



Awake & Arise

2010 was the best year of my life thus far! It was a season when life made perfect sense. There were days I remember thinking that I needed to pinch myself to see if it was real. It was that good. My days were filled with purpose, I never dreaded Mondays, I love Mondays because I love every moment of what I did with my life. My husband and I were leading our own church, our home was always filled with people, food, laughter and love. We had a group of teenagers that practically lived with us, in fact one of them ended up being our son-in-law! It was a beautiful and rich life and I thought it would last forever. But it didn't.

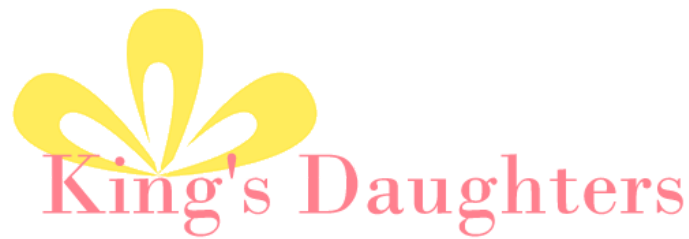
Jump ahead a few years later. We no longer had a church and the painful years ahead almost ripped our family apart. I can't tell you the details, it would take too long and it would expose those involved and I don't want to do that, but I will share a glimpse of my perspective of this season.

It was a beautiful warm summers day. A Sunday. I sit in my garden soaking up the pleasant sounds of birds chirping and admiring the garden that was bursting with colour and life. At the same time I contemplate the dark place that I find myself in. On the outside, to anyone else, my life is fine, I lack nothing and have all that a modern woman could desire. A loving husband, beautiful children, our own home and a car, food to eat when hungry, clean water to drink and so forth. But my struggle is a spiritual one, one that few would understand. I'm not backslidden, quite the opposite, I'm leading a Godly life as best I can and love Jesus with every fibre of my being. The dark place is because of church.

I love church. Any church. All churches. I just love the body of Christ. Most of my journey in life was rooted in church one way or another. I discovered my identity at church. It was at church where I realise my gifts and talents. Church helped me raise my children when I was a young mother and was always there for me in good times and bad. I always had a home to run to whether to celebrate or cry. Church was the closest I could get to experience God except for those special moments in my private devotions. Church was a very important part of my life so not being in a church by choice was the most painful and confusion thing for me. In many ways it seemed that the devil had won that round.

Tears streamed down my face. "God I am so sorry about this. I don't know how this happened. I feel so guilty but I don't know what to do about it either."

Church had become a source of unbelievable hurt and I couldn't face going to church. I felt so alone because no one could ever understand it. How could they, I couldn't even



understand what I was going through. Disagreements about church was even causing division and strife into my marriage and home. I was completely alone.

I spent about 6 months not going to church.

"I am one of them now, aren't I God. One of those people that I could never understand, in fact the very people I judged without realising it. I am a Christian who doesn't go to church. I never understood people who said that they met you in their garden and not at church or that they went to TV church. Well, now here I am doing both. Meeting you in the garden and watching church on TV with my children."

The had been knocked off course, taken out of the race. The devil was happy and I was miserable.

The apostle Paul summed it up perfectly in Corinthians when he said, "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" - 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

Somehow those words gave me comfort as I realise that it was tough but it was not over. I felt the comfort of the Holy Spirit whisper in my ear that it's ok, I don't need to force myself back to church, he would take my hand and lead me.

And he did. In time, I found the strength to go back to a church that was so big that I could be invisible in many ways. I went to church every Sunday because I knew it was the right thing to do but I feared being asked to serve or get involved in any way, I wasn't ready to jump into all that again. During this season my ministry, King's Daughters, was on a break too. I tried to close it and bury it but little did I know that God had today in mind and so much more.

As you can imagine there is quite a journey to share with many more significant details, but jump ahead with me to a few months ago.

I am in my lovely new church a no longer desired to be invisible. Encounter church is so welcoming and we quickly became a part of the family. God showed Eric and I things very clearly that confirmed that we are to put down roots in Winchcombe and at Encounter church and that it was time to get back to serving in a practical way which we both felt ready to do. One of those areas was to serve in the women's ministry and it occurred to me that King's Daughters still existed and there was no point in starting something new when something quite lovely already existed.



As I wrestled with what to do, when and how I found myself reading through old King's Daughters info. I wrestled with today, the theme, what to call it, how to do it. My confidence has been knocked and doubts crept in. But then something happened.

Each year God gives me a theme for the conference. It's quite random, it can come at any time really. I just suddenly get the theme, title, scripture and even the worship set or part of it. It's like it all downloads into me! At the end of 2015 after our fantastic "He Loves Me" conference, I get the entire theme for the next year, "Awake & Arise" long with the verses, worship songs, etc. Little did I know what darkness lay ahead or that King's Daughters would not meet in 2016 or 2017. Or that I would try and get someone else to take over the ministry entirely while I buried myself in a deep dark hole for quite some time.

As I wrestled with today's theme I decided to go back to my folders from past years and opened the Awake and Arise folder and as I read the words something awoke inside of me. I had felt things I had not felt for years. Something came alive inside of me and I felt King's Daughters arise once again. It hadn't died but only resting. I realised that I first has to Awake and Arise and then I needed to help others Awake and Arise too.

King's Daughters, it's time. You may have been hurt, you may have felt overlooked in ministry, you might feel unqualified or that you can't do anything because you are too young, or too old or too handicapped or inexperienced. If you are here today then I want to declare to you - Awake and Arise. See Jesus putting his hand out towards you right now as he says to you:

"Talitha cumi" which means "little girl arise" in Aramaic. - Mark 5:41

But this isn't the only time Jesus has **stretched out his hand** and told a woman to arise. He did the same to an older woman, Simon's mother-in-law, who was ill.

"And he came and **took her by the hand** and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them." - Mark 1:31

Today I believe Jesus is stretch out his hand to you, both young and old. He wants you to take his hand and awake. Awake from spiritual slumber, awake from illness, awake from hopelessness. Take his hand and awake.

But it doesn't end there, he doesn't just want you to wake up but he wants you to rise up! So take Jesus mighty hand, awake and then arise!



Now what? We awake and arise, ready for service. Let's take a look at the three steps we can take not.

Position - Ready

Who We Are - Identity - King's Daughters

You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God. - 1 Peter 2:9-10

Greek translation:

You are a chosen (favourite) generation (family member), a royal priesthood (fraternity), a holy nation (race or tribe), His own special (purchased) people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God.

You are God's favourite family member, part of a special royal club, a pure and holy tribe, with great value as we were purchased.

Knowing that we are royalty can take us one of two ways. Either we abuse God's grace and favour and use all that he has done for us for our own pleasures and desires. Or. We can understand the weight of being royalty and use it for what it is intended. I love watching TV programs about royalty, I learn so much whilst being entertained. One thing I have noticed is that there is always a sibling who takes their position lightly and another who understands.

Privileges of King's Daughters

There are too many promises in the Bible to even begin to look at the privileges of being a King's Daughter. The best thing to do is to become in love with your Bible. Read it through fresh eyes to see all that many privileges of what we have because of our position as the royal daughters of the king of heaven and earth.

Rights of King's Daughters

As a born again Christian you have the right to eternal life and direct personal access to the Holy Spirit and to God our King. It's awesome if you think about it.

Responsibility of King's Daughters

You are being watched. You have a responsibility to everyone who can see you and to God who sees everything.

Some royalty in the natural live with their claim to privileges and rights but few take responsibility. Being a Christian isn't about naming and claiming all your privileges and rights to make your life



comfortable. I believe God gave us these things to help us with our responsibilities so that we have the tools we need to do a good job.

For example, how many Christians do you know or you have seen who rejoice in Jehovah Jirah their provider whilst sitting on the sofa eating crisps and watching daytime TV and living off of benefits? They struggle financially but it's OK because the Lord will provide. Actually it is the lovely generous people around them that are carrying them because they haven't taken responsibility for what God has for them.

Or on the other extreme, the wealthy in this world that live to accumulate even more whilst claiming that God has blessed them. Yes perhaps God has given them the gift to generate wealth and the lead a lovely extravagant life but have they taken responsibility for what God has for them?

It's not just taking responsibility for financial and material things either. What about time? What about kindness and forgiveness? What about love? Do you acknowledge your privileges and rights as a Christian but not take responsibility?

As I said, I believe God does give us good things both to enjoy but also to equip us for service.

Our Body

Do you want to know the will of God for your life? Have you spent a great deal of time praying, perhaps even fasting, pleading with him to tell you His will for your life? I can tell you right here, right now. Romans 12:1-2 tells us:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable (GREEK: rational) service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

We have a responsibility. It is our reasonable service. It starts with our physical body. Our body matters. In fact, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20,

Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Our body is not our own and yet we treat it like it is and abuse it and don't take care of it. God is asking us to present it to him as a living sacrifice and I imagine he would like it to be in good condition too.

Think about what you do with your hand, where do you go with your feet, what do you see with your eyes, what do you listen to with your ears, what do you put into your stomach, and other parts that I won't mention but you get the picture.



In fact, he also advised us to fast. But we will get into that in a moment as I can really get passionate about this! What are you doing with your body and how are you offering it to him as a living sacrifice? Take responsibility and care for your body because without a healthy body you cannot live out the life he has planned for you. Use your body for His glory. Touch lives with your hands, they are His hands after all. Take time to use your eyes to look at what is good.

Our Mind

The second part that he wants to us to take responsibility for is our mind. We simply cannot think as the world does and believe what the world believes. God knew it would become tricky, especial in these last days, so He even told us how to take care of our mind. He says to renew it to prove his perfect will. The best way to start renewing your mind is again to love your Bible - read it often!

This is the beginning of taking responsibility. Training your body and your mind and then live accordingly taking full responsibility for the mission that he has for you. It won't be easy, in fact He promises it will be tough. You have the following guarantees:

You will live in a constant war zone between your flesh and spirit. - Galatians 5:17

In the world you will have trouble. - John 16:33

Count it all joy when you fall into various trials. - James 1:2

There is a lot of work to do to get into position. It's possible that the world is such a mess because the church simply isn't positioned for battle. But forget about all that is wrong with Christians and today let's choose to position ourselves for battle. Why? Because you will never feel satisfied in this world if you are living for anything else. Nothing on this earth will truly satisfy so let's get the job done so we can go to heaven to be with him, completely spent and ready to get a real reward.

Prepare - Set

What We Do - Battle

*"We do not **wrestle** against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." - Ephesians 6:12-13*

Now we are positioned. Our body and are mind are ready to go to battle.

Eternity starts today. Right here, right now. You have the power to flip the switch and turn on eternal living and stop living for the temporary. We all do it, don't we? It comes easy to and natural to spend our life on the things that don't really matter while living to the kingdom is hard work and doesn't come naturally at all - the flesh is strong and the spirit is often weak. Few have what it takes to pay the price and many fall despite their best efforts.



So what does it mean to live for eternity? In my simple understand it means that we live our life according to the 'rules' of God's kingdom and not earth's rules. That's why we can see the sick healed and the blind see, that's why we can call the dead back to life and cast out demons. The problem is that we are trying to do miracles with earth's rules and so we don't see many and stop believing that they still happen. Miracles are real and can happen here today, in fact I am expecting to see some. But don't worry, if you get on with these three simple steps today you will very quickly start living your life by a different rule book.

Preparation:

Be Still - Find your secret place, develop spiritual disciplines

Most of your battle will **start when you stop**. Someone once said, if the devil can't make you sin he will make you busy. It is in our busyness that we can often miss God completely. Find stillness in your life, what and when does God want to spend time with you? In the early morning, after the children have gone to school, in the evening? Develop a habit of stillness each day. Learn to meditate and quieten all the voices screaming in your head.

Be Silent - Listen for His voice

Once you are still listen. Take time often just to listen or to pray and wait for the answer. Praying on the go is good, you can pray without ceasing as Paul said. Spurgeon was said never to have prayed more than five minutes at a time, but he never went more than five minutes without praying.

However, there is nothing quite like forcing yourself to sit down and pray for half an hour or an hour. It starts out really tough, perhaps you run out of things to pray but once you break through the flesh's comfort zone and into discomfort you suddenly remember how awesome prayer is and you don't want to stop. You must break through that comfort barrier first though. Pray in tongues, pray in English, sing songs, be in His presence and you will encounter Him in the most powerful way and will hear His voice.

Be Obedient - Now you are ready for action

It is at this point that you are ready for action. You will feel refreshed and full. He will guide you every step of the way as long as you are willing to step out. He reached out His mighty hand to you now you need to reach yours out to others.



Proceed - Go

How we do it - Action

By force

“The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” - Matthew 11:12

The Greek word for violence here is *biazō* (bee-ad'-zo) which means to press into like when a city is sieged or when the crowds pressed in to hear Jesus speaking or passively it means to be siezed.

Once you accept Jesus you join a family, the royal family who just happen to also be an army. The devil “does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” - John 10:10 That is is only agenda, if he is not doing one he is doing the other. The rest of the chapter of John 10 goes on to describe how Jesus has come to give us an abundant life by laying down his life for us. His death was a violent one. Jesus sets the tone with the ultimate sacrifice for love. He did this so that we could have an abundant life.

Start violently taking the kingdom by force, it is a battle and we need Christians who are ready to fight. Start by fighting with your own flesh, as this is the greatest enemy. Too often we blame the devil for things when actually we have already done the work for the devil by submitting to our fleshly desired.

Force your body into submission - fast and pray (it's about food!!)

Action:

Own your world. Your world is your sphere of influence. Your everyday ordinary life.

Serve your world. Random acts of kindness, prayer, small things and big things.

Love your world. Love is sacrifice, be willing to lay down your life.

Jesus our example.