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Strategies for Making More Effective Christians, Part 2

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Last week, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose started discussing strategies for building effective Christians. This episode completes the discussion. We talked about normal Christian life, especially about not always being "nice", and about expecting discomfort and opposition. We talked about having a mission. We talked about having integrity at school and at work. We talk about growing by watching debates and reading good books. We made fun of popular Christian books. Please subscribe, like, comment, and share. Show notes: <https://winteryknight.com/2022/05/15/knight-and-rose-show-episode-5-strategies-for-making-more-effective-christians-part-2>

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Transcript

Last time, on the Knight & Rose Show, we talked about how we would like the Church to do a better job of preparing Christians for mission. Today, we continue our discussion. One thing we seem to have a lot of trouble with today is sort of putting forward spiritual and moral boundaries to people, making truth claims like, "This is the truth, and disagreement with this is false." That makes people uncomfortable.

On moral issues, you say, "This is the right thing to do in this situation." Because that

seems to rub people the wrong way, we stop doing it. But actually, a lot of people who sort of cross over the lines in different issues change their worldviews a lot as a result of having done something really wrong. I think it's a good idea for the Church to be more confident and bold about setting out these boundaries and maybe even supporting them with evidence.

What do you think? Have you ever seen a situation like that where someone wasn't really convinced about something theological or something moral and they stepped across a line, they shouldn't have stepped across and then it caused a lot of problems for the relationship with God? Absolutely. Yeah. In fact, it was probably only maybe a month or two ago that - I mean, this actually kind of happens fairly frequently lately - but about a month or two ago, I had a Facebook friend who was upset with me because I had posted something against abortion.

Oh, you're being controversial again. Surprise. Yes.

And this person was really upset. And first, she commented publicly and then I explained why scientifically we know when life begins, we know what is growing inside the mother's womb. We know that it's a distinct living whole human.

And we know from the Bible that murder is wrong. So when you put these two things together, the phrase I used was, "This is a no-brainer." She kept replying with her feelings. "Well, I don't feel like it's bad when the fetus is really young." "Well, I don't feel like every situation is the same." "Well, I don't feel like you're being very compassionate." And we actually took the conversation private and continued it, but it was more of the same.

I would give her evidence, she would give me feelings. And I found out - I had a suspicion, but I found out in our private conversations that she had, in fact, had an abortion and the reason why she was so passionate about this issue was because she needed to be approved of, she wanted to be justified in her actions. She did not want to acknowledge that she had done something wrong.

And I'll tell you something, I am very, very compassionate when people come to me - several of my friends can testify to this - when people come to me and say, "I had an abortion, it was the biggest mistake of my life, I am horrified by it, and I want to use the days that I have left teaching younger people not to do what I have done." That's an excellent attitude and a very excellent person to make a difference if they have that kind of humility to accept that they've done something wrong. Absolutely, yeah. But this particular person I have in mind just wanted to be affirmed and celebrated for all of her decisions.

She didn't think she had done anything wrong or she didn't at least want to admit it. As we talked more and more, I found out her entire worldview has changed as a result of

that decision and her need to be celebrated for her decision. So yes, you're absolutely right that when people cross a line morally and they're not willing to acknowledge that it was wrong, the whole thing can fall apart, the whole worldview.

I think it's probably pretty hard for someone to either accept that God has these rules that sometimes get in the way of their happiness or if they make the mistake that they did something wrong and then their desire is to warn other people that Christian life isn't easy. Either you're losing out on things that you want to have or you have to be humble and accept that you're not sufficient in and of yourself. Yeah, exactly.

And that's something else. Again, I hate to go on and on and on about how poorly the church has done, but hopefully, maybe we're giving some ideas for how the church can do better, but this is one area. People need to know that the Christian life is hard and that's not something I've heard a lot in church.

There's a lot of be nice, a lot of praying God will give you what you want, that sort of thing, but we need to be preparing people for rejection. We need to be preparing people for shame, for threats that they are likely to receive, increasingly so as our culture becomes more hostile towards Christianity and Christians. We ought to expect to be persecuted the way the New Testament Christians were persecuted.

That is the normal Christian life. It is not the normal Christian life to be celebrated for calling yourself a Christian. So, if we want people to be equipped, to be prepared to persevere in the Christian life, we need to be teaching them the full counsel of Scripture, including the passages where there is tremendous conflict, where there's condemnation of Christians, where there's controversy as opposed to just be nice.

I don't know where this whole just be nice came from. One of my least favorite sayings to hear is, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." No, that's so unbiblical. That is the culture speaking.

That is not Jesus. That's nowhere to be found in the Bible. Jesus condemned the Pharisees in the harshest of terms.

Read Matthew 23, the whole chapter. Being nice was not at the top of Jesus' priority list. Another example I think of is when Jesus scolded his own disciple, Peter, when Peter was off-base about who Jesus was in Matthew 16, verse 23.

Jesus said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." That was Jesus' conversation with his rockstar disciple. He's calling him Satan and saying, "You're a hindrance to me.

Get your mind right. It's on the things of man. It's on the things of this world.

How many of us need to be told, and how often do we need to be told? Hey, your mind is

set on the things of this world, and that's a problem. You need to set your mind on the things of God. Let's talk about what that looks like, and I'll walk you through it, and I'll strategize with you, and we can talk about it." But I don't see a lot of that going on in the church, and it's absolutely critical.

Something else we see is all throughout Acts. I've been reading through Acts recently. We see Christians being stoned, some dying, some surviving.

We see Christians being jailed. We see rioting from people who are concerned that they're going to lose some of their business over Christianity. These are the things we should expect.

We should not expect to be celebrated or held up as wonderful people because we call ourselves Christians. It's not about being nice. It's hard.

Living the Christian life is hard, and it's very, very costly. In fact, you've experienced your share of difficulty and challenge and costliness for following Christ in hard times. I know you've told me in some of our conversations.

Are there any you're comfortable sharing with any listeners? Yeah. I think in the early 2000s when I was just coming to America to start working here and seeing if I could somehow turn this into a way to immigrate, it was pretty difficult. We had a lot of recessions.

I think there was one in 2003 and then another one in 2006 or something like that. I was watching a lot of people in the IT get laid off, and it was really difficult. At the time, I was supporting a few Christian ministries.

I remember being in tears, signing some of these checks to William Lane Craig's ministry and stuff and just thinking, "I don't even know if I'm going to..." People who are listening, who are residents of their country and have permission to be there, when you're on a work permit, you have to understand that if you lose your job, you get deported. I have to leave the country if I lose the job that I'm in. It's not like you just find another job.

These were very dark days, difficult days for me to be doing these things, but I wanted to be part of the solution to help people who didn't know some of these arguments to build themselves up. Yeah. That's a great example.

I think of Jesus telling people before they commit to following Him that they need to count the cost. We should expect that there is going to be a huge cost, like the one you just described, like several others. I think that we've both experienced over the years of following Christ.

Jesus likens the decision to follow Him to the decision to fight a war and tells people in Luke 14, "You need to know. You need to think about it and ask the question, 'Do I have

the resources? Do I have the perseverance? Do I have the character?" And of course, Jesus, the Holy Spirit is always sanctifying us and growing us and equipping us more and more for what He puts in front of us. But if we're thinking the Christian life is just going to be some sort of party or concert or picnic, then as we count the cost of whether or not we're going to follow Him, then the answer, it should probably be no.

If you're looking for a picnic, I can tell you the answer to whether or not you're ready to follow Christ is no. Following Christ puts us at war with Christ's enemies. Even our own family members, if they're not Christians, know Matthew 10, Jesus talks about, "Don't think I've come to bring peace to the earth.

I didn't come to bring peace, but a sword. I've come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter in law against her mother-in-law." I remember when I was young, growing up in my family, my mom's Muslim and her entire side of the family, all my aunts and uncles are Muslim. I had gotten my little New Testament from the Gideons in my public school.

And I was reading this and I came to this passage and I brought this passage to her and I said, "What do you think about this passage?" Because I had no idea what she was and I didn't know what she was going to say. And she said, "I don't like it." And I thought, "Oh, well, I guess I don't like you then because this sounds really, really good to me and that God's going to be first." If God were first in the way that you were raising me, maybe, and my brother, maybe we would be treated a lot better by our parents. Yeah.

There wasn't any constitution in that home in terms of this is the way that we're going to raise you and we have this goal for you. But it was a really neat thing to me at the time that Christianity had this more important vertical relationship that imposed all of these values and boundaries on some of the people who at that time in my life, they weren't really performing in a way that was constructive and caring towards me. So it might be one of the reasons why I was so curious about it and so interested.

Although at this point in my life, I have many, many, many better reasons to believe than I had back then. Right, right. So you mentioned that counting the costs and fighting a war and things like that.

So I play a lot of video games and I'm always strategy games and I'm always thinking about how do I level up my people? How do I equip them with better equipment? How do I grow my cities and my armies and so on? I think men naturally think in these terms. And so Christianity is normal for us. We're thinking how can I make a difference? How can I score points? And the world is a scary place, but that doesn't mean you have to go out there and be dumb and get yourself into trouble.

So one of the things I've done obviously is, and this is being proven out almost as we speak and the current day is people are saying, "Oh, it was a good idea for you to have

an alias." If you want to speak out about controversial issues like natural marriage or the status of the unborn or anything, the rights of children and the responsibilities of adults and pretty much anything, you don't have to just be wild and crazy and stand up on the middle of the battlefield and go, "Everyone, I'm over here. Shoot at me." You can make certain decisions that are going to make it a little easier for you to hit your target and not get hit yourself. So how could the church equip people to be a little bit more brave, perhaps by seeing the danger, but accepting that there's going to be certain risks involved in being a Christian, that you're going to be expected to do dangerous things that might make you some enemies or might make you some trouble at work or some trouble in the schools with the teachers or whatever.

What can the church do to get people used to the idea that this is the normal Christian life as there's going to be some conflict? Yeah. Well, one thing we can do is to teach the danger and the risk of following Christ as found in the Scriptures. 1 Peter 5.8 says, "To be sober-minded and be watchful, your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour." There really is a real adversary out there who wants to devour us.

We see Stephen in early days seized. He had this powerful message and then he was stoned to death. We see also an ax Peter and his friends threatened by the political leaders and jailed in 2 Corinthians 11.

Paul goes on and on about in this long passage about how he was beaten with rods. He was stoned. He was shipwrecked.

He was in danger from robbers and rivers and his own people and enemies of the faith, danger in the city, danger outside the city, danger everywhere he went, danger from false. What an advertisement for Christianity. Do you think anybody would take that job today? Well, you know what's interesting? I was reading a book recently.

I'm actually not quite done with it. It listed the top 10 reasons given by men for why they don't want to go to church and they were all very similar reasons and they were like, well, Christianity is boring. Church is boring.

Church is irrelevant. It has nothing to do with real life. It has nothing to do with the way I live.

It's a bunch of hypocrites and I don't like singing. There's no real hope or fun or risk or greatness or anything. It's just dull and boring.

I'm just thinking, how dramatically wrong have we gone that men get that impression of what it's like to live the Christian life? I actually do think that if we teach on the potential risks that people who are willing to engage in the kind of life like Jesus and his disciples engaged in, they will be more drawn to the church. People who just want to be social and

have potlucks and call themselves Christians are probably not going to come. I think that's fine.

That's great. Then we wouldn't be accused of having a church of hypocrites. We would have people who are willing to put their lives where their mouth is instead of being there for all the wrong reasons.

So yeah, I think that that's actually a really good idea. CB; When I think of the Christian life in terms of me and my friends, it's basically the life of a secret agent. We're reading all these books, we're having all these conversations, we're wondering about the different relationships we have with our coworkers and our family members.

We're organizing campus lectures, campus debates, conferences. Now you and I are doing this podcast, which we never did before. My blog gets me into trouble frequently with people.

There's this rule in I'm a war gamer and there's this rule in war games that whenever you're about to take a shot, if someone is advancing in your position, they always say, "Make sure that you calculate the cost of this shot because you're going to reveal your position when you shoot." For me and my friends, we're always considering, "How much can I say to this person at work? How much can I say to my boss?" For us, it's constant danger because we don't want to lose our jobs, we need to earn our money, we need to save our money, we have to allocate the money to all the ministries we want to support, we have mentoring relationships where you push the person too hard and they disengage. But you need to keep this person growing, but you need to make sure that you don't cause them to pull away from you. So there's just so many relationships going on, so many projects with all of these different people.

I wish I could show people what it's really like to be involved in Christianity in this way rather than what you see in church, which is just walk in and let the pastor handle this. This is absolutely not how Christianity works. We'll probably do a lot of shows on this and share that with people so that they have some kind of idea of what they could be doing.

Mm-hmm. I actually think that there's value in highlighting martyrs throughout the ages and holding these people up as Christians who we admire and honor and seek to be more alike. I think it would be valuable to honor and draw attention to the people who supported them as well, like their wives, their children and such.

I'm not a fan of the whole "desert your family for the sake of the gospel," but there have been a lot of spouses and children who have really been instrumental in the work of their husbands and have had a lot to do with the impact that was made and to no small sacrifice to themselves. I think that these are the kind of people we want to hold up as models, role models, as opposed to the people we hold up today, which is like the singers, right? The people who, if you can play an instrument or you can sing. Athletes.

The athletes, yes, exactly, right. The charismatic people with lots of makeup and the very sing-song voices. Yes.

There's a lot of very tall, handsome pastors. It's very strange. If I were thinking about people that I look up to, I think I look up to Walter Bradley.

There's a new book about his life, Dr. Walter Bradley. He's a professor of mechanical engineering. He was at Texas A&M for a long time.

He was a very outspoken Christian who had grown up in a family where his father committed suicide. This guy was really driven. He was like an A+ student.

He finished his PhD at some ridiculous age, like 24 and was a full professor by 27. He was a Christian. He was really upset about how he had gone through school and nobody had ever supported him in his face so that he was taking all this heat for being an outspoken Christian and none of the professors gave him any support.

So he decided he wanted to be a Christian professor. He would announce his faith to his students and say, "Hey, this is just to build rapport. I want you all to know that I'm a Christian." All the Christian students would come and talk to him about all the things that they were going through in their lives.

But of course, then all of his professor colleagues had contempt for him and would exclude him from things and laugh at him and make fun of him. Even though he was absolutely at the top of his field as a professor of mechanical engineering with a lot of grants from private companies and a lot of inventions, a lot of published papers, it didn't matter. The fact that he believed these things in a very orthodox way was strong enough in his beliefs to write papers on it, deliver lectures at all different university campuses.

He was still taking a lot of heat. He talks about this one story where the atheist at the school newspaper where he was working found out that he was giving these speeches to his students. They said, "Would you like to write an article in our student newspaper about your faith?" And he said, "Oh, that'd be great." They thought he was going to say no, because they thought, "Well, you might be willing to do that to people who are in your classroom, but you're not going to announce that to the whole campus." And he was like, "That's just the sort of crazy person that I am." And so he wrote this long, long article in the student newspaper with all sorts of apologetics.

For me, that's the kind of person I don't like to lose and I don't like to suffer and I don't like to be the victim of non-Christians. So like I said, I'm a war gamer. My goal is to win.

And so I want to do as much damage as I can to the other side and not let them get me. For Bradley, he did a ton of excellent work, but because he was so good at his job, they could never get rid of him. And I think that that's one way that you can be an outspoken Christian.

But are we telling people in the churches, "You need to be the best in your education and the best in your career. You need to manage your money so that you have lots of money set aside for your legal defense. You need to be careful about who you marry so that your wife isn't like throwing your kids into public schools or undermining you, but she's like a co-laborer with you." We don't really make the Christian life very adventurous or consequential.

I don't know how you could look at Christianity in the Bible and get to this point where you're saying, "This is all for me. God's job is to make me happy." I think the culture has infiltrated the church more than the church has infiltrated the culture. There's this huge emphasis on feelings.

Do what feels good, do what makes you happy. Don't worry about – there's very little about being mission-minded, very little about what Christ's mission for us is with the priority of His kingdom as opposed to building our own kingdom or prioritizing what feels good to us, whether it be with money, with our education, with talents, with experience, with relationships, with marriage. We marry the person who makes us feel good and we buy the things that make us feel good.

We focus, we major in the course of study that feels good or feels easy or whatever without thinking from a mission-minded perspective. I really think that this needs to be a big part of mentoring and strategizing like we've talked about with people who want to be mission-minded. Give us an example.

You come to mind, actually. You've done a really great job at this. I know that – Me? Yes, you.

I know that you've mentored several young women. You've led them to excellent books. You've given them excellent advice on very practical issues.

You've built them up and you've prepared and equipped them to choose good men to make the most of their marriage for kingdom purposes. Even with me, you asked me early on, "What are your goals? What are you working towards? What are you interested in doing?" I gave you a list. You said, "Okay, well, let me introduce you to this app that you can use that will be a lot more helpful than what you're using." I love that you're interested in doing this and this and that.

Those are kingdom-minded mission and purposes. You're going to need this. You're going to need that.

You know what? Let me send them to you because I know you don't have a lot of extra resources. You saw that on my list was to start a podcast. You realized, of course, that that was actually something that had been tossed around in your mind.

As we talked more and more and saw how much we're on the same page, you said,

"Okay, why don't we do a podcast together? Here's what we're going to need." You made a whole list of everything that we would need, what the steps were, what I could do that would fit within my abilities and what you could do, divided up the tasks, and we got going on it and here we are. The church needs people like you. They need people to take that initiative, to mentor, to lead, to, again, like I said, strategize, to realize that there's a risk, but also to help people think through how to mitigate that risk through things like having an alias.

I know that people have laughed at that as being paranoid, but with a lot of the things that we're seeing in, for example, even Canada today, a country that we all think of as so wonderful and peaceful and free and the height of freedom and kindness and wonderfulness, the prime minister has essentially declared war on peaceful protesters and is blocking their access to their bank accounts and has blocked their access to grocery stores and things like this. We need to think several steps ahead. I think a lot of people have a lot to learn from you on these topics.

That's one of the reasons I wanted to do the podcast with you is because your voice needs to be heard, your experiences need to be heard. Thank you very much for that. Yeah, I'm all about trying to, I don't really look at Christianity as something that's supposed to meet my needs or make me happy.

It's more about, "Look, what can I do here to move the ball forward?" Yeah, let's talk about that a little bit. Typically, what I do is I do a lot in the office. I'll put William and Craig debates and intelligence design DVDs on my desk.

I remember the first job I had, I was working in Chicago near Fermilab. I was looking through a lot of lectures from the Veritas Forum. This is an organization that's since gone woke, but at that time, they were very good.

They were very strong. They would invite these professors to lecture at college campuses. At that time in my life, I was just going through their videos ordering them.

There was one that I saw of a guy named Dr. Mike Strauss who was doing research at Fermilab. It's like a particle physics laboratory. He was right near where I was working.

I saw his lecture that he gave at Stanford where he went through the standard evidences for a creator and designer with the Stanford students. I had passed that DVD around my office and the atheists were like, "This guy is good. This is how you argue for a creator and a designer." He actually has a career in this, which is something that young Christians should be thinking about is how am I going to get that authority? I actually invited him out to speak when he was doing his experimental work at Fermilab.

He spoke to all the people in my company. It was hilarious because we took him out for lunch afterwards. One of the atheists there started raising the oscillating model of the

universe as a counter to the standard cosmology, which requires a creator.

The other atheist, one of the other atheists at the table said, "No, you idiot. Don't you understand because of this cosmic microwave background radiation and redshift and helium hydrogen abundances? We know that the universe had a beginning, so there's no way that you can maintain that." This guy was like a scorpion. He just really loved stinging people.

Even if he could use Christianity to start a fight, he was willing to do it. That is when you know you've really won, is when you can take an atheist out to lunch and the one who knows more about the data is having so much fun with his new toys that he turns it against his brother. You're kind of thinking, "This is amazing.

I don't even have to do the work. He's doing the work for me." That's what I want Christians to have in terms of experiences. That's how it's saying it.

What do you think that the church can do to equip Christians to have these kinds of interactions with non-Christians where they're like, "Let's take a look at the data. I know that we work together and I know that this is risky, but I feel so comfortable with my approach and my evidence that I'm going to let it be known that I'm a Christian around the office and that this is where I'm coming from." What does the church need to do to turn out people who are going to sort of turn it up a bit at work and know how to do that? MELINDA GARRETT Yeah. Well, I think one of the things that the church can do is hold more debates on theological topics and prepare people in-house to have those types of conversations.

Those things will come naturally and easily and are actually really fun for people who have the basic knowledge to be able to engage in those conversations and who have a good idea of what the other side says and claims. As you were talking, I was reminded of Acts 17, 18, and 19 and how Paul would go into the synagogues and reason with the Jews and persuade the Jews. Then he would go into the town square and reason and persuade the Gentiles.

People would then become convinced of the truth and start following him. Then people who had been against him, opposed to his message at first, had become convinced of it. Then were fighting for his side, were going out and going with him and making the case for Christianity alongside of him and probably in different areas as well.

In church, we're just missing so much of that. We're missing the ability to have intelligent conversations, to have practical conversations that are informed by a Christian worldview. We're holding up people as examples who really don't have that ability, who don't have those skills, who don't remind me of anybody in Acts, except maybe the guy who fell out the window when he was listening to the sermon that Paul gave.

But that's a different story. I think something else that the church really needs to do is really, I don't know how to say this in a way that sounds kind of gentle, but we need to discourage people from acting so weird. By weird, I mean things like attributing all of our feelings to God.

I feel like God is calling me to, and then dot, dot, dot, whatever, put in whatever your feelings are actually leading you to want to do. Or needing a sign for every little thing or seeing every little thing as a sign. When really all of that is self-serving, I'm not saying that the Holy Spirit cannot... It's making God's job to care about you, your life, and your happiness.

If you flip it around from my perspective, it's that God is the boss, God is the general, and it's my job to undertake actions today to move the war along in a direction that He would like it to go. So it's a completely different... He's not there to rescue me or make me feel anything. It's my job to think about what will I do today to show that I respect Jesus as leader, that I respect God as commander.

How will my actions reflect my allegiance, my vertical allegiance? Absolutely. Yeah. It's nowhere.

Nobody thinks like that. Right. And along those lines, when God is the one whose opinion we care about and when God's mission is the one we're seeking, we will be rejected by non-Christians, by secular culture, we'll feel out of place, we'll be made fun of, we'll be threatened.

But another thing I think we really need to do is emphasize that it does not matter what the secular culture thinks of you. Who cares? I would love... I can't think of a single time when I've heard a sermon about the dangers and the problems and the pathetic nature of being a people pleaser and needing the approval of the secular culture around us. But it's all over the Bible.

I mean, you know, I saw the first king of Israel. He defied the order of God because he wanted the men under him to like him. Who cares if the men under you like you, you have a mission, you have a boss, you have an audience of one, you serve God.

Who cares if the men under you like you or not? I think of Pontius Pilate, Mark 15:15 says, "Wishing to satisfy the crowd, he released for them Barabbas and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified." That's where people pleasing will lead you. Paul made a big deal about how, you know, if I were seeking the approval of men, then I would not be a servant of Christ. It ought to be a source of embarrassment to call yourself a Christian and yet care more about what the secular culture thinks of you than what God cares about you.

And again, I think by equipping people with apologetics, with theology, with a Christian

worldview, with debates and debaters as kind of role models, as opposed to feelings oriented, really nice people who can sing songs and things like that as the role models, we would make a huge step forward in equipping people in this kind of way. I agree. You don't learn how to talk, how to get into these conversations except by watching debates.

You learn how to sit still and listen to your opponent by watching debates. That tolerance and calmness that you need in order to make it safe for the other person to open up to you comes from practicing listening to the other side and not needing to interrupt, blame them, insult them, attack them. But instead, the Christian in the workplace, especially in today's workplace, especially in today's IT workplace, that should be the safe space for everybody left, right, and center.

You know, they should be able to come to you and say, "This is what I really think about this." And we are supposed to know how to do that. That's something that we can offer that the very radicalized, secular, left woke people cannot offer. We can offer forgiveness.

We can offer tolerance. And that's something that people are going to want in order to be themselves. We can give them that safe place to discuss what's really true.

Mm-hmm, yeah. And you know, you mentioned watching debates and how important that is. That's definitely something that I would absolutely agree.

It has to be a priority among Christians. I've gained a tremendous amount from watching debates. I think, you know, probably from watching debates, I've learned the most about temperament and character and how to respond and that sort of thing.

I would add to that that to gain the knowledge, really to gain the knowledge that debaters have, we have to be reading excellent books. We have to expect Christians to read excellent books. We have to be doing it ourselves, expecting it of others.

This needs to be a normal conversation. Give us an example. What are you reading? So right now, I'm reading a book called Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth.

Wow. And in that book, the author Jeffrey Satinover talks a lot about what type of life someone who engages in homosexual behavior is likely to experience using studies, statistics with- He's a medical doctor, right? He's some kind of doctor. Yes, he's a medical doctor.

That's right. Yeah. Yes.

And in every area of life with regard to disease, life expectancy, fulfillment, satisfaction, stability, and happiness, contentment, every sort of issue that people really care about, homosexuality does not bode well for those things. Rejecting one's homosexual inclinations, one's self-same-sex attractions is actually the way to a more fulfilling, a

more satisfying happier and healthier lifestyle. And so, I mean, we don't have to just go out and say homosexuality is wrong because the Bible says so.

I mean, God does not give us rules to make our lives miserable. He gives us wisdom in order to build us up and equip us for our own good, to give us what he knows is actually best for us. And sometimes that results in persecution.

Sometimes that results in self-sacrifice and cost, as we've talked about. But ultimately, God cares about our good. Ultimately, following Christ is what is going to make us happy, satisfied, fulfilled in the end, even if there is a temporary cost, even if that temporary cost is our very lives.

But we have to be reading excellent books in order to know this, in order to share it with others. I mean, I would be embarrassed to go up to someone and tell them about Jesus as we're commanded to in the Great Commission. And then if they ask, "Well, why should I believe that?" say, "Well, you know, I had a burning in my bosom.

I just feel it. I just know it's true." Or, "My mommy told me so." Are you kidding me? I mean, but that's what we are equipping people with. We just have to do a better job of expecting of ourselves and of one another to be reading good books.

Pete "Husband" Jones Are we reading good books? Do you think that the Christian community, do you think the churches are promoting good books? What are people reading? Dr. Pompa Yeah, interesting that you should bring that up because I, again, was listening to Greg Cokle recently and he shared the top 100 best-selling Christian books of 2021. He mentioned that there were only two books related to Christian apologetics, so I found the site and I went to the full list to see what was on there. Pete "Husband" Jones What are they reading? What are people reading? Dr. Pompa It's pathetic.

Okay, so, Joyce Meyer, right? Prosperity gospel, health and wealth, feminist, who has nothing of substance to offer. Sarah Young, who basically, you know, the Bible is insufficient for her, so she has to create- Pete Get direct messages from God. Dr. Pompa Yes, exactly.

Pete Better about her life. Dr. Pompa Exactly. Yeah.

So, she gets these so-called direct messages and she writes them down, but her voice, her words, what she is hearing or what she is imagining in her mind, she attributes those words to Jesus. So, all of her books are books like Jesus Calling and she's got like, I don't know, a dozen of them, Jesus Calling at Christmas and Jesus Calling when it's rainy outside and Jesus Calling, I mean, those aren't literal, but Jesus Calling all the time. And they're all her words that she is attributing to Jesus.

So, big, big, big problem there. It's all feelings oriented, it's all very girly, it sounds nothing like Jesus of the Bible. We've got on that list also, T.D. Jakes, again, Prosperity

Gospel, Joel Osteen, Max Lucado.

Pete Oh, Prosperity Gospel. Dr. Pompa Yeah, Joel Osteen is Prosperity Gospel. Max Lucado is just, you know, as watered down and useless as it gets.

I realize that Christians love reading him, reading his books, but- Pete Yeah, he's gone very woke lately. Dr. Pompa Exactly. Pete I never read his stuff.

I was disturbed by the way people were putting this guy forward when I was a young Christian and I never got into this. Dr. Pompa Exactly. So, I actually found three books related to Christian apologetics.

One of them was The Case for Christ, which is an excellent book, but I thought it was odd that a book that's like 25 years old should be on the top 100, but I really think it's because the movie came out and people were like, "Oh, that was a good movie. Maybe I'll read the book." And then they were probably in for a shock because the book actually has apologetics in it. So, I don't think people bought it for its apologetics.

I think they bought it because the movie made them feel things. And then Greg Coeckel's Tactics, which is phenomenal. And then Mama Bear Apologetics as well was on there.

So, but other than that, I mean, really, it was just really watered down, unhelpful, untheological, or non-theological, non-apologetics, not helpful, kind of feel good, give me what I want, make me happy right now nonsense that, honestly, Christians should be offering people money to take those books away from them. They should not be buying that. Dr. Pompa He mentioned Greg Coeckel, and one of his favorite quotations, one of my favorite quotations of his is, he said something like this, and I think it was in his master series lecture on Christianity at the end of the 20th century.

He said, I think it was in the Q&A, he said something like this to someone, he said, "With respect to God's purposes in the world, your happiness is expendable." And it just made me think of one of my favorite verses that Walter Bradley spoke on, its passage from 1 Corinthians 4, 1 to 4 that talks about the need for stewards to be found faithful. So, look that one up if you want. But I think that's a good place to end.

So, I think that's, let's call it there. If you like the content listeners, please like, comment, and share. As always, you can find the references for this episode on winternight.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]