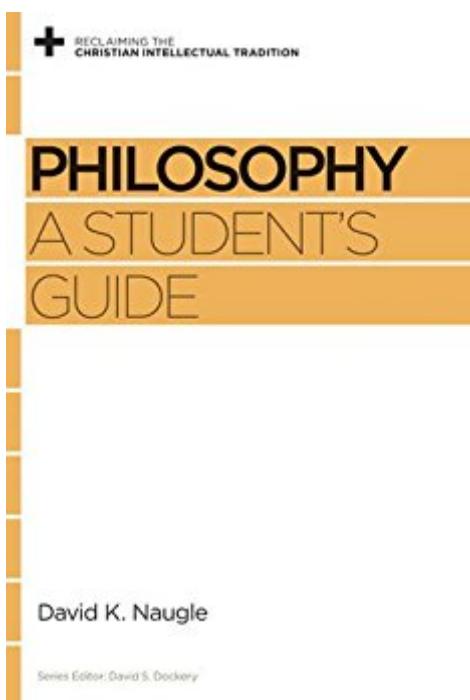


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# Philosophy: A Student's Guide



## **Synopsis**

Philosophy pervades every sphere of life from the defense of the gospel to the formulation of Christian doctrine to the daily decisions we make. In this work, distinguished professor David Naugle gives us a firm understanding of the basic issues, thinkers, and sub-disciplines in the field of philosophy as well as an invitation to engage with the contemporary challenges therein. He discusses the importance of prolegomena (assumptions and methods) and the vocation of Christian philosophers. Naugle also outlines the differences between the Hebrew and Greek mindsets and provides biblical perspectives through an Augustinian approach. Above all, Naugle teaches us how to philosophize in light of God and the gospel.

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## **Customer Reviews**

Philosophy: A Student's Guide\*, written by the philosopher David Naugle (also known for his work on worldviews), is the latest edition to the recent series Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition-a series intended to help the coming generation of Christians to think Christianly. In this book, Naugle seeks to introduce the reader to a Christian approach to philosophy. As Naugle notes

in the preface to the book, his introduction is not a vanilla Christian approach to philosophy but an explicit Augustinian approach to philosophy, an influence that permeates the pages of this book. Naugle begins by offering what he calls a philosophic prolegomena, arguing that by addressing issues related to prolegomena, we better see the different assumptions we are making and the possible ways we have appropriated certain non-Christian beliefs (e.g. empiricism, Platonism, etc.). Some of the key prolegomena that Naugle discusses concern the primacy of faith, the doctrine of creation, the Augustinian doctrine that grace restores nature, Al Wolters' structure/direction distinction, and the presence of common grace in unbelieving thought. In the next five chapters, Naugle briefly touches on metaphysics, human anthropology, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. In each chapter, he brings together particular teachings and doctrines from Scripture that should inform one's thought as they work within a particular field, such as metaphysics. Naugle also discusses certain topics in these fields that need to be approached from a particular Christian perspective (e.g. what does the Bible have to say about the dignity of human beings?).

There are many ways of introducing philosophy to beginners. Some authors give a historical introduction, while others give a thematic introduction, a few do both. In this book, Naugle gives thematic introduction to philosophy from within a Christian worldview. It is my humble opinion that the best way to honour a philosopher's work is to approach it as a philosopher, that is, to interact with his claims, to ask questions of the author, and to give him the benefit of the doubt until he proves otherwise. In this review I will do just that. I will begin by noting the purpose and limitations of this book, as described by the author, followed by a brief outline of the book. I will finish by explaining what are this book's greatest merits and difficulties. This book is part of the "Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition" series that is edited by David S. Dockery and published by Crossway. The books in this series are to be written primarily for college students, professors and other readers who are active in university campuses. The purpose of this particular book in the series is to help Christian students to reconnect with a particularly Christian philosophy. Though the author does not interact with Heidegger's claim that Christian philosophy is a contradiction and confusion of terms, he does challenge, indirectly, that claim by defining Christian philosophy as faith seeking understanding (p. 15). The author informs the reader, from the very beginning, that he approaches philosophy from a distinctly Augustinian position (p. 15, 106). That being said, the well-informed reader gets the impression, all throughout the book, that Naugle is borrowing many of his claims from Van Til and Vern Poythress Sheridan, though he never refers to them explicitly.

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