

This Simple, Powerful Phrase Can Help You Reach Your True Potential in Christ

“¹ Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left” (Isa. 30:21).

I recently read somewhere that we make approximately 5,000 decisions a day. Wow! I realize that I make a lot of decisions based on emotion or whether or not I am exhausted.

We make so many decisions throughout the day. And while some may seem insignificant, others may be huge life decisions. I decided to choose peace and joy and purpose today over lethargy and complacency. I chose to meet with God today before meeting with anyone else; however, some days, I fail in that pursuit as well, and it shows in my decision making on those days. Some of our everyday choices are completely random, while others are very important; however, they are all choice points. Those seemingly small or large choice points may seem like insignificant decisions, yet they will lead us in one direction or another.

We make daily decisions to either react in anger or respond in patience and compassion in moments of conflict in our relationships. We choose to create drama and agitation with friends or co-workers, who may hurt our feelings or seem selfish or lack compassion at times. We have the daily opportunity to choose words that will affirm and encourage or cause pain and insecurity in our children. There are so many situations in our daily walk where we are faced with frustration, disappointment, hurt feelings, anger and pain.

Stop ... Challenge ... and Choose

As part of our personal growth plan, Pat and I made a decision three years ago to take back our physical health. This was a major life change that has literally changed our life and restored our energy, vigor and vitality to run our race strong and to be there for our children and grandchildren for the long run. It also ensured that we will enjoy life together well into our retirement years. One of the statements that one of our health mentors taught us was *stop ... challenge .. and choose*. We had to view our choices differently. How would our food choices affect our physical health and our overall health goals? We had to stop and evaluate and choose the path that would lead to our desired goals.

Believe it or not, this same principle can be applied to our spiritual walk, learning to view our reactions to crisis and conflict from a different perspective. We must *stop* in the face of crisis/conflict ... *challenge* our emotional response ... and *choose* to respond from a place of our relationship with God. We must not react but rather act upon to have the best outcome for everyone involved, asking ourselves key questions: How will my response/reaction affect my life and the life of those around me? How will all those involved walk away from this moment? Will relationships be severed or will they grow in maturity? Are my reactions creating a victim mentality and an attitude of constant offense or a lifestyle of gratitude and joy?

A Change in Perspective and Perception

Sometimes we have to change our perspective and our perception of life. There are times I have to choose to change how I interpret what's happening around me, because how we perceive our circumstances can make or break us in any given situation. Our perspective shapes us and how we think and how we engage with the people around us every day. Perspective creates opportunities for growth or it can hinder our progress and restrict us in life. Our perspective can cause us to walk in constant offense and bitterness, jealousy and lock us up in

the comparison prison where we never reach the potential that God has for us.

There are days where I find myself making the following statements: "I can't ... I will never make it to that goal." "Why does that always happen to me." "Why don't they listen to me?" Can you see how those statements are reactive vs. proactive? Always finding the bad in every situation? When I find myself in those days, I have to stop ... challenge ... choose to go into my prayer closet and find my place in the presence of my Savior to change my attitude to be that of this: "I can. I will. It's going to be fine. God's got this! Keep going. Persevere. Keep your eyes on the prize set before you. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I am more than a conqueror. With God, nothing is impossible." Those are much more responsive and proactive attitudes, choosing to see the best in a situation (God's view) brings about a totally different view. The right perspective says failure is part of learning and life is hard sometimes, but with God, we can do hard stuff!

God is calling us to change our perspective to see His faithfulness and His power! To be aware of His ability, not our weakness and limitations. A dear friend and fellow health coach, Terri Miller, said this to my husband, Pat, and me recently as we were discussing growth in our business. She said: "Many people are just wanting the stage of success, while others choose the stage of growth!"

Wow! How true is that?! So many times, we just want the outcome to glorify us and showcase our accomplishments and giftings, but we really should be choosing to always be in a stage of growth mindset. Look at Hebrews 5:12: "For though by now you should be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God and have come to need milk rather than solid food."

I can just hear the Father saying on those days when I have a

rotten attitude or when I'm feeling sorry for myself, whining and griping, "Really, Karen? This again? I thought we were past this already?" For some of us, we are just waiting for someone to come along and put the spiritual bottle in our mouths to feed our insecurity, self-doubt and lack of self-worth. Isn't it time we graduate from that mindset already?! I'm ready to put down the bottle and the pacifier and graduate to solid food that strengthens my mind, body and spirit. I don't have time for pettiness anymore.

Did you know that the Bible actually speaks about the power of the mind and our thoughts?! I love these Scriptures: "I call heaven and earth to witnesses against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deut. 30:19). We need to understand that life, love, joy and peace are choices! We always give circumstances too much power and credit in our lives. It just seems too simple to believe that simply choosing love and joy is possible. Look at Romans 12:12 (NLT), "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."

Changing the way we think actually changes our perspective, which changes the way we act. Paul's words were not new! The theme of Jesus' first sermon was, "Change your mind" (see Matt. 4:17). Jesus always challenged people to change their mind and their viewpoint. All through the Bible, it shows us that if we do not change our mind, we just impose our own biases and mindsets and labels on the words we read. The first thing we have to change is our perception. And that begins with ourselves, not everyone else. We need to change our perspective of who we are!

Ephesians tells us we are God's handiwork, and that before the world was ever created, He prepared us for great works. Seeing the truth of God's perspective about ourselves is not about

our self-esteem or arrogance or a pat on the back or even our happiness. It's about making the right choices for those we are called to reach, rescue and set free. It's about stepping out in purpose and the destiny that God has called you to.

So how do we choose to change our perspective in real life?

1. Choose: We can choose fear, insecurity, jealousy, bitterness and the lies of the enemy on a daily basis, or we can choose to believe that God is true to His Word when He said, "Now to him who by the power that is working within us is able to do far beyond all that we ask or think". (Eph. 3:20)

Here is your choice today. In the face of crisis and conflict.:

- Choose to believe that you are loved by God. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).
- Choose to live in freedom.
- Choose to believe God has prepared you to do great things.
- Choose to believe you were created for purpose, on purpose.
- Choose to believe that with God, you will overcome.

Choosing means that you have control over thinking as a victim who is powerless or choose to be an overcomer, trusting that God's Word is true.

God told us in 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV) that He did not give us fear (panic) but power, love and a sound mind.

If God gave us power to change the atmosphere, then we can change our perspective to God's viewpoint. When our perspective is toxic to our soul, then we have the power to accept it or dismantle it and see through God's viewpoint.

Without the weapons of power, love and a sound mind that God gave us to conquer the thoughts of fear, we wouldn't be able to follow through with this Scripture, phrased like this in the Message Bible: "We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of a life shaped by Christ. Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity" (2 Cor. 10:5-7), or (2 Cor. 10:5, NIV), "we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

God's Word says that with the tools He gave us, we can actually capture and tear down specific thoughts in our mind, so I think it's safe to say that we can conquer wrong thinking through Christ. But how is that even possible? It's actually in plain sight in the Bible. Psalm 46:10a (MEV) says, "Be still and know that I am God." The power of prayer has been proven over and over throughout history. Capturing your thoughts requires stillness ... uh-oh. Some of us just walked out of the room because that is nearly impossible with our busy hectic lifestyles. Most of us feel we have no time for prayer but if we don't have time for prayer then our thoughts, emotions and feelings continue calling the shots in our life.

2. Change your thinking.

Change your thinking.

Stop ... challenge ... and choose is this:

"Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

Every now and then, I run into someone who is different. They are always happy, always calm, always think the best in

people, nothing phases them, they are almost impossible to offend. Their peace and joy are contagious. I walk away thinking, *Wow, I don't know how they are that way, but I want to be that way.* Then I have to realize (Phil. 4:8), they chose love! They chose to view life through God's eyes and not their own. They chose God's heart and fiercely rejected the negative lies of the enemy.

We can be the inspectors and quality controllers of our thoughts. When the wrong perceptions and perspectives come along the conveyor belt of our minds and thought factory, we must examine them, challenge where they came from and who they came from. If they don't meet up with the standards of God's Word, we can choose to remove them from our hearts and minds and replace them with the Word of God and what God says about us and over us.

Look what Hebrews 4:12 tells us, "For the word of God is alive, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart." More times than not, our thoughts and feelings are going to challenge the word of God. The Word of God is going to challenge your fleshly thoughts and the rough and stubborn areas of our life. But it will also give you strength to lean in to the real answers and to the truth! God's Word will shift your wrong mindsets and misconceptions and replace them with faith. It will heal your heart and comfort you in the darkest places of your life. Proverbs 23:7 (NASB) lays it out so clearly: "As [someone] thinks within himself, so he is." God's Word does not offer empty promises, but real hope!

3. Stop comparing. Can we please just stop comparing ourselves to other people and where other people are in life? Second Corinthians 10:12 says, "For we dare not count or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. They who measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another are not wise." So many of us twist ourselves up in

knots, never satisfied, trying to live up to someone else or be like someone else or something were not. (I've been guilty at times.) We try to fill some endless list of qualities and qualifications and capabilities that we think will somehow fulfill us or give us the attention we so desperately desire in our flesh concept of success. God doesn't need another (Insert your name here); He needs you. He made you on purpose, with a purpose.

Here is my challenge to everyone today: Instead of asking God to change your situation, complaining about your life, to change other people ... Maybe we should ask God to change our perspective and our perception. How about we stop blaming, making excuses, looking for reasons to be offended. How about we challenge the thoughts that we're dwelling on, measure them against the Word of God and what God says about us and over us, and Choose to walk in God's truth over the enemy's lies.

Realize that so many times, the obstacle is the way! Stop worrying about the obstacle and start viewing it as a means to the promise. The way is through the sea, through the prison, over the mountain, through the fiery furnace, through the lions' den and on a cross!

How do you think God wants to change your perception/response today to life's choices? Maybe you are dealing with fear, anxiety, anger, jealousy, bitterness or inadequacy? Whatever you are facing, could it be that you have an opportunity to walk out of it with a testimony? The apostle Paul prayed that someone would be able to change their perception. Look at Ephesians 1:18 (HCSB), "I pray that the perception of your mind may be enlightened so you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the glorious riches of His inheritance among the saints." The New Living Translation says that "I pray your hearts will be flooded with light." Can you imagine if you allowed God to direct your emotions, choices and attitudes? Can you imagine waking up and walking through a dark situation or season, but then all of a sudden, all the

lights get turned on for you? Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." God walks with us in situations where it is hard to see clearly and illuminates the path by which we can be led to healing, wholeness, and freedom and joy.

In the 5000-plus choices you make today, I pray that you take a moment to stop ... challenge ... choose. I pray you ask the Holy Spirit for His guidance, His counsel and His direction before reacting. Choose to follow the Holy Spirit as He leads the way.

Prayer: *Dear Father, some days are challenging, and my emotions get the best of me. Some days, my words or decisions come from a place of pain or frustration and insecurity. Today, I want to see through Your eyes in order to change my perspective. Today, as I make all those 5000+ choices, I ask that You turn on the floodlight for my mind to see clearly. Walk with me, speak life to me and remind me of how my emotions and choices affect others. Help me to lead out of love and security in knowing who I am called to be. Help me not to compare myself to others and fully embrace all You have called me to be. Help me to follow the leading of Your Holy Spirit so that I can be a life-giver and encourager to those you bring into my life. Help me to bring value through Your Word in every situation. As I draw near to You, I know You will draw near to me. Thank you, Father, Amen..*

Watch as evangelist/author Karen Schatzline shares this powerful new word on a recent episode of "The Breathing Room."

Karen Schatzline is an international Christian evangelist and author who, with her husband Pat, founded Remnant Ministries International in 1997. Karen ministers with passion and fire; her messages always deliver hope, freedom and a call to intimacy with the Father. Karen is the author of the powerful book, *Dehydrated* (Charisma House), which will lead you into a

deeper encounter and intimacy with God. Together, Karen and Pat authored *Rebuilding the Altar* (Charisma House), a wake-up call to the church and believers to rebuild the place of encounter, and their new book, *Restore the Roar* (Charisma House), which will release in August 2019. Karen also hosts a biweekly video blog called “The Breathing Room,” which has an online audience of tens of thousands and can be seen live on Facebook or through archived episodes on YouTube.

Karen makes her home in Fort Worth, Texas, along with her husband, evangelist and author Pat Schatzline and their daughter, Abigail. Their son, Nate, and daughter-in-love, Adrienne, live in California, where they are youth pastors and have made Pat and Karen grandparents with their two sons, Jackson and Anderson.

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