

A Personal Snapshot of *Finding I Am*

BY AMBER DOWD AND
LAUDANNE WOODARD

Our team has been very pleased by the positive responses from many of you regarding this year's theme book: *Finding I Am* by Lysa TerKeurst. Our hope is that the books we send will be a valuable resource for you as you engage women in their walk with Christ.

My church recently used *Finding I Am* for its women's Bible study group. I decided to interview a participant to capture her experience first-hand. Hopefully this will be helpful to those of you who are also considering this study for your church.

Let me introduce you to Laudanne Woodard. Laudanne is a hospice nurse and mother of two (darling) young girls. She has come to our women's Bible study on Tuesday mornings since last fall and recently completed *Finding I Am* with the Oak Hills Church women's Bible study.

Amber: *Were you drawn to this study for any particular reason?*

Laudanne: Honestly, I came into the study without expectations. I've attended the group for a while now and love that it provides a morning out and covers childcare. It makes for a nice break for me. So I just go along with whatever study is being done. I was pleasantly surprised by this one and got a lot of out of it.

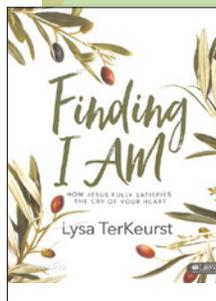
Amber: *What was your overall impression of *Finding I Am* now that you've been through the entire study?*

Laudanne: I like how it takes the time to really look at who Jesus says he is and how this relates to us in our lives. It got me thinking about what that means for me. A main point I received is that women have so many longings and desires and we seek to satisfy them in many ways outside of Christ. This study really helped me remember that ultimately Jesus is the only one who can satisfy me.

Amber: *Is there an example of how the study played out in your everyday life?*

Laudanne: One statement of Jesus that stood out to me is "I Am the Good Shepherd/ Sheep Gate". Personally I'm in a time of transition with many unknowns. The study taught about how Jesus like a shepherd— protects, guides and brings peace to us, especially when peace isn't our natural go-to feeling for that type of circumstance. I really felt I grew in my understanding and actual experience of having peace from Christ that came from beyond

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Women's Connection is offering your NAB church **ONE FREE COPY** of *Finding I Am* by Lysa TerKeurst

This copy can be requested by a woman in leadership in your church.

Please contact Heather Senges at hsenges@telus.net

Include in your request:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your phone number
- Church name
- Leadership position in your church



Our Vision

To connect with women of the North American Baptist Conference and help them fulfill their calling

Our Mission

To connect with women of the North American Baptist Conference, encouraging them in their desire to serve God, and providing them with valuable tools and resources to accomplish what God is calling them to do.

Our Core Values

CALLING AND WORTH
We value the essential role women play in ministry.

QUALITY RESOURCES
We value God's Word and seek resources that are Biblically sound, applicable and accessible.

BROADER CONNECTION
We value supporting the broader vision of the North American Baptist Conference and developing a connection among North American Baptist Conference women.

LEGACY & THE FUTURE
We value the legacy of women who have gone before us and are committed to engaging the next generation.

Mom Strong

by Heidi St John



Have you ever looked into the faces of the people who call you “mom” and wondered what in the world you got yourself into?

If you're like many Christian moms today, you've been reading the headlines and watching the rapid-fire changes in our culture with frustration and fear. Let's face it: Moms today are facing questions that previous generations didn't even see coming, and even our right to determine what is best for our own children is under fire. Popular speaker and blogger Heidi St. John (*The Busy Mom*)

believes that today's mothers need a special kind of strength. We need to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. We dare not rely on human strength for the battles we're facing right now. In *Becoming MomStrong*, Heidi has a powerful message just for you the mom in the midst of it all. Through encouragement, practical prayer points, and authentic “me-too” moments, Heidi equips you for a job that only you can do: to train your children to hear God's voice and to walk in truth no matter where our culture is heading. God wants to use this generation of mothers to do something extraordinary:

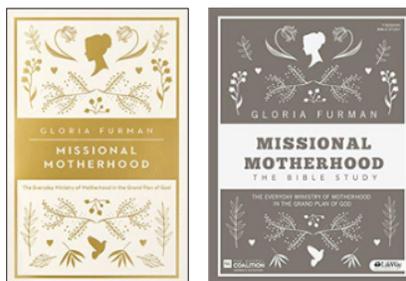
- To be strong in the Lord
- To know who you are in Christ, and
- To impart that strength to your kids.

In other words, He wants you to be *MomStrong!* So if you're feeling tired or inadequate today, get ready to find new strength as you join Heidi St. John in *Becoming MomStrong*.

Missional Motherhood

by Gloria Furman

Bible Study Book: The Everyday Ministry of Motherhood in the Grand Plan of God



There's no such thing as “just” a mom. Despite the routine tasks and mundane to-do lists, motherhood is anything but insignificant. God has designed motherhood as part of his greater plan to draw people to himself instilling all women, whether called to traditional mothering or not, with an eternal purpose in nurturing others.

In this book, Gloria Furman searches the Scriptures for the mission of God in motherhood. She opens our eyes to God's life-giving promises intended to empower each and every woman as she makes disciples in her home, in her neighborhood, and around the world.



Snapshot of *Finding I Am*

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myself when I normally would have feelings of anxiety.

Another section I connected with was “I Am the True Vine”. I liked the idea that to experience pruning isn’t necessarily a bad thing. Rather, it means that the Gardener is close and in touch with the plants. Even a plant bearing fruit will bear even more because of the work of the Gardener. This taught me that the results of our life in Christ are ultimately outside ourselves.

Life with him is about something else- about seeking God, relying on truth and not fearing outcomes. If God is calling me to do something, I don’t have to have it all figured out.

Amber: *How would you describe the group’s experience with this study as a whole?*

Laudanne: We format our time together with a big group time and then divide into consistent smaller groups. Having small group time really promotes bonding. I think there’s something to being able to confess and express ourselves with transparency about our deepest issues, longings, hurts and temptations. I found that the study questions lent toward this type of sharing and had good personal application that promoted depth.

We also spread the study out over 12 sessions instead of 6.

This left more time for deeper discussion. We also included a time in our larger group for various women to share their testimony with everybody. I liked getting a chance to hear from different people and even had to do it myself one week, which was a stretch for me!

It seemed like many people really identified with the Shepherd and Vineyard imagery, but it was also nice to see how the other I Am statements spoke to women in different ways, depending on the things they were going through.

Amber: *Do you have any last thoughts you’d like to share?*

Laudanne: We are often faced with temptations to try and control our life circumstances or chase physical comforts. This study challenges us to instead let Christ fill those spaces and receive his unique peace and joy amidst times of struggle or chaos. As a hospice nurse I see a lot of pain and suffering, but when I see God invited into these sorrowful spaces there is always a beauty to be seen. It’s beyond our explanation because it’s done by God.”

My thanks goes to Laudanne for taking time to talk with me, as well as to Oak Hills for taking a chance on our theme study. It is always a blessing to learn what God is doing among the women of NAB, and so if your church is embarking on the journey of *Finding I Am* we would love to hear from you about your experiences as well. God bless you all!

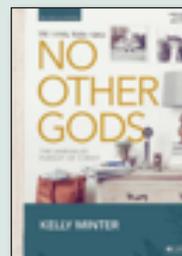
Recommended Summer Studies from Lifeway



The summer season means something different to everyone. To parents and grandparents with kids out of school, it’s a busy mix of activities, sleepovers, and family road trips. To small group leaders, it’s a time to plan out studies for the fall and beyond. And for the rest of us, it’s a time to catch our breath.

If you want to stay in the Word this summer no matter what your schedule looks like, here are 6 studies to get you started:

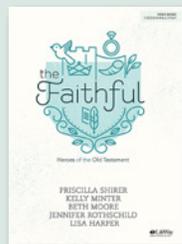
No Other Gods by Kelly Minter • 8 Sessions



While originally released a decade ago, this revised and expanded study reflects how God has continued to grow, teach, and encourage Kelly Minter in her unrivaled pursuit of Him.

Over 8 sessions, you’ll find all-new wisdom on how to identify the functional gods you may unknowingly be serving. Because only when you dethrone those modern-day idols can you experience the deeper, more abundant life Jesus came to give you.

The Faithful by Priscilla Shirer, Kelly Minter, Beth Moore, Jennifer Rothschild & Lisa Harper • 5 Sessions



Borrowing from best-selling studies by some of your most favorite authors, this study is perfect for women on the go as each session is a standalone Old

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Connecting in the Eastern Association Women's Connection Luncheon

Pittsford Community Church (Pittsford, New York)
March 30, 2019

The Women's Connection Leadership Team is grateful to Monica Goodnough and her team of ladies at Pittsford Community Church for hosting the third connecting luncheon in our NAB Conference regions.

"It was a blessing to be able to connect with other women in ministry and have you (team members Fabiola Campos and Jean Ewing) give us great information. We hope to see all of you soon."

– Janeth Rodriguez, Tabernacula Biblico Bautista Nueva Jerusalem, Kitchener, Ontario

"It was a great time. I think we all enjoyed being together, making new friends and reinforcing old ones. Thank you for putting it on."

– Tina Lamarco, Victor Community Church Victor, New York

These comments reflect the feelings of the 31 ladies (and 2 babies) from 6 US and 2 Canadian churches from the Eastern Association who attended. The ladies from Canada came a day early enjoying each other's friendship for more than just the luncheon.

The goals for our connecting lunches were accomplished as the NAB women in leadership shared ministry concerns and encouragement around the tables and offered helpful suggestions for the WCLT as it develops its place in NAB ministry.

Thank you women of the Eastern Association for your valuable input. If you are reading this and have thoughts about any of these topics PLEASE send your ideas of how you addressed these ministry issues to jhwing@roadrunner.com

Women from the Eastern Association are looking for ideas and resources for:

- How to start small in your ministry to women
- Ways to reach the inner city
- How to integrate the younger generation

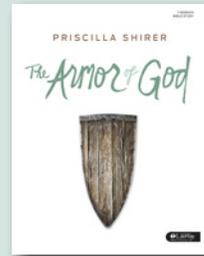


LifeWay Studies ... from page 3

Testament character study of either Gideon, Nehemiah, Esther, Hosea, or Malachi.

Through their stories, discover how God uses the lives of ordinary people for His glory and the good of His people. And strengthen your faith as you walk alongside these larger-than-life figures who all chose to obey God no matter the circumstances.

The Armor of God by Priscilla Shirer • 7 Sessions

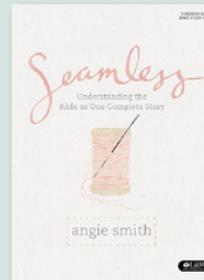


Get the whole family involved in this one!

While you pore over Priscilla's 7-session study for women, The Armor of God, engage your

kids in its companion activity books, available in editions for both older and younger kids. Develop an action plan for securing victory against the enemy while teaching your kids to put on the armor of God to fight life's daily battles.

Seamless by Angie Smith • 7 Sessions



What if you could cover all the people, places, and promises of the Bible, tying them together into the greater story of Scripture, in just 7 weeks?

And better yet, what if you could do it with your teenagers? Pick up the women's study for yourself and the teen girl's version for your daughter.

Together, you'll discover a biblical context that reshapes and brings to life stories from the Old and New Testaments.

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Blue Ocean Group

An invitation to be a part of an exciting missional/formational adventure!



The dates for the next Blue Ocean Group

GATHERING 1

Missional Theology and Ecclesiology
Vancouver, Canada
Oct. 28-30, 2019

This first week aims at understanding God's missionary nature. Throughout scripture, God sends His word and His people as He seeks to redeem all things. There are many implications for the way in which we, as a sent people, live together to bear witness to God. In this week, we will focus on creating a sense of team and common journey together, as well as encountering a couple of churches who are developing local and international missionaries.

GATHERING 2

The Formation of God's People
Sacramento
Feb. 24-26, 2020

This second week will be at a retreat center as we focus on being shaped into the image of Christ. We will pay attention to the process of how Christ is formed in us, both as individuals and as a community of faith. Being at the retreat center allows us to have times of silence and solitude, as well as to be taught and led by others who have walked this journey ahead of us.

The Blue Ocean experience really affirmed the ministry that One-Eighty is doing in Lodi. It gave us clarity in our vision. It gave us tools that we are going to implement with our teams, and tools that we have already put into action. It gave us time and space to really dream about what's next for One-Eighty. More than anything it connected us with ministry leaders who continue to pray for us and encourage us. It validated what I am doing in my ministry in connecting with parents and students. I've been able to share with my staff and encouraged them to continue in what we are already doing.

At first, as a woman, I was really unsure why I was asked to be a part of Blue Ocean. In the past, my church experience has basically taught us that men or paid church staff were the ones who did the "real ministry" and the rest of us did supplemental ministry that was good, but not as important as ministry the church staff was doing.

I am thankful for this group that not only put those hesitations and insecurities to rest in my mind, but encouraged me to step out and speak up about situations that I see in my church and ministry. This experience was nothing but positive and uplifting for me personally. I keep encouraging anyone who asks me about it to consider going next year or in the near future.

GATHERING 3

Living as a Faithful Presence, Chicago
April 28-29, 2020

In this event, we visit with David Fitch at his church near Chicago. David will help us learn what it means for us, as God's people, to reflect the image and presence of Christ in the context of our current culture. There is an emphasis on participating in spiritual practices as a community, where we learn to identify the presence of God in the midst of our neighborhoods.

"The Bonfire" – Chicago
April 30-May 1, 2019

Come and join those who have journeyed together in these first four rounds, as well as others who have been on this missional/formational journey, as we gather for two days to encourage one another, tell stories, and learn more about who God is and how He is at work in the world.

If you are interested in being a part of this journey please contact:

Kent Carlson
kcarlson@nabconf.org

Lisa Schmidt
lschmidt@nabconf.org
(916) 797-6222 ext 237

– Liz Stevahn, Care Lodi Director, 180 Lodi

LifeWay Studies ... from page 4

Breathe by Priscilla Shirer
• 5 Sessions



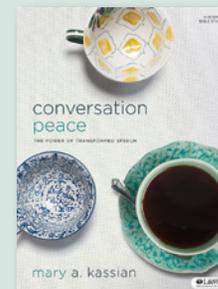
One of the greatest challenges among women in our culture is taking the time to stop and breathe (especially during the summer!).

We are in bondage to busyness. We

constantly strive to complete the limitless to-do lists that hinder us from experiencing all that God has for us. By neglecting time for tranquility, serenity, and repose, we limit our Christlikeness and miss out on some of God's greatest gifts.

In the Old Testament, Sabbath was given to the Israelites as a gift, and it is still a gift to us today. If you're worn out and need to remember to rest this season, then this 5-session study exploring the concept of Sabbath will change your life.

Conversation Peace by Mary Kassian • 6 Sessions



Summer is the season for close-quarters road trips, so now's the time to focus on the way you talk to the people you love most.

Over 6 weeks, you'll strengthen your vocabulary with words from God's Word, revolutionize your speech habits, and improve your relationships.

If this is the study for you (and really it's for all of us).

What are you studying this summer?



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