

Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God Study Guide

Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God by Francis Chan

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Plot Summary

In his book *Crazy Love*, Francis Chan uses scriptural references and real life stories to encourage his readers to move closer to God. Chan first impresses upon his reader how majestic and awesome God really is. He then describes the lukewarm Christian and uses scripture to explain the disdain that God feels for this type of person. He ends his book by sharing with the reader several examples of people who have followed Christ with reckless abandon. Chan's intention in the book is to encourage his readers to follow God's leading and become the Christian that God wants them to be.

In the first chapter of his book, Chan starts his readers' journey of love by impressing upon them how awesome God really is. Chan claims that when men are encouraged to love and worship God, however, they often forget how awesome and all-powerful he really is. In the second chapter, Chan reminds his reader how quickly the human life can be taken away. The lesson of this second chapter is that the only thing that is really important in life is what has been done for God.

In Chan's third chapter, he writes about the way that a person's relationship with their earthly father can color their relationship with God. In chapters four and five, Chan uses scripture to present inappropriate responses to God's love. In chapter six, Chan changes gears and describes the way a person truly in love with Christ will act. In chapter seven, Chan dismisses the idea that faithful Christians are perfect by discussing the lifestyles of the people listed in Hebrews 11 or the hall of fame of the faithful in the Bible.

In chapter eight, Chan describes and gives characteristics of those who live lives characterized by obsession with love for God. Chapter nine is a list of people who have dedicated their lives to following God's will for them despite the costs. Sacrifices made by the people range from those of overseas missionaries who have given up wealth to American families who have made a tradition of making Christmas memorable for those around them. In chapter ten, Chan encourages his readers not to try to mimic someone else's lead or purpose for their life, but to try to determine what God really wants them to do with their own life, no matter how small or how large the sacrifice may seem.



Chapter One

Chapter One Summary and Analysis

In his book *Crazy Love*, Francis Chan uses scriptural references and real life stories to encourage his readers to move closer to God. Chan first impresses upon his reader how majestic and awesome God really is. He then describes the lukewarm Christian and uses scripture to explain the disdain God feels for this type of person. He ends his book by sharing with the reader several examples of people who have followed Christ with reckless abandon. Chan's intention in the book is to encourage his readers to follow God's leading and become the Christian that God wants them to be.

In Chapter 1, Chan focuses on giving his reader an idea of the awesomeness of God. He not only leads his reader to worship the great power and wisdom of God, but also tries to paint a picture of who God really is. In describing who God is, Chan explains that God is holy, God is eternal, God is all-knowing, God is all-powerful, and God is fair and just. Chan backs up the portrait of God that he has just painted using scripture from the Bible. These descriptions focus on scripture found in Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4 where both John and Isaiah describe what they see and hear when they have a vision of being before the throne of God.

After Chan impresses upon his readers how great and powerful God really is, he then writes about what he calls "an epidemic of spiritual amnesia." He says that although people constantly witness the greatness of God, they quickly forget this greatness when they are called to worship and love him. He concludes that people need constant reminders of the greatness of God to keep them on track.



Chapter Two

Chapter Two Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 2, Chan challenges his readers to consider the fleeting nature of life. He notes that if a person's body ceases to function properly or if there is an accident, such as a car wreck, the human's life can be over instantly. Chan shares an experience where he suffered with heart palpitations but did not want to go to the doctor because of his stubborn nature and because he knew it was stress that was causing his problems. His symptoms grew worse until he gave his worries to God. When he finally did give all his worries and stresses to God, his symptoms disappeared.

Chan states that a person's worry and stress are the result of a failure to believe that God is big enough to take care of them. He indicates these qualities reek of arrogance. Arrogance is described as the feeling that one's self or the things that one does is more important than who they really are. Chan talks about this feeling of arrogance as the way that an extra for a movie might obsess on the one scene he is involved in although in reality, no one else really cares about the tiny part that he plays. Chan stresses through this example that in reality, life is only about God and we are only here to point others to Him.

In the conclusion of this chapter, Chan returns to the idea of the fragility of human life. He points out that many people waste their lives doing things that don't really matter instead of living their lives for God. Chan argues that we should spend more time working for God. We should realize that God is the only thing that really matters in life.



Chapter Three

Chapter Three Summary and Analysis

Chan begins this chapter by pointing out how few people really understand the depth and wideness of the love of God. He argues lack of understanding of God's love is because people often have bad relationships with their earthly fathers. In their mind, they equate their relationship with God to the one that they have had with their earthly father. Even the best of earthly fathers cannot love the way that God does, so this connection often leads to a misunderstanding of the true nature of God.

Chan writes that what he remembers most about his relationship with his father was that Chan tried his best not to annoy his father. Chan indicates that he carried this belief into his relationship with God and found himself just trying not to annoy God until the point that he became a father. When Chan became a father, and experience the love a person can have for a child and the feeling that being loved in return, he realized how much God actually loves all of his creation.

One of the devices that Chan uses to support his ideas throughout his book is direct quotations from Biblical scriptures. For instance, Chan writes that before he had children of his own, he connected best with passages that spoke of the fear of God because he feared his own father and knew how this felt.

In the process of writing this chapter, Chan also speaks of his disbelief that God could actually want to spend time with him. During a four-day vacation with God in the woods, and with the help of Jeremiah 1, Chan writes that he finally realized how completely God knows him. During this time and through his search of the scriptures, Chan realized that God had created him for a specific reason and that he did not need to fear the possibility of failure and of disappointing God.

Also during the chapter, Chan describes God as the greatest good in the world. He reasons that if God did not push people toward what was good, in this case, Himself, we would, at the conclusion of our lives, believe that he was unloving. In the end of this third chapter, Chan summarizes his material and asks his reader to consider if they really love God, or if they just love the things that he offers to them.



Chapter Four

Chapter Four Summary and Analysis

In this chapter, Chan first includes a summary of a parable in the Bible that he says describes the appropriate response to God's love. The main character of this parable is a man, representing all men, who discovers that a great treasure, which represents God's love, is buried in a field. The man sells all that he has in order to buy this field. Chan says this giving of everything in order to get and keep God's love is the way that all men should react when they learn about the availability and presence of God's love.

Chan goes on to say that most people, however, have inappropriate responses to God's offer of love. He uses Jesus' parable of seeds and different types of soils to describe what different things can distract people from God. Things that distract people from God include activities such as hobbies, sports, and things such as money and belongings. Chan believes the majority of Christians only want to do the minimum amount required to be considered "godly." He describes these people who have inappropriate responses to God's offer of love, and only want to do just what it takes to get by as lukewarm Christians.

Lukewarm Christians, Chen writes, attend church regularly because they feel it is expected of them. They also give money as long as it doesn't affect their way of life. Lukewarm people also tend to go along with what is popular instead of what is right, according to Chen. Lukewarm people also don't genuinely hate sin since they want forgiveness only because they don't want to suffer the consequences of their sins. Those who are lukewarm also rarely do radical acts for Christ or share their faith with others. These lukewarm Christians allow God to be only a part of their lives and they also compare themselves to non-Christians to determine their spirituality.

Chan goes on to write that these lukewarm Christians also do not love God or others as deeply as the scriptures say that they should. This type of Christian also does as little as possible, but just enough to make them feel as if they are not guilty. These lukewarm Christians aren't very different from non-Christians in the way they live their lives.

In order to support each of his claims about the personality and characteristics of those who are lukewarm, Chan quotes scripture. In each of these cases, Chan uses more than one verse from scripture appropriate for explaining why Jesus did not like these characteristics in His followers. Often these scripture verses also describe the way Jesus felt about those who acted in this manner.



Chapter Five

Chapter Five Summary and Analysis

In this chapter, Chan tells his reader that he plans to share examples out of the Bible that describe poor responses to God's gift of love. The first example that Chan shares is found in the third chapter of Revelations where God indicates that "lukewarm" Christians are not real Christians and will not be seen in heaven. Chan explains that the people whom John writes about in Revelations are not Christians. After studying the Gospels, Chan writes that he has come to the conclusion that Jesus wants either all or nothing from His believers.

Chan writes next about the parable of the soils. He argues that modern Christians misunderstand this parable by trying to make it about being saved or unsaved. Chan, however, indicates the parable is only about what type of soil is good soil. Chan reasons that readers misunderstand the parable because they are concerned only about what they have to do in order to be saved and go to heaven. Chan continues his argument by including scripture that indicates Jesus intended for his followers not only to believe in him, but also to do as he asked them to do.

In the next section, Chan encourages his reader by telling that all Christians have areas in their lives where they struggle with doing God's will. Just because they struggle doesn't mean they aren't true Christians, Chan writes. He explains it is at this point that the love of God and his grace covers these areas in which each Christian are lacking. He goes on to write that it is the attitude of obedience and surrender that makes the difference between the saved and unsaved.

In the following section of this chapter, Chan discusses the way that wealth often negatively effects Christians. He starts by explaining that even though most Americans believe they are not wealthy, they are actually more wealthy than the majority of people. As in many other sections of his book, Chan quotes several sections of scripture that support this claim that riches are a stumbling block on the way to the kingdom of heaven.

In the final section of the chapter, Chan describes why giving God "leftovers" instead of what He really deserves is evil. Chan uses the scripture that refers to sacrificing blemished animals as being an evil practice. Chan indicates that this is the same idea as giving God leftovers instead of serving Him fully. Chan also indicates that Christians should be less afraid of failure and more afraid of being busy, but accomplishing anything. He supports this statement with an example of a bag of potato chips that has no trans fat in it. Although Chan hasn't harmed himself by eating these chips, he hasn't consumed anything beneficial to himself either.

Chan closes his chapter by asking his reader if they really counted the cost when they chose to become followers of Christ. He wonders if they would really follow Jesus where



he led them, even if it meant going away from family, or even to certain death. He tells his readers not to assume they are one of the Christians who are following Christ as they should.



Chapter Six

Chapter Six Summary and Analysis

In this chapter, Chan first introduces his readers to Clara, his wife's grandmother. Chan writes that Clara is an example of a person who is deeply in love with God. He compares the way that Clara thought of her time with God as the same way that someone who is truly in love with another human being would act. In order to decide if they are truly in love with God, Chan says each Christian should ask themselves one question. Chan quotes information from John Piper's book *God is the Gospel* asking if a person would be happy in a heaven-like place if God were not there. If a person is truly in love with God, then he will not consider the idea of a heaven without God.

Chan then changes gears as he tells his readers that he hopes that they do not believe that works that rise from fear and guilt are the answer to solving the problem of lukewarm Christianity. He writes that it is, instead, works that arise from true love and affection for God that will solve the problem of lukewarm Christianity. Chan wonders, though, why there are so few people who actually enjoy being with God in the way they should as born again Christians. Chan argues that Christians need God to help them need God. He uses an example of a person trying to run and eat at the same time. He argues that one person can't do both. He reasons that a person also can't sin and run toward Christ at the same time. Chan writes that as a person becomes more and more focused on Christ, they will be more like Him and will learn to love him more.

In the next section of this chapter, Chan tries to explain how Christians should deal with the hardships and troubles that they experience in life. When we seek pity from others for our circumstances, we as people get the glory instead of freely sacrificing and giving God the glory so that he can reward us for our actions. Chan also suggests his reader to test God's ability to bless those who serve him by giving more than they are able and seeing how God will bless them in return.

In his conclusion, Chan challenges his reader to tell God how they really feel about Him. To confess to Christ what has been getting in their way of serving Him. He suggests they tell God that they want to love Him as they should, and then point out exactly the things that they love about Him.



Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven Summary and Analysis

In this chapter, Chan attempts to describe what a Christian who is actively pursuing Christ will look like. In order to first dispel the idea that Christians who are active in their belief in Christ are perfect, Chan points to Hebrews 11. This chapter is sometimes referred to as the hall of fame of the faithful. Instead of being perfect saints, the people listed in this chapter are liars, murderers and adulterers. Chan also points out the way that the people who truly believe in Christ often do things and live in such a way that makes no sense to nonbelievers.

Chan then goes on to tell his readers that the ideal example of the Christian life is Jesus' life. Christians should be willing to sacrifice and give the same way that Jesus did. In an effort to determine if they are living as Christ would want them to, Chan has his readers refer to Matthew 25. In this chapter, Jesus tells those who want to follow Him that if they see others in need but do not help them, they are sinning. Chan indicates that people should treat each person as if that person were Christ.

Not only does God expect His children to give others their love, but He also expects them to give freely of their time. Chan suggests that we should give God all of our time and let Him show us how best to use it. He says that instead of keeping for ourselves all of the wonderful things that God has given us, we should share these things with others. The only way for Christians to live like Christians is to give away what they have in excess to those who don't have as much as they.

Chan then writes about the reasons why he believes that Jesus would tell his disciples not to take anything with them when they chose to follow Him. Chan believes this was so the disciples would have to completely trust Jesus to provide their food, clothing and other necessities.

Chan finishes this chapter by addressing the idea of faith. He says that when he was a student in Bible college, a professor had asked what he was doing that required faith. It was at this point that Chan realized that if he didn't believe in God, he wouldn't be living his life much differently. Chan points out several verses that echo the idea that Christians don't live their lives much differently from other people in the world. He stresses that what is important in life is not the amount of money made, but how a person uses the things that God has given them to help others.

Chapter Eight

Chapter Eight Summary and Analysis

In this chapter, Chan spells out a description of an obsessed Christian. As with the other assertions that he has made about Christ and Christian living, Chan backs up the characteristics of these obsessed people with examples taken from scripture.

In this chapter, Chan says that obsessed people are able to give freely and openly, even to those who will never be able or want to return their kindnesses. He writes that those who are obsessed will care more about God's kingdom than their own personal safety. Chan writes that he believes that Jesus intends for Christians to live lives that are in some way connected to the poor.

Chan also says that obsessed people are more concerned with obedience to God than anything else. Obsessed people also always fight the presence of pride in their lives and strive to give all of the glory to God. People who are obsessed with God enjoy serving others; they also enjoy giving and try not to be known as takers. Those who are obsessed also schedule their lives around eternity instead of the present.

Finally, Chan writes that a person who is obsessed with God has a life that is characterized by a deep and passionate love for God and for others. People who are obsessed are also honest with God about their faults and sins. People who are obsessed with God spend time with Him and enjoy the time that they spend with Him. People who are obsessed with Jesus are concerned about their character. They try to always ensure that their manner is one of joy and that they cultivate their God-given gift of joy. Obsessed people also realize the best thing they can do with their life is to be faithful to God. They also realize they need to be thankful for God's gifts, but know that trying to pay Him back for all his goodness will spoil the intimacy they might otherwise enjoy with Him.



Chapter Nine

Chapter Nine Summary and Analysis

In this chapter, Chan shares examples of people who have lived lives that are totally devoted to Christ. Chan uses the examples to challenge his readers to live the way that God wants them to live and also to show them what true Christianity is all about.

The first example that Chan writes about is Nathan Barlow. Barlow was a doctor who dedicated his life to helping treat the people of Ethiopia who suffered with a condition called mossy foot that made them social outcasts. Barlow wanted so badly not to have to leave Ethiopia that on one trip to the United States to treat an intense toothache, Barlow had all of his teeth pulled so that he would not have that problem again.

Chan's second example of Godliness is found in a person named Simpson Rebbavarapu. Rebbavarapu's parents tried to abort him because they already had five children and couldn't afford to feed another one. Because the medicines given to his mother didn't work, Simpson was born and taken to a missionary run orphanage when he was four. As an adult, Simpson believes it was God's will that he was allowed to live. He works at an orphanage that he started and also evangelizes to the illiterate through audio Bibles. Simpson does not receive a salary but relies totally on God for his livelihood.

Jamie Lang is Chan's third example of a godly person. Jamie travels to Tanzania and while there meets a baby whose mother is dying of AIDS. Jamie's love and kindness in caring for the child prompted the mother to be saved before her death. Jamie then worked out the details to adopt the baby. Since that time she has married and had a child of her own, but she and her family returned to Tanzania to continue to reach out to the people there by translating the Bible into their language.

Marva J. Dawn is another example of a godly person that Chan shares in this ninth chapter. Dawn is a teacher whose family lives off her salary despite the fact she has written and published a book. The proceeds of the sales from this book go to support charities in Africa. Although Dawn has medical conditions that more money could help alleviate and make her more comfortable, and that her car is old and needs work, Dawn refuses to use any of the money from her book sales for herself.

Rich Mullins is a popular songwriter and musician who gave the proceeds of the sales of his albums to his church. He lived off a small stipend given to him by the church, but the rest of the money was given away.

Rings is an old man whom Chan is not even sure of his real name. Rings lives in his pickup truck. Rings uses the money he earns each month to buy food which he prepares to help feed the homeless in his area. Rings uses the time that he spends



cooking telling those who come to eat about Jesus. He tells them that if he can be saved, anyone can be saved.

Rachel Saint is another woman who has touched many lives with her love for Jesus. Although she had the opportunity to be the companion of a wealthy woman, Saint instead chose to go to South Africa as a missionary. Her desire to minister to the Waorani people there was sharpened because her brother was killed by these people. Through Saint's influence, the Waorani people turned from their vengeful and murderous ways and came to believe in God.

George Muller is a man who has changed many people's lives with his example of Christian love when he and his wife started an orphanage in England. The emphasis of the Mullers' orphanage was not only to help the homeless children, but also to give people an example of what could happen when someone trusted God for everything.

Brother Yun was a Chinese priest persecuted by the police because he tried to preach to his people. During one of his numerous stays in prison, Yun was beaten until his legs were crippled in an attempt to keep him from spreading the gospel. Yun, however, was able to walk out of prison six months later, and continues to preach despite the fact that he is wanted by the police.

Shane Claiborne works through The Simple Way community in Philadelphia to help the poor and underprivileged living in that area. Although Claiborne is often a featured speaker, he doesn't ask for payment for his services, only that what money can be given be given to The Simple Way. Claiborne gives away the proceeds from his book, and has also spent several weeks ministering to Iraqi believers.

The Robynson family is a family of five who celebrates Christmas by serving breakfast to homeless people in their town.

Susan Diego was challenged by God to speak at a women's conference in Uganda even though she did not enjoy speaking in front of people and had, in fact, asked God not to make her do so.

Lucy is a former prostitute who forty years later as a saved person opens her home to those who are caught up in prostitution.

Cornerstone Community Church is a church that has worked its way up to giving away 50 percent of its budget. Instead of building a multimillion-dollar sanctuary for themselves, church members decided to have more money to give away by building an outdoor amphitheater instead.



Chapter Ten

Chapter Ten Summary and Analysis

In his concluding chapter, Chan encourages readers to try to determine for themselves whether or not they are living their lives as God wants them to do. He suggests one way of doing this is by pretending that each person they come in contact with is actually Christ. Are they treating each person as they would if he was Christ? Chan also tells his reader that in addition to thinking about how they should best live their lives, they should also put their plan into action.

In his writing, Chan also warns his readers not to try to duplicate another person's sacrifice, but to find their own special niche that God has made for them. Chan notes a verse in I Corinthians that indicates that each Christian is gifted in a different way.

Chan ends his book by reminding his readers that they must continue to pursue God. He also reminds his readers that they are not alone and that their actions affect much more than they will ever be fully aware. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is another aspect of his Christian faith that Chan says has helped him more than anything else.

In Chan's conclusion he writes about three believers martyred in Turkey. Although these men were tortured for several hours before their deaths, Chan is sure that when they died and met Jesus, they were assured that all of their troubles were worth the pain. Chan tells his readers that they must keep in mind that one day they will be called to give an account of their life to God. He hopes that each person who reads his book will be able to quote the words of Paul in 2 Timothy that they lived life as best they could for the glory of God.



Characters

God

God could be said to be the main character of this novel. It is Chan's intention to help his reader develop a closer and deeper relationship with God. Those who believe in Christian religions believe that God created the Earth and universe as well as human beings. God's son, Jesus, was sent to Earth to die for the people's sins. Chan indicates that it is God's desire that people on Earth live their lives as Jesus lived his life. Chan's idea is that people should try to seek God's will for their life. Chan argues that God has a plan for each person to serve a purpose in the world. However, at the same time, people should realize that the only reason that they are on Earth is to serve God and do His will. Their life is about God and not about themselves.

Francis Chan

Francis Chan is the author of this novel. He encourages his reader to seek and develop a deep and relentless love affair with God. Chan argues that people have forgotten that their lives are given to them by God and that most people have forgotten that their life is really about God, not themselves. Chan writes in his book that he was convicted of his own lack of faithful living by one of his professors in Bible college. He also writes that one of the things that he did when he became convicted of his own lack of faith, he began going to downtown Los Angeles to share his faith. Although Chan indicates he did not believe he was being called to do this, he does believe he was acting in obedience to God.

David

David is a man from the Bible who is called a man after God's own mind when in fact, he was actually an adulterer and murderer. David's children were also reported to be out of control. However, David was one of them men who was included in the faith hall of fame in Hebrews 11. David is one of the people whom Chan includes in his book to show that even people who make mistakes can still be faithful to God.

Stan Gerlach

Stan Gerlach is a man who sat down and died just after he finished witnessing to a group of people at a funeral. The irony of the situation was that he had just warned the group that life was short and could end at any time.



Brooke Bronkowski

Brooke Bronkowski is a teenaged girl who died at the age of fourteen in a car accident. Although Brooke died at an early age, Chan argues that she had much more influence on people in God's work than many people who live much longer.

Clara

Clara is Chan's wife's grandmother. Clara is an example of a person whom Chan believes is truly in love with Christ.

Solomon

Solomon is a character from the Christian Bible who warned Bible readers not to rush into God's presence with words. Solomon says that fools rush into God's presence with words.

John

John is a character from the Bible who describes in Revelations 4 a vision that he has of seeing God seated on His throne. John not only describes God and his throne, but also the people and creatures that are surrounding the throne and worshipping God.

Isaiah

Isaiah is another man who lived in Biblical times who had a vision of God on His throne. Isaiah's account of his vision of God is detailed in Isaiah 6.

Abram/Abraham

Abram/Abraham is a man from Biblical times who is made the father of a nation when he was 99 years old. At one point, because he was afraid for his safety, Abraham lied and told people that his wife was actually his sister. Later, however, Abraham comes close to sacrificing his own son because God tells him to do so.



Objects/Places

www.crazylovebook.com

This is a website where additional resources to help the reader can be found.

God's Throne

Both Isaiah and John note in their scriptures that they have seen God seated upon his throne. Chan does not put as much emphasis on describing the throne as he does on describing who is in the throne room and the way that they are worshipping.

Movie of Life

Chan tells his reader that this movie of life is not about them, but instead about God. He uses this allegory to help his readers understand their relative unimportance in the great scheme of things.

The Good News

Chan writes that the Good News is the fact that each human can have God Himself.

Parables

Jesus often spoke His truths in the parables. These stories kept the attention of those who were not listening completely, who weren't really trying to understand, or would not fully understand what Jesus was trying to tell them.

Hebrews 11

Hebrews 11 is a chapter in the Christian Bible often referred to as the hall of fame of faith. Although Chan argues that it might be believed that these people listed in this chapter were superhuman, they weren't.

Mossy foot

Mossy foot is a debilitating condition found in people who live and work in areas with volcanic soil. This condition caused the people to be shunned, somewhat like the lepers of Biblical times.



The Heart

In the time period that the Psalms were written, the heart was considered to be the seat of a person's emotions.

The Soul

In the time period when the Psalms were written, the soul was considered to be the basis for a person's traits and qualities.

Themes

Love

The theme of love and the importance of love in a Christian's relationship with God and with fellow Christians is one theme that is repeated throughout Chan's book. Chan suggests to his readers that they should have a love for God that comes not from what God has given them or can give them, but simply for who He is. Chan suggests we should love God the way God loves us. Although we as frail, easily killed humans are unable to do anything in the larger scheme of things to benefit God that he could not already do for Himself if He so desired, God still loves us with a love that Chan refers to as "crazy."

Much of Chan's book is made up of describing the types of followers that God wants to have or the type that He loves. First, God loves those who give freely and happily. God loves people who make him the central feature of their lives. God wants his followers to love others as much as they love themselves. In fact, Chan makes the point that Christians should equate those that they come in contact with on a daily basis to Christ. If they do not show love to these people, then they have not shown love to Christ. Chan writes that our love should even extend to people who are unable or unwilling to return the loving advances that we make toward them. In contrast, God does not want followers who only love the attention that being a follower of Christ might get them.

Finally, Chan indicates that God's definition of what matters is solely made up of how much we love. He is not concerned about what we do for a living or how much money we make, but how much we are willing to love the people that we meet on a day-to-day basis.

Scriptural basis for arguments

One of the important things that Chan does in his book is that he backs up all of his arguments with a least one, and usually more than one, example from the Bible. By including these scriptural references, Chan is making it clear to his readers that he is not just making up the things that he is writing about. These claims that he makes are not just his opinions on the matter; they are supported by scriptures from the Bible. As it is sometimes easy to take a verse or two from scripture out of context and manipulate it to fit a writer's devices, it is important to note that Chan often uses more than one scriptural reference to support his arguments. These cross-references show the reader that Chan is not likely taking scripture out of context since the same idea is often echoed in more than one verse. By using scripture to reference his work, Chan also shows his reader that he is not intending to lecture them, but to share with them what the word of God says about particular topics. For instance, Chan's characteristics of the lukewarm Christian do not come from Chan, but from the scriptures. Similarly, Chan's



characteristics of the obsessed Christian do not come from Chan, but from the scriptures instead.

Faith

A deeply-rooted faith in God is one characteristic that Chan stresses throughout his book as vitally important to every Christian. For instance, he indicates that fourteen-year-old Brooke Bronkowski's faith to God ensured that her short life was not wasted. .

Living by faith is another characteristic that Chan stresses as being very important to a Christian. Chan writes that he was convinced while attending Bible college that he was not doing anything in his life based solely on faith. He indicates that this presence of a faith-based activity can differentiate the lives of Christians from those of non-Christians. In one portion of his book, Chan refers to Hebrews 11, which is often known as the faith hall of fame. Although these people did not have perfect lives, and might have appeared to be non-believers, they had a strong a vibrant faith in Christ.

In the larger picture, however, Chan writes that even the characteristic of faith is not as important as the characteristic of love when it comes to living the Christian life.



Style

Perspective

Francis Chan writes his book in order to persuade his readers to develop a closer relationship with God. Chan's point of view is that his readers will benefit from their improved relationship with God. Chan gives clues that he has a religious background. He indicates, for example, that it was while he was taking classes at a Bible college that he was first convinced that he was not following God the way that he should be. Chan also is the senior pastor of Cornerstone Church in California.

Chan has a very strong opinion that the majority of people do not worship and love God the way they should. He describes these people as "lukewarm" Christians whom he doubts will be in heaven. Chan also indicates there are certain people who have given their lives to Christ and allow Him to dictate their actions. Chan indicates it is these Christians who will be allowed to join God in heaven. Chan encourages all of his readers to try to live devoted lives full of faith in God.

Chan writes his book in the first-person point of view, referring often to the readers and himself as "we." This idea that Chan is talking not only about the habits of other Christians, but also about his own actions, gives the reader the idea that Chan also realizes his own shortcomings.

Tone

Although Chan deals with some material that could be considered very guilt-inspiring and "heavy" to the readers, he does not present the material in a way that is overbearing or guilt-inducing. He does not propose to judge his reader. A great deal of this lack of judgment on Chan's part comes from the fact that he supports his arguments with quotes from the scriptures. If a reader feels condemned after reading this book, it would be a result of feeling convicted by the words of the Bible and not Chan's own words.

Chan also shares with his reader some of his own shortcomings. For instance, he writes of the way that he was convinced of the lack of faith in his life while he was in Bible college. He tells his readers that even he had not attained the level of the obsessed Christian that he writes about.

The tone of Chan book could probably best be described as persuasive. Through his material, Chan intends to encourage his readers to seek a deeper and more lasting relationship with God. Although Chan does mention some of the possible outcomes of not seeking this deeper relationship, his main focus is on the benefits that come from developing the relationship.



Structure

The subject matter of this book is divided into ten chapters. Each chapter has both a numerical designation assigned to it as well as a short, catchy blurb that gives the reader an idea what the chapter will be about. Inside each chapter, most quotes from the Bible are offset and set off from the rest of the text with several blank spaces. Often Chan will emphasize certain words or phrases such as "lukewarm people" by typing these in all capitals. This helps the reader identify where he will find another reference to a characteristic shared by this type of Christian. When Chan changes directions completely within a chapter, he will use a set of arrows with one arrow pointing upward and another pointing downward to indicate this change within the text of a chapter.

Quotes

"I sometimes struggle with how to properly respond to God's magnitude in a world bent on ignoring Him or merely tolerating Him. But know this: God will not be tolerated. He instructs us to fear and worship Him." (Chapter 1, p. 26).

"We don't get to decide who God is. "God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.'" (Ex. 3:14). We don't change that." (Chapter 1, p. 29).

"On the average day, we live caught up in ourselves. On the average day we don't consider God very much. On the average day, we forget that our life truly is a vapor." (Chapter 2, p. 37).

"If I could pick one word to describe my feelings about God in those first years of being a Christian, it would be fear." (Chapter 3, p. 54).

"My existence was not random, nor was it an accident. God knew who he was creating, and designed me for a specific work." (Chapter Three, p. 57).

"The greatest knowledge we can ever have is knowing that God treasures us." (Chapter 3, p. 59).

"My conclusion? Jesus' call to commitment is clear: He wants all or nothing." (Chapter 5, p. 83).

"We're willing to make changes in our lives only if we think it affects our salvation." (Chapter 5, p. 84).

"God wanted the temple gates shut. The weak sacrifices of the laid-back priests were an insult to Him. He was saying that no worship is better than apathetic worship. I wonder how many church doors God wants to shut today." (Chapter 5, p. 90).

"Lukewarm living and claiming Christ's name simultaneously is utterly disgusting to God. And when we are honest, we have to admit that isn't very fulfilling or joyful to us, either." (Chapter 6, p. 101).

"Jesus Christ didn't die only to save us from Hell; He also died to save us from our bondage to sin." (Chapter 6, p. 101).

"I think we naturally assume that if we look out for our own interests and concerns, we will be happy. But people who sacrifice for others will tell you that season of giving are the most rewarding of their lives." (Chapter Six, p. 107).

"These people were far from perfect, yet they had faith in a God who was able to come through in seemingly dire situations." (Chapter 7, p. 112).



"The ultimate example of sacrifice and surrender is, of course, Jesus Christ. He had everything and still chose to surrender it out of love for His Father. Your attitude should be the same as His..." (Chapter 7, pg. 115).

"One of the most memorized verses in the whole Bible says, 'For God so loved the world that he gave' (John 3:16). Right there we see the connection between loving and giving evidently established." (Chapter 7, p. 118).

"I think we sometimes assume that if we are nice, people will know that we are Christians and want to know more about Jesus. But it really doesn't work that way." (Chapter 8, p. 128).

"Why is it that the story of someone who has actually done what Jesus commands resonates deeply with us, but we then assume we could never do anything so radical or intense? Or, why do we call it radical when, to Jesus, it is simply the way it is? The way it should be?" (Chapter 8, p. 134).

"It's pride, plain and simple, that keeps me from giving God all the glory and keeping some of it for myself." (Chapter 8, p. 136).

"The point is that there is another path, an alternative to the individualism, selfishness, and materialism of the American Dream (even the so-called Christian version)." (Chapter 10, p. 164).

"My hope and prayer is that you finish this book with hope, believing that part of your responsibility in the body of Christ is to help set the pace for the church by listening and obeying and living Christ." Chapter Ten, p. 170).



Topics for Discussion

Discuss the majesty of God. How do the examples of His greatness, as found in creation, help one understand His personality?

Do you agree with Chan that "lukewarm" Christianity is becoming a rampant problem in American churches?

Just as Chan's Bible professor ask him, challenge yourself by asking what it is that you do that is faith-based. What makes your life different from that of the non-Christian?

How does Chan's use of scripture in his arguments make his conclusion more reliable and plausible?

Consider the idea that human life is so short and so fleeting. How does Chan use the briefness of human life to encourage his readers to dedicate themselves to Christ?

Compare and contrast a couple of the profiles that Chan shares in his book about people who have done the calling of God. How have these people allowed their lives to be affected by God? How are their stories different? How are they similar?

How is it that people who are in love with God are similar to a person who is in love with an earthly person? Do you know anyone who shows these characteristics?