

## American Gospel discussion, part 3

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] So, begin where we left off with the subject being hell and how that is an uncomfortable subject for those who are unbelievers.

It's perfect for believers, even, to talk about as well. Bart Campolo made the comment that you should trade up for a better God. And Ray Comfort, you know, came back with a great comment about how, while in the Old Testament people were making gods with their hands, we do the same, but we do it with our mind.

And really, they were doing the same thing with their minds back then and using their hands to create a visible image. We don't go that far, maybe, but maybe instead of making an idol, we chase a certain dream.

It could be a vehicle. It could be a house. It could be another person. But we do the same. People do the same today. They create a God who they're more comfortable with, and they do that.

They trade up for a God that they feel like is more appealing to them. And then we heard Penn Jillette. Did you see Penn Jillette, Penn and Teller? He's an atheist, I believe.

[ 1 : 2 9 ] I don't think he's an agnostic. I think he's upset with agnostics, right? I think I've heard him talk about agnostics where it's like you can't, you know, one or the other. But I heard more than that testimony.

They just played a snippet of it, and what he was talking about was a man after one of his shows who he could tell was really nervous, but wanting to say something to him.

And the man came to him with a Bible, Gideon's Bible, and gave it to him and then shared the gospel with him. And so he said that that meant a lot to him.

He could tell that that man was really sincere, and he felt like it was really important that he approach Penn Jillette, and he give him that Bible, and he share the gospel with him.

And that meant a lot to him, even though he's an atheist. And that led him to go on to the next comment where he said, how much do you—he respected the man because he said, how much do you have to hate somebody to not share the gospel with him if that's what you truly believe?

[ 2 : 3 1 ] That sinners spend their eternity in hell. How much do you have to hate somebody to not care enough to issue that warning to them? Then Ben Carson talked about annihilationism, which is the belief that when you go to hell, eventually or ever sometime or maybe right off the bat, you're annihilated, which the Bible does not teach that.

And we have scriptures that speak to that, that says that hell is an eternal place of eternal punishment for those who go there.

And then the Jimmy Kimmel clip about, you know, this thought that hell is only for really bad people. And really what the video was getting across is this thought that nobody really thinks that they deserve hell.

You know, those who are unbelieving, they don't really think that hell is a just punishment for their unbelief and for their sin. So then the question that they were really kind of debating about was, why would God punish someone forever?

So that's the question I want to start, you know, our dialogue with is, you know, you'll have, or maybe you've already had somebody come to you with that question. You know, well, it doesn't seem fair.

[ 3 : 5 2 ] They'll even go to the point where they'll make it sound like, well, it seems immoral that God would make people suffer forever. You know, kind of like I think Ben Carson was pointing out, somebody lives 60 to 80 years, and they die in unbelief, and they're going to be punished forever.

And so how would you answer that question of why would God punish someone forever? Or comment, Julia?

Hold on, hold on, hold on. Okay, Paul's got you. Well, I won't come up with anything unique, but I thought the two different things that were shared in the film were spot on for that question. The one being the concept that a person doesn't go to hell and then suddenly stop sinning, that that rebellion continues and continues and continues.

So it's almost like debt. Well, if you're trying to pay your credit card debt down, but then you also go to the mall, well, guess what? You're never going to reconcile that account.

[ 5 : 00 ] And then the second thing was the whole car analogy. Yeah. To say, okay, it's not necessarily my perception of the severity of my sin.

It's the magnitude of the one that I'm sinning against. Yeah. I thought that was an excellent illustration. I'm going to put that in my pocket for you because that was great.

Go ahead, Danny. No, no, go ahead. Oh, no, go. You go. You go. I was just going to say that from a human point of view, I think that there could be a lot of seemingly good people going to hell.

But when you have a righteous, almighty God that sent his son to die for our sin, it was spilt.

And it all was leading up to that and is that. And then he came and fulfilled all that. That there is no other escape from hell other than accepting his son and repenting.

[ 6 : 07 ] Yeah. Amen. Wes has a comment. I think that's a great point is, yeah, when we compare ourselves to other people, I'm doing pretty good.

I'm not so bad. Everybody, you know, can compare themselves to Hitler, hopefully, and think that's bad and, you know, I'm not nearly as bad like that. So it's changing the comparison. Well, you know, compared to other people, maybe you are a good person.

But compared to God, you definitely are not. Wes? Wes? Wes? You had asked how you would explain to somebody. I can think of two things. One is it's God's garden.

It's his creation. It's his rules. That's all there is to it. It doesn't matter what you think. He's the one that created it. It's his rules. But the other one is you don't go to hell because necessarily that you sin.

It's your rebellion against God. And that's why you're okay with sinning and all that kind of stuff. So I've heard the phrase, pardon it, but God's not a cosmic rapist. He's not going to make you love him.

[ 7 : 08 ] And so if you're rebelling against God and you don't want any part of God, then in the end he says, okay, you don't have me. You're not going to have God in hell where he is a loving God.

And so after spending 6,000 years in hell, I said, well, now I love you, God.

You asked for it. And it's because you're rejecting him. That's why you're there. And so I guess that's what I would say why it's forever because you chose that.

And you're not going to probably change your mind that now I love you, God. You know, he could twist your arm and make you say I love you, but he doesn't want to make us automatons. He wants us to truly love him.

And people that sin and continue in sin, they don't love him. And so, okay, you get hell. Yeah. I guess. Yeah, good. I think that's why it's so important we know what the Bible says so that we can present the truth about what God says to shatter those notions that people have of those gods that they've created with their minds to say, well, you know, but that's not what he says.

That's not what the Bible says about him. And so presenting them with the view of God from his word that he is absolutely perfect and holy.

[ 8 : 24 ] And to sin against him is to sin against his infinite holiness, you know? And that's why I love the illustration of the rock. Yeah, go scratch a rock and nobody cares.

Go scratch a Ferrari. And all of a sudden people are not going to be quite so cool with that because it's something so valuable. Well, now we're talking about the being who is infinitely valuable, right? And we've sinned against him. And that's the punishment that comes from sinning against an infinitely holy and righteous God.

So we've got to present people with the right view of Scripture and asking them these questions, you know, trying to figure out where do you, to hopefully show them, you've got to see that you're basing your idea of who God is from your own opinions.

And have you been wrong before? You know, have you thought wrong before? Yeah. How can you be sure that your vision of God in your mind is true? So sin will be punished.

[ 9 : 33 ] And again, I kind of wrote down here that it's easy to forgive people of their sins as long as that sin wasn't committed against you. It's easy for people to say, oh, you know, he should just forgive them and whatever.

And so, yeah, it's easy to forgive people who have sinned when that sin wasn't against you. But if it was your Ferrari that was scratched, I don't think anybody has one. But you know what I'm saying is somebody sins against you.

Yeah, it's personal now. Yeah. And it's personal. And we've seen that people are not very forgiving in our culture anymore, are they? Especially now I'm kind of going off a little bit.

I know we have a little time, not much time. But like I think of Kyler Murray, who was the quarterback for your Oklahoma Sooners, went number one. And there's people digging up trash tweets that he sent out when he was an immature high schooler.

And they do that. And they're so unforgiving. So goodness, Cameron. And for me, it's, you know, people want to say, well, it's just not fair that, you know, I do a few little things and I'd be punished to hell.

[10:40] Well, if you look at what my reward is, my reward is eternal paradise. Why should the opposite, if I'm not deserving of eternal paradise, why is the opposite only, oh, you're just going to spend a few years in hell and then it's going to be all better?

Yeah. You know, but, you know, people want to make it fair. But then you turn the argument on them. Well, if it's fair, why is the other option not eternal damnation and eternal punishment? And if I don't have that threat of eternal damnation, eternal punishment, then what sort of motivation is there for me to serve God in the first place?

If I'm just going to go spend, you know, however many years in purgatory or a few years in hell and then I'll get to paradise eventually, then what's the point of serving God in the first place?

Sure. I'll go spend a few years in hell. If I'll eventually get to heaven, then I might as well just enjoy this life and live it to whatever I want to do. I might as well not even worry about serving God because, hey, I'll eventually get to heaven.

[11:56] Yeah. Good point. And then, you know, and then people create things like purgatory and this thought, well, you can go to kind of like a place in between where, you know, it's not fun, but it's not quite hell, but you're getting cleaned up for heaven.

And so, but it's just like, man, that's not what the Bible says at all. And then we moved into the, okay, go ahead, Michael. You're making the point of, you know, how much harder is it for us to give, forgive somebody who sins against us, where every sin that, that we commit is against God.

How much more loving is he that he forgives all of us? For every sin that's committed against him, you know, how much more open should we be to forgiving those that have sinned against us?

Because every sin is against God and God still forgives us. Amen. And I think that's, that is something, I think I said it in the last sermon, you, you, I, nobody has really seen God until they've seen their own sin, I think.

Because when you see God, when you're saved and you see him truly for who he is, then you see your sin. And we go to the scripture of all the times where people had visions of God and they were with God.

[13:16] And the one thing that, that they all share is common is fear and trembling and recognition of his holiness and their sinfulness. And then you realize that my sin put Christ on the cross.

My sin was punished in his body. My sin, you know, I, I, I'm not worthy of the salvation that I've received. And when you've experienced that, so in salvation, you realize that I'm so unworthy of the love and the grace that I've received from God.

It should compel us. We are transformed to salvation, right? And part of that is now I realize how much I've been forgiven and I go and forgive as well.

And then we got into Richard Rohr some more talking about dual, dualistic thinking, either or, to cultivate a non-dual mind, the contemplative mind about solitude and silence, experiences rather than thinking about God.

And so the question I had was, why is that so dangerous? To, yeah, to depend more on experiences to tell you who God is than what the Bible says about who God is.

[14:30] Wes? Well, something I understand about when they're talking about meditation and it's not just letting your mind go blank kind of thing. Something I've heard about yoga is people, you know, just clear your mind and transcendental meditation.

Just clear your mind of all thoughts and you're opening yourself up to other thoughts coming in, a demonic attack and things like that. So you don't want to just blank it all out and just go in a dark

cave like they're showing them and just sit and think about nothing because you're opening yourself.

I mean, it's wide open for stuff to come in. John MacArthur talks about discernment and where people say, I have an open mind. It's like, no, don't, don't have an open mind where just stuff can come in.

You want to have a discerning mind where you can let the proper things come in and not let other things come in. And Paul talks about, you know, think on what is righteous and what is pure and what is good. And if you're thinking those kind of thoughts, you're not going to leave yourself open to evil kind of thoughts coming in.

It's not hard for things to just start coming into your head and you start thinking, I could rob a bank. You know, if I did this, maybe all of a sudden this gives seed to an evil thought. Next thing you know, you are stealing a car or something.

[15:34] And I mean, never really happened to me, but I can just see, I can, you can see how people can think that way. It's like, I think I can really do this and I'm going to murder somebody for insurance or something stupid like that.

And next thing you know, they're, they're being chased by the cops, you know? Yeah. Can you have experiences with God? Like they talk about? I mean, as far as like, you feel like, um, you've had a moment in your life where you just had an experience with God?

I think so. I know I have. And what I mean by that is, um, you know, something happens in life or you've been praying about something that prayer is answered or God just in his way, uh, does something and you just know.

Um, you may have knew, knew from his word, right? But there's just something about those moments where you're just like, man, I, I know that you're there, God, and that you care and that you love me.

But I think we've got, so we've got to be careful, um, to move too far one way or the other. You know what I'm saying?

[16:47] So one thing I'm always on guard against is when I hear people say God told me because I've heard a lot of people say that God told them something that contradicted what the Bible says and God wouldn't do that.

You know, he wouldn't contradict himself in such a way. But then I've, you know, and I've experienced things too where you're like, okay, does that match scripture? And if it does, then, then you've experienced God, I think in, in that sort of way.

Okay. Michael and Danny. All right. We hit on something here. You know, when we have, when we, we speak of having experience with God, it comes from being in God's word. Yeah.

Um, that's where it should start. And if it's not starting there, then where's it coming from? Good point. Um, so as, as we are in God's word and we meditate on God's word and we, we think about those things that are good and upright, you know, our, our thoughts turn to those.

And that's when we experience God the most. I mean, you know, sitting, sitting on a mountaintop meditating, um, yeah, you can, you can have feelings and you can experience something, but think of it so much more of sitting on a mountaintop with God's word and just after reading it and experiencing God in nature.

[18:02] Um, it's, it's so much different. Um, that experience that you're feeling there is, is from God's word and from reading it and being a part of it more so than just being out there and trying to experience nature.

Sure. Yeah. Good point. Uh, go ahead, Danny. I think, well, my largest experience other than being born again was I was probably 28.

And they were up in front of a Baptist church talking about a bus ministry and how someone out there could, you know, he knew that God was calling them and, and I'm like the last person to get up on something like that, you know?

And, uh, but it was like, I was pulled up and walking down there and could not stop my legs. And I said, I, I started backing out immediately.

And I said, I think you're talking about me. And, uh, well then we met for lunch the next day. And for the next three weeks I was trying to back out of it because I heard you had to go call on kids on Saturdays.

[19:12] It didn't work in my schedule. And, uh, and it was the worst three weeks of my life. And I felt like Jonah or something. Yeah. And it wasn't until I finally said yes, that I had peace in my mind,

in my head.

And then I was a bus captain for about 12 years and then a few years down the road, another place. But, but sometimes you hear from God and you know, without a doubt that if you don't, you know, it's, it's going to be miserable.

Yeah. But it aligns with his word. Sure. And I think that's a good point because you're never going to turn to a scripture and say, and thou shalt volunteer for bus ministry. And so that, those are the experiences I'm talking about more.

And I think I've been encouraged to, now there's like the retreat I went on. Yes. But I wasn't going thinking, okay, God, me and you in the mountains, you know, tell me what you want to say or anything like that.

Cause God, you know, if you like, you've heard it said, and it's true. If you want to hear from God, then open up the Bible and read, read it out loud and you'll hear it. But those kinds of experience, and I've had some moments where a lot of time those experiences have been kind of like in a despairing moment, you know, where I felt like and called to ministry and pursuing that call and coming against some difficulty and just being so down and, you know, almost wanting to quit, but not, not that like, you know, there was a voice or anything, but just, I knew that in those moments where I was weak that, you know, you just, God was reminding me to stick, stick to it and to trust him.

[ 20 : 55 ] And I remember like, there was a prayer, there was one time I remember where things were just real bad, hard, not bad, hard. And this was when I was the first, a youth pastor and we had some other things going on.

And I remember just collapsing to the ground in our townhouse and just laying on my face in despair, like, God, this is not good. I don't like this at all. And, and none of my circumstances changed, but I got up and I felt completely different.

And I think those are the things I'm talking about. And so whenever somebody says anything about having those experiences, it's, does this match scripture? Yeah. We see that God calls people to serve him and they resist, but eventually they, they obey.

And so, you know, we see that, you know, we have different spiritual gifts to put those to use in the church. So I think it's something we still have to be careful. Somebody says, God told me like, well, what do you mean by that?

And one of the great advice I've heard from my pastor growing up was to always ask the question, does it match? You know, does it match? And still to be a little bit careful, you know, because when somebody says, God told me, they're automatically putting themselves in a position to be, you know, well, who are you to question what God told me?

[ 22 : 17 ] Then we went on, they went on to talk about the reliability of scripture and of an inerrancy. And I think they handled that really well that, you know, Jesus believed the Bible was true and, uh, and was without error.

And he said that it was so in John 17, 17, we've seen that the word of God is powerful. Think of Ezekiel 37, the Valley of Dry Bones and how, you know, it was the words of God that put, that brought those dead dry bones back to life.

And so Satan is always wanting to attack God's word. That's what he did with Adam and Eve. That's what he did with Eve in the garden. You know, did God really say that? And then he tries to, to come at Jesus in the same way, twisting scripture.

And so that's why it's so important that we not only know what the Bible says, but we believe that the Bible is inerrant and does have authority, that this is, this is our foundation here. And so, uh, if I, if I preach something, uh, like, you know, Paul, Paul mentioned, and I, and I, one of the things I really love and appreciate about this church is that I know that there are people in this church who know their Bible really well.

And that's an encouragement to me. And it's also good for me because, um, you guys know that if I say something in the pulpit, now I might make mistakes sometime and, you know, please forgive me when I do that.

[ 23 : 34 ] As long as I don't say something like, well, Jesus wasn't fully divine or something like that, you know? Um, but we need to know that so that, and, and, and churches need to know their word so that they can hold their pastors accountable as well to what's being taught.

And, uh, and God's word does have power and, uh, and it will not come to him void. And he's jealous for his glory was the next thing that was mentioned. And then finally, we've run out of time, but man, something that they said that was really heavy was that we're saved from God and that not only does he hate sin, but he does hate the sinner.

And then back that up with scriptures from Romans, uh, uh, Romans nine, uh, Jacob have I loved, Esau have, have I hated in Psalm five, four through five and six.

And I've heard, and I'm sure that you have too, God loves the sinner, but he hates the sin. And again, we have to ask, well, does it match? Um, and that's one that I encourage you to wrestle with. And there are some heavy statements like that where I wouldn't want you to, don't just think, no, I don't, I can't go there. I can't believe that. You wrestle with it and you think about it and you pray about it and you go to God's word and you see what God's word says.

[ 24 : 52 ] Uh, one of the books I've said it before that has had a great impact on my life was, Saved from What? by R.C. Sproul. And I just stumbled upon that in seminary because I'd heard his name and I was interested to read more.

And so I went to a used bookstore and I recognized the name R.C. Sproul and I grabbed his little book, Saved from What? And it wasn't that I didn't know those things, but those things hadn't really been taught to me about God's wrath that were saved from his wrath, that were saved from God. Um, and, and that book really was a struggle for me for reading through it. But, you know, that's what scripture says. Um, any comments on that or any thoughts?

I know we're two minutes over, but were there any, any things maybe ruffled, ruffled your feathers and you're going to have to struggle with it? Okay. Danny. And then Wes.

One thing that I want to say is that, and I know that God hates the sinner. Yeah. And he hates the sin. But I think here on this part, we have to be careful to, that we can't hold that place for hate.

[ 26 : 05 ] Yes. But yet we don't want to be all inclusive that everything's good and anything can roll and that type thing. It has to match up with God's word, but we will have to be loving to lead people to the Lord.

Yeah. And we're not judge. Yeah. Good point. I think the, real quick, follow up to what he's saying is that God hates the unrepentant sinner.

Yeah. And we don't know who is going to be the unrepentant sinner. God does. We do not. Great comment, Paul. Wes. I was basically what Danny said.

I'd heard as Christians, we're supposed to hate the sin, but love the sinner. I don't think I've ever heard of that being said about God, but that was an eye opener to see right in the Bible where he hates the sinner.

And then Paul, like what you said, the unrepentant sinner. So, and Danny, I agree. We have to be loving on, I mean, someone walks in the church as a sinner, we can't just be hating on them.

[ 27 : 05 ] We have to love them and understand that they've got an issue and it's the sin that we really do hate. But that was an eye opener to see God hates the sinner. So that was good.

Go ahead, Julia. I agree, I agree. But I also am always a little perplexed in Psalms because David specifically says, do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?

So there is part of God's word that also talks about a hate that we have. So somehow there's a little bit of balancing.

And I think, I don't know the right answer to that, but there's a balance there somewhere. Yeah. Do you have to reconcile it all? Yeah. Yeah. Well, and that's what I was going to say too, is Jesus died for our sins.

He died for sinners. He dined with sinners. He met with sinners, right? So we would be wrong and unbiblical to just tell people, are you a Christian?

[ 28 : 13 ] No. God hates you. Okay. God hates you. Please. Don't ever do that. And if you do, please do not let them know that you go to church at Highland Park Baptist Church.

Yeah. Yeah. When we go engage, are you? Yeah. Oh, man. All right, Michael. I think we talk about, you talk about that passage in Psalm and David, who's a man after God's own heart, right?

God calls him that himself. So we have this, you know, idea of that as we become more sanctified, we become more like God.

So we have this issue with those that do sin, right? That's where it stems from, is because we are becoming sanctified, we are becoming more like God every day as we are in his word.

So that dichotomy of, you know, loving the sinner and hating the sinner, and that just becomes more and more prevalent as we become more and more like God, and that perfection, right, that we seek.

[ 29 : 25 ] So it's a balance of that, right? God does it perfectly because he is perfect. We struggle with it because we're human. Yeah. Good point.

And in all of this, too, let's keep in mind that God's wrath belongs to God, not to us. And so let's not go the opposite direction of being totally unfeeling and become more like the Pharisees or the Sadducees, where we're just constantly condemning and constantly hating, and there is no love or no grace.

And that's the one thing I say as a church. We've always got to remember that the church is an institution that was built upon grace and should be a dispenser of grace.

And so, yeah, I think great comments from everybody. And this is one I encourage you to just be praying about as well and thinking about, too, and going to Scripture.

What does the Bible say? And meditate on that, but not by, you know, channeling whatever, home.

[ 30 : 42 ] True meditation, biblical meditation is reading and thinking about the Word of God and praying through it. And so that's what I like about these videos and these times together and these conversations because this is good for the church to do, and I think it's great to have these conversations throughout the week.

That's one of the other things I like about this video is I've heard you guys talking about it, and that's a good thing. So let's close in prayer.

Father, Lord, we're thankful for you. We're thankful for your Son, Jesus Christ. We're thankful, Lord, for your love and for your mercy and for your grace, that you would forgive us of our sins, that you would atone for them yourself, that you would crush your own Son so that we, Lord, who believe, will be spared and have eternal life.

Father, we are unworthy of the grace that we have received, and so, Lord, I pray that we would just marvel in it and over it.

Lord, as we've mentioned, we are not you. We should never step into your role and take your place to execute your wrath, that it belongs to you, Lord, but that we should step up and fulfill the calling which you've given us, which is to go and to make disciples.

[ 32 : 11 ] And we know that as we do that, Lord, we will come across people who are atheists.

They hate you. They want nothing to do with you. We'll come across people who maybe have a belief in a God, but it's not you.

It's a figment of their own imagination. We'll come across people who maybe they're so caught up in this world that they haven't even really spent significant time thinking about what awaits after this life.

And so, Lord, in each and every situation and context that we step into, I pray that we would be gracious as you have been gracious to us and loving as you've been loving to us, but that, Lord, we would speak the truth as you have given it to us.

That just like Jesus says, he met the woman at the well, that he exposed her sin, but then once he did, he revealed himself to her as her only hope, as her only Messiah and Savior.

And so, Lord, I pray that we would follow the same path, that we wouldn't be afraid to call sin, sin, but that we would make sure that we don't forget the best part about the good news, which is the Savior who came to atone for it, to set us free from sin's penalty, to bear the wrath against it on the cross in his own body, and the joy and the hope that we have in his resurrection, and the hope that we have eternally in Christ, that as he reigns and lives, so do we.

[ 33 : 45 ] Lord, we pray that as we dismiss from this place, that as we go into our neighborhoods, into our places of work, or just in our little spheres where we live and move, that God, our light would shine brightly for you, and that we would share the gospel.

And we hope and we pray that people would hear and respond in belief. And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.