

I am...

I am _____. The word(s) that fill that blank can speak life or death in a matter of seconds. This year, more regularly than I would like to admit, my words about myself have been more damaging than life-giving. I have placed immense pressure on my shoulders to make 2020 “a year of new beginnings, a fresh start, a pause to all of the things that were on my plate that should not have been, [and] a chance to start over.”

Those statements sound incredible, yet each time I read another post, watched another video, had another conversation about “fresh starts,” my expectations for myself grew higher and higher. Each day, I faced a mountain of expectations. Each day that I didn’t make a step towards a new me, I fell deeper and deeper into disappointment.

- I am a failure.
- I am never going to measure up.
- I am not worthy of the position that God has placed me in.
- I am afraid.
- I am unsure.
- I am a disappointment.

These are all honest, raw, and real thoughts that have made their way into my head over the course of this year. As I type this, I can look at these statements and confidently say that they are untrue. I could slap a Band-Aid on it and say, “Meredith, it’s silly you think you are a failure.” Well, it wasn’t silly when a memory reel of my past failures played in my mind. That was a real moment where I felt defenseless and alone. This is the work of the enemy. This is exactly what he wants to happen. **The enemy fills us**

with lies to make us accept defeat. The Bible tells us in 1 Peter 5:8-9, “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” Satan will do anything to keep us from the love and freedom found in Christ.

Verse nine continues: “Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” Resist him. Stand firm in the faith, not in isolation, but together, knowing that the enemy is after anyone moving toward the plans God has for us.

Our Girls’ Ministries theme for 2020 and 2021 of “I AM...” is very fitting for this time. In Exodus 3, Moses encounters the burning bush, and God lets him know that He has heard the cries of the Israelites in Egyptian captivity. He instructs Moses to lead them to freedom. During this conversation, Moses voices some of the same concerns a leader might have today.

EXODUS 3:11-15

“But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell

them?”

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’”

“This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.”

Do you realize that this last verse is speaking to YOU? **GOD IS STILL I AM.** We are part of the generations that shall call him I AM, and He is sending you to disciple girls in a time of uncomfortable change, stress, and loss. Some of you may respond like Moses did saying, “Who am I to do this?” When you examine Exodus 3:11-15 more closely, you notice there is the good news that He is with us, and He is with you today. God was fully aware of the circumstances the Israelites were facing in captivity. He had heard their cries, and He wanted Moses to help fulfill His plan of leading His people from captivity to freedom.

God is still aware of what is happening today. He sees us right where we are. He knows the giants we face, physically, mentally, and spiritually. He is with us. The girls you serve and lead may have their own captivity they are facing. They need to realize there is freedom in I AM. And in this freedom, there is love from which they can never be separated.

“There is freedom in I AM, and in this freedom, there is love from which they can never be separated.”

Our key verse this year is found in **ROMANS 8:38-39:**

“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This journey Moses set out on was full of challenges, but there was never a moment when he was separated from God. We saw God’s mighty hand at work through the Israelites, and we know the rest of His story. Your story may have its own set of challenges. We don’t know what we will face on our journey, but we can be confident that the I AM will be with us, equipping us for every challenge we face. 2020 has been packed with ups and downs, but how exciting is it that we can continue teaching the good news of God’s big story to girls all over this world? I AM’s great love and redemption for mankind continues from generation to generation!

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