

Christine Caine & Lisa Harper

**The
Promise
and
Power
of
Easter**

Captivated by the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus

 HarperChristian
Resources

The Promise and Power of Easter Bible Study Guide

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Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Welcome From Christine and Lisa | 4 |
| How to Use This Guide | 6 |
| Session 1: God’s Redemptive Plan for the World | 9 |
| Session 2: Pursuing God’s Presence | 33 |
| Session 3: Compassion in the Shape of the Cross | 63 |
| Session 4: Come and See, Go and Tell | 87 |
| Stations of the Cross | 113 |
| Leader’s Guide | 116 |
| About the Authors | 122 |
| Scripture Cutout Artwork | 124 |

Welcome

From Christine and Lisa



The resurrection of Jesus Christ stands as the most pivotal event in human history. On Easter, we rejoice in Jesus' triumph over the grave, His victory over death forever. In the early centuries of Christianity, believers set aside a time for fasting, prayer, and reflection, which eventually became known as Lent.



Considering the weeks leading up to Easter are crucial, we do ourselves a disservice by thinking of Easter as merely a single day on the calendar. As author and speaker Barbara Johnson of Women of Faith famously said, "We are Easter people living in a Good Friday world." This perspective reminds us to live in the joy and hope of the resurrection every day.



Easter is so much more than a 24-hour period; it forms the metanarrative for us as followers of Christ. So, in this study, we're not only preparing our hearts for the resurrection, but we are also going to get a bigger picture of the Easter people we are called to be.

What we have discovered is that as we focus on the promise and power of Jesus' death and resurrection, we have the opportunity to draw closer to Christ and remove every obstacle that gets in the way. Through what Jesus did on the cross, we find new life in Christ. We discover purpose and see opportunities to share this new life everywhere we go, with everyone, in every way.

As we embark on this Easter journey, may you find yourself awakening to Jesus anew—through the details of His life, the agony of His death, and the overwhelming joy of His resurrection.

Chris Lisa

How to Use This Guide

OVERVIEW

The Promise and Power of Easter Bible study is divided into four sessions. Every session includes Video Teaching Notes, Group Discussion, Call to Action, Closing Prayer, and Between Sessions Personal Bible Study. As a group, you will watch the video and then use the video notes and questions to engage in active conversation. The goal is to develop genuine relationships and to be fully equipped to share the good news of God's redemption of us through His son, Jesus.

GROUP SIZE

This four-session video Bible study is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, retreat, small-group, or online gathering. If your gathering is large, you may want to consider splitting everyone into smaller groups of five to eight people. This will ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in the discussions.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Everyone in your group will need a copy of this study guide, which includes personal streaming video access, notes for the video teachings, discussion questions, and personal Bible studies in between group meetings. A leader's guide—including best practices—is found at the back of each study guide.

FACILITATION

Depending on how your group is formatted, you may need to appoint a person to serve as a facilitator. This person will be responsible for starting the video and keeping track of time during discussions. Facilitators should

be prepared to read the discussion questions aloud, monitor discussions, encourage everyone in the group to engage, and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

PERSONAL STUDIES

Between group meetings, maximize the impact of this study on Easter by working through the personal Bible study section. Treat each personal Bible study like committed time with the Lord and your Bible in whatever way works best for your schedule. Allowing time across multiple days provides the greatest opportunity for marinating in God's Word, as well as for letting the teaching sink in and take root. These personal studies are not intended to be burdensome or time-consuming, but to help you apply the lessons learned to your everyday, personal life for growth and connection.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Traditionally a Catholic tracing of the last moments of Jesus' life, we have included a visual telling of Jesus' last days through His resurrection. We hope this helps you trace this incredible story in a simple and beautiful way. We encourage you to look up each Scripture reference as you use this tool.

SCRIPTURE CUTOUT ARTWORK

We have selected four specific verses from the Bible that carry the Easter narrative as we can experience it today. Each verse page is designed to be cut out and will fit in a standard 8x10 matte frame. Our hope is that you will be reminded of the promise and power of Easter and continue to live captivated by the cross and resurrection of Jesus every day!

“From the very beginning God said,
‘You’re worth so much to Me that I will
send My Son, and He will die to reconcile
you to Myself.’ That’s Easter.”

L I S A H A R P E R



SESSION 1
Group Study

God's Redemptive Plan for the World



Video

Leader, stream the video or play the DVD.

Each video opens with a short introduction vignette, followed by the teaching session. **As you watch, take notes on anything that stands out to you.**

SCRIPTURE: Luke 24:25-26; Genesis 12:2-20; Genesis 15

Story of running

Our trinitarian God is restoring us

Road to Emmaus

Abraham

I will bless you

Blood covenant

| VOCABULARY | DEFINITION |
|-----------------------------|--|
| HERMENEUTIC | the lens through which we look at God and His Word |
| THEOPHANY | the physical representation of God Himself |
| LAW of FIRST MENTION | when something happens repeatedly in Scripture, pay attention to the details of the first occurrence |
| EXEGESIS | to draw knowledge out of something |

Group Discussion

1. Think about your personal experience with Easter and the weeks leading up to the event.

- Did you celebrate either or both Easter and Lent as a child?
- Do you celebrate either today? How so?
- What is your understanding of the season?



"I think the common perception is to think of the God of the Old Testament as a punitive God of wrath and the God of the New Testament as a Jesus kind of grace. Yet God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are perfectly eternal, and that posture of redeeming us traces all the way to the very beginning."

2. Discuss the following.

- Do you ever think of the God of the Old Testament as different from the God of the New Testament? How so?
- Why is it important to remember that the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit have existed in unison since the beginning?

3. Invite a few volunteers to read Luke 24:13–27, and then respond to the following questions.

- Why were those on the road to Emmaus so confused by recent events?
- How does Jesus respond to them?

- Why does Jesus turn to Moses and all the prophets to reveal Himself?
- Why is it important to study Moses and the prophets to learn more about Jesus?

"If you go back to the beginning of the story of God in Genesis, you'll find the red thread of redemption has always been there."



4. Invite a few volunteers to read Genesis 15, and then respond to the following questions.

- What promise was Abraham waiting for God to fulfill?
- How does God assure Abraham He will fulfill this promise?
- Why does God institute a binding blood covenant? What is different about this covenant?
- What does this reveal about God's commitment to fulfill His promises?

5. Consider how the blood covenant points to Easter and Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

- What changes in your understanding of just how precise, deliberate, and intentional God is with every move from the Old Testament to the New?

- What does God’s willingness to fulfill His promises—even when we break ours—reveal about God’s character? His love? His commitment to us?
- In what ways do you struggle to see yourself the way God sees you—as the object of His affection?
- Where do you most need your heart awakened to Jesus’ power and presence this Easter season?



“It’s a huge deal that the smoking fire pot and flaming torch represent God Himself—the Creator, Redeemer, and King of kings—walking through the blood. He knows the covenant will be broken because of sin, but He will pay the price in His blood on Easter. This didn’t start in the New Testament—it started in Genesis. That’s why Easter is not just a point in history. It’s the point of history. We have always been and will always be the objects of His affection.”

Call to Action

Leader, you will need some pieces of paper, about a quarter- or half-page for this exercise.

Pass out a piece of paper to each group member. Invite each person to write down something she is seeking restoration or resolve for this Easter season. Place each slip of paper into a bowl or basket, mix them up, then have each person draw one. Pray over that restoration for the next four weeks.

Closing Prayer

Select a volunteer to read the closing prayer over the group.

Lord, Your love for us is amazing and traces back to before the beginning of time. For thousands of years, You have been planning to come in human form and redeem us. We are so grateful. We ask that Your resurrection would be alive in our hearts—the reality of who You are, all You’ve done, and all You’ve called us to become. We love You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



SESSION 1

Personal Study

This section is created as a guide to personally study and further explore God's Word in anticipation of our Savior's sacrifice.

Don't forget to pray for personal restoration or resolve for one of your fellow group members throughout this week.



LESSON ONE

The season leading up to Easter invites us to reflect on our lives and relationship with Jesus and enter a time of preparation for the death and resurrection of Christ.

 What's one meaningful way you've prepared your heart for Easter in the past?

In Italy, the seven weeks leading up to Easter, known as Lent, are rich with traditions. This period begins on Ash Wednesday, when the faithful receive ashes on their foreheads as a symbol of repentance. Many Italians observe Lent by giving up certain foods or habits, focusing on prayer, fasting, and doing acts of charity. In one province, seven dolls dressed in black are placed in a public location. One disappears every Sunday as a kind of countdown to Easter. Holy Week, the final days before Easter, holds special significance with processions and reenactments of Jesus' suffering, known as the Passion of Christ. The week culminates in the joyous celebration of Easter.


In Greece, Lent is known as "Great Lent" and begins with "Clean Monday," a day filled with outdoor activities, in particular kite flying, which symbolizes "trying to reach the divine" and the cleansing of sins. Greeks adhere to a diet during the weeks leading up to Easter, in order to simplify their diet and focus intentionally on spiritual matters. Orthodox Greeks avoid meat and all their byproducts including cheese, milk, and eggs, as well as oil and wine. Religious services are held on Fridays. Holy Week features nightly church services, culminating in a procession on Good Friday and special service at midnight on Holy Saturday. In celebration

of Easter, eggs are dyed red to symbolize the blood of Jesus and renewed life. The resurrection is celebrated with candles, fireworks, and a feast with family and friends.

In Ethiopia, Lent is observed by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church for fifteen days longer than the traditional forty-day period with a rigorous fast. The weeks leading up to Easter are marked by increased prayer, church attendance, and giving. Services are held daily, with a focus on repentance and spiritual renewal. Holy Week features special liturgies and the “Procession of the Cross,” which features a large, ornate cross. On Good Friday, many attend church services and engage in acts of penance. Easter Sunday is celebrated with a festive meal, breaking the fast with dishes like spicy chicken stew.

All these practices help participants engage in a hope-filled anticipation, preparation, and celebration of Christ’s resurrection.

 Which of these practices intrigues you the most? Why?

 Which of these practices (or others) might help you engage more intentionally as you prepare for Jesus’ resurrection?

In this season of Easter, where do you most need to encounter Jesus in your life? Circle all that apply.

Healing in relationships

Overcoming addiction

Finding purpose

Building connections

Overcoming fear

Decision making

Extending forgiveness

Finding peace

Seeking healing

Knowing my identity in Christ

Wisdom in parenting

Strengthening my relationship with God

Creating balance

Other: _____

Grieving fully



Where do you most need to experience the healing power and presence of Jesus?




In the space below, write a prayer that exchanges hurt for forgiveness and healing, fear for faith, and hesitations for trust. Then ask Jesus to fill you with hope-filled anticipation for how He might meet and renew you during Easter.




LESSON TWO

The story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 is foundational for understanding our need for Jesus, and it helps set the stage for the celebration of His long-awaited birth. In this important chapter of the Bible, the serpent tempts Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God had forbidden. The serpent's cunning questions sow doubt into Eve and lead her to disobey God's command. She takes some of the fruit and eats it, and then gives some to Adam, who also eats it.

Read Genesis 3:1–6.


-  How does the serpent's question to Eve challenge her understanding of God's command?

-  What motivates Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and how does this reflect our human tendencies?

Once Adam and Eve disobey God, everything changes, including the way they see each other and the world.

Read Genesis 3:7–13.

 How do Adam and Eve respond to each other? To God?

 What is the impact of disobedience to God, also known as sin, on their relationships?

God pronounces judgments because of their disobedience: the serpent is cursed, and hostility is placed between the serpent and the woman's offspring. Eve will experience pain in childbirth, and Adam will work hard for food from difficult ground. They are then expelled from the garden to prevent them from eating from the tree of life and living forever in their sinful state. Yet, even with their disobedience, God lays the blueprint for the salvation of humanity.

Genesis 3:15 is sometimes referred to as the "protoevangelium," or "first gospel," because it contains the first of God's plan for salvation through Jesus Christ. In the aftermath of Adam and Eve's disobedience, this verse provides hope and a promise of redemption.

In the space below, write Genesis 3:15.

In this verse, God addresses the serpent (Satan) after the disobedience of the original couple. Several elements of this passage point to Jesus and the plan of salvation for humanity.

The “enmity” or hostility between the serpent and the woman are representative of the ongoing conflict, represented by the serpent, or Satan, and humanity.

The “offspring” or “seed” refers to the descendants of Eve, but ultimately points to one specific descendant: Jesus.

The “crushing” of the serpent’s head foreshadows the ultimate defeat of Satan and the power of sin through Jesus’ death and resurrection.


The “strike” on the heel contrasts with the “crushing” of the head. A strike on the heel can be survived, but a crushing of the head cannot. The striking can be interpreted as the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus, and Jesus’ resurrection reveals His victory over death and all evil.




How does Genesis 3:15 reveal the incredible depth of God’s love and His commitment to redeeming humanity?

Jesus' death and resurrection fulfill the promise of victory over death.


Read 1 Corinthians 15:55-57.

 How does Paul personify death in these verses, and what is the significance of challenging death in this manner?

 In what ways can understanding Jesus' victory over death impact your daily life, spiritual walk, and understanding of suffering and overcoming?


Jesus' death and resurrection make it possible to walk in relationship with God.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.

 What does it mean to be reconciled to God through Jesus, and how does this reflect the promise in Genesis 3:15?


Jesus' death and resurrection reveal that evil does not win.

Read Romans 16:20.

-  How does Paul's reference to God crushing Satan under our feet relate to Genesis 3:15?

Jesus' victory over death and sin provides hope and redemption for all who believe.

Read John 3:16.

-  What is the promise and power available to everyone because of Jesus' sacrifice?

Tucked into Genesis 3 is the promise of Jesus who will fulfill God's plan and promises. Yet it's far from the only moment in Genesis that points to Jesus as the one who will redeem humanity—as we'll discover in the next lesson of personal study.

• • • LESSON THREE

We all have situations and circumstances that can cause us to doubt God's promises, and Abram was no exception. Abram's story begins with God commanding him to leave his homeland in Ur to go to an unfamiliar land, which would later be revealed as Canaan. God promises to make Abram into a great nation, bless him, and make his name great. By faith, Abram obeys and travels with his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot, to Canaan. God appears to Abram there, and reaffirms His promise, declaring that He will give the land to Abram's descendants, but a severe drought drives Abram to Egypt (Genesis 12).

Abram and Lot return to Canaan, but their growing herds create strife, and so Abram offers Lot the first choice of the land. Lot chooses the best land for himself, and Abram is left with Canaan. Once again, God reiterates His promise to Abram (Genesis 13).

When we catch up with the aging Abram in Genesis 15, he is concerned that he and Sarai are childless. He wonders how God will make his descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, since he doesn't have a single child. Once again, God assures Abram that his descendants will be abundant and will inherit the land. Abram believes God's promise, and his faith is credited to him as righteousness. To formalize the covenant or promise, God instructs Abram to prepare a sacrificial ritual.

Read Genesis 15:1.



What does God instruct Abram to do?



How does God's promise to Abram foreshadow the protection and reward we find in Christ?

Despite multiple assurances from God that Abram will have many descendants, he still struggles with doubt. This highlights Abram's humanity and his inability to see beyond his current circumstances. Despite Abram's anxiety about his lack of an heir, God reassures him with a powerful promise, reinforcing the unshakeable nature of God's covenant with Abram.

Read Genesis 15:2-5 and Galatians 3:6-9, 29.



How does God's promise find its ultimate fulfillment in the spiritual descendants of Abraham through Christ?

Abram's belief, despite his uncertainties, is counted as righteousness, establishing a foundational principle for the relationship between God and His people.

Read Genesis 15:6–11.

In the space below, draw a representative picture of what's described.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin golden-yellow border, intended for drawing a representative picture of the biblical text.

Read Genesis 15:12 and Matthew 27:45–46.



How does this darkness symbolize the suffering and death that Christ would endure?

God gives Abram a broader perspective on His unfolding divine plan. The foretelling goes beyond the Israelites' enslavement in Egypt and extends to a larger divine narrative that God has been working throughout history.

Read Genesis 15:13–16 and Romans 6:17–18.




What does God say about the future slavery and freedom of Abram's descendants?



How does this prophecy parallel the slavery of sin and the freedom brought through Christ?

God ratifies the covenant to Abram through a *theophany*, a visible manifestation of God. The firepot and torch moving between the animal pieces symbolize God's binding promise to Abram. Such rituals were traditional methods of covenant-making in ancient times. By passing through the pieces, God demonstrates that He alone assumes the covenant's obligations and consequences.

Read Genesis 15:17–21 and Luke 22:20.

-  How does this covenant foreshadow the new covenant made through the blood of Christ?



“God tells us that when the covenant between us is broken—and it will be because we’re human and because of sin—He’ll have already paid the price.”

Read Hebrews 8:6.

-  How does the new covenant with Christ compare with the old covenant?



How does understanding the connection between Genesis 15 and Easter deepen our appreciation for Christ's resurrection?

Genesis 15 is a foundational chapter that sets the stage for God's redemptive plan through Jesus Christ. The covenant with Abram, marked by faith, promise, and sacrifice, points forward to the ultimate fulfillment in Christ's death and resurrection. By studying this chapter, we gain a deeper understanding of God's faithfulness and the significance of Easter.

“It’s so easy to be overwhelmed by everything in this world, so we need a sense of resurrection hope. We need to be able to lay everything at the feet of someone who is bigger than us, and who has defeated hell and death, pain, suffering, and injustice. We need to be able to lay it at the feet of Jesus.”

C H R I S T I N E C A I N E





About the Authors



MEET CHRISTINE CAINE

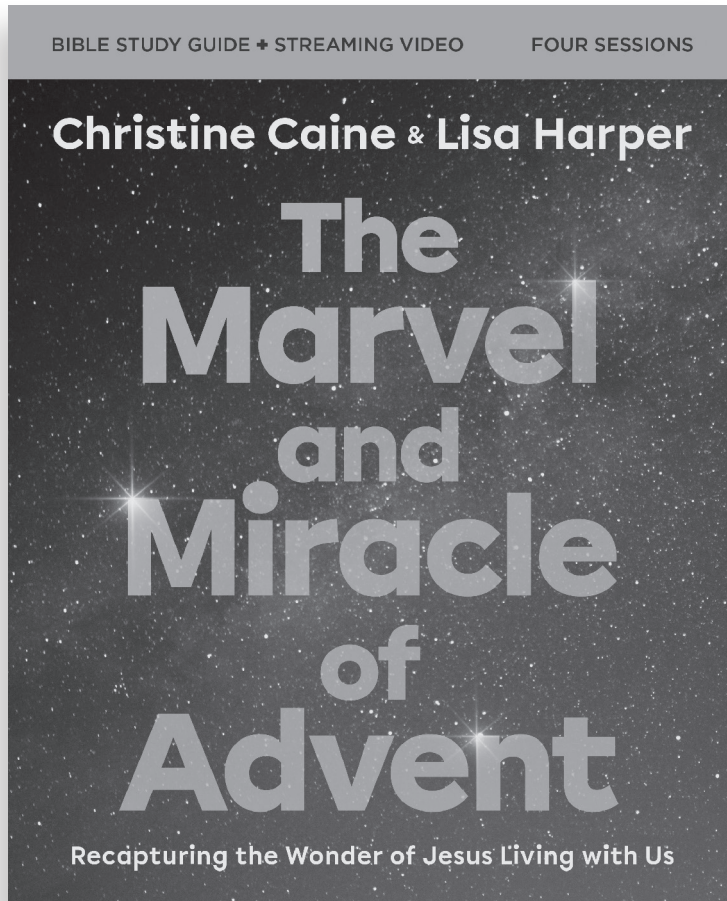
Christine Caine is a speaker, activist, and bestselling author. She and her husband, Nick, founded The A21 Campaign, an anti-human trafficking organization. They also founded Propel Women, an initiative that is dedicated to coming alongside women all over the globe to activate their God-given purpose. You can tune into Christine's weekly podcast, *Equip & Empower*, or her TBN television program to be encouraged with the hope of Jesus wherever you are. To learn more about Christine, visit www.christinecaine.com.



MEET LISA HARPER

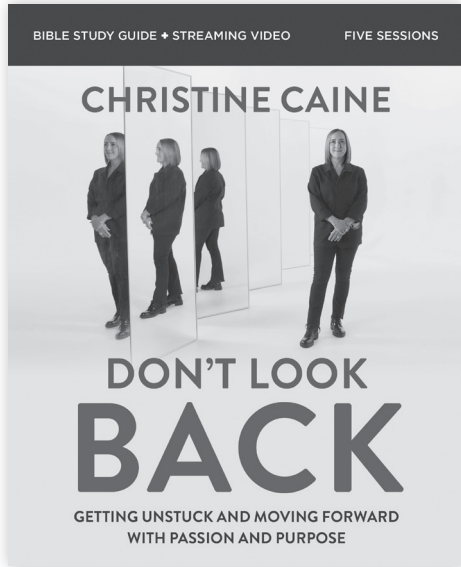
Lauded as a “hilarious storyteller” and “theological storyteller,” Lisa Harper is anything but stereotypical! She is known for emphasizing that accruing knowledge about God pales next to a real and intimate relationship with Jesus. Lisa has 30+ years of church and para-church ministry leadership, as well as a decade speaking on-tour with Women of Faith. She holds a Master of Theological Studies from Covenant Seminary and is in the thesis stage of an earned doctorate at Denver Seminary. She is a regular on TBN's globally syndicated *Better Together* show and has published multiple books and Bible studies. Lisa has also been leading the same weekly Bible study in her neighborhood for fifteen years. The most noticeable thing about Lisa Harper is her authenticity and love for Christ. But her greatest accomplishment to date is getting to become Missy's mom through the miracle of adoption in 2014!

Also From Lisa and Christine Together



Discover how Advent is not only a season of waiting and preparation, but a season of action to share the hope of Jesus with everyone.

Also Available From Christine

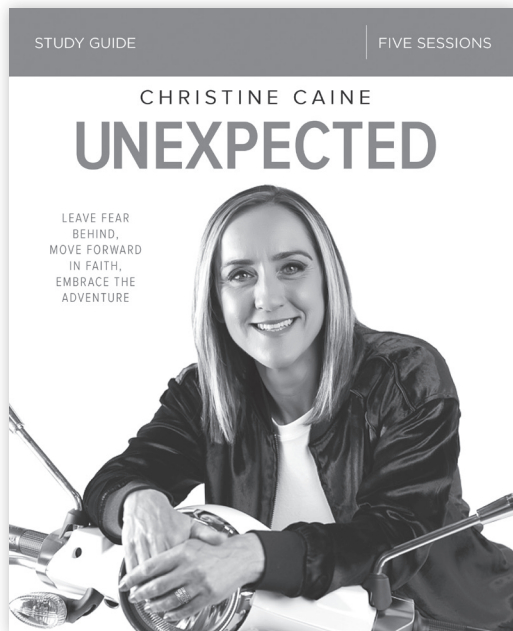


MOVE CONFIDENTLY INTO THE PURPOSE GOD HAS FOR YOU

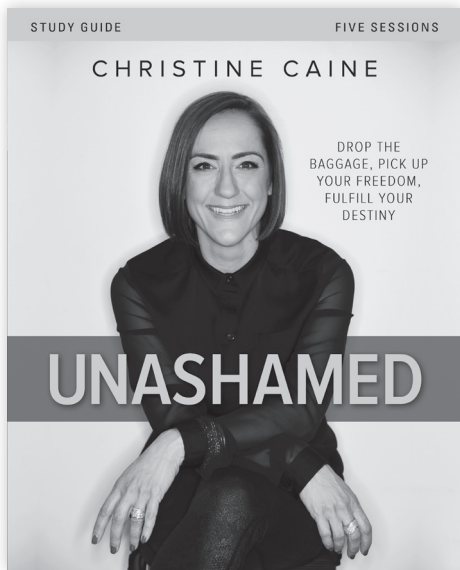
With a rallying cry to “remember Lot’s wife,” Christine motivates us to stop looking back, to let go, and to move forward into what God promises for our lives.

FAITH THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN IS POSSIBLE

Develop a relentless faith so that the next time life throws you a curveball, you will be able to navigate your way through, still living the adventure God planned for you!



Also Available From Christine

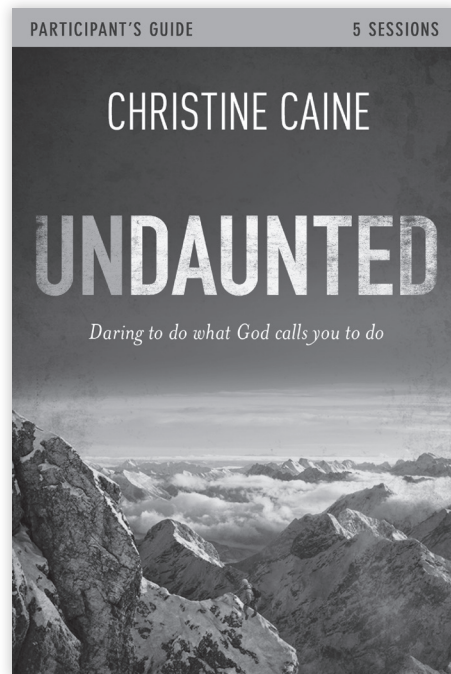


TODAY IS THE DAY TO FULFILL YOUR DESTINY

Christine teaches you a way out of shame by helping you rediscover the power of God to overcome our mistakes, our inadequacies, our pasts, and our limitations.

DARE TO DO WHAT GOD CALLS YOU TO

Learn from Christine life-transforming insights about how to overcome the challenges and often painful circumstances we all experience, and to use those experiences to be a catalyst for change—in ourselves and those around us.



The Promise and Power of Easter

BY LISA HARPER & CHRISTINE CAINE

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