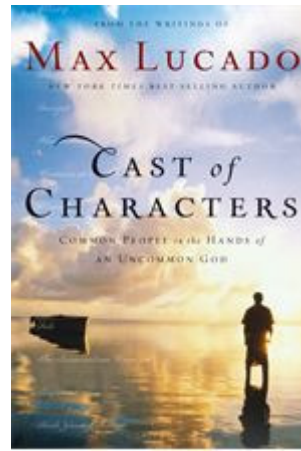


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I wanted to extend my sincerest thanks to Ashley Deets at Thomas Nelson for giving me the opportunity to review Max Lucado's *Cast of Characters: Common People in the Hands of an Uncommon God*.

There's a strange phenomenon that sometimes occurs when we read a book, watch a movie, or have an experience in the course of our daily lives. This phenomenon is often referred to as *déjà vu*. *Déjà vu* is the sense that you've been here, seen this, or had this experience before. It may be hard to put your finger on it, but there is a sense of the familiar. As I stated earlier, there are times we all encounter this when reading a book, especially in the pages of our Bibles. As the stories of Joseph, Job, Peter, Paul, and others Biblical persons unfold, we may relate to their experiences, personality, and character traits. Our life experiences, personality, and character traits that intersect with those of the Biblical persons draw us into their stories and make us feel like we're a part of them. The reason we can so easily relate to them is that they were normal ordinary people like you and me. Like us, they had many faults and flaws. In spite of this, God used them to change the world. This is precisely what Max Lucado is trying to communicate in his new book *Cast of Characters*.

Max unfolds the stories of various Biblical persons over the course of twenty three chapters. Each chapter has three parts: scripture passage, explanation of the Biblical person(s) in the scripture passage, and study questions. As Max helps the reader relate to the Biblical persons, he offers a message of hope in a God who is able to transform the direction of people's lives, just as He did with and through these Biblical persons who live so many years ago.

It's been quite some time since I've read a Max Lucado title. His work tends to be a departure from the more technical and reference type books that I'm drawn to. I was happy to find that I enjoy Max's writing style just as much as I did many years ago. The strength I see in this book is that he goes to great length to help the reader get inside the minds of these Biblical persons. I felt like I came away from reading this book with a better grasp of the heart and mind of David, Matthew, Lazarus, and others.

The layout of the book makes it ideal for a small group setting or for personal devotional reading. If you've enjoyed other books by Max Lucado, I'm confident you will find this new title to be enjoyable as well. This book would be a perfect gift for the Max Lucado reader in your life during the upcoming Christmas season.

Max Lucado is Minister of Writing and Preaching at Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, Texas. He is married to Danalyn and they have three daughters. Max is the author of numerous bestselling books. Learn more about Max Lucado and his writings at www.maxlucado.com.