

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## **150. What Do Your Soul and Self Need This Summer?**

You are listening to episode 150 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, What Do Your Soul and Self Need This Summer? Welcome to the podcast today! I'm so glad you're here--and I mean that. I just don't say it to say it, from the bottom of my heart I'm grateful you've chosen to spend a few moments with me today. Before we go any further, however, can we just pause to celebrate the 150th episode of this podcast??!! 150 episodes!! I can't even comprehend that for 150 weeks the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast has shared hope and encouragement for our real lives. I guess, as they say, time flies when you're having fun, right?! This podcast exists because of you and your interest in living an encouraged life and because of God's influence and hand of blessing on it. Thank you and thank God. And I'm excited about this particular episode as we pause and ponder the question, "What do your soul and self need this summer?" Let's get right into it.

### **Right out of the gate today, I ask you, "What do your soul and self need this summer?"**

Do you know? Have you asked?

Somedays we run on autopilot. We have routines that we slip into and stick to pretty well. Yet sometimes we get so stuck in them that we've put ourselves in a box without even realizing it. It's likely one that we never think of expanding out of. Or am I the only one? I can get so focused on doing what I'm used to doing that I just keep doing it until something tears open that box I've put myself in.

Think about it for a moment. Are you in one of these boxes in this season of life? I found myself in one until I asked myself the question which is the title of this episode. What do my soul and self need this summer? Let me tell you the story.

A friend of mine shared a link to a Christian podcast episode regarding soul care for summer. She shared it with me because I had mentioned in our Monday morning prayer group (she's a member of this group) that I feel as if God is leading me to live a different kind of summer. One of rest, refreshment, and caring for my soul. She was right--the podcast episode gave my mind some new thoughts to think. It also confirmed and put into actual words how God has been leading my heart and speaking to my soul for this season. And now that summer officially begins on the calendar this week, it's not too late to pause and ponder this question.

### **Again, I ask you, "What do your soul and self need this summer?"**

For me, I consider June 1 the beginning of summer. So I'm already well on my way to enjoying this--my favorite--season of our four. I love everything about summer... the sun, the heat, the green, the flowers, more daylight, you name it (okay, except for maybe the bugs, I could do without the bugs). It's also the season in which I tend to be more creative. I seem to do my best work during the summer months.

Take for example last summer. Last year I was knee deep, sometimes shoulder deep, in finalizing my manuscript for my book, *Right Now Matters*. I was preparing to publish it in the fall--which I did. I filled most of my days last summer with typing, researching, studying, and praying at my desk. I'd try to get outdoors on my scheduled fifteen-minute breaks throughout the day, but most days, I was inside. I had deadlines to meet and many things to accomplish, as you can imagine.

### **Because summer was so full last year, I almost felt like I missed it.**

We did a lot last summer. On top of writing two books, we trained for and completed our 8th RAGBRAI, I watched our grandsons one day each week, we planted, cared for, and harvested what I call a very large garden, and I chose to still spend my evenings with my husband. This is a personal choice I continue to make daily.

Because this season typically is my most productive, I assumed when spring arrived this year, I would spend this summer working and creating like I did last summer--and at that pace. Every time my thoughts turned to my next book, however, I felt this check in my spirit. I kept getting a "not yet" kind of halting. *What? Why, God? Summer is my jam. Summer is my most creative time. Lord, I expected to write my next book this summer.*

If there's anything I've learned over the past year in publishing my two books, it's this: I can't force it. God has to lead it. And if He's not leading it, then I can't muster it up on my own. So late May I halted my plans and surrendered to God's. And let me tell you, that wasn't so easy for me to do. The get-things-done kind of girl inside of me fought this hard.

### **Until I listened to that podcast episode.**

What do my self and soul need this summer? I didn't just ask myself that question, but more importantly, I asked God. *What do I need, God? If I'm not to write my next book, what am I to do?* It was if the clouds parted and the sun shone through. My self and soul need a summer of rest, refreshment, rejuvenation, and relationships. I guess I'll call them The Four Rs.

It still feels awkward and strange to say this, let alone carry it out daily. But I know I'm on the right track and in the center of God's will because of the immense peace that fills me daily. At first, I felt like I was falling behind, but then I had to question, falling behind in what and from whom? God continues to remind me this life is not a race, nor is it a competition. His plans and purposes for this season--let alone my entire life--are good. Oh, so good.

God is showing me this season of rest is not sitting around doing nothing. It's more about resting in Him, being refreshed and rejuvenated by time spent with Him. It's also about building my relationship with Him and with others.

So I'm still doing many of the things I usually do: working my part-time church job, offering new episodes for this podcast, hosting my June women's event next week, and listening and looking for God's prompts regarding my next book. I'm still spending two days and one night hanging out with my fun and adorable grandsons each week, and I'm putting a greater emphasis on building relationships with the people in my life.

This is what my self and soul need this summer.

### **What about you?**

Do you know yet? Is God stirring you, guiding you, leading you in a specific way? I encourage you to take some time today and ask Him what you need. Because sometimes we don't know what we need. Or at least I don't. But when we invite God in and ask Him, He will make it very clear. After all, He knows us better than we know ourselves. He created us and our souls.

When we seek God and His will, then live out His calling and direction, we will experience His ultimate peace. And don't we each desire a peaceful season--and life? This points me to a passage of Scripture that encourages my heart immensely. Maybe it'll encourage yours as well. It's a common one, or at least the end of it is. But I don't want us to miss the encouragement contained in the beginning of it as well.

It's Philippians 4:4-7 (VOICE). It reads, "*Most of all, friends, always rejoice in the Lord! I never tire of saying it: Rejoice! Keep your gentle nature so that all people will know what it looks like to walk in His footsteps.* The Lord is ever present with us. Don't be anxious about things; instead, pray. Pray about everything. *He longs to hear your requests,* so talk to God about your needs and be thankful *for what has come.* And know that the peace of God (*a peace* that is beyond any and all of our *human* understanding) will stand watch over your hearts and minds in Jesus, the Anointed One.

I think we're both ready for a peace-filled season, right? No matter what God reveals to you regarding this season, we can trust Him in it. Even if it feels a little (or a lot!) uncomfortable.

### **He knows what's best for us, and He will always guide us to His best.**

Speaking of His best, next Monday, June 24, is our next local women's evening of encouragement. We call these events Real Encouragement *LIVE!*, and the title of this one is Halting the Hurried Life. God never intended for us to live life in such a hurry. This isn't His best for us. If you feel God guiding you to a more peaceful and stress-less way of living, this evening is designed for you. Details and tickets are in the show notes.

Also, if you are encouraged from listening to this episode, would you please rate and/or review this podcast from wherever you're listening today? Be sure to subscribe so you never miss an episode.

I am praying for you in this season, friend. God has good plans for your life, and sometimes it just takes us pausing and asking what they are. Sometimes the boxes we've unintentionally put ourselves in no longer suits us, and it's time to break out of them. The wonderful thing is, when we allow God to do all the work, we only need to follow. The peace that's He makes available to us in doing so is just what we need. Thanks for being here for this 150th episode. I appreciate you and am grateful for you! God bless you!

Links in this episode:

[What You Need This Summer](#) | Wild at Heart Podcast

[Philippians 4:4-7](#) Voice

[Halting the Hurried Life](#) women's event, Real Encouragement *LIVE!*

[Right Now Matters and Right Now Matters Bible Study](#)

[Access my Free Resource Library](#) to help you live as a Right-Now Woman

*Julie Lefebvre*