



A Christian Survival Guide: A Lifeline to Faith and Growth

Ed Cizewski

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What enables some to survive as Christians when so many others falter? Without resorting to empty answers, clichés, relativism, or smug certainty, *A Christian Survival Guide* provides an accessible and safe place to deal with issues that can give Christians sleepless nights. By focusing on spiritual practices, discussing solutions to faith struggles, and offering perspectives from multiple Christian traditions, this survival guide moves readers into a thriving relationship with God, even if that means not necessarily finding all the answers.

A Christian Survival Guide doesn't run away from the big, tough questions of life like:

Does the Bible have to be "true"?

Where is God in an evil world?

Did God sanction genocide?

Is hell eternal conscious torment?

Does money keep us from following Jesus?

Candid and wry, Cyzewski deals with the tension of hard questions without resorting to empty answers, clichés, relativism, or the smug certainty that can so often drive seekers and strugglers further away. He writes for those who both care and question deeply, and offers survival tips to help readers move from living on the edge to a place of health and life. This survival guide is not meant to be a "one size fits all" handbook. It is a first step to confronting the big issues and challenges of a life of faith—even the ones that Christians fear most.

A Christian Survival Guide: A Lifeline to Faith and Growth Details

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Andrew says

A Christian Survival Guide was written to instill principles in our daily walk with Christ and to help us not just to survive until we meet Jesus face to face but to also grow deeper in their relationship with Him. The first part of the book covered Christian beliefs for example: prayer, the Bible, hell, Apocalypse, and so much more. The second part of the book also enclosed Christian practices for instance: sin addiction, money, community, and more.

One of my favorite chapters was the chapter on prayer. I liked how Ed Cyzewski shared Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplications (also referred to as ACTS) method to praying to our loving Creator. This way of praying is a wonderful reminder that we can pray for our own needs but we also pray for others. I connected with how Ed revealed he struggled with always feeling like he never could pray enough and when he did it would be many times repetitious. As a child, I would also constantly restate the same prayer over and over again. It took me countless years to realize my prayers doesn't always to be said the precise same way. I also enjoyed the story he shared about Bill Graham and his dramatic big bold praying in regard to his radio show. This was the first time I heard that story and this will inspire readers.

I would recommend this life changing book to anyone who is sick and tired of barely surviving and they are ready to thrive and to run their race and to grow more in their faith. After reading this book, I have begun to pray more and to pray to God like a true friend and to study the Bible and try to become more like Christ. Ed Cyzewski did an excellent job at presenting the topics in this book and I liked how he didn't sugarcoat the message. If you're looking for a book to help you in your walk with Christ, then read this one!

"I received this book free from the publisher from Kregel Publications book review bloggers program."

Melinda says

A Christian Survival Guide is not a verse-by-verse systematic study of theology. It is a simple guide to the larger picture of faith in Christ and how that impacts our daily growth. Yet the author manages to address briefly and with humor practically every difficult area of struggle people often end up wrangling about with God.

Ed's guide is written in winsome, everyday language, making this small book appealing to anyone who is puzzled by faith, God's actions, or by the explanations they've been given by the church or by Christians. This book is for someone who doesn't want to read straight-up theology, who, in fact, might be turned off by the very idea.

I am a lover of theology. Yet in spite of all my personal studying and discovering of answers that satisfied me, I found Ed's way of approaching difficult issues unique and mind-stretching. The way he words his questions, the application of God's unchanging nature yet flexibility within each culture and era, and his deep love and trust of God's goodness temper everything Ed writes. Because of this, Ed is one of my favorite Christian writers.

I found some of Ed's explanations the best examination of some of these difficult topics that I'd ever seen. In others area, I had reached different conclusions in my own study. But Ed approaches every issue with an eye to both God's goodness and justice, while giving complete acknowledgement of the tension of every example. I heavily underlined all of his discussions of violence, evil, and the nature of pain.

If you have difficult questions, this book is a gentle arm around your shoulder, turning you back to face God to listen and see him anew.

Joan says

I really liked this book. There are topics that frequently trip up Christians. It could be evolution and creation or a good God and the presence of evil. Just like a hike in the wilderness requires planning and survival skills, the same goes for Christian faith. Cyzewski has written an excellent book that helps Christians survive those challenges. He offers a variety of biblical perspectives on each of the issues, looking for common ground. He adds a little humor here and there too. I really liked his critique of the secret rapture. Well done, giving viable alternatives to the date setting interpretation of Revelation.

If your faith is being challenged, take a look at this book. You may find a perspective you have not considered.

See my full review at <http://bit.ly/1w2GwgH>.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher for the purpose of an independent and honest review.

Ron Smith says

At the time that I first started reading Ed's book I had just finished writing *A Mere Christian*. My first thoughts were therefore geared to Christians which were at least moderately mature in their faith. The topics that I cover are very deep indeed in contrast to *A Christian Survival Guide*.

I realized after reading the book, that it would be a great resource for new and maturing Christians who were fairly young in their faith. This kind of resource is valuable because it covers Christian basics. It would be read before reading *A Mere Christian*. The two together would actually be complementary works for Christians who are serious about their faith and ready to move from milk to meat.

I highly recommend it.

Debby says

I won this book on a contest on this site and am I ever glad I did. Very interesting and made me want to read sections of the Bible again I had not read in a while. I am glad it is mine to keep because I used my highlighter a lot. Thank you for the opportunity to enjoy such a great book. I will be buying this book for friends as gifts.

Mary-ann says

What enables some to survive as Christians when so many others falter? Without resorting to empty answers, clichés, relativism, or smug certainty, *A Christian Survival Guide* provides an accessible and safe place to deal with issues that can give Christians sleepless nights. By focusing on spiritual practices, discussing solutions to faith struggles, and offering perspectives from multiple Christian traditions, this survival guide moves readers into a thriving relationship with God, even if that means not necessarily finding all the answers.

What happens when you are faced with tough situations?

We are reminded by the author that we must be grounded in our faith that is the first step to survival. We have to be more than Sunday only bench warming Christians. We must be deep in our faith. And how do we do that you ask?

The author then takes us through some very good lessons on prayer, and how important it is to have a grounding in God's word EVERY day by reading the Bible.

The author has done a great job at reminding us the basics of our Christian lives. The chapters are short, but they make you think hard.

This would be an excellent book discipleship, a study group, or even on your own. It is one that I will keep on my book shelf.

I received this book free from the publisher <http://www.kregel.com>. I was not required to write a positive review and the opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Trip Kimball says

I had the privilege of getting a pre-release copy to review *A Christian Survival Guide*, so here's my review. I also did an interview with him this week on my blog. At first, I thought, "do I really need to read this?" I've been a Christian believer for a few decades and done ministry most of my adult life. As I dove into the book, I found myself getting more and more drawn in by Ed's writing style and content.

Ed has a great combination of genuine openness about his own struggles with faith, and self-effacing, sometimes biting humor. It makes what could be heavy reading into a thought-provoking exploration of some areas of faith that are difficult for many.

?Even the book's chapter titles and subtitles are engaging. It starts off with "Prayer: A Still Small Voice for Big Loud Problems," where Ed shares some of his issues with prayer shared by most of us. "Violent Bible Stories: Deliver Us from God?" is one of my favorites. Then there is, "The Bible and Culture: Less Lobster, More Bonnets," another favorite of mine.

The book has two parts—Christian Beliefs and Practices. I like that there's a practical, as well as, theological view of the Christian faith. In the practical part, issues such as sin, money, church community, evangelism, and the Holy Spirit are looked at.

Although I don't struggle with the Christian faith in general, I appreciate the insight gained in this book. For

those of us who have been believers a considerable time, it's easy to get into a rut or become oblivious to what others may struggle to understand about God and faith.

This isn't just a book for young believers. It's a genuine look at the Christian faith, and questions or issues that get debated, yet aren't always discussed with openness and honesty. I believe Ed does that in this book. He does not give trite nor clichéd answers. In fact, he makes a point of encouraging discussion and reliance upon God to gain answers. Ed doesn't skirt difficult issues, but lays them out to consider, perhaps for some of us, in a new light.

I'm glad I read *A Christian Survival Guide*. It's given me a fresh look at things I've set aside, and given me a new outlook about the faith struggles I once had. It's also a good reminder of how to encourage others in their faith.

Michael Boling says

The Christian walk is one of endurance. We are not promised in Scripture a bed of roses. In fact, we are told that in this life we will have trouble meaning there will be issues we must confront. How we confront those issues is of vital importance. Do we address the problems of life or when times of doubt come out way through our own efforts and our own understanding or do we lean on the truth of Scripture through the power of the Holy Spirit? Author Ed Czerwinski in his book *A Christian Survival Guide: A Lifeline to Faith and Growth*, provides some helpful insight into a variety of issues we all will face and how we should deal with them.

Czerwinski rightly notes at the outset of this book that "When temptation hits or a dark season arrives in our lives, a flimsy faith and tacked on spiritual practices won't provide the sturdy support we need." In fact, "Christians who neglect their spiritual growth, the actions God calls them to take, and the teachings that ground their faith are setting themselves up for failure." Thus surviving this life with all of its challenges can only take place if we have that strong foundation upon which to grow deep and wide in the things of God. Without that foundation, we will without fail crumble under the crashing waves that will inevitably come our way.

After establishing the importance of spiritual growth and maturity, Czerwinski engages a number of key beliefs that must form the locus of how we live our daily lives. Prayer, devotion to the Word of God, God's sovereignty, as well as how to address the problem of evil, hell, and the reliability of Scripture are looked at by Czerwinski.

While I appreciated his comments on things like prayer, the importance of Bible study, and realizing that while God's timing and plans may not be what we would like, everything happens as God desires and for our best, I had some issue with Czerwinski's treatment of hell in particular. After the uproar that surrounded Rob Bell's book *Love Wins*, the issue of hell, especially whether hell is even an important doctrine for the church to focus on and teach, came under fire. Unfortunately, it appears that for Czerwinski, the reality of eternal punishment is not exactly on his radar of importance. He notes "There's no doubt that the "traditional" view of hell as eternal torment in fire caught on and became the norm. We could theorize that the "best theology" won." While he does a decent job of engaging the relevant terms used in Scripture to describe this place of eternal punishment, Czerwinski's argument that hell may not necessarily be a place of eternality for the wicked is based more on quotes of other scholars who had an issue with hell's place in theology rather than engaging for instance the fact that hell is described in the same manner as heaven, namely an eternal place. I

was hoping he would discuss the meaning of the Greek word *aionos*, a word that is used to describe the length of time the wicked will spend apart from God in that place of punishment as well as how long the righteous will spend in the presence of a holy God.

Cyzewski's comments on doubt were especially helpful. He rightly states that doubt is a "demon weed. It's a thick weed that runs deep into our garden before sending out enormous leaves that will shave a huge section of our raised beds if I let it grow." He correctly states that having doubts is a natural course of life; however, allowing doubt to fester is dangerous. We can find comfort in the fact that even the apostles endured times of doubt. This means that doubts will come, but they must be dealt with. The One who can help us through doubt is Jesus. We can cry out to God "Help my unbelief". As Cryzewski aptly notes, "That tiny seed of faith in that prayer is more than enough to help us survive when doubts threaten to upend our faith."

Overall, I found this book to be insightful and helpful, although as noted earlier I had some issues with how the author approached certain issues. I appreciated his efforts to remind believers of important overarching truths such as God's justice and Christ as the center of our lives. With that said, there were times when he seemed to neglect the trees for the forest, specifically in regards to the topic of hell. I would recommend this book as there is quite a bit of helpful tools provided by Cryzewski for walking in faith as we journey through this life.

Joy says

Some of the topics included in the book are hell, sin, and the Holy Spirit. The author answers questions people have asked about the Bible and living the Christian life. I think it's a good book for a new Christian, there's sections on putting things into practice which is interesting. A quick easy read with subjects to think about and discuss.

I received a copy of this book free from Kregel Publishing in exchange for an honest review.

Karen Korb says

My Thoughts On The Book: This book is not a heavy hitting, verse by verse study. It is however an easy to read, sometimes uncomfortable, lifeline for today's Christian who needs some answers. In his introduction is an encouragement to examine your way of thinking and go from surviving to thriving. He tells shows us in the introduction that surviving is not something you just do.....surviving takes planning. He gives us some insight into the marks of a Messy Christian vs a Happy Christian and how both can fail to thrive as a follower of Jesus. That was eye opening for me! The book is then divided into two parts. Part I deals with Christian beliefs and although I did not completely agree with some of his thoughts I could see where Cryzewski was coming from. Each chapter was short and easy to read which would not bog down someone looking for some answers. Part II was on Christian Practices and the most startling chapter for me dealt with bad churches happening to good people. This one touched close to home. Overall I enjoyed reading the book. It made me uncomfortable at times. I gave me some answers. I would share it with friends I know are struggling for answers.

Disclaimer: This book was given to me by Kregel Publishers Blog Tour Program in exchange for an honest review. The thoughts are entirely my own. Thank you for this opportunity.

April Reynolds says

I really enjoyed this book. Ed Cyzewski breaks down some of the hardest issues surrounding Christianity and returns the gospel to being "good news". Very liberating and thought provoking.

Jennifer Tinker says

Reading Ed Cyzewski's work is always a happily unsettling mix of comfort and a good swift kick in the pants. He does that again with his new book, A Christian Survival Guide. The book had me laughing out loud and reading passages to bystanders, while also giving me wisdom to continue to ponder in my heart.

Ed takes difficult topics and faces them head-on, all the while sharing grace and just enough humor to help keep us afloat. It's a good overview of the struggles and doubts that Christians face and ways through them without jumping to easy answers or cliches.

As a person with a degree in theology, I should note that this book is geared more for a general audience--ordinary Christians with sincere questions about the faith. There were places in the book where my theological wrestlings go beyond what the author explores.

I recommend this book for individual reflection or as a discussion starter for Christians who want to explore these topics together.

I had the chance to interview the author and you can catch that audio at Life & Liberty Online Magazine: <http://www.davidhousholder.com/a-chri...>

[Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book from the publisher for the purpose of interviewing the author.]

Cara Meredith says

Ed knows his stuff and he's got some of the best one-liners to boot.

Stacie Wyatt says

I read A Christian Survival Guide by Ed Cyzewski, in exchange for honest review from Kregel Blog Tours. The book provides advice on dealing with issues such as addiction to sin; money; and prayer. The book is divided into two sections: Part 1 focuses on Christian beliefs, while Part 2 focuses on Christian practices.

I wanted to read the book because I struggle with my Christian walk and the book provides practical insight on dealing with common Christian issues.

The chapters, which appealed to me are chapter 10: sin addiction; chapter 1: prayer; and Chapter 2: the bible.

One of the first things, which stood out was survival requires planning. Page 13 said "the path to survival isn't just a matter of doing the bare minimum to survive...Christian survival demands that we face the challenges to our faith and learn to rest daily in Christ, our solid foundation."

On page 17, the author gives characteristics of messy and happy Christians and I have fell into both traps.

For the rest of this review, I am going to focus on chapter 10: sin addiction. I have an addictive personality, whether Facebook or a new game or even books. I used to be addicted to sex, prior to my celibacy journey. As a Christian, I knew I shouldn't have premarital or promiscuous sex, but I did it anyway.

The author said people sin and hide behind their justifications and rationalizations, which I know from experience. I didn't feel like I was hurting anyone, but I was hurting myself. My harmless fun had consequences.

The book was also easy to read and easy to understand.

Finally, this chapter discussed Christian insanity, "doing the same thing over and over again to defeat sin and yet they don't experience the freedom that the scripture promise." (p. 152). I am struggling with insanity for other issues. My methods are not working, but God's will

Andi says

A great book for anyone who has doubted or struggled with the Christian faith as they have learned it. I appreciated Ed's openness and his honesty, and I'm also grateful for his wide perspective here. While I do wish sometimes he had pushed harder into things or gone further with his positions, those wishes are shaped by my own beliefs and might have damaged the open arms feel of the book. Good writing, too.
