



What We Can't Not Know: A Guide

By J. Budziszewski

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Revised and Expanded Edition

In this new revised edition of his groundbreaking work, Professor J. Budziszewski questions the modern assumption that moral truths are unknowable. With clear and logical arguments he rehabilitates the natural law tradition and restores confidence in a moral code based upon human nature.

What We Can't Not Know explains the rational foundation of what we all really know to be right and wrong and shows how that foundation has been kicked out from under western society. Having gone through stages of atheism and nihilism in his own search for truth, Budziszewski understands the philosophical and personal roots of moral relativism. With wisdom born of both experience and rigorous intellectual inquiry, he offers a firm foothold to those who are attempting either to understand or to defend the reasonableness of traditional morality.

While natural law bridges the chasms that can be caused by religious and philosophical differences, Budziszewski believes that natural law theory has entered a new phase, in which theology will again have pride of place. While religious belief might appear to hamper the search for common ground, Budziszewski demonstrates that it is not an obstacle, but a pathway to apprehending universal norms of behavior.

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What We Can't Not Know: A Guide By J. Budziszewski Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #435453 in Books
- Published on: 2011-02-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.98" h x .80" w x 6.15" l, .99 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 300 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Once upon a time, Budziszewski contends, a common moral ground existed so that all cultures could agree on moral absolutes. In contemporary society, however, such mutual ground has given way to shifting moral sands and new "situational" ethics. According to Budziszewski, an associate professor of government and philosophy at the University of Texas, none of these new systems offers strong moral foundations. Very simply, he argues, we all have deep inside us a moral regulator-our conscience-that tells us right from wrong. This conscience is part of our human nature, and the law that it writes on our hearts is the natural law of God. Thus, contends Budziszewski, we all know it's wrong to murder, steal, lie, commit adultery or have abortions because our conscience tells us so. No matter how we justify cheating on a spouse, he argues that "we can't not know" the activity is wrong. Budziszewski finds fault with every ethical system but his own because they fail to account for this natural, absolute law written in our hearts. He also egregiously misrepresents certain philosophical positions to make his case. He mistakenly presents utilitarianism, for example, as an ethical system guided by the principle of pleasure instead of emphasizing utilitarianism's focus on the greatest good for the greatest number. Despite his tendency to make straw men out of the systems he opposes, Budziszewski passionately and polemically challenges what he sees as the moral shortcomings of contemporary society.

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From Booklist

According to the natural law, a concept Christianity adopted and modified from Greek and Roman philosophy, knowledge of God's existence and of fundamental moral principles constitutes humanity's universal common sense. It isn't innate, however, but must be inculcated through traditional moral systems, such as the Tao, the dharma, and the Ten Commandments. Budziszewski invokes the last as best known to most of his potential readers and cites Judaic and Christian scripture, yet this is no religious tract but a philosophical exposition and a disputation on current moral attitudes and issues, especially abortion. Framing the entire presentation in terms of a lost world of moral consensus, Budziszewski says the natural law grounds a rational worldview that has been discredited by sin and guilt, and displaced by worldviews grounded in sensation (he is particularly cogent on the varieties of modern atheistic or agnostic feelings). But the natural law weltanschauung could be reestablished, and Budziszewski concludes his superb "guide" with broad advice on how to do so (for one thing, "we must repent abortion"). *Ray Olson*

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Review

"Budziszewski passionately and polemically challenges what he sees as the moral shortcomings of contemporary society." -- *Publishers Weekly*

"Superb" -- *Booklist*

"What We Can't Not Know is a must-read for those concerned about the state of American culture." -- *Chuck Colson, Prison Fellowship Ministries*

"powerful tool in the hands of preachers who want to speak effectively to the moral crisis which grips our culture." -- *Preaching Magazine*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Eloise Torres:

Now a day those who Living in the era everywhere everything reachable by connect to the internet and the resources inside can be true or not involve people to be aware of each data they get. How individuals to be smart in receiving any information nowadays? Of course the correct answer is reading a book. Reading through a book can help men and women out of this uncertainty Information specially this What We Can't Not Know: A Guide book since this book offers you rich data and knowledge. Of course the info in this book hundred pct guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

Edna Garza:

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Kathy Natal:

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