

ANN VOSKAMP

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF ONE THOUSAND GIFTS

# waymaker



FINDING THE WAY TO  
THE LIFE YOU'VE  
ALWAYS DREAMED OF

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THE LIFE YOU'VE  
ALWAYS DREAMED OF



STUDY GUIDE

SIX SESSIONS



BY ANN VOSKAMP  
WITH LISA-JO BAKER

*WayMaker Study Guide*

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# A Letter from Ann

Dear fellow pilgrim on The Way,

I have a gift for you as we begin this journey together. It's what we gave our eldest on the eve of his wedding. And I'd like nothing more than to slip it into your hand, too. It's a lifeline that's kept me from drowning more days than I can count.

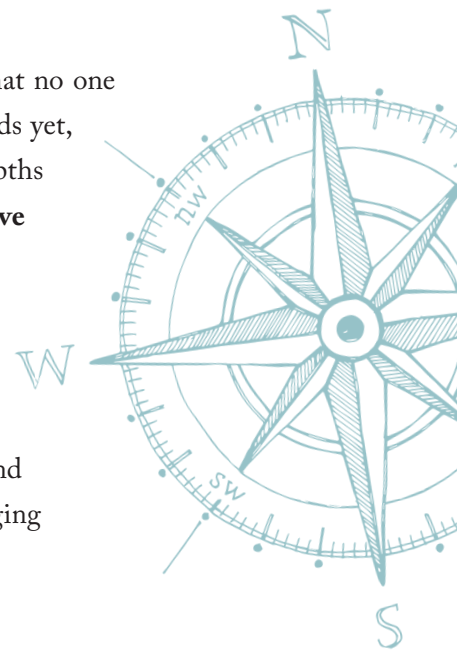
Because, and let's be brutally honest here right from the start, life can often feel like walking out deep into a churning sea. Every day waves swell high around our necks and every night we've about had it up to our necks because we keep floundering through deep water and unexpected, upending news, diagnoses, relationships, and flat-out disappointments. And, yes you can say it out loud, the story of our lives, the expectations of our only life, haven't turned out to be quite what we always dreamed of.

So, today, wherever you are, whatever you are facing, that no one even knows or that you maybe haven't even put into words yet, in the very eye of your storm or at the bottom of your depths of disappointment or unspoken broken, **friend, can I give you my compass?**

A compass to find your way.

A compass to part the waves.

Because you and I are both pilgrims who each have to find our way—find The Way—to know God. Because pilgrimaging



isn't just walking where Jesus walked, but walking *in the way* Jesus walked. And the spiritual practice that we're going to unpack in this study together is the soul's very real and directing compass to keeping company with God.

A decade ago, I began counting gifts as a daily habit to open my eyes to the real and active presence of God. I also scratch down the acronym **S.A.C.R.E.D. as a daily habit, a compass** that reorients me in relation to God.

This habit arises directly from Exodus 14—one of the most formational chapters of Scripture. God parts the waves before Moses and the people of Israel and shapes not only the identity of God's people then, but also foreshadows our deliverance now into a new way of being—and this way of life, this compass, offers a daily habit spelled out in just six letters.

In our time together, we'll dive into each letter and see how the WayMaker is not a far way off where you have to scream for His attention. He's no distracted lifeguard, oblivious while you flail and drown in the deep end. But instead, He is here, right here. He is right here in the way between your heartbeat and your next breath. It's when you give your whole self to the Way Himself that you know there's going to be a way through. He can be trusted. And you are going to make it. Because you, right now, are in the hands of the WayMaker.

Your fellow wayfarer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Post", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

# Introduction

## THE WAY AHEAD

As we begin this pilgrimage together, I hope you will prayerfully invite a group to go on the journey with you. Whether old friends or new, here is what to expect as we travel together:

## GROUP STUDY

- ❖ This guide contains six group study sessions to go with six video segments, each unpacking one of the SACRED habits that together teach us how to reorient our lives in relation to God.
- ❖ As you gather, you can expect your time together to include:
  - A **Welcome Letter from Ann** introducing the lesson you'll be studying together and what to be on the lookout for.
  - A chance to **Open Up** to one another.
  - Space to record **Video Notes and Reflections** from the segments.
  - An invitation to **Talk About It** with your group, interacting with the video lessons, the Bible, and your own stories.
  - A **Closing Prayer** to pray for one another.



## PERSONAL APPLICATION

In between each group study session, you are invited to a time of personal study and reflection. John Wesley, George Whitefield, Ignatius, King David, the apostle Paul—these fellow pilgrims—all made it a daily practice to examine their hearts, to scout out the topography of their souls, and locate themselves in relation to God. David said, “I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes” (Psalm 119:59). And Paul implored: “each one must examine his own work” (Galatians 6:4 NASB).

**Unless we make time for daily reflection, we can be making a road in the wrong direction.**

Use this time between sessions to reflect, to complete the study activities at your own pace, and to begin to journal using the SACRED compass prompts intended to put what you’re learning into practice. Here is where we put on the daily habit of SACRED. Write it down like you’re writing down directions. Because The Word is forging a Red Sea Road into more than finding a way through the waves, but also into a new way of being. A way of navigating daily closer to Christ.

SACRED journaling into Christ’s sacred heart takes a handful of moments every morning that we can’t afford to lose, since who can actually afford for their soul to lose its very way? And so, with Bible, pen, and journal in hand, we will locate our souls in relation to the WayMaker.

*Session 1*

# STILLNESS

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## to Know God

### GROUP STUDY

#### WELCOME LETTER FROM ANN

*Please ask someone to read this letter aloud as you begin your time together:*

Welcome, friends!

Here we are at the beginning of a journey together. A pilgrimage if you will. Learning the habit of daily SACRED reorientation; finding ourselves in relation to God.

If I told you that life rarely lives up to the movies, I'm guessing I'd be preaching to the choir. Like you, I have a laundry list of disappointments where my plan for the life I dreamed of veered sharply and irrevocably away from my reality. I mean, who wants to admit that on their honeymoon they ended up sobbing in the shower when their just one-week-new husband

wanted to leave their not-as-romantic-as-you-hoped-it-would-be getaway three days early to get back to the farm and his pigs?

And in the next two decades of marriage the waves would just keep coming. There would be plunging farm markets, and then skyrocketing debt, plummeting crop yields, and then steep, dizzying pig losses, kids who dropped out of school, out of college, out of our faith, mountain and valley, wave after wave after wave. And in seasons when the picture in my mind looked nothing like the reality staring back at me from the bathroom mirror, all I wanted to do was run away and demand answers from God.

So, let's start there. In session 1, those of us who are the frustrated, the disappointed, the irritated and the flat-out exasperated, let's get really honest about where we really are and what we really want. On my disappointing honeymoon, before we packed up and left, I walked down to the beach by myself and yelled at God across the lake: "Where are you?" I've yelled it many, many times since then.

It's a question you might be yelling right now, or aching with, or whispering when you lie in bed at night. A question straight out of Eden, like an echo of God's first recorded question to us: *Where are you?*

I want to invite you to listen to God's question. To think about how to answer God's question. To imagine God asking you with incredible attentiveness, winsome tenderness, and a deeply invested interest in your heart, your soul, your answer:

*Where are you?*

Your fellow pilgrim on The Way,



## OPEN UP

*Get to know who's on this pilgrimage with you. Group leader or volunteer, present the following question to the group for a brief time of opening up your time together.*

Where are you in your life right now? Briefly share what part of the story you're in: beginning, middle, plot twist, climax, stuck on repeat, lost on a detour? Take this opportunity to introduce the group to your stage in the life story.

## VIDEO NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

*View the video segment for Session 1. As you watch the video, use the following outline to note anything that stands out to you, any quotes you want to capture, and any questions or responses you may have.*

Stillness to know God. "Be Still and know God" (Psalm 46:10 paraphrase).

Stillness invites us to ask the question: What's in my way and what can I do about it?

Exodus 14

Our battle is to keep still—while God does the battle.

We are only seen and known as much as we are still.

EPS (or Expectational Positioning System) can steer us into disappointment at how our story has turned out.

*Ayekah* Hebrew: Where are you?

When we find the courage to be still and to be transparent, we find ourselves found.

God asks “Where are you in relation to Me?”

Be still because what’s in the way is making a way. The obstacle is the miracle.

## TALK ABOUT IT

*Discuss as many of the following questions as you have time for. Ask for volunteers to read the Bible passages out loud. Invite robust conversation, every voice matters.*

1. What in the video moved you? Is there a quote or a story or an image that stuck most with you? Why?
2. Let's talk about EPS—our personal GPS that drives our lives. How has your own Expectational Positioning System gotten you lost and let you down?
3. Unpack the source of your expectations—where are all these untrustworthy directions coming from?
4. Read Genesis 3:8–10. Is it uncomfortable to think about God coming to find you? Why?
5. Describe how you picture the God who is asking you where you are? Is it strange to imagine Him as hurt? Why or why not?
6. Read Exodus 14. Honestly, unpack your reaction to the idea of being still. How would the group describe what this concept looks like in real life on a regular Wednesday, for example?
7. What kind of red sea are you facing in your own life right now? Write down what other members share so you can remember how to pray and support them in their story right now, too.
8. Can you remember what the S in the daily habit of SACRED stands for?

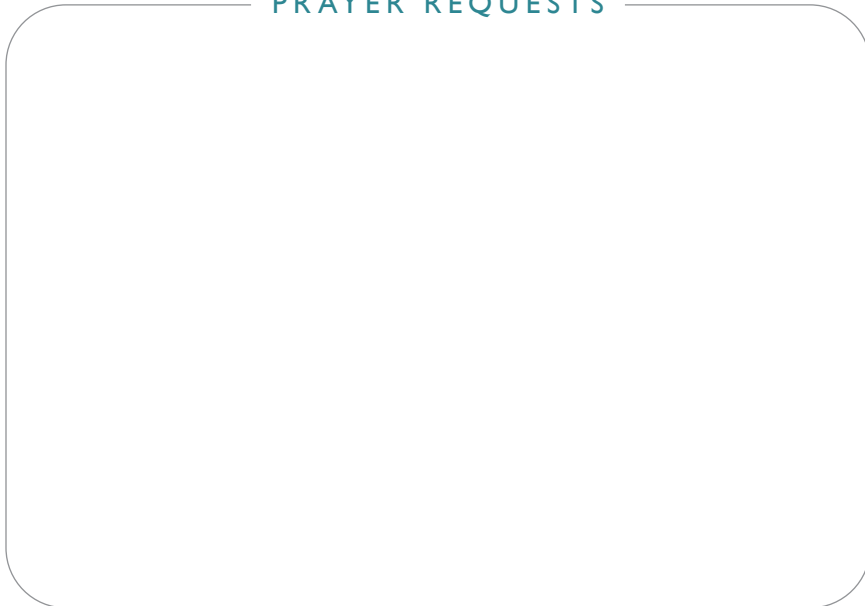
## CLOSING PRAYER

*Invite a group member to read the paragraphs below aloud. Then make time for everyone to share prayer requests. Close by bringing your prayers to the Father, either silently or out loud, as your group members feel most comfortable.*

Genuine prayer is having a genuine conversation with our Father; pull up a chair, lay your head, your heart, in His big, ole faithful hands. Prayer isn't giving God information to act upon, but God giving us intimacy to rest in. What undergirds every single prayer is the reality that we are held by our Father. As we go on this journey together, let's invite the Holy Spirit into our community and make room to hear where each person is really at. Prayer is a way to be still and invite God to act.

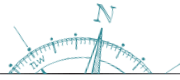
As you pray together, confess to God where you are in your life right now. Share the red sea you are facing. And invite Him to do as He promises, to fight for you while you remain still.

### PRAYER REQUESTS



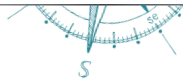
# PERSONAL APPLICATION

*Here is where we do the personal heart work. You and the WayMaker. Remember, new habits take time to learn. New rhythms require repetition. So, I suggest spreading out this personal study over several days between video sessions. And remember, this isn't about mindless repetition that feels like drudgery. Instead, this is like learning the lyrics to your favorite love song. A daily celebration of the songs the WayMaker sings over you.*



## SACRED LITURGY FOR TODAY

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_



**S:** \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ **God.**

A liturgy is a sacred habit. Like a song stuck on repeat, it sings out loud and clear what we love. If we pay attention, our daily habits will reveal our truest romances. While our intentions might be good and true and beautiful, our habits are the real reflection of the heart we each wear on our sleeve.

A habit of turning to Facebook before opening the Word and facing His face, of being more consumed by the news than the Good News, of turning to Hollywood's stories to understand our own holy story instead of staying in His Story—and now we're wearing our real love on our sleeves.



Can you recognize your habits? Are you aware of the love songs playing on repeat in your life? Reflect on the list below. Honestly circle the life-draining habits you recognize from your own repetitive rhythms. Add any others you can think of.

Binging entertainment

Holding grudges

Scrolling social media on a loop

Mindless shopping

Consuming constant news

Constant comparison

Overeating

Turning to alcohol, drugs, or pornography for comfort

Purging

Obsessive worry

Punishing exercise

Self-loathing

Negative self-talk

Trolling strangers online

Gossiping

Believing the worst of people

Nitpicking

Exploding

Replaying painful conversations

Stuffing your emotions

Obsessing over the lives of others

Self-harm

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Our habits build what kind of life we inhabit. Our way of life is forming the way we are. And we may be shocked to discover that our faith-filled intentions are in misalignment with our actual behavior. And these habits, for better or for worse, are becoming our liturgies, our sacred habits. Because our daily way of life is the way we put on Christ—or not.

So, let us begin a new daily love liturgy with God. It always begins with your pen scratching down, letter by letter, a lifesaving compass for navigating your days, S.A.C.R.E.D.

**S** is the first letter in the SACRED Liturgy.

**S:** Stillness to know God. Write it out for yourself below:

**S:** \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ God.

What always comes first at the beginning of each day is being still, to know that He is still God. Stillness defiantly trusts: Because He is always with us.

Read Exodus 14:10–14. Underline the verbs.

Who is the subject of the verbs in this passage?

Did you notice how *God* is the subject of all the verbs in the story of the way through the red sea?

In the space that follows, reflect honestly on what you think about the idea of “Being Still.” Is this a difficult concept for you to put into practice? Why or why not?

Charles Spurgeon said, “I dare say you will think it a very easy thing to stand still, but it is one of the postures which a Christian soldier learns not without years of teaching—[Stillness] is one of the most difficult to learn under the Captain of our salvation. The Apostle Paul seems to hint at this difficulty when he says, ‘Stand fast and having done all, still stand.’” Stillness may be the most difficult to learn, and to still stand.”<sup>1</sup>

Stillness is an almost impossible posture in our culture that likes things fast, that reaches for the phone first before even turning on the light. We would rather keep forcing our own way forward, scrolling, trolling, stressing, obsessing, than stand still, when worry, uncertainty, fear or doubt, shame or failure are closing in.

Think about the last time you were truly still, in your heart and mind and soul. Picture and describe the circumstance or experience below. If you can't remember, then reflect instead on what is making your life feel so frantic?

Still hearts still see God. When there's no agitation of soul there can be a revelation of God. The only way to know what you're about is to so intimately know God, that you see yourself as God sees you.

## STILLNESS IS KNOWNNESS.

If it's true that our deepest desire is to be seen and known—then we are only seen and known as much as we are still. And we are only able to be still when we aren't being driven by our own expectations.

What are the expectations that are driving your agitation, your discontent, your life? Look each one in the eye and name them here:

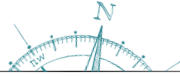
In stillness:

Sanity is found. Sense is made of things. The roar of the enemy is stilled and the soul can listen to the whisper of its Maker.

You have to make time to be still—in order to make a life.

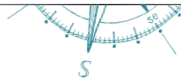
Write it down again. The first letter in our SACRED habit.

**S:** \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ God.



## SACRED STUDY FOR TODAY

\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_



If stillness is knownness, it's worth considering:

### DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BE KNOWN BY GOD?

**Pause and consider the intimacy of that.** This is how David describes the experience:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

PSALM 139:23–24 ESV



We are used to asking God where HE is. Demanding answers from HIM. Inquiring as to HIS location. But do I really want to say where I am to I AM? Can you perhaps understand why Adam hid?

#### Read Genesis 3.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer retells the ancient story like so: “God speaks to Adam and halts him in his flight. Come out of your hiding place . . . out of your self-torment . . . Confess who you are, do not lose yourself in religious despair, be yourself. Adam, where are you?”<sup>2</sup>

This is the age of Adams—we evade the arms of God. Stay alone and you stay lost.

But when aloneness ends, lostness ends, and we have a God who names Himself the One who is with us.

It's striking that when God came to find Adam, He used the word *ayekah* when He could have used the more common, generic word for “where” in Hebrew, *eifoh*, which simply means to locate. *Eifoh* is the word Saul uses when seeking David, when Naomi asks about Ruth's whereabouts, when Joseph is trying to track down his brothers. *Ayekah*, on the other hand, expresses a heart motivation beyond mere location, and *ayekah* conveys expectations: “Where have you gone? Where are you if you are not here with me?”

When Adam and Eve turn away from intimacy with God—God cries *ayekah* because He's asking more than simply, “Where are you?” He's asking, “Where are you in relation to Me? Where have you gone that's taken you farther away from Me? Where are you when the expectation is that you and I would always be together?” God cries because there is distance between Him and His lover, and God's first known question of history asks you to orient to the topography of intimacy, to locate yourself in the Landscape of Love.

God knows what it's like for there to be trouble in paradise, for paradise to go all wrong, for the perfect way to fall away, for there to be distance. But for all the times nothing has turned out the way you dreamed and you've howled at God, “Where are you?”, He's howled His own very first question of all time back to you, with that one word *ayekah* that sounds like:

“Where are you, when it was once all about you and Me—and now it's all about you and that damned lying snake? Woe is Me, where have you gone?”

I just want you here with Me.” For the Lord your God is looking for you, means to be “always with you. He celebrates and sings because of you...”

Write out Zephaniah 3:17. But don't write it here. Write it on a Post-it or a note card and stick it on your mirror. Or make it the background design on your phone's screen saver. Write it where you can see it daily.

The triune God isn't looking for you because He's disappointed in you. He isn't rebuking you, isn't rejecting you. The triune God delights in you, smiles over you, seeks to be with you, revives you with His kiss of grace, and can't stop singing love songs because of you. Right from the beginning, God has ached over any space and distance between us. When we were looking for a way out, God's woe over any distance between us drives Him to make a way to us. To be with us.

The cross points to the Way with open arms: Because our fall was detachment from God, our restoration is only found in attachment to God. If our first sin was to turn from God, detach the fruit from the tree, and savor it, then our return to wholeness is to turn, attach to God, and savor Him. Though our fall broke our attachment to God, He makes a way to us, slips His arms around us, and whispers all will be well now because He is Immanuel, God with us. Our story can only know restoration if our attachment to God is restored. The very symbol of the faith, the intersection of the cross, expresses how God purposes us for connection.

God has always been a WayMaker, making more than merely a way *through*. The WayMaker *is making a way to you*.

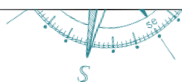






## SACRED QUESTION FOR TODAY

\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_



### “WHERE ARE YOU?”

God’s first recorded question in all of history, the very shortest question of the entire Hebrew Bible—Where are you?

Turn in your Bible to **Genesis 3** and write out verse **9** below:

The most life-changing questions always are the shortest. In Hebrew we know it’s only one word: *ayekab*. It’s the question God has for you today and every day: “*Where are you?*”

Imagine your Creator walking in your garden or your apartment or to the back bedroom where you are hiding. Imagine Him calling to you by name—write your first name into the questions below and spend a few minutes answering in your most vulnerable and transparent voice:

Where are you, \_\_\_\_\_?

Where are you going with your life, \_\_\_\_\_?

Is this really where you want to be, \_\_\_\_\_?

Maybe your answer to that last question is, “No, I am not where I expected to be, not where I imagined I’d be, none of this is the way I thought it would be.”

So very many saints all throughout history and Scripture have shared that sentiment:

- ✦ David had to keep putting one step in front of the other after being betrayed by his son Absalom.
- ✦ Martha had to find a way forward after Lazarus and all her hopes were bound in grave clothes and laid in the dark.
- ✦ Moses messed up at Meribah.
- ✦ Hagar had to find her way through when death stalked, dreams shattered, and she felt abandoned by all sense of hope.

But here's what I've learned, when an all-knowing God asks where you are, He isn't asking for your coordinates—He's asking you to seek out and coordinate your own heart with His.

He asks you where you are in your life because He wants you to name the place, see the circumstance, acknowledge the disillusionment and desperate hopes, to sit with it all—even *befriend* it.

**What reaction do you have at the invitation to befriend where you are in your life right now? Circle all the feelings that apply:**

Anger	Confusion	Disappointment
Revulsion	Fear	Delight
Disbelief	Anxiety	Surprise
Injustice	Relief	

Spend a few moments writing one or two simple sentences about how sitting still in where you are in your life right now really feels.

Friend, *ayekab* means God understands everything going on inside you and doesn't want your soul to hide.

But what no one tells you is: When you hide who you are, what you ultimately are hiding from is yourself. This is a haunting, exhausting kind of lost. And if evil can keep you distracted from taking the time to ask your soul where you really are—he can take you every day farther from the life you envisioned.

When we find the courage to be still and to be transparent, we find ourselves found.

Only when you ask where you are every day—can you find your way. The God who asks where you are, He's large enough to hold you however, wherever you are.

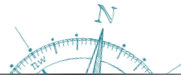
**Read Genesis chapter 22.**

Unlike Adam, when Abraham heard God calling for him, Abraham answered *hineni* Hebrew.

Write Genesis 22:1 here to reflect on what a simple and straightforward answer *hineni* truly is:

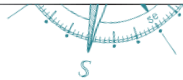
*Hineni*: here.

Not in the sense of a roll call *here*, but in the sense of *I am all here*. Spoken only eight times in all of Scripture, every time *hineni* is the answer it is a transformative turning point.



---

**SACRED APPLICATION FOR TODAY** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_



Friend, life is about location, location, location. So, no matter how brutally hard it is, unless we keep locating our soul—we'll keep losing our way.

Right now is a chance to quiet your soul, to stop striving or hiding, to let yourself be found in relation to where God is, right here. Be still and let God find you, like He found the Israelites on the edge of the Red Sea. The obstacle will be the miracle. Be still and be here, right here with God.

**Take a deep breath. Look around.**

What is in your way today? What are you trying to push past, to push down, to run away from? What is the obstacle in your way today? What is your Red Sea?

Now, in your stillness, what do you hear God saying in your heart? Listen, reflect, and write it below like a letter to yourself.

This can be an impression on your heart, a part of the teaching that deeply resonated with you, a revelation from a conversation you had with a friend, or a sense you have in your spirit as you come still and quiet before your Creator, trusting that He knows you. There is no wrong or right answer. Just practice being still and listening. Write down what you sense God saying about you and your obstacle today:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

I know you and I love you,  
Jesus

## BONUS READING

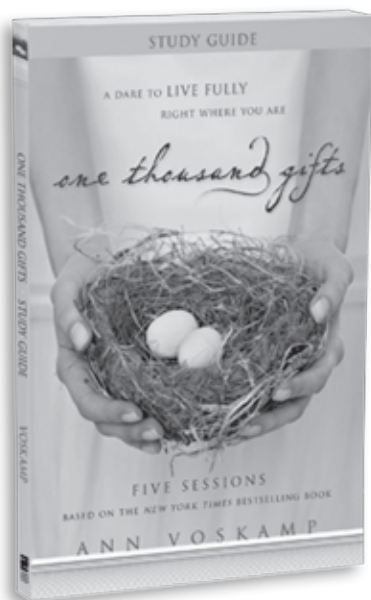
As you reflect on what you have studied, learned, and journaled from Session 1 you may want to go deeper. Now is a good time to read chapters 1–4 of *WayMaker: Finding the Way to the Life You've Always Dreamed Of*.

# Endnotes

- 1 Charles Spurgeon Sermon Collection, *Direction in Dilemma*, <https://doi.org/10.5840/augstudies1980114>.
- 2 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Bonhoeffer Reader*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press) 259.
- 3 James K.A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016).
- 4 Curt Thompson, *Anatomy of the Soul* (Chicago, IL: Tyndale, 2010) 65–67.
- 5 Alastair J. Roberts and Andrew Wilson, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing Themes of Redemption through Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 125.
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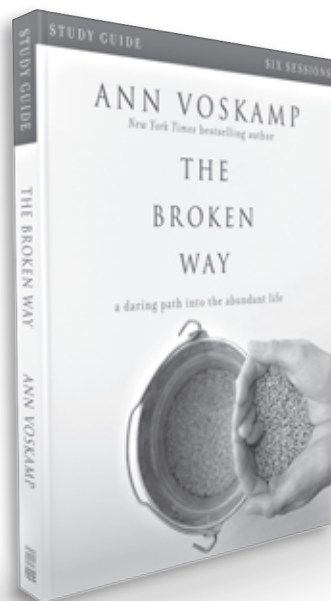


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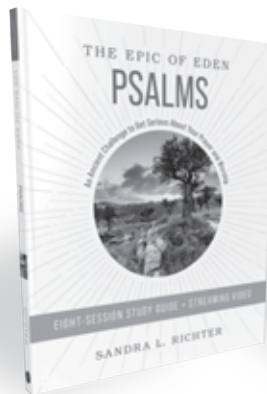
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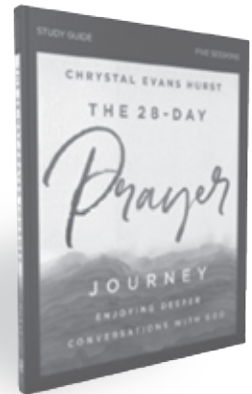
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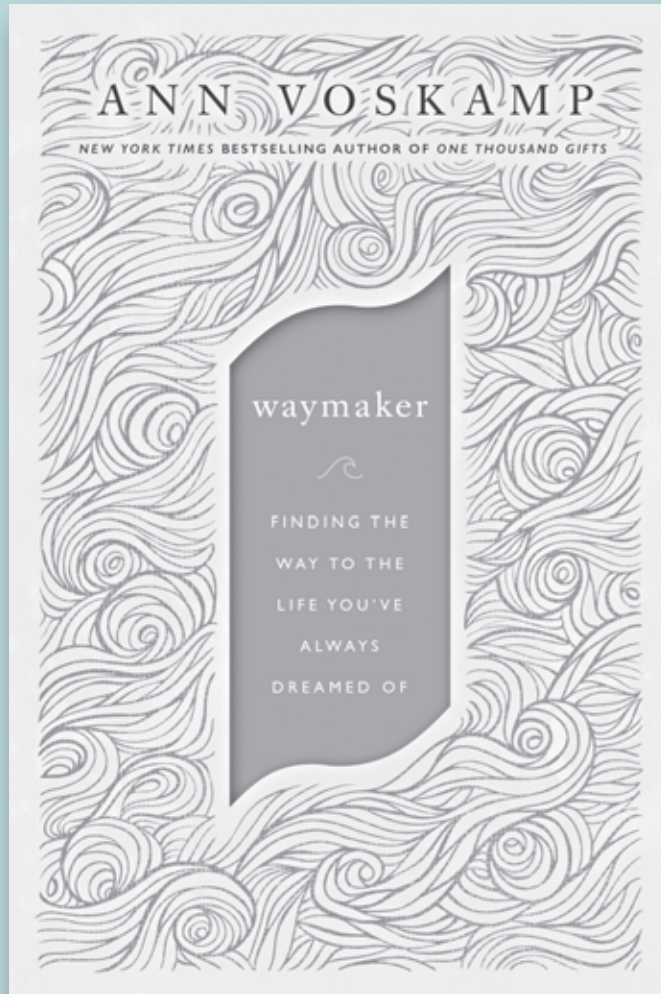
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