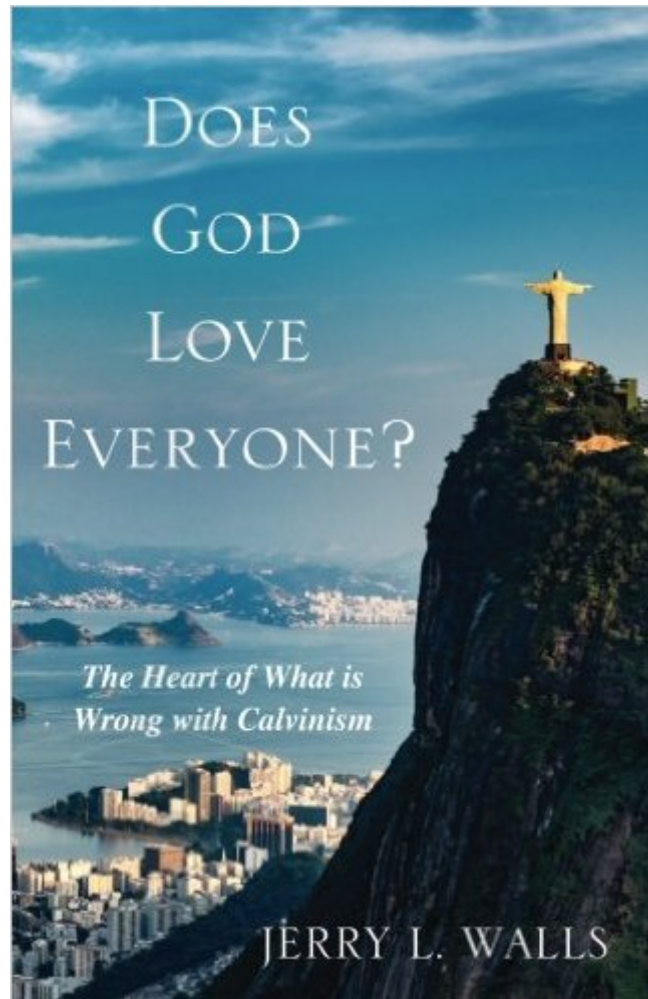


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Does God Love Everyone?: The Heart Of What's Wrong With Calvinism



Synopsis

Does God truly love all persons? Most Christians think the obvious answer to this question is, "Yes, of course he does!" Indeed, many Christians would agree that the very heart of the gospel is that God so loved the whole world that he gave his Son to make salvation available for every single person. This book shows that one of the most popular and resurgent theological movements in the contemporary evangelical church--namely, Calvinism--cannot coherently and consistently affirm this vital claim about the love of God. While some Calvinists forthrightly deny that God loves everyone, more commonly Calvinists attempt to affirm the love of God for all persons in terms that are compatible with their doctrines that Christ died only for the elect--those persons God has unconditionally chosen to save. This book shows that the Calvinist attempts to affirm God's love for all persons are fraught with severe philosophical and theological difficulties. Calvinism, then, should be rejected in favor a theology that can forthrightly and consistently affirm the love of God for all persons. Nothing less is at stake than the very heart of the gospel.

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Customer Reviews

This book is accessible for the layman and sufficient for the scholar. The aim is clearly for a broader audience but I have a hard time thinking anyone would be disappointed. Despite a full day of work and helping take care of four small children, I was able to finish this book in one evening. The price is great and you get a lot out of a very quick read! I am familiar with Dr. Walls' work and this is an excellent summation of a point that seems close to his heart. I expected more of a philosophical

case, as philosophy professors are wont to do, but this was almost entirely theological and exegetical in its argumentation. I was very happy to see all his interactions with statements made by John Calvin as well as modern Calvinists like D.A. Carson and John Piper. I do not know how Calvinists will respond to this book but I hope they take the charge seriously because it's one they will need to deal with both personally and in their ministry as long as they hold to this belief. Anyone who has seen Dr. Walls speak in a lecture or debate knows of his rhetorical strength and fervency with which he makes his case. I found this book to be slightly more measured in tone but not lacking in punch. It is a confident invitation to examine a logically and biblically consistent view of God's love. And at no point does any argument rest on the back of an emotional plea, as is sometimes lobbed against critics of limited atonement. The most shocking thing I discovered in the book, and an important early component to his larger thesis is the fact that in all of Calvin's Institutes, "God is love" is not mentioned once. That's a painful omission!

Calvinists are quick to make it sound as if the major difference between Calvinists and Arminians is that Calvinists stress the sovereignty of God while Arminians stress the free will of man. This misrepresentation has been so propagated that many Biblical scholars as well as theologians simply assume it as true. It is stated as fact. But that of course is not true. In this fantastic little book Dr. Walls sets the record straight and points to the fact that the real issue at hand is the nature and character of God. Is God a loving God? Does he truly love everyone the same? Or is he loving towards some and not others? One would think that, Biblically speaking, the answer is quite clear. It would seem that certainly God loves everyone and desires all to be saved. Dr. Walls shows us that that indeed is not the case. He shows us that for the Calvinist the sovereignty of God is above the love of God. This despite the fact that God is loving before anything exists; before he can be sovereign over anything. In a well stated, step by step argument, Dr. Walls dismantles the Calvinist view. He does it by first showing what Calvinists truly believe. He shows that for the Calvinist God truly only loves some and not all. God loves and rescues some, although he could rescue all, and he condemns the rest to eternal Hell and apparently he does this to satisfy his good pleasure and bring glory to himself. God saves some although all are equally sinners. Why doesn't he save all since within a Calvinist framework he could? How can condemning so many to Hell bring him honor and glory? The author deals with the arguments that Calvinists present in order to justify this terrible declaration concerning the character of God. The author then turns to the Arminian position.

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