

A PILGRIM'S GUIDE TO



The letters R, E, S, and T are arranged vertically within a large black rectangular frame. The letter R is at the top, followed by E, then S, and finally T at the bottom.

R E  
S T

STUDY GUIDE

# CHAPTER

# ONE

*You're Not Crazy*

1. At the beginning of this chapter, Byron describes the “person” to whom this book is written. It’s that person who feels as though they were cheated — they were promised a gift but found themselves having to strive to earn the rewards. That person burned by the church and by life in general. That person who feels like they’ve gone crazy because of the tension between what they’ve been told and what they’ve experienced. In what ways do your experiences make you this “person”?

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2. As Byron notes in this chapter, Evangelicalism is clearly on its way out, and in its wake, there have been many reactionary movements — the Bart Ehrman's and the Rob Bell's, if you will. In a sense, they've deconstructed Christianity to a grand nothing, rather than deconstructing only the innovations which evangelicalism has introduced. Knowing all this, why is it important to see our response to evangelicalism as a return to “classic” Christianity rather than a movement to something new and innovative?

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## CHAPTER ONE | YOU'RE NOT CRAZY

3. Byron, in “You are now leaving Pietism,” confronts the evangelical order of operations as it deals with the transformation of the Christian Life. The typical way we’ve been taught to do this starts from the outside in. We are told to act like Christians in order to enjoy the acceptance of Christians. Why does this create a life driven by fear and guilt rather than obedience that flows from gratitude?

Romans 6:1-11, Ephesians 2:8-10, LBCF 13.1

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4. Byron compares the gospel to a passport — a legal declaration of our identity that becomes more helpful the farther we are from home. We must, therefore, hear it over and over again in order to remember our true identity. However, there are many who would say an overemphasis on the gospel would be a dangerous thing because it would cause people not to fight their sin. Why does this objection not hold water and why is the constant preaching of the gospel necessary in our constant fight against sin?

Romans 5:20-21, 1 John 3:1-3

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## CHAPTER ONE | YOU'RE NOT CRAZY

5. In the last section “Coming to Terms with Nothing to Do,” Byron describes how hard it is for us to be people who are okay with having to do nothing. It’s hard for us to accept a Savior who demands nothing of us but faith. Why is this so difficult and why is it, therefore, necessary that Christ be constantly put forward as our true Sabbath rest?

Romans 8:1, LBCF 18.2

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# CHAPTER

## TWO

*Leaving Pietism*

1. At the beginning of this chapter, Byron connects the idea of implicit faith, which was an essential part of the medieval church system, to the way evangelicalism has caused us to eat up its traditions without much thought at all. Calvin, along with the other reformers, saw that all the traditions and practices were hiding Christ from the people. In what ways have the traditions and practices of evangelicalism done the same, thereby undermining the doctrine of solus Christus (Christ alone)?

Colossians 2:20-13, Hebrews 12:1-2

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2. Byron points out three major influences on the DNA of evangelicalism. Being American, we are suspicious of all forms of authority. Being Revivalists, we've altered our practice to emphasize "conversionism." Being Pietists, the focus of Christianity was shifted to the Christian's internal experience rather than the external work of Christ. How have you seen these influences both in your church experience, as well as in your own view of Christianity?

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## CHAPTER TWO | LEAVING PIETISM

3. In the section “Motivation: Delight not Dread,” Byron diagnoses one of the key differences between the confessional and pietistic worlds. In the pietistic world, good works are done in order to convince ourselves of God’s goodness with us. In the confessional world, good works are done because we are convinced of God’s goodness with us. Why does this difference in perspective on the relationship between assurance and good works completely transform the way the Christian life is lived?

Genesis 3:7-8, LBCF 11.1, LBCF 16.1-5

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4. In the section, “Clarity: Law and Gospel,” Byron shows how the law-gospel distinction is like color-blindness-corrective glasses bringing color to the confusing grayness of evangelicalism’s gospel. The Law reveals to us the standard of perfection, points out our deep sin and does nothing to help us. The gospel requires nothing of us, gives us the perfection we need, and is all of grace. Why is this so important, especially as it relates to how we read our Bibles and how we live our lives?

Romans 4:4-5, Romans 8:1, Romans 6:14

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## CHAPTER TWO | LEAVING PIETISM

5. In the section, “Life: Faith vs. Faithfulness,” Byron points out the importance of the difference between emphasizing the faithfulness of the believer and the faithfulness of Christ for the believer. How does this difference cause us to read our Bibles differently (especially the Old Testament) and how does it transform how we view our own lives?

Romans 1:17, Romans 3:21, Galatians 2:20

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6. In the section, “Perspective: Pain and not Triumph,” Byron addresses how evangelicalism has merged American Triumphalism into the Christian Life. According to the theology of the cross, the Christian Life is filled with struggle, failure, and defeat. According to the theology of glory (triumphalism), there is something wrong if your life is not on the constant up and up. What effect does this difference have on both the individual’s life and the way a church works together?

Matthew 23:11-12

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# CHAPTER

# THREE

*The Weary Pilgrim*

1. Byron starts this chapter with an anecdote of “The Colonel” who had grown up during the Great Depression and whose experience through that shaped everything about him. It was impossible to understand why he did what he did without understanding what he was responding and reacting to. The same is true in understanding the Reformers. You must understand their context to understand their writing. What is it that they are responding to and how does that shape what they emphasize in their writings?

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2. In the section “Let’s Go Back,” Byron points out many of the similarities between Evangelicalism and the Medieval church. What are the similarities and how do you see them play out in Evangelicalism?

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## CHAPTER THREE | THE WEARY PILGRIM

3. In the section, “The Burden that Remains,” Byron points out that although there are many great things written in John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, there are some parts of it that are inaccurate descriptions of the Christian life. Justification is turned into a journey to the cross, the Christian Life is filled with uncertainty about making it to the end, and the burden that falls off at the beginning makes it seem like the load we bear was a one-time thing that never shows back up, at least in how we feel. How do these confusions blur the idea of sola fide and the uniquely protestant idea of simul justus et peccator?

Genesis 15:6, Philippians 1:6, Romans 7:13-25

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4. Byron now dives into church history and discusses three important figures: Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. Augustine emphasized the reality that we are all incurvatus in se — that we are turned in on ourselves — and that sin was not merely something we do, but a state we were in from which comes our sinful actions. Luther described the deep anfechtung, “the terror of the soul,” that plagues every human and lies under our natural bent to distrust God and his promises — even after we are saved. Calvin emphasized the importance of the doctrine of assurance, and why it is necessary that it is grounded entirely in God’s faithfulness to us rather than our faithfulness to Him. How do the ideas of these three men relate to each other and together shape the way we view our lives as Christians?

Colossians 2:13-14, Romans 5:1, Romans 8:19-24

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## CHAPTER THREE | THE WEARY PILGRIM

5. In the last section of this chapter, “Paul’s Already Not Yet,” Byron lays out the implications for the reality of sin being a domain from which we were released, especially by explaining Paul’s argument in Romans 6-8. Viewing our salvation as dying to the dictatorship of sin in our lives changes how we view our fight with sin. Sanctification changes from a trip to the dentist to a trip to the candy store. How does this change in perspective actually help us fight our sin more boldly, while still being rooted in God’s acceptance of us, rather than his disdain for us?

Colossians 2:13-14, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 6:15-19

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# CHAPTER

# FOUR

*Finding the “On” Switch*

1. At the beginning of this chapter, Ryan lays out some of the answers to the question “Why did God give us the Bible.” The Apologetic view sees the Bible as a giant prooftext, proving the existence of God among other things. The Dispensational-Theological view sees the Bible as telling us how the Church was “Plan B” to Israel’s attempt at establishing the Kingdom of God. The Ethical view sees the Bible as primarily giving us good and bad examples of how to live better. All of these, however, fall short of the true reason. How have you experienced these views (or any others) and why does having the wrong purpose for the Bible change the way we read it and apply it to our lives?

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2. After laying out many of the false views of the purpose of Scripture, Ryan lays out the true purpose: the redemptive-historical view of the Bible. In this view, the Bible is ultimately about the redemption of sinners, and every portion can be brought back to that. How does this view give readers and hearers of the Word hope and help keep them from interpreting passages incorrectly?

Luke 24: 25-27, Hebrews 1:1-2

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## CHAPTER FOUR | FINDING THE “ON” SWITCH

3. In the section, “It’s Sad How Common This Is,” Ryan describes how the majority of evangelical preaching is centered on improving the believer’s actions and habits. He describes that that same attitude also pervades the way we read scripture as well. How are legalistic preaching and “legalistic reading” related to a bad view of the purpose of Scripture, and why does the Redemptive-Historical view protect from such interpretations?

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4. Ryan describes here how the Biblical story can really be simplified down to the tale of Two Adams. There was the First Adam who failed and because of whom all of humanity fell, and there was the Second Adam who succeeded and because of whom all in him have life. This is all based on the idea of federal representation that the acts of a person can be counted, or imputed, to the account of someone else. This doctrine is at the core of our justification. Why does this basic story have to be understood in order to interpret scripture rightly?

Romans 5:15-21; 1 Corinthians 15: 22-23, 45-49

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## CHAPTER FOUR | FINDING THE “ON” SWITCH

5. After understanding this broad outline of the Biblical tale of Two Adams, Ryan lays out how the details of this tale also point to this Second Adam. Using the example of the historical Exodus, we see how it is a befitting analogy for our own spiritual exodus from slavery in the land of sin. Think of other shadows and types in the Old Testament which point to the person and work of Christ. Ultimately, how does the redemptive-historical view promote the person and work of Christ for us?

John 3: 14-15, 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, Hebrews 7

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# CHAPTER

# FIVE

*Why the Struggle?*

1. At the beginning of this chapter, Jon lays out some of the reasons that people find it hard to pray. Some people treat it as a way to appease God, to keep him from being unhappy with us. Some treat it as a way to gain his favor so that he would stay happy with us. Some treat it as a filling station, a way to store up “spiritual strength” which we can use to fight sin over the course of the day. All of these views of prayers keep us from wanting to pray. Think about your own life. What keeps you from praying, and how is that connected to a false view of prayer?

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2. In the section, “Where Did We Go Wrong?”, Jon explains how many of our faulty views on prayer came through the spiritual disciplines movement that started in the 70s and 80s. These spiritual disciplines shifted the emphasis for many Christians from what God has done for us to what we should be doing for God. However, the key word for the biblical model of prayer is dependence. It’s about leaning on what is outside of us. How does a proper view of prayer cause us actually to desire to pray instead of leading us to despair?

Romans 8:18-30

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## CHAPTER FIVE | WHY THE STRUGGLE?

3. In the section, “The Gospel and Prayer,” Jon sets up the gospel of our justification and our adoption in Christ as the basis for our prayer life. God calls us “child,” and we call him “Daddy.” We are fully accepted now and fully assured of his goodness and grace toward us for the rest of our lives. How should that amazing gospel of grace shape the way we view prayer?

Matthew 6: 9—15, LBCF 12.1

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4. Jon explains that when Jesus comes to the earth and ushers in the New Covenant, one of the big changes we see is that of the believers’ access to God. The Old Testament did not really speak of God as our Father the way the New does. In Christ, we can boldly approach the throne of God. We’ve been sprinkled clean by the blood of Christ, so we can bring everything up to God. How does this great privilege of the New Covenant change how and why we pray?

Hebrews 4:14-16, Romans 5:1-2

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## CHAPTER FIVE | WHY THE STRUGGLE?

5. Based on all this, it's quite clear that so much of our problem with prayer has to do with the very title of this book. Rest. We so easily think that prayer is something we do in order to get into a place of rest rather than something we get to do because of the rest we already have in our Father through the work of Christ. As Jon concludes, prayer is meant for the weary Christian. How does that reality help solve many of the reasons we have for not praying?

Matthew 11:28-29

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