

How to Demolish Your Christian Doubts with Cliffe & Stuart Knechtle @givemeananswer

July 17, 2026

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, do you have doubts about the Christian Faith? Are you 100% certain that Christianity is true? In fact, can you be 100% certain that Christianity is true? And if you do have doubts, how can you use those doubts to actually get answers and be secure in what you believe so you can be a better ambassador for others as well? Well, you know, I've been on college campuses for a little over 20 years, but our guest today and his son have been on college campuses.

The main guest, the father here, has been on since the 1980s, ladies and gentlemen. You've seen them. Their website is Give Me An Answer. And his son, when he started to talk to his dad about doing this, he's like, dad, I don't know if I want to go on college campuses. Well, he's been doing it for at least a decade now. They are Cliffe and Stuart Knechtle. And here they are, ladies and gentlemen, all the way. Enough with the audience. All the way from New Canaan, Connecticut.

And the new book, by the way, they've put together, I have it in Kindle. It's called *Demolishing Doubt. Demolishing Doubt: Discover How Your Deepest Questions Can Lead to Life-Giving Faith*. It's always great to see Cliffe and Stuart. They do such great work out there. As I say, Cliffe, you've been on college campus since, what, 1981? How far back do we go?

CLIFFE:

1980.

FRANK:

1980. Now I'm sitting near Charlotte, North Carolina right now. And you went on a basketball scholarship.

You inspired Steph Curry to go to Davidson, I'm sure. Cause you were—

CLIFFE:

I was not on a basketball scholarship. I was a walk-on.



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FRANK:

Oh, you were.

CLIFFE:

Thank you, though, Frank.

FRANK:

All right, all right. So you went to Davidson, which is like an hour north of where I'm sitting right now, and then you ran into a man by name of Leighton Ford, who was somehow related to Billy Graham. Explain that connection.

CLIFFE:

Billy Graham's brother-in-law is Leighton Ford. Leighton was married to Jeannie, Billy's sister.

FRANK:

Okay, but he was a minister himself, wasn't he?

CLIFFE:

Yes, correct. Evangelist on the Billy Graham team.

FRANK:

And how did you meet him? From Davidson College. How did that happen?

CLIFFE:

Mom and dad had worked with Billy Graham on the 1954 or Six Crusade in New York City. And so when we went down there, mom and dad introduced me to Leighton and Jean.

FRANK:

All right, and so when you came to Davidson, he was in the area already. And was he your mentor? Like, what happened?

CLIFFE:

Well, they invited me over one Sunday, and at the end of the Sunday, they said, we'll see you hopefully next week.

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And then that Sunday they said, we'll hopefully see you next week. And, they became like a family away from home for me while I was at Davidson College, and I spent the weekends with them.

FRANK:

You spent the weekends with Leighton Ford, a great evangelist and brother in law of Billy Graham. And then how did you go from Davidson to going to college campuses out on the quad answering difficult questions?

CLIFFE:

Well, Leighton encouraged me to go to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. So I did for three years, got my Master of Divinity there.

And then I went through the door that God opened to get to the most non Christians, which was InterVarsity Christian Fellowship doing evangelism on the Boston College campuses. So that's where I started. But I got real frustrated because the only people who came to the meetings that I spoke at in college dorm lounges were Christians. And so I decided to leave InterVarsity because I was not going to spend my life telling Christians how to accept Christ. When Leighton, who had been speaking at the University of Arizona, saw a hellfire brimstone preacher stand up and tell all the students they were going to hell in a handcart. And he said, Cliffe, why don't you go out and present both the love and the truth of Christ?

So, brother, 46 years ago, on the beaches of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, when everybody's out there sunbathing during spring break, and InterVarsity had a beach evangelism project. I stood up and began to preach, and students hopped off their towels and started interrupting and firing questions at me. And so I scrapped my outline and started answering their questions. And after about an hour, I said, my voice is tired. I'll see you all later. And I went back to the hotel where the InterVarsity staff and students were, and they said, hey, Cliffe, would you try this on our campus? And I did. And I haven't stopped.

FRANK:

And how did you learn all the apologetic answers? Was it by necessity, or did you take classes in apologetics?

CLIFFE:

No, it was by necessity. Beginning in about middle school, we lived in a very secular part of the nation, Connecticut, and people challenged my faith on a regular basis. And then at Davidson

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College, people challenged my faith regularly. And then on into Gordon Conwell Seminary. I would go down to inner city Boston and work among the homeless and work with guys on vacation down there trying to hook up with a prostitute. And so I began to have to think through the issues. And then I went on staff with InterVarsity and I was asked a lot of questions.

I didn't have the foggiest answer, foggiest idea how to answer. And so I went to the university staff workers and said, guys, I can't answer that question. How would you answer it? And slowly, I built a pool of knowledge up from these InterVarsity staff workers, InterVarsity Press books, and other books like your great book on I'm, can't have enough faith to be an atheist, and built up a pool of answers to those questions.

FRANK:

Now, Stuart, what was it like growing up in this family? Your dad was on the road a lot. Get in the car, go to a university. Could be hours and hours away. What was it like growing up in that kind of home?

STUART:

Yeah, the two top reasons so many kids leave the faith of pastors. So pastors kids are, one, because the pastor's always gone, or they're hanging out with just the congregants. And then two, they're really hypocritical. And they're preaching one thing, living the other. And so I was fortunate enough to have a dad who strongly avoided both of those. I think probably a lot of the influence came from Leighton and the Billy Graham's.

And so that level of consistency of character. Sadly, we see so many spiritual leaders fall in this day and age. I think a lot of that has to probably do with the unhealthy or just lack of a devotional life. And so I got to grow up seeing him have a really healthy devotional life. I remember he would tell me of Gordon-Conwell. He would study until what, 9:30 every evening, and then he'd put the books away and he'd go out underneath the stars and pray and just have memorizing scripture for two hours straight. And so the discipline there is one that my other spiritual hero, Tim Keller, also really put in place.

So seeing that I was really lucky to have kind of those different forms of dynamics of spirituality, that helped a lot.

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FRANK:

And what made it that you wanted to go to college campuses? Because in the book you were kind of reluctant to go do that. What was it you said, well, I'll go with dad and maybe I can do some of this too?

STUART:

Yeah, I think when we started a little bit of a youth group out of their basement and like he mentioned, it's such a secular town in Connecticut, tremendously wealthy, and I see these kids who are all about all kinds of drugs and hooking up and just confused with their gender and that sort of thing.

All of a sudden they would come, they would join and ask these tough questions. And that's the only thing that would lead them actually to really our home or to any type of church-related thing. And so I saw that there was a real impact, and I grew a real passion for that. And then it's interesting, Frank, you and I were talking about Nova Scotia randomly. I was not a reader, let's just put it that way. But randomly, I remember those drives. I started to really like apologetics, theology, church history books.

And I would read the entire 16 hours. And it was especially one summer. So I think that was the second thing that really juiced me up. And then I thought, wow, there's a real connection here to our church and being a pastor. So why would I be missing a big opportunity, to spread the gospel in general and also connect to our church in town if I didn't do this?

FRANK:

Yeah. For those who don't know, Pastor Cliffe and Pastor Stuart are pastors of Grace Community Church in New Canaan, Connecticut. So they're pastors first before they're campus folks.

They're preaching every Sunday or teaching every Sunday, and then they go out to campuses and start with a very short, maybe talk on something and then it's Q and A the rest of the way. And their YouTube channel and Instagram page has exploded. Stuart, you're probably most responsible for that, making sure that got up and going. But, Cliffe, what's changed over the past four decades in terms of questions that are being asked on a college campus?

How's it changed from, say, the 80s to now where we are in 2026?

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CLIFFE:

The questions have not changed that much, but the emotional aura has. People are more emotionally fragile today than they were in the 80s and 90s, so I've had to be more sensitive and not be such a harsh guy and a boneheaded guy. So it's been good for me to, grow emotionally and seeking to connect with them. I mean, it gets real quiet whenever I talk about how many of you have come from homes that have been split wide open by divorce and, you know, the pain and the alienation of divorce.

So the emotional fragility has increased since the 80s and 90s. Secondly, there is a greater commitment to agnosticism than I've ever seen before. I mean, a lot of nice people will say, well, Cliffe, this makes a lot of sense. And I say, well, great. Are you ready to put your faith in Christ? And they say, well, no, no, no, not too fast. I just really don't know. I think I'm still agnostic. And I try and point out the impossibility of agnosticism, but there is a pretty firm commitment to agnosticism in the minds of a lot of students, a lot of people these days.

So that has definitely grown.

FRANK:

We're going to cover a lot more with Cliffe and Stuart Knechtle and their brand new book, *Demolishing Doubt*, that you're going to want to get. We're going to get into some details right after the break. Don't go anywhere.

Ladies and gentlemen, I just got back from Washington, D.C. We did our second spiritual tour of the Capitol with Speaker Mike Johnson, and let me tell you, he was on fire for number two. You're going to see some of the video come out in the ensuing weeks. Because he really is fired up about what's going on in Washington and how Christians have to get involved. It's kind of crazy that it seems like almost the Democrat Party is going socialism, maybe even communism.

And, Mike Johnson has a lot to say about that. For those of you who don't know, he's an historian and also an attorney that for many years worked for the Alliance Defending Freedom, which is a group of attorneys that pro bono go out and protect religious freedom. We'll talk more about that in a future podcast, but keep an eye on the YouTube channel because we're going to start releasing the video of Mike Johnson explaining the spiritual aspects of the Capitol to us. We've got better video and better audio than we had last time, so keep an eye on that.

Today though, we're talking about *Demolishing Doubt*, the brand new book by Cliffe and Stuart Knechtle. Here it is in Kindle, ladies and gentlemen. I've been going through this very fine book.

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It's very well written and it covers the major issues very well. But Cliffe, before the break, we were talking about that the kind of the attitude has changed. You say people are much more emotionally fragile now and then secondly, you said agnosticism. People want to kind of remain on the fence. Anything else has changed in the past 40 or 45 years?

CLIFFE:

Well, sure, there's even a deeper commitment to relativism. And the way it's shown to me often is, Cliffe, don't you dare tell me how to live my life. And I'm not going to have God tell me how to live my life. Morality is relative. And ethnocentrism, the whole idea that culture defines reality and don't allow your culture to force on you and then on me your ethical system, that's bigoted and narrow-minded and intolerant. So moral relativism and relativism in general has become more firmly entrenched.

And that's also then obviously shown in, I really don't know who I am. I don't know whether I'm male or female. I don't know whether I'm a fox or a squirrel or a monkey. And you know, that's fascinating. But it's a logical conclusion of everything's relative and you create reality in your head. So the statement perception defines reality is bantered about more and more, which of course is totally wrong. If I perceive that I am a Hulk, that doesn't change the fact that I'm a skinny 72 year-old guy. I'm not a Hulk. But you know, it's a logical conclusion of you create reality in your own head.

FRANK:

I don't know, when you go into the Knechtle stance, I think, I think that people sometimes think you're like going to Hulk them, like jump on them or something. That's actually in the book, ladies and gentlemen. Stuart, explain the Knechtle stance, would you?

STUART:

It's very hard to explain Frank. It's near impossible. We had a couple too many Heineken's one night and that just came about that way. No, I—

CLIFFE:

Wait a second. Not we, you.

STUART:

No, no, don't clip that. So I, we. That's a good question. So it was totally at random. First of all, the stances are him. I think it's hilarious with the stance Frank, because especially. He doesn't get any more because it's mainly Christians out there now. And it's because people get it now

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because they see what it is. But for years, a strong, angry atheist would say, don't you get down in that crouch.

Don't you stance me like that. How offensive of you. And I just thought that was the funniest thing, because now it's one of the most positive things that you can do, I guess, because it kind of promotes sharing the gospel. Like, all right, get ready to share the gospel kind of thing. So he was doing that. I had this random one where I guess I kind of did the splits in this video at UConn with this girl who was very passionate, I guess she was. Everybody there was calling her a Karen. But, so I really got tired and I just did the splits.

You know, we stretch a lot because we play basketball. And so that kind of turned into my, I guess, gospel stance. And so there were, like 20 million views on that. Everybody just, you know, commenting. What is bro doing in that Gen Z kind of language? So that's how it started. And it was very random. We were at Mar-a-Lago, actually. And we were in tuxes. And I think we had done it once, and there were a few people were like, oh, that's really funny. And so I had us do it again in front of these palm trees.

And a friend just took a picture, and that's the one, I guess that went really viral. Us in tuxes.

FRANK:

We got to put that on screen. We'll put, we'll insert it on screen so people can see. But, no, this really developed, Cliffe, from you being on campus out there for hours and hours. You don't sit down. And if your back's hurting you a little bit, right. You kind of got to get. You kind of have to widen your legs and get down a little bit, stretch out your back. But people think you're —

CLIFFE:

Exactly. Thank you.

FRANK:

Yeah. People think you're about to, like, pounce on them, you know, as you're listening, CLIFFE: I'm loosening my lower back, Frank.

FRANK:

Yeah. So you got to. You got to modify that, too, because you don't want to overcome a snowflake and have the snowflake melt in front of you. I get that. I get that. So, how have you had to adapt, then, to answer questions. I mean, do you ever get annoyed when people, ask a question that maybe is self-defeating or maybe is overly sensitive?

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Like, how do you hold back to prevent yourself from really coming out too strong?

CLIFFE:

Too many times I've had to ask for forgiveness for losing my temper, for coming on too strong, for being too intense. And that's been one of the areas the Holy Spirit has changed me most over the years. Not losing it as many times as I used to. So an example would be Brown University. A student comes walking down the walkway saying, oh, here's another one of those narrow minded fundamentalist evangelicals out here telling us we all need to be saved by Jesus.

And I shot back, yeah, and here's another one of those narrow minded, bigoted Ivy League students who hadn't heard a word I've said but has stereotyped me. I thought that was blind prejudice. Well, fortunately, he didn't leave. He sat in front of the crowd and the Holy Spirit convicted me of my berating him in an inappropriate way. And so I turned to him and said, man, I lost my cool with you. I am very sorry. Would you please forgive me? And I was shocked. The guy looks me in the face and says, yes, Cliffe, I forgive you, and let's keep on talking. But I've had to continue to grow in that area, Frank, a lot.

FRANK:

Although I will say that Jesus, he hammered people pretty hard sometimes, particularly Matthew chapter 23, and he never apologized, so.

CLIFFE:

Thank you, Frank. I'm indebted to you, brother, already.

FRANK:

Maybe that guy deserve that. Well, speak to that, Stuart, because you talk about this in the book. You talk about moral relativism, but the same moral relativists who will call you intolerant are assuming that being intolerant is wrong. So how do you turn that back on them? You, know, how do you, how do you point out that they have a moral standard as well?

STUART:

Yeah, it's interesting. The ones that cry loudest for tolerance or the most intolerant of all. And so I typically go the route of, hey, look, that's a judgment. And the only verse I ever hear you guys quote, which you probably don't know is a Bible verse, is out of Matthew chapter seven: do not judge, lest you be judged. Well, that's tremendously intolerant of you. You think you're being

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tolerant by saying, hey, nobody should judge out here, but what standard are you truly stating that by? And I think you clearly do have a standard that you have set up.

And so we talked a lot with your close friend, obviously, Charlie Kirk, about that. That was kind of the main topic, I want to say we talked about with moral relativism, along those lines. And it breaks down for most students. They start to eventually catch it because you just say you're either individually coming up with that yourself and it's subjective, or it's coming from the culture, or it's coming from those who are in authority and in power. And eventually you get to the point of saying, I think all of those are ridiculous. You know, that there is a law above the law.

Like Martin Luther King Jr. talked about, that there's true moral oughts, shoulds, and duties. And so they usually get to that point. But I remember one guy at Texas State, he would. He went along the lines, of that type of thinking, and he said, yeah, Jesus is basically what I determine him to be. And so we have a website that's called I pissed on Jesus.com. and I thought he was kidding, but he has a, there was like a whole ministry and website that obviously was making fun of Jesus.

It was actually Jesus Pissed on Me. They were trying to say that that was baptism, schizophrenic type, morality type identity. But basically he was saying the idea of Jesus is totally subjective. And you guys aren't talking about a historical objective Jesus. It's all made up in our minds. So this is how we think of him.

FRANK:

Wow, I wouldn't want to be that guy on Judgment Day. I mean, I was talking to our mutual friend. You probably know Cliff Freitas. He's a former Green Beret and also an apologist and former Virginia delegate.

We were talking recently. I asked him the question, you know, if there's one thing that Christian that non Christians you, or that you would want non Christians to know about Christianity other than it was true, what would it be? And he basically went on to talk about the gospel, that Jesus came to earth to take our punishment upon himself, and by trusting in him, you can not only be forgiven, but given his righteousness and it's a total free gift. And we talked further and I said, now why would anybody not want that to be true?

Like, why? That's the most beautiful thing ever to sacrifice yourself to save somebody else. We all recognize that. Why wouldn't anybody not want that to be true? And I think it goes back to

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what you said, Cliffe, is that people don't want, despite the fact that that is a invitation to eternal bliss, they don't want God to interfere with what they want to do right now. So how do you deal with that?

CLIFFE:

Well, I am going to be taking more and more the line of thinking the following. You tell me that morality is relative, which means that Jesus Christ is not the truth. He's not the Savior, he's not the Lord. It's all relative. You just created in your head. Was Abraham Lincoln and the Northern troops ethnocentric when they had the arrogance and audacity to fight the South in the Civil War in order to free slaves from slavery?

In other words? What I'm doing, Frank, is I'm trying to find common ground. Every liberal, every conservative, every atheist, every secularist has a conscience. And I'm convinced that the conscience informs us that there is a right and there is a wrong. And once I begin to grapple with the fact that, oh yeah, it wasn't just ethnocentrism on the part of Abraham Lincoln in the North to fight the Civil War in order to free the slaves. It was justice. It was goodness. Then I've got to go to the next step, which is, okay, I've never owned a slave, but I, as a white American have had subtle racist attitudes.

I've never stolen a lot of money from a bank, but I have been greedy. And therefore I'm not this wonderful person that I wish you all would believe that I am. I am a dirty rotten sinner in reality, which means I need help. I need a savior. I need Jesus Christ. But if you take sin out of the equation and if you take and if you replace sin with moral relativism, then I don't need a savior. I don't need anybody's help. I'm a self sufficient, autonomous American male. I'm an all American. I can do it on my own. And I don't need anybody to interfere with me and intervene in my life and that'll block me from Christ and his love and his sacrificial death on the cross.

FRANK:

How do you get over that attitude? We're going to discuss it right after the break with Cliffe and Stuart Knechtle. The brand new book, *Demolishing Doubt*. And by the way, can doubt lead you in a good direction? We'll talk about it right after the break. Don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist.

AD:

Could you answer this question? Why doesn't God let everyone into heaven? Or do all religions get you to heaven? Well, Frank Turek can. And now you can. Watch him tackle the toughest questions from his latest college tour appearance.

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See real students challenge Frank and watch how truth stands up under pressure. Subscribe to our Cross Examined YouTube channel right now to watch. That's Cross Examined two words on YouTube and sharpen your faith for the real world.

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen. I didn't know how amazing the Bible was until I started to study the intricacies of typology and prophecy. And we unfold all that in the brand new course The Bible You Never Knew. It starts August 3rd. If you take the premium version, you're going to be live with me on several occasions for live Q and A Zoom sessions. The Bible You Never Knew will revolutionize the way you look at the Bible because Jesus said the Old Testament was all about him.

Really? The entire Old Testament was all about him? How could it be all about him? Find out in the course The Bible You Never Knew. I'll be your instructor. Today we're talking about demolishing doubt by my friends Cliffe and Stuart Knechtle. They've been on college campuses, at least Cliffe has, since the 1980s. Stuart started, doing the same with his dad a little over a decade ago, and they've written this brand new book. They have a great YouTube channel and a great website.

The website is give me an answer dot org. Give me an answer dot org. Stuart, what's the YouTube channel?

STUART:

Give me an answer with Stuart and Cliffe Knechtle.

FRANK:

Give me an answer with Stuart and Cliffe Knechtle. By the way, Knechtle, K N E C H T L E. You need to know that. And Cliffe, let's talk about the fact that the, the book *Demolishing Doubt* talks a little bit about a hundred percent certainty. I know you've been asked on college campuses quite a bit, are you 100% certain that Christianity is true?

How do you answer?

CLIFFE:

No, I am not 100% sure that Christianity is true. My doubts are shown every day when I sin. Because when I sin, what I'm saying is, God, I think I have a better idea on how to be happy than

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you do. And therefore I trust myself to be the definer of right and wrong. And for me, I think that's an expression of doubt. I doubt God's goodness, I doubt his wisdom, I doubt his power. And I think that I have a better way of doing it. So I doubt. Now, my wife disagrees with me.

She says, no, I think that's your own sinful nature. And I am 100% sure, she says, for me, I can't go that path. And the reason I can't is, at times I wonder, does this unseen God, I believe in really exist? And so I do struggle with doubt at times. But then that forces me to go back to the evidence. And when I consider the evidence of the order and design of the universe, the evidence of the experience of love that I have, the evidence of the experience of reason that I have, then I begin to realize, oh, no, no, no.

Reason doesn't come from non-reason. Meaning doesn't come from matter, and design does not come from chaos. It's far more reasonable to believe that in the beginning God than it is to believe in the beginning hydrogen. When I doubt the resurrection of Christ, often what I have to do is, for instance, as a pastor, when I'm standing over a casket that we're about to lower into the ground, and I'm telling the family on the other side of the casket, because this person put their faith in Christ, you're going to see him one day. And because you put your faith in Christ, you're going to see him one day in heaven.

At times I doubt. I say, are you sure, Cliffe, that that's the truth? But then all I got to do is I got to just look up at the heaven and the sky and the cosmos, and then I begin to realize, you know, the evidence is there's an intelligent mind behind this massive, massive, gigantic universe. If God created the universe, do you think he can raise a dead body back to life? Of course he can. That's peanuts compared to creating the universe. It's like me saying to a woman who bakes a loaf of bread from scratch, can you toast a bagel?

Well, of course she can toast a bagel. She just put a loaf of bread together from scratch. Well, if God created the universe, he can definitely raise a dead body back to life. And the resurrection of Christ clearly points to that being true. And that's why faith in Christ is so important. So, yes, I am certain that Christ is the truth. Yes, I am certain that God exists. Do I struggle with doubt? Yes, I do struggle with doubt at times. And then I'm driven back to consider the alternatives. I'm driven back to consider the evidence.

FRANK:

Stuart, the book talks a lot about proof and evidence and faith. Can you kind of distinguish between those? So, our audience can understand what we mean by faith, because a lot of people today think faith. And this is actually, we use this definition in *I Don't Have Enough Faith*

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to Be an Atheist. The atheist definition is if you don't have evidence, you have faith, you know it's blind even against the evidence. That's not the biblical version of faith. Can you explain that, Stuart?

STUART:

Yeah, Mark Twain said that faith begins where reason leaves off And that's clearly.

Jesus was an evidentialist. He said that, my goodness, if you don't believe the words that I'm saying, believe in the evidence from the miracles alone. And you have doubting Thomas. Clearly Jesus is stating, okay, you talked with your friends, they gave you all the evidence in the world. Now I'm giving you DNA evidence. Then stop doubting and believe. And atheists love to pick on that and say, oh yeah, doubting Thomas. See, he just calls him and shames him for his doubt. But that's not looking contextually at all. It's missing the whole crux of the very issue right there.

So proof I don't believe you can prove next to anything. Number one, maybe 0.01% of things in the universe, can you truly prove? It's probably a couple mathematical principles. Number two, we would all have different definitions of proof. Everybody thinks, oh, there's one definition, but I guarantee you we'd have definition, different definitions. And so there'd be a type of proofism perhaps instead of this strong proof. And the definition of it is silly to say that it's a consensus of. Other religions claim that they have proof when it comes to their holy book.

I don't think that they have proof that their holy book is truly the word of God. Next, when it comes to evidence, there is historical evidence, there's different forms of philosophical evidence. So there's different areas of evidence. But basically it's a matter of calculating what you see connects closest to reality and then saying, okay, that's most livable intellectually, experientially and culturally, emotionally.

I would take those categories. So it has to fit your experience. You know Blaise Pascal, like you were talking about earlier, Frank. Blaise Pascal said, you can't lead anybody to the Christian faith until they find it attractive. Because they're not even going to get close to agreeing with the evidence. And so the emotional side, I have a psychology background and emotionally it has, is there evidence behind. Is this emotionally fit? Second, culturally, how do you get justice? How to get moral oughts and shoulds or not? Does it break down at kind of the justice level, the moral ethical level, and then the philosophical level and then the historical level?

So you have to work through the evidence when looking at a worldview. And then, so you said proof, evidence. Oh, and then you said faith.

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FRANK:

Faith, yeah. How do you define faith?

STUART:

Yeah, faith. I would say a lot of it has to do with belief. And when you're looking at belief, you have to go back to, okay, when I'm looking and deciding on whether to take this multivitamin or this powder that they're calling creatine or this Advil tablet, am I going to just say, oh, blindly, I just believe, even though there's no directions, there's no labeling on this bottle?

Or am I going to say, no, the evidence behind something like taking this Advil is the FDA, and we see the labeling here, so I'm going to take it. And I'm being totally paranoid if I can't get on board with, there's strong evidence here that this is not going to kill me, but it's actually going to help my back pain. And so that's where your belief truly is. There's obviously a gap between here's the strong evidence and here's me taking it. No, it's going to be a belief based off of the evidence where I will finally commit volitionally to take the tablet.

FRANK:

So you're trusting in what the evidence is showing you. And I heard you say this once, Cliffe, maybe you can unpack it further. You said to prove something means it couldn't be any other way. Like, obviously, two plus two equals four. Couldn't be any other number. There are mathematical proofs. But is it possible that Jesus didn't rise from the dead? Like, could it be another way?

CLIFFE:

Anything is possible, Frank. Maybe I'm a bad dream you're having right now.

It is possible. But due to the fact that the overwhelming evidence is I'm not a dream you're having right now, we are having this conversation. You continue to take me seriously and speak rationally and thoughtfully to me. I would argue that we all base our lives on evidence. So I would define biblical faith as evidence plus commitment. I can have all the evidence in the world, but if I don't make a commitment, that evidence does no good for me. So faith is evidence of reliability plus commitment.

And we all have faith. Every single human being has faith. Meaning by that, none of us can prove that our answers to the question, why are human beings valuable? What is the meaning and purpose of life? What's the basis of ethics? And is there life after death or not? All of us

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have answers to those questions. None of them we can prove. The question is, what's the evidence that the way you answer those four questions is accurate and reliable. And I'm convinced that due to the historical evidence of his lifestyle, his teachings, his death and his resurrection, it is a no-brainer.

Jesus Christ is reliable in a way that none of the options are.

FRANK:

The first few chapters of *Demolishing Doubt* ladies and gentlemen, give some of the arguments for God. Because there has to be a God before there can be a resurrection. Jesus couldn't have resurrected from the dead if there is no God. But then, Stuart, the book goes into four reasons that you think the New Testament is historically reliable. Why don't we, we can't go into a lot of detail here, but why don't you list the four?

We'll talk about a couple of them before the break and then we'll go and come back. What are the four?

STUART:

Frank, you're going to have to remind me.

FRANK:

Oh, okay. You know, here's the problem with writing books, ladies and gentlemen. No, I agree with you 100% because you write a book and it's almost a year before it comes out. And then when you do an interview, you go, what did I write? I can't remember. Right. Well, one of them is an internal test, another is an external test.

Why don't we start with those two? And then there's two others. Go ahead.

STUART:

Those are ones you've literally been using since 1980.

CLIFFE:

That's right.

STUART:

All right, so why don't you give those are your four tests.

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CLIFFE:

Four tests are, first of all, internal consistency. Are there contradictions within this supposed historical account that show us that there's massive confusion? No. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. No contradictions. Different perspectives. Absolutely, yes. No contradictions. Second test, literary style.

Is the literary style of the document, once upon a time in the land of Nod, Wink and Blinken, and I took a boat ride. That's obviously fairytale, mythology. Once upon a time. No. The Gospels are at this time in this place with these people around. Jesus said this and did that. The third test is archaeology. Did Jesus float a boat on the island on the Sea of Atlantis? No. He floated a boat on the Sea of Galilee. Archaeologically verifiable places. Are Bethlehem and Nazareth archaeologically verifiable towns? Yes, they are.

And then the fourth test is, do we have the manuscript evidence that points to the reliability of the documents? Yes, we do for the New Testament. Five thousand eight hundred Greek manuscripts or pieces of manuscripts, all agreeing to an infinitesimal degree. We have overwhelming manuscript evidence that we don't have a perfect document with no variants. No, there are many variants, but they're so small, they're so inconsequential that we can be very certain we have an accurate historical picture of Jesus.

FRANK:

And by the way, ladies and gentlemen, what Cliffe just said there at the end, even Bart Ehrman would agree with the recently retired skeptical New Testament scholar from UNC Chapel Hill. He essentially admits that the manuscript evidence allows us to reconstruct what the New Testament writers really wrote. Now, did they really write what was true? That's another question. We'll cover some of that right after the break. Because we want to demolish your doubt. The book is *Demolishing Doubt* by the Knechtles, Cliffe and Stuart Knechtle. Check out their website, give me an answer.

We're back right after the break. Ladies and gentlemen, doubts. How can doubts actually be a good thing? Doesn't the Bible say we ought not doubt? We don't want to be tossed to and fro? He who doubts is a double minded man. But in what sense can doubts actually be a good thing? Well, we're talking to my friends Cliffe and Stuart Knechtle. The new book *Demolishing Doubt: Discover How Your Deepest Questions Can Lead to Life-Giving Faith*.

Forward is by the great Josh McDowell. Stuart, I don't know if you remember this part of the book, but hopefully you do. We're going to be busting on Stuart from now on. This, I might

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know this book better than you do, Stuart. For those of you just tuning in, I asked Stuart a question in the last segment and dad had to jump in and say, Stuart, you forgot that section. I wrote that section, so let me handle it.

But—

STUART:

The 72-year-old's old's memory is better than the 38-year-old.

FRANK:

That's right.

CLIFFE:

No way. Thank you.

FRANK:

Tell us, tell us about the value of doubt, especially if you treat doubt properly. Go.

STUART:

Yeah. In the book I give an illustration on how in order to protect your body from cancer, you're going to want to have good antibodies. And just like protecting yourself from cancer, in order to protect your strong faith, hopefully that you've developed, you're going to have to have some type of antibodies to protect that faith.

And those antibodies typically for me at least are a form of doubt and questioning because then you grow in your faith getting those questions answered. And when that happens, then you're not going to be shocked or blown away when somebody says, oh, yeah, well why did my uncle just die of cancer, who I was very close to and so you can help them work through the issue of suffering rather than it causing your faith to be eaten away by cancer. So that type of questioning is really, really important. But that's the healthy doubt in getting after the questions.

The unhealthy is the typical atheist who claims just to be a truth seeker, truth seeking agnostic, when really he's saying, oh no, I'm just doubting. And yet he'll fire 10 questions at you at once. And you can tell it's an emotional thing, not an intellectual thing at all.

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FRANK:

Yeah, that's why I always ask them, if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian? And a lot of times they hesitate or they say no. And if that's the case, it's not really an intellectual problem. It's a heart problem.

It's not a head problem; it's a heart problem. In fact, our mutual friend Gary Habermas has said this. He would have people call him. This still happens to him. People call him with doubts. And, a lot of times they call him and they say, hey, Gary, I'm having some doubts lately. I've been thinking lately. And he's found in almost every case when people say that, not all cases, but in almost every case when they say I've been thinking, what they really mean is I've been sinning.

And that drives them away from Christianity for volitional reasons. They don't want it to be true. This isn't the case always, but Gary's found that out quite a bit. And those are the hardest ones to deal with because no answer is going to solve their problem, because answers aren't what they're looking for. They're looking more for autonomy. And Cliffe, I remember you saying this, maybe in one of the podcasts we did a year or two ago, that a lot of the atheists will come up to you and say, I'm a person of evidence.

I've got to have evidence before I believe anything. And then you often question them about their worldview. And what have you found?

CLIFFE:

I ask two questions. Who or what are you living for? And secondly, what is the evidence that whoever or whatever you're living for is true? And the answers that I get to those two questions are so poorly thought through, so threadbare, it is scary. I'll never forget being invited to be at a class at Columbia University. They were discussing Calvin and Zwingli's view of war.

And after the class I walked out with a professor who was a postdoc student from London, England. I said, professor, you were magnificent. Thank you for inviting me to your class. Now, let me ask you, who or what are you living for, and what's the evidence? And this brilliant guy, Columbia University professor, looks me in the face and says, please don't ask me that question. That's scary. That is really scary. The unexamined life is not worth living. Meaning by that. If you don't have the honesty to face what you are living for and ask the hard questions, why on earth am I living for whatever it is I'm living for?

You are a hurting pup, that's for sure. Now, to help people understand that you are living for something, an idol or God or some gods, I like to encourage people to ask themselves, what do I

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sacrifice the most time, money, and effort for? That's your idol. That's your God. Secondly, who or what defines the purpose of my life? My meaning in life? That's your God. Whoever or whatever it is that defines your meaning and purpose in life, that's your idol.

That's your God. A third point would be, who writes your philosophy of life? Who writes your values? Whoever does that. That's your idol. That's your God. So we all have idols. We all have a God of some type. The question is, what's the evidence that whatever idol you believe in, you trust in, is reliable? What's the evidence that whatever God you believe in is reliable and trustworthy?

FRANK:

Yeah, I think you may have said this before, correct me if I'm wrong, that many of the people that you talk to have a really high bar to believe in Christianity.

Cliffe, you're going to really have to give me a lot of evidence before I become a Christian. But when you ask them about what evidence they have for their worldview. How high is the bar? Cliffe?

CLIFFE:

It's really, really low. So you're confronted by a double standard. We got one standard for Jesus, and then we got the other standard that we apply to whoever or whatever we want to live for. It's incredible double. think. So, Stuart, your dad says, hey, you know, you've, you got to have evidence for what you believe. You should have evidence for what you believe.

How do we know the New Testament writers just didn't invent this whole resurrection thing?

STUART:

Well, one way is you just look at the different names that are mentioned, which are footnotes written as historical nonfiction. So Alexander and Rufus, for example, Malchus, Simon of Cyrene. Many names are not mentioned, but the ones that are would have been the ones who are known in the community. And basically, the writers of the Gospels would say, go check with them then if you don't believe what we're stating.

So I believe even the 500 in 1 Corinthians 15, even the 500. When Paul talks about some have fallen asleep, meaning some have died. Well, he's saying, go check with those who have not fallen asleep, obviously. So when it comes to this idea of making it up. Yeah, if there was never any type of footnotes, sources saying, hey, go look and check it out with other people, then I

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would have a tough time wondering, saying, hey, maybe they did make it up. Where's the fact checking here? So that's one way.

FRANK:

Cliffe, what have you found to be persuasive, at least somewhat persuasive among college students? When you give them evidence for, say, the New Testament, what is the more persuasive evidence that causes them to stop and say, well, maybe this really did happen?

CLIFFE:

If you're driving through an inner city at midnight and it's raining outside, if your car breaks down and it's a rough area of the city, you get out of your car and suddenly you see a door of a warehouse open up and 10 of the biggest, toughest looking guys walk out of that warehouse and they start walking toward you.

Will it make any difference for you if you know that they just left a Bible study? So please don't give me this nonsense that the Bible is a bunch of fantasy and irrelevant. Come on, man. The Bible is the basis for the Judeo Christian ethic that Western culture, the United States is based on. The Bible is the basis of the Good Samaritan. The Bible is the basis for if someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to them the other also. The Bible is the basis for, you've heard that it was said, hate your enemies, but I tell you to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

So come on, buddy. Bottom line is, you know very well that the Bible has done more for the sake of women, for the sake of slaves, for the sake of all people, than any other book in the world. So let's stop playing games about, oh yeah, the Bible is just a fantasy book of, just a fairy tale. No, no, no. It has such profound ethics in it, such profound existential answers to the questions of what's the purpose and meaning of life. It's amazing and it gives incredible hope of life after death.

So please don't give me this bit, oh, the Bible's irrelevant. The Bible is totally unreliable. The Bible really hasn't done anything of any significance, that's a lie.

FRANK:

You know, I had a student at the University of Maryland, and you guys are about to go to the University of Maryland in about 90 days or so or a couple months from now. One time he was, during the Q and A afterwards, he was sort of dissing the New Testament, but he seemed to not

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really know what was in the New Testament. And I actually asked him, I said, have you ever read the New Testament? And he was completely flummoxed.

He admitted he hadn't read it. And I'm going, look, you know, I don't, I don't care where you're from or who you are or what your history is, but if you're, you're, if you're going to consider yourself a person pursuing truth, you have to at least read the most influential book in history. You have to at least check it out. You might read it and say, oh, I think it's bunk, but you have to at least read it. Don't come in here start dissing the most influential book in history when you haven't even read it.

But I find that too often people have slogans in their head rather than really evidence. And when you start asking them enough questions, they start backpedaling pretty quickly. Now we're coming up here on the end of the program. In the next program we're going to be together in the next podcast. We're going to cover more of the difficult questions that the book *Demolishing Doubt* covers. Like you mentioned a minute ago, women and slavery and these kind of things. A lot of people think the Bible is negative on those things. Women, slavery, genocide, these kinds.

We're going to cover that in the next podcast. But tell everybody, Stuart, where they can go to find you and where you are going to be speaking on college campuses starting in September.

STUART:

Yes, we'll be on Instagram. So it's just Stuart underscore Knechtle, where we're going to put up all the different places we're going to be at. And in September we're going to be at Maryland, Rutgers, and Texas A&M. If you're in Texas, definitely come to the Texas A&M one because that'll be a great time and we're looking forward to seeing a lot of you guys.

FRANK:

And in the meantime, folks, you got to get the book *Demolishing Doubt* by my guests Cliffe and Stuart Knechtle. They've been doing this a long time. They know the relevant or, the relevant. I should say issues to discuss. That's what this book *Demolishing Doubt* does. Get it and then go see them if you're in Connecticut Grace Community Church, New Canaan, Connecticut. If you're in any of these schools they just mentioned, you can see them there. You can also see them on the Internet. Give me an Answer YouTube. Give me an answer.org is the website and we will see you here next week with more from Cliffe and Stuart. God bless.

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