

Transcript 136

Shea Houdmann

Welcome to the Got Questions podcast. A few episodes ago we had a kind of team conversation about the TV series, The Chosen. We've been receiving a lot of questions about it and actually in the YouTube comments someone suggested well, why don't you interview Dallas Jenkins? And I was like I would love to. I mean, as the you probably give you your exact title, but the executive producer, the man in charge of The Chosen, I would love to ask him some of these questions. But I didn't know Dallas Jenkins, but turns out with the two degrees of separation between almost any Christian in the world, I know someone who knows Dallas and so we're able to make it work. So Dallas, welcome to the show today.

Dallas Jenkins

Yeah, thank you for having me on. I appreciate it. I appreciate it your your your conversation and I I think it's just so healthy.

Shea Houdmann

So I want to ask you a few questions, both from like us as the Got Questions staff have about The Chosen and also some questions that we've been receiving. And there's a lot of misinformation out there about The Chosen, about your goals, why you're doing things the way that you are. And so I really want to even ask some of the questions that I don't hear people asking that I think would be more helpful help people to understand what exactly The Chosen is all about. But let's start off with what led you to do The Chosen? Why is the series structured and even designed the way that it is?

Dallas Jenkins

Well, several years ago, almost a decade I I was working at a big church in Chicago and for our Good Friday services I would every year do either a short film or a vignette about usually centered around the crucifixion because we were celebrating Good Friday. Not celebrating it but honoring it. And it was the the concept of telling stories of Jesus rooted in the Gospels, but coming at it from a different perspective, but not changing the story. Not trying to say something new. I mean I'm a conservative evangelical. The church I was part of was was the same, and so we we have tremendous respect for the for for God's word. But when you can tell these stories from a different perspective, and explore a little bit more some of the cultural context and historical context that isn't implicitly in the Gospels, it really opens things up. I mean, we would see it over and over again. People having these aha moments that weren't replacing scripture but were in fact enhancing their experience with it. Like a supplement to scripture in some way similar to what a sermon can do or what a Bible study can do. And so we just saw that happening over and over.

Dallas Jenkins

And and every time I did it I was so like I've been a believer you know, as long as I can remember, and I've heard the stories hundreds of times, I've memorized Bible verses. I was an Awana kid. I mean, I've, I've been steeped in it and yet even myself in my 40s I would get so kind of re excited, re energized going oh my goodness I guess I didn't realize that when Jesus said this that in the context of that time

that would have had even more resonance for those people. You know those kinds of things are really fascinating.

Dallas Jenkins

So long story short, I did a short film about the birth of Christ from the perspective of the shepherds back in 2017. And when I was making it, that's when I was like, you know, every time I do these short films, even even 18 minutes long which is what the shepherd was, I feel like I'm I'm exploring more about this story than I've ever seen. What if I could do that for a long time, like there's never been a multi season show about Christ. There's been movies, there's been miniseries. They always go from Bible verse to Bible verse, miracle to miracle. There's very little context, very little emotional connection like what you'd normally get when you watch a movie or TV show. And so I thought, you know, man. The thing about multi season shows that are really great is you can really follow these characters season to season, episode to episode and and really take the time to develop some of these stories that in the Gospels they don't take as much time because the Gospels, the kind of the point of the gospels, is Jesus's greatest hits to prove that he's the Messiah. And whereas the TV show has a little bit of a different different goal and purpose. And so that's that's when that's when the idea started to come. And now at the time I was coming off of a huge career failure, there was no one lining up around the block to do a project with me. But once I got that short film out to the world and and and offered people the opportunity to crowdfund invest into the show it just it just took off. Something I think resonated about that short film in people's hearts and minds and it's carried through to the show.

Shea Houdmann

One of the things we talked a lot about in our episode a couple times was artistic license that anytime you're portraying anything in the Bible, you have to use artistic license. Even if you're just talking about the background or what the people look like, the clothes they wear while the Bible does not specifically say doesn't give us these types of details, but I think one of the criticisms that I've heard a lot about The Chosen is that use a lot of artistic license. There's scenes that are portrayed that are not in the Bible like at all. So what is your perspective on the appropriateness of artistic license? How much you can use in portraying biblical accounts?

Dallas Jenkins

Yeah. Well, it's a really nuanced answer, and it's also a really nuanced question because I think you have to start with this premise, I'm making a show about the people of 1st century Galilee. I wouldn't necessarily call The Chosen a Bible show. Now that may sound scary to some people, but I think to some critics they might actually say, yeah, that you need. That's true. That's more accurate. Don't call it a Bible show because this isn't the Bible. And I would say you're right, it's not the Bible. The Bible is the Bible. The Bible will never change. The Bible is God's inerrant word, and I'm not trying to change it. Your Bible has not changed since The Chosen came out. The Chosen is a TV show, a historical drama based on the people of 1st century Galilee that uses the Bible as its primary source of truth and inspiration.

Dallas Jenkins

And then I'll go you, I'll take you one step further from your question, I would say not only is there a lot of artistic license, I would say the vast majority of the show is artistic license. I would say as as high as 95%. I mean, if you think about it. I mean, Jesus never even said hello in Scripture. So so every time that

we have scenes from even from taken from the Bible there's stuff at the beginning of them. Sometimes stuff in the middle, sometimes stuff at the end that isn't directly from Scripture. So I think that both fans and critics of the show need to recognize this is not a Bible show, because I think once you once you start to see it as that, then anything that we add is is now feels like a violation.

Dallas Jenkins

So I'm comfortable because from moment one of the show when you first turn on episode one, the first thing that comes up and it says this is based on the Bible. You know it uses it as a truth and inspiration. However we change some things like dates and you know locations and stuff like that, we've added some artistic license and viewers are encouraged to read the Gospels. Like right up before you watch A-frame of it, I tell you, read the Gospels.

Dallas Jenkins

My wife, you know, get gained a little bit of popularity for a comment she made at a public and a public event where she told a story of I'm not going to get into the whole story, but where people were smuggling Bibles into Iran and they offered to also preach and the person who was receiving the Bible said no Bible preach. And he was saying the the the the Bible is enough for us, we don't need your preaching. And I would agree. I I would agree with that. And that's that's where we stand when it comes to the show. So from the beginning I've said this is a show based on the people of 1st century Galley. I don't ever want to violate the character or intentions of Jesus and the Gospels. I think anything that we portray needs to filter through the category of plausibility. Is this plausible? And once we've kind of filtered everything through that lens, then I'm comfortable doing that. Now there are some people I I know this is a long answer to your question. There's some people who don't believe that anything should be portrayed that isn't directly in the Bible, and those people have the right to that opinion, and we're never going to agree, and they're never gonna watch the show. That's perfectly fine. I would tell you that right up the off the gate. I mean when you first the first very first episode, I think well there's anything from Scripture up other than the fact that you see Matthew as a tax collector. Simon is a fisherman and at the and and at the end we see Mary Magdalene being healed of demons, which is in the Scriptures. Everything else this is this is a historical drama. Popular YouTuber Mike Winger I think called it fan fiction and I think that's a fair, I think that's a fair analysis.

Dallas Jenkins

So I think as long as we know what we are and as long as the audience knows what we are, I think that I think that we're OK. But there is going to be a contingent that's just not comfortable with our any artistic license. In which case I would say great, there's plenty of videos out there now that take a literal reenactment verse by verse account of the Gospels, and that's great.

Shea Houdmann

There are a few of those, as I'm sure you know are better than others. And yeah, even in the ones where the Jesus, the actor portraying Jesus in those doesn't say anything that's not a direct quote of scripture. Even in those, there's if you really look at it, there's a lot of artistic license in terms of what is going on and how things look and how he said it. Even his tone of voice, we can't know any of those things, so it's interesting to see how I don't think people truly think through when they criticize artistic license, how

impossible it would be to be able to do any video based reenactment of anything in the Bible about high percentage of being artistic license.

Dallas Jenkins

Although I would say to be fair to them, I would say that there is a difference between, I mean, you're you're absolutely right, you're making a great point, but I think there is a difference between I think clothing and cinematography. And then I think what people get really concerned about is the words of Jesus. Anytime he's putting words into the mouth of the son of God. That that you don't know that he said. And I would argue I'm not putting words into the son of God's mouth because Jonathan isn't the son of God and this is the show is not the Bible. This is this is an artistic rendering of of of the stories, and we know that. But yeah, I think you're absolutely right now.

Dallas Jenkins

There are some people who go even further and who say, I mean I there's a couple of popular bloggers and thought leaders who've said an image of Jesus, any image of Jesus is inherently wrong. I mean a painting anything that that God gave us words he didn't give us give us pictures. You know, we we we we don't get a clear description of what Jesus looked like now, of course, why I heard one person say, you know any time, if if you you know God didn't want us to see Jesus, he wanted us to hear his words and I'm like, well, all the people who met him must have had a really difficult time because they saw his face. But yeah, I think there are, there is a contingent just doesn't think any rendering of Jesus at all is is good because of the second commandment. And I mean that's a whole other conversation, but but I think there's a there's definitely a spectrum of artistic license and a spectrum of comfortability with that.

Shea Houdmann

No, that's interesting, because truly, that was the next question I was going to ask you because I have a good friend, who for her, she can't watch any any film whatsoever where Jesus is portrayed because then in her mind, that's how she always pictures Jesus. And for me that's not an issue at all. I mean, I've I've watched enough different Bible films and I've watched both seasons of The Chosen and I've never in my mind pictured Jesus looking like the actors who have portrayed him, although that's the hard to do when very consistently portrayed looking a certain way. But I don't think if I were to meet the actor who plays Jesus in The Chosen, I would not be like, oh, it's Jesus like no, it's yes. But I understand those who have that problem. And so ultimately, what would you say is the how, how how do you respond to those who say you shouldn't portray Jesus at all, and because it's a violation of the second commandment?

Dallas Jenkins

Yeah, so I think there's two questions. One is the the the the Second Commandment idea, which is specifically about worshipping idols, worshipping graven images, worshipping other anything that represents a God or God. Even God himself shouldn't be worshipped. I don't know a single person, we have, we've heard from literally millions of people about the show. Including people who are obsessed with it and who believe that it has taken them closer to God. Not a single person has ever said they're worshipping Jonathan Rooney or worshipping The Chosen or worshipping a scene from The Chosen. That would be wrong, obviously obviously, but the the the commandment is about worshipping an idol, not about looking at a piece of art. I just think that they're two completely different subjects, and I think that the danger of worshipping a piece of art is inherently real. And anyone who's who does that, or

who thinks that that might be a struggle for them should for sure be cautious. I just don't know anyone who literally thinks when I'm worshipping in on Sunday morning, you know singing I, I'm worshipping The Chosen or I'm worshipping the the painting that I, that I that I have in my home of Jesus. I've just never I've just never met anyone like that. Now I remember what's funny is that I I visited Israel and there there's the blanking on the name of it, the Big cathedral where where Jesus is the Golgotha is it It's it's It's owned by this church that has like 4 different denominations represented.

Shea Houdmann

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Dallas Jenkins

Yes, yes. I was very, I was very uncomfortable in that place. And because there were some people who were who felt to me like they were worshipping, you know an object. Now they may not have been actually worshipping, they just might have been overwhelmingly emotional because of what it represented. I don't know, but sure some sure sure looked like worship and I just wasn't comfortable there. Felt very idolatrous. But I'm just not seeing that with The Chosen. I mean even when people comment about how much they love the portrayal of Jesus and even people who even think who I've heard of a few people say I, I do picture some of the characters in my head. I don't know that that's inherently bad. I don't think that that means that they're now worshipping the actor. I've just never heard anything close to that, so there's.

Dallas Jenkins

Yeah, so yeah, my my point is that the two-part point of it is that the second commandment idea for sure we agree on, but I just don't think that that's what The Chosen is doing and I think some people who say the actual episodes themselves are inherently a violation of of of the 2nd commandment. I think that's I think that's a stretch. I think that's starting to put to project on to people something that you don't know is in their heads. And I think it's good to give a warning, but I don't think it's good to just assume that by definition the show is doing that and of itself.

Shea Houdmann

I've been to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as well, and I had, I think I had the same, I don't know, I described it as like a weird spiritual vibe almost.

Dallas Jenkins

I totally did.

I much prefer the garden tomb location in terms of

Dallas Jenkins

How funny you say that. Yeah, I was with a group of there were about four of us and I I was at the front of the line and and I didn't so I didn't know how they were reacting and I got kind of threw a line and I got to a point and I finally turned around I said can I just say this? I'm, I feel dark. I don't feel good here and they all were like I was going to say the same thing. Let's go, we just left. Now I don't want to, you know, besmirch anyone who loves it or there might be good people involved. But we just we all have the

same kind of spiritual, not great feeling. And then we went to the garden tomb and had the exact opposite. It felt, it felt like home.

Shea Houdmann

So there's a question to I've just received just recently, in response to the podcast and it was it's actually able to engage in a productive and edifying e-mail conversation, which we actually didn't agree so that was it was wonderful. But her concern was that The Chosen has done such an amazing job of portraying the humanity of Jesus, whether it's him being extremely tired, exhausted from a day of healing people, or him practicing the Sermon on the Mount or other scenes that really portrays the humanity of Jesus, her concern was his humanity is being portrayed so strongly to the point that you're not getting the fact that he's also deity, that he is the God man, that he is fully God, fully man. How do you respond to that and part of my response was I I have no idea what your plans are for the rest of seasons of The Chosen but so far you're at a very early point of Jesus Ministry. The more explicit claims of deity don't really come till later, so that was I mean again, I'm.

Dallas Jenkins

Right?

Shea Houdmann

I have no idea what direction you're going, but it's like maybe think of it from where they actually are in terms of following the Gospels.

Dallas Jenkins

Yeah, so this is a really good question and it and it I'm going to it might take a little bit of time, but I think it's really important. So again there is a spectrum. This is we we start getting into the whole hypostatic Union of things. This is something that is has bedeviled, no pun intended scholars, for for centuries. I mean what what exactly did that look like? And there's there's a group of people who love the show and who are, love Jesus and love God's word just as much as as your friend does who actually think we go a little too far in the God deity part because they come from the Philippians perspective of he gave up his, you know he did not He count equality with God as something to be grasped. And so they were, they've they've said, every time The Chosen has Jesus put on his God goggles as they call it, where he knows people's thoughts, where he's, you know walking around like like Bruce Almighty where he he just he knows everything, he's got every attribute of God, where they're like yeah, those are our least favorite parts there. There is a spectrum of of belief about from very well-intentioned, well meaning, God loving, Bible loving people about what exactly this would have looked like.

Dallas Jenkins

Now to specifically to her question here, here's here's the key. Do we say in the in the show that Jesus is the son of God. Yes, outright multiple times. Does Jesus actually assert his godhood? His like that he is God? Yes, I mean episode one of season 2 he says I am that I am. I mean he he outright says it and he in that same scene he refers to the Book of Genesis as as as as his favorite memory. He he asserts. It's like basically I was there at Creation. I mean do do we show him do, performing miracles? All the time. Do we show him as sinless? Yes. Do we show all of his most important spiritually impactful enriching God delivered, Father delivered truth bombs and pieces of scripture? Yeah, yes, I mean we show the the the,

the Beatitudes, the sermon on the Mount. We show him we show him talking to Nicodemus and and and John Chapter 3 saying who he is and why he came and how he is the way to salvation. In episode in season three, which episode 3 hasn't been released yet, but he gives his even most explicit assertion as savior because he's talking to his hometown, friends and family. And is outright saying you need me for salvation. And they're saying, wait, we're the chosen seed of Abraham, we don't need, we don't have any spiritual debt. We we, you know, and he's like no, I'm I'm the guy.

Dallas Jenkins

So I I I understand the question that she's saying, or the concern she's expressing for sure we spend more time on his humanity because I believe that more hours of the day are spent in your humanity than in your deity if it on a practical level. So hear hear me out. I believe Jesus was both God and man 100% of the time. 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but on a practical level, when he's eating, when he's laughing with his friends, when he's dancing at a wedding. When he's dressing a wound, how God is he in that moment practically? What does that look like? And I would say that it's very clear in the show that Jesus is God, that Jesus is the son of God. It's also very clear in the show that he was a human being who felt everything we felt. He just didn't sin. I think both of those things are true. I don't know how we make sense of them all totally. I don't. It's a mystery that I don't have fully unlocked, but I do believe that it would be. It's where I would strongly disagree is that it detracts from his deity in the show. What I had seen over and over from people, and what I've experienced myself, but I'm not going to use myself as an example over and over from people is is that it actually makes his deity even more overwhelming. That the creator of the universe, the son of God, the Godhead, the God man dressed his own wounds and and cooked some food, and had a mom, and danced with his friends at weddings. God with us Emmanuel. He was truly with us. I think that's I think that's extraordinary. I think that's beautiful. I understand if someone's a little uncomfortable with it because they they prefer their Jesus to be on a stained glass window or they prefer their prayers to be more on the kind of the reverent side. I shouldn't have, I should have said it so dismissively. I don't mean saying glass window in a dismissive. I'm just. There are some people who are more comfortable with kind of a a Jesus who's who they come to with with such reverence that that there's this kind of holy distance. And I don't mean that in a negative way, and I'm I'm I'm I'm great with that. That's fine, maybe the show isn't going to make you maybe it's going to be as comfortable. I just would take issue with the notion that that it's detracting from his deity when we're showing his suffering and his humanity. I don't think the Bible does that. I think the Bible leans into it just as much as the show does.

Shea Houdmann

Yeah, it's a, it's a great point. One of the things we've received several questions about was Jesus practicing the sermon on the mountain. And I mean, my be entirely honest, my first reaction was like huh for some reason I had in my brain that Jesus as God could just perfectly download the perfect sermon from heaven and deliver it with no practice. And of course as God he could do that. But the Bible also describes Jesus sleeping, eating, drinking, doing very human things that he also would not need to do as God. So yeah, in his humanity I think Jesus probably would have practiced a sermon just like any preacher today would, and several other people that I've talked to not even trying to convince them one way or the other. They've kind of come to the same relations like yeah. I actually think I agree with that and so it's just little points like that is like Jesus was fully human. What does that actually mean, practically speaking?

Dallas Jenkins

Right now I think that what people are saying is because he had so much truth already in him, he knew he was that he's God. He was at the right hand of the father. I, I think it's for sure, debatable whether or not he would have practiced a sermon or run through it or not. I mean, I, I'm not saying that I'm right. I'm not saying that that happened. I'm saying I think it's certainly plausible. I don't think it's a violation of his character, but I don't know that it happened and I just also don't know that it didn't happen. What we're trying to communicate in in those 10 seconds where he's kind of wrestling with the words to use and then in the next episode where he's spending time with Matthew and and and trying out some different things that that honestly was as much about Matthew as it was about Jesus. In fact, it was more about Matthew. Jesus was trying to teach him. He was trying to include him in the process and Jesus and says in in the scene with Matthew. Of course I don't need your opinion. Of course I don't, but I but I am curious to know what you think because I want you to be, I want you to participate. He's he was doing what a lot of rabbis do, they ask questions. They engage their students.

Dallas Jenkins

But all that to say Jesus wasn't sinning by rehearsing a sermon. He he wasn't sinning by arguing with John the Baptist, you know he wasn't sinning by standing on a stage. Some of these things that some people have said Jesus would never do that. You know some of those things that they're saying Jesus would never do I'm like, how do you know that? I don't know he's not a sin? If I were sure Jesus sinning that's a major problem, obviously. But what's wrong with preparing a sermon? Like what's like? I heard from pastors and from a lot of people who were like that was one of the most wonderful moments of the season for me, because it, again, it was that he, he experienced what we experienced, he just didn't sin. He just didn't mess up and and I think that's I think that as long as we're staying within those bounds, I I don't, I mean, you could disagree, and that's fine, but I just don't see it as a salvation issue or as a heretical issue. And some people say I can't watch the show anymore, you just you just took all of Jesus's Godness away from him. And just like out of out of the 16 hours of the show you've seen so far, 10 seconds of it shows Jesus not even sinning, but it doesn't contradict anything. And just I, I just think we're, I think we we tend to get a little too precious sometimes with with non salvation, non non inerrancy issues.

Shea Houdmann

Leads well into my what I wanted to ask you next, as as a ministry that answers Bible questions and we don't shy away from answering, giving our best shot at a biblical answer to tough questions on controversial issues. We receive a lot of criticism. And I know just from us having an article on should a Christian watch The Chosen and us doing a podcast episode on it, just the criticism we've received for what, in my opinion was our goal is to present a fairly neutral viewpoint and say look, The Chosen isn't for everyone. Watch watch an episode or two. Pray for wisdom whether this is something that God wants you to contain, use your own discernment regarding what you, what you watch. Obviously, compared with Scripture, as, as you say before the 1st episode, how do you respond to criticism and and even just on a personal level, I know how difficult it can be to not let it get to you, but how do you respond to criticism but all at the same time, not ignoring it? To try to look for what are some valid points that people are making that maybe I need to take more into account?

Dallas Jenkins

Yeah, to be to be honest, the latter happens less because and here's why. By the time the show is out there, I have gone through a pretty rigorous process. So what when people say, I hope you'll reconsider that scene. Or, you know, can you change this? It's like what, how, how? Yeah, how lightly do you think I took this on the front end? I mean I this wasn't something we we were wrestling with and then just tossed it out to the world and hoped it would go OK and we'll see what happens. So I mean I have just in my own life what with my prayer life and my relationship with my wife and my relationship with with Pastor friends of mine, and our our Biblical round table and I go through a pretty rigorous system before I'm comfortable presenting this show to the world. So the other thing that's really important about that is that I wrestled for many years and finally God, I think removed from me my largest struggles with narcissism and the fear of man as the Bible says, the desire to please, the desire to be praised, the desire for affirmation. That was all taken away from me about five years ago, and it became a bit of a superpower, which is I truly don't care for the most part about the criticism or the praise, and I think that's really important too. I can't. I can't make decisions based on avoiding criticism, and I don't want to be in affected overly by the the the criticisms of a stranger. But I also don't want to necessarily be overly affected by the praise of a stranger. Someone telling me I'm the greatest thing they've ever seen and that my show has changed their life and I'm I'm awesome. I mean that happens plenty and and that doesn't impact me either. I mean, I love hearing stories of life change. I love hearing how God is doing work, but I can't believe those headlines either, just as much as I can't get dragged down by, you know, doing a YouTube search for Dallas Jenkins, heretic and seeing a bunch of videos that I'll talk about how I'm you know, literally sending people to hell. I I answer to to God and to a lesser extent my wife. And so when you get to that place where you're truly affirmed by the Lord, or at least seeking the affirmation from the Lord as opposed to man. It really makes this a lot easier, so when it comes to handling criticism, it doesn't bother me, it doesn't, it doesn't affect me. I don't love it when people lie. I mean, there's lots of headlines about me that are literally just outright false. You know Dallas Jenkins said this. Dallas Jenkins believes this. And that kind of stuff is is annoying because then I think there's well meaning fans who sometimes get confused. Sometimes they're coming to you going hey, should I watch this show because I heard x? And I think sometimes your answer can be well that's not for us to decide for you. I mean, you got to you, you got to watch the show yourself. It's totally free, so you're you know you you if you don't want to give any money to it, that's fine. If you want to be safe. But I I think some people overthink or my role in all of this. I'm I'm I'm a filmmaker. I'm trying to tell the stories of the Gospels in a in a in a fresh way, but that doesn't disrespect or or contradict or change the actual gospel accounts. And and because of that, because I'm comfortable with that, I just can't be, I can't be dissuaded by or or motivated by the opinions of others.

Dallas Jenkins

Now, on a practical level, we do get pretty active in our responses just because we believe these conversations are important. So we're not defensive or upset or we need to prove people wrong. And I'm not trying to change anyone's mind once they've made a YouTube video, they're never going to change their mind because they've they've gone public. But I think we do try to establish what I think is a good example for how to handle, especially on social media criticism. And I think we try to communicate that we don't take ourselves too seriously, but we do take the work seriously. Try to communicate that it's healthy to not respond to a social media comment as though it is something that is relevant to your heart and your relationship with God, which is supremely more important. You can't base your mood, you can't base your decisions. You can't base your the work you're doing on the

comments of others. I think I think we want to try to set a good example for that. That's why we do sometimes respond. So again, this is very nuanced. You're you're. This is why you guys have a whole successful and influential podcast and ministries because you ask and and answer very, very nuanced and important questions.

Dallas Jenkins

But I think that I think the root of it for me is just I answer to God and that to I find my favor. And and I I I want to please him, not others. And so by the time the show comes out, I I I just let it go. I don't. The decision has been made I feel good about it. I feel I want to use the word approved, but I feel like I went through the process that God wanted me to and the praise or the criticism just doesn't doesn't motivate me.

Shea Houdmann

That's a really hard place to get to. To be able to to not allow criticism to affect you negatively, and to not allow praise to influence you to the extent that you're seeking praise. That's a tough place to be, and I'm I'm not there. Years of doing this is helping me with the criticism part but but there's like it's words of encouragement are my love language. So now I I.

Dallas Jenkins

Yeah me too.

Shea Houdmann

I get not relying on those things but still being blessed and encouraged by them. So I've got one last question for you, but I know people who watch this or why didn't you ask about this or this or this? So what we're going to do is in the in the show notes and the description on YouTube, we're going to include some links to where Dallas answers some of the other big questions that I know you you all are wishing I would ask him but I didn't want to have.

Dallas Jenkins

Him answer the Mormon question. The Mormon question.

Shea Houdmann

Exactly the same question you've already answered 100 times, but I'll include links to where you response to those. But maybe in closing who would you say The chosen is for and who is The Chosen not for?

Dallas Jenkins

Well, I hope this doesn't sound like a cop out answer, but it it goes back to what I what I said just a minute ago, which is I don't when I'm writing it particularly, I don't think about who it's for audience wise, because for me it's for it's It's for the Lord. And so people will say are, you know, are you writing this so you can appeal to non Christians or I think that scene doesn't appeal to Christians that might appeal to non Christians or might appeal more to Christian might, non Christians might feel excluded, so I'm like look I don't think about any of that. I'm trying to be as authentic as possible to the stories and to what's plausible and and and so I would say that what we've heard from people is that it's for

everybody, really. I mean, we've heard from atheists. We've heard from Hindus. We've heard from people who've said I don't believe that Jesus is the son of God, but I like the show as a show and you know, I'm and also it's making me curious. It's making me want to read the scriptures. So I believe that anyone who is interested in learning more about or seeing portrayed in an artistically compelling way the most influential man in the history of the world, I think the show is going to be compelling to you and that's what we've seen.

Dallas Jenkins

Who it's not for? I mean, that's between the the viewer and God, and if you are uncomfortable, if you feel like in your relationship with God, you are prone towards idolatry, meaning you're prone towards being distracted by things other than Scripture, I do believe Scripture is sufficient. I do believe that God's word is all we need for sound instruction and for discipleship, and for relationship with him. So if you're in a place in your spiritual walk where you really need that to be the only thing, because anything else, maybe you're prone to addiction to entertainment, maybe you're just so easily distracted from God's word that you just need to, you just need to land in that for a period of time. Then by all means land in that. I mean, that's that's, that's that's vital. But I just I've never met anyone who doesn't benefit at some point from additional context, it's just so difficult to just open God's word, you just pick any page and just completely get it right away. Now there are people who've done that and who've had major supernaturally God using the wrong, wrong word, like kind of a supernatural experience with with God the father, where their salvation just becomes so clear and evident because of God just opening their eyes and removing the veil. That happens of course, all the time, but for the most part, most of Scripture requires some context and, and I do think that Bible studies and sermons and yes, The Chosen can be a good supplement and a good, contextualizer and a good kind of battery recharge towards a passion for for Jesus. But but not everyone needs that, and not everyone can can do that healthy and so if that's the case for you, I wouldn't know it because I don't, I can't speak speak to that, but I would always check your spirit. And and I'm a flawed, sinful human being. I'm capable of mistakes. The show is not perfect. And they're in 56 hours of television there will be times when when I get some when I'd say something or do something that isn't accurate, quote on quote, that Jesus will tell me in heaven, oh, you got that part wrong. This part was pretty good. That's for sure true and if and if that's going to distract you from what you're experiencing right now with God's word, then I would encourage you to stay in God's word, because that's not flawed.

Shea Houdmann

Absolutely. And that's to me a great way to conclude this. I I know. I mean I I don't know you personally, but I know from watching your interviews I know you do not view The Chosen as a replacement for Scripture or adding to Scripture in any sense. I've heard you say that countless times and that's one of the things that drives me the most crazy. It's like he's adding the scripture. Its like how many times does the man have to say he's not adding the scripture before you believe him in putting the the revelation 22 verse. It's about how adding or taking away from Scripture. That's not what is going on, but let's hear from me that that I'm not here to endorse or turn people away from The Chosen. There's been episodes or parts of those that I have absolutely loved, and there's another parts I've been like I I don't think I would have done it that way, or I don't think I would have had it said that way, but overall I what I've enjoyed is helping me to think through both the humanity of Jesus as we discussed in some unique ways I've never really thought about before. But also just to picture some of these scenes is like huh? What

was going on behind the scenes or even in the scene itself played a big role in how the events would have transpired, and for that I am grateful and I plan on continuing to watch and I have friends who absolutely love The Chosen and I have friends who don't like it at all and I'm still very good friends with both of them. So my encouragement to you and I think Dallas would say the same thing is pray for wisdom. Pray for discernment. If The Chosen is leading you into a hyper critical attitude, then there's something better you could be doing with your time. But if in any way you were encouraged by watching it, continue to do so. But in all things, go back to Scripture. If there's anything in The Chosen that bothers you, thinks unbiblical well obviously accept the Bible over what's being portrayed in The Chosen. So again, as I said earlier, we'll include some links so you can learn more and links to where Dallas answers some of the questions. I know you're wishing I'd asked, but we didn't for time. So, but Dallas.

Dallas Jenkins

Yeah, there's a video. There's an extra video on our YouTube page called you have questions about The Chosen and it's like a 10 and 11 minute video where it's kind of our statement of faith as it were. Where I where I just talk about these in in pretty succinct terms, but but I think I think you'll, I think it'll make sense. I think that's for sure one that people would want to check out. There's others yeah where I respond to specific questions.

Shea Houdmann

We will definitely include the. I want people to I guess, make a fully informed decision about whether they're watching this or not watching it. But Dallas, thank you so much for your time and keep doing what you're doing. Maybe let me ask one more quick question. How can we be praying for you and The Chosen team?

Dallas Jenkinsa

Yeah, that's a great question. And first of all I want to also just add real quickly to watch The Chosen. Because we do have a new chosen app and on that new chosen app it has exclusive content including Bible roundtables. So we actually have after each episode a conversation between an evangelical scholar, Messianic Jewish rabbi and then a Catholic priest. Now I'm not a Catholic, but we have these really and fascinating discussions about it through about how we see the Bible through those lenses, and we dig real we, we dig, we dig real deep and so I think you'll get a lot out of that as well. You just look up the chosen so wherever you get your apps or your TV apps, just look up The Chosen. And then you'll see an app that's called The Chosen, and that's where you get that.

Dallas Jenkins

In terms of prayer, yeah, I mean, I think I would answer that in two ways. One is you can always pray that I am continuing to surrender to God in this process, and that I am not letting my own ego or my own, my own love of myself. My own love of of my own interpretations of God's word, my own earthly wisdom to ever get in the way of God's wisdom to get it, ever get in the way of truth. You know I, I don't because the show isn't the Bible, I'm not necessarily saying you know, pray that I'll never make a mistake because because I'm sure that will happen. I am a sinful, flawed human being. But I think it any time that that anyone, even a critic of the show, could pray that in my role as the creator of this show,

and a show that is proving to be extremely influential and impactful, that I continue to to take second place to to God and in in the voice of this. More of God, less of me.

Dallas Jenkins

And then second, and it's just a really hard, I mean, it's just hard in our family, it's it It takes a lot of time. It's a lot of pressure. It's a lot of weight. We're we're growing massively fast, faster than we can keep up with as an organization, and so not only am I a filmmaker, but now I'm a boss of a of a large organization that's growing fast and at the same time my #1 job is to be a good husband and father. It's just increasingly difficult the the faster this show grows around the world so. You know prayer for our family just to to again withstand the slings and arrows of not, I'm talking about critics and just talking about the enemy always wants to go after something that's that's leading people to the Bible and to God's want to to a closer relationship with God. And so we're we're we're definitely feeling it and I don't necessarily want to escape it because I think that's where refines us, but I also don't think, I think some relief occasionally and and and and also just endurance is always good to be prayed for.

Shea Houdmann

Will do. We'll be encouraging our listeners to do so as well. So Dallas Jenkins thank you so much for your time today. We really appreciate what you're doing with The Chosen and also how faithful you've been at even defending what you're doing or explaining it. I mean, you've spent more time answering questions about The Chosen then wow, how does this man find the time and even the energy to continue doing this, when I know The Chosen itself takes so much of your time and effort. So keep doing what you're doing. Keep praying for wisdom, keep following God's lead.

Dallas Jenkins

Thank you so much brother, I really appreciate it.

Shea Houdmann

This has been the the Got Questions podcast with Dallas Jenkins, the creator of The Chosen. Got questions. The Bible has answers. We'll help you find them.