

TO THE FULL

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it **to the full**.*

- John 10:10 NIV -

*ARE YOU BREATHING JUST A LITTLE, and calling it a life?** Sometimes we need the reminder that life is meant to be lived to the full. That it is OK to enjoy ourselves, to let our hair down, to worry less, and to really suck the marrow out of life (who even says that? I guess we do now.) Because as far as we can tell, this is exactly how God intended for us to live- fully and abundantly.

It's easy to forget what that feels like, though. One day we're wide-eyed and the possibilities are endless, and then slowly, without even realizing it, we find ourselves dulled by the routines and disappointments that are a part of being human. We slowly start to lose our optimism and zest for life.

All that is about to change, because this next year is about the full life. Which means living grateful, joyful, and hopeful. It means being led by the Good Shepherd and trusting that everything is working out exactly as it should.

We'll say farewell to auto pilot and regain our vitality. We'll have more fun, get to know new people, stop fearing what could go wrong or being so afraid of what others think. We will enjoy our kids like never before, and someday, when they wonder what life to the full looks like, they will look no farther than how mom does it.

But here's one important thing to remember: this idea of life to the full isn't about striving for more. It's not about striving at all. It is about recognizing that life isn't a bunch of goals to achieve, or people to please; but an invitation to savor, delight, and enjoy your life just a little more.

If you have ever felt like you aren't enough, if you have forgotten to have fun, or feel like you have lost your spark, then this is the fresh start you have been waiting for.

In order to live *To the Full* this year, let's:

Have More Fun: Fun is often the first thing to go when life gets hectic because it seems frivolous and extravagant. This year we are going to remember that we can still have fun even when life is hard. We are going to let the laundry wait and build a fort with our kids. We'll stop waiting until everything on our to-do list is finished until we have fun, and do one thing a month just because it makes us happy. This is our year to remember what it feels like to enjoy ourselves.

Fear Less: No more fearing what people might think or say. No more letting fear paralyze us or concern about the future rob us of the present. At any given moment, there is courage inside of each of us that may be lying dormant. This year we'll bring it to life. We'll change our ways of thinking, calm our anxiety, and surrender our need to control. This is the year of faith over fear, and abundance over scarcity.

Find Our People: This year we'll meet our neighbors, learn the name of the cashier at the grocery store, and invite our MOPS table over for dinner. We need our people, and they need us. Maybe it means asking someone we respect to be our mentor, or perhaps it means marching in a parade, throwing candy and inviting other moms to MOPS. Finding our people takes some vulnerability, but it will also mean being known, belonging, and helping others feel the same. Life to the full happens best with people by our side.

* From the poem, *Have You Ever Tried to Enter the Long Black Branches?*, by Mary Oliver