

‘He Saw the Relevance of the Resurrection’: More Details Come to Light on Hugh Hefner’s Beliefs

Famed author Lee Strobel has revealed how Playboy founder Hugh Hefner reacted when Strobel—a well-known atheist-turned-Christian speaker and apologist—went to Hefner’s famous mansion just over a decade ago and shared the gospel with the magazine publisher.

Strobel sparked quite a bit of intrigue and speculation with a Sept. 27 tweet revealing that he once shared the gospel with Hefner and that Hefner “saw significance of the resurrection, but had never checked the evidence.”

On Thursday, Strobel appeared on “The Billy Hallowell Podcast” to offer more details about what unfolded. Listen to him explain how the surprising—and fascinating—conversation with Hefner came to pass.

It all started back in 2004 when Strobel was hosting a national TV show called “Faith Under Fire.”

One of his producers had a connection with someone who was employed by Playboy, and Strobel’s team ended up successfully pursuing an interview with Hefner about his views on theology, life and the Almighty.

“We went over to the Playboy mansion, which for me was just freaky,” Strobel said. “It was the last place I ever expected to go.”

Yet, Strobel one day found himself in the living room of the infamous mansion waiting for Hefner to emerge. The Playboy

magnate didn't disappoint, either, as he emerged donning "his typical pajamas and smoking jacket." Hefner immediately offered Strobel a tour of the mansion, to which the author responded, "No, thank you." From there, the duo had a captivating conversation.

"He was quite engaging in terms of the conversation. We talked about what he believed and he had a very minimalistic, deistic view of God," Strobel said. "He said he has a minimal belief in God."

It was a theological stance that Strobel said is "quite convenient" for people like Hefner, because it removes any real and viable moral responsibility on behalf of human beings.

"A God like that, of course, does not put any moral demands on anybody," he said. "[Hefner] said, 'The God of Christianity is a little too childlike for me.'"

At one point in the interview, Hefner seemed surprised to realize, though, that Strobel was a Christian, with Strobel reflecting on the moment years later with some laughs. He said, "Apparently nobody had told him that I was an evangelical Christian."

But despite Hefner's surprise, Strobel said the two continued to have "a great conversation" that took an interesting turn when the author brought up Jesus and, in particular, the resurrection. While Hefner said he didn't think Jesus was the "Son of God" any more than any other human being is, he "perked up" when it came to the resurrection.

In fact, the Playboy founder said that any evidence for Jesus' resurrection and return would drop "a series of dominos" that would prove a number of theological claims, including the existence of an afterlife. Strobel said that Hefner told him he was at "the head of the line hoping it's all true" but that the rational part of him held him back from embracing such

sentiment.

“He saw the relevance of the resurrection, he saw the significance of it,” Strobel said, adding, though, that Hefner never had considered that there could actually be evidence that it really unfolded—and Hefner hadn’t really investigated.

It was after the cameras turned off, though, that Strobel said he had a deeper conversation with Hefner and presented him with the gospel, explaining how humans are “separated by our sin, by wrongdoing” and that Jesus “offers forgiveness as a free gift of his grace.”

Strobel also revealed that he, himself, had once been an atheist journalist who went on a quest to disprove Christianity and ended up embracing the faith due to overwhelming evidence; Hefner reportedly listened intently.

“He wasn’t dismissive,” Strobel said. “He seemed genuinely curious.”

Strobel left Hefner with a copy of his best-selling book, *The Case for Christ* and expressed his hope that he would read it.

While Strobel left thinking that it could have been the beginning of an ongoing friendship and dialogue, Hefner didn’t reach out for further meetings; he did, however send Strobel a Christmas card that year. {eoa}

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