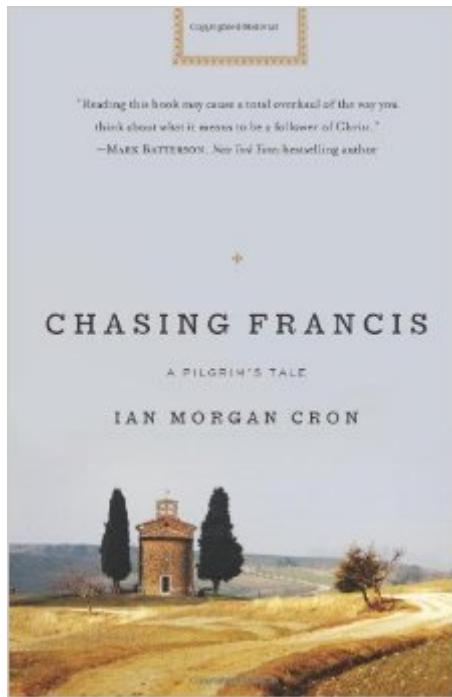


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Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim's Tale



Synopsis

What happens when the pastor of a mega church loses his faith? Pastor Chase Falson has lost his faith in God, the Bible, evangelical Christianity, and his super-sized megachurch. When he falls apart, the church elders tell him to go away: as far away as possible. Join Chase on his life-changing journey to Italy where, with a curious group of Franciscan friars, he struggles to resolve his crisis of faith by retracing the footsteps of Francis of Assisi, a saint whose simple way of loving Jesus changed the history of the world. Read this riveting story and then begin your own life-changing journey through the pilgrim's guide included in this powerful novel. Hidden in the past lies the future of the church. When his elders tell him to take some time away from his church, broken pastor Chase Falson crosses the Atlantic to Italy to visit his uncle, a Franciscan priest. There he is introduced to the revolutionary teachings of Saint Francis of Assisi and finds an old, but new way of following Jesus that heals and inspires. Chase Falson's spiritual discontent mirrors the feelings of a growing number of Christians who walk out of church asking, Is this all there is? They are weary of celebrity pastors, empty calorie teaching, and worship services where the emphasis is more on Lights, Camera, Action than on Father, Son, and Holy Spirit while the deepest questions of life remain unaddressed in a meaningful way. Bestselling author Ian Morgan Cron masterfully weaves lessons from the life of Saint Francis into the story of Chase Falson to explore the life of a saint who 800 years ago breathed new life into disillusioned Christians and a Church on the brink of collapse. Chasing Francis is a hopeful and moving story with profound implications for those who yearn for a more vital relationship with God and the world.

journey of your own through the pilgrim's guide included in this book.

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Customer Reviews

Chase Falcon, megachurch pastor, has lost his faith. When a young girl falls off her bike and never wakes up, Chase's answers suddenly seem hollow. His faith comes crashing to the ground at the worst possible time: in the middle of a sermon."I used to have all the answers, just opened the Bible and there they were. The truth is, they aren't all there - or if they are, I can't find them. I've tried to convince you that Christianity is logical and straightforward, as if God can be codified and stuffed into files he can't jump out of. Each time uncertainty knocked on the door, I hid behind the couch until it went away. Now I'm the one who's thirsty. And the Jesus I've known for twenty years isn't making it go away.""And what about our church? I mean, is this all there is?..."Understandably, few at the church know how to react to Chase's crisis. When the elders ask him to take a leave of absence, Chase goes on a surprising pilgrimage, chasing and learning from Francis, better known as Saint Francis of Assisi. Through this novel, Chase's pilgrimage also becomes our pilgrimage too.Near the end of the book, Chase says, "When I left here, I wasn't sure what a Christian looked like anymore. My idea of what it meant to follow Jesus had run out of gas. I started feeling less like a pastor and more like a salesman of a consumerized Jesus I didn't believe in. Learning about Francis helped me fall in love with Jesus again - and with the church again, too."I didn't think I could learn so much from a novel, but then again, I've never read a novel that has a study guide before. This book expresses some of what I have experienced, minus the exotic pilgrimage. I was genuinely sad when the book ended because I wanted more.Not everyone will appreciate this book. Some will not know what it means to go through a crisis of faith, and will not appreciate Saint Francis as an example. But for those of us who long for more, Chasing Francis may take you on a pilgrimage, from a faith with all the answers to a more robust faith and genuine love for Jesus and the church.

In Chasing Francis, author, singer/songwriter and pastor Ian Morgan Cron shares his vision for the postmodern church through an engaging story about a pastor who finds his way forward as a follower of Christ and leader in the church by looking back at the life and beliefs of St. Francis of Assisi. Chase Falson is the founding pastor of a New England church who becomes disenchanted with many aspects of modern evangelicalism. The senseless death of a young girl in Chase's congregation and his inability to help the girl's mother make sense of it devastates him to the point that he questions his own faith in a sermon before his church. No surprise, church elders then ask

Chase to take time off to figure out where he stands. Seeking to figure it all out, Chase turns to his Uncle Kenny, a Franciscan priest living in Italy. Kenny invites Chase to join him for a time in Italy, which ends up being a pilgrimage for Chase to learn about St. Francis and what he believed the church and Christians should be. As Kenny and his fellow Franciscans take Chase to the places and recount the events that shaped Francis's life and beliefs, Cron paints a literary picture of what he believes the church should become. To try to summarize here the issues that Cron raises and thoughtfully addresses throughout the story and accompanying study guide in the appendix would not do them justice. My advice: read the book. In fact, I would encourage everyone in the leadership of spiritual communities to read this book and meet with others to dialogue about the issues raised in it. Cron creatively and intelligently addresses issues that are essential to the church's future. Like Chase Falson, most churches are trying to find their way in a postmodern world. How surprising, and wonderful, to find wisdom for today in the life of one of the spiritual giants of history who lived during the transition from the Middle Ages to Modern Times. Two other points I would like to make about Chasing Francis. First, I thoroughly enjoyed the interesting characters and vivid descriptions of places Cron weaved into the story. After my wife and I read Chasing Francis, we decided to change our upcoming travel plans to go to Rome and Florence instead. Second, I appreciated that Cron didn't paint the characters in unrealistic terms. These are real people with real problems who become the body of Christ to one another. They celebrate the joys in life together and, by being there for one another during life's trials, they cushion the inevitable blows we all experience. When I finished Chasing Francis it made me hope that Cron will write a sequel about Chase's experience trying to bring to life his new vision for the church. I'm also interested in what happens to the characters and relationships we learn about in Chasing Francis. Let's hope Ian Cron will keep this story going.

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