



By

Mark McGee



*How Reason Can Lead To God: A Philosopher's Bridge To Faith* (Joshua Rasmussen, IPV Academic, 2019) is a must-read for Christian apologists and anyone who wants to improve how they think and talk with people about the existence of God.

Joshua Rasmussen (PhD, Notre Dame) is an associate professor of philosophy at Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, California. He is also the author of *Defending the Correspondence Theory of Truth and Necessary Existence*.

Rasmussen writes as someone who has struggled with the idea of God's existence and purpose in life. His struggle led him to investigate truth and that led him to a strong and evidential belief in God. As he wrote in his book, "My aim is to use reason to secure a path to truth." (p 16)

Rasmussen used a thinking process he calls "The Bridge of Reason." He presented the idea of building supports for the the 'bridge' beginning with a foundation. He called that "The Foundation Theory."

"The basic components of our bridge install the Foundation Theory. The Foundation Theory is what it sounds like: there is a foundation to things. Like a stack of bricks that rests upon the ground, the stack of dependent things rests ultimately upon an independent foundation." p 33

Rasmussen's theory is based on the supporting beams of –

- Independence
- Necessity
- Ultimacy

Rasmussen used nine tests that “probe and push upon the foundational materials.” He said the tests from question, comments and objections he has encountered in journal articles, books, academic halls and the Internet during the last 20 years. Rasmussen said his aim was “to provide a better sense of the integrity and nature of the bridge.”

# Logic and Reason

I especially enjoyed Rasmussen's emphasis on logic and reason throughout his book. Skeptics and scoffers often accuse Christians of being illogical and unreasonable in their thinking. They mock Christians for lacking "critical thinking skills."

Rasmussen used the tool of reason to build steps "to an ultimate foundation of things" in his book. That's refreshing to read. He used three reason-based tools in the process –

- Simplicity
- Explanatory depth
- Uniformity

"Each tool will independently reveal the same thing from a different angle. Each tool has its own power, which we can use to construct the next step." p 61

*How Reason Can Lead To God* is one of the best books about philosophy from a Christian perspective that I've read in some time. I encourage you to get a copy of this short book (208 pages), read it carefully, make notes and ask God to help you as you share Christ with unbelievers He brings into your life.

# Contents

Preface

Acknowledgments

1. When Reason Leads to Doubt
2. The Bridge of Reason
3. The Foundation Theory
4. Testing Ground
5. Eternal Power
6. Purely Actual
7. Foundation of Mind
8. Foundation of Matter
9. Foundation of Morals
10. Foundation of Reason
11. Perfect Foundation
12. Challenging the Bridge
13. Removing Barriers
14. On the Other Side of the Bridge

Bibliography

Index

# From the Publisher

“Do you seek the truth?

Do you value reason, science, and independent thinking? Are you skeptical of beliefs that people maintain merely ‘on faith,’ yet you remain interested in the big questions of life? Do you hope there could be a greater purpose to the universe, if only that were realistic?

If so, then philosopher Joshua Rasmussen can encourage you in your journey. Beginning with his own story of losing faith and the belief in any ultimate purpose in life, he then builds a bridge to a series of universal truths about ultimate reality. Using only the instruments of reason and common experience, Rasmussen constructs a pathway—step by step, brick by brick—that he argues can lead to meaning and, ultimately, a vision of God.”

# Reviews

“Rasmussen’s book is destined to be a modern classic. Rasmussen combines simplicity, clarity, and depth to an extraordinary degree, resulting in a book that makes some of the most advanced work in contemporary philosophical theology accessible to the general reader, without sacrificing any logical precision. Rasmussen’s style is winsome and engaging, drawing the reader into a thrilling adventure of metaphysical investigation of the existence and nature of reality’s ultimate foundation.” Robert Koons, professor of philosophy, University of Texas at Austin

“This short book contains a bold, original, and provocative argument that shows how reason can lead a person who is genuinely seeking truth to God. It is written in simple, ordinary language and makes no appeal to authority. Although Rasmussen appeals only to truths that he thinks should be universally accepted, a good deal of the force of the book stems from the personal story of Rasmussen himself; his courage and honesty draw the reader into a similar journey.” C. Stephen Evans, university professor of philosophy and humanities, Baylor University



“How Reason Can Lead to God is beautifully written. It is truly exceptional in its clarity and simplicity of prose. While some concepts and arguments may be difficult to digest, the interested reader, up for a rigorous, intellectual workout, will be very richly rewarded. Engaging. Humble. Winsome. Rasmussen strikes just the right tone given the aim(s) of the book. A real gem!” Kevin Corcoran, professor of philosophy, Calvin College

“Rasmussen provides a masterpiece argument for God. He delivers every step in a clear and engaging style. Powerful. Beautiful. Transformative.” William Lane Craig, professor of philosophy, Talbot School of Theology and Houston Baptist University, coauthor of *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*

“Rasmussen’s superb and unique book provides arguments that are deep, convincing, expressed with admirable clarity, and informed by the very latest in philosophical thought.” Alexander R. Pruss, director of graduate studies and professor, department of philosophy, Baylor University

“Professor Rasmussen is a top Christian philosopher, a deeply devoted believer, and a longtime personal friend. He identifies his primary audience as a skeptic who cares about truth, is interested in life’s big questions, and believes only what can be supported by reason. And Rasmussen hits the bull’s-eye. Along with *Mere Christianity*, *How Reason Can Lead to God* is the book

to give to such a person. But don't let this aim fool you. This book is a must-read for believers who love philosophy or apologetics. You will learn a ton by reading this book, and by reading it your ability to think will be vastly increased. The flow of Rasmussen's argument for God is developed with such precision and care that, quite frankly, it could not be improved. I am so excited about *How Reason Can Lead to God* and can't wait to see its impact. So put on your thinking hat, buy it, and study it carefully." J. P. Moreland, distinguished professor of philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, author of *Scientism and Secularism*

"How Reason Can Lead to God is an extraordinary book. Rasmussen builds, piece by piece, a bridge from the basic structures of reality to God. This work is meticulously structured. Rasmussen's writing style fits perfectly with the project. He is clear, careful, and patient. He never jumps to a conclusion. He considers objections fairly and engages them thoughtfully. This is simply the best philosophical defense of theism I have read in a long while. But, it is more than a defense of theism. It is a guided tour through the foundations of metaphysics." Gregory E. Ganssle, professor of philosophy at Biola University, author of *Our Deepest Desires: How the Christian Story Fulfills Human Aspiration*

“A magnificent and prodigious talent as deft in analytic skill as he is adept at uncommon common sense, Joshua Rasmussen has produced a disarming, brilliant, bridge-building book that renders the recondite accessible. It takes readers on a fascinating journey, inviting them to think for themselves, try out his arguments, and come to their own conclusions. He is a remarkable philosopher in the best and old-fashioned sense: respecting his readers; asking vitally important, existentially central questions; rigorously following the evidence where it leads; animated by deep confidence in the revelatory power of reason to show the way. Any genuine seeker of wisdom and truth will find in these pages an eminent kindred spirit and faithful fellow traveler.” David Baggett, coauthor of *The Morals of the Story: Good News About a Good God*

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