



Conclusion

Now that you know the 10 truths . . . what will do with them?

When my daughter was in first grade, she reached a milestone: she mastered the monkey bars on her school playground.

When I picked her up that afternoon, she jumped in the car with a huge grin. She was so proud of herself, and so was I. As she shared details of her accomplishment, revealing how scared she was because she didn't think she could do it, I realized the life applications.

In kindergarten, she couldn't make it past the second monkey bar. She got so frustrated she quit trying. But as her first-grade friends began mastering the bars, her interest was rekindled. Watching them have fun inspired her to give the bars another shot.

Before she started, she looked to the end of the monkey bars.

Noticing the distance made her sick to her stomach. "When you're not doing it, you're just thinking about it, and that's when you get scared," she told me. But as she pushed through that fear, she grabbed the first bar. Then she grabbed the second bar. This is where her self-doubt kicked in because she'd never made it to the third bar before.

Once again, she looked ahead to the end of the monkey bars. Once again, her fear returned.

"Then I realized something I never did before," she told me, "that I need to try my best instead of giving up and dropping." It took a big burst of courage, but she stretched out her arm and reached for the third monkey bar—and made it!

Overcoming this obstacle was the turning point. With her fear gone, she swung to the end, propelled by sudden confidence. She kept thinking, *I can't believe I just did that! I can't believe I just did that! I CAN'T BELIEVE I JUST DID THAT!*

From that third monkey bar on, she had a great time. She spent the rest of recess doing the bars over and over again.

Far too often in life, we let fear hold us back. Like my daughter stuck at the second monkey bar, we venture no further than what feels safe. We look too far ahead, counting the obstacles between us and our goal, and get sick to our stomach. And as our self-doubt kicks in, past failures come to mind. We want to quit already because we think we've reached our limit.

But through Christ, all things are possible (Philippians 4:13). And when we push through fear with strength from Him, we find a freedom in serving God that is exhilarating and

life-changing. We look back and can't believe what we accomplished. As we reach the end of one goal, we want another run. Because now that we know the feeling of being propelled out of our comfort zone and into God's territory, we're hooked.

Keep in mind that the joy of serving God often comes *after* an obstacle is conquered. It is obstacles, after all, that build your Christian muscles and strengthen you for next time. So when you're stuck at the second monkey bar, tested in a moment of weakness, don't expect elation. The elation comes once you *survive* the moment and look back with a sense of accomplishment.

I didn't think I could stand the awkwardness of being the one person not drinking at the tailgate party . . . but I did it!

I didn't think I could face the school bully . . . but I spoke up!

I didn't think I could keep from falling for my ex-boyfriend's charms as he tried to use me again . . . but I stood firm!

Your greatest power lies in the small choices you make each day. Whether you choose the world's way or God's way makes all the difference in the kind of life you'll have.

A life that serves God serves *you* well too. It leads you to the water your soul is thirsting for. You'll still make mistakes sometimes. You'll still fall off the monkey bars and have to start over. But the beauty of God is that He's a God of grace and second chances. His power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Despite your flaws and limitations, He wants to use you. And through Christ working in you, you can reach your hand out with confidence and stretch beyond your limits.



So open up your heart and mind to God's will. Listen for His call. Use the 10 Ultimate Truths as guideposts to live an intentional Christian life, remembering what we covered on these relevant issues:

1. Popularity
2. Confidence
3. Reputation
4. Interacting with boys
5. Self-worship
6. Perseverance
7. Patience
8. Image
9. Inner beauty
10. Self-talk

Jesus exists in the present. So when you get scared on life's monkey bars, don't measure the distance to the end, because that overwhelms you. Don't dwell on your past failures, because that discourages you. Instead, focus on the bar in front of you. Think about the one choice you're called to make *right now*. Get through this hurdle before thinking about the next one. And when you encounter a moment of weakness, draw strength from God and what you know is right.

As you live for Him, you'll encourage others. They'll see your joy and peace and want that too. Like my daughter watching her friends ace the monkey bars, they'll be inspired to take

a chance. They'll face their fears once again, tapping into a newfound courage.

Come together with girls in faith and share the 10 Ultimate Truths. As iron sharpens iron, you will sharpen each other (Proverbs 27:17). What will result is a better you, a better them, and a better world at large.

There is freedom on the other side of fear and hope on other side of doubt. One great run with God is enough to get you hooked. Trust me on this. I promise it's the truth.