

unforeseen

ENDORSEMENTS

In her book, *Unforeseen*, Bailey Lynn is very vulnerable and shares stories to display how God has showed up in her life. I love her writing style and the reflection questions at the end of each chapter. If you need some encouragement and prompting to draw closer to God, this book is for you!

Leslie Speas

Author of *Confessions of a Hot Mess: From Mess to MESSage - 90 Days of Messages for the Hot Mess in You* and blogger at www.lesliespeas.com

Unforeseen is an authentically written book that deepens our walk with God as we learn from Bailey's keen ability to draw spiritual insight from unusual places. Bailey helps us see Jesus through her life's journey—whether breaking in a horse, being in a mirror maze, or dealing with a dog with pink eye. Readers will love reading and learning from the stories in this book as they find hope in the midst of their own unforeseen circumstances.

Heather Holleman

Author of *Seated with Christ: Living Freely in a Culture of Comparison*

Real, honest, and vulnerable, Bailey Lynn offers insight into the valleys of life and what to do when you find yourself in one. Through her soulful writing, Bailey affirms the realities of doubt, confusion, and unanswered questions when life hits hard and situations blindsides you. Through Bailey's stories in *Unforeseen: Learning to Trust*

in God's Plan When Life Takes Unexpected Turns, you can once again discover purpose and tools to restructure your perspective based on a scriptural foundation. You will be challenged with questions that only you can answer for yourself. This book is practical, inspiring, and deeply spiritual.

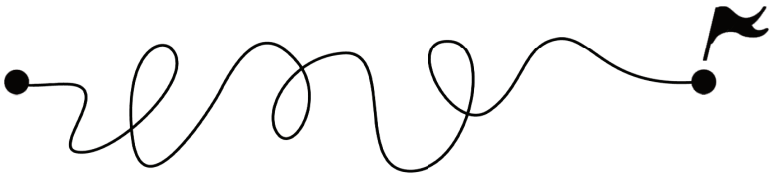
DeAnna Lynn Sanders

Author of *Unseen People: Sharing Light and Life
with your Neighbors and the Nations*

BAILEY LYNN

A MEMOIR

unforeseen



LEARNING TO TRUST

IN GOD'S PLAN WHEN LIFE

TAKES UNEXPECTED TURNS



AMBASSADOR INTERNATIONAL
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA & BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

www.ambassador-international.com

Unforeseen

Learning to Trust in God's Plan When Life Takes Unexpected Turns

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Paperback ISBN: 978-1-64960-346-3

eISBN: 978-1-64960-363-0

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Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

Edited by Martin Wiles

Cover design by Hannah Linder Designs

Interior typesetting by Dentelle Design

Scripture taken from the King James Version. Public Domain.

AMBASSADOR INTERNATIONAL

Emerald House Group, Inc.

411 University Ridge, Suite B14

Greenville, SC 29601

United States

www.ambassador-international.com

AMBASSADOR BOOKS

The Mount

2 Woodstock Link

Belfast, BT6 8DD

Northern Ireland, United Kingdom

www.ambassadormedia.co.uk

The colophon is a trademark of Ambassador, a Christian publishing company.

This book is dedicated to my mom. Thank you for being a constant reminder of how it looks to live the life of a godly woman. Your love and support through everything life has thrown my way has meant more to me than you could ever know.

*“Life with God is not immunity from difficulties,
but peace within difficulties.”*

C.S. Lewis

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

However this book ended up in your hands, I'm glad you are here. Before you dive in, there are some things I want to tell you.

This book is not designed as a devotional, so I recommend working through it at a pace that feels comfortable. Every chapter is another story or lesson God has placed on my heart to share. At the end of every chapter is a Bible verse or verses that provide a connection point from God's Word to the overarching theme of the chapter itself. I recommend locating those verses and reading the chapter. This will provide more context and help derive meaning from the message.

The chapters also end with a handful of reflection questions. I find it helpful to write down my answers to these questions in my journal. Feel free to approach these questions in the most comfortable way. Perhaps just read and consider each question in quiet time alone or work through them with a friend. Allowing God's Word to sink into our hearts is important.

Before I wrote each chapter, I prayed over them. Some dismiss prayer, but the power of prayer is so strong. I took seriously the responsibility of sharing the Word of God. I have prayed that these words will positively impact you and help you see more of who God is through the life experiences and stories I have included.

I also use a lot of metaphors. This is intentional. I love metaphors, especially when talking about God's kingdom because they make abstract concepts tangible. Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset once said, "The metaphor is perhaps one of man's most fruitful potentialities. Its efficacy verges on magic, and it seems a tool for creation." Metaphors help us make meaningful connections in our minds. They have been studied in the disciplines of sociology, language, and even psychology as one of the most effective tools we can use to relate ourselves to others and the world.

Metaphors allow messages to resonate in us deeply. Let them sink in and wrestle with them in a way that creates meaning. Doing so helps us relate our experiences to the kingdom of God.

Unforeseen was never meant to be a book. After painful circumstances ended my engagement, I felt a sense of intense confusion and loneliness. The only way for me to fully get my thoughts out was to write. I felt as if I was at a fork in the road where I could choose bitterness and anger toward the Lord for the pain I was experiencing, or I could realize He could use it to refine and shape me to be more like Him. Through that experience, I learned about the true nature of God and experienced Him in ways I never had before. As I continued writing, I shifted away from the events leading up to a traumatic breakup and began writing about my walk with God in its entirety.

Some of the biggest things I continue to struggle with are distrust and control. I know God is faithful, but I often find myself afraid to give Him complete control. As I wrestled with this challenge, I continued to write. Pages piled up, and I realized my vulnerable experiences could help others. Although I have experienced many

unique and sometimes crazy times, my life has continuously proven that Jesus is the only One with the ability to make our lives full and glorifying to Him. I have seen how more satisfying life can be when our mission is to glorify God instead of ourselves. The nature of Who God is has been revealed to me in amazing ways throughout my life's story.

Although God has taught me so much, I am far from perfect. Every day, I make mistakes that wedge a gap between me and the Lord. I am thankful for His mercy and grace that have allowed me to live in communion with Him, despite the ways I have failed. Yet I am broken. I don't have all the answers, and I don't always walk perfectly in step with God's plan. Rather, I come as a sister in Christ, excited for a chance to learn and grow in my faith with you.

I welcome you into my deepest and most real emotions. I hope that through a lot of my mistakes, a lot of my heartaches, and a lot of my unexpected circumstances, you will see the amazing ways God can work. I hope my experiences will help you give God control. Once we let Him call the shots, He will transform us in ways we never thought possible.

Chapter One

THE DRIVER'S SEAT

The section in Target where they sell planners is my kryptonite. I love planners. I could (and do) spend large amounts of money on planners—daily planners, monthly planners, work planners, social planners. It's kind of a weird thing, but it makes sense for me because it isn't the planner itself that I love having. It's the plan.

I love to check things off my planner when I am done with them and write new things in as I plan for them. It helps me feel as if I am taking the unknown out of the future. I like seeing what will come my way in the days, weeks, and months ahead. I know some people who are go-with-the-flow, free-spirit types. I'm glad for them. But I imagine many people are like me.

Some may not count perusing the planner aisle at the office supply store as a fun evening activity, but I think many people also appreciate having some of the ambiguity removed from the future.

Planning is in our nature. It's the reason we get stressed out when we are eighteen years old and haven't chosen a college major yet. It explains why we get frustrated with our flaky friend who just called to cancel plans for the third time in a row. We operate best when we know what to expect.

And while I don't think that planning is a bad thing, nor do I fault people for being uncomfortable with the unknown, I think we tend

to over-plan. Our deep-rooted desire to know what the future holds can often kick God out of the driver's seat of our life. I know from experience—and the fact that God taught me this lesson the hard way several times—that the minute we put ourselves in the driver's seat, we begin heading toward a destination much worse than the place God was trying to take us when we trusted Him with the control.

Sometimes, God takes us down a winding road that seems dangerous and confusing. And sometimes, He has us make pit-stops in some less-than-scenic places. Through the disappointments and trials, we may wonder why we are taking this route at all. It looks unfamiliar; we don't understand the road signs; and we want to grab the phone and confirm there is an agreeable destination programmed into Apple Maps.

This book is for planners. For those of us who have every detail of our life written down in all three of our planners and typed into our Reminders app. For my friends who, like me, get uneasy when we can't see the destination. I know we think our destination is perfectly good and that we could probably drive there a lot quicker and smoother than anyone else.

But there is Someone Who wants to take us to a destination far better than the one we imagined. He knows the detours we must make and the things we need to pull over to view. He knows when we need to stop and refuel, as well as the best route to take to avoid dangerous conditions. This Driver's name is Jesus; and as difficult as it might be, we need to get in the passenger seat, buckle up, and let Him navigate.

The point of all of this is to walk through the ways we can lean on God and His Word when He takes us down a road we didn't

anticipate. It is to describe how we can cope with all the thoughts and feelings that arise when we make pit stops in dangerous places that cause us to wind up a little wounded. It is to figure out how we can learn valuable lessons in all the seemingly unnecessary detours. Most importantly, it is to remind us of how more beautiful our destination will be (and how much more meaningful our road trip is) when we relinquish control and let God take the wheel.



In the Word:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Reflection Questions:

- In what areas of my life do I struggle with letting God take the wheel? What parts of my life do I feel most comfortable managing on my own?
- How does the idea of letting God call the shots make me feel? Am I eager to slide into the passenger’s seat, or is the thought of relinquishing control unsettling?