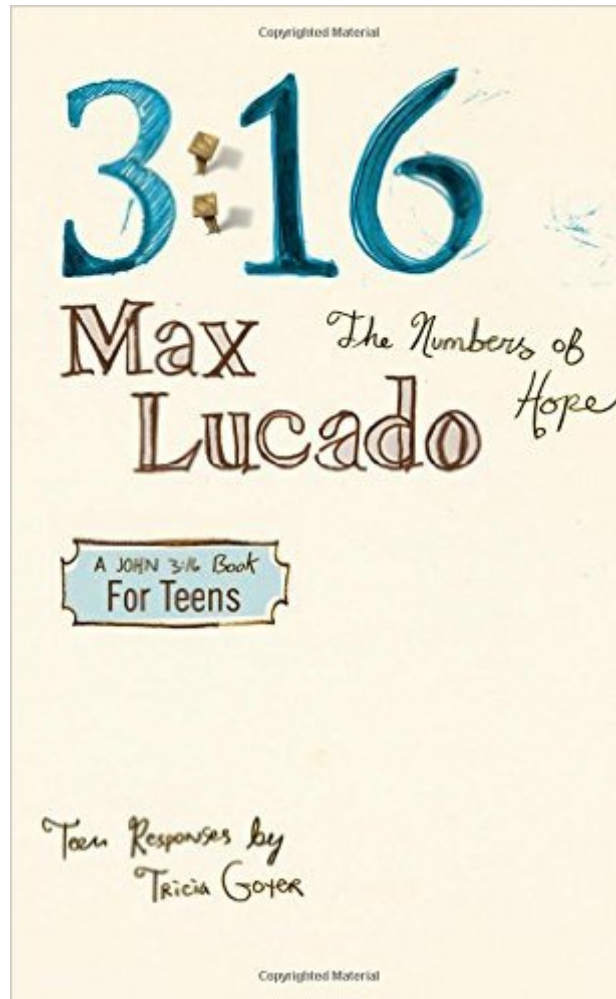


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3:16: The Numbers Of Hope-Teen Edition



Synopsis

Based on the beloved verse of John 3:16, Max Lucado brings insight to help teens apply this important teaching to their lives. 3:16 is certain to be one of Max's most important titles ever. Max offers his unique and simple storytelling for this important message while Tricia Goyer writes teen responses to Max's message, guiding teens to fully understand how this verse can impact their lives. From confession to praise, these responses are sure to bring an insightful look into the personal faith of teens. Note: White silicone bracelet no longer available with this edition. To order bracelet separately, use ISBN 9781400312634.

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Customer Reviews

It's a match made in heaven (or that's what Thomas Nelson Publishers must believe). In 3:16: The Numbers of Hope, one of the world's best-known and best-loved Christian authors takes on the world's best-known and best-loved Bible verse. Max Lucado has authored over 50 book with sales exceeding an incredible 50 million copies in print. His books are regularly on the New York Times list of bestsellers and continually dominate the Christian charts (where he has had up to eleven books present at one time). 3:16 is as close as we could expect for a sure-thing bestseller. An unparalleled marketing campaign will all but guarantee it. It is no coincidence that the book will release on 9/11, allowing people to contrast numbers of despair with numbers of hope. The book will also stand as the centerpiece of a major global ministry initiative launching on Palm Sunday, 3/16/08. This book is going to make a splash. In 3:16 Lucado unpacks ("exposits" would probably not be quite the right word) what he calls the "hope diamond of the Bible," the verse that is known

and cherished by more believers than any other: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Of this passage he says, "If you know nothing of the Bible, start here. If you know everything in the Bible, return here." Good advice, and advice that immediately shows that this book is written for a dual audience, both those who know the Bible and those who do not; those who love God and those who do not. It is written to show the reader the value of understanding and living in light of the words of John 3:16. Through twelve logically structured chapters Lucado interacts with this verse, moving easily through each of the major words or word pairings in the text. Lucado is a good writer and one who communicates well, often through story and example. It is little wonder that he has gained such popularity as he does an excellent job of communicating in a way that is bound to appeal to just about any reader. The book concludes with 40 brief readings (adapted from selections from Lucado's previous books) that are intended as supplementary devotional reading over a 40 day period. While I rarely employ such a format, I am going to divide this review into two parts, pointing out first what I perceived to be the book's strengths (beyond those already offered) and then a few of its weaknesses.

Strengths I was glad to see that Lucado largely gets the gospel right, aptly expressing the work of Jesus and its tragic necessity. He expresses the hopelessness of man without God and the fact that rebirth, like birth, is a passive act to which we contribute nothing. He emphasizes the exclusivity of Christ against all other religious claimants, unashamedly declaring that Christ is the only way to the Father. He is clear that some people are saved and some are not and in consequence he writes about the joys of heaven and the horrors of hell, never attempting to apologize for the existence or utter hopelessness of hell. He is refreshingly old fashioned in much of his theology. This leads to a related point, that Lucado is not afraid to discuss theology that is too often regarded as outmoded today. As already mentioned, he writes about the reality of hell and about Jesus' claim to be the only Savior. He writes also about the substitutionary nature of Jesus' work--that He took our sin upon Himself and received in Himself the punishment due to sinners--and of the reality of those who are sinners. "Bad news..." he writes after looking at a few of the Ten Commandments, "Your test score indicts you as a thieving, lying, adulterous murderer." Lucado often turns to good and trusted sources in his footnotes. Perusing the footnotes I noted references to James Boice, Donald Barnhouse, James White, John Blanchard, Randy Alcorn and other sources of sound theological wisdom. Though he often refers to these authors more for stories and anecdotes than theology, it is heartening to see him seeking to learn from such trusted, biblically-minded authors.

Weaknesses Lucado writes of God's promises and often does so without distinction between those who know God and those who do not. This is doubtlessly a consequence

of writing for a dual audience. He uses Bible verses that are clearly written to Christians but does not make that distinction. This is true not only in the words of John 3:16 (does God love everybody in the world without exception or everybody in the world without distinction?) but in other passages as well. This kind of talk can be dangerous--it can have consequences. To assure readers that they qualify as beneficiaries of God's promises whether they know Him or not can cause a great deal of confusion. While Lucado is very clear that Jesus is clear that there are those who are saved and those who are not, it is strange that he does not better delineate who certain promises are for. There are aspects of Lucado's theology that are a little bit suspect when I compare it to the Bible and to the broad stream of historic Protestant theology. In broad terms, his theology seems to downplay the sovereignty of God in favor of the free will of man. So while humans are sinful, they are not so sinful that without a prior work of God they will never turn to Him. As Lucado explains it, God waits for us to turn to Him, never infringing upon our free will, even saying "God, eternally gracious, never forces his will." Yet this introduces the complication that dead men, men who have perished spiritually, have no good desires and dead men can never be initiators. If we are dead, God must make the first move, even if this involves forcing His will. I felt there were a few places in the text where it may have been wise to exercise just a little more precision or where the author was just plain inaccurate. For example, Lucado speaks of Jesus going to hell--a common belief but one that seems to owe more to the Apostle's Creed than to the Bible. He also states that, because of the fact that the Father and Son are both God, in God giving His Son God gave Himself. I know what Lucado is attempting to communicate, but it could definitely be said better and in a way that would not breed confusion, especially among those who have little prior theological background. Lucado employs at least twelve translations of the Bible. I realize that in a format like this there may not be opportunity to explore the meaning of a text and thus it is sometimes most convenient to simply turn to a translation that says things in the way the author feels they can best be said. But often I found the translation used was not the most accurate one and this is especially true when Lucado turns to The Message. A couple of the passages he quoted from that paraphrase bore only a vague resemblance to a more accurate translation.

Conclusion

Those concerns aside, I feel that 3:16 is quite a strong effort and one God is sure to use despite its imperfections. While perhaps not a book I would choose to hand to a person interested in exploring Christianity, I can say with some confidence that it is also not a book that will lead people far astray. Lucado presents the good news of Jesus Christ's atoning death and does so in an attractive way. The millions who are sure to read this book will come face-to-face with one of Scripture's most powerful statements and through it will come face-to-face with the Savior. Though it does not present the whole story, 3:16 will certainly

have a lot of value as a means of stirring hearts and beginning spiritual conversations. With marketing efforts focusing, at least in part, on airports, keep an eye out for people reading this one when you travel. The words of John 3:16 have brought many souls to the Savior; I trust this book will serve to help bring many more.

Max Lucado has a way to illustrate concepts in the bible to make them crystal clear. I was raised with daily bible reading at the dinner table and know the bible well. As well as I know it, reading Max Lucado's books, and especially 3:16, has renewed and deepened the realization that God's love as expressed in Jesus is all encompassing and unconditional. He loves me when I don't love, or even like, myself.

The author of 3:16 The Numbers of Hope, Max Lucado conveys the central message of the New Testament that is contained in John 3:16 in a poetic way. The verse reads, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." He summarizes the basic Christian faith in a way easy to grasp, but a way that deeply touches the heart: Jesus Christ, the son of God, came into the world to deliver people from sin through his crucifixion and resurrection. This was the holy plan of redemption from the beginning of time. Max Lucado dedicates a chapter to each phrase that is contained in this verse and explains it with stories from the Bible and everyday life. He starts with the most famous conversation in the Bible, the one between Nicodemus and Jesus regarding "spiritual rebirthing." He then continues on to explain the love of God that moved him to give his one and only son as a sacrifice for all. The author explains how this gift is available to 'whomever' and is not limited to only a select few. While reading this book, I almost felt like I was listening to Max Lucado talk with me face to face. His style welcomes the reader into a heart to heart conversation, where truth is the mediator. He has the ability to transform any abstract idea into a tangible message that finds its way straight to the heart. An example of this is apparent in the following sentence: "...perish... a sobering word. We'd like to dilute, if not delete, the term. Not Jesus. He pounds Do Not Enter signs on every square inch of Satan's gate and tells those hell-bent on entering to do so over his dead body. Even so, some souls insist." (10) I have read almost every book that this inspiring author has published. It is always a joy and encouragement for me to read his words that help make the message of the Bible as clear to me as the water of a lake on a calm crisp spring morning. Whenever I start reading one of his books, I cannot stop until I am done from cover to cover. It's almost like starting a bag of chips and not being able to stop until the whole bag is gone. His writing is addictive in a most positive

way. Lucado demystifies the Bible stories in his books. I would recommend anybody who would like to get a fresh look at well known stories and lessons of the Bible to read them. He will not disappoint any reader who hungers for the truth. I especially recommend 3:16 The Numbers of Hope for its crystal clear explanations of God's promise and redemptive plan.

I read the full version of this book from the library and wanted to buy it for a gift. When I received this book though, I realized this version is only 50 pages long! This was a brief summary of the actual book, so that was a little disappointing, but for \$2.99 I didn't really want to waste time returning it. Just so you know, this is only a summary/brochure type book so don't expect a novel.

I have loved all of Max Lucado's books but this one stands above them all... it is a verse from the Bible that most everyone can quote and yet do we really 'know' the meaning of this verse. I have read the book several times and have shared with many others...thanks Max for bringing this verse back to us in a very real form. I have also bought this book and given to those that are without Him..you can't read the book and not change something about your life after everything Jesus went through for you and me.

This is a wonderful book when unabridged. I didn't realize that this would be an abridged edition. I wish that would give a little more information about the books ie: number of pages, date of copyright etc. This information isn't always given.

The book was in very good condition, but the add that was on was for the book 3:16, not a sample, which is what I received. I was led to believe that I was receiving the full book. Maybe try to be more specific next time if you are not selling something in full.

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