

Transcript 131

Shea Houdmann

Welcome to the Got Questions podcast. On today's episode I've got a returning guest, Alisa Childers. She is an online you tuber, podcaster, apologist, worldview specialist. She has been on the show before, but today we're actually discussing her new book that just recently came out, Live Your Truth and Other Lies, exposing popular deceptions that make us anxious, exhausted and self obsessed. So Alisa welcome back.

Alisa Childers

Oh, thanks for having me back. We were just talking like I I go to the website all the time just to kind of get a grasp on things when I've got a question. So yeah, it's always good to be with you.

Shea Houdmann

Yeah, even before the show, the two of us were talking is like the question that you asked recently that that's an interesting one that I think I need to meet I need.

Alisa Childers

Yeah, I got stumped at a Q&A and. I was like I had to go to Got Questions.

Shea Houdmann

I have to noodle on that a little yeah. We didn't have an answer, but we will soon I promised, yeah. So, Alisa, what led you to write Live Your Truth.

Alisa Childers

Well, when I was thinking about what was going to be the next book, you know, talking with my agent about it and the and even with the publishing house and at first I was thinking, you know, maybe I'll do a more, 'cause the Another Gospel was really just like a theological memoir. It was just, you know, there was definitely information about progressive Christianity in it, but it wasn't meant to be an academic analysis of progressive Christianity. And so I thought about maybe doing something like that, even maybe getting some scholars involved to help with chapters. And just do like a little kind of academic. They thought oh man, I just don't know if I have that in me. I'm just I'm tired from writing that first book. And then I started to realize you know a lot of the the beliefs of progressive Christianity are really in alignment with some cultural ideas that are coming in. And they're they're really theological in their nature about just what we think about God and how that relates to who we are and what what's wrong with us. What fixes us. You know the big worldview questions. And I was noticing that the biggest pop level influencers in progressive Christianity were not, you know, they're not so theological in, you know that they're not going to be parsing out all the differences between the atonement theories and things like that. But these kind of pop level influencers are just saying things like you're perfect just as you are. Don't let anybody ever tell you you're broken. Or you're enough for yourself and you should live your truth. And I thought you know, maybe we should focus on some of those lies that are more culturally and even in the church more influential I think in people everyday lives. And so that was kind of, that's kind of what made me start thinking in that direction. But I already had a talk I was giving at conferences

that was that had some of these things in it. So I thought, well, that would be a natural transition to just write that book.

Shea Houdmann

Yeah, for sure. And as I went through this book I mean every single chapter with popular slogans or whatever we want to call them. You hear a lot in culture today. Our question that we've been receiving whether it's an exact quote or yeah, maybe it's not always said exactly that way. But a lot of people are saying and thinking these types of things. So why don't we start off with even the first one, the one the title of the book is? Live your truth. And we hear it about well, that's your truth but my truth is. Or even similar, but not exactly the same so they like, well, my Jesus would never do or say this. Those sort of things. So what is the flaw in this line of thinking? And why is it dangerous?

Alisa Childers

Well, one of the things we talk about in the book is that to say live your truth or I should live my truth is actually that's just not how truth works. So truth is by definition something that lines up with reality. It's what is real. It's when you make a statement and it corresponds with what is real in the world, then that's truth. Right? And that's not something you create inside yourself. But that's the big thing culture saying is that you can basically look down inside of yourself and really identify what your deepest desires are. And then once you do that, what you need to do is anything that goes against those desires, or anything that would say those desires are wrong, you need to shut those voices out. And then just proclaim those desires out to the world and identify yourself by those desires. And then that's kind of like living your truth or living in your most most authentic self which we talk about in the book as well.

Alisa Childers

But the thing I try to help people understand is that there is such a thing as opinions, right? We all have opinions on what the best dessert might be or the best movie or whatever, or something like that. But those are those are called opinions. Those are preferences. They're based on this subject, me. They're based on what's between my ears and my own brain and my own mind. And those aren't actually truths. Those are opinions. Right? So truth is something that's really outside of you. And so what our culture has done is they've taken religion and morality, and they put them in that opinion, preference, ice cream, dessert category, right? And the reason that doesn't work is because Christianity, if it's true, it actually makes claims about itself that are true for everyone. Which means it has eternal consequences for everyone. So you can't, you can't approach religion or morality with just a you know what's your favorite flavor of ice cream kind of attitude because it just doesn't work that way.

Shea Houdmann

It's so true, but the correct answer to what is the best dessert is dark chocolate, of course.

Alisa Childers

I would not disagree with that.

Shea Houdmann

Yeah, but what are some of the like the practical examples you hear when someone is using this as an argument for say it's like, well, OK, that that's true for you, but, but it's not for me. And what situation

do you most often hear this statement coming out, and what would you say is the best response to it?
To help somebody really think through what they're saying.

Alisa Childers

Well, I think the the main expression would be when it would come to your actual identity. Like who you are and what you are. That's really being identified very subjectively. People are saying you know you live your truth about what you think you are or how you are or what you are. And I'll live my truth in that way. And I think that, that it really betrays a cultural sort of push to be thinking about morality in that sense. Because really, what that means is like what you desire to do, nobody else has the right to tell you that that's actually morally wrong. And and again, this is where Christianity and morality go hand in hand. Because if Christianity is true, then it has things to say about that and actually our morality in what we know is objectively not just for us. I mean, it's not just my morality or your morality. Objective morality exists because it would be based on the nature of character of God, and if he exists, then that has to that you know if even if objective morality exists, God has to exist. Because otherwise it would just be a matter of opinion between people. And this is the danger I think.

Alisa Childers

And this is where I think people fail to think about it deeply enough. I get why it sounds nice to say you live your truth. I live my truth. You find what works for you, right? That's a big one. The practicality the pragmatic angle. Find something that gives you peace and happiness in your life. And you do that and I'll find the thing that I like. And but the problem is, is at some point what I think is right is going to contradict what you think is right. And that might be OK as long as those those two things don't interact with each other. But if they interact with each other well, now we've got a problem, because now we need somebody to decide between us. And at that point, if if everybody just has their own idea of what's right or wrong. Then it's really down to power. It's just down to whoever is the biggest and the strongest, or maybe the most talented at gaining the most influence that gets to determine what is actually right and wrong.

Alisa Childers

And anybody can look throughout world history and see that that has not worked out well for us. I mean, think about Nazi Germany and everybody uses this example, but I mean it's really true. The average person in Nazi Germany would have had certain ideas that they believed were actually not just morally OK, but actually objectively morally good. And we judged them for that, right? We had the Nuremberg trials. We said, no, that was immoral even though your law said that it was good and moral and even encoded that into law. So that's how we. That's how we judge laws. It's why we stand against unjust laws because there is this sense of objective morality. But it's scary to think that you know for example, if I was having lunch with somebody and they said, well, my truth is that your money belongs to me. Well, if there is no objective truth then at that point it's just, I better hope somebody helps me or if this person is bigger and stronger. Or, you know, maybe you can appeal to the law if the law is a good law. But it's there's there's gotta be a like you know, we always say a moral lawgiver.

Shea Houdmann

Absolutely, and going back to that ultimate objective standard, which people don't think through what it means if you deny that that standard exists, how everything goes. How really it's the situation like Nazi

Germany like you said, the people in power are the ones who ultimately get their way and make these determinations about what is right and wrong because they have the power to influence or to objectify what their beliefs are. But ultimately your truth is your truth, and my truth is mine. Like you said, it only works until we come to a point where we're disagreeing. And then how do we decide? Or how do we actually determine how do we work through something together when our truths don't coincide. And that was, that was a big one, and that was definitely the one that we saw, in terms of the apologetics related questions received.

Shea Houdmann

That was the biggest one for us, but another one, and I think I've been noticing this a lot lately. Something along the lines of God just wants you to be happy. And it's not always said in exactly those words, but it's often well God loves me and therefore he wouldn't want me to deny myself of what I want or how I'm feeling. So what in your experience? What's the background of most of these questions and what is the proper way to think through the God just wants you to be happy.

Alisa Childers

Well, it's I think that what it is it's a very tempting way to look at the meaning of life. If even like I think about myself as a parent, I look at my kids and like man, I want my kids to be happy. Like I get that. I get the you know how even as a parent, I'd want to almost remove any obstacle that would not make them happy, right? Because I want them to be happy, but I also know little tiny lessons about that from being a mom. I recall this one particular time when my daughter was my first born, when she was struggling to stand for the first time as a baby. You know she was trying to pull herself up on to furniture. You know just as they do. Even when they're crawling and they're trying to learn to stand. And then they're going to walk. And I remember sitting in a chair and she was grasping at my legs to try to pull herself up. And she got frustrated and started crying. And just reached her hands up like you know she wanted me to do it for her. And everything in me wanted to just reach down and put her up on her feet. And I started to and then I was like well, no, she has to learn how to do this by herself or she'll never, she'll never learn to walk if she can't learn to stand on her own. And even the struggle is what develops her muscles to be able to do that. But in that moment, she didn't think that that was making her very happy, right?

Alisa Childers

And so I think if we if we zoom way out to like the God perspective on that, our sufferings are kind of like that, like we're grasping, and we're pulling and God we're like where are you God? Why aren't you picking me up? Why aren't you helping me? Why aren't you changing this situation? And God in his infinite and eternally perfectly good viewpoint, no. You know he's allowing us to walk through these trials and these things that that buffer against us and all of this because we need the strength for something. Or there's something that that's leading to. He's working that for good. Of course, for those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. But yet we're just looking at the one thing he's not doing for me right now. And it's and it could be years, a season of years where you're feeling that way, but I think it's just having that eternal perspective of knowing and trusting.

Alisa Childers

So much of it has to do with trust. Like I, I think so many of these lies are based on just trusting yourself rather than trusting God. It's like if we know God is good. And his promises are true. That he's true. Then

we can know that if he's, you know orchestrated this trial for us in our lives, and we know that it's, it's for our greater good. And I mean and that's the point I bring out in the book too. Is like, you know, people have suffered everybody does. And the people have suffered and have clung to Christ, they have more peace than anybody else. More compassion than anybody else, more wisdom than anybody else. And I think we all know that's true. And so I think the ultimate point in life is not just to be happy. God does want us to have happiness if it's defined properly, not just this temporary feeling of contentment or joy, like having a perfect day at the beach or something, but he's talking about eternal, deep, abiding joy. And that comes from being in, you know, in relationship with him, because that's why we were created is to love God and worship him forever. And so the struggles along the way they they help us actually, with that, rather than, you know us wanting to. Of course, we want to shake our fists at God sometimes but but we I think when we do that, we're not trusting in His plan.

Shea Houdmann

Very similar to the quote you just said. I think it's from the Westminster Confession of Faith. Is the chief end of man is to glorify God and to then enjoy him forever.

Alisa Childers

Right?

Shea Houdmann

We often flip that on his head saying that I'll glorify God as long as I'm enjoying him. It's like, no, that's that's that's that's not how it goes. But that's often how it works out in our lives, is that I'm only happy in my relationship with God or I'm only willing to submit to God or worship him if he's making me happy, if he's giving me all the things I want. And that's obviously the completely backwards as you were just sharing

Alisa Childers

Yeah.

Shea Houdmann

So to the third one and this one to me was the most directly biblical one, and so it's that we have an article on this, and that's the question we get a lot, the whole do not judge concept. Also, there's a verse in the Bible where Jesus says do not judge, lest you be judged. So this has a biblical background, but obviously needs to be studied in context, and you discuss that quite a bit in the book. But similar to the previous questions, do not judge. How do you see this one being used and misused and what's the proper way of understanding what Jesus meant when He said that.

Alisa Childers

Right, well this is what we call the atheist favorite Bible verse right? They love to quote Jesus. If you have any kind of an opinion on morality or or maybe what you know some of those objective truths are. People might come along and say, hey, you know you shouldn't judge. Jesus said judge not, lest you be judged. And then they forget to keep reading, in the manner, if you judge, you will be judged. So what what this verse is actually talking about is Jesus is teaching you how to properly help your brother take the spec out of his eye. Which has to do with you know sin that you might be confronting or something

like that. And Jesus is saying, first, take the log out of your own eye 'cause you're not even be able to see clearly to do this properly if you're a hypocrite, right? So what Jesus is saying is not that you shouldn't ever make judgments about people, but he's saying don't do that hypocritically. And and because you don't want to be judged in that way. So don't judge in that way.

Alisa Childers

But then Jesus says in the book of John, in Gospel of John. He says judge with right judgment. So we are supposed to make judgments. Even Paul talks about this. He says it's not those outside the church who we judgment those inside that has to do with confronting sin because sin corrupts. It's contagious. It can corrupt a whole, you know, body of believers and so it's to protect the church. But it's also, to restore the sinner back to God and back to the church as well. And so there's there's things in place, but this is where I kind of tell people like I know I hear the words coming out of my mouth and how that sounds to most people who are not Christians. Like that sounds like crazy talk, right? But yeah, you know what the cross is foolishing to those who are perishing. We do things differently in Christianity. So I say, let's get off the hamster wheel of culture where you have to check Twitter every 5 minutes to find out we're supposed to think and let's just trust that God knows what he's doing. And this is the way he's saying to do it. And so I think it makes a lot of sense as well. It's like it's deep wisdom to say yes, we do have to make certain kinds of judgments about people. But we want to make sure that we're doing that from a right place, and that's really, I think the main point of what Jesus is communicating there.

Shea Houdmann

I can't remember which one it was, but one of the popular movies about Jesus. It may have been the Matthew series that came out like in the 90s early 2000s. Where in the movie He, Jesus, when he says this, he goes to the you can't take a spec out of your brothers eye when you've got a log in your own and he actually in the film, he picks up this huge log and puts it on his face and then pretends to be trying to help someone else. And it's the whole hypocritical judging of how that's what Jesus is talking about. Obviously many times in Jesus Ministry he judges people and throughout the New Testament we are called to make judgments to make evaluations of both our own lives and other things that are going in other people's lives. To rebuke, to encourage, all of which requires a certain level of judgment. So to use Jesus statement saying, never judge anything whatsoever. Well, that's, it's not even realistic. It's not even possible.

Alisa Childers

That's right, and Jesus even calls certain people wolves. Like he actually refers to them as wolves. These false teachers he say that are going to come in. And then he says you will recognize them by their fruit. So he's actually saying you're going to. Here's how you can spot these people, here's how you can judge that these people are false teachers, and that's by the you know, do their lives bear the fruit fruit of obedience, or do their lives bear the fruit of sin? And Jesus is saying like this is how you actually make those kinds of judgments. So you know, it's it's so frustrating honestly to me, when people just take these little verses and pluck them right out, and in many cases, if you just read the next line, you'll see that that's not at all what that means, right?

Shea Houdmann

Let's do one more. So it's all about love. And even we have a article on our list. The article need to be written about the statement, love is love. So what's your response to this one? And like where are you hearing it the most? And why is there some truth to it? And yet why and how is it being misused?

Alisa Childers

Right? Well if we define love properly, love is an attribute of God. So yeah, love kind of is everything right? Love love is love, but what does that mean? And that's the thing is, slogans like love is love just like think about slogans like make America great again and Black Lives matter like these are kind of benign statements really if you just look at the literal words. But everybody knows these words represent movements, right? These these words represent something much more than just that sentence. And I think the word love just as a word has has taken on that sort of a characterization in our culture. So if we look at how culture defines love, they define love really as acceptance and affirmation and even celebration of whatever somebody else thinks is good and true and how they want to live and how they want to behave and how they want to think. And that's just not how the Bible talks about love.

Alisa Childers

Like I said, it's one of God's attributes. God is love. So we have to get it right, right? And so we see of course we look at the life of Jesus. We see love personified. But we also have Paul fleshing this out for us in First Corinthians 13. This is the famous passage on love. Love is patient. Love is kind. There's something really interesting in that passage where Paul says love cannot rejoice in wrongdoing. So so, the biblical. And he says, love rejoices in the truth. So truth and love are intricately connected, right? They're inseparable, really, I, I don't even, I know the Bible says at one point I was looking it up 'cause you just want those slogans you're like, is that in the Bible or is that what people say, speak the truth in love. That actually is in Scripture and I love that. But it's almost like people have almost taken that to mean something else. And really like love and truth, it's when you were speaking the when you are loving someone, you are speaking truth like you are literally doing that because love can't rejoice in wrongdoing. And so it's according to the Bible it's actually unloving to celebrate, affirm everything anybody else might say or behave like. Which is actually the cultural definition of love. So it's the direct opposite.

Alisa Childers

And so that's what Christians just have to think through I think in some of these things is you know it sounds good to say love is love. It sounds good to say love is everything and just be loving and love is more important than teaching and love is more important than all these other things. But it's like even the statement love is more important than teaching. I see this all the time. Or love is more important than belief or love is more important than doctrine. Well, that in and of itself is a belief. That's a doctrine. And so it refutes itself, because if it's true, then that that doctrine is more important than love, because you'd have to start there. It's just you know, I, I just I, I hope to just encourage Christians get off the hamster wheel of culture. Live your life by the Scriptures and it's such a more stable foundation. It's it's eternal. It doesn't change. It's not constantly shifting under your feet and not only does it give us the truth of how to be in relationship with God, but I think it also gives us really great results on earth of just having more joy, more peace in our lives. That we're, we have wisdom and and we're made more and more into the image and likeness of Christ every day as believers.

Shea Houdmann

For sure, I mean if Ephesians 4:15 I'm, I'm pretty sure I saw it referenced. I'm speaking the truth in love. One of the foundational versus for Got Questions in that we're giving these answers and often are controversial and difficult topics. And we want to speak the truth. We want to, here's what we believe is the proper biblical understanding of on this issue. But we also want to do that in a loving way, similar to First Peter 3:15 to give a reason, a defense for why you believe, but do it in gentleness and respect. Defining that right balance can be really difficult. Read through your book. To me it's a great example of we're in the world, but not we're not to be of the world. That we're surrounded by all these people who are thinking in unbiblical ways. They're not honoring Christ with their words, with their actions, with their thoughts. And we have to be in the world in the sense that we recognize these things are going on to know how to respond, but without allowing the world to actually influence us and to cause us to think some of these same ways. So your book, Live Your Truth, I highly recommended. Thoroughly enjoyed it. I think it'll do a lot of people a lot of good just to really see how you've processed through these things and then also to help them to think through them as well. And just know how to speak the truth in love on on some of these issues. So what I'd love to do is just give you a quick opportunity to, a little bit of a sales pitch, almost. Who do you think would be most benefited by reading Live Your Truth?

Alisa Childers

Well yeah, thank you for asking that. I wrote this. I wanted this to be really easy to read. I wanted it to be easier than Another Gospel. I wanted. I did everything in my power to make this something you could give to a teenager. I wanted it to appeal to both male and female. I didn't want this to be like, you know, I I just. I wanted to write this in a way that was there's a lot of storytelling. Thing there's a lot of ways we connect the ideas with Scripture through just talking. Like I, I purposely didn't just list out a bunch of scriptures on each thing, but I tried to just make it sound like we're sitting at coffee and I'm telling you what the Bible says, you know. And so I try to make it really, really easy to understand. There's humor in it. There's a lot of you know story. So I think that this, this book is going to be a great encourager for Christians, who are already convinced that these things are true. But also I wrote this book to be the kind of book you could give to somebody who might be kind of swept up by some of these pop level influencers. Maybe they're reading, you know progressive books, or maybe they're reading some of the self help books out there that are sort of Christianish. And this this is a book you could actually give to them that might actually persuade them you know back to truth. I've had lots of feedback to that end that people were like, wow, I didn't realize I had been buying into some of these lies and the book was persuasive for them. So I would say give it, give it to your young people. And it's it's written on a very simple level. And hopefully it'll be persuasive for people. I think Another Gospel was more written for the church to understand progressive Christianity. I wasn't really trying to persuade progressive Christians in that book, but I actually think this now it, you know, look somebody really hardcore into it may you know, I'm not saying this is going to be persuasive, but somebody who might not realize it. I think this could be a really good resource for them.

Shea Houdmann

And I would agree with that evaluation. It's very easy to read, but it's also thought stimulating so very well done.

Alisa Childers

Good. Thank you.

Shea Houdmann

We'll include links to where the book can be purchased in the show notes and also in the description on YouTube and also at podcast.questions.org and also to some other aspects of your ministries. But but tell us briefly in addition to this book, not that you've had much time. That wasn't dedicated this book, but what are some other ministry outlets you have going on right now and how can people? What are the best ways people can learn more about you and God's calling on your life?

Alisa Childers

No, thanks for that. So I've got the Alisa Childers podcast. That's probably my biggest platform. Just the audio podcast, also on YouTube at Alisa Childers, Instagram and Facebook. You can go to AlisaChilders.com for information about all the things. But you know my speaking calendars there and I'm currently working on finishing, I'm just like landing the plane on another, a third book which is about deconstruction. So I'm really praying that one will be a gift to the body of Christ.

Shea Houdmann

Any idea when that one will be released 2023 sometime?

Alisa Childers

I don't. Well, yes it will be I'm, I'm hoping it will be in 2023. The goal is to try to get it out fairly quickly. You know my past two books like they were turned in a year before they come out. I think they're going to shoot for something a little quicker than that this time, but I don't have a date yet.

Shea Houdmann

OK well I would love to have you back on, but it's obviously Christians who have deconstructed or deconverted. It's a big deal.

Alisa Childers

It is, yeah.

Shea Houdmann

Causes a lot of questions in other people, so I would love to have you back on to discuss that. So Alisa, thank you for joining me on the podcast today. Sure has been a pleasure and again, Live Your Truth and other lies exposing popular deceptions that make us anxious, exhausted and self obsessed. It's excellent, a book. Highly recommended.

Alisa Childers

Thank you.

Shea Houdmann

This has been the Got Questions podcast with Alisa Childers. Got questions? The Bible has answers. We'll help you find them.

