



Season 5: Episode 12 | Tim Barnett | Are Faith and Reason at Odds?

Hello and welcome to Scripture Untangled, a podcast by the Canadian Bible Society. My name is Joanna la Fleur. I'm a friend of the Canadian Bible Society and I'm going to be your guide for today's episode.

Today we're going to be featuring an interview I was able to do with Tim Barnett. Tim Barnett is an apologist and speaker with Stand to Reason or STR, an Apologetics ministry dedicated to training Christians to think more clearly about their faith. Tim travels across the U.S. and Canada speaking to thousands of people each year.

And in 2020, Tim began *Red Pen Logic with Mr. B* because he's previously a schoolteacher. And so, Mr. B was the online ministry that assesses bad thinking on social media by using good thinking. So that red pen is the teacher's pen.

And across all social media platforms, Red Pen Logic has been reaching millions of people every month. He has over 100,000 subscribers on YouTube, over 50,000 followers on Instagram. He has been really impacting people through his work as a speaker and apologist.

He lives in the greater Toronto area with his wife, Stacey, their three daughters and their dog. So, I think you're going to enjoy this conversation as we lean in and learn what Tim Barnett is up to as an Apologist in a digital age.

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Joanna la Fleur: Well, Tim Barnett, we're so glad to have you here on Scripture Untangled with the Canadian Bible Society. Thanks for joining us today.

Tim Barnett: It is so good to be with you.

Can't wait to get into this discussion.

Joanna la Fleur: I know I cannot wait. And if those who are watching instead of just listening to the podcast, there are some things behind you like a YouTube plaque and some content behind you that I hope we can dive into later.

But before we go there, please introduce yourself. Who is Tim Barnett?

Tim Barnett: Sure. Well, I'm just honestly an ordinary guy for the most part.

You know, I have a wife, a beautiful wife and three beautiful girls. They're getting older now. You say little girls, but I have a 12-year-old, a 10-year-old and a 7-year-old.

So, audience need to pray for me. All right. I am outnumbered in my household.

Joanna la Fleur: And you're going to have some teenagers soon.

Tim Barnett: That's right. And that's going to be I mean, that's going to be exciting.

During covid, we even got a female dog, a little morkey poo. OK, and don't ask me what a morkey poo is. All I know is like nine pounds of fluff.

OK, so I'm kind of an ordinary guy, used to be a high school science and math teacher for a number of years. And then I started doing this thing called apologetics, kind of on the side just for fun. It was a hobby for me, and I spoke at some churches and that actually snowballed.

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And other churches were asking, hey, can we get that apologist guy to come and speak at our church? And that I mean, that really took off to the point where I ended up connecting with a ministry in Southern California called Stand to Reason. And they hired me as their as one of their speakers and writers. And so, I've been doing that now for eight years, since 2015.

And then things took actually a bit of a turn in 2020 when the whole world shut down. And when your job is a speaker at churches and you can't travel and churches are closed, I mean, this created a bit of a problem. What am I going to do? Just sit on my hands or what have you? And so, we decided, hey, there's this idea I had as a former teacher.

We used to mark students work; grade students work with a red pen, and we correct because we care. That was the idea. And so, I was noticing there were some tweets online that were viral, like a hundred thousand people like this tweet from a movie star.

And I thought, man, this tweets not very clever. It's not right, actually. There's some there's some fallacies here.

And so, I started, I read, penned it and posted online and I couldn't believe the response. People were liking, sharing, commenting and getting into discussions on what I had posted. Some in agreement, some in disagreement.

And that's when Red Pen Logic was born. And so that's the connection behind me. It's kind of like a little bit of a studio here.

This is just my office, but bookshelf with some fun stuff back there. And so, yeah, Red Pen Logic has really taken off. And I just, I love being a part of that ministry.

Joanna la Fleur: Well, and as we before we hit the record button, you will be I didn't expect us to jump in here right away, but you're going there. So, let's go there. This Red Pen Logic.

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I want you to talk a little bit about this as it pertains to when talking about Bible Scripture, being a thinking person or maybe a thinking person of faith on the Internet. So, I think this is really fascinating because one of the things behind you that I noticed as a fan of YouTube myself and I work with some YouTubers, you have a plaque behind you that YouTube gives people when their platforms reach a certain level of subscribers. So, you have reached a certain sort of marker of what we could call, quote, unquote, success, but on YouTube.

But what have you been learning around like, you know, success? That's sort of the worldly term of success. But what have you been learning about the success of Scripture or the success of the conversations you're having? Because there's lots of people who would like to connect online and they aren't having, you know, the resonance. And so, I'd love to...

What have you been learning about how to talk with people about faith on the Internet, on YouTube or social media or whatever?

Tim Barnett: Yeah. So, I mean, there's no recipe. It's not like follow these, you know, whatever steps and you'll have whatever that is, that, quote, unquote, success, right, online.

I honestly feel blessed in many respects. I feel like I'm riding a wave right now and I'm just trying to stay on, you know, and God's doing it.

You know, God made the wave and when he kicks me off, OK, I'm done, you know. But I think the reason I found some success is because what I'm doing is responding. There's a lot of I'll just call it nonsense, OK? I'm not trying to be pejorative or put people down, but there's a lot of nonsense on the Internet.

It's on TikTok. It's on YouTube. It's on Instagram and Twitter.

It's all over the place. And I think a lot of Christians are feeling a little bit overwhelmed by it, partly because they don't even know how to respond to it. And so, someone puts out a tweet and they see it get so much traction.

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Do we call them tweets anymore?

Joanna la Fleur: Well, I know they changed the name to X.

People know whatever Elon Musk is. Yeah. Let's call it Twitter for our sakes. That's what we can keep up with.

Tim Barnett: Yeah. And so, they'll put out a post and they just don't know how to respond to it.

And so, when I came in and said, well, here's the error. They know. Here's the thing. They know something's amiss. They know something's not quite right. And yet they don't know what exactly that is.

And so, when I come in with the red pen and point it out or when someone posts a TikTok video and I come in and just for a couple of minutes, I'm not going to give you a full 60-minute lecture. I'm just, OK, they took 60 seconds. Give me 60 seconds and I'll just point out one of the mistakes in the thinking. And that, I think, brings like a sigh of relief. And it's like, oh, man.

And that's why people are liking and following and subscribing. And, you know, you hit these numbers. Again, it's not because Tim Barnett is something special.

You know, I actually think anyone could do what I do. If you look at the early videos, I'm in my living room, OK, and I'm using a webcam, a Logitech. I mean, I had desk lamps.

There were five desk lamps I would grab. My wife was always upset with me every time I made a video because...

Joanna la Fleur: You would rearrange the living room.

Tim Barnett: That's right.

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Our bedside lamps, I would put them on the desk and just turn them all on. No special lighting. Now, OK, things have grown a little bit.

You know, people want to support what we're doing. So, we got a nice camera and lights and all the stuff. But I was just a guy who was responding to some of the stuff that's out there.

And so, one thing is I think people don't know how to respond. So that's a problem. And another thing is they don't want to because in our culture.

They know there's consequences. I actually, with the content I've produced, I don't think that I would ever get a job with the York Region District School Board again. You know, I am like, I'm not that they canceled me, because I left them on good terms and started my own thing.

But trying to be rehired to go back to teaching is probably not an option for me anymore. Well, why not? Because my views on gender and sexuality and Christianity and all these things are now out there. So, any Principal could Google me.

Fortunately for me, you know, I'm doing this ministry thing and that's putting food on the table for other people. They're in a context where if they say something or if they were to tweet something in response or whatever, then they might lose their job or they might lose friends or they might, you know, so there's consequences. And so, I think all those factors, when you put them all together, it's like, OK, let Mr. B, that's what they...

So, I go by red pen logic with Mr. B, Mr. Barnett. That's what my students called me, Mr. B. So let Mr. B take the heat, you know. And so, yeah, we're going to keep doing that until, you know, until YouTube or one of these other platforms says you're done.

You know, a couple of videos on TikTok have been banned. I appealed them. They put them back up, which is nice.

But who knows how long we'll be on there?

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Joanna la Fleur: Well, and the whole sort of effort of the work is about being people who think. And so, I think of this, you know, this this love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, a chair with four legs.

Tim Barnett: Yeah. That's good.

Joanna la Fleur: And this category of the mind, maybe if it's fair to say it might be the focus you could for simplicity, the focus of your work, not that you don't use the other. You know, we need the whole chair to sit up. But it seems that for a lot of people, this is my own observation.

And, you know, in the past, I've been a pastor myself and how the Biblical literacy or the thinking work in the ministry opportunities I've had that, you know, people have a lot of heart. They want to connect. They have like a soul or like that spiritual connection that they know something of the Lord, their strength.

They may be putting a lot of effort. They're serving, they're volunteering in the church and their community. But then this mind thing does seem for a lot of people, not all, but for a lot of people, it does seem like very intimidating and maybe a place of insecurity, a place where people haven't been equipped.

So, talk to us about why the mind is so critical in some ways. Maybe it's a redundant question, but what has kind of driven this passion for you if we need all four to sit properly on the chair of our faith, so to speak?

Tim Barnett: Yeah, you know, God commands us to love the Lord your God with all your heart, not some of it, right, all of it. And then it gives those four things.

And I actually think what's going on in that text is it's basically your whole person. This is your whole person. And to be honest, I'm not a logic machine.

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People message me and say, hey, can you respond to this? Can you respond to this? And I'll do my best to think critically about those things. But the mind really can't be divorced from the heart and your strength and these other things. We're just we're human beings.

Right. And what we want to do is love God with those different aspects. Now, in the church, I think we've done a good job loving God with our hearts.

You know, generally speaking, that's you know, that I don't think we failed in that area. But one area I think we have failed, at least in some church. I don't, I'm not going to seem like I'm beating up on the bride.

OK, I love the church. I love the local church. We speak a lot to local churches because we're trying to train Christians.

But many churches just haven't gone deep when it comes to loving God with our mind and understanding theology. And which is interesting, because when you go back a few hundred years, I mean, Christianity had such a rich intellectual tradition. I mean, man, the leaders in the universities were the intellectual Christians.

And so, we've kind of moved away from that to more of an emotional-ism than an intellectual-ism. In fact, there's in some churches, there's a pushback. There's like an anti-intellectualism.

So, it's not just that we don't focus on that. It's like, you know, focusing on the mind is a bad thing or something.

Joanna la Fleur: Like it's sort of you lack faith.

Tim Barnett: That's right.

Joanna la Fleur: Too much in the mind. You need too much proof. So then therefore, it's not faith.

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Tim Barnett: Then where then, where is the room for faith? And actually, that is sadly a misunderstanding of what true faith is. Because faith, if you read the Scriptures, what you find is faith and evidence are not at odds with each other. Faith and reason are not at odds with each other. Faith is a trust.

And when do we put our trust in something? When we have good reason to put our trust in that thing? So, I tell people, look at, I trust my wife more today than when I married her 15 years ago. Why, was it a blind thing? No, because she's given me reason as I walk with her day in and day out and our relationship grows. I have more trust in her.

So, I like to use that word. We have a tactic at Stand to Reason, the ministry I work with. We say, watch your language. And we don't mean like bad language, like, you know, cursing.

Joanna la Fleur: The swear jars.

Tim Barnett: Yeah, the swear jar. That's right. We mean, there are certain words in our culture that have been hijacked.

I actually think faith is one of those words, because as soon as someone hears the word faith, they immediately put other words onto it like blind or leap of it's a leap of faith. It's blind faith. I don't think when you read Scripture, that's what you get.

You know, there's plenty of examples. In fact, the Gospel of John, at the very end of the Gospel of John, John tells us why he wrote, he says, many other signs were done in the presence of disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written. Why John? So that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and by believing you may have life in His name.

So, the whole reason John wrote his gospel was to talk about these signs, so that people would read the Gospel of John, and come to believe. Does that sound like a blind leap? No, that's trusting in an eyewitness, John, and what he saw, and then taking that step. So, faith is trust.

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But it's not against reason. It's not against evidence.

So again, there's like a little, I mean, kind of diverted there, but people not understanding what's going on when it comes to faith, and that sends them on the wrong path. And so, this is why we must never give up the life of the mind. Look, if we want to live for Jesus, we got to know what he said.

If we want to speak the truth, we got to know the truth. And so, the life of the mind is playing a role in this. And I'll just add, man I love working with young people.

I mean, that's partly why I'm on TikTok. Why am I on TikTok? Because I want to be? No, I don't like TikTok.

But I know that. I know that's where I want to be here.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah, I don't want to be here, but here I am.

Tim Barnett: I don't want to be here. I feel, you know, I feel old when I'm on TikTok. But I know that that's where kids are. I know that young people are, and they are hungry for answers.

We do a student apologetics conference. At Stand to Reason, we do six of them across the US. And they are all sold out.

We're in the biggest church in Minneapolis, Minnesota in November, it holds 4500. And we will likely sell it out. We're going to be at Biola University, we already have in next week, two weeks.

And we're at 2000. That's capacity. We actually do have to do overflow now.

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And so, we're going to reach about 13,000 young people across our six conferences. And they're apologetic conferences. For those who maybe don't know the term apologetics is just making a case for Christianity.

Joanna la Fleur: We're not apologizing.

Tim Barnett: Yeah, we're not saying I'm so sorry, I'm a Christian, please forgive me. No, I always say we make other people sorry, we're Christians.

We don't do that either. Some of this is why apologetics has a bad reputation.

Joanna la Fleur: It's if people feel like it's argumentative...

Tim Barnett: That's right.

Joanna la Fleur: Arrogance...

Tim Barnett: Totally. And you know what, there is a sense in which when you tell someone, it's not this, but it's this.

You know, that sounds arrogant. "Who are you to tell me, you know," that kind of thing. And "why do you think you know so much, you know," and, so right out of the gate, apologists can come across as arrogant, and argumentative.

And that's why we got to do, man; we're trying to change the face of apologetics at Stand to Reason. And hopefully people see it in the videos I respond to, you know, I sit there, let the person say their piece usually play their entire video, and I'm not rolling my eyes. I'm not.

Oh, how could you possibly, you know, you're such an idiot, you know, that we don't do that. Someone has a view, let's be respectful. Jesus came full of truth and grace.

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And so, I want to be full of grace when someone sees me responding to a video. Now, they're not going to like what I have to say, I get that, you know, if they're offended by the message, well, there's nothing I can do about that. But if they're offended, because the messenger, well, that's on me, right? So, I want to be as gracious as possible.

But I mentioned young people, because they're leaving the church in droves, like there is an exodus happening. Anyone who has been following the studies over the last decades knows.

Joanna la Fleur: Their own family, I mean, I'm thinking of the listeners, all of us, we know the stories in our own, you know, whether parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, church involved people, we see this. And, so I mean, I think what would you, you know, you're talking about going to these campuses, and what would you say to, I'm thinking that, at the time of recording, it's the beginning of a new school year, it's the Autumn of 2023.

And there's lots of students, students in my own life, you know, we're praying, as they go off to, whether I mean, broadly, secular university, secular colleges, secular high schools, broadly, what are you saying? What do you think of? And what do you say to encourage that person, they've come up in a faith tradition in Christianity. And now they're being exposed to a lot of things that are very compelling and powerful ideas that are not aligned with a Christian worldview. What do you say to those people? Maybe even just how do you walk through the halls of that campus?

Tim Barnett: Yeah, the first thing I would want to say is kind of fear not.

I know that I get the same sense to when a book comes out, you know, from a leading atheist or whoever. And it's like, what do they know that I don't know, you know, is there something in there that's going to rock me that's going to shake my faith. And I'll just tell you; I've read a lot from people who don't share my views.

And typically, it's like, oh, okay, I understand their view. And I don't find that compelling at all, you know, or maybe there's something in there that may be changed, something that I used to

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believe. So, what I would want to say is, you don't have to fear, I would want you to understand the views that are being taught, it's really important that if we disagree with someone, we should at least know what they believe, right? And this might require us to ask some questions, you know, get right down to it.

So that and this may even cause, and this may cause doubts. Okay, I'm an apologist, I have doubts sometimes. And so, it may cause some doubts, but don't just stop there.

See, a lot of people, what they do is they hear a view, they've never heard before, it contradicts something they were taught in church. And then it's like, well, I guess I'm out of here, this must not be true. Well, hold on a second.

Let's hear the other side of the argument. So, what I would say is, if that doubt comes, why not doubt your doubts? Right? You have a doubt? Well, try doubting it. This was something Tim Keller talked about in his book, *The Reason for God*.

And the point is, oftentimes, there is a good counter argument. And so, you want to make sure that we're hearing both sides. And what I've found, as I've kind of, you know, walked this Christian life for a while now, is yeah, there are some challenges, let's be real.

Christianity is not tidy. It can be messy at points. And I still have questions where I just say, I don't know.

But there are lots of challenges that come up, that seem really compelling, like, oh, man, this is it for Christianity. And then I do, you know, more digging, and it's like, oh, okay. Oh, man, they were way off.

Or that, no, that argument doesn't work. Or they got the facts wrong. Or maybe there's a logical misstep or whatever.

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So, I just, I would just want to caution a young person, just get a big picture here. And I think our knee jerk response sometimes is like, oh, man, that's not true, then I guess the whole thing's not true. Man, I know people that left, say, young earth creationism.

And they went directly to atheism. Well, wait a second. That doesn't follow, you know.

Joanna la Fleur: They swung the pendulum swung to the.., you know, as opposed to kind of considering, I mean, as you say about that, for people who we're listening, you know. If you don't believe in a six-day creation, it doesn't mean you have to be an atheist, evolution, whatever radical.

Tim Barnett: That's right.

You know, I even know Christians. I mean, this may shock people who are listening, but I have friends who are Christians, and they're theistic evolutionists.

You know, they believe God is in the process. Now, that's not my view. But they're still brothers and sisters in Christ.

There is a great, like, we all have some false views. None of us are God. Okay.

And so that means we don't have perfect theology. My boss, Greg Koukl, he's in his, he's 73. And he's the smartest person I know.

Okay. He's been doing this thing for, you know, 40 years, and he's been doing the apologist thing. He's so brilliant.

And he tells me that when he writes in his Bible, he uses pencil. Why? Just in case his theology changes, you know, like, because he is always, we all have false views. We just don't know which ones are false at the moment.

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If we knew which ones were false, we change them, right? And there have been times in my Christian journey where I've changed my mind on certain things. Because I found that while Scripture didn't really teach that other view, it actually is this other view, although I see why people hold the other one.

I don't hold that anymore, because I think there's more evidence for this other view. So, I think we need to remember to keep first things first. You read first Corinthians 15.

The Gospel is of first importance, not second, not third. It's first importance. But then there's other things that are secondary, and then tertiary, you know, and I know Christians like to fight about those things.

But we got to remember what's first, you know, if I can make one recommendation for a book for the audience, there's a really, it's not a long book. It's called *Finding the Right Hills to Die On*. I love the title, *Finding the Right Hills to Die On*.

And the subtitle is, *The Case for Theological Triage*. We all understand triage. You know, there's an ambulance comes in, or a couple ambulances comes in.

And you have different patients, one guys got a bullet, you know, wound to the chest, and another guy, he's got, you know, a slice on his hand or something, you know, he needs stitches. Well, they're going to treat the guy with the bullet wound to the chest, there's a triage. In the same way, we need to kind of triage our views when it comes to theology, there are things, they're all important is what he says, you know, so your view about creation, it is important, but it's not as important as God as the Creator.

Okay, so that's a different, you know, belief in God is a more important view, what you think about God is more important than say, how he did creation or something like that, or baptism, you know, there's lots of things that we disagree on in the church.

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The Bible Course: Taking a moment out of the conversation here to tell you about The Bible Course, because whether you're a seasoned Bible reader, or you're just getting started on the journey, The Bible Course offers a superb overview of the world's best-selling book. This eight-session course is going to help you grow in your understanding of the Bible using a unique storyline.

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Now back to the conversation.

Joanna la Fleur: And so, I mean, you come from a science background, you were the science teacher. And I think we know the Bible is not a science textbook.

I hope we know this. However, there are things around science, history, archaeology, that we would look back on politics over, you know, ancient history, we're talking about issues of morality, gender, sexuality.

So what is the Bible for you? If it's not a science textbook, or, you know, a precise archaeological archive of exactly where a city was built, and when it fell, so to speak? Yeah, what is the Bible?

Tim Barnett: That's good. I actually was in Houston, this weekend, and I was preaching at a church, and I gave a sermon. And my first point was asking the question or answering the question, what is the Bible? And I think one of the confusions people have is they see it as one book, because here it is, you know, I'm holding up my Bible here.

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It's one book, but it's really a collection of books. In fact, what I told them was think of it like a library. And when you enter, when you open your Bible, visualize yourself entering into a library.

And when you're in a library, people know there's books by different authors. And each book was written maybe for a specific purpose and a specific audience. There's going to be different genres, you know, you mentioned a couple there, there's history, there's law codes, there's poetry, there's, you know, you have all these different genres, there's different styles that people are going to write.

And that's why we like reading some books over others, because the style of the author. In the same way, the Bible is like that when we open up the Bible, we have 66 books. And we have it written over a time period of 1500 years, over 40 different authors, in different languages, we got Hebrew in the Old Testament and Greek in the New, some Aramaic in there.

And so, we got to be careful when we started the Bible that we don't open it up and say the Bible, I mean, people will say, "Well, do you take the Bible literally?" And my question is, well, which parts, you know, because if you mean like, well, then Jesus is a door, like he is a wood door, or he's a vine. Okay, well, do you think he's a stick? No, of course, you're going to, this is so important. We always read the Bible in context, we have a little aphorism we use, we say, never read a Bible verse.

Never read a Bible verse. What do we mean? We're not saying don't read the Bible, we're saying just don't read a single verse without looking at the context, the verses before and after the paragraph, the chapter, even the Bible, the book inside the Bible, as the context dictates. So, it's really important that we understand what it is we're reading.

I think this is where Christians get all mixed up. Because they end up maybe going to some poetry and reading it as history or something. Or they'll read, I mean, this is another mistake people make, they go to a law code, in say, Deuteronomy, that was written to a very specific

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people at a very specific time, it's the Old Covenant. And then we come into the New Covenant, or we grab the Bible today.

And we're like, okay, well, why is it that I don't? How come I'm allowed to eat bacon? Right? Why can a Christian eat bacon? I'll tell you why. That was written for a very specific people at a specific time. We're under a New Covenant.

And here's what Jesus says about this New Covenant. Hey, all food is clean. So, it's not that we're picking and choosing, it's just understanding what the Bible actually says and the purpose of the book.

So, man, when you ask is it's not a science textbook, you're exactly right. It's not science textbook. And that's a good thing, man.

I have science textbooks on my shelf. And they change their information all the time. Right?

Joanna la Fleur: Well, and the classic, you know, stories we have all learned in school of, you know, there were people who said, hey, we don't think the world is flat.

And then ultimately, really, the religious leaders, the political leaders, the kings of the day say this is heresy, this goes against the Bible, to say the earth is flat. And you know, these people are, you know, whether killed or silenced, and so I mean, that's like very obvious, that the whole solar system does not revolve around the earth that we're revolving around a soul, you're revolving around a set, like there's these things that have happened where we have discovered more about the world, I would say more about creation. And it changes how we read the text.

Tim Barnett: That's exactly right.

Joanna la Fleur: And so, you know, how do we do that? Well, because I think then the fear becomes rightly so. There are people who, I don't know, defended slavery, you can use a text as

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a weapon, you know, to the classic stories like defending slavery, through the text, or, you know, I think the fear is when we have positions as Christians, I appreciate as you say, what if we are wrong, but we can't live in a panic all the time that we're always, you know, what if we're wrong all the time, we have to have some solidifying places to stand on.

And so maybe I guess what I'm trying to say is, how do we navigate the balance of those things? Because there are things that perhaps we will look back later, whether us personally, or even as a whole church and say, you know, I'm not sure we got that right. Yeah, we didn't get it right with the world with, you know, the whole planet, all the planets revolving around the earth, that is no longer heresy.

We all, I hope, agree that that is true. Doesn't seem to contradict the text anymore, although we originally thought that it did. You know what I'm trying to say? There's so many issues that we could bring up that are very poignant right now in culture, that people are trying to wrestle through, and coming to different conclusions on.

So yeah, how do we do that? And not just be anxious all the time about, what we're seeing and believing and thinking about?

Tim Barnett: Yeah, that's a really good question. A very practical question. I know that when it comes to like creation, for example, I think that, you know, we know that God has revealed Himself, and He reveals Himself in His special revelation.

That's God's Word. That's Scripture. But also in general revelation, the heavens declare, right, the glory of God.

And so, you have these kind of two different revelations, Scripture and nature. Now, both of those, I mean, and those are always going to be consistent with each other, because God has revealed and God is an author of confusion, and so on. Here's the problem, though, as human beings, finite human beings, we have to interpret Scripture, and we have to interpret nature.

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Now, when we interpret nature, we just call that science, and we have different scientific theories, and sometimes they get disproven and whatever. In the same way, we interpret Scripture. And sometimes we get it right, and sometimes we get it wrong.

And so, you got a great example there with the geocentric solar system. You know, there was a time when people thought the Earth was the center of the solar system, or the whatever you want to call it, and everything revolved around the Earth. This seemed intuitively obvious when you looked around, at least initially to the observation, and then it also seemed obvious when you read the text.

You read these poetic statements about the Earth stands still, holds firm, you know, this kind of thing. And they thought, okay, so it doesn't move, just sits there. And I mean, we have brilliant theologians like John Calvin and Martin Luther, who argued that from the text, that is what it means.

Now we know they were wrong. I'm not saying Scripture was wrong, their interpretation of Scripture was wrong. Just like the scientists can be wrong about their interpretation of nature, sometimes theologians get it wrong when it comes to their interpretation of Scripture.

So, okay, what's the practical thing here? Well, I would want our listeners to see that, man, Scripture and nature, God's revealed Himself. We hold firm to those things. And sometimes our interpretation isn't quite right when it comes to certain.

Now, and that's just because, man, the Bible, like we said, isn't a science book. It's not like it's set out to write a whole book on here's how the solar system works. That's not what it does.

There's no chapter doing that in Scripture. Okay. There's, but yet there are chapters on other things that we, you know, like, for example, arguments for, say the deity of Christ, you know, that you can go to Scripture.

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And it's like, this is clear in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And all things were, you know, all things were made through Him. I mean, there is an argument that is being made in the first chapter of John, basically, you know, this Word that becomes flesh, He's pre-existent in the beginning.

Like that's supposed to remind you of Genesis, *in the beginning, God, in the beginning was the Word*. And so, what's John doing? He's making, so we can be confident, man, when it comes to the deity of Christ, there are specific texts in Scripture that are highlighting this idea. But is that the case when it comes to these other things? Does the Bible have things that are descriptive that aren't prescriptive? Like you mentioned slavery.

Yeah. People kept slaves and then people, you know, in the last 200 years said, hey, we're going to use that as a text, as a justification to have slaves. Well, hold on a second.

We can say they were wrong about that. Well, why can we say that? First of all, there were things that were descriptive, not prescriptive. It wasn't saying go out and own a slave.

There are other things. I mean, there are laws in Deuteronomy and in the old covenant that were not the ideal. Jesus said himself, *it was because of the hardness of your heart that Moses gave you a certificate of divorce*.

So, you can read about divorce and that permission in the old covenant, but it wasn't because God was like, hey, you know what you guys should do? You should do this. No, it was, you guys are so hard hearted and hardheaded that here you go. I'm going to allow this for a season, but this is not how you were created.

Genesis one and two, right? Jesus makes that point. I think there's things like that in the old covenant. Again, I don't want to lose sight of what we're talking about here.

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We want to be clear that we can stand firm. This is the Word of God. When Paul writes to Timothy, second Timothy, the last thing Paul is ever going to write before he dies, he knows his time is short.

So, if you want to read something that's like, wow, what did Paul really care about? Go read second Timothy, you know, and what you find there is he says, Timothy, remember the things that you have been taught, hold firm to them, remembering who you learned them from. You learn them from me, how from a young age you were well acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation for all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. That like the second Timothy, uh, what is that? Three, like 14 to 17, something in there.

And what you find is, man, you can plant your feet on Scripture. Why? Because it's God's Word, but we're human. We get some things wrong.

Joanna la Fleur: And when you go around to, to do this, we're going to think of the thousands of people you're going to be speaking to, but also sort of your, you have a pulse on, um, the questions people are asking you're responding to both culture, but also, really the heart cry and the, wrestling of particularly young people. Yeah. Could you talk to us about some themes of that? Like if, you know, if we were to, because none of us could be an expert on every single category of, you know, all these issues, and that's where it starts to feel completely overwhelming.

And I think that's where people say, well, if I can't know it all, you know, why bother? I'm not going to ever; I don't want to get into an argument because I don't know all the answers. But there must be some themes, and they change with each generation, but what are the concerns you're seeing? I'm thinking of like Gen Z, uh, young people today. What are the categories of questions that if we were to try and read about or learn about and increase our loving the Lord, our God with our mind, that's where I'm kind of going to be very practical.

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Like if we could answer some of these questions, and again, not answer because we are the know-it-alls, we'll have the answer, but if we could educate ourselves more on them, what are some of those topics?

Tim Barnett: Yeah. So, it's a good question too, man. Cause there's only so many things that come up.

You know, you go to a university, or you go to a church, and you do a Q and A time, and you think, man, there's thousands of possible questions. And there are, sometimes you get some obscure question, and I just don't know the answer to it, but there's a lot of questions that come up over and over again. Barna did a study, uh, years ago, man, it's probably been almost two decades ago.

And they were looking at the number of reasons why young people were leaving the church. And the top six were first, one of them was hypocrisy. People were leaving because of hypocrisy they're seeing in Christians.

Christians are saying one thing and then they're doing or maybe doing and saying something else. And man, you go online, you see it all over the place. And so, this is a challenge.

It hopefully should challenge us all to try to live like Christ. You know, we want to imitate Christ. But one of the, just kind of a quick thought on that, is oftentimes I'll ask, look at, if I got a piano out and started playing, um, what is it, like Mozart or Beethoven, just started pounding on the keys.

Now I don't know how to play the piano, but if I was like, you know, hammering keys, would you blame Mozart or would you blame me? You know?

Joanna la Fleur: You mean if it doesn't sound very good?

Tim Barnett: Yeah. When it doesn't sound very good. And of course you're going to blame me.

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I'm the one hitting the keys incorrectly. I'm the one who's butchering the song, you know? And so, you blame the performer, not the composer. Now in a similar way, I would say, look, when Christians play Jesus really badly, we don't blame Jesus, the composer, we blame the performer.

Okay. And man, there is no end to the list of examples of Christians not behaving yet performing badly. And, you know what, that's part of, we're all trying to be sanctified.

I mean, this whole journey is, it's hard, you know, and there's temptation and there's sin and all that stuff. And so, I mean, so there's, there's the hypocrisy question. We've talked a little about science.

One of the top six reasons they found was they think that Christianity is anti-science. And there's a whole host of reasons for that. We could, go down that rabbit hole.

But at the end of the day, what I would want to say is no, science is not incompatible with Christianity. Science teaches that the universe had an origin. It had a beginning.

Guess what Scripture has taught for centuries? In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. You know, they used to think the universe was eternal. Um, and it basically had to take it on faith that the universe, you know, like that Jesus or that God made it with the beginning.

Cause when you look out at the heavens, man, it looks the same as it did yesterday, pretty much. And so, there was the origin of the universe, there's the origin of life. There is no naturalistic explanation for the origin of life.

Not a good one. It still remains a mystery to this day. And we've mapped the genome.

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I mean, there's all kinds of things we've made tons of advances in genetics and biology and so on, but origin of life is still a mystery. Um, the fine tuning of the universe. One of my favorite things to talk about as a physics major is the fine tuning of the universe that points to a fine tuner, a designer.

And so, these things, these connect there's points of that, things that we learn, especially about origin stuff that seems to point to a creator. Let's just say point to, okay.

I'm not saying it scientifically proves. I mean, I'm just saying, cause science isn't about, you know, proving the supernatural, but it can point to it, I think.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah.

So, we've got that hypocrisy is a big question. These science questions, and maybe..,

Tim Barnett: Sexuality,

Joanna la Fleur: Sexuality. I was wondering about that.

Tim Barnett: For sure. Sexuality. Yeah.

Joanna la Fleur: You're on Tik TOK. It doesn't take long to find, um, some different views on human sexuality, uh, you know, within five minutes on Tik TOK.

Tim Barnett: Yeah.

And it's hard. I mean, it is hard. That's a hard one to talk about because it's so personal.

It's become, uh, synonymous with identity, right? So as soon as you start talking about gender and sexuality, you are now talking about an individual because people have married those ideas together. Sex isn't just something you do. It's who you are.

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And, man, there's so many, so much we could say about that. Cause it's just not true. That is a, is an upside-down view of reality.

And, what I would want to say is, because this is, you know, Canadian Bible Society, we want to go the back to the Bible and what it says. And I actually don't think this is theologically complicated, although what the Bible says is very controversial to our country, our culture. And so, when it talks about Jesus, when Jesus says from the beginning, they were male and female, and kind of prescribes and answering a question about divorce, but he's talking about marriage.

I mean, man, Jesus, His view would not be tolerated today. Because it goes against the culture.

Joanna la Fleur: Right.

And my understanding of the research now is that it seems people are asking fundamental questions from the next generation coming up is not so much, is it true? Is Christianity true, but is it good?

Tim Barnett: Yeah.

Joanna la Fleur: Because when we look at issues like that, it seems like actually quite offensive or, at least on a surface level, if people have a different view on human sexuality, for example, it can feel immediately offensive or, um, at the very least outdated. Um, and then to say, but is this a good or true or better, um, way to live?

Tim Barnett: Yeah.

And I think it is. I think what we read in Scripture is like, the kind of like the owner's manual. Um, you know, if I bought a really nice car, like I'll never own a Ferrari.

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Okay. I'm just saying, uh, even if I won the lottery, you know, I wouldn't buy a Ferrari, but let's say, I got a Ferrari and I'm not going to take this thing off road. You know, I'm not going to take it over to the parking lot where it's got all these speed bumps.

And I'm just going to like, hey, let's see if we can get some air, you know? Um, there's an appropriate, okay, here's what this car is made to do. You know? Uh, probably couldn't even get in my driveway. Cause it's so low to the ground, you know? And so, here's what, God, I think has given us that, manual for here's how you can prosper.

Here's how I want you to live. This is for your good. It's not because he's a sex kill joy or something like that.

That's not it. God wants what's best for us. And he outlines that, this is like, I know people think, well, look at all these boundaries.

The boundaries are good for us. Lots of people have talked about different analogies, you know, putting up the fence and then when you, you know, people, everyone wants to jump over the fence, but if the fence is like, it's protecting you from falling off a cliff, well, the fence is a good thing, right? It's for your good. Although we don't often see it that way.

And, um, and so you're right. You're exactly right. It's not about whether or not Christianity is true anymore.

It gets right down to the question. Is it good? But here's the problem. Our culture and especially our young people, have bought into a lie called moral relativism, and moral relativism says there are no rights and wrongs.

There is no good and evil, not objectively. It's just up to you as an individual to decide, you do you. And if someone says that you shouldn't do you, then, that's bad because you, I mean, you're the God of, you know, you're the boss, of your life.

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And because they have been sold that lie from the devil, they see something that they don't think is good because, I want something different. And then they translate that to, okay, then God's not good. Right.

I think, I mean, this is garden of Eden stuff. Here's a tree and the fruit looks really good, but God said, don't eat it. Don't eat it.

And, but they said, no, this is, I want this. That's a delight to the eyes and I know better than God. And so, I'm going to take it.

And, so we're seeing this kind of thing play out. I mean, a garden of Eden thing. People ask the question, you know, how come I'm at fault for what Adam and Eve did? You know? And one of the things I say is, well, we actually live that life every day. Here's God's commands.

And I choose sometimes to not follow his commands. And so, in a sense, I'm Adam and Eve in the garden every day when I do that.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah.

Well, and Tim, and these kinds of questions, of course, uh, the reason it's your life's work is because it's, there is so much, and we could do an entire series with you talking about this. But for the sake of today, where do you want to send people now that, you know, as we come to a close on the conversation, to your YouTube, to your conferences, to books, you've mentioned a resource already. I've mentioned a couple of resources, even Tim Keller as well.

Where do you want to send people today? And we'll make sure to link it in the show notes so that people can dig more because this is, a journey beyond a one-hour podcast.

Tim Barnett: Yeah. And hopefully people who hear this, it maybe sparks something within them as maybe a first step towards some, other resources or some videos or whatever.

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I know that *Red Pen Logic*, is a good place to start for people, especially young people. I can't tell you how many people, have told me my kid is 11 years old and loves *Red Pen Logic*. We can't wait for the next video.

We sit down and we talk through, because I guess it's meeting them where they're at. They're on, you know, some of these platforms. And so, they're seeing this thing come up and it's short and it's, short and sweet.

And that's what a lot of young people want. So, um, that may be a good, so if they were to Google *Red Pen Logic*.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah. And we'll link it for sure. So, we'll get it down in the notes and we'll make sure we'll make sure to find it. Well, and Tim, you know, thanks so much for your work, for your passion, for your thoughtfulness.

You know, and it's an encouragement, I think to people listening, as they are thinking of people, whether if it's, if you're listening to this podcast, it's probably not you per se, although we might be feeling convicted to go do some of our own good work with and stretching our mind. But we're also thinking about people around us and, and this encouragement about these thousands of people that you're going to be speaking to, you know, encourage listeners here today to be praying for you and to be praying for the work of your ministry, because, there's a hunger for this. Uh, the harvest is plentiful.

The workers are few. So, thanks so much for being with us here at Scripture Untangled. We untangled a little bit, but there's, you know, much more work to be done by us on our own and, diving into your content more. So, thanks so much for being with us today.

Tim Barnett: Thanks for having me. This was a lot of fun.