

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Episode 112:

Finding Hope During Financial Frustration with Erin Odom

Shownotes at jenriday.com/112

Jen Riday: Hey there, welcome back to Vibrant Happy Women, the place to be if you want to find peace and calm and authenticity. Even when life gets hard, you just want to feel at peace and that's totally possible. Life isn't always easy; life isn't always happy unicorns and roses. However, we can always find that deep inner peace, that place of authentic calm. And here on Vibrant Happy Women, we talk with a number of guests who share their journey to finding that peace in the midst of sometimes that chaotic world we live in. I'm so glad you're here. Last week, I spoke with Mutale Bingley all about not comparing our insides to other people's outsides. She shared a Bemba quote about, "The only thing you can see in someone else's house is the roof." You can't see what's under that roof, so it's important just to know ourselves and be our authentic selves. That was at episode 111; episode 111, if you haven't listened to that yet. Today, I'm talking with Erin Odom all about her journey from being really financially frustrated to shifting her entire financial experience. Erin shares her journey from being a financially frustrated stay-at-home mom to finding unique ways to, not only save money, but to earn money while still having that flexibility to be the stay-at-home mom she wants to be. So let's go ahead and dive right in. I promise, even if you're not financially frustrated, Erin shares some tips that will help everyone.

My guest today is the amazing Erin Odom and she's the founder of The Humbled Homemaker, a blog dedicated to grace filled living and designed to equip and encourage mothers in the trenches. Her southern charm and wealth of inspirational practical content has drawn an audience of millions over the years. Erin and her husband, Will, live in the south where they raised their 4 children. Welcome to the show, Erin.

Erin Odom: Thanks so much for having me, Jen. I'm happy to be here.

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Jen Riday: Well, let's go ahead and launch into your favorite quote and then hear your story.

Erin Odom: Well, my favorite quote is one that has been a favorite since I was a teenager. I'm thinking I was maybe 15 or 16 years old when I heard this quote. I wrote it down on a piece of paper; I mean, really just like scritch... chicken scratch on a little piece of scrap notebook paper and I taped it to the dresser beside my bed. And I would read this quote over and over during tough times then, and I remember it now. And the quote is from Mother Teresa. And it is, "God doesn't call us to be successful, he simply calls us to be faithful." And I don't know about you, Jen, and I don't know about your listeners, but I've always been more of a perfectionist type person. I'm a firstborn and I think it kind of comes with the territory. And it was just part of my personality as a teenager, you know, that success was having the really good grades. And I did have good grades, but it was a... more of a mindset shift of just being faithful and... and what God has given me today, and not putting undue pressure on myself to meet the world's standards of success. I think sometimes now as like as a woman in her, I guess I would say late 30s now, I can see how the world says, "You've got a hustle, hustle, hustle and be a Pinterest perfect mom. And you need to do this professionally and that professionally while not neglecting your family." And I think that there's just so much undue pressure we could put on ourselves. So really, I've always loved that quote, you know, for over half my life now; well over half my life. And recently, I've been thinking about it so much again because, I don't... my... my version of success doesn't have to look like everyone else's.

Jen Riday: Yes.

Erin Odom: It doesn't have to look like what social media deems as successful. I don't want to sacrifice success of my family for other successes. And so just learning to slow down and be faithful in what is right in front of me today and take baby steps of success and not beat myself up when I don't look like the world's version of that.

Jen Riday: Right, right. Well, so how did you get to the point where you can know, or how do, you know, what is the next best step for you and keep pushing that comparison-itis away?



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Erin Odom: Hmm, you know, it's hard; it really is hard. I am a very future minded person. My parents always would laugh and say that I should have gone into long-range planning because even as a child, I was constantly thinking of... you know, I would plan out my outfits like 30 days in advance.

Jen Riday: (Laughs). That's awesome!

Erin Odom: What I would wear to school, And, you know, I would I would actually doodle those out like during church; and I'm embarrassed to say that. But, you know, I think it's just slowing down, you know, I pray a lot, and looking at what's around me so that I don't miss out on the future. And so what's the next best thing? You know, even the other day, I'm launching a book right now as we speak; it came out a few weeks ago when you air this. And I realized that, in just the busyness of every day, I'm not really savoring the fact that this is another dream that's come true; that this books coming out.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Erin Odom: And instead of jumping ahead and thinking, "Am I ever going to have more books?" or, you know, "Are my kids going to be able to go to this school when they're older?" or what not; just sitting still and today and savoring it. And it's more of a mindset shift. It's more of when I find my mind starting to race forward in time and really stress out and think about things that right now, I really don't have a whole lot of control over, to really capture those thoughts and go back to, "Alright, what is today? What's on my agenda today and this week and this month that are going to get me to those places that I hope to be in the future?" you know?

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Erin Odom: And so, for me, right now it's my... it's my book right now, it's my kids where they are right now. But, again, it's really that mindset shift of capturing those thoughts that want to race forward. Because I... I don't just think, I know that we women put so much undue stress on ourselves by not focusing on today. And we might miss out on the joys of today too.



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Jen Riday: Right, it's true; that's true. Well, so you mentioned your book which is called 'You Can Stay Home With Your Kids; 100 Tips, Tricks And Ways To Make It Work On A Budget'. So tell us about your book and in the backstory that led you to write it.

Erin Odom: Well, I... I always wanted to be a stay-at-home mom. If I... when I was younger, I thought, "I might never get married, but if I am, I want to be a stay-at-home mom." My mom was a stay-at-home mom from the time I was 2, so I don't remember her not being a stay-at-home mom. But our first daughter was born in 2008, which was right in the middle of the recession. We didn't even really remember, but we really didn't even know. You know, looking back, everyone can see what happened, you know? But we didn't know how bad it was or how bad it was going to get at that time. And so she was born, I was teaching full-time. My husband was getting a master's; he was in school full-time, he was working part time. And there was just no way that I couldn't go back to work full-time when she was 6 weeks old. And so I felt in that moment that my... my dreams were really dashed, but they weren't. I... I enjoyed actually the time that I worked. And I worked full-time for most of her first year, but I really still had that dream of staying at home with my kids.

And so my husband and I we had some marital issues and family challenges that I talked about a little bit and my first book, 'More Than Just Making It'. And we had to make a quick move to being with my parents who lived in North Carolina in 2009; middle of 2009. And at the time, we had a house in a different State that couldn't sell. My husband had lost his job which was a major reason for that move. His parents were going through a nasty divorce, so we needed to be around someone who would give us a lot of really emotional support and just a lot of wisdom in our marriage and in our job situation. So we moved to North Carolina, didn't have a house, didn't have a car; we had sold our cars, did not have much of anything. And within 6 weeks, my husband did get a job, we did find a place to live. My parents let us borrow their vehicle while we were working to... actually, we ended up buying their used vehicle from them. And we decided at that time, we're going to try to make it work for me to stay home with our kids.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

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Erin Odom: We only had one kid at the time, she was 13 months old; which, looking back, was the craziest decision because we were in a really bad situation. And, again, we didn't realize how about it was. My husband got the full-time job teaching, and looking back, we did not realize or understand as a young couple; and honestly, we weren't that young. I was... I think I was 28, almost 29. I mean, I was young but, you know, I wasn't like 2. And he's a 4 and a half years older than me, so he was in his early 30s. But we had just been through a very hard time and we did not realize how much harder it was going to get and how much it took to support a family. North Carolina was and still is one of the lowest paying States for teachers.

Jen Riday: Ah.

Erin Odom: So we started... we started that journey and I decided to try to get some side gigs. I taught some kids from our church Spanish, homeschool Spanish; that was one of my majors in college. Again, I was always the overachiever side, 2 majors; journalism, because I loved writing in Spanish. And I tutored at the local elementary school and my mom helped take care of our little girl. And I started freelancing for several local newspapers. I had left writing aside, which had always been a passion of mine. But I had really stopped writing about 6 years before that. I had... my inspiration had really dried up. I didn't have a lot to write about. It was really interesting because it had always been something that had made me come alive. I started writing again though because I wanted to do anything to make it possible for me to stay at home most of the time with our daughter. So let's fast forward. We ended up having a second daughter; she was a surprise. Okay, so Jen, just full disclosure, 3 out of our 4 kids were surprises. And, yes, we know how that happened.

Erin Odom: But 3 out of 4, and 2 of those 3 came during that really hard season of our lives. So we ended up having 2 more kids; so we had 3 little girls within 4 years, and times were so tough. But after our third daughter was born, she was a couple months old, I had started my blog; I'd been blogging for about a year. And my friends... some of my blog and friends knew we were struggling. I'd never said on the blog, "We are struggling economically." And they said, "Let's write a motherhood series together and cover different facets of motherhood. Erin, we think you should be the one who should write about staying at home with your kids when you could barely afford it. Look at you; you

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have 3 little kids that you can barely afford it." I thought, "Okay, well, this is really vulnerable."

Jen Riday: (Laughs).

Erin Odom: And I had always voiced it by being authentic on my blog, but there were just some places I just didn't go. But my blog did not have a ton of readers at the time, so I thought, "Okay, well, you know, who's going to read this anyway?" So I wrote a blog post called 'Staying At Home With Your Kids When You Can Barely Afford It'.

Jen Riday: Ooh.

Erin Odom: And I basically started out with, "We're living on a rice and beans budget, but it's extremely important to us... for me to be at home with our kids, and so here's how we're making it work." And I gave some of my best free cool living tips at the time. Well, I went to bed and I woke up and I had tens of thousands of page views, hundreds of comments.

Jen Riday: Whoa! (Laughs).

Erin Odom: Emails, you know, overflowing in my inbox. And what I started to realize was, I was not alone.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Erin Odom: That many people were struggling financially, there were many moms that wanted to be at home with their kids, who either weren't home with their kids and really wanted that, you know, maybe they were working and they just kept having this pool to be at home with their kids. Or maybe they were like me and they were home the majority of the time, but ends just weren't meeting and they were really struggling month to month or after month after month. So what's really interesting is that passion I'd had since a little girl, I had put it aside until I was in a very desperate position and I began writing for the newspaper, I began writing on my blog. And I look back and, God really used that as a conduit to bring my family out of living on a low income and provide the way for me to

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stay home with my kids. So today, I call myself a work-at-home-mom because I am. My income on the blog is our primary income and it has been for close to 5 years now, I think. My husband and I now run the blog together. But that little blog post that I wrote, when I finally decided, "You know what? I'm going to really take off the mask and be real with my readers," that blog post attracted the attention of my literary agent, who 2 years after I wrote it, I got an email from him and I also got an email from an editor, an acquisitions editor from HarperCollins Christian, who owns Zondervan who's my book publisher around the same time, both wanting me to write a book around the topic of staying at home with your kids when you can barely afford it.

Jen Riday: Oh nice! Yeah, it's a great title. So... so you wrote your first book, 'More Than Just Making It; Hope For The Heart Of The Financially Frustrated'. And when did that come out?

Erin Odom: That one came out in September of 2017. So that one came out about 6 months ago; 6, maybe 7, 8 months ago now by the time this comes out. And it was really... so 2014 was when my agent and that editor both approached me. But at the time, we were doing much better financially, but I had a 1 year old, a 3 year old and a 5 year old. And even though writing had always been my passion, and I know those of you ladies listening, you might be passionate about something and you might be saying, "But I have young kids at home," you know, even I'm in my late 30s and I... like I just said, I have a 14-month-old. So it's that constant struggle of, "When do we embrace these passions?" you know?

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Erin Odom: So even though that had been a dream of mine, I thought, "There is no way I can continue to run the blog and be the mom I want to be to my 1 year old, 3 year old and 5 year old at the time, and write books."

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Erin Odom: And so I was really in this quandary. And I know my personality, I know myself; I know that, you know, I would struggle to hold everything together and do everything

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well. So that's where I went back to that quote of, "Okay, God calls us to be faithful, not successful by the world standards. Where do I go from here?" And so honestly, I put a lot of prayer into things and I really felt like God was saying, "Walk into this sign with this literary agent." And he was wonderful, the agent. And he said, "You know what? Take your time." So I did, Jen. I took almost 2 years to write my proposal in the cracks of time. And then I got the deal. And I didn't know, I don't know if most people know, but it takes... it's about a 2-year process, at least a year and a half, when you write a book with a publisher because you go through edits, you go through, "Let's pick out the cover of, the book the marketing and all that." And so what is so funny and it's just really ironic is that, my girls were in a very good place. You know, I didn't have toddlers or anything anymore when the book was in the process for coming out; you know, when I had the contract that I was writing. And then in the middle of writing my first manuscript, I found out that I was, "Surprise!" expecting our little boy.

Erin Odom: And so my edits were literally due, my big edit, the week he was born. And my publisher gave me a lot of grace, but I did launch that book when I had, you know, an infant. But it was okay; it all worked out. If I had known all of that years ago when I wrote that blog post, I think my brain would have exploded. And that's where it's like, "Okay, you have to just look at today. You don't know what's going to happen in the future." But... and, you know, it all worked out. I found out that having older kids with a baby, it's a little bit different. And I know your listeners might be thinking, "I would love to, you know, simplify my life, but also really cultivate some of these passions." And it totally is possible but it goes back to, "Okay, let's do one day at a time and see how this can work out."

Jen Riday: So you wrote the book and everyone loved it, and then you wrote another within 7 months? Goodness! Did you just get on role?

Erin Odom: Well, Jen, it's so interesting. It's... it was a 2 book deal.

Jen Riday: Okay.

Erin Odom: And I don't know that I would... I don't know that I know... I do know; I do know I would not write two books again the same here. I absolutely would not.



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Jen Riday: (Laughs)

Erin Odom: The second book is more of a companion and it's... it's a nice gift book and it's more practical and it's... the tips are in bite-size, easily digestible chunks, is how I like to describe it, with action steps. The first book was definitely more challenging to write. But people say, "How did you write that second book?" You know, "As moms, how do we cultivate our passions with little kids underfoot?" Well, I will tell you, my son was born with minor health issues. He had some low muscle tone, so we had to go to like physical therapy. We had to go to an OT because he had to wear one of those baby helmets and stuff. And so I literally wrote my second book when I was sitting in waiting rooms.

Jen Riday: Oh, that's so perfect. Yeah, smart.

Erin Odom: Yeah, and when my husband... my husband drove us to a lot of these appointments and I would write in the car. And I took my lap... somebody asked before, "Did you write on your phone?" no, I actually took my laptop with me everywhere; and so I just fitted in and the cracks. And I think sometimes when we have young kids, and even when we have school-aged kids, because I'm learning, I have 3 that are school-aged, it's not that it gets easier; it's a different kind of challenge, you know, because now I have homework. But I'm learning that just learn... you could fit in these passions in some of the cracks of time, like waiting rooms. I could have chosen to scroll on my phone on Facebook, which I'm not going to lie, I have done that before too, you know? Or I could have chosen to write my book on my laptop. And because I had my publisher with a deadline, it was easier to choose that, you know?

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm, smart, smart. Yeah.

Erin Odom: That's how... that's how I was able to write that second book. But, again, I would only write 1 a year from here on out. (Laughs).

Jen Riday: Yeah, yeah. One a year is amazing, my goodness! That's awesome! Well, so tell us a few of the tips from the book that's what... I'm curious, what kind of tips do you have for making it work on a budget?

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Erin Odom: Yeah! Well, thank you for asking. So I've divided the book up into 8 sections. And what I really tried to do was look at, "What are the major areas that we spend money on in our life? And let's break these down into different... some of my best tips for... for curbing spending in all of those major areas." So the first chapter is actually called 'Curb Spending'. And that's where I just look at little things that we have to do in life. I mean, we have to get our hair cut. We... I guess we don't have to be entertained, but... but we... it's a... it's a big desire. You know, we have to have utilities. We have to wash our clothes. So I try to break down some of those things that we absolutely have to do, but how can we curb spending in those areas? And the second chapter is 'Eat Well On A Budget', because I don't want to just feed my family cheap food, I want to feed them affordably but healthfully; and so I talked about that. I have a chapter on DIY household products because I have learned with just a few different ingredients that most people already have on hand that we can simply, but healthfully, again, clean our homes. I am have a chapter on entertaining your family without spending a fortune because I have learned, and I'm sure you have too, with 6 kids, with 4 kids, it costs a lot of money to do things, you know?

Jen Riday: Mm-hm.

Erin Odom: Even going to the zoo. So I'll tell you that, last summer, we got a membership to the zoo. Because we learned, with this many kids, we could go to the zoo once and, you know, we could add \$20 on to it and we can have a zoo membership for the whole year.

Jen Riday: Yeah, that's so smart, yeah.

Erin Odom: And... yeah. So that's one of the things that's like, "Okay, look into membership." I have a chapter on shopping secondhand in sales. And one of my favorite chapters I wrote in this book was providing for health care needs. Because our family now, we don't have traditional health insurance, we use a health sharing plan and that is saving us a ton of money. I have a chapter on hunting houses and vehicles. And then, I think my favorite chapter in the whole book is 'Creating More Income'. And that isn't a frugal living tip, but that whole section is on, "Let's look at your gifts and your passions and learn, if you so desire or if you need to, how can you create income for your family from home?"

Jen Riday: Hmm, yeah, that sounds amazing. And this is all in your second book 'You Can

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Stay Home With Your Kids; 100 Tips, Tricks, And Ways To Make It Work On A Budget'?

Erin Odom: Yes, that is all in my second book.

Jen Riday: Oh, wow, that's full! That's amazing! Well, let me... let me think of... let's see, how about let's get a tip from 'Hunting Houses And Vehicles' because my teenager just finally got his license and needs a car. So give me your tip there; give me a tip. (Laughs)

Erin Odom: Okay. So I would say, when you're looking at... if you went the car... well, first of all, one thing I wanted to say about homes, our family is actually thinking about buying a... a different home soon; flex your location.

Jen Riday: Oh!

Erin Odom: If at all possible, flex your location. So my family is actually very serious about possibly building a home that is a little bit bigger, because now we have 4 kids, in the next town over; we're talking 5 minutes down the road, but it's in the county and not the city of limits. And we will save thousands each year because the taxes are lower there.

Jen Riday: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Erin Odom: And so, if you can flex your location and not be married to a specific town or even county, if your commute, you know, will allow you to live somewhere where it's not going to be, you know, 2 hours to commute, then that can really save you thousands of dollars, where you're looking at vehicles. So we've been able to buy 2 vehicles and cash now.

Jen Riday: Oh!

Erin Odom: I will say, to start, we did not shy away from driving an older used vehicle for years. So I started out this conversation talking about how we borrowed my parents' old minivan; I didn't say it was a minivan. They had a minivan that we borrowed and then bought from them. And once we bought that minivan, we drove it for years and years and years. And, in fact, I was in a wreck with that minivan.

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Jen Riday: Oh!

Erin Odom: And the insurance company totaled it; somebody rear-ended me. Well, the reason why they totaled it was because the van ran fine, but it was an older van and it would have cost more to repair it than it would have been worth, okay?

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Erin Odom: So when they told us it was totaled but the mechanic said, "This van runs fine," we said, "Would you allow us to keep the van and you pay us however much money to repair the van?" and they did.

Jen Riday: Hmm!

Erin Odom: That really helped us because we were able to drive that van for several more years and it, you know, it wasn't very attractive; it had a big dent in the back of it, but it drove fine. But because we were able to do that, and we actually... we did just a little repair on the back of it, but we were able to save the money they gave us, we were able to buy another van that was only a couple of years old in cash...

Jen Riday: Nice!

Erin Odom: ... because we've able to save so much money by driving around. Now, you have to really swallow your pride and really just avoiding brand-new models and shopping around. My dad, he bought my first vehicle at a police auction.

Jen Riday: Oh no! Did it have a light on the outside?

Erin Odom: It did not.

Jen Riday: (Laughs)

Erin Odom: But it was... my friends called it 'the boat'.



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Jen Riday: Oh, nice.

Erin Odom: It was a 1980-something, I'm sure it was 80-something, Crown Victoria. It was one of those really like a boxy, I guess, more like rectangular cars.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Erin Odom: It had a lot of metal around it, it was white. But you know what? I was in a wreck with that one. An 18-wheeler pulled out in front of me I was 18.

Jen Riday: Whoa.

Erin Odom: And I swerved to not go under it. I mean, this was very... God protected us. And we hit at the gas tank, and I really believed that vehicle helped protect us because there was so much metal and between me and the... the truck that we hit. So I think a lot of housing and vehicles too is just being able to swallow your pride.

Jen Riday: Yeah, that's true. (Laughs)

Erin Odom: Because...

Jen Riday: My first car was a blue Station Wagon, a Zephyr; it was called the Zephyr. Oh yeah, that was fun to drive; but embarrassing, but still. If you... if you take... you do it with a bit of confidence, people can think it's cool; in high school at least.

Jen Riday: What about the eating well on a budget? How do you do that? Do you really have to only rice and beans? You know, that's...

Erin Odom: No. Jen, I definitely believe that you can eat healthy and not just eat rice and beans on a budget. Now, I do talk about in both of my books that, if you are struggling financially and you have an income problem and you can't afford anything more than rice and beans, that's when you have to really explore a little deeper and figure out a way to create more income. Whether that is you or your spouse changing jobs, whether that is, if you are say to her mom they need to go back to work even temporarily, or my favorite

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way it's creating more income from home. And so those are some ways that you could up your grocery budget so you don't have to eat rice of beads all the time. But you can feed a family healthfully on much less than what the world would deem you spend. And one of my favorite ways is just eating simple meals.

You know, when I first got married 13 years ago, I thought that I had to try different gourmet meals out and that I needed to make a new dish every... every week. And I think that was fun in the beginning to try different meals, but what I've learned now with a family, a busy family with 4 kids that, sometimes simple is better and that the simplest meals could be very healthy meals. And so I choose meals that don't have a whole lot of ingredients. And there's even times where there will be recipes that call for something that I'll leave out in order to save money. And just using some of the same basic ingredients, you can create different meals but not spend a fortune. Something else is just planning ahead; meal planning is huge. And when I don't plan what I'm going to do with that food that I buy at the store, it'll spoil.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Erin Odom: And it's such a hard feeling. You know, you feel so guilty when you open the refrigerator and whatever has... has gone bad. And meal planning, it really helps me to use up and be a good steward of what I have and it also helps prevent going out to eat at the last minute. Because when I don't plan my meals, I'm so much more prone to say, "Okay, let's order a pizza. You know, it's 4 or 5 o'clock and I have no meat thawed."

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Erin Odom: And one of my favorite things to do is to just pull out the meat from the freezer in the morning, even... even if I don't have a meal plan already for that day. Say it's just a really crazy week and I haven't got that completed, just pull out the meat for the freezer so you have something planned so you're going to be less tempted to go out to eat or call in the pizza order that night.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Oh, that's a good idea; just having the plan ahead. Well, so what about the entertaining your family without spending a fortune? You know, 4 kids.

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Erin Odom: Yes.

Jen Riday: So you talked about that Zoo membership, but just looking for deals or do you scour websites or what's the... the trick to that?

Erin Odom: Yeah. Again, keeping things simple is... is really key. But one of my favorite vacation tips that we... we did this last summer is, just like you flex your location with a home, flex your... your season with vacation. So what I mean is, when you go on vacation and the offseason somewhere, it's going to save you so much money.

Jen Riday: Hmm, yeah.

Erin Odom: So consider going to the mountains in the summer and going to the beach in the winter. I know that sounds crazy and some people, you know, say, "Well... well, that's pointless." Well, we did that this year. We went to the mountains last July. We went with a group of friends and it was wonderful. I'm a natural redhead who burns. And so I... I sometimes am miserable at the beach in the summer when it's so hot; I live in the south, you know, I drenched in sweat. And there was a little lake with a beach... in the mountains; we went to Snowshoe, West Virginia. But the mountains were gorgeous, we could go hiking, we could go to that little lake. And the kids almost get the same experience of being... you know, swimming at the ocean, except they're in the lake on the speech building sandcastles. And it saved us thousands of dollars by going to the mountains in the summer. And then this past January, we went to... near Charleston South Carolina. And it was cool, but it wasn't cold; I think it was in the 60s and 70s, but we were still able to walk along the beach.

Jen Riday: Yeah!

Erin Odom: We were able to collect seashells. Between me and you and your listeners, I really don't like swimming in the ocean a lot because I think, "Shark! Jellyfish!"

Jen Riday: Yeah, right.

Erin Odom: And so... but we were able to get our feet wet, the kids loved it. It wasn't too

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hot and there was... where we stayed, there was a heated pool.

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Erin Odom: So they were still able to get full and swim. It saved us so much money just by flipping where we went on vacation.

Jen Riday: That's... that's really smart. Plus, who wants all the crowds? It's just so much more feeling when it's less crowded. And you feel more like a local that way, which is half of the fun of traveling to experience that local feel. So...

Erin Odom: Yes, it was so much fun.

Jen Riday: That's great.

Jen Riday: Let's talk about your favorite things, starting with, "What does your morning routine look like? How do you fit it all in with 4 little kids?"

Erin Odom: That's a good question. And I will say it could be a challenge, but it's very important to, you know, take time for ourselves. My morning routine right now is, I am very spoiled, in that, my husband can take my kids to school. They go to in a unique school where they goes 3 days a week and then their home schooled 2 days a week.

Jen Riday: Oh, nice!

Erin Odom: And the teachers at that school prepare the lessons. And so right now, the first thing I really do in the morning is that I nurse the baby, I get my coffee, I tried to fit in some reading time. And when I'm on my a-game, which I will tell you, the last few weeks with launching a book and having sick kids, this has not been as frequent, but I will do a... like a 15 to 20 minute workout with my favorite online fitness program called Fit To Be. So it's not really strenuous; I don't do hard core exercise, and it's just not for me. I know some people love and your stuff like CrossFit. For me, I used to beat myself up by not doing exercise or, you know, not going all or nothing. But I have learned that something is better than nothing, and so I focus on more of the gentle, low-impact aerobics and 15 to 20 minutes



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to get it... get it out of the way. At night, we get the kids to bed, and I... I have to read something. Even if it's just for 5 minutes, I love to read right before bed at night. And I also usually have a cup of tea or a cup of Natural Calm; it's say magnesium calcium drink that I will drink right before bed.

Jen Riday: Mmm, that helps with sleep a lot, doesn't it?

Erin Odom: Mm-hmm, it does.

Jen Riday: Okay. And what is your favorite easy meal? We were talking about simple meals, but tell us what that looks like in a week, for example?

Erin Odom: Okay. So I love skillet meals and I love crock-pot meals. I'm just getting into using my instant pot; I know they're... they're really popular right now. I still prefer my slow cooker to my instant pot. But one of my easy go-to meals is called this herb chicken skillet, and I have a link on my right on my blog that I can give you the recipe to share with your listeners.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Erin Odom: But it's just chicken that you cook and then you add some tomatoes, you add some herbs and seasonings, you add some onions, and you add some chopped spinach. And you cook it all in the skillet and then you can eat it over either pasta or rice, and it's just super, super easy. And it's a meal that I always have all the ingredients on hand, so I know, if all else fails and I'm having a really stressful day or just busy week, as long as I have that chicken thawed out, that I whip that up pretty quickly.

Jen Riday: Do you saute the chicken first and then add the vegetables to it, kind of?

Erin Odom: You do.

Jen Riday: Okay.

Erin Odom: Yeah, yeah, you do.

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Jen Riday: Yeah!

Erin Odom: So you... you cook the chicken first you just, you know, cook it in some oil, saute it, and then, you know, there's some (unclear) [38:33] meals where you remove the meat and then you cook the vegetables; not with this one. So you just add the... the onions and, you know, let them cook for a little bit, but don't let them burn. You add the onions and then you add the cans of tomatoes. And then you add all the seasonings on top.

Jen Riday: Yum.

Erin Odom: And then at the very end, you add some chopped spinach that will... you know, it cooks really quickly; it'll wilt in there. And so I feel like the spinach like boosts the health of this... this recipe.

Jen Riday: Right.

Erin Odom: But it's just super, super, super easy.

Jen Riday: Yum! That sounds amazing! Thanks for sharing that. We'll have that link on our show notes page at jenriday.com/112; 1 1 2. Alright, so what's your favorite way to relax when you're stressed out?

Erin Odom: Like I said, I love to read, and so reading it's a really big way for me to relax. I'm much more of a book person than I am a TV person. There are certain TV shows that I will binge watch sometimes, if I take a break from reading. I prefer to kind of watch them all together than to have a show I watch every week. I don't like being married to, "Okay, Tuesday nights at 9 o'clock, I have to watch the show or else," and I think the... the advent of Hulu and Netflix and just the on-demand TV has made that better. So 'This Is Us' is my current favorite show.

Jen Riday: Woo-hoo! Me too!

Erin Odom: I love it, love it, love it so much! So, you know, I watched it on Hulu. So I'm

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actually, I think, 3 episodes behind right now, but I've purposely just waited on those and then, you know, probably sometime in the next week where I'm going crazy with the chicken pox and my kids are all in bed, I'll watch those 3 episodes.

Jen Riday: Exactly.

Erin Odom: But usually reading. Also, when I'm stressed out, I have a mentor who I call. And she is 13 years older than me, so she's not like a mom; she's more like an older sister. And we are just dear, dear friends. She is in, I would say, 2 seasons ahead of me in life. She had her kids and she was younger than I did. So her... her sons are just getting out of college and her youngest is still in college. And I will call her whenever I'm in the car using my Bluetooth and the kids aren't with me. And it just really helps to... just to talk things out and de-stress. And she just gives me some really awesome wisdom. So, you know, your listeners, for them, it might be listening to a podcast; I think that's a really great thing. But if they have a friend that they can talk to sometimes... I am an extrovert and so I'm an external process too, and that it just helps me so much to be able to do that.

Jen Riday: Ah, that's awesome. And what's your favorite way to boost your mood when you're feeling down?

Erin Odom: I... reading. Again, reading, talking to my friends, and also, I use essential oils too. So one that I love it's a lavender Ylang Ylang; I don't even know how to say that oil, It's y l a n g, twice. And it's called Serenity from dōTERRA. And I dab it on my wrist every night before bed. But if I'm really kind of feeling like I need a boost, I will put that on whenever as well. There's other oils, but that's the one that I go back to again and again. I pray. Sometimes I try to just walk outside or even just open the window; open the blinds even, just to kind of get some sunlight in. And something else recently I've been trying it a little bit was that, I'm... I work with a naturopath. I'm more of a natural person when it comes to medicine or a combination really of both natural and conventional. But my naturopath suggested that I get a copper necklace or copper bracelet because something about the copper can help de-stress you; I really need to do some more research on this, Jen.

Jen Riday: Oh.

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Erin Odom: But my husband got both for Christmas. And so like I have a copper bracelet that sometimes if I feel like, "You know what? This is just going to be a stressful day for whatever I have on my calendar," or I'm just feeling that stress rise in me, I'll put on that copper bracelet. And I have... I don't know if it's a mental thing or what but I definitely felt like it does help me to ground me a little bit.

Jen Riday: Oh, I need that. Ooh! (Laughs). I hadn't heard that before. Okay, so what's your favorite book, Erin?

Erin Odom: You know, I love to read, and I've gone through seasons where my reading life has ebbed and flowed with having little kids, but I've really been able to read a lot more this year. And my favorite book changes over the years because it just kind of depends on what the season of my life. I have read several books this year that I have loved. And two that have already become two of my all-time favorites are 'Boundaries' by Dr. Henry Cloud and John Townsend, I believe is the co-author, and 'Essentialism' by Greg McGowan, I think is how you say his name; I could give you a link to put in the show notes. Those 2 books have come highly recommend it to me for years. And I will tell you, both of them, I read them and I thought, "Why did I not read these sooner?" That was my biggest regret, because they are both eye opening and life-changing. So I think 'Boundaries', everyone, every single person needs to read the book 'Boundaries'.

Jen Riday: Hmm.

Erin Odom: And it just really helps with relating to people. It helps with not people-pleasing. It's just amazing. 'Essentialism' goes... it's interesting because they both have similar themes, but they're very different. The author of 'Essentialism' actually quoted 'Boundaries' in one portion of his book.

Jen Riday: Oh! Interesting!

Erin Odom: Which was interesting because I did not know that they were going to be really related at all when I picked both of them up. I just knew they both had come highly recommended to me so I thought, "Okay, I'm going to finally read these." 'Essentialism' is more of a business book, but I will say it applies to all aspects of life; parenting, keeping

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your home. I think that you might have to think a little bit about it more if you're... if you don't have any kind of business that you're running, but I really think most people should read that as well. It talks about... just to boil it down to the core message, when we are trying to make decisions about business or life, cutting out the fat and just focusing on the meat; like, "What is truly essential?"

Jen Riday: Yeah.

Erin Odom: And one thing that I was convicted in was the amount of time I spend on my emails. And realizing, "Okay, this, my... my time on emails or social media, those things are really preventing me from doing the meat of my business."

Jen Riday: Right.

Erin Odom: It's really going to keep it going. And just really having that mindset shift of, "What is essential?" because especially as women, as moms, we can't do it all and do it all well. So if we do want to cultivate some passions, whether via hobbies or as businesses, and also keep home and family alive and vibrant, then, "What is truly essential? And let's cut out or just curb the amount of time we spend on the rest."

Jen Riday: Right.

Erin Odom: And, again, 'Boundaries' goes with that because with 'Boundaries', you are creating a life where others are not dictating to you how you spend your time or how... you know, or your decisions. You are creating margins for yourself, you're learning to say, "No," you are essentially focusing on the essential. And so I believe that those 2 books go hand in hand. Again, 'Boundaries' is going to be more for anyone I truly believe every single person on this planet needs to read boundaries. 'Essentialism', you're going to get more out of it if you have a business, but again, it was very eye-opening and life-changing, even if you are a stay-at-home mom and you just want to apply it to your home.

Jen Riday: Yeah. Oh, good. I'm going to check those out. I've heard of both and I haven't read either of them, so thank you. And I want to remind our listeners, we'll have links to both of those books and everything else that Erin's been talking about on the show notes

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page at jenriday.com/112; 1 1 2. Erin, where can people find you if they want to learn more about what you're doing?

Erin Odom: They can find me at thehumbledhomemaker.com; that's 'humbled' with a 'd' on the end. I am... I tell people, "That doesn't mean I'm humble, it means that I have been humbled." I started my blog...

Erin Odom: There's is a big difference! There's a big difference. I started my blog, whatever, I was so overwhelmed with life and parenting and motherhood, and I felt humbled; and so that's why I called it 'The Humbled Homemaker'. So they can find me there thehumbledhomemaker.com. They can find me on Facebook. They can find me on Instagram @The Humbled Homemaker; that's my new favorite social media platform.

Jen Riday: Nice.

Erin Odom: They can find my books at morethanjustmakingit.com and youcouldstayhomewithyourkids.com. If they would like some predictable... practical just tangible tips for eating well on a budget, I also have a free e-Course called 'Eating well on a budget'. They can go straight to eatingwellonabudget.com. It's a 5 video e-Course with downloadable worksheets and printables to help them learn how to feed their family well without spending a fortune.

Jen Riday: Ooh, that's great! Thank you, thank you. We'll have a link for that on the show notes page as well. Excellent! Well, let's have our final question, my favorite question; and that is, "What does it mean to be a vibrant happy woman? What does it mean for you to be a vibrant happy woman?"

Erin Odom: Mm-hmm. So, for me, it means, not sacrificing the joys of today on the altar of the future. It means focusing on, "Where has God called me? What is my station in life?" and not looking at what everybody else has. So, for me, it means I want to be a mom. I want my family to come first. I also want to write, and I feel like God has gifted me in both. But what my career, my life looks like, doesn't have to look at somebody else's. So I don't want to sacrifice, you know, this time with my kids on the altar of, you know, being a... a best-selling author. Does that make sense?

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Jen Riday: Yeah, yeah.

Erin Odom: So I would...

Jen Riday: You'll have more regrets at your... your deathbed if you neglect the joys of today, for sure; because kids grow so fast, right?

Erin Odom: Yeah, yes. So that's what it means. And it means having boundaries in your life and focusing on what is the most essential.

Jen Riday: So what is the most essential thing for you?

Erin Odom: So, for me, it's my relationship with God and my family; that is the most essential. And, yes, I... I love to write. I love to encourage other women, and I would say that definitely comes third... But if I am not living out the essential in my own life, which would be my relationship with God and my family, then how am I ever going to encourage other women to do the same?

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm.

Erin Odom: And so that is what is the most essential. And when I have my priorities straight in my personal life, then it's going to be a natural overflow into encouraging others as well.

Jen Riday: Mm-hmm, awesome. Well, you're doing great work in the world, Erin. Thank you so much for being on the show, Erin.

Erin Odom: Thank you so much for having me, Jen. You have an awesome day!

Jenriday: Thank you so much for joining us today. And for those of you who are members of the Vibrant Happy Women Club, we will be talking this week in our small groups about, "What is most essential to us? What are we passionate about? And how do we make time in the cracks of our day for those passions?" And for everyone listening, thank you so much for being a part of the Vibrant Happy Women movement; we are each on a journey to be our best selves and to radiate that light that is within us. Thank you so much for being here and I will see you next time. Take care.

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