Feminine Conservatives Face an Esther Moment:

In this chapter, I describe how important it was for me to write this book. *Feisty and Feminine* comes out of my own personal experiences, but I know they are really common experiences that all conservative women face.

This book is for every woman who has left the playground, PTA meeting, neighborhood gathering or classroom wishing she had just the right thing to say in response to an arrogant liberal who has confidently challenged her beliefs. I hope women will tear out chapters, highlight stats and fact and stuff them in their purses to study during car pool, so next time they are ready.

This book helps you have the tough conversation in a way that is respectful, winsome and redemptive. Every chapter is a self-contained guide on how to discuss the controversial issues of our day, such as the devaluation of women, sexual abuse and politics, marriage, life, radical Islamism, Israel, and work-family balance.

Women in this nation are so blessed—with the most academic degrees, 9.1 million businesses owned, and full citizenship including our right to vote and our First Amendment rights. The world is desperate for the Esthers of this generation who will prayerfully step forward, clear their throats and lean into the chaos and confusion around us. We know the truth because we know the Author of Truth.

I hope that as you study this book – whether individually, in a college dorm room with YWA girls, at a CWA Chapter meeting, during a church small groups, or just out to lunch with friends - you can nurse your wounds, inspire each other, and get back on the battlefield. I envision some women choosing to go through this week by week for 10 weeks together as a sort of book group for activists! I hope your time of study and reflection is like a mission base to which you return for comfort and to plot your next move. This study guide is designed to be your battle strategy handbook to help you along the way. And never forget who the real enemy – and Who your true Savoir - truly is.
Fill-in-the-Blank:

1) Like most women, I switch ____________at lot.
2) When did simply referencing one's faith become ____________?
3) ____________— feminine conservatives—abound.
4) It’s time to become ____________Women.
5) You will learn to support your beliefs not only ____________ but also using irrefutable ____________.
6) In order for conservative Christian women to powerfully impact an increasingly secular world, we must understand what happens beyond our ____________.
7) Concerned Women for America founder ________________ says, “God didn’t call us to win the battles; He called us to fight the battles.”

Discussion Questions:

1) Like me, have you faced an experience where your values and beliefs were disrespected and criticized right in front of you? Have you ever held your tongue instead of speaking up for what you believe in or correcting the mistaken declarations of a friend? How did you respond? How do you wish you had responded?
2) Why is it that liberals always seem overly confident, preying on conservatives who seem to buckle under pressure, and curl up and hide like a scared possum?
3) How do you think faith and the public sphere intersect? Do you agree that women of faith need to be aware of what is happening in our increasingly secular world? What is the best way to fight it?
4) Like Esther or Beverly LaHaye, have you ever felt that your background or personality precluded you from public service? How do you think God might be calling you to be used for His Kingdom utilizing exactly the woman He made you to be? What would success look like for you?
I hope you enjoyed reading my rather embarrassing episode with the poor man complimenting my boots. I want this book to be personal, and I hope your discussion is personal, too. There are big issues at stake here, and there is no use holding back.

Have you ever noticed the devil has a particular hatred of women? The crown jewel of creation, the being capable of co-creating other beings, something Satan can’t do. Well, he’s sure made some disturbing inroads in affecting our nation. But Christ promises the alternative – what we are truly made for – a great feast of love!

Violent porn has become mainstream; Planned Parenthood teaches BDSM sex; visual images pervert our expectations, and our response is to decry domestic abuse but never address its underlying causes.

**Fill-in-the-Blank:**

1) BDSM stands for _______________, _______________, _______________, _______________.

2) The future of our children is at stake when we confuse ____________ with ____________.

3) This is the ________________ side of feminism that embraces taking the ________________ characteristics of men and emulating them.

4) Studies show that nearly _______________ of 5th-12th grade girls report wanting to lose weight and almost the same percentage of girls 1st-3rd grade want to be thinner.

5) _____ out of _____ kids aged 10-17 report encountering unwanted porn (and that’s just the accidental encounters.)

6) God wants us to feast on His love. He provides us a life’s banquet of _______________ yet we are settling for _______________. Stop! You are demeaning God’s _______________. You were meant for more. Fifty ________________, not fifty shades!!!

7) A society full of sexual license has not made us happier. _____ in _____ women are on antidepressants.
Discussion Questions:

1) I know you must have stories of feeling objectified and devalued. After a while, you may have taken on a defensive posture that makes you assume you were being bullied when you really weren’t. Other times, perhaps you have become numb to the situations, shrugging them off when you should have stood up for yourself. As you are comfortable, reflect on some of these personal experiences and reactions.

2) Recently, Utah declared pornography a “public health crisis.” Discuss some of the most harmful results of pornography and why it is harming our hearts, brains, and societies.

3) How do you think we have gotten this far? Discuss the origins of this pornified culture, and how we think we can solve it.

4) So many young women struggle with depression and body image issues. Do you agree that sexual brokenness could be related to these other problems? Discuss.
Sexual Assault and Politics:

As you read, I hesitated to share my story of being sexually assaulted because it can’t compare to the greater trauma of women who have been raped.

Laws and policies that deal with this issue as a campus problem and not a criminal offense aren’t helping us. Like so much in politics, good goals are getting buried under an agenda. We all want our universities—and our culture—to respect and honor women and their bodies and their choices. But things go so terribly wrong.

The federal response has been misdirected into over $660 million in grants that aren’t tracked for effectiveness. Hundreds of thousands of rape kits with the DNA of perpetrators have gone unprocessed, despite the fact that confessed assailters admit to doing it before. In 2013 we pushed Congress to pass the SAFER act to ensure good use of funding in this rape kit effort, but the Department of Justice hasn’t enforced the law.

Rape is a sickness of the soul. On a moral level, in education, on campus, in court, and at the legislature – we could be doing a much better job addressing this deep brokenness, and I hope you can be part of the solution.

Fill-in-the-Blank:

1) Conservative are ______________ ______________ arguing over campus rape rates. One is too many.
2) Mutual ______________ consent policies are half measures that don’t treat rape as the despicable crime that it is. Rape is a crime, not a ______________.
3) A Slate reporter wrote that binge drinking makes women less safe and was excoriated for “______________ ______________”.
4) We have a duty to our daughters to teach them to keep themselves safe as best they can. That means making ______________ ______________.
5) No woman ______________ to be touched in any way she doesn't want.
6) This is a ______________ issue, not a ______________ ______________ issue.
7) Only _____% of sexual assaults between 2005 and 2010 resulted in an arrest.
Discussion Questions:

1) Have you ever been through something that you were afraid to share, knowing that others had faced far worse? Like me, do you struggle wondering why God, Who we know loves us, allows such sufferings, which seem unfair? How can we help encourage one another no matter what suffering we face?

2) Take a moment to share what you thought about rape, assault, and college campuses before and after reading this chapter. What did you learn? Did your views change? How can we be realistic, not politically correct?

3) What do you think is behind the hesitancy to look at poor decisions – especially regarding drinking – as a potential contributor to campus assault problems? What guidance should we give young women and men going to college? In what ways do all these safety lessons fall short without fundamental spiritual transformation?

4) We know from the story of Tamar that God is grieved by brokenness. Jesus Himself unjustly suffered and answered Tamar’s cries – he rids us of our disgrace and clothes us in righteousness. How can we weep with those who weep and confront these problems?
Marriage and True Tolerance:

In one word, the state of marriage in America is a disaster.

Marriage is one of the most prime indicators for success for our next generation. Not to mention our own happiness and growth. God is the one who instituted marriage – and that institution preceded the advent of the state and government. In fact, all religions and every major civilization has seen marriage as necessary for civil flourishing.

Despite its social importance, it is becoming less and less a part of American life. How twisted is it that as gay people fought vehemently for a right to marry, male-female marriage rates declined while existing marriages collapsed.

With the Supreme Court ruling that gay marriage is allowed in America, we have to take on the fight for religious freedom for adoption agencies, pastors, and businesses. And we also have to look within, humbly acknowledging our own brokenness, and compassionately loving those on the other side. We can lead by having healthy marriages ourselves, extending love and civility in all circumstances, and being open and transparent about our own struggles. Above all – the Gospel offers hope for ourselves and others – hope for healing, true love, and ultimate union with Christ, our bridegroom.

Fill-in-the-Blank:

1) _____% of Americans say marriage is becoming ______________.
2) _____ out of _____ people 25-35 cohabitate. Cohabitation has risen from 2.9 million in 1996 to _____ million in 2012.
3) The Ashley Madison website scandal exposed _____ million names – with only _____ U.S. zip codes going unrepresented.
4) Even Obama acknowledges that marriage reduces the probability of child poverty by _____%.
5) Marriage is an ___________ and ___________ institution.
Discussion Questions:

1) Everyone has struggles and parts of their life that aren't perfect or aren't what they expected. How can single, divorced, widowed, separated, and childless women still be vitally involved in the pro-family movement? What about women married to non-Christians, and even those of us who have good – but oh so imperfect – marriages?

2) What about families trying to heal from past infidelity? What can be done to encourage and support those families, whose situations are each unique and always painful?

3) In our efforts to fight homosexuality, how have we hypocritically missed the crisis going on in marriage generally? Why is it so easy to deflect judgement on others, and miss that each one of us is in some way sexually broken and in need of healing?

4) YWA Chapter President Crystal Macias says that “the main problem conservative women face on college campuses is silence.” Do you agree? In what ways has silence played into your own response to cultural change?
Abortion and the Sanctity of Life:

Abortion is the killing of a human. A baby. A person. They can try to call it anything else, but eventually they run out of arguments. Recently, Hillary Clinton slipped up and stated that “the unborn person doesn't have constitutional rights.” She accidentally called the child a person! But she believes those persons can be killed in the womb. And she defends Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood is the nation’s number one abortion provider, and they have been caught red-handed in scandal after scandal, yet they still receive half a billion dollars in federal funding. We are constantly shocked that every time we explain that community health centers offer a viable and healthier alternative to Planned Parenthood, many have never even heard of such a healthcare option. The name ID that Planned Parenthood possesses has allowed them to manipulate the public for far too long.

Kermit Gosnell shows the unregulated dangers of the abortion industry. They were only able to even search his clinic because of illicit drug activity. When they found deplorable conditions and sent him to court, he was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and the intentional killing of three infants. Only three. Because they rest of the babies he had successfully dismembered while they were still inside their mother.

Every human being is made in the image of God. If we truly believe that, we need to fight even harder to protect innocent lives who get slaughtered every single day. We need to help vulnerable women find alternative healthcare. We need to help workers find new jobs. And we need to help the world see that pro-life is pro-woman.

Fill-in-the-Blank:

1) The moment the sperm penetrates the egg a new person comes into existence with separate and complete ____________.
2) Fetal development tells us that unborn babies have a detectable heart beat at _____ days. At _____ days, the foundation for a nervous system is complete. At _____ days, a baby has eyes, ears, a mouth, and kidneys. At _____ days, brain waves and reflexes are detected.

3) At _____ weeks old, an unborn baby can respond to its mother’s voice – and feel pain.

4) Since 2009 at least _____ abortion providers in _____ states have faced investigations and/or criminal charges for substandard treatment.

5) Abortion procedures include ____________ and ____________ abortions in the first trimester, along with ____________ second trimester abortions and ____________ techniques used in the third trimester.

6) At least _____ women have died from complications due to legalized abortion.

7) Women like Marjorie Dannenfelser remind us that fighting for life is not only ____________ right, but ____________ smart.

Discussion Questions:

1) I encourage you to stand on sound Biblical ground, know the facts, offer compassion, promote awareness for alternatives, advocate for life, and keep the faith. What part of this battle plan particularly inspires you? What have you done to stand up for life? Does your area have a pregnancy center? Do you know your state laws on abortion and how to model successful restrictions that have passed in other states? Take a moment to strategize based on your group’s particular talents and situation.
2) Even as a pro-family advocate, at first I was shocked to be pregnant and not all that happy about it. Can anyone relate to my experience of unwanted pregnancy becoming an inexplicable blessing? How can we get women to get to that step, and realize that even if their pregnancy is unwanted, their child is deeply wanted!

3) If you think you can stomach it, talk through the main types of abortion procedures. Go through the process and risks so you can be ready to explain it if God ever gives you the opportunity. Also practice quizzing each other in fetal development facts, so you can know them by heart.
Liberals love to accuse conservatives of being in a “War on Women”, mostly meaning that-gasp– we are pro-life, and apparently on an unknown crusade to take away women’s birth control.

Their rhetoric and arguments are old and unfounded, and their insistence in attacking within ignores both the prominence of women in America and the real war on women – of a completely different kind.

The real war on women is being waged by an anti-Western philosophy advocated by theocratic Muslim nations. Women in these countries cannot choose whom or when to marry, they cannot leave their homes without a male escort, they cannot drive, they have little legal protection from abuse or rape, many cannot vote; quite simply, they have no power.

In the view of many on the left, anyone who holds conservative, traditional views is patriarchal and misogynistic. Christians are lambasted for wanting to end abortion or for holding traditional views on marriage, yet forced marriages among Muslims in our own country are ignored because we don’t want to seem culturally insensitive.

We have the opportunity to share Christ’s view of women in stark contrast to the horrors of human trafficking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, child marriages, honor killings and other atrocities. Jesus was the greatest believer in the value, beauty, and significance of women of anyone who has ever walked this earth. So believe in your own dignity and fight for the dignity of all women.

**Fill-in-the-Blank:**

1) When women are forced to cover their faces, it sets them apart from everyone else. It’s a barrier not just from the _____________ _____________ of men, but also from _____________ at large. This is known as _____________ _____________.
2) Liberals spent $______ million on gender-baiting ads in the 2014 midterm elections.

3) As AHA Foundation founder Ayaan Hirsi Ali wrote: “No ____________, ____________, or ____________ can be invoked to justify violence against women and girls.” ____________ violence shames us all.

4) Randomly handing out birth control will perhaps ____________, ____________, but it won't stop the ____________.

Discussion Questions:

1) I talk in this chapter about how Jesus stood up for oppressed women. He spoke to them directly, healed them, offered them forgiveness, listened to their needs, and loved them deeply. Why do you think Christianity gets so unfairly painted as anti-woman? How can we emulate Jesus and show people that Christianity offers great dignity to women?

2) Reflect on my suggestions for legal, local, and international policies as methods to hold sex-trafficking at bay. Of what other methods have you heard? Like Michelle Obama, would you refuse to wear a headscarf travelling to Muslim countries?

3) The Gates Foundation refused to fight against child marriages and forced marriages for fear of being “paternalistic.” In what other ways can political correctness get in the way of fighting for justice? In what ways can we respond to such arguments?

4) Jeanne Mancini points to the words of the great Saint Catherine of Siena: “Be who you are and you will set the world ablaze.” Do you know who you are? How do you think you might go about forming your identity and discovering your calling?
It was a moving experience to realize that CWA’s first ever Day of Prayer and Fasting for Victims of Islamic Terror occurred on the very day that ISIS slaughtered—beheaded—21 Egyptian Coptic Christians as they knelt on a Libyan beach. The propaganda video afterwards claimed that it was “[a] message signed with blood to the nation of the cross.”

That would be us.

At last, the State Department has officially declared ISIS attacks on Christians as genocide. At least we know the label embodies the severity of the situation, and I hope equally serious action follows. Indeed, Christians and women are among the most hurt by this extremism. We are seeing Christians and other religious minorities slaughtered; we are seeing women raped and forced to take birth control and have abortions. By perpetrating violence against women and girls, ISIS has been able to take control of communities, destroy traditional family and social structures, and humiliate dissenters—thereby expanding their reach and power.

This scary scenario is compounded by a failure of national leadership to outwardly identify and decry the real enemy. As Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn has said, “You can’t defeat an enemy that you don’t admit exists.”

It’s up to you to sound the alarm, to pray, to call for action, and support those who fight.

**Fill-in-the-Blank:**

1) Since 2000 there has been an incredible ___________ increase in the number of people killed by terrorism worldwide.

2) Girls as young as _____ are given to ISIS as wives, or sold as sex slaves to be passed among men as they wish.

3) ISIS preys on young people seeking ____________, ____________, and ____________.

4) ____________ ____________

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Discussion Questions:

1) The story of praying for victims of Islamic terror at the same time as their martyrdom still sends chills up my spine. Why do you think God orchestrated this? Why is it still worth praying even if it seems like our prayers aren’t answered?

2) Discuss Just War Theory. Do you agree that fighting ISIS is a Just War?

3) Why is it so easy to ignore international religious persecution? Isn’t it also far too easy to think we are immune to religious persecution ourselves? Don’t we so often take it for granted! What do you think the future will hold in terms of facing religious persecution on both a national and international scale?
Beyond Our Border: Why Israel Matters to Christians:

Israel is a friend of America. Judaism is a friend of Christianity.

So many forget this, forget why Israel is such an important issue for us today. Threats to Israel abound and take many forms. From local anti-Semitic comments, to college campus campaigns, to threats from Hamas, Iran and Hezbollah and even the U.S. government.

Christians get stuck in apathy or “Replacement Theology” or simply look the other way.

God suffers alongside His chosen people as any parent suffers when their child suffers. This battle is of a spiritual nature as well as a political one.

Don’t think that because you are not a Jew you are not called to speak out for them. Please stand firm with Israel and advocate for strong support and aid to them. They are our friends and God’s chosen.

Fill-in-the-Blank:

1) My Dad’s wise response to my question about who killed Jesus was: “Yes, Penny, the Romans nailed Jesus to the cross, but it was actually ___________ ... He willingly died as a sacrifice for my sin.”
2) Despite its commitment to peace and freedom, Israel has been recognized by only two of its twenty-two Arab neighbors, ___________ and ___________.
3) One evidence of anti-Semitism today is the BDS movement: ___________, ___________, and ___________, which is having an impact on college campuses.
4) There was a _____% increase in anti-Semitic incidents in 2014.

Discussion Questions:

1) Isn’t it disturbing to remember how long it took America to wake up to the reality of Jewish persecution in World War II? What lessons does this lackadaisical response hold for us in our own advocacy today?
2) Why do you think it is that so many Christians forget how important standing with Israel truly is? Why is “Replacement Theology” an incorrect understanding of God’s plan for Israel?
3) What can you do to speak out for Israel in both big and small ways?
Seasons: Work, Family, Life, and the Art of Balance:

Being a Conservative young woman who wants it all can be both inspiring and overwhelming. It is a good thing when a woman who has a desire for family and career is affirmed in that, instead of the extreme feminist who represses the value of being a wife and mother. But there's a subtler pressure too—the pressure to have it all at the same time, perfectly.

Isn't it tempting to only look at what another woman does well, while only looking at what we do wrong! As hard as it is to realize, you are not what you do. Embrace and be grateful for the amazing liberty and opportunity America offers without letting it overwhelm you.

There is no magical formula for this, but don't give up on it. Thank God for a 100 percent supportive husband, kind friends, and forgiving children. Don't forget that “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” Enjoy the season you are in.

Fill-in-the-Blank:

1) Keeping our jobs in proper _____________ to the rest of our lives is often a huge challenge.

2) The wage gap is untrue. In our twenties women are paid _____________ than men—by _____ cents on the dollar. And overall, _____% of women say they have about the same opportunities to advance to top executive and professional positions in their companies as men.

3) In 2012, _____% of all women were stay at home moms, a _____% increase from the year before.

4) _____% of young women views marriage as important or very important to their life plans. This reversed the decades long trend in the other direction.
**Discussion Questions:**

1) For me, part of learning the art of balance was accepting my own imperfections, and coming to a new understanding of grace. What would that look like in your life? How do you feel like you look at other women—with jealousy? respect? idolization? anger?

2) What is your take on the Mommy Wars? Have you felt workplace discrimination? Judgement for working? Judgement for not working?

3) What works for you in balancing work and family and everything else? How are you finding what works for you? What are conscious practical steps towards being rooted in God, church and community that can help you know your worth and enjoy whatever season in which you are?
A Vision for the Future:

Today, we live in an increasingly liberal and secular society, and conservative women are too often painted at two-dimensional caricatures, church ladies who don't get the real needs of women or the changing social dynamics of America. But this representation is simply untrue.

As educated, faithful conservative women, we can’t afford to sit on the sidelines. We’ve got to stand up, find our voices, and speak truth about the things that matter most. We won't be marginalized because of our beliefs or values any longer; we must use them to become empowered. So it’s time to use who we really are—our entire unique self—in service to God.

It may be just a small act of defiance, like my mother refusing to stand for a racist governor when everyone else in the room was applauding. But those small acts MATTER, and you can do them. Take heart in God’s promise to Moses: “Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say” (Exodus 4:12).

Fill-in-the-Blank:

1) For the first time since Gallup started asking this question, American parents say that they no longer believe their children will inherit as much ____________ as they have enjoyed in our great nation.

2) Cultural indicators—like the decline of ____________, staggering number of ____________, rate of ____________ ____________ against women, and ever-increasing ____________ from ____________—suggest that our nation is in trouble.

3) We’ve got to ____________ ____________ on the ways that our liberal culture has failed women and our nation, and we need to offer a new ____________—one that starts with ____________, ____________, ____________ conservative women.

4) Beverly LaHaye laid out clearly in the vision of CWA, engagement starts with three things: ____________, ____________, and ____________.
Discussion Questions:

1) What does “I Am Woman” mean to you? What does it mean to be a woman who is strong, Christian, Conservative, and ready to impact the world for change? In what specific ways do you defy unfair Christian and Conservative stereotypes?

2) What have you learned during this study? Reflect upon the past sessions and share two takeaways in your own personal life.

3) Concerned Women for America is founded on both prayer and action. Take this last session to pray together over each of the issues we have discussed in this book.

1. Feminine Conservatives Face an Esther Moment
2. The Devaluation of Women
3. Sexual Assault and Politics
4. Marriage and True Tolerance
5. Abortion and the Sanctity of Life
6. The Real War Against Women
7. The Rise of Islamic Extremism and the Need to Fight Back
8. Beyond Our Borders: Why Israel Matters to Christians
10. A Vision for the Future
11. Each one of you! That God would prepare and call and anoint you for the Kingdom work He has planned for you to do.

Written By Penny Nance
Answer Key:

Chapter 1:
1. Hats
2. Taboo
3. FemCos
4. Esther
5. Scripturally, Data
6. Pews
7. Beverly LaHaye

Chapter 2:
1. Bondage, Domination, Sadism, Masochism
2. Abuse, Love
3. Thuggish, Vilest
4. Half
5. 1 out of 4
6. Filet Mignon, Pig Slop, Masterpiece, Years
7. 1 in 4

Chapter 3:
1. Wasting time
2. Affirmative, Miscommunication
3. Rape Denialism
4. Good Decisions
5. Deserves
6. Police, Campus Administration
7. 12%

Chapter 4:
1. 40%, Obsolete
2. 1 out of 4, 7.8
3. 40, 3
4. 82%
5. Essential, Exalted

Chapter 5:
1. DNA
2. 18, 20, 30, 42

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3. 20
4. 86, 29
5. Suction, Chemical, D&E (dilation and extraction), Instillation Techniques
6. 347
7. Morally, Politically

Chapter 6:

1. Immodest Gazes, Society, Burqa Apartheid
2. $70 Million
3. Religion, Culture, Tradition, Honor
4. Decrease Population, Suffering

Chapter 7:

1. Fivefold
2. 9
3. Identity, Community, Adventure
4. Legitimate Authority
5. Just Cause
6. Right Intention
7. Last Resort
8. Reasonable Hope of Justice

Chapter 8:

1. Me
2. Egypt, Jordan
3. Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions
4. 21%

Chapter 9:

1. Proportion
2. Better, 8, 72%
3. 84%
4. 29%, 6%

Chapter 10:

1. Opportunity
2. Marriage, Abortions, Sexual Violence, Threats, Abroad
4. Prayer, Education, Action