

## Standing for Christ on the NBA Court with Jonathan Isaac

(July 25, 2025)

### FRANK:

How do you resist the temptations of the world, Sex, money, and power when those temptations are dangled in front of you continually? How do you tactfully go against your employer when you should in order to stand for Christ? And will you stand, stand for Christ when the entire world is telling you to kneel to the culture, kneel to their values? Well, our guest today actually did stand when everybody wanted him to kneel.

He stood for Jesus and the gospel on an NBA court in the middle of 2020. You remember 2020, the COVID year, also the George Floyd year when the NBA was playing inside a bubble, and the Black Lives Matter push was at its peak, and the pressure to conform was relentless? We're going to tell you about that in a few minutes because our guest today actually stood for Jesus on that court on July 31, 2020. He was drafted by the Orlando Magic in the sixth pick overall in the 2017 NBA draft.

So, he's entering his ninth season. He played only one year. He only had to play one year in college to see how good he was to be immediately drafted into the NBA. He is a minister at Jump Ministries and Global Church in Orlando. He speaks at topics on God's love, faithfulness, Christian unity. He also wrote a best-selling book and it's very-- It's a book that has a lot of great reviews. It's called 'Why I Stand.' Here he is, a seven footer all the way from Orlando, the great Jonathan Judah Isaac, the power forward. Jonathan, how are you?

### JONATHAN:

What's up Frank? Man, I'm doing great man. Thanks so much for the introduction.

### FRANK:

Well man, I wanted to have you on the show because I saw you speak at an event I was speaking at too. It was one of the America Fests with Charlie Kirk out in Phoenix. And then you spoke at Jack Hibbs' Church. And you said, hey, Jack, do you know Frank? Can you give me his



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number? So, you contacted me, and you said that our ministry helped you. So, I appreciate that. But I wanted to have you on because, man, your story is so inspiring, and more people need to hear it. So, why don't we start at the beginning before we get to what happened in the NBA a few years back. Tell us where you grew up, and how you became a Christian, and how you got in the NBA.

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah, I'll start with the reason why I wanted your number. And I know we talked about it, but just was, you know, how much your ministry has impacted me, and people like you. You know, the great Christian apologists that are kind of out on the forefront defending the faith and equipping believers with, you know, the intellectual side of how to, how to believe.

And I've appreciated that greatly. So, it was great to connect with you. Yeah, man. So, my story starts in Bronx, New York. I have four brothers, one sister. Mom and dad was raising us in the Bronx. I would say I was a quiet, kind of observant kid. I had friends, but wasn't, the most outgoing guy. My parents ended up splitting up and I moved from Bronx, New York to Naples, Florida. Big, big culture shift. Big culture change. You know, there's not a lot of black people at the time in Naples, Florida.

Not like it wasn't crazy, but at the school we went to, me and my family made up a decent portion of the black kids at the school. And I really struggled to fit in, fit in and make friends. I was used to horseplaying to get friends, and that's not something that they were used to over in Naples, Florida. And I got in trouble quite a bit. And it was the first time that I started to become self-conscious of who I was, how people perceived me, and how I perceived myself. And I started to develop an anxiety around making friends, and pretty much putting in effort to get people to like me.

Okay, I need to be a certain way, I need to look a certain way, I need to do certain things. I started to be, you know, be a class clown, to try to get attention. And early on I could just-- I just, you know, that sense of yearning for acceptance and validation was very overwhelming. Basketball became a bit of a safe haven, where I started to, I started to play, I started to get better, and everything started to look better in my life. I started to have more friends, started

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to talk to girls, and things just started to kind of just come up, and to the point where I was the number one player in the state of Florida.

The difficult part was that there was this dichotomy between, I would play really well, and then I would be nervous and anxious about not playing well, because if I didn't play well, then in my mind, I would lose all of the love and the validation that I was receiving from my family, my friends, you know, just people around. And the bigger my name got, the harder it was to keep this anxiety deep down inside of me at bay. And it got to the point where I went to Florida State University, and it started to spill over into my everyday life.

You know, there were moments in class where I would have panic attacks. And, you know, we had one big instance where I passed out in class. You know, this is, this is the big man on campus. You know, this is the guy that's going to lead us to, you know, in the tournament and championships and all that stuff. And I'm silently really struggling with just being okay in my own body. And I didn't really know what was going on. Started seeing a team psychologist, started taking anxiety medication. And this is kind of all under the table.

And my mom back home didn't know. Not a lot of people at Florida State knew, just the coaching staff. But that became my normal. I ended up having a really decent year. Got drafted to the Orlando Magic sixth pick. And same thing as I started to rise, this underbelly of imposter syndrome, and finding my identity in basketball, and what everybody else thought really started to show. One day I meet a guy on an elevator, random guy on an elevator.

And he says to me, I can tell you how to be great while I'm in Orlando, Florida. I just got drafted. And I said, how? And he said, you have to know Jesus. And I said, man, I know Jesus. I grew up in church. And at the same time, I went to an NBA chapel with the Magic. And the chaplain says, Luke 6:46, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I say? And it pierces my heart and I say, man, that's me. You know, I know about God. I grew up in church. But if somebody really looked at my life, I really don't care what Jesus has to say, truly. My mindset was, I want to experience everything that the NBA has to offer from the life, the nightlife, the lights, the glitz, the glamour, the money.

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I want to experience that. And once I did, something deep inside of me said, this is not actually all that it's cracked up to be. And sometimes I would be at the club, and I would look around going, are we in the same place? Like, are these people actually having fun? Because I'm here and I'm trying to enjoy myself, but I'm not. And it looks like they're really enjoying themselves. And it was kind of all perfectly timed to where, I started saying, you know, I want to truly get to if this is real or not.

And so, I started looking up is Christianity true? And videos of Frank Turek taking on college students popped up. And William Lane Craig, and John Lennox, and all of these great men of faith, debaters, you know, started popping up and I started watching their videos, and I started, you know-- You know what? It does make sense. It can be true. And that was kind of simultaneously happening, not only the intellectual side of things, but, like, the heart side of things, where I kept running into this guy that I met in the elevator.

I started going to church, and he started to teach me about the love of God, and the grace of God, and the mercies of God, and how God loves us for us, and we don't have to work for it, and it's unconditional. And all of this was, like, completely going against the way that I was living my life because I was so used to working for love. And I just started to see real changes in my life. You know, basketball even started to become easier to play. I started to see myself take steps in the right direction when it came to that. And, yeah, everything was just— It started to all make sense.

And I truly got to a place where I was like, man, I believe, and I put my faith in Christ, and I was kind of put on a road of being a Christian in the NBA and trying to figure out what that looks like while still having my own personal struggles of really, truly, like battling this anxiety. But it wasn't something that I didn't understand anymore. It was something that I understood. Now it was time to battle it. I needed to find my identity in Christ and to truly know what it is to be seen and loved by him and not seek validation and praise from the world.

And I've kind of, for my entire career, really been on this tug of war of figuring out how to balance that, and how to sit in that, and how to grow in that. And so, I've had my ups and downs when it comes to that conversation. But, yeah, you know, being on this road has led me to, you know, this podcast and why a lot of people know me, you know, kind of in the public

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space because of some public stands that I felt like God was calling me to make. But I really didn't want to. I was terrified to. And, yeah, I'm sure we'll get to it.

**FRANK:**

We're going to talk about it. But what you're saying, Jonathan, is so relevant to people today, including me. I mean, how often do we get our worth from what we do and what people think of us? That's something we need to examine. We're going to examine it with Jonathan Isaac, forward for the Orlando Magic, a Christian. That's the more important thing. Don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek. Back after the break.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network, and several other stations around the country. My guest today is Jonathan Isaac, forward for the Orlando Magic, Christian, who also wrote the book 'Why I Stand.' And he stood when everybody wanted him to kneel. We'll get into that here in a few minutes. But, Jonathan, I wanted to ask you, you mentioned that apologetics has helped you realize that Christianity is indeed true, and you could devote your life to it. What were some of the arguments for you that felt persuasive to say, yeah, this is really true?

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah. So, one of the arguments that I first really grabbed a hold of was one of yours. And it's one of the great ones where you talk about atheist or unbelievers stealing from God in order to argue against Him. And that was something that really-- I couldn't quite articulate it, but it made sense in my mind where I was like, wow, the very ground that we're standing on to say something is evil, or good, or bad, we're taking from this moral framework that already exists and that we kind of already know is objective, but then trying to argue that it's subjective.

And so, yeah, it was just awesome. And I grabbed ahold of that one. And William Lane Craig was another guy that I really listened to and watched his debates. And he talked about a lot of times, I think one that he talked about was, you've got to tell me if this is wrong. It's like Kalam Cosmological, something like that.

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**FRANK:**

You got it! Cosmological argument, the argument from the beginning of the universe. Yeah.

**JONATHAN:**

Yes.

**FRANK:**

Universe had a beginning.

**JONATHAN:**

Universe had a beginning. And that made so much sense to me as well, because I was like, you know, there are people saying that the universe is always here. It's like, well, he said something like, if the universe always existed, then it's kind of like you would never get to this moment because it would infinitely go back, kind of go backwards.

And so, that was one thing. I was like, okay, if we're going to posit that it started, something outside of it, outside of time, matter, and space, had to be, you know, had to have some type of control or effect on it to make it plausible. And so, yeah. And so, like it was kind of like, as I'm listening to these things, I was like—

Like, new life was like coming to my-- Oh my gosh. Like, that makes so much sense. And I think that it was really intentional by God to kind of get me in that way, and to have both sides of it. Like, I was also going on this journey of like, the heart where God was really, I felt like God was really leading me, and talking to me, and my pastor was teaching me about these things. And on my own, I even, funny enough, I even took a course from Biola University.

**FRANK:**

Oh, great.

**JONATHAN:**

I signed up for it and I started, you know, taking the course and everything like that. And that was one of the things I was like, oh, I want to do this because I want to learn. And so, yeah.

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**FRANK:**

Well, it's difficult for the heart to rejoice in what the mind doubts. And so, if you're unsure about this Christianity thing, you can look at so many of the practices of Christianity and the beliefs of Christianity with a lot of skepticism, and even cynicism and say, yeah, I'm just not into it.

But when you have really good evidence it's true, then you can feel secure, and feel like you're not being duped, and feel like, no. This is really true, and I can devote my life to it. I also want to go back to what you said in the first segment, because I thought what you said is very profound and relevant for people, that people try and get their worth from external sources. What I mean by that is other people, or what other people think, or accolades they get. And look, we're-- I mean, this is what all social media is about, right?

You've got to get likes on your stuff, right? Otherwise, you're depressed, that kind of thing. But I love what John Lennox said, our mutual friend John Lennox. Do you remember when he told that story of when he proposed to Sally, his wife? He said, now, when I saw Sally and I wanted to marry her, I said, I went to her with a cookbook, and I said, if you can cook from this book really well for 40 years, then I'll see about accepting you and loving you. But if you don't, if you don't like that, you can go back to your mother.

And he said, when he said that, audiences roar. And he goes, no, of course I didn't do that. If I did that, she'd have rightfully thrown that book back in my face. But I loved her from the beginning, and that freed her up in order to cook for me or serve me. Just like it freed me up when I know she loved me to serve her. In other words, I'm not trying to gain her love. I already have her love. She's not trying to gain my love. She already has my love. Yet we think God is like John Lennox in the cookbook. You know, I'm going to give you this book, and the only way that I'm going to love you is if you obey the book.

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah, it's so beautiful and true in my mind. But the application of it is what's so difficult because we do live in this world, and in my case, sports, where everything really is positioned on your output and how well you do. And one game people love you, and the next game, people don't. And it really is tough and so funny.

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It's like, the Bible talks about renewing the mind, and it really is a work of the Spirit to renew us. And even talking about, like, kids, I have two daughters. And in the John Lennox thing that you just mentioned, the love is already there from when they're born. Like, what would it be like to parent where it was like, hey, you, can't do anything for me. You can't talk; you can't move. But I still need you to do everything right in order for me to love you.

And it's like, it just doesn't even compute. It doesn't make any sense. The love is already there, and all you're trying to do as they grow up is reassure them of how much you love them. And I kind of really turned that to God and try my best to live that way with Him, where it's like, God, I am loved. I am received. I am justified in your eyes because of your sacrifice and my faith in Jesus. And to live from that place, live from love and not live for love. But it's so much easier said than done.

And I've been up, and I've been down, and I've had to bring myself back to that place of, when everything is going really good in my life, and it's so easy to kind of like, flutter that way. And then God have to bring you back and say, no. It's not about performance. It's not about what you can do. It's about what I've done and having to restart.

**FRANK:**

Well said. And in fact, people that don't have the skills you have are just as loved as you are, and we're all loved by Jesus. So, that's the beauty of Christianity. We're not in competition with one another because God loves us for who we are, regardless of our skills.

But, Jonathan, it does have to be difficult to have everything you do on tape. Ladies and gentlemen, can you imagine—

Can you imagine that everything you did at your job was on tape and everybody could see it every day? I mean, that is—

There's a lot of pressure in doing that. How do you deal with that? I mean, psychologically, that every time you step on the court, everybody in the world can see it. You can't hide from it. Your stats are up there every, you know, every game. How do you deal with that psychologically?

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**JONATHAN:**

Yeah, I have to I have to be honest and say that it's been a struggle, you know, really, throughout my whole life. And so, that anxiety that I felt really early on about my performance, you know, is something that I still struggle with to this day. I've learned how to fight it and how to combat it. And, you know, somebody that I've got to give, you know, so much respect and props to as my pastor at the time of all of this, you know, the book and the stand and all that, he was the one that taught me, okay, yeah, the anxiety is there, but Jesus has also given us tools to fight it.

The Word of God, speaking back to the enemy. When you have a thought that says you're weak, no, I'm strong through Christ, and going to war, you know, and spiritual warfare in your mind. And so, I've had victory, great victories in my life, but also defeats. And I think that's the journey we're all on with God, and continuing to grow in faith, and trust, and relationship with Him. But, yeah, just honestly, it's been a struggle for me, and I've seen myself grow greatly from the time that I started. So, I thank God for that.

**FRANK:**

Amen to that. Now, let's talk about what happened in 2020. You're a rookie. No, no. You're in your third year at the time.

**JONATHAN:**

Third year.

**FRANK:**

So, you've kind of—

You're kind of already established you're a Christian at this point. The George Floyd event occurred around Memorial Day of 2020. Nobody, we're still in the COVID year, so the NBA is delayed. And then you guys are playing in a bubble. It's July 31, 2020. Tell us what happened and what led up to it.

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah, it was actually, so my third year. Going into my third year, I was playing, you know, my best basketball. I think in every category I was up. It was kind of like, you know, you have your

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first year, you get your feet wet. Your second year, you're like, okay, you're trying to figure it out. And your third year, you really take steps towards your growth, and that's where I was. And so, yeah, man, the bubble was just, you know, every time I kind of go back to that place of, you know, recanting what had happened, it really is sobering because it really was a lot.

And it's hard to put into words the feelings of it all, and the weight of the culture, the weight of other people's opinions, the weight of what other people have to say about you and your intentions. It was a lot. It was difficult, a really difficult time for me. So, you have the death of George Floyd, you have, what all that brings. And when I saw it firsthand on Twitter at the time, I was devastated. And I was trying to make sense of it, or to figure out where my heart was with one being a Christian, one being a black man, and like, how to decipher what all of this means.

And, early on, I just started to listen. I was listening to the Black Lives Matter organization. I even had conversations with some of my friends and some random people. And what I was hearing, I didn't quite agree with when it came to like, the tone, and the rhetoric of the movement, and even tried to interject at times, like, hey. Isn't this a beautiful moment for the love of God, and to lift up Christ? And I was met with, you know, anger or you know, this isn't the time for that.

And that was hard for me to kind of decipher and work through. And so, I really just kind of internalized everything. I didn't like, speak out or anything like that, until I was kind of, I wouldn't say forced to. But I was put in a moment of, there's a decision for you to make. And so, we're leading up to the bubble. My pastor is preaching a sermon, and he talks about the time that Peter lunges forward and cuts off the guy's ear.

And Jesus says, hey, if you live by the sword, you'll die by the sword. And what He taught, what He worked that to mean was that we have an opportunity in this moment as Christians and also black Christians, to set a standard, and to do, to be different than the world.

And so, you know, it was at the time where the riots were going on. And I kind of just hit in my heart that, hey, if I have a moment to speak to this in any way, I'm going to lead with the love of God. And that, I'm nobody's judge. And I can't throw stones from a glass house. And it has been the love and the grace of God that has changed my life, and changed my heart, and that I

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believe that that's the answer for everything that we struggle with as a society, from racism to anything else. There are heart issues. And so, I had that in my heart going into the bubble, but didn't have a platform to say anything.

I really didn't want a platform to say anything. We get into the bubble and there's rumblings that teams are going to decide to kneel for the National Anthem, and to wear a Black Lives Matter T-shirt to warm up. And so, I'm hearing about this and I'm uneasy because immediately I felt uncomfortable about making that kind of decision.

**FRANK:**

Is this the first game in the bubble?

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah, so—

So, we didn't play first. There were two other teams that played the day before us. And so, they knelt.

And so, now—

**FRANK:**

We're going to come back. They knelt. So, this is only like the 3rd game of the whole season in the bubble. A lot of pressure to conform. What happened? What did Jonathan Isaac do? You're going to find out right after the break. You're listening to I Don't have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek. Our website, CrossExamined.org, CrossExamined with a D on the end of it. Don't go anywhere. A lot more with Jonathan. We're back after the break.

Do you know how to defend the faith in the public square? If you're a little bit unsure, you want to join me, Alisa Childers, Greg Koukl, Jorge Gil, Phoenix Hayes, and John Ferrer for the brand-new Fearless Faith course. It's an online course. It starts in early August. You're going to be a part of that and learn how to deal with the most difficult issues out there. To be a light and ambassador for Jesus, even with unbelievers, as my guest today has done, Jonathan Isaac.

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So, check out, CrossExamined.org, go to online courses. You'll see Fearless Faith there also. That's a brand-new course, by the way. We had a previous course named Fearless Faith. This is the update. And then the next month, we're going to do Digging Up the Bible: The Top Archaeological Discoveries from Genesis all the way to maps, all the way to the book of Revelation, and beyond. Twenty-two hours. It's going to be an amazing time. Anyway, check that out on our website. If you click on online courses, you'll see it there. Now, before the break, Jonathan talking to Jonathan Isaac, forward for the Orlando Magic.

He's in his ninth year in the NBA, but in his third year during the COVID lockdown, The NBA played in a bubble. And in the third game inside the bubble, the first game the Magic played, you're in the locker room, Jonathan, with your teammates and what happens?

**JONATHAN:**

Well, I've got to go back just a little bit. One—

**FRANK:**

Go ahead.

**JONATHAN:**

I'm definitely going to take you up on that course.

**FRANK:**

All right. [Laughter]

**JONATHAN:**

I want to do that.

**FRANK:**

Fearless Faith. All right, beautiful. Jonathan will be in there with us then.

**JONATHAN:**

Yes. So, this is a little bit before I'm in the locker room with my teammates. We have a team meeting the day before because the teams have already knelt before us and the organization is

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trying to get a handle on the situation. And so, we have this big team meeting with like the team officials in there and they pretty much say, hey, you guys are free to do whatever you want to do, but at least do you know when you come to decision, do it as a team. And so, they leave the room and now it has turned into just a team only meeting.

**FRANK:**

So, are you saying the NBA is in the room initially, saying--?

**JONATHAN:**

Just Orlando Magic.

**FRANK:**

Oh, the Orlando Magic. Okay.

**JONATHAN:**

Like, you know, the coach, the president, everything like that. And so, now it's a team only meeting, and the topic is we don't have a choice, guys. There's no question about this. If we don't kneel, then it's going to seem like we don't agree, and we're not on board, and we're kind of protesting what they're doing. So, we're going to kneel, end of the conversation. That's kind of the veterans of the team are talking at this point.

And my teammates know me to be a Christian and a Jesus follower. And one of my teammates turned towards me in the midst of everybody talking and says, Jonathan, what are you going to do? And then everybody's like—

**FRANK:**

It's going to be on tape too! [Laughter]

**JONATHAN:**

And I said, shakily, I said, fellas. I'm not going to kneel, and I'm not going to wear the T-shirt. And everybody goes, oh, my gosh.

Like, here we go. Like, with the—

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Like, let's go. Here we go with the Jesus stuff. And they go, dude, like, what? Why? And everything like that. Like, why not? And I pretty much just said, look, I've fallen short of the glory of God. And I can't throw stones from a glass house. And I don't agree with the, you know, with this or the you know, the tone, of the rhetoric, or the fact that, like, symbolism has turned into-- Has turned into an order to where if I don't do this, then I don't care about black lives, and I'm not for this or that.

And I disagreed with that as well. And so, I said that, and there were guys that were very upset, and understandably so. One of the things that I completely understood going into this, that it was very emotionally charged and that everybody was free to do what they felt was right for them. And one of the things that I said to him was, like, I'm not saying that I don't see the problem. I'm not sitting here going, oh, God is the answer, and nothing was wrong. Nothing happened to George Floyd, and we should just sweep it under the rug. I'm saying I see the problem.

I just believe that there is a different answer, and a better answer, and the true answer, which is not kneeling for the National Anthem, or wearing a Black Lives Matter T-shirt. It's Christ. And more so, the love of Christ, where if we chose to love each other the way that God loves us, which is in spite of our sin, in spite of our shortcomings, then we could have real change. But somebody has to take the first step. And we kind of left the meeting at that. Some guys said that they weren't going to kneel next to me standing, and so that they'll wait in the locker room and everything like that.

And then kind of one of the veterans on the team said, no. That can't happen. If you're going to kneel, you kneel. If Jonathan wants to stand, he can stand. And everybody just, let's move on. Let's get over this. And so, that night, I'm pretty distraught. I call my pastor and I'm like, hey, like, I don't think you understand how crazy this is going to be. Like, I'm going to get it, is what I'm trying to tell him on the phone. Like, I'm going to lose my black card. I'm going to be, you know, I'm going to be everywhere. I'm going to be on Twitter.

Like, people are going to be talking about me negatively. My contract extension was up this summer after this season that we're playing right now. So, there's an opportunity that, you

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know, you know, the possibility of being blackballed from the NBA or, you know, me not signing a contract and whatnot. And I'm laying all this out to him, and he says to me, he said, Jonathan, you cannot stand for God, and God not stand for you. And it was kind of like, oh, you're so right. And so, that was when, you know, it really hit me, like, okay, like, we're going to-- We're going to go through with this.

This is happening. And so, yeah, so we get to the next day, which is game time. You know, everybody's on the court in their Black Lives Matter T-shirts, and I'm just in my jersey, and it happens. You know, everybody kneels, and I'm just standing there, and I'm just, I'm praying under my breath, like, God, like, please purify my motives. Like, let this truly be about you, because I'm terrified here. I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know what's going to happen after this game. And then that was it. It happened. I actually had a really good game, played really well.

And I picked up my phone after the game, and it was completely blown up. Twitter was going crazy. Instagram was going crazy. You had people that felt certain ways about people who took a political stance from it, people that took a negative stance from it. And then you had the Christians in between that were like, nah, we know why he's doing what he's doing. And when I had an opportunity to speak to it afterwards to the media, it went more in that direction where Christians were like, no, he's standing for Christ because he believes that Christ is the answer. It's not something political.

Not that I have anything against America in any way. I'm grateful to live in the country that we live in and be able to practice our faith. But that's what it was really about. And so, yeah.

**FRANK:**

And I know that jersey sales. You were the number two jersey sold in the NBA, your jersey, right after that.

**JONATHAN:**

Yep.

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**FRANK:**

Because courage inspires people. You know? That's what makes people go, well, if Jonathan can do that, then I can do this.

Once somebody stands up, other people will stand up. How did your teammates after this happened, how did they--? How did they respond? And the other team, you get any hard fouls that game?

**JONATHAN:**

Nahhh. I mean, I would say I got a-- It was a mix. I definitely was like walking around the bubble. There were people that, again, understood why I did what I did and respected me for that, even if they didn't agree. When you talk about my teammates at the time, again, it was tough.

It was a very emotionally charged situation. And some of my teammates were very involved, like going to the protests, very involved with the Black Lives Matter organization and movement. And just, you know, they had real feelings.

And so, the next day we have practice, and we're coming back from practice, and we're on the team bus, and I get a text message to my phone. "Hey, team only meeting when we get back to the hotel." So, I'm getting off of the bus, and one of my teammates, like, nudges me, like, hey, just heads up. This is about you. And so, we get to the team only meeting, and, you know, it's heated, man.

It's heated. Guys are like, you know, they felt that I was intentionally hijacking the movement or intentionally trying to make everything about me. And, you know, they're like, oh, we've got to answer questions about you and all this stuff. And, yeah, they kind of posited a question like, are you going to stand again? Because we play the next day.

Are you going to do this again? And, I was like, yeah. You know, I'm not going to kneel, guys. And again, it was that-- It was that energy of like, we're not going out then. Like, if you're going to be standing, like, I'm not kneeling next to you standing. Like, I'm not going to be on a picture or something like that. And so—

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**FRANK:**

Why not? If they believed in it, why not? Why wouldn't they?

**JONATHAN:**

I mean, I'm not sure, but I pretty much was just like, yeah, like, I respect you guys. Like, I'm not here to try to, you know, make a name for myself and disrespect you guys. I respect you guys' decisions to kneel. Like, I'm just looking for that same respect in return. I'm not-- I'm not protesting you guys kneeling by me standing. I'm just standing for what I believe in. And you guys are kneeling for what you believe in, so we can just, you know, let the cards fall where they may and kind of agree to disagree.

But after leaving that meeting, I was pretty kind of distraught because I was kind of like, I don't know if I'm doing the right thing. And is God pleased? Like, I just didn't know where I was, kind of. So, I called my pastor, and I'm like crying on the phone back at my hotel, like, I don't-- Did I make a mistake? Like, am I making this about me, kind of thing. And he reassured me, and was just like, look, you respect them. This isn't about Jonathan making a name for himself. He knew that. I knew that. And he gave me some reassurance, and I was able to, you know, find peace again.

**FRANK:**

Yeah. You also pointed out that the Black Lives Matter as an organization were supporting things you didn't agree with. Right? Destruction of the family, all the LGBTQ stuff. You know, they—

It wasn't just about—

Of course, everyone believes black lives matter. That's obvious. But the idea that somebody's trying to get through to me right now, and it ain't going to happen. Stand by. Hold on. I mean, it's not like you were saying black lives don't matter.

You obviously agree with that. In fact, it's-- I think sometimes you could look at it and say, some people say, well, black lives matter seems like a racist thing. Don't all lives matter? Of course

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they do. But of course, black lives do matter. Of course, according to the atheists, no lives matter. Right? [Laughter]

**JONATHAN:**

But that was a part of the-- That was a part of the craziness of it all, because I was like, hey, like-- So, a decision to kneel for the anthem or not kneel for the anthem, that sums up whether somebody believes that black lives are important?

And I was kind of coming from the place of that is not my kind of deciding factor of whether I believe that black lives matter or not. The work that I do in the community, those things are deciding factors on whether I believe black lives matter or not. And so, it was kind of just-- It was a rejection of this is the way that things need to be done in order to protect black lives or believe that black lives matter are important or not. And yeah.

**FRANK:**

Well, you stood for what you believed in, and you are right. The ultimate solution is the gospel. And unfortunately, a lot of people think that you were standing for some sort of self-promotion when that wasn't the case at all.

**JONATHAN:**

Right, right.

**FRANK:**

And so, it's all outlined in the book, by the way, 'Why I Stand', by Jonathan Isaac, my guest today, ladies and gentlemen. So, you may want to check that out. It's got great, great reviews for good reason. You can see Jonathan knows the Christian faith, and he stood for the Christian faith, and he stood for the real solution to our problems, which is the gospel, which is Jesus.

So, check the book out. We're going to have another segment with Jonathan right after the break, so don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek. Back after the break. The Apostle John in 1 John 2 said, don't love the world or anything in the world. All that is in the world is the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the

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boastful pride of life, sex, money, and power. Well, when you're in the NBA or in any big sports league, or you're a celebrity of any kind, those things are just flaunted in your face.

How do you resist them? You know, Jonathan, we're talking to Jonathan Isaac, forward for the Orlando Magic, a Christian. We've been talking about why he stood and his book, 'Why I Stand.' Jonathan, it's got to be the hardest in the NBA because you can't hide. You know, baseball players look like everybody else. Football players are behind a helmet. You know, hockey is not as big as basketball, but everybody knows who an NBA player is. You're a foot taller than everybody else. You can't hide.

They know when you know, you guys are in town, or the Magic are in town. I know what hotel they're in. Man, there's got to be girls, there's got to be money, there's got to be temptation. How do you deal with that? You've got a lot of downtime between games. You're going on the road. You're playing a night game, and then you're, maybe you play another game the next night. You've got a lot of downtime. What's going on at the hotel? How do you maintain your Christian walk?

**JONATHAN:**

Yes, it's been a process. It's been a process of growth, growing in my relationship with God, grace, and mercy, and time over time. I've had my fair share of battles in that area and continuing to grow as a man. Getting married, has been a huge, you know, point of correction, and accountability, and grace, and growth.

And so, it's definitely been a process. But as of now, it's just, you know, after this season finished, I've done a really big, kind of like life reset where I've been saying to myself, man, I just want to-- I kind of want to get away from everything, from everyone and just dive in, and really grow, and establish moreso.

And, yeah, just my relationship with Christ, and it's been an amazing time. And I think summers like this has been the difference in keeping me on track, getting me back on track, you know, having a church home, having accountability brothers, men of God that, you know, can share, and hold me accountable. I'm in therapy. That has been something that has really helped as well.

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And so, all of that together, has helped me to, you know, stay in the race, and not, you know, falter or give up, or go in the opposite direction.

**FRANK:**

Now, when you go on a road trip, can your family come with you or is that--? Do they not allow that?

**JONATHAN:**

I mean, they're absolutely allowed. It's just tough, you know. You know, a lot of our road trips are kind of quick, in and out. And then we're on to the next city. We're back to our home city. You know, I've got small, kids, you know, wife is at home holding down the fort.

So, it's just-- It's a monster. It's a difficult, you know, a set of circumstances to kind of always have to kind of, to always have guardrails up. And so, it is much of a point on myself, you know, to put no confidence in the flesh and to, you know, go into it, having guardrails and things that I'm doing in terms of like, you know, like, you know, one, not leaving the hotel.

I don't leave the hotel much when I get in. You know, people that I can call, people that I'm still talking to at times when I'm on the road, and then just being in the Word, you know? I've really upped as of late, my intake of the word and it is, you know, it's really helped. It's been fruitful.

**FRANK:**

Yeah. You mentioned the word monster. Reminds me of what Denzel Washington said. He said, fame is a monster.

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah.

**FRANK:**

Because it can consume you to think that you've got to please all these other people, and you've got to get attention all the time. And it's one of the big three: Sex, money, power as part

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of the fame issue. So, it's got to be hard man, doing what you're doing. I know, yeah, obviously, people are paid well to play in the NBA, but money ain't everything. I'll tell you. You can—

**JONATHAN:**

Absolutely. Absolutely not. Absolutely not. I have, you know, whenever I go around and I, you know, speak, or like talk to the youth and everything, it really is the same message. I have been, it's almost like, I'd say it's a blessing, even though it's been my greatest difficulty.

But I've been blessed to be able to receive, or to have access to what everybody in the world wants in terms of-- You talked about sex, money, power, fame, all of that. And I've been able to rest in the fact that I know it to be true, that it does not satisfy. I've seen it not satisfy people around me, and I've experienced it not satisfy myself. And so, that I know without a doubt. It's like, we have our struggles, and we may fail, and I may go in one direction or not.

But there's one thing that I know is that the world has nothing to truly offer, in a long term, you know, whatever, you know, in the long term. And so, I'm often humbled and brought back to man, I know what the truth is. It's the gospel. It's Christ. And that's what truly satisfies.

**FRANK:**

Amen. You're sounding a lot like Scotty Scheffler right now. The number one golfer in the world just had a press conference about the British Open, saying the same thing. Man, I win these tournaments. It's great for two minutes, and then I'm like, why am I even doing this?

You know? I mean, and he's a Christian too. He gets it. Well, something that grew out of the standing for Jesus, 'Why I Stand', the book by Jonathan Isaac. Also, you, Nike dropped you as a sponsor. You didn't have a shoe.

**JONATHAN:**

Right.

**FRANK:**

So, it turned out you created your own shoe, didn't you? Tell us about that, man.

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**JONATHAN:**

Yeah, so, you know, another big shout out to my pastor at the time of all this happening. I was signed to Nike. After I stood in the bubble, I tore my ACL.

I had a really big injury, and I had been sidelined for like two and a half years, two and a half seasons. And so, tore my ACL, had a really difficult time. But out of that, you know, I went to my pastor, I said, hey, I don't have a shoe brand. And when I get back healthy, you know, I could either possibly try to go back with Nike or go to Adidas or any of these other brands.

And he said, start your own. And I was kind of like, that doesn't make any sense. You know, that's why they have these brands. Players don't do that. He said, make your own. And that's how the Judah One and Unitus was born. And the Judah One is the first NBA signature sneaker with visible Bible verses on the outside.

**FRANK:**

To show you that I wanted to support Jonathan and what he's doing, I actually have a pair of Judah Ones. I actually love these. Look at the scripture on the back, ladies and gentlemen. That's Romans 8:31. And it's Judah because your middle name's Judah, right?

**JONATHAN:**

Yes, sir.

**FRANK:**

And also, the Tribe of Judah.

**JONATHAN:**

Yep. And so, yeah, so it's just grown. You know, it went from this idea of doing a shoe to why not create an entire brand centered around connecting people to Christ and keeping people connected to each other, you know, in the Christian faith.

So, I've been wearing these shoes on the NBA court all of last season. We're working on the Judah 2 right now, which I'm going to be wearing this upcoming season right now. But we've branched out into everyday walk around shoes, gear, you know, T-shirts, hoodies, you know,

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the whole nine, and you know, the desire is just to see it grow and have people have these touch points in their lives that keep them connected to Christ and to each other.

**FRANK:**

You know, given what Nike supports, I won't wear any of their stuff. You know, I mean, stuff I've always had, I still wear. Yeah. Like these Nike—

These are Nike glasses, but I've had them forever. But I won't buy any new Nike stuff just because of all the stuff that they're promoting.

**JONATHAN:**

Right.

**FRANK:**

And now with We Are Unitus, ladies and gentlemen, if you want to check Jonathan's line out, it's We Are, W - E - A - R - E Unitus, U - N - I - T - U - S.com. Check it out. He's actually got a Christian line of sportswear which I think is really cool. And it came right out of this whole, you're trying to unite people.

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah, yeah. Came out of this, this entire situation. And funny enough, you know, going through the time of injury and pleading kind of with God, like, where are you in all this? Like, this doesn't make any sense. I stood for you, and this happens, and I tear my ACL, and I tear my hamstring, and I tear my—

All these things were going on. It was really tough for me to stay standing, and I have so many people to thank for that. My wife, my church family, my pastor at the time, with just, you know, love and encouragement to keep me on this path.

But now getting to the other side of it, I'm back to playing. You know, we were able to write by the grace of God, a national best-selling book and to create the brand Unitus. So, it was like, God, I see what you were up to during this entire time. Not only the stuff you wanted to bring to pass, but what you wanted to do in me as well. And so, here we are.

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**FRANK:**

Well, you're doing it, man. It's great to see. Let me ask you this too, about, I mean, this is going to be year number nine for you in the NBA. You've gone through all these injuries. There's a lot of talent out there, man. How do you stay so competitive?

**JONATHAN:**

Shoot, these summers, man, being in the gym, you know, I finished a workout right before I hopped on with you. So, staying in the gym—

**FRANK:**

So, you're in the Orlando Magic gym right now? You're like—

**JONATHAN:**

Yeah, I stole one of the offices to knock this out. [Laughter]

**FRANK:**

And so, are you practicing with other teammates? Or just, like, how do you do it in the summer? What do you?

**JONATHAN:**

It's just individual right now. Everybody's really all over the place in the summer. And then towards the September end of August, we start to get together and you know, start working on everything.

**FRANK:**

All right. And it's got to be. of the four big sports, it's got to be the most competitive because you got the smallest roster.

**JONATHAN:**

Yep.

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**FRANK:**

And, you know, like, you know baseball. Yeah, baseball, you know, you got 25-- What's that?

**JONATHAN:**

I've seen 60 new players coming in every year too.

**FRANK:**

Yeah. Yeah. It's got to be hard. And everything you do is on tape, as we said earlier. But you're still feeling good. You're still feeling like you're, you got a few more years left in you?

**JONATHAN:**

I do. I do. I think this year for me is going to be really, really good. And just for our team as well, I feel like we're really in a position to have a really great big season.

**FRANK:**

So, you got the Magic this year. Magic's going to have the magic this year. Mark it down, ladies and gentlemen.

**JONATHAN:**

Absolutely.

**FRANK:**

Hey, last thing before we go. I don't know if you can say this or not but tell me if you can or can't. Who else should we be rooting for in the NBA who's a Christian? Anybody come to mind?

**JONATHAN:**

Oh, yeah, there's absolutely. A.J. Green, he plays for Milwaukee. I don't know if Miles is playing this year, but you've got Miles Plumlee. Tyrese Halliburton has been really growing in his faith as of—

**FRANK:**

Oh, man, he's good, too.

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**JONATHAN:**

Really, really good.

**FRANK:**

But he's going to be out with the Achilles.

**JONATHAN:**

Yep. Unfortunately. He'll be fine. He'll be fine. Him. Shoot, there's a couple more that I'm blanking on.

**FRANK:**

Well, we got Jonathan Isaac anyway, bro. Check him out. And check him out at [Weareunitus.com](http://Weareunitus.com) That's his website. [Weareunitus.com](http://Weareunitus.com). We'll put it in the show notes. Jonathan, great having you on, brother.

**JONATHAN:**

Thank you, man.

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