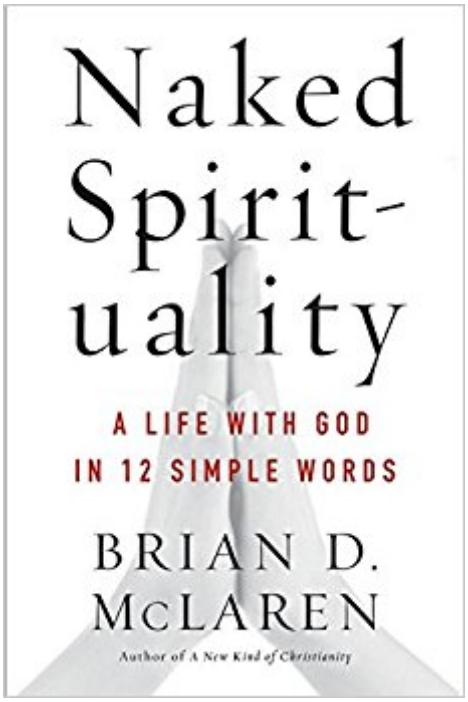
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Naked Spirituality: A Life With God In 12 Simple Words



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“A rich, brilliant and important book: wonderfully readable and personal, filled with insight and wisdom, it invites us into practices that can transform our lives.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Marcus J. Borg, author of Speaking ChristianÃ¢â ¬Å“Brian McLaren is a bridge builder. In these simple yet profound spiritual practices he perfectly marries his evangelical heart and contemplative soul, and we are all richer for the union.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Cynthia Bourgeault, author of Centering Prayer and The Wisdom JesusIn the same way he revitalized our faith in A New Kind of Christianity, church leader Brian McLaren reinvigorates our approach to spiritual fulfillment in Naked SpiritualityÃ¢â ¬â •by tearing down the old dogmatic practices that hamper our spiritual growth, and leading us toward the meaningful spiritual practices that can help transform our lives.

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Wise, easy to read, and practical.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Fr. Richard Rohr, author of The Naked Now)Ã¢â ¬Å“A rich, brilliant and important book: wonderfully readable and personal, filled with insight and wisdom, it invites us into practices that can transform our lives.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Marcus J. Borg, author of Speaking Christian)Ã¢â ¬Å“Brian McLaren is a bridge builder. In these simple yet profound spiritual practices he perfectly marries his evangelical heart and contemplative soul, and we are all richer for the union.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Cynthia Bourgeault, author of Centering Prayer and The Wisdom Jesus)Ã¢â ¬Å“McLarenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s trademark persuasiveness is put to good effect as he

continues to shatter paradigms for spiritual seekers.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Library Journal (starred review))Ã¢â ¬Å“Anyone wanting to conserve the spiritual spark in themselves will find this book a gentle and generous tract.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Publishers Weekly)Ã¢â ¬Å“These stories are honest and kind and good... they illustrated the life of a real and raw experience of God and the human responses we offer.... This guidebook to simple words for a not so simple spirituality is an incredible gift, a true asset to us, bread for the journey.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Hearts and Minds)Ã¢â ¬Å“McLaren both charts an arc of the spiritual life and suggests practices to nurture [it]. . . . McLaren deserves endless thanks for reminding us that estrangement and no do not represent a breakdown of the spiritual life. . . . Naked Spirituality is very astute.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Christian Century)

Christianity is in crisis. Many sincere Christians feel their traditional Christian practices are in danger of becoming irrelevant, empty rituals. In his previous book A New Kind of Christianity, Brian D. McLaren offered new biblical models for how we understand the central ideas of a faith that provides hope for restoring and reinvigorating the power of the gospels to transform us and our communities.In Naked Spirituality, McLaren takes his prophetic work a step further by confronting how the lack of a simple, doable, durable spirituality undermines the very transformation God is calling us to undergo. As a result, our religious structures become tools to maintain the status quo and not catalysts for personal and social change. McLaren presents a four-stage framework for understanding the spiritual life, and he unfolds spiritual practices appropriate to each stage. Each practice is rooted in a simple word: here, thanks, O, sorry, help, please, when, no, why, behold, yes, and silence. Naked Spirituality offers accessible, practical wisdom for living a truly spiritual life. Staying true to Jesus’s core message while engaging faithfully with our postmodern world, McLaren presents a proven spiritual program for engaging in and sustaining a meaningful relationship with God.

McLaren develops four seasons of life along the lines of the seasons of the year, with one-word summaries that depict each element of each season. I particularly liked the "autumn" season, where we cry out with no apparent response from God. McLaren is at his best in describing the agony and apparent non-redemptive quality of this season, which are subsequently resolved by other seasons. I had to "plod through" some of the material, but overall, it is a worthwhile read.

I was reluctant to review this book because, for whatever reasons, I did notreally "connect" with it. However, I do know that Brian McLaren is a very popular andprolific writer. While I did find some his

writings very inspirational, mostly it was notthought provoking for me. So I would have to conclude that ones response to thisbook may vary greatly and be very individualistic.There was another Brian McLaren that I found more stimulating and thoughtprovoking. This book is "Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Budda and Mohammed Crossthe Road? I would recommend this book more highly. Don’t let the title deceive you, this is a book of substance, in my opinion.

This book is amazing! I originally checked it out from the library but then i kept wanting to underline all the paragraphs, and as i am a librarian, i know that is frowned on, so i saved my pennies and bought a copy. I can’t think of a more appropriate book in this time when so many people who call themselves Christians have forgotten Christ’s mandate to love and care for one another, not just those who go to the same church. I would say this is a must read!

I read this book as part of my Sabbath discipline, one chapter per week. I found it so fruitful that I now use it as a training tool for new member sponsors at the church I attend.The premise is simple: McLaren has chosen 12 words to reflect on the seasons of the spiritual journey: Here, Thanks, O, Sorry, Help, Please, When, No, Why, Behold, Yes, and [...] He uses three words each as contemplative metaphors for the four seasons of Simplicity, Complexity, Perplexity, and Harmony. Because he is using the analogy of the year or cycle, he offers the opportunity for the reader to consider our journeys less as a trip (from point A to point B) and more in line with a wandering (passing the same point more than once, but always in a slightly different emotional-spiritual-psychological space.)McLaren’s reflection on his own voyage of discovery was like having a lively, challenging, and vulnerable companion beside me. There were times when I said, "Finally I have words to describe what I felt during that experience." There were other times when something that had been lurking in the back of my heart snapped into sharp focus.McLaren’s honesty encourages honesty in his readers, and a willingness to move deeply beneath the surface of events to explore the meanings, the blessings, and the shadows.Having used the book with groups, I would say that literal folks have a harder time with the imagery and metaphors he uses (which, personally, I found enormously helpful --) It is also probably not a good book for those who tend toward believing that there is one right answer to questions about faith. Depending on where a person is emotionally, it might be the tipping point book -- inviting her or him into an expansive and divine space. It could also simply be an exercise in frustration when McLaren gently suggests that God is likely larger than any one answer we might believe we "have."If, however, you are someone who is seeking a companion to challenge your own status quo and nudge you to look openly at your

own "givens" and biases...you have found the person in McLaren.

Naked Spirituality offers a creative and fresh approach to Christian spirituality. McLaren orients the text around four seasons, which one can pass through any number of times and should be envisioned as "an ascending spiral that grows wider" each time one passes through (p.27). For each season, he suggests three words that offer unconventional names for specific spiritual practices.For those followers of Jesus for whom the traditional language and practices of spirituality are second nature, as well as those for whom those words and what they represent are difficult to approach, McLaren, McLaren provides new vocabulary and an invitation to continue on the journey of faith moving toward spiritual nakedness or authenticity. I find McLaren's work, in general, to be theologically thoughtful and pragmatically helpful in moving the church of the early twenty-first century more fully into the present. While Naked Spirituality is no exception, it did not reach as far nor did it resonate as fully as have other recent texts. Furthermore, the stage theory itself is a bit forced, but this problem is overcome to some degree by the advice to live each stage well and to see all twelve as leading to the final word: love.

As the title suggests, Naked Spirituality is a stripped-down, simple approach to connecting with our Creator. Brian McClaren has done a brilliant job of identifying specific aspects of relating to our Father and defining them with one word. I wake up each morning now and now have a simple path that helps me connect with my Father. It is not a to-do list of activities.Brian uses the metaphor of seasons to help us recognize where we are in our life. In addition, he gives us permission and in fact encourages us to bring all of our emotions to God. Brian uses examples from scriptures to show us that God wants us to be real. I found this book to be very liberating in its message while providing a straightforward, easily manageable path to follow.

I found this book to be eye opening and one I can refer to time and time again not only for my own spiritual growth and awareness but as a tool to help others become aware of their own spirituality. The book invites us to leave our inhibitions behind and fall completely into God's presence and grace.

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