

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

43. 7 Ways to Overcome FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)

You are listening to episode 43 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, 7 Ways to Overcome FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Thank you for joining me today. Welcome back to the podcast! Do you struggle or have you ever struggled with FOMO, the fear of missing out? I'm thinking most people do or have. Except my husband. He doesn't seem to struggle with this at all. Maybe guys just don't deal with stuff like this as much as the girls do. I don't know. But this is the subject of today's episode. If FOMO isn't an issue for you, well share this episode with someone who struggles with it. Because today we're peering into this fear of missing out, what it is, what it does, and how we can overcome FOMO. So, let's get into this episode to find some help, hope, and a whole lot of encouragement along the way.

Well, rats. Some of our friends went out together. Without us. We didn't receive an invitation. Ugh. I hate it when that happens. As soon as I found out, I instantly went quiet. I returned to my old habits of turning inward and withdrawing. And my thoughts went wild, down a slippery slope. Before long my self esteem followed and my self worth shattered in a million pieces on the floor. All within a matter of minutes.

Thoughts like, "No one wants to hang out with you." "You are boring and unworthy." "Get used to it, because this is way it's going to be from here on out." And, "Your friends are finding different friends."

Ridiculous, I know.

But being completely transparent with you, that's where my mind went. But, I know better. I've learned over the last few years how to combat thinking like this. I know where these thoughts came from, and they weren't from God. I don't have to believe every thought I think. (We talked about this in episode 39, What in the World Are We Thinking?). There's no doubt these thoughts were directly from the enemy of my soul. And sadly, I entertained them and allowed them to affect my mood, my attitude and my life.

So, after realizing all of this, I did what you probably would have done right away. I prayed. Something like, "God, I know these thoughts aren't from You. I know You are with me in this. I also know You allowed this to happen for a reason. But I don't understand. What am I supposed to do with this? How am I to handle these feelings of being left out? God, please help me. I need You."

Something happens when we turn to God with our problems and struggles. Something happens within us. And we remember we aren't so alone in whatever we're going through in the moment. Sure, I was still sad, but I determined this situation was not going to ruin the rest of my day.

No, FOMO was not going to ruin my day.

FOMO, or fear of missing out, is a real thing for many of us. It's something many people struggle with often. Maybe you do, too. I hadn't dealt with it for awhile until this situation. And boy, it sure hit me hard. So, I understand if you might struggle with this too. It isn't easy.

And it may not be the most fun subject to discuss and to openly address. But only when we address it can we fix it. Only when we bring it to light can we overcome FOMO.

In the last two episodes, episodes 41 and 42, we discussed comparison and how staying in our own lanes helps us refrain from comparing ourselves to others. This can be a destructive habit in itself. And when we do give in to comparison, the fear of missing out is often a result. If we stayed away from comparison, FOMO wouldn't likely be an issue. FOMO wouldn't be a thing.

FOMO is often a result of comparison.

And it can appear on the scene when we least expect it. Through a social media post. Through someone else's good news. It can happen when we compare others' lives to our own or what someone else has to what we don't have. The triggers of FOMO can be many.

But it's actually caused by a part of our brains--the amygdala--which determines if something is a threat to our survival. That old fight or flight syndrome is a part of this, which causes us anxiety, an adrenaline rush, and other physical responses. Dictionary.com defines it as: a feeling of anxiety or insecurity over the possibility of missing out on something, as an event or an opportunity. And some experts define it as a mental epidemic, especially in children.

No matter where it originates or what causes it, FOMO robs us of life. And I'm tired of anything that robs us of life! Aren't you? Because life is too short to have the fear of missing out on anything.

The thing is, you and I don't have to live with FOMO. I believe we can overcome it.

Here are 7 ways to overcome FOMO.

1 - Focus on who you are.

FOMO causes us to feel inferior, unworthy, of little value. Stop right now and see yourself as God sees you. He sees you as worthy, wonderfully made, chosen, dearly loved, beautiful, talented, accepted, priceless, a work of art. God sees you as His unique creation, as there is no other like you anywhere. He created You with unique gifts and talents that no one else has. You are special in every way, and accepting this truth helps to overcome FOMO and live life to the fullest!

2 - Appreciate what you have.

FOMO can creep in when we see another possessing something that we don't have. When this happens, it's important to pause to appreciate what we already have. Just take a look around. See all the many blessings God has given you. All the special moments you've lived, all the memories you've created with loved ones. Appreciate your health, your hope, your joy. Taking a moment to do this helps us overcome FOMO with a grateful heart.

3 - Live in the moment.

When FOMO interrupts our day, we can choose to either let it ruin our day or choose to live in the moment. Let's choose to live in the moment. Instead of allowing FOMO to consume us, let's pivot and

allow it to motivate us even more to control what we can in this moment. And that is to choose to live fully alive right now. Take a deep cleansing breath and relax. Invite God into this moment and allow Him to permeate your thoughts. Goodbye, FOMO.

4 - Turn off notifications.

Social media can be a big source of FOMO. A number of years ago I turned off my notifications to all of my social feeds, and let me tell you, that was extremely freeing! I missed the dings for a couple days, but after that, it was one of the best things I ever did! When we don't get notified of what our friends are doing, we have less FOMO in our lives and more time to live our lives in abundance.

5 - Hang out with "real" people who matter to you.

FOMO often happens when we see other people living out their own lives. Either in person or on social media. And sometimes what we see is not the true picture of their lives. Let's invest in the relationships of the "real" and authentic people in our lives who value who we are. Let's focus on creating memories and unforgettable moments with them. This is a sure-fire way to overcome FOMO, as we embrace life with those who matter most to us.

6 - Recognize your achievements.

When we see others achieving goals and dreams, especially if they're similar to ours, FOMO can rear its ugly head in a big way. Let's take a moment to recognize our own achievements and to celebrate them. Thank God for them. And realize our future goals and dreams will happen in God's perfect timing for our lives. When we do this, we are better able to celebrate the success of others, knowing our achievements are worthy and wonderful too.

7 - (Most Important!) Focus on God.

The truth is, FOMO happens when we take our focus off of God and put it on someone else. When we switch our focus back to God, life become a little more clear and a whole lot less stressful. It's wise to ask God to help us when we're consumed with FOMO. It makes a difference to ask Him to help us see His perspective in the situation. And when we ask Him to grow us through the experience, well, He uses it for our growth and for His glory. Focusing on God is the best thing we can do to overcome FOMO.

We can overcome FOMO.

It doesn't have to consume us one minute longer.

Psalm 16: 1-2, 5-6 (VOICE) Protect me, God, for the only safety I know is found in the moments I seek You. I told You, Eternal One, "You are my Lord, for the only good I know in this world is found in You alone." You, Eternal One, are my sustenance and my life-giving cup. In that cup, You hold my future and my eternal riches. My home is surrounded in beauty; You have gifted me with abundance and a rich legacy.

When fully believe this, FOMO will have no place in our lives. When we live one day at a time, following God and trusting He will give us all we need, we can overcome FOMO and live the abundant life God has given us.

As I took the situation and my FOMO to the Lord, I recalled what I knew. That God sees things that I can't possibly see and He knows things I can't possibly know. Were we not invited because God protected us from something I didn't know we needed protection from? Or maybe God had something else in mind for us to do at that time? And it's certainly possible, too, that I missed something He had for me as I was wallowing in self-pity and withdrawing from the world in that moment.

We don't want to miss one thing God has for us, do we? No. We want to live our lives to the fullest, to experience all God has for us in this life. And we simply can't do that when we are consumed with FOMO.

Could God be working behind the scenes in your situation, friend? Does He have something better in mind for you? It's worth seeking Him and trusting Him in all we go through, isn't it?

FOMO is not God's best for us.

It's not healthy, it robs us of so much, and it alters our behavior. So, let's make a change. Let's take the actions needed to overcome FOMO. Life is too short to be consumed with the fear of missing out.

We're taking this subject over to our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Join in the conversation over there and be encouraged, friend. The link to this group is in the show notes.

If you found encouragement in this episode, I invite you to subscribe to this podcast and rate/review it so others can find this encouragement too.

In closing, I'm glad we're in this life together, friend. I'm thankful we can encourage each other as we trust God one day at a time. May He help us overcome FOMO for good! God bless you.

Julie Lefebvre