

Crush Debilitating Fear With These 8 Important Declarations

Life change happens when we grow so weary of one thing we are finally willing to cling to something else.

This story has been played over and over again in my own life, as I've struggled with one thing or another through the years, loving it while it choked me, then eventually hating it enough to get free from its grip. I've discovered those moments of freedom only come when I stare down the thing that needs to change and acknowledge the high price it costs my life.

Maybe you relate.

I found myself here not long ago, staring down the fear and reactionary life I had allowed to creep in, not looking away for once.

I was on a plane bound for Texas, being rocked to sleep in seat 15 D by the hum of the jet engine and the warm sun peeking in through the half-cracked shade. "Jesus music" played in my ears. *People* magazine was lying lazy in my lap. Soon, I drifted into that semiconscious state where you're asleep but not, dreaming but thinking, body still, breathing shallow. During this time terror gripped me in the most unwelcome way I have never known.

I jolted awake, feeling agitated and fear-filled, convinced my whole family was going to die. *How can I sleep when the world is cruel and dark?* I thought, hysterically. *Things are bad, I can control nothing, and none of us will be okay.*

Everything far off seems imminent; everything histrionic seems reasonable. This is the way we all feel when the evil one

terrorizes us. There is no spiritual logic or peace.

I kept trying to wipe my eyes before the flight attendant came to ask me if I wanted a drink. I wondered what she would think if I told her, "No, I don't want a drink, thank you very much. I want to make all the crazy of the world go away. Can you bring me a big glass of that?" I can only imagine her response in dealing with me, the crazy person on the plane.

It was not long before the flight came to an end, and I arrived at my destination without the plane falling from the sky or the world coming to an end. But my fears didn't stop when we landed. For months, I had felt gripped by fear, scared to death—this moment was just the culmination. I was beginning to feel that despair was my new normal. I was sliding into skepticism—accepting that this world would never get better. That hopelessness is the kiss of spiritual death. My prayers of *Come quickly, Lord Jesus* were more about rescue than the desire for His presence.

It was at this point of panic and fear that I was ready to be free from its grip and cling to a new strategy for living: one of strength and endurance, with a settled perspective that defied life's typical frenzy.

After that day, I determined eight important things that changed my life—powerful declarations that carry with them vital life lessons to walk this life out with strength.

1. **I am able.** This is where many of us struggle the most. Because of the burdens and difficulties of life, because of our insecurities and the negative things that were proclaimed about us, we don't believe we are able to walk this life out strong. When we understand that we have an inheritance of walking in the covering of the authority of God (Eph. 1), and His strength, not our human bravery, is our new strategy, we will finally rise to our spiritual potential.

2. **I will know what I believe.** A lot of us have opinions and let our voices be heard in volatile, reactionary speech. But deep down, we don't know what we believe. We are confused by the mixed messages the world is sending, not grounded in the Word of God, and it shows up in our wavering when faced with our culture. We've got to know what we believe so we can maneuver hard conversations and not be swayed by the anti-biblical sermons the world is preaching.
3. **I will tell the truth to myself and others.** There is no life like the life of a clean conscience. Many of us struggle with this because we don't want to face the truth, yet the truth is what heals. A great number of us aren't strong because we aren't free. And we aren't free because we haven't told ourselves the truth. A life of truth empowers us because, not only do we walk through the world with a sense of dignity and strength, but we have the confidence to speak a life of truth to others.
4. **I will rise up and stand firm.** Complacency has killed the church for years and kills our very souls. It is what stops good people from rising up against injustice and taking action for what moves the heart of God. It is always love that will compel us to rise up—a holy, righteous love, not for self but for God and the gospel. This will mean self-interest has to be replaced by interest in the holy. We rise up and stand firm with our footing in the sure place, the steadied tracks of God, and it changes the person we are inside.
5. **I will go on record.** In our right effort to not be a part of the often-contentious online and in-person conversation over issues, many of us have taken the silent approach. Yet Jesus never intended for us to hide our faith. Instead, with prayerful wisdom, we are to go on record as a follower of Jesus Christ, never being ashamed of our allegiance to Him.
6. **I will choose God.** This commitment to choice over feeling is, perhaps, the most powerful and life-altering

choice. Every day, other things will beg for our attention. We will have to choose between them and God, even the good things sometimes. How we choose will determine the wellness of our souls. Choosing God is the best choice for the best life we will ever have.

7. **I will follow God, forever.** Being a Jesus-follower is not just the immediate obedience to follow Him, quickly, as soon as He calls, but also the long obedience to follow Him, forever. So many of us are quick to jump towards Jesus but slow to walk the journey out with Him. Locking eyes, staying tethered tight, following Him to the very end is where the richness of life is found. Without this kind of following Jesus, life we won't be strong.
8. **I am ready.** These three words mean everything. They are to be the cry of every believer's heart, whether or not things are lining up in our lives as we hope and life is running smoothly. Jesus never asks us to feel ready; He asks us to be ready. We are ready to take on this world every day in His strength because of who He is, what He's done and how He rules this world. This is all we have to know, and He is all we need to count on. We don't even have to trust ourselves. We just have to trust God.

My friends, when we are weary of our fearful and reactionary lives, we are in the best position to disown them. When we are no longer willing to sit by and watch things that harm us choke the life out of us, we will cling to a better way.

Jesus has given us the promise of abundant life, sealed our future with His death on the cross and given us the covering of His authority to walk strong through this life.

Today is our day to declare the truth and watch our life change. {eo}

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passion to communicate one thing: Jesus is everything. Her love runs deep to see people pursue Jesus for life, grow deep roots of faith and walk strong in the midst of a world that so often seems to have gone crazy. She is the author of six books, including her latest, Put Your Warrior Boots On, and a sought-out Bible teacher for her wit and bold, bottom-line approach. She is a wife and mother of three who currently resides in North Carolina. Visit her at .