

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## 129. Why Today Is the Greatest Day to Be Alive

You are listening to episode 129 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, "Why Today Is the Greatest Day to Be Alive." Welcome to the podcast! I am glad you're here and I am praying for you today. What is your favorite day of the year? Is it your birthday, Christmas, the first day of spring, or something else? I think my favorite day would have to be my birthday. I don't know. I've not really thought about it before, and maybe you haven't either. I got to thinking about this over the weekend though, and I came to a profound conclusion: Today is the greatest day to be alive. Why? Well, this is the subject of today's episode. Let me tell you, if you could use a dose of encouragement today, you will find it here. Hang with me for these next minutes, and we'll find hope and encouragement together. Let's get to it!

### **January is my least favorite month of the year.**

There, I said it. It's cold here in Iowa. Bitterly cold. I've spent every winter since my birth in this bitter Iowa cold, and as I age, it doesn't seem to get any easier. Two weeks ago it was -17 degrees one morning. That's not the wind chill, that was the actual temperature. Yikes! January feels extra long to me who is a summer-loving girl at heart. I'll take the Iowa heat and humidity any day over the frigid temps. If you live in the south, you might welcome some cooler temps, however, and maybe this month you've received some.

Also two weeks ago we received close to two feet of snow. I never heard the exact amount, but my husband said two feet, so I'll take his word for it. We were snowed in for three days, until our neighbor came by with his tractor and scooped a path down the road so my husband could get to work. Bless his heart! Yes, January in Iowa can bring lots of snow.

So, you can maybe understand why January is not my favorite. But my friend and fellow Iowan, Jennifer Dukes Lee, helped me see winter through fresh eyes last year, and that winter is a time for a slower pace, for restoration, for rest, and for hibernation (for animals, the earth, and even for us). I learned to embrace winter last year, and I'm happy to report this new perspective has carried through this year so far as well.

### **My husband, on the other hand, struggles with February.**

He feels about February the way I do about January. For me, once January passes, I feel like we're on to smooth sailing (for the most part) to spring. He doesn't see it that way. Once February is over, then spring is just around the corner for him. (Which is true!) February, to me, typically feels short. But to him, it's the longest month ever!

But the thing is, my pondering over the weekend led me past the weather, past the time or the season of the year, and even past my current circumstances. My pondering led me to a truth God taught me as I wrote my book, *Right Now Matters*.

That truth is this: Right now is the greatest moment to be alive. Which also means:

### **Today is the greatest day to be alive.**

No matter if it's Christmas, or my birthday, or January, or the middle of summer. No matter if it's an easy, care-free kind of day or one filled with struggles and heartaches. Today is the greatest day to be alive because God created this day. He's with us in this day. He desires to meet us in today, He is present with us, and He's never going to leave us, ever. God cares about today. He cares about right now. He cares about all the intricate details of our lives.

Sure, He was with us yesterday, and His Word reminds us He will be with us tomorrow, but today is the day--and this moment is the moment--He meets us right where we are.

Right now certainly does matter.

All because of God.

### **Yes, today IS the greatest day to be alive!**

Not the days of the past, nor what we're looking forward to in the future. And when we wake up and walk through the day with this kind of mindset, everything changes. Everything becomes a gift from the God who loves us, who is with us, who has good plans for our lives. When we live with this kind of mindset, our hearts fill with gratitude and we carry a hope that we can't muster up on our own.

Now, I don't want to sugar coat the real life issues you and me may be walking through today, or the headaches and heartaches we're experiencing. And I understand how some struggle with the dark days of winter and how depression and anxiety are very real and debilitating for many during the winter months. I also understand you may have a difficult time seeing today as the greatest day to be alive. You might, instead, see it as the worst day to be alive.

I'm so sorry if this is the case, but through my own past experiences, I may understand some of what you're feeling.

But if you'll allow me to take this a step further, let's together look at what God says about this today.

"For he says, 'In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.' I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2 NIV). Not yesterday or tomorrow but today. This is the day of salvation.

And what about Psalm 118:24? "This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it" (NLT). If God didn't care about today, He wouldn't have created it.

One more. "Encourage each other every day—for as long as we can still say 'today'—so none of you let the deceitfulness of sin harden your hearts" (Hebrews 3:13 Voice). God calls us to encourage another another today--while we can.

### **Today--and right now--certainly matter to God.**

Don't you agree, because of all these, today is the greatest day to be alive!

And the truth of the matter is, you and I aren't guaranteed another one. We are not guaranteed tomorrow.

So, why wouldn't today be the greatest day to be alive??

Think about it for a moment. Not that it's comfortable to go there, but if we knew today was the last day of our lives, how would we live it? Do you think we would live it differently? Wouldn't we consider it the greatest day to be alive? Wouldn't we set out to make a difference in this world? And wouldn't we tell others how much they mean to us, and spend time with those we love, and live in a way that would point others to God. Wouldn't we try to leave a lasting legacy that affects generations after us?

So, why don't we live this way every day? If we're not guaranteed another day, why aren't we living this way today? I don't know about you, but this reality convicts me. Does it you, too?

I want to live each day with this kind of intention. Let's do it together!

But how?

### **How can we live as if today is the greatest day to be alive?**

We can partner with God, asking Him to lead us through this day and to guide us to His will for us. Because when we do this, we slide over to the passenger seat and let God take the wheel. His plans and purposes are best for us, and He'll take us to His best. A simple prayer like, "Lord, I desire to partner with You today. Guide me and lead me to Your perfect will today."

We can live with this new mindset--that this is the greatest day to be alive. Imagine how just thinking that will impact our day. Our attitudes will improve, joy will spread though us and around us, our steps will feel lighter, and our hearts will be brighter. We will truly shine the light of Jesus to this weary world!

We can get out of ourselves and focus on others. As God leads us, when we focus on others and allow God to lead us to those who might need us today, we are living beyond ourselves. Who needs an encouraging word? Who is struggling to make ends meet? And who needs a reminder that God still loves him or her? It may very well be someone under your own roof!

We can focus on what's truly important. The distractions, the interruptions, the less important matters won't be our focus anymore. Instead, we'll consciously let all that go as we pay attention to what truly matters. We will live alert and attentive and be people who care about eternal things, not the trivial things that try to trip us up. What a freeing and beautiful way to live!

### **I say we begin today.**

And if we are blessed with another day on this earth tomorrow, let's repeat these four ways, and every day we are given after.

Are you with me?

Yes, today is the greatest day to be alive. Let's live as it is, because truly it is! What's one way you can embrace this idea and change your perspective today? Come on over and share it in the private Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. I can't wait to meet you over there as we discuss this subject this week. The link to this group is in the show notes.

Have you checked out the Free Resources on my site recently? There are so many goodies designed to encourage your heart, including a printable with the four ways I just shared in this episode to live this

day as the greatest day ever. Don't miss this. The link to this and all the Free Resources is also in the show notes.

Friend, what joy it is to embrace the truth that this is the greatest day to be alive. I'm grateful I get to live it with you! Go out there and make a difference in your corner of the world today. People need your presence and your gifts that only you can give, maybe now more than ever. I'm cheering you on today and every day. Thanks for being here. God bless you!

Links in this episode:

[2 Corinthians 6:2](#) NIV

[Psalm 118:24](#) NLT

[Hebrews 3:13](#) Voice

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