, it's not going to rain today, because the atmospheric pressure, weather, temperature, and

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

moisture in the air is insufficient to provide rain. But if you were to ask me to try to do that, I couldn't. I don't know what the weather, temperature, and moisture is. So, with something as simple as whether or not it's going to rain today, providing a refutation to that would be almost impossible.

But contrast this with a rebuttal, where I don't have to say you're wrong. I just have to point out how you haven't proven yourself to be right. So, a rebuttal would sound like this. Well, no, not necessarily because you wore brown shoes yesterday and it didn't rain. Now note, I'm not saying they're wrong or it's not going to rain. I'm simply pointing out how their justification doesn't lead to the conclusion they're trying to argue for. So, in this sense, I'm not doing the legwork of having to disprove every claim they're making. I'm simply pointing out how what they're arguing doesn't lead to the conclusion they think it leads to.

FRANK:

Yes. And for those who have read 'Tactics,' you've heard Greg say a similar point where he says, when somebody says something, it's not your job to disprove what they say. It's their job to prove what they say or give evidence for what they say. That's why one of the tactical questions is, what evidence do you have for that position? When somebody says something, you don't have to refute it. They have to actually give evidence for it. And so, why is this a lazy approach to evangelism, ladies and gentlemen? Because you don't have to know a lot. You just have to think about what the person has said and try and ask them a question to show them that even if they're right, it doesn't prove their point.

Maybe we could roleplay this a little bit, Eric. I'll play the pro-choice advocate that you were trying to debate, or you debated, I guess, down in Texas at one point. Her name was Heather. And Heather said this. And then you can respond with a rebuttal rather than a refutation. Here's Heather. I don't think a human embryo is a person in the sense of a living, breathing, walking, sentient human being.

ERIC:

Before I give the response here to give some commentary, note that what she's doing is, she's giving a list of criteria for what she thinks is necessary for a "person." And so, here's my response. I said, well, they are living, they are breathing, and they are sentient, but they're not walking, right? That's one of the criteria she listed. I said, but by that line of logic, would it not then be permissible to kill a disabled person who's confined to a wheelchair just because they're not walking?

FRANK:

At that point, the audience laughed kind of awkwardly. And she said, I'm not even going to answer that. That's preposterous.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

ERIC:

Yes. And I agreed with her. I said, well, I agree that is preposterous. But that's not my argument. That's your argument.

FRANK:

Okay, so you just pointed out by making a couple of statements that even if she's correct, actually, I guess you went to reducing the argument to the absurd here. You basically pointed out your criteria would enable somebody to kill a person in a wheelchair.

ERIC:

That's right. So, within what I call the lazy approach, and there's five different tools. And we don't have to touch on all of them. But you know, I often combine them. And you know, one tool is entirely dedicated to identifying logical fallacies, or knowing how to reduce them to absurdity. So much so that I devote an entire chapter to that. Of course, asking questions, and then rewarding a person's position to expose a problem.

FRANK:

Stop there for a second, because that's so important. Rewording what somebody says, because when you reward it, you can show that the other person is saying something that doesn't follow or is absurd. And that's so important. So, you're rewording, and you'll see it as we go through some more of these interactions that are in the book, by the way, 'The Lazy Approach to Evangelism.' We're just reading from the book to show you this tactic. I'm sorry, I interrupted Eric. But I wanted to point out, rewarding is so important.

ERIC:

Yeah. And if I can give, this actually also relates to abortion. In a different occasion, I gave a presentation at a secular college campus on the issue of abortion. And afterwards, when the cameras stopped rolling this young man who claimed to be a Christian approached me and says, look. I agree with you that the unborn are human persons. And then he said this. He said, but don't you know that if we make abortion illegal, then women will harm themselves trying to illegally seek out abortions? Now, here's where I'm going to use this tool of rewarding the position. There's two ways to use this tool.

One, you reward to expose the problem and remove the fluff from the claim. And the second way is you reword the principle of their argument and apply it to a counter example. And I did both with this young man. So, after he said, don't you know if we make abortion illegal, women will harm themselves trying to seek out illegal abortions? And I said, well, before I respond, let me just see if I understand your question. So, I'm going to remove the fluff, the first way of doing it. I said, are you essentially saying that if we don't allow women to legally kill their innocent, unborn children in the womb, then they might harm themselves trying to illegally kill their innocent unborn children in the womb? Is that what you're asking me?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

And he said, well, that's a good point. I suppose you're right. I said, well, I haven't made a point yet. I'm just rewording to make sure I understand you. So, just by removing the fluff of what he's saying, it allowed him to clearly see what he's actually asking. Now, at this point, I said, but let me go ahead and respond now. And let me give you an argument. Tell me if you agree. So, now I'm going to reward the principle and apply it to a counter argument. I said, you gave me this question. But how about this argument? Suppose I gave you the statistics of all the burglars that have hurt themselves trying to break into people's homes?

You know, this guy cut his arm in the window. This guy broke his ankle. This guy got bit by a dog. And what if I argued that if we made burglary legal, these criminals wouldn't harm themselves trying to break into people's homes? This was his response. He said, he thought about it and said, well, no, because they're just harming innocent people and that's not right. And so, I paused. I smiled. I let the point sink in. And I said, well, I suppose that would have to be my answer to your question as well. So, note, I didn't even give him an answer. I just asked a question by rewording the position and allowed him to come to the conclusion by himself.

FRANK:

Hmm, very good. Let's go back now to Heather, who was your debate partner. And you say this on page 159 of your book, 'The Lazy Approach to Evangelism.' In her opening statement, Heather stated that we have a moral obligation to feed and care for children who are already here. By this, of course, she meant only the children outside the womb. Noting this subtle but revealing caveat, I proceeded with a question for clarification, and ended with a question to expose this absurd caveat to the audience. Go ahead.

ERIC:

I said, you stated earlier that we have a moral obligation to feed and care for the children already here. So, I'm rewording to hear at this point to make sure I understand and to set up my pieces, as I say in the book, for what I'm going to ask after that.

FRANK:

So, Heather said, yes, correct?

ERIC:

And I said, okay, well, where are the unborn if not here? And why don't we have a moral obligation to feed and care for them? You can actually watch this on my YouTube channel, the whole debate. And what you'll notice is, she really doesn't have response, or she'll change the subject. And granted, with the debate and with the moderator. In fact, here's some other details that are not in the book.

At one point, there was a lot of red tape to go through. It's a college. In fact, even some legal stuff came after that. But suffice to say, the school did not want this to happen. They tried to keep it from happening, and we had to have someone supervise the event. Which basically

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

meant when Heather was struggling with an answer, we were forced to just move on to the next question or they were pretty much threatening to just shut the thing down.

FRANK:

In the name of inclusion, tolerance, and diversity. Okay, here's another highlight from the debate. Heather says, a six-week old embryo is not a fully formed human being.

ERIC:

And I never said it was. And I said, it's a whole human being, just not fully formed. After all, many students here aren't fully formed yet, but we can't kill them, can we? So again, I'm taking the entailments of what she is saying, and just applying it to the situation that we're at. Just showing the logical entailments. And here's a problem I see, sometimes even within the Church. We don't know how to think holistically about what our views entail or how they connect to other beliefs we may have that might be contradictory to what we're saying.

FRANK:

Here's another highlight. Highlight number five has to do with health care. In defense of abortion is healthcare, Heather stated that "every person should have the necessary..." I like when she says should have. She's implying a moral standard here, as you can see. But anyway, and I'm sure you had an opportunity to point that out. Anyway, she stated that every person should have the necessary resources to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy birth. Using a variation of the question, what do you mean by that? You're saying now, Eric, I brought the focus back to abortion to make my point. Go.

ERIC:

What page are you on? I'm sorry.

FRANK:

The top of 161.

ERIC:

And I said, how is an abortion a healthy pregnancy?

FRANK:

Because if someone is not ready, or able to be pregnant, they shouldn't be forced to be pregnant.

ERIC:

But that doesn't sound like a healthy pregnancy. That sounds like killing an unborn human person.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

FRANK:

There's so much in the book, ladies and gentlemen. But you can see Eric's approach here. Here's a good one. We've got to talk about this one, rewording the position holistically. This is in the book, again, 'The Lazy Approach to Evangelism.' You've got to take this, Eric, because it's mostly you. Top of page 162. Go ahead.

ERIC:

Yeah. So, to summarize, another thing I try to point out in the book is that the "lazy" aspect of this is when you understand a position and you learn to think holistically, you learn how to identify and spot things in an argument or claim that are inconsistent, or just lead to absurdity. So, throughout the debate, at this point, most of the things we've talked about are almost immediately after she makes a statement, and then I asked a question. But with this last one, I had to kind of piece together, holistically, the thing she had said throughout the debate. So, there's a few things you said.

In one part of the debate, she said that everyone should have equal rights and opportunity for health care, regardless of a person's race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. At another point in the debate, she said we shouldn't judge, or protest, or shame a woman's decision to have an abortion, and essentially said that when it comes to a woman making that decision, we should support a woman's decision to have an abortion even if we disagree with their decision. Now, Heather works for, well worked for. That's another whole issue. She's no longer employed with the company she was with at the time. I just report the facts. I don't interpret them.

But she worked for an organization that if a woman could not afford an abortion, her company would pay for it. So, knowing that she's made these statements, which aren't at face value, contradictory. I came up with the following question during cross examine, which is my favorite part of debate. So, I start with rewording just to clarify, and I'm setting up my pieces. I said, so you said at one point that there should be equal rights and opportunity across the board, regardless of your sexual orientation, and yada, yada, yada. She said yes. And then later on, you said that we should support a woman's decision to have an abortion, even if we disagree with their decision. Correct? And she's like, yes. I said, okay. Here's a hypothetical scenario.

I said, suppose a religious woman approaches you and wants to have an abortion. And here's why. Let's say we have the technology to identify the sex of the baby. But suppose we also have the technology to identify the sexual orientation of the baby. And this religious woman approaches you and said, I just found out I'm going to have a boy or girl. But I also found out that they're going to be gay, and I don't want a gay baby. Now, in this instance, would you still be pro-choice? Because it seems that on the one hand, if you say yes, then you are implicitly okay with killing someone just because they're gay. But then if you say no, then on the other hand, you are now not respecting a woman's decision to have an abortion, which according to you, we should support even if we disagree with their decision. So, my question is, would you still be pro-choice in this instance? Yes, or no?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

FRANK:

Now, you say here in the book, the room grew so quiet, you could hear a pin drop. After an awkward laugh, she responded, well, that technology doesn't exist so... And then the room erupted in laughter. And you continued by saying what?

ERIC:

So, I didn't want to let this go, right? She's trying to obviously wiggle out. I wanted an answer. And I said, well, it's a hypothetical, right? But now note. Again, back to the lazy approach. I'm not going to try to fight or argue this. I'm going to run with it. And I said, well, it's a hypothetical. But you know what, let's say it doesn't exist, right? Because it clearly doesn't.

FRANK:

The technology for this doesn't exist.

ERIC:

Right. The technology for that doesn't exist.

FRANK:

And we don't even have a genetic component for same-sex orientation, anyway. It appears there isn't one. But even if there was, you're saying if someone did what? If someone? Go ahead.

ERIC:

Yeah. I even went as far as to say this. In other words, if I can add to their case, it only makes mine stronger. I said, let's say she was lied to. Here's the point, regardless of whether this technology exists or not.

FRANK:

The pregnant woman was lied to saying your baby's gay?

ERIC:

Yes. And whether it exists or not, this is still this woman's position. It is still her choice. And again, these are her standards. So, would you still be pro-choice in this instance? Yes, or no? Now, this was a part where I say, the person who was supervising this debate that worked at the school, came up to the stage shortly after with a note, and I don't want to say slammed it on the table, but let's say very abruptly slid a note to the moderator that essentially said, remind everybody that this is not a debate. This is a discussion.

I don't remember the exact words, but basically was threatening, we're going to cut off the mics if this continues. So, we were forced to move on. But at that point, it was clear to the audience, that what she was arguing for was inconsistent. It led to absurdities, and she had no defense of her position.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

FRANK:

Now, you had several people come up to you, I know at least one, if I remember in the book. What did they say after the debate?

ERIC:

Yea, so this was really interesting. Again, it's a secular college campus. Not at all friendly to Christianity. We'll put it that way. And afterwards, when I had a few young ladies ask for prayer, there was two Asian young ladies. And I'll try not to tear up because I almost always do when I share the story. But let me give you the paraphrase of it. They asked, can we share our story with you? I said, sure. Essentially, they said, well, if it was up to that woman on stage, Heather, we wouldn't be here. I said, why?

They were born in China during the one child policy law. And they both told me their stories. You know, they found me behind a dumpster. And the other one said, they found me by the river. I said, why the river? Well, where they lived, there was a known area, this river, to where it was known for discarding the unwanted female children. And what the mothers would do is if they had a baby girl, because the doctors at some point stopped doing ultrasounds. The abortion for women skyrocketed when they found out it was a female, baby.

FRANK:

Because most couples, if they could only have one, they wanted a boy to carry the family name on. And so, there are some areas of China, and this goes back 20 years ago when we did the research for 'Legislating Morality' more than 25 years ago. There are some areas of China where the birth rate at the time was like 64 to 36, male to female because there were so many female babies being aborted because they can only have one. Anyway, sorry. Go ahead.

ERIC:

Yeah, no. And so, what she concluded, the reason they found her by the river. She said, what likely happened is my mother took me to this river with the intention of throwing me in there. Because when you leave a baby behind a dumpster, the neighbors can hear the crying. But if you throw the baby in the river, the river takes them away and no one knows anything about it, because you don't hear the sounds of the cries anymore. And she said, it was likely that my mom couldn't bring herself to throw me. And so, she just left me by the river and just walked away. And obviously, they were found, and some years ago, were adopted by a Christian American couple, and here we are today. But if it were for people like Heather, we wouldn't be here.

And I had a few other young ladies come up to me and ask for prayer. And I had other young ladies say I came to this debate either pro-choice or on the fence. But as a result of this, I'm leaving pro-life. Now in my opening I also, of course snuck in the Gospel. How was this evangelistic? Well, one, it shows that there's a God who loves them. And I said something to the effect of, I'm not here to condemn you if you've had an abortion tonight. But just know that there

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

was a God who loved you enough to send His Son to die for you and give up His Son, even if you made the decision to give up yours.

And just letting people know about the hope that we have in spite of what you've done, you're not unlovable. And being able to tear down the strongholds of a situation, which seems to just tear down even the walls. And, you know, I say in the book, I don't know who said this quote. But the heart cannot embrace what the mind regards as nonsense. And people sometimes neglect the mind and think the heart would just substitute for all of that, when the Bible tells us to do both, to aim at both. And that was my goal here. And I saw the fruit of that.

FRANK:

There's so much more in the book, 'The Lazy Approach to Evangelism,' ladies and gentlemen. You really need to get it. It's by my guest today, Eric Hernandez. And it's not just about cultural issues like abortion. I just remembered when I read the book a month or two ago, that that really struck me as a very good way of rebutting somebody's position. Eric just rewards what people say, and they wind up in a situation where they know they're wrong. And you don't have to know a whole bunch to do that. You just have to be observant, and you have to just think ahead a little bit, and try and figure out, what is this person saying? How can I reword this to make it clearer? And that's what the lazy approach to evangelism will do.

Look, ladies and gentlemen, if you think you have to get everybody to the foot of the cross in a conversation, you're never going to evangelize people. Your goal is just to either move them away from their current false worldview or move them a step closer to the true worldview. And in your case, Eric, it looks like you sort of did both. You had people walking away from being a pro-abortion person, to at least now being pro-life. And you also had some people even say, well, I'm a believer now because you got the Gospel in there, or at least moved them closer to it. So, that's the lazy approach, friends. You don't have to have an answer for everything.

And by the way, if you want to learn more about this, in addition to Eric's book, you can go to where I went seminary, Southern Evangelical Seminary, SES.edu/Frank. That will give you a potential for a scholarship. Eric is also one of several 100 people who have gone through our CrossExamined Instructor Academy, CIA. It's coming up again this August. If you want to apply, go to CrossExamined.org and click on CIA. Click on Events and then you'll see CIA there, what it's all about.

Also, we're about to do an online version of CIA for the second time this year. And if you want to be a part of that, keep an eye out. Because in the next week or two, we'll be announcing that. It begins later in March. And you'll want to be a part of that. It's an amazing way to learn how to present and learn from some top apologists like J. Warner Wallace, and Alisa Childers, and Natasha Crain. You'll want to be a part of that. So, just go to CrossExamined.org. Click on online courses for more. Eric, you mentioned in the book that there are five tools with the lazy approach. You wouldn't have to go into detail on all of them. But what are those five tools that you unpack in the book?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

ERIC:

Do you mind if I set up the biblical basis for this?

FRANK:

Sure. Yeah, go.

ERIC:

So, the whole heart of this approach comes from Colossians 4:5-6. And to paraphrase what Paul is doing here is, I would say that Paul is essentially giving us two principles for having conversations with non-believers. And his overall theme is essentially, keep the main thing the main thing. And he's given us two principles for how to do this. So, in verse five, he says conduct yourself with wisdom in your interaction with outsiders or non-believers. And then he says, make the most of each opportunity.

Now, I summarize that to say his first principle is make the most use of your time. Now, what does that mean? So, I like to give this example. Let's think of the notion of triage, right? In the medical community, if you're a doctor, and they rush in a patient to the emergency room. Let's suppose you're the doctor and this patient has three wounds. They have a broken wrist, a scraped knee, and a bullet in their chest. Where do you operate first? The bullet in the chest. Why? Because that's what will kill them if you don't address it. Now consider the notion of theological triage when it comes to evangelism.

Suppose you knew that in one hour exactly, Christ would return, and you are stuck in an elevator with a non-believer for one hour. When I'm talking to an audience I say, here are four topics you can talk about, and you tell me what you would focus on: age of the Earth, creation evolution, biblical inerrancy, or God exists and rose Jesus from the dead.

FRANK:

The last one. [Laughter]

ERIC:

That's right. And the question is, why? Well, because that's what is required for salvation. To put the point differently, we're all going to go into the afterlife with some false theological beliefs. And my simple point here is this. I would rather have someone go to heaven with false theological beliefs, than go to hell with false theological beliefs. And if we're going to make the most use of our time, this will encompass theological triage.

So, what does it take to be saved? Well, you if you look in Scripture, confess with your mouth. Believe in your heart, Jesus is Lord and God raised Him from the dead, and that the earth is only 6000 years old. Well, that's not what my translation says, right? But sometimes we seem to add these unnecessary obstacles that are not relevant to salvation. And there's a difference between discipleship and salvation.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

And if we're going to keep the main thing the main thing and make the most use of our time, that will require theological triage. Because at minimum, there are essentially two things that make Christianity true. God exists, Jesus rose from the dead. The second principal Paul gives us comes from verse six. And he says, let your speech at all times be gracious, seasoned with salt, so you know how to answer everyone who questions you.

If you know anything about Paul, he's very specific with his words. And he says know how to answer. He doesn't say know what to answer. And there's a difference. My go to example is, if I'm talking to a youth group, I'll look for a young guy who doesn't have a wedding ring on and doesn't look like he's married. And I'll ask, yes, or no? Have you stopped beating your spouse? And they think for a second, and they say, yes. I said, oh, so you used to? And they said, oh. Okay, now my answer is no. I said, oh, so you still are? And they look really confused. And I whisper to them. I say, are you married? And they say no. And I say, well, why don't you just say that?

There's a lot of problems here. But one of the main problems is that there are at least two assumptions behind that question. It assumes you're married, and it assumes you're beating your spouse. So, note, in this instance, it's not important to know what to answer, but to know how to answer. And there's a difference. Because if you give me a question that has some false presuppositions or some underlying assumptions that I don't agree with, or don't apply to me, then in this instance, it becomes appropriate for me not to answer the question directly, but to question the question. And so again, Paul's main theme, I would say is keep the main thing, the main thing. Make the most use of your time, theological triage, and know how to answer, not what to answer. This is not a script.

And my go to example to model this. I had a young lady she once said she was an atheist. I said, why? She says, because the Bible's full of contradictions. Now, even apologists at this point, because they have so much knowledge about biblical reliability, they can't wait to share this with someone. And sometimes in this instance, you know, people will start either defending the Bible or ask for an example, which in the book, I say don't do. And I'll just leave it to the reader to see why. But here's what I did. Again, I asked, why are you an atheist? Her response? The Bible's full of contradictions? My response was, and how does that prove there's no God? And she looked stunned, because no one's asked her that before. She's accustomed to throwing that out there and starting to fight.

But I'm taking the lazy approach. Because note, her response to why are you an atheist isn't to give me a reason for atheism. It's to attack Christianity. But attacking Christianity doesn't prove theism. So, to break the awkward silence, I said, let me put it this way. If God exists, did He exist before the Bible was written? And she says, I don't believe in God. I said, no, I understand that. But just follow me here. If God exists, did He exist before the Bible was written? And she's says, well, yeah. I guess, if He exists. I said, okay, great. So, even if I can see the Bible is full of

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

contradictions, I don't but let's say it is. I'm going to concede it for the sake of argument, the rebuttal here.

How would that prove God doesn't exist? How would that prove atheism is true? Or how would that make him cease to exist? What am I missing here? So, note with just a few minutes and a few questions, I'm making the most use of my time. I'm knowing how to answer not what to answer. And I'm keeping the main thing, the main thing. And within a few minutes and a few questions, I've at the very least planted a seed in her mind by giving her a rebuttal, asking a few strategic questions, taking what I call the lazy approach to evangelism.

FRANK:

Now, notice friends, the most important question Eric asked in that entire dialogue was why. You know, as soon as she said, I'm an atheist, he didn't say, well, here's the cosmological argument. Right? He just said, well, why are you an atheist? And then, she went on to say, well, the Bible is full of contradictions. So, even if that were true, that wouldn't mean there's no God. Right? So, that's a brilliant way of doing it. Now, notice, you don't have to even know the evidence for God to do that. Right? You don't. You just have to point out by asking questions, that even if what they're saying is true, the conclusion that they think follows from that doesn't follow. It doesn't follow there's no God if the Bible has contradictions, even if they're right.

That's a question for maybe biblical inerrancy or something like that, which is not an essential of the faith. And you can still be saved even believing that the Bible has errors in it. I just don't think it's a wise move because you'd be disagreeing with Jesus. And anytime you disagree with Jesus, you're in a bad position. Okay? But, yeah, that's very, very critical. So, you try and major in the majors, which is something we always try and do here at crossexamined.org. We don't make our ministry on the age of the universe, or on eschatology, or on some of these arguments that Christians have with inerrancy even. Even though I'm an inerrantist, we don't say you have to be an inerrantist to be a Christian. So, it's very critical that we major in the majors.

ERIC:

And to even be clearer in that. So, relating to the tools, the fifth tool is identifying logical fallacies. And one of my favorite illustrations of this is from Jesus Himself, right? Because I like to ask people, do you think Jesus did this "lazy approach?" Do you think He called out people's logical fallacies and false dichotomies? Do you see this in the red letters of the Gospels? And 99% of people say, no. I don't see Jesus doing this. But He did, and He did it brilliantly.

If you go to Matthew 22:23 and the verses on, I'll give you the nutshell of what's going on. The Sadducees are going to argue against resurrection. And the nutshell of their argument is they essentially say, okay. This woman gets married, but the guy dies, and the next guy marries her. And let's say this happened seven times. Whose wife will she be? And to paraphrase the argument, they're saying, look, Jesus. You believe in resurrection, we don't.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

But here's the problem. It reduces to absurdity. Because if you're going to tell me if she's only married to the first guy, well then now she's an adulterer against the other six. On the other hand, Jesus, if you tell me she's married to all seven, well, now you have a woman engaging in polygamy, which is also prohibited by the law of Moses. So, Jesus, it looks like either way you cut it, because of your belief in an afterlife and resurrection, your position leads to absurdity. So, Jesus, give up your position. That's not a bad argument.

And how does Jesus respond? Two ways. He first gives a rebuttal, then He gives a refutation. The rebuttal in the nutshell. First of all, He says, well, you're wrong because you don't know the Scripture, and the crowd goes nuts. But setting that aside, He essentially says this. Here's where He's calling out their logical fallacies, which is my fifth tool within this approach. He says, okay, well, guys, first of all, don't you know there's no marriage in heaven? They're going to be like the angels. Now, a little background, Pharisees didn't believe in angels, spirits, afterlife, or the intermediate state of existence.

FRANK:

Pharisees or Sadducees?

ERIC:

Sadducees. Yeah. That's right. So, you remember that because they didn't believe in these things. And that's why they were sad, you see? [Laughter] So they didn't believe in these things. So, why would Jesus mention angels if they don't believe in angels? Because He's essentially saying this. Guy's look, if you're going to critique my position, at least get it right. And don't you know in my view that there is no marriage? They will be like the angels.

So essentially, you're begging the question, which is a logical fallacy that there's marriage in heaven, which has led to this false presupposition that I have to answer whose wife will she be, which has ended up manifesting in this false dichotomy of which law of Moses you're going to break. But the problem again, is that your entire position is a straw man of mine, another logical fallacy. This means your entire argument collapses and isn't applicable to me. But hey, thanks for trying. So, He rebuts their argument.

Then He goes to the rebuttal, and then He starts off again. Have you not read? And He's talking to the experts here. So, do with that what you will. And then here's what He does, and here's why I bring this up, specifically. What we just said earlier was, we believe in inerrancy. We believe that the Bible is God's authoritative Word. But there's a difference between discipleship and salvation. And if something's not a core issue, and I'm talking to an unbeliever, I'm not going to make that an obstacle. Again, I would rather have someone go to heaven with false theological beliefs than hell with false theological beliefs. So, here's what Jesus does.

For his reputation. He's going to quote a proof text from the Old Testament to prove His belief in afterlife and resurrection. But He quotes Exodus 3:6, which is a very odd verse to quote. And here's what the verse says, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That's all it says. Now,

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

if you think just for a second, does that prove resurrection or an afterlife? And the answer is, no. It really doesn't. In fact, if you're going to use a proof text from the Old Testament for afterlife or resurrection, there are better verses to use, from Isaiah, from Daniel, your dead will rise again. They'll rise from the dust of the earth. But He doesn't use those. So, was Jesus having a bad day? Was He off? Did He forget? Or was there, as I say, a method to the madness?

Another fun fact about the Sadducees. In the Sadducean mind, the only thing they regarded and respected as God's inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word, were the first five books of the Bible. In other words, had Jesus quoted from Isaiah or Daniel, the entire debate would have devolved into a debate about biblical reliability or inerrancy. And Jesus knows that's not the main thing. So, what is He doing here? He's keeping the main thing, the main thing, making the most use of his time, and knowing how to answer their objection. So, to be clear, this is Jesus, God in flesh, intentionally and purposely choosing not to debate Scripture with people who don't believe it. And if He can do it, my goodness, why can't we?

FRANK:

I was going to say, so you're saying they did accept the Pentateuch, the first five books. He's going to quote from Exodus rather than Daniel or Isaiah. Go ahead.

ERIC:

That's right. So again, God in flesh doing intentionally avoiding a debate about the Bible with people who didn't believe it. And again, if He can do it, then, my goodness, why can't we? Still, it's an odd verse. So, what He does is, now He presents an argument. He adds to the verse, and He says, He is not the God of the living but the dead. And then the next verse says the crowd...

FRANK:

The living but the dead. How did you quote that?

ERIC:

He's not the God of the dead, but the living. That's right. Yes, thank you. He's not the God of the dead, but the living. So, here's His argument that He just made with that verse. Which, by the way, this was one of their favorite verses to quote. This would be like our John 3:16, which makes it even funnier when he starts by saying, haven't you read this? And the argument is this. Okay, guys, on your view, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are dead. And on your view, they don't exist, because there is no afterlife. But wait a minute, isn't He the God of the living, not the God of the dead?

And now that seems to raise a problem, because if He is the God of the living, the Scripture says He is. Not was, He is. Well, how can He be their God if they're dead? But wait a minute, if He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and if He is the God of the living, not the dead, well, it seems to follow from that, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must still be alive and well, though not physically present here on this earth. Which means even on the verses you'd like to

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

quote that you trust as reliable, looks like I'm still right and you're so wrong. But again, hey, thanks for trying.

FRANK:

This is all in the book, 'The Lazy Approach to Evangelism,' ladies and gentlemen, by Eric Hernandez. And as you can see, there's a lot in this book. So, if you would, Eric, just enumerate those five tools of the lazy approach again, just in order so we have them. Go ahead.

ERIC:

Yeah. So, the first is just using questions to make a point. I go in the book how Jesus did this brilliantly. He would ask questions. The second, which we've already touched on is to reword the position to expose a problem. Again, there's two main ways to do that. The first is you remove the fluff from the claim and expose it for what it is. And the second is you reword the principle of their position and apply it to a counter example. Why? Because if they don't agree with the principle of the argument for this counter example, then they should not accept it for their argument to begin with, right.

The third is to emphasize rebuttals. We've touched on that. I choose to emphasize rebuttals over refutations. One of the reasons that we haven't touched on this is simply because some people are unwilling to even entertain the truth of your view before they think that they need to, because they think their view is correct. But if you can poke the holes, if you will, in their structure, their belief system, that at least opens the door to consider other positions. The fourth? Well, yeah, the fourth one that we haven't touched on, I can do it quickly, is discernment. This is where you neither provide a refutation or rebuttal. And this is because people aren't making an actual argument or an objection. They're just passionately expressing their views. So, here's a short example.

One guy once said, my biggest obstacle to belief in God is the existence of evil. And here's how the conversation went. He says, how can you believe in God when there's so much evil in the world? And at this point, I said, well, are you saying that if evil exists then God cannot? So, I'm just clarifying. He said, yes. I said, okay, explain. Again, I'm not arguing. I'm not responding. So far, there's no argument. So, I said, explain. He said, well, it's just that. If there's a loving God, there shouldn't be evil. I said, why? He well, because He's all loving. I said, yes. And He wouldn't want there to be any evil. Why not? Well, because He's all loving. Go on. So, my lazy approach here is, there's no argument. And essentially, what I'm trying to point out is, you haven't given me a reason to take this as an objection.

In fact, at one point, he got a little annoyed and said, I think you know what I'm trying to say. And I said, I think I do. But if this is, in your words, your biggest obstacle to belief in God, then I need to know the underlying assumptions behind the objection if you want me to give a substantial response. Because so far, you've just repeated your assertion. But to me, that's no different than saying that if grass is green, the sky shouldn't be blue. So, after letting the point sink in, then I went ahead and after making that point, then I moved on and essentially gave a

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek PODCAST

quick view of well look, would you consider me a loving father if I took my kids to the dentist, which would include pain and suffering shots?

And his response again was, well, yes. But only because it's for something greater. And again, let the point sink in and I said, well, if you can conceive of that of me as an earthly father, then I'm having trouble how you see that would be a problem for God as a heavenly Father who's all knowing. So again, I'm not rebutting, nor my refuting. I'm pointing out and not wasting my time chasing rabbit trails that haven't been defended to begin with. And then the last one that we've touched on with Jesus, as the example is identifying logical fallacies. And this comes from Proverbs 26:4-5. Do not answer a fool according to his folly. But the very next verse says, answer a fool according to his folly. So, which one is it?

Well, you look at the context. And my, the King James Eric Hernandez version, if you will, is 1) don't engage in logical fallacies. And why not? Because you don't want to be like the person who's engaging in logical fallacies. That's what that first verse says. The next verse says, answer according to their logical fallacies, if you will. Why? Because they think they're correct, and you need to know how to point this out. So, that's why I spent a whole chapter on that one is because 1) there are many to be able to look for. Jesus did this. And if we are made in the image of an omnipotent, omniscient, orderly, intelligent God, we had better reflect that at least a little bit in our engagements with people. And we give God no glory or honor when we utter illogical nonsense to try and defend the truth of who He is.

FRANK:

There's so much more in the book, 'The Lazy Approach to Evangelism' by Eric Hernandez, ladies and gentlemen. You need to get a copy. We are just scratching the surface here. But those five tools of the approach are very, very wise. And you need to learn more about them so you can use them with people that you love and want them to come to the knowledge of the truth. Also, people that you want to disciple so they can go out and help other people come to the knowledge of the truth.

We've got some events coming up, ladies and gentlemen. If you're listening to this on Tuesday, February 20, I'll be at Fayetteville, Georgia at Flat Creek Baptist Church talking about 'Correct, Not Politically Correct: About Transgenderism.' Then this coming weekend up in Chilliwack, British Columbia, just about an hour and 15 minutes to the east of Vancouver. You can see the details on our website. Then down in Sarasota, Florida, the fourth to the sixth at ApologeticCon at Grace Community Church in Sarasota with my friend Chip Bennett. Then, the Unshaken conference. Alisa Childers and I will be near Detroit, Michigan on the 9th of March. You can see all the details at UnshakenConference.com. Eric, where are you going to be? You're out there. You're mostly in Texas, aren't you?

ERIC:

Mostly, yes. But I'll actually be in Louisiana this weekend. I forget the name of the church. And then a few other places I have coming up. We have a conference in May.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
.ORG**



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

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

FRANK:

Tell them your website again.

ERIC:

So, for any conferences we do, they can check out TexasApologetics.org. If they want to see stuff I've done in the past (debates and things like that), they can go to my YouTube channel, just youtube.com/EricHernandez. And to see other things, other videos as well, some articles, EricHernandezMinistries.com.

FRANK:

EricHernandezMinistries.com. Ladies and gentlemen, check all that out and get the book, 'The Lazy Approach to Evangelism.' Try and improve yourself so you can be a better ambassador for Him. We're here to know Him. Not just intellectually, but personally, and then to make Him known. So, be a better ambassador. Pick up a copy of the book. There's so much in it. Great stuff, Eric. Thanks for being on.

ERIC:

Thank you so much, Frank.

FRANK:

All right, that's Eric Hernandez, ladies and gentlemen. And Lord willing, we will see you here next week. God bless.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**

