

# How to tell the truth with Preston Perry

## TRANSCRIPT

August 12, 2024 | September 26, 2024

**NOTE: This transcript was AI-generated and has not been fully edited.**

### **Mark Turman (00:02.665)**

This is the Denison Forum podcast. I'm Dr. Mark Turman, executive director of Denison Forum. Thank you for joining us for this conversation as we seek to equip Christ followers to discern the world, literally everything in the world that they encountered differently. We want to help you to do that by thinking differently, thinking biblically so that you can live holy and ultimately so that you can serve and speak as a follower of Christ in a compelling way. And that's the conversation that we're looking forward to today. You know that the Bible uses words like ambassador, representative, witness, even servant. If I was giving a biblical theme to our conversation today, I think I would pick first Peter three, 15 and 16 that says, but in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord, always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you for the reason for the hope that you have.

But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. There's about five sermons. We could probably pull out of that one two verse passage, but to have a conversation today, our guest is Preston Perry. Let me tell you a little bit about Preston. If you're unfamiliar with him, he is a poet. First and foremost, we'll get him to talk about that a little bit.

He is also a performance artist, a teacher, and an apologist from the Chicago area. He just shared with me, he's a white socks fan, so we need to pray for him in that way. Preston's writing and teaching have been featured on ministry platforms such as the gospel coalition, the poets, autumn tour, and legacy disciple. Preston is also the cohost of the popular poke podcast called with the Perry's that he does with his wife. He also created bold apparel.

And the YouTube channel called apologetics with Preston Perry. That way he can engage the public with theological questions and conversation. Some of you may be familiar with his wife, Jackie Hill Perry and, Preston, you're probably like me known to many people by, that's so and so's husband over there. But they live in Atlanta along with their four children. And, we are excited to have Preston join us today. Preston. Welcome to the Dennis more Dennison forum podcast.

**Preston Perry (02:25.121)**

Thank you for having me that was a great introduction. Yes. I am known for a lot of people's that's Jackie's husband Yeah

**Mark Turman (02:31.541)**

Which is not an entirely bad thing. Right.

**Preston Perry (02:37.199)**

Nope, nope, that is my biggest flex. My wife is so beautiful and amazing.

**Mark Turman (02:42.889)**

Well, we're going to, yeah, we're going to talk today about your new book called how to tell the truth, which is, really both, kind of a biography as well as a training manual, a testimony, if you will, as well as a training tool to help people to share Christ in the most effective ways. I guess my first question, Preston is why did you pick this title for the book?

**Preston Perry (03:09.265)**

Well, you know, I wanted to have a book that focused on truth telling, but you you quoted 1 Peter 3 .15 where it says, your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy. You always be prepared to make a defense for anyone who actually, the reason, for the hope that is in you, but yet do it with gentleness and respect. And I think when we think about apologetics, I think we think about information first. I think we think about giving truth first. I think we think about boldness first.

But we speak park at the apology of park, which means to make a defense or give a justification for something or argument for something. you know, a lot of people don't really emphasize the gentleness and respect part. And I think that giving the way we give the truth is equally important than actually giving the truth, right? That if we give the truth to somebody in a garbage bag and not on a dignified platter, you know, they didn't reject the truth. They rejected the way we gave it to them.

And so I wanted to write a book on how, like telling the truth, but how to the truth so that we can be effective in the world around.

**Mark Turman (04:16.467)**

Yeah, it's such a great, way of talking about it. I, I'd never thought of anybody saying it that way that, if we offer you something truly valuable in a garbage bag, you may not be interested simply because of the garbage bag. And, that's a great, that's a great way to think about it. You know, sometimes we think of apologetics, kind of like a baseball bat. And, I just was, was wondering pressing, even in that, when we say that we're here to defend our faith.

**Preston Perry (04:30.353)**

Yeah.

**Mark Turman (04:45.279)**

Does that even the word, the idea of defending our faith kind of put us in the wrong mindset? Just the word defense.

**Preston Perry (04:53.093)**

Yeah, yeah, like, yeah, because you know what, I think we have to think about the context in which it was right, which is pastors was written to, it was written to the persecuted church, right? And who would greatly persecuted. And it's the same man, like you can easily take the word defense and swap it with justification or always be prepared to give a justification of why you believe or an argument or, you know, like

Just be prepared to explain to people why you believe what you believe. Right? And I think that if we focus on the first part of the passage where it says, your heart honor Christ the Lord as holy. Right? Now he came and loved people well, endured with people. Right? And so if we do anything in a way that's not honoring Christ, we are already in the wrong mindset. Right?

And then it says, you know, we go on and do it with just a disrespect. And so I don't think that we should hear the word defense and think that, you know, God wants us to be in a boxing match or this is a UFC match. It's like, no, like how can I be prepared to love people well, while at the same time finding gentle and respectful ways to give them truth when the time calls for it? I think that's what we need to think about when we think about apologetics and defense.

**Mark Turman (06:14.805)**

Yeah. I think in that idea of a silver platter, you know, serving it up in the most honorable, dignified way is a beautiful word picture for talking about what we mean precedent. I'm going to jump ahead on you a little bit here. And just because we're on this passage for a moment, that's so foundational to this book. but so many Christians, I pass through churches for 35 years. So many Christians, feel like they're stuck in the first part of first Peter three 15, which is

**Preston Perry (06:22.748)**

Yeah.

**Mark Turman (06:43.551)**

To revere or to set apart Christ as Lord in your heart. They're like, well, if I get that under my belt better, then I'll be ready to maybe talk to somebody, you know, a few years down the road, maybe. But you know what? I'm just not living my faith well enough to really talk about it with somebody who might ask me a question or may not know Jesus. What do you say to the person who feels like, know what? I'm just not a healthy disciple to the point.

I don't follow Jesus well enough to really represent him in any good way right now. What would you say to that person?

**Preston Perry (07:21.268)**

Well man, you know, think it would depend on the actual person and I think the first question that I would have is what is your definition of a healthy Christian? know, somebody might have a

definition of being a healthy Christian is I don't know all the things yet. Someone, you know, might have a definition of not a healthy Christian that I'm in a continued state of sin. And then I would question, you know, have you question like, you truly converted yet? So I think I will ask questions, you know? But I think, you know, for the person who feels like they're not, they haven't arrived, you know, I would challenge them to examine what do they mean by that? Like none of us have arrived and that's the reason why the perfect sacrifice had to come and die on the behalf of us in the first place.

And so if you, you know, if Jesus Christ was the propitiation and the atonement for your sins, right, and you've adopted His righteousness, that's a sanctification process that we all go through. None of us are perfect, right? You know, and if you are striving to live like Jesus, if you are submitted under His lordship, there's always gonna be someone that doesn't know more than you and that can learn from you, right?

**Mark Turman (08:43.497)**

Hmm. Right.

**Preston Perry (08:43.797)**

Which is the reason why you know, I told the story in my book that I gave my life to the Lord When I saw the God who was mentoring me fail Through his failure, you know, and I would just tell the person that way like it doesn't really matter I don't think God wants you to be perfect I think God wants you to display to the world that you're trusting in a perfect God. And so you might Not have victory in every area of your life

But are you dependent on your Lord and Savior? Are you humble enough to repent of your sin? Are you repentant? And I think if you are, if you have a repentant heart and you have a broken heart over your sin, don't think that you have to be perfect because I think the risk of that is thinking that you have to arrive at a certain place and then you think that you're at a certain place and then you might start acting in self-righteousness. And it's like, God wants to see

God wants the world to see people who are dependent on him. And I think that, I think we just have to define what arriving to a place looks like.

**Mark Turman (09:55.221)**

Yeah, that's a really, really good way of talking about it. I think makes me think of, you know, many of us love the apostle Paul as a healthy believer. And, we think, you know, next to Jesus, he might be the most healthy Christian we see in the Bible, but even he's saying, you know, to the Philippian church, he says, you know what? I don't have it down yet. I'm still trying to grow. I haven't arrived yet. And even in his very last letters to Timothy, first and second Timothy, he's saying, you know what?

I'm still very aware that I'm the greatest of all centers. And, he always knew that he was not going to be complete and he wasn't going to be fully Holy until he got into Jesus's full presence, but he didn't let that stop him. kept, kept going, even though he knew he was far from being

perfected at this point, which really kind of brings me around to where your book starts, which is out of your own story of coming to Christ and living in a

**Preston Perry (10:26.975)**

Yeah.

**Preston Perry (10:36.445)**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Mark Turman (10:52.661)**

pretty rough part of Chicago living in some pretty challenging situations and environments. but tell us a little bit about your personal story and some of the pivotal moments maybe that, ended up bringing you into a real relationship with Christ, really and kind of set the stage for you becoming a witness and an evangelist for him in these days. Tell us a little bit about that backstory.

**Preston Perry (11:21.259)**

Yeah, so I grew up on the south side of Chicago. My mom raised me and my siblings. I didn't grow up in church. I didn't grow up regularly going to church. My mom would take me to church on Easter and Christmas and stuff like that. And it wasn't until I heard the gospel for the first time in a house church when the pastor got up and said that if we thank God, being a God of love means he won't destroy all things that he hates, that he won't destroy all sin. We don't know what love is, that if God is a God of love, he has to hate evil. But he's equally calling us to repent, turn to him, and place our faith in Jesus. And that was the first time that I was confronted with the gospel, because at that time, 16, I was doing a lot of stuff that I shouldn't have been doing, like breaking in cars, fighting you know, sexual immorality, all kind of stuff, you know, that, you know, people in my neighborhood, that was normal. That was normal for a 12 year old to do a lot of those things, to believe it or not. And so, you know, I was already like waist deep in this really serious sin, you know? And so I was confronted with the gospel that rocked me at the house church in my neighborhood in a living room. Like it wasn't even like a formal, you know, church or whatever.

**Mark Turman (12:22.968)**

Right.

**Preston Perry (12:41.686)**

I just remember that really rocking me to the core and I'm feeling really like, conflicted, like God has a problem with the way I live my lifestyle. I don't know how to deal with that. And it wasn't until a friend of mine was shot and he was dying and while he was dying and my mom was trying to revive him and I felt, I just felt like, man, like this nudge in my stomach was like, man, this is me or this will be me if I don't figure something out, if I don't turn to the Lord.

And from there, my aunt, who was a minister, she invited me into her home to come live with her. She was a single woman. And she was a minister on the south side of Chicago, loved

Jesus. And she took me into her wing. just loved me well, fed me three times a day, put some weight on me. And introduced me to a guy named Gary, who went to Moody College, Moody Seminary.

He started to disciple me and through Gary's life I ended up giving my life to Jesus. I saw the weight of my sin by looking at his life every day and the Lord led me to himself. So that's how I ended up coming to Christ.

**Mark Turman (13:50.675)**

Yeah. How old were you? Yeah. How old were you when you came to Christ?

**Preston Perry (13:53.912)**

I was 19.

**Mark Turman (13:59.827)**

Yeah. Okay. Well, tell me, tell me a little bit at Preston. I really am focused sometimes on this podcast about the differences between words and, a lot of the folks that follow our podcast. sometimes we get confused about words we hear in the Bible. hear the word witness. we often use the word evangelist and apologist. Can you kind of define those three terms to do all Christians?

**Preston Perry (14:02.176)**

Yeah.

**Mark Turman (14:29.045)**

are all christians all three of these do we all have a role in responsibility here help us understand the difference perhaps if there is any between what it means to be a witness for christ an apologist and an evangelist

**Preston Perry (14:44.909)**

Well, yeah, well, apologist is not an office, right? The word apologetics or apologists derives from the Greek word apologia, which means to make a defense, right? And I think that, you know, in our lifetime, you know, I tell people all the time, you know, the moment you tell somebody you're a Christian and why, in a lot of ways, you're an evangelist. You know, the moment they start asking you questions, you're an apologist.

and the moment they're willing to follow you is when you become a disciple maker. And so these three, they're not the same, but they definitely hold hands. And I do think that at one point, every Christian will have to share their faith with someone, right? And every Christian will have to give a reason for the hope in them, whether that's argumentative,

conversation with this security conversation like a curious question like why do you believe in Jesus or you know why you're Christian you know like I think you know like a lot of us will have those questions you know but I think the last thing is the cycle should make and I think every

Christian is called to do the Great Commission which is to go therefore make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all God commanded them and so I do think that because were all called to make disciples, I think that we have to practically figure out how has God uniquely made us? Where has God uniquely placed us? And how can we utilize how we're made and we're replaced to, you know, duplicate other believers like ourselves, to draw others into the fold of God? I think every Christian should try to figure that out, whether you're called primarily to give the gospel to your family members or whether you feel the... the urge to give the gospel to your co-worker or your classmates or you feel the need to just as you go to start conversations with your driver or your barber or whatever. How can we be intentional with the gospel? Every Christian I think should be intentional with the gospel.

**Mark Turman (17:00.179)**

Yeah, that's a great, great way of understanding it. And, that's what you talk about in this book so well. And one of things I love about the book, Preston is how many stories you tell, both out of your own experience and from other contexts. But like I said, the book has so many elements of just your personal testimony and story in it. But, growing up in Chicago, growing up in a challenging area, You often are referring to two or three different groups, two of which I recognize the Jehovah's witnesses and the Mormons, followers of the latter day saints. there was one that I had never heard of before. that was interesting to me, but how do you feel like growing up in that environment with these different views you would, you talk about in your stories in the book, encountering these different people in different groups, sometimes they would get hostile to you. sometimes they were very conversational with you. How do you feel like that sets you up for being the kind of witness and apologist evangelist that you are now?

**Preston Perry (18:05.966)**

I think it's taught me a lot of emotional intelligence. Taught me how to be sensitive to people's hurt and pain. I think it's taught me how to ask good questions. Because I think when we ask good questions, I think that we give people an opportunity to teach us how to serve them. And so I think a lot of times we don't know how to serve people because we have this

Gospel message do we think that we know changed our lives and so we we think that if we come with this script that have changed theirs But people are way more complex and nuanced than we give them credit for and I think that Jesus came and modeled just this beautiful ability of him, you know knowing things but still like being inquisitive about people and asking questions and you know asking questions that he knew the answer to to help reveal you know, something in someone's heart. The woman at the well, like, where's your husband? You know, he knew she had five, right? But he's trying to reveal something to her, right? And so I think, you know, just talking with different people groups and different people has just helped me to, you know, be confident in one, ability to give the gospel to anybody, but also to just help me be confident in knowing that if I serve people well, if I

**Mark Turman (19:10.974)**

Right? Yeah.

**Preston Perry (19:32.551)**

If I make people feel seen, you know, they'll teach me how to surf.

**Mark Turman (19:38.003)**

Yeah. So that may be the best definition of emotional intelligence I've heard, is learning from people, how to serve them, but a great way to, think about it and, you know, understand and love that as well about Jesus asking questions that, Jesus was trying to get people to answer these questions, to reveal something to them, not so much to reveal something about himself that happened to

**Preston Perry (19:46.832)**

Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah.

**Mark Turman (20:05.161)**

But it would reveal something about them that they didn't quite grasp or understand that was in many ways driving their behavior, driving their decisions. Right. And he was, he was trying to get to that depth with them. you, you referred to it a moment ago to some of the people in your life, your mom, your grandmother, your aunt, and then, your friend, Gary, talk about the influence of those people in your life and.

**Preston Perry (20:15.035)**

Yeah, for sure.

**Mark Turman (20:33.873)**

how those relationships really model what you think every disciple maker needs to, to emulate how they need to disciple people across the bridge of relationship. What was it about these different people in your life when you're, when you were a teenager that really captured your attention and made a difference.

**Preston Perry (20:54.983)**

Yeah, they were just really patient with me and loved me well. And I think that they live with their humanity. I think a lot of times when we think about disciple making, I think that we think that in order to make an impact on people, we have to show people the most perfect parts of us. But like I said, they didn't show me like this, this unrealistic Christianity that was, you know, not attainable. Like, and I think, I think, you know, when we think that we have to perfect lives before people to win them, it actually discourages them more than anything. It communicates, I can never be that. And it's just like, well, they're not even that. They're just acting like they are, right? And so Jesus was the only perfect one. And so I think they just, they were human, they were real. I was able to come to them with my fears. And I think when I did come to them with...



my fears and my questions or whatever, they were just ready to give truth to me. And I felt loved and seen by my aunt Denise and the guy who ultimately me to the Lord, Gary Brown. I felt loved, seen from them, and I learned a lot from them. Yeah.

**Mark Turman (22:09.971)**

Yeah. And one one of the things I, I picked up in your relationship, particularly with Gary, was just this idea of, of winning friends, if you will, winning hearts or winning friends, instead of being so focused on winning an argument. when we, when we were winning arguments, we seem to be focused on being cultural warriors. Whereas at Dennison forum, we try to talk as much as we can about.

**Preston Perry (22:27.74)**

Yeah.

**Mark Turman (22:36.137)**

God's called to be cultural missionaries. I don't know of anywhere in the Bible that God calls us to be cultural warriors, but we are to be missionaries in every sense of the term. how do you think Gary, we are Preston. How do you think we can generate a greater curiosity in people and just caring about them through curiosity rather than seeing them with suspicion? how can we more look at, at the people around us that we don't know particularly

As people who are potential friends, rather than seeing them as quote unquote, you know, evangelistic or spiritual trophies that we might win.

**Preston Perry (23:16.477)**

Yeah, well man, that's a really good question. think you said it, like I think we have to truly ask God to help us see people. Because I think that's the problem. I think we don't see people. You know, that's the story in John when Jesus heals this man that was blind. And so Jesus is walking past the synagogue and it says that Jesus and the disciples saw this man who was blind from birth. And

You know, the disciples asked Jesus, Jesus, who's saying this man was parents and he was born blind? And Jesus' response is that neither this man or his parents sin. He was born blind so that the glory of God can be revealed in his life. Right. I love that story so much, but I love how the story starts off with Jesus seeing a blind man and now Jesus healing a blind man. Jesus. And so we have to understand that Jesus saw this man, not like everybody else saw him. Right. Jesus like saw his needs. Jesus saw him. Right.

And because he saw him, he was moved with compassion and Jesus saw stories. And I love the end of that passage after Jesus healed the man by spitting in the mud, putting the mud in the man's eyes, telling him to go watch in the pool of Siloam, which means, sending all the things. They kicked the man out of the synagogue later on in that story, the Pharisees did, and Jesus comes back to the same man that he healed and asks him a very important question. He says, do you know who the son of man is?

And the man responds and says, no, I don't know who the son of man is. Tell me that I may worship him. And Jesus says, I'm the one you are speaking to. Then he says something very, very, very important. He says, for judgment I've come into the world for those who do not see may see and for those who do see may become blind. And then the Pharisees responded and says, Jesus, what are we also blind? And Jesus says, no, if you were blind, you would not be guilty of your sin. But now that you say we see your guilt will remain. And so what Jesus was trying to explain to them was here they had a miracle made man in front of them, man who was born blind, but they couldn't see the miracle in this man because they were so focused on holding him accountable to the law. Jesus healed him on a Sabbath. You're not supposed to heal on a Sabbath. It's like you literally look past the miracle because all you cared about was what you thought you knew.

**Preston Perry (25:41.236)**

And so this is the reason why you miss God. This is the reason why you missed the rejoicing in his man miracle. And I think Jesus in such a beautiful way showed us that if we are more invested in knowledge, ideas, policies, politics, than we are in people, when someone shares their story, we won't hear that story, but we'll hear a position.

We'll hear position. And isn't that what we do in this culture all the time? You know, somebody shares their story about what they went through growing up. It's like, you sound like a woke warrior. It's like, they're not even trying to have any political affiliation or whatever. They're just sharing their story. But we don't see people as stories. We like to categorize people. We like to find out where people land. And we like to figure out you know, if we're going to accept them into our world based on what we think they land, and we just miss people all the time, we don't hear stories, we don't see people. And in order for us to truly see people, we have to be invested in stories more than being invested in the things that we think that we know. We have to be uncomfortable with people challenging our worldview. We have to be uncomfortable with challenging the worldview that comes from our bubbles, because we all live in bubbles.

And that's not a negative thing. We just all come from a particular context. And so if you don't learn, if you don't have the humility to learn from somebody that's different than you, you won't see them. And if you won't see them, you won't know how to serve them.

**Mark Turman (27:19.465)**

Yeah. And that's such a, such an important thing for us to really pray about and ask God to help us to do that. Because like I said, we, think you frame that really well that we're, we're constantly sizing people up relative to their position rather than just understanding them as a person and trying to connect to them as, what John John Claypool used to call a fellow struggler. and we, we keep.

**Preston Perry (27:43.776)**

Yeah.

**Mark Turman (27:45.513)**

We keep hearing positions and we're like, well, I disagree with that, or I can, I can defeat that position, or maybe I'll accept you into my circle because of the position I think that you hold. And we're not, we're not really valuing and, and engaging with people for who they are and for what they are. We're just thinking about their position that they're, explaining or trying to present to us. so really, really helpful insight.

**Preston Perry (27:58.571)**

Yeah.

**Mark Turman (28:15.583)**

Preston, one of the you point out in this book is some of what you've learned to, to do in walking out your faith and sharing your faith and learning to depend on the Holy spirit. Can you kind of explain some of that, describe some of that, how you've come to understand what that daily dependence looks like and how important it is.

**Preston Perry (28:39.392)**

Yeah, yeah, for sure. think that the Holy Spirit's job is to lead us into all truth and to guide us, you know? And I think that, you know, like... man, like one thing that I've learned in evangelism and given the gospel to people is that people don't make us do anything. They just kind of bring what's in us out. And so if you don't, if you're not submissive to the Holy Spirit, you know, somebody's going to bring that irritation, that impatience, that anger, right? And so I think we need the Holy Spirit when we're dealing with other flawed, fallen human beings. And so for me, it is a consistent

You know, like, Lord, help me. I'm not naturally a patient person. I was born and stand and shaped in iniquity. And I think that if we depend on the Holy Spirit, not just knowledge, but the Holy Spirit to govern our hearts, to anchor our souls, to give us a calmness, give us a peace, when we engage the world, there's nothing else to bring out. It's a peace, love, patience, joy, self -control, right? The fruits of the Spirit. And that's the Holy Spirit's job to help sanctify know, conform us into the image of Jesus. And so if we're not consistently being conformed into the image of the Son, you know, it's going to be hard to interact with other people.

**Mark Turman (30:05.267)**

Yeah. And, know, it's a good reminder. Dr. Dennis and our founder reminds us often that, know, our words alone cannot change a human heart. It's the Holy spirit's work that actually changes people's lives. And we get to be a part of that in various ways. And sometimes we get to see it happen. but it's, it's not our words. It's not our technique. It's not our knowledge that changes anybody's lives. It's ultimately the Holy spirit persuading somebody.

**Preston Perry (30:17.193)**

sure.

**Mark Turman (30:33.353)**

to ultimately put their faith in Christ. Preston, one of the things that your book brings out, one of the kind of lightning rod words in our culture these days is the word authenticity. And how important that is that, you know, we just need to be real. And that means that we need to be people of both humility and hope. You know, as, as the Bible tells us to right size and rightly understand where we are in our own faith, but always to be hope. hopefully moving forward. How do you, how do you think we communicate a sense of, of genuineness? How do we discern that in other people? it obviously it's important to be genuine, to be authentic, but how do we express that? How do we discern that?

**Preston Perry (31:24.485)**

do discern, is the question is how do we discern a genuineness in others? Is that what you said?

**Mark Turman (31:29.737)**

Yeah, how do we detect that? How do discern that?

**Preston Perry (31:34.371)**

Yeah, I mean, you know, I think I think authenticity recognizes authenticity, you know, but sometimes, you know, someone might not seem authentic because they don't come in a package that we think that we think they should come in. And so I do think that God reveals things over time. I think that this is the reason why God wants us to be patient with people, you know, and also to, you know, with all that getting get understanding, you know, because a lot of times I've seen people not be themselves, which is a form of not being authentic. But the question is, is like with patience, God might show you that they have a fear of not being themselves, that they're not comfortable. And he actually wants to use you to give them confidence in being more authentic. You know, and so like, think that, you know, you, you just have to figure out like, like, it's the authenticity around you dangerous to be around or is God using you to help them so

**Mark Turman (32:40.339)**

Yeah. Yeah. It's something, like you said, something that gets discerned over time. usually as we engage with people on a more regular basis. Yeah.

**Preston Perry (32:46.809)**

Yeah. Yeah, that's a good -

Yeah, yeah, for sure.

**Mark Turman (32:53.087)**

So one of the things you point out in your book, for all of us to remember is the idea of boldness. I love the definition here that boldness is an act of obedience, not an act of fearlessness. you also talk about how boldness is not necessarily a personality characteristic, but kind of, kind of going back to where we started with what Peter wrote in his letter. Do you think that, those of us that follow Christ, do you think we should

**Preston Perry (33:05.871)**

Yeah.

**Mark Turman (33:23.077)**

Seek out faith conversations with people around us, or should we wait for them to come to us? Or is it a little bit of both?

**Preston Perry (33:31.752)**

Yeah, think it's back to the obedience thing. I think that we have to be obedient. I think that when we are obedient, I'm a firm believer that we'll have multiple opportunities to give the gospel conversations that we initiate and conversations that others initiate. Especially if we begin to pray for it and ask God to help us, prepare us for it. I honestly think that

You know, some conversations will be us initiating it. Some of conversations will, you know, people will initiate it, you know? But I also think that God wants to use all of us how He has uniquely made us. I'm the type of person that will get in a car, see, you know, the Quran on a seat of my Uber driver, and I will start a conversation. My wife is not that type of person. She will not say one word.

And one of the stories I put in the book is, know, we were in a, me and my wife, we were in the airport and I saw some of Jehovah's Witnesses. And because the way God made me, I went over there and have a conversation with them to see if I could be a light to them. And after the conversation, I went to find my wife in the restaurant and she had her hair bowed praying with the waitress. And what happened was the waitress asked her, where was her husband? And she said, you know, I'm buying my food for my husband because he's over there, you know.

having to talk with some Jehovah's Witnesses. And she said, yeah, I used to be a Jehovah's Witness and they excommunicated me and I've been done with the church ever since. And so notice how my wife did, she didn't pursue a conversation, but she didn't avoid one when God laid one on her lap, right? And so, I do think that God is in pressuring you to go out and pursue conversations, right? If that's not the way he made you. Like, I think that,

A of times we put pressure on ourselves that God is not putting on us, but God does want to use you how he has uniquely made you. And if we're the body and we're all made differently, some people are going to go out there and catch the fish. And some people are called to prepare it. And some people are called to serve it, right? And so, like, I think all of it can be discipleship making. And so...

**Preston Perry (35:53.832)**

Yeah, I just want to free people to think that, you my evangelism and my apologetics all have to look a certain way.

**Mark Turman (36:01.129)**

Right. Yeah. There's a lot of, a lot of freedom in the spirit around this and, he uses us all in unique ways. Talk a little bit because pressing, I've been down this road with my own extended family. come from a large family and, like you, came to Christ when I was in my late teens. but talk about some of the uniquenesses of both living and sharing your faith in the context of the people who know you really well, your family, your extended family and your friends.

What were some of the challenges when you first started walking with Christ and how some of those people viewed you? What would be some of your advice to us about, you know, trying to represent Christ, speak for Christ, especially among people who know you really well, like your family and friends.

**Preston Perry (36:50.293)**

Yeah, yeah, like over time, win them over with your conduct and behavior. I think that, you know, like people get used to your life if you're consistent. If you're not consistent, they're not gonna get used to it and it's never gonna be comfortable for them to accept your lifestyle. But you know, when I first became a Christian, a lot of my family members, they were like, I don't know how to move around you. I don't know how to say to you. They were uncomfortable.

But as I started to live just my life more consistently, they had to accept it and then our relationship got better. And so I always just say, live your life out loud in front of them. Be a good listener. Don't be ashamed of the gospel. While at the same time, don't preach a gospel to them to make them think that they can change on their own. Like God didn't.

didn't save you like like display that you know this God changed your heart and your mind and gave you a new nature and you know I I hear people always I always hear people say like you know give the gospel and if necessary use words but I like to say you know like like live your life out loud in front of people so when you do use words your words have more impact so when you do say you when you do say something like

Because nobody is going to come to the Lord if they don't hear someone preach. They don't hear a proclamation of the gospel, right? And so they have to understand the gospel. So our words are important. But our words might not be believable if they don't see a lifestyle that matches. And so just live faithful for them. Even if they don't tell you that they're watching, even if they don't tell you that they're impacted, more than likely they are.

The moment you tell your family you're a Christian, they're watching. They're watching.

**Mark Turman (38:47.989)**

Yeah. Yeah. And that's, that's been a lot of my experience as well. I can remember talking to one of my siblings and, I was a pretty young Christian and, and didn't really have a lot of emotional and social maturity and intelligence at that point. And we had a pretty rough conversation, but, you know, things got, things continued on, but 20 years later, he brought up that conversation. he, held onto it. He still remembered it.

And, and so they are watching they, and they are oftentimes listening more than you think that they are. and so it's, it's important to, to stay humble and stay prayed up a big way. for sure. Let me, let me zoom out for a minute, Preston, to a little bit of your larger world, particularly the world that you live in as a poet and not only as an evangelist, but,

**Preston Perry (39:25.129)**

Yeah.

**Preston Perry (39:32.651)**

So, for sure.

**Mark Turman (39:45.075)**

somewhere in the not so distant past, I came across this idea that, maybe it's beauty that can save the world. And, what stuck with me was just that idea of beauty. And, and for many Christians that I've talked with and for myself as well, the word holiness sometimes feels out of reach. and so one of my definitions, one of my working definitions of holiness is.

The idea of beauty anything that is truly holy is beauty is beautiful and anything that's truly beautiful is therefore holy So as a poet and as a performer How do you feel like? Beauty, how do you feel like the arts things like poetry? How do they fit in to? This whole dynamic of being a witness and being an evangelist for Christ

**Preston Perry (40:21.003)**

Yeah.

**Preston Perry (40:37.75)**

Yeah, yeah, that's a good question. think it fits in a lot. I think that's the reason why, you know.

so much poetry, figurative language and apocryphal languages in the Bible. know, the first human words recorded in the scripture is when Adam said, this said last is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. And that was a poem. Right. And so the first human words recorded in the scriptures was poetry.

And so we have to understand that God uses poetry for his glory. you know, exploring the beautiful possibilities of language, I think helps people dream to see, to experience the depth of what God is trying to communicate, you know, and to use a metaphor or double entendre or, you know,

you know, assembly or whatever, you know, to further communicate the depth, right, of how you feel. Sometimes just using regular language, don't cut it, you know. Sometimes you need some poetry there to explain like how much you love the Lord or how much God loves you or how far you are away from the Lord. you know, yeah, I think poetry just does a really good job of

highlighting, yeah, just some of the great things about the Lord and the pressing matters about faith.

**Mark Turman (42:26.543)**

And so it's always been the case, right? That, that life and, and story, poetry, music, all of those things are ways that God seeks to get our attention and the way that God helps us to understand his presence and what it means to walk with him. And, just, yeah, thank you for the way you do that in your larger ministry as well. And, and, so just.

**Preston Perry (42:45.997)**

Yeah.

**Mark Turman (42:52.981)**

Preston want to thank you for being a part of this conversation and more than that, thank you for the work that you've done on this book and the, work that you continue to do. If, people want to know more and follow your ministry, how can they keep up with you?

**Preston Perry (43:06.585)**

Well, man, thank you. Thank you for having me. First of all, man. Yeah, like I have a YouTube channel with my wife called with the Perry's. also have a podcast called with the Perry's. It's on Spotify, Apple, iTunes and all. Not iTunes, but Apple, whatever, you know. Yeah, the Apple part. And yeah, I have a YouTube channel called Apologetics with Preston Perry. While, you know, having conversations with you Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses and Hebrew Israelites and stuff like that. you know, just trying to teach you how to engage the world around them. But if you want to follow me on social media, you can follow me at Preston underscore end underscore Perry. And that's also on threads and Twitter as well. So follow Preston and Perry on Instagram and, you know, keep up with me there.

**Mark Turman (43:58.919)**

Awesome. Awesome. Well, thank you for that. We appreciate you coming and being a part of our conversation today and good luck. hope that the book does really well as not only a great testimony to God's work in your life, but also to your response to him and to helping people to know how to share the message of the gospel. Well, in beautiful and compelling ways, want to thank our audience for listening to us today. And, we hope that today's been both encouraging and equipping.

God would give you great clarity and intentionality as you seek to walk with him and also as you seek to share The message of Christ with others that are in your life wherever God may give you opportunity Thank you for following our podcast. We'll see you next time on the dennison forum podcast.