

The page is framed by a decorative border of various botanical illustrations. In the top left, there are orange-outlined flowers and leaves. The top center features a black and white detailed drawing of a flower. The top right has red and orange floral elements. On the left side, a large red flower is prominent, with a blue and white detailed flower below it. The right side is decorated with green and blue floral sprigs. The bottom left shows green and white flowers, while the bottom center and right feature blue and white detailed floral clusters and red leaves.

Revive Our Hearts™

Set Free to Serve

CHALLENGE

5 Days of Walking in Truth

WELCOME TO THE SET FREE TO SERVE CHALLENGE!

Dear Friend,

Whether you're leading a large ministry team, teaching a Bible study, or sitting with your arm around a struggling mom, **all leaders have one thing in common: we need God's truth** to point women to the freedom, fullness, and fruitfulness found only in Christ, the living Word.

We're honored to walk alongside you over the next five days to help you identify and break free from lies that women in leadership tend to fall for because the stakes couldn't be higher. When leaders fall into bondage, Satan wins a double victory by wreaking havoc in our lives and in the lives of the people we lead.

We suggest you team up with a friend or group of leaders on this 5-day journey. Share this challenge with every sister you know serving in ministry so the exponential power of truth is multiplied among today's leaders.

Here's what you can expect:

- To hear the truth about lies dealing with performance, faulty expectations, identity, power, and comparison from women of influence.
- A daily short devotional followed by reflection prompts and suggestions for going deeper into truth.

Let's speed ahead together, leaving the dust of lies in the rearview mirror!

**For freedom, Christ set us free. Stand firm, then,
and don't submit again to a yoke of slavery. —Galatians 5:1**

Walking together in the truth,

Leslie Bennett

Women's Ministries Initiatives
Revive Our Hearts



Day 1

Lie #1

A leader must meet everyone's needs and expectations.

Truth #1

Jesus is sufficient in all the ways I'm not.

Have You Let Down the Women in Your Church? It's Okay.

Devotional by Melissa Kruger

*God, you are awe-inspiring in your sanctuaries.
The God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.
Blessed be God! —Psalm 68:35*

For years I believed that as a woman on staff at church, I needed to be there in every crisis, arrive early and stay late at every event, and be on call whenever someone needed me. But the weight of attempting to please everyone isn't a burden we're created to bear.

Jesus—and Jesus only—is the Shepherd of His sheep. He is sufficient in all the ways we're insufficient. By reflecting on the truth of God's character, we're freed from the lie that we must meet everyone's needs and expectations.

One way I unnecessarily burdened myself was wrongly believing I needed to know everything happening with the women under my care. It's an impossible task. The good news? God knows exactly what's going on in the lives of the women in your church ([Psalm 139:1–4](#)). He will help, support, and sustain you and them. He is with them at every moment and is sufficient to meet their needs and expectations.

I've found that the more I reflect upon who God is, the more I can let go of pleasing others. I have one Person I'm serving, one Master I'm responsible to: God. As we seek to serve Christ, we may let others down. *That's okay.* Christ will care for His church in all the ways we cannot ([Psalm 68:35](#)). He knows all things. He's everywhere. He's all-powerful. Trust in Him as you spend your life loving others.

Reflect and Respond:

- How is it dangerous to try and attend to every need and please every woman in your ministry?
- How does knowing that God is all-knowing and all-powerful free you from the expectation of trying to meet everyone's needs?

Go Deeper:

- Take time to meditate on [Psalm 68:35](#) and pray for the women in your ministry that you feel powerless to help. Pour out your concerns before God and ask Him to work in their lives in ways you can't imagine.
- You can also find encouragement to trust God's power and strength—for your ministry and in all areas of life—through the *Seeking Him* one minute podcast "[El Shaddai](#)."

Melissa Kruger serves as vice president of discipleship programming at The Gospel Coalition. She is a wife, mom, and the author of multiple books. She and her husband live in North Carolina and have three children.



Day 2

Lie #2

I must be strong and
always have it together.

Truth #2

The message of the
cross is good news for
weak, limited, insecure
leaders like me.

You Don't Need to Be Strong

Devotional by Kristen Wetherell

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. —Romans 5:6 ESV

I'm all too familiar with the lie that I must be strong. It haunts me as I prepare to speak. It accuses me as I write. And it follows me as I enter my church, convincing me that being a pastor's wife means having it all together.

I'm fed up with being deceived by this lie. Believing it drains me. This is why the message "you are strong" never actually helps us; instead, it perpetuates Satan's original lie and keeps us looking for strength where we were never meant to find it—in and of ourselves.

The message of the cross, however, is our freedom. It's good news for weak, limited, insecure leaders like you and me.

For [Christ] was crucified in weakness, but he lives by the power of God. (2 Corinthians 13:4)

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (Romans 5:6 ESV)

The message we proclaim is that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of weak, sinful people. And the power of this message comes from Christ, not from us. Only He can grip the hearts of the women you serve—and **He'll often use your weaknesses to display His perfect power** and remind you of this important truth.

Reflect and Respond:

- In what areas of your ministry do you tend to believe the lie that you must be strong?
- How has God used your weaknesses to glorify Himself in your ministry?
- How can you point women to rely on Christ's strength in their problems and difficulties?

Go Deeper:

- If you're struggling with your weakness today, the Leader Connection article "[Leading Out of Weakness](#)" will show you how to embrace weakness to persevere with joy.
- Read [Romans 5:1–11](#) and reflect on the power of the gospel message for us as weak, sinful people.

Kristen Wetherell is a pastor's wife, mother, writer, speaker, and podcast cohost. She is the author of several books including *Help for the Hungry Soul* and *Humble Moms*, and co-author of the award-winning *Hope When It Hurts*.



Day 3

Lie #3

If I work hard serving the Lord, ministry will go smoothly.

Truth #3

Ministry doesn't always go smoothly because God uses ministry to smooth me.

Are You a Smooth Operator?

Devotional by Susan Hunt

I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. —Galatians 2:20

Our natural inclination is to think if we work hard we will succeed, but this reasoning is deadly if it informs how we think about our relationship with the Lord—because it's all about *us*. Our relationship with God isn't a *quid pro quo*. It's a unilateral action of our covenant-making, covenant-keeping God.

He sovereignly initiates a grace-based relationship with us and gives us a gift we don't deserve and cannot earn—life in Christ. **It never has and never will depend on us.**

We were created and redeemed to put God's glory on display, but we can't do this in our own strength. So Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit who renews our minds and transforms our hearts so we become more like Christ ([2 Cor. 3:18](#)). To our Savior, our transformation into His likeness is much bigger and grander than the success of our projects. This transformation is not painless. It often involves what seems like failure and means death to self ([Gal. 2:20](#)).

God frees and empowers us by His Word and Spirit to become what He created us to be and do what He calls us to do. **He slowly but surely loosens our grip on *self-dependence* and *self-confidence* so that we might rely on His grace and power.** Ask Paul, who was given a thorn in the flesh so that he might learn to depend upon the strength of the Lord rather than himself ([2 Cor. 12:7–10](#)).

Ministry doesn't always go smoothly because God uses ministry to smooth us.

Reflect and Respond:

- How has God used ministry to smooth you into the woman He wants you to be?
- In what ways have you had to die to self as you've ministered to others?
- As you encounter ministry difficulties, how can you train yourself to think biblically about those situations?

Go Deeper:

- Pray about any current challenges you're facing in your ministry. Ask God to show you how to think and respond to the situation in a way that glorifies Him.
- Has ministry turned out differently than you expected? For wise insight on how to respond when ministry doesn't go smoothly, check out this article on the Leader Connection: "[There's Hope When You're Disappointed in Ministry.](#)"

Susan Hunt is the widow of Gene Hunt, the mother of three, and the grandmother of thirteen. She is the former coordinator of women's ministry for the Presbyterian Church in America and has written several books for women including *Life-Giving Leadership*, co-authored with Karen Hodge, and *Aging with Grace: Flourishing in an Anti-Aging Culture*, co-authored with Sharon Betters.



Day 4

Lie #4

I'm responsible for
changing people's lives.

Truth #4

I have no power to
change women but I can
point them to the One
who can.

It's Not Up to You

Devotional by Linda Green

*So, then, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything,
but only God who gives the growth. —1 Corinthians 3:7*

What I remember most from my early days of ministry were my cries for help to the Lord as the weight of women's pain (and my inadequacy to relieve it) took its toll.

By God's grace, He heard my prayers and began to expose the subtle lie at work in my heart—I *was responsible for changing these women's lives*. **While God does call us to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2), there are things that are simply beyond our ability.** The crushing weight of responsibility I felt at times revealed that I had been operating as though it was up to me to rescue and save the women who came to me. This is clearly something only our all-powerful, redeeming God can do.

The truth is that the ministry God calls us to is a holy calling, but **our joy and fruitfulness will be far greater when we recognize where our responsibility begins and where it ends.** When we listen to them, lead them to the Word and prayer, and offer them trustworthy resources, we provide a great gift to the women we serve. And by acknowledging that we have no power to change them or those who grieve them, we point them to the One who can. And in that we have served them well.

Reflect and Respond:

- What are some ways you can help bear another woman's burden but not take responsibility for changing her?
- How can you point women to life-giving truth in the midst of difficult circumstances?
- How can you serve other women with freedom, joy, and fruitfulness?

Go Deeper:

- Check out [this list of articles, podcasts, and printables](#) that will help you lead in prayer.
- Print this [Scripture Quick Reference Guide](#) to keep in your Bible as you point women to truth.
- [Watch Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth](#) encourage leaders to be students and teachers of the Word.

Linda Green served as a director of women's ministry for fifteen years. She is the co-author of *He Gives More Grace* with her daughter, Sarah Walton. Linda is married to Ray and is a mother to three grown children and several grandchildren. She enjoys helping women live out the gospel through their God-given design and purpose.



Day 5

Lie #5

My ministry is insignificant compared to leaders with larger platforms.

Truth #5

There's nothing insignificant about the supernatural work God has called me to.

There's Nothing Small about This

Devotional by Paula Marsteller

We, however, will not boast beyond measure but according to the measure of the area of ministry that God has assigned to us. —2 Corinthians 10:13

Have you ever thought, *My ministry is insignificant compared to hers?* I sure have.

Second Corinthians 10 speaks some much-needed truth into our hearts about this issue. This chapter speaks about those who compare themselves with others as not having understanding ([v. 12](#)). In the next verse, the apostle Paul says, “We, however, will not boast beyond measure but according to the measure of the area of ministry that God has assigned to us.”

What a needed reminder for us when we are feeling overlooked, or even . . . invisible. **Ultimately, God decrees all things—including our ministry reach. Our assignments come directly from Him.** Our area of influence—whether we deem it small, medium, or large—has been assigned by *God*. Therefore, **how can your role be insignificant if God has assigned it?**

When you and I envy other women's gifts and opportunities for the kingdom, we are thinking far too narrowly and selfishly. During these sinful moments, it's crucial to thank God that another woman's “success” in ministry is *good*, because it brings health to the one Body we all share ([1 Cor. 12:25–26](#)).

So let's get to work, sister. Small as we might deem our personal influence, there is nothing tiny or insignificant about the supernatural work our God has called us to. May *He* be known, treasured, and celebrated through our little lives!

Reflect and Respond:

- Do you envy someone else's spiritual gifts? Take time to thank God for their ministry and how it helps to strengthen the Body of Christ.
- When you get discouraged by the size (or perceived impact) of your ministry, what are some ways you can remind yourself that this assignment is from God?
- What are the assignments that God has entrusted you with today?

Go Deeper:

- Read [2 Corinthians 10](#). Write down the ways Paul describes his ministry. How many of these characteristics are true for all of us as Christ-followers?
- Learn how to avoid the dangerous trap of comparing yourself to others in the *Revive Our Hearts* podcast "[The Trap of Comparison](#)."

Paula Marsteller has a tenacious commitment to Scripture coupled with a compassionate, loving voice. God has captured Paula's heart, and she is passionate about sharing life-changing, gospel truths through the lens of her everyday, ordinary life as a wife, mom, neighbor, and church member. She served with *Revive Our Hearts* for fifteen years and wrote *Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Girl: On Her Journey from Neediness to Freedom*.



Anchored to Truth

It's been our privilege to walk with you in the truth!

God's Word exposes how Satan launches a stealth attack on our weaknesses, doubts, insecurities, hurts, and sin struggles to tempt us to believe anything *but* God's truth. Oh yes, Satan's darts can be destructive, but we must never forget: **Truth is more powerful than the arsenal of the evil one. God's truth crushes Satan's kingdom of lies.**

To walk in the truth is to make a daily decision to reject lies and choose truth. If we dwell on lies instead of immediately rejecting them, eventually we'll believe and act upon them. Without realizing what is happening, one day we'll wake up to the shock of spiritual bondage.

When we're living under the authority and protection of the truth we can experience abundant life, free from shackles. So now that you've been set free from deception, *how will you stay free?* To unchain the lies . . .

- Dissect each falsehood to get to the root of the unbelief.
- Repent from how you've exchanged truth for a lie.
- Decimate the lie with real truth. Use Scripture verses to knock the wind out of false beliefs.
- Walk in truth by meditating, memorizing, and renewing your mind daily in God's Word ([Rom. 12:2](#)).

Take the Next Step

God has graciously provided all we need to walk in His unchanging truth. So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free (John 8:36)! Where you go from here is up to you, but we'd love to keep walking with you:

- Register for [Overcoming Lies Leaders Believe](#), an online training event on August 6, 2024.
- Join our [ministry leader Facebook community](#).
- Connect with a [Revive Our Hearts Ambassador](#).
- Explore more [Leader Connection free resources](#).

