

**[00:00:00]** <music>

**Annie:** Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun in a very special month of shows. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today. I missed you last week. We've got a great show in store. Hope you had a beautiful Easter celebration.

I love getting to celebrate with my church and I love getting to continue digging into the reality that we have a God who is alive by learning more about how to talk with Him and listen to Him during our prayer series here on the pod this month.

And as we continue our prayer series, just a reminder that you'll hear from a couple of my MiniBFFs about some of their thoughts on prayer during each episode. I think it is so sweet to hear from each of them. So here's one of my MiniBFFs and then we'll get to the rest of the show.

**[00:00:56]** <music>

**Annie:** Brother, are you ready?

**Cohen:** Yes.

**Annie:** It's going to be very exciting. Okay, can I ask you a couple of questions about prayer?

**Cohen:** Yes.

**Annie:** Okay. Tell me, when do you pray?

**Cohen:** At night.

**Annie:** At night. By yourself or with your mom and dad?

**Cohen:** With my mommy and daddy.

**Annie:** What kind of things do you say when you're praying?

**Cohen:** Dear God.

**Annie:** Yeah. So you're talking to God, right? Do you think God hears us every time we pray?

**Cohen:** Mm-hmm.

**Annie:** Yes? How do you know?

**Cohen:** I just know.

**Annie:** You're right. He does. He hears us every time we pray. Do you say thank you when you pray to God? Do you ever thank Him for things?

**Cohen:** Mm-hmm.

**Annie:** What kind of things do you thank Him for?

**Cohen:** Love that He give.

**Annie:** Oh, yeah. Does He love you?

**Cohen:** Mm-hmm.

**Annie:** God loves you a lot. That is really, really true. Do you ever pray by yourself?

**Cohen:** Yes.

**Annie:** Sometimes? But mostly with mom and dad?

**Cohen:** Mm.

**Annie:** Yeah. Do you ever pray before you go to school?

**Cohen:** No.

**Annie:** No, just at night?

**Cohen:** Yes. But also at my school.

**Annie:** Oh, when do you pray at school?

**Cohen:** At lunchtime.

**Annie:** Oh, who prays?

**Cohen:** Me, I'll pray.

**Annie:** Oh, that's cool. If you could tell everybody listening one thing about why they should pray to God, why should people pray to God?

**Cohen:** So they get what they want.

**Annie:** Oh, yeah. Is that what happens when we pray? God hears us and sometimes He answers by giving us what we want?

**Cohen:** I think.

**Annie:** I think so too. I think so too. And that's why we pray at night, too, to say thank you for all the things you've done today, huh?

**Cohen:** Yeah.

**Annie:** You did it. That's it. You're awesome. Good job, Cohen.

**[00:02:51] <music>**

**Annie:** Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to take a moment to share about one of our incredible partners, [BetterHelp](#). We've talked about this before in regards to hair shedding. But there are so many additional ways that our bodies tell us that we're stressed: headaches, digestive situations, not to mention sleep issues, Oreos, overindulgence issues maybe, phones hitting us in the face when we fall asleep because we're just a smidge gluttonous about the escape we find in social media. That's just not me alone when I'm stressed. Right? That's everybody. Okay.

Well, stretch shows up in all kinds of ways. And our society is constantly feeding all of us these messages to do more and hustle more. But your friend Annie F. Downs is here to remind you to slow down and take care of yourself and maybe try some therapy. I sometimes wonder where I'd be without my therapist. And I'm like, "Downs, we do not have to waste time wondering about that." I'm really grateful for the benefits of counseling in my life and I think you will be too.

BetterHelp is customized online therapy that offers video, phone, and even live chat sessions with your therapist. So you don't have to see anyone on camera if you don't want to. It's much more affordable than in-person therapy. Give it a try and see if online therapy can help lower your stress.

My friends here at That Sounds fun get 10% off their first month at [betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun](https://betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun). That's [betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun](https://betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun).

**Intro:** Today on the show, I get to talk with my dear friend Ann Voskamp. You know her, you love her. She was with us for the third episode of our 2016 Christmas party and she's part of the Faithful podcast on the That Sounds Fun Network.

She's a writer who I deeply admire, not just for her lyrical beauty of her words, but for the hard-won battles. She's allowed to craft her character. She's the advisor and the encourager and the teacher I think we all need sometimes.

Her new book *WayMaker: Finding the Way to the Life You've Always Dreamed Of*, y'all, it is unbelievable. It's a hope story and a love story for all of us who feel like the ground shifts in disorienting ways far too often and talks to God and hears from God. And I can't wait to share our conversation about this book, and about life and what prayer means to us in the middle of some really rough moments.

So here's my conversation with one of my dearest friends, Ann Voskamp.

[00:05:10] <music>

**Annie:** Ann, welcome back to That Sounds Fun.

**Ann:** I absolutely love you, Annie Downs. Can I be a neighbor?

**Annie:** Yes, you are in my heart. You always are. I didn't even warn our producer, Johnny, about this. I don't know how I'm going to do this thing without just crying the whole way through, Ann. How many people have read your book and then just cried to you about it so far?

**Ann:** Oh, my DMs are brown up with people who said actually, "I don't know really what's happening here, but as I read the book, the stories are opening up my heart in a way I didn't know my heart needed to be opened up." There was a really kind woman who DM'd just to say that as she was reading *WayMaker*, she actually said, "It feels like I'm getting a transfusion. The stories and the pages are bleeding into my own heart and transfusing hope into me in a way I didn't even though I needed."

One woman messaged me this morning... Actually, one woman messaged me this morning, one woman last night. One said, "I wish I had this book 30 years ago, it would have saved me from so many nights of crying myself to sleep alone." And another woman messaged this morning to say, "This is a book I've been waiting 55 years for."

**Annie:** Yes! Ann, I mean, you know because the unfortunate thing for you is I have direct access to you.

**Ann:** And I love you.

**Annie:** So as I'm listening, I'm voice memo-ing you on Saturday that I am bawling crying in chapter 2 while I'm making egg salad. I mean, I started reading the book in my hand and I thought, "No, I want Ann to read this to me." So I bought the audiobook.

I mean, Ann, I don't know the question here except I just have to thank you. I just have to thank you because you did the same and made the thing... You gave me words for something I was experiencing and I didn't have words for, that I didn't know how to say to God, "Oh, this is why I don't feel connected to you right now." And you gave that to me.

**Ann:** Well, Annie, *WayMaker* is we think we want a way to a place and ultimately we are made in the image of a Triune God. We are made an image of a relationship. We are made out of the intimacy of a Triune God and the overflow of His love is us. So we think we want a place but ultimately, we are looking for a connection and attachment. We're looking for intimacy. That's the place we want is a place of intimacy.

So psychology will tell you that as human beings, everything comes down to attachment, everything comes down to how well we are attached. We have secure attachment. The function of our health is based on the function of the health of our attachments.

*WayMaker* is a book about when we have trust issues with God, when we run in all kinds of different ways to comfort ourselves and take care of ourselves, what does it look like to have a life that is deeply attached to Jesus as our secure, safe base, not cerebrally but in actual reality?

**Annie:** Yeah, that's what you describe so beautifully is in your relationship with Darryl and your relationship with the other kids and your relationship with Shiloh, you describe your transforming, your connection, and your attachment more deeply to Jesus.

**Ann:** Because ultimately the health of our relationships with others... We can only be as healthy with others as we are with God Himself. So how healthy is my attachment with God? So the stories that I'm telling about my marriage, the stories I'm telling about adoption, I'm telling those stories but those stories are metaphors for how well we are attached to God Himself.

**Annie:** I mean, you said over and over in the book in beautiful ways like marriage and adoption, marriage and adoption they're the ones God uses over and over to tell us who we are.

**Ann:** I mean, to me, when we look at our lives, we want to be deeply, intimately connected. And we tell these marriage stories and these adoption stories. But we forget we all have this opportunity with God Himself every single one of us. The metaphor we too often use and it's not that it's not biblical, it is, but oftentimes our relationship with God we use it in terms of a judicial metaphor. That my sins have all been paid in this courtroom. Jesus paid it all before the judge. Wrath has been lifted because of the sacrifice of Jesus. That is all true. It's not that it's not true.

But then when we walk out of the courtroom freed, we wonder, "Why am I living in deep intimacy and communion with God?" Because the primary metaphor has only been judicial as opposed to filial, family, deep, intimate connection, and attachment. Which we see through scripture, which we see over and over again. He's using marriage metaphor and adoption metaphor because that's the kind of fulfilling union and communion He wants with us.

**Annie:** So that's one of the reasons I wanted you to welcome us back from Holy Week, for you to be right here in the middle of the month about prayer is what I experienced listening to your book and what... I mean, you walked me into two and a half days of really challenging conversations with God because I realized my prayer life was suffering because my connection had suffered. Did I diagnose my problem correctly?

**Ann:** Honestly, Annie, you diagnosed... *WayMaker* talks about... I mean, it comes from a story that James Clear speaks of in *Atomic Habits*. If you leave LA on a plane and you just turn the nose of that plane a little bit of a degree at a time, you're not going to land in New York City, you're going to land in Washington, DC.

And I think lots of times in our relationship with God, that connection breaks and fractures in all kinds of different ways until we find ourselves somewhere we never thought we would be. *WayMaker* is really about you're going to run into obstacles in your life, where your heart gets broken, where life doesn't turn out the way you expected or dreamed it would be. And we just desperately want a way through.

And Jesus is like, "I am the way." So do you have a way of life, spiritual disciplines that keep you in intimate connection with the Way Himself? Because I Am the way through? So what is our intimate connection, in honest, vulnerable real ways look like with Jesus, so that we stay attached to the one who is the way through?

And I think that's a lot of times we say I don't see a way through it. It's because somewhere along the line our intimate connection with Jesus has fractured and become broken and we're headed in different directions.

**Annie:** Will you talk about the connection between what happens to you spiritually happening to you physically? Because your physical body suffers because of a spiritual and relational detachment.

**Ann:** Ultimately, that great New York Times bestselling book, everywhere it's this. Our body keeps score. We think we can keep forging forward and making a way forward but trauma and stress is embodied in our bodies.

And as we brought home a little baby girl from China, who had already had one open-heart surgery in China and we brought her home and went through another open heart surgery, the stress of those heart surgeries and us working on attachment to our little baby girl and bonding with her, I've really started, Annie... Augustine says that, obviously in Luther birth, I'll say, that ultimately humans have what they called in Latin *incurvatus in se*—we turn in on ourselves.

And I started to really turn in on myself to protect myself, to withdraw and self-preserve. I did not want to live into a posture of vulnerability with my heart wide open at all. I wanted to protect myself.

**Annie:** What made you want to do that, Ann? What made that be the cause? I think we all do that on accident. Like I sat with my acupuncturist yesterday and I said, "I think maybe my body is responding to me closing my heart."

**Ann:** That, that, Annie. That right there.

**Annie:** So what made you do that? Because I don't know that I meant to do it as aggressively as where I've gotten now. I'm in DC instead of Miami as far as my heart being shut down. So what made you want to turn that way?

**Ann:** So as we were working towards attachment after Shiloh came home to us, there was so much happening. There was a conversation one night after dinner. Darryl was reaching towards me. And I think we come into our relationships with our trauma lens from our past, our family of origin. I heard him differently than the way he expressed himself. He was like, "It's just all too much. It's all too much." And I heard "You're too much. You are too much."

I did not respond in a posture of cruciformity at all. So instead of living cruciform with my arms outstretched, with my heart exposed and open, I started to put my hands in front of my chest. "You think I'm too much, then I'll just take myself and I will get really small and I will withdraw. I will be kind and nice and polite but I am not letting you in to hurt my heart in any way."

But over time, Annie, when you curve inward, take your arms and curve and self-protect and self-preserve and I won't live into vulnerability, cruciformity, ultimately cruciformity with your arms outstretched, that posture of the cross is the posture of vulnerability, that leads you to the place that you desperately want to get to which is intimacy.

So you have to live with arms outstretched to God and to people to communion with Him and community with others. I didn't, Annie. All of life turns on the turn. And I didn't turn outward, I turned inward. And I ended up, Annie, in our little country hospital's version of ICU with... Well, I went in with a fever. They thought I had an infection. They put me on IV antibiotics and gave me some blood transfusions because my hemoglobin and iron levels were so low.

They admitted me, and by the next morning, I couldn't breathe, my chest... I felt crazy. How do you come up with one thing and there's this cascading of it? So they sent me down for more scans and "No, actually your lungs, both lungs two thirds full of fluid. You are in heart failure. Your heart can't actually pump strong enough to deal with the liquids that we are giving you. So that's why now you have double pneumonia."

Every breath felt like fire. I couldn't breathe. I couldn't sleep at night. It hurt, all the hacking and coughing. And it was my come to Jesus moment where your life is kind of... you're up through the night hacking and coughing and gasping to breathe and your life is sort of unfolding like real in front of you.

And I realized I do not like the way my life is going. Sometimes you think that the way you moved your arms to protect yourself and to shield yourself, you don't realize that actually it's not a shield to protect yourself. You are imprisoning yourself in deep isolation and aloneness. And I ended up calling Darryl in the morning to say, "I need you to come. I need to move from *Incurvatus in se*, turning inward and protecting myself and I need to move towards cruciformity and open my heart up again in a posture of vulnerability and let you in, let God in."

Because our turning inwards leads us way worse. And when we turn outward is only when we get to move forward. And not just forward but we move toward God and toward people, toward intimacy. So it's not just forward. It's, are we moving toward intimate connection again?

**Annie:** Yeah. I mean, that was one of my big revelations reading *WayMaker*, or more rightly said, having you read *WayMaker* to me, is I think when I was trying to turn inward from being hurt by people, I was accidentally also turning inward from God. And I didn't know I was doing both. I thought I was just protecting myself and I was actually shutting myself off to all relationships.

**Ann:** Annie, that statement right there reflects my own journey in ways I didn't actually realize. But again, if we don't have health with God, we ultimately don't have health with other people. If we don't have health with other people, our relationship with God has broken down somewhere.

I think sometimes moving forward in life requires profound intentionality. We sometimes end up going through the motions and don't realize that we are moving degree by degree by degree in ways that are very subtle, in ways we don't even realize we are moving off of the way.

Do we have a way of life, a rhythm of life, spiritual disciplines day in and day out that keep us in The Way Himself, that keep us intimately connected with Him, a posture of stillness, a patch posture of attentiveness? That every morning you wake up and you say, three questions: who do I say that you are? That determines the trajectory of everything in my life. Is He really my Abba Father who really loves me? Is He really on the throne that I can trust? I don't have to control my life. I can take my hands off my life. God is in control. So who do I say that you are?

The question He asked Hagar in Genesis: where are you coming from? Where are you going to? Can I locate my own soul with intentionality and be vulnerable with God to say, "Actually, this is where I am, this is where I want to go to, but this is where I'm coming from." Do you have a rhythm of life where you are actually locating your own soul? If we say all of reality is ultimately relationship, then what I have to do every day is determine where is my soul in relation to God. And then out of that I will know where I am in relation to others.

Finally, that third question of attentiveness is, what do you want? It's a question Jesus asks in Matthew. We're allowed to ask that question. It matters enough to Jesus. So it matters that we go ahead and say, "This is what I really want."

And in doing that, not only do we lay that down before Jesus, we also get to see... Like Calvin says, our hearts can be idol factories. Do I have an idol? The thing I want is really in alignment to what Jesus wants? And the way of Jesus will involve the via dolorosa. It will involve suffering. The way of Jesus was always through Gethsemane to resurrection. But saying what I want leaves me in a posture of vulnerability with Jesus Himself.

**Annie:** Yeah. Then Ann, I mean, even as you're saying we can do the practices, but if our heart isn't right, right?

**Ann:** Yes. Yes.

**Annie:** But then the other thing I say to my friends a lot, and I say to myself, it's like, when you feel like you're slipping, when there's nothing else, keep doing the practices.

**Ann:** Yes. Yes.

**Annie:** Keep praying. So my goal over the last few weeks, as I felt so disconnected and struggled so much in this is, is I will just keep doing the things. If you'll keep doing the right things, you will circle back around. Like feelings come and go, blah, blah, blah, all the stuff we're supposed to preach to ourselves. And I do think it really mattered. I do think it mattered that I stayed in my disciplines even when I felt wobbly.

How do we know the difference, though? Like, in our prayer lives or in our fasting discipline, or in our Bible study, how do we know the difference between just checking it off and it's actually taking us further from the Lord, and you are staying in this discipline and therefore you're tying yourself closer to God? Though, I will also tell you that the thing I've said to the Lord all weekend has been like, "It was never me that tied to you anyway, it's you that ties to me."

**Ann:** True 1000%.

**Annie:** But also how do we know the difference between the two and ourselves?

**Ann:** Well, I think when it gets pitchblack, I think when it gets foggy and murky. We don't fly by sight. We fly by the lights on the dashboard. So what does it mean then to go ahead and say, "Okay, right now, I don't know the way forward, I feel disconnected, but I know that I know that I know I will fly by the instruments, I will fly by these spiritual disciplines. I know that these instruments, these practices are what will allow me to practice my faith, practice keeping the cadence of my days in rhythm with a cadence of your ways, Lord." So that's first.

Number two, we go through the motions when I'm opening up scripture, I'm reading off a chapter, I'm checking off a box, I'm praying a row prayer. What we need when we read scripture, what we need when we open up our journal and we pick up a pen, I am expecting an encounter with Jesus face to face. I will face you today. So I come with an expectation of an encounter. Not with a book, but with the face of Jesus, with the word Himself who is love himself. I don't ever call it my quiet time. It is my sacred encounter with God Himself.

**Annie:** Oh, that's good. Sacred encounter.

**Ann:** It is my sacred encounter. "Sacred" meaning to be set apart. He's going to take me just like He took the Israelites, He's going to take me out of Egypt, out of bondage.

He is going to divide my seas when I have an undivided heart, when my heart is wholly set upon Him. An undivided heart. He divides the seas and takes me where? Takes me to the promised land of His presence, takes me out of bondage, sets me apart in a sacred way to be bonded to Him.

So that sacred encounter that I have with Him every day and that practice of stillness, the acronym SACRED: stillness, attentiveness, cruciformity, revelation, examine, doxology-

**Annie:** I loved that. That was so helpful to me that you-

**Ann:** And oh, the pressures of the day, Annie, they rushed in so early in the morning, and I'm thinking, "No, no, no, I know what it's like when I start just snacking on a verse here and grabbing a prayer there. I am never doing that again." I ended up where I never thought I would be. I don't like where my trajectory leads when my face isn't turned to Him first thing in the morning.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Ann:** A couple of weeks ago, I packed my big study Bible and I took all my journals. And I'm not letting travel or anything else take me out of a way of life that keeps me in the way. So when I pick up a pen to journal, I mean, the practice starts with S of stillness, because you need to slow down. I'm not going through the motions here. I am stilling my soul in the presence of God Himself. And that stillness is an act of trustfulness. I trust you enough, Lord, to slow down and trust that I will still and you are doing the battle still.

And then when I journal out the answers to those questions, the attentiveness, the cruciformity, how am I going to live surrendered today? What do I have to give up today and entrust into your hands today, Lord?

**Annie:** Do you work every one of those questions every time, Ann?

**Ann:** I really actually do because I want to make sure... because honestly, Annie, cruciformity, I realized, like my posture is not to live into cruciformity. I don't want to live the form and shape of the cross in any way. Every day I have to be really intentional about "Lord, where do I need to surrender to you and I have to open up my heart to you?" So it's about the intention. For me, it is therapy every single day as opposed to once a week or once a month.

And the revelation that are sacred, we want a way forward. But do I have a fresh revelation from God, from His Word today? I'm going to write that down today. E is for examine. What am I afraid of? And D, doxology, what am I grateful for

today? But I make sure, Annie, to slow down enough not to go through the motions with God but to actually be really vulnerable.

Look at the Psalms. David pounds on God's chest. David says to God, "These are my enemies. This is how my heart is broken. How long, O Lord? Where are you? Are you asleep? Show up here." Be really real with God. If we really want a real relationship with Him... Nobody has a relationship with somebody you're wearing a mask with and you're just being polite.

**Annie:** Sure.

**Ann:** Really be honest with God. And I think doing those spiritual disciplines and realizing that detours and deconstructions of all kinds of things can be the way God leads us deeper into Himself.

**Annie:** People are so afraid of talking about deconstruction, though, Ann. Well, the option is you're either afraid of talking about deconstruction or you believe deconstruction is the only way forward. Neither of those feel healthy to me.

**Ann:** Neither of those seem to be the way of Jesus at all. I think Jesus' way is... There are detours. There's going to be deconstructions. And when I say deconstructions, I'm talking about there are going to be refiner's fire that burn away the things that are not truth. When I say truth I mean Jesus' truth, scriptural truth.

There are detours and deconstructions. And God uses those so that we run into His arm so He can reconstruct our hearts. When I say deconstructions, I'm talking about the same kind of deconstruction Jesus has in Gethsemane where He is poured out and literally pressed out with great drops of blood. That's what Gethsemane means. It is a pressing. If that's not a deconstruction I don't know what is. There's a pressing out.

So we're all going to have our own Gethsemanes that are going to press us. Do we choose though, in that, I say over and over again in *WayMaker*, all of life turns on the turn? So in the middle of our deconstruction processes in a broken world, in the middle of our Gethsemanes where we're being pressed in, do we choose to turn towards the word Himself, towards Jesus Himself found in infallible truth of Scripture and say, "You're pressing me in here, Lord. I need to be pressed into the narrow way, so that this Gethsemane, this deconstruction takes me through to the cross of Calvary, takes me through to the empty tomb, takes me through to seeing you resurrected on the other side? That I have a clear vision of who you are, Lord."

So in the middle of that Gethsemane, in the middle of that deconstruction, where are you going to turn? If you're turning in a way that doesn't turn you to the word Himself, you're turned in the wrong direction.

**Annie:** That is 100% true. That's how we need to say it. If it does not turn you back to the word, it's the turn in the wrong direction.

**Ann:** He says, "I am the Truth. I am the way. I am the life." So if He is truth and if I want my deconstruction, my pressing in my Gethsemane, if I want to find real truth, I'm not going to find it anywhere apart from the word.

**Annie:** Yeah.

[00:30:12] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our incredible partners, [Brooklinen](#). Y'all know I love a good morning routine. There's a lot of great things you can incorporate reading and journaling, a nice cup of tea in your Chai Day Friday mug, a walk in your neighborhood. Personally, I like getting a head start on starting the day off right with an amazing night's rest on my Brooklinen bedding.

Brooklinen, home of the internet's favorite sheets, got its start in 2014 to give customers luxury hotel-level home essentials that don't break the bank. They offer everything from snuggling sheets to cozy towels and robes, work robe alert, loungewear accessories, and much more.

By working directly with suppliers, Brooklinen cuts out the markups and passes those savings right on to their customers. So you get their incredible products at a reasonable cost. You can also take Brooklinen's signature softness outside of your house with their loungewear collection, featuring the actual softest tees and joggers I have ever put on my body. And then I've seriously considered not taking off, you guys. They've got tanks, sweatshirts, and other essential basics too.

And for a limited time, Brooklinen is offering a free gift with your purchase. If you miss out, you can use a promo code THATSOUNDSFUN anytime for \$20 off of your purchase of \$100 or more at [Brooklinen.com](#). That's Brooklinen.com and enter promo code THATSOUNDSFUN for \$20 off your purchase today at Brooklinen, the curators of comfort.

**Sponsor:** And I've got one more amazing partner to tell you about, [Modern Fertility](#). We all know that there are certain things we're supposed to do on an annual basis. Some

are more fun than others. Am I right? Ladies, we're supposed to go to the OBGYN once a year for a checkup. Please do.

But checking in with our fertility isn't usually a thing we think about until we're ready for kids. But what if there were things that would be helpful for you to know now before then? That's why Modern Fertility was created. It's an easy and affordable way to test your fertility hormones at home with a simple fingerprick, mail it in with a prepaid label and you'll get personalized results within 10 days.

You'll get insights into your hormone levels, your egg supply, and other important fertility factors. And the results go deep into what every hormone means. And you can also talk one on one with a fertility nurse to review your results and options for next steps. I think that part is super important and really cool.

Traditional testing with your doctor can cost over \$1,000, oh boy, but Modern Fertility gets you the same info at \$159, which is literally mathematically a fraction of the price. And if you go to [modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun](https://modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun), you can get \$20 off your test. Also, if you have an HSA or an FSA, you can put those dollars toward Modern Fertility. If you want kids today or maybe one day in the future, having this info about your body can help you make decisions that are best for you.

Right now Modern Fertility is offering our listeners \$20 off the test when you go to [modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun](https://modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun). That means your test will cost \$139 instead of the hundreds or thousands it could cost at a doctor's office. So get \$20 off your fertility tests when you go to [modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun](https://modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun).

And now back to our conversation with Ann.

[00:33:32] <music>

**Annie:** Something that happens a lot in *WayMaker* that is awesome and sometimes breaks my heart is there were all these little Shalom, Shiloh signs. There were all these little like you end up in Israel and the place you're going to is Shiloh, right? All these moments where it felt like God was confirming it.

So you're sitting there and you're praying and you're asking God, "Is this daughter our daughter? Is everything I'm seeing happening?" And then there's all the signs. There are times in my life, Ann, where all those things... Sorry, all those things end up turning out exactly and there are other times where I see eight of those and it doesn't go the way I thought. And it deeply affects my prayer life.

What do you do when you're praying for something and there are all those really important signs? I think God works like that, Ann. In my life, there have been times where I knew where to go because of the next sign. And there are other times where I see all the signs and it doesn't go where I thought it was going to go. The follow-up question I want to say is, how do I trust a God who does both of those things?

**Ann:** I think ultimately, Annie, that at the end, how do I trust you? We struggle with attachment with people we don't trust. You burned me up a couple times and I don't want to be attached to you at all. I don't trust you and I definitely don't trust you with my heart because you could just crush it here. I resonate deeply.

As I finished *WayMaker*, my dad was killed in the same way that my sister was killed. And I will tell you, Annie, dare I say this out loud, but it felt like a cosmic joke to go ahead and edit a book called *WayMaker: Finding the Way to the Life You've Always Dreamed Of* when I was in grief and traumatized. I was like, "Okay, God, why do you write a story like this? My sister was killed the exact same way as my father in the exact same place. Crushed under the wheels of a vehicle?" So I really struggled with, "Can I trust you? Does any of this hold at all?"

I get to the place where I'm back to Job and back to, "Do I know how to make Venus turn in the sky? Do I know how to make the stars dance across the constellations?" I don't know these things. This is a world of ways. That this story, the way of this story is connected to the way of that story, which is connected with this story.

I don't know why the story has to be this way. Why did you take me this far along the story and now it takes this turn that I didn't expect in any way at all? To my understanding, this looks like the wrong way entirely. Now I see the story went this way. Clearly, that is a better way. But I don't understand the way this story is connected to that story, the way it's connected to this story, is connected... The only one that can understand and orchestrate and navigate a world of ways and all the ways of all the stories is the way Himself.

And I have to sit in a place where if I needed answers from Him, from God, I would be making myself into a kind of god. So I have to trust that His ways... Sometimes it feels like, "Oh, why did you leave me this far along the way? Why didn't you make me turn a lot sooner than here?"

**Annie:** I mean, how many times have I said that in prayer of being like, "Hey, I've ever listened. If you had told me, I wanted to do what you wanted me to do."

**Ann:** Why take me this far along the way? I guess I needed that part of the journey to restore me in ways I don't understand. He's the word. He is restoring me and restoring me in ways I don't understand. And if I had a God small enough to understand His ways, would He be a God worthy of me following if I could make Him that small, Annie?

But I think He's big enough for us to pound on His chest and say, "Why?" And He doesn't give us answers. He gives us an experience. His arms are warm and explanations can be cold. And I'm going to trust Him.

Annie, grief is so deep and suffering is so real. And sometimes we compare one person suffering to another person suffering. If your theology can't hold in Ukraine, if your theology can hold in the midst of famine and starvation, if your theology can't hold besides graves, then it doesn't hold. So we don't know the why and the way but I do know that our stories matter to the point, the suffering matters to the point that Jesus Himself enters into it with us and bears it with us. So it must have deep significance or He wouldn't allow it to be.

**Annie:** I was interested that there's not much about your dad in the book because I didn't line up the timing. But it's because he passed when it was being edited.

**Ann:** It was being edited. So the next book is that story.

**Annie:** Really? Are you already working on it? Well, you have to because that's how you grieve. Yes.

**Ann:** And honestly the way I process anything is to write it. I really want to press into how do you deal with deep trauma? How do you process deep trauma? How do you process the trauma of everyday life, Annie? Can I believe that in the midst of trauma and grief He actually wants me to grow?

**Annie:** Wow.

**Ann:** That is really where I want to press into the trauma of something being... We were speaking of things being deconstructed. The outside of that seed is deconstructed, is pressed in, it is pressed like a Gethsemane pressing. But out of that, what happens is growth and new life and a harvest is yielded out of that. So what does that process look like in our own hearts, Annie?

I think we're living it. We are living it every day in the ways that we turn, in our spiritual disciplines, our way of life that keeps us in the way Himself. And we are unpacking, what does it look like to follow a suffering Savior? And to follow a

suffering Savior, why would I think my road wouldn't lead through suffering? He has no other way.

**Annie:** It is fascinating how, especially probably, first of all, Americans who are privileged in a lot of ways, whether it's your bank account, or your skin color, or your opportunities that we assume are... No one would say that. And no one would say, "I don't think I'm going to have any problems."

**Ann:** I mean, it's this subtext... I mean I write about it in *WayMaker*. We have expectational positionings system.

**Annie:** Yes, yes. I love that.

**Ann:** Instead of a GPS, we have an EPS. The subtext of that EPS is I kind of expect my life to go this way. I kind of expect a life that avoids a lot of suffering if I do X, Y, and Z. I kind of have this transactional relationship with Jesus. "I give you all of this, I expect you to give me back this."

I unpack it in *WayMaker* that everything comes down to my expectations—what I expected my life to look like. We all have those. It looks different for all of us. But we all have expectations. But can I expect there will be a glass of cold water? Can I expect there'll be mercy and grace on the horizon? Can I expect hope is always coming to meet me? Can I expect God is always going to show up just never in the way that I expected Him?

Expect nothing really in life except chesed, which is used - what? 250 times in Scripture. Lovingkindness of God. So no matter the wilderness, no matter the grief, no matter the desert, no matter the questions, I can expect the lovingkindness of God to show up. One of my spiritual practices is to get together with my spiritual director every month. It's marked on my calendar.

**Annie:** How often? Every month? Is that what you said?

**Ann:** It has been as often. After dad was killed, it was every week I got together with her. Now I'm at once a month I get together with her. So we prayed last week and she said, "What do you believe that God is really speaking to you, Anne?" as we sit in prayer. And I said, "Chesed will be my lens. The lovingkindness of God will be my lens."

I think we look at what's on the horizon and we see bad things on the horizon, we see arrows on the horizon, we see overwhelm on the horizon, or we see absence of all the things we want to see on the horizon not coming. Can I wear a lens of chesed that whatever is on my horizon is a lovingkindness of God?

Chesed is my lens for my life. And I have to be really intentional. The only way I can pick up that lens of chesed and see the world through a lens of lovingkindness is if I open up to that word every day, and I turned towards real truth where He... The map of His word is the reality of the topography of life. Otherwise, I get my turned around and I expect, why isn't my life going in the direction I want better?

I open up the words you have a map that actually matches the kind of world we're in. This is my Father's world. This is my Father's world. This is a map that matches His world and chesed, the lovingkindness of God has to be my lens, Annie. Otherwise, without that lens of the word, the world warps.

**Annie:** When we are praying, when we are living our personal lives, the traumas are happening in our personal lives but the global traumas, how do we pray for people in Ukraine and in Russia and where people are starving in places in Africa and India? Where is this line of it is our Father's world, prayer changes things? There are people that are suffering in ways I cannot fathom right now on the planet.

**Ann:** At all. Cannot fathom at all. This is our Father's world. I think we, as our Father's children, as Abba's children, we need to see prayer not as the least that we can do, prayer not as the only thing that we can do. But prayer ultimately is the most important thing that we can do.

If you look at the life of Jesus, there is no important work that Jesus ever did in the world that wasn't first steeped in prayer. I think lots of times we say, "Where is God?" Well, have we gone ahead and steeped ourselves in prayer?" The only way forward up steep inclines is to steep ourselves in prayer. So are we a people of true prayer?

For us as a family, I don't know if there's been one practice that has revolutionized our lives more. The beginning of COVID, we started to get up every morning as a family at six o'clock and pray together as a family before we did anything.

**Annie:** You showed it on stories a couple of times where everyone would be sitting in a circle. It was beautiful.

**Ann:** But you know what? And the vulnerability in that circle, where we are pounding on God's chest. My grown sons in tears confessing their own sins before God, banging on God's chest about, why are you showing up in terrible places in the world? Where are you, Lord?

And when we enter into prayer, that intimacy and communion with God, I believe it changes the world, but it ultimately changes our own hearts. It changes our own

perspective and our own posture. So I think if my way forward looks steep, have I steeped myself in intimate communion with Him? But I have a way of life that keeps me praying and not in ways that are deeply honest.

We get to say, "There are bombs dropping on children in the Ukraine, Lord. Where are you?" I believe He hears those prayers and then He ultimately moves in us that we become... When we care about these things enough to pray about them, we become the answers to those prayers in the world too, Annie.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Ann:** We say, "Lord, where are you?" And He turns to us and says, He sends someone and says, "You are my hands and feet in the world? Where are you in the world?" I think if we really care about things that we're going to take the time to pray, He starts to move in us that we become the answers to those prayers.

**Annie:** Yeah. I mean, that's when things get real wild in your life, right? It's when suddenly you're adopting a daughter from China because you're asking God where He was in the world.

**Ann:** Where are you in the world? Where are you with broken hearts? Then He asks, "Are you going to step into a literal brokenhearted story?" *One Thousand Gifts* opens with my sister being killed and my whole life is blown up, and we weren't believing and I was terrified of death. Are you willing to adopt a little girl who's palliative, who's heart is terminal and not be afraid of death?

So I think if we really believe, if we are true followers of Jesus Himself. I wrote about it the other day on Instagram: we don't look for the ride out of the pain. We look for ammunition to run into where the pain actually is.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Ann:** That means getting up and making sure our little magazine of five stones are filled. Have I spent time in prayer? Have I spent time in His word? Do I have my spiritual disciplines? Have I located my soul in relation to Jesus? So I filled my little magazine of my five... For me, it's six with sacred smooth stone.

So I can go out and slay some Goliath. We can actually slay down any Goliath in the world. We don't have any ammunition against the dark and the evil in the world if we haven't first spent our time in the quiet dark of prayer at the beginning of the day and reoriented ourselves to the way Himself.

**Annie:** I love you telling people it's the beginning of the day. Because I am like, I have so much respect for people who do their sacred time in the evening. Fine, fine. But I can't. That doesn't start my day. My coworkers don't want me showing up here if I haven't done my time in the morning.

**Ann:** I think if you want the way forward, you need to reorient the trajectory right at the beginning of the day. And for us as a family that means before anyone goes out to do any work, before we tackle anything in the day, we start with our... Because ultimately, as believers, our most important work in the world is not the work we do with our hands. It's the work we do with our bowed heads and our bent knees before Jesus Himself. Nothing is going to happen in the world before we do that.

**Annie:** Yes.

[00:49:52] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one last time to tell you about one of our credible partners, [ThirdLove](#). So you know how you feel when you slide on your ABLE jean jacket? It's comfortable. It goes with actually anything. It pulls any outfit together.

Well, for ThirdLove, that's the go-to staple and it is their 24/7 classic t-shirt bra. It's their number one bra and for good reason, you guys. It offers unbeatable comfort, thanks to every single detail being intentional, down to the fit style, function, and design.

This bra is loved and worn by millions of women hand to heaven. I just checked. I have mine on right now. And it's just not present the same old problems. It doesn't pinch or dig. You won't want to take it off the moment you walk in the door of your house please. Of your house is what we mean.

The 24/7 t-shirt bra is designed with ultimate comfort in mind. It has ultra-thin memory foam cups and luck straps that never slip. And it's so smooth that it looks invisible no matter what you wear. I think hand to heaven it is my favorite bra.

ThirdLove does comfort so you can do you. Their bras, underwear, active wear, and feel-good all-day wear are designed to make you feel like a million dollars.

ThirdLove obsesses over each stitch so you never have to think about how something feels, looks, or wears. There are over 100,000 five-star reviews. That's insane. 100,000 five-star reviews, those don't lie.

Great products are a great start. But then they got to go and give back and steal our hearts completely. ThirdLove settled down. Listen, they're the largest donor of

undergarments in the US, partnering with organizations all over the place. ThirdLove has donated over \$40 million worth of bras to help women in need. Isn't that awesome?

Feeling is believing so get the 24/7 comfort and support that you deserve. Upgrade your bra today and get 20% off your first order at [thirdlove.com/soundsfun](https://thirdlove.com/soundsfun). That's 20% off at ThirdLove.com/sounds fun.

**Sponsor:** And I've got one more amazing partner to tell you about, [Rothy's](https://rothys.com). You're probably already aware of this but Earth Day is in April and it is coming up. And that means a lot of us are given a little extra thought to how we treat the planet. Everybody wants to help out. I know you do. I do. But it can be hard to know where to start.

Rothy's believes that even the biggest challenges can be tackled one step at a time. They make the most comfortable, stylish, and durable shoes and daily essentials all from recycled plastic. Y'all, I think that is the coolest.

Everything Rothy's makes is better for the planet. They've repurposed millions of water bottles into their signature thread that goes into all of their products. Plus Rothy's shoes, bags, and other essentials are made with less wasted fabric and they're designed to be durable and washable for a stylish fit that lasts and always looks great.

But the clothes you wear every day shouldn't just look great; they should make you feel great. And that's exactly how you feel knowing your Rothy's help keep ocean-bound plastic out of the water. Rothy's sources sustainable materials like single-use water bottles, algae-based foam, and ocean-bound plastic and uses other sustainable practices to create better shoes with less waste.

They're so comfortable from the second you put them on. My Rothy's has been in regular rotation for well over a year now because they are, hello, machine washable. They still look and smell like they're brand new. When you're wearing Rothy's, your footprint feels lighter than ever. Get \$20 off your first purchase today at [Rothys.com/soundsfun](https://Rothys.com/soundsfun). That's Rothys.com/soundsfun.

And now back to finish up this conversation with Ann.

[00:53:27] <music>

**Annie:** So for our friends who are listening that just need God to make a way in their life, first of all, they've got to read *WayMaker*. It ruined me in the best of ways. It changed everything. But what's the prayer for someone who needs Him to be a way maker where it feels like saying that word, singing that song feels not enough?

Like, Okay, I said God make a way where there is no way but what does He do? So what's it really look like?

**Ann:** I think what it really looks like... And I sing that song and I sing it with all kinds of zeal but I'm always careful with that song. Are you a way maker to the thing that I want? Because that's not the way maker I follow.

**Annie:** Right.

**Ann:** He doesn't go ahead and make a way for things that I want. He is a way maker in a sense that He is the way. So if I'm somewhere and I say there is no way forward, it means I've got my eyes turned in the wrong direction. They're not turned towards the way Himself. There is always a way forward when my eyes are turned upon Jesus.

And I think, Annie, I believed the lie for a long time that you turns meant repentance and then turning around. And I had to go the whole long way back. Oh, no. Our waymaking God comes the whole way to us. The only turn you have to make is just to turn your eyes. It's that small a turn that we have to make.

We don't have to pull ourselves up by the bootstraps and "Okay, now I'm going to get my spiritual disciplines in order, now I'm going to do all these." It's not about us doing. A way maker comes the whole way. All you have to do is where am I turning my eyes every day? Where am I turning my eyes? Is it to a screen? Is it to some comfort out there? Or am I turning my eyes to the one who says He is love Himself? Am I turning my eyes towards the one who is always, always, always for me?

So what does that look like? That means dragging. Am I weary, sorry self who is exhausted and beat down to a pulp with all kinds of bruises from a broken world? And I'm going to open my eyes every day, open the Word, lay my weary head on His word and listen to the pulse of Jesus for me in His Word. If I do nothing else in a day, I'm going to make sure I start right there. Stay in His Word till you have a fresh revelation with heart for you.

So you write that revelation down. I had a real encounter with a living God today, a fresh revelation of who He is in His word and I'm going to write that down today. Don't go forward so you have that fresh revelation. Then for me, the stillness, the attentiveness, the cruciformity. "Lord, what am I holding onto so tightly that you're actually asking...?"

We talked about me going to Shiloh. That's where Hannah prayed for this child, prayed for that child so much that she looked like she was actually drunk. She was

begging God. And then what does Hannah do? Hannah gives the dream back to God. Hannah says, "God, I wanted this child but I now give the child back to you because I don't want anything to come in the way between me and you."

Do I have that kind of relationship with God that I don't want anything that I want to come in the way between me and Him? And at Shiloh, our messianic God already told us how the word korbon, for 370 years the people of Israel had come to Shiloh with their sacrifices, their korban. But the korban in Hebrew doesn't mean "to give up," "to lose something." It actually means to come near, to draw near.

So the things that we want, the things we want God to make a way through to, am I willing to also make it like Hannah, my korban, the thing I'm willing to also lay down so nothing gets in the way between me and Him? And that korban will actually not be a sacrifice in a way that I lose something, but that I actually gain? I come nearer, I draw nearer to God, I have deeper intimacy with God.

So the stillness, the attentiveness, the cruciformity. "O Lord, what do I want? You're asking me to live like a posture of Jesus. I'll lay it down, Lord. Into your hands I will commit this. I'm going to leave till I have a fresh revelation from you today. Lord, examine my heart and see what am I afraid of? What's wrong? What's pushing me forward? What's motivating me and driving? I'm afraid of something, Lord." What? 360 times in Scripture, do not be afraid. There's something I am afraid of. I need to confess.

And then doxology. What am I grateful for? There's always something, something, something to be thankful for. And if there's something to be thankful for. Thanksgiving is our gateway into His presence, into joy itself. So if there's always something to be grateful for, joy is always possible even right here.

**Annie:** You don't have to answer this if you don't want to. But I'll tell you mine if you tell me yours about what you read this morning. Did something jump out to you in your scripture time this morning?

**Ann:** Oh, actually there was. Actually, I've got my prompt on my Bible. I actually wrote it down in my journal which is sitting right here. I underlined it this morning. I'm working my way through Kings, Annie. "Even then, though, Jehu wasn't careful, wasn't careful to walk in God's ways and honor the God of Israel from an undivided heart."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Ann:** And I wrote it down. Am I being careful? I want God to make a way through but am I being careful to walk in God's ways? And I want God to divide my seas, part

my waters, divide my seas and make a way through. But do I have an undivided heart for Him, Annie? I believe He's a God who is the word which means He communicates. "He's a communicative God," Jonathan Edwards says. So do I sit with His word long enough until I hear Him speak a word to me?

**Annie:** I am looping the Proverbs every month and I'm a little bit behind. So I'm in Proverbs. Everybody talks about Proverbs 3:5-6. Trust the Lord with thy heart, right? But all of a sudden, I found... This is what's interesting. I did this with the Gospels a couple of years ago. I read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John every month.

**Ann:** Yes, yes. Yeah. I thought it was amazing, Annie.

**Annie:** It's wild because every single month you see something that you didn't see the month before. And you're like, "Was I asleep on that day?"

**Ann:** I read Old Testament and I'm like, "I've read this book how many times? Why do I not know this story was here?"

**Annie:** And Proverbs 3:7-8, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones." I was like, "Oh, everything that happens in my body is in direct relation to what happened spiritually in my life, too." I went to Blue Letter Bible and looked up the "health for your body," and it's talking about the center. The actual Hebrew word means your core. Like, it'll bring health to the core of who you are. And I was like, "Okay, Lord."

Then I did what you did, I copied it in my journal, I copied it in two versions. I wrote that and I went sacred on it, of like, "What does that mean, God? And what do I do with that? If you're a way maker, what does it mean?"

**Ann:** Set apart for you, sacred, set apart relationship with you, I'm just going to lay this all out before you. I wrote this morning... I have a big journal. Little red one. Right here. I have my sacred journal here that I write in every day but then I also take my revelation. It's a teeny tiny little journal that have only space for one revelation. There it is. And I've written down... I actually went back this morning to read through some previous ones. "When we fear the Lord there is nothing else to fear." From yours right there in Proverbs. The fear of the Lord... Read it to us again. How was it?

**Annie:** "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. So three things: don't be wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord, shun evil. And this will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

**Ann:** I mean, we want a way forward. But if we don't get a fresh revelation and a word from God, and when we don't... He is speaking to us.

**Annie:** Right. Even when you don't feel like it, sitting down... I mean, what I said to the Lord after this weekend is, "I thought the reason you had me stay in my disciplines all week was so that on Saturday and Friday when I listened to Ann I could hear her." So even though I didn't feel connected... And I didn't do it every day. I mean you know me. I'm not saying, do it like this.

But I still gave energy knowing I didn't feel like it. And then you, Ann, showed up on Saturday and read me a book that changed my life. And I thought, "Oh, that's what the Lord does is He says, "Stay with me. Stay with me and let your muscles get stronger as you pray."

**Ann:** That's right. That's right. Stay in the way. Keep staying in the way even when you don't feel like it and the way He Himself will carry you through. He will carry you through. And even emotion, emotion, those feelings, sometimes our emotions, the movement of them, they don't move us directly towards God. But if we say, "You know what? I'm going to take all of these emotions and I'm going to let them move myself in this direction towards the Lord," eventually, we have an encounter with God that changes everything.

So I think even when you don't feel the emotions, Okay, motion, movement, where am I going to go with this? I'm still going to go, I'm still going to turn towards Jesus Himself, the way through Himself.

**Annie:** Ann, I have a thousand questions to go with your *Thousand Gifts* after I read *WayMaker*. But I'll tell you, the next episode we're going to have you on is when we do a whole episode about sex, because you really wrote about it, my friend. Ann Voskamp talking about sex is more than I ever dreamed that we get. And I just would like to thank you.

**Ann:** I just want you to know that if you didn't think God had a sense of humor, Ann Voskamp writing about... I can't even say the word. I'm just going to say anything like that.

**Annie:** You start the book and you end the book with sex, Ann.

**Ann:** But you know what? Ultimately, I really do believe God uses this metaphor all through Scripture. God uses the metaphor of idolatry and adultery.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Ann:**        The idols in our lives, God sees that as idolatry against Him.

**Annie:**     Wow.

**Ann:**        God says He wants to know us. He uses the word "yada," which means the kind of intimacy we have with-

**Annie:**     A spouse.

**Ann:**        There you go. Thank you, Annie.

**Annie:**     I should have waited and just let you handle it.

**Ann:**        I can't even say anything around this. This actually means I don't want to write that.

**Annie:**     Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to do a whole Q&A episode on sex with Ann Voskamp. She'll be back.

**Ann:**        I'm only writing about it out of obedience. This is who God is. "I want you to know me this intimately." Well, I'll just say this. Culture is driven so much around sex. Because really what we're looking for is intimacy. We are desperately looking for knownness.

And God is saying, "Wait a second, I want you to know me like this. I want you to have this kind of intimacy with Me. Stop looking for sex in all of these places. What you really want is knowingness. And I want you to know me like this, because I know you like this."

So I'm writing about these things because regardless of whether our story is divorce, whether our story is feeling abandoned in a marriage, whether our story is singleness. We are made to be intimately known by a God who says, "I want to know you like this." That's why Voskamp wrote about it.

**Annie:**     So proud of you. I was so proud. When you started there, I was like, "Wow." And then when you ended there, I was like, "My girl, let's go."

**Ann:**        I mean, ultimately, theologically, we are moving towards consummation of all eternity with the maker, the lover of our souls Himself. Regardless of our stories here, that is where we are all headed. And I felt like, Oh, do you write about... I mean, I landed Revelation, I landed... But the marriage supper, God means to wed Himself to us. Love Himself is wooing us because He wants that kind of bonded connection with us. Then we end up with the marriage supper of the Lamb. We end up wedded to Christ Himself. So where else can I land, Annie?

**Annie:** I love that.

**Ann:** That's where the best book in the world lands.

**Annie:** Somewhere that you had to do with Waymaker. Okay, Annie, the last question we always ask, besides current topic, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you?

**Ann:** Oh, that's really easy right now. Almost on the hour from about 6 a.m. to 11 a.m, I've been going out. I've got two brand new baby lambs.

**Annie:** They're so cute.

**Ann:** I am smitten, Annie.

**Annie:** Were y'all surprised?

**Ann:** Oh, well, they were five days early.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Ann:** We were not ready in any capacity to walk out and see two baby lambs. Actually, Mr. Lindsey, who was my neighbor as a kid growing up, he works with us here and he stopped in to just check with the sheep and came into the shed and told Darryl, "Oh, hey, when was the Lamb born?" Darryl was like, "What lamb?" By the time we got there, there were two.

So we were totally shocked. And we've never lambed anything before. Darryl has done I don't know how many calves in his life growing up. And then we've done like thousands and thousands and thousands of baby piglets and puppies. But we had never done sheep.

And you know what? Oh, Annie, the spiritual metaphor around sheep and not being smart enough to know how to nurse or feed or where to look for sustenance and like, "Oh, this is why God calls us sheep."

**Annie:** You're like, "I see myself in these babies."

**Ann:** Totally. I don't know where to turn. A lot of bottle feeding to try to... And to get them to be nourished on the right thing as opposed to like... Anyways, that for me has been super fun, so...

**Annie:** Thank you for sharing them with us.

**Ann:** But I should have taken up cross stitch because lambs can die-

**Annie:** Listen, I'll bring you into the cross stitch fold with pleasure.

**Ann:** You bring us all into the sheepfold, Annie. But bring me into the cross-stitch. Actually, you know what? I think we're going to see each other next week in person maybe, Annie.

**Annie:** Yes, we do see each other very soon.

**Ann:** But maybe you could get me on to some cross stitch in person.

**Annie:** There's a really small cross-stitch that is a... Yes, it's very small. It's like an entry-level cross stitch pattern. I'm bringing it to you. I'll bring it to you next week. Thank you for doing this. I love you so much. I'm so thankful for your work, but also just... If Ann Voskamp never wrote a book again, I'm just glad you exist. So thank you, thank you, thank you.

**Ann:** I love you, Annie Downs to the moon and back and around a hogs hind leg forever and ever.

**Annie:** I believe you. I believe you. I feel the same.

**[01:09:38] <music>**

**Outro:** Oh friends, don't you love Ann? My gracious, oh, she's just the best. Be sure to grab your copy of *WayMaker*. Either get the book or the audiobook. Listen, the audiobook moved me to tears. I told you, you heard it. Moved me to tears. Make sure you grab a copy of *WayMaker*.

Follow Ann on social media, tell her thanks so much for being on the show and the way she poured her heart out not only in this book but in teaching us about prayer and the sacred rhythm. The S-A-C-R-E-D is incredible.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same.

Today what sounds fun to me is going to a concert tonight. Oh, the gift of Nashville! I get to go to a show tonight. I cannot wait. Have a great week. We'll see

you back here on Thursday continuing our prayer series with my friend, Beth Redman. And just maybe we have a little surprise to send your way on Wednesday too. See you guys then.