

Revive Our Hearts™



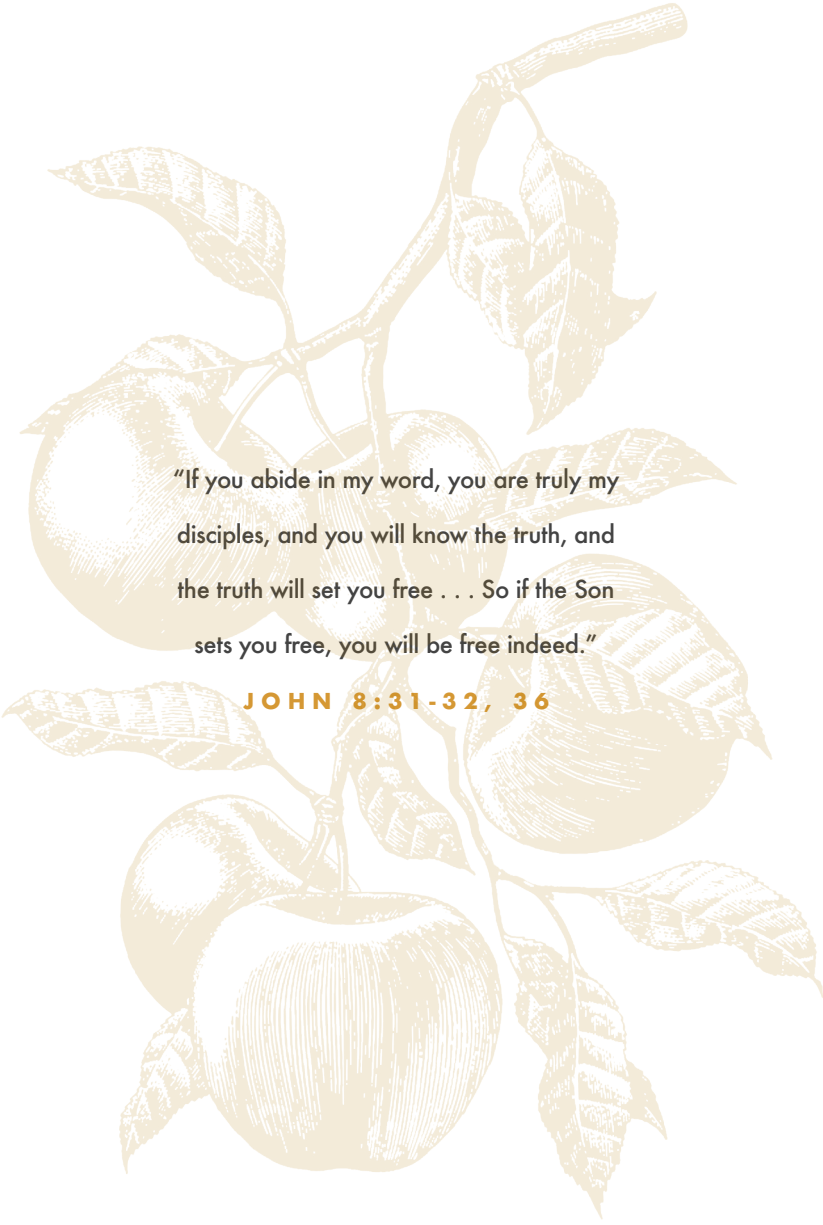
T O S E T
10

L E A D E R S
TRU

F R E E
THS



EDITED BY LESLIE BENNETT



"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free . . . So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

JOHN 8:31-32, 36

Contents

SECTION ONE: LIES LEADERS BELIEVE

- From the Editor Leslie Bennett
- LIE #1:** A leader must meet everyone's needs and expectations Melissa Kruger
- LIE #2:** I must be strong and always have it together Kristen Wetherell
- LIE #3:** If I work hard serving the Lord, ministry will go smoothly Susan Hunt
- LIE #4:** My leadership role makes me more valuable and important Shannon Popkin
- LIE #5:** My ministry is more important to God than my marriage and family Erin Davis
- LIE #6:** It won't matter if I skip my personal time with God Kelly Needham
- LIE #7:** I'm the only one who can do it. Ministry depends on me Leslie Bennett
- LIE #8:** I'm responsible for changing people's lives Linda Green
- LIE #9:** My ministry is insignificant compared to leaders with larger platforms Paula Marsteller
- LIE #10:** Ministry is so busy there's no time to rest Judy Dunagan

SECTION TWO: LEADING IN THE TRUTH

- Rejecting Lies and Embracing Truth Leslie Bennett
- Timeless Truths for Leaders Erin Davis

Introduction

Whenever I lace up my exercise shoes and grab the free weights, I can count on my virtual workout trainer to drill messages at me through the computer screen. In hypnotic cadence, she fires off, “You’re stronger than you think. You’re in control of your destiny. You’re getting the body you always wanted . . .”

The problem is she cannot see me sweating and struggling to keep up on the other side. My body—with its muffin top, cellulite, and varicose veins—has zero in common with hers. So while I appreciate the pep talk and positive attitude, I have to remember that there’s little truth behind the motivation.

We live in an age of relative truth and fake news. “Be true to yourself” is a holy mantra of the twenty-first century woman. You and I both recognize that the days when the Bible was widely upheld as absolute Truth are dwindling. Today, truth is accepted as whatever you want it to be (conveniently so, I might add!). Truth is believed to fluctuate. Nowadays, it’s *different* for *different* people based on your feelings on *different* days. Are you as baffled as I am? What a catastrophic mess we’ve made by blurring the lines between Truth and lies!

Which is why we must be vigilant to seek and find the Truth that is *real*—God’s Truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures. As leaders and influencers, it matters even more because we’re held to a higher standard ([James 3:1](#)). The stakes are sky-high. We hold in our hands a sword of Truth that can be rightly or wrongly wielded ([2 Tim. 2:15](#)). We either defend the Truth—or dilute and even distort it.

Our brother Paul was astonished at how quickly the Galatians were seduced by a different gospel than the one they first embraced ([Gal. 1:6–7](#)). They were so easily bewitched and bamboozled! Sisters, may we dare not become like the foolish Galatians who were bombarded by lies from the flesh, the world, and the devil—and who listened to them.

This ebook is a mini-Truth crusade to set you free from common lies that women in leadership tend to fall for (I couldn’t begin to tell you how many times my knees have been skinned!).

You might even notice common threads woven throughout the book that underscore we’re all susceptible to the bondage of deception and none of us is a perfect leader.

As we engage with thousands of women’s leaders through the *Revive Our Hearts Leader Connection blog* and the *Ministry Leader Facebook community*, we’ve heard you loud and clear. The lies we come up against are potent and deadly no matter what our leadership role is. We need to speak the Truth to one another.

So don't skip over a chapter. There are golden truths laid out in each one. You might even want to meet up with another leader to share how you plan to apply them to your life and ministry. Our hope is that you'll walk unwaveringly in God's Truth and share this ebook to multiply the power of Truth among women's leaders today. Together, let's speed ahead leaving the dust of lies in the rearview mirror.

So here's a message back to my personal trainer . . .

No, my body doesn't look young or super fit, but I am flexing my biceps for a greater purpose . . . to boldly carry the torch of Truth in my generation. *Who's ready to flex with me?*

The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever (Isa. 40:8).

Journeying together in Truth,

Leslie Bennett

Women's Ministry Initiatives



LESLIE BENNETT joined *Revive Our Hearts* with a dozen years under her belt of leading women's ministries in the local church. As a speaker, writer, and Bible study leader, her passion is to serve women through life-giving, truth-telling discipleship. Catch her blogs on the Leader Connection at ReviveOurHearts.com/leaders.



SECTION ONE:

*Lies Leaders
Believe*

FROM NANCY:

How can we know the Truth? We must remember that the truth is not merely an idea or philosophy. The Truth is a Person—the Lord Jesus Christ. He said of Himself, “*I am . . . the truth*” (John 14:6).

Satan has used deception to win our affections, influence our choices, and destroy our lives. In one way or another, every problem we have in this world is the fruit of deception—the result of believing something that simply isn’t true.

There are no harmless lies. We cannot expose ourselves to the world’s false, deceptive way of thinking and come out unscathed.

LIES WOMEN BELIEVE AND THE
TRUTH THAT SETS THEM FREE

Lie #1

A LEADER MUST MEET EVERYONE'S NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

By Melissa Kruger

North Carolina winters are often filled with the delightful hope of snow succumbing to the disappointing reality called freezing rain. It leaves the roads dangerously slick, and it coats every surface with a layer of ice, especially trees. As the sunlight shines through the ice-laden branches, the trees glisten with beauty.

However, the ice covering is actually dangerous for the trees. It causes the branches to bow down, struggling under the weight of the ice. One morning, we woke to find a tree in our front yard split in three directions by the weight of the ice it was bearing. What looked beautiful destroyed the tree.

As a woman in ministry, it's easy to feel weighed down by everyone's needs and expectations. For years I succumbed to the lie that as a woman on staff, it was my job to be there in every crisis, to arrive early and stay late at every social event, and to be on call whenever someone needed me. Even on vacation, I remember spending an hour on the phone with someone struggling through a problem, while my family was sunscreened and ready, waiting for me to finish.

It might look beautiful to attend to every need and attempt to please everyone, however it's just as dangerous as a tree laden with ice. The weight of attempting to meet everyone's expectations is not a burden we're created to bear. It's too much. Jesus—and Jesus only—is the Shepherd of His sheep. He is sufficient in all the ways we are insufficient. By reflecting on the truth of God's character we're freed from the lie that we must meet everyone's needs and expectations.

GOD IS ALL-KNOWING

One of the ways I unnecessarily burden myself in ministry is wrongly believing that I need to know what is happening with the women under my care (or at the very least know everyone's name!). However, it's simply an impossible task to know everyone and everything going on in their lives. The good news? God knows! Psalm 139:1–4 tells us:

O LORD, you have searched me and known me!
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

God knows exactly what is going on in the lives of the women in your church. He neither slumbers nor sleeps. He will help, support, and sustain both you and the women you care about. He knows each woman by name and is so intimately involved that He knows the number of hairs on her head. Free yourself from the expectation of knowing everything going on with each woman—trust that the Lord knows their story and rest in Him.

GOD IS EVERYWHERE

I believe in the ministry of presence. I know it matters to be with people in both joys and sorrows. But the reality for each of us is that we can only be in one place at a time. We're limited. To fully be present with one person means I must miss being present with others. However, God is not limited. He is everywhere. Psalm 139:7–10 reminds us:

Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.

Not only does God intimately know every woman in your church, He is with them at every moment. Your inability to be physically present may be the very thing that allows a woman to draw near to God in a way she's never done before. Rest in the reality that God is with His people. He is the one presence needed at every gathering—you are not!

GOD IS ALL- POWERFUL

One of the most difficult realities of ministry is our powerlessness. There are so many marriage

The more I reflect upon who God is, the
more I can let go of pleasing others.

difficulties, health issues, financial problems, and emotional struggles. I so desperately desire to rescue others from their trials. I want just the right words to say to make everything better. But I don't have them. Most days I feel powerless. However, God is all powerful. Psalm 68:35 rejoices:

Awesome is God from his sanctuary;
the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people.
Blessed be God!

God is the One who has the power to strengthen His people for whatever they face. God is the One who sustains, encourages, and provides. And He is the One who gets all the glory! While we are powerless to change most things, we are invited to pray to our God who is Lord over all things. He can work in ways we can't imagine. Our greatest resource is not our abilities, wisdom, or strength but our prayers that reach the very throne room of our all-powerful God. Rest in Him as you pour out your cares and concerns before God in prayer. He hears you, and He is able.

I still struggle at times with my failure to meet other people's needs and expectations. However, I've found the more I reflect upon who God is, the more I can let go of pleasing others. I have one Person I'm serving, one Master I'm responsible to: God. As Paul writes, "For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

As we seek to serve Christ, it may mean that we let others down or fail to meet everyone's needs. That's okay. Just like a tree can't bear the weight of too much ice, we aren't made to carry the weight of the church on our shoulders. Christ will tend and care for His Church in all the ways we cannot. He knows all things. He's everywhere. He's all powerful. Trust in Him as you spend your life loving others.



MELISSA KRUGER serves as an editor for The Gospel Coalition (TGC) and as Women's Ministry Coordinator at Uptown Church (PCA) in Charlotte, North Carolina. She's the author of three books including a new release *In All Things: A Nine-Week Devotional Bible Study on Unshakeable Joy*. Her husband, Mike, is the president of Reformed Theological Seminary, and they have three children.

Lie #2

I MUST BE STRONG AND ALWAYS HAVE IT TOGETHER

By Kristen Wetherell

God created us with weaknesses.

Yes, He made us in His image, but He didn't make us divine. He knit us together with limitations so we would always depend on Him. Long before sin, there was perfect communion between the transcendent, self-sufficient God of the universe and created, dependent humans.

But soon an alluring lie was whispered—"You can be like God"—and man's first suspicions arose.

- *Maybe dependence isn't such a good thing after all.*
- *Maybe God is holding out on us.*
- *Maybe we can be strong and powerful and limitless like Him.*

Then the forbidden fruit, taken and eaten. And so sin entered the picture, making us weak in more ways than one and causing us to perpetuate this original lie.

Even in the context of ministry.

SEARCHING FOR STRENGTH IN THE WRONG PLACE

As a leader, and as a woman who's suffered the damaging effects of Lyme disease, I'm all too familiar with the lie that I must be strong. It haunts me as I prepare to speak, causing me to fear the disorder in my jaw and the discomfort in my vocal chords. It accuses me as I write: *Didn't you just mess up in that area last night? Who are you to write about it today?* And it follows me as I enter our church on Sunday mornings, convincing me that being a pastor's wife means having it all together.

I'm fed up with being deceived by this lie. Believing it drains me. This is why the worldly message "you are strong" never actually helps us; instead, it perpetuates Satan's original lie and keeps us navel-gazing, looking for strength where we were never meant to find it—in and of ourselves.

The message of the cross, however, is our freedom. It's good news for weak, limited, insecure leaders like you and me.

But first, some heart-surgery.

FOUR REASONS WE BELIEVE THIS LIE

Friend, why do our hearts believe the lie that we must be strong and “have it all together”? Four reasons come to mind.

1. We struggle with the presence of sin.

In Jesus Christ, we’re no longer under sin’s power and dominion, enslaved to its passions and desires. But we’re not yet with Christ in glory, and the presence of sin lingers within and around us. In our leadership, we have a daily, moment-by-moment battle to fight against sin’s original lie that “we can be like God,” independent and self-sufficient apart from His Lordship. We think we must be strong because our sinful flesh desires power, independence, and the applause of man.

2. We are groomed to be embarrassed by weakness.

How many of us have bought into the values of our culture without even realizing it? The Western world abhors weakness and invents ways to ignore and avoid it. From self-help books to performance-enhancing drugs to doctor-assisted suicide, we’re constantly finding ways to cover up and deal with our obvious *lack*. We’re groomed to be embarrassed by weakness, and this seeps into our perception of what it means to be leaders in ministry.

3. We forget we’re all in the same boat.

We are weak, limited people leading weak, limited people. The ground is level at the cross. But when we forget this, we’ll believe the lie that we must have our act together in order to lead. Rather than approaching our women in humble service, we’ll view our leadership either through a prideful lens that thinks we’re better than them or through a self-deprecating lens that believes we’re unfit to serve.

4. We lose sight of the message we proclaim.

We often want to “be strong” so we can fulfill the work of ministry God has called us to, which isn’t a bad thing . . . I’ve prayed many times for Him to sustain me, body and soul, so I’m able to lead. But when our desire for strength is motivated by looking good before people—and in doing good before God—we’ve missed the whole point of the message we seek to proclaim.

And what exactly is that message?

FROM WEAKNESS TO POWER

For [Christ] was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God (2 Cor. 13:4).

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6).

We proclaim the crucified and risen Christ. We tell our women of the perfect God-man who condescended to earth in human weakness. We tell them how Jesus willingly perished on a cross, giving Himself into the hands of weak, sinful men, to bear our sin and shame. We proclaim the power of His resurrection from the dead, the same power that sets weak, sinful humans free from our bondage and raises us to new life in Christ. We tell of Jesus' continuing work in advocating for us before the Father when we sin and fail and feel our frailty; His perfect, limitless, bodily reign in heaven; and His promise to glorify and perfect those who are His.

We hold out the word of life, the invitation to come to Jesus in our weak, sinful state and to cling to Him all the days of our temporal lives until He brings us home.

Sister, you don't have to be strong, nor can you be—instead *you point your women to the God and Savior who is!*

You can also lead by example in clinging to the strong, sufficient Christ you proclaim. The women you lead are watching and will be blessed by how you humble yourself and depend on God and others.

Consider some areas of weakness in which you can point your women to Christ:

- Lay down your pride and ask for help.
- Let other women into your struggles and ask for prayer.
- Practice confession: first before God, then before others.
- Ask trusted women to hold you accountable in areas of sin and temptation.
- Delegate to your ministry team.
- Make a habit of saying, "I was wrong. I'm sorry."

The message we proclaim is that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior to weak, sinful people. And the power of the message we proclaim comes from Christ not from us. Only He can grip the hearts of your women by His Spirit—and He'll often use your weaknesses and limitations to display His perfect power and remind you of this important truth.



KRISTEN WETHERELL is a writer, Bible teacher, and the content manager at Unlocking the Bible. She is co-author of *Hope When It Hurts: Biblical Reflections to Help You Grasp God's Purpose in Your Suffering*. She and her husband are members of The Orchard in Arlington Heights, Illinois. They have one sweet daughter, Joanna.

Lie #3

IF I WORK HARD SERVING THE LORD, MINISTRY WILL GO SMOOTHLY

By Susan Hunt

The temptation to believe this lie lurks in our hearts. Our natural inclination is to think if we work hard we will succeed, but this reasoning is deadly if it informs how I think about my relationship with the Lord because it's all about *me*—I determine what happens. The burden of this responsibility is discouraging, defeating, and destructive.

The gospel is counter-cultural and counter-intuitive. It does not seem logical that God “chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4).

It defies reason that “while we were still sinners . . . while we were weak . . . while we were His enemies” Christ died for us (*Rom. 5:6–10*).

Our relationship with God is not *quid pro quo*. It is the unilateral action of our covenant-making, covenant-keeping God. He sovereignly initiates a grace-relationship with us and gives us a gift we do not deserve and cannot earn—life in Christ. He loves us with an eternal, perfect, unconditional, unchanging, covenant love that began before creation. It never was and never will depend on us.

GRACE TO SERVE

We were created and redeemed to put God's glory on display, but we cannot do this in our own strength so Jesus gives us another gift: “The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your *remembrance* all that I have said to you” (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit teaches and reminds us what Jesus says in His Word. He renews our minds and transforms our hearts so we become more like Christ (*Rom. 12:1–2; 2 Cor. 3:18*). To our Savior, our transformation into His likeness is much bigger and grander than the success of our projects. This transformation is not painless. It often involves what seems like failure. It means death to self.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (Gal. 2:20).

Grace upends our independence. God frees and empowers us by His Word and Spirit to become what He created and redeemed us to be and to do what He calls us to do. He slowly but surely loosens our grip on self-dependence and *self-confidence*. Ask Paul.

To keep me from being conceited . . . a thorn was given me in the flesh . . . Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Cor. 12:7–10).

This is the testimony of a *Christ-confident* leader.

THINK BIBLICALLY

We are products of our theology. What we believe about God shows up in all of life, but our default position is to begin with *self*. How often do we make our plans and then ask God to bless them rather than starting with prayer to know God’s will? Learning to think biblically is a spiritual discipline. What will it look like to *think biblically* about ministry?

Mandy is in charge of the women’s Christmas tea next week. The speaker just cancelled, and Mandy’s had three emails from women complaining because the tea will be in the afternoon rather than morning “like we’ve always done.” The downward spiral begins, and then Mandy *thinks biblically*. She remembers 2 Corinthians 1:8–9:

For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. . . . But that was to make us *rely not on ourselves* but on God who raises the dead.

She prays, “Father, give me grace to rely on You. You raised Jesus from the dead; I trust You to give life to our Christmas event so You receive all the glory.” But she’s still frustrated with the complainers when she *remembers Exodus 33–34*.

While Moses was on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments, the people made and worshipped a golden calf. God told Moses to take the Israelites to the Promised Land, but

“I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people” (Ex. 33:3).

Ministry does not always go smoothly because God uses ministry to smooth us

Moses did not ask God to

change the people or the circumstances. He prayed, “Please show me now your ways, that I may know

you. . . . Consider too that this nation is your people” (v. 13). Moses asked God to change him, and he prayed for God’s stiff-necked people. God answered, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest” (v. 14).

But Moses was still in the desert with stiff-necked people, so he made another request: “Please show me your glory” (v. 18). God hid Moses in a cleft in the rock and passed by saying:

“The LORD, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (34:6–7).

Moses saw the glory of God’s character. What happened next is what happens to us when we think, pray, and act biblically. Moses came down from the mountain and he “did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God” (v. 29). We see Jesus in His Word, and we reflect the glory of His goodness to those around us—even in the desert and even to stiff-necked people. Depending on self robs us, and others, of seeing glory.

As Mandy prays for Jesus to shine His glory through her, she has a sense of holy anticipation.

Ministry does not always go smoothly because God uses ministry to smooth us, to transform stiff-necked people into shining people who know Him better and reflect the glory of His goodness. Grace . . . amazing grace.



SUSAN HUNT is a mother and grandmother, a pastor’s wife, and the former Director of Women’s Ministries for the Presbyterian Church in America. She has written numerous books, including a release for middle school and teen girls, co-authored with Mary Kassian: *Becoming God’s True Woman . . . While I Still Have a Curfew*.

Lie #4

MY LEADERSHIP ROLE MAKES ME MORE VALUABLE AND IMPORTANT

By Shannon Popkin

When I was a young mom, I directed a ministry for one year. I was dedicated, passionate, and committed. The ministry flourished with new growth. But at the year's end, the previous director was ready to resume her role.

Outwardly, I graciously stepped aside, but inwardly, I was fuming. I had given so much! Things had gone so well! How could I be discarded so flippantly?

I felt devalued and hurt. It's because I was believing a lie.

The lie is that my leadership role makes me more valuable and that stripped of my leader badge, I am less important.

Believing this lie causes me to think more highly of myself when I'm in a leadership role. It causes me to stubbornly refuse to step down when it's time. And it causes me to feel lost or even ashamed when a leadership role is taken away.

The Truth is that all gifts and services are needed and valued in the Body of Christ. Leading might be a weightier role. It might require more of me than other roles. But leading doesn't cause my value to rise.

As leaders, we are simply women gifted to serve God in a particular way, often for a particular season. "Leader" is not who we are; it's *how* God designed us to serve.

GIFTED TO LEAD

Paul opens his teaching on spiritual gifts in [1 Corinthians 12](#) by contrasting idols that are mute with our God who speaks and makes Himself known—often by speaking through *us*. Paul then lists a variety of "speaking gifts" often given to leaders in the Church.

Paul's emphasis is not on singling leaders out or lifting them up but rather on the single source of power behind each leader: the Spirit of God, who is making Himself known.

Paul also gives special instructions regarding someone whose gift seems to deserve less honor. We must give her *extra* honor, Paul says, so that "there might be no division in the body" ([vv. 23–25](#)).

If you're convinced that your leadership gift makes you more important or if you believe someone else's gift makes her more valuable, you are not believing Truth. You've been deceived with a lie.

Satan uses these lies about our gifts to stir up powerful feelings of jealousy or pride, envy or self-exaltation, superiority or inferiority—all of which bring division and defeat, not fruitful unity.

TRUTH OR LIES

“Leader” is a role, not a value statement.

“Leadership” is a way to serve, not a way to be important.

“Leading” is something the Spirit empowers some to do, not a way to prove my greatness.

It's easy to affirm these truths. But it's easiest to see what I truly believe when my leadership assignment shifts, is split, or is taken away—like the time my role was given to the previous director.

Has this ever happened to you? Perhaps a new leader began doing what you do. Or the situation changed, and you were no longer needed. Or you were asked to step down—for good reason or not. Or circumstances prevented you from leading any more. How did you respond?

I love the way Moses, in Numbers 11, responds to the seventy new leaders God adds to his team. The new leaders gather in the tent, the Lord puts His Spirit on them, and they all start prophesying. But two of the newbies, for undisclosed reasons, stay back at the camp and begin prophesying there.

They create a stir, and when a messenger comes running to let Moses know, Joshua urges Moses put a stop to it. But Moses says, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” (Num. 11:29).

Moses didn't protect his leader turf. He wasn't jealous or threatened. He was delighted that the new leaders were experiencing the Spirit's empowerment and wished *everyone* could! (And ever since Pentecost, everyone *can*.)

“Leader” is a role, not a value statement. “Leadership” is a way to serve, not a way to be important.

Moses displayed a beautiful understanding of spiritual leadership. Unfortunately, his sister, Miriam, displayed just the opposite.

Just after the Spirit prompts those seventy new leaders to prophesy, we hear Miriam turning to clusters of people, asking, “Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through [me] also?” (Num. 12:2).

I'm guessing that Miriam had begun sketching the new organizational chart and was wondering if her prominence was going to be split seventy new ways. She was a prophetess! She—with Moses and Aaron—had led the people out of Egypt! Unlike Moses who said, "Are you jealous for my sake?"; Miriam is *inviting* people to be jealous for her sake.

God's response is drastic. He first reminds Miriam (just like Paul reminded us in 1 Corinthians 12) that the source of power behind every spiritual leader—including Moses—is the Spirit of God, making Himself known. God asks her, "Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Num. 12:8).

Ironically, when we believe the lie that leadership makes us more valuable and important, we tend to speak *against* other leaders and tear them down . . . and lift ourselves up—which is exactly what Miriam did.

God struck Miriam with leprosy. And though she was eventually healed, Miriam's story serves as a warning for us.

MOSES OR MIRIAM?

Are you like Moses—excited about new leaders God is raising up and humbly aware that your leadership results from God empowering and speaking through you? Or are you like Miriam—jealously tearing other leaders down and scrambling after the prominence leadership seemingly offers?

Remember the truth: Leadership is a role, not a value statement. It's a way for us to serve, not a way to gain importance.



SHANNON POPKIN is a speaker and writer from Grand Rapids, MI, who enjoys blending her love for humor and storytelling with her passion for God's Word. Shannon's first book, *Control Girl: Lessons on Surrendering Your Burden of Control From 7 Women of the Bible* released in January 2017. Shannon is happy to be sharing life with Ken, who makes her laugh every single day. Together, they live the fast-paced life of parenting three teens.

Lie #5

MY MINISTRY IS MORE IMPORTANT TO GOD THAN MY MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

By Erin Davis

We are gathered in a circle with our Bibles open. I'm in teacher mode, eager to see light bulbs flashing above the other learners' heads as they grasp deep, biblical Truth. Shepherding these people is one of my life's greatest honors.

This isn't a peek into a women's Bible study, though you'll often find me teaching God's Word to circles of women. It's not a snapshot of me leading a women's conference, though I do that sometimes, too.

This is a glimpse into my children's bedroom, where I frequently gather with my four boys to talk about Jesus and His Word.

In order of importance I am a follower of Christ, a wife and a momma, then a women's ministry leader. But lest I paint myself as the poster child for women who have mastered the work, home, and ministry balance or talk you into thinking I keep all of the plates spinning perfectly, allow me to get real for just a moment.

A BAD THEOLOGY OF FAMILY

My husband and I chose childlessness for nearly a decade because we didn't want our "ministry" to be hampered by children. Looking back, it's clear that we had a bad theology of family. The reasons for our wrong thinking were vast and varied. There's no single source to point the finger toward, but it's worth noting that it's possible to love the Lord, to love His Church, to surrender your life to ministry, and to misunderstand what that looks like practically.

There's not space here to recount the process God used to recalibrate our concept of ministry and family, but I'm so glad He did. Our sons Eli, Noble, Judah, and Ezra are the happy by-product of that epiphany. But just because I have children doesn't mean prioritizing them comes naturally to me. *It doesn't.*

My heart bends naturally toward the appeal of workaholic, achievement, and ticking tasks off my to-do list. Since the work of ministry is never done, there are endless opportunities to prioritize wrongly. The lie that my "ministry" is more important to God than my marriage and family may always have a gravitational pull on my heart, but as His Word reshapes me, I've learned some liberating truths.

THE CHURCH IS AN EXTENSION OF THE FAMILY, NOT A THREAT TO IT

Very soon after He sculpted Adam from dust, God declared that it was “not good” for man to be alone. One rib surgery later, and the first family was made (*Gen. 2*). As spouses and parents, Adam and Eve became the archetype for all of humanity to come.

Later, as the Church was formed, God could have described us as a corporation, a conglomerate, or a pack, but instead He reminds us through His Word that we are His adopted sons and daughters (*Eph. 1:5*), children of one Father (*1 John 3:1–2*), members of the same household (*Eph. 2:19–22*), with a shared inheritance waiting in the bank (*Rom. 8:17*).

This is family language, friends.

The Church doesn't trump the family. The Church is an extension of the family.

Said a different way, your family is not a threat to your ministry. Your family is your ministry. Every other sphere of influence is just icing on the cake.

DO WHAT ONLY YOU CAN DO

My husband is even keeled and steady, almost never knocked sideways by the demands of life. I, on the other hand, am a tornado in constant motion, ever questioning which way I should twirl. When I start to spin out, he frequently says, “Do what only you can do, Erin. Leave the rest to someone else.”

That looks a little different for each of us. For me, it means knowing that I am the only one living inside this body. No one else has the exact same needs regarding nutrition, rest, exercise, and time in the Word to function. It's my job to care for this temple the Lord has given me (*1 Cor. 6:19*), and I can't outsource it. I am also the only wife Jason has. I can't delegate loving and respecting him (*Eph. 5:22–24*). I am the only momma my children have. God has given their care to me and asked me to embrace that responsibility rather than try to offload it.

I think of this concept in the following metaphor: There are certain gardens God has given me to tend

The Church doesn't trump the family.
The Church is an extension of the family.

to. No one else will ever be held accountable for the fruitfulness of those plots. Just me. I've got no business spending my time looking over the fence at the gardens God has assigned to

others. While there are many shared plots that I cultivate with other believers, my family and my body

are mine alone to care for. When questions of priority pop up, I ask the Lord to help me value the gardens assigned to me.

EMBRACE RHYTHMS AND SEASONS

Gardening is also a picture of the fact that God has created a universe ruled by seasons. There are times when crops are abundant and times when fields need to lie fallow. So it is with family and ministry.

Sometimes ministry outside the home requires much of us. That's okay. God does ask us to sacrifice the comforts of home for His glory (*Luke 14:26*). Embrace the ebb and flow but beware of a trajectory that *always* asks your family to get the leftovers when it comes to your passion, your energy, your time, and your gifts.

IT'S ALL MINISTRY

I have this verse written on the bottom of all of my laundry baskets: "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much" (*Luke 16:10*).

It's a reminder that everything I do can be ministry. God is as interested and glorified in the work I do at home as He is in my efforts in bigger, more public platforms.

We are building a kingdom where the first are last (*Matt. 20:16*) and service trumps achievement (*Matt. 20:27–28*). Sure, God loves the Church and asks us to serve Her, but He also loves the family and asks us to be fruitful at home.

Don't sacrifice your family on the altar of "ministry." It isn't worth it. Whether you're washing dishes or sharing the gospel in the third world, trust the Lord to turn it all into loaves and fishes, multiplying your little offerings for great kingdom gains.



ERIN DAVIS is a popular author, blogger, and speaker who loves to see women of all ages run to the deep well of God's Word. She is the author of many books and Bible studies including *Connected*, *Beautiful Encounters*, and the *My Name Is Erin* series. When she's not writing, you can find Erin chasing chickens and children on her small farm in the Midwest.

Lie #6

IT WON'T MATTER IF I SKIP MY PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD

By Kelly Needham

I took my first job in full-time ministry during a very difficult season of life. A combination of painful losses, conflict, and stress had produced a weariness in my soul and regularly tempted me to doubt the goodness of God. *How could He love me when He afflicts me so?* I wondered. Yet amidst my own grieving and wrestling with God, I had Bible studies to prepare, discipleship trainings to lead, and women to counsel.

So I studied *Romans 6* as I prepared a series of talks about dying to self. I spent time in prayer for the young women I met with. These times of Bible study and prayer were easier to endure than my personal times with God. When I studied the Word and prayed for the benefit of others, I avoided the painful grief that lingered in my soul. Ministry, it seemed, could be a way to avoid the pain of wrestling through my grief and doubts. And with this realization a new temptation arose.

But the temptation to avoid personal time with God wasn't limited to hard times. In seasons of joyful and fruitful ministry, when my mind was overflowing with ideas and inspiration, I felt the pull to let all my Bible reading and praying be directed at ministry-related endeavors. The joy of seeing fruit produced through my life began to compete with the joy of simply knowing God.

In both the fruitful and the barren seasons, ministry can tempt us away from our first love. Whether we are avoiding pain or pursuing fruitfulness, allowing our hearts to be devoted to anything but Christ is a tragedy.

PURE AND SINCERE DEVOTION

This temptation is as old as time. Listen to how Paul describes Eve's sin in 2 Corinthians 11:3:

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Yes, even ministry can lead us away from a simple devotion to Jesus. But with ministry, we are often slower to recognize the drift because our activity is so full of spirituality. It's difficult to see the error when we are daily reading the Word and praying. But isn't this the same problem Martha faced? How

much nearer can Jesus be than present in her home? Yet she found herself distracted by her desire to serve. Distracted and pulled away from the enjoyment of Jesus by the desire to serve Jesus. Have you been there? I have.

Ministry can easily camouflage a lack of personal enjoyment of God. So how can we fight to keep first things first? How can we ensure a pure and sincere devotion to Jesus? We daily choose to sit with Him, not as a means to an end but as the end itself.

The temptation of ministry is to allow God to become a means to an end.

- We read our Bibles, not to enjoy God but to help feed others.
- We pray, not to enjoy God but to pray for ministry needs.
- We serve at church and talk about Jesus, not out of love for God but love for effectiveness.

The temptation of ministry is to go to Jesus to get what He offers rather than to get Him. We fight back against this temptation by daily spending personal time with God unrelated to our ministry demands.

KEEPING FIRST THINGS FIRST

Jesus said the greatest commandment is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:29–30). Before we ever consider how to love our neighbors and serve them in ministry, we have first been tasked to cultivate an all-encompassing love for God. This is the will of God for us all.

The temptation to skip my personal time with God because of other ministry demands is familiar to me. And sadly, it’s easy to justify because I know I’ll still be reading my Bible and I’ll still be praying. But ultimately the forfeiting of this time causes me to see God as a means to an end. And what use is a flourishing ministry if my heart is no longer devoted wholly to Christ?

There are two means of grace I daily employ to fight for devotion to Jesus: communal prayer and “for pleasure” Bible reading.

COMMUNAL PRAYER

When all of my prayer time is spent in intercession, I know something is wrong. If I hope to deepen my relationship with God, that involves more than sharing the needs of others. I need space in my prayer life to pour out my heart to Him, to listen to Him by meditating on the Truths from His Word. Rather than just rattling off prayer requests, I take time to worship and praise

What use is a flourishing ministry
if my heart is no longer devoted
wholly to Christ?

my heavenly Father (*Heb. 13:15*); I thank Him for all that He is and has done in my life (*1 Thess. 5:18*). I need space for prayerfulness that has nothing to do with ministry but is simply a time to be alone with God and share my heart with Him.

FOR PLEASURE BIBLE READING

Much of the ministry I do requires me to be studying the Word. What a joy! But if the *only* time I ever read my Bible is to produce content for ministry, I begin to view time with God as just part of my job. So it is imperative that I daily spend time in the Word that is for pleasure as I grow to know God more deeply. These times of Bible reading are not for anyone else but me. These times remind me that my first and greatest command isn't to teach the Word to others but to know the God of the Word and love Him with all that I am.

Our souls depend on the daily manna we gather sitting in His presence and drinking deeply of the fullness of joy He offers. Daughters of God, let us be thankful for the places of leadership He has entrusted for a season, but let it never be said of us that we were led astray from a pure and sincere devotion to Jesus. May we fight daily to pursue our primary and eternal calling: to love God with all that we are and abide in His love for us.



KELLY NEEDHAM is married to popular Christian singer and songwriter Jimmy Needham. She first began writing and speaking to his fan base in 2008 as they traveled together and has since garnered a much wider platform. She has been on staff at two different churches, serving in youth, college, and women's ministry. Kelly and Jimmy live in the Dallas area with their three children, Lively, Sophia, and Benjamin.

Lie #7

I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DO IT. MINISTRY DEPENDS ON ME

By Leslie Bennett

A colleague from a church where I once served likes to rib me with a story of how quickly I was forgotten. Several years after I stepped down from leading Women's Ministry, he un-politely put a young, new staffer on the spot by asking her if she knew Leslie Bennett. The poor woman's face turned scarlet with the admission she'd never heard the name before. *Bingo!* That's precisely the answer he was hoping for. The point he wanted to make is that leaders come and go but God's ministry always endures.

There's a lie floating around that we don't talk about. Conscious of it or not, we often believe the lie that the ministry entrusted to us rises and falls on our shoulders alone. Leaders fail to see this lie for what it truly is for good reason . . . we are faithful, hardworking servants (*1 Cor. 15:10*). We want to show God He can depend on us—as if He needs us to aid His sovereign work (*Ps. 50:10–12; Rom. 11:33–36*).

SOLO MINISTRY SUPERWOMEN

Going solo as ministry leaders may be excused an inexperience, but there could be something darker lurking beneath the surface: the sinful desire to be great in the eyes of people and to avoid sharing credit with anyone else. Our flesh battles to be independent rather than admit we're not the comic book superwomen we pretend to be.

I've been on both sides of the playing field. I've been the leader who burned out from pushing herself to the brink, and I've watched another leader nearly self destruct because she refused help from anyone. I don't know about you, but I don't like playing by these rules anymore. Neither does God want me to. He designed the Church to function optimally as one united body working together for the common good (*1 Cor. 12*). It's the pattern given by Him for ministries to flourish.

My selfish “yes” to own it all also means there's someone else on the other end who is denied the opportunity to serve. It's like slamming a door in the face . . . *So long, you're not needed. I'm the one in charge, and I've got this* (*1 Cor. 12:21*). Let's not miss the kingdom principle here: God's work isn't meant to be carried by a few MVP stars while everyone else watches from the sidelines.

John Calvin gives this helpful analogy: “The world is not lighted by a single ray of the sun; light is produced by all its rays together, as each makes its own contribution at the same time.”¹

LEARNING A NEW WAY

I won't pretend that this is a quick and easy lesson to learn. Leaders need discernment to know which tasks can be delegated and which responsibilities should remain in the center of their plate. Moses, the servant of God who knew Him face-to-face, had to learn this lesson, too.

As a devoted leader, Moses tried to handle the Israelites' growing needs on his own. But responsibility can serve as a fault when taken to an extreme. As you might expect, frustration and exhaustion came knocking at his door. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, observed him serving the people from sunup to sundown. What became obvious to Jethro was oblivious to Moses. He needed help. The conversation went like this:

"What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone" (Ex. 18:17–18).

Was it that Moses was an inferior leader who wasn't cutting it? Of course not. Could a more gifted leader handle the weight easily? No way. Ministry is never intended to be a solo venture.

No matter how gifted or strong we are, we aren't engineered to carry a 500-pound load by ourselves. Moses' dedication may have been the driving force of his leadership style, but it wasn't the wisest way.

Doing ministry alone is always the easier route, isn't it? We can trust our standards and abilities. We can rely on self to get the job done and to get it done right. But God asks us to trust Him enough to allow someone else to help carry the load—and accept that they may do it in a different way.

Like the great prophet and lawgiver, we too are finite human beings who need to understand our limits. This requires *one-woman-ministry-machines* (I've been called this before!) to downshift by recruiting, developing, and coaching a team to share the load. Jethro advised Moses to appoint able leaders to handle the smaller responsibilities while he continued to focus on the critical tasks (Ex. 18:19–23). Practically speaking, that means delegating the roles that can be delegated.

TRANSFORMATION STARTS WITH PRAYER

Shifting to a new style of leadership begins by praying that God will raise up ministry leaders who share the same vision. Seek out a mentor who's willing to advise you. Meet with women to dialogue and help them discover their gifts and passions. This process takes time, but don't allow it to discourage you. Who knows how many years Moses was able to dodge burnout by learning this principle? Just as Jethro assured Moses that God would be with him (v. 19, 23), God will surely direct us.

A LESSON FROM MOSES

Verse 24 stands out: “So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.”

Here’s the mark of an exceptional leader: One who listens to Truth and receives godly counsel.

During Moses’ lifetime, God said there was no other man more meek than him (*Num. 12:3*). It takes humility to become a good listener. Moses’ strength was his teachable heart. Invite wise people to speak into your life. No matter how long we’ve been leading, let’s never assume we know it all.

WHAT IS THE RESULT OF THIS NEW PATTERN OF MINISTRY?

“So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace” (*Ex. 18:22–23*).

Frustration and exhaustion will be replaced with peace and endurance for the long haul. It’s God’s way to thrive in ministry.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

The name and reputation of Moses has been revered for centuries. Most of our names won’t be remembered after we’re gone. People won’t necessarily hear about our hard labor—day after day after day. We will be forgotten, but our ministries are leaving a legacy of faith. Someone else will pick up our mantle and faithfully serve during her lifetime.

It’s not about us and our name. It’s about another Name that’s in a class of its own.

The day will come when at the “name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (*Phil. 2:10–11*).

The ministry never belonged to us in the first place. The truth is it belongs to the Lord.



LESLIE BENNETT joined *Revive Our Hearts* with a with a dozen years under her belt of leading women’s ministries in the local church. As a speaker, writer, and Bible study leader, her passion is to serve women through life-giving, truth-telling discipleship. Catch her blogs on the Leader Connection at ReviveOurHearts.com/leaders.

¹ J. Haroutunian & L.P. Smith, Calvin: Commentaries (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958). 390–391.

Lie #8

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR CHANGING PEOPLE'S LIVES

By Linda Green

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth (1 Cor. 3:7).

I was still adjusting to my new role as Director of Women's Ministry when women began seeking me out for counsel. The situations varied, but each one came to receive help, wisdom, and encouragement in difficult circumstances: loss and brokenness as a result of prodigal children, the empty nest, relational conflict, chronic pain, unloving husbands, and more complicated situations, such as domestic abuse. Yet what I remember most from those early days were my own cries for help to the Lord as the weight of women's pain (and my inadequacy to relieve it) was taking its toll on me both physically and emotionally.

GOING BEYOND OUR CALLING

By God's grace, He heard my prayers and began to expose the subtle lie that was at work in my heart—that *I was responsible for changing these women's lives*. While God does call us to bear one another's burdens (*Gal. 6:2*), there are things that are simply beyond our ability and thus not our responsibility. The weight of responsibility that felt crushing at times revealed that I had been operating as though it was up to me to rescue and save the women who came to me, clearly something only our all-powerful, redeeming God can do.

Thankfully, as I continued to cry out to God, He graciously showed where I was going beyond the work that He had called me to do. Gradually God began to free me from the burden I had been feeling over things I could not change. At the same time, I received clarity in regard to what I had been called to as a women's ministry leader. Here are four ways I have learned to serve other women with freedom, joy, and fruitfulness.

SERVING IN FREEDOM, JOY, AND FRUITFULNESS

1. We serve women by listening to their story with loving compassion.

Women come to us as fellow *sufferers* in a fallen world. Often we may be the first person she has shared her story with. Our first responsibility, then, is to listen carefully, allowing her time to articulate the

source of her burden. As we rely on the Holy Spirit's help, we can discern where our sister needs hope and encouragement.

As I listen, I also try to make note of where I see God's grace at work in this woman's life. In the light of her difficulties, how has she glorified God by living as a redeemed daughter of Christ, as one who has been delivered from bondage to sin? Where is she demonstrating reliance on Christ?

Sharing these observations will serve to encourage a discouraged woman's heart.

Of course as this sister's story unfolds, you will also begin to identify areas where sin is at work in her heart. Having already shown a spirit of love and compassion, we can now gently help a woman to see sin that she may have been blind to, leading her to confess, repent, and determine next steps.

2. We serve women by opening God's Word.

Difficult circumstances often distort our perspective and cause us to forget life-giving truth. Caught up in disappointment and hopelessness, women typically need help with seeing how their lives and circumstances connect to God's big story of redemption and the opportunity they have to glorify Him. It is God's Word (not our own), which has the power to convict, correct, encourage and, ultimately, transform hearts. We must open the Word so they can see what lies they have believed, as well as Truth they need to remember and live by.

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me (Col.1:28–29).

3. We serve women by praying for them.

One of the great privileges of ministry is lifting the needs of hurting or perplexed women to our sovereign, loving, and faithful God. As we claim the promises God has made in His Word and ask for His help, we encourage women to persevere, reminding them that their true hope is in the Lord, who gave His life for them and will never leave or forsake them.

4. We serve women by offering trusted resources.

One of the other ways we can serve women is by pointing them to other resources that are available and trustworthy. Sadly, today many women turn to counselors they have found on the Internet and

It is God's Word (not our own),
which has the power to convict,
correct, encourage and, ultimately,
transform hearts.

books or resources that offer worldly rather than gospel-centered wisdom. Rather than being set free by Truth, they remain in bondage to sins such as unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, or living with a victim mentality.

We can serve women who may not have biblical discernment by pointing them to well-vetted biblical counselors, ministries designed to help people through difficult seasons of life, mature godly women to walk with, and gospel-centered books and resources. (*Revive Our Hearts*, CCEF, and Harvest USA are some of the resources I recommend.)

The truth is that the ministry God calls us to is, in fact, a holy calling, but our joy and fruitfulness will be far greater when we recognize where our responsibility begins and where it ends. What we offer to women by listening, leading them to the Word and prayer, and offering trustworthy resources is a great gift to them. And by acknowledging that we have no power to change them or those who grieve them, we point them to the One who can. And in that we have served them well.

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it (1 Thess. 5:23–24).



LINDA GREEN is the Director of Women's Ministries at The Orchard Evangelical Free Church. She has been married to her husband, Ray, for over three decades, and has three adult children and several grandchildren. She enjoys writing articles that help women live out the gospel according to their God-given design and purpose.

Lie #9

MY MINISTRY IS INSIGNIFICANT COMPARED TO LEADERS WITH LARGER PLATFORMS

By Paula Marsteller

Have you ever thought, *My ministry is insignificant compared to hers?* I sure have.

As an audacious college student, I dreamed of becoming the next, world-class Christian women's speaker. (I even stood in line for over an hour after a conference to boldly ask Joni Eareckson Tada if I could serve as her personal assistant.)

When I ended up landing a job at Revive Our Hearts a few months later as Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth's personal assistant, I was on top of the world. I figured she'd tuck me in her back pocket, take me all over the country with her, and show me the speaking ropes. Soon it would be my turn to hire a personal assistant!

Ha. The following twelve years have been one giant lesson in humility. God has used this time to teach me to serve rather than shine.

DOES YOUR MINISTRY MATTER?

You may not have desired the spotlight like I did; your motivations might be much more holy than mine ever were. Which makes it all the more difficult . . . You love God, you love His people, and yet you feel you're hardly making a dent in advancing God's kingdom in this world.

Others, though, who aren't nearly as grounded as you, seem to attract hordes of women to their events. Or maybe it's a woman who seems to lack spiritual depth but wins constant praise from others with her charisma. Why even bother to continue in ministry when what you do seems so piddly and insignificant compared with the number of people she reaches?

Second Corinthians 10 speaks some much-needed truth into our frustrated hearts. You know, the chapter that speaks about those who compare themselves with others not having understanding (v. 12)? Yeah, that one. Let's drop in at the next verse. The apostle Paul is saying:

But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us.

What a needed reminder for us when we are feeling overlooked, even . . . invisible. Ultimately, God decrees all—including our ministry reach. Just as God puts limits on the ocean waves and says, “Thus

far shall you come, and no farther” (Job 38:11), He does the same for you and me.

ASSIGNED BY GOD

Our assignments came directly from Him. Our area of influence—whether we deem it small, medium, or large—has been assigned by *God*.

What if you and I really believed that?

I mean, think about it. What if the CEO of a major corporation asked you to bring her a glass of water. Would it not feel significant to you because of who had assigned this task to you? Therefore, how can your role be insignificant if God assigned it?

Almost as equally profound as *who* gives us our assignments is *what* assignment God entrusts us with. So much more than asking for a glass of water, God asks us to reach the globe with the gospel of Jesus

Christ (2 Cor. 10:14). This is how God advances His kingdom: through His people faithfully sharing the good news with the man, woman, or child right in front of them.

Following Christ has never been about stardom.

So the next time you're tempted to think, *My ministry is insignificant compared to others with larger platforms*, think again. There is nothing insignificant about sharing the gospel in the area of influence God has assigned to you.

Besides, since when do numbers document eternal fruit? Verse 18 reminds us that only God—not attendance sheets—can define true success:

For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

EMBRACING THE OPPORTUNITIES HE BRINGS

Following Christ has never been about stardom. May you and I faithfully serve those the King brings across our path rather than despising and missing the “little” opportunities 'cause we're so busy daydreaming of a bigger platform.

I would even go so far as to say that the fact that we don't have a larger platform is a gracious gift. What if Christian stardom would cause us to deceive ourselves? To grow lax in ruthlessly killing the vestiges of sin in our dark hearts?

I appreciate author Andy Crouch's transparency here:

If you knew the full condition of my heart, my fantasies and grievances, my anxieties and my darkest solitary thoughts, you would declare me a danger to myself and others.

solitary thoughts, you would declare me a danger to myself and others. *I cannot be entrusted with power by myself, certainly not with celebrity, and neither can you.* . . . Those of us who find ourselves with a measure of public fame must make radical commitments to limit our power.

So thank God for not giving you a larger platform. And get to work cooperating with the Spirit in being conformed more and more to the image of the beautiful Christ. I find Joni Eareckson Tada's testimony so powerful. When asked what she would say to her thirty-year-old self, she responded:

Looking back, I was far too actively engaged in the ministry God had called me to, and nowhere near as engaged in who God called me to be. So, I would say to 30-year-old Joni, "God is far more interested in reaching people with disabilities than you'll ever be, and he can manage quite well with or without Joni and Friends. So slow down and love Jesus more. And prove that love by pursuing holiness." . . . Natural leaders tend to lean naturally on their giftedness, and so they fail to see the deceitfulness of sin.

When you and I envy other women's gifts and opportunities for the kingdom, we are thinking far too narrowly and selfishly. During these sinful moments, it's crucial to recall and thank God that another woman's "success" in ministry is *good* for us, because it brings health to the one Body we all share ([1 Cor. 12:25–26](#)).

So let's get to work, sister. Small as we might deem our personal influence, there is nothing tiny or insignificant about the supernatural work our God has called us to. May *He* be known, treasured, and celebrated through our little lives!



PAULA MARSTELLER has served with *Revive Our Hearts* for twelve years. She is the author of *Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Girl: On Her Journey from Neediness to Freedom*. There's nothing she loves to share more than the gospel-centered truths that have so transformed her own life: what it means on a daily basis to be "dead to sin, alive to God, and in Christ Jesus." Paula, Trevor, and their son, Iren, make their home in New York.

Lie #10

MINISTRY IS SO BUSY THERE'S NO TIME TO REST

By Judy Dunagan

In the gospel of Mark we see a beautiful scene where Jesus wants to protect His disciples from the pressing crowds and the tyranny of the urgent in serving others:

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” (Mark 6:31 NIV).

What an invitation!

“Come with me by yourself . . .
To a quiet place . . .
And get some rest!”

Don't you wonder what the disciples were thinking when Jesus spoke those words over them? Was there a collective sigh of relief and a glimmer of hope in their weary eyes? Or did they look at each other shocked that their Messiah cared about them getting rest while He was busy saving the world?

THAT ELUSIVE REST

I love our Savior's heart for His disciples in the midst of the desperate crowds clamoring for His attention. We're told in verse 32 that they actually got into a boat to get to that quiet place of rest. But . . . the irony of this scene is that as they tried to get away, they were again met by a crowd on the shore:

And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things (Mark 6:32–34 ESV).

I wish I could share that they finally got to a quiet place of rest that day, but Scripture doesn't tell us. Instead we're told that Jesus first fed a crowd of over 5,000 with a boy's lunch (vv. 35–44), then He walked on water later that night in a storm to get to His disciples (vv. 45–52), and then we're told when they finally reached shore and “got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was” (vv. 54–55).

Not much resting time in there for Jesus and His “ministry team” that day. However, we can see that the true desire of His heart in this passage was that the disciples could “come away . . . and rest a while” with Him even though rest was so elusive.

Thankfully, we do see in other parts of the Gospels that Jesus often found time alone with His disciples and friends to rest, pray, eat and pour into those so dear to His heart. And we know getting to those “quiet places” alone was a priority that Jesus often sought out in the midst of His earthly ministry.

THE TRAP OF BUSYNESS

What about you? As a women's ministry leader, have you agreed with the lie that “ministry is so busy there's never time to rest” to the point of exhaustion and burnout? Perhaps you've even used passages like we've looked at in Mark 6 to believe the lie that “I need to stay busy serving Him because rest equals weakness or it means I'm not serving Him faithfully.”

I fell into that trap during an especially busy season for the ministry I led at a large church. Our women's ministry was growing in the areas of discipleship, prayer, and evangelism, which was exciting but also exhausting. And it didn't take too long for my overloaded schedule to impact my joy and strength to serve and also my time alone with God.

Getting to those “quiet places” alone was a priority that Jesus often sought out in the midst of His earthly ministry.

Thankfully, our Lord Jesus can relate to ministry and the needs of others pulling us away. Mark 1:35 tells us, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, [Jesus] departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.” Then in the next two verses we see that “Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, ‘Everyone is looking for you’” (vv. 36–37).

- Can you relate to that pull as a busy ministry leader?
- Do you often feel like “everyone is looking for you” and it's not even practical, let alone possible, to get some rest or just to spend time alone with Him?
- Aren't you grateful that your Savior understands that pull?

SCHEDULING SOME CARA TIME

During that burnout season, I sought out my mentor and prayer partner for ideas of how to find margin and also reawaken my love for His Word and guard my time alone with Him. In her typically practical and blunt way, she said, “Judy, you need to put CARA time on your calendar! That non-negotiable, **Come Away** and **Rest Awhile** time with Him needs to be at the top of your to-do list.” She was the one to first point me to Mark 6:31 that we’ve already looked at where He invites His disciples to get away with Him and rest. That invitation can be for us, too!

My mentor encouraged me to find a day on my calendar and write CARA on that day. She wanted to know the date so she could be praying for my getaway day with God, and she wanted me to be accountable to her that I actually got away.

And so, I did. And my heart for Him and my ministry calling has never been the same. God used that first CARA day to gently woo me closer to Him and ignite a fresh love for Him and His Word. I also encouraged my leadership to do the same thing, marking their calendars with CARA days and letting me know what days they were going so I could cover them in prayer.

MAKE IT A DATE

What about you? Are you finding that your crowded calendar is taking over, leaving very little room for rest or to just be with Him or others you love? I believe that busyness is one of the enemy’s most common tactics to drive us to burnout, even resentment, as we try to serve Him faithfully in our callings. But let’s not let him do that.

I encourage you to find a day at least once a quarter and write CARA over it. Make it a date that is non-negotiable for other distractions to pull you away. Ask Him to meet the longing of your heart for resting in and with Him that day. Be accountable to a mentor or ministry partner, knowing they will be praying for you on that day.

I promise you that our faithful and very patient God will be right there waiting for you.



JUDY DUNAGAN served as a women’s ministry leader for over twenty years before joining Moody Publishers as an acquisitions editor for the women’s line of books and discipleship resources. A wonder seeker who chases knowledge of God and His Word, Judy is passionate about discipling women and seeing God’s Word come alive in everyday life. Visit her blog at judydunagan.com



SECTION TWO:

*Leading in
the Truth*

FROM NANCY:

Satan knows that if we buy into his deception, we will influence others around us to sin, and our sinful choices will set a pattern for subsequent generations to follow.

Believing and acting on the Truth is our means to freedom—not just survival or escape—but true, glorious freedom in the midst of this fallen, broken, hurting world.

Living according to Truth requires a conscious choice to reject deception and embrace the Truth. That's why the psalmist prayed, "Remove me from the way of lying . . . I have chosen the way of truth" (Ps. 119:29-30, NKJV).

LIES WOMEN BELIEVE AND THE
TRUTH THAT SETS THEM FREE

REJECTING LIES AND EMBRACING TRUTH

By Leslie Bennett

A small group leader accepts her explosive and uncontrollable anger as a generational sin that she's saddled with for life.

A Women's Ministry Director is perpetually overwhelmed because she agrees to personally mentor every person who asks.

A church staffer who battles same-sex attraction resigns to join another church community that teaches it's perfectly normal for Christian women to be involved in a homosexual relationship.

A pastor's wife battles shame over her dependence on food to relieve the stress of ministry life.

A popular author and Bible teacher who influences thousands of followers suddenly reverses her viewpoint on a major doctrinal issue.

These are not hypothetical situations. (Although I wish they were.) They describe real women whose lives and ministries have been jeopardized as a result of believing lies. It's possible you and I are in our own personal battle right now. We wonder, *How does it happen to us who are appointed as torch bearers of God's Truth?*

SEDUCED BY THE FATHER OF LIES

Disaster happens when we're seduced by the father of lies (*John 8:44*), who is a master contortionist of Truth. The enemy launches a stealth attack on our weaknesses, doubts, insecurities, hurts, and sin struggles. He will tempt us to believe anything *but* God's Truth. When leaders fall for lies, Satan wins double victory by wreaking havoc in our lives and the lives of women we lead. Oh yes, Satan's darts can be destructive but leaders must never forget: Truth is more powerful than the arsenal of the evil one. God's Truth crushes Satan's kingdom of lies.

Friend, you and I must constantly be on guard because Satan's slick counter-truths look and sound like the newest, grandest thing. Don't be fooled; they are as old as the dirt in the Garden of Eden. They've just been dusted off and dressed up to sound attractive to today's generation. The wisest of all men said, "There is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, 'See, this is new'? It has been already in the ages before us" (Eccl. 1:9–10).

FALLING INTO SPIRITUAL BONDAGE

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth explains the process of spiritual deception and bondage in her 2018

updated and expanded book, *Lies Women Believe and the Truth That Sets Them Free*.

Once we permit Satan's lies to gain an entrance into our minds, the progression continues as we dwell on those lies. If we don't immediately reject deceptive ways of thinking, but allow ourselves to entertain them in our minds, sooner or later we'll begin to believe them. And what we believe inevitably is what we will act on. When we act on the lies believed, we begin to establish patterns in our lives that ultimately enslave us. . . . Every area of bondage in our lives can be traced back to a lie.

It's quite possible while reading this book you identified a lie that is crippling your spiritual freedom and fruitfulness—and to think, we barely scratched the surface of lies we confront day in and day out. Lies are paraded all around us in media, books, magazines, blogs, and movies that are ripe for picking. While we can't escape from hearing or seeing lies, thankfully, we can choose Truth and therefore escape from their destructive deceit.

LIVING FREE FROM LIES

Fellow leader, do you long to be free from lies as I do? If you're in bondage to the past, gripped by shame, guilt, or fear, or enslaved to approval or performance (just to name a few tricky snares), liberation begins by earnestly seeking God's Truth and surrendering ourselves to its beauty and power.

It's when we're living under the authority and protection of Truth that we can experience the abundant life—free from shackles. Let's not settle for less than all Jesus came to give (*John 10:10*). Certainly, there will be times when we fight back in defiance to have our way or we cave in to the fear and doubt of our flesh. Yet hear this: Christ set us free to stay *free*—not to be slaves to deception (*Gal. 5:1*).

Living free from lies means consistently walking in Truth. Here's how to take the first steps:

- Ask God to search your heart and expose lies you're believing (you may be surprised as I have!).
- With the Spirit's help, dissect each deeply buried falsehood to get to the root of the unbelief.
- Next, repent from rejecting God's true Word and accepting a lie.
- Then decimate the lie with the Truth. Find specific Scripture verses that knock the wind out of false beliefs.
- Walk in Truth by meditating, memorizing, and renewing your mind daily in God's Word (*Rom. 12:2*).

WOMEN OF THE WORD

To boil it down, leaders must be women of the Word. Rather than accept whatever we hear, women of the Word call a timeout to discern truth from lies. Any idea presented as truth isn't truth unless it's validated in God's Word. Women of the Word are like the Bereans of Acts 17 who "received the word

with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Women of the Word also know the value of having mentors and peers who will speak the Truth to them. We need help identifying the lies in our lives as we’re often blinded to them. We need to sit under pastors and teachers who teach sound doctrine. Leaders cannot afford to overlook the powerful role others play in helping them anchor their lives and ministries to God’s Truth.

GOD PROVIDES WHAT IS NEEDED

Our God, who is the source of Truth (*Isa. 65:16*), has graciously provided all we need to walk in His Truth. Slowly consider this glimpse of His promises.

- The Lord is near to all who call on Him in truth (*Ps. 145:18*).
- We have the Holy Scriptures to sanctify, purify, and renew our minds (*John 17:17; Heb. 4:12*).
- We worship a Savior who embodies truth and grace (*John 1:14,17*).
- We’re filled with the Spirit of Truth who guides into truth (*John 15:26, 16:13*).
- We belong to the Church, a pillar and buttress of truth (*1 Tim. 3:15*), whose gospel proclamation purges our souls of the world’s lies.

While others (maybe even some of our Christian friends) base their beliefs on relative truth and feelings, God’s Truth is the only real Truth. The Truth of the Bible never changes because God never changes (*Heb. 13:8; Mal. 3:6; Num. 23:19*).

Truth is seldom popular, but beloved leaders, we cannot afford to shrink back with locked lips. As we walk together in Truth, my heart cry for us echoes the prayer of Paul, “that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak” (Eph. 6:19–20).

May the Psalmist’s words be true of us as torch bearers of Truth:

I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
I set your rules before me.
I cling to your testimonies, O LORD;
let me not be put to shame!
I will run in the way of your commandments
when you enlarge my heart! (Ps. 119:30–32).

TIMELESS TRUTH FOR LEADERS

By Erin Davis

As women's ministry leaders we spend our days helping women identify lies and replace them with God's Truth, so we know that Truth matters. But as sinners in a broken world, we remain vulnerable to the disastrous impact of lies in our own lives.

- Being on staff at a church doesn't protect us from lies.
- Neither does regularly teaching Bible study or Sunday school.
- Partnering with a parachurch ministry doesn't give us a pass on potential deception.
- Planning women's events doesn't vaccinate us from the poison of the enemy.
- And that well-stocked shelf of books on theology and ministry can't fully protect us either.

There is one source of Truth—the Word of God. No matter where or how long we serve, we must run to God's Word daily in order to effectively wield this “sword of Truth” against the enemy's lies.

In this final chapter, we want to highlight a more comprehensive list of thirty truths that you can cling to as you minister. Consider this your easy-access guide to the Truth you need as you serve.

These are Truths that have deeply impacted our own lives and ministries. Rather than skimming through them, we want to encourage you to read these pages slowly, intentionally, asking the Lord to use them to equip you for the ministry challenges you face right now.

Park here awhile. Say these Truths aloud, asking the Lord to firmly plant you in the Truth of His Word. Consider memorizing any specific passages the Lord uses to reorient your thinking.

Come back to these pages anytime you need a dose of Truth to counteract the enemy's lies, or download and print the PDF of these Truths available on the *Revive Our Hearts* Leader page. God's Word does not change, and these Truths are timeless guides, ready to equip and encourage you as you lead, serve, and grow.

1. God knows exactly what is going on in the lives of the women in my care.

O LORD, you have searched me and known me!

You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue,

behold, O LORD, you know it altogether (Ps. 139:1–4).

“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:6–7).

2. God will help, support, and sustain both you and the women you care about.

The LORD helps them and delivers them;
he delivers them from the wicked and saves them,
because they take refuge in him (Ps. 37:40).

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble (Ps. 46:1).

3. God is not limited. He is everywhere.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9).

“Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD” (Jer. 23:23–24).

4. God is the One who has the power to strengthen His people for whatever they face.

The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (Ps. 18:2).

Awesome is God from his sanctuary;
the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his
people.

Blessed be God! (Ps. 68:35).

5. Christ will tend to and care for His Church in all the ways we cannot.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:11–13).

“Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;
it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure”—
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God” (Rev. 19:7–9).

6. In Jesus Christ, we are no longer under sin’s power and dominion, enslaved to its passions and desires.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17).

Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses (Acts 13:38–39).

7. We are weak, limited people leading weak, limited people.

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some (1 Cor. 9:22).

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

8. You don’t have to be strong, nor can you be—instead you point women to the God and Savior who is.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words (Rom. 8:26).

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Cor. 12:10).

9. God uses your weaknesses and limitations to display His perfect power.

“This God is my strong refuge
and has made my way blameless” (2 Sam. 22:33).

“Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways,
and how small a whisper do we hear of him!

But the thunder of his power who can understand?” (Job 26:14).

10. God’s love does not depend on us.

“The Lord appeared to him from far away.

I have loved you with an everlasting love;

therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you” (Jer. 31:3).

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:6–8).

11. God frees and empowers us by His Word and Spirit to become what He created and redeemed and to do what He calls us to do.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:26).

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work (2 Cor. 9:8).

12. Ministry does not always go smoothly because God uses ministry to smooth us.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers (Rom. 8:28–29).

For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (James 1:3–4).

13. All gifts and services are needed and valued in the Body of Christ.

“So the last will be first, and the first last” (Matt. 20:16).

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen (1 Peter 4:10–11).

14. “Leader” is a role, not a value statement.

For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in

serving the saints, as you still do (Heb. 6:10).

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another (Gal. 5:13).

15. The Church is an extension of the family, not a threat to it.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:1–2).

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1 Tim. 5:8).

16. Everything you do can be ministry.

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much” (Luke 16:10).

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).

17. Jesus is not a means to an end, but the end itself.

You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16:11).

But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41–42).

18. Before we ever consider how to love our neighbors and serve them in ministry, we have first been tasked to cultivate an all-encompassing love for God.

To do righteousness and justice
is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice (Prov. 21:3).

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

19. Prayer should include listening, meditation, worship, praise, and thankfulness—not just intercession.

Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness (Ps. 29:1–2).

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be feared above all gods (Ps. 96:4).

20. My first and greatest command isn't to teach the Word to others but to know the God of the Word and love Him with all that I am.

And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27).

We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

21. God designed the Church to function optimally as one united body working together for the common good.

Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity! (Ps. 133:1).

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone (1 Cor. 12:4–6).

22. Our ministry does not belong to us. It belongs to the Lord.

The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein (Ps. 24:1).

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering (Heb. 2:10).

23. While God does call us to bear one another's burdens, there are things that are beyond our ability, and thus, not our responsibility.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:6–7).

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19).

24. It is God's Word (not our own), which has the power to convict, correct, encourage, and ultimately, transform hearts.

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me (Col. 1:28–29).

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

25. We serve women by praying for them.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working (James 5:16).

Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints (Eph. 6:18).

26. Our area of influence—whether we deem it small, medium, or large—has been assigned by God.

“The greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matt. 23:11).

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).

27. There is nothing tiny or insignificant about the supernatural work God has called us to.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19–20).

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up (Gal. 6:9).

28. Busyness is one of the enemy's most common tactics to drive us to burnout, even resentment, as we try to serve Him faithfully in our callings.

It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep (Ps. 127:2).

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me” (John 15:4).

29. When we're living under the authority and protection of Truth, we can experience abundant life, free from shackles.

“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17).

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life (Rom. 6:22).

30. Christ has set us free to stay free—not to be slaves to deception.

So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God (Gal. 4:7).

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

A Leader's Prayer

Know that as you consider these Truths, we are praying for you. Will you pray for other women's ministry leaders, many of whom you may never meet, who will read these words and commit to pursue God's Truth daily as we lead the women God places in our path?

Let's pray together.

Jesus,

We praise You because You are the source of Truth. We thank You for the ways Your Word exposes the lies of the enemy and helps us to reorient toward whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise (Phil. 4:8). Give us the wisdom to understand Your Word and a hunger to run to it daily. Teach us to elevate Your Truth above all things as we lead the women in our care.

Amen.



RESOURCES FOR

Women's Ministry

LEADERS

Whether you're planning an event, starting a small group, or just need regular encouragement . . . we're here to serve you.

Our *leadership resources* will help you scale mountain peaks and cross deep valleys so together we can build up the Church and glorify the name of Jesus.

United in Him, let's reach thousands with the life-giving truth that sets women free.

LEADER
RESOURCES

CONTACT AN
AMBASSADOR



Has *10 Truths to Set Leaders Free* helped you break through lies to believe God's Truth?

Here's how you can encourage more leaders like yourself to walk in truth . . .

- Tell your friends about this free ebook on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter! *Here's the link you can share.*
- Connect with Revive Our Hearts on social media for more leader resources and encouragement! Find us on *Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.*
- Email the *ebook* to a friend.
- Join the *Revive Our Hearts Leader Facebook Community* where you can connect with like-minded leaders who share a passion for gospel-fueled, servant-hearted leadership.
- Read the updated and expanded versions of *Lies Women Believe* and *Lies Young Women Believe.*

LIES WOMEN BELIEVE

UPDATED & EXPANDED

