



Volume 63 | Issue 2

Article 29

12-1-2020

Koukl's "Tactics: A game plan for discussing your Christian convictions" (book review)

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Recommended Citation

Keller, Noelle C. (2020) "Koukl's "Tactics: A game plan for discussing your Christian convictions" (book review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 63: Iss. 2, Article 29.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2572-7478.2240>

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Book Reviews



Koukl, G. (2019). *Tactics: A game plan for discussing your Christian convictions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective. 284 pp. \$17.00. ISBN 9780310101468

The tenth anniversary updated and expanded edition of Greg Koukl's *Tactics* begins with a forward by Lee Strobel, the celebrated former *Chicago Tribune* writer who set out to disprove Christianity and ended up the best-selling author of *The Case For...* series of books and one of the leading speakers on the Christian faith. His story was made into a major motion picture. The book's author, Koukl, is a speaker at colleges and universities throughout the country and world, radio show host, and founder of Stand to Reason (www.str.org). One of his other books takes on nothing less than *The Story of Reality: How the Word Began, How It Ends, and Everything Important That Happens in Between*.

This book offers its readers strategies for speaking, debating, and defending one's Christian point of view with "gentleness and respect" for oneself and one's audience. (I Peter 3:15) It is a pragmatic teaching guide for recognizing diversions and digressions in conversations and speech and debate tactics for keeping in the words of Stephen Covey "the main thing the main thing". In a world openly hostile to Christianity and its tenants, this book offers methods for responding to non-Christians and getting them to think about Jesus. The ultimate goal is not to win a contentious debate but to persuade the person you are engaging in conversation to know Jesus by having a repertoire of approaches to "...know how to answer everyone." (Colossians 4:5-6)

Approaches, a game plan, "gardening tools" are provided to equip Christians to prepare the hearer's heart and mind for a harvest of faith. (p. 19). His "Ambassador Model" (p. 26) relies on diplomacy to engage, to talk with others about one's faith, and respond to questions and objections. Illustrations and examples of conversations are provided throughout. Scenarios and situations are presented with techniques to approach dialogue in thoughtful ways that plant a seed. Notes are included at the end with references to scripture and other books. The updated and expanded edition offers an additional tactic and a chapter of Mini-Tactics for engaging in discussions without fear or retreat. The first edition sold nearly 200,000 copies.

Complementary works include Lee Strobel's books, Greg Laurie's contemporary book/study, *Go Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News*, focuses on sharing the gospel and how with a casual tone/manner. The website and works of Ravi Zacharias are for the intellectually curious and are more academic and/or philosophical in approach. Classic works on apologetics that might be of interest include C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* and *The Screwtape Letters*.

This would be a great youth group study for high schoolers to prepare for the college environment or for Christian college groups or individuals needing guidance in a potentially adversarial or hostile setting. It would further be suitable for a church small group study or for an individual to be ready to give "a reason for the hope that is in you". (I Peter 3:15)

Reviewer

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