



crazy love

STUDY GUIDE

OVERWHELMED
BY A RELENTLESS
GOD

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CRAZY LOVE

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CHAPTER 1: STOP PRAYING

1. Stop and think about the last prayer you voiced. How did you begin? *Our Father? Dear Lord? Jesus?* What word or phrase did you use to start the prayer? Now, take a minute and consider the prayer you prayed *before* that prayer. How did you begin? Same word or phrase? Different? Sorta different or radically different? If you begin all your prayers in much the same way, ask yourself why.

2. Read these words from G. K. Chesterton:

A child kicks its legs rhythmically through excess, not absence, of life. Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough.... It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again," to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again," to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike: it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we. (*Orthodoxy*)

To temper question 1, remember that you could vary your introductory prayer phrase each time you voice a prayer and still not tap into that eternal appetite of infancy or freshness that Francis Chan talks about in *Crazy Love*. What word will you choose to start your next prayer?

3. Take on this scenario: You've just seen Jesus. One of those courtroom sketch artists has asked you to physically describe what you just saw. What do you say? Be as specific as possible. Try and figure out the sources of some of your descriptions.



CHAPTER 2: YOU MIGHT NOT FINISH THIS CHAPTER

1. When Francis talks about just being alone with God, how do you respond to those words? Can you relate? Do you walk with God, intimately and regularly? Or are your experiences with God usually mediated by something or someone (books, sermons, pastor's voice, fellowship, etc.)?

2. One of the publishing sensations of late has been a book titled *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch. The author began writing it when he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and given only months to live. Its basic message is *live your childhood dreams, because you never know what day will be your last*. How does this message sound when compared to what Francis is talking about in this chapter? Is it essentially the same? If not, how is it different?

3. Medieval philosophers kept a skull on their desks as a constant reminder of the nearness of death. That's kinda dark, huh? Without going to that extreme, what's something you could keep on your key chain or saved on your iPod or stored in your cell phone to keep yourself aware that our life is truly a vapor?

4. Name one person in your life who lives as if each day is his or her last. What is this person's effect on people around him or her? Does living that way make him or her seem, well, different? Why?

CHAPTER 3: CRAZY LOVE

1. How do you feel when you hear Paul's words to "pray without ceasing"? Confident? Guilty? Confused? Ashamed? Try and pinpoint an emotion. Or, maybe you don't feel anything. If so, what's causing you to feel numb?

2. If you could pick one word to describe your relationship with your earthly father, what would it be?

3. Now how about your heavenly Father? Pick one word to describe your relationship with Him. Does your "one word" reflect a reality you're pleased with or one you're disappointed in? If you're pleased, then great. But if not, what one word would describe the way you'd like it to be?



4. Consider using that one word as a prayer for a while, repeating it throughout the day when God's Spirit prompts you. It could be a significant first step to praying without ceasing.

CHAPTER 4: PROFILE OF THE LUKEWARM

1. The poet David Whyte tells of a conversation with his mentor:

Mentor: David, the antidote to exhaustion is not rest.

Whyte: What do you mean the antidote to exhaustion is not rest?

Mentor: The antidote to exhaustion is *wholeheartedness*.

Fill in the first blank and pay close attention to the second blank:

The antidote to lukewarmness is not _____.

The antidote to lukewarmness is *wholeheartedness*.

2. Matthew 5:43–45 says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.” Name one enemy you have right now; not in the past or possibly will have in a couple of weeks, but right now, today. Can you stop and voice a prayer for that person right now? If not, why not? What's holding you back from obeying Jesus' words?

3. Name one person who may consider *you* his or her enemy. You may not have anything against that person, but you're pretty certain you're not on his or her good list. Can you stop and voice a prayer for that person right now? If not, why not? Take a moment and read Matthew 5:23–24.

CHAPTER 5: SERVING LEFTOVERS TO A HOLY GOD

1. There are often many reasons we have for not following Jesus. One of the more common is fear, although we rarely admit it. What is one thing that Jesus is asking you to do? One thing you know He's asking of you, but you're afraid of? What is the worst that could happen if you followed Him in that way? What's the best?



2. Writer Annie Dillard says, “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.” Pick a day from last week. Beginning with the moment you awoke, go back through the day and write down everything you can remember regarding how you “spent” the day. We don’t save time; we just spend it. Don’t embellish or fudge the truth; just write down your day. Is that “day” reflective of how you’re spending your life? Don’t answer too quickly.

3. Fill in the blank with your own words or with words you hear quite often from others:

Can I _____ and still go to heaven?

CHAPTER 6: WHEN YOU’RE IN LOVE

1. Francis indicates that most of us struggle with either our intimacy or our reverence. Which of the two do you seem to struggle with the most? Has it always been that way in your relationship with God? If not, what changed? When did it change?

2. List five of your “light and momentary” struggles. Do they feel “light and momentary”? How are you handling them? Or, are they handling you? Is God showing you anything in these struggles? Are you even looking to move in His direction?

3. Francis says, “There is nothing better than giving up everything and stepping into a passionate love relationship with God.” Point to something in your life that indicates you believe those words. If you believe them, there ought to be something. If there’s nothing to point to, do you have the courage to be honest with God and your friends about it?

CHAPTER 7: YOUR BEST LIFE ... LATER

1. A recent New York Times best seller was titled *The Year of Living Biblically*. A year is biting off quite a bit. How about the concept of *The Day of Living Biblically*? Could you start there, just for a day, living as biblically as possible? Is this something a friend might do with you? How about if your small group decides that on Wednesday, _____, 2009, that you’re all going to strive to live the day biblically?



2. Read Galatians 5:22–23. In the King James Version, one of the fruit of the Spirit is “longsuffering.” What images does that word evoke in your mind? Is that a word your family and friends would use to describe your life? If not, why not?

3. Take a few moments and answer this question: What am I doing right now that requires faith? Nothing is gained here by trying to sound spiritual or concocting some answer that isn't true. Maybe it helps to break the sentence in half. First, answer: What am I doing right now? Then look at those “right now” things and ask if any of them requires faith.

CHAPTER 8: PROFILE OF THE OBSESSED

1. Brainstorm an ongoing list of the ways in which we, as believers in Christ, live lives dictated by culture and tradition instead of by the Bible. From the silly to the super-serious, come up with as many as you can.

2. Say you were to view Francis and friends breaking bread and celebrating communion. What words would you use to describe those scenes? Is there something attractive to those words for you, or do they make you nervous? If nervous, why?

3. Chances are good that someone in your group has a laptop or iPhone. Google the word *obsessed*, and talk about the top responses. Rather than dismissing them as shallow or superficial, try to get at what the attraction is for those people, places, or things. Dig deep, and see if you can discover the core(s).

CHAPTER 9: WHO REALLY LIVES THAT WAY?

1. Who do you look up to? Who are your Christian heroes, living or dead? Pick two and share with your group. Be sure to give everyone a chance to share.

2. After the discussion, based on all the stories that are shared, come up with some thoughts as to what makes a Christian a “hero” as opposed to a “not-so-hero.” Get really specific as you craft a composite.



3. Maybe there's someone in your church who your group considers a bona fide Christian hero. Consider recognizing them in some way, not to draw attention, but to encourage them. Heroes need encouragement too. If any kind of spotlight might embarrass them, consider an anonymous gift. Remember the brass rule of gift giving: Good gift givers give good gifts.

CHAPTER 10: THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

1. The book of James talks about being not only hearers of the Word, but also doers. Just going through this study and talking about *Crazy Love* and watching the videos, that's all cool, but if that's all it is, then it's sad. Very sad. What are you going to *DO*? What tangible, concrete expression of God's crazy love are you going to share with a friend, family member, stranger? What habits or disciplines are you going to put into place in your own life? After this experience, what is of great value? What really doesn't matter anymore? How are you going to live the rest of this day?

2. Hebrews 10:23–25 says,

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Consider how you may spur one another on, encouraging one another. Accountability groups can often fall into the trap of being “fess up to your sins” time. What the writer of Hebrews is talking about is so much more than that. He's writing about how we can support one another in “love and good deeds.”

3. One of Francis's thoughts is: Don't get proud. Have someone in your group do a phrase search on BibleGateway.com for verses that contain the word *humble* or *humility*. As a group, choose one and memorize it. As you are spurring one another on, incorporate that verse into your “spur.” A little reminder goes a long way.

