

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## **83. Are We Called to Be Comfortable?**

You are listening to episode 83 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, Are We Called to Be Comfortable? Welcome to the podcast! I'm thrilled we get to hang out together in this way today. It's hard for me to believe we are at episode 83 already. I pray this podcast encourages you and blesses you in your real life, and that God equips you and spurs you on through it. Thanks for tuning in today. Is God calling you into a place that feels uncomfortable? Do you feel His tug on your heart to do something that scares the bejeebies out of you? Well, good news if this is the case, because this is the subject of today's episode. Even if you don't feel that tug from God at this point, you likely will in the future, so either way, this episode will encourage your heart for now or when it does happen. We will find some timely help and hope for our lives today in answering the question, "Are we called to be comfortable?" Let's get right into it.

For 24 years of my adult life I attended Bible Study Fellowship, and one lesson in particular stands out in my mind. It was years ago, and we were studying the story of Jonah in that particular lesson, and how God called Him to Nineveh. But Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh. In fact he didn't like the Ninevites. So much so, He didn't want God to show mercy on them and forgive them. So, he ran in the exact opposite direction to Tarshish. And we know what happened at sea on the way to Tarshish. Jonah was swallowed by a whale.

What stands out to me the most in that lesson wasn't the swallowing of the whale, but what our teaching leader asked us from behind the microphone that day.

### **"What will you do if God calls you to Nineveh?"**

Gulp. God had been placing tiny thoughts on my mind before this day, I knew right then He was calling me to my own Nineveh. Everything in me wanted to run to Tarshish. Everything within me screamed to race the other direction. But deep down, I knew better. I knew I didn't want to follow Jonah's example of running away from God, and I certainly didn't want to be swallowed by a whale for three days. That didn't sound like much fun to me at the time, and still doesn't today.

I knew God was calling me to step out of what was comfortable, and I knew I had to follow.

But that didn't happen without asking some hard questions first. Like, *am I willing to step out of what's comfortable? Am I willing to do something afraid? Am I willing to follow to where God is calling me?* Even if it's a little scary and makes me sick to my stomach? Even if it's something I really don't want to do?

Friend, are you?

Are you willing to follow to where God is calling you?

**The thing is this: we are not called to be comfortable.**

You might know that my word for this year is the word *uncomfortable*. I shared the details in episode 74, and it's not a word I would have chosen in a list of words. It's not one that's all warm and fuzzy and sunshine and rainbows. Nope. This word is a challenge. It was one of those instances where I knew if I didn't adopt this word as my word for 2023, I would regret it all year long.

So, I've been living uncomfortable for weeks now, and I try to do something every day that makes me uncomfortable. And I'm learning a lot about feeling and living and embracing it.

The thing is, God calls us to be uncomfortable. Have you noticed what He leads us to do and what He asks us to do is often way beyond what's comfortable for us? I mean, when was the last time God called you to do something that was comfortable?

**God doesn't call us to be comfortable. He calls us to be faithful.**

To obey, to follow Him, to step out in faith with Him. And all three of these actions--obeying, following, stepping out in faith--make us uncomfortable. *Or am I the only one?*

That morning I knew God was calling me to Nineveh.

My own Nineveh. To the hurting, the hopeless, and the homeless in our community. To the formerly incarcerated, the lost, the least in the world's eyes. This was my Nineveh. Not because I didn't like these people, but because I was scared of them. I didn't know what to expect with them. I felt we lived in vastly different worlds and I had nothing in common with them. Fear made me want to run. Feeling uncomfortable made me want to flee. Saying yes to God made me want to throw up.

But I knew I had to be faithful.

Maybe you know the feeling. And maybe you know it right now. Quite possibly God is calling to you your own Nineveh at this moment. You want to run. You want to flee. But you also don't want to spend three days in the belly of a whale.

Boy, do I ever understand. The thing is, you've likely heard this before, if God calls you to it, He will equip you through it. He will! I know, because I lived it and am a better person today because I, shaking in my shoes, said yes to going to Nineveh.

Big breaths, friend. Big breaths.

**Following God sometimes makes us uncomfortable.**

And there's nothing wrong with that. Why do we like comfort so much? Why do we cling to comfort? We love what's comfortable, don't we? No matter if it's our oversized sweatshirt, our cozy blanket, or our familiar daily routines. Is comfort something that controls so much of what we do?

What if we let go of the idea that we need to be comfortable all the time? How about if we trust that if God is calling us to something, He'll equip us to do it in our uncomfortableness. Again, we aren't called to be comfortable. We're called to be faithful.

A few verses to encourage us and spur us on today:

Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. Proverbs 3:5-6 MSG

For you *are* my rock and my fortress. So, for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me. Psalm 31:3 LEB (Lexham English Bible)

I will teach you and tell you the way to go *and how to get there*; I will give you good counsel, and I will watch over you. Psalm 32:8 VOICE

### **Following God into what's uncomfortable is His best for us.**

He will lead us. All we need to do is trust. He will no doubt grow us, bless us, increase our faith, and impact the lives of others for Him through it. He will do amazing things as we follow His lead, things we can't begin to comprehend now.

Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Matthew 16:24 MSG

God is in control. All we need to do is follow.

So, that's what I did back in 2009. I followed God to a local mission on a Tuesday morning. Both scared and excited, I walked through the door into a space and into a calling that would, unbeknownst to me at the time, literally change my life forever.

I have many more details of this endeavor to share with you, but if I did it today, this episode would be way longer than I want it to be. So, I will continue this in next week's episode, number 84. Come back then to listen to the "rest of the story," as Paul Harvey used to say. I believe it will encourage you in your own walk and in your own journey to Nineveh.

In the meantime, I pray if God is prompting you to step out in faith with Him, and to follow Him into the uncomfortable, that you will trustingly and boldly say, "Yes, God! I will follow you. I'm scared, but I'm trusting you. You will always be with me."

### **Staying in the center of God's will is the best place to be.**

We are moving this conversation over to our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Come on over there to be encouraged in your faith and inspired with hope. You'll find this space an uplifting and Christ-centered place. The link to this group is in the show notes. I hope to see you over there.

Also, if you found encouragement in this episode, would you please consider leaving a rating and/or review form wherever you're listening today? This will help others find this encouragement too. Be sure to subscribe to the podcast so you never miss a new episode.

Come back next week to hear how following God into this calling completely changed every part of my life. I can't wait to share it with you. Thanks again for tuning in today. God bless you!

Julie Lefebvre