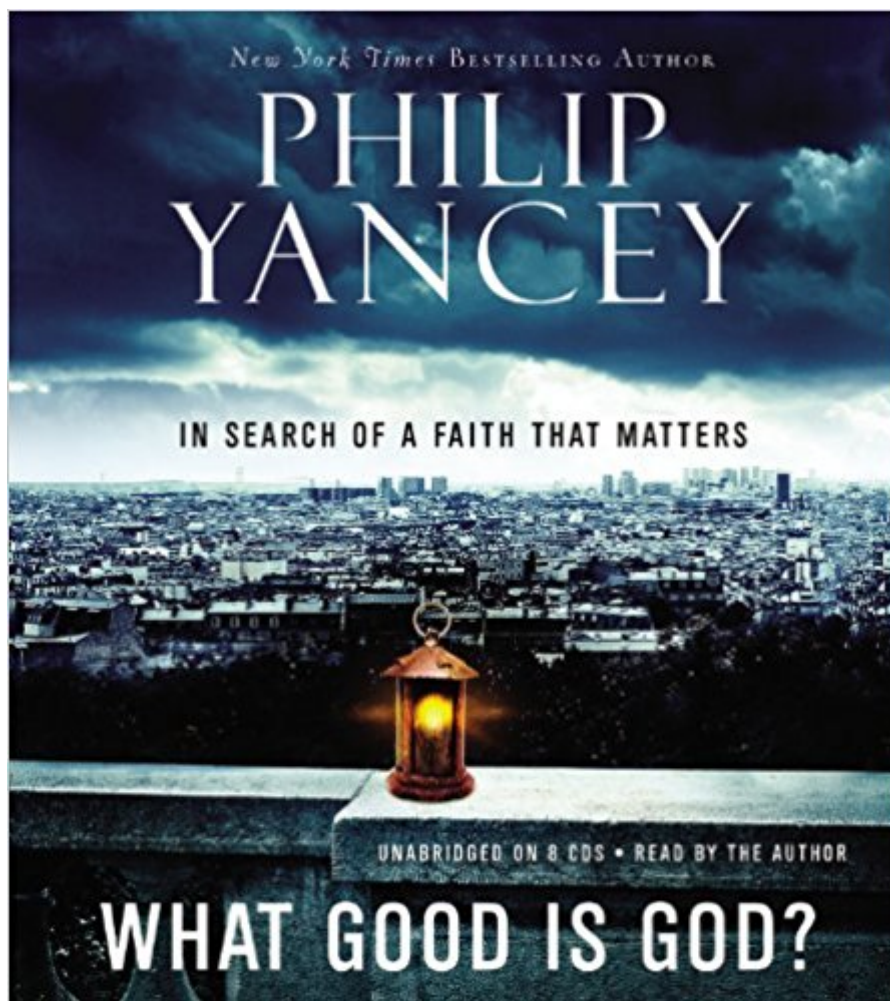


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# What Good Is God?: In Search Of A Faith That Matters



## Synopsis

Journalist and spiritual seeker Philip Yancey has always struggled with the most basic questions of the Christian faith. The question he tackles in *WHAT GOOD IS GOD?* concerns the practical value of belief in God. His search for the answer to this question took him to some amazing settings around the world: Mumbai, India when the firing started during the terrorist attacks; at the motel where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated; on the Virginia Tech campus soon after the massacre; an AA convention; and even to a conference for women in prostitution. At each of the 10 places he visited, his preparation for the visit and exactly what he said to the people he met each provided evidence that faith really does work when what we believe is severely tested. *WHAT GOOD IS GOD?* tells the story of Philip's journey--the background, the preparation, the presentations themselves. Here is a story of grace for armchair travelers, spiritual seekers, and those in desperate need of assurance that their faith really matters.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The search for God in the midst of horror, disaster, and loss has confounded believers for centuries. How does belief actually matter in the lives of those who suffer? Yancey, popular journalist and public speaker, travels the world and attempts to make some theological sense of the hurting people and devastated places he observes, from Virginia Tech to Mumbai. The author is very adept at walking the fine line between being "in" the world and being "of" the world. His global treks allow opportunities for dialogue with other cultures and religions, but his grounding is clearly in Christian scripture, which serves as a safe port when he encounters choppy secular waters. Particularly

moving are the author's stories about China and his trip to a convention for former sex workers in Wisconsin. Somehow, redemption shines through in all of these encounters, and faith in God and humanity emerges intact, if a little bruised. The author truly believes that God can be found in the lives of ordinary people all over the world, and his compelling stories may just convince others, too. (Oct. 19) (c) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**\*Starred Review\*** "I travel," Yancey writes, "for the same reason anyone travels. Readers may, however, see more self-effacing humility than truth in these words. For the journeys here recounted are those of an extraordinary pilgrim. What Yancey seeks in his globe-straddling travels is spiritual understanding of how God works his miracles of grace through men and women grappling with life's most wrenching difficulties. Readers thus join the author in marveling at how faith can sustain believers grieving the violent deaths of loved ones in Blacksburg, Virginia, and Mumbai, India; can empower prostitutes trying to escape from the sex trade in Perth, Australia, and buoy alcoholics fighting their addiction in Chicago; and can even enable black Christians in South Africa to extend miraculous forgiveness to their former oppressors under apartheid. Traversing the U.S. and the UK, Yancey finds that the same faith that comforts the oppressed can pierce the comforts of the wealthy, summoning the devout to aid the downtrodden. Still, Yancey refuses to reduce his message to simply a call for improving this world. Drawing on the work of C. S. Lewis, he affirms his ultimate allegiance to a God whose eternal dominion transcends all things earthly. A bracing witness, challenging both religious complacency and secular skepticism. --Bryce Christensen --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Phillip Yancey is one of the most influential writers in the Evangelical world today. "I write books for myself," he says on his blog, "searching for a loving, gracious God." Yancey writes about God's grace instead of the God he feared because of the hellfire and brimstone preaching he received from what he calls a "toxic church." Yancey brings us a new format in his book, *What Good is God*. He takes us on a global trek to ten distinct groups of people to determine if the faith he writes about holds up through the tough issues he encounters in the "refiner's fire of oppression, violence, and plague." We see underground Christians in China, the horrific lives of those thrown into prostitution, recovering alcoholics in Chicago and life on campus in a 1960s Bible College. The idea for the book came to him while on an airplane. After his book tour in India was bumped because of the terror in Mumbai in 2008, Yancey instead spoke to a small group in an Indian church. His theme: How do we

find comfort in the midst of disaster and suffering? During his quest, Yancey, the journalist observed with a practiced eye while Yancey, the believer, probed his soul for answers. His sojourns through the dark places of our planet and its broken people are metaphors for his own spiritual journey. The message of *What Good is God?* echoes that of a pastor preaching from a passage in Romans following the Virginia Tech campus massacre. "Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." The design of the book was refreshing. Effective illustrations precede each chapter. The poignant cover shows a small lantern perched high above an unnamed modern city. Faith in God makes a difference--not just in a small 18th century church, but in the indescribable suffering of today's world. Compassion may have been the only gift Phillip Yancey felt he could give to the broken and injured he met on his travels. The message of *What Good is God*, however, is clear. Good exists in this flawed planet because God is here. By encouraging believers to allow the light of Christ to illuminate the darkest places of our experiences, Phillip Yancey reassures us that our vigilant God is present, no matter what tragedy we stumble upon. Reviewed by Holly Weiss, author of *Crestmont*

I really enjoyed this book, with the caveat that it grew a bit too long. This is a slow read set of tales, with speeches by the author to the various groups he was visiting. The book became a little repetitive and was a little too long in my judgment. Half of the stories told would have suffice for the illustration of the theme of the book concerning grace. I should say there were many items of interest, many pieces of information or scripture citations which were helpful at the least. But again I think maybe half these stories could have made the points he wanted to make more than adequately. One other thing. The headline I have chosen for this review is one of the queries his experiences created for Yancey. My responsive question is would religious dictatorship be more conducive to the production of less decadence? I think the question has already been answered dozens of times in Europe's history. Perhaps he needs a little more study of the religious history of Europe and its dictatorial church driven leaders.

I had already read this and got so much out of it that I wanted a copy for others in the family. This author is very readable and expresses profound truths. His heart is in the right place.

i now get ANY Phil Yancey book - only one disappointment - a devotional book wasn't what I was looking for - rest are so great and his worldview is well shaped and his journalistic background and processing and truthful ways are great.

I had to buy this book for a class, but I was captivated! Quick read, amazing stories, and it has definitely affected how I see the world.

Philip Yancey is one of two or three writers on faith matters who will always get my attention when they release new books. As a reader, one must be careful in Yancey's case, because his publishers have on several occasions repackaged or abridged previous work, and sometimes he releases a book of essays which are usually quite good, but not as focused as his best work. This book lies somewhere between the best new product (*What's So Amazing About Grace*, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, *Rumors of Another World*) and the essays. As a result it is quite readable, contextually strong but not the transformational work I was hoping for from the title. That said, this is a must read, and I hope you'll grab it quickly. The book is set against his travels, especially into situations where people easily ask where is God now? Places like China, Mumbai, Virginia Tech and South Africa become laboratories for exploring the movement of God's grace in a troubled world. The format is simple—a chapter describing the situation he was entering, the people he was speaking to and what he hoped to see, and then an essay/talk from that trip. It is a kind of exploratory experiential theology, the kind of thing Yancey does best. In every instance God's grace shines through clearly and I find myself seeing God more fully. This kind of life situational grace filled theology is a welcome antidote to the cold orthodoxy and polemical striving of many evangelical (especially Reformed tradition) writers and the lack of direction of most emergent writers. I highly recommend the book. If you like Yancey's previous work, I'm pretty confident you will love this one. If you are unfamiliar with his work, it's a pretty good place to start.

Philip Yancey is the C.S. Lewis of our generation. He takes complex spiritual issues and makes them as plain and easy to understand as the ABC's. This book explains to the power of a Christian culture in a society and consequences of a lack thereof. He uses modern day examples and real life accounts of events and personal stories. Another Christianity and Politics book I think every Christian should read is *Christians and Politics: Uneasy Partners* by Yancey. It is only 99 cents and worth far more.

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