

What to Do When Culture Hates You | with Natasha Crain

(August 9, 2024)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, do you ever wonder why people make the decisions that they make? You might scratch your head and go, why did that person decide to do that? That's not biblical. That's not right. Why are they coming to that conclusion? Well, my guest today, Natasha Crain, has some insights in on that.

As you know, Natasha wrote the great book called 'Faithfully Different', and she has a new book that's about to come out in the next few months that we're also going to dive into. And she just had an experience which is so typical today online for Christian apologists or Christians who are outspoken about the culture. We're going to dive all into it today on this edition of I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.

Ladies and gentlemen, we're on the American Family Radio network. And for those of you that listen on AFR, we actually do two podcasts a week, this one that you're hearing right now. But we also do a midweek podcast that normally comes out on Tuesday afternoon. So, if you like what you hear, look for the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist because the one that we do on Tuesday is not broadcast on AFR.

So, let me start with the great Natasha Crain. Natasha, it's always great having you here at CIA. By the way, we're at the CrossExamined Instructor Academy, ladies and gentlemen. We run this every year to try and train people on how to be better prepared to present the evidence for Christianity and answer questions. And Natasha, many years ago, you actually came to this as a student, didn't you?

NATASHA:

Yeah, I came to it as a student, and it was fantastic, and so much helpful input, and getting to be with all the instructors here. It's just an amazing experience. I tell everyone who's remotely interested in doing something like this that they have to come to CIA. And so, it's always an



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honor and pleasure. One of my favorite things, honestly, of the whole year, to get to come and be part of CIA.

FRANK:

We don't often get a chance to work together as apologists because we're traveling to our own gigs, if you will, our own presentations, and we don't get a chance to be together. But right now, we're here with Natasha Crain, Alisa Childers, we're here with Greg Koukl, and Brett Kunkle, and Richard Howe, and John Ferrer, and Bobby Conway, and several others. We're all here together trying to show people how to, how they can get better at presenting and answering questions.

And you came as a student. Now you're an instructor. Alisa came as a student. Now she's an instructor as well. We run this once a year, ladies and gentlemen. It's usually the first week of August, so the next one won't be until 2025. It'll probably be in Sarasota, Florida. But we haven't verified that. You're going to want to be a part of it. Keep an eye on our website.

But Natasha, I want to start with an experience that you just had recently online that I think is so typical of what happens when Christians try and engage the culture, whether it's engaging the culture on social media, on some sort of moral or political issue, or you're actually speaking directly about politics and candidates and that kind of thing. What happened?

NATASHA:

Well, we were talking about this a little bit before we got on here, and it's an interesting example of what happens even amongst fellow believers sometimes when you speak out about politics. So, I had made a post on social media and just basically said, you know, be aware if someone is only willing to say that there is no Christian party, politically speaking, and then they don't say anything else.

I said, that's a little bit telling because while it's true that there is no Christian party, it's not true that there aren't certain things that we can look at biblically and say, well, more of these positions line up on one side than the other. And so, it tells a lot. And so, I had somebody who commented, and she tends to comment a lot when I say anything about politics of this nature.

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And she basically just said, you know what, you need to get back to doing apologetics. Defend the faith. That's where your strength is. That's what God called you to.

FRANK:

Wow.

NATASHA:

So, I was saying beforehand, you know, I actually took some offense at this because it's very presumptuous to think that, you know, what God wants for someone and where your strengths are and that kind of thing. But I just thought, this is also a really big misunderstanding of apologetics and what it means to defend the faith. It's not just, hey, defend the truth of Christianity, and we get to this kind of answer where it says, yes, Christianity is true.

What are the implications that flow from that? And a lot of the implications that flow from that are our role in culture, and how should we be salt and light? And some of that is going to be political sometimes. And so, a lot of times when Christians will speak out on those kinds of issues, Christians get kind of squeamish.

They think, you know, you're stepping too far out. You shouldn't be talking about these things. I think that's one of the biggest misunderstandings that Christians have in culture right now, and it's a very disappointing one, especially given everything that we're seeing.

FRANK:

Yeah, it's very disappointing because Christians should know better. When someone says, stay in your lane. Right? As if the only thing you should speak about is the evidence that Christianity is true. Because you're an apologist, you can't talk about anything else. That is not the Christian viewpoint ladies and gentlemen. We're supposed to be Christians 24/7 in every area of life.

You know, I hear people saying things like, well, you were called to do this or called to do that. Unless you're the Apostle Paul and you're struck down on the road to Damascus, you're not called to do anything. You're commanded to do certain things. And one of the things you're commanded to do is not only do the Great Commission, but also the cultural commission, to be salt and light, seek the prosperity of the cities that you're in.

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Do what is right, love people, which in politics means you want to put laws in place that protect them from evil. Are only atheists qualified to run the country? Where do we come up with this silly idea? Yet you've got Christians berating somebody like you to try and tell you to stay in your little apologetic lane, Natasha. You shouldn't get out of the lane. Meanwhile, whoever this person is, is in the political lane telling you, you can't be in that lane. How do people come to these conclusions? It amazes me.

NATASHA:

Yeah, I think that she thinks that it's just the toss-up. And that's exactly, ironically, that's what my post was about. That it's not really a toss-up, that at the end of the day, when you look at what the Bible teaches, that there are certain moral positions that are going to lend you to maybe more one side than the other.

And she really resented that. And a lot of Christians today do resent that. They just want to continue on with this belief that, well, you know, Christians of good conscience, we can go any way on these things. It's not necessarily the case.

FRANK:

Yeah, we just had a couple of podcasts with Megan Basham, ladies and gentlemen. If you haven't listened to those, they are a week or two ago, who just wrote the book 'Shepherds for Sale', and we can't recant everything that was in there. Recant. Recount. We don't want to recant what's in the book. We want to recount it. [Laughter] But one thing that really came out of me reading that book, Natasha, and I think you've probably observed this as well.

In fact, you've written a new book we'll get to a little bit later. But there are people on the political left who claim to be Christians, people like Russell Moore, and David French, and Phil Vischer, and these kinds of people, and they will say things about clear biblical teachings, about life, about sexuality, about these issues that the Bible is very clear on gender. And they will say that those positions that the Bible takes aren't as clear as you think. And we've got to be more nuanced.

We could have different political views on this. Yet, their views on debatable issues like climate change, immigration, and the vaccine, you better take as Gospel or you're not loving your

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neighbor. Now, we see this happening. How do people get away with claiming that clear, clear things in the Bible are fuzzy and debatable, things that maybe the Bible doesn't even speak to directly are clear, and you need to follow what they say in your book, 'Faithfully Different.' You point out that there are four sort of tenants of the secular worldview that even some in the Church have adopted. Just list them now, and after the break we'll, we'll unpack them.

NATASHA:

Yeah. I break out four things. One is that feelings are the ultimate guide. The second one is that happiness is the ultimate goal. The third one is judging is the ultimate sin. And the fourth one is that God is the ultimate guess. And I frame those things up as these are the tenets of a worldview in which the authority as the self for determining what is true about reality, what is good or bad, right or wrong, harmful and helpful.

FRANK:

The authority of the self. That's really what this comes down to. Is there a God? And if there is, who is this God, and what has He told us to do? Some people apparently want to make themselves God and say, whatever I say, everyone else needs to obey. And it seems like there are some people on the left who even claim to be Christians are doing that, that our position is correct, even though the Bible doesn't support it. Much more with Natasha Crain. We're talking about a lot of issues today, particularly cultural issues. Don't go anywhere. We're back in just two minutes.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio network. We're talking to the great Natasha Crain, who wrote an excellent book just a couple of years ago called 'Faithfully Different.' We're talking a little bit about that book and what's in it, and then we're going to move on to some other issues that are in a new book she has that is coming out called 'When Culture Hates You.'

That'll come out in about six months, but we're going to give you a preview of it because it's very important, particularly right now in the heat of an election cycle, there are many people that hate Christian viewpoints, particularly on Christian viewpoints that intersect with the political.

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So, Natasha, let's go back to just what we were talking about just before the break, those four tenets of secularism, which helps you understand, ladies and gentlemen, why people think the way they do, why they make decisions the way they do. Let's go through each of them. Start with the first one. Happiness is the ultimate goal. What is that about?

NATASHA:

Well, let's start with feelings are the ultimate guide. Yeah, feelings are the ultimate guide. So, what is guiding you? If your authority is yourself and you don't have anyone or anything outside of yourself to tell you what you should or shouldn't do, then you're going to go off of your feelings. It's going to be a very subjective experience. And of course, just to contrast that with the Christian worldview, our feelings are not our ultimate guide. God is the ultimate guide.

And so, what that looks like is that even if in the Bible there's something that we don't necessarily like or we don't understand, we wish it were different, we wish that God did something differently. We're not going to say, well, I'm going to go with what I think because I'm going to reason my way out of that. I'm going to go with what God said because He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and I am not.

So, that's the distinction there between those views. But in culture, what we see is all of the feelings based guidance. So, that's how we get to these statements like follow your heart that you talk about often, right? It's like people don't realize that is a really big worldview statement. That's not just an innocuous little fun saying. That is a statement about the nature of reality, that you just need to follow your own feelings and that that's going to get you to some kind of a measure of happiness, which is the next part. Happiness is the ultimate goal.

So, where are your feelings leading you? They're leading you to this subjective feeling that, well, I just want to be happy. And what we see is that in culture, you can justify anything when you say, well, I'm happy. It's like this mic drop moment for people. As long as somebody says, well, I'm happy, we're all supposed to go, oh, wow, wow. Well, they're happy. I mean, what else are we supposed to say? We got nothing else. Let's go home. That's all of it, right? [Laughter]

And everyone is just assumed to have to take that approach now. And so, when I do talks on this subject, and I will throw this out at the audience and say, "Does God want you to be

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happy?" to audiences of Christians. It is so deathly quiet in there because no one knows exactly what to say to that. And the truth is, it's not that God doesn't want you to be happy, per se, but He has bigger objectives for us. Right? We are to know God. We are to make Him known. We are to be in a relationship with Him.

And sometimes our circumstances do not make us feel happy along the way, and that's okay. I mean, Paul was in jail, right? He's in jail, but he's still writing a book that has come to be known as the book of joy. So, we can be joyful when it's rooted in the objective knowledge of Jesus as our Lord and Savior, even if our temporary circumstances don't make us feel happy, per se.

FRANK:

You know, we fall into this, too, as Christians, because we will say things particularly about, say, a young couple that are about to get married. Even as parents we'll say, we just want them to be happy, happy rather than holy, rather than a couple that is going to be great ambassadors to build the kingdom. We think as long as they're happy, everything's okay. Yeah. I mean, obviously, you can make yourself happy in many different ways that are immoral.

And so, we need to change our language, parents, if we're going to say we want them to be happy. No, we want you to be holy. I mean, we hope you're happy, obviously, but that's not the goal. And yet, the secular mindset says that is the goal, and the first tenet is feeling. So, you've got to look inside yourself to find that goal of happiness. And if you're not happy with your current spouse, oh, well, time to move on to somebody else. Or if you're not happy with your current...

How many people say that about their kids? I'm not happy with my kids. Let me move on to other kids. Why do we say that about the spouse but not the kids? Right? [Laughter] I need new kids. Right. Okay, so you've got feelings are the ultimate guide, happiness is the ultimate goal. What's the third one again?

NATASHA:

The third one is judging is the ultimate sin. And this actually, this makes total sense if you kind of step outside the Christian worldview and you put yourself into the mindset of, I'm the boss,

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I'm the authority, the authority of the self worldview. Because if feelings are truly the ultimate guide and if happiness is actually the ultimate goal, then of course judging is going to be the ultimate sin. If someone comes alongside you and they say, hey, you should or should not be doing this, then you're going to look at them and say, who are you to say? Who are you to say that you don't know how I feel? You don't know what makes me happy.

So, of course, judging is the ultimate sin in this kind of authority of the self worldview, because you're the boss. No one else can come and tell you what you need to do. And I think that's why a lot of Christians don't understand why we can be so resented for coming alongside someone than saying, hey, you know, you should not do this, or you should live in this way or another because the secular culture is coming from this other perspective of saying, but how are you to know? Right?

How are you to know what I should or shouldn't do? They're not really processing that we are the messengers, that we're not telling them what they should or shouldn't do. We're the messengers based on what God himself has already said you should or shouldn't do. So, judging is a really bad thing from the cultural perspective.

FRANK:

They will judge you for judging.

NATASHA:

They absolutely will. And Christians get this wrong too, right? Christians get this wrong all the time. And again, I'll ask an audience, so are Christians to judge? And lots of audiences will go, no. Yes, absolutely. We are to judge. When by judging you mean discern between what is right and wrong. So, Matthew 7:1, Jesus says, do not judge or you too will be judged. And everyone cuts that out with laser precision. And they think, oh, we're not supposed to judge, but in reality, that's just a precursor to a passage that's about not judging hypocritically.

FRANK:

That's right.

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NATASHA:

And so, even within the Church, we get this wrong. And I think that this really harms our witness a lot of times because we are so convinced that we shouldn't be judgmental. We've taken that cue from culture, that we've come along, and somebody is doing something that we really should be truth tellers, and we should be that salt and light we're called to be.

But we're not because we're saying, well, I don't want to be judgmental. God has already judged. He's the judge. We're not the judge. We're just coming along and we're saying, here's what God has said.

FRANK:

Yeah, there's a difference between making judgments and being judgmental, too. Right? Being judgmental is kind of this holier than thou attitude. And you don't have all the evidence, you don't have all the facts, and you're just, you just make snap judgments. You slam people. You have this nose in the air attitude. That's being judgmental. But saying that, say, same-sex relationships are wrong is not judgmental. It's a judgment built on a moral truth. It's built on reality. In fact, you don't even need the Bible to know this. Our founders talked about it in very stark terms. They said these were crimes against nature. Why? Because it's the natural...

It's against the natural design of the human body. And so, it's not judgmental to say that. It's making a judgment. And when somebody says, no, you're wrong, those relationships are just fine. That's a judgment, too. The question is, what standard are you using to say your judgment is right and the opposite judgment is wrong? So, everybody's making judgments. The only question is, are your judgments true according to a standard outside of yourself that everyone ought to obey?

And that standard can only exist if God exists. And so, I think it's very important that we make judgments without being judgmental. None of us are going to get to God by being better than other people. We're not better because, I mean, we may behave better on certain things, but we're all fallen. We all need a savior. I don't know who said this, but it was brilliant. They said, evangelism is just one beggar showing another beggar where the food is, right? That's what we're doing.

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We're trying to show other people where the food is. Okay, so you got, feelings are the ultimate guide, happiness is the ultimate goal, judging is the ultimate sin...

NATASHA:

And God is the ultimate guess, not guest. Sometimes people think I was saying guest. No, guess, as in we can't ever know for sure.

FRANK:

We're guessing.

NATASHA:

Yes, we are guessing. And a lot of times people think, oh, our culture is so godless today. And in a sense, that's true in terms of people want the authority of the self. But from an actual you know, what do they believe perspective, that's actually not true, because about 90% of people in the United States believe that there's at least some God or higher power out there.

So, the vast majority of people believe there's something out there. They just don't believe that that is a God who has revealed Himself so that we can know with any certainty who He is, or who we are, or what's required of us, any of those things. As I say in 'Faithfully Different', culture is totally fine with a generic God who requires nothing, but is absolutely offended by a specific God who requires everything.

So, God can only ever be a guess. It's totally okay if you post on social media, thank God that everything went well today with whatever it was I was doing. But if you start posting something that's specific to Christianity, that is revealed as truth in the Bible about who Jesus is, Jesus is the only way to God, that there's an actual heaven and hell, that we can know all these things, now people are offended.

Now they're offended because you're suggesting that everyone's guess is not equally valid, that this isn't all just a guessing game about who God is. Now you're claiming to know that you can know with some kind of confidence that there's an authority outside of the self.

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FRANK:

But Natasha, why does the general public have a problem with a Christian saying Jesus is God, but they don't have a problem with a Muslim saying Allah is god?

NATASHA:

Well, that's a really good question. And I think that, well, we can get into all of the social justice stuff that's happened in the last few decades, but I think it comes down to that, because Christianity has been the norm in America for the last several hundred years. And today all norms, values, and expectations are being rebelled against because of critical theory, which you've talked about many times on the podcast.

And this whole critical theory idea that there are oppressors and there are the oppressed depending on power dynamics in society, means you're going to fall on one side or the other of that line. There's a social binary. You're either part of the group that's been in power or you're the group that doesn't have the power. And that's the dividing line of injustice.

And so, when it comes to Christianity, because we have been the group that is, "in power", or has been in power, by having the kind of influence we've had in society over the last few hundred years, we are considered to be oppressors. And so, everyone else is considered to be marginalized. So, that would include Islam. That makes a huge dividing line between how Christians and Christianity are perceived in the United States and treated and how Islam is perceived and treated.

FRANK:

Isn't it really crazy, when you think about it, that you have people on the left in this country who are somehow protesting for Hamas when those same people, particularly the LGBTQ community, would be thrown off a building if they were in Gaza?

NATASHA:

Right.

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FRANK:

When Netanyahu a couple weeks ago came to America, he said, gays for Gaza is kind of like saying chickens for KFC. Or you could say it's kind of like saying blacks for the KKK. It's crazy. And yet, it's all because of this oppressor oppressed binary that people think whoever is oppressed automatically has to be right. And it's pretty odd to think that the people who are oppressing gays in Gaza are somehow also oppressed themselves.

NATASHA:

It's the logical outworking of the theory. Right?

FRANK:

Right.

NATASHA:

It's just any group that doesn't fall on the upper side of the power dynamic is oppressed. So, we need to all get together and be one oppressed, marginalized group to rise up against those in power.

FRANK:

Now we're going to take those four tenets of secularism and discuss them further in the context of what do you do when culture hates you, right after the break. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.' My guest, Natasha Crain. Don't go anywhere. Back in two minutes.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with me, Frank Turek. My guest today, the great Natasha Crain. We've been talking a little bit about her book, 'Faithfully Different', which has these four tenets of secularism that are very important to understand. And once you understand them, you're going to be able to see why people decide to do what they do.

And unfortunately, Natasha, this has actually been, this kind of mindset about feelings are the ultimate guide. Happiness the ultimate goal. Judgment is the ultimate sin. God is the ultimate guess. To a certain extent, it's kind of crept into the church, hasn't it? That these kinds of

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secular ideas are ideas that are being adopted in the church, particularly when it comes to happiness and that kind of thing. How have church members responded to your book?

NATASHA:

Well, I think that they have found that framework really helpful. I've heard a lot from parents especially, who say, oh, this is a way that I can encapsulate this whole complex way that culture thinks into these four points to teach my kids. And it's helpful because one, and I can say this from personal experience with my own kids. I have three teenagers. And when they understand these four points, then they start to see these things everywhere around them. You see it in the news, the way that people talk.

You see it on social media, you see it everywhere. You see it on the things stitched in pillows in the stores. Right? I mean, you really do see this kind of thinking everywhere. And so, I've heard from a lot of people that this kind of crystallized it for them. It seems like culture is all over the place. And statistically, they are. In terms of all the different kinds of beliefs that they hold, it's all over the map from reincarnation, there's energy in rocks, and you know, 40% of people believe in psychics.

I mean, all kinds of stuff is out there. But the tie that functionally binds that worldview together of all those people who otherwise believe all kinds of things is this authority of self rather than the authority of God. So, I think those four points just kind of help people pinpoint. Okay, that's what that looks like in execution. If your authority is you, here's what it's going to look like. Your feelings are going to guide you. Happiness will be the goal. Judging a sin, and God is a guess. So, it just kind of crystallizes, I think, for people, what they're seeing in culture.

FRANK:

That distinction is very important to understand, ladies and gentlemen, the distinction between who... It's not really a distinction, but the question, who is the ultimate authority? Is it God, or are you the ultimate authority? And we actually cover that in a seminar that you and I do, along with Alisa Childers, called Unshaken. Tell us a little bit about that conference. What do we do at that conference?

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NATASHA:

Yeah, so the Unshaken conference is a series that we have been doing. We have done, let's see, we've done six so far. We started them last year. We did four. We're doing four more this year. And we basically, we have a theme, 'Winning the Battle of the Gods.' And what we mean by that is, you know, how do you get out there in culture and relate? How do you win, so to speak, as Christians, when there's a battle between the God who is actually the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and the god that everyone thinks of as themselves?

So, we do all kinds of talks that day to just help people understand some of the things that we've been talking about here about, well, what does that look like? What does it mean to have yourself as the authority? What should it look like for Christians to have God as the authority? And how does that play out in all these cultural issues?

And so, we have two more dates coming this year, September 21st in Buffalo, New York, and November 16th in Austin, Texas. And it's just a full, wonderful day of equipping and encouraging the body of Christ on these issues to stand strong in culture. And it's getting hard.

FRANK:

Yeah. And we have a website, UnshakenConference.com. So, if you want to be a part of either of those coming up again, one in Buffalo, New York, September 21, or the second in Austin, Texas, on November 16. Just go to UnshakenConference.com. We'll have a great time together. As you say, we've done six of these, and we come and interact with people at the end. If you want books, we're there to sign any of your books or interact and answer questions. So, it's not just a bunch of lectures. We hang out with folks.

And so, if you want to be a part of that, I hope you can come. Go to UnshakenConference.com for a lot more. And if your church wants to host us at a future date, you can also go to UnshakenConference.com and request that we come to your church again. It's Natasha Crain, Alisa Childers, and myself for the Unshaken conference.

Also, Natasha, you have just finished writing a book called 'When Culture Hates You.' It's a fantastic book. You asked me to write the foreword. I'm honored to do that. It's such a great book. What is the purpose of the book and what sort of motivated you to write it?

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NATASHA:

Yeah, so the subtitle kind of explains the purpose, but it's a very long subtitle. When culture hates you, it's a much easier thing to remember. But the subtitle is 'Persevering for the Common Good as Christians in a Hostile Public Square.' So, a lot easier to remember when culture hates you.

But the subtitle really tells the story that this is all about, what do you do when the culture does hate you, in terms of persevering for the good of society? A lot of people don't think that it's actual good when Christians are advocating for righteousness, for what is actually right according to God, for the just functioning society.

A lot of people don't call that good, but we need to be really clear on what objectively is good as Christians. And how do we advocate for that when it's a very hostile public square, when people don't want to hear it? What does that look like? That's really the impetus for the book, is to help encourage Christians to be confident that, yes, we have a role in advocating for the common good. Yes, this is part of what we should be doing as salt and light.

You can't be salt and light just sitting in your living room. You're not preserving or exposing anything by sitting in your living room. You have to get out there. You have to do things. What does that look like? How can you be doing that with confidence and courage?

FRANK:

Jesus said, if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. He also said, if they persecuted me, they're going to persecute you. Paul said, anyone who lives a faithful life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Isn't it interesting that Christians are persecuted almost to the exclusion of any other major religious worldview? I mean, Muslims persecute other Muslims, but it's not like people are persecuting Muslims in most cases as much as they're persecuting Christians.

I know there, I guess there are some Muslims being persecuted in China right now. That's certainly true. But why is it that Christianity and Judaism is almost universally persecuted to the

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exclusion of other religious worldviews? Why is that? Is it satanic? Is it demonic? It sure seems to me there must be an element of that in there.

Why would the world hate a religion that is bringing forth a savior that saves them by grace? Is it because they don't understand that it's grace? What is it? I don't know, but it's been predicted that we were going to be... We are going to be persecuted. Why does the culture hate us, Natasha? Why? Why is that? Why do you think?

NATASHA:

Well, there are lots of reasons. I mean, many factors. We talked about some before the break, right? We talked about the Christianity having been seen as the religion that's in power in the US. And so, because of critical theory that's led to some of that. But if we go back to the explanation that Jesus actually connects, we often hear, yes, Jesus said the world would hate us.

But when I was writing the book and my very first chapter is Jesus said it would happen that the world would hate us. Right? I actually, when I dug into this, I realized that when he talks about this, he doesn't connect to the explanation right away. You kind of have to tie the pieces together throughout the gospels here. But what you eventually see is that he says that the world will hate you because you're not of the world.

If you were of the world, then the world would love you as its own. And that tells the whole story. The Gospels really show that there is this divide between those who are of the world and those who are of God, and literally calls people who are of the world the children of the devil versus the children of God. There is a divide, and it's not a hyperbolic theological claim to say, oh, you know, the world is, "of the devil." This is literally what Jesus says.

And so, what you end up seeing is that there is this dichotomy in the world as we have it, that you are a child of God, meaning that you're submitting your life to God and that you're looking to God as the authority, like we have been talking about. You're doing God's will; you are practicing righteousness. And then on the other side, you have those who are under the governing influence of Satan that you're literally doing the will, whether you know it or not.

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So, it sounds extreme. I understand that. If a non-believer was listening to this, they'd be like, oh my gosh, we're all under like, the rule of Satan, right? It sounds extreme, but this is what the Bible tells us. You are a child of God, or you are a child of the devil. And it's all about whose will are you doing? Are you doing your own will? Are you doing your own desires, which is serving Satan ultimately, or are you doing the will of God because you're a child of God?

And then the Gospels go on to talk about how the children of God will practice righteousness. And when we practice righteousness, when we expose the works of the world, of those who are of the world, again, that language, when we do that, the world will hate us. So of course, they're not going to like it when you expose evil. No one's going to like that, and they're going to hate you for doing it.

FRANK:

Men love evil rather than light. Jesus may have said it this way. Men love darkness rather than light, and they don't like being exposed, whether they know they're essentially on the demonic side of the divide or not. I think it's correct to what you're saying, that there's only two authorities, either the authority of God or the authority of yourself.

In fact, it's been put this way, too. Christianity is not against freedom. Christianity is against autonomy. Autonomy is I get to decide whatever I want to do whenever I want to do it. Freedom is I have a lot of things I can do. True freedom is being able to do what I know I should do, not to follow every impulse I have or every desire I have, but having the power to do what I know I should do. There's a lot of things you can do as a Christian. I mean, God gave us, and particularly the Jewish nation, ten things you...

Well, they're not all can'ts. There are some of them, you know, love God and love your neighbor. But there are several that say, you can't do this. You can't. Everything else you can do. Okay, so there's plenty of freedom in the Christian worldview. But Christianity is not against freedom. It's against autonomy.

And what you're pointing out here is, are you going to follow God, or are you going to follow yourself? You also have a chapter in the new book. Again, it's not out until next year, but we're

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just touching on some of the aspects of it. The chapter is about how God defines the common good. What is that about?

NATASHA:

Yeah, so the common good, we throw this term around, and we all kind of think that, you know, we know what that means, but you actually have to get a little bit deeper with it, because people define good differently depending on their worldview. So, most of the culture wars today are over the common good. It's not because people, some people want what's good for society and some people don't.

It's because people disagree on what is good for society. That's the distinction. But truly, the culture wars are over the common good. We look around at all the issues that we see today when it comes down to abortion or social justice issues, or transgenderism, sexuality, all these issues, ultimately, are about the common good. What kind of society are we going to have?

What are the parameters that we should have in place that are going to actually help us to flourish and thrive as a society? And Christians are very confused about this because sometimes they look at the definition of good from culture, and they're applying that to how they should vote and how they should act, and how they should be in society, as opposed to looking to God and understanding, no, this is what's objectively good.

FRANK:

Now, how do we act on that? We're talking to Natasha Crain, and we're talking about, what do you do when culture hates you? We're going to come out of the break and talk about what the common good is when it comes to politics. You're not going to want to miss this. So, don't go anywhere. We're back in just two minutes.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you want to get a real good seminary education on apologetics, philosophy, and or theology, actually, we get all three. You need to go to ses.edu. That's where I went, Southern Evangelical Seminary. Go to ses.edu/frank, and you might get a scholarship. It's a great place to learn apologetics, theology and philosophy. I'm talking to my friend Natasha Crain today.

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We're talking about these issues of culture and what do you do when culture hates you? That's actually the title of a new book which you can pre-order on Amazon. It won't be out until after the new year, but it is a fabulous book. I'm looking at the PDF draft edition right now, and I'm privileged to write the forward on it. You're going to want to get this book not for the forward, but for what? All the stuff Natasha has...

NATASHA:

And the forward, too. It's going to be amazing.

FRANK:

That's right. And Natasha, you were talking about the common good just before the break. And the common good should be what we are pursuing in politics. But before we get there, can you give us a simple definition of what politics is? Because for some reason, Christians think we ought not be involved in it.

NATASHA:

Well, I think a lot of times when people think we shouldn't be involved, they have all kinds of baggage they're importing into the definition of politics. So, that's why in the book, I try to just kind of step back and say, okay, hold on. I'm about to talk about the dreaded P word, politics. I know it's a big deal, so let's just come up with a basic definition. And politics is really just the process through which people living in communities decide on the parameters of how they're going to live together.

FRANK:

Say that again.

NATASHA:

Politics is the process through which people living in communities decide on the parameters of how they're going to live together.

FRANK:

Christians shouldn't be involved in that.

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NATASHA:

Well, why not?

FRANK:

Yeah, I know. It's so stupid like, oh, no, you shouldn't be involved.

NATASHA:

We're all part of this country, right? I mean, so I make the point in the book and in the chapter about this in particular, that if you are blessed to live in a country where you have the opportunity to influence your governing structure toward making and enforcing laws that promote the common good, of course we should do that out of our love for both God and others. I mean, that is just, it is the most basic takeaway, I think.

If you love God and you love other people as we are commanded to, then you should care about their lives in the context of society. That's the common good, and that's all politics is. Now, you can talk about all kinds of other things politically, but I would encourage anyone who's listening to this, if you get into these conversations and you're getting into disagreements with other Christians about politics, take a step back and say, well, how do you define politics?

What are we even talking about here? Because most of the time they have all kinds of other things in mind that maybe you would go, oh, yeah, I don't agree with that either. But take a step back and just say, should we be involved in influencing our governing structure toward making and enforcing laws that promote the common good out of our love for God and others? And I think that is an unequivocal yes.

FRANK:

You know, sometimes I get the question, what do you think about subject x? And a lot of times I'll say, it doesn't matter what I think. I'm not the moral arbiter of the universe. In fact, I had that question at the University of Michigan once. What do you think about homosexuality? It doesn't matter what I think. Because if there is a God, it matters what He thinks. If there isn't a God, it still doesn't matter what I think because there is no objective right or wrong. It's just an opinion.

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So, we have to get back to who the authority is. And the authority is good. What we mean by God is His nature is good. We're not just obeying God because he's the authority. He happens to be the authority, but He's also good. And we ought to follow what is good. The problem is, is that people are going to say, well, no, the reason you Christians can't be involved and shouldn't be involved, Natasha, is because you want to impose your views on others, which is another chapter in the new book, 'When Culture Hates You.' Give us a summary of your response.

NATASHA:

Well, yeah, I just had someone tell me this yesterday on Facebook that, you know, it's Christian nationalism if you think that abortion is wrong and you want to impose those laws, any kind of pro-life laws, on people. And this is not just a theological misunderstanding. This is a civic misunderstanding, how our country actually functions, how government works, which is really unfortunate.

And in fact, in 'When Culture Hates You', I spend quite a bit of time just talking about the civic background because Christians need that as well. It's both the theology and it's also the civic background. But in a democracy that we're in, or a constitutional republic technically, but just everyone says democracy, so I'm going to use that. But in a democracy, all of us are supposed to bring our views to bear on how we are going to vote and what we advocate for in society.

That's how democracy works. That's the way the whole thing is set up. It's not, well, we're going to psychologically profile to know if you are motivated from a religious worldview. We would be doing that to people all day. Well, what's motivating your view? It's not that. Everyone brings their views to bear and people say, well, what about, you know, the First Amendment? Right? Well, what about the whole, you can't establish a religion.

Well, that just means that there can't be a federally established church. That's a whole different thing than whether or not people who do hold religious views and therefore moral viewpoints that they want to bring into the public square, whether or not they should do that. And of course we should. It's a democracy. It is about the will of the people, of course, within the context of the Constitution. That's not Christian nationalism.

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Now, Christian nationalism is another whole subject. I actually have a chapter on that in the book, but that's just how democracy works. I believe in the sanctity of life. I believe that the preborn humans have just as much worth as a human who's been born. Therefore, I'm going to advocate in society for righteousness when it comes to that subject, because of God, what He says. Not because I want Christian nationalism.

FRANK:

Yeah. And also, ladies and gentlemen, notice that when people say, you ought not impose your view on them, they're doing the same thing to you. They're saying you ought not impose ought not. Well, they're imposing that view on you. And look, when people say, don't impose your views on others, I say, look, these aren't my views. These aren't my morals. I didn't make them up.

I didn't make up the fact that murder is wrong, abortion is wrong, theft is wrong, rape is wrong, that you ought not mutilate children, that men, men were made for women, and women were made for men. I didn't make any of this stuff up. It's not my morality. It just happens to be the morality. The one Thomas Jefferson said was self-evident.

NATASHA:

One of the things I talk about in the book is I say you should take these kinds of challenges. And I go through a whole chapter where I have all these objections, take all of them and submit them to what I'm calling the slavery test. So, would you still use this objection when it comes to slavery? In other words, in this case, we would say, well, would you ever say that we shouldn't have tried to outlaw slavery because we don't impose our views on other people? Of course not. No one today would say that.

So, why would we say that about other things? There are a whole lot of objections like that, that when you put them in the context of slavery, people go, well, no, I guess not. And it suddenly makes it clear. Another one is, sometimes people will say, oh, well, Christians just want power, or it's a power play. We should be giving up our power. You hear this from inside the church also.

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And the same thing, apply the slavery test. Would you say, well, we shouldn't have outlawed slavery because Christians shouldn't seek power? Of course not. Power can be used well, or it can be used poorly.

FRANK:

Yeah, it's amoral.

NATASHA:

It's just, it's a stewardship issue. Right? And Christians should seek power just like anyone else should seek power. And the hope is that you steward it well for promoting the good and restraining evil, per Romans 13.

FRANK:

I remember years ago, Russell Moore put out some post saying that Christians ought not pursue power, they ought not try and persuade people, blah, blah, blah. Here he is using his position of power to try and persuade us not to seek power or not to try and persuade others. I mean, if irony could kill, he'd be dead right now. Okay? Because he's doing exactly what he says we shouldn't do. What you shouldn't do, which is so typical of people on the left. They will exempt themselves from their own theories. You ought not impose your views on others when they're imposing their view on you. Right?

I mean, they're doing exactly what they say that you shouldn't do. But let's talk for a minute about Christian nationalism, because you've got a chapter in the new book on it, 'When the Culture Hates You.' I think Christian nationalism is used just to try and label people as some sort of zealot to keep them out of the political process. But what say you on that issue, Natasha?

NATASHA:

Yeah, it's a really complicated topic, actually, because every time someone uses the term, they're going to mean something different. And there's no objective standard for the terminology. So, you just kind of have to ask people some questions to understand, well what do you mean by Christian nationalism? And the example that I just gave where the person said, oh, it's Christian nationalism if you vote for pro-life laws, clearly that's just a misunderstanding of how the country should work.

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But in that chapter, what I talk about is that when you look at the research that's been done on, "Christian nationalism" and you look at the media's narrative about Christian nationalism, what you see is that overwhelmingly what it is, is that if you hold a popular, excuse me, a position that is unpopular with the current moral consensus politically, and you want to see those values actually executed in the public square, you are going to be called a Christian nationalist.

And so, I sampled all kinds, hundreds of articles about this from media. If you Google the term on search engine, you will get 2.3 million results. So obviously, it's impossible to quantify what everyone's talking about. But after sampling hundreds of these, you'll see all kinds of articles where it's basically like coming down the road, you have Christians who want to take away transgender rights, you know, all the "anti-trans bills".

This kind of Christian nationalism is what we have to watch out for. Or if you are pro-life and you're advocating for laws that restrict abortion, that is called Christian nationalism. So, what you end up having is all these claims about Christian nationalism, which is really just about conservative, unpopular positions that a lot of Christians hold.

And then when you look at the actual research that's been done in some of the major studies that people look to that they're referencing, these questions that they ask in order to categorize people as so-called Christian nationalists, basically are just finding people who are conservative Christians. And so, they then label them as Christian nationalists.

Now, the tricky part of this is that sometimes, or a lot of times in these articles in the media that you see, they'll come up with actually problematic examples by a self-identified white supremacist group, for example, that are saying racist things. And then they'll lump that in with, oh, and Christians also want to take away transgender people's rights, and they lump it all together, and call it all Christian nationalism.

And then Christians start thinking, yeah, this is really a problem. There are so many different issues that are going on with that. But typically, it is, you are a conservative Christian. You want to impose your values on us, which we've already talked about, or they're talking about racism, which is often not rightly defined, sometimes is, but get lumped into everything.

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And then xenophobia, the so-called irrational fear of immigrants, people who are not like you. And again, you can come up with all kinds of problematic, truly problematic examples. But then they extrapolate this to huge swaths of the population who would be Christians voting conservatively and say this is a big problem. So, it's a complex issue.

On the other end, you also have Christians who are debating about Christian nationalism from a theological perspective. I don't address that in my book because I'm talking more about the cultural accusations. But that's another whole side of this issue.

FRANK:

This is going to be a fabulous book. You can pre-order it, ladies and gentlemen, on Amazon or wherever you get books. It won't be out until after the first of the year, but you can see it's very relevant to what's going on now and what will even be relevant after this election. So, thanks for writing it, Natasha. How do people learn more about you? What website did they go to?

NATASHA:

NatashaCrain.com, and I have a podcast. I also have a joint podcast with Alisa Childers that we do every week. We're on hiatus for the summer, but we'll be back in September.

FRANK:

The Unshaken Podcast. It's great. Don't forget about the Unshaken conference in Buffalo on September 21st, and in Austin, Texas on November 16. Go to UnshakenConference.com for more. Natasha, thanks for being with us.

NATASHA:

Thanks for having me.

FRANK:

That's the great Natasha Crain, ladies and gentlemen. And we'll see her again once this book does come out. And Lord willing, I'll see you again here next week. God bless.

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