



Book Review

By

Mark McGee

How Do We Know: An Introduction To Epistemology (Second Edition, IVP, 2020) is an excellent book for any Christian who wants to understand the basic philosophy of how we “know” things. As simple as that may sound, it is a subject few people understand. As Christian disciples, we need to know that what we know is true and be able to explain that to people with whom we talk about the Truth of Christ. This book will help you do that.

The authors, James Dew Jr. and Mark Foreman, did a great writing job with this book. It is easy to read the entire book in one sitting or a chapter at a time. It’s the kind of book that you can use as a reference guide as you have discussions with people about their worldview. The authors included basic historical information for various philosophical positions that will give you a good background for how we arrived at today’s postmodernism.

Many people believe they know things without knowing how they know them. Does that sound like a good way to go through life? Helping people know how they know can be a way to guide them toward the truth of the Gospel of Christ. Once you've read through *How Do We Know: An Introduction To Epistemology*, you will have a better understanding of why people believe what they believe and how to talk with them about their beliefs.

Many people who grow up in church do not know how they know that Christianity is true. That's one reason so many young people drop out of church and away from Christianity in high school or college. There are good reasons to believe that Christianity is true and we need to be able to help our children and teenagers know those reasons.

You can also use the book with family, friends and small groups. Each chapter ends with Discussion Questions that will help guide conversations and studies.

The authors are both professors of philosophy. Dew is president and professor of Christian philosophy at New Orleans Baptist Seminary. He is the coauthor of *Philosophy: A Christian Introduction* and *Understanding Postmodernism: A Christian Perspective* and the coeditor of *God and Evil: The Case for God in a World Filled with Pain* and *God and the Problem of Evil: Five Views*. Foreman is professor of philosophy and religion at Liberty University. He is also the author of *Prelude to Philosophy: An Introduction for Christians* and *Christianity and Bioethics: Confronting Clinical Issues*.

I've read many Christian books about philosophy that are excellent reads, but are probably best for people with some training in philosophy. *How Do We Know* is a great book for people with or without any philosophical training. I definitely recommend it for people interested in evangelism and apologetics.

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Series Introduction: Questions in Christian Philosophy

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Publisher's Description

What does it mean to know something? Can we have confidence in our knowledge?

Epistemology, the study of knowledge, can often seem like a daunting subject. And yet few topics are more basic to human life. We are inquisitive creatures by nature, and the unending quest for truth leads us to raise difficult questions about the quest itself. What are the conditions, sources, and limits of our knowledge? Do our beliefs need to be rationally justified? Can we have certainty?

In this primer on epistemology, James Dew and Mark Foreman guide readers through this discipline in philosophy. This second edition has been expanded with new material and now serves as the first volume in IVP's Questions in Christian Philosophy series. By asking basic questions and using clear, jargon-free language, they provide an entry into one of the most important issues in contemporary philosophy.

Reviews

This second edition of How Do We Know? is an exciting, timely provision for the body of Christ. Well-suited to serve as a textbook and a tool for the thoughtful lay reader, this volume is one of the clearest, most accessible introductions to epistemology I have ever read. The selection of topics covered is excellent and highly relevant for equipping believers to engage competently with the fundamental ideas that constitute our increasingly secularized culture. A delightful feature of the book is its regular and careful interaction with key figures in the history of philosophy. I joyfully recommend it. J. P. Moreland, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, and author of Scientism and Secularism

Dew and Foreman's How Do We Know? is a remarkably clear and concise discussion of central issues in epistemology. They explain difficult concepts as simply as possible without compromising accuracy, and they provide helpful illustrations throughout to ensure that readers will

not get bogged down in the thicket of technical terminology. Epistemology is a field that can be as forbidding as it is important, and Dew and Foreman have done a wonderful service by giving us such an accessible treatment of the subject. Christian readers will find the book especially useful, as it includes discussions of faith, divine revelation, and other issues related to religious epistemology. Another virtue of the book is the authors' discussion of many major figures in the history of philosophy as well as significant contemporary epistemologists. I highly recommend this text to anyone interested in epistemology as well as students of theology and philosophy of religion. James S. Spiegel, Taylor University

How Do We Know?, now in its second edition, will appeal to students and laypeople looking for an introduction to epistemology that includes the standard topics, theories, and arguments but avoids the complexity, technicality, and abstraction of other texts. In addition, Dew and Foreman provide their Christian readers with welcome resources for integrating the theory of knowledge with Christian theology.

*As a result, their survey of the field is more comprehensive than most. Among other attractive features of the volume are its frequent discussion of many classical and contemporary epistemologists, its helpful illustrations drawn from ordinary life, and its balanced treatment of controversial issues. This primer would serve well as a textbook for courses at Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries or as a guidebook for the general Christian reader interested in what philosophers have to say about knowledge as well as in the importance of epistemology for life, faith, and theology. James E. Taylor, professor of philosophy at Westmont College, author of *Introducing Apologetics and Learning for Wisdom**

Dew and Foreman provide a clear and intuitive introduction to the field of epistemology. This book will empower your mind. The authors skillfully help readers work through a well-organized series of questions about the foundations of knowledge building, and they draw out applications and implications of the different theories. A must-read for every Christian influencer and idea leader. Joshua Rasmussen,

professor of philosophy at Azusa Pacific University, author of How Reason Can Lead to God

The enormous success of movies like The Matrix and Inception shows that nonphilosophers can appreciate the importance of the central questions of epistemology. However, very few books on the topic succeed in addressing these questions on a beginner's level. The first edition of How Do We Know? was a welcome exception that has been very well received by our students, and this updated edition looks even better! Michael S. Jones, professor of philosophy and theology at Liberty University, president of the Virginia Philosophical Association

How Do We Know: An Introduction To Epistemology (Second Edition, IVP, 2020, 168 pages)

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