

Dear LifeWay women – and potential Israel-trip-besties!

I'm writing to encourage you – and your husband, BFFs, and/or kiddos - to join us for a life-changing, heart-wrecking (in the best way), spiritually renewing trip to Israel next Spring (March 26-April 5, 2019). I'm SO excited about this Holy Land adventure, I start bouncing every time I think about it so it's a good thing I'm not writing this with a pen or I'd make y'all seasick for sure!

Anyway, the first time I had the privilege of going to Israel in 1998 (back when I had tight skin and a high metabolism and cell phones were the size of bricks), I was less than thrilled beforehand because I thought I was too busy to carve out almost two weeks of my schedule to "ride around on camels, eat figs and Feta cheese, and listen to boring talks about Biblical archeology" – which is what I assumed the gist of the trip would be. Fortunately, my boss didn't give me the option of backing out and by the end of my first day in Israel, I was so gobsmacked by the tangible presence of God, I didn't want to go home!

There were so many aha moments on that first visit I ran out of room in my journal, but the one I can still remember in detail all these years later is sitting halfway up the hill on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee – pretty much exactly where the crowd would've been sitting and listening while Jesus preached His Sermon on the Mount. Then realizing with a start that I could hear everything that was being said by a tour guide 100 yards below me because of how the water was amplifying his voice. Then, when I stood up and turned around and saw the ruins of an ancient city on the very top of the hill behind me, I realized that may very well have been what Jesus gestured to when He told that First Century crowd they should be like a city on a hill that could not be hidden (Matthew 5:14)!

I've believed the Bible was true since I was a little girl, but in that moment it was as if I'd been picked up and plopped down smack dab in the middle of a page in Matthew's Gospel account – it was then that I *knew-that-I-knew-that-I-knew* these black, white and red words we memorize and exegete and cross stitch are the *living* words of the only true God! The Bible went from seemingly monochromatic to technicolor in one fell swoop! And quite frankly, I've never read it the same way since because now when I peruse the redemptive narrative of Holy Writ I can almost *see* scenes from those stories in my mind's eye.

Of course I agree with Paul's profession that we can only see through the glass dimly when it comes to our finite human minds comprehending the omniscient majesty of God (1 Corinthians 13:12). But I'm telling you, the proverbial glass gets less foggy in Israel and you'll clearly recognize facets about our Redeemer that were only blurry traits before!

I'm also delighted to tell you that I'll be co-teaching with the lovely and legendary Lysa Terkuerst on this trip, who's one of the most learned and passionate Bible teachers I know when it comes to the Holy Land. And last but not least, not only will LifeWay (which just so happens to be my favorite parachurch ministry in the known world!) be hosting us, which means we'll be surrounded by people of integrity, but Inspiration Tours will be handling the logistics, which means we'll also feast on gourmet food, relax en route to the sites every day in very comfortable transportation, and rest in beautiful accommodations every night. This promises to be one of the most significant experiences of a lifetime, so please, please, please prayerfully consider joining us next Spring!

Warmest Regards,

Lisa Harper