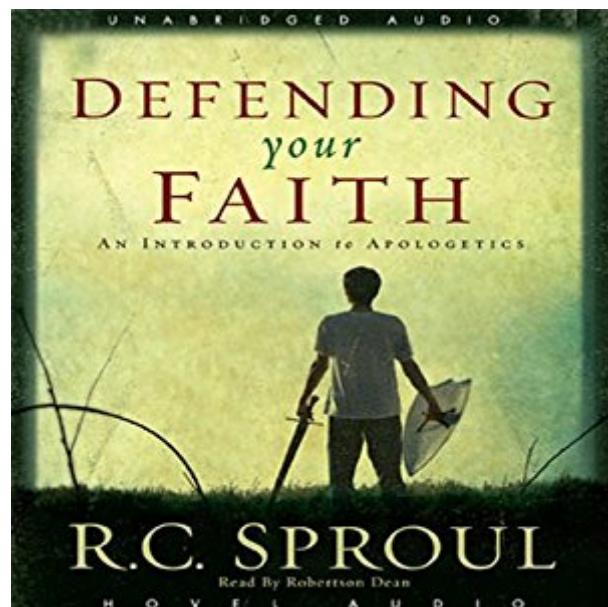


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Defending Your Faith: An Introduction To Apologetics



Synopsis

There is a widespread belief that reason and faith are incompatible and opposed to each other. Faith is viewed as subjective, emotional, a crutch for those who find the real world too hard. Though many of the world's finest minds hold this view, the Bible teaches that it is the fool who says there is no God. Dr. R. C. Sproul clearly and simply argues that at its core Christianity is rational. He focuses on defending the basic truth claims for two of the most crucial issues of apologetics: God's existence and the Bible's authority. In this primer of apologetic thought, Dr. Sproul affirms four logical principles that are necessary for all real discussion and teaches you how to defend your faith in a faithless world. Using the writings of church fathers and philosophers throughout the ages, he uncovers the common ideologies that work against faith. The defense of the faith is not a luxury or an intellectual vanity. It is a task appointed by God that you should be able to give a reason for the hope that is in you as you bear witness before the world. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Mention the word Apologetics to your average Christian and know what happens? At best, you get that deer-in-the-headlights gaze as a response. At worst, you're told that Apologetics has to do with being sorry. Granted, if Christian Apologetics were about being remorseful, Dr. R.C. Sproul (Sr.) would write a read-worthy book on the subject. Truth be told, Sproul couldn't be boring if he tried. Christian Apologetics, however, is about providing a rational defence of Christianity's truth claims. If you are a Christian and feel yourself lacking when your friends or family or colleagues challenge

what you believe, you could scarcely find a better primer on how to respond than what is offered in Defending Your Faith: An Introduction to Apologetics. The book consists of twenty-three chapters. But - and this is important - each chapter is little more than five pages in length. Combine the chapter length with Sproul's readable style and unique ability to communicate complex Christian truth claims clearly, and what you have is a palatable and helpful book. As a testimony from my own experience, I couldn't put this book down once I started reading it. After dealing with some preliminaries (e.g. the biblical mandate for Christian Apologetics, the inability of Christian Apologetics to convert a non-Christian apart from the Holy Spirit, etc.), Sproul lays out the four pillars of knowledge, namely, the law of non-contradiction, the law of causality, the basic reliability of sense perception, and the analogical use of language. In so doing, Sproul points out that non-Christians have to undermine at least one of these pillars when denying Christian truth claims. Some very helpful examples from the history of philosophy are proffered.

This review is written towards potential buyers who do not already agree with the Christian outlook, or even firmly disagree; whether the reader is completely ignorant of philosophy or an experienced logician. The book sets out to achieve two main goals: demonstrate that one does not have to be irrational to believe in a powerful, supernatural, and invisible entity, and that the Bible is an accurate source of knowledge on matters both historical, spiritual, and cosmic, including the specific characteristics of this higher being. Sproul lays out a solid case for the existence of a being of immense power with attributes far beyond our own and shows how one can reach this belief through observation of the real world and logic. I found a few parts of this argument to be either incomplete, incorrect, or simply too confusing for me to understand (I wish I could list examples, but I'd have to repeat the entire argument here to meaningfully explain my issue with it, and this review is far too long as is), and therefore don't agree that the purely logical argument presented in this book is firm proof that an omnipotent God MUST exist. He certainly demonstrates that something like the Christian god is logically POSSIBLE, but as far as I can comprehend he does not rule out that an unthinking force most people would be justified as labeling "higher physics" is the highest power in reality; yet neither of these two choices is more inherently rational or supported by modern knowledge and observations than the other. He is NOT saying that anybody who believes in god is rational or that their arguments are solid, and in fact points out the irrationality of some common pro-god arguments or beliefs.

This is an excellent introduction to apologetics that places the bulk of the emphasis on the

philosophical arguments typically used against theists. Essentially this is apologetics that focuses to begin with not on Scripture, but on epistemology. How do we know what we can know? This has been a critical arena for non-theists seeking to discredit the possibility of a God without the necessity of dealing with any particular god. Sproul deals with the major epistemology topics of the law of noncontradiction, causality, the reliability of sense perception as a means for gathering knowledge, and finally the analogical use of language. He then moves on to an overview of key voices on the topic of natural reason and faith. He then moves on to offer the four basic explanations for why there is *stuff* - you, me, the earth, the universe, lemurs, what-have-you. Does *stuff* really exist at all or is it an illusion? If *stuff* is really there, did it get there by chance or by its own causation? Could it have always been there in one form or another? Or does the fact that *stuff* exists necessitate an uncreated creator that is the source of all the *stuff* we know about today? Afterwards there are several chapters dealing with key philosophers in the modern period who contributed powerfully (generally in the negative sense) to the discussion of the existence of God. Each is examined in light of the four major issues of epistemology to determine whether they are rationally sound or not. And finally Sproul deals with the reliability and authority of Scripture. It is this last topic that seems to be the most briefly and inadequately treated, perhaps because Sproul expects that it will be more familiar to his readers.

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