



NOBLE

STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

POVERTY IS OFTEN AN INVISIBLE EVIL. WE STAY AWAY FROM THE POOR PARTS OF TOWN. WHEN WE SEE SOMEONE BEGGING FOR MONEY, WE OFTEN TURN THE OTHER WAY, AS IF WE DIDN'T SEE. BUT TRUTH IS, POVERTY DOESN'T VANISH WHEN WE CLOSE OUR EYES. FEW KNOW THAT BETTER THAN CHRISTINA NOBLE.

CHRISTINA GREW UP IN POVERTY, LITERALLY SINGING FOR HER SUPPER SOME NIGHTS. SO PERHAPS IT'S NOT TOO SURPRISING THAT, WHEN SHE GREW UP AND FOUND SOME STABILITY IN

HER OWN LIFE, SHE WANTED TO HELP OTHER CHILDREN WHO GREW UP MUCH LIKE SHE DID. ONLY SHE WANTED TO HELP KIDS A HALF A WORLD A WAY.

NOBLE IS THE INSPIRING STORY OF THIS REAL-LIFE DO-GOODER, A CHAMPION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS WHO IN THE LAST 25 YEARS HAS HELPED ABOUT 700,000 CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES IN VIETNAM AND MONGOLIA. FOR CHRISTINA NOBLE, POVERTY WAS NEVER AN INVISIBLE PROBLEM. AND IN THIS AWARD-WINNING MOVIE, SHE DOES HER BEST TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE SEE IT, TOO.



*LIVING
FEARLESSLY*

CHRISTINA ENDURED A LIFETIME OF MISERY BEFORE SHE TURNED 18. HER MOTHER DIED. HER FATHER PRETTY MUCH DESERTED HER AND HER SIBLINGS. THE NUNS SHE WAS RAISED BY BEAT HER AND, WHEN SHE FINALLY LEFT THE CONVENT, SHE WAS HOMELESS AND DESTITUTE. HOOLIGANS KIDNAPPED HER, RAPED HER AND LEFT HER FOR DEAD.

Those experiences could've left Christina cowering in fear—scared to set foot into the big, often beastly world. But Christina didn't grow fearful. Instead, she fought back and tackled life with zest—relishing its joys, surviving its pains and never, ever backing down from a challenge. In the end, her trials didn't make her fearful, but propelled her into what became her life's work.

Life can be a brutal teacher. And when it smacks us upside the head, we can be tempted to simply run and hide—to watch life from the safety of whatever walls we've built for ourselves. Christina shows us that that's not the way to live. Even when we take our lumps, we've got to pick ourselves off the canvas and keep swinging.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Have you ever dealt with pain or a tragedy that made you want to run away or hide? Did you eventually overcome that pain?*
- 2. Do you know someone in your life that lives fearlessly?*
- 3. Even when you live fearlessly, you still sometimes need time to regroup. Christina did after she was assaulted. Have you ever needed time to collect yourself after a difficult season? How did it help?*

*DELAYING
DREAMS*



WHEN CHRISTINA'S A YOUNG WOMAN, SHE DREAMS, QUITE LITERALLY, OF GOING TO VIETNAM. AND FROM THAT MOMENT, THE COUNTRY IS RARELY FAR FROM HER THOUGHTS. BUT IT TAKES YEARS FOR THAT DREAM TO TAKE LITERAL SHAPE IN HER LIFE. CHRISTINA HAD WORK TO DO AND CHILDREN TO RAISE. IT WAS ONLY WHEN HER KIDS WERE GROWN THAT SHE STEPS ON A PLANE THAT TAKES HER TO THIS EXOTIC, FAR-AWAY LAND.

We all have dreams. We all have ambitions. And sometimes we want to make our dreams real right now. But often, that's simply not possible. It takes work, patience and, most frustratingly, time. And sometimes it can feel like our dreams are slipping through our fingers. Christina's tenacity shows us that a dream deferred is not a dream lost. We can all follow our dreams ... even if the path toward them is longer than we'd like.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. What do you dream of doing with your life? What great things do you want to do?*
- 2. What will you need to do to make that dream come true?*
- 3. Are there dreams you've let go or set aside? Do you foresee a time when you might be able to recapture and pursue that dream?*



*FOLLOWING
AN UNCLEAR
CALLING*

SOME PEOPLE MIGHT LOOK AT CHRISTINA'S TRIP TO VIETNAM AS A QUIXOTIC MISSION: SHE FEELS LIKE GOD IS CALLING HER TO GO, BUT SHE HAS NO CLUE OF WHO TO TALK TO OR WHERE SHE COULD HELP OR EVEN WHAT, EXACTLY, SHE SHOULD BE DOING. SHE HAS A CLEAR IDEA OF HER GOAL, BUT NO IDEA HOW TO GET THERE.

“I can’t afford to make any more mistakes or I’ll get kicked out of this country,” she says to God in front of a Cathedral altar. “I need you to tell me what to do. I’ll tell you what,” she finally says. “I’ll walk. You lead.” And so she begins walking ... until she almost literally gets hit with her purpose.

Many of us feel like we have our own callings to follow—a purpose that we were destined to fulfill—but such callings aren’t always easy to discern or, like Christina, to understand how to follow them. That can be frustrating. But, if we have patience and faith, sometimes it all becomes clear. Our calling can suddenly thwap right in front of us, like a kite.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Do you feel like you have a calling? What is it?*
- 2. Christina didn't always believe that taking care of Vietnamese children was her calling. She initially wanted to be another Doris Day. Sometimes time and circumstances help us understand our calling a little better. Have you ever had a calling change on you?*

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a denim-style top and shorts, sits on a wooden stool. She is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background is a wall of corrugated metal, suggesting a slum or informal settlement. The overall color palette is muted, with a strong blue-green tint. The text 'SEEKING JUSTICE' is overlaid in a bold, italicized, yellow font across the middle of the image.

SEEKING JUSTICE

CHRISTINA SAYS SHE'S WORKING FOR HO CHI MINH CITY'S DESTITUTE CHILDREN, BUT THAT WORK EXTENDS BEYOND JUST GIVING THEM FOOD AND EDUCATION AND LOVE. She's determined to protect them from those who mean them harm—the predators who prey on them. When she sees a foreigner lure a 10-year-old girl up to his hotel room, she barges into the hotel and demands that the girl be brought down. She confronts the foreigner and takes a picture of him—telling him that if he ever tries something like that again, she'll make sure his picture is in every paper across Southeast Asia. And when the man strikes back at her, she encourages a friend of hers to ransack his hotel room for incriminating evidence—and finally gets the cad arrested.

Seeking justice doesn't need to look as dramatic as it does in the movie, but we all are given chances to stand up for what's right. We can defend or befriend a bullied schoolmate. We can confront people we know who are cheating or breaking the law. It's never easy to do this sort of thing: Christina knows how hard and scary it can be. But someone should do it. And why shouldn't that someone be you and me?

QUESTIONS:

1. *Have you ever been put in a situation where you could stand up for what's right or sit back and just let things happen? When? What did you wind up doing?*
2. *Have you ever been confronted about doing something wrong? How did that work out? Were you grateful later?*
3. *Why do you think people sometimes don't do what they know is right? Do they get scared? Are they just apathetic?*



*THE BEST KIND
OF STUBBORNNESS*

CHRISTINA WAS NEVER VERY GOOD ABOUT TAKING NO FOR AN ANSWER. SHE DOESN'T HAVE A WORK PERMIT WHEN SHE COMES TO VIETNAM, WHICH MEANT THAT SHE COULDN'T VERY WELL DO WHAT SHE WANTED TO DO. AND EVEN THOUGH THE COUNTRY'S NOTORIOUSLY STRINGENT ISSUING WORK VISAS, SHE TAKES A CHANCE AND ASKS FOR ONE ANYWAY—EVEN SINGING DURING HER

INTERVIEW. And when the government gives her a mere three months to prove herself, she works tirelessly to make that three months worthwhile. She spends long hours with Vietnam's most destitute children. She petitions moneyed investors—calling a particularly wealthy businessman seemingly dozens of times. But in the end, her perseverance pays off. Those seeds of stubbornness lead to 25 years (and counting) of good works.

A little bit of stubbornness can go a long way in this world. Thomas Edison made more than 1,000 attempts at creating a working light bulb. Dr. Seuss' first book was rejected 27 times. Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team. But none of these folks ever gave up. And there are times when we all need to be a little stubborn, too.

QUESTIONS:

1. *Have you ever been in a situation that required you to be a little bit stubborn? When? Did your perseverance pay off?*
2. *You can, of course, overdo stubbornness. Have you ever been too stubborn?*



*HOLDING
ONTO FAITH*

CHRISTINA TALKS WITH GOD A LOT DURING THE MOVIE NOBLE—AND SOMETIMES, SHE’S PRETTY MAD AT HIM. SHE BEGS GOD TO LET HER MOTHER LIVE, BUT SHE DIES.

She has terrible experiences with the nuns she meets—women who are supposed to be showing her God’s love and grace. “Do you actually love these people?” Christina asks. “Because I won’t be your friend for much longer if you do.” And when she’s raped, her faith is greatly shaken.

But it’s never broken. “I know you’ve got a much better future in store for me,” she tells God when she’s a kid. And even though Christina goes through a great deal more pain to get there, Christina continues her conversations with her God. She believes that He has big plans for her—even if those plans are taking a long time to germinate.

It can be hard to have faith these days. The world can be a pretty awful place, and sometimes the folks we love the most can let us down. Christina’s own faith in people—her father, her husband, a once-kind nun—has been betrayed time and time again. Most of us have felt the same pain. But even when faith doesn’t seem to pay off like we’d like it to, it’s important to hold onto faith. For it’s in that faith—in God, in ourselves, in our calling—that can help us succeed and make a difference in this world.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Where do you place your faith?*
- 2. Have you ever felt like your faith in somebody or something didn’t pay off? Do you have someone in your life who has never betrayed your faith in them?*
- 3. Are there people who place their faith in you? Does that make you work harder and do better, so you won’t let these people down?*



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