

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

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Beware of People-Pleasing Christians – Plus Q&A

(September 3, 2024)

Ladies and gentlemen, should you call out somebody you know who is a believer, who is teaching something wrong? We started this conversation last week based on someone who wrote in and was complaining that we had called out Tim Keller on something, at least Megan Basham did. And we talked a lot in the last podcast about this. Tim Keller, one of my favorite preachers, really, of all time.

But I think we need to be fair and point out when somebody gets something wrong, you should call it out if it's an important issue. And I think the issues we talked about last week were important. Go back and listen to last week's podcast, the Friday or Saturday podcast that came out. But let's now talk about what might be behind some of the wishy washiness that we're all susceptible to when we want to please people who are not Christians.

In fact, Bill Dembski, the great Bill Dembski, the man with two PhDs, one of the founders of the intelligent design movement, has a sub stack blog. And I'll put his article that I'm about to read from in the show notes. He talks about how the Scriptures warn us from trying to be friends with the world in order to be liked by the world.

And here's what Dembski writes. He says the scriptures teach repeatedly that we should guard against recognition, accolades, and advancement from those hostile to the faith, and that in fact, we are on much safer ground when those hostile to the faith persecute rather than praise us. This is not to say that we should purposefully make ourselves so annoying and distasteful that we receive the reproach of unbelievers as when Christians act as hypocrites.

But it is to say that by quietly and consistently living out our faith, we will naturally attract opposition. Consider the ongoing saga of the Denver baker, Jack Phillips. You can read about Jack Phillips. He's been totally attacked despite being just a sweet guy who's just trying to make cakes and cookies in his bakery by the LGBTQ movement.

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There's a link in the article you can read about Jack. Anyway, Dembski goes on to say the New Testament makes this point so consistently, as illustrated by the following verses, that it is hard to dismiss as simply proof texting. I'm going to read several passages that Dembski lists here. Here's Jesus in Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me, says Jesus. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. For in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Listen to that. He says, blessed are you when you're insulted. Rejoice and be glad, because your reward is great in heaven when they persecute you on account of me.

In Matthew 10, he says this, you will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. In Luke 6, he says this, blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, and insult you, and reject your name as evil because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

In John 15, He says to His disciples, if the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belong to the world, the world would love you as its own. But as it is, you do not belong to the world. But I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember that I told you, "a servant is not greater than his master." If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

In Acts 5, the Apostles were flogged. It says, they called the Apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. The Apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the name of Jesus. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul says, in fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

In 1 Peter, Peter says, if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, well, this is commendable before God. To this you are called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps. And then Dembski says this. Well, before I get to Dembski.

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Notice that almost every New Testament letter is written to people who are suffering or mention suffering. The whole prosperity gospel thing is nonsense, ladies and gentlemen, just complete nonsense.

Suffering is just part of life, and it's part of the Christian faith. People are going to hate you for being a Christian. Now here's Dembski. At the risk of overburdening the reader with still more scripture verses, yet to leave no doubt about what the New Testament is teaching here, not only is opposition from unbelievers seen as something normal and to be expected, showing that Christians are doing something right, but support from unbelievers, at the very least requires scrutiny, and at worst can be a trap or a pitfall.

In other words, he's saying, you better be careful when unbelievers praise you. This is what the Bible's teaching and what Dembski is saying. In Luke 6, it says this. Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets. Yeah.

Ladies and gentlemen, if nobody has said anything negative about you, you're probably not saying much. People don't even know you're a Christian, in other words. If somebody doesn't hate you, you're doing something wrong. Not hate because you've been unkind to them. Hate because they know you're a follower of Jesus and what Jesus stands for.

In John 5, Jesus scolded people by saying, how can you believe, since you accept glory from one another, but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? In other words, people are seeking glory from other people, not from God. And Jesus is calling them out on it. I like what Alisa Childers has said.

In fact, I think she got this from Oz Guinness, that our number one audience is an audience of one, God. If we're not following God, forget everything else. If we're not following Jesus, forget everything else. That's the primary audience, the audience of one.

Now, of course, we want to influence people who are not Christians and people who are Christians to get closer to Jesus. So, we do need to watch our approach. But if we're not pleasing Jesus, nothing else matters. And by the way, we're not pleasing Jesus when we ignore big issues that the culture is dealing with because we don't want to offend anybody.

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In John 12, Jesus says this. Because of the Pharisees, many would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue. For they loved human praise more than praise from God. And of course, Paul in Galatians 1 says, am I now trying to win the approval of human beings or of God? Or am I trying to please people?

If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. Yeah, get that right ladies and gentlemen. If you want to please people, don't be a Christian because, well, you should be a Christian because it's true. But you're not going to please people by being a Christian. Men love darkness rather than light. James says this, you adulterous people.

Don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. So, Dembski is pointing out here that the Bible says you're going to be persecuted.

And secondly, you ought to be careful if people are praising you too much, people who are not Christians. And yet, isn't that a temptation? Look, I got to admit, it's a temptation for me. It's a temptation, I think, for any speaker or even anybody out there on social media who's putting forth Christianity. You want people to like you. You want people to like what you say. You want people to like what you put up.

But if you don't watch yourself, you're not going to be teaching God's Word. You're going to be teaching your own, or you're going to be more influenced by the culture than you're influencing the culture. In fact, there's an article in the Washington Stand about that. I'll put that in the show notes as well, that too many Christians have been influenced by the culture much more than they've influenced the culture.

So, we need to be very careful, very careful, whether we're a teacher, a pastor, or just someone who is going through our day as a Christian or somebody up on social media, wherever. Don't think you're going to please everybody. Don't be shocked when you're persecuted for following Jesus. You're blessed, actually, according to Jesus.

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Now, going back to our previous conversation from last week when we were talking about what the Bible commands and what it doesn't command, and how many evangelicals, including Tim Keller, were trying to say that certain issues were sort of morally equal. Helping the poor is just as big an issue as abortion.

Now, I emphatically disagree when it comes to government, of course, as a Christian, we have to be concerned with both. But the Bible has put protecting innocent people from evil in the hands of government. So, this is a confusion that some people make about applying the Bible. I'm not talking about Tim Keller right now.

I'm talking about people in general. They think that everything in the Bible is a command for God or a command from God for us today and also for government. But I think that's a misunderstanding. First of all, God created three institutions: marriage, government, and the church in that order by the way. He created marriage first, Genesis 3, government, Genesis 9, and the church, not until the New Testament.

And these three things are set up to do different things. And while there may be some overlap with certain commands, not every command is for every institution. For example, the Bible commands us numerous times to preach the Gospel and to make disciples. But do you think that's a command for government or a command for individuals in the church? It's not a command for government.

It's a command for individuals. I mean, do you want the U.S. government setting up churches and preaching the Gospel? Actually, it wouldn't be a bad idea. You know, Thomas Jefferson and other presidents actually used federal tax revenue to build churches and to promote Christianity among Indian tribes in the early U.S. They wanted to do that.

So, it wasn't against the first amendment either. But generally, we might agree, hey, we don't want a national church. In fact, the first amendment prohibits a national church that required everybody to be a part of it. But, yeah, we don't... You know, when the Bible says make disciples or the Bible says preach the Gospel, we don't think that's a command for government.

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That's a command for Christians. It's a command for individuals. Also, there's a mistake that people make regarding the Old Testament civil law. The Old Testament civil law was just for ancient Israel, except those laws that are repeated in the New Testament. For example, the commands in the Old Testament about leaving the corners of the field for the poor were only for ancient Israel.

But that command does show, along with other New Testament passages, that God cares for the poor, and so should we. And even if government, or let me put it another way, even if the Bible commands the government to help the poor, and I don't think it does so directly, it's telling individuals to do so, but I think it does so by implication that the government should be helping the poor. The Bible doesn't dictate to modern governments how to do so.

In fact, the Bible discourages giving people what we consider to be welfare when they are able to work for themselves. And probably they do this. The Bible does this, Paul does this. Because such behavior is not fair. It creates a free rider problem, and it will not be good for anyone long term. It's not good for the person that is not pulling their weight and for the person that's pulling their way too much to take care of the person who isn't.

And Paul concludes a very long passage on people choosing not to work this way. He's basically saying people are lazy and you ought not let them be lazy. This is from 2 Thessalonians, chapter three. Paul says this. "For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule. The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat. We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive.

They are not busy. They are busy bodies. Such people, we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food that they eat." Now this is certainly for believers. It's certainly for the church, one of the three institutions. Is it a command for government?

No, it's not a command for government. But the principles certainly make sense. You don't help able bodied people by enabling their laziness, their idleness, because they become dependent when you do so. You help a person much more by showing that person how to fish rather than just giving that person a fish. And so, this principle, I think, is something that should be applied to government, help people get on their own.

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If they need a handout, to get them on their feet, okay. But you don't want the safety net to become a hammock. That's not what it was made for. And tragically, in our culture, in our country, it has become a hammock for so many people, people who are able bodied and refuse to work. This is not helping them. It's also breaking up marriages, too, because some people can't get welfare checks unless they don't have a father in the home, but they have children.

So, they keep having children out of wedlock to get more welfare checks, and they keep the father out of the home. I don't know what the solution to this is now, but I know what currently is being done isn't working. In fact, I think it was a George W. Bush who had welfare to work or something, and then Obama came in and reversed it. Or was it Obama that did? I can't remember.

But welfare to work was working and then somebody reversed it. I think Obama reversed it. Could be wrong on that. But yeah, if you're able bodied, you ought to be working. Sure, we'll have a safety net for people that can't work, but is that completely done by the government, or should the church be involved? The church always used to do that. Now as the church, we've ceded that to the government. Is that right?

We can debate these things. We shouldn't be debating, however, whether or not abortion, murder should be outlawed. And that's the mistake we talked about last week that Tim Keller and I think other people have made. They're trying to equate helping the poor with a life and death issue like abortion. They're not the same thing. Go back to the last debate, I should say the last podcast if you want to hear more about that, because we talked about it.

Now, before I go to another question that came in from hello@crossexamined.org I want to mention we've got 'Train Your Brain' coming up, two versions of that course. It's a course in logic. If you've never had a course in logic, trust me, this is a fun course and you're going to learn a lot. If you take your kid through it with you, it's going to help your kid quite a bit.

We have two tracks, one for 6th to 8th graders and the other for everyone else. Look, I don't know about you, but when I want to learn something, I like the 6th to 8th grade level. So, the material is the same in both classes, but some of the examples are different for the adults that we use to teach it.

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Shanda Fulbright, who is a former California school teacher, will be teaching, and I'll join some of the Zoom Q & A sessions on those 'Train Your Brain' sessions. So, I hope you can be a part of that. And also, 'Why I Still Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' is a course I'm teaching. And both these courses, all three of these courses start on September 9. But if you're listening to this after that, you can still join those.

That's for high school and college students. If you want to know why Christianity is true and want to systematically defend it, then take 'Why I Still Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.' By the way, this is all new material. We've updated the course over the past year or so, and it's all new material, new workbook that goes with it, and all new video.

So, check all that out. 'Why I Still Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' and 'Train Your Brain.' Go to crossexamined.org. Click on online courses. You will see it there. Also want to mention going to Egypt and Saudi Arabia beginning December 2. I think we're going December 2 to December 15. Going to be a phenomenal trip. See all the big sites in Egypt. We have an evangelical guide.

We're also going to see how there's evidence for the Exodus in Egypt. Then we're going to go to Saudi Arabia and actually climb what we think is the real Mount Sinai. It's going to be an amazing trip. The best hotels. We're staying at five star hotels because, man, when you go on these trips, man, you get tired. You don't want to stay in a bad hotel, a cheap hotel. You want to stay in the great places.

So, that's where we're going to stay. Go to crossexamined.org. Click on events. You will see it there. Okay, let me take a question from Stephen, who writes in. Hello CrossExamined, I have a question I was told I could submit. Here it is. Years ago, I presented the cosmological argument to an atheistic professor. I mentioned to him that the universe had to have a beginning. The universe is expanding. Edwin Hubble and others showed that there was a point where time, matter, and space began, as it says in Genesis 1:1.

My question is this. He agreed that the universe is expanding, but he said, why can't the universe be like an accordion, expanding and contracting? This was Professor Paul Kurtz, the father of secular humanism, who presented me with this question when I was a Christian at the

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University of Buffalo. By the way, we're going to be up at Buffalo. We just were at the University of Buffalo, but we're going to be up at a church in Buffalo on September 20, doing the Unshaken conference. Myself, Alisa Childers, and Natasha Crain. Go to unshakenconference.com or go to crossexamined.org if you want to be a part of that. I hope you do.

Anyway, this questioner says, I know there is no evidence suggesting the universe is like an accordion, but is there a direct refutation to this theory? And then you go on to say some nice things about, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, and how it helped bring somebody to Christ. Thank you, Stephen.

Well, actually, the answer is in the book 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.' Yeah, the universe is not an accordion, because the second law of thermodynamics won't allow it. You can't go on an infinite regress of bangs due to the second law, because eventually you're going to run out of energy. First of all, there's not enough mass in the universe to pull everything back into a singularity again and then have it re-bang again.

So, there's not enough mass to do that. But even if there were, you can only do that a finite number of times before the universe would run out of energy. Because the second law of thermodynamics is a fundamental law of physics. There's been no exceptions found to it. And it says, everything's running down.

This universe is going to run out of energy someday. Which, by the way, is another argument that the universe had a beginning. As we point out in I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. That's the S in the acronym S.U.R.G.E. where we go through the evidence that the universe had a beginning, the scientific evidence. S stands for second law of thermodynamics.

The universe is running out of energy. If it's running out of energy, it has a finite amount of energy, but we haven't run out of energy yet. Then the universe must have had a beginning, because if it didn't have a beginning, we would have run out of energy a long time ago. Just like if you had a finite tank of gas in your car.

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You know, if you're driving it now, you couldn't have started driving an infinitely long time ago. Why? Because if you did, you wouldn't have any energy right now. But you do have energy. You still have gas in your tank. So, you had to have started driving only a finite time ago.

So, the answer to Dr. Kurtz's rejoinder to the fact that the universe had a beginning is the second law of thermodynamics. That's one answer. The other answer is the observational evidence does not support that. So, look, you can come up with any possibility, but a possibility is not evidence. There's a difference between possibilities and probabilities. You can say anything.

Well, suppose it's like an accordion. You could say, suppose it is, but then when you've got to give evidence for it, you don't have any. In fact, you have evidence against that. You got to say, okay, it had a beginning. By the way, it can't have a beginning philosophically. Or let me say it another way, it can't be eternal philosophically. Even if the universe has been banging over and over and over again, it couldn't have gone on forever. Why?

Because if it were the case, today never would have gotten here. If there's an infinite number of days before today, the universe has been banging like an accordion over and over and over again. This day that we're in wouldn't have arrived. But since today is here, that would mean that the universe had to have a beginning. And if time had a beginning, whatever created time must be outside of time. In other words, the cause must be timeless.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, if you're timeless, do you have a beginning? Do you have a cause? No. If you're timeless, you didn't have a beginning, which means you didn't have a cause, which means you're the uncaused first cause. I.e., who made God is a silly question, because God is outside of time. He's the being that created everything else that exists. He's the eternal uncaused first cause. And that's not special pleading. Why?

Because the evidence is pointing to that. We have a finite universe that had a beginning a finite time ago, which means time had a beginning, and space had a beginning, and matter had a beginning, which means the cause of space, time, and matter must be spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, to create the universe out of nothing, personal, in order to choose to

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create, because to go from a state of nothingness to a state of creation, someone had to make a choice, and only persons can make choices.

Also, the cause would have to be intelligent to have a mind to make a choice. So, ladies and gentlemen, I always ask people, when you think about a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent cause, who do you think of? God, of course. You say, how do you know it's the Christian God, Frank? We don't, yet.

We haven't done enough research yet. The cosmological argument alone does not get you all the way to Jesus. It just shows you there appears to be a first cause which could be the God of the Bible. It could also be Allah or some other theistic or deistic God. It's only when you see the evidence for Jesus, and you realize He did predict and accomplish his own resurrection from the dead that you realize that the same being that walked out of the tomb 1991 years ago is the same being in whose divine nature created the universe out of nothing.

You don't get that from just the cosmological argument. It's possible by the cosmological argument, but it's not sufficient. Yes, there is a God who created the universe. Who is He? Oh, Jesus rose from the dead. Oh, that's the God that created the universe out of nothing that Colossians says created everything, everything that exists.

So, thanks for your question, Stephen. The argument doesn't work. Another question, or the counterargument doesn't work. Another question comes in saying, if the answer to who created God is nobody, God is infinite and existed forever, how can He have a created world which wasn't existing forever? I mean, if God didn't have a beginning, how can the world He created not have existed forever as well?

If He existed forever, was there an infinite amount of time in which humans and the world didn't exist? How is this possible? And actually, this question comes all the way from Greece. Well, similar to what I just said, God is outside of time. So, God wasn't waiting to create ontologically prior to this universe existing. Ontologically is a fancy word for being. There was no being other than God, unless angels were created prior to the creation of the universe. But they're limited spiritual beings.

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There was nothing physical created, including space time, because they go together, according to Einstein. There wasn't anything physical space time created ontologically prior to the creation event we call the Big Bang. So, God wasn't waiting. When God created the universe, He created time with it. He created space time with it. Space, time, and matter go together, so He created those together.

And that's the theory of general relativity, that space, time, and matter are correlative. You can't have one without the other. They go together, according to Einstein. Now, that's about as much as I understand about general relativity. But that is what Einstein is saying. I know a little bit more than that. But the point here is that they were created together.

So, God wasn't waiting. God is outside of time when He creates space time, that's when time begins. And it's also why, as I mentioned just a minute ago, you can't go on an infinite regress of days. Time had to have a beginning, which means space time had to have a beginning in order for this day today that we're at right now to get here, because you can't traverse an infinite number of days.

If there were an infinite number of days before today, you'd always have to live another day before you got to today. I know this can give you intellectual constipation, but if you think about it long enough, this is one of the best arguments for the beginning, and it has nothing to do with science. You don't need science to know this. You know there can't be an infinite number of days before today.

If there were, this day wouldn't have arrived. Since this day has arrived, there can only be a finite number of days before today. So, whatever created time is timeless, and that's God. All right, ladies and gentlemen, we'll get to some more questions in future podcasts. If you want to send in questions, go to hello@crossexamined.org.

Also, don't forget about the courses coming up. 'Train Your Brain' for both parents or anybody, I should say, and then kids six to eight. And 'Why I Still Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' for high school and college kids. And we've got a number of events coming up at let's see, UT Dallas, the 5th of September, Calvary Chapel, Tucson, with my friend Charlie Kirk, and Robert Furrow on the 6th.

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We're at the Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona on the 9th. We're at Western Carolina University on the 18th. And we're doing the Unshaken conference in Buffalo, New York on the 20th and much more coming up after that. All those are all dates in September. So, Lord willing, I hope to see you back here for the Friday podcast.

Oh, wait, one more thing. What else do we have? Do I have to say anything else, Diego? Is there something else I need to talk about? I don't think so. Oh, yeah. Well, we're calling the events that we're doing on college campuses Truth Rising. You're able to ask questions you're not even allowed to ask.

So, you can go to our social media and see more about that. But otherwise, if I don't see you out on the college tour somewhere or at some of these churches, I hope to see you right here next week, Lord willing. God blessed.

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