

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## **85. Now Is the Time to Bloom**

You are listening to episode 85 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, Now Is the Time to Bloom. I thank you for joining me! No matter if this is your first time here or your 85th, I'm glad we get to hang out with each other in this way for awhile today. You and I both need encouragement every now and then, right? And I believe right now is a good time for a hearty dose of it. Life can get discouraging, heavy, and down-right depressing if we stare too long at all that's messed up in this world. So, today we're looking at hope, at promise, at blooming in this season. Because friend, it's a beautiful time to bloom. So, let's get right into this episode and find some help and hope for our real lives, right here today. Are you ready? Let's go.

Well, happy spring! Yes! Our calendars happily shared that yesterday was the first official day of spring. I'll say they were happy anyway, because who isn't happy that spring is finally here? We talked a few weeks ago, in episode 81, about how winter might seem long for some, and maybe it did for you. So, I'm glad it's spring! Yet, nothing has really changed outdoors here in Iowa, however. The grass is still brown. The trees are still bare. And everything still seems dormant. But just knowing spring is here has added a little lift to my step. You, too?

But a couple weeks ago my family and I met at the airport and together we flew southward to Florida for a week's vacation. All eight of us. Let me tell you, spring is certainly alive and well in Florida! And it was just the shot in the arm we needed. A reminder that spring in Iowa is not too far off. And here it is! The flowers we saw blooming in Florida will soon be blooming in Iowa. The warm temperatures we felt in Florida will soon be felt in Iowa. And the spring air in Florida will soon arrive here in Iowa, too. Now, I know you may live in another state, but the same goes for you and your state too. Spring is here, friend, and evidences of it will soon appear!

### **I love a new season, don't you?**

I love the changing of the seasons. Especially moving from winter into spring. Because everything that looked dead and lifeless comes back to life. Everything that was barren gives birth to newness. And everything that was frigid and dull and gray bursts forth with color.

Spring is a good reminder for us to embrace the newness God brings into our lives, too. He is making all things new.

Revelation 21:5, in NLT reads, "And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!"

Isaiah 43:19, in VOICE says, "Watch *closely*: I am preparing something new; it's happening now, *even as I speak*, and you're about to see it. I am preparing a way through the desert; Waters will flow where there had been none.

**God is good at making things new.**

God is good at breathing life back into what seemed hopeless. And maybe that's why I appreciate spring so much. It reminds me of God's transforming power in my life and in the lives of others.

Pretty soon God will prompt the Daffodils with, "It's time to bloom." He'll whisper to the oak trees, "Get ready. It's time to bloom" And he'll water the ground with timely rains and invite the grass bloom and to return to it's beautiful shade of lush green.

And maybe, just maybe, He's stirring within your heart and mine, preparing us for this season, too. Preparing us for when He whispers to us, "Now is the time for you to bloom, too."

### **Is now the time to bloom?**

What does that even mean? To bloom? I mean, sure, we know flowers and plants bloom. We see it happening before our eyes in spring and summer. But how can you and I bloom? We're not flowers or plants. No, we aren't.

But, that doesn't mean we aren't to bloom.

What does it mean to you to bloom?

Some may think it means to make the most of your current situation. And that can be true. Some may describe it as doing the right thing by making good choices. That can be true, too. Yet, others might think of it as becoming the person God designed you to be by maturing in your faith through grace. That can be true, too. Someone else might see it as achieving a goal or a dream. That can be also true. And you might think of something entirely different than these.

Dictionary.com defines bloom as: to produce or yield blossoms; to flourish or thrive; to be in or achieve a healthy state of beauty or vigor; to glow with warmth or with a warm color. Thesaurus.com adds the synonyms of: grow, prosper, develop, bear fruit.

Who doesn't want to flourish and thrive? Who of us would rather not grow, prosper, and bear fruit? I believe we all do, and I believe God delights in His creation, especially when it blooms.

### **That includes you and me.**

You've likely heard the term, "bloom where you are planted," right? It's a beautiful saying, and I think there's much truth and encouragement in it. It almost sounds as if it could be biblical, right? But it's not found in the Bible. It's not even clear who first coined the phrase. But I do believe God is in the blooming business. In fact, we see examples of it in the Bible of people who bloomed, right where they were.

- The orphan, Esther, unconventionally became queen of Persia and was used to save God's people from annihilation.
- The widow, Ruth, chose to stay with her mother-in-law instead of going back to her people, and eventually became the grandmother of King David and an ancestor of Jesus.
- Jacob's favored son, Joseph, who was sold as a slave by his brothers, ended up as second in command to Pharaoh only to be used in saving Egypt from starvation.

These three bloomed where they were planted. But did they bloom on their own? No. God is the one who blesses us to bloom. God is the one who designs us to bloom in the ways He created us to do so. And God is the one who receives the glory for when we bloom.

**We bloom for our growth, for the good of others, and for His glory.**

Because when we bloom, we can't help but impact the world around us. We can help but influence the lives of those we do life with. Our blooming helps others bloom, and our blooming is a testimony of God's goodness in our lives.

*You are like that illuminating light.* Let your light shine everywhere you go, *that you may illumine creation*, so men and women everywhere may see your good actions, *may see creation at its fullest*, *may see your devotion to Me*, and may turn and praise your Father in heaven *because of it*. Matthew 5:16  
VOICE

We may not like our circumstances, but we can bloom anyway. We may not like where we're planted, but we can bloom anyway. And we may think we are too young, too old, too tired, too preoccupied, too whatever to bloom. But we can bloom anyway.

So, how is God calling you to bloom today? In what ways has He equipped you over the last season to bloom in this one? Blooming doesn't have to be a grand happening. It doesn't have to be a monumental occasion. It can be as small as stepping out of your comfort zone. (Which can feel really big!) We discussed that in episodes 83 and 84. It can be something that no one sees but you and God. It can be as simple as taking a step forward toward your dreams.

**However God calls you to bloom, He will help you do it.**

It's not something we do on our own, but we bloom through His prompting and power. All we need to do is be open and available to bloom. God has good plans for your life, friend. He will prompt you to bloom in His perfect timing.

In order for a seed to bloom into a flower, it goes through a number of stages, but it starts out buried underground. Maybe you, too, have felt buried underground lately. Maybe, like the buried seed, you felt a little hopeless through the dark winter. But wait. You feel something changing.

Just like the buried seed, roots begin to grow down deep and a stem begins to stretch upward. Your eyes lift and you realize, you are growing!

You push through the ground, similar to the seed, and you stretch your arms outward, similarly to how the stem grows leaves.

Not long after, a flower bud appears. God is growing you (and the seed, too). He's preparing you to bloom.

The flower bud begins to open, and here you are, little by little, blooming in the ways God designed you to. You face your Source of light and you thank Him for the blooming work in your life.

**Join me in person!**

If you're local to me, every quarter I host an evening of encouragement for women called, Real Encouragement LIVE! These are girls' night out kind of events where we gather to be inspired,

encouraged, and have some fun. Our next one is on this very subject, Bloom Where You Are Planted, and it's March 30 at 6:30 p.m. in Cedar Rapids. The link for details and to find tickets is in the show notes. I'd love to have you join me for this fun evening out!

We're carrying this conversation over to our private Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. All week long we're discussing blooming and what that looks like. I encourage you to hop over there and join in the conversation. The link to this group is in the show notes.

Also, would you please consider leaving a rating and review from wherever you're listening in today? This will help others find this encouragement too. Also, as a bonus, every review we receive before April 1 will be entered into a drawing to win one of my favorite encouragement tools. And if you've already left a review, then you're automatically entered into the drawing! Be sure to subscribe to the podcast so you never miss an episode.

In closing, God is in the blooming business, especially in this season. I pray we allow God to do a work in us, in the ways only He can, to bring forth beautiful blooms in our lives. Not just for our growth, but for the good of others, and for His glory. I'm cheering you on, friend. May this new season be filled with beautiful and bountiful blooms. God bless you!

*Julie Lefebvre*