

Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View

Dear Listener:

Thank you for stopping by for a visit at Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View podcast! To make it easy, you will find a transcript of each episode. I hope you enjoy the visit!

Episode 35- Is it Enough?

Welcome back to the porch! I'm Julie, and I teach folks just like you how to live a Simple Life. It may sound like this is a lifestyle that doesn't offer enough to satisfy us. But then, that begs the question, 'What really is enough?'

I am guilty of using the phrase, "It's not enough", all too often in my life. There's not enough money. There is not enough time. There's not enough to _____ (you fill in the blank). We seem to have the mentality that we need an over-abundance of something in order to make it worth our while. When in reality, we need 'just enough' to serve our needs.

Take our garden for instance. When we plan our garden, in our minds we usually have forty or more of any given plant, like tomatoes and peppers, fifteen or more rows of corn, and a lagniappe row that consists of all the leftovers that wouldn't fit in the section for which that vegetable was slated. Never mind we don't really have that much space, but we always worry we won't have 'enough' if we don't plant everything we want.

Normally when we can all the produce from our gardens, we are in the kitchen every day in the summer, washing, prepping, and watching the gauge on the pressure canner. We worry that what we have won't be enough to get us through the winter, so we just keep canning.

This year, the garden didn't do as well as we wanted. There wasn't much rainfall, so we depended on water from our well. The tomatoes and peppers did okay, but we only scraped by on the cucumbers. The corn and green beans were a flop.

This year reminded me of another gardening year. Instead of a drought, we had an abnormal rain fall, to the point where many areas flooded. That time, I barely got even a tomato or a pepper, as the garden was all but completely washed out.

In the midst of all that rain, my friend Kathleen came by to visit early one morning and brought us a bag of peaches. There were maybe fifteen in the bag. In most people's eyes, it was enough to eat, but too many to eat quickly enough before some of them spoiled. Most folks would have thought there wasn't enough to even pull the canner out -right? Wrong.

The Country Boy and I indulged on a couple of the fresh ones standing at the sink and enjoying the juicy goodness. The rest? I peeled, sliced, and canned. I may not have had my table covered with jars of bright orange peaches, but we still feasted on what jars we had over the winter.

One summer, the Country Boy and I tensed in solemn prayer that he could get the tractors running. He was in the middle of hay production and one of our tractors had a serious PTO problem. (If you aren't familiar with that term, it means Power Take-Off, and it's what makes the cutter and baler work.) The money just wasn't there to buy a new tractor. And parts aren't cheap, either.

In order to make it through at least the first cutting, the Country Boy borrowed a tractor from our neighbor Danny. He completed the first cutting, all while his mind steadily worked on how he could make at least some of the parts with the scraps and tools he already has around the farm.

We often tell ourselves we don't have enough - enough money, enough time, enough energy. In reality, what we should be doing is asking ourselves how we define 'enough'. It often amazes me how we seem to pass up some of the best things in life because it doesn't measure up to our definition of enough. A handful of snap beans doesn't make it worth our while, because it won't be 'enough' for dinner.

But that same handful of snap beans, when combined with a couple of carrots, a can of corn and a few other items can create a huge pot of soup. A few snap beans won't feed even one person, but a pot of soup can feed as many as 8 to 10 - or even more.

Time is a valuable asset for most of us. But there never seems to be enough of it. Most folks will tell you that you can't make more time. However, you really can. No, you can't add any more minutes in a day than what we are given. Instead, you can look at the things that are taking up a lot of your time. From that list, look at what is truly a priority, and what things aren't really necessary.

In many cases, we can cut out enough things to save us a few hours to an entire day. When that happens, use that time to do the things you truly want to do, like spend more time with family and friends, or pursue something you've been wanting to do for a while, but never seem to have enough time to do it.

And then there is money. We never seem to have enough income to cover all of our expenses. But if you take a hard look at what you are spending, more than likely there is actually enough to cover the necessities. There may not be much left over for the extras, like eating out at restaurants or going to the movies. But that's part of the beauty of living a Simple Life. Even a peanut butter and jelly sandwich feels like a gourmet meal when it is served outside as picnic fare.

Most of us have a DVD player, which means you probably have plenty of movies to watch at home. Or you can create your own entertainment – play games, build something, or just sit back and have a fun conversation.

If it is a material item, take a good look at what you want. You may not be able to afford it, but it doesn't mean you can't make something similar. Look to see what you have on hand, or things you can scavenge. I can't tell you how many things these hands of mine have created because our money always seems to run short. The Country Boy is forever building parts for the tractor out of scrap metal or repurposing one item for another use.

He loves using the black plastic lick tubs for his Cypress tree seedlings or fall tomatoes. I've used them for compost bins and to store feed for the animals. One of them we use as an outdoor table, and an empty one flipped upside down makes a good place to sit and rest.

We purposely keep drops – or scrap pieces of lumber. These are then used to build garden trellises, weaving looms, or wooden toys for the grandkids.

One thing I've learned in life is that God always provides us just 'enough'. We may not have excess, but we have what we need, when we need it. Sometimes that comes in material goods, like more tomatoes than we can handle in a single day or in scrap metal and a few tools to make a part. On occasion, He sends us a little extra income, that is just enough to do what we need to do. Sometimes the 'enough' comes in the package of knowledge and creativity to be able to make what we need.

And sometimes, 'enough' comes wrapped in the package of a friend who has what we need, like Danny and his tractor, or Kathleen and peaches. Enough also comes from friends who offers words of encouragement, giving us the faith in ourselves we need – or helping hands to get us over the latest hurdle.

We may not have a lot, but we always have 'enough'. And I thank God for providing that enough –whether it's in a few tomatoes, a small bag of peaches, or the friends He has put in our paths to give us courage and determination.

I have enough. What about you?

If you want to learn more about the topic at hand, or get a transcript for this episode, just visit my website at www.thefarmwife.com/podcast. That is the Resource page for this podcast and I have it set up by episodes to make things easier to find. To help you out, this is Episode 35.

If you want to just stop by for a visit, I would love to hear from you. You can email me at thevirtualporch@gmail.com. Don't forget to tell your friends to visit the Podcast as well – the more the merrier!

Thanks again for stopping in. I will see you next week on Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View. And while you are waiting on the next episode, grab that glass of refreshment, pull up a rocker, and sit back for a while. It's time to

Relax & Enjoy!

julie