

Fight Like A Man Against Sexual Sin - Part 1

SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2025 at 08:00 AM CT

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Fight Like A Man Against Sexual Sin. That is a topic we'll discuss today right here on *The Christian Worldview Radio Program*, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a listener-supported radio ministry. Our website is [The ChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org). and the rest of our contact information will be given throughout today's program. As always, thank you for your notes of encouragement, financial support, and lifting us up in prayer.

The Apostle Peter was inspired by God to write, be of sober spirit, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour but resist him, firm in the faith knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished among your brethren who are in the world. That's from 1 Peter chapter 5, verses eight and nine.

The devil is the believer's great adversary and he has a singular mission to devour the Christian by tempting us to sin against God. Satan uses the fallen world and our sinful flesh to great effect. One of his favored means of destruction is corrupting God's gift and design of sex for one man-one woman marriage into a litany of perversions, fornication, adultery, lust, pornography, homosexuality, and more. Consistent victory in this never-ending war is not simply a matter of having an accountability partner or putting a filter on your device. No, this calls for transformation of the heart and comprehensive preparation and plans of action, from being born again to pursuing sanctification to employing the supernatural resources God provides.

Emeal Zwayne, also known as E.Z., president of Living Waters Ministry, has written an excellent book titled *Fight Like A Man: A Bold Biblical Battle Plan for Personal Purity*. He joins us today for part one of a two-part series on this important topic of sexual purity.

Fight Like a Man is our new featured resource and we will let you know how you can order a copy today for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Later, in the final segment, Soeren Kern, geopolitical analyst and managing editor of The Christian Worldview Journal, will join us to discuss the recent violence in Syria and whether reports of Christian genocide are true. But first, let's get to the interview with Emeal Zwayne on fighting like a man against sexual sin.

E.Z., thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today. Just tell us about your background, how God saved you, and what your life is like now.

GUEST: EMEAL "E.Z." ZWAYNE:

Yeah, David, this is a treat for me. Before we came on, you and I were talking about how we both heard of each other for probably decades now but have never connected, and it's a joy to finally put a face and a voice

to the name. And you and I, of course, both have two very dear people to us in common and that's Todd Friel and Ray Comfort, and I'm always into extremes. Todd is freakishly tall, Ray is adorably short, and so it's great to be connected to those two guys.

And I don't even know if you know this, David, but I'm the president of Living Waters here, but Ray happens to be my father-in-law. And what a lot of people don't know is Ray's of Jewish descent and I'm from Lebanon of Arab descent and we often say that together we are the solution to the Mideast crisis. There's so much peace between us, in fact, we're going to start a new mattress company called E.Z. Comfort and just call it a day.

Yeah, so I had a pretty crazy upbringing. I was born in Lebanon, immigrated to the US in 1980, and coming from a war-torn country, I had a little chip on my shoulder from the outset, had a little kind of soldier mentality, so I started getting into trouble early on in school, getting in fights and stealing and all kinds of chaos. And when I was about eight or nine, I did my first Holy Communion in the Catholic Church and decided to reform my life. So I stopped lying and stealing and cheating and robbing banks, the whole deal, all at eight years of age and then peer pressure set in. I had my long list of dos and don'ts, things I would never do, things I'd always do, but as peer pressure set in, that became a distant memory. And really when I hit high school, man, I plunged headlong into sin and immorality.

Before I turned 16, I'd already been kicked out of two high schools. I'd become a gang member with the Crips and I attempted to commit suicide in front of my family. But on that divine August evening in 1991, God reached down in the time and space, grabbed a hold of the heart of this wretched sinner, opened my eyes to the truth of the gospel, and radically, radically transformed my life. Got back into my high school where I was my freshman class president where I got kicked out. I mean I got kicked out of the class president, that's how bad I was. Went from a 0.32 grade point average at the end of my sophomore year, which is four Fs and 2 D minuses, I get back, I go from that 0.32 GPA to a 4.0, start teaching Bible study on campus, graduated, went to a Christian university, able to study as a theology major, ended up co-planning a church at 20, which was crazy, wouldn't advise that.

And then ended up meeting this crazy little Kiwi named Ray Comfort and met his daughter, took one look at me, dropped to her knee, proposed, and here we are now. Ended up coming on with Living Waters 22 years ago now, believe it or not. That's my story in a nutshell.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

That's an amazing before and after picture, just a little follow up, who explained the gospel to you and how did they explain it to you?

GUEST: EMEAL "E.Z." ZWAYNE:

I grew up with a friend in my neighborhood who came from a Christian family and they had taken me to church a few times, attempted to share the gospel with me, but it just never... I was so blind it never

penetrated. But finally, that friend invited me to an evangelistic event and it was a big event held in a big amphitheater, and I went with him and that was the night. It was like, boom.

The scales fell off my eyes and I finally understood what the cross was all about. I understood why Christ died, I understood the severity of my sin, his grace, his mercy. And 2 Corinthians 5 says, "If any man's in Christ, he's a new creation. The old things have passed away, all things are new." And it was like that. It was just instant, everything about me changed that night, 33 years ago, never been the same.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

And I can still see the smile on your face looking back with such gratefulness at how God changed your life. Emeal Zwayne, who goes by E.Z. is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview. E.Z., let's get into your really excellent new book. It's our featured resource here on the program, *Fight Like a Man: A Bold Biblical Battle Plan for Personal Purity*.

On page 18, you write, "Unfortunately, real men are in short supply today. Cultural theologian, P. Andrew Sandlin couldn't have said it better. "One of the most tragic cultural shifts of the US in the last quarter century is the loss of rugged manliness." In my experience, most young men, including young Christian men, suffer from laziness, lack of ambition, obsession with cheap entertainment, avoid of chivalry or protection of women in a whiny, self-centered non-risk-taking disposition. And yet God's word exhorts us to pursue a higher standard," you write, "the standard of real manhood." You quote 1 Corinthians 16:13, "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong." So has a decrease in manliness, E.Z., led to an increase in the focus of your book, sexual immorality?

GUEST: EMEAL "E.Z." ZWAYNE:

Indisputably, David. Indisputably. And when you have a Supreme Court Justice nominee who cannot define what a woman is when asked that in a confirmation hearing, I mean where are we, man? There are times I step back and I'm like, "We can't really be living in these days." If you told someone this 10 years ago, let's go even further, 20 years, they'd look at you like you're insane. "What are you talking about? What do you mean someone can't tell you what a woman is?" And obviously by extension, we see the same thing happening with manhood.

Yesterday I was reading about a guy who sits on some important committee who identifies as a turtle. This is where we're living now. And so, yeah, absolutely. When you can't define what manhood is, then you're going to lose the consciousness of what biblical manhood is in a society, and the ramifications for that are disastrous. And the reason why that's important is because you have to know what a man is in order to act like one.

And what is a man? When I talk about manhood in the book, and of course the title gives it away, that I talk about that fight like a man. And you cited the scripture there, we're called to act like men, equip ourselves like men. Manhood doesn't just imply masculinity in the sense of someone who's strong or maybe athletic or deep-voiced or thick-bearded or whatever. Of course, those things apply, but manhood really contains and

implies someone who is devoted, dedicated, who has character, integrity, loyalty, a willingness to fight, a willingness to lay down their lives for causes greater than themselves and for the love of others and for the glory of God.

And so, when men don't do that in the arena of sexual purity, you're going to have the outcome that we have today, which is a massive pandemic that is ravaging families, that is ravaging men, that is ravaging children. It's ravaging our society, it's ravaging the church. And so, my call in the book to men is, "Hey, you need to stand up and fight like a man in this arena."

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Emeal Zwayne is our guest. He's the author of a book titled, *Fight Like a Man: A Bold Biblical Battle Plan for Personal Purity*. We are inundated, as you just mentioned, E.Z., with sexual temptation in our society. Name the location, it's hard to even escape whether it's on television, the internet, billboards, just everywhere. It's omnipresent. Why do, let's say men in general, it's also for women, but the purpose of this conversation, we're talking more about men. Why do men in general and Christian men in particular struggle so much with this sexual sin aside from the fact that it's just omnipresent?

GUEST: EMEAL "E.Z." ZWAYNE:

Well, it's because sadly, most men have a peacetime mentality when they are living in wartime. David, imagine a soldier being deluded into thinking that he is on a luxury cruise ship heading for the shores of Bora Bora to an exotic resort, when in reality he's on a Higgins boat heading for the shores of World War II Normandy. What's this guy going to look like? He's going to be sauntering off the Higgins boat, clad in a bathrobe, some fluffy slippers, a remote in one hand, and a latte in the other hand as he just walks out into the midst of the theater of war and he's going to get smoked.

And so, men are just kind of like, they're chill, they're relaxed, they're like, "Oh, yeah." And sometimes it's like, "Yeah, I got to deal with this, but all my friends do it and it's so common." And so there's this lax mentality and they're getting smoked on the battlefield of sexual purity. And so, I'm trying to help men recognize it until they change their mindset and recognize that there is a real enemy out there seeking to destroy them. A real soldier is going to know who his enemy is, he's going to know what the enemy's battle plan is against him, and he's going to have a counter attack.

And that's what the book does. It hits that sweet spot of helping men recognize that reality. And I ask men, I say, "Look, if someone came up to your wife, pulled their fist back, and was about to pop her in the face, would you jump in front of her, absorb that blow, and then defend her? Someone held a gun at your kids and they're about to pull the trigger, would you not jump in front of them and catch that bullet if you could and if you lived, defend them?" I mean which man would say, "No, not really. I don't care?" Of course not.

But yet we're not willing to fight with that tenacity when it comes to protecting our family and our children. And even if we're not married, other believers in the testimony of the gospel and what have you, we're not willing to fight that way in order to protect them from the ravages of sexual sin in our own lives. And so, it's a

clarion call to men, rise up. You've been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. He's given you all things that pertain to life and godliness. You have to determine to access those things and fight.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

E.Z., on page 51 of your book, *Fight Like a Man*, you write, "When speaking of sexual sin, Paul the Apostle said this in 1 Corinthians 6:18, "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." God's word is also perfectly clear that when it says that quote, fornicators and adulterers, God will judge, Hebrews 13:4, and that the quote, "Sexual immoral shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone," Revelation 21:8." You also quote Ephesians 5:5-7, "This you know that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ in God. Let no one deceive you with empty words for because of these things, this immorality, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them."

And I read all of those because in scripture there is so much on moral purity, sexual immorality, it's a very serious sin. Perhaps you can define what exactly is sexual immorality because we tend to have definitions that get around that. Define what it is and why don't we hear very many churches and pastors preaching in favor of moral purity and against sexual immorality, including pornography.

GUEST: EMEAL "E.Z." ZWAYNE:

That verse in 1 Corinthians 6:18 is very important because Paul there makes it very clear that sexual immorality is a distinct sin that carries with it massive ramifications. We often quote the mantra as Christians, sin is sin. And we're right in a sense in that all sin is a violation of God's law and it's serious, but not all sin is sin equally in the sense of its egregiousness, its impact, its ramifications. If you ask me to help you move house, David, and I say, "Ah, man, I'm busy this weekend," and I'm really not, that's a lie. That's serious. It's a sin. No question about it, but it is different in terms of its egregiousness, impact, and ramifications if I go and murder your entire family and burn the house down with them.

So Paul is making it very clear that sexual immorality, it's distinct. He's talking about, "Hey, every sin," right? He's talking about every sin. It's outside the body, but you commit sexual immorality, sins against his own body, there's a distinction there. When we look at Romans 1, sexual immorality is part and parcel with reprobation. It's like, this is a given over type of sin. And so we have to recognize that. And yeah, sexual immorality is basically, in essence, any unlawful sexual activity. Unlawful meaning anything that violates what God has revealed in his word is permissible in the arena of sex, which He created, which He designed. It's wonderful and beautiful and amazing, but Satan has twisted it, the world has tainted it, our flesh has perverted it. And so anything outside the confines of intimacy between one man and one woman, a husband and wife in the bonds of marriage is sexual immorality.

And Jesus made it clear, it's not just the physical act, if you look at a woman to lust after her, you've committed adultery already with her in your heart. So whether it's lust, pornography, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and any other form of forbidden sexual activity, it is sexual immorality. And the reason why we don't hear it addressed often from pulpits is because, sadly, many people in leadership are afraid of what people will think. It's an uncomfortable subject. And the statistics tell us that 75% of men, 40% of women, and

18% of pastors within the church are entangled in pornography. I mean 75% of men, 40% of women. Back in the day, it was a rare thing that women would get into it, but now the curiosity, "Why are so many men into this?" coupled with the accessibility have led it into that arena.

And 18% of pastors, I think it's a lot more than that because many of them won't really be candid about it, but it's tragic. It's destroying the church. It comes up when a pastor falls, someone that's well known, we talk about it, but then it goes back under the radar. And the reason they often don't talk about it is because they're worried about what people will think, they're afraid of maybe the pews clearing, and it's uncomfortable, and I think sometimes a lot of pastors are struggling with it to one degree or another themselves, and they don't want to have to touch on it because it hits a nerve in their own heart.

So I think all of those combine and, yeah, David, let me just say this before we go any further, and that's this. Look, the book is a book of hope. It's not a beat down book. It's all about how there is victory in Christ, that no matter how far men have gone into the sin, they can be delivered from it by the grace of God. It's not about the arm of the flesh and us doing it ourselves, it's not moralism. It's God's grace and all that he supplied you to be able to do it. And so there's hope and there's grace, but men have to man up and stand up and say, "I'm owning this. I'm calling it what it is. I'm not making any excuses. And I'm going to deal with it."

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Yeah, and you're right about that. This is a very substantive book. Yes, it's a *Bold Biblical Plan for Personal Purity* as the subtitle suggests, but it really is a book about living a Christian life as an overcomer. How to be a strong and vibrant believer is what this book's about. The title is *Fight Like A Man*, and our guest is Emeal Zwayne, goes by E.Z. He's the author of the book and also the president of Living Waters, the co-host of Living Waters podcast and lots of other things.

You can find links to him at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Again, the name of the book is *Fight Like A Man* by our guest today, Emeal Zwayne. It's soft cover, 272 pages, and retails for 17.99. It's our new featured resource, and for a limited time, you can receive it for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. To order, go to TheChristinWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233, or write to box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota, 55331. Our contact information will be repeated during this upcoming break. More coming up with Emeal Zwayne on sexual purity. I'm David Wheaton and you are listening to the Christian Worldview Radio program..

Our guest today is Emeal Zwayne, president of Living Waters and author of *Fight Like a Man: A Bold Biblical Battle Plan for Personal Purity*. E.Z., a portion of the book deals with this triad of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And you do that to, I think, help readers understand the process, I guess you could say, of how sexual temptation becomes sexual sin and how the devil and the flesh and the world works on us. So, why is that helpful to understand how the world, the flesh, and the devil work on us to have us succumb to sexual sin?

GUEST: EMEAL "E.Z." ZWAYNE:

It goes back to what I referenced earlier, and that is knowing our enemies, knowing their tactics against us and having a battle plan that has a counterattack. And I think it's important to realize that, I think, scripturally, we do see those three enemies; the devil, the world, the flesh. And yet I think, as Dr. John Street said in his very powerful book on the subject, the flesh is really the real enemy, our fallen, sinful nature. The devil and the world are outward adversaries of opportunity that capitalize on the true condition, which is our fallen state, and they will be allies with the flesh. We have to realize that there's no one to really blame but ourselves and our own sinfulness and fallenness and propensity towards sin. But those are the real outward enemies of opportunity. And so, yeah, we have to know who they are and what their battle plan is against us.

I begin in the book with the devil, and I think rightly so, because we see him as the first enemy of man. Adam and Eve were created in a perfect state in the garden. He, himself, was a fallen being, of course, having sinned against God through the sin of pride and all of a sudden, to the throne of God, I will become like the most high. And so he had a tactic against Adam and Eve, and it's the same one he still uses against us. It began with discontent. "Did God say you can't eat of every tree?" Whereas in reality, God gave them the entire garden, every single tree except for one. And David, think about it, how visible would the tree of the knowledge of good and evil been from space? I saw the widest tree in the world, in the state of Oaxaca in Mexico, this thing was massive. It was like 316 feet in circumference.

But let's say that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a thousand feet in circumference. Let's say it was 300 feet high. How visible would it be from space? Not at all, it'd be totally invisible, it'd be like a speck of dust. God gave them dominion over the entire planet. And then he said, "But I just restrict you from this one, relatively speaking, microscopic thing." But Satan draws their attention toward it in such a way to where it creates discontentment in their heart. If you remember Haman in the book of Esther, when Mordecai went and bowed before him after he got invited to have a private banquet with the king and queen for the second time, he goes out, calls his wife and kids and friends together after he saw Haman again and was distressed after he was filled with joy. And he recounts to them all the blessings he had. And then he says this, "But all of this avails me nothing, so long as I see Haman in the king's gate." Because I can't have this one thing, everything else means nothing to me.

Satan hits us with that discontent. Then he comes at them with disbelief, then it's, "Well, God said we'll die." He said, "You shall not surely die." So he hits them with disbelief when it came to what God said are the consequences for sin. He does the same thing with us. "Ah, sexual immorality, it's no big deal. Everybody does it. There's not going to be any consequences." Whereas scripture is clear, you cited 1 Corinthians 6:18, it's a severe sin and there are consequences. If you don't know the Lord, on the day of judgment, you're going to bear radical wrath over your sexual immorality. And if you're a believer, 2 Corinthians 5, you're going to stand before the judgment of the seat of Christ. Yeah, it's not a judgment under condemnation, but there will be loss of important reward and there's going to be the discipline of the Lord here on this earth.

So he hits us with disbelief, and finally he hit him with deification. "In fact, you'll become like God knowing good and evil." In other words, you will be the arbiters of what is right and wrong in your own life. And it's the same thing, David, with us, discontentment, disbelief, deification. That's Satan attack. I don't know if we have

time to get into the others, but that's that one. And we have to counter it. We have to counter it with gratitude. We have to counter it with trust and belief in what God has said and we have to recognize that the most foolish thing we could ever do is try to usurp God's throne in our own lives. That's idolatry. We now remove God from the throne of our heart, put ourselves there and say, "We know better than God. We're going to do what we want, autonomy." And that's destructive. So I go in detail and tell men how they can find victory in that arena.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Well, I thought that was a particularly powerful and helpful part of the book when you went over how Satan tempted Eve in using discontent and disbelief and deification and how that is such a model for how we are tempted with sexual morality and probably other temptations as well. So that was really well done.

Emeal Zwayne is our guest today here on the program. He is the author of *Fight Like a Man: A Bold Biblical Battle Plan for Personal Purity*. E.Z., you mentioned the flesh and how this is really the main point that we need to focus on. It's not only that we have outside temptations from Satan in the world, but we have something inside of us that's pulling us to go the wrong way. And I think that can be hard for the believer to understand because, well, wait now, I've been saved and I'm a new creation, and yet I'm still living in this flesh. And you quoted Galatians 5, and I just love this passage and I'll just read just a short portion of it here where Paul writes, "I say then, walk in the spirit," and he means the Holy Spirit, "and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh for the flesh lusts against the Spirit," the Holy Spirit, "and the Holy Spirit against the flesh."

And these are contrary to one another so that you do not do the things that you wish, but if you are led by the Holy Spirit, you're not under the law. And then there's this list of, now the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, and it goes on with this list saying that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. And it's very interesting that that list is, I don't know, 12 or 13 sins, and the first four or five have to do with the sexual realm. But before we get to that list, E.Z., there's this war going on inside the believer between the Holy Spirit who now indwells a believer and yet this unredeemed flesh, how do we understand how that actually works? That we, as believers, are new creations, we have the Holy Spirit inside of us, and yet there's a part of us that never is redeemed, this flesh that sort of pulls against us. How does that work?

GUEST: EMEAL "E.Z." ZWAYNE:

We know that the three parts of salvation are justification, sanctification, glorification, and right now, we are in between, if we're believers, justification and glorification. We've been justified. We've been made right, we've received the righteousness of Christ. We will one day be glorified and fully perfected in eternity. We will be resurrected, we'll receive new bodies, we'll be in that eternal state again where we will be sinless as was the original condition of man. But right now, we're in this stage of sanctification that's being conformed more and more into the image of Christ. And so in that, while we've received the spirit of God, we still live in these fallen bodies. We still have that sinful nature that resides within us that is a flesh, though we do now have the new man and we've been regenerated.

So as Paul says, there is that battle, the flesh lusts against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh. These are contrary to one another so that you may not do that what you wish. Who is the you? Well, the you is a newly

regenerated man who's been born again, who desires to please God. You wish to please God in the spirit, but your flesh is tugging against you. Like Jesus said to the disciples when they kept falling asleep in Gethsemane, the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. And so we have to recognize that and to look at the solution that Paul gave us. "I say then, walk in the spirit and you'll not fulfill the lust of the flesh." And walking in the spirit, the language there, it carries with it the idea of being controlled and governed by the spirit. Well, how do we do that? We do that by engaging in the things that the spirit of God is involved in.

And when we look at Scripture, we see four main things. The Spirit is involved in the Word. We know Scripture is called the sword of the Spirit. We know the Spirit is involved in prayer. We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us. We know that the Spirit is involved in evangelism. When the Spirit comes upon you, you will be my witnesses. And we know that the Spirit is involved in fellowships. Scripture talks about the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. And yet the problem, David, is that so many men will look at these things and they'll be like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know, I know, but..." Wait, you know, but? Let's pause a second and evaluate what you're really saying. When someone says, "Yeah, yeah, I know prayer, I need to pray, whatever. But I don't know if that'll do it."

Okay, so you're saying, in other words, "Yeah, I don't know if talking to the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, infinite God of the universe who holds all power in His hand, who loves me so much that He paid the highest price ever paid for anything ever purchased in the history of the universe to make me His, who cares for me infinitely, yeah. I guess talking to Him, I don't know if that'll..." Are we crazy? The word that's living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword at the table to discern the thoughts and intents of our heart, that is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, and righteousness that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good word? Oh, yeah, I guess the word, yeah. It's insanity. Fellowship, having other saints who indwell by the same spirit you're indwelt in, that raised Jesus from the dead, that our fellow heirs in God's kingdom that will one day be judging angels, fellowship. Evangelism, fulfilling our call as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. What greater honor is there than that, than to be an instrument in the hand of God, watching the Lord transform lost souls through his precious gospel?

So we need to wake up and say, we're crazy to look at that and say, "Ah." We're looking for the answer everywhere else to defeat the flesh. And God says, "Walk in the Spirit. Involve yourselves in the things the Spirit of God is involved in." And as he empowers you and controls you through those graces that he's provided, you're not going to fulfill the lust of the flesh. He doesn't say, "Don't fulfill the lust of the flesh that renders you walking in the Spirit." He doesn't even pay attention to it. Walk in the Spirit. You won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. And so men need to wake up and recognize the benefits of all of those wonderful privileges we have and enter into them with passion.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

So well said. God gives us supernatural resources of the ones you just mentioned, to be able to overcome the lust of the flesh and the sinful temptation all around us. And thank you for emphasizing that, and that's what we're going to get into in part two of our interview is some of these supernatural resources and this is where your book continues to be very, very helpful and Biblical.

So, E.Z., we're doing this interview over the internet today, but Lord willing, I'll be seeing you in person in just a few days, but we'll do part two right at Living Waters and we're looking forward to seeing you in person and seeing what's going on there at the excellent ministry you are a part of. So thank you for coming on the Christian Worldview Radio Program today, and we'll be looking forward to part two.

GUEST: EMEAL "E.Z." ZWAYNE:

Thank you, David. It was a pleasure. Can't wait to see you in person.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Yes, my family is traveling to Southern California where, Lord willing, we plan to hold a Christian Worldview Partner event on Sunday, March 16th. Also, stop by KKLA 99.5 FM in Los Angeles, they air The Christian Worldview each weekend, and visit Living Waters for part two of the interview with E.Z. Since we'll be on the road, it's likely part two won't air on the March 22nd weekend, but rather the following March 29th weekend.

But in the meantime, you can order E.Z.'s book, *Fight Like a Man: A Bold Biblical Battle Plan for Personal Purity*. It's soft cover, 272 pages, and retails for \$17.99, and for a limited time, you can receive it for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. To order, go to TheChristinWorldview.org or call us toll free 888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota, 55331.

Next segment, Soeren Kern, managing editor of The Christian Worldview Journal will tell us what is behind the recent large scale killings in Syria. I'm David Wheaton. You are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio program.

In this final segment, Soeren Kern, geopolitical analyst and managing editor of The Christian Worldview Journal, will explain what's behind the recent violence in Syria and also the latest developments in Gaza. Soeren, there have been widely divergent reports about what has been taking place in Syria. I saw this on social media from someone named Dr. Malouf. It is now estimated that over 7,000 Christians and Alawites were murdered in Syria in the last two days. I'm speechless. This is a genocide. On the other hand, the new president of Syria, Ahmed al-Sharaa, also known as al-Julani, wrote about him in The Christian Worldview Journal, said, "We are now facing a new danger at this crucial moment in that the remnants of the other regime," that would be the Assad regime that was kicked out, "supported by foreign elements are trying to create another civil war and drag our country toward a civil war in order to divide it, destroy its unity and stability."

Soeren, what do you know about what is taking place in Syria and who and what are triggering it?

GUEST: SOEREN KERN:

As you mentioned in the January, 2025, issue of The Christian Worldview Journal, I explained in quite a bit of detail how difficult Syria has been to govern because it's a very highly fractured country. It emerged out of the failed Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. So it's essentially an artificial state that's comprised of a myriad of competing ethno-religious groups as well as rival tribes and clans. Syria has faced political instability

since it achieved independence in 1945. And in 1970, Hafez al-Assad, an Air Force general took power and established a autocracy, a dictatorship that ruled Syria with an iron fist for more than 50 years. In December, 2024, Turkish backed groups, which was Sunni Muslim, overthrew Bashar al-Assad's regime after 14 years of civil war.

So as you mentioned, the Assads were Alawites, which is a sect of Shiite Islam. Alawites comprise about 10% of Syria's population, so they are a minority. And so the geopolitical consequence of Assad's overthrow was that Syria really shifted from Shi'a Iran orbit to a Sunni Turkish orbit. Previously, the Assad regime was close to Iran and Iran would use Syria as a launching pad to expand its influence into Lebanon, Hezbollah, essentially to attack Israel to prepare for a war against Israel. That has now shifted. Iran has been essentially ejected from Syria and Turkey has really expanded its influence. So that was sort of the big picture. As I mentioned that as a minority, Assad presented himself as a protector of all minorities, including Christians and Druze in the face of Sunni majority. Some Alawites continue to be loyal to Assad and seek to destabilize Syria, partly out of revenge. Other Alawites were complicit in Assad's crimes against humanity and fear they will be prosecuted.

So the recent violence seems aimed at preventing Syria's new president, Ahmad al-Sharaa, from consolidating power. What really happened was on the evening of Thursday, March 6th, a group of about 1,400 pro-Assad Alawites ambushed a Syrian security patrol and killed over 200 members of the government's security forces. The next morning on Friday, March 7, the Syrian forces as well as Sunni jihadist groups retaliated by pouring into Alawite villages and towns along Syria's coastal region, especially in and around Latakia support city on the Mediterranean Sea, which is really the Alawite heartland. Over four days, more than 1,000, mostly Alawite civilians were killed. Many of those killed in the reprisal attacks were children and elderly. So Syrian president, al-Sharaa condemned the violence and said that the Alawites will be brought to justice, as will those who targeted unarmed civilians. He blamed Assad loyalists for starting the violence, and he formed the committee to investigate the massacres. In my view, the problem for al-Sharaa is really a lack of trust because before he became Syria's president, he was a jihadist with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq.

He fought against U.S there and now he claims to be a moderate who was abandoned by Jihad and many say a tiger cannot change its stripes and that he remains a jihadist in disguise. As a consequence, many analysts have attributed the recent bloodbath to al-Sharaa. Some have claimed that even if al-Sharaa was not directly involved, he gave tacit approval to armed groups aligned with him to carry out the reprisals. It's really difficult at this point to know truth from fiction, but it does seem to be in al-Sharaa's near-term interest to avoid stoking sectarian violence. He says his top priority is to end international sanctions on Syria and to raise an estimated \$250 billion to rebuild the country.

So in this context, it would really be counterproductive for him to deliberately target minorities. I think in this, it should be added then on March 10, the Kurdish-led US-backed Syrian Democratic forces, which controls much of the oil rich northeastern parts of Syria signed a deal with al-Sharaa to integrate the SDF-controlled entities into Syrian state institutions. This is a historic development that should provide Syrian Kurds with more political and economic rights. So this would indicate to me that, at least for now, al-Sharaa is seeking to integrate ethnic and religious minorities.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

So Soeren, what about the reports that Christians are being specifically targeted? I even saw a post about a Christian or multiple of them being crucified.

GUEST: SOEREN KERN:

Unfortunately, some of those caught in the sectarian violence were Syrian Christians. As I've already mentioned, it appears that the attacks were primarily aimed at Alawites, but there's no evidence that jihadist groups deliberately targeted Christians from as far as I can tell. It's really impossible at this point to know precisely how many Christians were killed in the attacks. That said, there is massive amount of misinformation and disinformation circulating on the internet, and many of these claims of genocide simply cannot be sourced. I've consulted various human rights groups for accurate statistics. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, it's based in the UK, it's a monitoring group. Approximately 1,300 people have been killed in sectarian violence since March 6th. Of those, roughly 1000 were Alawite civilians.

Open Doors, a UK-based group that seeks to raise awareness of global persecution of Christians, said of all the civilians killed in Syria, only three were Christians. It said that a father and his son from an evangelical church in Latakia were reportedly shot in their car. And then another Christian died in his home after he was hit by a stray bullet. Open Doors put out a statement saying, currently it is not clear that Christians are being specifically targeted because of their faith in these attacks.

A group called Pastors of Christian Churches in Latakia in a statement also denied that there was any systematic targeting of Christians. I think the false information circulating on the internet and social media should serve as a reminder that we cannot believe everything we read. I would add also that nearly 300 Christians have been slaughtered by the Islamic State in the Republic of Congo, and these attacks have been widely reported by international media. We know that there's a lot of persecution of Christians in the Middle East and in Africa, in Muslim countries, but in this particular case, I just cannot find any proof whatsoever that this was intentional effort by the Syrian government to target Christian minorities.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Soeren Kern with us today, he's the managing editor of The Christian Worldview Journal. Soeren, who are these Christians in Syria?

GUEST: SOEREN KERN:

The Christians in Syria are primarily Orthodox Christians. They would be members of the Assyrian Church. The Assyrian Church is one of the oldest lasting longevity churches I think in the Middle East, really have their roots from the very beginning of Christianity. So they would be very prominent in northern Iraq, in Syria, in parts of Lebanon. They once were in Turkey, and they are to some extent also in Armenia and in Israel, particularly in Jerusalem.

Orthodox Christianity is different from Evangelical Christianity, I would say more akin to Roman Catholicism where tradition plays a very big role. In Evangelical Christianity, we seek to interpret the Bible literally and not add additional things to what scripture says. Orthodox Christianity is very big on icons and on statues and on physical symbols to promote their faith, to promote belief, piety. And of course, most Evangelical Christians would reject those things. The number of Christians in Syria has really dwindled since the civil war began in 2014. And so there's only around 300,000 Christians left in Syria. Most of those have gone to Europe, to Canada, and North America. It's very doubtful that most of those Christians who have left will ever be coming back.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Geopolitical analyst, Soeren Kern with us today. Soeren, final question, any updates on what's happening in Gaza with Israel and Hamas?

GUEST: SOEREN KERN:

It seems as though the Trump administration makes a lot of threats to try to force Hamas to release the hostages or else. And so far the Trump administration has not honored those threats. And so the hostages, I think there are 24 live hostages as of this recording, still in the hands of Hamas, and that's really the only bargaining chip. So it seems very unlikely to me that Hamas is going to release those without major, major concessions from Israel. And those concessions would be essentially Israel leaving Gaza altogether and allowing Hamas to come back into the territory.

After some weeks ago, President Trump made an announcement that the United States would essentially take over Gaza and rebuild it. In the aftermath of that, a number of Arab states, including Jordan and Egypt and Saudi Arabia have announced that they would try to rebuild Gaza on their own, but the objective is to leave Hamas in power. And so it seems to me like Trump's offer or threat to rebuild Gaza, depending on how you want to see it, was aimed at forcing the Arabs to resolve the Hamas problem without the United States getting involved.

It seems to me that's really an intractable situation in Gaza. It's just really impossible for me to see how the Americans or anyone else can just forcibly remove 2 million people from Gaza because where would they go? These people are so radicalized after two generations or three generations of radical Islam that they pose a threat to Jordan and Egypt and other countries, and that's why other Arab countries are very reluctant to take these people in. So, I just don't really see any near-term solution to the Hamas problem. The Israeli government under Netanyahu vowed that they would completely defeat Hamas, and it's obviously very clear that Israel has not succeeded, at least so far in that endeavor. So there's a lot of negotiations going on behind the scenes.

I think that President Trump just wants peace, not only in Syria. He wants basically the Iranians out of Syria, which I guess he has accomplished to a certain extent, but he wants peace in Syria and President Trump also wants peace in Gaza. But this is Jihad. This is not just a normal confrontation between secular militaries. This has a religious component to it and the Hamas people, they don't want economic development. They could care less if President Trump invests money and turns Gaza strip into a Mediterranean resort. What they believe is what Islam teaches, and that Islam teaches the Gaza Strip and Israel itself, because that was once controlled

by Islam, is always permanently, eternally going to be Islamic territory. And until they give up that Islamic ideology, there really will be no peace in Gaza, no resolution to this conflict. So, I see no near-term solutions to this problem.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Yes, considering the Islamic ideology and the historic animosity going back all the way to Isaac and Ishmael, President Trump is either naive or overly optimistic that the US will be able to "own" Gaza and turn it into a resort on the Mediterranean. Soeren, as always, thank you for your insight on these world events.

GUEST: SOEREN KERN:

My pleasure.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview and for your support of this non-profit radio ministry. The Bible says, "No temptation has overtaken you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." Do you believe God? That he is faithful to provide the way of escape from temptation? Let's ask God to help us obey him promptly. So until next time, think Biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm.

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