

5 Things God Would Never Say to You

If I told you I spent last weekend on the moon, you'd know I was lying. On the other hand, if I told you that last weekend I went to the movies, would you believe me?

Ok, I didn't go to the movies last weekend, but those subtle lies are so much trickier to spot. Often when we're trying to hear God more clearly, the enemy will slip in lies that *sound* like they could be true. Because of this, it's just as powerful to know what God *isn't* saying as it is to know what He *is* saying.

Let's start with five things we hear often that God actually isn't saying. They're not the obvious vacation on the moon. Rather, they slide in, in an almost believable form, attempting to derail our obedience, our trust or our clarity.

1. It's all up to you. There's a marquee in our small town that I pass on the way to our daughter's school that reads, "if it is meant to be, it is up to me". This lie can better be expressed as, "Your breakthrough depends on your strength". Hear me out. This is *not* the same as saying that God doesn't ask for or even sometimes require our partnership in bringing things to fruition. In fact, the Word tells us that faith without works is dead (see James 2:17).

If what you're hearing, however, is telling you that you must *make* your prophetic words come to pass solely based on your abilities, then that's not God. God didn't tell Abraham to adopt a new diet and workout regimen so that he (Abraham) could by his own strength make himself able to fulfill God's promise. Actually, "it's all up to you" is the lie Sarah believed, and we all know how her plan with Hagar turned out.

If you're experiencing intimidation, anxiety or fear because

you're hearing that it's *your striving* that brings your breakthrough, then take a relaxing breath and realize that God never made a promise in the Bible without offering His beyond-what-we-can-do strength to back it. It's *not* all up to you.

2. I'm done with you. We asked one question of the teenagers who fill our home and hearts every Wednesday and Sunday evening for youth group: "What do you think the biggest obstacle is to those in your generation accepting Jesus?". Shockingly, 3 out of 4 answered, "thinking that they're messed up too bad or they're too broken." We hear that and gasp in heartbreak, but what happens when we flip the mirror towards ourselves? What happens when we alter the question slightly to "what is the biggest obstacle in pursuing everything God's put in your heart to do?"

Our answer too is often a resounding feeling of unworthiness. Because God is a God of parables, He paints Himself in Scripture relationally in the best ways we can understand Him: Father, friend, Counselor and more. The problem is, none of us has ever experienced a "perfect" father or a "perfect" friend. These imperfect experiences, sometimes coupled with out-of-context Scripture, can make the lie believable that God's mad at you. God's ignoring you. God doesn't favor you anymore. God's done giving you chances. None of these is true, and on the other side of the wedge the enemy is desperately trying to drive between you and God is an unbreakable relationship with unshakably good plans. We have a God who *went with his people into exile!* A God who chose to die for His betrayers.

Maybe grasping His love for you isn't a challenge, but you hear (and fear) Him being "done with you" in a different way. The enemy reminds you of all the great things God used you for in the past- raising children, achieving that goal- but now it's done. God has nothing more for you to do, so enjoy your "spiritual retirement" as you coast for the rest of your life. If you're still here, God's not done. In fact, He doesn't just continue using us. He takes us on an ever-increasing journey

from glory to glory.

3. I know My Word says, but ... You know that thing that the Bible says you shouldn't be doing, but you feel like God's told you it's fine for you? We have to be very careful on this slippery territory because it drips the juices of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After the fall, we suddenly began assessing and judging things as good or bad just as God would—but without the wisdom or capacity to be God. God has given us His Word without exception. We have commandments that were not taken away—only fulfilled—by Jesus. Following a voice that says they are irrelevant to your living is likely not following the voice of God.

If that's the case, you may ask, then why did David get to eat the consecrated bread (in 1 Samuel 21)? Why did Jesus eat with sinners and touch the dead and the sick? The answer is that God may call us to go *against human tradition*, but He will never call us to go *against His commandments*. He may not call you to do all that the latest self-improvement article dictates, but He will call you to live according to His Word.

4. Be afraid. I recently did a Bible study with some friends of mine which had us read the *contexts*—not just the instances—of the Bible's many “don't be afraid” verses. You would think after mentioning it hundreds of times in the Bible that we'd know God wouldn't want us to fear. Still, I cannot count the messages I receive that are panicked that God is telling them they need to dread some horrible thing that's going to happen. Maybe the not-so-palatable messages from the Old Testament prophets are warped into this misunderstanding, but fear is never from the Lord.

In fact, even those old messages of woe had some redemption, plan for turnaround or hope tied to them. Here's the litmus test. Next time you get a word that makes you feel afraid, ask yourself “where is the hope and the promise in this word?”. If it's not there, it's not God. No doubt when Moses got the word

to cross the Red Sea, he might have been a little afraid. If he was, his fear was the same human uneasiness we wrestle with. *But God never told him to be afraid or even focused on the bad things he would face on the journey.* God instead kept reminding him of the promises on the other side. God was honest that it would be a struggle, but He also told Moses over and over that he would be successful in leading His people out of slavery.

Don't let a counterfeit voice keep you frozen in dread. Focus on the hope and promise of God in the word you're receiving, or don't receive that word!

5. It doesn't matter. Our son loves outer space. As we read and learn together, it is astounding the level of detail that had to be created so precisely for life to be able to function as it does. It could only be a creation of Almighty God! Why is it then that when we feel that urge in our spirit as God moves us to make that phone call He's been calling us to make, there's a little voice that retorts the calling, saying, "Does it really matter?.'

In the split-second decision of obedience, the enemy tries to interject. Paying for the person's coffee behind you isn't that big of a deal. It doesn't matter. Sending that text that you're praying for that person you haven't talked to in months isn't going to matter to them. It's clearly not meaningful in the grand context of God's plans. While God doesn't want us agonizing over the choice of having tacos or burgers for dinner, He will never tell us that what we do, what we feel or what we say doesn't matter. God is the God of fishes and loaves, of mustard seed faith and of becoming like children. The little things matter to Him.

Don't lose your calling to the impression that God's not as interested in your everyday life's ministry as He is that celebrity pastor's ministry.

Every now and then we all need a checkup. Stop today and ask yourself, “Am I hearing any of these five things?” If you feel the Holy Spirit nudging your heart as you’re reading, ask Him to fill those spots with His truth. When we know what He’s really saying (and what He’s *not* saying), we wake up in our intimacy with the Lord as well as our callings. {eo}

Sara Whitten is an author, speaker, equipper and founder of Arrows of Zion Ministry. She and her husband are pastors for the youth of Impact Christian Fellowship in Kerrville, Texas. Sara is a prophetic writer featured on *Elijah List*, *Spirit Fuel*, *Charisma* and more. She hosts *Hear God Everyday* on the *Charisma Podcast Network*, a podcast with tools to help amplify the voice of God amidst the noise of everyday life. Visit her website at [sarahwhitten.com](#).

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