

Mantra Mania

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There are several sayings going around in the world of women's ministry that I think we should have a look at. They seem to be repeated on so many levels, whether in teaching, books, or women's conferences. Hence they have turned into mantras.

- ***You are Strong!***

The first one I want to concentrate on is "*You are strong*". I've seen this so much. Can we be strong women? Of course we can but saying so isn't going to make it so.

Instead, we should be asking, "*Where are you getting your strength?*" We women are busy. Some of us are in jobs outside the home. Some of us at home with small kids. We are loaded down. We have heavy burdens to carry. We don't need to be told we are strong. We need to be told where to get our strength from.

We need to concentrate on our strength coming from the Lord. By leaning on Christ is how we become strong.

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Corinthians 12:9,10

We should be encouraging women to dig into the Word, immerse themselves in prayer. It will help them to become stronger and stronger. We have God on our side. Look what God told Joshua.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Joshua 1:9

- ***You are Beautiful!***

The next one I think I've heard at quite a few women's conferences over the years. "*You are beautiful.*" Frankly, I don't want to hear it. I never have understood the frequent use of this one at women's events. I don't really see what it accomplishes.

Can we tell someone they are beautiful whether it is outward or inward

beauty and mean it? Of course we can and I think we should compliment other people. It does those people good and it does us good, but instead of making, "*You are beautiful*" a mantra for Women's Ministry, shouldn't we be teaching women how to be beautiful?

There are ways can do that. How about some kind words and kind deeds? How about pleasant speech? How about some good attitudes? Those should be the things that we instill in other women.

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" Ephesians 4:32

What about being beautiful by getting along and being in unity as believers?

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Psalm 133:1

- ***You are Powerful!***

I've seen this one brought up a lot lately. "*You are powerful.*" or "*You have the power!*" We can be powerful women, but really as Christians shouldn't we be concentrating on our powerful God?

We have no power in and of ourselves. The Lord is the source of our power.

Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. 1 Chronicles 29:11

- ***You are Brave!***

The next one is the constant reminder that we women are "brave". Are there brave women out there? Yes. Can we be brave? Yes. We can be brave but instead of just telling us we are brave, shouldn't we be concentrating on how we become brave and where do we get our courage from?

We just talked about Joshua 1:9. Read through that verse again and notice the last part. We can be brave because God is with us.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Joshua 1:9

- ***You Shine!***

I'm not sure where this one came from but I've seen it floating around.

I don't think we should be told that we "*shine*". I think we should be asking the question, "*Whose light are you shining?*"

We are supposed to shine as Christians but it is not our glory that we want to shine out and concentrate on, it is the love of Christ that we want to shine.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16

I actually think "*you shine*" wouldn't be a bad saying if you were gearing it towards volunteers or something. We do have people that work hard and shine with what they do.

- ***You are Good Enough!***

I think this mantra bugs me more than all of the rest, especially when I see it associated with women's ministry. We are not "*good enough*" in and of ourselves. We need Christ.

Sure, Christ will accept us just as we are. He loves every one of us but without Him we are not good enough, especially when it comes to salvation.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; 2 Corinthians 3:5

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8, 9

Conclusion:

I know a lot of these mantras have come along because women's groups have got a lot of hurting women in them. I don't contest that fact and I think those women do need help building self-esteem. I just don't think that building self-esteem should be the major focus of Women's Ministry and I fear that a lot of the focus has become just that.

I think we have become overly concerned how people are going to feel that we end up tiptoeing around them. Our message ends up becoming "feel better", "you're okay", "you are a good girl" and we forget about focusing on Christ.

As a result our teaching and outreach gets watered down. We only concentrate on the sweet and loving aspects of the Bible. We get far away from ever mentioning sin. We end up not encompassing the whole of God's Word in how we teach and how we manage our women's ministry activities.

I just think there are better ways to build self-esteem than just hurling a bunch of mantras and sayings at people. If we go over to Titus chapter 2 we see so many things that can help in this area. It talks there of teaching all those different things that we are to teach *other women*.

What I've noticed in working with women is that when we really start teaching these things that self-esteem builds up in our women. This list of things in this passage of Titus all revolve around knowledge, skills, and how to live. Those are the things that when we get a handle on them, our confidence builds.

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Titus 2:3-5

Have you ever noticed that just when someone learns to cook how much confidence that can build? Ever see someone get their finances under control? It opens up a whole new world to them. Skills and knowledge can boost a person.

When we start learning to do and be what is all contained in Titus 2, it can have a great impact on our self-esteem. We start being wise. We start learning to keep our homes. We start learning to love our husbands and family. We increase our kindness. We increase our obedience to God. That can turn us into some well-rounded women.

Look how when our faith grows we become stronger in the Word and how that can propel our purpose in life. If we would just work at learning and growing as Christians we could forget about the mantras. With Christ's help we can become confident Christian women.