

THE POWER OF I AM

TWO WORDS THAT WILL CHANGE
YOUR LIFE TODAY

JOEL OSTEEN



New York Boston Nashville

ALSO BY JOEL OSTEEN

Break Out!

Break Out! Journal

Daily Readings from Break Out!

Every Day a Friday

Every Day a Friday Journal

Daily Readings from Every Day a Friday

I Declare

I Declare Personal Application Guide

You Can, You Will

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Starting Your Best Life Now

**THE POWER OF
I AM**

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*This book is dedicated to my wife, Victoria, who
inspires me and fills my life with love and light, and
to my children, Jonathan and Alexandra, who continue
to amaze me and fill my life with joy. I am
grateful to God for bringing us together as a family and
for showing me that I am blessed.*

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**THE POWER OF
I AM**

CHAPTER ONE

The Power of “I Am”

Lacy was a beautiful young lady who seemed to have everything going for her. She was smart, attractive, and came from a loving family. As we visited in the lobby after a service, she was friendly and had a pleasant personality. I thought if anybody would be happy, it would be her. But I soon realized it was just the opposite of what I thought. Lacy began to describe how she wasn't fulfilled; she was lonely and she perceived her coworkers as more talented. She made statements such as, “I am unattractive. I am unlucky. I am a slow learner. I am always tired.”

After five minutes of listening to Lacy, I knew exactly what was holding her back. Her “I am”s. What follows those two simple words will determine what kind of life you live. “I am blessed. I am strong. I am healthy.” Or, “I am slow. I am unattractive. I am a lousy mother.” The “I am”s coming out of your mouth will bring either success or failure.

All through the day the power of “I am” is at work. We make a mistake and out of our mouth tumbles, “I am so clumsy.” We look in the mirror, shake our head, and say, “I am so old.” We see somebody who we think is more talented and whisper under our breath,

“I am so average.” We get caught in traffic and grump, “I am so unlucky.” Many times we wield the power of “I am” against ourselves. We don’t realize how it’s affecting our future.

*Whatever follows the
“I am” will eventually
find you.*

Here’s the principle. *Whatever follows the “I am” will eventually find you.*

When you say, “I am so clumsy,” clumsiness comes looking for you. “I am so old.” Wrinkles come looking for you. “I am so overweight.” Calories come looking for you. It’s as though you’re inviting them. Whatever you follow the “I am” with, you’re handing it an invitation, opening the door, and giving it permission to be in your life.

The good news is you get to choose what follows the “I am.” When you go through the day saying, “I am blessed,” blessings come

*The good news is you get
to choose what follows
the “I am.”*

looking for you. “I am talented.” Talent comes looking for you. You may not feel up to par, but when you say, “I am healthy,” health starts heading your way. “I am strong.” Strength

starts tracking you down. You’re inviting those things into your life.

That’s why you have to be careful what follows the “I am.” Don’t ever say, “I am so unlucky. I never get any good breaks.” You’re inviting disappointments. “I am so broke. I am so in debt.” You are inviting struggle. You’re inviting lack.

You need to send out some new invitations. Get up in the morning and invite good things into your life. “I am blessed. I am strong. I am talented. I am wise. I am disciplined. I am focused. I am prosperous.” When you talk like that, talent gets summoned by Almighty God: “Go find that person.” Health, strength, abundance, and discipline start heading your way.

But how many of us, when we get up in the morning, look in the

mirror and the first thing we say is, “I am so old. I am so wrinkled. I am so worn out.” You are inviting oldness. You’re inviting fatigue. Do us all a favor; stop inviting that. Dare to say, “I am young. I am energetic. I am vibrant. I am radiant. I am fresh. I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” That’s one of the best anti-aging treatments you could ever take, and it costs you nothing!

You Are an Amazing, Wonderful Masterpiece

Some people have never once said, “I am beautiful. I am attractive.” They’re more focused on their flaws and what they don’t like about themselves and how they wish they had more here and less there. When you say, “I am beautiful,” beauty comes looking for you. Youth comes looking for you. Freshness comes looking for you. Nobody else can do this for you! It has to come out of your own mouth.

Ladies, don’t go around telling your husband how unattractive you are. You should never put yourself down, and especially don’t put yourself down in front of your husband. You are his prize. To him you are the most beautiful woman in the world. Why would you want to tell him anything different? The last thing he needs to hear is how bad you think you look. Don’t put those negative thoughts in his mind. It’s not going to do him or you any good to discredit yourself. If you keep telling him how bad you look, one day he may believe you.

But when you say, “I am beautiful,” not only does beauty, youth, and freshness start coming your way, but on the inside your spirit also comes alive. Your self-image begins to improve, and you’ll start carrying yourself like you’re someone special. You won’t drag

Beauty is in being who God made you to be with confidence.

through the day feeling less than or inferior. You'll have that spring in your step, that "You go, girl!" attitude. Beauty is not in how thin or tall you are, how perfect you look. Beauty is in being who God made you to be with confidence. If you're a size 4, great. If you're a size 24, great. Take what you have and make the most of it.

God made you as you are on purpose. He gave you your looks, your height, your skin color, your nose, your personality. Nothing about you is by accident. You didn't get overlooked. You didn't get left out. God calls you His masterpiece. Instead of going around feeling down on yourself, unattractive, too tall, too short, not enough of this, or too much of that, dare to get up in the morning and say, "I am a masterpiece. I am created in the image of Almighty God."

David said in Psalm 139, "God, I praise You because You have made me in an amazing way. What You have done is wonderful." Notice David's "I am"s. He was saying, not in pride but in praise to God, "I am wonderful. I am amazing. I am a masterpiece." That goes against human nature. Most of us think, *There's nothing amazing about me. Nothing wonderful. I'm just average. I'm just ordinary.* But the fact is there is nothing ordinary about you. You have a fingerprint that nobody else has. There will never be another you. Even if you have an identical twin, somebody who looks exactly like you, they don't have your same personality, your same goals, or even your same fingerprints. You are an original. When God made you, He threw away the mold. But as long as you go around thinking, *I'm just average. I'm just one of the seven billion people on the earth. There's nothing special about me,* the wrong "I am" will keep you from rising higher.

Rather than being down on ourselves and discrediting who we are and focusing on all of our flaws, I wonder what would happen if all through the day—not in front of other people but in private—we were to be as bold as David was and say, “I am amazing. I am wonderful. I am valuable.” When you talk like that, amazing comes chasing you down. Awesome starts heading in your direction. You won’t have that weak, defeated “I’m just average” mentality. You’ll carry yourself like a king, like a queen. Not in pride. Not being better than somebody, but with a quiet confidence, with the knowledge that you’ve been handpicked by the Creator of the universe and you have something amazing to offer this world.

Be as bold as David was and say, “I am amazing. I am wonderful. I am valuable.”

God Can Even Change Your Name

That’s what happened to a lady in the Scripture named Sarai. She had to change her “I am.” God promised Sarai and her husband, Abram, that they would have a baby. But Sarai was eighty years old, way past the childbearing years. Back in those days, if a wife couldn’t conceive and give her husband a child for some reason, even if it was the husband’s fault, the wife was considered to be a failure. She was looked down on greatly. There was a sense of shame in not being able to conceive a baby. This is how Sarai felt. She was eighty years old and never had a baby. She felt as though she had let Abram down. Her self-esteem was so low. I can imagine some of her “I am”s: “I am a failure. I am inferior. I am not good enough. I am unattractive.”

Yet Sarai has this promise from God that as an older woman she

was going to have a baby. God knew that it would never come to pass unless He could convince Sarai to change her “I am”s. It was so imperative that she have this new mindset that God actually changed her name from *Sarai* to *Sarah*, which means “princess.”

Now every time someone said, “Good morning, Sarah,” they were saying, “Good morning, Princess.”

“How are you, Sarah?” “How are you, Princess?”

“Would you pass me the ketchup, Sarah?” “Would you pass me the ketchup, Princess?”

She heard this over and over. Those words got inside her and began to change her self-image. Sarah went from “I am a failure” to “I am a princess.” From “I am unattractive” to “I am beautiful.” From “I am ashamed” to “I am crowned by Almighty God.” Instead of hanging her head in defeat, in embarrassment, she started holding her head up high. From “I’m not good enough” to “I am a child of the Most High God.” From “I’m inferior” to “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Her new attitude became: “I am amazing. I am wonderful. I am a masterpiece.”

And ladies, as was true for Sarah, you may have had a lot of things in life try to push you down—bad breaks and disappointments, maybe people have even tried to make you feel as though you just don’t measure up or you’re not quite attractive enough. You could easily let that seed get inside, ruin your sense of value, and cause you to live inferior. But God is saying to you what He said to Sarai, “I want you to change your name to Princess”—not literally, but in your attitude. You have to shake off the negative things people have said about you. Shake off the low self-esteem and the inferiority and start carrying yourself like a princess. Start walking like a princess. Start talking like a princess. Start thinking like a princess. Start waving like a princess!

Instead of whispering, “I am inferior. I am less than,” you start

declaring, “I am one of a kind. I am handpicked by Almighty God. I am valuable. I am a masterpiece.” When you get up in the morning, don’t focus on all your flaws. Look in the mirror and dare to say, “I am beautiful. I am young. I am vibrant. I am confident. I am secure.” You may have had some disappointments. People may have tried to push you down, but quit telling yourself you’re all washed up. Do as Sarah and say, “I am royalty. I am crowned with favor. I am excited about my future.” This princess spirit got inside Sarah. It changed her self-image. I’ve learned you have to change on the inside before you’ll see change on the outside. At ninety-one years old, against all odds, she gave birth to that baby. The promise came to pass.

So What’s Coming Out of Your Mouth?

My question today is, What kind of “I am”s are coming out of your mouth? “I am victorious. I am blessed. I am talented. I am anointed.” When you have the right “I am”s, you’re inviting the goodness of God. Maybe if you would just change the “I am,” you would rise to a new level. Words have creative power. They can be very helpful, like electricity. Used the right way, electricity powers lights, air-conditioning, and all kinds of good things.

My question is, What kind of “I am”s are coming out of your mouth?

But electricity used the wrong way can be very dangerous. It can harm you, even kill you. It’s the same way with our words. Proverbs 18:21 says, “Life and death are in the power of our tongue.” It’s up to you to choose what follows the “I am.” My encouragement is to never say negative things about yourself. Most of us would never go up to another person, at least to their face, and criticize them,

yet we have no problem criticizing ourselves. “I am so slow. I am so unattractive. I am so undisciplined.” That is cursing your future. Do yourself a favor and zip that up. We have enough in life against us already. Don’t be against yourself.

I had a friend with whom I used to play basketball. When he would miss an important shot, he would exclaim, “I’m an idiot! I’m an idiot! I’m an idiot!” I heard that month after month. He didn’t realize it, but “idiot” was coming, looking for him. I hate to say it, but I think it found him!

If you go around saying, “I am so dumb,” this may be poor English, but “dumbness” is coming your way. “I am so unattractive. I am so plain.” Ugliness says, “I hear somebody calling my name.” Use your words to bless your future, not curse your future.

The Scripture says, “Let the weak say, ‘I am strong’”—not the opposite, “I am so tired. I am so run-down.” That’s calling in the wrong things.

Let the poor say, “I am well off”—not, “I am broke. I am so in debt.”

Let the sick say, “I am healthy. I am improving. I am getting better and better.”

You Are Who God Says You Are

Romans 4 says to “call the things that are not as though they were.” That simply means that you shouldn’t talk about the way you are. Talk about the way you want to be. If you’re struggling in your finances, don’t go around saying, “Oh, man, business is so slow. The economy is so down. It’s never going to work out.” That’s calling the things that are as if they will always be that way. That’s just describ-

ing the situation. By faith you have to say, “I am blessed. I am successful. I am surrounded by God’s favor.”

I asked a young man recently how he was doing in high school. He said, “I’m doing okay. I’m just a C student.” Come to find out, when he was back in elementary school, one of his teachers told him he was a C student, and he let that seed take root and bloom. I told him what I’m telling you. As long as you’re saying, “I am a C student,” you’re not going to become an A student. You’re calling in the C’s, and those C’s will come find you wherever you go. If you’re not careful, you’ll make a C in homeroom, a C in lunch, and a C in PE. Change the “I am.” “I am an A student. I am smart. I am full of wisdom. I am a good learner. I am excellent.”

Have you allowed what somebody—a coach, a teacher, a parent, an ex-spouse—said about you to hold you back? They’ve planted negative seeds of what you cannot do. “You’re not smart enough. You’re not talented enough. You’re not disciplined enough. You’re not attractive enough. You’ll always make C’s. You’ll always be mediocre. You’ll always struggle with your weight.” Get rid of those lies! That is not who you are. You are who God says you are.

People may have tried to push you down and tell you who or what you can’t become. Let that go in one ear and out the other ear. What somebody said about you doesn’t determine your destiny: *God does*. You need to know not only who you are but also who you are not. In other words, “I am not who people say I am. I am who God says I am. I am not the tail; I am the head. I am not a borrower; I am a lender. I am not cursed; I am blessed.”

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about you doesn’t
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As was true in this young man’s life, somebody may have spoken

negative words to you when you were young. But know this: Before anyone could put a curse on you, God put a blessing on you. Before you were formed in your mother's womb, God knew you, and He approved you. When God made you, He stepped back and said, "I like that. That was good. Another masterpiece!" He stamped His approval on you. Other people may try to disapprove of you. Don't go around feeling less than, feeling inferior. Our attitude should be: *I am approved by Almighty God. I am accepted. I am a masterpiece.* When you talk like that, the seeds of greatness God has placed inside will begin to spring forth.

Change Your "I Am"s

You have gifts and talents that you've not tapped into yet. There is a treasure inside you. Throughout life, negative thoughts will try to keep it pushed down. The enemy doesn't want you to reach your full potential. There are forces constantly trying to make you feel intimidated, inferior, unqualified. If you're going to fulfill your destiny, you have to shake off the negative voices. Shake off the thoughts

When you know God has approved you, you realize, I don't need other people's approval. I've been equipped, empowered, and anointed by the Creator of the universe!

that are telling you, *I am unable. I am unqualified.* Don't invite weakness. Don't give intimidation an invitation. You may feel unqualified, but before you were born, God equipped you. He empowered you. You are not lacking anything. God has already stamped His approval on you. People may try to push you down, but when you know God has approved you, you realize, *I don't need other people's*

approval. I've been equipped, empowered, and anointed by the Creator of the universe!

I know a man who was told by his high school counselor that he wasn't very smart and should focus on the lowest skilled job that he could find. I'm sure the counselor meant well, but he didn't know who this young man was on the inside. He didn't see the seeds of greatness God had planted in this young man. As a high school student, this young man's "I am" was distorted. "I am not up to par. I am not smart. I am very average." He didn't realize he was inviting that into his life, but over time it showed up.

After high school, this man got a job at the local factory and stayed at the lowest level year after year after year. One day the factory closed down, so he went across town and applied at another factory. This company had a policy that job applicants had to first take an IQ test. He took the test and scored the highest in the company's sixty-three-year history. His IQ score was assessed at genius level. He went on to start his own business, and he invented and patented two very successful products. Today, he is extremely blessed.

What happened? He changed his "I am."

Could it be what someone has told you is keeping you from God's best? Could it be that the wrong "I am" is keeping you from rising higher and reaching your full potential? Do what this man did. Change your "I am." Don't let what somebody told you determine your destiny. Get in agreement with God. Know who you are and know who you are not. "I am not lacking. I am not average. I am not inferior. I am equipped. I am empowered. I am anointed. I am wise. I am a masterpiece."

Be a Joshua, Be a Caleb

In Numbers 13, Moses sent twelve men in to spy out the Promised Land. After forty days, ten of them came back and said, “Moses, we don’t have a chance. The cities are fortified and very large and the people are huge. Compared to them we felt like we were grasshoppers.” Notice their “I am”s. “I am weak. I am inferior. I am intimidated. I am afraid.” What happened? Fear, intimidation, and inferiority came knocking at their door.

The other two spies, Joshua and Caleb, came back with a different report. They said, “Moses, yes, the people are big, but we know our God is much bigger. We are well able. Let us go in and take the land at once.” Their “I am”s were just the opposite. “I am strong. I am equipped. I am confident. I am more than a conqueror.”

What is interesting is that the negative report from the ten spies spread like wildfire throughout the rest of the camp. Before long some two million people were intimidated and afraid. Nobody even paid attention to Joshua and Caleb’s report of faith. Here’s what I’ve learned: A negative report always spreads faster than a positive report. When people are murmuring, complaining, and talking defeat, be on guard. Make sure you don’t let the wrong “I am” take root.

The people of Israel were so distressed by the negative report that they complained against Moses and Aaron, “Why did you even bring us out here? We’re going to die in the wilderness. Our children, our wives, they’re going to be taken as plunder.”

God answered back something very powerful and very sobering. He said in Numbers 14, “I will do for you exactly what you have said. You said you’re going to die in the wilderness, so you will die in the wilderness.” God is saying the same thing to us. “I am going to

do exactly what you've been saying." Don't ever say, "I am weak. I'm intimidated. I'm inferior." Friend, the wrong "I am" can keep you from your destiny.

Do you remember reading in the Scripture about a man named Sethur, a man named Gaddi, or a man named Shaphat? I'm fairly certain that you've never heard of them. You know why? They were listed among the ten spies who brought the negative report. They also never made it into the Promised Land. The fact is they were called to be history makers, just as Joshua and Caleb were. They had seeds of greatness inside them, but the wrong "I am" kept them from making their mark.

Don't let that be your destiny. You may be facing some major obstacles. My challenge is for you to be a Joshua. Be a Caleb. "I am strong. I am confident. I am equipped. I am more than a conqueror. I am well able." Make sure you have the right "I am"s coming out of your mouth.

Joshua and Caleb were the only two from that whole wilderness company to ever make it into the Promised Land.

Speak These "I Am"s over Your Life

Let me give you some "I am"s to speak over your life. Read over these declarations every day. Get them down in your spirit. Meditate on them. They may not all be true right now, but as you continue to speak them, they will become a reality.

"I am blessed. I am prosperous. I am successful."

"I am victorious. I am talented. I am creative."

"I am wise. I am healthy. I am in shape."

"I am energetic. I am happy. I am positive."

"I am passionate. I am strong. I am confident."

“I am secure. I am beautiful. I am attractive.”

“I am valuable. I am free. I am redeemed.”

“I am forgiven. I am anointed. I am accepted.”

“I am approved. I am prepared. I am qualified.”

“I am motivated. I am focused. I am disciplined.”

“I am determined. I am patient. I am kind.”

“I am generous. I am excellent. I am equipped.”

“I am empowered. I am well able.”

“I am a child of the Most High God.”