



Rise Up and Move: Are You Ready?
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Originally published by Crosswalk.com

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* Wednesday, February 16, 2011

R.I.S.E. God is calling us to rise up and move. Are you ready?

Well, it's that time again: going to my doctor for my regular visit. I simply dread it. I dread hearing from her what I am not doing right. That I am eating way too much fatty foods, not getting enough exercise or enough water. That my blood pressure could come down not to mention my cholesterol. I know she is going to fuss at my weight as she shakes her finger and rolls her eyes.

It was a Tuesday, and I had come the week before for my blood work. I wonder if I could eat a Twinkie now that my blood work has been recorded. I just love Twinkies with that soft yellow cake and white gooey cream inside. But I didn't eat a Twinkie because, well, I've started to make some changes in my life. As much as I wanted a Twinkie, the power it had over me had started to wane. As I sat in the waiting room I was getting anxious, especially dreading the scale. I had told a friend the day before that I was not going to get on the scale. And if they made me I was going to walk out. I mean, I am a grown up and I shouldn't have to get on any scale. She reminded me that the doctor needed those numbers. I was like, "Ugh. Alright, but they had better not tell me what it is. I just don't want to know." It will only depress me.

I then heard my name and started to walk down the long hallway to her office. I was like, "OK, just tell me how bad I am, how much I have failed, I'm ready for it." Then she said something that blew me away. She said Kris, your numbers have really improved since you were here last. I was like, "What?" She ran down each area from how much Vitamin D I had in my body to my liver, my kidneys and so on. She told me that each area was either the same or had improved. She then said, "And on top of this all you lost ten pounds, too." I started to cry. She was like, I have never had a patient cry because she had lost weight. I then, in the power of the Lord, was able to share some of my journey. The journey of RISE.

For some of my readers you may know I have diabetes 2. I have been on insulin for longer than I can remember. My daily life is a series of counting carbs and taking insulin as well as other "preventative" medications for long-term living with this disease. It is my thorn in my side that I have asked the Lord to take from me as well as the rose of fragrance as I have been able to share with so many others due to my disease. Diabetes has not stopped me from living a full life, however, it has limited me in some areas. A year ago I realized my diabetes was out of control. My present doctor had given up on how to treat me. He diagnosed a new insulin that didn't work and as a result, my sugars were very high. For several months I suffered with several side effects. These effects could have killed me if it wasn't for the Lord and so many prayers of others. I switched doctors and my new doctor immediately started to work at making changes in all my meds. Her goal was to get my sugars even, not in a month but over time. As each month passed I saw my numbers go down, more adjustments being made requiring more changes on my part.

Then in the fall, I ran into a friend who has lost a ton of weight. I almost didn't recognize her as she had changed so much. We quickly swapped phone numbers and set up a time to have lunch. I was so curious about what she had done. I figured she must have had that stomach surgery but no, she said, "To be honest Kris, it's taken me four years to lose the weight. But please understand, it's never been just about the weight. It's been about a transformation from the inside out through the power of the Lord." I was like, "OK, I'm listening." She proceeded to share with me a simple acronym. In fact, she didn't know where she got it from. The acronym was RISE. Something easy to remember and apply. RISE stands for:



R: Reduce

I: Increase

S: Substitute

E: Eliminate

She proceeded to tell me that RISE is what all Christians should be doing as God transforms them through the process of sanctification. The only difference is she was very intentional to monitor her steps because for her, it helped her stay focused on target. It allowed her to set goals and see them achieved. For her, being able to look back and see the success of where God has brought her gave her energy and enthusiasm to keep going. So many times God has made huge changes in our lives but we focus on the things that haven't changed or the things we are still struggling with. Through RISE you can measure and allow the Lord to reward you for the steps you have made. She explained it like this:

R: Reduce

Ask yourself what is something in your life that you could reduce that isn't helping you in your walk with God, in your relationships, in your work, etc. Could it be something like how many hours you work or how many Cokes you drink a day or how much television you watch? For me I chose to reduce some of the sugary foods in my life as well as mayo. Not a huge change, but something that I could achieve. I also reduced my work load in that I made more time for family and friends. When my body got tired, I rested more. God would show me the areas that were good but perhaps being over-done, thereby hurting me.

Then we will no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different or because someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth. Instead, we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love (Eph. 4:14-16).

I: Increase

Ask yourself what is something in your life that you could increase that could help you in your walk with God, in your relationships, in your work, etc. Could it be how much time you spend with the Lord, more veggies, more times of sitting and just listening to others? For me I needed to increase physical activity. I really hated exercise so a friend suggested I start walking at least 15 minutes a day. But to make it more fun and less of a chore, talk on the phone while I walk. The clincher was that I should talk to folks that I normally don't have time too ... you know, all those Facebook friends. It worked, and it does make walking that much easier. I also needed to increase healthier food choices when I was given them. Again, nothing huge but they were intentional steps that I could achieve, all with the goal of becoming more like Christ. In becoming more of what God wanted me to be.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18).

S: Substitute

Ask yourself what is something in your life that you could substitute that is helping you in your walk with God, in your



relationships, in your work, etc. Could it be Splenda for real sugar or reading a book instead of watching a TV show, memorizing Scripture over memorizing song lyrics or walking versus driving. For me, one big thing was substituting egg whites for egg yolks due to my cholesterol being too high. With that one change in three months I dropped my cholesterol by 40 points. But even more than food, I need some major areas of change. I needed to substitute anger for thankfulness, my perspective for God's, and fear for trust. This like all the other parts of RISE in that it's a daily choice to seek God in all things.

For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own (Matt. 6:32-34).

E: Eliminate

Ask yourself what is something in your life that you could eliminate that isn't helping you in your walk with God, in your relationships, in your work, etc. Could it be an addiction to shopping or something on your computer. Maybe it's a struggle with a bad attitude or unforgiveness. For me, one thing I eliminated was television. It's not that I don't see it in hotels as I travel or my friend's homes, etc., I just personally don't own one. I use to sit night after night and watch it mindlessly. Between the violence and sexual nature of the shows, to the obsession with power, stuff and body image, the enemy used TV to constantly tell me I would never be rich, pretty, thin or happy enough in this life unless I did this "whatever." My Savior tells me in his Word that I am rich, pretty and thin enough because of what he did on the cross for me, for my sin. No, in this world I am never going to be good enough but because of his death on the cross and his goodness, I have been made complete. My happiness on this earth is not dependent on how many knickknacks I own from QVC or weighing 120 lbs but in who I am in Christ.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart (Heb. 12:13).

Well, my mind started to going a hundred miles an hour. I kept thinking of all the different ways to apply RISE. I got very excited to know that I had been doing RISE all the time in general, but now I could really measure the success. As God continued to change me for his purpose, I could share this with others. RISE could take my witness to the next level. So I asked my friend what is next? She gave me some additional tips that she uses in her life.

1. Get a journal and start recording the areas you are going to apply to RISE. This way you can see the progress you are making as well as know when to add something new.

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you (Jn. 14:26).

2. Pray about the various areas and see what God brings to the forefront to apply RISE. Sure, we all fall short of the glory of God but some things in our lives are causing more damage than others. Sit quiet long enough to hear from God for His direction and His Holy Spirit for the power to make the changes.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Ps. 139:23-24).

3. Don't be in a hurry. God will complete the work he has given you to do. Remember to do all things in God's timing, not ours.



Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails (Prov. 19:21).

4. Be thankful for all victories no matter how small giving the honor to the Lord.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness (Col. 2:6-7).

5. Reward yourself for achieving success. But remember, if you are trying to lose weight, rewarding yourself with a box of Twinkies might not be the best reward. Pray and ask God what would be the kind of reward He wants to give you.

From the fruit of their lips people are filled with good things, and the work of their hands brings them reward (Prov. 12:14).

Well, my doctor handed me a tissue as I continued to cry in her office. I told her that it had been a long journey. That even though I had been applying RISE to my life that I was sure that she wouldn't see enough progress. She told me, "Kris, your numbers show me the change as a result of what you are doing. Keep up the good work and next time, I want to hear that you are walking even more." LOL. She couldn't just let me leave without saying something.

Thank you Lord for RISE, for my friend and for your Holy Spirit that changes me each day through the renewing of my mind. For taking all the enemy's lies and turning them into truths. For your power to make better choices so that one day I will be like you. Amen.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Rom. 12:2).

Kris Swiatocho is the President and Director of TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries and FromHisHands.com Ministries. Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 20 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is currently working on her third Bible study, From the Manger to the Cross: The Men in Jesus' Life. Her second Bible study, From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life, was published last fall and is available on her websites. Her first book, Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment, was co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click here to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

Singles and Relationships by Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell

Many singles are Christians who wonder if God will ever bring a mate their way or if they should just stop focusing on a future with a marriage partner and live the single life to the fullest. Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell offer solid biblical answers for singles in this newest title in Dick's popular 31-Day Experiment Bible study.