7 Myths That Keep You Stuck

Robyn Dykstra
WANT TO HAVE A LIFE OF SIGNIFICANCE? DON’T LET THESE MYTHS SABOTAGE YOUR PROGRESS.

When it comes to experiencing a life of deep meaning and satisfaction, one or more of these seven myths can sabotage your future. I know, because not only have I believed them myself, but in decades of ministry I’ve watched them hinder countless women from finding real purpose, lasting joy, and personal significance.

Do any of these myths sound familiar to you?
MY PAST IS SO MESSY. NO ONE COULD EVER LOVE ME.

I fell for this one hard, which is why I’m starting with it. I thought because I’d spent years as walking pornography—working as a Playboy Bunny and club dancer, using and being used by men—that I was damaged goods. I believed I had to settle for whatever crumbs life handed me because God could never love me. And he was going to make me pay for my past.

Wise women in my new church wouldn’t hear of it. “God loves you just as you are, right where you are,” they assured me. “No one is perfect! Jesus died for all sin so everyone would know they are loved and accepted by God.”

“But you don’t know what I’ve done!” I whispered.

“It doesn’t matter. You are so loved by God—no matter your past—that he sacrificed his only Son for you.”

I had only to accept his loving gift of forgiveness.

YOU ARE LOVED—AS IS.

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16–17 NIV)
**Myth 2**

**I CAN NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF.**

It’s one thing to be guilty of stealing paper clips from work or driving 10 mph over the speed limit. It’s entirely different to harbor a dark secret or deep regret, and I found that dwelling on my most haunting sins, trying to hide what I’d done, and being unable to make restitution only brought more shame. My sins were just too big for me to forgive.

“How do I get through this?” I asked my mentor.

“God has forgiven you, but have you forgiven yourself?”

“I think so...maybe...most of the time.”

“That’s the problem. You haven’t. When it comes to yourself, why do you have a higher standard for forgiveness than God has? If he’s forgiven you, you can forgive yourself. Stand right here, look me in the eye, and say, ‘I forgive myself for...whatever it is.’”

It took several attempts, but I managed to coax it out. Instantly, I felt better. Now whenever the ghosts of the past haunt me, I remind myself that my sins are never too big for God—or me—to forgive. I don’t have to listen to those old taunts.

To be completely free of the shame after God has forgiven you, you need to forgive yourself. Not doing so keeps you imprisoned, as though you’re still wearing a ball and chain shackled to your leg. You can’t move in freedom until you free yourself of the weight.

**YOU CAN FORGIVE YOURSELF, JUST AS GOD HAS FORGIVEN YOU.**

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

(1 John 1:9 NIV)
I’LL NEVER GET OUT FROM UNDER THIS MESS I’VE MADE.

After confessing my long list of foolishness, decadence, and disobedience, I felt much better. But mistakes have consequences—with no cosmic eraser. How could my life ever be redeemed?

What makes God so godly is that, instead of micromanaging our every move and thought, he gives us free will to disregard his guidance and make all the mistakes we choose. When we finally come to our senses, say we’re sorry, change our minds about making those lousy choices (repent), and ask him to forgive us, however, he does the most extraordinary God thing—he redeems!

God exchanges our old lives for new ones. That is, he takes all our broken pieces and causes them to work together for good, even using the story of our brokenness and mess to deliver his message of redemption to others.

It may take time, but with God’s help and love, you can overcome.

YOU ARE REDEEMED.

Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits...[he] redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.

(Psalm 103:2, 4 NIV)
I DON’T DESERVE GOOD THINGS.

When your past is polluted with lousy choices and your present with their consequences, it’s easy to believe you’ve used up all your chances—that it’s too late to dream, much less hope, and that according to the universe’s balance sheet, the bad outweighs the potential for anything good to come.

I said yes to lots of things I should have said no to. Before and even after reconciling my differences with Jesus, I waffled. I faltered. I backslid. I knew what I was doing was against God’s will, that it would compromise my witness, and I was modeling behavior I would never condone. Yet I succumbed to temptation.

How could God bless me when I didn’t deserve it?

Maybe you recognize this pattern in your life too?

God knew I would need lots and lots of do-overs. As much as I want to be perfect, I’m a work in progress and need a Savior who will exchange my garbage for his glory and remove the shame and stigma of my wrong choices. And every time he does, he leaves me with a clean slate. Whenever I make a misstep or fall short, I can have a do-over.

Proverbs 13:12 says, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life (NIV). You can have do-overs too, starting with giving God control. Part of the good news of Jesus Christ is that a fresh start is available every time you need one, and that the Lord wants to bless you.

YOU ARE A NEW CREATION.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!
(2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV)
Myth 5
I’M ALL ALONE. IT’S ME AGAINST THE WORLD.

Sometimes we can feel as though it’s just us against the world. We feel alone even when we’re in a crowded room, or feelings of despair can grow into epic proportions. And the lonelier we feel, the more we can isolate ourselves.

When my man left me with two little boys to raise, an old farmhouse in the middle of restoration, and an acre of yard to maintain, I felt completely overwhelmed. I wanted to curl up in a ball and sleep until the rapture. But I had children to feed and chase and snuggle, so I got up and did what I could.

God’s peace fell on me, letting me off the hook for many tasks. So what if the grass got a little high? So what if crackers and watermelon constituted dinner? So what if sheets weren’t changed for a month? The world would not stop turning. My overwhelm turned to peace.

Then God sent a team of people to fill in the gaps for me. Some came with chicken salad, some raked leaves, some took my boys to the circus, some just sat with me. I was never alone, even when it felt like I was. God was with me as a comforting Spirit, and he was with me as his people spent time with me.

God is with you. Listen for his whispers of assurance. Watch for the ways he activates his people for you. Wait for his intervention.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.

(Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV)
Myth 6

GOD IS AGAINST ME

When life is upside down and inside out because of circumstances you never thought you’d face, or even the result of decisions you made that got out of hand, it’s easy to think God has closed his eyes to you. You ask, How could this happen? Where was God? Why doesn’t he help me?

I was widowed twice in four years. The cause of death for one husband was a heart attack at age thirty-nine, and for the other a plane crash at age forty-one. That felt like too much, and I’m sure events or circumstances in your life have felt like too much—or too many or too often—causing you to think perhaps God was making you pay for your foolishness.

That is never the case.

When I was taking flight lessons, I was slow to learn how to make the airplane do what I wanted it to do. I often called out in terror for my instructor to do something to avoid a collision with the ground. But sometimes when that happened, he did nothing. He waited for me to remember what I already knew to do, or to figure it out. Working through the crisis cemented the lesson in my permanent memory. He knew what was best for me and when to intervene. He’d say, “Robyn, I’ll let this aircraft get out of your control, but I will never let it get out of mine.”

God is not against you when your life gets out of your control, and it’s never out of his. You can trust him to do what’s best for you. Sometimes he rescues, sometimes he whispers a way to correct the path of destruction, and sometimes he lets you work out a solution so you’ll remember it forever.

YOU CAN TRUST GOD.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5–6 NIV)
NOTHING WILL EVER CHANGE. IT’S ALWAYS GOING TO BE LIKE THIS.

I remember the day I looked in the mirror and thought, This is it. This is the way it’s going to be for the rest of my life, and I hate it.

It had been about five months since I’d buried my man. My boys were eight and five, and I was alone, overwhelmed, and profoundly sad. No more casseroles were being dropped off, no more condolence cards were delivered to my mailbox, and no one eased my mind about being alone for the rest of my life. Everywhere I went, I was the third, fifth, or seventeenth wheel. Everyone seemed to be part of a couple. All my cheerfulness ebbed away, and I could see only desperate loneliness as I waited to die and join my man in heaven. I was at rock bottom.

Grief put me there, but maybe for you it’s feeling hopeless about an addiction or a broken relationship or insurmountable debt. Whatever it is, there isn’t a way out from under the heavy weight of despair…but God. Those might be my two favorite words: but God.

Even in the direst despair, know that God loves you, is with you, and has a plan for you. When it seems like all is lost, recall how God was faithful to provide or comfort or intervene in the past. Review his character traits as you consider your circumstances, and stand firm on those traits. Then move forward with fresh confidence in God, knowing he is already at work, making a way, making a plan.

YOU HAVE HOPE AND A FUTURE.

I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)
If any of these myths have kept you from discovering your real purpose, maintaining lasting joy, or realizing your personal significance, now is the time to make shifts in your thinking.

HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THESE MYTHS KEPT YOU STUCK?

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