

67 Innocent Lives Perish in Plane Crash: Why Didn't God Intervene?

With Dr. Andy Steiger

(January 31, 2025)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a lot to cover on the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist radio program and podcast today. It's kind of with a heavy heart, we're doing this program. We're recording this on Thursday. And of course, last night was that terrible plane crash. And we're going to talk about why would God allow such evil? Does it disprove God? What could possibly be the reason for it? And actually, when something like this happens, it's normally not a time to look for these kind of answers if you're very close to the tragedy.

In fact, the time you need answers for a tragedy is long before you go through the tragedy. But I can't help talking about it for those of us who haven't lost anybody but are still heartbroken by it. My son is an American Airlines pilot. He flies a 737. This was a smaller aircraft that holds about 70 people. And I called him when it first came up on the TV. And nobody really knows what happened yet.

We'll figure it out at some point. But his at least working theory is that when the helicopter was told to look out for a particular plane on final, he may have misidentified the plane as already passing him and wasn't on the lookout for one that was just coming right next to him. I mean, it's a one in a million chance that they'd be in the same airspace at the same time, but indeed they were. I don't know if I could even read this thing, but Bill Mulligan is a, I don't know if I'm pronouncing his name right.

He's a Fox News reporter, and he just put up this tweet, and I retweeted it. He said, it's with great regret that I can confirm a friend of mine, Wendy Schaefer, lost her life in an American Airlines crash last night. Wendy was an incredible wife to my friend Nate, an amazing mom of two children, ages 3 and 1. I met them both when they were dating when I was working in Charlotte, North Carolina. Always smiling, such a sweetheart. Heartbroken for Nate. We go from joking in our fantasy football group to chat to this horrible news.



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Rest in peace, Wendy. And then he has the prayer emoji there. And here's what Nate said. That's the husband who lost his wife. I'm still waiting to wake up from this nightmare, but I fear this is the truth. Wendy was not just beautiful on the outside, but was truly an amazing woman and through and through, she was the best wife, mother, and friend that anyone could ever hope for. Her love, kindness, and strength touched everyone she met.

We will miss you more than words can express. Wendy Jo, I love you endlessly. Rest in peace, my love. Now I can't. Sorry. One of the things this tells us, ladies and gentlemen, is exactly what the Bible says, that life is like a vapor. You're here today, you're gone tomorrow. Jesus says in a parable, you fool, your life will be demanded of you tonight.

If there's anything good that comes out of a tragedy like this, it wakes us up to the fragility of life and the fact that we're here one minute and gone the next. And I personally can't imagine that this life is a stairway to nowhere, that we just end and it's over. Now, you might say, well, Frank, that doesn't make it true that this is a stairway to somewhere. I know it doesn't. I think there's evidence for it, and my guest today is going to help us work through that.

Dr. Andy Steiger is with Apologetics Canada. In fact, he founded Apologetics Canada. And you may have heard about Apologetics Canada recently, because one of their speakers, Wes Huff, had a debate with a guy by the name of Billy Carson and graciously dismantled Billy's position, and Joe Rogan saw it, and then Joe invited Wes onto the program. And that kind of notoriety on that program has done a lot for apologetics in general and certainly Apologetics Canada. And Andy and I have known one another for many years.

I spoke at one of Andy's events out on the west side of Canada a number of years ago. He wrote the book called 'Thinking?: Answering Life's Five Biggest Questions', another book, and several articles and some video series that we're going to talk about on this program that has to do with the reliability of the Bible. But we're going to talk a little bit about the evil question.

Andy, we had this scheduled for a few weeks, and we weren't obviously going to talk about this issue of evil, but since you're here, it's great having you on the program, and thanks for the work you're doing at Apologetics Canada. Why don't you just start us out with any thoughts you have on a tragedy like this?

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ANDY:

Well, first, thanks, Frank, for having me on the show. It's an honor to be with you, and I appreciate you bringing up this topic because it's a heavy topic when we experience, you know, the suffering and evil of this world. And I pastored for 20 years, and over those 20 years, I walked with people through some dark valleys. We had a number of, you know, challenging things take place in our church.

I remember one in particular when a young man, his dad was murdered and he was, this is a normal family. It was just a great guy, just died in the wrong place at the wrong time and got himself in the middle of a gang turf war and was executed, and it was a terrible situation. And over those 20 years, I encountered many of those, you know, difficult situations where you're just, you're seeing just that face of suffering and evil and you're walking with people through that.

And one of the questions that, you know, you have to ask yourself is, you know, how? How do you do that? How do you reconcile the evil of this world that we experience, and we see, you know? How do we reconcile that in juxtaposition to a God that is supposed to be a loving and good God that we can trust? And I've got to tell you, here's the thing that I had to come to grips with when I see what's going on on the nightly news or what I see that's going on in my family and my community.

And that is, the only way that you can walk in a world with evil is if you know that it's evil, that what happened is wrong. Because the interesting thing that I have found about evil is it has this way of deceiving you into questioning when you begin to question evil, that you actually can begin to lose sight of the very thing that you're disgusted by. And that's where my faith has always been so important in my 20 years of pastoring and now as I've done ministry for 25 years, that I hold very dear to me.

And I know this might come across as a surprise to some listeners, is that if you want to, if you walk through times of suffering and times of evil, the only way that you can do that is if you maintain a firm fix on that evil, that you truly believe that what happened was wrong and was evil.

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But if you think something was wrong, if you think it, you know, the world ought not to be that way, that this isn't the way that it should be, that it means then you believe there's a way that the world ought to be. There's a way that the world should be. And so ultimately, in my conviction that something is evil and something is wrong, that that is truly bad, I can only do that if I have a firm fix on what is good. And that's where my faith in God becomes a foundation to actually be able to call out the evil of this world as evil.

And that to me is like, that's got to be ground zero, Frank. If you don't have that kind of foundation, you will get lost. You will begin to be disgusted by the evil. You'll begin to question God's goodness, whoever, what you know, who is this God? Does God even exist? Before you know it, you don't believe in God anymore. But now you've embraced a world that there's no good, there's no evil. There's just blind, pitiless indifference, as Dawkins says. And now you've lost sight of the very thing you were disgusted by.

FRANK:

Yes, evil doesn't disprove God, ladies and gentlemen. It may prove there's a devil out there, but it doesn't disprove God. Because we wouldn't even know what evil was unless we knew what good was. And we wouldn't know what good was unless God existed. Because if there's no purpose, as Andy just mentioned, there's no real meaning to life. You can't say anything's good or bad. You can just say they're, you don't like them. But what happened in this plane crash wasn't just a matter of distaste or displeasure. We lost people that we love. These people were valuable. Why are they valuable?

Because people are valuable. Why are they valuable? Because they're made in the image of God and there's a purpose to life. We'll talk much more with my friend Dr. Andy Steiger about this and some other issues. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. Our website is CrossExamined.org. That's CrossExamined with a D on the end of it dot org. Back in two minutes. Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with my friend

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Dr. Andy Steiger. We're talking about a number of issues today. Some subjects that he is delving into with Apologetics Canada. We're going to get into them in just a few minutes, but let's talk a little bit more about this tragedy and this question of if God why evil?

Andy, you have an entire chapter in the book 'Thinking?: Answering Life's Five Biggest Questions'. And one of the questions has to do with evil. You write in chapter four, why is there evil? Why don't we just start right there and say a few words about it and then we'll move on to some other topics?

ANDY:

Yeah, you know, I think it's a, it kind of gets back to what I was saying earlier, Frank, when we were talking about evil. It's important that we understand, you know, that A), that we're convinced that what happened was wrong, and that it was evil, and that we can have a worldview that actually substantiates that, that allows us to maintain that position. And so, when we're talking about the question of evil, one of the ways that I like to talk about it is that evil is not a thing necessarily.

It's the corruption of something. And one of the examples I like to give is currency. That you and I know what it is to have currency. We know what it is to have counterfeit currency. And from a Christian perspective, evil would be a counterfeit currency. It would be a counterfeit relationship the way that the world ought not to be, the way that's wrong or incorrect, if you will. So that when we're talking about this idea that there's this counterfeit currency, it means then that you believe that there's currency.

And the reason I like to use that example is because it helps people to appreciate that you can have a world of currency and no counterfeit currency. We can have a world of good and no evil, but you can't have a world of counterfeit currency unless currency actually exists. You know, you can't have a world of counterfeit relationship unless real relationship exists.

And so, by being convinced that something's evil, you're convinced that something is good. But that does still leave us in this quandary. Okay, if there is good, and God is good, and God loves us, and God is a good God, and He's all powerful, like, why would He allow then for us to experience the kind of evil in this world?

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And that is a challenging question that people have been asking for a long time. You know, how do I wrestle through the evils of this world as I, you know, in particularly, as I believe in a good God. And I think that at some level that's just going to require that we trust that God is in control and that God does love us, and that as the Bible talks about that we will have a time, you know, a limited time, as Paul talks about. That we will, that we do go through suffering, but that we have our sights set for our hope is set on a time in which that suffering will cease.

That this is only temporary, and that soon this kind of evil and suffering won't be any longer. And one other thing I think is interesting as also part of this, Frank and I know you've talked about this and thought about this, and that's just the ripple effect that can take place through evil, that God, in His sovereignty, can actually use the broken things of this world to achieve His good purposes. And again, though, that leaves us in this place where I've got to trust that He is good and that He can bring good from these broken situations.

FRANK:

Yeah. You know, one of the interesting things about the book of Job is that Job questions God. And Job might even be angry with God. But Job never denies God. Right? He never denies God. God, of course, can take any kind of questions that we have or anger that we have. I mean, just look at the Psalms. They're full of emotion. God can handle all that. But Job never, never took the advice of his wife to curse God and die. He trusted God.

And I think due to the ripple effect, you have to trust because we know very little of history. We hardly know anything about the present. We know nothing about the future other than anything God tells us. We don't know how things are going to work out long term.

We don't know what the ripple effect can bring. Of course, there's a great story in the Old Testament about Joseph. You know, the ripple effect that happened to his brothers who originally did evil and sold him into slavery. Well, that evil they did actually later rippled forward to help them when they were able to escape a famine.

Because Joseph found himself as the number two guy in all of Egypt due to the evil his brothers had put him or had done to him. And so, that's why he says, I think at the end of Genesis, he

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says, you meant it for evil, speaking to his brothers, but God meant it for good, the saving of many lives. So, we can't. You're right. We can't always know what's going to happen long term. All we can do is trust God. All right, sorry, you were going to jump in and say something Andy. You go ahead.

ANDY:

Well, I was just going to say that it leaves us then in this position where we should condemn the evil of this world and simultaneously trust the goodness of God, that He will be able to redeem it.

FRANK:

Andy, people always seem to think that it's just the Christians that have to answer the problem of evil. But doesn't every worldview have to answer it?

ANDY:

Well, that's the thing I find so interesting about it. I host this thing, by the way, Frank, called Questioning Christianity. We do this in our church where people can come and just ask whatever questions that they have. And we have a lot of non-Christians that come, and they'll often come with this question.

I know you've done apologetics for a long time, and I'd say like 90% of the people that come and ask the, you know, questions at events that we're doing or something like QC, you know, Questioning Christianity, that at core, the question that they're asking is a question of suffering and evil.

And so, I just think that that in and of itself is actually a very powerful argument that God exists, that you have so many people that are convinced that this isn't the way that the world should be, that this is wrong. But it makes you have to wrestle with then, well, what is the right? What is a good right world then? And ultimately, I agree. Ultimately, it's going to lead you to a worldview in which God is necessary. And more than that, I would say the Christian God is necessary.

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FRANK:

Yeah. And the Christian God actually is the only God who submitted Himself or subjected Himself to evil. I mean, He is the God who took evil upon Himself so ultimately, we could be spared from the punishment we deserve, and he could achieve a state where there would be no more pain, there would be no more mourning, there would be no more tears because evil had been punished. And if God is infinitely just, He has to do that, otherwise He wouldn't be infinitely just.

So, Christianity is the really only worldview that answers it adequately, even though we don't have all of our questions answered. So, friends, there's a lot more you can get in Andy's book, 'Thinking?'. The book is called 'Thinking?: Answering Life's Five Biggest Questions'. And you can also check out Andy's podcast. What is the podcast, Andy? Where do people go for that?

ANDY:

Yeah, the Apologetics Canada podcast. You can find it on all your platforms and on places like YouTube.

FRANK:

And I know that it's not just you sometimes. I just saw one with you, Wes Huff, and two other guys answering questions.

ANDY:

Yeah, we call it the Quad. So, we have our team there. And it just varies. Sometimes it's the four of us on, but sometimes it's just two of us or we have, you know, various special guests that come on to the show.

FRANK:

Now, you have a PhD in theological anthropology from a university in Scotland. What is theological anthropology? Can you help us there?

ANDY:

Yeah. So basically, that's, what does it mean to be human? And because we're talking in the area of theology, we're asking, what does it mean to be human from particularly a Christian

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perspective? My doctoral work was looking at the work of Michael Polanyi and specifically gets into the area of artificial intelligence as well. So, it was interdisciplinary. And these days that question of what it means to be human is a pretty hot topic. When I graduated, Frank, AI wasn't nearly as cool a topic as it is now. So, I guess I was lucky in that regard.

FRANK:

So, what does it mean to be human? Why don't we just start right there?

ANDY:

Yeah. You know, one of the ways that I talk about this with people is, I say, you know, that we need to appreciate that there's a difference between the parts that a thing is made of and the purposeful whole that a thing is made for. And that you and I never define a thing by its parts. We always define a thing by its purpose. And that this is true not only of the things we create, but the things that God has created, and that we, as God's creation, are defined not by our parts, but by our purpose.

And from a Christian perspective, this is one of the things I, you know, I love about the Bible. It is so consistent from beginning to end. And Jesus just preaches this, that you and I were created for the purpose of relationship, relationship with God and relationship with one another. And so much so that Jesus says, listen, I can sum up the entirety of the law with just two.

And he says in Mark, chapter 12, for example, and elsewhere, love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. This is very Hebraic. See, He's quoting Deuteronomy, chapter 6 and Leviticus 19.

But that's a Hebraic way of saying, love God with everything that it means to be human, heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. So, what we see from the Christian perspective is to be human is to love God and to love people. And that's actually the motto of Apologetics Canada. We didn't make it up.

FRANK:

Now, as a Christian, what would it mean to love God? Unpack that for us, because I think a lot of times, we're not even sure what love means, because we think, and we'll get to this as well,

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we think when we're loving other people, it means we have to approve of everything they do, when in fact that's not the case. But what does it mean to love God, first? Let's start there.

ANDY:

That's a great question. First, I think it's interesting, by the way, if we take a look at something like the Westminster Catechism of Faith. It begins by saying that the chief aim of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. And I think that that's such an interesting way of putting what I just said, what Jesus is saying, that you and I glorify God, and we enjoy him forever when we're in right relationship with God. And so, one of the simple ways that we could talk about is, what does it mean to love God?

Would be, first of all, to get to know who God is, that, you know that you're reading God's word, that, you know, you're in your Bible, you're learning more about who God is. You're learning more about what he's done in the world, and particularly in His son, Jesus, and that we get to know Him better. And then, as we become students of Jesus, as we learn from Him, we begin to practice that, right? We begin to learn to be like Him and we begin to learn to love like God loves.

And I think that this, honestly, Frank, is one of the keys of what it means to love God, is to love other people. Because, you know, if you really love somebody, you'll love what they love. And God loves people. And so, when we love people, I think in a very tangible way, we are loving God. So, it doesn't surprise me that Jesus, you know, will say things like, you know what you've done for the least of these, you've done for me.

FRANK:

Now, I've always thought about that Westminster Confession, glorify God and enjoy Him forever. But I always want people to unpack what glorify means. What does it? Well, we're coming up on a break here, so start the answer. And then we'll pick it up after the break. Go ahead, Andy.

ANDY:

Well, you could even just, you know, use an example of, like, my kids. When my kids honor me and when they're in right relationship with me that, you know, they bring glory right to our

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family and to me, and to my relationship. They're like, man, what great kids you have. And so, I think, you know, one of the ways that we glorify God is when we are living out what it means, you know, to Love him and to love others.

FRANK:

And we're going to unpack that further right after the break with my guest, Dr. Andy Steiger of Apologetics Canada. Go to YouTube or Google and type in Apologetics Canada. You will find a wealth of great stuff. And we'll unpack some more of that stuff after the break. Don't go anywhere. Back in just two minutes. Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network.

I want to mention I will be down at Grace Community Church, Sarasota, Florida, this weekend. The Saturday night service, three services on Sunday, February 2. Then on February 12th, Lincoln's birthday, we're going to be in Lincoln, Nebraska, at the University of Nebraska. It's open to everyone.

And by the way, ladies and gentlemen, because of your donations, those events on college campuses are completely paid for. You pay for them, the students don't. So, University of Nebraska on the 12th, William and Mary University on February 20th, and there are several other colleges coming up after that.

I'll tell you about that. We've got, I think, eight or nine this semester. So, pray for those events. If you're anywhere near those colleges, love to see you there. It's open to everyone. Also, check out the livestream. You're also paying for the livestream donors. The livestream goes everywhere so people can see it who are not in the room.

So, thank you for your support there. Let me go back to my friend, Dr. Andy Steiger. We've been talking about some topics that are in his book, 'Thinking?: Answering Life's Five Biggest Questions'. We've talked a little bit about the issue of evil.

Of course, we could spend hours talking about that. Then we started talking about what is the purpose of life, and what does it mean to love, and what does it mean to glorify God? Andy,

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maybe you could repeat what you said just before the break and go a little further with that. What does it mean to glorify God?

ANDY:

Yeah, so one of the things I was talking about before the break is that my relationship with my kids is an interesting example of what it means to bring glory to somebody or to bring honor to somebody that when my kids live in right relationship with me, when they respect me as their father, their parent, that it, it brings glory, brings honor to the family, to your relationship.

And people will often, you know, look up to that and say, oh, man, they got such a great relationship or what a great dad sort of idea. And so, you and I are put in a very similar position to our relationship with God, that when we love other people and we do that well, we bring glory, we bring honor to God, particularly a God who's created us for that purpose.

And this might be an interesting thing for people to just think about and how that's related to flourishing. You know, we talk a lot about what does it mean to flourish as a human, but we don't really put any actual, you know, concrete ideas to that, like how does that actually work out or cash out as an idea?

But ultimately, what we're saying is that when a thing does exceedingly well in what it was created for is to flourish. So, when we do exceedingly well at our purpose, the purpose of loving God and loving people, that not only do we experience flourishing, but we reflect back to God the good purposes that He created us for, and it brings glory to God.

And as Christians, we'll often talk about it as being ambassadors of God, right? We represent God, and when we do that well, we bring glory and honor to Him. People go, oh man, I want to know who that God is.

FRANK:

You know, it's interesting. There are many places in the Scripture where suffering and glory go together, that when you go through suffering, glory can come from it. I'm thinking of Romans 5 and Romans 8. Here's a passage in Romans 5 when Paul says, therefore, since we have been justified through faith, he's just brought up the fact that we're saved by grace through faith. We

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have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, there's no longer this gulf between us because of our sin.

And he goes on to say, through whom we have gained access by faith into his grace, which we now stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character, and character, hope. And hope does not.

Does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. And then when you get to Romans 8, it's even starker than that, because in Romans 8, I don't know about you, Andy, but I think Romans 8 might be the peak of the Bible.

I'm not going to read the whole passage, but here's Romans 8:18. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us. And he talks about how we're in frustration in this Creation, but God's going to liberate us from us.

And then he goes on to say, we know that all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose. We forget the last passage or the remaining passage because it goes on to say, for those he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.

How does sufferings help us conform to the image if that's our purpose, Andy? If it's our purpose to know God and to make Him known, to bring glory to God, and to love others, and to be conformed to the image of His Son, how does suffering help us do that?

ANDY:

I'm going to take an interesting approach to this, and you fill it out if you want to go in a different way. But I want to give people something to think about, maybe that they haven't thought about before. And that is if people, if God created us for the purpose of right relationship with Himself and others, and that good purpose was broken in Adam and Eve, and we now live in a world full of sin, and suffering, and evil, then it means you and I have never truly seen a human flourishing until Jesus comes on the scene.

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When we see Jesus, we are seeing not only you know, that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, that He's fully God, but Jesus is fully human. And as a human, Jesus lived out the purpose of humanity perfectly. He never stopped loving God or people, even when it cost him his own life. He was willing to suffer and die for us and calls us into that same mission. As he says, listen, take up your cross and follow me.

Yet ultimately, we will suffer. It doesn't necessarily mean we're going to be crucified on a cross, but it does mean that you and I need to be willing to humble ourselves as Paul tells us in Ephesians, sorry, Philippians chapter two. That we'd be willing to crucify our selfish ambition and our vain conceit in following Jesus's example of what it looks like to be glorified in suffering. That you and I don't stop loving God when life sucks. That we still love him even in the midst of the suffering.

And we don't stop loving people in the midst of the hardship. But in fact, that's when, you know one of the things that you see in the Bible, Isaiah talks about this and Jesus picks it up, talking about we are the light of the world. That man, in a dark world full of broken relationships when we love God well, and when we love each other well, in the midst of that suffering, we are a light in a dark world, living out what it truly means to be human, following Jesus's example.

FRANK:

Yeah, I think that's well put, Andy. I hadn't thought about that. That Jesus is the only true or human being that achieved what God wants us to achieve. And we know we can't do it because we have a sin nature. Jesus didn't have that sin nature, but He achieved it.

ANDY:

And calls us to follow Him. Let me give you a quick analogy that people might find interesting. It's kind of like a Ferrari. You and I know what the purpose of a Ferrari is, right? To go fast from point A to point B. But if a Ferrari—

FRANK:

And to look good doing it too, Andy. [Laughter]

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ANDY:

Yes. And look good doing it. But if a Ferrari has a flat tire, is it still a Ferrari?

FRANK:

Yeah.

ANDY:

Yeah. Just because a thing can't achieve its purpose doesn't mean that it's no longer that thing. You know that you and I are like a human with a flat tire. Sin has, you know, has broken our relationship with God, broken our relationship with one another. But Jesus says, come follow me. I can fix that. I can mend that. I can redeem your relationship with God. I can mend your relationship with God, and I can teach you how to mend your relationship with one another. I can teach you how to love like I love. And it's kind of like fixing that flat tire, right?

Just because of sin doesn't mean that we're no longer human. We're still human, but we don't have that glory that we were created for, that flourishing that we were created for that Jesus says, follow me and I can teach you. **FRANK:** Let's go back to the idea that he wants us to be conformed to the image of his son. Here we are, these flat tire Christians, as you might say. We can't do things perfectly. We're fallen. We have a sin nature. So, sin comes easy and good works come hard. Also, it's easy to be bad, it's hard to be good.

Here's my question. What would we become given our flat tire state, our fallen state, if we never had any suffering in our lives, if everything went well the way we wanted it to all the time, what would happen to us? Would we become more selfish or more selfless, do you think?

ANDY: You know, that's kind of a hard question because on the one hand I want to say that the world doesn't have to have suffering, the world doesn't have to have evil. And our hope is that one day there, you know, there will be no more suffering and there will be no more evil.

FRANK:

But we won't have a sin nature then.

ANDY:

What's that?

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FRANK:

I'm saying in our sinful nature now? Yeah.

ANDY:

Yeah, yeah. So, I was going to say, but what you're asking is like, but now, you know, can God teach us a deep, profound truth about love through suffering? And I think that the answer is yes, He can, if we're willing, Frank. It reminds me of one time I was hiking with my son, and we were coming down off of a mountain, and a cold wind came in quick, and we weren't prepared for it, and we were just freezing as we're walking down this mountain.

And I could see my son shivering. And I said to him, I said, Tristan, I go, can I give you, my jacket? And he goes, no, dad, I'm fine. You know, he's trying to tough it out. And I could see, you know, again as he's just getting colder and colder. So, I just took my jacket off, I put it around him, and he just zipped it up. And I said, hey.

You know, a little bit later, I said, hey, are you warmer now? And he goes, I am, but I'm not happy about it. And I'm like, well, why is that? And he goes, well, because I'm warm now that you're cold. In other words, I know that you're suffering for me. But as a parent, you and I know, well, there's no greater joy than to suffer for your kids. Why?

Because you love them. You know that suffering can actually teach you the depths of somebody's love for you if you're willing to allow it. And I think that's one of the beautiful things about Christianity is God says, listen, I love you so much that I'm willing to come and suffer for you. And ultimately Jesus says, and I'm going to give you the greatest gift anybody can give anyone. I'm going to lay down my life for you.

FRANK:

Yeah. And I think many of the survivors of this plane crash that just happened, I know a man lost his wife. We read earlier. I know that another man lost his son. His son was the co-pilot on the plane. That both of those people would immediately switch places with their loved ones that died, not to avoid the pain, but to say, take me instead. You know, that's what love is, that you would sacrifice yourself to save somebody that you really care about. And I think in our

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fallen state, I know for me, if I got everything, I wanted all the time, I would become even more of a me monster than I already am.

And I think that that's one of the problems with celebrities. You know, celebrities are never told no. And that doesn't help them become more Christ like, it helps them become more selfish, it seems. You know, imagine, Andy, if you could just go through life and no matter what you did, no matter who you saw, they're falling all over you, you know, telling you whatever you want, I'll get for you. I don't think that's healthy for a human being.

ANDY:

No, you start to believe the lies. I mean, isn't that the amazing part, though, about Jesus? The one who's truly famous, the one who's truly great doesn't come as a king, but he comes as a servant. And again, saying, listen. I want you to know how much I truly love you. And he didn't just teach it, Frank, he lived it.

FRANK:

Yeah, He did live it. And because He lived it perfectly, we can live again. Because His life is a sacrifice for ours. The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. He paid the price for our sin.

And by trusting in Him, you can not only be forgiven but given His righteousness. More in a minute. We're talking to Dr. Andy Steiger from Apologetics Canada. By the way, you need to check out the Apologetics Canada website. There is some great material up there. And in the Tuesday midweek podcast, we're going to reveal a brand new series on the reliability of the Bible.

You don't want to miss that. If you're listening on the American Family Radio Network, you will not hear that broadcast on AFR. You've got to find the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast, and it will come out, Lord willing, on Tuesday. So, check that out, Apologetics Canada. And check out the podcast we are going to talk about on Tuesday. But let me go back to Dr. Steiger. Andy let's close the loop a little bit on this issue of love. I've often said that I think our culture mistakenly thinks love means approval, and that's particularly true on the sexual issues.

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You know, if you want to love me, you've got to approve of what I want to do sexually. Why do you? First of all, you agree that it doesn't mean approval. And how would you, answer somebody who says well if you love me, you'll approve of what I want to do?

ANDY:

Well, you know, it's interesting that you're right. Our culture right now has this idea that to love somebody means that you agree with everything that they agree and has led into all sorts of interesting ideas within, sadly within progressive Christianity, you know, Christianity and you know, progressive Christianity, but just in our culture in general, which ironically I would say actually when you truly love somebody, that means that you are willing to challenge them.

Especially challenge them on areas of truth. And when they are not heading towards truth, the reality is like you and I know that if we see our kids heading off of a cliff, so let's say you know, that we're going to warn them. We're going to tell them because actually the most loving thing to do would be to let them know that you're heading in a direction that's going to harm you.

And to not do that I think is actually the real tragedy. So, love means that you and I care for that person's ultimate well-being and that we are wanting to direct them to what is going to lead to their flourishing. And that's Jesus.

FRANK:

Yeah, love means seeking what's best for the other person according to God's will, not their own. Because we have all sorts of desires we ought not act on. In fact, the principled restraint of destructive desires is called civilization, ladies and gentlemen. If we just followed every whim and desire we have, we would find ourselves divorced, addicted, broken, alone, and probably prematurely dead.

And we don't help people when we affirm them in evil. No parent should do that. And if we love other people, we should ensure that we tell them the truth and try and get them to realize that they ought to be following what Jesus wants for them, not their short sighted and impulsive desires.

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ANDY:

One of the challenges that we're faced with, Frank, in this culture that we're in is we are in an, you know, an extremely individualistic culture. It's all about me. And that's the way our society has been completely oriented. So, it's, you know, it's the you do you culture, which just falls right into this idea of oh okay.

If you really love me, then you'll just let me do what I want to do and you know, live the way that I want to live instead of saying, no, no, I actually love you so much that I want to point you in a direction that's going to lead to your flourishing. And that means that you're going to have to look beyond yourself, that life isn't just about you, and that ultimately there, as we've been talking about, there's a greater purpose that you've been created for and that that's going to be key to your flourishing.

I think there's another interesting part here, Frank, that plays into this is sometimes we need to realize that there are different ideologies at play that people have bought into. And one of the big ones in our culture, as you're mentioning, is just a very, not only a hyper individualistic culture, but a hyper sexualized culture. So that now it's about, it's not just it's all about me, and it's about what do I want, and what's going to make me happy. There's a great book, actually. I'm sure you've read it by Carl Trueman, 'The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self'.

And Trueman just points out, you know, listen, we've been heading in this direction for a long time. And that you take that individualism, and you take that sexualized ontology, right? That what it really means to be human is to be sexual, that these two coalesce together. And now we have all sorts of ideologies out there where people think, okay, if I just act on this thing, and, you know, whatever that might be, but particularly these days, it tends to be something sexual, that that's going to make me happy and that's going to lead to my flourishing.

And from a Christian perspective, we're saying, listen, you can go have sex with whoever you want, and you can identify however you want, but that is never actually going to lead to your flourishing. That's never going to lead to your good. You were created for something so much more than those things. You were created for relationship with God, you know, relationship with one another.

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And so, I think sometimes we've got to get in the habit of seeing people with the ideology that they're at and helping them, helping to reorient that within a Christian faith framework. Am I making sense here, Frank?

FRANK:

Oh, totally. No. Putting individualism together with rampant sexuality or so many different views of sexuality leads to the culture that we have today. People are looking for truth. Or let me put it another way. People think they're looking for truth, but they're really looking for happiness. They're on a happiness quest, not a truth quest. And I don't know if Chesterton said this, but it's attributed to him, I think. I think he said something like any man knocking on the door of a brothel is looking for God. Now he just, he's looking for God in all the wrong places. [Laughter]

ANDY:

All the wrong places, yeah.

FRANK:

He's trying to find satisfaction somehow. And he thinks that the physical satisfaction is somehow going to satisfy him ultimately, when in reality it's temporary and it might lead to more promiscuity and more emptiness rather than the fulfillment. Isn't it interesting that Jesus, who you pointed out, is the only human being that truly completely flourished because He didn't have a sin nature, and He lived a perfect life. He never had sex.

ANDY:

I think that messes with a lot of people. And you know, because of the culture we live in, we think, oh, if you want to get, you know, have the real life, you know, you've got to be having lots of sex. And like, well, actually, no. I like the way Augustine put it. Augustine said that the heart of man is restless until it rests in God. And until we truly understand that, we will look for, we will try to solve that restlessness in all the wrong places.

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FRANK:

I just had a friend of mine say that a man in her church turned himself in for sexually abusing his nine year old adopted daughter. And he's in prison right now. And it just, you know, the pastor could hardly even speak to this guy. Nobody really wanted to counsel him at all. It's such a hard situation and it puts a lie to the cultural claim that sex is just physical.

Because if sex is just physical, well, what's the problem? And we know there's a massive problem there. One more thing I wanted to ask you about, Andy. And then in the next Tuesday podcast, we'll get into your new documentary series. But you have a book called 'Reclaimed: How Jesus Restores Our Humanity in a Dehumanized World'. What's the thesis of that book? What are you covering there?

ANDY:

Well, I cover a lot of things that we've been talking about here, but from a perspective, I think it's important for us to appreciate, especially in today's culture. And just to simply put it, when you and I see each other correctly, we will treat each other correctly. But when we don't see each other correctly, we are capable of horrendous acts towards one another.

You know, it's interesting, Frank, this last year I was asked to speak in Rwanda for the 30th anniversary of the genocide. And I was there to speak on the question of why does God allow suffering and evil? And as I was there, you know, I had the privilege of meeting with a pastor that had saved hundreds of Tutsis during the genocide.

And one of the things that I was talking with him about, and one of the things that I had seen in all my research over and over again is that when people don't see each other, right? They think, oh, this person, what a cockroach or a snake, you know, you become capable of all sorts of heinous acts towards one another because you don't see them correctly.

And I get, you know, it doesn't take much to convince people these days. Just go on the internet, right? Read a few comments on YouTube and you know, a Reddit thread, and you'll realize, man, what we are capable of, right? It's easy for us to say all sorts of things when we don't see a person face to face. But when we see them, and we see them particularly, and this

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is where Christianity is so unique in this. When we see them correctly from the Christian perspective, and we could put it like this.

You know, the Bible tells us that in Genesis chapter one, 26 and 27, that we have been made, that humans were made in the image and likeness of God, which has some interesting theological implications. It means then that our view of God is the most important view we have because it informs our view of ourselves and of others. And that ultimately the higher my view or the greater my view of God, the greater my view of people that are made in God's image. And so, the desire then, as a Christian, is man, I want to have a high view of God.

And that's going to lead to a high view of people that are made in His image. And I want to make sure that I'm seeing them correctly and that I would treat them correctly. In philosophical terms, we'd call this an I thou relationship versus an I it relationship. In every atrocity, every atrocity, Frank, you can bring it back to this I it relationship, whether that's Nazi Germany, or Rwanda, or Cambodia, you name it. It's when they stop seeing somebody correctly, they no longer treat them correctly. We even see this with the slave trade.

FRANK:

And we see it with abortion.

ANDY:

And we see it with abortion.

FRANK:

It's not a baby; it's just a clump of cells.

ANDY:

Yeah. Or they won't even talk about the baby at all. And they just say they're ending the pregnancy. Right? It's actually a very dehumanizing perspective.

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FRANK:

Well, Andy, it's been very enlightening talking to you here. Give our audience your website, your podcast, and we're going to have Andy on Tuesday. But go ahead, Andy. Let people know.

ANDY:

Yeah, thanks. Yeah, our podcast is Apologetics Canada, and you can again check that out on all your streaming platforms. But then our website is ApologeticsCanada.ca, and we would love to connect with you.

FRANK:

Check them out. It's not just Andy. There's so many other great speakers up there, Wes Huff and others. Check it out. Also, tune in on Tuesday for another show with Andy. Check out his book, 'Thinking?' and his other book, 'Reclaimed'. Great stuff as well. And I'll see you if you're anywhere near Sarasota this weekend. And don't forget, Lincoln's birthday. Lincoln, Nebraska, February 12th. University of Nebraska. See you there.

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