

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

126. Walking Into 2024 Worry Free with a Word

You are listening to episode 126 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, "Walking Into 2024 Worry Free with a Word." Welcome to the podcast, friend, and happy new year! I'm so glad you're joining me today on this first episode of 2024! Just two days into the new year, how are you doing? How are you feeling about beginning a new year? Are you excited or apprehensive? In today's episode we're officially welcoming 2024, I share a few things on my heart, some exciting news, and my word this new year. Buckle up, because we've got lots of exciting things ahead of us, both in the new year and in this episode! Walking into 2024 together, let's find some hope and encouragement for our real lives today. Here we go!

Happy New Year!

As we are walking into 2024, I pray however you rang in the new year that it was full of hope, joy, and anticipation of God's goodness. As we know, numerous people set new year's resolutions or goals. Some of us choose a word for the year or a Bible verse. Others don't do any of this or may do something entirely different. There's no right or wrong way to begin a new year. At least in my opinion.

I've chosen a word for many years--this is my eleventh year of doing so. Here is my running list:

2014 - JOURNEY

2015 - IMPACT

2016 - BELIEVE

2017 - LIVE

2018 - ADVENTURE

2019 - REVIVE

2020 - OPEN

2021 - CONNECT

2022 - DELIGHT

2023 - UNCOMFORTABLE

Before I share this year's word, I must pause to comment on last year's word--uncomfortable. I introduced it last year at this time in episode 74 on this podcast, and you could say I was nervous about it. I wasn't sure what to expect with uncomfortable being my word, but without a doubt, God prompted me to choose it. It was a word that I just couldn't shake, so I knew it was the one. I know, some may think this sounds silly--that "God gave me my word." It may, until one experiences this.

So instead of continuing to fight uncomfortable, I embraced it, and surprisingly, uncomfortable became my normal. I attempted to do something that made me uncomfortable every single day. Whether it was making an uncomfortable phone call, doing something that stretched me, or simply just trying

something new, God used this word to completely transform my life. I no longer fear being uncomfortable, but I now kinda thrive in it. It's given me a worry-free attitude, instead of fretting about what's uncomfortable. God used it to help me step out of my comfort zone and to finally write the book I had been talking about writing for years. Not only one book, but two. And I believe uncomfortable will be the subject of my next book!

Did you choose a word for the year? If so, how did it impact you?

During my Monday morning prayer group a couple weeks ago, we were discussing goals and words and plans for the new year. At that point, God hadn't directed me to my word yet. But during that prayer group, in an instant, He brought a word to my attention. I knew it was the one. Are you ready for it?

My word for 2024 is WALK.

Just like with last year's word, I have no idea how it will play out or how it will impact me this year, but I know without a doubt, it's the word that will be my focus.

Right now, I see it through a biblical perspective and a physical perspective.

Biblically, I found numerous scriptures about walk or walking. Here are a few:

"The path we walk is charted by faith, not by what we see with our eyes" (2 Corinthians 5:7 Voice).

"No, O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8 NLT).

"Here's my instruction: walk in the Spirit, and let the Spirit bring order to your life. If you do, you will never give in to your selfish and sinful cravings" (Galatians 5:16 Voice).

And this one regarding steps:

"A man's heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps" (Proverbs 16:9 NKJV).

But the one that stands out to me the most is Colossians 1:10 NKJV, "that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;"

This is my verse for the year.

Regarding a physical perspective, I love to walk. Especially outdoors when the Iowa weather is appropriate to do so. I understand the value of moving my body, and after sitting in my office chair for hours last year writing my books, I fully comprehend how detrimental it is to my health to sit for hours on end. I'm done with that. So this year I plan to walk, a lot. Bill got me a walking pad, a small kind of treadmill, for my office. I can now walk as I write with a standing desk in front of me holding my computer screen and keyboard. It's perfect for me. I look forward to walking in these ways in 2024. A few Januarys ago, I walked 75 miles in that month. Maybe I'll do that again. Or maybe not. I don't know. But I do plan to walk.

Walk with God, to continue walking out my calling, and to walk for my health. Walk may end up being much more than this, but today, this is where I begin.

But I know I won't walk everything out perfectly, and I've accepted that that's okay. Taking one day at a time, one moment at a time, I desire to follow God's leading and guidance to receive what He has for me every single day. And because I'm walking into 2024 with Him, I can choose to live worry free. I worried more than I wanted to at the end of 2023 for various reasons, and the thing is, I know better. I know how worry pulls me away from living in the moment, and worrying is not God's best for me. When I worry, I am not fully trusting God. So walking into 2024 with Him, I have nothing to fear. I have nothing to worry about. And friend, when You're walking with Him into this new year, you have nothing to fear or worry about either.

Walking into 2024, I'm excited about my word for this year, and I look forward to seeing how God will use it in my life.

Are you choosing a word for this year or any particular goals or resolutions? What are you looking forward to in 2024? We're talking about all of this in our private Encouragement for Real Live Community on Facebook. I invite you to come over there and join in the conversation this week. The link to this group is in the show notes.

But the thing is, you don't have to choose a word, or a Bible verse, or goals or resolutions. You don't have to start the year strong or in any particular way. Sometimes just walking with God, one day at a time, one moment at a time, is enough. Actually, that's more important than setting a bunch of goals and resolutions we ditch before the month is over anyway. Our relationship with God is much more important than anything else we can focus on. May this year be the year we grow in our faith in Jesus and learn what it means to truly follow God.

I pray we will be Right-Now Women in 2024.

I talk about who is a Right-Now Woman in my book, *Right Now Matters*. God desires us to trust Him, to live in the present moment with Him, and to fully embrace all He has for each of us. I pray we can do that throughout this year.

I'm excited to share with you something that might help us all do that. I shared in last week's episode that the companion to *Right Now Matters*, the *Right Now Matters Bible Study: A 28-Day Guided Adventure to Living as a Right-Now Woman* released on December 26. I wrote this to help women like you and me go deeper with God and with ourselves this year and to embrace the lives Jesus came to give us as we live in the right-now moment.

So, I invite you to join me! Beginning the week of January 15, I am leading two five-week group Bible studies, using the *Right Now Matters Bible Study*. One will be online, and one will be in person. The online study will be on Mondays on Zoom from 6-7 p.m. (CST), and the in-person study will be held in Cedar Rapids on Thursdays from 6-7:30 p.m. (CST). There's no cost to attend, however you'll want both books to get the most out of the study. We will meet for five weeks and will end the week of February 12. Additional details and registration link is found in the show notes. I can't wait to dig into Scripture and grow through God's Word with you as He teaches us what it truly means to live in the right-now moment.

As I was thinking of you last week and praying for your new year, I became very grateful and excited for you. You made it through 2023, and here you are in 2024. God has good plans and purposes for your life this year. I truly believe this. We know the year won't be perfect in every way, but we can trust God will

bring us His best for us, even if it may make us uncomfortable at times. I pray for you often, and the other day I wrote my prayer out.

Here is my prayer for you for 2024:

Lord, I pray for the dear one hearing this today. As she looks to the new year, may she look to You first. Show her Your ways, Lord, and guide her to Your best for her life. May she fully rely on You for all she needs in 2024. Please equip her, strengthen her, and encourage her heart. Help her to shine Your light in this world and make a difference for You in it. Remind her daily how much You love her. Amen.

I will continue to pray for you throughout this year, friend.

Let's begin 2024 with hope, promise, and excitement knowing God will be with us every step of the way. He's not going to leave us or forget us. But instead, He will bring about His goodness for our lives. I'm so glad we get to journey through 2024 together. Thank you for joining me here today. You matter to me. Happy New Year and God bless you!

Links in this episode

Episode 74, [Happy 2023! How Are You Beginning This New Year?](#)

[Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook](#)

Episode 125, [Ending 2023 Grateful and With Big News](#)

[Join the Right Now Matters Bible Study](#) beginning the week of January 15

[Stay encouraged in the new year with my free Resources](#) designed just for you!

Julie Lefebvre