

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

125. Ending 2023 Grateful and With Big News!

You are listening to episode 125 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, "Ending 2023 Grateful and With Big News!" Welcome to the podcast today! I'm glad you're here. Because in today's episode we're discussing a big subject: ending 2023 grateful. Plus, I have some exciting and big news to share! You won't want to miss this episode. Plus, it's my birthday today! So we'll do some celebrating here too. I invite you to hang with me here for this next short while, and together we'll find help and hope for our real lives right now. Let's get to it.

I'll say it here again, Merry Christmas! I pray your holiday was full of everything that brings you joy and that you were able to celebrate it in a way that the birth of Jesus filled you with hope and promise. I also pray you were able to live in the moment and stay present as much as possible. But just in case it didn't go as you hoped, or you spent the holiday more distracted than you wanted to, I'm praying for you today, too. No holiday is perfect, and it's okay for us to not expect it to be. Today's a new day and today matters.

Thankfully, God is with us in it all.

Every year when Christmas night rolls around and everyone has departed from our home, I get a little sad that our holiday celebration is over. I know the celebration doesn't need to end because of the traditional twelve days of Christmas that lasts until January 6, but some years I realize after December 25 passes, many people feel a letdown of sorts. It's then I think of the following day... my birthday! Yes, my birthday is today, December 26! So, I guess I don't get the big letdown after Christmas like many people do. I've really never experienced that with my birthday being the next day. It just feels like another day to celebrate and appreciate this God-given life!

And I can't think of a better way to celebrate today than with you through this episode! So thanks for coming to my birthday party!! Seriously, I appreciate you and your presence here on this podcast. I'm grateful we get to journey through life together in this way.

I'm grateful. And as the year is quickly coming to a close, I'm ending 2023 grateful.

I'm grateful for much today: for my birthday, for you, for 2023, for my parents (even though they are no longer on this earth) for my family, for my faith in Jesus, and for His presence in my life are just a few.

I invite you to end this year grateful, too.

Maybe your year wasn't what you expected it would be. Or maybe it was that and more! Maybe 2023 was full of disappointments and discouragement. Or maybe it was full of joy and celebration! Maybe the year was confusing, confounding, and correcting. Or maybe it was full of peace and blessing. I'm guessing, like my year, it was a mixture of both. But again, like I mentioned just a couple minutes ago. thankfully God is with us in it all.

Yes, God is with us. And we just celebrated Jesus as Immanuel, God with us yesterday. We discussed this recently in episode 123. This truth is something we can carry with us every day of this week and into the new year. No matter what we do, what we face, or where we go, God is always with us. There's not one moment we're by ourselves or alone, even if we feel we are. You and I can always be assured no matter what we do, God will never leave us. And let me tell you, I've given Him many reasons to leave over the years!

So, no matter if you're had enough of 2023 and you're ready for it to end, or if you'd like for it to hang out for a little longer, ending 2023 grateful will help us begin 2024 in the same way.

But before it arrives, let's pause for a moment.

Let's take some time this week to look back over the year. What lessons did God teach us? What blessings did He provide for us? And what joys did we experience? What would we like to take with us into the new year and what do we want to leave behind? When we take some time to reflect and ponder, we allow space for God to speak into our lives and grow us through our experiences. Because if we don't do this, we may miss many gifts God may want to bring to us.

Also, did you set a word for the year? If so, how did it impact you? How did God use it in your life in 2023? (If you've not done this or aren't sure what I'm referring to, I'll share more about this next week.) What else do you typically do to end the year before beginning the new one?

This is also the week to pause to ask God some pointed questions such as:

What's my word for the year? (If you do this.)

What do You want me to focus on this year?

How can I glorify You this year?

How can I grow closer to You this year?

What is it you want me to do this year, Lord?

Friend, do you set goals and resolutions? What do you typically do to begin the new year? I'll share more of what I do in next week's episode as I share my word for 2024 and some of the focuses in which God has inspired me.

In my opinion, there's not a perfect way to end and begin a year. It's important to do what makes the most sense to us and to follow what God is leading us to do. No matter what, the new year will arrive right on time at midnight on December 31. I pray God blesses you this week and in the new year ahead!

It's an exciting time of year, isn't it?

Tune in next week as we begin 2024 together. I can't wait!

And now for the big news I have to share!

I already mentioned it in last week's episode, episode 124, but in case you missed it, you might remember I published my first book in October. It's called *Right Now Matters: Empowering Right-Now Women in a Culture of Distraction*. It's been a whirlwind these last couple months as the book has been

received very well from women all over the world. I'm humbled and grateful for what God is doing through the message of Right Now Matters. He's changing lives through it!

In April I joined a group of writers to learn how to write a Bible study. It was a nine-month course, and let me tell you, it inspired me as I learned so much! I knew in April I wanted to write a companion Bible study for Right Now Matters, and this course would teach me how. So as I finished writing Right Now Matters, I began writing the Right Now Matters Bible Study in July. I call it a 28-Day Adventure to Living as a Right-Now Woman.

What--or who--is a Right-Now Woman? She's someone who is tired of missing out on the priceless moments of life due to distractions. She desires to rise above them to live the abundant and joyful life Jesus came to give her. And she understands she can't do this alone. She needs God's help and equipping. She understands right now matters and is ready to embrace the right-now moment.

Well, this Bible study releases today!

If you desire to go deeper with God and yourself in 2024, this study is for you. If you've never studied the Bible before, this study is for you. Or if you're a "Bible study master," this Bible study is for you. And if you're ready to experience all God has for you in 2024, this study is for you.

You can find it on Amazon today and soon on barnesandnoble.com, and Books A Million. You can find more at rightnowmatters.com. The links are in the show notes.

This is my birthday gift to you, and I pray you open it with great excitement with me!

I'm also offering opportunities to walk through the study together... both online and in person mid-January. I'll share more details about that next week and through social media.

I pray this Bible study blesses you, increases your faith in Jesus, and encourages you in ways you can't imagine now. It's going to be an exciting 2024 together!

We're talking about all these exciting things in our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Hop on over there and join in the conversations this week. The link to this private group is in the show notes.

And if you found encouragement and hope in this episode, would you please consider leaving a rating or review from where you're listening today? This helps others find this encouragement too. Be sure to subscribe so you never miss an episode.

To close out this last episode of 2023, friend I'm grateful for you. I am praying for you. May God meet you in every need, in every desire, and in every moment now and into the new year. I pray He blesses you, encourages you, and grows you in ways you can expect now. He loves you so very much. Remember this in the days to come. It's been a joy to journey through these episodes with you in 2023, and I look forward to more moments together in the new year. Thanks for coming to my birthday party! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Links in this episode:

Episode 123, [How to Cope When Holidays Are Not Happy](#)
[Check out the Right Now Matters Bible Study releasing today!](#)

[Find the Right Now Matters Bible Study on Amazon](#)
[Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook](#)
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