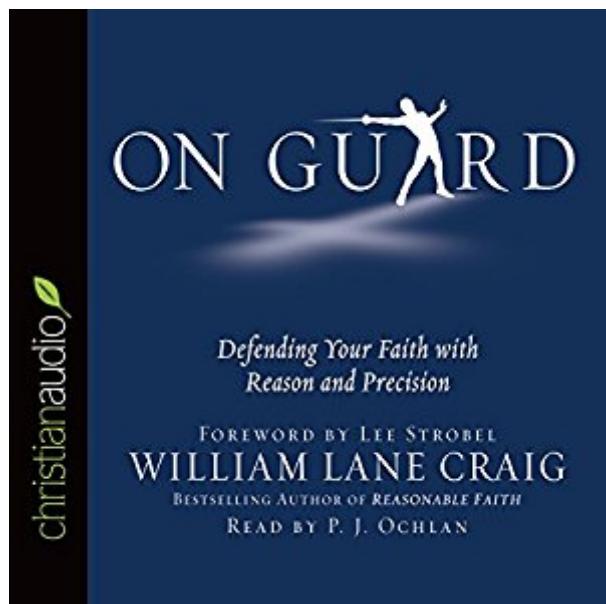


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On Guard: Defending Your Faith With Reason And Precision



Synopsis

Renowned scholar William Lane Craig offers a listenable, rich training manual for defending the Christian faith. This concise guide is filled with sidebars and memorizable steps to help Christians stand their ground and defend their faith with reason and precision. In his engaging style, Dr. Craig offers four arguments for God's existence, defends the historicity of Jesus' personal claims and resurrection, addresses the problem of suffering, and shows why religious relativism doesn't work. Along the way, he shares his story of following God's call in his own life. This one-stop, how-to-defend-your-faith manual will equip Christians to advance faith conversations deliberately, applying straightforward, cool-headed arguments. They will discover not just what they believe, but why they believe - and how being on guard with the truth has the power to change lives forever.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you've ever desired philosophers to say things in easy to understand, yet not dumbed down language, then you will be pleased with this book. *On Guard* seems to take all the great things William Lane Craig says during his debates, podcasts, and interviews, and puts them in one accessible read. For some reason, apologists speak so clearly during their debates, and yet when you buy their book, you get bogged down in technical jargon that keeps you busy either reading the same page 4 times, or rifling your fingers through a copy of *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion*. Before I got this book, I believed it would be one of those books that would be great for using in a young adults (or not so young adults) Sunday School class, or perhaps giving to someone who knows nothing of apologetics. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that that *On*

Guard is not only that, but also much more! On Guard reminds me of a book that would be the result of an individual's gleanings of the best notes of his studies. (Now I don't have to spend the next year writing all my notes down, because WLC has done it for us! ha ha) Ok, so now that I've given my impression of the book, allow me to go into greater detail: On Guard begins with an impressive list of endorsements, ending with the finest by J.P. Moreland, who refers to Craig as, "the finest Christian apologist of the last half century." I wholeheartedly agree, and also place Moreland there too. We move on to an excellent introduction by Lee Strobel. Lee reminds us of the great debate between Craig and Zindler (a debate I actually paid money to buy on cassette from Moody), and then closes with the claim that, "you'll learn the most compelling arguments in favor of Christianity." Chapter 1 opens with a description of what exactly apologetics is, points out that it is biblical by giving references to Jesus (Luke 24:25-27; John 14:11), and Paul (Romans 1:20; 1 Cor. 15:3-8), and more. He continues by giving reasons why apologetics is important, such as: shaping culture, strengthening believers, and winning unbelievers. Craig closes by explaining how to get the most out of his book. Chapter 2 is about "What difference does it make if God exists?" Starting with the absurdities of life without God, Craig discusses how there would be no ultimate meaning without God (illustrated by his excellent story of the astronaut marooned in outer space), no ultimate value, and no ultimate purpose. He moves on to talk about how people are living in denial, and then to the practical impossibility of atheism. Chapter 3 discusses "Why does anything at all exist?" Craig begins with Leibniz's Argument in easy to memorize form. 1. Everything that exists has an explanation of its existence. 2. If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is God. 3. The universe exists. 4. The universe has an explanation of its existence. 5. Therefore, the explanation of the universe's existence is God. The book goes on to raise objections to the premises, and also sufficiently addresses those objections. Chapter 4 moves into "Why did the universe begin?" Here, Craig takes us to Al-Ghazali's Argument. 1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause. 2. The universe began to exist. 3. Therefore, the universe has a cause. Craig then discusses premise 1, explaining that "something cannot come from nothing," and, "if something can come into being from nothing, then it becomes inexplicable why just anything or everything doesn't come into being from nothing." He ends the discussion of premise one by pointing out that "common experience and scientific evidence confirm the truth of premise 1." WLC moves on to premise two by discussing actual infinites, Hilbert's Hotel, Big Bang, beginning of time, Oscillating Universes etc. (again, I will remind the reader, if you are not familiar with these subjects, he makes these points in understandable language). Chapter 5 asks, "Why is the universe fine-tuned for life?" I find this chapter especially interesting, since it addresses the impossible odds of life existing in this universe, such as, if the

nuclear weak force was altered by only one part out of 10 to the 100th, life would not exist. Craig then discusses arguments against fine-tuning, such as "if they were different, different life forms might have evolved," and, "what if there were different laws?" Taking time to body slam Richard Dawkins' objection presented in his best seller, "The God Delusion," Craig tidily shows the errors of Dawkins' conclusion, "Therefore, God almost certainly does not exist," and then moves on to the next chapter. Chapter 6, "Can we be good without God?" Craig gives the moral argument for God's existence, explains the distinction between values and duties, addresses Euthyphro's Dilemma, answers notions such as, "moral values simply exist," "Whatever contributes to human flourishing is good," "we evolved morals," and then gives a clear description of the Genetic Fallacy, followed by a nice example. By now, hopefully you have a decent picture of what this book is like, so I shall forgo summarizing the rest of the chapters, choosing rather to merely list them. Chapter 7, "What about suffering?" Chapter 8, "Who was Jesus?" Chapter 9, "Did Jesus rise from the dead?" Chapter 10, "Is Jesus the only way to God?" I'll close this review with a mention of two additional features I find appealing. One is the regular "Talk About It" boxes that are on many pages. These are great for reviewing with a class, or testing yourself to see what you remember. e.g. "How has this chapter shown that God: Is unembodied Mind? Transcends the universe? Created the universe?" And, "Think of a movie you've seen recently. If you asked the main character, 'Why does your life matter?' what do you think he or she would say?" The second feature is the wide margins on the side of the pages. There is plenty of room for taking notes. Good luck and enjoy On Guard!

William Lane Craig is one of the top Christian apologists alive today. So when he writes a book on apologetics, I expect it to be well-argued and -reasoned. But I do not necessarily expect it to be accessible to the average reader, for better or for worse. Yet On Guard, released this week by David C. Cook Publishers, is just that and more. This book is ready-made for undergraduate classes, church small groups or any Christian looking for an introduction to the key arguments in defense of Christianity. Most of the content is not new to the discussion, but the format by which it is presented is. This is one of the primary appeals to this work. There are wide margins on the pages perfect for note-taking, unless that space is used for definitions of key words and logical fallacies. There are even profiles of some of the key thinkers along the way. Craig presents the chapters in ascending logical order of arguments, from "What difference does it make if God exists?" to "Is Jesus the only way to God?". Along the way he hits some of the most popular arguments today for God's existence: the moral argument, the design argument, and of course the kalam cosmological argument, which Craig is especially well-known for modifying in his doctorate thesis. If there is one

weakness in the book, it is that it tries to be all things to all men. While the book is meant to be introductory, there are points when the content will simply be heavy lifting due to the subject matter at hand--despite the occasional single-panel cartoon thrown in. And the "Talk About It" questions seemingly geared for the small group are, in my humble opinion, more distracting than beneficial. With only these few exceptions, William Lane Craig has written the perfect introduction to Christian apologetics. I know it will be among the first books I recommend when a Christian wants to get his feet wet in the defense of the Christian faith. Even to those familiar with the arguments, this book will be a worthwhile tool to add to the belt. This book was a free review copy provided by David C. Cook Publishers.

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