

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## **132. Do You Love Who You Are?**

You are listening to episode 132 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, "Do You Love Who You Are?" Welcome to the podcast, friend! Thank you for joining me today. At the airing of this episode, it's Valentine's week. It's the week our focus tends to turn towards love and red hearts and thinking about showing love to others. I think every day should be Valentine's Day, because why would we only focus on this one day out of the year? That's a subject for a different day, but I'm thinking we're alike in desiring to show love and receive love every moment we can. But the thing is, I got to thinking, we aren't able to show or receive love well if we don't love ourselves. So, do you love who you are? We're diving deep into this today, and I invite you to hang with me here while we do. We'll find hope and encouragement along the way. So, let's get to it.

Many of us have been told to not think too highly of ourselves, or to put others first, or to be humble and meek. Some of us aren't sure if it's okay to love ourselves because we've been taught or experienced otherwise. Others of us have been chastised at the mention of loving who we are because the focus of love shouldn't be on ourselves, but on God and others instead.

### **Is it wrong to love who you are?**

Now, it's not wrong to be humble and meek, nor is it wrong to put others first and to keep a proper perspective of who we are. These honor God and He is very clear about these in His Word. And if we only loved ourselves and not God and others, well our priorities would be misaligned and misguided.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 NIV warns us. "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people."

Now, please understand what I'm saying. Loving ourselves within the healthy boundaries of God's love is beautiful in His eyes. But it's never okay to live with the thought that we aren't deserving of love--and that love includes ourselves. God's Word is also very clear about that.

And the verses that stand out to me regarding this is Matthew 22:37-39 ESV. Jesus said this when referring to the two most important commandments, "And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Did you catch that at the end? As yourself. It's okay to love yourself.

So, I ask you today...

**Do you love who you are?**

I encourage you to answer honestly.

Do you love the person you are in a humble way? With a proper and healthy perspective? Do you love the person God created you to be? I mean the entire package of you. This isn't just your good looks or your fine talents or the wonderful things you've accomplished. It's not only what you can do physically or the words you say or how smart your mind is. I'm referring to the complete and total you. The one and only unique you. The masterpiece God created.

Please be honest with yourself here.

If your answer is no, or that some days you do and some days you don't, I believe many women can answer the same. I'm hoping to change your mind before the end of this episode. So hang with me here.

In preparing for this episode, I recalled numerous times in my own life when my answer to this question would have been a big NO. I didn't love who I was. I recalled an awful season back in my high school years when a fellow classmate affected me so negatively to the point I hated myself and my life. But I thank God for Coach K. I've mentioned her here on the podcast before. She was my wise and discerning assistant basketball coach who saw this change in me and graciously stepped in. She guided me to see the truth and she taught me I could love myself no matter how others treated me. Little did she know the life skill she modeled for me would be one I would often use with and teach others over the years. I still thank God for Coach K!

I didn't love myself well during another season of my life after failing and making some big life mistakes. My self-talk was the worst. I would never have said to others the words I said to myself during that time. The darkness of self-hatred and despair engulfed me. This was probably the scariest season ever in my life. I tasted how low depression can take someone. It was awful and ugly, and I certainly didn't love myself then. But, again, God was kind and gracious to me. He extended His hand of help and hope through a person's listening ears and wise counsel. Over time I was able to understand my mistakes were not me. My failures were not me. I could love who I was, despite the fact I wasn't perfect. Another life lesson I learned and have taught others since as well.

**The thing I've learned is this: loving who you are isn't about you at all.**

It's not about how others treat you, or what you've achieved, or what you've done or haven't done. It's not about your skills, or intellect, or appearance. Loving who you are is all about the One who created you. The One who designed you. The One who has a future and a hope for you.

Loving ourselves is all about God.

In case you wonder what I mean, take a look at Psalm 139, verses 13-16:

"For You shaped me, inside and out. You knitted me together in my mother's womb long before I took my first breath. I will offer You my grateful heart, for I am Your unique creation, filled with wonder and awe. You have approached even the smallest details with excellence; Your works are wonderful; I carry this knowledge deep within my soul. You see all things; nothing about me was hidden from You as I took shape in secret, carefully crafted in the heart of the earth before I was born from its womb. You see all things; You saw me growing, changing in my mother's womb; every detail of my life was already written in Your book; You established the length of my life before I ever tasted the sweetness of it" (Psalm 139:13-16 VOICE.)

God created you and me excellently. The God of the universe, the God of heaven and earth, shaped us inside and out, not missing any details. He sculpted us from nothing into something... someone amazing. And, He knows all the details of our lives, even before we ever took a breath. He loves us so much He created us uniquely, unlike anyone else. Friend, don't you agree that absolutely amazing?

**You can love who you are because of Who made you.**

And God who made you is crazy about you. Seriously! Because of this, God wants you to love who you are. Yes, we are to love Him and love others, and we're encouraged to serve and give to and bless others. We're also inspired, however, to live out our God-given identity in loving who we are.

But, friend, we live in a fallen world. We live in a world where days can be difficult and loving who we are can be a struggle. We'll do and say things that will be against what we stand for. We may not like certain things about ourselves. Others will mistreat us. Situations will tug us away from truth. Distractions will entice us from what's important. When these times come, however, I pray God reminds us of His love and how special He created us. We can love who we are because He loves us more than we can comprehend.

And His love is all that matters.

**So, friend, do you love who you are?**

I pray you can answer yes. But if you can't quite yet, I invite you to do any of these: 1) Read Psalm 139 in its entirety. And keep reading it until it becomes truth that sinks deep in your soul; 2) Pray and ask God to help you love yourself in His love, and to see you the way He sees you; 3) Share how you're feeling with someone who is close to you and you can trust; 4) Pray about seeking a Christian therapist who can help you work through things you may not be aware of now.

God will help you love who you are healthily and humbly. I think you're amazing, but more importantly, so does God!

And only when we have a healthy and humble love of self can we effectively love God and others. It all goes hand in hand. Because if I don't love who God made me to be, what's that saying to God, my Creator? That I can't love who He created? And if I don't love myself, how can I possibly love others well?

**Loving who we are benefits more than just ourselves.**

It impacts everyone around us and every relationship we have.

Let's take this deeper. We're continuing this conversation over in our private Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Come on over there and join in the conversation. It's the most uplifting and encouraging space! The link to this group is in the show notes.

Also, if you found encouragement and hope in this episode, would you please leave a rating and/or review from wherever you're listening today? This will help others find this encouragement too. Subscribe so you never miss a new episode.

In closing, God loves you so very much, and I pray you love who you are too. You are His beautiful and magnificent creation, unique and special. As you go about your week this week, remember who you are

in Jesus. I'm thankful for these few moments we got to spend together today. I love and appreciate you!  
God bless you!

[2 Timothy 3:1-5](#) NIV

[Matthew 22:37-39](#) ESV

[Psalm 139:13-16](#) VOICE

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Lefebvre". The signature is written in black ink and has a horizontal line underneath it.