Foreword by Chris Tomlin

- I love the description of Francis Chan by Chris Tomlin – he writes, “Francis is one of those rare people you come across in life who leaves you wanting to be better.”
  
  o Who in your life has made you want to be a better person?
  
  o Would others say this about YOU?

  ▪ I thought of the movie *As Good as It Gets* with Jack Nicholson where he says, “You make me want to be a better man.”

  ▪ One of my favorite songs is called “Lead Me” by a group called Sanctus Real about a young father wanting to be all that his wife and children need him to be – lyrics for this song are at the end of this packet.

- Tomlin also says that “the life that Jesus calls us to is **absolute craziness** to the world.” The Bible agrees with that statement!
  
  o For the message of the cross is **foolishness** to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ~ 1 Corinthians 1:18

  o The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. ~ 1 Corinthians 2:14

Preface

- If Chan is correct – that those who want more of God need to surrender themselves “totally to God’s purposes” – how do we deal with this message that seems to be in direct contrast with the “American dream” of getting all you can and taking care of #1?
  
  o Another recent book addresses this issue head-on. Pastor and author David Platt wrote *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* – read it when you get a chance.
Chan writes that God put him in Simi Valley, CA “to lead a church of comfortable people into lives of risk and adventure.”

- Which category are you in – “comfortable” or “risky and adventurous”?
- Does the Christian life really HAVE to be filled with “risk and adventure”? Why or why not? What Biblical examples do you have to support your opinion?
- A great book, especially for men, that deals with the adventure of walking with the Lord is by pastor Marc Batterson titled *Wild Goose Chase: Reclaim the Adventure of Pursuing God*. Batterson wrote the following words:

  *I’m not convinced that your date of death is the date carved on your tombstone. Most people die long before that. We start dying when we have nothing worth living for. And we don’t really start living until we find something worth dying for. Ironically, discovering something worth dying for is what makes life worth living.***

  - Are you really “living” like Batterson describes? Missionary and martyr Jim Eliot once said something similar – his famous quote is “He is no fool who gives what he can not keep to gain that which he can not lose.” Have you given up the temporal things of this world to gain the eternal things of the kingdom of Heaven?

Chan writes that the biggest problem Christians have is “an inaccurate view of God.”

- How can we get an accurate view of who God is?
  - The study of **THEOLOGY and DOCTRINE**

- Theology – simply means the study of God
- Doctrine – this is a scary word for most Christians, but what does the word doctrine mean?
  - Teachings
  - Principles
  - Precepts
  - Tenets
  - Beliefs

  - The core of the Christian faith is the **RIGHT TEACHING** of who God is – which entails the study of the fundamental and historical Christian doctrines of the faith!
I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell.

The third day He arose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

**Basic Doctrines of the Christian Faith**

1. God the Father – (theology)
2. Jesus Christ the Son of God (Christology)
3. The Holy Spirit (pneumatology)
4. Angels (angelology)
5. Inspiration of Scripture (bibliology)
6. Man (anthropology)
7. Sin (hamartiology)
8. Salvation (soteriology)
9. The Church (ecclesiology)
10. The Second Coming of Jesus (eschatology)
Chapter 1 – Stop Praying

- Chan implores us to BE STILL and know that our God is mighty and awesome!
  - On page 26, Chan quotes from RC Sproul – “Men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God.”
    - Doesn’t this idea of us realizing our “insignificance” run counter to everything our culture is telling us about how “worthy” we are?
    - What happened to the Burger King “have-it-your-way” philosophy?
  - Did you watch the “Awe Factor” video?
    - What were your thoughts?

- Notice that Psalm 19 is written in the ACTIVE voice. The Bible is telling us that God IS DECLARING and IS SPEAKING to us today through His creation.
  - Are we listening?
  - Are we stopping to “smell the roses” and appreciate the One who created them?

- Chan moves into the defining attributes of God
  - God is holy
  - God is eternal
  - God is all-knowing (referred to as omniscient)
  - God is all-powerful
  - God is fair and just

  - A great resource to learn more about the attributes of God is the classic book by A.W. Pink titled The Attributes of God.

Chapter 2 – You Might Not Finish This Chapter

- On page 39 Chan writes, “On the average day, we live caught up in ourselves.”
  - Why doesn’t this bother us more?
  - Notice what Chan is trying to say – we have time and space for only one thing to dominate our lives, our thoughts and our ambitions – if we place ourselves at the center of our own universe, we must displace God from the throne of our life – and only God is worthy of our full measure of devotion.
What does it mean to be fully devoted to God?

- Read 2 Samuel 23:15 – the story of David’s Mighty Men and their devotion to their earthly king who simply asked for a drink of water from the well in Bethlehem.
- If these men were that devoted to risk their lives to fetch water for their earthly king from a well surrounded by their enemies, how devoted should we be to serve our Heavenly King?

- On page 42 Chan writes that “both worry and stress reek of arrogance.”
  - Does that sound a little harsh? Doesn’t everyone worry and stress about things? What point do you think that Chan is trying to drive home here?

- On page 44 Chan writes, “The point of your life is to point to Him.”
  - Has anyone ever told you that before?
  - The Westminster Shorter Catechism’s first question and response deal with this issue:
    - Q1 – What is the chief end of man?
    - A1 – Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.
  - Does it sound like Chan is saying the same thing as these early church fathers?

- On page 48 Chan shares the poem by teenager Brooke Bronkowski, a young woman who died in a car accident, but left an impact in the lives of others because of her devotion to Christ.
  - How do you want to be remembered by your loved ones?
  - Are you spending time on eternal things…or temporal things?
  - Is there someone you need to tell about the Good News of Jesus Christ? Why are you waiting?
  - “All that matters is the reality of who we are before God.” ~ Francis Chan
  - The only significance of life consists in helping to establish the kingdom and this can be done only by means of the acknowledgment and profession of the truth by each one of us. ~ Leo Tolstoy (1828 – 1920)

Notes for parent book discussion prepared by Dan Panetti, Worldview Director for Prestonwood Christian Academy, © 2010
Chapter 3 – Crazy Love

- Chan shares a powerful, yet sad, story about how his father’s life marred his own view of God – this is true for so many people today. What about you? Did your father’s lack of genuine affection, abuse, abandonment, failings, or sins adversely affect your ability to fully understand the love and grace of our Heavenly Father?

  - Chan had to change his perception about how God’s Word speaks about fearing God – he now uses the words *reverent intimacy* to express the biblical concept of respect and awe.

  - When you read Scripture, do you see a loving and gentle Father in God – one who protects His children, adores His children, and sacrifices for His children?

- On page 62 Chan writes, “The greatest good on this earth is God. Period.”

  - Have you ever done anything or gone anywhere that you really wanted to someone else to experience?

    - How did you tell others about your experience?
    - Do you tell others about Christ with that same enthusiasm?

Chapter 4 – Profile of the Lukewarm

*It is not scientific doubt, not atheism, not pantheism, not agnosticism, that in our day and in this land is likely to quench the light of the gospel. It is a proud, sensuous, selfish, luxurious, church-going, hollow-hearted prosperity.*

- Chan begins Chapter 4 with the statement above. What are your thoughts on this statement? Is Chan talking about someone else…or us?

  - On page 67 Chan warns us – “Do not assume you are the good soil.”

    - Chan writes, “A relationship with God simply cannot grow when money, sins, activities, favorite sports teams, addictions, or commitments are piled on top of it.”

    - Isn’t Chan describing the North Dallas/Plano culture we live in?
    - Do you think Chan is right? Why or why not?
    - If Chan is correct, what changes do you need to make so that your faith can grow?
• On page 67 Chan asks a powerful and convicting question – “Has your relationship with God actually changed the way you life?”
  
  o Many don’t know that Francis Chan has recently stepped down from his position as pastor at Simi Valley and is currently waiting for the Lord to guide and direct his next steps. He lives a very simple lifestyle – even after the success of Crazy Love.

• Which one of Chan’s description of “LUKEWARM PEOPLE” most impacted you?
  
  o LUKEWARM PEOPLE:
    ▪ Attend church fairly regularly.
    ▪ Give money to charity and to the church…as long as it doesn’t impinge on their standard of living.
    ▪ Tend to choose what is popular over what is right when they are in conflict.
    ▪ Really don’t want to be saved from their sin; they want only to be saved from the penalty of their sin.
    ▪ Are moved by stories about people who do radical things for Christ, yet they do not act.
    ▪ Rarely share their faith with their neighbors, coworkers, or friends.
    ▪ Gauge their morality or “goodness” by comparing themselves to the secular world.
    ▪ Say they love Jesus, and He is, indeed, a part of their lives. But only a part.
    ▪ Love God, but they do not love Him with all their heart, soul, and strength.
    ▪ Love others but do not seek to love others as much as they love themselves.
    ▪ Will serve God and others, but there are limits to how far they will go or how much time, money, and energy they are willing to give.
    ▪ Think about life on earth much more often than eternity in heaven.
    ▪ Are thankful for their luxuries and comforts, and rarely consider trying to give as much as possible to the poor.
    ▪ Do whatever is necessary to keep themselves from feeling too guilty.
    ▪ Are continually concerned with playing it safe; they are slaves to the god of control.
    ▪ Feel secure because they attend church…[but] are not safe just because we wear the label Christian.
    ▪ Do not live by faith.
    ▪ Probably drink and swear less than average, but besides that, they really aren’t very different from your typical unbeliever.
Chapter 5 – Serving Leftovers to a Holy God

• On page 84 Chan makes a very bold claim:

*To put it plainly, churchgoers who are “lukewarm” are not Christians. We will not see them in heaven.*

  o What do you think about this statement?

  o Chan backs up the statement with a reference to Revelation 3:15-18 – have you ever considered that you or people you know are “lukewarm” and will be spit out of the mouth of Jesus?

  o Chan says that the commitment to Jesus is an “all or nothing” proposition. Have you heard that message before from your church or other Christians?

• On page 89 Chan addresses the American failure to realize how blessed and wealthy we are – compared to the rest of the world! He asks a powerful question:

*Why don’t we think we are rich?*

• Chan talks about the “serious disadvantage spiritually” of being wealthy. He quotes from William Wilberforce, the liberator of England from the bonds of slavery, “Prosperity hardens the heart.”

  o Do you believe this statement to be true?

  o What steps are you taking personally to make sure that prosperity does NOT harden your heart (or the hearts of your children) to the Lord?

• On page 92 Chan writes that “no worship is better than apathetic worship.”

  o We can all attest to the fact that we’ve worshipped God apathetically in our lives. What steps can you take to protect yourself from apathetic worship?

• On page 93 Chan writes one of my personal favorite statements in the book quoting from Tim Kizziar:

*Our greatest fear as individuals and as a church should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don’t really matter.*
• On page 95 Chan writes, “If life is a river, then pursuing Christ requires swimming upstream.”
  
  o How are we doing at producing generations of good swimmers?
  
  o What steps are you taking with your own children to help them “swim upstream” – or are they just drifting down steam with the culture?
  
• On page 96 Chan writes, “But the fact is that nothing should concern us more than our relationship with God…”
  
  o What would you say are the most pressing issues on your plate right now?
  
  o What consumes the largest amount of your time, talents and treasure?
  
  o If you were completely honest with yourself, what would you say is the greatest desire of your heart – something of the world or knowing God?
  
Chapter 6 – When You’re in Love

• Notice how Francis Chan is trying to shift your perspective on Christianity from a “religion” to a “relationship” by focusing on LOVING God?

• Chan brings up Psalm 63:1-5 and asks if this Psalm is “an honest reflection of our lives on most days?

  o If you answer no, what can you do to fall more in love with God?

    ▪ Chan writes on page 103, “It does no good to muster up more love for God, to will yourself to love Him more.”

    ▪ What does Chan suggest?
      • On page 103, Chan writes, “The answer lies in letting Him change you.”
      • On page 104, Chan writes, “The fact is I need God to help me love God.”
        o Have you asked God to help you love Him more?
        o Do you practice the spiritual disciplines of worship, study, prayer and fasting so that you know God more and learn to love Him more?
Chapter 7 – Your Best Life…Later

- On page 114, Chan asks a very important question:

  *What does running toward Christ and pursuing Love look like in daily life?*

- Chan immediately turns to Scripture for the answer. Who in the Bible do you feel like your life most resembles? What can you learn from their lives and how God used them?

- Chan focuses on Hebrews 11 and the “hall of faith.” He writes about the martyrs for the faith – those who gave the ultimate sacrifice of their lives – an act, Chan reminds us, that would be completely worthless but for the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

  - Have you read Foxe’s Voice of the Martyrs? It is a listing of those who were tortured, imprisoned or killed for their faith in Christ.

- On page 117, Chan turns to the powerful passage found in Matthew 25 and concludes that “Jesus is saying that we show tangible love for God in how we care for the poor and those who are suffering.”

  - What is your attitude toward those less fortunate than you?
    - Ignore them
    - Despise them
    - Empathize with them
    - Sympathize with them
    - Love them
    - Look to assist them

  - How does GIVING help you to TRUST Christ more each day?

- On page 124, Chan tells about a time when he was in Bible college and his professor asked his class:

  *What are you doing right now that requires faith?*

  - How would you answer that same question?
Chapter 8 – Profile of the Obsessed

- Chan gives various descriptions of obsessed people…which one connected with you the most?

  + Obsessed people:
    - Give freely and openly without censure.
    - Aren’t consumed with their personal safety and comfort.
    - Live lives that connect them with the poor in some way.
    - Are more concerned with obeying God than doing what is expected or fulfilling the status quo.
    - Know that the sin of pride is always a battle.
    - Do not consider service a burden.
    - Are known as givers, not takers.
    - Think about heaven frequently.
    - Are characterized by committed, settled, passionate love for God, above and before every other thing and every other being.
    - Are raw with God; they do not attempt to mask the ugliness of their sins or their failures.
    - Have an intimate relationship with Him.
    - Are more concerned with his or her character than comfort.
    - Know that the best thing he can do is be faithful to his Savior in every aspect of his life.

  + Do you remember the movie *Schindler’s List* – the last scene of the movie depicts a heart-broken Schindler whose only desire was to save the life of one more person – the ring he owned and the car he drove could have been sold to save another person – he was a man obsessed with the care and well-being of others. Are we as concerned with the spiritual lives of people as Schindler was with their physical lives?

Chapter 9 – Who Really Lives that Way?

Chapter 9 is filled with the real life stories of individuals and communities that choose to live a life in what Scripture calls “in but not of the world.” Who in your personal experience have you encountered lived a life that was markedly different and set apart for the service of God?

Chapter 10 – The Crux of the Matter

*The greatest thought that has ever entered my mind is that one day I will have to stand before a holy God and give an account of my life.*

~ Daniel Webster
Sanctus Real - “Lead Me” lyrics

I look around and see my wonderful life almost perfect from the outside, in picture frames I see my beautiful wife always smiling but on the inside, I can hear her saying...

“Lead me with strong hands, stand up when I can't
Don't leave me hungry for love, chasing dreams, what about us?

Show me you're willing to fight, that I'm still the love of your life. I know we call this our home. But I still feel alone”

I see their faces, look in their innocent eyes. They're just children from the outside. I'm working hard, I tell myself they'll be fine; they're in independent. But on the inside, I can hear them saying...

“Lead me with strong hands, stand up when I can't. Don't leave me hungry for love, chasing dreams, but what about us?

Show me you're willing to fight, that I'm still the love of your life. I know we call this our home. But I still feel alone”

So Father, give me the strength to be everything I'm called to be. Oh, Father, show me the way to lead them. Won't You lead me?

To lead them with strong hands, to stand up when they can't. Don't want to leave them hungry for love, chasing things that I could give up

I'll show them I'm willing to fight, and give them the best of my life. So we can call this our home Lead me, 'cause I can't do this alone

Father, lead me, 'cause I can't do this alone