

**Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Communications – Cissie Graham Lynch
Fearless – Ep 118 – God, Miracles, and Harry Potter
Final Transcript**

MUSIC STARTS

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:02 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to *Fearless*, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:00:21 Well, welcome back to another episode of *Fearless*. And I think often when we hear the word "apologetics," some of us can maybe just tune that out very quickly because some of us think it might be way over our head; that's too complicated; we kind of live by a simple faith. And to be honest, that can often be me. My husband, Corey—I know it's hard to believe as a football player—he was a physics major and a mathematics minor, so he dives deep into those conversations. But I also think it's important that we don't ignore it. We need to know what we believe and why we believe it. I often talk about that here on *Fearless*.

And I think one person that does that the best is Frank Turek, and I've asked him to join me on today's episode. You might've seen Frank on social media. He's often on college campuses or in churches, defending his faith and what you should believe and why you should believe it. He often finds himself on campuses across the country. So, I'm always amazed at people that do that. And so, I've asked him today to talk about what do we as parents need to be preparing our children for when they go to college campuses? And also, we're going to talk about Harry Potter at the end of this episode—another divisive subject in the church if you have young children. So Frank, thank you for joining me on today's episode of *Fearless*.

Frank Turek:

00:01:33 Cissie, it's my pleasure. I'm so happy we're talking about these issues because so many young people, as you know, go off to college, about three out of four of them, last survey I saw. They are in the church in high school; as soon as they go to college, they're out.—[Cissie: Mm.]—And one of the reasons is intellectually, they don't know why Christianity is true because we've never told them why it's true. We've just told them to go believe.—Uh-huh. [Cissie: affirmative]—And when they get to college, their professors and the culture and other students are trying to talk them *out* of Christianity. So, the pressure to be talked out of it is great and a lot of young people leave. And now actually people are leaving a lot sooner because they got the iPhone, right?

Cissie:

00:02:12 Yeah.

Frank:

00:02:13 And, there's a lot of misinformation on the internet about Christianity, so what we try and do at Cross Examined is to give them true information.

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Cissie:

00:02:20 Well, like you said, I went to a Christian college. I grew up in public school my whole life, and then I went to a Christian college. I went to Liberty University for two years—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—which I was kind of the opposite—I was shell shocked a little bit on being a Christian campus, but then I transferred to Appalachian State, which you've been before—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—speaking, but I went to Appalachian State and it's just what you said. I was kind of shocked. I was one of the few Christians—probably the only outspoken Christian in my classes. My first professor found out I was a transfer from Liberty. She goes, “Miss Liberty” and looked down her nose at me. [chuckle] So I had to learn real quick. It was great for me, but thankfully I've had parents that have set that example before me.

So, before we get into some of those questions, though, I'm always curious when I see you in some of these environments that can get pretty heated at times, but you've always kept your cool, what led you to spend your life going across the country, visiting college campuses, debating, and giving answers for the hope you have in Jesus?

Frank:

00:03:15 Well, it started out, I grew up in New Jersey, so I was Catholic because it's the law. In New Jersey, you're either Catholic or Jewish, right? I went to Catholic high school, but I never really knew who Jesus was, and I went off to college. I talked to some people on campus, but I didn't really get anywhere with them either. I always knew there had to be a God. I just didn't know who Jesus was. I knew there had to be a first cause.

Right after college, I went into the Navy. I went to flight school in Pensacola, Florida, and I met the son of a Methodist minister, and I had so many questions for him, Cissie, that he finally said, “Look, you just need to get Josh McDowell books: *Evidence Demands a Verdict* and *More Than a Carpenter*. So I got those books, and I realized then that Christianity was indeed true. And then after I got out of the Navy, eight years later, I met Norman Geisler, who at the time was sort of the Michael Jordan of apologetics, which is giving evidence for the faith, and he was starting a seminary right down here in Charlotte, North Carolina. So in 1993, my wife and I and three sons moved from the D.C. area to Charlotte and we've been here ever since. And, I later started a ministry called CrossExamined.org to go to college campuses, high schools, and churches and present the evidence that Christianity is true. So, I came to faith through evidence, so I wanted to pass that on to others.

Cissie:

00:04:28 Wow. What are some common questions from college students that you continue to hear, that you're seeing them struggling with, and how can we prepare our children that might be in high school now? How can we prepare our children as they go? What are some of those common things you're hearing?

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Frank:

00:04:42 Well, I think the offensive side of this—I don't mean in a negative way. I mean, to go on offense and just provide the evidence that Christianity is true, you have to answer four questions—and this is what we do on college campuses. Does truth exist? Does God exist? Are miracles possible? And, did Jesus really rise from the dead? Because if the answer to those four questions is yes, then Christianity is true. You can show the Bible's the Word of God by answering those four questions—truth, God, miracles, New Testament, resurrection.

Once you do that, however, you're going to get pushback, and the pushback comes in four areas as well. They all begin with the letter "E." You're going to get questions about evil. If there's a good God, why is there evil? Good question, right?—Uh-huh. [Cissie: affirmative]—You're going to get questions about ethics. Like, why did God kill the Canaanites in the Old Testament? Or, why does God not permit same-sex relationships? Those kind of things, right? You're also going to get questions about evolution. Is evolution true? Does it somehow disprove Christianity? And then you're going to get questions on eternity. Like, what about those that have never heard? Why did God create people He knew would go to Hell? These kinds of questions. So, you've got four points you need to make: that truth does exist, that God exists, that miracles are possible, and Jesus rose from the dead and the Bible's true, and then you get four basic categories of pushback: evil, ethics, evolution, and eternity. And 95% of the questions, Cissie, are in one of those four categories and we have an app—the Cross Examined app. Two words in the app store: Cross Examined. We have those four questions and those four categories of objections in the app with answers. So, if people want to go further, they can.

Cissie:

00:06:19 Yeah, and also, I find your videos on YouTube if I want to dig a little, or for some of the longer ones, some of the churches you've been to, you've also posted those. But what are some of the questions that college students, or even millennials, myself, asking today that might've been different 20 years ago? It's like a stumbling block of their faith.

Frank:

00:06:39 Yeah, you know, I think today the four major objections to Christianity are morality, morality, morality, and morality. In other words, just about every objection that I get, not all, but most, have something to do with morality now.—Uh-huh. [Cissie: affirmative]—You know, "Why did God kill the Canaanites?" is one. "What about LGBTQ?" That's a big one on college campuses, as you might imagine. The evil question is actually a morality question: Is it immoral for God to allow evil? Or, is it immoral for God to create people He knew would go to Hell? They're all related to morality in some way.—Mm-hmm [Cissie: affirmative].

And when people do that, my first question is: By what standard are you judging? What moral standard are you judging what apparently God is doing, to say He's wrong? Because if there *is* no God, there *is* no objective moral standard—it's just my opinion against your opinion. So, when they come up with a moral objection, I'm

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immediately going to ask them, “Where are you getting your standard from?” “Why are you saying that’s wrong?” And that’s the starting point.

So, most of them related to morality because, Cissie, most people today are not on a truth quest, they’re on a happiness quest. They’re not really interested in truth; they want to know if this belief system is going to make them happy. It’s more pragmatic in nature. And, ‘If I don’t get to sleep with who I want to sleep with when I want to sleep with them at any point, well, that’s not going to make me happy, so I don’t want Christianity to be true.’ And that’s why I always ask these people this question: If Christianity were true, would you become a Christian? And many of them will say no. Because it’s not a head problem. It’s a heart problem. They want to do their own thing. They want to go their own way.

In fact, maybe we could just do a little thought experiment with your listeners right now. I do this in front of audiences all the time. Here’s the question I ask: I want you to think of somebody you know who’s not a Christian, whom you’d like to be a Christian—a friend, relative, somebody like that. Everybody listening right now got someone? OK. Here’s my next question: Is the person you’re thinking of on a relentless pursuit of truth? In other words, they want to know if Christianity is true and they’re really searching hard. Or, are they apathetic or maybe even hostile to Christianity? How many people listening right now say, The person I’m thinking of is on a relentless pursuit of truth? When I do this before an audience, I might have one person raise their hand. Usually, it’s none. Next question: Is the person you’re thinking of apathetic or hostile? And everybody raises their hand, because most people are looking for God like a criminal’s looking for a cop, right? They’re not interested. They’re on the run. And so, I think it’s very revealing to ask people, “If this really were true, would you become a Christian?” And if they hesitate or say no, it’s not a head problem. It’s a heart problem.

Cissie:

00:09:24 When we look at just the intricate design, like DNA—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—the human body, the eye, and we look at the universe, just the distance from the sun to the Earth, you often talk about just “the fine-tuning” argument. Can you explain that to our audience?

Frank:

00:09:41 Sure, the universe is so fine-tuned that if you were to change any one of a number of factors about our universe virtually imperceptibly, either the universe wouldn’t exist, or if it did exist, it couldn’t support life. For example, Stephen Hawking, an atheist, famously said this—he said if the expansion rate was different by one part in a thousand million million, a second after the creation event, “the Big Bang” he called it, the universe would either collapse back on itself or never develop galaxies. So, if the expansion rate was that infinitesimally different from the very beginning, we wouldn’t be here. Now, what could have caused the expansion rate to be *that* precise? It seems to me only a mind that created space, time, and matter.

Another one that’s *really* interesting is that the gravitational force ... if it were altered by more than one part in 10^{40} compared to the strong nuclear force, we wouldn’t

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exist. Now, 1×10^{40} is hard to get your mind around. It's one part in one with 40 zeros following it. You say, well, I can't understand that number. Let me just give you an illustration of this: Take the entire North American continent, all the way from say, Central America to Greenland, and stack it in dimes all the way to the moon. That's 238,000 miles. And do that on a billion other North American continents, stack it in dimes all the way to the moon. Now take all of those dimes, all those billion piles of dimes, put them in one big pile, mark one dime red, mix it in with the rest of the dimes, blindfold a friend, throw them on that pile, ask him to pick a dime at random. The chances that he would pick that one marked red dime is one chance in 10^{40} . Is he going to pick that dime? No, he's not. OK.

So, there's only two possible explanations for that value being where it is: either it was designed to be there or it wasn't. Now, what makes more sense? It was designed to be there; that's the point. Now even atheists—like years ago I debated Christopher Hitchens, who was a brilliant British atheist, who sounded more brilliant than he was because he had a British accent, and he said that *this* is the hardest piece of evidence to answer, the hardest argument to answer against God is the fine tuning. How do you come up with this? How do you explain this in the absence of a mind? You don't. There is a mind out there that created and sustains this universe.

Cissie:

00:11:58 And I think too, when you're talking about apologetics—you know, like I said earlier, my husband, the mathematics, the physics major—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—this is right down his alley—but you also talked about the moral argument earlier, and I think that's where it's important for those that maybe think this is way over their head. There's an argument that we can have these conversations. We are capable and knowledgeable enough to have these conversations, no matter what your strength is and what your passion is, to be able to defend your faith in Jesus and God who created this.

But, what I love about you is when you're on college campuses is 1 Peter 3:15—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—“*Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.*” And I think that can be lost in today's time because we just live where it's my truth, your truth, we're all kind of fighting for our truth. We can kind of—even Christians don't always do it with grace and that's what I've appreciated about you. You kind of have this joy and this smile when you get some wild questions and people arguing with you on college campuses, but when speaking with nonbelievers, how do you balance winning the argument with winning the heart?

Frank:

00:13:09 Yeah, well, you don't want to win the argument and lose the person, that's for sure. And I think one of the things you can do is to realize that you should *not*—if you're the person being asked a question—you should not expect the other person to agree with you. I mean, look, I'm 62 years old now. When I was 22, I didn't believe what I believe now. Why should I expect some 22-year-old to agree with my 62-year-old self now when I didn't agree with my 62-year-old self back then, right? Why do we expect everybody to agree with our perspective on the world as we understand it

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right now when we didn't even [chuckle] you know, agree with it 10 years ago, 20, 30, 40 years? We didn't, right?—Mm-hmm [Cissie: affirmative].

In other words, everybody is somewhere along the process of either getting closer to Jesus or further away. And we shouldn't expect everybody to be *right* where we are right now. So, I think we have to have grace with people and say, "Look, as Paul himself said, 'Look, I was an insolent and arrogant man, but Christ showed me mercy.'" And he said, "I didn't deserve it," and none of us deserve it, you know, it's totally by grace. And so, we have to keep in mind when we're talking to other people, that we shouldn't expect them to agree with us, that we have to bring them along just like we were brought along to the point we are now.

Cissie:

00:14:32 You talked about your relationship with Norm Geisler and how he impacted your life—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—and that y'all end up moving to Charlotte, but y'all wrote a book together, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, which is a wonderful defense for the Gospel and a testimony for Christ—and for those who are listening, it's probably a must-read for a Christian audience to be able to defend our faith. Tell us a little bit about that book the two of you wrote.

Frank:

00:14:57 Sure. That book goes back to a time when Norm and I were traveling the country doing a seminar we called, "Twelve Points That Show Christianity Is True." And it's an argument that Norm had developed over the years being a professor for so many years. And at one point I said to him, I said, "Hey, Norm, this really needs to be a book, not just a seminar." He said, "OK, let's write it!"

And so, we wrote it and it's 12 logical points to show that Christianity is true. Now, the four basic points are the ones I mentioned earlier: truth, God, miracles, New Testament, right, or, resurrection. If you can show those four things are true, that there is truth, that God does exist, that miracles are possible, and Jesus rose from the dead, Christianity is true. Well, the book, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, really dives in in detail on those four points. It spreads them out over 12 and goes into a lot of precise detail. And so we wrote that back in 2004. It's been 20 years now. And, it still does very well. People like it because it's a kind of a one-stop shop book. You don't have to get a whole bunch of different books. You can kind of get the whole argument, not in exhausting detail, but in enough to know the basic arguments as to why Christianity is true. And that's basically what I talk about when I go to college campuses. We call it, "I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist," and I summarize what's in the book and then take questions.

Cissie:

00:16:10 I think that's a great resource, no matter your age. Parents, or if you're listening, you don't even have kids, it's just a great resource that we need to have as Christians. But, when I look at our children—I have a 10-year-old, a 7-year-old, and a 1-year-old, so I'm at the beginning of all of this—Uh-huh. [Frank: affirmative]—And the worldly messaging is hitting our children at a younger and younger age—which I think for some Christian parents, that can be pretty scary when we look at it 'cause

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it's like everywhere we turn—even commercials now, you know, you have to be careful what commercials are playing.

Frank:

00:16:42 Oh, yeah.

Cissie:

00:16:43 So how do we combat this and prepare our children, at a *young* age? How do we begin that relationship with our kids and those conversations to defend the Gospel, defend their faith at a young age?

Frank:

00:16:53 Talk about what they already know, Cissie, and that's cause and effect— [Cissie: Hmm.]—In fact, Doug Axe, who's a microbiologist, wrote a book a number of years ago called *Undeniable*, and the book talks about the fine-tuning argument not only in cosmology, but also in biology. And he says, when young kids—even kids brought up by atheists—see something like a butterfly or a hummingbird, they immediately know somebody created that. Somebody caused that. They have to be talked out of what they intuitively understand that every effect needs a cause. And so, what we need to do is trade on that—amplify that intuition in young people, that every effect has a cause because if someone were to ask me, How do I know that God exists, I'm going to say, "I know that God exists by His effects."

If there's a creation, that's the effect. I need to reason back to a cause, a creator. If there's design, that's the effect, like the fine tuning we just mentioned. I'm going to reason back to a cause, a designer. If there's a moral law written on the heart, basic right and wrong, that's the effect. I'm going to reason back to a moral law giver. If there's evidence that a Man predicted and accomplished His own resurrection from the dead, that's the effect. I'm going to reason back to a cause. Who could raise somebody from the dead? Only somebody like God. So, you're always reasoning from effect back to cause. And even if you have a personal experience, some personal experience that you think God has spoken to you, you're doing the same thing. You're saying, "I have this personal experience;" that's the effect. I'm reasoning back to a cause that God is the ultimate cause of this.

And so, if we show young people, we amplify that intuition that they have, that every effect needs a cause—not that everything needs a cause. There has to be an uncaused first cause, and that uncaused first cause would be a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent Creator—but if we trade on that, if we amplify that, *then* we can show them that it's *very* reasonable to be a Christian. In fact, it's most reasonable to be a Christian because what do scientists believe in? Cause and effect. When you're doing science, you're trying to discover what particular cause caused a particular effect, or working backwards, what caused the effect that I witness here? You're reasoning back to a cause. So that's what we need to do. Now at CrossExamined.org, we've actually developed curriculum that goes all the way as low as second grade. So if they go to CrossExamined.org, click on "Store," they'll find curriculum. One is called, "Let's Get Real." Another one is called,

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“Yes, God is Real.” We have second to fifth grade; sixth to eighth grade; and above eighth grade we have, “I Don’t Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist.”

Cissie:

00:19:29 We’ll put a link to that in the show notes so people can find that easily because you actually just said one thing. I had a conversation with a friend today who had listened to a previous episode about children and salvation and just reminding parents that salvation is a miracle of the heart, and only God is in the miracle business—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—but we as parents, we’re to instruct our children, to guide them, to teach them God’s Word. And so it was more of her not to worry because what her son at a young age keeps saying is, “Mom, how can somebody be raised from the dead?” [chuckle] And I loved his authentic answer that he feels like he can be real with his mom at a young age—

Frank:

00:20:06 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:20:07 —and that’s a hard question for him. So, these *are* questions that we have, even at a young age, 9- and 10-year-olds are asking.

And I think we as parents, and that’s my encouragement here, is that when our kids go into school, if they’re in a public school, if they’re in high school, and then off to college, where we’re not around as much, is that we need to put them on the offense—

Frank:

00:20:25 That’s right.

Cissie:

00:20:26 —that they’re not on the defense all the time.—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—And we need to prepare them and strengthen them just as we would in anything else, if that is sports and music and arts, here with their faith and taking the time. I know, for parents, it’s hard. So, what I’ve tried to do is in my car rides—and now we’re going to look at your resources. I’m going to check that out—but in our car rides, I call that my biggest mission field, on the way to school, asking them certain questions about their faith.

Frank:

00:20:49 And Cissie, if I can, also get them to be able to ask questions of others.— [Cissie: Hmm.]—For example, my friend Greg Koukl wrote a book called *Tactics* and the main three tactics or the main three questions you got to teach your kids to ask other people is: When they say something, it’s not your job to refute what they say. It’s their job to support what they say. So, if they say, “Well, I can’t believe the Bible because it’s been changed throughout the centuries,” don’t give them an exposition as to why it hasn’t. Say, “First question: what do you mean by that? What do you mean it’s been changed throughout the centuries?”

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Second question, “How did you come to that conclusion?” In other words, “What evidence do you have for that position?” Because chances are, they don’t have any evidence. They just heard a slogan, and they don’t have no evidence for the slogan. They think the slogan’s true, but if you ask them for evidence, they don’t have any.

And then the third question—after you’ve asked, “What do you mean by that?” and “How did you come to that conclusion?”—the third question is an opportunity for you to provide some evidence back, and the evidence back would be, “Have you ever considered that we did not get the Bible like the telephone game like some people think?” You know, one person told it to another who told it to another who told it to another and it gets all garbled.

“—that we got the Bible by eyewitnesses or people that knew eyewitnesses who wrote down what they saw. And then those manuscripts were copied and copied so much that today we can compare the 6,000 or so Greek manuscripts and reconstruct the original New Testament with more than 99.5% accuracy, and the 0.5% we don’t know about doesn’t affect any doctrine.” So, it’s a nice way of you providing evidence back. Ask questions: “What do you mean by that?” “How’d you come to that conclusion?” “Have you ever considered?”

Cissie:

00:22:26 I love that. So, parents, take note and then also go out to Cross Examined and for those materials. Earlier you mentioned, you know, just the LGBT community on campuses—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—and I can’t imagine how relentless that might be for you when you’re on college campuses, and that messaging coming to our children. How can we kind of counter that relentless messaging that they’re getting when it comes from that community about the truth of God’s design and the purposes that God has for our children?

Frank:

00:22:52 Well, first of all, there is no morality without purpose. There’s no way of saying, ‘This is a good way to live’ and, ‘This is a bad way to live’ unless you know what the purpose of life is. And if the Scriptures are true—and they are—the purpose of life is to know God and to make Him known—not just to know Him intellectually, but to know Him personally. This is why Jesus in John 17:3 when He’s praying to the Father for us, He says, “*Now this is eternal life: that they,*” meaning us, who He’s praying for, “*may know You ... God [the Father] and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*” In other words, eternal life is not just some kind of endless time. Eternal life is a quality more than a quantity. It’s to *know* Jesus, to know God and know Jesus whom He sent, and then with the Great Commission, as your grandfather was so great at doing, is to go out there and make disciples of all nations, to make Him known. So, that’s why we’re here.

Now the question is: How does God want us to conduct ourselves to that purpose? If the purpose of life is to know God and to make Him known, then there’s a whole bunch of ethical, how-to-live questions that are answered and they’re revealed not only in the Bible, they’re revealed in natural law. The design of our bodies show that men were made for women and women were made for men. And the best way to

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perpetuate and stabilize society is with the man-woman biological marriage relationship. By the way, I don't call it traditional marriage because it's not tradition. Well, it is tradition, but it's more than that. It's natural marriage. It's marriage between a man and a woman based on the design of their bodies. To know one another and, in reality, that union, as we know, is an illustration of our ultimate relationship with Christ. So, marriage is designed, not just biologically, but theologically, for a man and a woman to come together and to procreate and stabilize society.

Cissie:

00:24:43 So, let's shift gears just for a little bit. We're going to talk about Harry Potter and some of them probably are just wondering, an apologist—we're just talking about fine-tuning moral arguments, but now we're going to talk about Harry Potter, and that's because I love your book, *Hollywood Heroes*, because it is exactly what I've done in the past with my kids. Whenever there's a song or whenever there's a movie, I always kind of turn it into my talking points about faith with my children and use it as an example, and that's what you do.

So, you state in your book, *Hollywood Heroes*, "There has not been a single fictional character in popular modern literature and film that has had more in common with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ than Harry Potter." And I'm sure a lot of people probably already want to argue that right away [Frank laughs] because Harry Potter is more popular now than it was over 20 years ago when the first book and the first movie came out. My kids love it. They want to go to Universal Studios this weekend to go to Harry Potter world. But, it has been very divisive amongst the church and Christians and I get both sides of it.

Frank:

00:25:50 Yup.

Cissie:

00:25:51 So with that quote, can you explain this and kind of unpack it for our listeners?

Frank:

00:25:55 Sure. I know many parents are concerned about the so-called witchcraft in the movie and I side with parents. If you think that your kid going to a movie like this is going to be problematic, then don't send the kid there ... but even if that's the case, you ought to know the plot of the movie. Why? Because their friends have watched the movie, and if you can speak intelligently about the movie, you have a great opportunity to show them the Gospel because you can say, If you like Harry Potter, you're going to love Jesus. Why? Let me just give you four ways Harry Potter parallels the life of Christ. And you know why he does? Because J.K. Rowling says she got that story from the Bible. OK?

First of all, Harry Potter is prophesied to be the savior before he's born. Does that sound familiar? It sounds exactly like Jesus—and what happens is some king or some evil force wants to kill Harry while he's an infant. Does *that* sound familiar? Yeah, it's Herod trying to kill Jesus, right?

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Secondly, Harry Potter is *born* as the savior, and in order for him to *be* the savior, he has to live a moral life. Does *that* sound familiar? Yeah, Jesus has to live a perfectly moral life to be our Savior. Then, Harry Potter is killed, and then he resurrects from the dead and the people that he's trying to lead have to put their faith and trust in him in order to defeat Voldemort, the Satan figure in the movie.

So he's prophesied, number one, before he's born. He has to live a moral life. Then he dies, number three. And then he resurrects from the dead, number four, and his followers have to put their faith in him in order to defeat the evil 'Satan' figure. This is the story of Christianity, ladies and gentlemen. And it's written in a very provocative, interesting, suspenseful way by J.K. Rowling who says, Look, it's a British book. You would expect there to be some Scripture in there. And that's, as we point out in the book, *Hollywood Heroes*, how your favorite movies reveal God. That's exactly what happens.

Cissie:

00:28:12 I am thankful what you just said before you answered—that is you're going to side with the parent.—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—And I think of course God gives each of us as parents convictions—

Frank:

00:28:21 Right.

Cissie:

00:28:22 —to our own children.

Frank:

00:28:22 That's right.

Cissie:

00:28:23 And so to follow that because God might put that conviction in your heart because He knows the struggles your child will have later on—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—and that could be different for a different parent and a different child. So, thank you for saying that because I always clarify that even with my own friends in our conversations that the Lord gives us convictions for a reason—

Frank:

00:28:39 That's right.

Cissie:

00:28:40 —and we need to listen to that conviction. You wrote this book with your son, right?—Mm-hmm [Frank: affirmative]—Is that—and I think that's interesting because, of course, that meant coming up with years of just conversations you two have had in your relationship. How did that collaboration come about?

Frank:

00:28:54 It came about, my son went into the Air Force after college and one day we were driving to Chapel Hill because I was speaking there or something. He came

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with me and we started talking about movies because he's a big movie kid, you know. And we started to realize how many parallels there are in the best movies, the most successful movies Hollywood puts out. And let me say right now, a disclaimer: Hollywood obviously puts out a lot of junk, a lot of evil stuff, but when they hit it big, it's normally because they've stolen the storyline from the greatest story ever told.—
[Cissie: Hmm.]

And what we do in the book, *Hollywood Heroes*—and we started talking about this on this trip to Chapel Hill. It took us about five years to put it together. But we started to talk about all these different movies and how there's so many parallels to the Christian story in these movies, from *Captain America* to *Iron Man* to *Harry Potter* to *Star Wars* to *Lord of the Rings* to *Batman* to *Wonder Woman* to *Spider-Man*. All these superhero movies, Cissie, are trading on the hero being someone who sacrifices him or herself to save people. And this, of course, is the story of Jesus. And of course, the ultimate hero *is* Jesus, so the last chapter of the book is all about Jesus, the true ultimate hero.

So we came together—he actually went to seminary. He went to Southern Evangelical Seminary as well, even while he was in the Air Force. He already has a degree from the seminary, as do I. And so we collaborated on that, and hopefully the book has been helpful, particularly to parents and teenagers who really are interested in these movies.

You can see so many of the parallels. You can also see some great theology out of these movies—and some bad theology as well—and some great life lessons that come from these movies that are Biblical life lessons that you might not recognize if you're just kind of boringly reading through the Bible, but when you see them on the screen, boom! “Wow. I did—oh, that's, that's what God said!”—Yeah, exactly.

Cissie:

00:30:48 Well, and I love it. Even if those are movies like *Harry Potter* that you don't want your children to watch, it is important to be able to have those conversations because it is in our culture, our pop culture; our kids are going to hear it. So to be able to have those conversations, I love that. We'll put a link to the book, once again, in the show notes.

Frank:

00:31:03 Can I say one other thing—

Cissie:

00:31:04 Yeah.

Frank:

00:31:05 —about this, Cissie, and that is, I know a lot of parents are concerned about seeing evil on this big screen and all this, but let me remind people that the Bible itself is rated R.—[Cissie: Mm.]—There's a lot in the Bible that God doesn't approve of, but He describes. There's, you know, David's adultery, there's murder, there's intrigue, there's all sorts of evil going on in the Bible—not that God is

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approving it. It's not a *prescription*, it's a *description*. And God must have realized that real life has a lot of evil and a lot of immorality in it, and we can learn from it, if we take the right lesson from what we see.

In fact, that's even what Paul says in two occasions, in Romans and I think 1 Corinthians, he says, "These Old Testament characters were examples for you," and most of them were negative examples. '*Don't* do what *they* did,' right? And so, when you see this played out on the big screen, they can be very powerful examples as to what *not* to do. 'Don't go down these roads.'

Cissie:

00:32:08 And those are the conversations we have with our kids in our household. So that's why I appreciated this book because you probably articulated your arguments a little bit better than I do with my own kids, so I've used it. But these are things they're going to see, so how can we bring it back to our faith in Christ?

But, I do want to talk about—before we close—witchcraft, because I get it. I get the argument that parents have—

Frank:

00:32:32 Yup.

Cissie:

00:32:33 —and the concern. I was just recently in a Barnes & Noble. The front table all had to do about Wiccan and witchcraft.—[Frank: Hmm.]—You go to Universal Studios into the Harry Potter world, there are quite some different characters in there. [chuckle] So do you see that as a rise on college campuses that you're facing?

Frank:

00:32:50 Well, I think that's right out of the Scriptures, that in these last days people are going to listen to anyone who wants to tickle their ears and they're going to be insolent, arrogant, haters of their parents, and all these things. I think the rise of the occult is just part of the degrading of our culture and the degrading of even the church—the church not being the salt and light it needs to be. So, I see all that as just the way the world is going, but on the other hand, I also think we have to know something about it in order to combat it.—Mm-hmm [Cissie: affirmative]—You just can't say, "I need to stay away from that completely," because it would be like saying, "I couldn't study Islam, because I know Islam's wrong. It might somehow pollute me." But then how are you going to reach out to a Muslim if you don't know what they believe, right? And you don't know why they believe what they believe.

So I think we have to be knowledgeable about it without being in it. If there's a way of saying that, you know, being *in* the world, but not of it, in the way that you're taken by it—and that can be a fine line, I understand that, but we have to know something about it. You would never go to a doctor who says, you go, "Hey, you know, I got this disease, Doc." And the doctor goes, "Well, I don't study disease." You'd go, "What?" [chuckle] "I just study health." "No, I need somebody that knows the disease. I need to go to somebody who knows the disease, so that person can help cure me." The

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same thing is true with all these—with witchcraft or Islam or any other worldview that is counter to the Scriptures. We have to know something about it without being personally engaged in it, if I can say it that way.

Cissie:

00:34:22 Thank you, and thank you for the reminders today. Thank you for joining me on today's episode of *Fearless*. We'll put all your resources to Cross Examined and to the books we've mentioned in our show notes, but thank you. Thank you for your ministry of going out to college campuses and in churches, equipping the church to know what they believe and why they believe it and to be able to stand on their faith strongly in this world. Your voice is greatly needed and greatly appreciated here from *Fearless*.

MUSIC STARTS

Frank:

00:34:49 Thank you, Cissie. Thank you for being fearless in what you're doing as well.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:34:55 Thanks for joining me on another episode of *Fearless*. It was awesome having Frank Turek here as a guest. I encourage you to check out the resources that he has. We'll put it in our show notes. And once again, thank you for following me on *Fearless*, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

CLOSING MUSIC

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