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## Gould, Dickinson, and Loftins' "Stand Firm: Apologetics and the brilliance of the gospel" (book review)

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# Book Review

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Gould, P. M., Dickinson, T., & Loftin, R. K. (2018). *Stand Firm: Apologetics and the brilliance of the gospel*. Nashville: B&H Academic. 256 pp. ISBN 9781433689239

*Stand Firm: Apologetics and the brilliance of the gospel* is the work of three Ph.D. professors of philosophy and/or apologetics. Professors R. Keith Loftin and Travis Dickinson both of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Dr. Paul M. Gould of Oklahoma Baptists University have written a readable and practical apologetics volume for readers exploring the Bible as a source of truth, beauty, meaning, and purpose. The book's purpose is... "to show the relevancy and importance of apologetics to evangelism, spiritual formation, and indeed to all of life" (pg. 1). The apologetics set forth here attempts not just to defend one's Christian beliefs but to positively influence others to believe.

This 12-chapter book opens with a definition and discussion of apologetics. The relationship between truth, knowledge, and faith is explored in chapter 2.

Questions addressed in this book include: the veracity of Christianity; the Bible's truth and historical reliability (chapter 5); the existence and identity of Jesus (chapter 6); and why evil exists (chapter 9). Overviews of topics include: evidence for the existence of God (chapter 3); an exploration of the definition of miracles (chapter 4); the resurrection of Jesus Christ (chapter 7); and Jesus as the sole path (chapter 8).

The academic questions addressed are not just for knowledge's sake but also for the missional dimension of apologetics. Chapter 10 summarizes the beliefs of four world religions so one might address the questions raised by people of those faiths. The problem, solution, technique, and exemplar of Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism are reviewed. Chapter 11 turns to the counterfeit variants of Christianity primarily in the United States, Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses. The history and beliefs are overviewed. The contradictions between Christianity are identified related to the sufficiency of Scripture, the integrity of the Bible, and the nature and God and Jesus. These beliefs are set forth so one can be aware and respond.

The bulk of the book presents much evidence to make a case for reasonableness of Christian faith. The final chapter attempts to make the connection of apologetics to witnessing and discipleship. *Stand Firm* presents much helpful content for addressing the questions of non-believers with the motivation not just of being right but of persuading others to come to faith.

Apologetics as presented here is both a defense of faith and provides positive reasons for faith.

The book is footnoted throughout with scholarly references for further exploration. Each chapter ends with an assignment of discussion and study questions along with suggested further readings. A bibliography and scripture, name, and subject indexes complete the volume.

I would recommend it as suitable for curious adult readers as well as undergraduate students for a concise introduction to the topics explored and guidance to the literature one might explore further.

**Reviewer**

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