

A portrait of Christine Caine, a woman with shoulder-length blonde hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a dark, button-down shirt and has her arms crossed. The background is a solid blue color.

**CHRISTINE CAINE**

**DON'T LOOK  
BACK**

**GETTING UNSTUCK AND MOVING FORWARD  
WITH PASSION AND PURPOSE**



## Praise for *Don't Look Back*

“In recent years on my hardest days, all I wanted to do was to crawl back into bed and not have to face the new realities that were in front of me. My life looked very different than I thought it would, and I desperately needed some time to adjust to all the changes. In *Don't Look Back*, Christine guides those of us who may be feeling stuck in pain and in the past yet are wanting to thrive while moving forward into a hopeful future. This is a book to sit with yourself, and to share with your loved ones who also need this timely encouragement!”

—LYSA TERKEURST, #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING  
AUTHOR AND PRESIDENT OF PROVERBS 31 MINISTRIES

“My friend, Christine Caine’s latest book is a masterclass on the power of perspective. In *Don't Look Back*, she reminds us to keep our eyes fixed on what’s most important—God’s plan for our lives. We may not always know where he’s leading us, but we can keep moving forward in faith knowing that he’s prepared the way.”

—STEVEN FURTICK, LEAD PASTOR OF ELEVATION CHURCH  
AND NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *CRASH*  
*THE CHATTERBOX*, *GREATER*, AND *(UN)QUALIFIED*

“*Don't Look Back* is bursting with the one thing everyone is in desperate need of these days: *hope*. Hope for the future because of the abiding hope found only in Jesus. There is no greater voice to speak to this than Christine’s. She is a prophet to our generation and I’m certain this book will change your life!”

—CARLOS WHITTAKER, SPEAKER, STORYTELLER,  
AND AUTHOR OF *HOW TO HUMAN*



“Several research studies have concluded that we spend as much as 30 percent of our mental capacity thinking about the past. Even more troubling, when we think about the past, the majority of our thoughts gravitate to our regrets. In *Don't Look Back*, Christine Caine delivers a powerful toolbox to help shift our thoughts in the direction God has always called us to focus: heavenward. This book is the counselor we all need on speed dial.”

—NONA JONES, PREACHER, TECH EXECUTIVE,  
AND AUTHOR OF *KILLING COMPARISON*

“Most of us feel stuck at some point in our lives. We want to change, but we don't know how. Thankfully, Christine Caine has written *Don't Look Back*. Packed with spiritual wisdom and practical application, this book will equip and inspire you to take real steps of faith and live the life God intended for you.”

—CRAIG GROESCHEL, FOUNDING PASTOR OF LIFE.CHURCH  
AND *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

“When you meet Chris—and you will meet her in this book—you will discover a woman that could have stayed stuck by looking back at her pain, disadvantages, and trauma. But instead of looking back, she's looking to Jesus. Jesus will never leave you stuck. Get this book. Devour it. Share it. Live it.”

—DR. DERWIN L. GRAY, COFOUNDER AND LEAD PASTOR OF  
TRANSFORMATION CHURCH AND AUTHOR OF *THE GOOD LIFE*

“At some point in life, you may find yourself stuck, and you'll be tempted to stay where you are or to return to what was. With her signature prophetic voice, Christine Caine calls us to move forward in obedience to Jesus. There is no way to grow without stepping out in faith. Her message is personal to me: Chris was a significant voice in my own life during a key season of discerning a call to step out with faith and courage. As she unpacks the Scripture and shares stories from her life and from others around the world, I know you will find the strength, healing, and hope to live with greater purpose and freedom.”

—GLENN PACKIAM, LEAD PASTOR AT ROCKHARBOR CHURCH AND  
AUTHOR OF *THE RESILIENT PASTOR* AND *THE INTENTIONAL YEAR*



**DON'T LOOK  
BACK**



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*Undaunted*

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*Unexpected*

*Unshakeable*

*How Did I Get Here?*

*Resilient Hope*

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# DON'T LOOK BACK

GETTING UNSTUCK AND MOVING  
FORWARD WITH PASSION AND PURPOSE

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CHRISTINE CAINE



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*Don't Look Back*

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Some names and identifying factors have been changed to protect the privacy of those who have shared their stories.

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To my beloved daughters, Catherine and Sophia





“Remember Lot’s wife!”

JESUS, LUKE 17:32

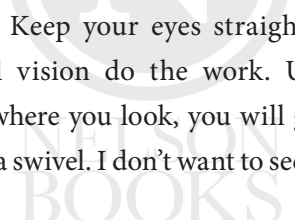






## INTRODUCTION

### Where You Look Is Where You Will Go



**M**rs. Caine! Keep your eyes straight ahead. Let your peripheral vision do the work. Use your mirrors. Remember that where you look, you will go! I don't want to see your head on a swivel. I don't want to see you looking back. Eyes forward!"

My motorcycle safety course instructor belted out most everything he had been teaching me as I exited the last turn and came to a stop. Feeling a bit proud of myself for having mastered the obstacle course he'd designed with orange cones, it must have shown on my face, because before I could look around to accept any fist bumps from my fellow riders, he added, "But don't let me see you on the interstate with that toy, even if it is legal."

With that, everyone laughed, much like they had the past



## INTRODUCTION

two days. Ever since I rolled up to the California Motorcyclist Safety Course on my Vespa—wearing my riding gear, complete with elbow and knee pads, boots, and a helmet that made me look like a bobblehead—and took my place among all the other riders, they had simply stared at me in disbelief. I felt welcomed enough among the mostly twenty-something-year-olds straddling their sport bikes, but it was hard to ignore that I was obviously the oldest in the class and the only married-mum-with-kids type.

As I mastered each exercise, little by little I garnered their respect—well, as much respect as you can get on what most people classify as a scooter or a moped. I imagine if I had been on a Ducati, I would have had immediate respect, but showing up on a pretty little Vespa meant I had to earn it. Or at least be a good sport and laugh at myself as much as they all did.

It was the fall of 2020, when things were starting to open up a bit after being shut down during the pandemic. The state of California resumed their Motorcyclist Safety Course because it could be held outdoors and met the requirements for social distancing. And since I wasn't traveling as much because of COVID-19 restrictions, I had a little more time available in my schedule. So I finally booked the course I had been trying to fit in for years.

What made it feel even more important to me is that my husband, Nick, had surprised me for my fiftieth birthday with the Vespa—something I had enjoyed immensely when we lived in Australia. There I owned a hot-pink one, and I rode



## INTRODUCTION

it everywhere. But when we got ready to move to the United States, it wasn't practical to ship, so I left it behind—but I never stopped pining for it.

In the process of purchasing the Vespa, Nick had researched everything for me, and he informed me that in order to enjoy my new bike beyond the end of the driveway, I had to take an instructional riding course and pass a written exam. As much as I wanted to just trade in my Australian motorcycle license for a California one, that wasn't going to work. So I studied in advance and passed the written exam with flying colors. However, the riding course was a little more challenging—especially since the last time I'd ridden a bike for any significant amount of time, I'd been driving on the other side of the road. Still, getting my motorcycle license was imperative if I wanted to be free to ride anywhere in the US.

## WHERE YOU LOOK, YOU WILL GO

Of all that I learned during the motorcycle safety course, one phrase my instructor used repeatedly never left me: *Where you look, you will go*. For weeks after the course, it resounded in my head. And because the pandemic was ongoing, I especially thought about it in relationship to my pre- and post-pandemic life. I recognized that my natural inclination was to compare life before the pandemic to life after the pandemic. To look back, rather than forward. To find myself expressing



## INTRODUCTION

frustration and saying to no one in particular, “When will we go back to normal?”

Maybe you said the same thing. When the pandemic hit us all and stretched around the globe in 2020, and well into 2021, how could we not want to roll back the clock, return to the way it used to be, and do things the way we had always done them?

What changed in those days? Far more than had stayed the same. In my pre-pandemic life, my kids could be dropped off at school. Nick and I could go to an office to work. I could meet face-to-face with my team. I could travel freely. It was hard learning new ways of communicating via Zoom, of speaking to a camera instead of visiting churches, of fighting human trafficking with all the new restrictions.

It was then I recognized that where I looked, I would go. Where my mind went, I would go. Where my emotions went, I would go. I had to remember my purpose and calling. How I did things had to change, no doubt, but I also needed to remember that the promises and purposes of God had not changed at all.

All of it got me to thinking—there are times in each of our lives when we look back and feel desperate to make time stand still, particularly when change happens that we didn’t see coming. Isn’t that what Lot’s wife did when God sent the angels to escort her and her family out of Sodom? She looked back and turned into a pillar of salt.<sup>1</sup> I can’t wait to introduce you to her in chapter 1, because what I’ve learned from her and from my own experiences is that we can’t stop and look



## INTRODUCTION

back any more than she did. Looking back didn't go well for her, and it never goes well for us either. What's more, looking back doesn't enable us to *go* back, and more times than not, it just makes us *stuck*. In a place. In a space. In a memory. In a habit. In a mindset. When we are stuck, we are not moving ahead because we can't move ahead when our feet are planted in place.

When Jesus invites us into a relationship with him, it is an invitation to follow him.<sup>2</sup> When we accept his invitation, we don't know where we are going, how long it will take us, or what we will encounter along the way—but what we do know is that he will never leave us nor forsake us.<sup>3</sup> Following Jesus is a journey, moving from one place to another, not necessarily geographically but always spiritually. Furthermore, to follow Jesus, we have to go where he is leading, and as much as we might want, we can't spend all our time looking back to where we once were while simultaneously trying to look forward to where he is taking us. In the words of King Solomon, "Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you."<sup>4</sup>

Life is full of unexpected twists and turns, of detours and slowdowns, of surprising stops that divert our focus. In recent years, we've had a lot of them no matter where we live around the globe. We've navigated life through a pandemic and all the loss that goes with it. So many of us lost loved ones and dear friends, relationships and jobs, ministries and businesses, hopes and dreams. It's still hard to comprehend. On top of that, more happened around the world in that time than we



## INTRODUCTION

could have ever imagined—politically, economically, environmentally, and socially.

I think we'd all agree that it's shocking how we can be moving forward, full steam ahead, and suddenly life throws something our way that changes everything, whether it affects everyone in the world or just us. If we've not prepared ourselves for how to move through those times, and get our vision looking ahead once more, we can get stuck looking back. We can get stuck in places we never intended to find ourselves—spiritually, emotionally, mentally, relationally, financially, or physically. To be honest, we can get stuck just about anywhere in life, can't we?

- When we like where we are.
- When we are scared about the future.
- When we may not want to let go of what we love.
- When we are wronged.
- When we are hurt.
- When we are disappointed.
- When we are numb from the trauma we've endured.
- When we are betrayed.
- When we are weary.
- When we are overwhelmed.
- When we are discouraged.
- When we are distracted.
- When we are wounded.
- When we are hopeless.



## INTRODUCTION

Sometimes, when we stop and think about what we have experienced, how can we not get stuck in disappointment, unforgiveness, bitterness, offense, fear, guilt, anxiety, insecurity, indifference, apathy, comfort, or complacency? And yet, to move forward, we have to find a way to move through these exact places and more. We have to move through loss, grief, hardship, suffering, disillusionment, mistakes, and sheer heartache to keep going.

Still, I imagine we all find it easier to stay stuck than risk moving forward and what might come with it, like stepping out into unfamiliar terrain and feeling even more uncomfortable. Like experiencing more hurt, more disappointment, more suffering, or more betrayal. It's little wonder the writer of Hebrews said that we must focus our eyes on Jesus. "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."<sup>5</sup>

To keep going through the most painful part of his mission, Jesus kept his focus on the joy that lay before him. That's how he endured the cross and made it to his seat at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. Because of Christ's sacrifice, we won't ever have to go through the kind of suffering he did—but we will still go through our own times of pain and hardship, of disappointment and hurt, of loss and heartache. Keeping our eyes on Jesus, who is the way, is the only way we can find our way forward.

Successfully navigating the twists and turns of life while



## INTRODUCTION

fixing our eyes on Jesus requires a spiritual strategy with four steps:

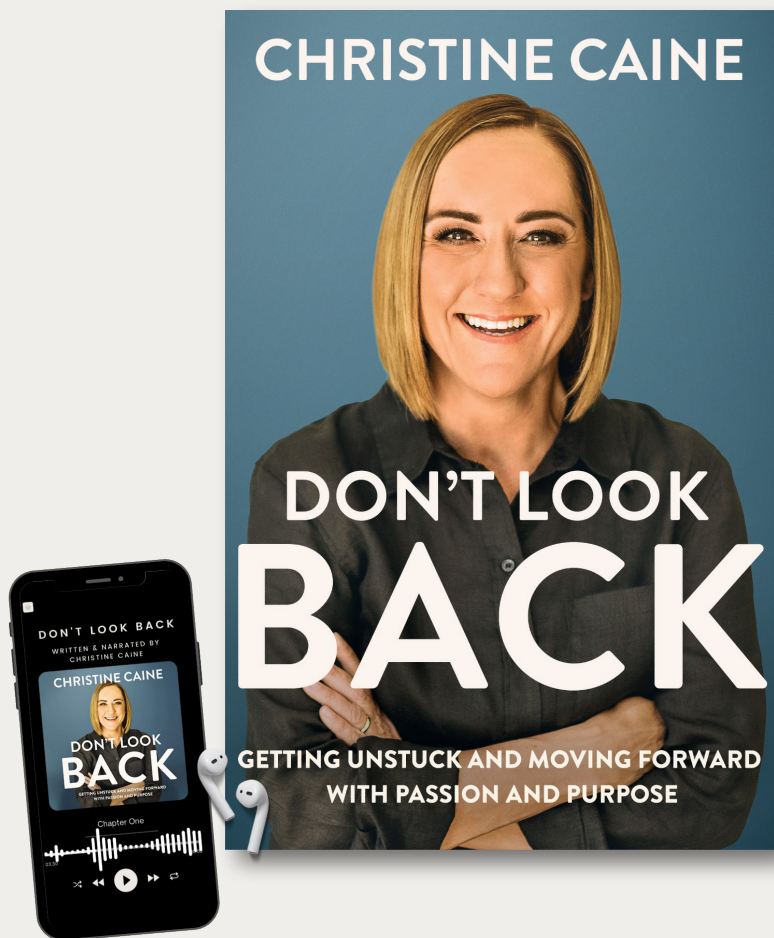
1. We need to first learn how to stop looking back and start looking to Jesus.
2. We need to invite Jesus in to help us get unstuck from those places where we never meant to be.
3. We need to start moving forward in a way that ensures we're successfully pursuing all the plans, purposes, and promises God has for our lives.
4. What's more, we need to learn how to do this repeatedly in every area of our lives all throughout our lives, because new challenges will present themselves—Jesus told us they would. He said we would have trouble in this world, but he also told us how to move through what life would throw our way.<sup>6</sup>

I understand how challenging this can be, particularly because it is not something we do once and move on. As we journey together through the pages of this book, I pray you will discover how to stop looking back and start looking to Jesus, how to move on from where you are to where God wants you to be, how to look forward to the future God has for you, and how to keep moving toward it in bold faith—especially when the world is ever-changing.

Love, Chris



# Trust God with your future.



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