



Brian Gray: [00:00](#) Hello and welcome to the Faith and Work podcast, where we explore everyday work in God's world. The Faith and Work podcast is produced and hosted by Denver Institute for Faith and Work. I'm Brian Gray. I'm the COO here at Denver Institute and direct the 5280 fellowship. This evening I'm joined by Dustin Moody, and Dustin serves as our communications director. Dustin, how are you doing today?

Dustin Moody: [00:25](#) I'm doing great, Brian. How are you?

Brian Gray: [00:26](#) Not bad. We survived a fun and interesting little public protest in our building.

Dustin Moody: [00:31](#) We did.

Brian Gray: [00:32](#) Which was quite enjoyable. Everything was locked down, but we've made it here into, I think, a fun conversation tonight.

Dustin Moody: [00:37](#) Yeah, I'm really looking forward to this one. Our guest tonight practically wrote the book that helped change my prayer life. So this is a real treat. So our guest tonight is Philip Yancey. As a best-selling and award-winning author, Philip has explored the most basic questions and desperate mysteries of the Christian faith through books like, *Where's God When It Hurts*, *Disappointment With God*, and my personal favorite, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* His writing has provided a platform for Philip to serve as a counselor at large of sorts, and he's been asked to address and explain big questions about God and suffering from places like Newton, Connecticut, following the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary, all the way to a small village in Japan after a deadly tsunami. As a resident of Colorado since 1992, Phillip has enjoyed the best of our adopted state through skiing, mountain climbing, and mountain biking. Phillip, welcome to the podcast.

Phillip Yancy: [01:30](#) Thank you very much and it is a wonderful state. Well,

Brian Gray: [01:34](#) I consistently tell my wife as we're traveling, "As states go, we win."

Phillip Yancy: [01:39](#) You're right. We moved here from downtown Chicago, which has its own charms, but wildlife is not one of them. I worked in a basement office there and I would look out and see, at eye level, I'd see squirrels and pigeons and rats. Basically, that's it. Now I see fox and elk. There was a herd of elk moving through

my yard today and a bobcat. We had a mountain lion in our yard a week ago, so that part is improved a lot.

- Dustin Moody: [02:06](#) Yeah.
- Brian Gray: [02:07](#) Why don't you stay stay indoors? And you've lost that lake effect snow, which I'm sure is not too bad of a trade as well.
- Phillip Yancy: [02:14](#) Well, we have plenty of snow in Evergreen where I live. But it melts, unlike Chicago.
- Brian Gray: [02:20](#) It goes away here.
- Phillip Yancy: [02:20](#) It sticks around and turns around in one day. Whereas in evergreen tends to stay white, so ever-white we call it the winter months.
- Brian Gray: [02:28](#) Well, we certainly love having you here. You've been, I think, a friend and just a real encouragement to us here at Denver Institute. I was describing you the other day to someone who ... Well now, she was in her early twenties and she'd never read a Philip Yancey book. And I about fell out of my chair with some frustration.
- Dustin Moody: [02:47](#) It's a travesty.
- Brian Gray: [02:47](#) Yeah. I said, "I don't understand. Tell me you know who the Beatles are?" But I was describing it. I said, "Well, Phillip's primary work was originally journalism and editing and is now most well-known for writing. Probably secondarily teaching that comes along with that." But I described, I said, "I suspect his calling is to be about public challenging, authentic theological reflection." That's how I've experienced you. That was you in my own words. I feel like your reflections have been, they're very public through writing, but they're always challenging and they're always authentic. Now, that was my description. Out of curiosity, how would you describe your own sense of vocation and your own sense of calling and how that captures your work?
- Phillip Yancy: [03:34](#) I feel very blessed because I'm able to work out my life in a way that other people can interact with, give me feedback on, and when I sit down to write a book, I never sit down to write a book that I know something about because I would be bored if I already knew the answer. So when I run up against a wall, I

don't understand prayer, for example, "Oh, then I should write a book about it." Not because I'm the world's best prayer, because I'm the world's worst prayer, but it gives me the chance to grapple with something that's been bothering me. So I started writing books about pain and suffering because that was a block to my faith. How can I believe in a good God when all these terrible things are happening, including to people close to me, whom I love?

Phillip Yancy: [04:20](#) So I feel unusually blessed. A lot of writers are experts in some particular field and I'm not. And a lot of Christian spokespeople, as it were, are professors or pastors and they have a radio platform. I'm not. It's just me in my basement office and I don't have to raise money and I don't have to report to a board. So I grew up in an unhealthy church. I'm open about that. I call it a toxic church, one I'm in recovery from. And a lot of the things that I was taught in that church I later found out were not true.

Phillip Yancy: [05:00](#) I had been betrayed and deceived. And for awhile, I threw them all away and then gradually, bit by bit, I re-picked them up, picked them up again, turned them over and tried to find what is authentic, what is something that I can stand behind, and tried not to repeat the mistakes that I thought my church had made. And of course I did somewhere along the way. But I am able to have that single focus of only write what I can stand behind, not the propaganda, not the machine, not what the church tells me or my board tells me or whatever. The solitary pilgrim exploring.

Brian Gray: [05:43](#) Well still, that is such a ... That's gift to those of us who resonate in so much with some of your reflections. I think that, to me, is that public nature of it and that's that authenticity comes through, but it's ... Your reflections aren't always easy. They're challenging in the most welcome of ways. That's how I've always just described and I think loved your work and your writings.

Phillip Yancy: [06:09](#) Well, Brian, we're meeting the day after I met with a convention here in town, the Evangelical Theological Society, and that was pretty intimidating because I'm a generalist. I'm a journalist and these guys are all Greek and Hebrew scholars and all this stuff. And I have mixed feelings about the word evangelical to begin with. And so they scheduled a three hour deal and they said, "Well, we could assign people to write papers about your work." I said, "No, that's punishment, don't do that." And we

tried ... What can we do for three hours? And said, "Well okay, how about this? How about if I talk about things I figured out, things I haven't figured out, and things that really disturb me and I'm struggling with?"

- Phillip Yancy: [06:56](#) And it was a wonderful exercise at my age, I'm almost 70, not quite there, to be able to sit down, reflect and say, "These things are kind of foundational. I can plant my flag here and say I operate out of this frame. These things I had no clue about whatsoever. And then there are a lot in the middle." And that was the longest page, the things that challenged me, the things that disturb me. And I'm able just to say, "I'm still struggling. I'm still working. I'm still trying to figure that out."
- Phillip Yancy: [07:27](#) And I love the Bible because it's so full of that lost-ness. Read the psalms where so many of the psalms, I think Eugene Peterson who translated said two thirds of the psalms are psalms of lament, psalms of being upset about what's going on in the world. And we're not only given the freedom to voice that, we're given the words in the Bible to use. If you run out of words, just pick up one of the psalms.
- Brian Gray: [07:55](#) Permission.
- Phillip Yancy: [07:56](#) Yeah. Absolute permission.
- Dustin Moody: [08:00](#) Philip, I'm curious. Talk to us a little bit more about where being the voice for the suffering, or at least the explanation of it, fits into your calling. So when this podcast is published, we'll be approaching the sixth anniversary of the Sandy Hook shooting in Newton, Connecticut. I know that you were there shortly after that and you wrote that people were asking questions like, "Why doesn't God intervene? Where can I find comfort? Why do such things happen?" How has this, for lack of a better word, job of giving voice to Christian suffering, how has that played out over the last several years or decades for you?
- Phillip Yancy: [08:40](#) In addition to what you just mentioned, just this week we had a meeting because Columbine is coming up on their 20th anniversary.
- Brian Gray: [08:48](#) Oh is it 20?
- Phillip Yancy: [08:49](#) 20 years, yes. And so they're planning a major, not a big mass celebration. Celebration is memorial, remembrance. And so I've

been involved in some of the discussions around that. However, I think my own focus on suffering came about for more personal reasons. I've told the story. I'm writing a memoir now, and I'm telling all the details, but I've not told full details until this point. When I was a year old, my father got polio, was paralyzed. And people who loved him, people who cared for him, he was planning to be a missionary, he was 23 years old, and they decided that it could not possibly be God's will for him to die. So they became so convinced of that that they prayed and removed him from the iron lung and from the hospital. And about 10 days later he did die. And these were not people who had murderous intent by any means. One was his wife, my mother. These were people who made a mistake in theology.

Brian Gray: [09:58](#)

Misplaced theology.

Phillip Yancy: [09:58](#)

Yeah. They thought, "We know God's will." And in a sense it was like the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God says, "That's my prerogative, not yours." And I realized what you believe matters, has, in this case, fatal consequences. Later, when I became a journalist, young journalist, I really didn't know how life worked, but journalism is usually about dramatic things. And I was often sent to interview people. In fact, I did a number of the drama in real life articles for Reader's Digest magazine. So these are people attacked by grizzly bears and crocodiles and lost in blizzards and things like that.

Phillip Yancy: [10:44](#)

And I would interview these people. To a person, they would say the experience was bad enough, but the worst part was when people from the church came to visit me because they all had a different theory. Some people said you deserved it. You did something terribly wrong. You're being punished. Other people said, "No, it wasn't being punished. Satan's attacking you, it's spiritual warfare." And other would come in and say, "No, it's not Satan, it's God. But God has chosen you to be an example to others in the church."

Phillip Yancy: [11:16](#)

And I didn't ... I'm in my twenties myself. I didn't know what to believe. And I had the shadow hanging in me in, in my family background. And so very early, that was really my first real book, I learned if you don't know the answer to something, then write a book about it. You can spend as much time as you need going to people who helped. And in the process of doing that, I met this Doctor Paul Brand, who became a father figure for me. I was one year old when my father died. And so I had no father

figure at all, no memory, still have no memory. And an adult, very wise man, who had spent his life working with people who feel no pain but feel great suffering, people with leprosy. Their nerve cells don't work anymore. And that's why they destroyed their own bodies. They're not aware of it.

Phillip Yancy: [12:10](#) So that was kind of an odd take on pain. And just someone who had been in the real world in India, a place of great poverty and great suffering. He became a mentor to me and the book was called, *Where IS God When It Hurts?* And then I started getting phone calls from places like Columbine, Virginia Tech, Newtown, Connecticut, saying, "That's the only question we're asking these days, can you come and talk about that?" And that wasn't something I chose or would have sought. But I always said yes, if I could possibly make it, because I felt I was invited into holy ground.

Phillip Yancy: [12:51](#) And it is so important what you believe. What I find is that if I had to conclude one thing that I would say to those who are suffering is that God is always on the side of the one who suffers. And so many people think, "God is against me. I've got sticking pins in me." Whatever. And the reason I know that and can say that with confidence is that God gave us a face. God gave us a son, Jesus. And the Bible tells us that's the express image of the invisible God. If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. Just follow Jesus around and see how he responds to someone who's suffering.

Phillip Yancy: [13:29](#) Unlike the people I interviewed for *Reader's Digest*, he didn't charge into hospital rooms and say, "Here's why. In fact, he avoided that question. But he always said, 'The god of all comfort. I'm here to bring comfort and healing.'" And so I can say to the people at Newtown, Connecticut who lost their six year old, seven year old children, "You grieve, God grieves more. You are upset by what happened. God is more upset." It doesn't solve all the problems, but it's important to start there to realize that God is on your side, not the one causing it, but the one who wants to bring comfort and healing through the church, in many cases, in any way that God can.

Dustin Moody: [14:10](#) Yeah. I'm curious if you could talk just a little bit more about what we get wrong as the church, and what we can get right as the church when it comes to ministering to people who are in those places?

- Brian Gray: [14:21](#) Maybe not being Job's friends, apparently.
- Phillip Yancy: [14:24](#) Yeah. And I often use Job's friend as an example because they did one thing very well when they showed up. They were so upset, they tore their clothes, they sat down and put ashes on their head, which is a custom then, and sat with him in silence for seven days and seven nights.
- Brian Gray: [14:42](#) And then it went south.
- Phillip Yancy: [14:42](#) That was great. When they opened their mouth, that's when the problems started.
- Brian Gray: [14:46](#) I've never thought about that, you're right, yeah.
- Phillip Yancy: [14:49](#) And I've asked many, many people, "Who helped you most?" Not one time has somebody said, "Oh, there was a PhD in philosophy from ..." They never say that. They usually don't even say pastor. They say, "Well, it was my grandmother. She just would sit there in and crochet or knit. And when I needed some orange juice, she would give me orange juice. Or I needed an ice cube to suck on. She didn't really say anything. She was just there and she loved me." And that's what people who are going through suffering need. They need practical help and they need assurance. "Look, it's not your fault. And we are here to bear your burdens with you. That's what we're called to do as Christians."
- Phillip Yancy: [15:32](#) So, what do we get right? Well, often we do surround those. You see these studies, and some of them are kind of strange studies on do Christians who are being prayed for heal quicker after surgery for example? And the answer is yes, not necessarily because of some miraculous intervention, but because what keeps you from healing are things like stress, anxiety, guilt, fear.
- Brian Gray: [15:58](#) Isolation.
- Phillip Yancy: [15:59](#) Loneliness, yes. And if your church community, particularly, surrounds you and says, "Look, don't worry about your kids. We'll take care of your kids. Don't worry about feeding your family, we'll bring you food. We'll walk your dog. We'll cut your grass." Well then that anxiety level goes down. "Okay, I can use all of my resources that God has built into the body for healing." And so that's one of the things the church, that most important

thing maybe, that the church does right. What we do wrong is we come up with these theories like Job's friends. "Here's why it happened." And we just talk too much and pretend like there's an answer when there's not.

- Brian Gray: [16:36](#) Philip, as you were talking, I felt like I heard in the response, as we get these things right as the church, or as the people of God, in essence those are responses of grace. And I see these two things that we've talked ... The two themes in your writings. I just feel like they predominate, these ideas of suffering and this idea of grace. Tell us about ... It's obvious in your book titles, that grace shows up. From your own personal journey, how did this theme of grace emerge for you personally and take so much space in your public reflection?
- Phillip Yancy: [17:14](#) Funny you had mentioned that. I was invited a few years ago to give a lecture at the University of Virginia, and they said, "You can stay in the bedroom where Thomas Jefferson used to stay." "Okay, I'll do it." And then they said, "Okay, we need a title." I say, "Oh, but it's a couple of years in advance." "Well, just come up with something." "Okay." So I gave them the title, Two Themes That Haunt Me. And then as time grew closer, "I got to come up with two themes here." And those are the two themes.
- Brian Gray: [17:47](#) Those are the two themes?
- Phillip Yancy: [17:47](#) Yeah, suffering and grace.
- Brian Gray: [17:49](#) I called Virginia behind your back.
- Phillip Yancy: [17:51](#) There you go. There you go. So suffering, I explained the background there. Grace, that's another thing that my church got wrong. So much of my writing, I suppose, is in reaction to almost a feeling of betrayal here. The church is invested with this unbelievable message of God's grace and God's limitless love for humanity. And yet I grew up thinking of God as the policemen about to smash me. And it was hard to project a feeling like love onto the image of God that I came away with from childhood. But I did taste grace in several ways. It started not in theological ways. I was fed up to here with church talk. But I credit three things that really brought me back to faith. Those were classical music. I play the piano and have a pretty massive collection of classical music, nature, the beauties of nature, and romantic love.



- Phillip Yancy: [19:02](#) And those three things softened. I had a very hard exterior at that point, very resistant, because the people in the church kept thinking, "God's going to smash you. God's going to break you." And I kept waiting, "Yeah, try it." And I later learned God isn't into smashing. God is into seducing, I would say, alluring. And when you taste that first gulp of grace, that it's not about being good, it's not about being perfect. It's not about trying to get the angry God to be a little less angry. It's about a God whose essence is love. God is love. Not God loves. God is love. He can't help loving and the that's the foundation of the universe. And how did I miss that? And how does the church sometimes miss that?
- Phillip Yancy: [19:57](#) Because that's not our reputation always. Often, in society around us, we're seen as these self-righteous people who are holier than thou. That's the phrase, but it's not about whether I'm holier than thou, it's how I am with God. I'm not as holy as thou and I don't have to be. The price has been paid and I am invited, adopted, is the word that Paul uses. I'm adopted into the family of God and God can actually live in me. And when I started exploring the concept of grace, I realize how un-grace-filled our world is.
- Phillip Yancy: [20:38](#) It's a world of competition. It's a world of rankings, it's a world of division. Need I say that in today's climate. As we grow more and more divided, politics, economics. There's little grace in those kinds of things. Bank will you money. Stop paying the money if you get sick, the bank will come and take your car, your house, your motorcycle, whatever. Politics is an adversary sport. We just went through a political season. There's no grace in those ads. It's distorted slander, basically. One candidate and the other candidate back and forth. It's an adversary sport.
- Phillip Yancy: [21:22](#) And we live in a tough, dog eat dog world. It is the nature of this world. You bomb my country, we bomb you back. And that is the climate in which Jesus came. And he said, "No, let me tell you something else. That's not the way the world is. It's not the way the universe is. It's not the way my father is in. And in fact, my father has the sun shine on the good people and the bad people alike. As the rain to fall, good and bad. I didn't come for the good people. I came for the sinners. I didn't come for the well people, I came for the sick people."
- Phillip Yancy: [21:56](#) And he turned upside down the people who we tend to rank highly and the people ... I went through Jesus' life. And the

people who are the most miserable failures, moral outcasts, bad citizens, prodigal sons, these are the ones who are the heroes of his parables. It was the uptight, religious good citizen people who were so threatened by Jesus and eventually killed him. And that's an incredible message that our world needs, because we're so tightly run by what counts is how beautiful you are. And what counts is how much money you make, what kind of school you went to. We got all of these ways of ranking. And then the church has its own ways of ranking. "Oh, you're one of these people, not those." And Jesus cuts right through all of that and says, "Compared to God, none of you rank. But do you know what? You do, because God found a way to accept you."

- Brian Gray: [22:55](#) I've kind of sensed, I've wondered as soon to be the case as I've heard your reflections on ... Read your reflections, and heard some in conversation, on I think what you've called it, the toxic fundamentalism even that you grew up in, part of the graciousness theme seems like a response to some of those wrong answers that you were handed at the very beginning.
- Phillip Yancy: [23:20](#) Right. And race would be one of them. I grew up just as the civil rights movement was getting underway in Atlanta, Georgia. Martin Luther King Jr, was our most famous citizen. But in those days, notorious would be a better word. And they didn't claim it. They put him in jail. And my church actually had, I still have a card that's the deacons printed up. And if a person of color tried to enter the church, they would give them this card that said, "We know you're not here to worship. You're here to cause trouble, you're not welcome here." And they would bar them at the door, just because of the color of their skin.
- Phillip Yancy: [24:00](#) And they had their own little bad exodesis reasons for it that they would quote the Bible. And if you ... I just am astonished frankly, that there are any African Americans who are Christian. It's a sign of-
- Brian Gray: [24:18](#) Grace.
- Phillip Yancy: [24:18](#) -of grace. A sign of God's grace. I hear that people we used to own now tend to be more religious than the descendants of the owners. It's amazing. You watch the music awards and so many of the African American musicians, "Thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." right and open. It's an amazing thing. And that kind of proves Jesus' point. They saw through what we do to the good news and they saw the good news itself.

- Brian Gray: [24:51](#) You ... Perhaps these ideas of suffering and grace, while these are really feel like these strong themes, these twin themes that you'd identify, the two themes that haunt you. Another one that has been particular interest to me, I had a previous career ... Maybe that phrase career flatters to deceive, but several years of work in cardiovascular research, and your interest in the intersection of faith and science has always been a curiosity. I'd be curious, you mentioned Dr Paul Brand earlier. Talk a little bit more about your relationship with him and how that ... Was that a response to, was that also fueling of your interest in the intersection of faith and science?
- Phillip Yancy: [25:31](#) Actually, I was always interested in science. When I was in high school, I wanted to be an entomologist.
- Brian Gray: [25:37](#) Oh, there you go.
- Phillip Yancy: [25:37](#) I had a pretty impressive insect collection. I cringe as I look back on it because I killed all these bugs in carbon tetrachloride and pinned them to styrofoam.
- Brian Gray: [25:49](#) I did the same when I was in school.
- Phillip Yancy: [25:50](#) But I learned a lot. In fact, I won a scholarship and spent one summer working at the Center for Disease Control, which was then called the Communicable Disease Center. And I thought, "That's what I'm going to do. I'm going to spend my life collecting insects." But Dr. Brand was a person who put together the world for me because he was ... He said, "If you take a telescope and look at the stars," which we have plenty of in Colorado here that are visible, and then you take an electron microscope, which he had in his laboratory, and you look at atoms and electrons, you see the same thing.
- Phillip Yancy: [26:34](#) You see these swirling, spiral nebulae both places. And he said, "The hand of the Creator is all through the universe." And then we eventually did two books on the human body, which I've been redoing. They've been out for three or four decades, and so the science has changed a lot. And I have just completed a project that will come out with InterVarsity Press next year, a book called, *Fearfully And Wonderfully*. And I told the people at this Evangelical Theological Society, "Where are your scientists?"
- Brian Gray: [27:10](#) Oh, for sure.

- Phillip Yancy: [27:10](#) I look at the theology books, and you'll open up what is God like? Omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, these big words. Wait a minute, step back. The most obvious thing about God is that he's a brilliant designer and artist, unbelievable. And I just finished reading *The Life of Birds* by Richard Attenborough, and I just told them some stories about birds. It's just amazing the design that is built in. Like these little prairie chickens, prairie hens, quail, they lay 14 eggs, so one a day, 14 days. But they all have to hatch on the same day or otherwise, the ones that are hatching first and hatching last are food for predators.
- Brian Gray: [28:03](#) Sure.
- Phillip Yancy: [28:03](#) So they have this little pecking going on inside the shell, like 100 times a second. And then the other little embryonic chicks inside the egg listen to that. And then they adjust their development so that they're all born on the same day, even though each one is born on a different day over 14 days. That's amazing. How can you possibly come up with that? And that's one incident of hundreds in that book. Now, Richard Attenborough, as far as I know, doesn't credit the designer, but I do. And we have done some pretty impressive things as human beings, but if you just look at nature, oh my goodness, that what goes on, while I said that last sentence, our bodies created 17 million red blood cells. 17 million. It happens all day long.
- Phillip Yancy: [28:55](#) Just the fact that we can speak, the billions of synapses going on in our brain to allow me to come up with a sentence that makes sense. Some of them do, some of them don't, but they all involve a lot of synapses. Dr. Brand opened up for me the book of nature. I've been connected with a group called BioLogos which works with putting together science and faith. And there are so many people who were raised in church backgrounds, and they hit the university and they run into scientists who aren't believing and they have no basis, they have no understanding of how to put those two together. And so they just [crosstalk 00:29:36]
- Brian Gray: [29:35](#) So they lose their faith. Yeah, that's right.
- Phillip Yancy: [29:37](#) Yeah, they do. And I just cringe because that's one of the things that brought me back to God. I wanted to know the artist who came up with a peacock feather. As you see these peacocks, what these birds do just to attract a mate. What we humans do

is pretty impressive, but it's more impressive in the natural world, frankly.

- Dustin Moody: [30:05](#) Phil, I'm curious, as we close out our time, you've written prolifically over the past several decades. I'd be curious, in your opinion, what are the works that are the most important to you and why?
- Phillip Yancy: [30:18](#) Well, the funny thing is if I ranked my favorite books, it would be the complete upside down of the bestselling books.
- Dustin Moody: [30:28](#) That's okay. That's why we ask.
- Phillip Yancy: [30:32](#) The bestselling books would be What's Amazing About Grace, and The Jesus I Never Knew, and Where's God When It Hurts? They've all done very well.
- Brian Gray: [30:39](#) My mom has all 300 [crosstalk 00:30:41]
- Phillip Yancy: [30:41](#) Oh great, all right.
- Brian Gray: [30:42](#) She says, hello this evening.
- Phillip Yancy: [30:43](#) I like her. My favorites up at the very top would be Soul Survivor, and that's because I got to write about the people who formed me, 13 different people. They're not all Christians, actually. Mahatma Gandhi is one of them. Martin Luther King was one of them. And they're not necessarily the kind you find on every evangelical bookshelf, but these were the people who formed me. It was such a healthy exercise to write about my heroes and how I am different. I envy that for anyone to be able to sit down, and in my case, spend a year thinking about why am I different? who made that difference? And what do they do to change me? And then books that show more of my personal struggle, Reaching For The Invisible God.
- Brian Gray: [31:37](#) That's my favorite. That is my favorite. It says something.
- Phillip Yancy: [31:40](#) Because it's that whole, don't just take the propaganda. How does it work? People talk about a personal relationship with God, God's invisible. How do I know if he's listening or not? These are the issues that I struggle with, and again, I am blessed to be able to write about those struggles and it's gratifying to hear other people have the same struggle. I don't know that

when I'm writing it. I think, "Maybe I'm the only one," but I have to keep writing. So those would be my two favorites.

- Brian Gray: [32:12](#) Maybe as a closing thought, Dustin from both of us, is if we could commend, from our own opinion, if we could commend one of Philip's books that we would encourage people to read, what would it be and why? Mine would be Reaching For The Invisible God. I think I mentioned to you before, I was slack-jawed at this idea of God being shy, or this idea of a God not being the God of some of the worship songs we were singing in church. I just want to slow dance with Jesus and whatnot. It's like I don't know how to slow dance with Jesus. I can't even find him.
- Dustin Moody: [32:47](#) I don't really want to.
- Brian Gray: [32:48](#) Yeah, that would feel quite awkward. And there was so much permission for me in that to explore, for me, doubt as an aspect of my faith. Not the absence of my faith. And I feel like that is incredibly timely, particularly for younger believers who find themselves a little off put by some of the current expressions of church as they've known it, and they start to jettison some of the traditional understandings of God along with it. And I think that is a wonderful conversational partner. So that's the book I would commend. Dustin?
- Dustin Moody: [33:24](#) Yeah, mine would be Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference? Prayer has always been a struggle for me. Phillip, I know you said you were the worst prayer. I would compete with you, unfortunately.
- Phillip Yancy: [33:34](#) Time for you to write a book, Dustin.
- Dustin Moody: [33:35](#) No, you already did. But no, it, it helped reframe my thinking about why prayer was so hard, but also it's our attempt to help or gain God's perspective.
- Phillip Yancy: [33:49](#) Right.
- Dustin Moody: [33:49](#) I read that shortly after I came back from hiking in Yosemite, and you have an illustration of God is on the mountain in our prayer. It's him. I'm going to butcher this illustration, but looking down, seeing everything that the hiker can't see. And that is just such a helpful way of me to enter into prayer that it didn't have before.

- Phillip Yancy: [34:12](#) Yeah, well, Colorado taught me that. It's an actual experience. I realized I was praying as one of the tiny little dots down in the valley, down in the bowl. And I thought I had no clue what was going on, which was God's message to Job. "Job if you only knew what was going on."
- Dustin Moody: [34:31](#) Where were you? Where were you?
- Phillip Yancy: [34:33](#) "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Yeah, I look at that speech and to me it's like, "Okay, Job, you don't like the way I'm running the world. Let's compare resumes, you and I, and I go first." That incredible speech of nature where God's saying, "Look, here's what I've done. Next, what have you done Job?" I repented, and just dust and ash. I have no idea what I spoke.
- Brian Gray: [34:57](#) Well, those are gifts. We're thankful, and certainly we would commend those to our listeners from our perspective.
- Dustin Moody: [35:03](#) Yeah, we've mentioned several of Philip books on the podcast. We'll have those all linked on the show notes. And considering that this comes out in December, all of those would be great stocking stuffers. So if you're in the mood for looking for gifts for your loved ones, check out our website once the show notes go live. I also want to take an opportunity, Brian, to plug the 5280 Fellowship. If you're hearing conversations happening in the background, we're going to finish this podcast and move into dinner with Phillip and his wife Janet, and that is an opportunity that doesn't come along too many times with city leaders and influential people in Denver. And that's what you get out of the 5280 Fellowship. Brian, tell us a little bit more about that.
- Brian Gray: [35:40](#) Yeah, just simply, it's a nine month spiritual formation and professional development program for early to mid-career professionals to help them reintegrate, as they belong together, some of these ideas of work, and calling, and faithful cultural engagement, faithful presence within culture to understand work is a place where God meets us and allows us to worship him and to be formed into his image and likeness, and to faithfully serve, to be servants of society. So yeah, this evening, a small group of our fellows will see our dinner with Philip and Janet, which is a gift. We're really appreciative. We're just trying to learn from city leaders who think, well, yeah, about their place in society.



- Dustin Moody: [36:22](#) Yeah. After the first of the year in early 2019, we'll be publishing some ways to get more involved, ways to learn about the fellowship if that's something that you're interested in doing. So, Philip, thanks so much for joining us.
- Phillip Yancy: [36:32](#) My pleasure.
- Dustin Moody: [36:33](#) It's been a treat.
- Brian Gray: [36:33](#) We appreciate it.