

## Time in a Bottle

*Time in a Bottle* – written and performed by Jim Croce and recorded in 1972 – became an iconic song of that decade.

Croce wrote the lyrics after his wife, Ingrid, told him she was pregnant in December 1970. It appeared on his 1972 ABC debut album, *You Don't Mess around with Jim*.

ABC had not planned to release the song as a single, but when Croce was killed in a plane crash in September 1973, the lyrics of the song – dealing with mortality and the wish to have more time – delivered an even more powerful message. After release, the song had a two-week run at the top of the charts in early January 1974.

Here are the lyrics:

*If I could save time in a bottle ... The first thing that I'd like to do ... Is to save every day ... 'Til eternity passes away ... Just to spend them with you.*

*If I could make days last forever ... If words could make wishes come true ... I'd save every day like a treasure and then ... Again, I would spend them with you.*

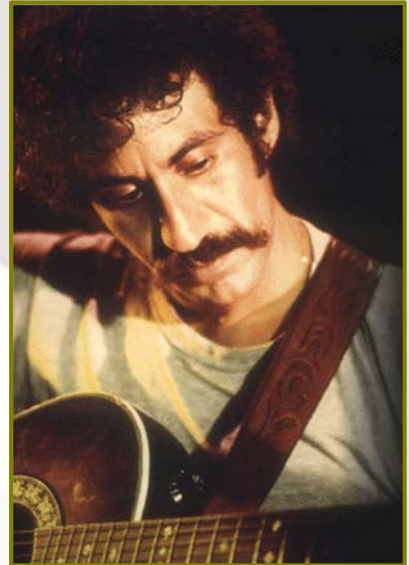
*But there never seems to be enough time ... To do the things you want to do ... Once you find them ... I've looked around enough to know ... That you're the one I want to go ... Through time with.*

*If I had a box just for wishes ... And dreams that had never come true ... The box would be empty ... Except for the memory ... Of how they were answered by you.*

As we begin a new year Monday, the song is a reminder of the value of time and the importance of making the most of what we have. Let us treasure the opportunities to spend time with loved ones, friends and the special occasions we can create together.

If it were possible to uncork times from bottles and revisit the occasions captured, I would ...

- As a 5-year-old, tag along with Johnny Gibson, a retired Putnam County, Tennessee, office-holder who often came to the fresh-water pond on our family farm, to sit and fish and enjoy the peanut-butter-and-crackers he always brought as extras for me.
- Ride again with my father in a horse-and-buggy carriage into town for groceries and agricultural supplies, and talk about life.



- Recline on the lap of my grandfather before crackling flames in the fireplace on Christmas Eve.
- Converse with my mother in her kitchen with the sweet smell of cakes she was baking.
- Play games, like kick-the-can, with my two brothers and the neighborhood kids in the back yard.
- Eagerly reach for my mother-in-law's turkey and dressing at Thanksgiving – the best ever!
- Travel with my father-in-law in his immaculate 1957 Chevrolet through the rural countryside and hear him tell stories with pride about neighbors and how they helped each other in a demanding existence on the farm.
- Heed the calls of an uncle in Sevierville, Tennessee – a Smoky Mountain preacher admired for his rise above tragedies of various kinds – to visit him more.
- Tell co-workers and church members who have gone on before just how important they were to me.



But, alas, there are no bottles with times that can be released and renewed. We have only today, and no promise of tomorrow.

Let us purpose, as the calendar turns and 2018 arrives, to:

1. **Guard our time jealously.** It is said that time is money, which is not accurate. Money, you see, can be spent and more can be earned to replace it. Once time is spent, it is gone forever.
2. **Give of our time generously.** Prioritize the relationships and the activities that truly matter during our sojourn on this earth, however long it may be.

*So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90:12 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter

