

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

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

HELP! My Pastor Doesn't Talk About Cultural or Political Issues! With Tony Perkins

(May 21, 2024)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, several times in recent years, after I've spoken on an issue that is a moral issue, that is also a political issue, whether it be marriage, transgenderism, abortion, Christians in politics, I've had people come up to me and say, thank you. I thought I was going crazy. I go to church, and I never hear anything about these issues. My pastor avoids these issues. What can I do? It's just so good to hear somebody talking about these issues from a biblical, natural law perspective. I'm glad to get informed on them, but I'm concerned that people in my church never hear this. What can I do about it?

Well, my guest today, Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, who was my guest last week on the podcast. We're going to continue our discussion because Tony, as president of the Family Research Council, has been involved in the political world for several decades. The past two or more have been as the president of the FRC. He's in Washington almost every week dealing with these issues, and he's going to give us some insight, first of all, on what you can say to a pastor in order to try and determine whether or not this pastor is going to deal with these issues and maybe encourage him to do so.

And then secondly, what happens if your pastor goes from being silent on these issues to suddenly speaking up? Are the pews going to empty? Is he going to lose his donations? Are people going to run away? What's really going to happen? Tony's got research on that, so he's going to tell us. Tony, it's great having you on again. We had a great discussion last week about these issues that are controversial for some reason, particularly to Christians. But we pointed out in the last podcast that we need to be engaged.

We're commanded to be engaged if for no other reason, to continue the ability to preach and live the gospel, but also because we do love our neighbors and we want laws in place that are going to protect them from evil. But Tony, first of all, what happens when a pastor suddenly becomes engaged in these issues? What happens to the church in your experience?

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TONY:

I'm going to address that, Frank, but I'm going to go back to how you started this conversation because it's very important what you said, is that people are looking to their pastors to speak to this, because when they hear you speak to this, they're like relieved because they're not crazy. They haven't lost their mind. Here's what's happening, and I've watched this develop over the last 20 years, is that the media no longer even allows a biblical worldview or anything that resembles a biblical worldview on their platforms. The legacy media will not allow that. That really took place after the redefinition of marriage.

So, everybody who thinks that a boy is a boy, and a girl is a girl feels like they're swimming upstream in the broader culture. And so, what's happening with that? By design, as the left pushes that silence, that separation of those who have a biblical worldview, they retreat. Either they get angry, or they retreat in silence. And when that happens, we begin to see elections affected by that because people go silent, they're no longer having conversations because they feel like they're isolated and alone.

So, it's so important what you're doing, being out there, holding these training sessions, these speaking, challenging people, this broadcast, the podcast, so important. But it comes back to pastors need to be preaching the Word of God because that is the source of our direction. That is truth. That's what we need to build our lives and our viewpoints around. It's not my opinion, Frank. It's not your opinion that matters. It's the Word of God that matters. And so, we need to be able to rightly divide the Word of truth in its application to the world today.

That's one of the reasons I do it, because there's a vacuum in the church. I'm doing a two-year journey through the Bible chronologically. Every morning, I do a 10-15 minute devotional online, just challenging people to read the Word and then apply it to our lives, because it's not coming from the pulpits. So, here's number one. What's happening for pastors who all of a sudden awaken to this? They start to preach the Word of God as it applies to the culture in which we're living. They get resistance. It's going to happen.

It's interesting, I was reading recently in 1 Samuel in chapter, I think it's chapter three at the very beginning, when Samuel calls the people to repentance after they've been worshipping

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their idols and off doing their own thing. And he says, repent, turn to God, put away your idols, seek Him with your whole heart, and serve Him alone. And so, they do. But then guess what happens? The Philistines began to amass the army, and the people began to be afraid because they're turning to God, and the opposition doesn't like that.

So, when a pastor begins to preach the Word of God, challenging his people to live out the Word of God, guess what? The forces of darkness, the principalities, and powers are going to get upset and they're going to move against the Church. There's going to be friction. It's going to happen. But here's the thing you have to do. You have to stay the course, just as it was with Samuel in that occasion where God came through and thundered down and scattered the enemy.

What I have found for those pastors that have stepped into this void and have preached the whole counsel of God, I mean, they're not doing this every time they preach. But when it's appropriate and as it comes up, they speak to the issues. They don't sidestep the issues. Their churches are exploding because people are hungry for the truth. They're tired of the [unintelligible] that no longer meets the demands of our day. This is a day of defining.

And so, I encourage pastors how I've done it, how I've encouraged them to do it. In Calvary Chapel probably is the best example of this and others can do it. But Chuck Smith in his wisdom taught his pastors just to preach through the Word of God. Just start at the beginning. Preach through. And so many pastors, you know, Jack Hibbs is an example. Gary Hamrick is another example. So many of them, they just preach through the Word of God.

So, these issues are going to come up. You don't have to cherry pick the issues on a Sunday and say, I'm going to preach on this and I'm going to find this Scripture that meets this issue. You just preach through the Word of God, and you are going to be dealing with the relevant issues of the day. And no one can say that you were trying to cherry pick an issue or that you were going out of your way to step on somebody's toe. You're just preaching the Word of God.

FRANK:

Yeah, those churches have exploded because people are hungry for truth in every area of their life. And ladies and gentlemen, there's no area of your life, at least if you're a Christian, where

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Jesus should not reign. You should bring Jesus and the Word of God into every area of your life. And that includes what you think about the moral issues of the day, includes what you think about the political issues of the day.

By the way, it's interesting, Tony, as you well know, in our lifetime, you mentioned this on the last show. So many things have changed in terms of Christianity's acceptance in society. And, you know, when we were born, I was born in 1961. You were born what, 64?

TONY:

63

FRANK:

Yeah. Okay, so we're about the same age. Abortion was not a political issue. Marriage was not a political issue. Certainly, transgenderism and gender identity was not a political issue. Open political issue wasn't an issue at all. And they've become political issues. And now that they're political issues, some people on the other side will say, well, you guys can't talk about that because that's a political issue.

First of all, we could talk about anything we want, and we should talk about every issue because God has something to say, if not through His word, through natural law, about certain things. And if something becomes political, we don't just say, well, we can't talk about it anymore.

In fact, as you well know, Tony, in Canada in particular, this has come up. The Bible's now a political issue. There are certain passages that you can't preach. Are we going to say as Christians now, as pastors, are they going to say, well, I can't preach this section anymore because in Canada, this is going to prevent me from doing so because, you know, this is against the LGBTQ way of looking at things. So, I can't preach from Romans 1 anymore. What pastor is going to say that? I hope none of them.

TONY:

But once you surrender that territory, that is the logical outcome. And you're absolutely right. What has happened? Life is a biblical issue. It is a moral issue. It is an issue that clearly is in the realm, within the realm of the Church to speak to. But they, you know, abortion, they've made

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that a political issue. And so, they say that's off limits. Same thing with marriage, now human sexuality, even to the point of wanting to change the Bible in terms of God being male, masculine. So, there's no end to this. Sin, here's something we need to realize.

Rebellion and sin against God never stand still. It is constantly on the march. And so, to think that, okay, we're just going to pull off here and we're going to kind of make this our rest stop and we're going to let them have what they have. They're not going to be satisfied. Evil is never satisfied. So, you have to stand resolutely against evil and call it what it is.

Now, we're not talking about attacking people. We know what's behind this. Our enemy is not flesh and blood. Paul made that very clear. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this age, against the spiritual host of wickedness in heavenly places.

But one of the things we have to come to grips with, Frank, is that we are in a spiritual battle, and there are spiritual forces at play. You know, I saw this upfront and personal when I was a police officer, and even more so now. I have two adult kids that are in, children that are in law enforcement.

In fact, just this week, my son called me and said, hey, dad, you've got to hear this case. And it's the demonization that's become so prevalent because of drugs and because of promiscuous sex that is being encouraged by public policy, which leads to demonization. All right? I'm just going to be very clear. But pastors need to be preaching that they're not. They're afraid to. And so, we need to understand that we are in a spiritual battle. There are spiritual forces at play, and there are ways that people open themselves up to that demonization.

FRANK:

And pastors, sometimes I understand this. It's very hard to be a pastor. I mean, first of all, particularly of the smaller church, because the congregation expects you to do everything and be everything to every person, and that's really hard to do. So, pastors have a very difficult job. I get that. The issue, however, is the fact that so many times we are preaching based on incentives rather than based on what's true.

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In other words, we'll preach because we're incented to keep people in the pews rather than to really tell them the truth. Because if they leave, they take their money with them. And now we can't fund the church, we can't fund the staff. We have to check ourselves on that, Tony. We're very susceptible to incentives rather than truth. And I think what you have discovered in your work is very important that we need to say again.

And that is, ladies and gentlemen, at least right now in America, when you start coming out preaching the truth on every issue, yes, people are going to protest. Yes, people are going to get mad. Yes, people are going to walk out of your church. But in the long run, your church is going to grow, and they're going to be fully devoted followers of Jesus.

TONY:

And that's the ultimate goal that we're to do. We're to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

FRANK:

That's right.

TONY:

And you've got to prepare them for that. And Erwin Lutzer has been really good about this, of challenging people. He said, look, we're not equipping people to go to a picnic. We're equipping them to take up a cross and die. And so, we've got to change our mindset. It's not come follow Jesus, and we're going to have a great time. It's come, follow Jesus and die. Die to yourself, to your own reputation, and serve something that is greater than yourself. I understand the difficulty.

I served as a pastor, and I understand the difficulties there. But we have a higher authority to whom we answer, not just our deacons, not our elders. We answer to God. And as pastors, we need to preach the whole counsel of God. And again, I think the best way to do that is just work your way through scripture. I'm very concerned about a lot of pastors who preach topical messages, and I understand it's a way of preaching.

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But we need to be thinking about how we equip our people with a biblical worldview so that they know how to operate in an increasingly secular and hostile world. And the only way they can do that is if they have a clear grasp of scripture, understanding of that scripture, and how it applies to the world around us.

FRANK:

That is so important, Tony. So, give our listeners some practical advice. Pastors, of course, are quite often run down by their parishioners about certain things that the parishioners, the congregants don't like. But if you want to encourage your pastor, or maybe first discover whether your pastor is open to preaching on these issues and then encourage your pastor to do so, how do you recommend our listeners do that?

TONY:

Number one, I mean, we're all human beings. We talked about this in the previous show about politics being about relationship. Life is about relationships. So, I'm going to speak from personal experience. You know, we all like to be affirmed. We all like to get an encouraging word. And so, when your pastor does preach or touch on these issues and speak to this, you know, make it a habit to encourage them. You know, I will often send the pastor of the church that we're attending now, I'll text him after a message and say, hey, man. That was a great message. Thank you for preaching truth. Or send them a card.

Just encourage them. Because that way, when you want to address something else, you have already in your bank account with them a little capital. And because you just like, you know, when your kids, you know, you want to make sure you're encouraging and praising your kids in greater proportion to, you know, kind of jumping on them occasionally, you know? So, we want to encourage our pastors. And they need that because they carry a weight.

They know a lot of things you don't know about what's happening in the church, and there's spiritual battles raging around them. But here's a couple of tools that we've developed, Frank, to help in a church, especially for those that want to see their church more engaged culturally. We have our culture impact team, or what we call now a community impact team, where if you're a layman and you have the confidence of the pastor, you can set this up within your church and you become kind of the community conscience of your church.

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You do the voter registration, voter guides. We have all of that information available for people to use and just ask to have the blessing of the pastor. So, it's not something else that's on the pastor's plate, but he can, you know, kind of give this blessing to someone in the congregation that would lead this and help their church be more attuned to what's happening in terms of being an influence in their local community.

FRANK:

Where do people go to get that packet, Tony? That's kind of a turnkey thing, right? To get the packet. And then, you don't need the pastor to do any work. He just approves it.

TONY:

The pastor does not have to do the work. It is something that the people can do. Let me check here real quick. I think the website is, cit.org is the website where people can actually sign up. There's training available for it.

FRANK:

CIT.org? That didn't bring me anywhere.

TONY:

Let me see.

FRANK:

We'll find it. We'll put it in the show notes if we can't find it here.

TONY:

It's also, I believe it's at FRCAction.org as well. But I was trying to get people to it directly.

FRANK:

FRCAction.org. Yeah, that kind of turnkey kit would be very helpful. So, encourage your pastor when he does speak rightly on issues, and then also maybe approach him or volunteer to be someone who can bring knowledge to the congregation on who stands for what politically.

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TONY:

You know, the last thing the pastor needs is, hey, you know, pastor, this would be a great idea if we did this, you know? Because he's got a thousand things going on, is, pastor, let me show you this. Would you be open to us helping lead this in our church? And then we've got all the information. Show them what it is. It's a c-3 compliant. It's not partisan. This is not a Republican Party thing. This is simply voter registration, voter education, awareness of what's happening in the local community.

And also, we include in the manual and the training suggestions on ministry projects in the local community that kind of help build capital, if you will, with the community, whether it's going in and helping out a school, or whether it's serving law enforcement, or something along those lines, to build relationships in the community. Because where you serve, you can lead. And that's what our community impact teams are designed to do.

FRANK:

Community impact teams, ladies and gentlemen. Check that out. That's a tool that you can use right from the Family Research Council. Again, as he said, nonpartisan. It's just getting people informed on where people stand on the issues. And so, even if your pastor doesn't speak about these things from the pulpit, at least they can get information in the church about these issues.

And by the way, ladies and gentlemen, if you're concerned about your federal government, your state government, your local government, do you realize that most of the things you would be concerned about can be solved if Christians actually voted biblically? Because about half of Christians don't even vote.

So, if you could just awaken the Church, many of the political issues you worry about, whether it's issues regarding life, marriage, your children, and them being indoctrinated into this crazy gender ideology or open border, sex-trafficking across the border, drugs coming across the border, terrorism coming across the border, the economy. You're worried about these things. Well, if Christians voted, many of these issues would be solved. Not completely, but they'd be improved. And so, we just need to encourage the Church to get engaged right now.

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Tony, let me ask you one other thing, and that is, you've been in Washington for several decades now with Family Research Council. You guys are a nonprofit yourself. What is an example of an important, successful outcome you've been able to achieve through your work at FRC?

TONY:

There are several I could point to, Frank, that the Lord's given us the ability to be a part of. But one I think is most significant that I kind of saw come together. But it was long in coming. You might remember back in, I think it was 2000. In around 2006 or so, there was a vacancy on the Supreme Court, and George W. Bush nominated Harriet Myers to serve on the court. And she had spoken out in favor of Roe v. Wade and was really not good. I mean, we've seen this play out, the same movie we've seen over and over.

FRANK:

She was like his chief of staff or something, too. She wasn't really even qualified be on the Supreme Court.

TONY:

But it was, trust us. They'll be conservative. Well, I mean, we heard that line so many times before, and it just never happened. In fact, it was always the opposite. I've never seen a liberal justice turn conservative.

FRANK:

No, it always goes the other way.

TONY:

Right. And so, I remember having a phone conversation with Karl Rove, the president's top political advisor, when that selection was made. And I told him, I can't support her. I mean, she's bad on these issues. We're not taking this by faith anymore. And I remember, I had to hold the phone out because he was screaming at me. And at that point, we had a coalition of conservative groups that were meeting at the time.

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Actually, Don Wildman and I kind of, he was the chairman. I was his co-chair. It was the Arlington group. And we met periodically. It was all over the marriage issue at the time. But this came up in the middle of that, because you'll recall that's back when the marriage amendments were passing the states. And so, we met. And collectively, I helped lead the opposition to Harriet Myers. And two weeks later, that nomination had to be withdrawn. Now, the replacement, do you recall who the replacement to her?

FRANK:

It's probably Sam Alito.

TONY:

It was Samuel Alito that was tapped. And we went and did an event. Dr. Dobson had the late Jerry Falwell there, Bishop Wellington Boone, and others in a historically black church in Philadelphia to promote Samuel Alito. Do you know who wrote the Dobbs opinion?

FRANK:

Sam Alito.

TONY:

Samuel Alito. Had we gone with the political message, had we gone along with the Republicans and been an appendage of the Republican Party that many claim that we are, I feel very strongly, based on the numbers, we would not have seen the overturn of Roe v. Wade.

FRANK:

Nor would you have had the overturn of Roe v. Wade had Trump not appointed three justices. And I know you've had a lot of contact with President Trump when he was president. You had some influence on him. I know the Federalist Society did as well. It's kind of ironic, Tony, because probably personally, we could read between the lines and say, well, Donald Trump is probably not personally all that pro-life. But it turns out that since he was a political novice, when he got to Washington, he listened to people like you, the Heritage foundation, the Federalist Society, for his selections for judges. And boom, it happened.

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TONY:

Right. And look, Frank, part of the reason Donald Trump was elected is that pro-life voters over the last 40 years have voted pro-life. We've been ridiculed for voting pro-life. We, you know, single issues voters, which is not true. But nonetheless, we've faced that ridicule. We face ridicule for supporting Trump, you know, given his background, but yet he embraced the party platform. He made a list of judges that were conservative. He picked a pro-life running mate. And so, we supported him in that general election and look what the outcome was.

So, you know, I think that's one of those things that I look back on that I was in the meetings. I was there, I was a part of it. And I feel, you know, based on the way things unfolded, we wouldn't be here had we not been present, had we not been involved, and engaged in the process, and willing to take stands against even conservatives, Republicans, when necessary to advance the biblical truth that we've been called to advance.

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, do what's right and leave the results to God. What you did back in 2006 really bore fruit. Well, it bore fruit for many of Alito's decisions because he's been a great Supreme Court justice for many years. But certainly, when it came to Dobbs, which was what? What was that, Tony?

TONY:

2022.

FRANK:

2022. So, you're talking, you know, 16 years later, right after your phone call to Karl Rove. Talk about the ripple effect, ladies and gentlemen. There's the ripple effect right there. One little thing happens in 2006 that ripples forward to actually bring forth a great decision 16 years later. That's amazing. And that's why when even when evil happens, ladies and gentlemen, we can still trust God for a good outcome, even when we don't see the outcome because of the ripple effect.

And Tony, I want to mention one thing, because you mentioned the one issue voter. And I know Christians get tongue tied a lot. Oh, you're just a one issue voter. And I say, no, I'm not a one

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issue voter. I think a lot of issues are important. But I will tell you this, I'm a one issue disqualifier. And that is, if you're not pro-life, I'm not going to support you. If you're not good on the essential issue, the number one issue other than God, if you're not good on that issue, then I'm disqualifying you. But that's not the only issue I want you to be good on because the right to life is the right to all other rights.

If you don't have life, you don't have anything. So, I'm not a one issue voter. I am a one issue disqualifier. And I think we need to make sure that people understand that. We believe in a lot of things that are important, but there's nothing more important than life other than God himself.

TONY:

Absolutely.

FRANK:

We've got to stand strong there. Tony, if people want to support what you do or they want to be a part of the FRC, or they want to avail themselves of resources, where do they go?

TONY:

Well, the main website, FRC.org. But I was just looking. The community impact team is on our site, PrayVoteStand.org.

FRANK:

PrayVoteStand.org. Nonpartisan, but it will inform you on where everybody stands on these issues. And that's going to be critical this November, ladies and gentlemen. And there may be even some primaries going on still. You might want to check into these things at the local level. These local races are important, Tony. We forget about that, as you mentioned earlier. Your state attorney general, your state governor, your state reps, these are important positions. And of course, local school boards as well.

TONY:

Increasingly they're the ones that can challenge. You go back to the founding of the nation, the interposition where you had local officials who were standing against the overreach of the

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British government. And so, God is a God of order. And we're not to move toward anarchy, but we need to have elected officials at the state level, the local level that are willing to hold to account and in check the powers of those at the federal levels.

FRANK:

Tony, it's great having you on the program. Thanks for these two shows and thanks for the work you're doing at FRC. Just tremendous. And I want more people to know about what you're doing, especially during this election year. There's going to be a lot of ripples that come out of this election.

TONY:

Well, Frank, I appreciate that, and I appreciate the work that you do. And I don't know how many copies of your book that I have given out, 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' because it is the intellectual ammunition that we need to challenge the left. Because they don't want to have a debate anymore. They just want to silence. And we need to be confident in who we are, what we believe, and we need to speak up.

FRANK:

Thank you, brother. Hey, ladies and gentlemen, a couple things I want to mention before we go. I'll be at Community Bible Church in Brighton, Michigan on June 2. I'll be at Midway Church outside of Atlanta on June 9. And then I'll be at Calvary Chapel, Chino Hills with Jack Hibbs on June 12. And also, Sunday morning services on June 16, Father's Day. Check all that out on our website, CrossExamined.org. and don't forget about CIA, the CrossExamined Instructor Academy.

You've got to apply soon if you want to learn from some great apologists, Greg Koukl, from Allen Parr, from Natasha Crain, Alisa Childers. Check all that on our website, CrossExamined.org. Click on events. You'll see CIA there. And don't forget to check out my friend Tony Perkins website, FRC.org. Also, check out FRCAction.org. And Tony, give me that place to get the CIT again so we have that.

TONY:

PrayVoteStand.org.

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FRANK:

PrayVoteStand.org. Make a difference in your congregation to protect innocent people from evil, to make sure that we maintain religious freedom, that you be salt and light. Go there, get that kit, and do something ladies and gentlemen. It's better to light one candle than curse the darkness. I'll be with you here next week, Lord willing. God bless.

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