A person wearing a dark jacket and a white beanie stands on a dark rock in the foreground, with their arms raised in a gesture of triumph or joy. Behind them is a massive, wide waterfall cascading down a dark, mossy cliff. The water is white and frothy, creating a misty atmosphere. The background shows a dark, rocky landscape under a grey, overcast sky.

LIVING
in the
YES!

Experiencing true intimacy with God

LAURA JENKINS BOAL

Forewords by Leif Hetland & Dr. Brian Simmons

Available on Amazon

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Living in the YES! Look Inside

Hi! My name is Laura, and God healed me of a terrible brain injury – WOOHOO!

Now, just so you know: yes – that story is in here; but no – it's not the main thing.

THIS is what I learned while my brain was broken:



Living connected to God is better than living any other way.

THAT is the discovery that changed my life, before Jesus came, before we met the angel or any of the rest of it happened.

There's so much I want to tell you. I want you to meet Jo Moody, who died and met GOD! We're going to visit the *Museum of Modern Lighting*. We'll learn why cut flowers are important. And I want you to dream with me about *Watching from the Sidelines* and *Becoming David*. It took a whole book to fit it all in. This special excerpt will get you started.

P.S. I remember what it felt like when I could barely write a grocery list. I owe all of this to Jesus. May hope and gratitude leap off of every page and touch a place deep in your soul.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all my brothers and sisters who are standing on the banks of the River, looking out at the flow and thinking, "I don't know. Should I try putting a toe in?"

And it's especially for the prodigals.
Father says that he loves you.

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“Connections” are little stories scattered throughout the book. They will help you envision spiritual realities as if they are tangible and real.

Here’s what I’m praying over you...

“That the light of God will illuminate the eyes of your imagination [or, the eyes of your heart], flooding you with light, until you experience the full revelation of the hope of his calling.”

(Ephesians 1:18, TPT)

What Should You Expect?

This book is all about possibilities.

It's definitely NOT a self-help book. I won't tell you how to work harder, act smarter, and forge your own path to a great life. On the other hand ... If you're just about tired of your big, bad "self," then you might just stick around, because things are about to get pretty exciting.


*You see, life may seem pretty good on its own.
But real life starts with knowing God, deeply and intimately.
That's where the juice comes from, and there's nothing like it.*

God is bigger, better, wiser, kinder, and *gooder* than any of us can ever truly, fully know. He's amazing! And he loves you so much. **Real life**, and I mean a kind of life most of us have never even dreamed of, starts happening when we learn how to live in response to that amazing fact.

*It's like God is constantly calling your name
with love, affection and joy.
And your whole being becomes your answer... "YES."*

Are you human and breathing? Then I know these things are true: God created you, and he loves you.

He has such good plans for you! Read on to find out more.



Full disclosure:
We got color in the ebook
(and the Encounter Guide
is full color) but the
printed book is B&W.

Chapter 1:

Searching
for the
YES!



Laura

Hi! My name is Laura.

My friends and I are going on a journey through these pages. We're traveling into the YES of God — and we're inviting you to come along.

What on earth is the YES? Why would you need it, where will you find it, and what difference can it make in your life? This chapter will get you started with an introduction to all things that are YES-related.

As we go through the book, I'll pop in from time to time to call your attention to the really big stuff. Then we'll all check it out.

I hope you're blessed along the way!



LivingintheYES.com
/study/ch-1

Discover the truth that will change your life!

I can't wait to tell you what I've learned about living in the YES!

Living in the YES. It's an amazing place to be... and a different way to live. Here in the YES, we find that our lives have meaning and purpose, and we discover what it feels like to be fully alive. We're surrounded by possibilities and filled with hope. We find real joy that washes away our sadness, and life-giving love that conquers our fears.

Sometimes life can be messy, and whole storms of difficulty may rage outside of us. But when we're living in the YES, those difficulties don't get to come inside our hearts or minds anymore, because the powerful peace within us stills every storm. Even the tough times are better here, as we suddenly realize that our greatest challenges have now become our grandest adventures. When we're living in the YES, no situation seems truly hopeless...and even miracles are possible.

All of that happens when we're connected to the presence of God.

Connecting to God's presence is like getting plugged into the ultimate power source in the universe. You're getting direct downloads of real *life*. It's what we were made for!

Once you experience living in the YES—living in God's presence—you can't imagine living any other way.

That's not a "blue sky" promise. It's for real, and it's God's gift to you, purchased at great cost because of the way that he loves you.

God's YES: Why do we need it?

Sometimes in life, it seems like we're surrounded by NO's. They're the really hard problems, the difficult circumstances and disappointments that come our way. The NO's can be hard to deal with, and over time, they can wear us down. Even the strongest, most diligent, most resourceful among us eventually run into problems we can't fix, feelings we don't want to face, or losses we don't know how to handle. That's when we realize how desperately we need God's YES.

Is there a NO in your life right now? Maybe it's a scary medical diagnosis, or a difficult job, or a relationship that's not going so well. Or maybe things are going great for you, and you simply want to experience the most, best life that you can. In either case, take heart! God is speaking his YES over you right now. It's thundering through the heavens. Can you hear it? I can't promise you exactly how things will turn out, but I can assure you that God loves you, he's right there with you, and he is faithful. He's actively working to bring his amazing goodness into your life. The Bible assures us:

“No matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:20, NIV)

It's time for each of us to add our "Amen."

Yes, Lord! So be it!

How do we find it?

People take so many different paths in their search for a good life. Should you work harder? Think smarter? Go all in for a makeover, or go all out to make better connections? Maybe money or talent will do it, or maybe it's going to be all about power. Maybe you'll go after that big promotion... or maybe you'll give it all up, and go after serenity.

But you can't find the best kind of life in any of those ways.

You can't find it by learning “more rules” or “better guidelines.” It isn't about trying harder. It isn't about achieving enlightenment, either. You can't scrabble and claw your way up to this kind of life. You can't work hard enough to do it, can't think your way through it, can't meditate your way into it. Instead, it's a pure gift! And it's already right there, waiting for you, hidden away in God's presence. The only thing you can do is turn to him, receive it, and start living in response to it. ⁱ

Now, that truly is the adventure of a lifetime.

Going up the mountain

Imagine we're all starting out on a journey together. We're at the foot of a mountain trail—a whole big group of us. Most of us plan on going up the mountain, though some folks expect to stay right here, down in the park. They're bringing out

picnic baskets and pushing a friend in an all-terrain wheelchair. As for the rest of us, the biggest group is taking the easy path. Just a few people are taking the trail for hard-core hikers. A couple of folks even brought ropes, spikes, and other climbing gear. They'll attempt to scale the summit.

But you never know what's going to happen when you're on a mountain.

Some of us, climbing the easy trail, get pinned down by a thunderstorm. There we are, wedged into a cleft in the rock, desperately clinging to each other as thunder booms overhead.

Others get stopped by a huge boulder that's blocking the path. One fearless sort scrambles over it, only to be stymied by a rockfall. "We can go forward," he calls back. "But we'll have to take it slow. The footing over here isn't very sure."

Another group gets sidetracked, and they lose the path entirely. They're slowly picking their way through the wilderness... until, suddenly, they can't go any further. What on earth happened? There must have been a terrible mudslide years ago. Now, this whole part of the mountain is just gone. There is no way forward.

Life can be like that for all of us, can't it? We find ourselves facing obstacles, challenges, even impossibilities. Some of them you can overcome. Others, you can't. Some will just plain wear you down. That's when you realize that life isn't fun anymore. You've lost the sun, lost your way, and maybe even lost all hope of ever finding home again.

God is coming down!

Which part of that mountain are you on right now? Does your life feel like a picnic, or does it feel more like you've gotten caught in a thunderstorm? Is something blocking your path, or is the path gone entirely? Maybe it seems like you're inching along a narrow ledge and your footing is treacherous. Or maybe you're standing on the summit, gazing in wonder over endless miles of valley below.

Wherever you are, it's time look up, because God is coming down.

"Make the crooked road wide and straight for our God. Where there are steep valleys, treacherous descents, raise the highway; lift it up; bring down the dizzying heights. Fill in the potholes and gullies, the rough places. Iron out the shoulders flat and wide.

The Lord will be, really be, among us. The radiant glory of the Lord will be revealed. All flesh together will take it in. Believe it. None other than God, the Eternal, has spoken." (Isaiah 40:3-5, VOICE)

Just stop for a minute and let that soak in. How does it move your heart? *God, the Eternal One, has spoken.* And check it out! He's revealing his intentions toward his people. He doesn't merely want to "meet" with you every once in a while. Instead, he wants to BE with you, from now on.

No matter where you are on that mountain, God will find you, and he will help you. He will BE the impossible; he will DO the

impossible. He'll do whatever it takes to come for you. NOTHING can keep him apart from his children. So consider this his personal invitation. You can experience his presence and live in his YES. *Right here. Right now!*

My story

I learned about living in the YES when I was in the middle of the worst NO of my life. In 2013 a car wreck left me with a traumatic brain injury that rocked my world. Suddenly everyday life was so hard! I couldn't do the most ordinary things anymore, and I felt confused and overwhelmed most of the time. Before the accident, I'd thought I was valuable because of all the things I could do. Afterwards, almost all of that was gone. A lot of the things that had made me, "me," had simply vanished. It looked like life, as I had known it, was basically over.

That's when God taught me how to live in his YES.

It was amazing! It was like he unlocked the door to a whole new kind of life—one that didn't depend on my connections, abilities, efforts, or achievements. No limitation could stop it. No crisis could block it. No matter what challenges I was facing, I found out that I could still have a good life *right then*, because God was still *right there*. Once I realized that was true, I started worrying less about what I could do and what I couldn't do. I was too busy being loved by God, and finding out what he and I could do together.

As it turns out, you see, I wasn't just a limited person.

I was a limited person connected to an unlimited God.

That's when things started to get exciting.

In the middle of my crisis, God lifted his grace and kindness off the pages of the Bible and knitted them into my flesh, blood, and bone. Sure, life with a brain injury was still hard. In a lot of ways, though, I actually started living a much better kind of life, because I'd become truly, deeply connected to him. It was such a massive gift that, if he hadn't ever done anything else for me, I could have spent the rest of my life celebrating.

But then God did so much more. Three and a half years after the accident, he healed me completely! That afternoon, I still had all the symptoms of a brain injury. That evening, while I was busy talking to someone else, focusing on them and praying for them ... suddenly it felt like God himself had stepped into the room with us, and that's when everything changed.

Other people who were there said it was like watching a massive wave of power pass through my body and into the person I was praying for. Then, all at once, I didn't have a brain injury anymore! *Every sheared neural connection. Every delayed reaction. All of it was healed in an instant.* The pure wonder of that still overwhelms me. The only thing I'm left with, from that long, dark time, is the extreme joy of knowing how to live in God's YES. And that, of course, is what I want to share with you.

Looking back, I have to laugh out loud. Do you want to know what was the worst limitation I ever faced? It actually wasn't the brain injury. It was the way I'd been trying, for all the years before the wreck, to do life on my own. Living connected to God just really is that much better!

This is for everyone

What about you? I'm sure you're busy with your own life, and you have your own ups and downs and challenges to deal with. In the middle of all that stuff, can you find your way to God's YES, as well?

I absolutely believe that you can.

You're going to hear that message again and again, and not just from me. You're also about to meet Jo, Selim, Ian and Stefanie; Ellen, Rachel, Vijay; and a whole host of others. They're all real people I know, who were facing very real problems. And you're getting a front-row seat, because they're all going to open up and tell you what *actually happened* in their lives... when God showed up.

My friends and I have all been changed—and we're still being changed—because we've been touched by God's presence. We've discovered that the most ordinary lives become extraordinary when we're connected to him. He has done so much for each of us, and we believe he wants to do the same sorts of things for you.

What about you? Maybe you know God well, or maybe you hardly know him. Either way, as we open our hearts and share our stories, we hope you'll be encouraged to know him better.

Get ready to be blown away! No matter how big you think God is, or how much you believe that he loves you... he's MUCH bigger and better than that, and he loves you WAY more.

What can you expect?

In this book, you're going to hear real-life stories from real people. Then we'll use their stories as a springboard, launching us forward as we look for answers to several very important questions.

The adventure begins with our first question: *What is God really like?* The Bible says that he's good. But can we count on that? Is his nature truly an anchor for us, even when everything else in life is likely to change? That's such a big deal! I think it's actually the single most important thing you're ever going to know.

That first answer propels us forward into the next section, as we explore how God relates to us. *Is he still good, even when life feels bad? And what does he really want from us, anyway?* This section caps off with a spectacular truth, as we consider: *Is God calling us to be family servants, or inviting us to be family members?*

Then we'll look at some of the really big things God has done for us. Have you ever done things that you're sorry for but can't undo? Have you ever wondered, as I did, if there was a cure for your own brokenness? Have you wished you knew how to plug into the real power source, so you can actually experience the richer, better, more abundant life that Jesus promised? These answers continue to amaze me. The Lord doesn't just leave us to struggle through life on our own, and his powerful provisions for us truly are astounding.

Finally, after all of that, we'll be ready to dig deep into the last question. *What in the world is going to happen when all this truth starts coming to life...in us?* The Lord assures each of us that we are significant. Whether we're rich and famous—or not—our lives really do matter. When we're truly, deeply connected to his presence, we find that it's so. Good things start happening around us, things that we couldn't have even imagined before. That's just what it's like when we live in his YES.

These are the truths that changed my life. That was the miracle for me, long before God brought about the other miracle of healing my brain. It was like getting an all-access pass to a life of wonder. And it even worked on the worst days, when it felt like my brain was all but offline. It's important for you to know that. No matter what challenges you're facing, all of this is completely available to you, as well.

As you read this book, I hope you find that the words leap off the page as if they're written, not merely with ink, but also with fire. May they cause your own heart to burn within you, as you have a personal encounter with God and his amazing, transforming love. May you get a fresh connection with his presence as he breaks down barriers and removes roadblocks, bringing you real joy and hope and life.

Impossible becomes possible

As these powerful truths take root in our hearts, we find that we're turning to God from a place of safety and security. We may still face many NO's in life, but we suddenly realize that

we're not dealing with them alone anymore. And we find that God's YES is more real, more true, and more powerful than any NO we'll ever face.

How does that work? Sometimes God intervenes and changes our circumstances. Sometimes, instead, he changes us. But either way, more and more, we discover that our lives are being defined by his YES, his love and affirmation and approval roaring over us in the face of any other adversity. We learn, more and more, how to partner with the Lord as we "do life" together. We begin to understand what the Bible actually means when it says that God is "for" us... and *nothing* is impossible for him.

The Lord wants to explode every single barrier that's been preventing us from truly, deeply knowing him. As he does, we start bringing down our own walls and really letting him in. That's when we look up in wonder and realize: *HE is here. Right here. Right now!* And in his presence, we become changed from the inside out.

It's as if we start breathing in the very air of heaven. Then, as we breathe out—as we start living differently, living in response to this amazing truth—the world around us starts changing, too. ⁱⁱ

Finding more and better life

In John 10:10 (MSG), Jesus says, "I came that they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of."

Real and eternal life?

More and better life than we ever dreamed of?

That's not just the promise of Heaven. It's the kind of life God offers us *right now*. He purchased it, at great cost, because of his overwhelming love for us. I believe he wants every one of us to enjoy this priceless gift.

Will you come along on the journey? We're going to explore some amazing territory as we talk about living in God's YES. Here's the bottom line: *We get to know God. We can actually live connected to him!* If you truly want to experience the most, best life that you can, it really is that simple.

All the life is in him.

Want more life?

Get more connected.

These truths are so big, so wonderful, and so powerful that only God could have dreamed this up. I suppose we could call them "mysteries," because they blow our minds and transform our thinking. But they're certainly not secrets! They're for all of us.

Are you ready?

What adventure does God have in store for you?

ⁱ Romans 3:20-24

ⁱⁱ Mark 9:23, Luke 18:27, Romans 8:31-39, 12:2

Recap: Searching for the YES!

God wants so much more for us than we want for ourselves. He has gone to great lengths to make sure we can *actually experience* all that he's bought for us. Life can be messy, and sometimes it feels like we're surrounded by NO's. Yet God's presence with us is the ultimate YES. That fact is more real than any NO we'll ever face.

These are the wonderful realities we're going to explore:

- God is truly good.
- He isn't mad at me.
- I don't have to earn his love.
- He welcomes me into his family.
- I am really forgiven.
- He has given me his righteousness.
- I can live connected to him.
- My life matters!

These great truths carry the power to change your life. May they be written, not only into your mind, but into your heart and into your spirit!

Connection: Want to Come Along?

Have you ever read a Bible story and imagined what it would be like if you were actually there?

Imagine you're living in Bible times. You've been walking towards a friend's place and you pause to rest for a bit, enjoying the sunny spring day, looking at the new growth and feeling the warm breeze. You're watching a group of people as they come towards you, laughing easily and talking energetically with each other. They look really happy. As they draw near to you, suddenly the leader stops them all.

That has to be HIM!

You've heard about this Jesus. They say he isn't like the other teachers. He's real, and kind, and he helps people. So many stories. There was the Samaritan woman at the well; even her own people wouldn't have anything to do with her. Zacchaeus, the despicable tax collector who collaborated with the Romans. The woman Amaraⁱⁱⁱ, brought before the rulers to be stoned to death because she was caught in adultery. And more!

They say Jesus talked to every one of them as if they mattered. They say he knows things about you that you've never told anybody. He looks at you as if he really sees you, and once he does, you're never the same.

And now he's here. He's turning towards you!

Nobody has ever looked at you like that. It's as if he sees the real you, and you see acceptance and warmth in his eyes. He gestures at the road ahead. "We were just on our way into town," he says with a grin. "Want to come along?"

"Weren't we excited when he talked with us on the road and opened up the meaning of the Scriptures for us?"

Luke 24:32 (GW)

ⁱⁱⁱ This beautiful woman is not named in Scripture. I made up the name "Amara" for the sake of the story.



Living in the YES!

We hope you enjoyed this special look inside. There's so much more to tell you! To continue your journey, you can go to:

–www.livingintheYES.com –

Or search for books by Laura Jenkins Boal on Amazon.