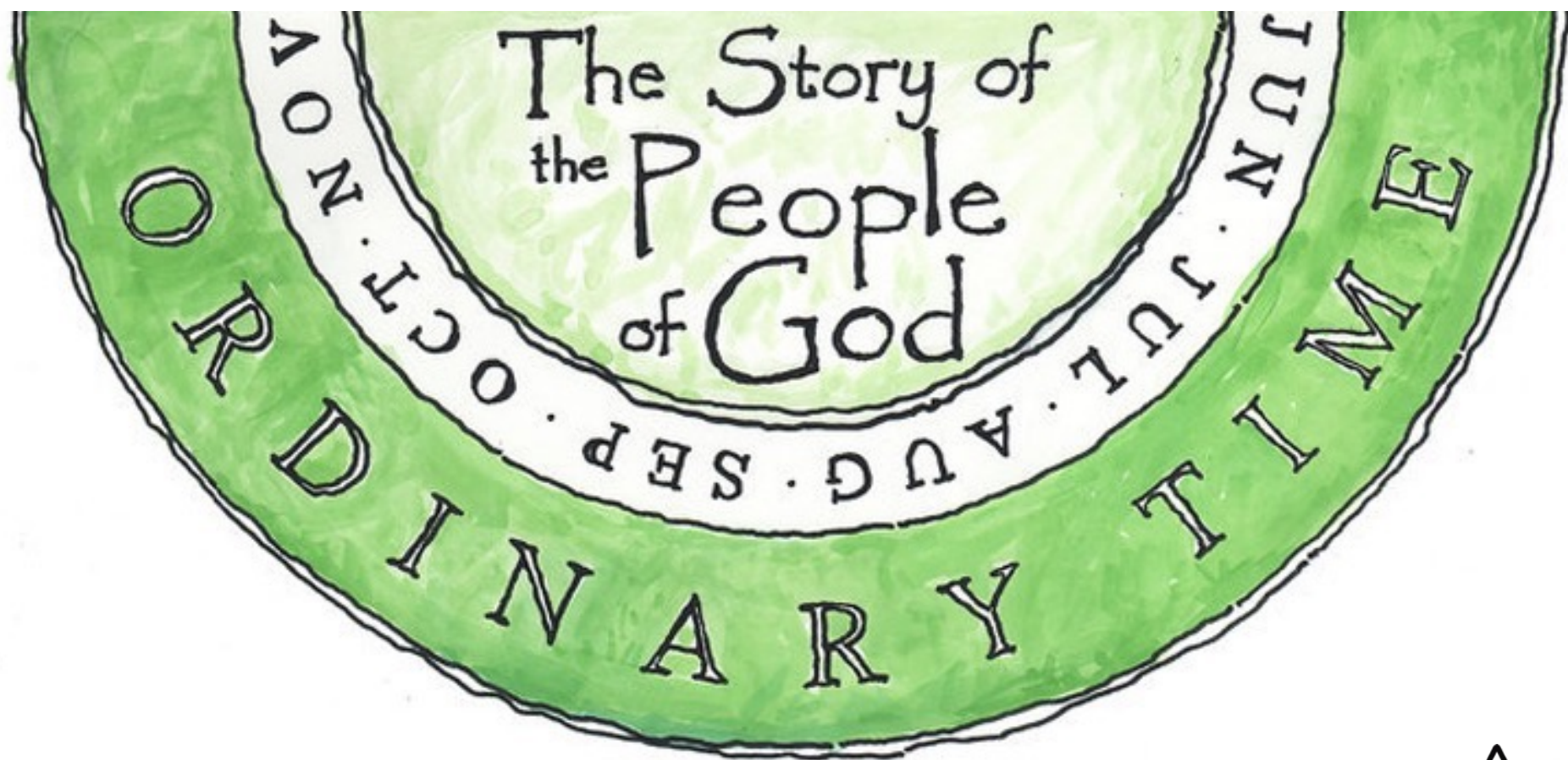


God of strength and courage,
in Jesus Christ, you set us free from sin and death,
and call us to the risk of faith and service.
Give us grace to follow him
who gave himself for others,
that, by our service, we may find
the life he came to bring.
Amen.

Opening Prayer







THE GOOD and BEAUTIFUL LIFE



LEARNING TO LIVE LIKE JESUS

Learning to live w/out **ANGER**

Learning to live w/out **LUST**

Learning to live w/out **LYING**

Learning to live w/out **VENGEANCE**

Learning to live w/out **VANITY**

Learning to live w/out **AVARICE**

Learning to live w/out **WORRY**

Learning to live w/out **JUDGMENT**



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—DALLAS WILLARD

*“You will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.”*

HOLY
BIBLE

JOHN

8:32

MOST LYING BEGINS WITH FEAR, NOT MALICE...

- Afraid of ***rejection***
- Afraid of ***disappointing*** others
- Afraid of appearing ***inadequate***
- Afraid of losing ***status/control***



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MOST LYING BEGINS WITH FEAR, NOT MALICE...

When we understand that
we are deeply loved by God,
we don't need to manufacture
a better version of ourselves.



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“When someone like me, who will go to superhero lengths to avoid the truth, runs out of options - when I am found out or too exhausted to pretend anymore or maybe just confronted by my sister - it feels like the truth might crush me...”



NADIA
BOLZ-WEBER

“...And that is right. The truth does crush us, but the instant it crushes us, it somehow puts us back together into something honest. It’s death and resurrection every time it happens.”



FALSE NARRATIVE #1

If people knew the **REAL** me,
they wouldn't **ACCEPT** me.



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FALSE NARRATIVE #1

If people knew the **REAL** me,
they wouldn't **ACCEPT** me.

TRUE NARRATIVE #1

We are most deeply
KNOWN and **LOVED** by God.



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FALSE NARRATIVE #2

I **AM** what **OTHERS** think of me.



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FALSE NARRATIVE #2

I **AM** what **OTHERS** think of me.

TRUE NARRATIVE #2

My **IDENTITY** comes from **GOD**,
not from public opinion.



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FALSE NARRATIVE #3

I **HAVE** to be **PERFECT**.

TRUE NARRATIVE #3

GROWTH is more important
than **PERFECTION**.



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TRUTH ALLOWS US TO SAY...

- I ***don't*** have all the answers
- I'm ***struggling***
- I'm ***grieving***
- I was ***wrong***
- I need ***help***



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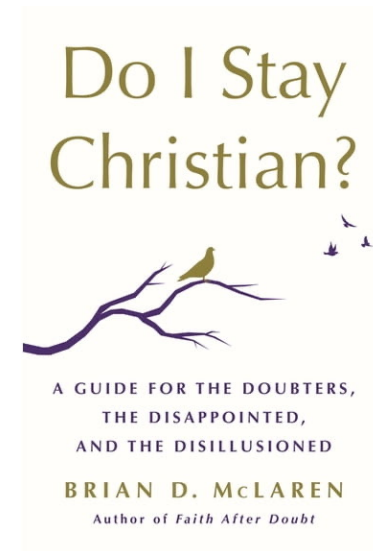
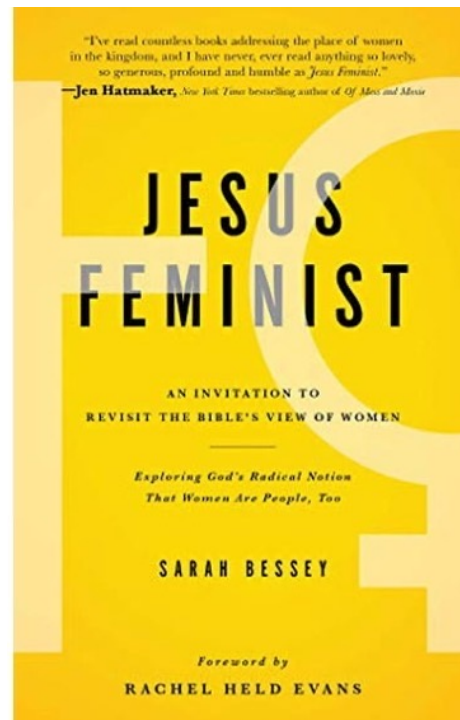
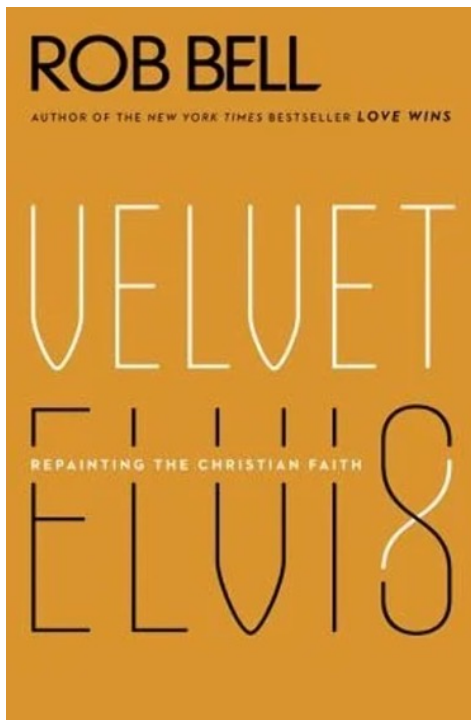
PUTTING ON THE
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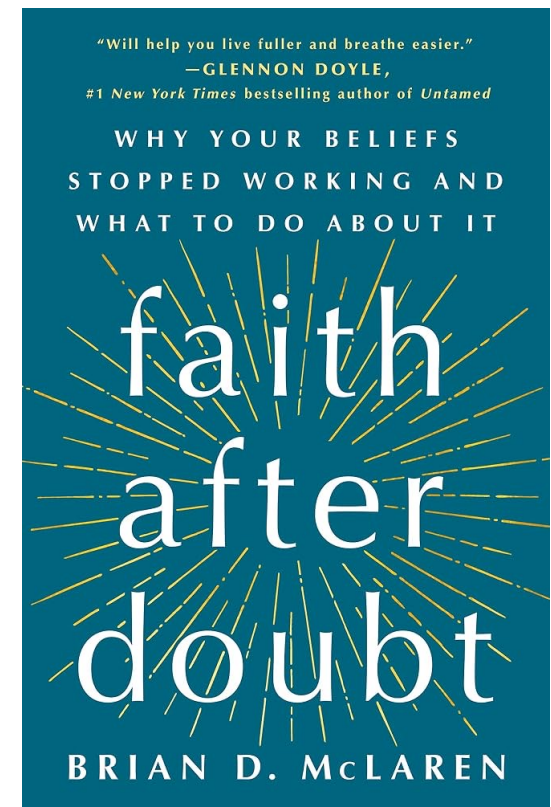
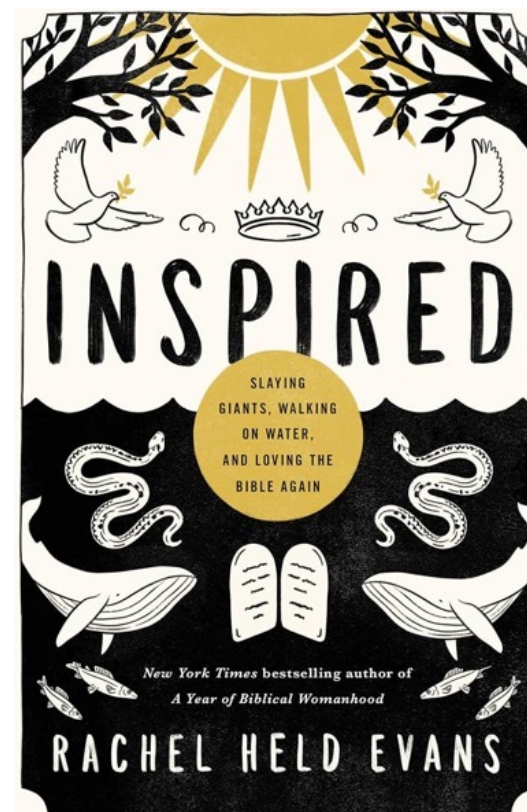
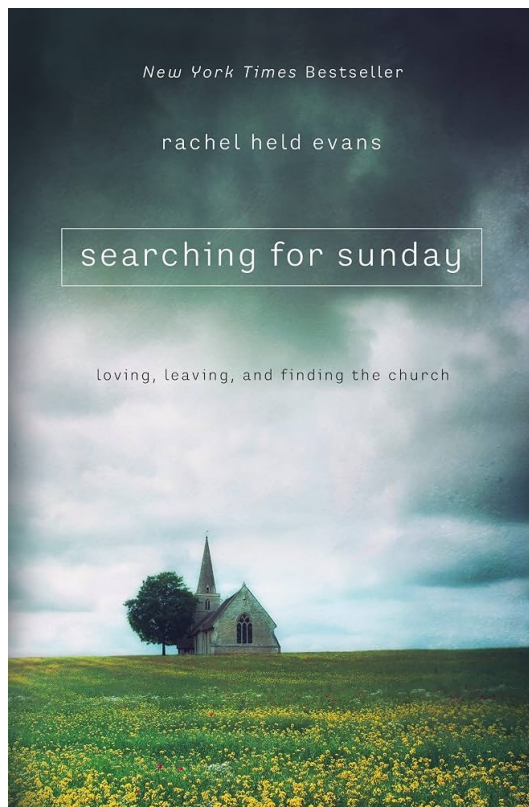
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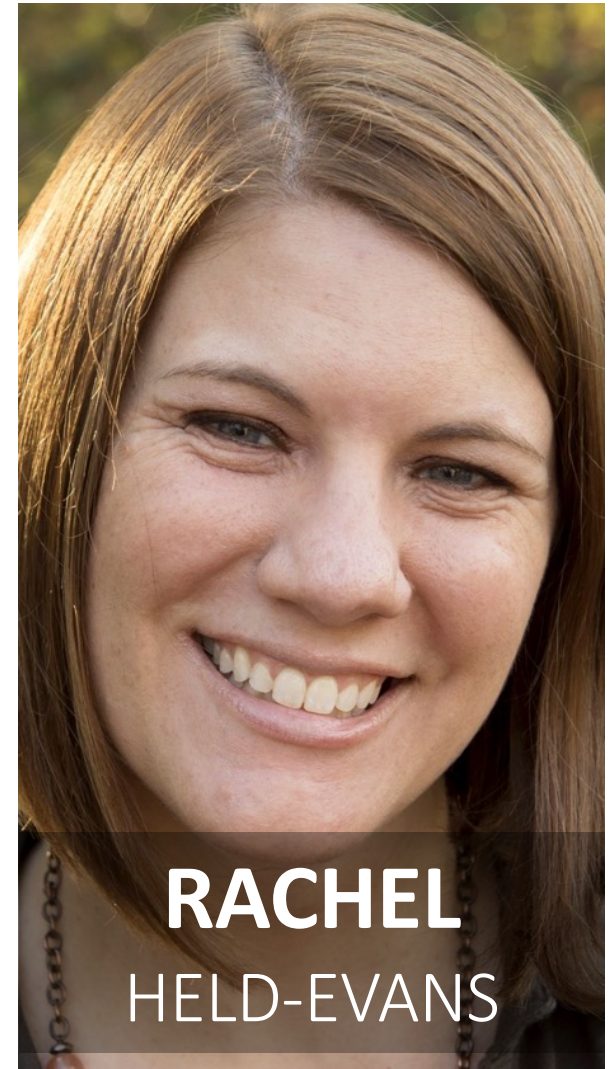
“It’s right for God to slaughter women and children any time he pleases. God gives life and he takes life. Everybody who dies, dies because God wills that they die.”







“I have come to regard with some suspicion those who claim that the Bible never troubles them. I can only assume this means they haven’t actually read it.”



RACHEL
HELD-EVANS

“Acknowledging uncertainty doesn't make a person less faithful; it just makes her more honest. Admitting how much we don't know doesn't make a person less faithful; it just makes him more candid—and perhaps even more curious.”



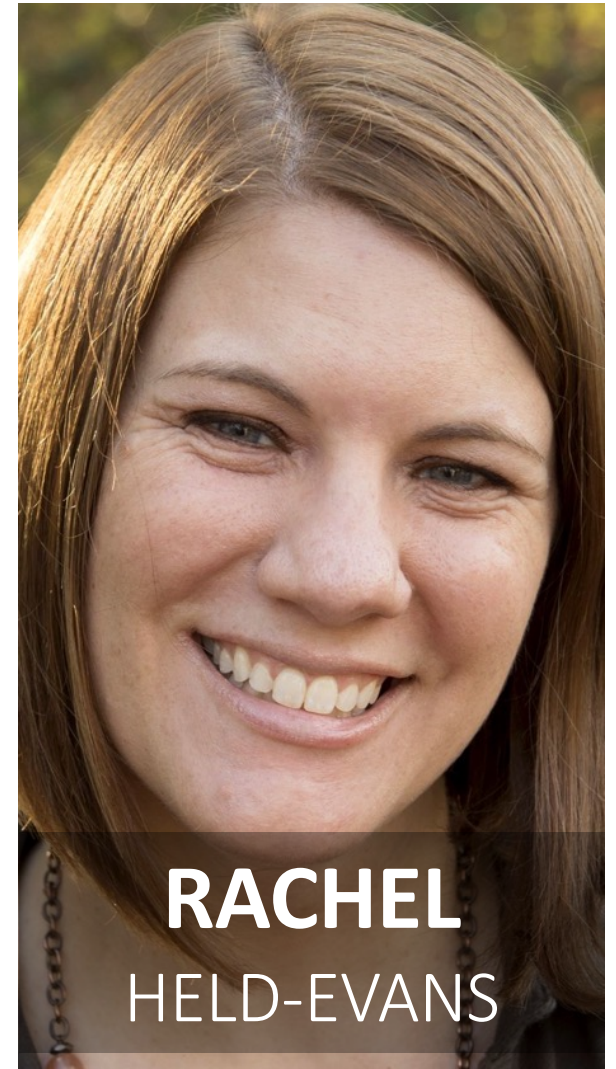
RACHEL
HELD-EVANS

“The bravest decision I'll ever make is the decision to follow Jesus with both my head and heart engaged—no checking out, no pretending.”



RACHEL
HELD-EVANS

The “slippery slope”



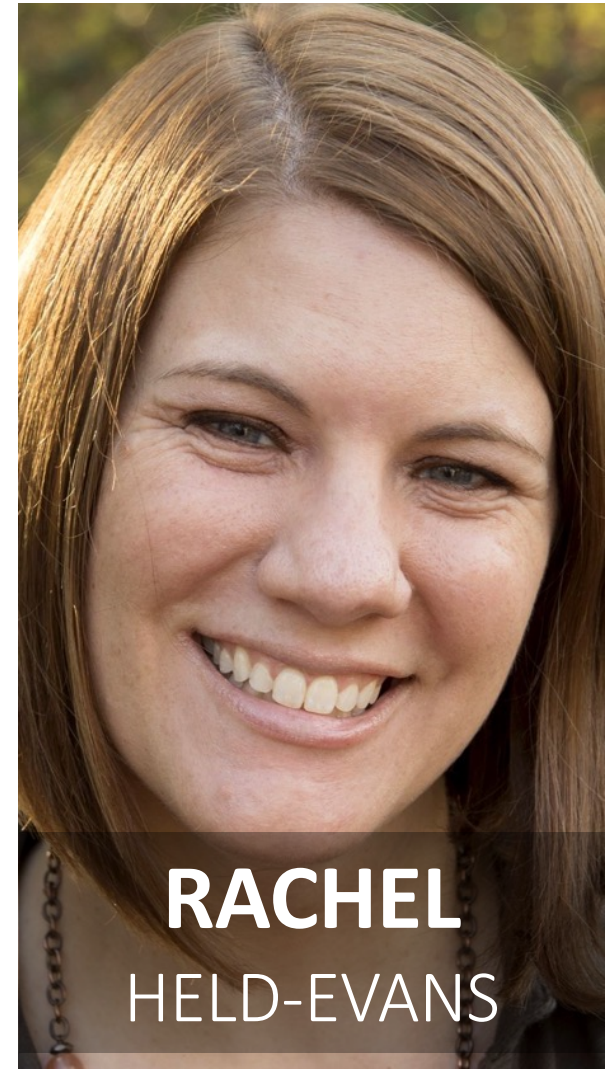
RACHEL
HELD-EVANS

“We don’t want to choose between science and religion or between our intellectual integrity and our faith. Instead, we long for our churches to be safe places to doubt, to ask questions, and to tell the truth, even when it’s uncomfortable. We want to talk about the tough stuff—biblical interpretation, religious pluralism, sexuality...”



RACHEL
HELD-EVANS

...racial reconciliation, and social justice—but without predetermined conclusions or simplistic answers. We want to bring our whole selves through the church doors, without leaving our hearts and minds behind, without wearing a mask.



RACHEL
HELD-EVANS

FALSE NARRATIVE #4

There is **NO** room
for **DOUBT** in **FAITH**.



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FALSE NARRATIVE #4

There is **NO** room
for **DOUBT** in **FAITH**.

TRUE NARRATIVE #4

HONEST questions
can **DEEPEN** faith.



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WE CRAFT IMAGES...

- ***Successful*** enough
- ***Faithful*** enough
- ***Happy*** enough
- ***Certain*** enough



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BUT JESUS SEEMS MOST DRAWN TO PEOPLE WHO DROP THE MASK...

- The woman at the well
- Zacchaeus
- Peter (after his denial)
- The tax collector who says,
“God, be merciful to me!”



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THE POINT:

Jesus **CONSISTENTLY** meets people where they truly **ARE**, not where they **PRETEND** to be.



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THE POINT:

TRUTHFULNESS is not
merely a **PERSONAL** virtue,
it is a **COMMUNITY** practice



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THE POINT:

TRUTH without love can **WOUND**.
LOVE without truth can **MISLEAD**.
The Christian Way is truth **AND**
love **TOGETHER**.



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BECAUSE WE ARE ACCEPTED...

- We can ***admit*** mistakes
- We can ***confess*** harm
- We can ***change***
- We can ***grow***



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THE POINT:

GRACE creates the **SAFETY**
necessary for **HONESTY**.



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*“Sanctify them by the truth;
your word is truth.”*

HOLY
BIBLE

JOHN

17:17

“The light of truth is simply the only thing that scatters the darkness in ourselves and in the world because God doesn’t deal in deceit and denial and half-truths. Yes, encounters with Truth are hard and require you to step into something that feels like it might just crush you...



NADIA
BOLZ-WEBER

“...But the instant it crushes
you it also puts you back
together into something real.
Only the Gospel can do that.”



“The good news is not that you can possess the truth, but that the truth can possess you, making you real and making you free...perhaps for the first time. And as frightening as it might feel, as much as it might feel like it’s going to crush you, the light of the truth is something you can live in...”



NADIA
BOLZ-WEBER

“...because the love of God has freed you and indeed every human being from the need to live in any lies. Step into the light. You’ll be fine. You’ll be real. And you’ll be free.”



“Imagine if every church became a place where everyone is safe, but no one is comfortable. Imagine if every church became a place where we told one another the truth. We might just create sanctuary.”



RACHEL
HELD-EVANS

How the Bible Actually Works*



*In Which I Explain
How an Ancient,
Ambiguous, and
Diverse Book Leads
Us to Wisdom Rather
Than Answers—and
Why That's Great News

Peter Enns

Author of *The Bible Tells Me So*

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
WHOLEHEARTED FAITH

**RACHEL
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INTRODUCED BY
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BESTSELLING
AUTHOR
SARAH EDEEN

**BRAVING
THE TRUTH**

ESSENTIAL ESSAYS FOR
RECKONING WITH AND REIMAGINING FAITH

The Biblical Case in
Support of Same-Sex
Relationships

**GOD AND
THE GAY
CHRISTIAN**

*"This book is a game changer. Wise, accessible, and carefully researched,
every page is brought to life by the author's clear love for Scripture and deep, persistent faith.
Matthew Vines emerges as one of my generation's most important Christian leaders."*
—RACHEL HELD EVANS, author of *A Year of Biblical Womanhood* and *Faith Unraveled*

MATTHEW VINES

REFLECT

- What ***false narratives*** have you been carrying?
- What ***truth*** might Jesus be offering in their place?
- What ***liberating*** truth is God inviting you to embrace?



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE #1

“What is not sitting right w/me?”

- Name the question/ concern
- Dig in - find a podcast, book, blog post, etc.
- Feel free to share your questions with others
- God is big enough for our questions



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE #2

Praying Psalm 139

- Pause after each section
- Imagine God seeing your strengths, failures, doubts, hopes, and responding with love, rather than judgment



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE #3

Resting in Belovedness:

Breathe slowly and repeat:

- I am God's beloved
- I have nothing to prove
- I have nothing to hide
- I have nothing to earn



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE #4

False narrative to ponder:

"I am _____."

God's truth to ponder:

"You are my beloved child." So:

- What false story are you ready to release?
- What truth is God inviting you to trust in stead?



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May you have the courage to tell the truth about who you are, and the grace to believe that you are loved there too. May you remember that faith is not the absence of uncertainty, but the willingness to trust that God's love is greater than all that you cannot yet understand.

Go in peace, knowing that nothing can separate you from the love of God. Amen.

Benediction

