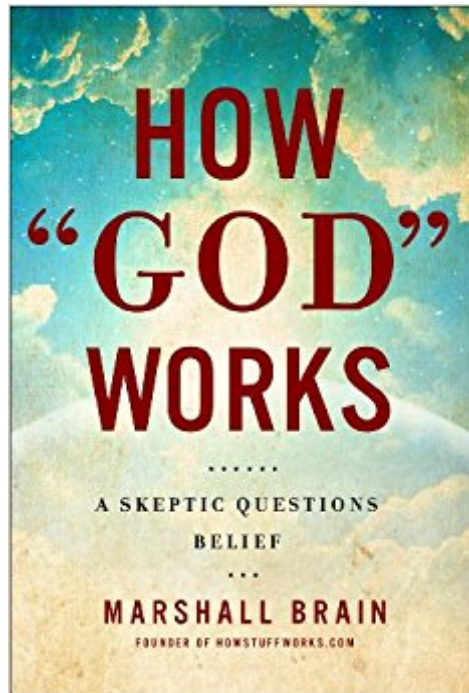




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How "God" Works: A Logical Inquiry On Faith



Synopsis

Does God exist? Using an intellectually rigorous, scientific approach, Marshall Brain—the founder of HowStuffWorks.com and author of the How Stuff Works series—sets out to resolve the eternal debate once and for all. With a compelling sense of curiosity, he breaks down mankind's search for a higher power, tackling such quandaries as: Who is God? What are his attributes? What is God doing and why? How does God interact with humanity? And ultimately, how can humans know with certainty whether God is real or imaginary? How God Works is an enlightening journey in critical thinking that challenges readers to boldly approach the subject of personal faith and put aside intuition in favor of objectivity and logic.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Marshall Brain is best known as the founder of HowStuffWorks.com, and is the bestselling author of the How Stuff Works series (Wiley). He has appeared on Oprah, Dr. Oz, Good Morning America, CNN, Modern Marvels, and in many other media outlets to apply his signature approach to unraveling the mysteries of life. He is also the host of the National Geographic Channel's Factory Floor with Marshall Brain TV show. He lives in Cary, North Carolina.

My five star rating is mostly because I want people to read this book. Brain does a good job of laying out a logical argument for doubting the existence of God based on the fact that there is no statistical evidence that prayer affects the physical world at all, according to double-blind experiments. I especially liked his chapter about how nobody ever prays for an amputee to grow a limb back.

When you eliminate all chances for coincidence, and you are left with only the impossible, prayer is ineffectual every time. The worthlessness of prayer to affect changes in the physical world is really the basis for his entire argument throughout the book. He discusses the problem of evil a bit, and rails against the violent acts of God in the Old Testament, but he continually comes back to prayer. I wonder if he originally wrote the book titled as "How Prayer Works". That said, there were several things that annoyed me. First, Brain continually defines even the most basic of words throughout the entire book - words like "absurd", "blessing", "evil", "love", "miracle", "prayer", and many more. These definitions appear indented in the text and are quoted from dictionaries or Wikipedia. A new definition appears every few pages. I'm not sure what the intention was, but it evoked two conflicting impressions for me. On the one hand it feels as if he is writing to a less educated audience, and it's almost insulting; on the other hand, I get the impression he is trying to be objective in his usage of the words, which is good, but distracting at times, breaking the flow of the text a little too much. My second complaint is that he takes too much time developing his arguments. The book could easily be compressed into something 1/3 its size, if he didn't spend so much time developing things like what a double-blind experiment is. Third, the cloud-like vertical border on every page is something I would expect to see in an emotional book like "Chicken Soup for the Soul", not an intellectual book on why God does not exist. It seems like Brain is targeting the kind of audience who also reads Guideposts Magazine, Max Lucado, and Rick Warren. A final complaint I have is that Brain's logic is sometimes not rigorous enough, which leads him to make claims that are not well substantiated. For example, on page 219 "If God were real, we would expect all Christians to strive at all times to live flawless sinless lives of goodness in accordance with the Bible." But that kind of logic would likewise conclude that global warming is not real just because Al Gore's Nashville mansion uses more than 20 times the national household average (which may or may not be true). Just because Al Gore does not perfectly practice what he preaches, that does not mean what he preaches is false. There are other subtle logical fallacies in the book like this one, and I wish Brain had been as ardent in analyzing his own arguments as he was in analyzing those of others. Still, I think Brain does an excellent job in challenging believers of all religions to apply critical thinking to the outrageous claims they believe. Suggestion: If you are a believer, I suggest you read the book twice. During the first reading, pretend Brain is targeting every other religion but your own, and you will readily agree with the wisdom of his arguments. During the second reading, consider the fact that these same arguments apply to your own religion as well.

How God Works is a easy read on how to use logic and reason as to whether God really exists or is

imaginary. While skeptics will sit back and enjoy, believers will have to face the facts that the things that they have believed may not be so after all. Proving the bible was written decades after the supposed death of Jesus, the contradictions and discrepancies will open the eyes of most believers if they can step back and think. While most prayers go unanswered, these simple facts cannot go unnoticed if people would just be honest with themselves and try to break free of the shackles of religion that most people have been exposed to since childhood. While this book does present a lot of good information, the author does occasionally repeat himself but that does not take away from the message that believers should consider.

I recently finished reading the excellent book "How God Works". Marshall Brain's writing kept my interest throughout the book, especially the way he explains ideas in such a clear and understandable way. The book goes through the standard characteristics Christians believe about God and then looks at each of them using critical thinking skills. One of the most important points the book makes is that we never see any real world evidence for God or his supposed interaction with human beings. For example, what Christians consider to be evidence of favoritism by God, such as being cured of an illness, is merely a coincidence and completely explainable as a natural process that does not statistically happen to Christians any more often than it does to anyone else. Overall, this is one of the best books I have read about God, and both believers and non-believers will enjoy this book and think about ideas they have not thought about previously. It sparked my own interest again in this topic, which I had not thought about much in a number of years.

It is written in simpler language so less educated folks can read and understand how critical thinking works. As a review for clarity to answer theists' many claims, it is an excellent resource. It would be very educational for teens, too. Critical thinking and the scientific method are our best methods for determining reality. Well-done in illustrating how a critical thinker will not just accept claims but be willing to see if his/her/others claims hold up under analysis and show evidence that can be verified and demonstrated in reality. Feeling something is true is not evidence. Book is well organized with clear examples.

If you are a fundamentalist Christian who believes in a walking, talking snake, this book will almost certainly not change your mind. However, if you are a normal thinking person who just so happens to believe in the power of prayer and an divine power, this book will almost certainly convince you that

those beliefs are delusional. I highly recommend this book. If you consider yourself to be a liberal or moderate religious believer, I challenge you to stay that way after reading this book. I read a lot of atheist/humanist books and this one is one of the best. check it out!

I wish everybody would read this book and others like it. It confirms the logical-thinker's (atheist's in my case) view of religion and will hopefully be persuasive in causing one to use critical thinking skills. As this book supports, I cannot believe that adults in this day and age, still believe, and fall for, the "God" virus. Great read!

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