

Superwoman or Super Woman: Your Life-Changing Choice

News Flash: I resign from my position as superwoman.

I never should have taken the job in the first place. I wasn't made for it. I can't fly. As a matter of fact, I don't even like flying except to get me from point A to B. I never applied for the job. I just adopted the superwoman theology and took it upon myself to take care of everyone and everything.

I know I'm not alone in assuming this role. Many women I know have taken up this same job. You may even be one of them.

In today's society, women feel they not only can but have to do it all—career, home, marriage, children, church, volunteer, neighbor, friend, family member and every once in a while, sleep.

If our schedules aren't full saving lives, we haven't done our jobs.

Saving the World

It reminds me of when I had graduated from college and working my first full-time 900 miles away in Richmond, Virginia, a city I knew nothing about. My sanity was restored by the fact that my friend, also a new college grad, decided to move with me and take a job there.

I went into my normal mode of over-committing. I was working a full-time job, volunteering in the mission center, serving as program coordinator of our church's young adult group, trying to be somewhat healthy and managing anything and everything thrown at me.

One day as I was suffering from extreme stomach pain caused by

a stress-related disease, my friend said, "You are doing way too much. You can't save the world on your own."

All-knowing 21-year old that I was, I said, "But I can try."

Superwoman Theology

So for the next 30-plus years, I tried to do that. After all, God needed my help, didn't He? I had to fight for Him, because who else would?

My personal theology, a mixture of various denominational influences, went like this. I am saved by grace. I know I didn't do anything to earn salvation, (Eph. 2:8-9). I also know that from the time I accepted Christ as my Savior my sins are forgiven—past, present and future, (Ps. 103:2, Micah 7:18-19, Matt. 26:28, Acts 3:19, 2 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 1:3-13,).

Somewhere in there, I decided that my faith in Christ, which I had to have to be saved in the first place, (Eph. 2:8) without action was dead, (James 2:14-17). So even though I'm alive in Christ, (Rom. 6:11) if I don't work myself to the bone, I'm not really saved.

Thus, my superwoman theology appeared before I even got out of elementary school. Although I really didn't voice my rather dismembered theology, I showed it by my actions. I was living my own version of the famous Hunter Thompson quote:

"Life should not be a journey to grave with the intention of arriving safely in heaven with a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, thoroughly exhausted collapsing at the gate sighing, 'Finally, I can rest.'"

Burn Out for Jesus

Or as one pastor I heard say, "I am going to burn out for Jesus. I can sleep when I get to heaven." That was definitely my idea. I only have a few years to do whatever God put me

here to do so I'm going to work as long and hard as I can.

That got me stressed out and overwhelmed and running to my "functional god" of sugar and high carbohydrate foods to get me through to the next day. I was overworking, not resting and going hard for the prize.

When I finally woke up, I weighed 430 pounds. I had diabetes, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure and extreme arthritis in my knees. My doctor gave me five years to live if I didn't lose weight and keep it off.

If I didn't change some things, I was going to get my wish of burning out for Jesus—soon.

Letting God Fight for Me

My priorities began to change. I began focusing on what God was telling me. Nothing I had tried had worked. I was now in a place where I was ready to listen. I learned quickly that's all He wants any of us to do.

God showed me I had to eat right and gave me the plan to do that. I had to exercise daily. I had to stop doing everything I was doing that wasn't absolutely necessary and spend time every day listening to God.

I had to learn how God wants me to love myself. I was rewarding myself with food, sweets and desserts for all my hard work for Jesus. I had to stop that and start seeing healthy eating, exercise, rest and relaxation as the way to love myself.

I had to listen to the voice of God and realize I'm not fighting for Him. He's fighting for me.

Exodus 14:14 became a real challenge for me. "The Lord shall fight for you, while you hold your peace." For a doer, this is probably the most difficult verse in the Bible. Being silent was not in my vocabulary.

Super Woman Theology

Figuring out how to lean in to what God is saying to me is one of the best lessons I have and still am learning. Every day, I learn something new.

It's so freeing to understand I don't have to be the commander of my destiny because that is God's job.

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31) We know this on a cognitive level, but God brings us to the place where we have to learn it on the experiential level.

That's a whole new ballgame. In this arena, we don't want to fly on our own, but we know God will give us the supernatural strength to overcome our fear and act on what He has promised us.

This circles back to deflecting my original superwoman theology. There is a correct super woman that involves relying totally on God instead of our own strength. We can do nothing without God and without the Spirit of Christ who indwells us "because he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

So maybe I do want to be a super woman after all, because I can do the impossible. That's only possible though when I allow the same power that raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 8:11) to live through me every day and in every way.

So I changed my mind. I do want to be this kind of super woman, the supernatural kind. Sign me up. I'm all in. {eo}

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