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*Craig Groeschel*

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“The more I looked, the more I found Christian Atheists everywhere.”

Former Christian Atheist Craig Groeschel knows his subject all too well. After over a decade of successful ministry, he had to make a painful self admission: although he believed in God, he was leading his church like God didn't exist.

To Christians and non-Christians alike, to the church and the unchurched, the journey leading up to Groeschel's admission and the journey that follows—from his family and his upbringing to the lackluster and even diametrically opposed expressions of faith he encountered—will look and sound like the story of their own lives.

Now the founding and senior pastor of the multicampus, pace-setting LifeChurch.tv, Groeschel's personal journey toward a more authentic God-honoring life is more relevant than ever.

Christians and Christian Atheists everywhere will be nodding their heads as they are challenged to take their own honest moment and ask the question: am I putting my whole faith in God but still living as if everything was up to me?

## The Christian Atheist: Believing in God but Living As If He Doesn't Exist Details

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# **From Reader Review The Christian Atheist: Believing in God but Living As If He Doesn't Exist for online ebook**

## **Chauncey Lattimer says**

I know that you are probably getting tired of me saying the same word frequently, but Wow! I barely sat the book down from the initiation of the read to completion. Craig Groeschel has written a very transparent look into how we are so often guilty of not living up to what we know to be Scriptural. With a mixture of humor, personal memoir, experience, and solid biblical instruction, Groeschel walks us through the many ways in which we are not living like we truly believe in the God who cares and is there. I found the book to be challenging in many ways – but primarily in re-examining my purpose as a Christian. Dealing with such practical and oh so appropriate topics as guilt, worry, evil in the world, the pursuit of happiness, prayer, and evangelism, Craig calls for us to step over the line – the third line, that is. Not the first line – believing in God and the gospel of Christ enough to benefit from it; not the second line – believing in God and Christ's gospel enough to contribute comfortably; but the third line – believing in God and Christ's gospel to give our lives to it! Thanks Craig, for the challenge to cross another line!

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## **Josh says**

I always find it interesting to read or listen to fundamentalists talk about how people other than themselves do not have faith pure enough to get into heaven. This whole book judges the faith of other people for not being fundamentalist Christians. The author has a discontinuous interpretation of the Bible which he fails to effectively express in his narrative. Really, this book is for people who already believe in God, but aren't all that active in their own faith. It is also for privileged, middle-class white people who really don't have all that much to worry about in the first place. The examples of sinfulness are stale, and lousy examples--and others are badly deduced reasons why everyday actions are sinful.. like worrying. It is based on a reductive understanding of faith and superficial interpretation of the Bible.

The part that was the most worrisome about this book was the chapter in which the author talked about visiting people on their death bed, scaring them into believing with threats of Hell. What an irresponsible way to preach. I imagine that when Craig Groeschel dies, he will be standing in front of the Throne of Judgment, and God will look at him and say, "Craig, do you know how many people you pushed away from Me with your ministry? How many people you needlessly scared with ideas of Hell? Do you not know that I forgave people and their sinful ways with the sacrifice of my Son because I know it is impossible for people to truly live as though I exist and I didn't want them to spend their whole lives chasing ideals that would leave them unfulfilled? Who are you to judge the hearts of those people who don't appear to be as faithful as you? Did you miss the parts about not having ostentatious faith, or only sharing certain things with me--like what a person should and should not call pure? No. You failed in your self-importance and self-righteousness, Craig. You are undeserving of my love. But do not despair, for I forgive you as much as anyone else even in your misguided intentions to save all Christians from lukewarm faith. That's the whole point of faith" or something like that. I do not recommend this book to anyone, believer or not.

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## **Matt says**

As someone who has lived as a "Christian Athiest" for period of time and has been submerged in an environment filled with them, I would recommend this book for any young Christians who are looking to take their faith to the next step. While it starts off slow for the first few chapters, it eventually finds its rhythm and grows stronger as the book goes on. It is a very practical and easy read, as Groeschel gives his own personal life experiences to support his points.

If you are looking for a book that deals with these topics on a more theological level, I would probably turn you in other directions. However, if you are looking for practical ways to take your personal faith to the next level, this book is a good place to start.

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## **Greg says**

Meet Craig Groeschel, he regularly breaks 40% of the Ten Commandments:

Craig hearts God, hanging out at the gym, and trying desperately to launch himself into the stratosphere of Christian High-Living, into the deluxe apartment in the sky that the Christian Superstars like Chapman, Cloud, Olsteen, O'Martin and Warren reside in. The Christian writers who were able to come up with a catchphrase or title and just milk the shit out that bitch for all that it's worth.

I suspected this when I first saw this book I thought this is stupid, he's just trying to make some money on a flimsy half catchy phrase he thought up. With blurbs like this on the back *"There are too many Christian atheists in the church today, and through this book, Craig challenges the genuineness of faith in the life of the self-proclaimed 'believer.' The Christian Atheist will cause you to move from head knowledge to heart knowledge. This is a must-read for every Christian."*, by Jentezen Franklin, the author of *Fasting* and another author looking to milk the shit out of flimsy topic one would think that this is a serious fucking problem, all these Christian Atheists out there, and one would think that maybe hmmm, maybe this isn't just a silly word. But then one remembers that book blurbers love inserting the title of the book into their blurbs and all goes back to normal, doubts disappear.

Apparently Craig Groeschel was once a Christian Atheist, which is shocking because just look at those pictures that man looks like he loves god with his whole body, including his tightly clenched rectum. Is it possible that he was faking it in those pictures? I don't know when he was faking it, but according to him he was. Now why would a Pastor who is the spiritual equivalent of fast-food (see his bio, he's like a motherfucking franchiser of religion, the bio on his book even includes a weekly viewer number that sounds more like a customers served) keep on preaching about a God that he knows this subject first hand (and I quote from his webpage): *"The more I looked, the more I found Christian Atheists everywhere."* *Former Christian Atheist Craig Groeschel knows his subject all too well."*

His dis-belief in God, or living as if there was no God never made him so distraught with guilt that it made him give up his ministry and stop taking the checks.... or issue an apology for being a fake....? No, it inspired him to come up with a new catch phrase and move in on cashing in even more. It makes me ask, was he really a christian when he wrote the book about getting read with god? (*Confessions of a Pastor: Adventures in Dropping the Pose and Getting Real with God*) If he wasn't all real with God, and more importantly with

the people who he was fleecing for their money, because seriously when you are a pastor who performs like some sell-out rock star in arena sized venues on stages that look more like Warrant should be performing than Jesus being worshiped you know it's all about the money, or the benjamins as sell-outs of a different genre of music would say.

I was going to write this review about how stupid the term Christian Atheist is, and about how what an idiot this dude is for believing that people who go to church could be considered Atheists, but that is too simple and I'm sure anyone with a first grade education could figure out how retarded the title of this book is.

Nope, it's been much more fun to accuse him of stealing!!! Stealing like a common Con-man. A trickster. A huckster of snake-oil. A breaker of Commandments number 8, Thou Shall Not Steal: You have stolen by continuing to take peoples money in your Ponzi scheme of faith; Commandment number 3, Thou shall not make wrongful use of the name of your God: by using God's name to make money when you weren't really *Feeling* the big dude upstairs; Commandment number 2, Thou shall not make for yourself an idol: which in this case is what you have done with yourself and continue to do with yourself by *Performing* on rockstar like stages; and finally Commandment number 1 *Thou shall have no other gods before me*: which is Money!!!!!! That's right you dirty fucker you care more about money because you never stopped your move to continue inhaling it like some vacuum cleaner without an off switch. If you are being honest in this book it means you are a thief in the past, if you are laying in this book it means you are a thief now, and in either case you are using religion as a means to make yourself rich.

Craig Groeschel, you suck.

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## **Jon Håversen says**

En meget flott bok jeg hadde veldig glede av å lese.

Lettlest bok som fremdeles er utfordrende når det gjelder kristen livspraksis. Boken tar opp temaer som mange kristne vil kjenne seg igjen, jeg kjente meg iallfall igjen i flere av punktene og ble utfordret. Vil anbefale alle kristne venner og lese denne. Kanskje aller mest vil jeg anbefale til de som er langt inne i akademisk apologetikk, men alle har godt av å la seg utfordre av disse punktene.

Rent teologisk er det jo alltid noen småting man reagerer på - men ikke noe avgjørende ting jeg reagerer på. (Annet en kapitlet om fortapelse, som jeg i bunn og grunn ikke er helt fan av).

Det er tydelig at dette er en bok som ønsker å ta for seg kristen livsutfoldelse, istedet for å være en lærebok i kristen teologi - og dette syntes jeg er bra! Vi er hele mennesker, ikke bare hoder, men også hender og føtter. Et fint bidrag til en helhetlig etterfølgelse av Jesus.

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## **Kris says**

While the aim and purpose of this book seems genuine and honorable, I still have many problems with it. (I'll try to keep this review a mix of positive and negative points.)

I admire Groeschel's attempts to highlight the fact that there are many Christians in name only -- those who speak the truths of Christianity superficially, but don't live by it in practice. But I think the term "Christian

Atheist" is a very inaccurate way to describe this phenomenon. He should have chosen his words more carefully.

In my opinion, the author takes too much liberty in speaking *for* God. He offers advice in saying things like "God wants this from you..." or "God hates it when you do this..." And while he does use scripture throughout, I don't think he uses it enough to support his claims, and therefore they ring hollow for me.

I do like the format and organization of the book: each chapter is set up as a "When You Believe in God But Not \_\_\_\_" fill in the blank with what have you (e.x. prayer, forgiveness, happiness, church). It's a good way of tackling many issues specifically.

And while Groeschel's aims are good, and no doubt his church has done great things and should continue to do so, the overall presence of *only* nondenominational Christianity, and the avoidance of specific Christian practices, seeps through every page. It's impossible to get away from. Frankly, Groeschel doesn't explain enough theology, and doesn't quote enough scripture. Whenever someone relies too heavily on a major "conversion experience" in adulthood as proof of faith, and always, *always*, being saved by a prayer alone, I quickly get suspicious.

But, in fairness, I suppose this is more of a motivational, "self-help your faith" kind of book, rather than academically-minded. Bottom line is, I was close to giving this one two stars. But since it's a generally good aim, just not specifically good, I'll let it slide.

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## **Thomas Foster Foster says**

I definitely believe in God and I definitely have set limits on where God is and is not welcome in my life and how far he can go!

This book helps me consider my position and my response - to live as though I really believed in God for every area of my life.

So as I reflect I can then see I have 3 options:

1. I can deny I'm making any compromises in how I follow Jesus.
2. I can accept I'm making compromises, but sort of pragmatically refuse to do anything about it (none of us are perfect after all and I have so many areas in my life on which I might focus)
3. by God's grace and as part of a community I can be gradually, slowly, but really changed.

The Bible tells me that if I'm looking at Jesus through my day-to-day relationship with him - then I'll be changed to become more like him. The Bible also teaches me (and experience lines up with this), that as I become changed by knowing him more, I become more deeply satisfied in my relationship with him.

However I find it's easy to choose options 1 and 2 - to hide away - guilt, denial .. they really do come very naturally to me!

But rather than get locked up in my own little world of struggle I've found getting some advice and teaching through this book to be very helpful. In fact the chapter on the Church states very helpfully why we need each other and can't just work these things out on our own.

So in this book Groeschel identifies a number of areas such as being ashamed of our past, praying or not, trusting God for justice, believing God loves me, how I pursue happiness, and highlights ways in which we can (and very often do) choose to not follow God - some striking a resounding note with me than others, but I've been able to easily empathise with all of them!

He reflects honestly on his own challenges giving examples of his own weaknesses and failures, but also then provides biblical teaching and some fantastic personal stories on how he has come to more fully trust God in his life.

I especially enjoyed the chapters on money, church, and the 'afterword'.

Shortish chapters meant good material for my morning reading :-)

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### **Cody says**

I don't disagree with most of what Groeschel has to say, but this book was very disappointing.

Instead of addressing the topic in an insightful way, this book reads like any other self help book with verses from the Bible and Christian themes thrown in every so often.

I can't stand the way these kinds of books are written. They follow the same structure chapter after chapter, starting with a story, then moving on to some kind of lesson, then failing to live up to that lesson, then another story, and then you arrive at some kind of final understanding told in lame, christian jargon.

I equate these kind of books to "Christian Music" scene. While the words aren't necessarily wrong and may be uplifting, they tend to be generic, boring, and have that corporately produced feeling that I can't stand.

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### **Kelly Belvis says**

It took me a little while to appreciate how helpful "The Christian Athiest" by Craig Groeschel would be. At first it seemed like a straight forward treatise on common themes: forgiveness, faith, worry, money, problems with church. Groeschel asserts that while we may very well be Christians we often conduct our lives and especially our inadequacies as if we were athiests. The standout here is that Groeschel openly shares some of his biggest failures. I immediately wanted to embrace his advice because throughout the book he indicated that he had made many mistakes and many of them were mistakes I had made or could relate to. To then see the times he was able to put his faith into practice and the dramatic outcome (especially with regard to forgiving someone who had grievously harmed his little sister), I was inspired to change the areas in my life where I live like an athiest rather than trust God to change not only circumstances but ME! This is a book I could easily read again in order to absorb each chapter and remind myself that "...he (God)is wise. He is willing. And he is able."

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## **Jen Edwards says**

After taking some time off of Christianbooks since reading Radical, which totally scared the crap out of me and was incredibly convicting, I have picked up another book. I'm now reading The Christian Atheist. <http://christianatheist.com/>

This book still has the potential to be convicting, but it's not so in your face about what a bad Christian you are from the get go as Radical was. Seriously, I thought I was going to hell after reading chapter one of that book. Here is a sneak peak of The Christian Atheist:

The Christian Atheist, by recovering Christian Atheist Craig Groeschel, is an honest, hard-hitting and eye-opening look into the ways people believe in God but live as if he doesn't exist. From his own lapses in faith as a young man to the painful self-admission he had to make as an established pastor, Groeschel's own journey will immerse you and challenge you into a deeper, Christ-filled life.

"The more I looked, the more I found Christian Atheists everywhere." Former Christian Atheist Craig Groeschel knows his subject all too well. After over a decade of successful ministry, he had to make a painful self admission: although he believed in God, he was leading his church like God didn't exist. To Christians and non-Christians alike, to the churchd and the unchurched, the journey leading up to Groeschel's admission and the journey that follows—from his family and his upbringing to the lackluster and even diametrically opposed expressions of faith he encountered—will look and sound like the story of their own lives. Now the founding and senior pastor of the multicampus, pace-setting LiveChurch.tv, Groeschel personal journey toward a more authentic God-honoring life is more relevant than ever.

Christians and Christian Atheists everywhere will be nodding their heads as they are challenged to take their own honest moment and ask the question: am I putting my whole faith in God but still living as if everything was up to me?

I definitely don't see myself as a Christian Atheist, but there is always the potential for me to fall into that way of life. I feel as though I really try (for the most part) to be a loving and giving person. I try to serve the Lord as often as I can through my life group, ushering, facilitating Alpha, and volunteering at LTH or other areas where I can serve the poor. God really wants us to serve and spread the gospel.

But this book is also about knowing the Lord and having a personal relationship with Him. That is where I lack. I do all the things i do to be pleasing to the Lord. But in terms of knowing Him, I'm still learning. And with time, after getting to know Him, I will form more of a personal relationship with Him. That is what I'm hoping to get from reading this book, as well as from continuing to read the Bible.

Reading the Bible has been really interesting. So far, it's mainly been stories about Job, Abraham, Isaac, Noah, etc.... But something that I have noticed in the Old Testament is that He seemed to be a vengeful God. You read so much about His wrath. When I think about God, all I think about is His love, which I'm looking forward to reading more about as the days, weeks, months come.

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## **Panda Incognito says**

Although this book did an adequate job of pointing out the differences between genuine Christians and



"believers" who have not truly experienced God, it fell short of facilitating genuine heart-change. Since the book was targeted towards nominal Christians, I tried to read it with that mindset, taking in the parts that applied to me, but mostly thinking through it theoretically. The further I got into the book, the more I sensed that something was missing: the gospel. Though the author explained the gospel story and referenced it throughout the book, it was insufficiently applied to the Christian walk, leaving each chapter little more than self-help tripe. If I were a nominal Christian reading this book, instead of feeling convicted that I did not know God at all, I would merely sense that in order to be Varsity-level Christian, I needed to sin less, give more, worry less, and not trust in my money.

The Biblical principles were sound, but by glossing over the truth of gospel change, the book offers nothing more than life advice. While offering a clear view of what constitutes "true believer behavior" and what does not, the book explains nothing about how to have the kind of relationship with God that empowers you to live that way. Although everything the book preached was sound, the missing core message makes it dangerous, threatening both genuine believers and "Christian atheists" by placing the emphasis on their behavior. Someone can have genuine faith without perfectly following the signs outlined in each chapter, and a book which is ultimately nothing more than a well-intentioned to-do list risks leading a true follower of Christ into doubt and insecurity about their faith. On the other hand, a nominal Christian is led away from challenging their presuppositions about Christianity, and will walk away with the misconception that attending church more often and giving more money will qualify them as sincere believers.

The pastor who wrote this clearly expresses throughout the book that faith comes by grace alone, but his practical application does not mesh with his theology. You will find some good insights and spiritual thoughts here, but nothing that explains what it means to be truly transformed, able to sincerely love God and desire righteousness. For an explanation of how to get past works-based behavior and how to really know and experience God, skip this book and read one or all of the following:

"Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary," J.D. Greear  
Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart: How to Know for Sure You Are Saved," also by J.D. Greear  
"Am I Christian?" by Mike McKinley

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### **Kathleen Fuller says**

This book was interesting--on the surface there was nothing new presented as far as the gospel and living a Christian life. But it is one of the most challenging books I've ever read. I didn't realize it, but I'm a Christian atheist (and working to change that). Through the whole book I was nodding my head and saying "that's me, that's me, that's me". And I'm not happy about that. What I found most helpful though were the personal stories, or rather failures and confessions, by the author who is a prominent pastor. Because while I was saying "that's me" I was comforted in knowing that "I'm not alone". This is a great book that might be dismissed because of lack of theological depth, but should be read by every Christian who's ever wondered or even thought that they are truly living for God. Maybe your spiritual life needs a tune up. Or, like me, it needs a complete overhaul.

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### **Mark says**

Another really good book by Craig Groeschel. We are all sinners but we are still part of the body of Christ.

Our past cannot define us. You have a bigger role in the Church than you think you do. Each of Craig's books feel like he is talking straight to you. Uninhibited stories from his life, bible stories that relate, and ideas for that part of your life are found in each chapter. Everyone has a past but it cannot define us. I would recommend this book to everyone.

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### **Hope Miller says**

this is a great book for anyone that is seeking to deepen their faith/is a new believer. good review for the longtime christians, yet still very convicting.

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### **Chloe Hawker says**

For about the first seven chapters of this book, I was completely unimpressed. I think this book, to a great extent, talks about what many other books of its kind discuss in much the same way. There is very little here that's new. However, three chapters did get to me: the chapter on worry (chapter 8), the chapter on money (chapter 10), and the chapter on the church (chapter 12). These three chapters offer a higher level of insight than the rest of the book does. I'd probably only give the rest of the book two stars, but these chapters had enough of an effect on me that I'll give it three. The chapters on worry and money were convicting as to things I struggle with, and the chapter on the church expressed something I have a hard time communicating to other people. While the rest of the book is fairly white bread standard Christian self-help stuff, for me, it was worth reading for just the three chapters that I thought had a little something more. It's not world-shaking, but probably worth the read.

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### **Kelli says**

"Are you a Christian Atheist? Do you believe in God but live as if he doesn't exist?" --Craig Groeschel

One of my friends posted a picture of this book on Instagram earlier this year and noted that it was a thoughtful read and a book that she had referenced several times. I had to read it because I thought perhaps I am a Christian Atheist.

The Christian Atheist was written by a minister and former party guy who shares his path to God. In every chapter the author provided an example of a real story and how it related to the point he was getting across. Then he went on to provide passages from the bible. I wish the book was about half the length and just provided verses from the bible with very short anecdotes. I underlined a lot of the bible verses in the book which I do think I will make reference to again and again. He got the point across every time, but took a long time to do so. I'm 50/50 on this one. It had meaningful content, but the stories didn't speak to me very much. 2.5 stars rounded up to 3. I had hoped to be much more inspired.

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## **Holmes says**

This book cuts through my thick feel-good hide and leaves me out to bleed - every drop of guilty blood, guilty of feeling like a Christian but not acting like one. I suspect many are like me: believing in God, wanting to please Him, even holding His words deep in our hearts - yet not doing 1% of what we're supposed to do if we claim to be His followers. Why do I cringe whenever I hear the word "tithe" (giving 10% of your salary to church)? Why do I pursue happiness as if it is the real god? Why am I so hesitant to share with others my faith - especially with the ones I care most about? Why do I honestly believe in an omnipotent God but somehow doubt that He can change me? Why am I reluctant to go to church when I myself can be part of the church, because Jesus says, "where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20)? If you're like me, this book will read like a thousand knives piercing your heart. It's painful, but it's good, because you can still feel the pain. To heal the pain, the only way is to get moving. Stop thinking about actions; stop talking about actions, start taking those actions.

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## **Clark Goble says**

Author Craig Groeschel coins the term "Christian Atheist" to denote a believer who isn't living his or her life in a way that exhibits that belief. Far from judgmental, this book is an exhortation for the reader to experience a fullness in their relationship with God. Groeschel uses several anecdotes from his own life to explore such weighty topics as shame, love, prayer, worry, and evangelism. Groeschel's work reads almost like a biography documenting his own journey from Christian atheist to maturity in faith.

The goal for this book is to encourage the reader to strive for and embrace what Groeschel refers to as "Third Line Faith." Groeschel paints the picture of a Christian who crosses three separate lines on their road to spiritual maturity. The first line denotes a Christian who believes in the gospel of Christ just enough to benefit from it. The second line represents the Christian who has matured enough to have the desire to contribute to the Kingdom of God as long as it is comfortable to do so. The third and final line represents the Christian who believes so devoutly in the gospel of Christ that they are willing to give their entire life in service to it.

I don't want to reveal too much because my hope is that you will read this book. I highly recommend it to all Christians who seek to grow and mature in their faith. Personally, I had a couple of "light-bulb" moments as I read this book; specifically when reading Groeschel's chapters on forgiveness and worry. This book encompasses enough subjects that any believer who reads it should be able to identify their own obstacles on the road to spiritual maturity.

I'll be adding this book to my list of highly recommended titles.

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## **Justin Boshoff says**

A book that should be read and re-read annually as Christians. Craig really highlights the issues Christians face and the reason why there are negative perceptions of followers of Christ. Well researched, well written and a personally challenging book that is indeed necessary.

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## **Stephanie says**

I had really big hopes for this book. It has a catchy title and a topic that I'm passionate about. The author has an easy to read style of writing. Unfortunately, the author lost me when every single chapter was turned into a sermon. I finally just started skimming through each chapter until I got to the last one - the one I was really hoping would be worth reading - "When you believe in God but not in His Church". Unfortunately this chapter fell as flat as the others before it. Instead of addressing how Christians can fix the fact that their churches are full of hypocrites and money hungry pastors, he just accepts that as the way it is and just tells Christians to quit whining and just go to church. Really? That's it? I'm sure every "Christian atheist" out there knows they're supposed to go to church. Writing a sermon about it isn't going to change anything. My only hope left for this book is that some author out there will start with the topic of "Christian atheists" and actually do something with it.

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