



# Hard Questions, Real Answers

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## **Hard Questions, Real Answers** William Lane Craig

*Why doesn't God answer my prayers? If God is so powerful, why does evil exist? And if He is so good, why do we suffer?*

Nonbelievers, and even Christians, are often troubled by questions about suffering, doubt, failure, and unanswered prayer. Yet careful, compassionate answers are hard to find, in part because evangelicals have not taken the life of the mind seriously enough. The intellectual currents of our day are just too strong for simplistic responses.

In *Hard Questions, Real Answers*, William Lane Craig doesn't offer trite phrases or pat answers—he offers honest insights gained from a life of study and ministry. Readers in the midst of doubt and confusion will find real answers to these perplexing questions and learn to stand on the only sure foundation for hope—God Himself. This expanded new edition includes chapters on abortion and homosexuality to help readers know how to think about these volatile social issues.

## **Hard Questions, Real Answers Details**

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## From Reader Review Hard Questions, Real Answers for online ebook

### **Katie says**

I'm a little embarrassed to admit I read this, but I'm in the middle of a research journey and was recommended this author by several people who seemed knowledgeable at the time. This book was almost tolerable until the chapter on homosexuality. I cannot believe that Dr. Craig's conclusions are an accurate reflection of what God intended for us to believe. I'm very disappointed in Dr. Craig's viewpoint and am now questioning things more than I had before opening this book.

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### **Charlotte says**

Dr. Craig is one of my new favorite authors. He's unquestionably gifted with insight, and what's more...he can explain it in language you can understand! This book does cover several hard questions including Doubt, Unanswered Prayer, Failure, Suffering & Evil, Abortion, Homosexuality- questions people don't dare ask in front of other people. Fascinating. He answers questions that a skeptic or agnostic, or even an atheist, would ask, and he answers them using philosophical techniques, not just quoting Scripture. I wondered many times throughout this book, "Why have I never thought about that like that?" He makes so much sense! He includes several personal stories so I got the idea that he's a real person, with a real life- someone I would love to have a conversation with (I think I would mostly just ask questions and listen to him talk). Haven't decided what my next book from him will be, but there will be a next one, for sure. Hard Questions, Real Answers is, without a doubt, recommended.

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### **stakahashi says**

loved this book, and william lane craig. initially, before getting too far into it, it seems like almost a shallow, random attempt at explaining away some difficult subjects, but it turns out to have quite some depth, and doesn't shy away from hard aspects - i guess sort of like the title suggests! great respect for craig.

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### **Jessica says**

I think this book does pretty well with the topics it tackles. However, it's important to recognize beforehand what the book is not about. It does not deal with issues of biblical inerrancy or difficult biblical passages. It does not take on the creation/evolution debate or theological problems like free will vs. predestination or divine foreknowledge. Craig has written books and articles about all of these things, I believe, but this book is not it. Hard Questions, Real Answers deals with some philosophical objections to certain Christian beliefs, such as the belief in an omnipotent and good God in the face of evil and suffering. Craig, in the manner of a philosopher, breaks down the objections one by one and answers them mainly with sound reasoning and logic rather than by appealing to the Bible, which would not be a trusted source for a non-believer.

For the most part, I think Craig's arguments competently answer the questions raised. Aside from the problem of evil, Craig grapples with issues of doubt, failure, abortion, homosexuality and the exclusivism of

Christianity. I found his arguments against homosexuality to be the weakest by far. He does well showing that the Bible condemns homosexual behavior, but it breaks down when he has to show why homosexuality is wrong apart from the Bible. Craig claims that Christians need to be able to debate this topic on a secular level, but his argument is bolstered by questionable statistics and weak suppositions, which are not only simple to refute but rather offensive as well. In particular, his reasoning for why homosexuals should be permitted certain rights and denied others appears influenced by personal prejudice and pretty unreasonable. It's a low point in what is otherwise a well considered argument for Christian values.

That one chapter aside, this book is worth reading for anyone who is interested in any of the issues it raises. By and large, Craig is a very academic and precise thinker, and his method of approaching these concerns should be of help to readers who wish to engage the secular world view from an intellectually defensible position.

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### **Jill Hudson says**

An excellent book for Christians who are going through tough times or even doubting the basics of their faith. This book convincingly tackles all the most troublesome questions, such as: why doesn't God always answer my prayers? How come I feel like a failure? How come the career I feel I was called to hasn't been an obvious success? You may not agree with all his answers, but he doesn't shy away from the issues that really matter.

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### **Muhammad Ali says**

Excellent book!

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### **Filip Sekkelsten says**

Det er en del gode svar i boken, men den tar ikke opp alle spørsmålene jeg lurer på. Dessuten likte jeg ikke alle svarene, ettersom jeg er delvis uenig i presupposisjonene de er bygd på. Svaret på at det antallet mennesker som blir frelst er fordi dette er den best mulige verden hvor fri vilje (libertansk) og Guds plan kan sameksistere (?). Det er selvfølgelig mulig, skjønt ikke veldig overbevisende. Hva med de som aldri fikk høre evangeliet? Er det kun andre, tidligere kristnes feil som ikke dro ut? Jeg vil ikke gå i den andre grøften som sier at det ikke spiller noen rolle *hva* du tror, men *hvordan* du tror det (først med Kierkegaard, nå hos mange andre, bl. a. Peter Rollins). Bibelen synes klar på at Jesus er den eneste veien til Far.  
... Dette spørsmålet må undersøkes videre.

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### **Jeffery says**

When it comes to logic and philosophy, I feel this book was spot on. I think he misinterprets some of the Bible passages, but he's consistent with evangelical theology. It definitely helped me think through some of the issues.

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## Patrick says

This book started me on a path of thinking about christian topics. However, while reading this book, new questions would come up and there would not be any real answers. For one instance in his proof of God, Cragi said if A than B than C than D, and BCD logically follows, which he spent a good chunk of time proving, but did not address A, which would be a serious question for agnostics and atheists.

It was hard questions, but not really complete answers.

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## Winston says

Questions Remain Unanswered. Dodging and Mental Gymnastics Galore

I'm just going to tackle Craig's arguments on the Problem of Evil, since most people are likely to pick up this book believing it refutes it. It doesn't The PoE is completely invulnerable when a tri-omni (omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent) god is being debated.

1. Omniscience utterly, unequivocally, negates free will.

Perfect foreknowledge entails that god set A&E up to fail, as well as Hitler to murder 6 million Jews, start a world war that slaughtered many millions more, famine, drought, the Spanish flu...

Need I go on?

Eternalism doesn't work as a dodge. If a god has perfect foreknowledge, then he's still responsible. And as we experience a coherent, cohesive set of events, I don't see how eternalism could be true.

NONE of the theodicies thus far created hold any water. Why? Because an omnipotent deity does not need to use evil to achieve greater goods.

Any such being could achieve the desired outcome from the get-go, no suffering required.

Craig engages in numerous logical fallacies. He commits special pleading to let his god off the hook. He clearly does not hold his god to the same moral standard as his god supposedly holds humans to. An all-powerful, all-knowing being who did nothing while billions starved to death is just as guilty as someone who caused such deeds personally. Might does not make right.

Painting his god as a loving father who "suffers with" us is almost as bad. Such a god doesn't do a thing to alleviate suffering.

The Problem of Evil is an insurmountable one for Christians (and all other theists who believe in a perfectly loving, all-powerful and all-knowing god). There have been intense and motivated efforts over the past two millennia to defend such a position rationally, and they have all failed. Miserably. Utterly. And in many cases, dishonestly.

Some approaches involve invoking an unknown "greater good" defense (which throws god's omnipotence under the bus. An omnipotent deity could simply actualise a desired goal without needing to use suffering as a "middle man"). Attempts to shift the problem by asserting that human happiness is not the goal of life (but knowing god is) removes the omnibenevolence and omnipotence of god (if you love someone, you don't

want them to suffer. It really is that simple).

Here, Craig takes the old canard of free will. Unfortunately, free will is meaningless unless everyone has an equal amount of it. This is undeniably NOT the case. Not everyone is given the same lifespan, physical strength, mental acuity, political clout, financial resources, and so on. Craig is pontificating from the luxurious confines of his residence, funded by conveniently gullible sheep. This has certainly damaged his ability to empathise with the billions who live on less than a dollar each day. And the thousands who starve to death every time the Earth completes a full rotation.

Craig also, perhaps unwittingly, advocates a social Darwinism in which the rich and physically powerful are able to murder, rape and steal from weaker individuals (and are therefore less able to exercise their own free will to prevent their own suffering). Craig worships a cosmic pedophile who revels in granting freedom to abhorrent individuals while getting his jollies from seeing the most vulnerable suffer and die in agony (only to get thrown into even more torture in the Christian vision of hell).

Lastly, a loving god would take away free will from those who would willingly surrender it in return for a life without suffering. Funnily enough, Craig seems to believe in a heaven without suffering but with all the bells and whistles of freedom. So why not create that universe from the get-go and stick with it? Why create a universe with even the possibility of corruption? It certainly is not something a perfect god would do. Then again, a perfect god would not blackmail beings he supposedly loves for eternal worship.

This book is best avoided lest his self-contradictory "Reasonable Faith" website continues to propagate its mendacity.

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### **Brian says**

probably one of the best quick-answer apologetics books for the general public...this is one you can confidently hand out to a Christian struggling with one or more of the most common questions we all face...definitely not a silver bullet though.

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### **Josie says**

So Craig's intention in this book is to answer "hard questions" about Christianity (why is there evil? why shouldn't I practice homosexuality?) with equally "hard" and Biblically supported answers. Clearly, there is some philosophical training involved here as well, as we are given the logical v. illogical pathways for a couple of answers. I don't really mind reading theories about why some things are (such as why evil exist) but my real problem with books like these are how things aren't presented as theory: they're presented as clear and unequivocal fact. It drives me up the wall when a "thinking Christian" presents something as a given, when that "given" clearly stems from their cultural and societal interpretation of something very not clear. It assumes the mantle of speaking for God, something which could be avoided by simply stating "I believe..." or "I think..." instead of "This is". The arrogance in presuming that you understand God and what he wants and how the world should be from two lines you've selected from the Bible to support the belief you want to hold is one of my biggest beefs with Christianity. In particular, the chapters on abortion (no chapter on the death penalty, huh?) and homosexuality devolve from philosophical theorizing to downright hate. Pages spent on how many diseases you'll pick up as a homosexual, the anal trauma, and the high depression rates are presented as "proof" that God hates the gays. Disgusting. In short, if you want to read some (simple, much used) theories on why there is evil in the world, give this

book a try, but realize they are only THEORIES, and that, in fact the reason you aren't getting your prayers answered may NOT stem from the fact that you aren't praying hard enough, or praying for the right things. But please, avoid the hate in the chapters on abortion and homosexuality. There's enough hate in the world already.

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### **Meghan Smith says**

Some things I'm not sure I agree with, but interesting reading for sure.

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### **Wayne Yates says**

Some good questions discussed...and in typical fashion Craig brings solid perspectives to the topics. Written much more to typical laypeople than some of his more technical books which expound more on the logical details.

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### **John says**

Craig writes this an an entry level book that is intended to be accessible to most readers. Ultimately, I think this effort falls a bit flat. The book doesn't have a coherent thread through it (it is taken from various lectures he has given), and so it reads unevenly. His strongest chapters are probably his middle chapters on the problem of evil, but they feel a bit of a strange fit in the book as they're written for quite a bit more sophisticated audience than his other chapters. His chapter on homosexuality feels very outdated and clumsy, both because it is not Craig's area of expertise, and because a number of better books have been written on the subject since Craig's book was penned.

That said, it is likely Craig's easiest read and so a decent place for someone to start who hasn't read Craig before. Perhaps read the introduction and his two chapters on evil as a decent starting place.

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