



STAND

A 5-DAY DEVOTIONAL FOR
LEADING & LIVING AUTHENTICALLY

NICOLE O. SALMON

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INTRODUCTION

The marketplace can sometimes be a challenging space to integrate your faith without being labelled as a “Bible thumper,” or compromising your convictions. Wherever our platform of influence is, we are there to be a representation of the Kingdom, a reflection of our heavenly Father, and to leave our spaces in a better state than we found them. God’s Spirit lives inside us, and as a result, no person, project, or even physical space should be the same after we have come in contact with it. The same Spirit who spoke the world into existence and raised Jesus from the dead lives in me, and He lives in you, too. The concept is both energizing and frightening, and I want you to be cognizant of it, and to walk in it, *every day*.

You and I were never instructed to draw attention to our own greatness, which is really borrowed anyways. But true moments of success emerge when, every now and then, someone pays you a compliment, sings your praises, and asks “How on Earth did you do that?” And BOOM, there it is, your chance to point them to the source. Running a covert evangelistic campaign in your workplace is perhaps one way to fulfill the great commission; however, it’s not how I have been gifted to have impact. My areas of giftedness—exhortation, creative strategy, coaching, facilitation, and prophetic discernment—show up when I do. It shows up in the boardroom while I’m facilitating performance management sessions. It shows up in the way I parent, the way I walk out my partnership with my husband, and it even shows up when I’m getting my nails done. It is in those spirit-filled moments that we gain the invited opportunity to share Jesus. After all, they did ask the money question, “How did you do that?” And the answer is always “Jesus.”

Now I’m not suggesting you “name drop” and leave people hanging. What I am proposing is that our transformed and authentically lived lives should inspire questions. Questions that are not ignited by entry

level identifiers like how we dress, or our “Jesus saves” bumper sticker. But as Spirit-filled believers we have been gifted and shaped uniquely to fit that big, God-shaped hole in the earth. So stop showing up as someone else. Not only does the world miss out on God when you’re not authentic, but it’s also too exhausting not being yourself. Wherever you are on the journey to understanding your gifts, abilities, or leadership style, your gifts will emerge when you master the art of showing up as your authentic self. No pretense, no desire to impress or to be what people desire you to be. Just be the you that God created, with your unique blend of gifts and unique temperament—introverted or extroverted, sensing or intuition, thinker or feeler (*Meyers Briggs Temperament Inventory*), just show up.

And so perhaps you are right where I began my journey to authentic living. In a boxy business suit, wearing a pair of heels that kill your feet, trying to be a leader, of course, (insert your own “trying to be” here _____). Wearing other people’s expectations, and twisted expectations of my own, trying to find my place in life, buried beneath a body count of versions of myself that didn’t quite fit, I bellowed out to the audience of pseudo silhouettes of myself, “Would the real me please STAND UP!” And out she emerged, awkwardly, with one foot in front of the other, caring less and less about what people wanted from her, and more and more focused on what God wanted in her, my true, powerful, authentic self. Join me and millions of other women as we answer the call to lead and live authentically. The next five days will refresh and revitalize your confidence to live and lead authentically.

au·then·tic·i·ty: Authenticity is not a VIP pass to being ignorant, arrogant, or unapologetic for rude and crude behaviour. The authentic Christian leader is on a continual path towards discovering and living their renewed identity in Christ, daily.

STAND

DAY I

DAY 1: WOULD THE REAL ME PLEASE STAND UP!

“Eustace was a boy who was so awful and nasty that he turned into an ugly and evil dragon. Then he met Aslan, who represents Christ. And Aslan changed him from a dragon into a fine young man. At first Eustace tried to change himself by scratching and peeling off layers of his dragon skin. But for every layer that came off, another layer of wrinkled, scaly skin appeared underneath. Finally, Aslan stepped up to the job. With one painful swipe of his powerful claws, the lion cut to the heart of Eustace’s dragon flesh and peeled it away, and Eustace the boy stepped out...” (C.S. Lewis, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*).

THERE EXISTS AN INTENSE TUG OF WAR BETWEEN
WHO GOD SAYS WE ARE AND THE WICKED, SINFUL
VERSION OF OURSELVES

Do you ever feel like Eustace? I do. Quite often actually. Scripture instructs us to “set an example for the believers, in our speech and conduct” (1 Timothy 4:12 NIV), and yet there exists an intense tug of war between who God says we are and the wicked, sinful version of ourselves that rears its ugly head a bit more frequently than we’d prefer. So would the real me please stand up? Am I that deflated creature who seems to be losing the battle most days? Or am I the victorious warrior who has the ability to rise to the challenge and do what makes me weak in the knees? And how on Earth do I decipher between the two?

“For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.”
(Hebrews 4:12)

With one painful swipe of his powerful claws, the lion cut to the heart of Eustace's dragon flesh and peeled it away, and Eustace the boy stepped out. Today God wants to peel away the layers of fear, insecurity, and egocentric hang-ups so that the real and authentic you can step out.

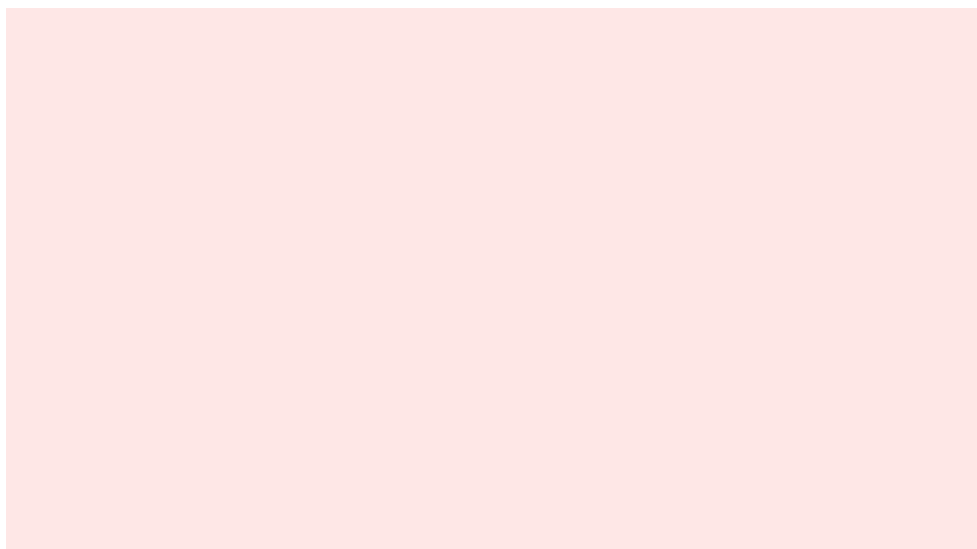
A THOUGHT TO PONDER

I am good enough. Today, right where I am, and until I become all the beautiful things I desire to see in my future, I can still change, shift, and impact from the platform I've been given. Even on broken, imperfect pieces.

TODAY'S PRAYER CHALLENGE

Dear God, I know it's a painful process, but I need your Word to cut to the heart of who I am. I am tired of trying to appear perfect, and I am asking you to take me through the process of being perfected. In the name of your Son, Jesus, I pray. Amen.

I ADMIT THAT I AM INSECURE ABOUT



STAND

DAY II

DAY II: I NEED TO GIVE THIS SOME THOUGHT

Remember the childhood adage “Speak only when you’re spoken to”? I’d like to reframe it in a less silencing way. Your voice is valuable and should not be taken lightly. Whether in the workplace, in your marriage, or in your home, you will continually have to navigate when to speak and when to remain silent. Both are equally viable postures to take, and both will require you to be sensitive to the voice of God as He gently nudges you into action, or inaction in many instances.

WORDS ARE WAY TOO COSTLY

So speak when you’re spoken to. In other words, speak when you sense God’s divine timing and inspiration. You don’t always have to have something to say. This will take some practice. You cannot afford to be hotheaded, hiding behind passion, drive, and emotions as excuses for flying off the handle. Words are way too costly.

“Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.” (Proverbs 17:28)

There is nothing wrong with deferring a conversation or decision to give it the time, prayer, and reflection it needs. In fact, there is no dishonour in saying, “I don’t have the answer right now,” or “I need to give this some thought.” As a leading lady, stand your ground and do not allow yourself to be bullied into snap decisions that you have not reached a sound resolve on. *“Do you see someone who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for them” (Proverbs 29:20)*. I recognize we are not always afforded the time we need, but what we cannot afford is the cost of not paying attention to God’s still, gentle voice.

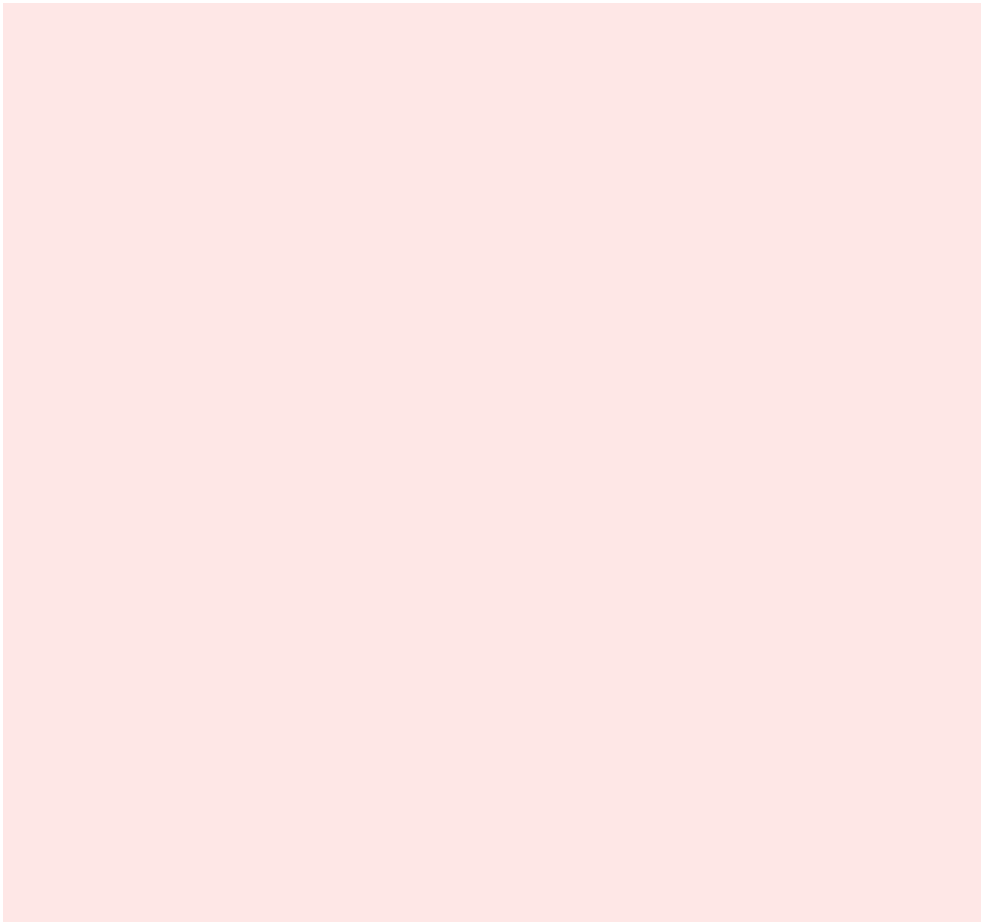
A THOUGHT TO PONDER

Listen liberally, and speak as though your words are food and there is an international famine.

TODAY'S PRAYER CHALLENGE

Dear God, help me to develop the discipline to weigh my words, the discernment to wait on your timing, and the wisdom to know when not to speak at all. I recognize I may be driven by the desire to appear right. Forgive me, and heal that hidden bit of insecurity so I can lead with integrity and not be driven by insecurity. Amen.

I WILL WAIT ON GOD'S DIRECTION FOR



STAND

DAY III

DAY III: NO

Our value systems as a society have become an insatiable medley of targets, profit margins, and a splash of what's in it for me. And the outcome? A generation that has the highest reported cases of depression, isolation, and anxiety we have ever seen. Employee assistance programs are in overload, sick leaves are unmanageable, and turnover rates in viable positions are at their highest.

My diagnosis is that we are making milestone movements in technology and the economy, but placing tombstones on our true capital, human beings. In essence, guard cannot be replaced. If you desire at all to build a sustainable life and leave a legacy of generational wealth and wellness, add to your vocabulary the word that most infants learn right after mastering "Dada," and that word is "No."

THE LONELY ROAD OF UPRIGHT OPPOSITION IS
SEEKING NEW TRAVELLERS

Have you ever been a part of a discussion where the entire crowd is revved up about an idea that is headed in the wrong direction? Have you ever been seated around a table while someone's character is being unjustly ripped to shreds? Have you ever stood in earshot of oppressive, racist, and discriminatory decision making? Have you ever missed an opportunity to say, "I don't agree," when the quorum was asked, "So is everyone okay with that?" The lonely road of upright opposition is seeking new travellers.

I absolutely love the story of Esther. She was a simple woman who gained a very influential and coveted position. A decision was made by the higher-ups that would have a devastating impact on her community. She could've chosen to remain silent on the issue and

enjoy the perks of her new role. However, she put her prominent position in jeopardy and, in her famous words, made the declaration, “If I perish, I perish, but I must see the king” (Esther 4:7). It was literally life or death. The king didn’t have an open-door policy. Going in to see the king uninvited was a suicide mission. Esther mobilized a team of like-minded women to pray and fast with her. Consequently, Esther’s upright opposition saved a nation.

Saying no may sound like, “I’d like to challenge that decision,” or “I’m not comfortable with this conversation,” or “I can’t support this in good conscience.” No is not ignorant resistance. You may not be called to lead the next civil rights movement, but a woman of distinction has the courage to say no when it is unpopular, unconventional, inconvenient, and preserves people over profit.

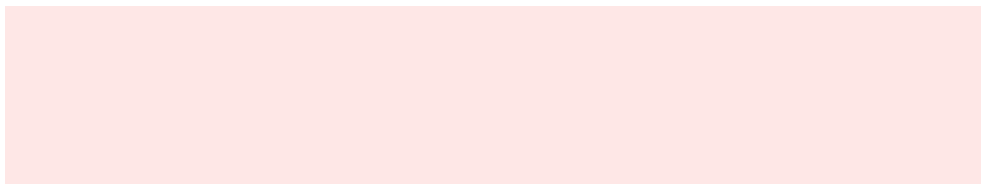
A THOUGHT TO PONDER

Doing what is popular will bring you fans. Doing what is right will bring you favour. Could it be that, like Esther, you are in the position you are in “*for such a time as this*”? (Esther 4:14)

TODAY’S PRAYER CHALLENGE

Dear God, I recognize that at work, or at home, you are counting on me to take an upright stand to preserve what is valuable and to leave a worthy legacy. Please grant me the courage and boldness to speak when it is unfavourable and to make choices that are driven with people as the priority. Amen.

I SENSE GOD LEADING ME TO STAND UP FOR



STAND

DAY IV

DAY IV: IT TAKES TWO

I am constantly comforted by a certain trend that I've discovered. I hope you will find consolation in it too. *God does not choose the most likely to succeed.* With all the public blunders I've made, why on Earth would God choose me to help lead other women to a place of victory and fulfillment? Because I need Him. We all need Him. And every time we accomplish something great, occupy a space we have no business being in, or win when the odds were pointing towards an epic fail, we are reminded that if it were solely dependent on raw talent, many of the world's most successful people that we quote and read books about would still be living in obscurity.

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus"
(Philippians 1:6).

God has placed raw, unfinished, imperfect potential in you, and every day it is being perfected, nurtured to maturity. As we encounter hard brushes with life's rough places, they are smoothing out our own rough patches, if we let them.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A SUCCESS TO BE A
SUCCESS

Do you know that a large percentage of people who occupy high profile jobs had no idea what they were doing when they started? I'm not implying that half of the workforce is illiterate, but what they have over you in this moment is the understanding that you don't have to be a success to be a success. *He who began a good work in you will perfect it.*

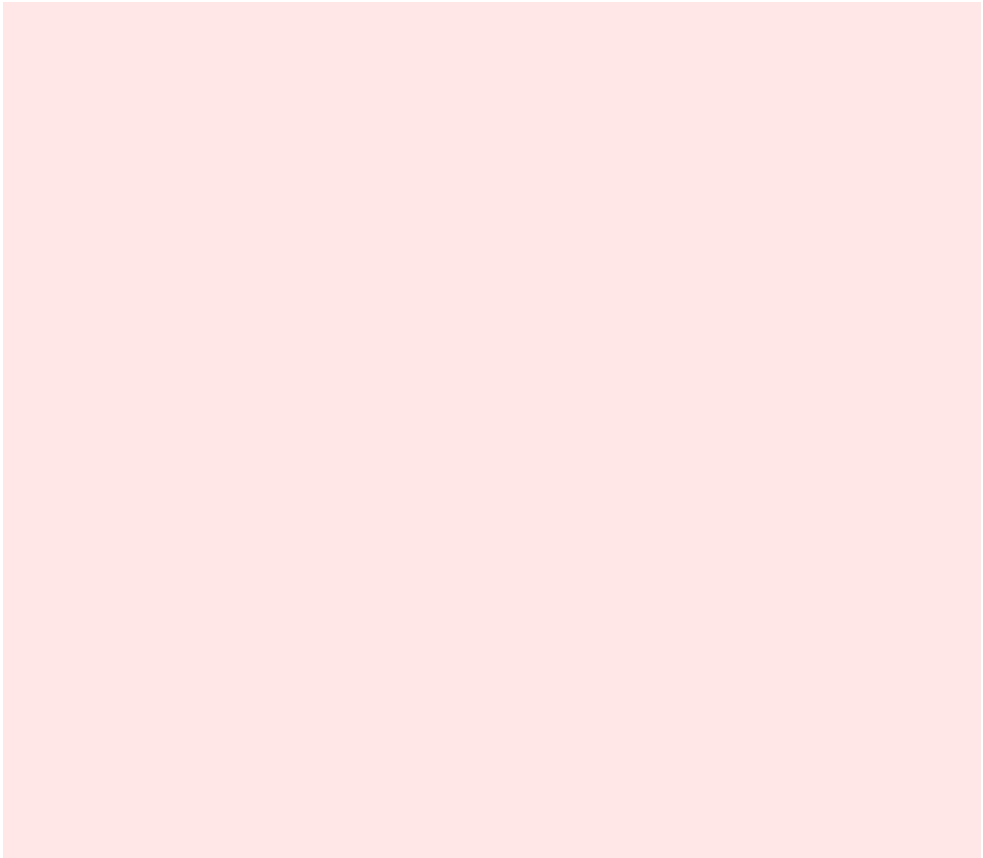
A THOUGHT TO PONDER

God is responsible for completing what He has started. When He involves me, it is an invitation to partnership and an affirmation that I am the one for the job.

TODAY'S PRAYER CHALLENGE

Dear God, I surrender to you in this moment. I am so grateful for the opportunity to walk in partnership with you. You are the source of my ingenuity, every brilliant idea, and my ultimate success. Help me over every hurdle of insecurity, so I will see myself through your eyes, daily. Amen.

WITH GOD'S HELP I WILL ACCOMPLISH



STAND

DAY V

DAY V: THE YO-YO EFFECT

I have the privilege of being surrounded by some amazingly talented and brilliant women. The world is not short of them. Through social media, we have exposure to countless examples of excellence, and we can follow snap shots of the day-to-day life of great thought leaders and world changers. How equally empowering and intimidating at the same time. Whenever someone's gift is in full shine, it looks effortless, airbrushed, and can sometimes leave us feeling inadequate in the wake of her excellence.

HIGHS AND LOWS ARE A TYPICAL PART OF LIFE'S RHYTHM

We can learn a lot from the lives of others, but our most perfect example is the very life of Christ. When we become consumed with what's trending and drawn into the images of perfection that have been filtered and edited for our viewing, it creates a yo-yo effect. One day you're up and confident, the next day you're down and depressed. Highs and lows are a typical part of life's rhythm; however, we have to build on something far more solid than the lifestyle of the rich and famous.

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”
(Matthew 7:24–27 NASB)

We don't find our identity by looking to others. We find it by looking into the face of God. His consistent message is, "You've got this, and I've got you." When you find your focus and confidence in flux, go back to the original script. What has God given you to do? What unique strategy has He given you to accomplish it? The word that gave you the courage to step out is the same word that will give you the confidence to keep going.

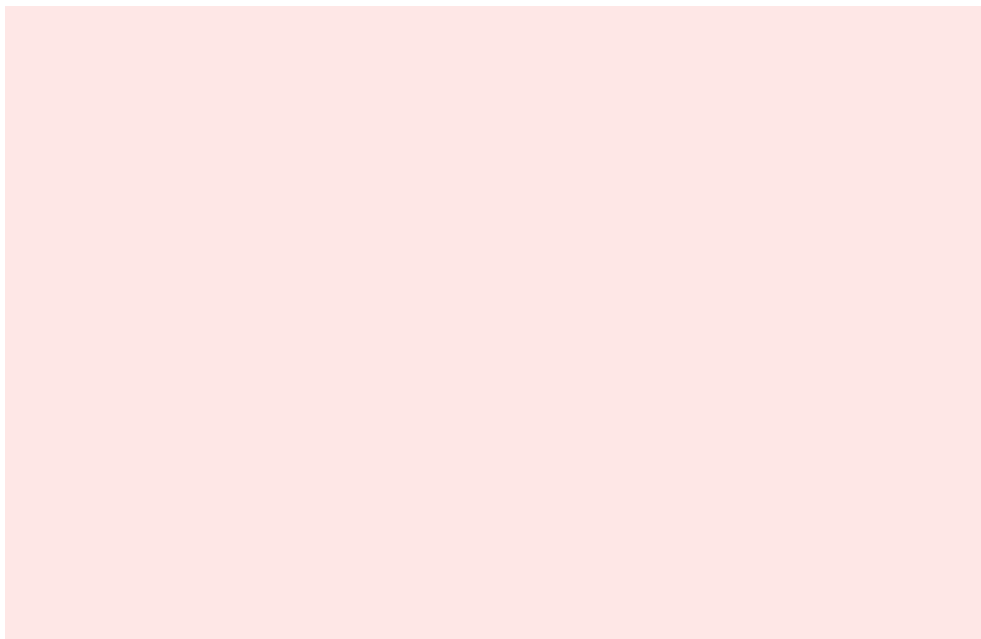
A THOUGHT TO PONDER

I am someone's example of greatness.

TODAY'S PRAYER CHALLENGE

Dear God, your Word was powerful enough to move me out and set me in motion. Keep moving me forward and give the courage to stand, in Jesus' name. Amen.

5 THINGS THAT MAKE ME STAND OUT



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

NICOLE O. SALMON

LEADERSHIP & LIFESTYLE COACH

"BE YOU.
IT'S THE MOST COURAGEOUS THING YOU CAN DO!"

Over the past decade, my personal ministry has taken me across the country and I am humbled each time I am given the opportunity to minister as a conference speaker and workshop facilitator.

Before stepping into full-time-purpose and launching my own coaching firm, I worked in the not-for profit sector for over 15 years, specifically with organizations serving communities experiencing marginality. After many years of front line work God opened the door for me to move into a management role providing oversight to a portfolio of several diversely funded skills development programs.

As a certified life skills coach and a personality dimensions level III trainer, my reflective coaching techniques, coupled with my one-to-one and group facilitation sessions, has led scores of professionals and organizations alike to a place of lasting success and high-level efficiency. Due to my unique combination of expertise, I am blessed to have emerged as a sought after keynote speaker and panelist in many corporate circles.

I have a family. And they are my first ministry. I am a proud mother of five (that wasn't a typo lol). Four ogers and one princess. A beautiful, loud, and never dull blended family of seven. Together with my husband and partner in crime Evon, we live a full and exciting life in Brampton, Ontario.

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