

One Word for 2015: Shine

Shine is my word for 2015. I must admit, I didn't like this word when I felt it was God's direction for the New Year. Shining feels like it means everyone will be looking at me. I've spent my life behind the scenes, writing about others.

Since writing about my 250-pound weight loss in my memoir *Sweet Grace*, I have been speaking, coaching and being interviewed on television and radio. I am finding I like all of these things, but I still don't want everyone looking at me. I really don't.

Really God?

Then, God gives me the word for the year. I always know it's the word because when I hear it, it resonates even though I may not like it. See, I don't aspire to shine. It's never been on my rather lengthy to-do list.

However, on one level the reason I know this is my word for 2015 because it stretches me. I am more of a planner and implementer, but not an upfront person. I like to be in the background doing the work or telling others what to do.

The Star

In November I went to Tribe Intensive, a weekend filled with tons of good information for writers led by Jeff Goins. It was held at an extremely busy time for me, the middle of November. I was working hard on *Sweet Change* book and really had no extra time, but it was one of those God things. I knew I needed to attend.

During the weekend, Jeff talked about what kind of writer you are which will determine how you build your platform. The choices were The Journalist, The Prophet, The Artist, The Professor and The Star. The Journalist asks questions. The

Prophet tells the truth. The Artist sees beauty in the ordinary. The Professor teaches something. The Star connects people, builds community and is famous.

I thought I could fit in any category, except the star. Then, he further defined the star as the type of person who shows the world, "I did it and so can you." My heart fell to my stomach. I knew was me and it scared me.

Not the Former Fat Lady!

I knew I could be any of the others. I am and always will be a journalist. Speaking truth is a core value of mine as it is the prophet. I am very visual and see beauty in everyone and everything. I am also a teacher and love giving step by step instructions. But a star? It didn't seem logical that the former fat lady would ever in a million years become the star.

I sort of accepted that definition, but really placed myself more in the journalist category. Still there was this nagging thought in the back of my mind that The Journalist definition was too easy. It was akin to just getting up in the morning and putting on my favorite jeans and t-shirt. It was something I could just fall into because I had done it for 40 years.

I knew "The Star" was somewhere in my future and as I do with most new concepts, I resisted it at first. I even told God, "Please do not make me a star. I don't want to be a star."

Why the Word "Shine"?

And now God gives me the word "shine" for 2015. I am more comfortable thinking this word means I will shine for Jesus. I will lift up others so they can shine. I will shine so others can find Jesus. I believe all of those are part of the meaning of "shine."

I thought of the verse I memorized as a child. "Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is

risen upon you.”¹ I could accept shining if it is God shining through me. As a matter of fact that would be a desire of my heart.² And I know having the desire filled only comes when I delight in the Lord.

What it Says to Me

This word says to me this is a year that God shines through me, not that I shine. Not that there is anything good in me to shine. It is only by the grace of God that I have shed 250, now 260 pounds.

Where I was and where I am now may make me a star in others' eyes, but to me it only makes God a star. Without Him I would be dead by now. Doctors told me as much.

Paul says it best in 2 Corinthians 12. A self-proclaimed boaster, Paul says God gave him a thorn in the flesh, a weakness so he would have to rely on God's strength and couldn't think he had done everything by his own effort.

“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”³

I don't know what Paul's weakness or thorn in the flesh was, but I know mine. I am a processed sugar and flour addict. I need God's strength every day to stay the course and resist foods made with those things. When I want His strength more than I want what I crave, God always delivers.

Shine!

If there is any shining to be done this year, it will be God shining through me. It makes me think of the Newsboys song back in the 1980s or '90s. "Shine, Make 'em wonder what you've got. Make 'em wish that they were not on the outside looking bored. Shine. Let it shine before all men. Let 'em see good works, and then, let 'em glorify the Lord."

I prefer to think my word means many more opportunities will be coming my way so that God will be glorified and He will be the star. After all, that's the purpose of my life. It is not mine, but His.

My prayer this year is that I am so close to Him I can't help, but radiate His light and shine for Him.

I hope you join me in shining strongly for Him this year.

Shine!

1 Isaiah 60:1 NKJV

2 Psalm 37:4 NKJV

3 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 NKJV

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