

## Why Do You Do What You Do: Truth or Incentives? – Part 2

(January 7, 2025)

Ladies and gentlemen, are you following the truth or are you following incentives that may cause you to deny the truth? That's what we're going to continue to talk about today. Because in the last podcast, the one that's done on the American Family Radio Network, we started our conversation on this issue because it struck me that people tend to make decisions based on incentives rather than truth. And I began to quote from a book by Mr. Morgan Housel.

The book is called 'Same As Ever, A Guide to What Never Changes'. It's more a book about investments than it's-- It doesn't have anything really to do with-- He's, as far as I know, not a Christian. He's not talking about Christianity, but he is talking about human nature and how we make decisions. Do you make decisions on truth and evidence or incentive? Now, I'm just going to continue our conversation that we began back in the last podcast. So, you'll have to go back and listen to that podcast in order to pick up the thread as to where we are here.

But let me just pick up our conversation where we left off. We were talking at the end of the last podcast about how, unfortunately, even pastors are tempted to avoid difficult, controversial issues, particularly in our culture that have to do with sex because they're incentivized to avoid them. They think that, well, I can't lose people. I don't want people walking out. I don't want people walking out and not hearing the Gospel because there's a controversial issue, I have to talk about that the Bible does talk about.

And so, they're incentivized to not preach the entire word of God. And I think this is a miscarriage of our responsibility as pastors, as teachers, and even as just Christians, because as you know, in Christianity, we're all priests. We're a nation of priests, according to Peter. But there are people that make it a vocation to speak the word of God. And those people especially should be preaching the entire word of God and allow people to hear the entire council of God.

And then those people are going to have to make a decision as to whether or not they're going to follow Jesus. We don't want them to follow a false view of Christianity. We want them to follow the true view, who Jesus really is and what he came to do. Not a watered down Jesus,



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not a Jesus where, you know, everybody gets what they want. Not a prosperity Jesus or not a Jesus that. C.S. Lewis put it this way. He said about God that most of us, he said we want not so much a father in heaven as a grandfather in heaven.

A senile benevolence who, as they say, "like to see young people enjoying themselves", and whose plan for the universe was simply that it might be truly said at the end of the day, a good time was had by all. That's C.S. Lewis. That's what we want. But God is not a grandfather. He's a father. And he puts moral restraints on us. Or, let me put it another way, gives us commands that protect us from making bad choices that can hurt ourselves and hurt others.

It's for our good that He gives us these moral restraints, not for His. You know, God doesn't improve if you obey Him and somehow degrade if you disobey Him. You don't add to God by obeying Him, and you don't take away from God by disobeying Him. We're the ones that get the benefit of following God and the detriment of not following God by our own choices. So, we were talking about pastors, and we should also just talk about ourselves, even the rest of us who aren't pastors.

Paul says in Romans 12, we need to renew our minds. Why do we need to renew our minds? Because our minds are oriented away from God. We have depraved minds. We're touched by depravity. We will follow our selfish desires. We will follow incentives that will cause us to not follow God and not love our neighbor. The reason He's claiming we ought to renew our minds is because our minds need renewing.

How about on money issues? You know, we're tempted to cut corners. We're tempted to hide problems when selling something. We'll make excuses for shady financial practices. We just got through the giving season. A lot of people give at the end of the year. We always do. And I'm sure maybe you do as well to charities that you think can further the Gospel, or help the poor, or preferably do both, that kind of thing. And it struck me in, I think it was in September.

Charlie Kirk and I did an event at Robert Furrow's church in Tucson, Calvary Chapel, Tucson. And Charlie said something that I think is really true the more and more I think about it. And it was this. He said, most Christians will not give unless they get a tax deduction. Ladies and

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gentlemen, do you need a tax deduction? Easy for me to say. Do you need a tax deduction to make a donation?

Really, you need one? Or do you only give to tax deductible causes? And you won't give to anybody that doesn't give you some sort of financial benefit in return. Are we really giving with the right spirit? Now, there's nothing wrong with getting a tax deduction. Our ministry is a tax deductible ministry where you get a tax deduction. But is that really the reason you give, or the main reason you give or won't you give to an organization unless it gives you a tax deduction?

Seems to me we might be more given to ourselves than given to others if we require a tax deduction to make a donation. We're incentivized. And by the way, the government incentivizes us to give to tax deductible donations because the more these charities do good work, the less the government has to do, the better society is. In fact, I did a program on this a number of years ago when some politician suggested we ought to do away with tax deduction for churches and other organizations.

I don't think that person thought it through. You know, who was it? Yeah, and I remember it was Beto O'Rourke, you know, the guy in Texas who always thought he was going to win. Yeah, let's get rid of these tax deduction. I did this whole program on it because there are so many benefits to society, to the community that churches and other tax deductible donation organizations do that it would be a disaster if the government took that away. Nevertheless, we shouldn't be making our decisions just based on tax deduction.

By the way, are you jealous when others make more than you or when somebody's doing better than you? Morgan Housel, the guy again, the gentleman who wrote the book that I've been referencing about incentives. Again, the title of the book is 'Same As Ever: A Guide to What Never Changes'. He said that in an interview, I saw him say this. He said that you can't be susceptible to FOMO.

You guys, you know what FOMO is, right? Fear of missing out. If you have this big high fear of missing out. If you've got to do what everybody else does, if you've got to keep up with the Joneses all the time, that's not going to bode well, not just for your financial situation. It's not going to bode well for you personally either. Because if you're following every fad, if you're

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following every trend, if you're doing what everybody else seems to be doing and you have to do it, you're never going to be disciplined enough to make the right decisions when you need to make them.

In fact, I'm sure some of you may have heard of the, of the study that has been done on young people where they put them in a room and they give a young person a couple of M&M's and they say, look, if you don't eat these two M&M's for the next five minutes, I'll come in and give you 10 more. But if you eat these two now, that's all you're going to get. It turned out there were three kinds of kids. The first kid was the kid who just ate the two M&M's right then and then didn't get any more, right?

The kid could not delay instant gratification. The other kid would wait five minutes and get 10 more. He could put the instant gratification off. And then, of course, there's a kid in the middle who would put his head on the table and try and lick the M&M without eating it, you know. [Laughter]

Anyway, they were doing a longitudinal study of these kids, meaning they would stay with the same kids for decades. Obviously, these studies take a long time because you've got to wait decades for the results. But what they found in these studies is that the kids that could delay instant gratification, the kids that were not susceptible to FOMO, were the kids that turned out much better decades later.

If you can't delay instant gratification, if you can't put off or ignore incentives that pull you off track, unfortunately, your future is probably not very bright. That's just the way it works. You've got to be able to delay instant gratification. So, you've got the sex issue, you've got the money issue, or the money incentive. How about the power incentive, which is related to FOMO, right?

You've got to be recognized. You've got to be liked; you've got to be popular. You've got to feel in on things. Do you get jealous when somebody gets more likes on their social media posts than you? Are you anxious? That's what Jonathan Haidt's book deals with, 'The Anxious Generation'.

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This generation is so anxious. The young generation is so anxious because of social media, nothing's ever good enough. There's always somebody doing it better out there on social media. There's always someone more popular or more successful or having more fun than you are.

And you're incentivized to try and achieve that. Now, it's easier to recognize other people's mistakes than our own. And what Housel says is, he says what makes incentives powerful is not just how they influence other people's decisions, but how blind we can be to how they impact our own. As I said, following incentives rather than truth can be a problem for all of us, whether we're Christians or not.

I mean, for Christians, if we're just Christians, because we're following the incentives, maybe we think, well, Christianity gives me comfort, or we think, oh, it's going to give me eternal life. It's going to give me community, you know, a church. It's part of my tradition, my upbringing. It gives me hope.

These are some of the motivators, some of the incentives. For secular people, particularly atheists, maybe autonomy, being able to do whatever they want to do whenever they want to do it. You know, the pleasure of this world, sex, money, and power, those things might be the incentives that pull them away from the truth.

Now, we don't always know why people do what they do or believe what they believe. Judging motives can certainly be speculative, but sometimes they tell us. And when they tell us, then we know. And that's why I always ask the question of people who are not Christians.

If Christianity were true, would you become a Christian? Would you? I've asked people close to me and they've said no. Why? The sex issues. They admit it. It's the sex issues, LGBTQ issues, sexual freedom, those kind of things.

I asked a Muslim on our Egypt, Saudi Arabia trip. I said, if Jesus really did rise from the dead to prove He was God, would you follow him? And to his credit, he said, yes. I did that after I gave him the Islamic dilemma.

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You guys know about the Islamic dilemma I've talked about, and David Wood has talked about quite a bit on his channel? That briefly, the Quran on one hand says obey the Bible. On the other hand, it disagrees with the Bible that Jesus rose from the dead. So, I asked him, you know, what do you do here?

On one hand, the Quran in Surah 5 verse 68 is saying, believe the Bible. Yet the Quran in Surah 4, verse 157 contradicts the Bible, says, Jesus didn't rise from the dead, he was taken straight to heaven. What do you do with that? And he tried to say, well, we're supposed to believe most of it, that kind of thing. And so, I said, hey, if Jesus really did rise from the dead, like really did, would you follow Him? And he said, yes. So, hopefully we can get him some evidence.

But he's got an incentive to say no, especially in Islam, because what's going to happen if he becomes a Christian and he's living in a predominantly Islamic country and maybe his job is related to Islam. And if he becomes a Christian, not only is his family going to be upset and maybe disfellowship him and in extreme cases, maybe even kill him.

What about his job? This is true to a certain extent in the Jehovah's Witness world, in the Mormon world. You can be disfellowshipped, not only from your family, but from your job, from your livelihood.

There's incentives to not follow the truth. Now, by the way, atheists have admitted this. When I debated Christopher Hitchens a number of years ago, a couple of times, both of these debates, by the way, you can see on our YouTube channel, the Cross Examined YouTube channel. You know, Hitchens kept talking about how God is a cosmic North Korean dictator peering in on our sex lives. He didn't want God to exist, which is why I ended both debates this way.

I said, Christopher Hitchens says his whole position is there is no God, and I hate Him. But God's position is there is a Christopher Hitchens, and I love Him, because Hitchen's problem with God was much more moral than it was intellectual. Thomas Nagel, the brilliant philosopher from NYU, who about 25 years ago wrote the fact, and I'm paraphrasing, he said, it's not that I don't believe in God.

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He said, I don't want there to be a God. I don't want the world to be this way. And he said one of the biggest problems for him is some of the most intelligent people I know are religious believers. Now, about 15 years after that, Nagel wrote a book called 'Mind and Cosmos: Why the Neo-Darwinian View of the World is Almost Certainly False'. I'm paraphrasing the subtitle, but he's basically saying it seems like the Neo-Darwinian materialistic view of the world is false. He's an atheist, but he's saying, look, the standard atheistic view is almost certainly false.

And he doesn't know what the right answer is, but he's admitting it's false, but he doesn't want theism to be true. Aldous Huxley. This is the grandson of Thomas Huxley, who was known as Darwin's bulldog back in the 1800's. Aldous Huxley is the guy that wrote 'Brave New World' in the nineteen, about 1930's, 1940's, something like that. Anyway, here's what Aldous Huxley said about not wanting the world to be a world with God.

He said, "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning and consequently assumed that it had none and was able, without any difficulty, to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. For myself, as no doubt for most of my friends, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom". Well, there is a very honest man.

He didn't want God to exist. He didn't want the universe to have meaning. He didn't want to have a system of morality that would prevent him from being sexually free. Incentives. Not a matter of truth, but a matter of incentive. C.S. Lewis said this. He said, "I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity".

Yeah, Jesus says deny yourself. Follow me. And so many times the Bible points out that we're incentivized even by our own nature to deny the truth. I mean, if you don't read the Bible, the Bible will read you because it does. I'll pull out some phrases from the Bible that are all essentially saying the same thing.

We have deceitful and wicked hearts. We suppress the truth to go our own way. I'll unpack that in a minute in more detail. We love darkness rather than light. We are not willing. In fact, Jesus said that to the nation of Israel, to the Pharisees. I wanted to gather you together like a hen

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gathers her chicks, but you were not willing. We nullify the word of God on account of our tradition.

We have passions at war within us. And in the passage from 2 Timothy 4 I read at the end of the last podcast, we will not tolerate sound doctrine, but with itching ears gather around us teachers to suit our own desires. Why do we do this? Well, we want to go our own way. And nobody put it better than the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter one.

In fact, if you want a 2,000 year old commentary on our culture right now, and in fact most cultures throughout history, just read Romans chapter one, verses 18 to 19. I'm just-- Or verses 18 to 32, that's the end of the chapter. I'm just going to read verses 18 and 19. Here's what Paul says. The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them because God has made it plain to them.

Then he goes on to talk about how we suppress the truth, particularly about sexual issues, particularly same-sex issues, because we want to go our own way. We don't want God to exist. He's in our way. His moral commands are in our way. His moral standards convict us. This is why this is attributed to Augustine, this quote.

We love the truth when it enlightens us. We hate the truth when it convicts us. We want to suppress the truth so we can go our own way. Look, what is known about God can be clearly seen through what has been made. If there's a creation, there's got to be a creator.

If there's design, there's got to be a designer. If there's a moral law, there's got to be a moral lawgiver. In other words, we know God by His effects. We're effects of God. The universe is an effect of God. Life is an effect of God. The moral law written on our hearts is an effect of God. It's His nature written on our hearts. But we suppress all that. Why? Because we want to go our own way. That's why I always ask, if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian?

Long ago, the psalmist detected what Thomas Nagel, the NYU philosophy professor, the atheist philosophy professor, what he called the Cosmic Authority problem. In fact, Nagel said when he

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was talking about Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, he said, I think Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins have a Cosmic Authority problem. And he said, I have it too. That's what Nagel said.

Well, the psalmist talked about this, I think, in Psalm chapter two, when he said this. Why do the nations conspire and the people's plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against His anointing saying, let us break their chains and throw off their shackles. The one enthroned in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath. That's Psalm 2, verses 1 to 5. In other words, this passage here, let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.

People are saying, I want to throw off God's chains. I want to throw off God's shackles because I want to do what I want to do. Okay? God gives you that freedom to do that. But there will be consequences because God is just. Look, nothing is more persuasive than what you desperately want or need to be true. That's what Morgan Housel said. I think he's right. Nothing is more persuasive than what you desperately want or need to be true.

Again, this cuts the Christian as much as the non-Christian. Do you just want Christianity to be true? Atheist, do you just want atheism to be true? What really is true is the question, not what you want. In fact, Housel asked a couple of questions on his blog which I find interesting. And most of this is investment related, but I'm applying it to eternity here. He says, what do I desperately want to be true so much that I think it's true when it's clearly not?

Again, if you're a Christian, it might be, well, I get comfort, I get hope, you know, I get eternal life. All these things, right? For the atheist, it might be, oh, I get sex, money, and power, pride, autonomy, all these things I want to do without any moral restraint. Another question. What do I ignore because it's too painful to accept? I might change that question slightly by saying, what do I suppress because it's too painful to accept? Now, this certainly seems true when people change their theology to fit what their loved ones want or what they or their loved ones want.

My mentor, Dr. Norman Geisler, always used to say this. He always used to say that fraternity will almost always overcome theology. Fraternity will almost always overcome theology. What did he mean by that? What he meant was, is that unless we're committed to the Lord, we're

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going to be tempted to throw the Lord under the bus if the Lord's theology contradicts with what I want or my loved one wants.

And this is particularly true on the sexual issues. You know, your kid claims that he's trans or your kid claims that he's gay. And suddenly the teachings on gender and same-sex behavior that the Bible talks about are thrown out the window because you think the best way to love your child is to affirm whatever your child wants to do. Now this is very understandable, but I think it demonstrates inverted priorities, and it doesn't really help the child.

If you want to love the child, and this is hard to do, admittedly, you need to seek what's best for that child according to God's will. Not their will, not your will, not the culture's will, but God's will. If we're going to love God and love others, the best way to love others comprehensively and completely is to love God first. Because love means seeking what's best for the other person according to God's will. And as Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 13, the passage that everybody reads at their wedding, but few obey.

You know the passage on love, Paul says, love always protects, love always perseveres. Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing. Love rejoices in the truth. But our culture is telling you that love is all about approval. Love is not about approval. We've talked about this on this program several times before. Parents, if you approve of everything your kid wants to do, are you loving? No. You can't approve of everything your kid wants to do.

You wouldn't be loving. You'd be enabling them to do evil, to hurt themselves and hurt others. You love people by telling them the truth. And I love what Thomas Sowell said about this. He said, when you want to help people, you tell them the truth. When you want to help yourself, you tell them what they want to hear. Yeah, the reason you don't tell them the truth is because you don't want them to be mad at you. Who are you helping? You're helping yourself. You're not helping them. But when you'll risk them being mad at you because you need to take a stand for their own good, that's what love is.

So, also said this about our lack of good education. He said, "One of the painful signs of years of dumbed down education is how many people are unable to make a coherent argument. They can vent their emotions, question other people's motives, make bold assertions, repeat

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slogans, anything except reason". Thomas Sowell. Yeah. You know what you're going to get if you start talking about these issues? You're going to get slogans.

You're going to get love is love. You know, you're going to get, I get to marry whom I love. And love is all about choices, and acceptance, and rainbows, and butterflies, and you know, that's not love, but that's what you're going to get. As soon as you start bringing reason into it, they're not going to be able to handle it. That's why you've got to ask questions.

The questions that Greg Koukl talks about. What do you mean by that? How'd you come to that conclusion? What evidence do you have for that position? To paraphrase Sowell, he also said this. We give our kids self-esteem rather than truth, so they are confident in their own ignorance. Let me say that again. We give our kids self-esteem rather than truth, so they are confident in their own ignorance. Yeah. You want to teach them the truth.

They have self-esteem because they're made in the image of God. But that's a truth you need to teach them. And they are not God. They are not the arbiters of right and wrong. God is. And you don't have rights unless God exists. And you don't have rights to do things God is against. Rights only exist if God exists. And they exist because God has granted them to us, because we're made in His image and governments instituted among men to secure these rights, as our Declaration of Independence declares.

So, let me bring a passage of Scripture in here, a long passage, by the way, that's very important to what we're talking about. And it's a passage from Matthew 16. And then I'm going to answer a couple of questions that relate to incentives and the truth. One from a Hindu and one from a Muslim. Let's go to Matthew 16. And I've said on this program many times before, there are no verses in the Bible.

The chapter and verse divisions were put in about 500 years ago to help us navigate the text. So, we shouldn't be pulling one verse out of context. We should read all around the passage. So, that's what we're going to do. We're going to read from Matthew 16:13 to the end of the chapter, verse 28. And this is when Jesus is with His disciples near Caesarea Philippi, which is in the northern part of Israel. And by the way, this particular passage is so much better understood if you know where this happened.

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And in the course 'How to Interpret Your Bible', we give you ways of discovering the true meaning of the text, and especially a text like this, because this is one of the disputed texts that people argue over, particularly Roman Catholics and evangelicals argue over this text. But let me just go through it. And by the way, the course that I'll be your instructor in starts on January 9th. But if you're listening to this after January 9th, you can still join us. We're going to do five live Zoom sessions together for Q & A. We'll learn from one another.

You can ask any question you want. The course is called 'How to Interpret Your Bible'. There couldn't be a more important course out there. If the Bible really is the word of God, you ought to know how to interpret it and apply it properly. But so, few churches teach this, so we've decided to teach it. It's 12 hours of video. Go to [crossexamined.org](http://crossexamined.org), click on online courses.

You'll see it there. Okay. Matthew 16, beginning at verse 13. When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, who do people say the Son of Man is? They replied, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

But what about you? He asked. Who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered, you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus replied. And here's where Roman Catholics and evangelicals will argue over this. What does He really mean by this? Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Now, again, I'm not going to unpack that right now. We don't have time. But take the course 'How to Interpret Your Bible'. But let me just continue with this passage. Then He ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah. He still had to complete His mission, so He didn't want people blabbering that He was the Messiah just yet.

That would come later. Then He goes on to say this. And here's where this gets very important for our purposes, for our discussion here about incentives and the truth. It says, from that time

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on, Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that He must be killed, and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. Never, Lord, he said, this shall never happen to you.

Jesus turned and said to Peter, get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns. Let me stop right here. I gotta say this. Nobody would ever invent this. Peter's supposed to be the leader of the disciples, and Jesus Himself is rebuking him, telling, basically calling him Satan? Do you think they invented this? No. This is another one of those embarrassing details in the text that they never would have invented if they were making this story up.

As you know, that's a big section of 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist'. It's one of the reasons that I believe the New Testament writers are telling the truth, because they never would have invented so many embarrassing details about themselves or even potentially about Jesus. So, let me continue. Then Jesus said to His disciples, whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it. But whoever loses their life for Me will find it.

Let me stop right here for just a second. Who would have invented this? This is paradoxical and difficult. Nobody wants to hear this, actually. I don't want to lose my life to find it. I want to do what I want to do. Jesus goes on, what good will it be for someone to gain the whole world yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? Yeah, we're incentivized to gain a lot of temporal things, particularly sex, money, and power.

But do we want to gain those things? Things in exchange for our souls? I'm not suggesting that you get saved by being good and not doing evil. But I am saying if we're truly going to follow Jesus, if we're going to accept his free gift of salvation, if we're going to repent and accept what He's done and then follow Him, then He tells us to deny ourselves, that we will follow Him.

It's a result of being a believer, not the cause of being a believer. Jesus goes on to say, for the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person according to what they have done. Well, there's a positive incentive right there. Truly, I

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tell you, by the way, there's nothing wrong with getting a reward for something you deserve to be rewarded over. Anyway. It's justice. Jesus goes on to say, truly, I tell you, some of you who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

Now, a lot of people say, well, Jesus was a false prophet. They didn't, you know, the kingdom didn't come. Those people all died. Well, as we point out in the course 'How to Interpret Your Bible', you've got to keep reading. There are no chapter divisions in the Bible either. If you keep reading, the very next verse talks about the transfiguration. That's what He's talking about. He's talking about the transfiguration. He's not talking about the end of the world. But they don't-- The critics don't teach you that.

The critics just criticize. And when you know how to interpret the Bible, when you can see that there's no chapter divisions in the Bible either, if you were just to keep reading into 17:1, you'd see, hey, He went up the mountain for the transfiguration. That's what He's talking about. So, ladies and gentlemen, when it comes to incentives, are we going to follow Jesus?

Are we going to deny ourselves and follow Jesus? Are we going to follow the culture? Are we going to follow what our family wants, what our friends want, what social media wants, what TikTok wants, what Instagram wants? Who are we going to follow? None of us. Even when we want to.

We don't do it perfectly. I get that. But what should we want to do? What decisions are we making? Now, let me deal with a couple of questions that just came in. Providentially, they came in. I didn't even know I was going to talk about this issue, but these questions came in. This gentleman writes in and says, hi, Frank Turek. I don't really know what to do because I feel like I'm stuck between Hinduism and Christianity. If I choose Hinduism, which I tried, but I never could feel God's love.

But in Christianity, I felt God was closer to me. But as an Indian American, if I choose Christianity, I'm rejecting my family, culture, and background. If I choose Hinduism, which I like, philosophically, I don't feel personally connected to God. My family tells me to embrace my culture and background, and I tried to do that, through trying to learn Indian classical music.

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But I have never felt more rejected than when I genuinely and tried to embrace my culture. I'm so confused, but I feel like I'll never be accepted in either category.

I'll leave him anonymous. Anyway, thank you for writing in. Great, great question. Now, you know what I'm going to say, because I think we have to follow the truth, not incentives put forth by our family, by our culture, or our background. Jesus came to save people all over the world, regardless of their culture. And there are millions of people in India who are Christians, as you know. The question is what is true, not what is convenient for me.

It's not what my family wants. It's not what my background wants, not what my culture wants. It's what your creator wants. And your creator wants to have a relationship with you. But even God can't steer a parked car. If He's going to allow us free will so we can love, He can't force us into a relationship. He gives us the opportunity to have that relationship. So, I don't know if you've investigated the evidence for Christianity and if you've looked into evidence for Hinduism or not.

We just did a program earlier in the month with Dr. Doug Groothuis, and one of the worldviews we looked into briefly, not in depth, but briefly, was Hinduism. And he thought that Hinduism, from a logical perspective, just didn't work at all. I don't have time to go into that now, but you may want to check out that podcast. But Christianity, if you look at it from a logical perspective, a philosophical perspective, a scientific perspective, and an historical perspective, I think it all fits.

And when I say scientific perspective, I'm talking about our ability to do science. Christianity was started by, I should say science was started by Christians because they believed in law in nature, because they believed in a lawgiver who created and sustains the universe. I think it was Kepler who said, when I'm doing science, I'm thinking God's thoughts after Him. I'm seeing how God has set up this universe and how cause and effect are related in this universe. So, I would urge you to take a look at the evidence for Christianity and then follow the truth where it leads.

By the way, if you really are concerned about incentives, again, there's nothing wrong with incentives. They just have to lead us to the truth. There's nothing, if Christianity is true, that has

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a bigger incentive, and that is you will be with your Creator forever in a place where there'll be no more mourning, no more tears, no more crying, where you'll be in paradise, as Jesus said to the man on the cross next to Him.

As I understand Hinduism, you're just going to blend into the Brahman. You're going to blend in and lose your consciousness, lose your individuality, depending upon what brand of Hinduism we're talking about here. But in Christianity, you will be personally connected to God because God is personal and you're not going to lose your personality. And I think it might be the Holy Spirit working on you, saying you do feel personally connected to God because that is the Holy Spirit calling you. So, follow that and follow the evidence.

Our book, 'I Don't have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist', might be helpful. You also might want to go to [watchmenfellowship.org](http://watchmenfellowship.org). It might be .org or .com. I'll have to look that up. I think it's .org, Watchman Fellowship. Dr. Brady Blevins teaches some courses for us. He's taught some courses for us on conversations with other faiths, including Islam, including Mormons, including Jehovah's Witnesses. I don't think he's done one on Hinduism, but his website has materials there on Hinduism, so you may want to check that out. But thank you so much for writing.

We've got to Follow what is truth or what is true, even if a falsehood gives us benefits, temporary benefits, and following the truth gives us temporary difficulties. Remember, we have to have an eternal perspective in mind. As Paul says at the end of 2 Corinthians 4, this whole section on suffering, he says, our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us a greater weight of glory that far outweighs them all.

So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, for what is seen is temporary. We fix our eyes on what is unseen. For what is unseen is eternal. So, any difficulty you go through here is going to be dwarfed by the glory you'll receive in eternity if Christianity is true, and I think it is. That's why we wrote the book 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist', so please check that out. There's many other books you can get, any of Lee Strobel's Books: 'Case for Christ', 'Case for Creator'. J. Warner Wallace's book 'Person of Interest', or 'God's Crime Scene', or 'Cold-Case Christianity'.

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There's several books. 'Mere Christianity' by C.S. Lewis, not just my book, but I'd encourage you to look into that. Thank you so much. Now, a question from a Muslim who will remain anonymous as well because he signs unknown. He says, hi, I just wanted to first say that I watch a lot of your videos and even though I'm a Muslim, I'm quite impressed with the way you, as a Christian, defend your faith and shut the mouths of a lot of ignorant and arrogant atheists.

My question is that in one of your videos you said that you would never convert to Islam, or you don't think it's true because of the fact that the Quran which came to Muhammad, came 600 years after Jesus and it talks about him so many years later, and therefore is not worthy to look at or believe when you have eyewitness testimony.

Right, let me stop right here. I didn't say I wouldn't convert to Islam. What I said was, I don't think Islam is true and I don't think the Quran is an historical authority on what happened to Jesus, because it is, as you say, written 600 years after the New Testament writers who, many of them were eyewitnesses and they knew what happened to Jesus, not a document written 600 years later. So, let me just clear that up.

Then you go on to say this. The writer does, the questioner. My question to you then becomes, well, who was Jesus then, who came 1471 years later after Moses who had brought the Torah and who was Jesus then to bring a new book, the Gospel, so many years after Moses? You would need to apply the same logic here then by extension. Okay, let me comment on that.

No, they're two different things. Jesus did not deny the events witnessed by Moses. He affirmed those events. The Quran on the other hand, denied the events or denies the events witnessed by the New Testament writers who were eyewitnesses. Specifically, the resurrection and the divine claims of Jesus. The Quran denies that. So, Jesus affirmed what Moses said and actually fulfilled the law of Moses.

He said, I did not come to abolish it, I came to fulfill it. And He affirmed what Moses did. He even said Moses wrote of me. So, Jesus isn't changing or denying what Moses said or did. He's saying I fulfilled it. I affirmed what Moses did. The Quran however is denying the events witnessed by the New Testament writers, particularly the resurrection and the divine claims of Jesus. And this goes back to the Quranic dilemma. Briefly.

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The Quranic dilemma is that on one hand the Quran says obey the Bible. That's Surah 5:68 and several other passages in the Quran. Obey the Bible. But on the other hand, in Surah 1:57, the fourth chapter of the Quran, verse 157, it says Jesus never died or rose from the dead. Well, that contradicts the Bible. So, here's the problem it seems for the Muslim in this situation. If the Quran is telling us to obey the Bible but the Bible disagrees with the Quran, it seems like there's a contradiction here.

If the Bible is true about the resurrection of Jesus, then the Quran is false and it's not the word of God, at least when it comes to Jesus, obviously. And that's a big issue. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, in other words, the Bible is false, the Quran is still not the word of God because it's telling us to believe a false book. Now look, if Jesus rose from the dead, then Christianity is true, and Jesus is God, and whatever Jesus who is God teaches is true.

So, I'm going to take the eyewitnesses who were there and had by the way, everything to lose by saying Jesus rose from the dead. Because by saying Jesus rose from the dead, they not only got kicked out of the synagogue, they got beaten, tortured, and killed. Remember, all the New Testament writers with the exception of Luke were all Jews. They were all Bible believing, Old Testament believing Jews who thought they were God's chosen people. They had no motive to invent a resurrected Jesus.

They had every motive to say it wasn't true, not every motive to say it was. Now, Muhammad, on the other hand, did not write the Quran, as you know. It was dictated to him, and he recited it, and others wrote it, and compiled it after he died. But Muhammad doesn't claim to do miracles. He says, I'm just a plain warner. I just warn people there's one God. There's no miraculous confirmation that Muhammad was a prophet. Now, some will say, well, the Hadith written 150-200 years later ascribe miracles to Muhammad and that shows he is a prophet.

The problem is, that would seem to contradict the Quran, number one, because in the Quran he says, I don't do miracles. I'm just a plain warner. And secondly, they come 200 years too late. They appear to be legendary, as even some Muslim scholars will agree. So, I think that if you take a fair look at the evidence, Christianity does appear to be true and Islam does not, particularly on who Jesus was. Islam may have certain things right? I agree with that.

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There is a God and all that. You ought to pray, and you ought to give to the poor and all. We all agree on that. Okay? But Jesus appears to have risen from the dead. And if Jesus has risen from the dead, then Christianity is true. The Godhead is triune. Not one person, but three in one divine essence, which of course goes against the Islamic view of God, of Allah being strictly monotheistic, even though the Quran appears to be eternal according to Islamic theology.

And that would put a partner with Allah from all eternity. Because if the Quran is eternal along with Allah, then as one person put it, in Christianity, God became a man. In Islam, God became a book, the Quran. That's the belief anyway. Now, Jesus had two natures. He had a divine nature and a human nature. He was 100% God and 100% man. And you would need that to have one or to have a mediator between God and man.

You'd have to have somebody on both sides of the divide. And Jesus was. So, take a fair look at the evidence. Thank you for watching our videos. But take a fair look at the evidence and I ask you, if Jesus really rose from the dead to prove He was God, would you follow Him? If it's really true, would you follow Him? I hope you would. I'd hope you follow the truth and not the many incentives you have to remain a Muslim. It's a hard issue, ladies and gentlemen. No question.

Incentives want us to keep believing what's most convenient for us. I get it. We're all susceptible to it. I'm susceptible to it. You're susceptible to it. Doesn't matter what your worldview, whether you're Christian, atheist, anywhere in between. We're all susceptible to believing things that make what we think will make life easier. That's what we do. But that's not putting God at the top of our priority list.

That's putting convenience at the top of our priority list. That's what makes abortion attractive. It makes convenience more important than God, more important than life, my autonomy more important than life. Help us not to be people that get our priorities inverted. Help us to be people that put God first, and love God, and love one another, which means not what's convenient, but what's true, and right, and good for all of eternity.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope this has at least got you thinking. It's got me thinking just preparing this podcast. If you hadn't heard the previous podcast, go back and listen to the last

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one. It was the one that was broadcast on the American Family Radio Network, and you can listen to all these wherever you get podcasts, the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast. And it's also broadcast on the American Family Radio Network on Saturday morning at 10am Central Time. Sorry, Eastern Time and 5pm Eastern Time on Sunday.

All right, friends, great being with you. Happy New Year. Lord willing, I will see you here next week. And don't forget to join the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist course that we're running. It's called 'How to Interpret Your Bible'. The CrossExamined course, I should say, 'How to Interpret Your Bible'. Just go to [crossexamine.org](http://crossexamine.org). Click on online courses. You will see it there. And I hope to see you Live for those five Q&A Zoom sessions. God bless you.

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