

*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
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with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

### 3 More BIG Questions: Fine-tuning? Feeling God? Inerrancy?

(December 17, 2024)

**FRANK:**

Ladies and gentlemen, just on Friday I was privileged enough to make it to the peak of what we think is the real Mount Sinai in Saudi Arabia with about four other climbers. I'm not going to tell you about it today. It's going to be on the Friday show or the Saturday morning American Family Radio program, so you're going to have to tune in for that. But it's been a blur of two weeks. We spent two weeks basically in the desert, the first week or so in Egypt, the second week in Saudi Arabia and verified some things that I thought were true and discovered some new insights both from Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Evidence for the Exodus in Egypt, that the Jews were there, the Hebrews were there, and evidence for what we think is the real Mount Sinai. And as I say, it was a, it was a privilege to make it to the peak. It took over three hours to get there and it was actually a seven and a half hour round trip because we also hit Elijah's Cave on the way down. We'll tell you more about that on this coming Friday. But if I start making less sense than I normally make, it's because I'm still suffering from jet lag.

I just landed on Sunday and we're recording this on Tuesday morning, the 17th of December. I woke up at 3am last night. You know, Saudi Arabia is eight hours ahead of the east coast time I'm in, the Charlotte time I'm in. So, I'm still a little blurry, but I wanted to get to some questions that came in over the two weeks that I was out in the Middle East because we try and get to your questions. I know we can't get to them all, but I want to spend a little bit of time on three big questions that have been asked.

One has to do with fine-tuning in the program we just had with Jay Richards just a few days ago. And then there's a question about why don't I feel God? I want to believe, but I don't feel his presence. And there's also a question about inerrancy. You've got events that the New Testament writers say essentially are the same events and they're recording it differently. How can these texts be inerrant? That's what we're going to talk about today. Let's start with a question from our resident skeptic, Mike, who is very articulate.

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He writes in this. Hi, Frank. I enjoyed your show today, as I always do when you use science to support your apologetics. This is just, he's talking about the program we just had, Jay Richards, the last program on 'Privileged Planet' so check that out. Here's what Mike says. I've always believed in a creator or intelligent designer and in the spiritual component of our existence that lives on beyond the death of our physical being. Because I find my faith at the intersection of what I want to believe and what I actually can believe, given the gifts of intellect, reason, and free will, we are apparently given by the intelligent designer to evaluate us above all other living creatures on our planet.

Although raised in Christianity and still one that attends services for family reasons. Let me stop right here. A lot of you are probably doing that over Christmas next week. You're going to go to church even though you're not a believer, just because you know your family's going and it's tradition and we ought to go. Essentially, what Mike is saying here. He says jumping from a belief in a creator and spiritual afterlife to the belief that the Christian definition of all things relevant and related to that premise is a bridge too far from me, he says. Now, we'll see why.

I would ask him why it's a bridge too far, but he doesn't elaborate. So, let me move on to the next paragraph. He said, you and your guest, meaning Dr. Jay Richards, reference the extraordinary precise mathematical equations that define the necessary factors of our existence to support the notion of fine-tuning by an intelligent designer. But you fall short of using science to explain why this fine-tuning could have only happened here in the universe we all might agree was intelligently designed, but a universe with 200 billion trillion stars and likely many more planets.

All right, let me stop right here. Maybe I'm misunderstanding you, Mike here, but you seem to be saying that the argument was that this Earth, this local area is fine-tuned. And that's not the argument. The argument of fine-tuning is that the entire universe is fine-tuned. And if any one of a number of factors about our universe were different by a virtually imperceptible amount, not only would we not have life, we wouldn't even have chemistry.

I mean, you might just have hydrogen and helium and nothing else. In fact, fine-tuning, and to your credit, Mike, this was not unpacked in the program because it wasn't really a program

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about just fine-tuning. It was more a program about the fact that yes, our universe is fine-tuned at the local level. Also, the universe level. But Jay was talking about that it's fine-tuned at the local level, and we are in a place to witness the world around us, whereas that ability to be in a place to witness and to do science is not required for life.

In other words, we could have all of the prerequisites for life and have life and not be able to see another galaxy out there. The fact that we can see other galaxies out there is not necessary for us to live. But what Jay and his colleague Guillermo Gonzalez, Dr. Guillermo Gonzales, an astronomer, are making is the case that yes, the universe is fine-tuned, but it's not just fine-tuned. Our planet itself is in a privileged position to recognize it's fine-tuned and to recognize other aspects about our universe that wouldn't happen if things were just slightly different.

So, it's not just the fact that we're fine-tuned for life. We're also fine-tuned for observation, scientific observation. So, their argument for fine-tuning is going beyond the normal argument for fine-tuning, saying yes, we're fine-tuned, but we also live in a place where we can witness fine-tuning, witness other galaxies out there, see certain things that in most other planets, maybe all other planets, we couldn't see. In fact, let me just do a quick review of fine-tuning, which we didn't cover in the program, not all of it anyway, just to show you what it's all about.

And that is there are three, at least three levels of fine-tuning. The first level is the initial conditions of the universe, such as the initial order of space time at the very beginning, what is called low entropy state, that the universe was in a state of very high order at the very beginning. And there have been physicists like Roger Penrose, who worked with Stephen Hawking, who points out that the universe is so fine-tuned at the initial condition, the low entropy state, that the idea that this could happen by some sort of freak accident is zero.

And he's not a believer. This is Roger Penrose. He has no religious ax to grind. Also, the expansion rate from the initial beginning of the universe, from the very beginning of the universe, the expansion rate was highly fine-tuned. Hawking said something like this. If the expansion rate of the universe was different by one part in a thousand million a second after the Big Bang, the universe would have collapsed back on itself and never developed galaxies. And so, the initial condition is level one of fine-tuning.

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The second level of fine-tuning is that the laws of nature or the numerical constants within them are fine-tuned as well. So, the laws of nature, meaning the gravitational force, you know, the four forces of nature, the gravitational force, the electromagnetic force, the strong and weak nuclear forces, those laws are fine-tuned, and the constants inside those laws are fine-tuned. If you were to change them just imperceptibly, not only would we not have life, we wouldn't have basic chemistry.

And then the cosmological constant, which Jay Richards mentioned in our fine-tuning podcast, our 'Privileged Planet' podcast, if you want to go back and hear more about that, you can. But basically, the cosmological constant is this strange force that's keeping the universe accelerating at a very precise rate. And it's fine-tuned to one part in 10 to the 120th power, which is a number you can't get your mind around because there's only about 10 to the 80 elementary particles in the entire universe.

And to remind you, 10 to the 81 is 10 times bigger than 10 to the 80, and 10 to the 82 is 10 times bigger than 10 to the 81st. We're talking about 10, one part in 10 to the 123rd power. You just can't comprehend that. And if that number was any different, we wouldn't be here. So, that's the second level of fine-tuning. The third level of fine-tuning is more what Jay Richards was talking about on the podcast last week, the 'Privileged Planet' podcast, that the local features of our planet and solar system are precisely what they needed to be for life to exist.

Our distance from the sun, for example, the oxygen level in the atmosphere, the presence of a large planet like Jupiter, the size and distance of the moon from us, and then Jay and Guillermo add the idea or the fact that we are in a very privileged position to witness what's going on around us. In other words, a very privileged position to do science. Now, all three levels of this fine-tuning, that if you were to change any one of the parameters in any of these three levels of fine-tuning, and they fall into very narrow ranges, if any of them were slightly different, not only would life not be possible, neither would basic chemistry.

And so, there are dozens of features about our universe and more than a hundred about our planet and solar system that are balanced, each balanced on a knife's edge. So, I think, Mike, you might be agreeing that there is an intelligent designer out there, but you seem to be

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thinking that the fine-tuning argument is just at the local level. No, it's not just at the local level, it's at the universe level.

So, it could be that there's life on other planets out there, as we talked about in the last segment of the program with Jay Richards. Or maybe there isn't. But to say that life developed by some sort of freakish accident still wouldn't explain why the universe itself is fine-tuned. So, it's not just a biological argument of fine-tuning. There is a physical argument for fine-tuning. In other words, physics is fine-tuned. So, it seems to be an argument that I think is quite compelling.

And even atheists like Richard Dawkins and the late Christopher Hitchens admitted this is the hardest one for an atheist to answer. All right, let me continue with Mike's email. He says, you, meaning Jay and I, also fail to explain where heaven and hell exists in this incomprehensible expanse of space, time, and matter. Well, that wasn't the topic of the program, Mike. But let me continue with what you say. You are obviously quite comfortable using science to support your arguments for intelligent design, and specifically for the Christian God, but don't use the same science to explain where heaven and hell are, which are fundamental to the Christian faith. All right.

And he says, I guess we all cherry pick and spin science to support our various beliefs. Mike, that was not the subject of the program at all. So, it seems to come out of left field. You know, we're having a discussion about fine-tuning, not where heaven and hell are. But let me just give you off the top of my head where heaven and hell are right now. Heaven and hell are nowhere because they are not physical places. Right now, if you were to die, you would be either in the presence of Christ as Paul says, or you would be in Abraham's bosom in some sort of immaterial state according to Luke 16. The ultimate heaven and hell are physical places.

For example, heaven is going to be a remade heaven and earth, but that hasn't been recreated yet. So technically, when we talk about heaven and hell, unless we're talking about the abode of God, it's not a real place, although the abode of God, since God is an immaterial being, a spiritual being, it's not a where question. It's a category mistake to ask a where question about a non where entity. In other words, you're asking a location for a non-location entity.

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So, heaven and hell haven't been created yet, so to speak, in the final state. And when we die now, our immaterial souls are either present with the Lord or they're in what we might call Abraham's Bosom or Hades. They're immaterial realities. They're not physical places, although they will be physical places at some point. And to say where they are physically would be speculation at this point. Once they are created other than heaven, which would be a recreated heaven and earth, to say where hell is, it's not explained.

But that's not an argument against the Christian faith. To say that Christianity doesn't explain where hell is means hell doesn't exist, is a non sequitur. Even if it is a physical place and even if it exists right now as a physical place, just because the Scriptures don't explain where that is, that doesn't mean Christianity is false. So, it's not part of the fine-tuning argument. And by the way, not everything in Christianity or any worldview, including atheism, can be explained by science. For example, Mike, you can't explain your agnosticism by science.

It's more of a philosophical question. Oh, there may be scientific arguments you make to support you're not knowing or your doubts, but you can't explain a complete worldview by a scientific discipline if you're defining science as the physical sciences. Because science, like all disciplines, relies on philosophy. That's why in our book 'Stealing from God', the title of the chapter on science is, the title is called 'Science Doesn't Say Anything. Scientists Do.' Because all scientific investigation requires philosophical principles that you can't prove by science.

For example, you can't prove the law of cause and effect by science. You can't prove the laws of reason or logic by science. You can't prove the laws of mathematics by science. Because all of those disciplines are required in order to do science. You can't prove your ability to witness the world around you and prove that the data you're getting from your external senses is reliable by science.

You have to assume that the data you're getting from your external senses or from your senses is telling you the truth about the external world. You can't prove that by science, you have to assume that in order to do science. So, we've inverted in our modern era the priority of knowing something. We say that we can know things by science without realizing we can't know anything by science unless we're relying on philosophical principles upon which science is built.

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And when we say science doesn't say anything scientists do, what we mean is that all data must be gathered, and all data must be interpreted. And who does that? Science doesn't do that. Scientists do that. And to say that the only things that are true are those that can be scientifically proven, (that's called scientism) is a self-defeating proposition because that very statement that all truth comes from science cannot be proven by science.

It's not a scientific claim, it's a philosophical claim. So, to say that, oh, I get all my truth from science, that truth itself, if it were true, which it can't be because it's self-defeating, but if it were true, it doesn't come from science itself. You can't prove love by science. You can't prove the laws of logic by science. You can't prove moral claims by science, like it's wrong to murder or it's wrong to steal. In other words, you actually need these things to do science.

You can't put morality in a test tube, for example. The idea that you ought to report your scientific discoveries truthfully can't be proven by science itself. It's a moral requirement that you put on the scientific endeavor. It comes from outside science. And so, and maybe you're not going this far with your objection, Mike, but you seem to almost be saying, if I can't prove it by science, I can't believe it.

Well, that very statement you can't prove by science. Do you believe it? So, we're getting our epistemology, meaning our method of knowing, inverted in the modern age when we try and believe in materialism. And we've talked ad nauseam on this podcast about how materialism is self-defeating, particularly when it comes to reason. Because if every thought you have is the result of just material forces bumping into one another, or I should say molecules bumping into one another by blind material forces, then why should we believe anything's true, including the thought that materialism is true?

It's a self-defeating endeavor. If materialism's true, there's no way of knowing it. You just have to take it on blind faith because you don't have a capacity to know anything if materialism's true. You're just a moist robot, a molecular machine, if materialism is indeed true. And this idea that you can prove everything by science is sort of like a guy combing the beach with a metal detector saying, there's no plastic on this beach because I didn't detect it with my metal detector. No, you're using the wrong instrument.

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If you want to find plastic, you don't use a metal detector. You use some other device and to say, well, if we can't prove something by science, it's not true. That would be like saying, plastic doesn't exist because my metal detector has never detected any. Meanwhile, you look at your metal detector and you realize half of it's made out of plastic. Okay? [Laughter] So, you're using the wrong tool to know all of reality by saying all of reality must be known and can only be known by science.

Some of reality can be known by science, but not all of reality. So, there's a lot more in the book 'Stealing from God'. If you want to go further on that, that chapter in particular. By the way, friends, it might make a great gift. Yeah, give people a stocking stuffer, the book 'Stealing from God.' It covers a lot more than science. It covers causality, reason, information, morality, evil, and science - C.R.I.M.E.S. And it also gives a defense of the Christian worldview, sort of a summary of, 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' in the very last chapter of the book.

Also, if you've got young people interested in movies, but they might not be all that interested in Christianity, the book 'Hollywood Heroes: How Your Favorite Movies Reveal God.' I put that together with my son, who's also a seminary graduate. He's a real movie buff. And you might be shocked to learn that the top blockbuster movies of the past 50 years, the top blockbuster franchises of the past 50 years have all stolen from the greatest story ever told, the story of Jesus. And we have a chapter in there as well about who is the ultimate hero.

It's Jesus of Nazareth. So, whether it's Iron Man, whether it's a Wonder Woman, or Captain America, or Luke Skywalker, or Superman, or Antman, or Spider man, or even Harry Potter. Harry Potter? Yeah. You'd be surprised. You'd be shocked to learn how much of Harry Potter was lifted straight out of the Bible, as J.K. Rowling, the author of the series, admits. Yeah, we know there's some crazy fake witchcraft in there, but the storyline comes right from the Bible.

And if you get the book 'Hollywood Heroes', you can give that to a young person, or even an older person. Say, look, if you like Harry Potter, if you like Iron Man, if you like Captain America, you're going to love Jesus. Because all those heroes are actually modeled after the ultimate hero, Jesus. All right. Sorry, I went off on a tangent there. Let me go back to Mike. Here's his final paragraph. He says, hang on a second. He says, if it is true that a creator with perfect

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knowledge and intellect, whose sole intent and focus was humankind on this particular planet, which He created in the Garden of Eden in the forms of Adam and Eve, who were made in the Creator's image and likeness, and intended to join the Creator in paradise, then it seems this intelligent designer wasted the overwhelmingly vast majority of space, time, and matter that the designer created in this universe.

Okay? Cheers, Mike. Okay, well, first of all, there's a lot of assumptions in this claim. The assumption is that first of all, Adam and Eve and this place are the only place God created life. We don't know if that's true or not. We talked about it with Jay Richards in the last podcast. You can see what Jay thought about it. And I think regardless of whether life is out there or not, other than our life, doesn't affect Christianity at all. But let me deal with this objection about wasted.

There is no waste for a Creator who has infinite resources. You only can waste things when you have limited resources. So again, this appears to be a category mistake here. Only finite creatures with finite resources can waste something if they're trying to achieve an objective. But an infinite creator with infinite resources can't waste anything because He has unlimited resources. Also, the objection assumes that the Creator is trying to only use resources for a particular end.

Well, what is that end, Mike? Do you know what the end is? Perhaps the Creator has created stars equivalent to sand grains on all the earth for a way of demonstrating His glory. And in fact, that's what the Scriptures seem to say. The heavens declare the glory of God, Psalm 19. Paul in Romans 1 says, God's invisible qualities and invisible attributes are clearly seen, so that men are without excuse.

They're clearly seen by what has been made. In other words, a creation implies a creator, design implies a designer. And that's how you can know that God exists. You know God by His effects. If there's a creation, that's an effect you have to reason back to a cause, a creator. If there is design in the universe and design in life, that's the effect. You have to reason back to a cause, a designer. If there's a moral law written on your heart that says this is right and this is wrong, not just my opinion, but it's really right or really wrong, that's an effect, you have to reason back to a moral lawgiver.

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If there's evidence that a man predicted and accomplished His own resurrection from the dead, that's the effect. You have to reason back to someone who could predict and accomplish a resurrection from the dead, only somebody like God. So, this is how you know that God exists. And you even do this when you have some sort of spiritual experience that you think has come from God. The spiritual experience is the effect, the cause you're reasoning back to is God. This is how you know that God exists. It's how you know your wife, or your children, or your husband exists.

You get effects and you reason back to a cause of that effect. You're always reasoning from effect to cause. That's what scientists do. That's what we do just naturally, without even thinking about it. And so, if God is communicating to us that His nature is beyond the finite, there's probably no better way to do it than to create a universe that seems almost infinite. Of course, it's not. It's limited, it's expanding right now.

But when you consider that the universe has at least the number of stars of sand grains on all the beaches on all the Earth, some say 10,000 earths worth of sand grains or even a hundred thousand earths worth of sand grains is equivalent to the number of stars in the universe. There's different estimates of this, but the number of stars are at least equivalent to the number of sand grains on all the beaches on all the Earth.

When you think about that, and you think just in our universe that it would take you over 200,000 years, if you could go at space shuttle orbit speed 5 miles a second, it would take you over 200,000 years just to go from one star in our galaxy to another star in our galaxy, an average distance away, if you could go five miles a second.

When you think about the vastness of this, this is supposed to communicate the majesty and glory of God. I mean, what would we think about God if the universe ended at the cloud tops, we'd go, okay, well, it's created, but man, it's not all that glorious. It could be a lot more glorious. So, God's not wasting anything. If you don't know what His intent is, you can't say He's wasting anything. And as He said, one of His intents is for the heavens to declare the glory of God.

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Then He's not wasting it. He's using the vastness and beauty of the universe to scream out infinity. That's what He's doing now. Sometimes I hear the objection, you know, well, even if we're the only life in the universe, and we don't know if we are, but if we're the only life in the universe, there's a lot of wasted space out there. That's kind of what Mike is saying. Well, if you read Dr. Hugh Ross, Dr. Hugh Ross says that the way this universe is designed, that space is necessary for us to exist here on Earth.

In fact, it's one of the fine-tuning aspects of the universe. The fact that in our universe, the average distance between stars is 30 trillion miles, and all that distance is necessary for us to exist here on Earth. Now, how far is 30 trillion miles? Far. It'll take you at least two tanks of gas on a Toyota Prius to go 30 trillion miles. Now, as I mentioned a minute ago, it would take you over 200,000 years if you could go five miles a second just between stars in our galaxy, stars that are an average distance away.

In fact, to go to the next nearest star in our galaxy, if you could go light speed 186,000 miles per second, it would take you almost four years to get to the next nearest star. The heavens are awesome for a reason. It's not wasted. It's communicating the nature of God, that He's infinite. Now, if this does communicate the nature of God, and I think it does, that communicates that God's attributes are infinite, which means we're in trouble.

Why? Because if He is the standard of justice, the infinite standard of justice, then we've all been unjust, and we deserve punishment. This is the meaning of Christmas, ladies and gentlemen. What's the meaning of Christmas? That God had to come into this universe as an innocent substitute for us to take the punishment deserved us upon Himself. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Why a ransom? Because God is infinitely just. If He's infinitely just, He can't allow unjust creatures to go unpunished. Because if He did, He wouldn't be infinitely just. Thankfully, He's also infinitely loving. And if He's infinitely loving, He doesn't want to punish us. So, He takes our punishment upon Himself for those that want to be pardoned of their sin. But God is not going to force anybody into heaven against their will. If you don't want Jesus now, you're not going to want Him in eternity.

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You can come up with excuse after excuse not to be a Christian. But when you look at the evidence, the evidence shows that there is a God. And Jesus did rise from the dead to prove He was God. And if you trust in Him, you can have your sins forgiven and be given His righteousness. But if you don't want that, you don't have to take it. So, that's the meaning of Christmas. The Lord loved us so much that He added humanity to His deity, came to earth, allowed the very creatures that rebelled against Him to torture and kill Him so He could take our punishment upon Himself.

There are other answers to this, but I'm running out of time because I want to get to other questions. And I guess one question I'd like to ask Mike and other skeptics out there is if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian? In fact, I asked that of one of our guides on this trip. I'm not going to tell you who it is, but a Muslim guide. And it was actually in one of the two countries, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, those two countries we went to, won't tell you where.

But I used the Islamic dilemma. That's the dilemma that says on one hand the Quran says obey the Bible, which is Surah 5:68. On the other hand, the Quran contradicts the Bible because it says in Surah 4, verse 157, Jesus didn't die, He was taken straight to heaven. So, it's a dilemma for Muslims because on one hand the Bible or the Quran says obey the Bible, on the other hand, it contradicts the Bible.

So, if the Bible's false, the Quran is not the word of God because it tells you to believe a false book, the Bible. If the Bible's true, the Quran is still not the word of God because it contradicts the true Bible. Either way, this is a dilemma. So, I brought this up with my Muslim friend and he tried to say that, well, Surah 5:68, we're supposed to obey most of it, but not all of it, basically. And then I asked him, look, if Jesus rose from the dead to prove He was God, would you follow Him?

And to his credit he said, yes, I would. I'm in. So, I planted a seed there. But that same question I want to ask of Mike and others, I mean, if Christianity really were true, if Jesus really did rise from the dead, would you follow Him? Certainly, no scientific argument from physics shows that Christianity is true. It's not a sufficient condition for Christianity. It may be helpful to prove Christianity that there is a God out there. But all the fine-tuning argument shows you is there is some sort of theistic God.

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Not that it's the Christian God, this could be Allah. This could be some other theistic or deistic being. But if you continue to look at the evidence and you realize that Jesus did predict and accomplish his own resurrection from the dead and whatever He teaches is true because He's God, then you realize that the creator and designer of the universe is the Christian God. You don't get all the way there with say, the cosmological argument or the fine-tuning argument, or even the moral argument.

But you can get to theism through those arguments. And when you get to theism, the next question is which theistic God is the true God? And that's where the resurrection and the evidence for the New Testament comes in. But we don't have time to recount all that here. We've done it elsewhere. Let me move on to the next question. Next question comes from Jesse, and this might be a question that applies to many of us. He says, I've never felt God's presence in my life. I've gone to church. I've prayed for Him to come into my life and I've spent years defending Him in conversation.

I've done everything to chase God. I flipped every rock and every mattress, chased Him to the ends of the earth and back. The only thing I've heard is silence. I'm not sure where else to go and I'm not sure who else to ask. Maybe I have an issue with what it feels like having God's presence in my life. Am I trying to feel a feeling that doesn't exist? What is it meant to feel like when you have God in your life? I can feel myself giving up on God. All right, Jesse, well, great question. Sorry you're having these feelings about not having feelings, I guess.

Let me ask you this. What would it mean to feel God? And where do feelings come from? Can certain feelings be explained without God? And where does the Bible claim you will feel God? And what would that feeling be? Is it defined? Well, some might say that John says, my sheep hear My voice. Now that is not a call or a verse that shows you that God is going to talk to you every day.

That's actually a verse for salvation or justification, not sanctification. He's talking about the fact that people who are truly Christians will become Christians or have truly been elected Christians, not in the five-point Calvinist sense, but when God created the universe, He knew who would believe and who wouldn't believe. And those people who intend to believe are

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going to hear the voice of God to become a Christian. He's not saying that God's going to whisper things in your ear every day to tell you what to do.

That's not what that passage is about. And I'll give you a reference on that here in a few minutes. And then Paul talks about that he says that when you pray with thanksgiving and when you... Let me find the passage here just to make sure I'm not misquoting it. Where he says, I'm doing it from memory now as I'm looking it up. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say, rejoice.

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. In fact, let me read the passage. He says, rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again. Rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about everything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

The peace of God. That seems to be something that Paul says, if you rejoice in the Lord and you're gentle, and you push away anxiety, and you pray, and you're thankful, and you present your requests for to God, you will experience the peace. Now, there's a lot of conditions on that, right? So, is it the fact that maybe you didn't meet those conditions or is it the fact that God just doesn't exist?

Or might peace be experience in a different way for different people? People, we all want experience. Let me just say for those of you that probably haven't figured this out, I'm not a real experiential sort of person. I don't get emotional very often. I don't think God is talking to me all the time. I've never heard God, an audible voice from God. I've gotten impressions from God, usually to do something He's already commanded me to do, like the Holy Spirit comes and says, you ought to talk to this guy about me.

That happens all the time. But I don't have, this sense of God's presence all the time. Sometimes I do, but it's not very often, to tell you the truth. And I've never had God said a word to me other than His word in the Bible. And I don't think that God promises that to all of us. Might He do that with some people? Sure.

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In fact, let me ask you this, Jesse. Is God required to treat everyone the same way? In fact, do you treat everybody that you have a relationship with the same way? No, you don't. You may adapt your treatment of somebody based on the needs that they might have or even needs they don't even know they have. You don't treat everybody in your life exactly the same way. There are different circumstances that might dictate how you treat someone. Does God have that same liberty to treat people differently?

I'm sure maybe there are people every day that hear from God and many of us don't. Does that mean God doesn't exist even if you don't? I mean, look what happened with Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist is in prison. He's having some doubts about whether Jesus is the Messiah. He sends an emissary over to Jesus. Hey, are you the one, or should we wait for somebody else? Jesus says, just feel it in your heart, baby. I'm the real one.

I'm the real deal. I'm the real thing. He doesn't say that. What does He say instead? He says, look at the evidence. The blind see, the lame walk. The dead are raised. In other words, Jesus doesn't talk about feelings. He doesn't say, just go, have faith, blind faith and trust in Me. He says, look at the evidence. And too often, I think we allow our psychology to interfere with the evidence. Do you know your psychology will not tell you what's true outside of your skull?

Your psychology can change with the weather. Your psychology might be dictated upon what sort of personality you have or how you're wired. Your psychology can change with the food you ate or the mood you're in, or the fact that your favorite football team lost again. The Dallas Cowboys, for example. Keep losing. Sorry, sorry, Cowboy fans. We have a worse team in New Jersey, the Giants. We have a saying there in New York that whenever the Cowboys win, it's living proof that Satan is alive and well.

Anyway, sorry, sorry to get off on that. But I mean, your psychology can change for a whole number of reasons. But your psychology is not going to tell you what's true outside of your skull. The evidence will. In fact, I can prove to you that a lot of us do this. We allow our psychology to overpower the evidence. For example, some of you listening to me right now may be scared to death to fly in a plane. You can't get on a plane because you think, oh, it's going to crash. I'm going to die.

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But the evidence shows that the safest way to get anywhere is in an airplane. You should be more afraid to get in your car than to get in an airplane. But here we are, allowing our psychology to overpower the evidence. Don't let that be you when it comes to eternity. Just because your psychology might not allow you to feel the presence of God, or might blunt the presence of God, or for any one of a number of a thousand reasons you don't experience what you think you should experience about God, don't let that blunt you from the truth that God does exist.

Because even if you never sense the divine presence of God, if you say God is hidden, I've never experienced Him, that does not negate the other evidence for God. It doesn't negate the argument from the cosmological argument, or the evidence from the cosmological argument, the conclusion there's got to be a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, moral, personal, intelligent creator out there. In fact, when you add the three main arguments up, there's more than that for God.

But for the cosmological, teleological, and moral arguments, I mean, you get a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, moral, personal, intelligent creator who created and sustains all things. Whether or not you feel that doesn't change the strength of those arguments. And the fact that that uncaused first cause who created and sustains the universe and is the grounding of all morality, that that being actually exists, that those arguments are good arguments.

Just because you don't feel his presence doesn't negate those arguments. And when we say, well, why doesn't God reveal himself more overtly to me? We've done programs on divine hiddenness. I can't get into all the details here. Whenever we ask that question, why doesn't God do X, Y or Z? It's speculation. Unless it's revealed somewhere in the Scriptures. We don't know. We have possible reasons. We've talked about them before, about the fact that if God were to be too overt, we'd lose our ability to go our own way.

We couldn't love Him freely, we'd be compelled. It's like if you want to win somebody over as a spouse, you don't go to that person with, if you're a very rich person, you don't reveal all your riches to that person immediately because then that person might just want to be with you for the money. You don't reveal everything. You want to see if the person really loves you for who you are, not what you have.

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I mean, we know this in human relationships, it could be the case when it comes to God. And I mean, let's suppose you, you didn't know your biological dad, you've never met biological dad, you've never felt his presence, would that mean he didn't exist? No, of course not. The very fact that you're here proves you had a biological dad, unless there's a miracle like the virgin birth. And that's another whole theological reason, that the reason there's a virgin birth is because apparently the sin nature comes through the man.

And of course, Mary conceived without a biological dad, but that's the only case we know about. Everyone else has a biological dad. And so, just by the facts of nature, we know that you had a biological dad because you're here, even though you may have never met him, never felt his presence. The same thing is true for God. Even though you may never have felt His presence, the very fact that you're here, the very fact the universe is here, the very fact that it's designed, the very fact that there's a moral law, all these things show that God does exist, even if you've never felt He existed.

Now, the Scriptures do talk about this, Jesse, that you ought to keep knocking and keep seeking. I mean, how much prayer have you engaged in? How many books have you read? How many people have you talked to who are further down the road than you are? I mean, you seem to indicate that you've done it all, but none of us have done it all. None of us follow God completely. There's always more we could do.

It might be that God does not want you to feel His presence right now. That might be the case. Maybe He's waiting for you to get a bigger circle of, say, skeptical friends, for Him to reveal himself more to you so that when you do become a strong believer, you'll have more people to influence.

I mean, that has happened to other people I've known. You just don't know. There's always a ripple effect. So, keep knocking, keep seeking. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. But don't rely on psychology. Don't think that your psychology will negate evidence. It won't. In fact, Martin Luther had a great saying. He said, feelings come, and feelings go, and feelings can be deceiving. My warrant is the Word of God.

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Naught else is worth believing. Feelings come and feelings go, and feelings can be deceiving. My warrant is the Word of God, not else is worth believing. And of course, on this program and in our books, we give evidence that the Bible is the word of God. That's how God primarily communicates, through the Word of God. And if you want more on this, I'd highly recommend, if you want to go really deep on this, you can get the book by, let's see, it's by Gary Friesen and Robin Maxson called 'Decision Making and the Will of God'.

But if you want a short course on that, go to the Stand to Reason website. Our colleague Greg Koukl over there has written a three-part series called 'Does God Whisper?' You know, is God nudging you all the time and if you don't get those nudges, does that mean God doesn't exist? Get the three-part series online. It's free. It won't take you long to read. Probably take a half hour to read the whole thing. 'Does God Whisper' by Greg Koukl. All right. Now, before I get to my final question, I want to point out there's a lot coming up. The next program, we're going to do hunting for Mount Sinai in Saudi Arabia.

I'm going to tell you what we discovered over there in Saudi Arabia last week. And in future programs I'll be talking a lot about Egypt. So, keep an eye on that. Also go to our YouTube channel. We've in our Instagram page; we've started to post some shorts from both of the trips and we're going to have longer videos coming out as the new year unfolds on the trip. It was a phenomenal trip. We had about 28 folks with us and just learned so much and experienced so much that I think you're going to want to be a part of that.

So, check all that out on our YouTube channel and make sure you listen to next this coming Friday's podcast Saturday morning broadcast on the American Family Radio Network. Also, want to mention next week we're going to have our annual Christmas show with Bill Federer. People say it's their favorite podcast of the year when Bill comes on and he talks about the origins of many Christmas traditions including Santa Claus, and stockings, and reindeer and North Pole, and we're going to talk about some other issues on this podcast as well.

You don't want to miss that. That'll be coming next week. Also, want to mention if you're looking for a good Christmas gift, in addition to the books, you can give a course, any one of our online courses. If you go to [CrossExamined.org](http://CrossExamined.org), click on online courses, you will see them there. You can give them a self-paced course they can take any time or if you want to give them a

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premium course where they'll be live on Zoom For Zoom Q&A with me. We're going to be doing 'How to Interpret Your Bible' beginning January 9th. I'll be your Instructor and we're going to be together on at least I think five occasions for live Zoom Q&A's.

'How to Interpret Your Bible'. You know, it's amazing to me that so few churches teach 'How to Interpret Your Bible'. You would think if we really thought that the Bible was the word of God, that'd be the first thing we teach. But I rarely run into courses on it. That's why we designed our own course on it. 'How to Interpret Your Bible'. Ninety percent of what you need to know to interpret the Bible you'll find in this course. We've boiled it down to the essentials, so check it out. 'How to Interpret Your Bible' starts January 9th if you want to take the premium version. If you just want to take the self-paced version, you can do so as well anytime you want.

Also want to mention that as we come to the end of the year, I don't talk a lot about donations, but I do want to say that we wouldn't be able to do anything we do without your donations. And 40% of our donations come in in the last month. That's just how people give. We give that way too. Most of what we give, we give and then we see how much we've earned, and we give it at the end of the year. So, ministries like ourselves, which are 501c3's, tax exempt ministries, rely on your donations to do what we do. Let me give you a quick rundown of what we've been doing.

First of all, I want to point out that 100% of your donations go to ministry, 0% to buildings. We are completely virtual. We are very frugal with what you give us because we want to reach the world for Christ, mostly on college campuses and high schools. And now we're spreading our influence out around the world. As you know, we do 15 to 20 college and high school events each year. We do 104 podcasts each year. We do 15 to 21 hour TV shows a year. This past year we've done 26 live streams. We post hundreds of videos and social media posts which reach millions.

We answer hundreds of questions. In fact, I was just in, as I said, I was just in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. We were in Memphis, Egypt, which is an ancient city. It used to be the capital of Egypt for a while. It's where they have that humongous statue of Ramses the Great actually on his back. You may have seen that in some of the pictures. We're going to post it in some of the videos that you'll see on our YouTube channel and Instagram page. Anyway, I was in Memphis

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and this very, very petite older woman, looked like she was Chinese, came up to me and said, are you Frank?

And I said, well, yes, ma'am. Who are you? And she said, I'm from Taiwan. I watch you from Taiwan. So, we were so blessed by that. I have this picture of this woman who just sees me in Memphis, Egypt, of all places, and recognizes us because our ministry has gone international, and we are being very deliberate about that. I don't know if I've mentioned this to you, I did in a previous podcast, but we have created now 15 foreign language websites.

We've translated over 3300 videos and over 1200 articles using proprietary AI. And we need to fine-tune those videos and articles because the AI we use still needs to be fine-tuned by somebody who is a native speaker. We also need those native speakers to promote the material on the ground in those languages and countries. So, this takes donations to do. We need your assistance to reach people in those places.

And when you're giving to us, think about the fact that you're giving through us because you're really contributing to the work we're doing on college and high school campuses, the work we're doing on the internet, the work we're doing through online courses, the work we're doing with these foreign language websites, and all the videos and articles we're translating to reach the world.

So, thank you for anything you can do as we come to the end of the year right now. A hundred percent goes to ministry, 0% to buildings. It's tax deductible. Go to [CrossExamined.org](https://www.CrossExamined.org), click on Donate. You'll see it there. There's an address there if you want to send a check, which saves us any credit card fees. But if you want to give by credit card, you can too as well. Let me go to Caleb. Final question for this program. Caleb writes in and says, I have a question about inerrancy. How do we account for the minute differences between the Gospels?

For example, in Matthew, it says, Jesus said, hi. In Mark, it said, Jesus said, hey. In John it says, Jesus said, what's up? Yeah, well, I think he's paraphrasing a bit here. He says all three cannot be correct. So, therefore either only one or none of these are actually historically accurate. Therefore, the Bible must contain errors and cannot be considered inerrant. And he, says in quotations or I said in a bracket, he says, asking from a position which does not hold to Mike

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Licona's view of inerrancy. Okay? And he says if we say that they are just eyewitnesses writing down what they remembered from 30 to 40 years ago, then what about when Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come and remind them of all that Jesus had said to them, John 14:26?

Well, first of all, thank you, Caleb, for recognizing the proper context of that passage. When Jesus says, I'll bring to your remembrance everything I taught you or said to you, he's speaking just to the disciples. He's not speaking to us. He didn't say anything to us directly. So, that's what John 14:26 is about. All right. Well, it depends on your view of inerrancy, which you just pointed out there, Caleb. Why do you think that inerrancy requires absolute word for word quotation precision like we might expect in the 21st century?

Why do you think that's what inerrancy means? Because most scholars do not think that's what inerrancy means. Inerrancy does not even mean dictation, that God dictated to the writers of the Bible His own words. God obviously used, and I say obviously, I'll explain why in a minute. He used the personalities, idiosyncrasies, and even the memory lapses of the writers. For example, at one point, Paul says in 1 Corinthians, I don't even remember who I baptized except a couple of people.

I came to preach the Gospel, not baptize, which, by the way, should show you that water baptism is not essential to salvation. When Paul says, I came to preach the Gospel, he says that in 1 Corinthians 1, and in Romans 1, he says the Gospel saves. So, the baptism's not part of the Gospel. Anyway, I digress there. But in any event, why would, if God's going to bring to their remembrance everything, He wanted them, and if He's going to dictate to them everything he wants them to say, then why did He say to, why did He allow Paul to write, I don't even remember who I baptized?

Well, maybe it could be because He wants people to realize that inerrancy doesn't mean word for word dictation, that God is using people in their natural state. Although He prompts them to do certain things, it doesn't mean He can't use them and their own idiosyncrasies, and their own personalities to record what He wants them to record. It may also mean He's trying to show them, at least in this particular instance, that baptism, while an important sign, is not a necessity for salvation.

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Of course, the thief on the cross wasn't baptized. Yet, He would see Jesus that day in paradise. All right? Also, we also need to remember that in Greek there's no sign for a quotation. So, there are places in the New Testament we don't know whether Jesus is speaking or say John is speaking. For example, in John 3, after He says, after Jesus says, for the Son of Man did... Or if He says, John 3:16, for God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

We don't know if the passages right after that Jesus said or John is saying, because there aren't quotation marks in the Greek. Another thing you need to keep in mind is that Jesus may have said the same thing. In fact, I'm sure He did this. He said the same thing several times, but He may have said it in slightly different ways. And you'll find that when it comes to me. If I go say do, 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' on a college campus, I'll say some of the same things with the same phraseology, but sometimes I'll alter it a little bit.

And so, when Matthew's recording an event, it might be the same event, but it could be a different event than what Mark is recording. So, it doesn't have to be necessarily the same event. And if it is the same event, paraphrase in the first century was considered acceptable. You can paraphrase. You can give people the gist of what Jesus said, even if you're not mentioning every single word, word for word. By the way, no extra charge for this.

But this is why an objection that Bart Ehrman brings up holds no water. Bart Ehrman will say something like, can you remember George Bush's State of the Union address in 2005? Well, no, I can't remember that. See? So, how can you expect the Bible writers to remember what Jesus said? Well, this is a completely inane objection. The speech that George Bush gave in 2005, the State of the Union he gave once, and it wasn't an impact event.

Jesus, on the other hand, is saying the same thing over and over again by people that travel with Him over and over again. And secondly, many of the things He said were very impactful. In fact, He put things in ways that you could remember it. He, you know, He had the blessings are. You could remember that. He had ways of turning a phrase, give to Caesar what is Caesar's. But give to God what is God's. He had ways of making things memorable through parables.

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Stories can be remembered. Maybe facts can't, but stories can. But you can even remember facts if you hear them over and over again. So, the two are not analogous. George Bush's 2005 State of the Union speech is not the same as the Sermon on the Mount, which Jesus may have given several times. So, and I mean, politicians do, right? They go to the same town and say the same thing over and over again, but they may alter it a little bit. And the same thing is true with me when I go out.

I'm saying essentially the same thing, but the quotation may not be exact. And then when you add the passage that you pointed out there, Caleb, divine remembrance, that God could inspire them to remember certain things He wanted them to remember. You don't have any problem by saying, yeah, they could have differences, but still, all be true in the broad sense. So, it really depends on what your definition of inerrancy is. And your definition of inerrancy may not be inerrant, neither might mine be. Okay?

The important thing here is the truth communicated. Let me say one other thing about this. You notice that when people like Bart Ehrman attack the Scriptures as well, it can't be inerrant because you know who got to the tomb first or how many women were at the tomb, or how many angels were there. Do you notice that these objections are all dealing with inconsequential details that even if they were contradicted, victory would not change the essential nature or the essential claims the text makes.

The essential claim the text makes is that Jesus died and rose from the dead, not who got to the tomb first or how many women were there, or how many angels were there. Those are inconsequential details. What is consequential is that Jesus died and rose from the dead. And they all agree on that. Every single Gospel agrees on that. They all agree that the women were the first witnesses, which they never would have invented because that's embarrassing. Only men were considered. Or let me put it another way, a man's testimony was considered far superior to a woman's testimony in that culture.

So, if you're making up the New Testament story, you'd never say the women were the first witnesses. But all four gospels say the women were the first witnesses, which is telling us what? They must have been. Although it's embarrassing, they're telling the truth. So, the idea that Jesus rose from the dead is the essential claim of the Gospels. Died and rose from the dead. All

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the other things are details. I think most of them can be harmonized and those that can't, even if they can't be harmonized, they don't defeat the essence of the text.

It's like saying that because the eyewitnesses on the Titanic disagreed on how the Titanic sank, all their testimony we've got to throw out. We can't say the Titanic sank. No, that's what they agree on. They all agree the Titanic sank. What they may disagree on is how it sank. And you can figure out why they might disagree. First of all, they were in shock. Secondly, it was dark. Third of all, they were in different positions. If you're a beam of this ship, you might see it break in two and go down. If you're on the stern or the bow, you might think it went down whole. There are reasons for the differences.

And by the way, if the texts, if the Gospels say said the same thing word for word, I think the skeptics would be rightfully claiming it was collusion. But since there are differences, it shows that they agree on the essentials. They may have differences in the non-essentials on these details about who got to the tomb first and all this. It shows that they are eyewitness details because that's, or eyewitness texts, I should say. Because eyewitnesses never tell the same story in exact word for word detail.

Any judge that hears two eyewitnesses tell everything exactly the same way in the same language would immediately rightfully assume collusion. But when they differ, that's what makes eyewitness testimony detectable. When they do differ, they agree on the essentials, but they disagree on some of the details. You go, yep, these people are probably telling the truth. And so, skeptics want to have it both ways. They want to say, well, if they're identical, they're colluding. If they're different, they're in error.

No, that's not... We don't treat other texts that way, just the Bible. Gee, I wonder why. Maybe they don't want Christianity to be true. All right, friends, well, it's been great being with you. Send questions to [Hello@Crossexamined.org](mailto:Hello@Crossexamined.org). Don't forget this Friday we're going to be talking about how the trips turned out to Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Particularly, we're going to be talking about the Saudi Arabian portion, hunting for the real Mount Sinai in Saudi Arabia.

And next week, we're going to have the great Bill Federer on to talk about the traditions of Christmas and some other issues related to Christmas. So, you're not going to want to miss

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those podcasts. And again, thank you for your donations at the end of the year. You are the ones that fuel us to do what we do, and we're very grateful and we use your donations to maximize the impact for the Gospel. All right, friends, great being with you. Lord willing, I will see you here on Friday. God bless.

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