

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

32. How to Bloom Where You Are Planted – Part 2

You are listening to episode 32 of the Encouragement for Real Life podcast, How to Bloom Where You Are Planted, Part 2. Welcome back! Spring is one week closer, and as it is, we are talking blooming on the podcast this week! Are you ready to bloom? Last week we began this discussion about blooming, what it means to bloom where we're planted, why we want to bloom, where we want to bloom, and how we want to bloom. You don't have to listen to last week's episode before listening to this one, but it may help in understanding this concept of blooming where you're planted. This week we continue this important conversation as we find some hope and encouragement in this season. So, let's get right into this episode and learn how to bloom together.

Well, my crocus and daffodil plants I mentioned in last week's episode were covered with snow last Sunday. But this has happened before. A couple years ago they were buried under six inches of snow for a few days. I've learned these plants are hardy little buggers. They bloomed beautifully that spring!

But those plants were completely covered and in the dark. This got me thinking. It got me thinking about you and me. Sometimes we find ourselves in the dark. Sometimes we feel completely buried, and what's buried us is beyond our control. Oftentimes there's nothing we can do about it but be patient and wait. Unless we can dig ourselves out, with God's help of course. It's then we seek understanding. It's then we ask God to intervene. And it's then when we can either stay encouraged or become discouraged. *Will it always be this dark? Will we ever see the light again?*

"Sometimes when you're in a dark place you think you've been buried, but actually you've been planted." –Christine Caine

Could it be you've been planted?

A number of years ago I found myself in a dark place. I had just walked away from a job that I loved but in which I could no longer function. It was not only a job, it was my calling. This job had affected every part of me, and God transformed my life through it. In leaving, I found myself feeling alone, uncomfortable, and in the darkest of dark for months.

But I knew God had called me away, so I wasn't second-guessing that. But what I was second-guessing was how I felt betrayed, blindsided, and bewildered because of the acts of others. Other Christians, none the less. I kinda lost my footing in that season, and I floundered for a time. I was in a fog with no purpose or plan. I drew near to God, and as I did, I turned to my writing. God used this gift to heal me, to grow me, and to point me in the direction He had for me to go. I soon found that dark place was exactly where God was preparing me to bloom again in another way... to bloom in my writing.

God had planted me to bloom in a different way.

And I realized later I needed that time in the dark for roots to grow and for God to prepare me for His next steps for me. Even though it was uncomfortable and lonely, it was a season that was necessary for the next step in this journey.

Friend, what dark place are you in right now? Could God be preparing you for something, for your next step in your journey? Could it be you've been planted? For His glory and for others' good?

You know, before blooms appear a time of planting is necessary. A time of waiting and watching and wondering if the seedlings will grow. A time of trusting God is working underneath the soil to bring forth life again.

It may be dark now, but friend your day of blooming is coming. This dark place won't last for much longer. Draw near to God. Allow Him to prepare you for the next phase in His blooming. He's not finished with you yet. Oh, goodness no.

I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. Jeremiah 29:11 MSG

You can trust God in this. He has you. And He's preparing you for something great.

I can't wait to see what plans He has for you. Your time of being planted will bring forth beautiful blooms!

But sometimes blooming isn't so easy.

I get it. Sometimes to bloom where you are planted is hard work. It sounds lovely, but it may be easier said than done, right? Especially if we find ourselves in a garden we never intended or expected. Or if we feel a bit forgotten or lost. Maybe life isn't easy right now and blooming seems completely impossible.

But we can bloom anyway.

How do we do that when blooming isn't easy?

1. Live in the moment.

What we experience now is preparing us for our future. What you and I walk through today will help us as we travel further on this adventure. We may not understand why we're planted where we are, nor why we are experiencing these current circumstances, but we can trust they'll benefit us down the road. We can look back over our lives and see that's been the case before and it will be again. Embrace right where you are and live in every precious moment you are given. Living in the moment helps us bloom beautifully.

2. Be grateful.

When we have an attitude of gratitude, not only does it benefit ourselves, but it affects others. Gratefulness helps us view life in a positive perspective, and it makes our days a whole lot more pleasant! We are able to see the many gifts and blessings we've been given, and doing so might be the example for another to do the same. Gratefulness helps us bloom brightly.

3. Bless others.

Something happens when we set out to be a blessing. We not only impact the lives of those we bless, but we also impact ours as well. Blessing others brings hope, joy, and encouragement. It

can become contagious and cause a ripple effect. Those you bless, bless others, and lives are touched beyond what you can imagine. Something as simple as a smile can be a blessing. Blessing others helps us bloom brilliantly.

4. **Make a choice.**

When it appears to not be easy or convenient, or if you've been dealt some tough circumstances, make the choice to bloom anyway. In life there's more than one way to bloom. Look for ways to shine, to grow, to see things from a different perspective. Even if it's not easy, blooming will be worth it. Sometimes just choosing to do so is all it takes to bloom boldly.

When life isn't easy, we can bloom anyway.

A dear friend of mine is walking down an unfamiliar and challenging road in life. She has days filled with hurt, pain, frustration, and loneliness. She finds herself in tears often, and life right now is far from easy. But she's remained hopeful. It hasn't been easy or convenient, but she's finding ways to bloom anyway. One day at a time. And sometimes that's all we can do.

Yet, as we bloom, we might encounter someone else who is blooming next to us a little more brilliantly than we are. We might be tempted to compare blooms... the size, the color of blooms, the length of the duration of the blooms. Before long, we are so focused on her blooms, we've forgot about blooming ourselves.

My mom and I created beautiful flowerbeds years ago at my home. She had the greenest thumb on the planet. (I wish I would have gleaned that from her.) These flowerbeds here are filled with all kinds of various flowers. Many have different colors and sizes that appear each year. These flowerbeds are an amazing sight all summer long (if I can keep them weeded).

So, I guess it's no surprise I correlate the concept of blooming where we're planted to my flowerbeds. It's as if each of us are a plant or flower in God's garden. He's planted you and me in specific places where we can bloom the best. Some of us bloom quicker or earlier, and some of us bloom a little slower or later. Some of us are in the back of the garden, some are in the front. We each bloom in our own unique colors and shapes as designed by our Master Gardener.

Blooming is difficult, though, if we're weighed down with comparison.

Flowers can be our example, as they don't compare themselves. They thrive in the place they're planted and are happy to bloom right where they are. And since they do, they complement other flowers as they bloom.

What if we were more like flowers? Thriving in the place we are planted and happy to bloom right where we are? What if we complemented (or complimented!) others as they bloom? The cool thing is, when we're each blooming as we're designed to, the garden is amazingly beautiful! When comparison is absent, we are better able to celebrate each other as we bloom for His glory and for others' good!

Romans 12 encourages us to bloom as we use the gifts God has given us through His grace. Some of us are gifted in showing kindness and mercy. Some of us encouragement. Maybe you're a natural at teaching or serving or leadership. And some of us are good at giving. But no matter the gift, we are to use them—to bloom in them—without comparing ourselves.

Romans 12:6a in The Message translation encourages us in this way:

...let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.

Blooming the way we're designed to.

In the unique ways only you and I can. Let's bloom in our gifts and celebrate others as they bloom in theirs.

Friend, how can you and I do this today? How can we bloom in our gifts and celebrate others as they bloom in theirs? What's one thing you can do to encourage another to bloom? How can you bloom today?

When we're blooming in the ways we are designed to, the garden becomes amazingly beautiful!

But what about when God replants us? What then?

How do we bloom when we've been replanted?

The concept of replanting is something I understand. I currently have a lavender plant that could use some replanting. Its pot is too small, and because so, it's not thriving the way it could if it had more dirt surrounding its roots. Most of the time it looks limp and pale and quite sad, actually.

Sometimes we get that way, too. We can become limp and pale and even sad looking if we're not in the place we're supposed to be. If our roots aren't receiving what makes us thrive and grow and bloom. Sometimes we, too, need to be replanted. Sometimes we could use a fresh environment to bloom in the ways we were designed to. You know? God's good at replanting. He knows where we'll bloom the biggest, brightest, and boldest. After all, no one knows you and me better.

Have you stopped blooming?

Every time I've stopped blooming God has replanted me. With each time, I questioned, I dug my heels in, I tried to stay planted where I was. But, I've learned through these experiences no matter how uncomfortable the replanting feels, there's something special about fresh dirt at the roots. There's something wonderful about a new space to grow.

Sometimes being replanted is what's best for us.

Friend, could God be in the process of replanting you? Does it feel like your roots are being dug up, stretched, or torn? Are you feeling uncomfortable and uncertain of what's going on in your life in this moment?

Maybe God could be extending to you a second chance? A do-over? A fresh start? Could He be moving you to a place where you'll bloom brighter than you ever have? Even if you can't possibly see it now?

Trust the Master Gardener in this process.

Trust He knows what He's doing. If He's replanting you He's got big things in store for you.

We can believe this truth in the process:

Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you.” Deuteronomy 31:8 NLT

Looking back, I can now say I’m thankful for the times God replanted me. I’m glad He didn’t leave me where I once was. Friend, He’s going not to leave you either. I can’t wait to see how beautiful the garden will look as we each bloom the way we’re designed to in this season!

We're discussing this in the Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Come on over to join the conversation this week. It's a beautiful place of encouragement. The link is in the show notes.

I've also created a free printable that contains last week's scriptures and this week's encouragement for how to bloom when life isn't easy. It's available for you in my Free Resources. Use it to encourage your heart. The link for this printable is in the show notes as well.

In closing, God is with us in this season. No matter if it's a difficult season, if we're stuck in comparison, or if we've been replanted, God is helping us bloom, right where He has us. For our growth, for the good of others, and most importantly, for His glory. Bloom brilliantly, my friend. I'm glad I'm in this garden with you. God bless you.

Julie Lefebvre