



FOUR LIES LEADERS BELIEVE

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It's estimated that over one million Americans suffer from a work-related slip, trip, and fall injury every year. These accidents can cause life-threatening disabilities, and in some cases, are fatal. While tripping and falling has a debilitating impact on physical health, I want to alert you to a different kind of fall affecting spiritual health. It's when leaders slip and trip over a lie they're believing.

When leaders stumble, there's more at risk than fractures or broken bones. Lies about ourselves, sin, God, and the power of the gospel can have traumatizing consequences for both us and the women we serve.

Let's be aware of four lies that can drastically hinder our leadership effectiveness.

Lie #1: I'm the only one who can do this. The ministry depends upon me.

Granted, there's a weight of responsibility when leading a ministry of any size. It's tempting to be consumed by checking off the daily tasks and forget who's really in charge. While God entrusts ministry to us, He never steps away from the command post. When we're tricked into believing we're solely responsible for the ministry, there's a reluctance to involve people in God's work (a.k.a. delegate) because no one's work is acceptable but our own.

But the real danger of solo-powered ministry is that we distance ourselves from the power of God. The sooner we recognize our helplessness apart from Him, the sooner we'll experience God's enabling grace to accomplish the work given to us.



A God-dependent mindset means coming to Him daily to acknowledge our weakness and inability to succeed at anything of eternal value. It requires that we continually turn to our Lord throughout the day for wisdom to lead. When I drift spiritually by trusting my human gifts and abilities, I must ask once again, "Why would I settle for so little of Jesus when He offers all of Himself?"

Sisters, the work we do rests on the broad, strong shoulders of Christ, who will carry it through to complete God's sovereign purpose and plans. He alone upholds and sustains all things without our help ([Col. 1:17](#)). When the burden of ministry drives us to fall upon Jesus, we can be thankful knowing that weight is training us to rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead ([2 Cor. 1:9](#)).

The truth is: The ministry belongs to the Lord—not to me.

Lie #2: If I falter and drop the ball, the ministry will come crashing down.

This lie is a nuance of the first one. Leaders are often high achievers who thrive on producing results. We're prone to keep pushing without knowing when to stop . . . Just one more email to the retreat planning committee. Just one more call to the wife whose husband lost his job. Just one more text reminder to the Bible study teacher. Each day, we race toward the finish line and wonder how to know when it's time to turn off the light and go home.

Knowing when to press the "off" switch is a trust issue. Can God keep spinning the plates in my absence? Does the Lord really expect me to work twelve-hour days, six days a week? There are certainly times when such an investment is necessary, but not in the routine of ministry life. The Lord is calling women to live balanced lives of work and rest, of ministry and home, which demonstrate the power of the gospel.

In the name of "success for God," our constant driving forfeits the calm of green pastures, the quiet of still waters, and the promise of a restored soul. It's no wonder the Lord "makes us" lie down ([Ps. 23:1-3](#)). Pray with me that we will volunteer to lie down when the Shepherd calls instead of waiting until a physical and emotional crash lands us flat on our backside.

A leader never outgrows her reliance on Jesus for rest and rejuvenation. His invitation stands forever:

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." - Matthew 11:28-30

The truth is: God can be fully trusted to complete His work—with or without me.

Lie #3: My success in ministry is defined by activity.

One of the worst things a leader can do is to perpetuate a lifestyle among women who are taught how to pray and study the Bible but have no time for it. There are sisters (even some of us?) who are bound by the trap of saying "yes" to every opportunity to serve without using prayerful discernment.

Fellow leader, let's be willing to come alongside and gently guide them to freedom from people-pleasing or from blind pursuit of winning God's acceptance and love. We may know the truth of [1 Thessalonians 2:4](#) and [Romans 3:28](#) in our heads, but actions are undeniable proof of what we truly believe in our hearts.



So what is the formula for ministry success? I propose that it's two-fold. First, it's determined by abiding with Christ even more than goal setting and strategic planning—even though these are profitable tools. My firsthand experience is that the most creative ideas and Spirit-led direction have been birthed through personal and corporate prayer.

The second is to focus on being faithful to the finish; let the Lord define the success. We cannot always control ministry outcomes, but we can be faithful. I'm learning to translate success not by numbers or a bulging calendar of activity, but by accomplishing the daily task of testifying to the gospel ([Acts 20:24](#)).

There's a hazardous tipping point when leaders begin to pursue ministry success more than pursuing relationship with Jesus. It's a sign that idolatry is reigning in our hearts. Watch for the warning signs: a constant state of being overly stressed, an emergence of unholy competition or ambition, being jealous or threatened by successful leaders, or extreme despair when ministry isn't going the way we want or when people don't praise our efforts.

Success in ministry is giving our best day in and day out—in both minor and major assignments—without expecting fanfare. Success is being faithful to obey, then allowing God to use our feeble efforts however He wants. The glory is His! No work offered humbly for God's glory is insignificant to Him.

The truth is: Success in ministry is defined by God; it's determined by my faithfulness and obedience to Him.

Lie #4: A leader hides the fact that she's not perfect.

When so many people are counting on us, there's a temptation to mask our true heart. It's easier to ignore our sin issues when the needs of people are ringing in our ears. It's simpler to keep covering up rather than come clean. There's no hiding the fact that getting real with God and people is hard work. (I recommend reading [Seeking Him: Experiencing the Joy of Personal Revival by Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth and Tim Grissom](#) for practical help.)

A fear of admitting weakness and struggles with sin makes us untouchable leaders. People may admire our perceived godliness but not be able to relate with the life we masquerade. The truth is a leader's weakness is her greatest strength—for Christ our Savior was crucified in weakness for us but now lives by the power of God ([2 Cor. 13:4](#)).

Paul knew this well. He learned to boast in his shortcomings rather than religious performance or a charismatic personality to attract followers. In weakness, the power of Christ became his strength. When the beauty of the gospel is magnified through a transformed cracked clay jar, ordinary leaders inspire awe—not in themselves but in a crucified Savior ([2 Cor. 4:7](#)).

Even more, strong leaders are bold enough to ask for help and prayer. But a leader doesn't manipulate or draw attention to herself by blabbing her struggles to any and every ear who'll listen. Instead, she quietly invites a handpicked sisterhood to hold her accountable (that circle sometimes includes a counselor or a pastor).

The truth is: A leader is honest about the true condition of her heart.

Living Free from Lies

Lies are as old as dirt, but thankfully, we don't have to resign ourselves to their deceit. We have the Word to sanctify, purify, and renew our minds ([John 17:17](#), [Heb. 4:12](#)). We serve a God who is the source of truth ([Isa. 65:16](#)). We worship a Savior who embodies truth and grace ([John 1:14,17](#)). We're given the Spirit of truth who guides into truth ([John 15:26](#), [16:13](#)). While the world (and maybe even some of our friends) base their beliefs on relative truth and feelings, God's truth is the only real truth. The truth of the Bible never changes.



As ministry leaders, do you long to be free from incapacitating lies? If so, liberation begins by joyfully submitting ourselves to the authority of God's truth. Sure, there will be times when we fight back in defiance or cave in to fear and doubt, depending on how long we've allowed a counter-truth to rule our minds. But we must not allow them to have victory over us. Here's how to remove the tripping hazards that weaken our ministry and leadership:

- First, ask God to search your heart and expose lies of the enemy you've believed (be prepared to be surprised!).
- With the Spirit's help, dissect each deeply buried falsehood to get to the root of the issue.
- Repent from rejecting God's true Word and accepting a lie.
- Decimate the lie with truth. Find specific Scripture verses that knock the wind out of former false beliefs.

Finally, beloved leader, let's walk steady in faith experiencing the reality Jesus promised in [John 8:31-32](#): "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."