

‘It’s Not Impossible’: Female Faith Leaders Reflect on, Celebrate International Women’s Day

Today people from all walks of life and every corner of the earth celebrate International Women’s Day. In many places, women are seen as the inferior sex with fewer rights, freedoms and liberties afforded them. But followers of Jesus, both historical and modern-day, know the value and culturally uncommon esteem He placed on women time and again. From offering the woman at the well living water to revealing Himself first to Mary Magdalene at the tomb after His resurrection, Jesus valued, cared for and respected women.

During this holiday, female faith leaders around the country celebrate the opportunities to shine in their God-given purposes.

Ruth Hendrickson, host of *Real Truth With Ruth* on the Charisma Podcast Network, reflects on God’s faithfulness in her ministerial journey.

She was often told she couldn’t do what she is currently doing in ministry for the simple fact that she is a woman, Hendrickson says. “I was reminded that I didn’t have the right education or the platform.” She continues, “Yet, God had given me a word and a vision years ago. I grabbed on to that word and trusted Him with the timing, and I am still walking that out. I am in awe of the doors that He has opened. He is exceedingly faithful.”

Cissie Graham Lynch, a granddaughter of the late evangelist Billy Graham, notes the importance of recognizing both the hope and the fight many women face around the world. She applauds those who look past the “trivial things” mainstream media touts in this celebration, and encourages women to stand

up for their fellow sisters in Christ:

"May we all fight and work together so that women around the world can have strength, hope and dignity," she writes. "May all women be clothed in the strength and dignity of God."

Am I the only one that gets tired of seeing the trivial things women are "fighting" for in this country? I'm blessed...

Posted by Cissie Graham Lynch on Monday, March 8, 2021

Learn more about her work with Samaritan's Purse as the nonprofit champions women and girls across the globe here.

And Pastor Cindy Stewart of The Gathering Apostolic Center in Tarpon Springs, Florida, says relying on God in the ever-changing culture of ministry is key to thriving as a faith leader. This holiday celebrates women fulfilling their "calling and destiny" and brings to mind her ultimate joy in what the Lord has equipped her to do: seeing lives radically transformed.

These powerhouses for the kingdom want to impart words of wisdom to the rising generation of female leaders.

Stewart's encouragement includes simple but sage advice: "Invest your time in building your relationship with God," she says. "And don't get hung up on the fact that you are a woman!"

Hendrickson adds, "Keep holding on tight to the Lord. Don't let your God-given vision for your life fade. Don't let anyone tell you that it is impossible. God has plans and purposes for your life.

"People may tell you that you are too young, don't have the right education—God knows right where you are at in your life," she says. "He knows the timing and how things will unfold. You are created to make an impact! Never underestimate your value, voice or position for the kingdom of God."

Candice Smithyman, prophetic revivalist, healing minister and pastor of Freedom Destiny Church in Orange Park, Florida, highlights the specific spheres of influence God has entrusted women with to accomplish His plans on the earth. "You are

needed!" says the host of the *Manifest His Presence* podcast. Today on International Women's Day, Smithyman urges women to remember they are "God's heartbeat to those who are lost and in need."

Kathy DeGraw, well-known prophetic deliverance minister and host of *Prophetic Spiritual Warfare*, agrees with these encouragements. She speaks to her fellow sisters in Christ as she stresses the importance of embracing their unique Spirit-filled calling in order to manifest the Lord's presence on earth:

"Don't look at the areas in which you are different as weaknesses but look at them as a uniqueness the Lord has given you to impact and impart into other people." {eo}

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