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Quick Answers to Common Atheist Objections, Part 3

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how to respond to common atheist objections to Christianity, in a minute or two. We cover these topics: Christianity as a crutch for the weak, goodness without God, intolerance by Christians, the Bible can be used to prove anything, if you were born in India you'd be a Hindu, why are there so many denominational divisions, why can't we just all love everyone, and being unhappy about friends and family in Hell. This is the third of a three-part series.

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Transcript

Welcome to the Knight and Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today's topic is Quick Answers to Common Atheist Objections, Part 3. I'm Wintery Knight and I'm Desert Rose. Okay, in the first episode of this series, we talked about atheist objections related to God's existence and objections from the Bible.

And then last week we talked about several atheist challenges related to God's character and objections related to Christians behavior. Again, these aren't well thought out challenges that we're addressing. These are not resulting from years of research, but these are more like "gotcha" phrases used to silence Christians.

But we can't afford to be silent. So, we want to continue talking about how to respond briefly to these kinds of objections. We're not trying to respond with everything we know, but we do want to give them something to think about.

So let's get started. Okay, just like the last two weeks, I'm going to play the skeptic again and challenge you. So here's my first objection.

Christianity is just a crutch for the weak. Yeah, I've heard this quite a bit. And I like to start by asking, "What do you mean by that?" And usually when I ask atheists that question, they'll say things like, "Well, Christianity is just something that Christians like to believe because it helps them handle the harsh realities of life.

For example, people get sick and they die, and some people don't want to face the cold reality that they're going to cease to exist. So they invent this idea of God and everlasting life that makes them feel better and helps them deal with it better. They'll talk about things like loneliness or that there's no meaning to your suffering in life.

And so they will think and say that Christianity is just a way to help us deal with these harsh realities better. I don't think that that's what Christianity is for. Right.

So I like to ask, "Well, what do you think Christianity is?" Because it's not what you seem to think it is. And in my experience, it's not what most atheists who raise this objection think. So Christianity is two things.

It is an intellectual assent to a set of truth claims about the objective world, the world the way it is. And it's also a re-prioritization of our lives to reflect those truth claims. So these truth claims are not accepted and trusted for psychological reasons to help us feel better or deal with hard things more easily.

But rather it's because they fit with the evidence from science. They fit with the evidence from history. And we're talking about evidence that is even granted by non-Christian experts in fields like cosmology and the study of ancient history.

Another response that I like to include is that, you know, Christianity actually, far from being a crutch to help us, it actually tends to add more work and responsibility to our lives. I mean, we have the problems that everybody else has, but then Jesus comes along and gives us these new responsibilities, like responsibility for our character, controlling our temper, forgiving others when we really want revenge, being chased and sober, telling the truth when it makes us unpopular, studying in order to defend Christian truth claims so that we're not just living by our feelings. It's a lot of work, self-denial as

well as, you know, reading all these books and making plans to make a difference in the world.

Right, exactly. Yeah, it's not just character responsibilities. Like you said, it's also, you know, ambassador responsibilities, representing God while on the earth, making a difference for the kingdom and stewardship responsibilities, being good stewards of the resources we've been given, of the talents that we've been given, of the education we've been given, things like that.

Yeah, let me let me say something about this. So I think I talked before about how I got my first New Testament when I was in the fifth grade, and I read it because they had a two year schedule in it. I read it for two years and then I read it for another two years.

And then in ninth grade, I joined my first youth group. That was where I met the youth pastor who brought me apologetics books. Right.

And at that time, it was around sometime in high school when I started to notice that the smartest kid in the school whose name was Patrick, he was just winning every award everywhere. He was an atheist and people around me were starting to think that atheism is just what smart people believe. And it really bothered me that people were thinking that intelligence is somehow related to atheism.

So what I did is in addition to dealing with the moral demands of Christianity that you mentioned, I had a terrible pride problem when I started out because I because of how my mother and father were, they were just constantly comparing themselves to other people. So I was trying to deal with those kinds of problems and reading C.S. Lewis. But now I also had kind of school problems because I wanted to show the other people in the school that I was smart and I was a Christian so that my boss would not have his reputation kind of maligned by this other guy Patrick.

Right. And for people who aren't familiar with our podcast, we're talking about God as boss. Yes, always.

So yeah, that actually didn't work too well in ninth grade. I was still struggling a little then in tenth grade, I started to do better. And then in eleventh grade, I won the awards for English and computer science.

So it was kind of a this is taking on additional responsibilities, but they have nothing to do with me. It's because my boss is being kind of affected by the assumption that atheism is smarter than Christianity. And I have to do something about it.

But that's just more that's taken on more work. This isn't I'm looking for a crutch. This is me looking for a trampoline, you know, so I can bounce up in the air and and go higher.

Same thing with stewardship. I noticed as I was going through university and grad school

like undergrad and grad school is a lot of university speakers were on the secular left and they were being brought in often by these left wing clubs or even if you just think of the professors, they're like, they're always on the secular left and they're being paid by the university too. But they never seem to have any money for Christian speakers or professors.

And when I was in a campus club, they actually de recognized us. Wow. Because we had a statement of faith for our executive.

So I decided that part of my career plans were going to involve setting aside money to be able to bring in Christian speakers and debaters on campus. And the year after I left the campus crusade group brought in William Landkraig to debate and I got to be the timekeeper. So this is kind of to show people who are saying, and this might be even Christians and not just atheist challengers, that Christianity isn't a crutch.

Christianity is like more work. They give you a badge and you have a bunch of responsibilities in addition to this because you're you're taking, you know, Jesus says, take up your cross and follow me. Yeah.

This is what we mean when, you know, when we say that Christianity is like the life of a secret agent, you know, Christians take on the role of an advocate for the boss, for God. Yeah. Yeah.

The Bible even talks about becoming ambassadors for Christ or Jesus says, well, you should take up my, you know, yoke because my burden is is light, but it is a burden. So, yeah, another response that I have included at times when I hear this is, well, you know, the same, the same accusation can be leveled against atheists. This whole thing about, well, you just believe it because it's a crush.

It works for you. It's helpful for you. Christians can say likewise that atheism is just a blindfold for self-centered people because it allows them to live however they want without feeling constrained by any sort of accountability to God.

Yeah. If you can make up, make believe ideas about an eternal universe and multiple universes and Darwinian macro evolution to account for all that is. Life from non-life.

Right. Exactly. Intelligence from no intelligence and all of that.

Just anything you want, anything that works. Yeah. Whatever works for you to allow you to.

To keep God at a distance. Exactly. And to let you feel like you're informed without actually being informed so that you can live however you want.

Yeah. It's all very self-serving though, you know, it's just to get the moral law. And like I

was talking about before, the responsibility to put God's concerns ahead of your own concerns and advocate for God and what he cares about.

This is going to make you unpopular. This is going to make people not like you. Yep.

Exactly. And it's so convenient if you don't have to care about that. Mm-hmm.

Right. Exactly. A lot of atheists I've talked to like to think that they're so strong in the face of death and loneliness and suffering in this life.

But actually there are studies showing that atheism is often linked to psychological trauma. Wow. Yeah.

So I don't know if you're familiar with Dr. Paul Vits. Oh, yes. Yes.

Yeah. Professor of psychology at NYU. And he's written a book called *The Faith of the Fatherless*.

And he lays out the evidence for atheism being the result of father issues. Like when the father is weak or abusive or absent, his children are far, far more likely to become atheists. And so Paul Vits looks at fathers of famous atheists like Karl Marx and his relationship with his dad and several others.

So it's actually kind of the evidence indicates the opposite. Right. They're the ones who have a psychological burden and they're the ones who are invoking a belief system in order to cope with it.

It's so ironic. Let me just say something about this because I've always remembered a really famous quote. I don't know why this stuck in my mind, but this is from Madeline Murray O'Hare, who is the famous atheist who started the organization American Atheists.

I looked this up because I knew we were going to talk about this in the show just in case it was relevant. And I'm reading this from an essay that I'll link in the show notes. But this is a quote from the essay that I found that contains her quote.

This is actually from Paul Vits. And he says this, "Here I will quote from her son's recent book, Madeline Murray O'Hare's son's recent book, on what life was like in his family when he was a child. He writes that he really didn't know why his mother hated her father so much, but hate him he she did.

For the opening chapter records a very ugly fight in which she attempts to kill her father with a 10 inch butcher knife. Madeline failed, but she screamed, 'I'll see you dead. I'll get you yet.

I'll walk on your grave.' For some reason, I always just remembered those words of hers

and just thought, 'Wow, like you're, that's the real hostility against the father.' And what Paul Vits' work apparently shows is that this is like present in many of the lives of them, of famous atheists. Yeah. And there's a Swiss study that showed that children are actually far more likely to adopt a religious worldview if their father is really serious about his religious worldview.

He takes it seriously and he has a really good relationship with his children. So, the evidence is pointing in the exact opposite direction of what atheists are accusing us of. So yeah, Christianity is actually easier for people to accept if they already have a picture of a benevolent authority figure available to them in their father.

Interesting. Yeah, yeah, exactly. You know, as I think also about this objection that Christianity is just a crutch and all of that, I think of the Apostle Paul and how he, like so many people who become Christians, he had everything prior to conversion.

You know, he had an impeccable pedigree. He was from, you know, a great Jewish family. He had the best Jewish education.

He was actually mentored and studied under Gamaliel, who was just, you know, the cream of the crop, you know, the very top Jewish boys were able to study under him. Paul had the highest status, great career, everything going for him, but he exchanged all of that to suffer as a Christian. After he became a Christian, that's when he started regularly experiencing things like being hated and stoned and imprisoned and shipwrecked in order to carry the message of God in all of these things.

So, I mean, he didn't take on a crutch. It's more like he broke his own legs. Right.

This is what we were saying about Christianity being taking on an additional burden in addition to your own personal burdens. Right. Yeah, exactly.

So, you know, I think of Philippians 3 when I think about Paul's pre-Christian life. And let me just read a little bit from the beginning of Philippians 3. Paul wrote, "If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more. Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in regard to the law of Pharisee, as for zeal, persecuting the church, as for righteousness based on the law, faultless, but whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ, yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so

somehow attaining to the resurrection from the dead." So this is a guy, yeah, who just had everything.

This guy walks great. He runs marathons and he's basically saying, "I'm going to take on a heavy backpack, you know, full of stones or to make my life more challenging." So he's like on recruit level when he's, you know, Mr. Professor of Theology for the Pharisees, and then when he becomes a Christian, he's on expert mode. He says that all those things he had going for him before, it's translated garbage, the NIV, rubbish, and some other versions.

Yeah, but it's actually a much stronger word that we probably shouldn't use here. Oh boy, be careful, this is a family podcast. There you go, that's right.

Yeah, let's go on to the next one. Yeah, so and then I think about Paul's post-Christian life, which I love the description in 2 Corinthians 11 because it's so vivid and Paul writes this, "Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked.

I spent a night and a day in the open sea. I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea, and in danger from false believers.

I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep. I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food. I have been cold and naked.

Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin and I do not inwardly burn?" So he's carrying the burden of getting the truth to as many people as possible. When someone is led into sin, he says he burns inwardly.

Whatever it takes, he's going to get the truth to people, all of the known world. This is the exact opposite of the impression we're so frequently given in the Western church that, "Live your best life now in all this garbage." It really is a much greater burden. There's just no evidence that believing Christianity provides you with some sort of crutch for broken people.

He's like working two jobs. He's got like one job and then he adds on another job and the second job is backbreaking difficulty. Okay, let me say something about this because I just finished reading a book by my role model, my very favorite role model, Dr. Walter Bradley who's a famous professor of mechanical engineering who also works in intelligent design on the origin of life.

So let me tell you a little bit about him. So he started out in a Christian home. He was a Christian.

His life was okay. He grew up kind of middle class. They weren't rich but they weren't poor.

What happened is he went off to university. He did his bachelor's, his master's, his PhD in mechanical engineering all done at age 24, tenured by age 27 which is astonishing. He's gotten enormous amounts of private sector grants for his research like from companies like DuPont and he also did research to help NASA.

Like I mentioned, he's written books on the origin of life, arguing for intelligent design and the design of the first living cell which is a big problem for naturalists. And he's also lectured on Christianity and intelligent design. And when I say he's written books, consider that he's written a book chapter in the book *Debating Design* which is published by Cambridge University Press.

So the best of the best. This guy competes with the smartest people in putting forward his views on the planet. And throughout all of this battling and successfulness, he is known by everyone as an enthusiastic advocate for the Christian worldview.

And he puts forward the case for the Christian worldview using reason and evidence. This is a person who when he was a grad student, not quite a professor, not quite a doctorate, you know, he would stand at the front of his business calculus class and tell everyone part of getting to know me is knowing that I'm a Christian and that means a lot to me. And if you want to, you know, come up to me and talk to me about that later, you can.

So just taking on the shame of all of the professors and the student newspaper and all of these people, you know, making fun of him because they thought he was dumb when actually he was brilliant. But he took on this additional burden of being identified as a Christian and the shame that it brought him the career trouble and things like that. So I think that's what I'm thinking of when people say Christianity is for the weak.

No, man, Christianity is life on hard mode. There's amazing opportunities to do amazing things as a Christian, but you will have to work hard and you will have to live with the shame and the scorn of non-Christians as part of it. Yeah, Walter Bradley is such a great example and there are so many more of people who really succeed and have everything going for them and they put it on the line in order to follow Christ and like you said, they take on the additional burden of shame and risking their careers.

You actually see this view not just among atheists, but actually in the church. You know, people act like a hospital for sick people and instead of a barracks for training soldiers. It's sad.

Anyway, that book is called *For a Greater Purpose*, I think it's the life legacy of Walter Bradley. And the funny thing about it is, is that the two authors are William Dempski and

Robert Marx, who are also leaders in intelligent design. And Dempski especially took hits in his career and there are endorsements from dozens of Christians you would recognize, including William Lane Craig, saying, "This is a guy who taught me, you know, or showed me how to be a public Christian and take the hits for it and yet be the best at what you do." So, this is my role model.

I just recommend everybody check out that book if you can find the lecture Giants in the Land. That changed my life. His lecture Giants in the Land.

The Giants are his secular professors who were trying to put him down, keep him down. Alright, next subsection. We spent a lot of time on that one because I think it was worth it.

This one is this, have you ever heard this? Christians need God in order to be good, but atheists can be good without God. Yes, I have. Yeah, so I think where I would start is by asking, well, what do you mean by good? Who decides what is good or evil on your view? Because anybody can make up a definition of good that they like and meet that standard, meet their own standard.

We need some sort of something external to ourselves in order to even be able to define what is good. We need God in order to define good. And so when atheists are just saying, "Well, there is no God, but I can be good," what do you even mean by that and on what basis? How do you justify that? We did a whole show on that.

We did episode 13 on that. It's our most popular episode. Everybody should check that out.

So yeah, I also like to ask atheists, how would you justify doing the right thing if it went against your own self-interest, if it made you look bad to others and made you feel bad? How do you even justify doing the right thing? What causes you to do the right thing? That's a good point. Think of like, really, whenever we listen to William Langkregan, he talks about the moral argument. He says, "Consider a Ferdinand Marcos or a Papa Doc Duvalier.

These are very wealthy people who can do evil and escape the consequences." So we don't even have to think about those people. Many people don't even know who those are. But think about Jeffrey Epstein and Harvey Weinstein, right? These are big time Democrat donors who donate to Democrats knowing full well that the Democrats support ending the lives of babies through all nine months of pregnancy.

So these are people who are, they can never believe in God because they could never face God and account for the fact that they had supported that kind of behavior. 60 million lives are gone because of this. So in public, these guys were talking, "Oh, we care so much about women's rights." And they would give money to the Democrat Party in

order to support this baby ending.

And then it seemed like they cared so much about women. But in private, they were involved in the worst kind of abuse of women. And that's because they didn't have any objective moral standard that functioned when the lights were off and the doors were closed.

So they were involved in sex trafficking and casting couches and horrible things, but there was nobody making the laws in their universe and no one to hold them accountable. So anything goes. Yeah.

I mean, atheism requires the denial of the objective moral law. So for most atheists, doing what the culture approves of is what is good. And so there's no reason to be good if you could even define it as an atheist in private.

But this idea that sin is only a problem if you get caught, this is absolutely destructive to individual lives, to the culture. Imagine being married to someone like that, you know, and you have no constitution to the relationship to appeal to. You just have to keep entertaining them in order to keep them committed.

There's no core there, the moral core. Anyway, I want to talk about something related to this. So what the atheist is saying is they're saying I can be good without God.

You see this on all the posters were put out that are put out by the atheist organizations. So I read an article recently about this senior software engineer, that's the same title I have. He's working for Apple.

And he's very, very intelligent. And he's very good at his job. This is a guy who followed kind of all the rules of the secular left.

He married a career feminist. And he lived in San Francisco, California. And he was comfortable with that.

And his wife announced that their child was transgender. And when he said, Now, just a minute now, I'm a senior software engineer. And I've read papers on this, this is not good for the child.

And she said, Okay, I'm going to initiate divorce against you get you stripped of your custody, slap you with a restraining order and make you lose your parental rights in court. And so he can no longer even communicate with the child. I just want to want to put that case forward because this goodness without God, this guy was a rock star, according to the definition of good that atheists would propose, right? But any Christian, the weakest Christian would say these are terrible decisions you're making, you shouldn't do life this way, you're leaving out the moral law, you're going to get into trouble.

They're proud of their goodness without God, man. I don't think it's the right way to go. I think that that ignoring God's moral law is actually foolishness.

As if losing his parental rights and custody and wife and all that wasn't bad enough. His insurance was charged \$200,000 for puberty blockers that he wasn't even okay with. Yeah, like a subdermal puberty blocking device.

Right. He disapproves of this. And this is where his his great cleverness got him having his insurance plan used to do things he objected to.

Yeah, so many atheists cause their own self destruction by creating their own morality and failing to heed the wisdom of Christianity. Atheists often talk about how superior they are to Christians at morality by citing divorce rates and incarceration rates. The claim is is that Christians have higher divorce rates and higher incarceration rates than atheists.

What do you make of that? Yeah, well, in both of these cases, they're relying on misdirecting the listener. I mean, they count people as Christians if they just identify as Christians. But if you count Christians as people who actually attend church weekly and demonstrate a commitment to their faith, then the divorce and incarceration rates are actually much lower among Christians.

That makes sense. If they put some skin in the game, then they really mean what they're saying rather than just speaking the words, I'm a Christian without right, you know, it affecting anything in their lives. Yeah.

And one of the reasons why atheists have lower divorce rates is because they have incredibly low per capita marriage rates. So naturally, they're, they're per capita divorce rates are going to be lower. First thing of the hookup scene in New York City or Seattle or New Orleans or on college campuses, so many people are not getting married.

They're just going with a different person every night and such. So atheists tend to see relationships as something that's designed to enhance their unhappiness, right? Commitment marriage as defined by God requires self sacrifice and forgiveness and doing the hard work of investing in someone else, even when you don't feel like it, doing what is best for them. So naturally, a lot of atheists avoid such moral obligations in favor of hooking up and cohabitating and things that that don't require as much of them.

Yeah, easy, no responsibilities, you know, anytime the relationship gets too demanding, they just end it. Okay, let's go on to the next one. How would you respond to this one? Christians are so intolerant.

Yeah, so I would say, do you tolerate murder? Do you tolerate rape, slavery, genocide, child sacrifice? Yeah, I'm intolerant. I said this I said this at CrossFit not too long ago. I said, Oh, I'm definitely intolerant.

Yeah, I do. I have no tolerance for rape, slavery, racism, things like that. But you know, sometimes I'll formulate it in as a question and just ask them, do you tolerate these things? And also who decides what the standard is for what we should tolerate or not tolerate? Again, we have talked about this several times lately, but but atheists have no basis for a standard of good and or evil or just or unjust.

You know, they need to rely on either some majority opinion, majority cultural wins, you know, which then require social reformers like Martin Luther King Jr. to be wrong because they weren't part of the majority, or it's just their own opinion. I'm not really concerned with people's individual opinions of right or wrong. Right.

So one other thing I wanted to mention is that the intolerance that we see today is often not coming from Christians, it's actually coming from the secular left. So I have some examples I want to go through. So everybody's heard of focus on the family, they actually got suspended on Twitter for tweeting about the biological sex of the Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Well, probably everybody's heard of this one, the CEO of Mozilla, Brandon, Ike, he made a very small donation to a pro marriage cause. And when everyone in his company found out he actually was forced to step down as CEO. In another case, there was this Christian couple that had lost custody of their child, because they weren't supportive enough of the child's transformation.

And the judge said, No, I'm sorry, but as Christians, you know, you're standing in the way of this, and you need to be punished, you need to lose custody of your child. In another case, also from Ohio, there was a graduate student from Eastern Michigan University who was doing a graduate degree in counseling. And she expressed her refusal to counsel a homosexual patient, and the university decided to not give her her degree.

Yeah, I was reading about a case today, just today in the news about a young man who graduated valedictorian of his class. And during his speech, he defended the traditional family. And yeah, I know exactly.

And so he is being threatened with having his degree taken away from him, his licensure to practice what he studied to be not given to him and all of his awards to be stripped from him. Yeah, that's crazy. That's crazy.

That reminds me of what happened to Dr. Gamra Gonzalez, an assistant professor of astronomy at Iowa State University. So he is linked to intelligent design, even though it never affected any of his work at the university. But just because in private, he was contributing to intelligent design research, the Board of Regents at the state of Iowa denied his application for tenure and his appeal to get tenure.

So he actually had to leave the university because he couldn't get tenure. So just one

last one, everybody's heard of Obamacare and how Obamacare forces Christian companies to cover drugs that cause abortions. So companies like Hobby Lobby and Little Sisters of the Poor, they actually had to take their case to the Supreme Court in order to get relief from that, this kind of forcing them to participate in what they view as taking innocent human lives.

So I don't see that Christians are the intolerant ones. I think the intolerance is actually coming from the secular left. Okay, one more objection.

How would you respond to this? You give an interpretation of the Bible and the atheist says, that's just your interpretation. Yeah. Well, I would ask them, do you say that because you don't like my interpretation or because you think I'm mistaken in my interpretation? If you just don't like my interpretation, that's irrelevant.

I mean, that's like objecting to a doctor's prescription for a pill that's going to save your life because you don't like the taste of the pill. It's irrelevant. It's still the right medicine to solve your problem.

If you think I'm mistaken in my interpretation, then let's talk about your objection. Let's look up the passage and discuss it together. Would you do that? That's usually the first way I'll respond.

How does that work out? Well, I think of one incident where the objection was raised when I made this comment about the Bible disagreeing with people of the same sex being together. This woman became really enraged and she said, that's just your interpretation. And I asked her this question, you know, so you don't like my interpretation or do you think that it's mistaken? And she said that she thought I was mistaken because I wasn't considering the context and that those passages that talk about that topic, they don't apply to us today.

She was referring, of course, to the Old Testament. And I responded that the context of Romans one, which addresses this issue is it's all about God's general revelation through nature and how everybody ought to realize through the creation, through nature, what we see around us, that there is an intelligent designer and that everyone is without excuse for not knowing and seeking and obeying him. And that if we don't seek out God, he's going to give us over to our own stubbornness in sin.

And so, you know, she was not actually familiar with the context at all. She had just been taught that we just say that you're taking it out of context. Whatever you say that I don't like is out of context.

My goodness, she picked the wrong person to say that to. Indeed. Knowing your background.

Okay. So yeah, that actually reminds me, speaking of skills that hermeneutics Bible

interpretation that reminds me of that episode that we did on politics. And we were talking about there are people who are trained in economics who basically know that if, you know, if you spend a ton of money, then you'll drive up inflation.

And so when we're talking about interpreting the Bible, there are actually people who have degrees in this who are really good at understanding ancient history, the meaning of the ancient languages. So it's important to appeal to the experts when you're trying to interpret a passage and not just go, I don't like it. Yeah, the meaning that was intended by the author is the true meaning.

It doesn't matter if the reader likes the meaning that the sender intended or not. What the writer of the message intended is the meaning that we need to discover and follow. And so again, it just doesn't matter whether we like what is written or not.

We need to study hermeneutics. We need to rely on commentaries at times from people who have studied the original languages and the history and take the intended meaning seriously. I think this is important.

Let me phrase this to you as an objection. Oh, you Christians, you're always bringing up teachings from the Old Testament to say that people are wrong. But you say you accept the Old Testament prohibition on polygamy, but then you don't accept the Old Testament prohibition on eating shellfish.

What would you say to that? I hear this a lot too, especially lately. And I would say that Christians do follow the moral teachings in the Old Testament because the moral teachings are based on God's character and his character is unchanging. But the ceremonial and dietary restrictions in the Old Testament were only for Jews living under the Old Covenant because those were intended to keep the Jews distinct and not cause them to intermingle because the Messiah was going to come from the pure Jewish line and also because God wanted to keep the Jews from idolatry and from worshipping idols that were so prevalent all around them.

And so that was an agreement for the Jews for a given time for a specific purpose, that the situation has changed, that purpose has been completed and accomplished, Jesus has fulfilled the law perfectly. But he also affirmed the moral law of the Old Testament, again, based on God's character, that doesn't change. And so that's right, we do continue to follow the moral law while discarding the dietary or ceremonial laws.

Excellent answer. Okay, here's another objection for you. This one is going to stump you for sure.

So you only think that Christianity is true because you grew up in the West. But if you had grown up in Saudi Arabia, you'd be a Muslim. And if you had grown up in India, you'd be a Hindu.

Yeah, I love this one because it's hilarious because I, you know, I responded, well, the same could be said of your atheism. Do you know how rare atheism is outside of the West? If you weren't from the West, you probably wouldn't be an atheist. But even there, declaring something as wrong because of where how it started is a logical fallacy.

It's called the genetic fallacy. Where something started or how it started does not tell us whether or not something is true. We have to look at the evidence.

And the assumption of this question is that religion is just a matter of custom or convention, that it's more like style of dress or flavor of cooking or that sort of thing, rather than whether it's true and based on evidence and reality. If that were true, then there would be no reason to convince anyone to think differently. But Christianity makes truth claims about the way the world really is.

And we want to convince people of the truth because the truth has implications for everybody's lives. And for example, we're committed to an origin of the universe, as we see in Hebrews 11.3, where we're committed to the beginning of time itself, as we see in 2 Timothy 1.9. And these concepts can be studied through cosmology, through science. And there is a consensus among scientists who are even atheists and of all different worldviews.

But we have to actually study the evidence. We can't just make up multiple universes or make up other theories that fit better with what we want to believe, with what we want to feel, with what allows us to pursue our own preferences. And so, other religions teach that the universe is eternal.

But we can rule that out by studying the science. Yeah, I agree. The scientific consensus right now is definitely that the universe began out of nothing, space, time, matter, and energy a finite time ago, and that the universe is currently expanding and that it is not going to collapse back on itself.

The expansion is going to go on forever or until the creator stops it. They don't say that, but that's what it is. So, I'm actually going to read to you three different views of three different religions that contradict that scientific view.

So, here's the Hindu view. And I'm getting this out of a book called "Hindu World," which is published by academic publisher, Routledge, okay? Okay. In 2012.

This is the quote, "This is the Hindu view. Time is infinite with a cyclic universe where the current universe was preceded and will be followed by an infinite number of forces." So, that's called the eternal oscillating cosmology. But it's false according to modern science.

So, here's the Mormon view. This is from the scriptural teachings of Prophet Joseph Smith. He can't get any better than that.

This is the original guy. And this is what he says, "The elements are eternal. That which had a beginning will surely have an end.

Take a ring. It is without beginning or end. Cut it for a beginning place, and at the same time you have an ending place." So, he's saying the universe is like a ring.

There's no beginning or end. So, he's committed to an eternal universe, and he is also contradicted by modern science. Now let's go to the third religion.

This is from the secular humanist manifesto one, which is a scripture that's used by secular humanists or atheists, people who deny the existence of God. And here's what they say. "Secular humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created." So, again, atheists are also committed to an eternal universe because who would be there to create it, right? And they are contradicted by the findings of modern science.

When we're talking about Christianity, we're not saying, "Oh, why are you trying to convince me to eat curry? You only like curry because you're Indian. I don't like curry. I like pasta because I'm Italian." You know, this is not what we're saying here.

We're saying every different religion makes claims that are testable in the universe. Yeah, we're recommending a set of answers that can be tested to the big questions of life. And they can be tested using science and history and analytical philosophy.

I encourage people all the time to look at the evidence, especially when they make this type of a claim. And they say, "Well, you're just a Christian because you were raised in the West, and you come from a Christian home," and that sort of thing. I actually was not raised in a Christian home.

I did not go to church during my formative years, and I became a Christian in my 20s because I was convinced by the evidence that it's true. So, you know, I'll ask people, "Would you like to look at the evidence that convinced me? I'd be happy to look at that for you, and you can come to your own conclusion, but I'm not recommending to you my preference, my feelings, or my flavor of the month, or my flavor for life." And actually, you know what? I do believe that to a large degree, Christians are at fault for these types of objections being so common because so many Christians give the impression that Christianity is about socializing and fun experiences and friends and what we like and what's going to make you feel good. And they defend it as something that works for them by sharing how Christ enhanced their personal life experiences.

I've lived in many states. I've been to many different churches over the decades that I've been a follower of Christ, and I have heard and been taught all over the place that the way you share Christianity with others is you tell them about some sort of poverty or lacking in your pre-Christian experience, and then you became a Christian, and then how that whatever was lacking is now better and enhanced. And it's very much a self-

centered personal, you know, "This worked for me" kind of subjective personal story or experience.

And that is just really largely unhelpful as well as contrary to what we see in the Christian scriptures. The Apostle Paul, for example, I mean, he did share his personal testimony occasionally, but his personal testimony involved objective evidence of seeing the risen Christ and that sort of thing. Even more commonly than that, he would talk about eyewitnesses and logic and evidence for the resurrection and fulfilled prophecies, things like that.

So. Right. Okay, let's move on to the next one.

How about this? I've actually heard this one. Look at all the different denominations. If Christians can't agree on what the Bible teaches, then why should I become a Christian? Yeah, I hear this a lot too.

So Christians do agree on the essentials, which include Jesus' deity, his death, his resurrection, and his coming final judgment. If you look at the most popular creeds like the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed, these are all accepted by all Protestant denominations. The denominational differences are largely minor and oftentimes they're just stylistic differences.

So for example, infant baptism, which is practiced by Presbyterians versus believers baptism, practiced by Baptists. I mean, this is not a central issue to Christianity. It would be hard to find Christians who would say, "You're not saved." If you weren't baptized a certain way, that would be salvation by works, which Christians reject.

Right. Do you think you have to study every denominational difference before you become a Christian? No, of course not. No, absolutely not.

We need to look at the evidence for the existence of God, the divinity of Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus. If you find those compelling, then it's time to acknowledge that those are true and submit your life to Christ, by which I mean reprioritize your life so that it matches with the things that God cares about, and you're a Christian. Okay, next objection.

We should all just love one another. Yeah, I heard this just very, very recently. So my first response is, how do you define love? Again, on what basis do you define it that way? I hear this from atheists all the time, we should just love one another, but atheists today will often define love as just affirming people in whatever they do, whatever they like, letting them know they're accepted, even in their say, and even in things that are terrible for them, that are going to be really harmful to them down the road.

It's about making people feel good right now. That is not loving. Affirming people in their ignorance, making people feel good about something that is bad for them.

That's not loving. Jesus defined love as sacrificing your own self-interest for the good of someone else, telling people the truth, even when it makes you unpopular. Yeah.

And on the Christian worldview, the highest good is being reconciled with God and growing in trust and obedience to Him. So love would include spending your time and your money, your talent, helping someone grow as a Christian. Yeah, like they have an objection.

You take them to a debate. You read a book chapter by chapter with them. You buy the book, you know, for each of you, something like that, like work with them to improve their relationship with God, to start their relationship with God as well.

So yeah, it's really funny. This is everywhere. Like love is affirming me in whatever I want to do.

I just want to read this line from a story about a lawsuit that's been started by a thousand plus families in the UK against a gender clinic, which is run by the National Health Service, which is the UK Socialized Medicine. And then this is a quote, "The Tavistock Gender Clinic is facing mass legal action from youngsters who claim they were rushed into taking life altering puberty blockers. Lawyers expect about a thousand families to join a medical negligence lawsuit alleging vulnerable children have been misdiagnosed and placed on a damaging medical pathway." So Christians would have said to that, "Hey, let's slow this down.

Let's think through it. Why are you sad? You know, tell me why you're sad." And the transformer people would say, "Let's get this moving. Two and a half hours of counseling, that's enough.

I affirm you. You know, I affirm you, you know, along this assembly line to change genders." Exactly. Yeah, modern atheist morality tends to say, "Say and do whatever you need to make people feel good about themselves, regardless of the consequences down the line." But that is not loving.

We're going to see things like this, this lawsuit, these thousand or more families devastated because their children, their lives have been forever impacted by these terrible decisions. Okay. How about this? "I could never be happy in heaven if my family and friends are in hell." Yeah.

I heard this a couple years ago from someone at CrossFit. And initially he was arguing that Christianity was not true, that there was no evidence for it. But through many conversations, I actually convinced him that the evidence was on the side of Christianity.

And he concluded that Christianity was almost certainly true. But he said he did not want to be with God because his mother wasn't a Christian when she died, and he'd rather be with her. And so my response to him was, "Listen, you will not be happy in hell.

If happiness is your concern, I'd really encourage you to go in the direction of the evidence, follow it wherever it leads. Do not follow the crowds or even your own mother into separation from God, from the source of all good, all truth, all happiness. You will be happy in heaven for all eternity, even if someone you really love in this life is not there.

Because again, you'll be with the source of all pleasure, of all goodness, of all truth. Your body and your soul will be renewed. You will be free from sin.

You'll be able to experience every good and perfect gift with greater pleasure than you can experience it now in a broken, sinful body. You'll be in perfect fellowship with the family of God, with God himself. You'll be free from sin.

Do not make the biggest mistake imaginable by exchanging perfect fellowship with God for eternal misery with another sinner. It's not worth it. Excellent.

Okay. I think that's a good place for us to stop today. So if you enjoyed the podcast, please consider helping us out by sharing it with your friends, writing a five-star review on Apple or Spotify, subscribing and commenting on YouTube, and hitting the like button wherever you listen.

We appreciate you taking the time to listen and we'll see you again in the next one.

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