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Why Should I Be Moral? Christianity vs Atheism

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose contrast Christianity and atheism to see which worldview makes it rational for humans to behave morally. We talk about cosmology, objective moral values, objective moral duties, and free will in each worldview. We talk about how humans discover moral values and duties in each worldview. We discuss the meaning and significance of behaving morally in the Christian worldview compared to the atheist worldview. We compare moral exemplars of Christianity and secular leftism.

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Transcript

Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today's topic is, "Why Should I Be Moral?" I'm Wintery Knight and I'm Desert Rose. In today's show, we're going to contrast two approaches to the moral life, Christianity and atheism.

What features of each worldview are relevant to moral behavior? Let's start with cosmology. What difference does it make to our ability to behave morally? Yeah, so in Christian theism, it's really important to note that we're committed to a beginning of the universe which commits us to a creator and a designer. We have a long list of philosophical arguments and scientific evidences that coincide with mainstream science, proving a beginning of the universe and therefore a creator and a designer.

We even have the fine-tuning argument which shows that the universe is fine-tuned to allow intelligent life. Right from the beginning, we have kind of like a software engineer who has manufactured a world in which humans are the goal. And so it's very reasonable for us to work from that to saying that the person who creates and designs the universe is going to give us information about how he wants us to live.

After all, he's already given prescriptions about how he wants the universe to run and we're in it. So just imagine this. Suppose you work really hard and you buy a home and a bunch of people from the neighborhood.

My state senator just dropped by before we were recording, my state representative and he showed up and if I had invited him in, I would have said, "Well, this is my house so I've got some house rules that you have to abide by in order to be in my house." So similarly, when you have a creator and a designer who makes the house, then the creator and designer can make the house rules and those house rules are basically just designed to make sure that the interaction between the homeowner and his guests and how the guests get along with the other guests are all collaborative and goal-oriented. Since the universe was created, it's presumably created for a purpose because it was made by an agent. It's not an accident.

And the interactions of the guests with the homeowner and the other guests is also collaborative and goal-oriented. So that's the difference that it makes on theism. So what counts as a good behavior would basically be compliance with the house rules and the house rules, they emerge from God because he is the one who built the house.

And so the particulars of the house rules, they come out of his character. So goodness consists of resemblance to God and moral values are rooted in his nature and moral duties like house guests don't hit the other house guests. Those are also rooted in his moral nature.

So they're not arbitrary, they're not external, they come from within him. Our actions are good when they conform to the house rules and God's purposes for us. Yeah.

Okay. So if there's a creator, then that creator has the right and authority to define what is good and right and just. And the scientific evidence points to the existence of intelligent designer and creator.

So we need to pay attention to who that creator is and what he says is good. Right? So under Christianity in particular, which is really the one worldview that fits the evidence for who the creator is, what is good and right and just is based on the creator's own character, just to kind of summarize what you've just said. Yeah.

So what about naturalism? How does cosmology ground naturalism, if at all, and how does that impact morality? It's completely different. I think when, just in general for this entire podcast, what we're going to see is that atheists love to help themselves to the kind of the costume of morality, but they can't ground any of it. So contrast what I just said about cosmology for Christian theists with atheism.

So they're committed to an internally existing universe. That is what is in the secular humanist manifesto one. And if the universe is like a brute fact that has no creator or designer, then there's no way the universe ought to be.

It's just kind of here on its own. You would even say by accident. It's not the result of any creative activity by an intelligent agent.

So there's no communication between creator and designer to his creatures. There's not even a design that the creatures can discover about how they ought to live in natural law. The whole thing is mindless and accidental.

Now, I know that there are some science fiction writers like Lawrence Krauss who have tried to argue that the universe can create itself. But again, if the universe creates itself, you understand that there's no meaning that is being conveyed to the creatures about what the house rules are. And that's because nobody built the home.

Nobody bought the home. Nobody owns the home. So it makes a huge difference whether there's a creator and designer.

When you don't have a creator and designer, there are no house rules. The people who happen to wander into the house just make it up as they go along. Right.

Yeah. Okay. So I understand that on atheism, there's no creator, there's no designer to specify the prescribed behavior for humans, but could there still be some sort of prescribed behavior or specification from some other source? Yeah.

I'm going to talk about two alternatives where people try, atheists try to say, "Well, we do have a rule book here, even though the universe is an accident or a brute fact or whatever." So the first one I want to talk about is called Platonism. It's basically the view that the hierarchy of values that you get with Christian Theism, including the specification for how humans ought to act towards one another, it just exists. It exists without explanation and without any mind to design it.

It's like a teapot floating around Jupiter that nobody can see. It's just there. We all have

to care about this non-material hierarchy of values and non-material specification for behavior.

But the problem is, is everybody knows that atheism is committed to materialism. If you have to have something outside the natural world, then you're just going back to supernaturalism. They're committed to a material universe, at least they are when they're being honest.

So this is just some Santa Claus. It's wishing and hoping for a hierarchy of values and a set of rules about how to treat people. So the other thing about this is even if you grant them that this hierarchy of values and the specification for behavior exists, nobody would have to follow it because it is not specified by anyone with a mind.

And in fact, there's no meaning to it on atheism. We'll talk about that more later, but it doesn't affect where you end up. You're just going to die at the grave.

So why would you care about these teapot rules when they go against your self-interest? It doesn't matter where you end up and it just slows down your pursuit of happiness now. So at the point is, it's very self-serving, very diluted, and irrational to follow it if it doesn't benefit you in some way. The second one is called utilitarianism.

And this is a kind of a view where they try to derive rules based on the consequences for following them or not. So they say, well, rules are good when they produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. So I have an article in my blog linking to JP Moreland where he writes about utilitarianism.

He's got four problems with it. I'm just going to quickly specify two and then you can check out the link in the show notes. So the first one would be if you can easily come up with counter examples to this view.

So for example, in the utilitarian view, if two parents agree to end a special needs child because they don't want to put up with the needs of the special needs child, then the two parents are happy, but the child is, well, presumably unhappy. And so that would be moral on utilitarianism. And another problem would be is that there's no such thing as universal human rights on utilitarianism.

Because again, back to the cosmology, we're dealing with an accidental universe that is a brute fact with no owner, no creator, no designer. So there is no objective foundation for objective human rights. So for example, if a majority of people decided to enslave, say a minority of people based on say their skin color, that would all be perfectly fine on utilitarianism, because the majority of people would be happy and too bad for the minority that's enslaved.

So it's just a stupid system of morality. This is actually the primary worldview that I was taught in my ethics courses that I had to take in the university. Those are excellent

counter examples.

There's no justification for overturning slavery or that sort of thing. If it made the majority of people happy. So I just want to clarify that it's not that atheists can never do anything that is morally good.

An atheist could rescue someone who's drowning, right? And an atheist could, I don't know that they would, but they could risk their life to defend religious freedom or some other freedom. They can make honest business decisions, things like that. The problem is that they have no grounds for calling something good.

There's no basis for them to say, for example, that to rescue someone from abuse is better than to abuse someone. And since they're not accountable to any higher authority than other humans, it would presumably also be harder for them to choose what is good when it goes against their own personal interests. Is that fair to say? Yeah.

So we're going to talk about all these things a lot more. So, okay. Well, why don't we move on to epistemology? Does that sound good? Yeah.

So epistemology is the branch of philosophy that deals with how we know what we know, like how we have knowledge and how we justify our beliefs. So how do we gain knowledge of moral values and duties on theism, first of all? Right. I just want to be clear that that stuff that you were just saying in the case where, you know, an atheist does something good, that would have to be in a universe created by God where he had defined objective moral values according to his own nature.

And they just said, well, I don't acknowledge that, but I'm going to do something in line with that. Yeah. They can certainly do that, but they just can't justify why it's good.

Right. And it's hard to see why they would do that when it goes against their own self-interest, like you said, right? Okay. So back to the question of epistemology.

So you're saying, how do we gain knowledge about what is moral? What is the hierarchy of moral values and what are, what are the moral duties? You know, how do I gain knowledge of that on each worldview? So on theism, it's a piece of cake. Again, because of the cosmology, we have a creator and designer. So right away, you're living in a universe of natural laws and you can gain knowledge about the creator just by experiencing those natural laws.

So for example, you can gain knowledge about the creator just from dietary stuff. So what counts as good to eat and what counts as not good to eat. So if you drink alcohol excessively constantly, you're going to notice that you have a higher risk of liver failure.

But even so, just think about things like children, you know, like having rules around the timing of sexuality and norms of marriage. Just how people argue for natural marriage in

the Supreme Court, you know, they argue based on natural law and saying the design of the universe is clear that certain observing certain rules about sexuality and marriage benefit children that provides them with a more stable environment. So there's a source of knowledge about the natural law, about morality from the natural law.

We'll talk about whether that's that obtains in atheism, but for sure with theism, you've got a guy choosing the laws and you can reasonably expect that you can deduce part of his character from which the moral law comes from the natural law that he's made. And in addition to that, of course, we have special revelation in the form of the Old Testament and New Testament for Christian theism. Right.

So yeah, basically, I said humans can learn about God's character from our experiences bumping up against these laws, even laws like fitness, you know, I just I don't want to say how much I dead lifted this week, but it was a new personal record, which was good for me, not as much as you. But I'm getting I'm getting I'm gonna hopefully, who are we kidding, I'm never gonna deadlift as much as you. But I'm trying to do as much as I can for an average man and getting there.

But you can learn a lot about virtues, just from being good at being able to produce results in the weight room, you know, deferred gratification and things like that. You can learn about God and his character from the natural laws, you can learn about it from special revelation. And the key thing about the special revelation is that the Bible makes very clear, not only in the words that it says, and this is key because a lot of atheists don't know this, but in the example of Jesus, that the height of morality for us is self sacrificial obedience to God and self sacrificial love for others.

A lot of atheists want to cash out morality as being things that make me happy and things that make people like me. But the Bible is very clear in the special revelation, not just in the words that it uses. But also in the example of Jesus, that morality is about self sacrificial obedience to God and self sacrificial love for others.

So that element of sacrificing your own interest is buried in the Christian notion of morality. Right. For atheists, they kind of, you know, there's this hilarious meme where this woman is like clapping in a very condescending way.

And the text says, congratulations on inventing your own system of morality and sticking to it. You know, that's literally what they're doing, because if there if there's no morality that is made by a creator and designer, there's nothing to submit to you. Just make it up as you go along and everything is permitted as long as you can get away with it.

Yeah. And it seems to coincide conveniently with whatever is popular in the culture. Right.

But it's the new thing. There's a lot of memes about that, too. You know, I agree.

You put a bumper sticker on your car and the bumper sticker says, I agree with the latest thing. So the late. So on one hand, the secular leftists are voting in a president who raises our oil prices so that we have to buy oil from Russia.

And then Russia now flush with cash, purchases a military that enables them to invade Ukraine. And then suddenly the same people that allowed this to happen literally made it happen. Turn around and go, oh, it's terrible.

I'm going to post a Ukrainian flag on social media. Look how much I care about the latest thing. Exactly.

You know, it's a joke to me. It's a joke to me to watch atheists trying to do morality because it's so transparently self-serving, such a ridiculous amount of virtue signaling that you really wonder, do these people realize what a clown they're making of themselves? It's clown behavior. No Christian means what they mean by morality.

We're having a problem these days with people dressing up in drag and how, you know, some people are saying, gee, that's really demeaning to women. You know, you're exaggerating aspects of femininity. This is how I feel when atheists talk about morality.

I really, I really feel like they're just, you know, making up the system on their own and obeying it and going, everybody celebrate me. I'm transforming genders this week. You know, it's ridiculous.

It's so divorced from what Christians know. So back to your original question. Just for Christians, when we say morality, we mean like math.

We mean there's a right answer to what is the right thing to do in every situation. There's a hierarchy of absolute values that has to be applied and there's a right course of action. That's what we mean.

Okay. It's not related to us. It's objective.

Okay. Right. For atheists, they're starting off with that accidental universe.

So natural law doesn't communicate anything about a designer's character or intentions and their experience of morality where they go, Oh, you know, I really ought to do this. That experience on their worldview, the accidental universe view, that's just produced by a bunch of genetic engineering that was facilitated by a blind biological process that optimizes their behavior for feeding, fleeing, fighting, and reproducing. Okay.

It's their goals are biological goals. Right. And their ought is I ought to do what's good for me to survive or rather I ought to do what's good for my species to survive.

Exactly. So their behavior isn't moral. It's not like their behavior is accountable to some kind of moral standard.

That's a specification for them to be virtuous and to put their self interest second. That's not what they're doing. Their behavior is sociable.

They're triangulating what their tribe expects them to do so that they're perceived as caring about the survival of their species. So what they get out of that is not some kind of objective standard of morality that makes them virtuous according to some, you know, definition of morality that appears in the classic literature, a classic place. What they're getting is relativism, right? Right.

So, oh, slavery is bad because my tribe says it's bad, except now I'm living in a time and a place where slavery is good. So now slavery is good because my tribe says slavery is good. So their views are always conditional on the crowd that they're in and fitting in with that crowd.

So, you know, today we have a bunch of people who are literally voting for infanticide, which traditionally has been viewed as a horrible thing. But for them, it's a wonderful thing and they're making a great virtue out of it and they don't see anything wrong with it. Yes.

So in this view, on this view, you know, every moral reformer would have to be immoral, right? Because they're disagreeing with the morality of the day, of the consensus, the culture. Yes, that's correct. If you reduce moral judgments to conventions that vary by time and place, then like I said, then when an atheist says X is wrong, what they mean is in this time and place, I'm going to say X is wrong so that you like me and I feel good.

But I would also affirm some other people groups in some other time and places, right, to say that X is right. And their justification for saying X is right is identical to my justification for saying that X is wrong now. So when an atheist says slavery is wrong, what they mean is my justification for saying slavery is wrong is identical to someone else's justification to saying slavery is right in another time and place.

And that should scare you about them. Yeah. Do you think that for most atheists, it's the thought process is conscious? Like, do you think they've thought through what you're explaining or do you think they're just, it's just, they're just kind of going with the flow? Yeah, I think they're just going with the flow.

I think it's like I said, I think for them, morality is a social activity. It's like having a sports team, you know, like I root for the hometown sports team so that everyone can see that I'm a good person and that's all it is for them. Right.

Right. So we've talked about cosmology and epistemology. Let's talk about free will.

Okay. So consider the case where someone is out jogging near a Navy pier in Chicago and he hears cries for help coming from Lake Michigan and he realizes that someone is drowning and crying for help. So this jogger has a choice of throwing the drowning

person a life jacket, swimming in to save him or continuing to jog.

So either trying to help or continuing to do what he was doing before. Most people would sense that throwing a life jacket, helping another person who's drowning is morally right. Whereas continuing to jog is morally wrong.

But in order to make a moral decision, the person has to be able to choose between alternatives. Totally. So which worldview grounds free will? Oh, good question.

Yeah. So on theism, again, going back to the cosmology, we've already seen that theism is committed to this philosophical and scientific case for a beginning of the universe. And from that we derive a supernatural creator.

And when you ask philosophers what kind of being brings the universe into being, what exists causally prior to the origin of the universe, they go, well, it's got to be either an abstract object or it's got to be a mind. Those are the only two non-material entities that we're familiar with. So the problem with an abstract object like the number two is that it doesn't stand in causal relations.

It doesn't operate in time to cause effects. So the alternative is that's left is the beginning of the universe was caused by a non-material mind. He brought the entire physical universe into being.

And that's why we say it's this cause is supernatural. Okay. So you're working with a non-material cause at the beginning.

So it's of course, it's totally normal for us to then go, oh, well, then maybe the creatures also have similar but less powerful non-material minds. I mean, since the creator is a very powerful non-material mind, why can't we? It's a lot less of a stretch to say that than it is to say, oh, we just material interactions, spontaneous created conscious agents who have free will and we'll talk about that in a minute. So on theism, that's how it works.

We work backwards from the creator to this view called substance dualism, where you are your non-physical mind and you have a physical body and those two interact with one another, but you have the capacity to sort of overrule your body chemistry and direct it similar to the way that a driver in a car is not the car and directs the operation of the physical car. Okay. So that's an example.

Okay. Right. It's not, you know, meant to be a perfect analogy.

So since your mind is not dependent on your physical body, it's not determined by chemical interactions or laws of physics or anything like that. Free will plays an important, like given that theism grounds free will, you can immediately see how free will is, gives us important aspects of the moral life with the existence of free will. It's

possible to say to somebody, you ought not throw out your food.

You should eat your food. You ought not be late for class. Well, the concept of odd relies on the idea of free will, because if you have an obligation to do something, it doesn't make sense to present that to you unless you have the ability to not do it.

Yeah. You need it. You need the ability to choose.

Yes. So an additional benefit of free will is you bring in the concept of moral responsibility. I mean, just think of where our criminal justice system would be if someone did something to you and then they just argued, well, it's not my fault.

My genes made me do it. I was determined to do it. And so I don't have to make restitution for you.

I don't have to go to jail and avoid hurting other people. I just get off scot free because my genes made me do it. So theism provides a whole heck of a lot of useful constructs for adopting the moral point of view and behaving morally.

Right. Okay. So theism offers a solid foundation for the existence of free will as a reality.

So what about atheism? Well, it's completely the opposite. Like I said earlier, you go back to cosmology. These guys are looking at an eternal universe, an eternal physical universe with nothing supernatural, nothing outside of just matter and time and chance.

Okay. So they're committed to materialism. So they don't have any non-physical minds.

They don't have a creator non-physical mind. They don't have human non-physical minds. So if that is true, then they cannot help themselves to not only consciousness, but especially for our purposes, free will.

So that means that there's no concept of odd. You're basically like if somebody hands you a bottle of soda and they shake it up and they hand it to you and you pop the tab and it fizzes up. That's what a human being is on atheism.

It's basically something that is being completely run by genetic programming and sensory inputs provided by the environment. So you don't make decisions. You're not reasoning.

You're not thinking. You're not choosing. Now, they may come back and say, no, I have the experience of free will I have right because you're living in a Christian theism universe.

That's why you have those experiences. But according to your own worldview, you should be surprised by that because first person perspective and awareness and the experience of making free choices, all these related substance dualist notions, they don't

sit well in a materialist universe. So to conclude, no free will is the view that atheism subscribes to and it undermines oughtness, moral responsibility, and our whole criminal law system.

It has other effects as well in terms of being able to reason, but that's not germane to our discussion about morality. Yeah. So as you were talking, I thought of Frank Turricks books, stealing from God.

Excellent books. So yeah, excellent. So when, when, uh, atheist talk about how, no, I, they, I do have free will.

I know I've experienced it. Well, they're, they're stealing from God, they're stealing from theism. So, and that, from that worldview, because they cannot justify it or ground it in their own worldview.

So for each of these worldviews, what is the ultimate meaning or significance of choosing the moral action when it goes against their self interest? So for example, like, let's say I, I wanted to warn a pregnant woman not to drink or not to smoke during her pregnancy, but that's not going to make her feel good. It's not going to make her like me. In fact, probably, you know, likely it'll be the exact opposite.

She's probably going to get angry and tell me not to judge her. Yeah. That sort of thing.

Yeah. That's where we've gone as a society. And I believe in part, it's due to our adoption of atheist conceptions of morality is that the highest morality now is not the judge.

But to answer your question, that is the question. Because if an atheist says, look at me, I'm being moral in my moral system, it's moral for me to eat pizza, and I'm eating pizza, so I'm behaving morally, you know, they're really, you know, missing the point of what morality means. So on theism, we have a very different and much richer view of morality.

It is night and day compared to the atheist conception of morality. These are separate universes that do not interact in any way. I'm exaggerating a little for a fact, but it really is shocking to me that people conflate these two things.

So on Christian theism, what we're talking about when we talk about moral behavior is again, as we said before, we're talking about choices that you make in order to reflect the character of God in your priorities and your actions and your planning, how you treat other people, how you treat God. This relationship that you have with God, where you're taking him seriously in your decision making, this relationship extends into heaven. God exists eternally, and you also, if you're resurrected to eternal life, will exist eternally.

So right away, you can see that there's this eternal significance to what you're doing. So that also applies to your interactions with other Christians who are also resurrected to

eternal life. So I'm saying this to sort of say, when we are making decisions that go against our best, our self-interest, we have to weigh that with the fact that these decisions are relevant to eternal relationships that we expect to be significant and fulfilling.

So some people like to say, "Well, you know, you are acting in your self-interest. You're only doing this because you're expecting God to give you goodies, you know, like, I don't know, candy, you know?" So consider the example of like a father out raking leaves with a rake. He doesn't really need any help raking leaves from, you know, his children.

But if the children happen to come out and say, "What are you doing?" And they say, "I'd really like to help you, you know, I'm raking leaves right now," and the children go, "Oh, we'll rake leaves too." And they take their hands and they pick up one leaf and put it into the pile, and then they kick a pile of leaves over. You know, the father is delighted with the fact that the children are asking him what he's trying to accomplish, and that they're trying to take part in it. And that's how Christians understand morality.

This isn't about feeling good. This isn't about signaling virtue to the people around me. This is about an eternal relationship that I have with someone who created me and who has arranged the world so that I'm constantly being led to enter into a relationship with this creator.

So if we run into a situation where we are confronted with doing the right thing and it goes against our self-interest, we say, "Oh, that's not a big deal. It's possible that I may go against my self-interest here and do what respects my relationship with God." And in fact, this is exactly what you see in the Bible where Jesus obeys the Father, even though it results in a lot of problems for his self-interest. When we're talking about this, we do these good things because we're seeking collaboration with God.

We're demonstrating our allegiance for God. We're developing our maturity. We're deferring gratification, but we're identifying with our leader by following in his footsteps.

We're willing to take on shame and hardship in order to identify with him. Right, exactly. Yeah, that's well put.

Okay, so what about on atheism? On atheism, it's completely different. So scientifically speaking, their view of the universe's ending is not going to be bodily resurrections to eternal life. It's something called the heat death of the universe.

And this doesn't mean that everything dies from heat. It means that the amount of usable energy, like for example, in stars that supports life on planets like Earth, and I'm not committing to life on other planets, I'm saying that the amount of heat in stars that is for any kind of potential life runs down. Okay, stars have a definite life cycle, like a main sequence star progresses, and then it goes through a natural stellar death, sometimes

becoming supernovary or something else.

When it does that, the energy that it was using for shining is dispersed to the surrounding environment. And gradually, the amount of energy available in these stars is dispersed to the surrounding environment. So what that means is the universe will eventually become cold, dark, and lifeless.

There will be no place for life to exist anywhere in the universe. This is the atheistic view. And so whenever you're contemplating as an atheist, a self sacrificial act, you understand that that act is meaningless, ultimately.

That ultimately, right? Yes. Ultimately, it's not going to affect one iota, what happens at the end of the universe, there will be nobody to remember you, there will be no ultimate change in the end. And so in a sense, it is meaningless because everything and everyone is going to die, everything's going to be gone.

Right. So there can't be any ultimate significance, it's just whatever we experience now. Right.

So when an atheist considering should I be moral, they have to consider and I'm not saying anything that atheist philosophers haven't already said, they know this problem. There's an essay written by Kai Nielsen, where the title is the same as his episode, his title is Why should I be moral? And at the end, he says, this picture depresses me, even an atheist, even with a good grasp of the facts cannot justify adopting the moral point of view. So they know exactly what I'm talking about.

When they've reflected on this a little bit. Yeah. So with theism, there is ultimate significance, everything lasts beyond this life.

Well, not everything, but our, our decisions, our impact, our choices, our relationship, and we're seeking relationship ultimately with God and also with God's people. Yes. Whereas in the other, there is no ultimate significance because there is no ultimate things are going to basically grow cold and die.

And that's the end of it. Let's talk about who are some Christian moral exemplars and who are some atheist moral exemplars. I've read quite a bit about Christian history and studied Christian history.

And this is something that really impacted me when I started reading about the difference that Christians have made throughout world history in the last 2000 years or so. So in Christian theism, every human being is made equal in value and dignity because we're all made in the image of God. So we're all made also with the purpose of knowing God in a loving relationship.

And this governs how we as Christians do morality. And one of my favorite authors is

Rodney Stark. I've read several of his books.

He actually passed away recently. Unfortunately, there are no more for me to order, but I would encourage everybody to read all of his books that he's written. Even as a non-Christian, he has written extensively about how Christians revolutionized the morality of the Roman empire.

It was Christians who ended infanticide and abortion and the branding of slaves. They used to be branded on their faces. It was Christians who first created hospitals.

It was Christians who prioritized education. They weren't the first to prioritize education, but they were the first, as far as we can tell, to offer education to the blind and the deaf and to girls as well as boys and to the poor as well as the rich. And the examples just go on and on about examples of how Christians, because of their worldview, changed the world for better.

Tom Holland has written a book more recently called *Dominion*, and he talks about how Christians would take in children to care for them, whereas others would first of all abandon their children. And then non-Christians would take in those children to be raised as sex slaves, but it was Christians who were finding abandoned children and taking them in to love them and to educate them and to give them life and goodness and hope. The Bible as well, from very, very early in Christian history, condemns exposure and abandonment of children.

And Justin Martyr talks about that, Tertullian talks about that. We know that William Wilberforce was driven by his Christian commitment, his Christian worldview, to devote his adult life to ending slavery in the UK. Pro-lifers who save unborn children are not helping themselves.

They're not serving themselves. They're just helping others who are vulnerable out of their Christian worldview. It's Christians who have led the way in adoption and foster care and crisis pregnancy centers, because as Christians, we are called to be concerned for the vulnerable, the weak.

So we care about abortion. We care about children not being exposed to a life that results from no-fault divorce, where they're deprived of one of their parents. We don't want children to be thrown in daycare and raised by strangers who don't have their best interests at heart.

We don't want children to be mutilated and drugged to pretend that they can become the gender that they're not. We don't want same-sex marriage for people because we know that that is not good for them. We know that that results in significantly higher rates of disease, suicide, early death, etc.

We don't want children groomed for sex in public schools. We don't want slavery in

anywhere, but we fight against, we oppose slavery that is so rampant, especially in Muslim countries, but beyond that as well. So these are some of the examples from Christian history who have made a difference in the world because of their Christian worldview.

All of these positions are rooted in the doctrine of the Imago Dei, that all people are created in the image of God. So we educate them, we care for them, we seek the best for them. What about in atheism? Chris It's completely different.

Again, going back to the cosmology, on the atheistic view, human beings are machines made out of meat that are just coughed up by a random process that didn't even have them in mind when it started. So when I think about atheist exemplars, I think about people like big time democrat donors like Jeffrey Epstein, who operates a sex trafficking ring where powerful people can prey on vulnerable fatherless children. Or I think about who's that Harvey Weinstein, another big time democrat donor.

These Epstein and Weinstein, they're always talking about women's rights and oh, isn't it terrible for women, blah, blah, blah, but in private, they're the worst people to women. And that is fitting with an atheistic worldview where all this is, is it's me talking to kind of get social affirmation and to feel better about myself. But if it comes into conflict with my self-interest, well, to heck with it.

Chris Mm-hmm. Chris You know, like even when you look back in history at people who challenged Christian concepts, like someone like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, you look at his personal life, he has a whole bunch of illegitimate children and throws them into an orphanage, then he turns around and writes a book called A Meal about how people should raise children. So the talk is very pious, but the actual behavior when it conflicts with self-interest is really terrible.

And that's rational in atheism. Atheists may act better than that, but they're acting against their worldview when they do that. Whereas Christians who do the things that you were describing, they're going with the grain of their worldview.

We sacrifice our own interests to help others and serve others, and the chiefest of which is this relationship that we have with God. Nicole Right. Yeah, I was actually taught specifically and directly taught in one of my graduate degree programs that what is best to do is to convince other people that we need to work together and we need to all care about each other and get on the same page and do what is good.

And then privately, I need to abandon my commitment to the group and do what is best for my own self-interest. I was specifically taught that in a graduate program. That really makes the most sense and that is the best way forward.

But again, on atheism, why not? Robert Yeah. We just had an episode where we talked

about the status of women in Islam. And I was scrolling through my Twitter feed and I saw this woman at a pro-abortion protest with a sign that said, "F these kids" or "F them kids." And I just thought, what are they demonstrating for? What are the secular leftists demonstrating for? They're demonstrating for taxpayer-funded abortion, right? So they want to continue their pursuit of recreational sex without consequences, even if it means killing other people.

And then there's also the defund the police rallies, which is basically like, "I want to do what I want to do and I don't want any policeman arresting me and putting me in jail." So this is the great morality of the secular left. You have to look at where the money is. These are the causes that they believe in.

Whereas Christians are very invested in defending natural marriage and promoting the pro-life cause, both of which are very unpopular, but both of which are beneficial to unborn and born children. So it's night and day. Our priorities are the polar opposite to their priorities.

There is no middle ground here. CM. Yeah.

So what do atheists say when you challenge them on the rational grounding for the moral point of view on atheism? JS. Yeah. So like I said, have you ever heard of LARPing? CM.

No. JS. LARPing stands for live action role playing.

So this is like, think of morality and atheism as like a person who isn't seen as a very good person. And then they put on a policeman costume and they start running around the neighborhood writing traffic tickets that are just written on paper, you know, to everybody. So they have a badge made with crayons and they have a toy car that they ride on a tricycle.

You know, there's no police chief, but they just drew a face of a police chief on a tree and there's no police station. They're just using a tree house as a police station. And they're not actually doing any real police work where they collaborate with other people on long-term projects, you know, to achieve law enforcement goals.

They're just kind of running around the neighborhood with a cape on going, "Look at me. I'm so moral. Everyone, I'm a moral human being." This is the standard view of atheists who are, you know, trying to claim to be moral.

So I think that, you know, they can certainly do that if they want to, but then they can't point any way that their worldview rationally grounds what they're doing as the reasonable thing to do. They may do it because they like it or to make people like them, but it's really comical to the rest of us who are involved in the real thing. And like you said, there's a real contrast between the goals of the secular left today and the goals of

people like William Wilberforce.

And again, people just need to read history, like you were mentioning, Tom Holland and Rodney Stark, to find out what difference it makes when serious Christians encounter non-Christian beliefs in their culture. That literally, I think, defines what Christian morality is and what it does. Right.

Yeah. So let me go ahead and read a quotation from an atheist. It's that I think summarizes the worldview pretty well.

Who is it? So this is from William Provine. He is a Charles Alexander professor of biological sciences at Cornell University. Okay.

And he wrote, "Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear. There are no gods, no purposes, no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death.

When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end for me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning to life, and no free will for humans either." And then he goes on to say, "No inherent moral or ethical laws exist, nor are there any absolute guiding principles for human society.

The universe cares nothing for us, and we have no ultimate meaning in life." Wow. That's the end of the quote. So I think it's, you know, this is an honest atheist.

He's echoing the things that I said that sounded so outlandish. Right. Exactly.

Which, you know, you're probably going to be accused of, you know, erecting a straw man or something like that. But this is not, you've not said anything that is a secret to atheists who really study and think about these things. And so in contrast, then we have the Bible, right? Which Luke 16, 15 says, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts.

For that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God." And so this is, you know, again, this is an honest examination of those who reject God, because they want to do what earns them praise, the praise of others. They want to be like, they want to be popular, but it's detestable in the sight of God. All right.

I think that's probably a good place for us to end. If you enjoy the show, please like, comment, share, and subscribe. You can find the references for this episode on wintryknight.com. That's W-I-N-T-E-R-Y-K-N-I-G-H-T.com. We appreciate you taking the time to listen, and we'll see you again in the next one.

[Music]

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