

## John Dickson (Studio)

My darling Buff's favourite podcast genre sadly isn't exploring some aspect of life, faith, history, science, culture, or ethics that's either much misunderstood or mostly forgotten ... and all that!!

No ... she likes True Crime. I get to hear it occasionally when the phone under her pillow as we go to bed is just a little too loud!

True Crime has exploded to become a worldwide phenomenon.

The podcast *Serial* may have started it all – they've racked up 340 million downloads. And the New York Times bought it for 25 million dollars.

Amazingly, the True Crime podcast genre spawned a TV show about the True Crime podcast genre. One of Buff's and my favourite shows in the last few years is *Only Murders in the Building* with Steve Martin, Martin Short and Selena Gomez. It's the most-watched comedy in streaming giant Hulu's history. Deservedly!

Well, I'm happy to announce that Undeceptions is launching its own True Crime podcast, where, in every episode, Director Mark is under suspicion for something nefarious and ...

Okay. Not entirely true.

Why do we have such a taste for true crime?

Los Angeles cold-case detective and author J Warner Wallace says it's because crime reveals fundamental truths about the human condition. We see our own humanity not just in what's best about ourselves, but also in what's worst!!

Jim's been solving unsolved cases – cold cases - for decades. And he's written an intriguing book about what some of his biggest cases taught him about human nature and even about God. The book is *The Truth in True Crime*. A former sceptic, Jim would also say his life's biggest investigation led him to a profound Christian faith.

I'm John Dickson, and this is Undeceptions.

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## **TAPE - J. WARNER WALLACE**

**J Warner Wallace:** Yeah, I think you really, uh, probably if, if you were to follow around a cold case detective, most of the time you'd be pretty bored because it seems like it's just controlled, steady, small things you're doing until you get to a point where you're like, I think we're getting close now because some of these cases have been open for 30 years and, um, no one's really touched on.

And so everyone's forgotten about him. The bad guy's forgotten that he was ever a suspect or maybe hasn't forgotten, but he doesn't think he's being worked actively. The, the, sadly, the family is an, I don't even even contact the family until a certain point, cause I don't want to give them false hope. So you're just chipping at this slowly over time.

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## **John Dickson (Studio)**

It's tempting to imagine Jim as a kind of Mr Monk, or Chief Inspector Barnaby.

But Jim's work was a far cry from showdowns in police interrogation rooms, meeting suspects in abandoned buildings, and publicly arresting murderers.

His day job was more like that of a lawyer, journalist, or even an historian! A lot of his time was spent pouring over old papers, digging through legal documents, filing motions in court, dealing with bureaucracy, and building relationships out in the community ... a far cry from the life of a Poirot or Father Brown!

Still ... at the heart of his work was a murder mystery.

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**J. Warner Wallace:** And then at some point you're getting ready to make that point of first contact. When I knock on that door to that suspect's house, usually I've got a search warrant already written. I mean, I'm really ready to start. It's going to become a fresh case now that we're at the door knocking. And until it does that, it's pretty boring.

And even though we might make discoveries and my partner and I are going, Oh, is this awesome? Probably it wouldn't make for a good TV show, you know, until you get to the door and then you knock on the door and the conversations begin and then this becomes a little more exciting.

**John Dickson:** I can imagine it goes from zero to ten in explosiveness

**J Warner Wallace:** Yes, And then you discover really if you're on the right track or not, because sometimes you're, you're, you're knocking on the wrong door and you think it looks good until you get there and then you go, no, no, I was wrong.

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## John Dickson (Studio)

Jim reckons the characteristic successful detectives need most is ... humility.

Humility reminds the scientist, the theologian, or the criminal investigator that human reasoning is fallible. Overestimating our own speculations, even logical speculations, can often be a hindrance to the truth!

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**J Warner Wallace:** And this is why humility's important in investigations because, uh, number one, the cockier you are, the more pride you are, the, the more li you're not, you're not teachable, uh, pride. Profit people are not teachable. They think they already know the answer. You can't go into an investigation. The first rule, I wrote a book years ago called *Cold Case Christianity*, and the first rule on that book is don't be a know it all.

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## READING

*All of us hold presuppositions that can impact the way we see the world around us. I've learned to do my best to enter every investigation with my eyes and mind open to all the reasonable possibilities. I try not to bite on any particular philosophy or theory until one emerges as the most rational, given the evidence. I've learned this the hard way; I've made more than my share of mistakes. There's one thing I know for sure (having worked both fresh and cold homicides): you simply cannot enter into an investigation with a philosophy that dictates the outcome. Objectivity is paramount; this is the first principle of detective work that each of us must learn.*

## ***Cold Case Christianity, Chapter 1***

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Like you can't think, you know, because you've worked 10 of these and the other 10, you know, it was always this guy, you know, a particular relationship, or if, if the spouse is dead and husband, you know, if you watch Dateline, you'll assume that every happy marriage ends in a murder. So, so you, you, you can over think it and think, you know, the answer, but that's, that causes you sometimes to chase a false lead. So I think that humility is super important in working investigations. It's the first rule. Is not to hold a presuppositional bias that would ultimately lead you in the wrong direction.

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### **John Dickson (Studio)**

Jim's book is an unlikely combination of criminal investigation and faith.

He makes a case for Christianity through 15 different "leads on how to live", all of which he learned from various investigations, but are also reflected in scripture.

It has the potential to be twee ... but it isn't.

He's basically saying that detecting reveals human life at its most raw, most stripped back, and that this revelation about humanity is already there in black and white—and a lot of grey—in the Bible.

It changed him!

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**John Dickson:** Just give us a really brief precis of how your detective expertise sort of led you to consider Christianity and in fact embrace Christianity. We've got a lot of sceptical listeners. So it'd be interesting for them to just hear a little of your story.

**J Warner Wallace:** Yeah. And I, and I never thought much that it was all that important. I think, I think everyone that comes to this claim from their own personal experiences, their professions, their family structures. And that was my case too. I was not raised around Christians, didn't have Christians growing up. Uh, I was familiar roughly with the story, arc of the story of the New Testament, just kind of from a cultural perspective, but I'd never been in a, you know, a, um, evangelical church growing up.

I'd been to one for like a wedding, my cousin's wedding. I remember I went to one. So I didn't really have anybody. And my wife and I were together for about 18 years before I stepped foot in a church where the pastor cleverly said that Jesus was the smartest man who ever lived and that was it. Um, provoked me pridefully, and I thought, well, what's so smart about this guy? I, I, I really expected that I would buy a new Testament and find it to be like, you know, fortune cookie wisdom, you know, a series of proverbial claims from a smart guy. And, uh, when I bought the new Testament, I bought a pew Bible and I started to research it to read the gospels and I was struck by At this time, I'd already been doing a bunch of forensic statement analysis in my job.

I was already an investigator. I'd already, um, started looking at one of my dad's old unsolved cases. My dad was a cop before me. Um, I was my details interviewer. I did a lot of interviews. Um, and eyewitness reliability was of critical importance to all of our cases. I understood how to test an eyewitness.

What I saw in the gospels was that there was a degree of variance that some people look at and say, Oh, this can't be true. Look how they vary. Well, if you've ever interviewed eyewitnesses, even if an event occurred two hours ago, you'll see at least that level of variation between accounts. And it's not just because we're standing in a different part of the parking lot when the murder occurred.

I just couldn't see it through that pole. No, it's not that. It's my background, my history, my desires, who I am, what I like, what I've experienced in my

own family upbringing. It colors the way I see things and it colors what I focus on. And so you get different. Perspectives. And what's interesting is clearly nobody tried to remove these perspectives.

They were allowed to kind of emerge and, and blossom through the generations in which people read the documents. And, and, and I think that was powerful for me. Maybe you want to test them.

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### **John Dickson (Studio)**

Check out our episode *Gospel Contradictions* with Mike Licona for a full episode about the agreements and variations in the Gospels!

Back to Jim.

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And the criteria for testing eyewitnesses is pretty clear in criminal trials. You know, it's basically, um, It's a simple thing.

If, if, were they really there to see what they said they saw? Can they be corroborated in some way? Have they changed their story over time? And do they possess a bias that would cause them to lie? So I just began to kind of, um, document these four areas to see, well, would they pass the test if they were eyewitnesses?

Now, look, I get it. The real issue is not whether the documents are reliable, if you really think about it, because I seriously doubt any skeptic would read those documents if there wasn't a miracle in them. In other words, if Jesus was just a preaching rabbi in the first century who did the Sermon on the Mount and did a few other sermons that are really pretty cool.

Okay. Well, I don't think anyone would, given the body of manuscript evidence we have. No one's, this is the best recorded ancient in the history

of ancients, but insert one miracle and suddenly everyone's like, Oh, this can't be trusted. This I think exposes the fact that it's not a manuscript evidence issue as much as it's a presuppositional bias against the supernatural.

And that's where I was. I held that part of me. I held that presuppositional bias against the supernatural. I, I could have accepted some things in scripture, but not this thing. This miracle thing, I'm out. That's got to be, that part's got to be a late insertion. It's got to be a lie. And I think what helped me to kind of reason through it was even as an atheist, I held a view of the universe that was what people call the standard cosmological model.

Just this idea that the universe is not infinitely old. It is finite. It had a beginning, but that means that there's something outside of space, time, and matter.

Okay, so the first cause, then, is already outside of the natural realm. And once I realise that, hey, I'm already holding a view in which I embrace some form of extra-natural phenomena, if there's a being that could blink the entire universe into existence, what am I getting hung up over a small potato miracle in the New Testament?

Because every miracle in the New Testament is going to be a small potato miracle compared to everything from nothing. And so I think for me, it just allowed me to at least to open my hand up a little bit about the reasonable nature of if there is a being of this nature, if that first cause is personal and not impersonal, then I could read this text a little differently.

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**John Dickson (Studio)**



Plenty of Christians report having a moment of surrender in their conversion, where one particular sticking point for them suddenly melts away and everything else falls into place.

For some, it's the historicity of the Gospels. For others, it might be the idea of God as judge. For our podcast patron saint C.S. Lewis, it was realising that the pagan myths he so adored could actually be the mind of God even when expressed through, say, the Norse poets. You may remember that it was JRR Tolkein that helped him see this.

Whatever that “sticking point” might be for you, dear listener, we’ve hopefully got an episode on it somewhere in our archives!

For Jim, his major sticking point was miracles. Once he realised he could philosophically make space for them, everything else in the Bible made loads of sense - especially when it came to what he saw in his work.

We’ll get into this more - after the break.

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**\*BREAK\***

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## **MEDIA: Broadchurch**

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### **John Dickson (Studio)**

That’s a clip from Season 3 of a Dickson household favourite ... the British crime drama Broadchurch, starring David Tennant as the cranky but loveable Detective Inspector Alec Hardy!

The scene illustrates a relatable point: even a good police officer can, if pushed, become a vengeful parent when a crime (in this case a cyber sex crime) is committed against your child.

Base instincts kick in, with explosive results!

It's a truth my guest Jim Warner Wallace has confronted time after time.

The greed and jealousy that led to the killing of a cheerful beloved homeless man .... A psychopath with no 'shame' button ... Or a friend's blind belief that his mate could never have committed murder—but he had!

**John Dickson:** I want to drill down on, uh, just a few ideas from this, um, new book, um, from, from, I want to, I want to zero in on three chapters and get you to talk about them a little more, because, because the thesis is that there are, there are things about human nature that you have learned in your long career as an investigator about human nature, that the Bible teaches us.

Already teaches and that if just thinking about these aspects of human nature can point us beyond ourselves to something greater, to God himself. So that's, it's an, it's an amazing idea, this book, but I want to zero in on, on chapter five. Uh, you talk about misplaced devotion - that this is something you see, you have seen, and that it, You know, if you view it from one angle, it can point us toward Christ. Can you talk about that particular idea of misplaced devotion?

**J Warner Wallace:** Well, it's a story, and every one of these chapters starts with simply a story about true crime but in this one his guy was, he was homeless, he was, uh, canning. In other words, he would collect cans in the early part of the day from dumpsters, and then he would trade those cans in at a recycling center and get enough money to eat or drink. And that's what he had every day look like for him.

So when he was stabbed one night, as he was sleeping in a porta potty, okay, it was a clean porta potty, but he was, that's where he would sleep at a construction site. Um, I, I thought, well, murders are always caused by the same three motives. This, this is the nature of working murders. It's also scriptural, but it's always Uh, on standing, I always say that on the stupid motives that people use to do bad things, if you had an Olympic for, an Olympics for stupid motives, the, the, the gold medal stand would be a stand we call pride. And there'd be a gold and a silver and a bronze medalist on that stupid stand we call pride.

And, that the gold medalist is the pursuit of power. The pursuit of money and sex are the other two medalists, but the gold medalist, which is about 70 per cent of the motives and the crimes that we work is that there's something that you've offended me in some way. You've challenged my authority. You've challenged me. You've disrespected me. Whatever it may be. A lot of stuff is done, uh, based on the pursuit of power and respect and authority.

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### **John Dickson (Studio)**

You don't have to look too deeply in the Bible to find people killing for power, sex, and money.

The first recorded murder happens in just the fourth chapter of Genesis - Cain killing his brother Abel. It's a crime committed out of jealousy, it seems.

One of the most infamous stories of the Old Testament is King David's orchestrated killing of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, whom David had manipulated into bed and made pregnant. This killing was a cover-up.

Judas betrayed Jesus himself ... for money - the famous thirty pieces of silver.

Back to our case.

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And I thought, well, I don't see anything that would cause someone to kill this, this guy. He was loved. He was sweet. He had the disposition of somebody you might call Santa Claus. He looked like Santa Claus. He had a long beard, white beard, sweet guy. Didn't have any money. It wasn't for sex. He was stabbing for what? What power did this guy possess? How could he threaten somebody else's power? Well, it turned out. He had been canning in another guy's area that this other guy thought was really like, this are my trash cans. I've already been canning in these trash cans. Don't come over here. And he was confronted at the recycling center one day by this other guy. Well, how much money is this? The guy going to lose on this? He's going to lose what a couple of bucks, 3, maybe 4 in cans, if that. And so Santa Claus kind of just blew him off and that disrespect in front of their peers - he had triggered two of the motives two of the three motives in one day the money and you might think well That's is that enough to kill somebody over? Well, here's the problem with idolatry So idolatry is just when we instead of worshiping the God of all good things We start to worship the good things and sex money and power are meant for good and God has created those for our good So we could actually glorify God But we have a tendency to stop short of the God who creates the good things and we only pursue the things that God has Created and we turn them into idols and everyone - EVERYONE - worships, whether they are spiritual seekers or an atheist, we all hold something as the highest value that we are willing to sacrifice for, that we are willing to think about, that we spend our money on, that we make, it becomes our master. And if you allow the idol to become your master, then stealing 3 a day from me and disrespecting me in front of a bunch of other people who I barely know is enough. Because you just now dented two of my masters. So that night he came to the port a potty and he shook it. And when Santa Claus came out of it to see what was going on, he stabbed him to death. Not a guy who would have ordinarily done a murder. Which goes to show you the importance of where you place your worship. If you place your worship in sex, then you're never going to be

satisfied. You'll never be pursuing lots of partners because you're just never going to be satisfied. If you put it in money, then you're constantly on the pursuit of stuff. If you put it in power, you're going to be angry anytime, and Anyone disrespects you in the smallest way. That's the problem with idolatry.

**John Dickson:** Next question, Jim, um, because chapter 11, uh, it's a very happy, uh, topic of guilt and shame. I mean, obviously guilt and shame, uh, were present in much of your, uh, experience as an investigator, but not always. Some people were immune to it. Tell us more about this theme.

**J Warner Wallace:** We had one guy and I talk about him in this chapter that scared us because he was so, um, uh, shameless. He was so, uh, brazen. And he, we did a plea bargain with this guy and part of the condition of the plea bargain was that he had to confess to how he did this murder. Now I get it, on every one of these crime stories I tell, I change enough of the details because I really don't want people to be able to trace them back to the cases in particular. But in this particular case, I remember we got out of that room, that interview, my partner looked at me and he said, that scared me to death. These are grown, were grown men who have talked to a lot of guys who have done murders, but this guy was so icy that we just thought, Oh, I was just glad to get out of there. Because he was the kind of guy you thought just, just, just like, it's like, like Hannibal Lecter. You're sitting there wondering if he's going to jump across the table and, and, and bite your jugular vein. You know, this is just a, a shameless guy. Meanwhile, his girlfriend who had done nothing wrong, he had no shame at all.

She felt terrible about herself. Now look, here's the difference between guilt and shame. The problem, of course, is that we often complain the two or we, we, we talk about them as both being negative. You shouldn't feel guilty. This is often the cult, the cultural mantra that as if this is the same as shame, there's a difference. Guilt is, is action-focused and, and shame is person-focused. So you can feel guilty about something you've done, an action you've committed. Shame is when you feel bad about you. Uh, guilt is when you feel like, I'm, I feel bad that I messed up. Shame is that I feel bad

that I am a mess up. It's a difference. Guilt is actually an adaptive emotion, according to psychologists. It's an adaptive emotion that can be used to leverage towards something good, because guilt Guilt will drive you toward reconciliation, toward restitution, toward wanting to change, toward repentance. Guilt can actually be adaptive even if you're not somebody who believes in God or believes in an atheistic system.

Shame is just corrosive. It just eats you because people who finally just give in to shame don't care anymore about how they're perceived. Shame is often how you're perceived by others and it can often be for people who have done nothing wrong. No reason even to You can be, feel ashamed about how you were raised, your family.

That's not even your fault. You didn't do anything. How you look. You can be, shame comes in a lot of different forms. And the question then becomes, well then how do we, like what worldview provides resources? Why would there be, why would we feel this way? And what worldview provides the best resources to leverage this toward human flourishing? And I think that's one of the unique features of the Christian worldview is because it addresses both, you know, the, the, the entire, uh, area of guilt that we often feel for doing something wrong is addressed by the forgiveness of God. And by the way, if you don't have, you don't believe there's a transcendent God that whom you have offended, what do you do when you've done something wrong and you can't make We can't, you can't make restitution.

The person you have offended is dead or the person is, you have no way to actually go back and make it right. What do you do with that? It's a Christian worldview actually gives a, an avenue that we can, and the issue of shame is, is really an issue of an identity. So if you've been forgiven by God and you've trusted Christ for your savior, you no longer, you've dealt with the guilt issue has driven you towards something good, and it can motivate the future for yourself.

Shame is resolved by your identity in Christ where there's no condemnation. Now, what do you do if you're a cop, that maybe you feel like you're limited

into how much you can share the gospel, but it turns out there's almost always a way that people find out about what you believe and what your worldview is, and you can move them along in this journey, and sometimes it takes guilt and shame to move us to the cross, because we're looking for resolution and forgiveness and identity.

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**\*BREAK 2\***

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## **READING**

*We kept following the two motorbikes through several villages while griping about the bureaucracy of war, the reluctance of higher-ups to let us do what we'd been trained to do. Maybe, in our griping, we were no different from soldiers in every war. We wanted to fight: we didn't understand larger issues, underlying geopolitics. Big picture. Some commanders often said, publicly and privately, that they feared every Taliban killed would create three more, so they were extra cautious. At times we felt the commanders were right: we were creating more Taliban. But there had to be a better answer than floating nearby while innocents got slaughtered.*

*Five minutes became ten became twenty.*

*We never did get permission.*

*Every kill was on video.*

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## **John Dickson (Studio)**

Those are the words of the Duke of Sussex - best known as Prince Harry - he's recounting the grim realities from his time as a soldier, serving in Afghanistan in the early 2000s.



The reading comes from his memoir *Spare*, released in 2023 to a maelstrom of tabloid coverage.

This particular excerpt isn't about Royal scandals ... It's a brutal reflection on what it's like to kill another human.

It's confronting.

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## READING

*Most soldiers can't tell you precisely how much death is on their ledger. In battle conditions, there's often a great deal of indiscriminate firing. But in the age of Apaches and laptops, everything I did in the course of two combat tours was recorded, and time-stamped. I could always say precisely how many enemy combatants I'd killed. And I felt it vital never to shy away from that number.*

*Among the many things I learned in the Army, accountability was near the top of the list.*

*So, my number: twenty-five. It wasn't a number that gave me any satisfaction. But neither was it a number that made me feel ashamed*

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## John Dickson (Studio)

We did a whole episode on the ethics of combat - Episode 55 *Just War* - but Harry's point goes beyond simple battlefield engagement ethics. He talks about the psychological toll of killing another human.

I can't imagine living in the knowledge that I'd killed 25 people, even in a just war setting.



Even less can I imagine killing in cold blood.

But Jim reckons that killer is in all of us.

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**John Dickson:** In chapter 12, you really push the friendship with your, with your readers because you, 'cause you say, um, that there's a killer in every one of us

**J Warner Wallace:** Yes, there is!

**John Dickson:** And you tell a story of, you know, someone who couldn't believe their mate, their friend, uh ha had been a killer. So, tell us about this insight. 'cause it sounds risky for an author to say this, but actually you do it in a compelling

**J Warner Wallace:** Well, yeah, it is. You, you see this when you, I first started bumping into it with defense attorneys who you, you know, you spend a lot of time in trial. You're sitting across the table from a defense attorney and sometimes you don't like these people because they seem like they're after you. But sometimes you just realize we're all doing the same job and we really spend as much time together. You end up liking these folks and they'll talk to you in the breaks. And I remember being talking to them in a break with somebody about their client who we had arrested for a murder. And he just couldn't believe that his client, and this was true of this particular case that you're talking about in the chapter, where if you were working, let's put it this way, if you're working serial killers, there's something weird about serial killers. They do it all the time. And then when you finally arrest them and knock on their neighbor's door, the neighbor will say something like, um, man, I'm so glad I got to jail. That dude's weird. His lights are on all night long, making all kinds of weird noises. He's digging holes in his backyard all the time. It smells bad over there. You know, they've got all kinds of stories. When you work a cold case murder, you'll

knock on the neighbor's door and they'll say no way, no way. That guy watches my kids when I'm gone. He's been, he's an elder at my church. He's this, he's that. I've known him for 30 years. Because these guys who do cold case killings, they did one ... 30 years earlier. And then for the next 30 years, they're living like absolute brilliant, perfect citizens. And how can that be? How can we be so enigmatic? How can we be so different? Capable of the most dire? I mean, some of these murders are horrific and then they have to cut the body up to get rid of it. I mean, really? Who wants to, who can do that and feel good and then go on and act tomorrow like nothing ever even happened? Well, it's something about our nature. And so I have to ask the question, are we? Are we innately innocent, or are we innately fallen, and how can we be both?

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### **John Dickson (Studio)**

I'm not sure if you've listened to our episode on Augustine recently but I can't help feeling that Jim's experience has turned him into an Augustinian: full of love and sympathy toward humanity but keenly aware of our shared fallenness!

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And if you look at the data, for example, on altruism, are we capable of doing great things? Yes. Until resources get tight. So we can be great until there's a pandemic and then we're suddenly hoarding toilet paper. Why are we doing that? Because it, when it serves us. Here it is again. When we are served by it, we can be very altruistic. But that's not otherly, that's really about a focus on us. We're trying, we get something out of that altruism. Until it no longer benefits us, until resources, then I'm not giving away my toilet paper. Why? Because at our core, we are self focused. But I think that we have to ask the question, is the data good? Now, I think for a lot of people who are parents, I don't think we need a lot of studies to demonstrate that our core nature is somehow broken because you don't have to teach your kids to be impatient and selfish. They seem to come out

of the womb that way. And, and that's because, and that's what we have to make that decision. I think what that does for me is that it doesn't, I won't run past a suspect just because he seems to look good because I just know from my work that that's always the case. That's always the case. I have never, because if this guy was so suspiciously sideways, Somebody would have taken him to jail years earlier, but he's a good, he's a good liar. He's hiding quite well because we all do this. We all put the best face on the public face of who we are. If we could probe our thoughts, why do you think Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount does not talk about behaviors? He does, but he talks really more about intentions, about thoughts. Because he's trying to core, to get, to drill down below what you want people to think you are, to who you really are, because that's where the gospel is so necessary, right? Because if, if you're just who people see you as, but you don't even need forgiveness for anything.

But if your thought life could be exposed, could you imagine if we had billboards on our foreheads of everything we thought? Nobody would even like us. We wouldn't even be, don't even talk to us

**John Dickson:** We would never go out.

**J Warner Wallace:** you never go outside. You'd be absolutely naked and ashamed all the time because your thoughts would be naked. So I think in the end, um, that, that chapter for me was really just about, and I've had that several times. I had, I had a guy, for example, different guy who had committed a crime who I liked so much that I, yeah, I liked him. Could he, I didn't, I'd have him over for dinner. He's that nice. He's not going to kill me. 30 years ago. Okay. How can we talk about people in that weird upside down way? Did I really like this guy? Yeah, but he did kill his wife 30 years ago. Okay, how, how does that even, just watch Dateline. If you watch a cold case on Dateline, I've been on Dateline more than anybody else. If you watch those cases, whether it's mine or anybody else's case, you'll see it over and over and over again.

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**John Dickson (Studio)**

Hey for our non-American listeners, *Dateline* is a weekly investigative show, broadcast on NBC.

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Someone interviewed who goes, No way, I was shocked when they found out it was him. Well, that's because our enigmatic nature is such that it's described perfectly by one worldview. A worldview that says that we are capable of altruism because we're created in the image of God. But we are so deeply rebellious that we are innately have inherited that sin of Adam to the point where we will do things that cover them up brilliantly.

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**John Dickson (Studio)**

This is all very depressing.

But Jim's book does have a hopeful note.

He reckons that what he's learnt through simultaneously facing the darkness and pondering the Christian vision of life actually leads to human flourishing!

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**John Dickson:** What's the best way for you to explain why viewing life and human nature through the lens of Christianity actually will lead to flourishing?

**J Warner Wallace:** Well, a couple of things. I would say that, um, I'm a boomer. I'm 62. It's kind of the very bottom end of the boomers. Um, and, and so for me, I needed to know 25 years ago, is this true? I'm not going to

give my life to something that wasn't true. And truth for me was not a postmodern view of truth. It was actually the old fashion. View of truth. But if I said to you that Christianity is true, I think most people who are maybe millennials or Gen Z would hear, oh, that's true for me. I'm not saying it's true for me. I'm saying it's true, but they don't hear it that way. And I think the questions have shifted. I don't think that a lot of people care with what's true for you. I got what's true for me. It's working for me. You got what's true for you. They wanna know, is it good? Because there's a sense in which Christianity and how you could even think it's true when it's the source of all misogyny, racism, homophobia, transgender, whatever it may be, it's not good. It's divisive. It's not, it's not good. And, and I've written books, the first probably six books I wrote were about whether it was true. And I just realized at some point that the conversation has shifted. It's about whether it's good. Now, I think all of this provides some good reason to believe that it's true. Don't get me wrong, because, and I say it this way all the time, if I find a fingerprint or a DNA at the crime scene that identifies the suspect in advance, well, I know who's door to knock on.

So some of that evidence points directly to the inference. So I just go right there. But other evidence in the room, I only can make sense of it after I meet him. Because it's a button that's laying on the floor, and then I don't know that it belongs to, but I encounter this guy who's missing a button on his shirt, and I'm like, oh dude, I think I might have the right guy here.

Why? Because it's corroborative in hindsight, as opposed to, um, identifying him before the fact. This kind of evidence about behavior is corroborative in hindsight. If Christianity is true, then it, I would assume then that it's, it's primary document would describe the world the way it really is, would describe humans the way we really are, because if that doesn't happen, it's kind of like saying this, if he's the killer, well, then now this behavior makes sense.

Everything he did in the week after the murder, you know, how he's moving things in the house, how he got rid of all of her clothing, how suddenly he's taking small packages out. And dumping them in the dumpster. Okay, this is

all behavior that makes sense if he, of all the other reasons we believe he's the killer, point to the right conclusion. Same thing here. Is that if, if, if, Christianity is true, then all of this makes sense. So, and by the way, I use all of that evidence in the case proper. I'm going to use the fingerprint and the DNA and the button. I'm going to use his behaviors. All of that's going to come into trial and all of it is indirect evidence.

It's all the same category. There's no more strength to the button or his behavior than there was to the DNA. It's all in the category of evidence we call indirect. So, I think in the end, it does have some place in your consideration of whether or not Christianity is true. Is it livable? Not only is it livable, does it lead to the best life possible? And this is what I hope to do in this book, in 15 chapters, show you that if you just lived this way, look, even if Christianity isn't true, if you want to flourish, you would be wise to live as though it is. Because it turns out if you're trying to throw that dart and hit that bullseye, that's called human flourishing. If you hit it, you're probably hitting all the principles that have been in the Christian worldview for 2,000 years. You're going to hit Christianity right square in the bullseye. So that's why I think in the end, this does provide for me. Now look, I don't consider this to be a case book. This is not a book where you're going to go, Oh, this is a book that I hope is a what now book. Okay, you've got the evidence to, to determine if Christianity is true. What do I do with that now? What, what now? How should I live now? What's, what's the, that's what I want this book to be. Not just the book, is it true, but is it good?

**John Dickson:** It's a fascinating way of applying your years of experience and insight. So thank you for sharing it with us today.

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### **John Dickson (Studio)**

We'll put a link in the show notes to Jim's book. There's way more there than we could put in one of our singles.



We've got a few more singles coming your way, as we work on the next season, including one on jazz. I can't wait for you to hear that!!

See ya ...