

How to Recover TRUTH in a World That Celebrates LIES with @phoenix_hayes

August 7, 2026

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen. Should we judge people based on the color of their skin or as Martin Luther King said, on the content of their character? There are people today saying we ought to go back to the race issue. What about whiteness? Is whiteness a tool of oppression? Is anybody who's white an oppressor? Are Christians oppressors? Why is there such a thing as Gays for Gaza?

Where does that come from? And why do people say men can have babies and somehow you're an oppressor if you disagree? You know why all this is going on? Because there's a war on reality. And my friend Phoenix Hayes and I just completed our brand new book called *The War on Reality* and here's the subtitle: *Recovering Truth in a World That Celebrates Lies*.

And the great Phoenix Hayes is with me here. We're at the Cross Examined Instructor Academy. And this book comes out September 8th. We're going to talk about why it's important to pre-order it in a few minutes. Not because it's a big money maker. There's another reason. We'll get into it. You don't make a lot of books, or you don't make a lot of money writing books, ladies and gentlemen. Unless you're like a million-seller author.

And I'm not. I have a million copies of my books in my cellar, but it doesn't really sell much. But anyway, we didn't write this book for monetary purposes. This book, *The War on Reality*, why did we write it? Phoenix, from your; I'm going to interview you like you're the only author.

PHOENIX:

Okay, so I'm the only author.

FRANK:

Why did we write it?

PHOENIX:

Why did we write it?



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FRANK:

Yeah.

PHOENIX:

Just, the world was just going more and more crazy. And, you know, I think the church's gut instinct to say, well, it's evil. You know, people are turning to their evil instincts. And, you know, we like to dig into the ideas and the philosophy behind things a bit more. Like, sure, we know people are bent toward evil, but there's got to be something we can trace this back to a little more coherently. So, yeah, We started diving into it, and it started with, really, I think the transgender explosion in what I think 2021, 2022, it was particularly prominent.

And from there, we were just. Well, I say we, but I was working backwards, thinking this is affecting almost every aspect of life. The shift from negotiating truth to actually thinking that the foundation of reality is also negotiable. And, of course, at that point, you've hit a breaking point.

FRANK:

Yeah, exactly. Now, how did you get into this? Because you're not from America, you're from New Zealand.

PHOENIX:

Yes.

FRANK:

So give people who don't know who you are, like, how you got to where you are now.

PHOENIX:

Yeah. Funny story. After high school, I went and did a year in Germany to go, you know, do Europe and study the language and things like that. And I happened to be based right outside the US Air Force base in Ramstein, Germany.

First group of Americans I ever met. I went to an American church. I absolutely fell in love with everything America. And because America doesn't get big ratings outside of America, I don't know if you know that. So, I had always thought, you know, UK, a lot of people from New Zealand and Australia will go and do a season in the United Kingdom. But I just absolutely fell in love with the American people.

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I was around military families, Christian families. They were so patriotic. They loved their home. They loved the freedoms and rights that they fought for. They wanted to help the world. And I just, I thought, this is indescribable. This is like nothing I've ever encountered. I want to be a part of it. So I didn't, so I returned to New Zealand thinking, I need to go to America.

That's what I want. So I decided to go to college and finish my undergrad. And after that, I came over as an immigrant on what they called a J1 visa. I was a nanny. And that was a very safe way to come in. As a single woman with no family, no friends in this country. It provided you a safe place to stay and income and health insurance and things like that for a set time. And during that time, I met my husband, and the rest is kind of history.

FRANK:

And then you wound up going to Southern Evangelical Seminary, where I went, where Alisa Childers is gone, where Tim Barnett of Red Pen Logic has gone. And many in our faculty here are from SES. Why did you want to go to SES? Southern Evangelical Seminary. SES.edu, ladies and gentlemen.

PHOENIX:

Because it's the best, that's why. Because I saw a. First of all, I stumbled upon apologetics. Like so many people raised in the church, I had not heard of it. And when I did find it, through a debate that I watched between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, I was hooked. I thought, lord, if I could do that for you, even half as good, I would consider my life, a worthy offering to you.

So I dive into the apologetics world and I start seeing who's writing, who's influencing, who's teaching, and of course, you are directly connected to SES, and I loved their approach of unifying both philosophy, theology, and apologetics. I thought, no one else is doing it. No one else is using those three pillars to form a really strong, robust case for Christianity. So I knew this is where I needed to train. Plus the fact that they have all their classes online, that was a huge, you know, what's the word I'm looking for? That was.

FRANK:

It's a benefit. It was convenient.

PHOENIX:

It's a huge benefit.

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FRANK:

I mean, you got four kids.

PHOENIX:

Exactly. At that point, I just had my fourth baby. I wasn't about to leave the house and go attend classes again. So it was fantastic. I could go at my own pace. And. Yeah, it was. I learned things that, I mean, it sounds stupid, I learned things I didn't know, but, you know what I mean? But, like, you don't know what you don't know.

FRANK:

That's right.

PHOENIX:

Yeah. So it wasn't just going in and refining what I thought I already knew. There was aspects of Christianity I hadn't even thought to consider.

FRANK:

And we need somebody at Cross Examined to do a lot of creative work. And so you came in and did work for us for a time.

And then you and I were like, you know, we ought to write a book together. And I would say this probably started, like, late 2024, maybe. We started to say, let's piece together what a book would look like. And we came up with The War on Reality as being a title, and we knew there were certain topics. It really did start with the trans issue, but it exploded out beyond that because it seems like many in the culture are literally at a war, or they're at war with reality.

With truth itself. With reality itself. And so we began to cover a bunch of topics in the book. And then Charlie was murdered in September.

PHOENIX:

Yeah, unbelievably. And it kind of. And when I heard the news, I didn't even know you were with him at the time. But I remember texting and saying when it was confirmed that he had passed. Because at first, of course, we're all thinking, no, he's going to pull through, this is fine. I immediately said, we need to dedicate this book to Charlie. I can't think of anyone who fought to defend reality more than he did.

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FRANK:

And so that's what we did. The first chapter of the book is all about Charlie. And Charlie, much of what he said and done is throughout the book. But the first chapter is called Murder on Campus, and it covers what happened that day and even the few days prior to that leading up to his murder.

And then we say the rest of the book is your intel brief on the war on reality, because the Lord has called your draft number. And all of us as Christians are supposed to put on the full armor of God and engage in the war on reality to build God's kingdom through truth.

And that's what we try and do here in the book The War on Reality. And one of my favorite chapters is the chapter on Marxism. It happens to be chapter 10. And I want to talk mostly about that chapter in this episode of I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. And, as we get into this, that chapter has so many answers to why there's a war on reality.

Give us a brief overview. We've got about a minute before the break on where cultural, what is cultural Marxism? Where did it come from?

PHOENIX:

Okay, in 60 seconds?

FRANK:

Yeah, I mean, we'll pick it up after the break. Go ahead, just start.

PHOENIX:

Cultural Marxism is basically the baby of economic Marxism, which of course was a failed economic theory created by Karl Marx. It got brought over to the universities and media by the Frankfurt School and implemented into changing capital as a monetary asset to a cultural asset. And so it switched over to cultural Marxism and then from there had all its little critical theory babies.

FRANK:

Bunch of critical little theory babies. And the book gets into all those details. And I think the key to understanding the war on reality is the center of that chapter, which we'll get into after the break. I'm talking to my friend Phoenix Hayes, the co-author of the brand new book, The War on Reality: Recovering Truth in A World That Celebrates Lies.

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This book comes out in September, but I hope you'll pre-order it, and I'll tell you why right after the break. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio Network and other stations around the country. We'll be back in just a couple of minutes, so don't go anywhere.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. My co-author, Phoenix Hayes, who, by the way, this book is written in the voice of Phoenix Hayes because she's a brilliant writer and very witty. There's a lot of jokes in this book, Phoenix, and people are going to read through it and go, did they actually just say that?

PHOENIX: Yeah, yeah.

FRANK:

You know, I mean, I got a lot of dad jokes in, but you've got most of the jokes. And why did we decide we had to be funny writing this?

PHOENIX:

Oh, my goodness. Well, first off, you know, some helpful feedback I received from my co-author. The first couple of chapters submitted sounded a little bit like a seminary research paper, I believe you said. So you were very kind and direct. So it's like, okay, you mean I'm actually allowed to just write in my voice? I don't have to try and sound as intellectual and academic as possible. So once you gave me permission to write that way, it became much more fun. And, you know, just some of the topics we cover are heavy.

FRANK:

Oh, yes. I mean, from not only just going back to the origins of the universe, like academically heavy in spots, but like emotionally heavy and morally heavy in part.

So it was like we need to give people just points of levity to say, you know what, it's okay to laugh at just how wild this is and how contradictory it is, constantly falling over itself for legitimacy, and yet it contradicts itself at every turn. And it's okay to laugh.

FRANK:

Oh, well, we do plenty of that in here. And even the publisher. We got in trouble with the publisher a few times saying, you can't say that. We said it. Lesbian rage poetry. It's in here. We fought for that. We're keeping lesbian rage poetry in here. I think that's a real course

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somewhere, ladies and gentlemen. But before we get into Marxism. Let's back up a little bit and talk about reality itself. First of all, what is reality? Why don't we define that? What is reality?

PHOENIX:

That's a great question. So one of the things that I thought is, how do we get to a war on reality? What's the difference between that and the war on truth? Because, you know, following you and, I remember years ago, when you were working with Dr. Norman Geisler, you knew that to present the case for Christianity, before you even got to the existence of God, you guys needed to demonstrate that there must be an objective standard of truth. If you can't get there, the rest goes nowhere.

FRANK:

Yeah, it's just your truth, my truth. Oh, you think Christianity is true? I have my truth. It's all true.

PHOENIX:

Exactly. Exactly. Well, I figured. I think we need to go back one layer further, and that's reality. Because what on earth. Because the truth and reality seem to get used interchangeably, and they're not the same. Reality is what is. It's the physical, tangible manifestation of what is.

It's simply what is. I don't know how else to say it. I think Aristotle would say, if you need it explained, I can't help you. It's reality. Truth is the language that we use to express what is real. So in a sense, society can hold together with each person having their own version of truth if they sort of treat it as well, that's your perspective.

But it was when, particularly the transgender activist group said, no, my truth is now your reality. You must share spaces with me. We are now changing the rules of the game. And I think a lot of conservatives, a lot of Christians, said, there's the line. You've gone way too far. We were able to tolerate different perspectives, different beliefs, but as soon as you claimed authority over what's real and true, we're at an end. That's a stopping point. So, yeah, the war on reality is when people started declaring things as though they were and everybody around could see, but it's not. It was the whole emperor, the emperor's new clothes situation, where it just simply wasn't true. The emperor was. The emperor was naked, and only the kid would call it out.

FRANK:

And as we say in here, truth is what corresponds to reality.

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PHOENIX:

Yeah, exactly.

FRANK:

And reality is just the sum of all truth claims. And it's also been put this way that reality is what still remains even when you stop believing in it.

PHOENIX:

Yes.

FRANK:

It's still there.

PHOENIX:

The fiction writer—

FRANK:

Robert Dick was it, or we have a quote from him on that, which I think is correct. Reality is what still remains even when you stop believing in it. So you may believe as a man, you're a woman, but that doesn't make you a woman. And believing that Jesus did not rise from the dead, if he really did rise from the dead, that belief that Jesus didn't rise from the dead is false. It's against reality. So how do we discover, and we cover this, of course, in the book. How do we discover what reality really is? How do we know what reality really is?

PHOENIX:

Well, that's a great point. So, again, this is the benefit of attending a seminary like SES is building that case from the ground up. We didn't write a book where we jumped straight into the cultural issues. That's more like the second half of the book. We thought, well, before we can start telling people why this isn't real, why this isn't false, we first need to have a baseline for what we mean by reality.

How we know what's real, how we can test things and compare them and ascertain truth of any kind. And then once we had that foundation, then we had something to launch from. So, yeah, we do have a chapter. We have several chapters in there. One of them covers what we called the rules of reality. I think we have about seven of them.

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The most important of which is you can't change the rules of reality. You can, what do we say? You can ignore them, you can deny them, you can defy them. The one thing you cannot do is change them.

FRANK:

Yes.

PHOENIX:

You can live out your life in rebellion to them. But at the end of the day, if you didn't create reality, you didn't create the rules of reality, you're never going to succeed. And that's, That's why we see these liberal meltdowns. Because reality will not comply with our wishes.

FRANK:

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, reality is undefeated. We can deny it, we can try and change it, but we're going to fail.

PHOENIX:

Yeah. And when we say try and change it, we're talking about reality in the ultimate sense. And we do cover that, too. Of course there are aspects of reality in terms of our existence that —

FRANK:

We can influence.

PHOENIX:

Of course.

FRANK:

Yeah. We can name our children whatever we want to name. You know, we can make certain choices

PHOENIX:

And, yeah, and when we see unjust situations, we don't just sit and accept that that's the reality. We do what we can to improve it. We're talking about higher levels of ultimate reality that we absolutely cannot control.

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FRANK:

Yeah, gravity is not just true for you, but not for me. Gravity is gravity. And that's what we mean when we say truth is objective. It's not just my gravity or your gravity. It's just gravity. It affects us all. And even if we deny it, even if we rebel against it, gravity is still gravity.

PHOENIX:

That's right. And you can call it as oppressive as you want. You will step off a building and still fall. That's the whole point with, for example, the transgender movement. You can declare, declare, declare that you are a man trapped in a woman's body or vice versa.

But at the end of the day, you are going to destroy your body by trying to force it into a form that it was not intended to be in, that reality has not granted you, and sometimes we personify the term reality just to make it feel a bit more light, but we're not treating it as a person. Reality isn't the universe. Reality isn't. It's just.

FRANK:

Although truth is a person.

PHOENIX:

Truth is a person. And we do—

FRANK:

We point that out.

PHOENIX:

And I love that about it.

FRANK:

And the ground of ultimate reality is Jesus Is the Trinity. We cover that in the book too, The War on Reality.

PHOENIX:

In fact, one of my favorite lines in there is something like, Christianity does not bend the truth or twist the truth; it worships it. Something to that effect.

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FRANK:

Yes, yes. Very witty, very witty, very witty. Thank you.

PHOENIX:

I don't even know that I wrote that one.

FRANK:

Yeah, no, I think you did. I think you did write that one. So there is a war on reality. And when we say there's a war on reality, what are some of the fronts that this, this war is fought on? We mentioned sex, biology. That's a front. What are some of the other fronts that we deal with in the book?

PHOENIX:

Okay, let's start from the beginning. We call the battle over beginnings.

FRANK:

Yes.

PHOENIX:

So we talk about. Once we've ascertained there's a way to establish what's real, what's true, then we have to go in, okay, what follows when you get the beginnings wrong? So we compare the different explanations for how we all got here, and we measure them against each other. I think we compare naturalism, humanism, spiritualism, syncretism, and theism.

FRANK:

And then we even get into creation or intelligent design and evolution. We cover that in the book—

PHOENIX:

Because I know you cover that in such depth, fantastically, in *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, which has just been updated and released. When is that coming out?

FRANK:

Comes out in October.

PHOENIX:

Oh, okay.

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FRANK:

But this book is before it. And so—

PHOENIX:

So we do a condensed, condensed, condensed version of that in about half a chapter. When it comes to the theories of intelligent design, where we came from, things like that. Then we focus on the actual battle line, and that is our school system.

FRANK:

Yes.

PHOENIX:

Coming up, with the myth of secular neutrality.

FRANK:

Yeah. Why do people think that you can be neutral about, say, the issue of God or say, the issue of creation, or our history? Why is that a myth?

PHOENIX:

Because a story that rejects the most logical explanation for how we got here is not neutral. I mean, I get that you don't like it, and we're not even saying you have to become a Christian or become religious, but offering an explanation for how any of us got here and intentionally cutting out the most obvious explanation for the sake of neutrality is really not neutral.

It's very active. It's an intentional, it's like trying to explain why a hot air balloon can fly, but intentionally cut out any mention of fire and gas and however it works. I don't know. That was a terrible example. I'm not a hot air balloonist.

FRANK:

No, no, no, no. I like this because here's how the intro to this chapter goes. We write, were you created or did you evolve? Is there any real meaning or purpose to your life? The key to answering those questions takes us back to 1943, long before high-speed Internet, before Spandex, and before anyone decided that Turducken was a good idea. That's, that's the kind of fun part of writing.

PHOENIX:

God bless America.

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FRANK:

Yeah, that's right. Back when information wasn't just a Google search away and people needed to consult ancient repositories of knowledge usually sold door to door. Or usually sold by door-to-door. salesmen, we call them encyclopedias. And then you wrote this part, you say, and while most of us were still learning how to spell the word without any help.

PHOENIX:

Yes. Still can't.

FRANK:

That's right. American philosopher Mortimer Adler was doing something far more ambitious. He was compiling a 54-volume series dedicated to humanity's most enduring questions and ideas. And what did he conclude, Mortimer Adler, about God? Because—

PHOENIX:

It was the biggest section.

FRANK:

Yeah, the biggest section of the great book series. Why was it the biggest section?

PHOENIX:

How you answer that question, the question of God, is how you will answer everything else. Is how you will answer everything else about who you are, about how humans are, whether they have value, how you interact with them, what laws are right and wrong, what's moral, what's the purpose of life, what's the final destination, what are we all working toward? Literally everything.

FRANK:

How should we live?

PHOENIX:

How should we live? It all boils down to the question of God. Is he here, isn't he, and if he is, which one is he?

FRANK:

And this is why, ladies and gentlemen, an education system that assumes the answer to the question does God exist, is either no or it doesn't matter, is not neutral.

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PHOENIX:

Exactly.

FRANK:

It's saying it's either irrelevant, or the answer is no. The question's irrelevant, or the answer to the question does God exist is no. That's ridiculous. And we got a lot more with the great Phoenix Hayes and the new book, *The War on Reality* right after this. Don't go anywhere. Back in just a couple.

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. 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, welcome to *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*. I'm talking to my co-author, the great Phoenix Hayes. The book is called *The War on Reality: Recovering Truth in a World That Celebrates Lies*. You know, before we were talking about some humor in the book. I love this. This is the section who decides what's right and wrong. And one of the options we give is you. You get to decide what's right and wrong. And here's what we write. Expressive individualism says the highest moral good is being true to yourself.

Sounds like an inspirational Disney song until the villain starts singing. Sure, you do you, works fine when you're picking ice cream flavors, but once you decide to scam your grandma, torch the city, or double park at Costco, suddenly we're all wishing that you didn't do you quite so hard.

PHOENIX:

We all know the people we wish they'd be a little less authentic to themselves.

FRANK:

We need to be saved from our authentic selves. We don't need to express our authentic selves because our authentic selves, as we point out in here—

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PHOENIX:

Are jerks.

FRANK:

Are jerks. We're evil. It's easy to be bad. It's hard to be good. And we actually cover, the history kind of human nature, you know, like who thought human beings were essentially good? Wasn't one of them Rousseau? Did we cover Rousseau in there?

PHOENIX:

Yeah, we cover Rousseau. He basically thought, you know, the native, the untouched tribes that had never met modern industry, they were the purest, most saintly of all creation. And unfortunately, the stats didn't pan out for that either.

FRANK:

And Rousseau, who claimed that human beings essentially were good, wasn't quite that good himself, was he?

PHOENIX:

He had an awful reputation and most famously dumped all his kids off in an orphanage because he didn't want to raise them.

FRANK:

He dumped all his kids off.

PHOENIX:

At an orphanage.

FRANK:

And this guy claimed human beings were essentially good? Yeah, I don't quite think that's the case.

PHOENIX:

He wasn't a model example of humans enduring goodness.

FRANK:

Yeah, it's only human history that actually shows us that we're not inherently good, that we're bent toward evil. Easy to be bad, hard to be good. We cover that in here. Why Phoenix, do

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Christians need to be concerned about more than just, say, the gospel? You know, we can do evangelism. We can go out to people and say, hey, you know, we're all fallen —

PHOENIX:

You need to be saved.

FRANK:

You need to be saved, you're a sinner, and Jesus is the way. Why do we have to go into the details that this book gets into on all these or many of these moral and cultural issues?

PHOENIX:

Well, basically, anybody who's under the age of 50 has been told that they are precious and perfect from the day Barney launched his first episode. So telling people that they're sinful and in need of a savior is a pretty big obstacle to convince certain people of. I think it was a lot more instinctive to generations before to say, listen, the world's evil.

That's probably because people are evil, therefore we need a savior, therefore Jesus is the answer, et cetera, et cetera. Nowadays you're going to have a hard time convincing anybody to take responsibility for their own inherent sin nature. If you can't get to there, why on earth do they need a savior? So that's a really big burden, a really big hurdle to get to. What Christians ought to be able to do is one, understand how the salvation story fits into the grand narrative or the meta-narrative of Christianity covered in the Bible from beginning to end.

How we got here, what was good, what went wrong, what the solution was, and what happens when it's all over. There's a grand narrative that every worldview has to be able to account for, and Christianity, as we explain in the book, does the best job of it. So for Christians looking to share the gospel and evangelize, it's not enough. It is, no question, the most important aspect of the grand narrative.

But, honestly, if you can't explain how we even got here in the first place and what went wrong and the evidence for why that's the case and be able to come up with intelligent responses to people who push back. You've got a harder mountain to climb to get people to now. You need a savior.

FRANK:

Even a majority of Christians think that human beings are inherently good.

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PHOENIX:

Yeah. It's wild. The stats, they don't. They don't. We're too prideful. We don't want to admit that we're the problem. In fact, there's a section in there that you, I think you pointed me to. Tim Keller is giving a sermon on the nature of evil, and he references a scene from Silence of the Lambs.

FRANK:

Yes.

PHOENIX:

And Hannibal is being interrogated by Starling. And he has that unique position where he is both psychotic, a criminal, but he also is trained in psychiatry, so he's able to give both sides of it. And when she's trying to assess him, he points out, he asks her, do you think I'm evil? Can you bear to say that I am evil? And she couldn't. He says, no, no, no.

She says, what happened to you? And he jumps on that and says, nothing happened to me. I happened. I am evil. But you can't stand that as a diagnosis. You need to explain it away on external things. And he's like, you can't do it. I am. Essentially, he's giving what Genesis tells us.

FRANK:

Yeah. In other words, he's saying, I am not a victim.

PHOENIX:

Right. I am not the product of external circumstances. I chose this.

FRANK:

As the Marxist worldview, the cultural Marxist worldview tries to tell us. It tries to tell us that we're victims, that human beings are inherently good.

And it's the system that has made us, in some way defective or in some way we're not as good as we could be. And what's the inherent contradiction in that? To say that people are inherently good? They're only drugged down by bad systems—

PHOENIX:

By bad systems that were also created by inherently good people.

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FRANK:

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. How do we have inherently good people creating bad systems all the time that drag people down?

PHOENIX:

I haven't heard a good explanation for that.

FRANK:

Yes. No, it's the people creating the systems, if the systems are evil, that are contributing more to the evil that goes on amongst human beings. And that's why we have things like government. It was put in place by God to try and constrain evil. Evil in the human heart. And it's why, of course, our founders separated the powers to ensure that one branch didn't have too much power because as Lord Acton said, absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely. So the Christian worldview is one of the only worldviews that gets human nature right.

PHOENIX:

Exactly. And offers a solution. Yeah. That's another thing that I just love about it. We can all stop pretending. There's no bravado in Christianity. And when people talk about, I don't like churches, they're full of hypocrites. We know. We are the hypocrites. We know. That's why we're there. Because we're honest about what we are, who we are, and in desperate need of a savior to keep submitting to and surrendering to.

FRANK: And when somebody plays Beethoven poorly, ladies and gentlemen, who do you blame? You don't blame Beethoven. You play the player. So when somebody plays Jesus poorly, you don't blame Jesus. Newsflash. Christianity is not Christians. Christianity is Jesus. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Now, if the Lord and he is, is calling us to be engaged and that we say in a kind of tongue-in-cheek way that this book is your intel brief to get more engaged in the war on reality. We go through ways to show what reality is. And then we go through all these different chapters where the war is waging the most. We cover identity, we cover the family. We cover Marxism, as we said—

PHOENIX:

Information and AI. That's a huge problem.

FRANK:

Let's talk about that for a second. Because AI scares a lot of people. Also, it's very useful, but it can be dangerous. What is the problem with AI when it comes to accurate information?

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Because we have an instance in the book where the same AI Chatbot was asked the same question and gave two different responses.

PHOENIX:

Yeah, the problem is it's a product. And a product is made to make the customer happy. So what that means is when you're dealing with information, the more prompts you put in, the more questions you ask, the more it learns about you, its user. So it is going to tailor its answers in such a way that makes you, the consumer, the most satisfied, the most pleased with the answer.

So you keep coming back and back. It's just self-validation more and more and more. So that's a problem because, of course you can have studies on different things, and one result might please you and another result might cause you to question your assumptions. It's going to give you the one that affirms what you already believe. But more than that, they found that it is dishonest.

It produces, okay, let's back up one second. Not only does it offer information that can be factually wrong, that's okay so long as people are still fact-checking their AI. The problem is young people especially don't. And AI will give you an answer and then drop some references below it, like, you know, you can fact-check me on this.

And they just think, so long as there's a footnote there, it's true. Click on the footnote, because sometimes it'll take you to something that either doesn't exist or has nothing to do with the information just gave you. So one of my biggest concerns with the AI is particularly with our young people. They're already not being taught how to think critically, but they're now not even questioning the information being sent to them.

At least with Google, which also tends to give you information and links relevant to your search history, at least it's a menu of things for you to click on and check. It's not just the answer right there. Of course, you do have the AI feature where it can give you a summary. But search engines, in the past, it was still a method of research, whereas AI, it's pretend research.

FRANK:

It makes us lazy. We have an example in the book where a Christian apologist in Canada, Tim Barnett, asked the AI chatbot, does the Bible or did Jesus claim to be God? It said, yes. A Muslim in Australia asked the same AI chatbot that same question: did Jesus claim to be God? And got the answer? No.

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PHOENIX:

Exactly.

FRANK:

It's telling you what you want to hear, ladies and gentlemen.

PHOENIX:

And she was so pleased with it.

FRANK:

Oh, yes, she was, wasn't she? The Muslim down there.

PHOENIX:

Like, this was it. This was the thread that was going to shatter, 2,000 years of church history.

FRANK:

There was a professor, I don't know if you saw it recently, who gave a term paper assignment to—

PHOENIX:

Yes, I know what you're talking about.

FRANK:

To his students. And 30, I think, like 33 out of 35 failed because they just took the directive, put it in AI and let it print the paper. But what he had hidden in the instructions was put the word Madagascar somewhere in the paper in a —

PHOENIX:

In a way that makes no sense —

FRANK:

No sense at all. And 33 out of 35 papers had it in there. The kids weren't even. They not only were putting their papers or getting their papers from AI, they weren't even reading the papers when it was over. Just handing it in.

PHOENIX:

That's. Wow, that's thousands of your education dollars is going in.

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FRANK:

That's right.

PHOENIX:

And so the reason he was able to smuggle it in is because he used white.

FRANK:

White. Yeah, he whited it out. We got a lot more with Phoenix Hayes and the new book, *The War on Reality: Recovering Truth in a World that Celebrates Lies*. Back in just a couple of minutes.

Welcome back to *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network and other stations around the country. We're talking about the brand new book that comes out September 8th. It's called *The War on Reality* by Phoenix and myself, *Recovering Truth in a World That Celebrates Lies*. And I want to point out that all the proceeds from the sale of this book will go to feed needy children. Mine. No, no, that's not true.

But you have kids. I have needy children that need—

FRANK:

And they're starving right now.

PHOENIX:

They're starving right now.

FRANK:

Okay.

PHOENIX:

Yeah.

FRANK:

Actually, you don't make a lot of money writing books given the amount of time you put into it. I mean, this is like a two-year project.

PHOENIX:

Oh, yeah.

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FRANK:

Easily. And, the real reason we want you to pre-order it is because bookstores, secular bookstores, if they see a lot of pre orders on a book, they're going to say, we probably ought to carry that one.

So if we get a lot of pre orders, secular bookstores will carry this, which means people that normally wouldn't see it will see it. And who knows, maybe they'll come to faith and become disciples. That's our goal anyway. So you'll help us get it before more non-Christians if you pre-order it on Amazon or Christian books or wherever you get it. Just the hard copy or the paperback copy, if you could do that, that would be great.

But let's talk a little bit about identity, and we'll get to Marxism later.

PHOENIX:

Because identity was the original idea I pitched to you.

FRANK:

It was, yeah, let's talk about identity. And we said, well, there's so much more than identity. But there was a critical shift on the issue of identity, probably three decades ago. What was it?

PHOENIX:

Yeah. So, I mean, honestly, this is a genius maneuver on the part of, I'm going to give Satan full credit for this.

Basically, having homosexual attraction and desires shifted from being something that you did, something you felt, and shifted to something that you are. And when that definition shift happened, suddenly it was off limits. Because if something is embedded in who you are as an identity, to critique it is to attack the person.

It would be like attacking someone for having the wrong skin color. That's who they are. They cannot do anything about it. Well, that's what the LGBTQ community did with their same sex attraction. They shifted it to an identity category, rendering it off limits. And unfortunately, a lot of Christians fell for it. It was like, how do we approach it? No, it was a whole love the sinner, hate the sin, but they're like, the two are indistinguishable according to their —

FRANK:

If you make that assumption.

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PHOENIX:

Yeah, yeah.

FRANK:

That you are what you think you are.

PHOENIX:

Exactly.

FRANK:

But we know that it's not true because—

PHOENIX:

And we apply it to absolutely nothing else.

FRANK:

Yeah. I mean, if you were what you thought you were or what you thought about or what you desired, most men would be women and most women would be chocolate.

PHOENIX:

That's right. That's a good one. But I relate, I think in the book, I relate it to the Fed, that I'm not a terribly patient person.

I've got four kids now. I think I'm getting up there with the sainthood, but I haven't made it yet. Nothing is more annoying than adults that are confidently wrong. I think everyone has that annoyance too. I can act out on my impatience when I come across people I think are legitimate morons. I can create a, you know, I'm within my rights to.

I was born impatient. That's how I lean. It's who I am. I'd like to start a parade. I'd like to gather with other impatient people, but not too close, because they're probably annoying and they'll be annoyed with me because we're all impatient. But we should have a National Day. Heck, we should have a national month. We should celebrate this inalienable part of my personality. Or we can say, cut it out.

Like, your desire may be to react and be impatient. Or you can acknowledge that this isn't the most healthy reaction to people. Perhaps you can work on it. Perhaps you can suppress it and

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find a more healthy way to express it. We do that with every other urge except sexual ones. Although. And even, even children were safe for a time.

They're working on that now, too, to remove that.

FRANK:

Yeah. Attractions don't necessarily mean the actions are good actions, because you could say pedophilia, if you have the attraction to children, then it's an identity and you ought to do it. You can say—

PHOENIX:

And they are saying that.

FRANK:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. You could say alcoholism. You could say adultery. You could say drug use. If you have a desire for it, you're a druggie. This is why I think it's wrong for a Christian to identify themselves by their attraction.

You hear people saying I'm a same sex attracted Christian or I'm a so-called gay Christian, I just don't engage in the behavior. No, you would never say that about anything else. You wouldn't say I'm a pedophilia Christian or I'm adultery Christian or I'm a porn addicted Christian—

PHOENIX:

I'm a rude Christian—

FRANK:

Yeah, you wouldn't say that.

PHOENIX:

Yeah, no. We would never build our identity over these things that we acknowledge our imperfections in us.

FRANK:

But Satan comes as an angel of light, so he gets us to think that's a good thing. And that is you. When in reality, as we point out in the book, that in Christianity you don't achieve your identity, you receive your identity.

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PHOENIX:

That's right.

FRANK:

You don't do anything to get it. You simply receive what Christ has done for you. So we cover so much in here. We also cover the fallacies that people have with regard to politics.

And Christians ought not be involved. Why is that ridiculous, that Christians ought not be involved?

PHOENIX:

Ought not be involved? Because as you say, how else do you love your neighbor if you're not prepared to stand up for the laws that are going to affect them? And we're not. And people too often conflate the idea that if Christians are involved in politics, they're going to bring in a theocracy or something.

Not at all. Christians. This is why Christians ought to be staunch defenders of natural law. That is reality. And so when we create laws and influence laws that support reality, doesn't matter who you worship, we want to support reality, the natural flourishing of human society. We have to speak up for that.

FRANK:

I think also too, and what Christians seem to forget, and we cover this in the book as well, is that, people will say, particularly pastors will say, well, I don't get involved in politics, I just preach the gospel.

To which I always respond, well, I guess you don't think the gospel is very important then. And they go, why not? Because politics affects your ability to preach and live the gospel. And I always say to them, if you don't think so, go to some of the countries I've been to. I've been to Iran. There's no First Baptist Church of Tehran. I've been to Saudi Arabia. There's no Calvary Chapel of Mecca. We just had a trip to Egypt. If you want to start a church there, they're going to give you trouble.

Why? Because politically they've ruled it out or restricted it. And if we don't defend religious freedom in America, politically, we're going to lose our ability ultimately to preach and live the gospel. And you had a great point. This is the point you made in that section, I remember

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Phoenix, because a lot of people will say something like, well, you know, sometimes the church actually succeeds during persecution and suffering.

Do you remember what you wrote in here?

PHOENIX:

That's not a growth model strategy, something like that. That's providence. When the church grows under persecution, that's providence. It's not a mission strategy.

FRANK:

It's not a mission strategy, and you say we don't give up our religious freedom by negligence.

PHOENIX:

Exactly.

FRANK:

Which is what so many people are saying, oh, we're just going to be negligent about it. Even though they wouldn't say that, that's really what they're doing. And I think a lot of times they just, they're afraid of the pushback they're going to get, maybe from their own congregation.

PHOENIX:

Yeah, they will get, that's crazy. You will get pushback from your congregation. But to that point, again, I just preached the gospel. Makes no sense to me. If you understand that the Gospel explains the entire narrative of our existence, our reality.

That means it touches everything. The gospel, sin, salvation is one critical aspect of the entire narrative that the Bible covers. So, Christians can't just hang out in this one spot. You need to be able to explain the whole arc of how we got here and how it ends. And politics is a part of that.

FRANK:

One of the three institutions God created was government. The other two: family and the church. Why do you think Christians think, many Christians think, well, we ought not be concerned about government. Why do you think that is?

PHOENIX:

Because they have confused categories.

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FRANK:

Why? What do you mean?

PHOENIX:

They think that they've been, well, probably because I don't think they've been taught, but they think that instructions that God has provided to say the church also apply to government. And instructions God provided to government also applies to family and vice versa.

They don't understand the difference. It's the difference between why Erika Kirk can publicly forgive the man who murdered her husband and yet still expect government to fulfill justice by giving him a trial. Because it's separate responsibilities.

FRANK:

Separate responsibilities. We often confuse what might be a command to say, a Christian, like turn the other cheek if somebody insults you.

PHOENIX:

Right. But if our president did that, I don't care who's in power. If our president, America, wouldn't exist.

FRANK:

Right. Yeah. If we turn the other cheek to a mortal enemy or somebody that murdered somebody else and said, well, why don't you murder this other person, too, that would be anarchy. The role of government is different than the role of the church, which is different than the role of the family.

They each have their place. They're running in certain lanes. And when those institutions stay in those lanes you have a flourishing group of people called a civilization. When they confuse those lanes, or get out of those lanes, or ignore those lanes, that's when you have a lot of people getting hurt.

PHOENIX:

And that's exactly one of the reasons why Marxism doesn't work. It tries to take on family responsibilities and give them to the government.

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FRANK:

And we know it doesn't work ladies and gentlemen, when was the last time you heard of Floridians getting on rickety boats in Florida to flee to Cuba? Never happened. Why are all the caravans going from Venezuela to the United States and not from the United States to Venezuela? Because the system of Marxism doesn't work. And we really, we said we were going to talk about it, but we didn't. We'll talk about it in the next podcast.

By the way, friends, if you do pre-order the book, that's one thing we give people in advance is the chapter on Marxism. Yes, but you need to go to thewaronreality.com?

PHOENIX:

Thewaronreality.com.

FRANK:

Thewaronreality.com. If you go there, it'll show you where you can put your receipt that you actually bought the book in advance. And you'll get chapter 10, right away. I think we might also send the foreword by Erika Kirk.

PHOENIX:

Yeah, I'm not sure, but they will have your name added to a list for a live Q and A that we're going to do.

FRANK:

Oh, that's true, too. Okay, so we're going to do a live Q and A in the first week or two of the book coming out for those of you that pre-order it. So if you go to thewarnnreality.com, you'll see the instructions on how to do that. So, Phoenix, this book I'm very proud of.

But you did the bulk of the work, and you wrote it in your voice, which, I mean, some of my voice is in here, too. But it's very witty, it's very fun, and it's profound in a lot of ways. So great work. And we'll come back on another podcast and do the Marxism chapter, or at least some of the Marxism chapter, because it's really the key to understanding why there's a war on reality.

So we'll see you here next time. Lord willing, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for being here. God bless you. See you next time.

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