

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

137. What Happens When We Invite God into Our Days

You are listening to episode 137 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, What Happens When We Invite God into Our Days. Welcome to the podcast! No matter if this is your first time here or your 137th or somewhere in between, I'm glad you're here! Thank you for joining me. A question for you today: Do you intentionally invite God into your day? Well, this is the subject of today's episode. It's a continuation of last week's episode in which I shared how my husband and I invited God to go with us on vacation... and He accepted! When we invite God into our days, something amazing happens, yet many of us forget or don't think to do this. I share a couple more stories from our vacation, highlighting what God allowed us to experience. I think this will spur us on today. Ready to find some help, hope, and encouragement for your day? Let's get into this episode.

Do you typically invite God into your day?

Do you ask Him to walk with you through your moments? On the days when I begin them with Him, I do this well. On the days I don't, well I don't. This is one of the reasons I'm so set on starting my day with God. It truly makes all the difference for me. Yet years ago I didn't think or didn't know to invite God into my days. I just went about them, I guess, on my own. Sure, God was always with me, but I didn't consciously invite Him into every part of my day. I didn't seek Him throughout the day. So, I get it if it's not something you normally do. I get it if you typically do this, but sometimes you forget. But don't you think our days would be much more spirit- and hope-filled if we invited God into every one of them?

In last week's episode 136, That Time God Went with Us on Vacation, I shared how my husband and I had just returned from a 10-day vacation, and how we invited God to go on the trip with us. It may sound kind of silly--inviting God to go on vacation with us--but like I said last week, "...why would we ever want to leave home without Him? Or why would we not want to begin our vacation days with Him, just like we begin our days at home with Him?"

From the initial prayer we voiced as we left our home in the wee hours of the morning of our first day, we asked God to lead us, guide us, and to travel with us. We sought His protection, His grace, and His presence. I'm so glad we did because doing so, I believe, impacted our vacation in ways I couldn't expect in that moment. If you haven't listened to last week's episode, I encourage you to do so. It's like a "part 1" to this episode.

So yes, we invited God to go with us, and He accepted! But truly, anytime we invite Him in He accepts. Have we invited God into this day? If not, let's do so now.

Would you pray with me?

Father God, thank You for this day, and for the blessing of it. We know this is the day that You have made, and we will rejoice and be glad in it. Lord, we invite You into every part of this day. We don't want to try to venture through it on our own. You know what's best for us today, and we humbly ask for you to guide us to Your best. Lead us, mold us, help us to be the people you desire us to be. We trust You today and love You with our entire beings. In Jesus' name. Amen.

That's better, isn't it?

The thing is this world isn't conditioned to invite God in. This world tells us we can do it all on our own and we can handle it all. How many times have you heard, "You've got this!," or have heard others say to themselves, "I've got this!"? I don't know about you, but I don't got anything on my own. I just don't. But with God I do.

I've also heard others say, "You are enough." No, I'm not. On my own I'm not enough. But with Jesus I am. Last week an acquaintance wrote on a social post, "I can do hard things." That may be true, but I really can't do anything worthwhile on my own. Remember the words Jesus said in John 15? He said, "If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5b NIV).

If we park for a minute in this chapter of John 15, it clearly reveals to us the secret of success and flourishing. It's remaining in Jesus. It's abiding in Him and clinging to Him. Like a branch remains in a vine. Verse 4 in that chapter reads, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (NIV).

When we invite God in, we remain in Him.

Friend, let's begin to build the habit of inviting God into every single day. It's just as simple as asking Him. Here's a secret: He will never decline our offer. So yes, let's invite God into every single part of our lives. In every single moment. Remember, apart from Him we can do nothing.

To recap from last week, I shared how God guided us to the audio book we listened to on the way down, and the fun we had with life-long friends in Georgia. I mentioned the blessings of our favorite French bakery in Indian Rocks Beach and the accordion player outside, how we dined at our go-to restaurants, and enjoyed our walks on the beach. And the impact our new friend in Unit B made on our lives that week. Whew!

God was in it all.

And we knew it, especially because we knew He was with us.

One reason we drove on this vacation was to take our tandem bicycle--to get out on the bike as much as we could. We're fair-weather bicyclists. Maybe someday we'll have cold-weather biking gear, but as of right now, we don't. So we bike when the weather is warm, and it was certainly that in Florida.

So, we biked three of our days there. The thing I love the most about getting on the bike for the first time in the season is how it feels. I can only describe it as it just feels good to get back on the bike. It's as if my body simply remembers its position on the bike and just settles in within the first few pedal rotations. It's

as if we never took a winter break from it. There's something about that saying, "It's just like riding a bike." Meaning it's like second nature to us, and we pick up right back where we left off. That's so true for us on that tandem.

We enjoyed the Pinellas Bike Trail, as well as riding down Gulf Boulevard from Indian Rocks Beach to Clearwater Beach. Let me tell you, there are some massive-sized homes on that boulevard. I don't know what the people do to live in such homes, but they are some of the biggest I've ever seen!

As the warm sun rested on my back as we peddled in sync together, it felt as if God was resting His hand upon me, warming every part of my body. It truly felt as if a thawing inside was taking place. And I was there for it all.

If you've read my book, *Right Now Matters*, you know bicycling was always my husband's thing, not mine. Until the year he asked me to ride RAGBRAI (the week-long bicycle ride across Iowa) with him on our tandem. After that week in 2014, tandem bicycling became OUR thing. And I'm so glad it is.

God reminded me as we peddled down the trail the first morning in Florida that He provided bicycling for us as a way to stay connected with each other in our marriage through transitioning into an empty nest when our children left our home. It's not something we specifically prayed for, but in His goodness, He provided it for us. I'm grateful He did. Because it's something to do together to benefit both of us.

It may not be you, or maybe it is, but someone may need to hear today the suggestion to find something you and your spouse can do together--whether you're facing an empty nest or not. Something that will benefit you both and continue to build your relationship. It's something worth praying about. Just my two cents about that today.

Rain was forecasted for Wednesday.

God, what do we do on a rainy day on vacation? We had lots of options, but we opted for our Plan B. So, we hopped in the van and drove to Tampa (which was 30ish miles away). We enjoyed IKEA and the historic neighborhood of Ybor City, which we had visited during a prior trip. What I remembered about Ybor City was the free-roaming colorful roosters. They were everywhere--in the parking lots, on the streets, on the sidewalks. And they were still there this time around. But we love this little neighborhood and the many things to do there. And God reminded me how we "stumbled upon it" the last time Bill and I vacationed in Florida together. I also don't believe in coincidences, but in "God-incidences." I believe God blessed us on our last trip and on this trip with this fun historic neighborhood.

After a full and fun week in Florida, we packed up and headed home on Friday, March 8. Our intention was to drive to St. Louis and spend the night there. That's roughly fifteen hours of drive time, but we were up for it. Friends of ours recommended another audio book for our way home, and let me tell you, this book rocked my world (again, no coincidence). It's *This Present Darkness*, a Christian novel by Frank Peretti, written in 1986 about the unseen spiritual world. Listening to this book captivated us and caused our 15-hour drive to seem much less! The thing is, I can't stop thinking about this book, even eleven days later after listening to it. God used it to remind me about and open my eyes to a world that I don't think of very often... the unseen world of good versus evil. It truly altered my perspective in life.

But as we arrived in St. Louis around 11 p.m. that evening, we soon found out that even though our apps showed us differently, there were no hotel rooms available that evening. None. Unless we wanted to spend \$190 for a room we would sleep in for just a few hours. At one hotel we stopped in, the man at the front desk said he had to turn away people with reservations. Man, if we would have been one of those that were turned away, I don't think I would have received that too well.

We prayed for God to show us what to do.

With four hours still ahead of us to get home, I didn't think it was wise to try to drive that distance after driving all day long. We couldn't find any rest areas to pull into. Our choices were dwindling. Pulling into a gas station around 12:30 a.m. on the west side of St. Louis, we decided to park the van and call it a day. We'd try to sleep in the van! Yikes! The gas station attendant said it was fine to do so, so we reclined our seats, tried to get comfortable, and hopefully sleep would come. It took me some time, but I finally fell asleep. Before I did though I said to Bill, "this is certainly an adventure!" And believe it or not, I was okay sleeping in the van. (This can only be the work of God! Seriously!) We woke at 6 a.m., fluffed ourselves up, and were on our way home.

It's amazing what God can do when we invite Him in. It's beyond what we can imagine or comprehend. This reminds me of Philippians 4:6-7, and I appreciate how The Living Bible translation says it, "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus."

His peace will keep our thoughts and hearts quiet and at rest. That sounds wonderful, doesn't it? That's what happens when we invite God into our days. He gives us His peace. No matter what happens, we will have His peace. The peace that allows you to appreciate His blessings--like we did on our trip--as well as the concerns of the day--like us not being able to find a hotel room and me agreeing to sleep in a gas station parking lot in our van.

God will give us His peace when we invite Him in.

We're taking this over to our private Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Come on over and join in the conversation this week. The link to this group is in the show notes.

Also, if you're local to me, our next women's evening of encouragement is next Thursday, March 28 in Cedar Rapids. We're pausing to Reflect, Realign, and Refocus our lives. It's a girls' night out with a purpose, and you'll be encouraged and inspired in your real life right now. All the details are found in the link in the show notes as well.

Friend, let's invite God into every day. Let's do what we need to do to remind ourselves, even if that means setting a reminder on our phones or writing it on our bathroom mirrors. Because this world isn't going to remind us to. This is too important not to. I'm cheering you on and praying for you today. God bless you!

Links in this episode:

Episode 136, [That Time God When with Us on Vacation](#)

[John 15](#) NIV

[Philippians 4:6-7](#) TLB

[Encouragement for Real Life Community](#)

[Details for our next women's evening of encouragement, Real Encouragement LIVE!](#)

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