

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

40. Where Is God in Your Life?

You are listening to episode 40 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, *Where Is God in Your Life?* Welcome back and thank you for joining me today. Have you ever looked up to the heavens and asked, "God, where are you?" Or even though you know scripture says God is always with you, you viewed your situation and wondered, "God, are you anywhere in this mess?" I'm thinking we each have done a certain version of this at some point in our lives. Well, in today's episode we are pausing to find truth and hope and a whole lot of encouragement regarding this subject. So, I invite you to hang with me here for the next 15 or so minutes, and we'll dig into this together. Let's get to it.

A number of years ago God called me to serve the homeless and the hurting in our community through a local mission. I spent my days helping those whom society turns their back on. It was the hardest job, yet most rewarding job, I ever had. But, I'm not sure I like even calling it a job. It was more of a calling than a job. And God transformed my life through this calling and the people He put in my path. Some day I'll share more about this calling on the podcast, but one thing I cherish from those mission days is how God showed up every single day.

Seriously. I saw God.

Not physically, mind you, but I saw Him and His activity every single day there. Truly, every single day. Some days I saw God in big ways, and on others He was there in the little things. Like the day when we received ice cream cones as a donation in the morning. We typically received all kinds of donations, but when these ice cream cones showed up I thought, "How in the world will we use these? We don't have ice cream on hand and neither do our homeless friends, so what are we going to do with these cones? Needless to say, we set them aside and went on with our day.

But wouldn't you know, someone else donated two gallons of ice cream for lunch that day, not knowing we received the ice cream cones earlier! What a treat ice cream cones were to those we served lunch to that day! God knows our needs before we do, even if it is just treating us to ice cream cones!

And the day when one of our homeless friends went missing. I seriously thought he took his life. I just had this feeling. So, I hopped in my car and drove to all the places where I thought he might be. He wasn't anywhere. A bit panicked, as I continued to ask God to show me where our friend was, He took me down a street I wouldn't have chosen on my own. Sure enough, my eyes couldn't believe it when I saw him. Our friend was walking on the sidewalk.

When I pulled over to tell him how God took me to him, tears filled his eyes. He was struggling mentally, more than I had ever seen him struggle. After talking for awhile there on the side of the road, we both felt better. I don't know what our friend's intentions were or what he would have done if God hadn't intervened that day. But I'm thankful and humbled God used me in that moment.

I have story after story similar to these of God's presence from those days at the mission. Some day I'll share them all. But stories like these remind us God is always with us, especially in our everyday, ordinary lives.

Yes, God is always with us.

How do I know? Not only because I witness His presence, but because His Word tells us so.

Some of my favorites are:

The prophet Isaiah recorded the words of God for the people of Israel in Isaiah 41:10 (ESV), "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." You and I can apply those words of truth in our lives right now. Fear not, for I am with you.

God encouraged Joshua with the words in Joshua 1:9 (NIV), "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." We can find encouragement in them today, too. The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Jesus addressed His disciples, recorded by Matthew in Matthew 28:20b (VOICE) of how He will always be with them. "And I will be with you, day after day, to the end of the age." Jesus is always with us, and always will be, as well.

And one more.

Spoken from the prophet Zephaniah to the faithful of Jerusalem, we can be blessed by these same words today in Zephaniah 3:17 (NCV) "The Lord your God is with you; the mighty One will save you. He will rejoice over you. You will rest in his love; he will sing and be joyful about you."

So, where is God in your life?

Where is God in your current circumstances?

Where is God in your day-to-day activities?

Do you see Him? Do you notice His hand in your life?

Because He's there. He is with you. There's never a moment that He's not with you and me.

But the thing is, when God called me away from ministering at that mission in 2013, He didn't stop showing up in my life every day. He didn't. But slowly over time, I stopped paying attention. I stopped noticing God's activity in my daily life. I became distracted with everything else around me, and I know full well I missed blessed moments He had just for me.

When life gets distracting, we miss moments with God.

We miss what He has for us. We miss the little blessings, as well as the big ones when we're not paying attention. But it doesn't have to be this way.

God isn't found only in the church pew or in the Bible. Even though those are great places to find Him. He isn't only present when we pray or when we sing worship songs. Even those are great places to hang out with Him too. No, God is everywhere, even in places where we might not expect to find Him.

Such as the grocery store, or on a walk outdoors, or in that nudge you feel in your heart to give a genuine compliment or offer a kind gesture. He's in the hospital room, in the funeral home, in the classroom. He is also with us behind the wheel, in the midnight hours, and in the moments no one else ever sees.

Where is God? He is everywhere! But do we see Him? Are we paying attention?

So, where is God in my life now?

Where do I see Him? Do I see Him or His handiwork daily? I do, because I am paying attention. I'm looking for Him in everything I do and everywhere I go.

He's in the sunrise each morning, and in the sunset in the evenings. He is in my grandson's laughter, and in the wonder I see in his little eyes. God's in the flower peeking through the ground, and in the warmth I feel from the sunshine on my shoulders. He is in the tug I feel in my heart to encourage another, and He's behind the thought in my head to bless someone with kindness. I see God in how He makes a way when I can't find a way, and when He opens the right door at the right time for me to walk through.

Just before recording this episode, I saw God at work specifically in a conversation with a friend who shared timely words with me, not knowing what she shared was the subject of this very episode of the podcast. I especially love it when God brings home the same message in different ways.

God is everywhere! Do we see Him?

Where is God in our lives right now? Friend, I invite you to join me today in paying attention to where God shows up. To join me in looking for His presence, and seeking Him in everything we do and everywhere we go. Because He's here. Let's not miss Him today. In case we think we might miss Him, all's we need to do is ask Him to make Himself known to us. "Show us where You are in our lives today, God." Or, "God, help us to see You today." This reminds me what my former pastor used to pray, "Show us what you are doing, Lord, and allow us to be a part of it."

And if we're in the midst of tough life circumstances, that's when we sometimes need this reminder to look for God the most. Because when adversity strikes, we either see God more clearly, or we can't see Him at all. It's then when we call out to God, and ask Him to help us find Him in the midst of our messes that we experience His peace and calming presence in our circumstances. If that's where you are today, don't waste another minute to call out to Him. He hears and answers, friend.

If we're struggling to see God in our lives, and if looking for Him isn't something we're used to, something that may help is to stop right now and look around. What do we see? What's around us right this very moment? Is there anything right here, right now we can thank God for? Because thankfulness and gratefulness conditions our hearts to the awareness of God and His presence.

We can thank God for His presence in the sun rising, for allowing our car to start today, for giving us the ability to see or hear or smell or taste. God is in all of those things. We can thank Him for our children,

our friends, the blessings He has given us. He is in all of those things. We can thank Him for springtime, for flowers, for the air we breathe. God's in all of those things too.

God is everywhere. Do we see Him?

Let's not only begin to pay attention today, but let's make this a habit. Until it becomes a habit to pay attention on our own, I invite you to write this sentence where you'll see it in the morning. "Where will I see God in my life today?" Write this one where you'll see it midday. "Where do I see God right now?" And then write this one where you'll see it at bedtime. "Where did I see God in my life today?" Soon, it'll become a habit and you'll notice God and His handiwork throughout your day.

We are continuing this conversation over in our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Come on over and be a part of the fun. The link to this encouraging space is in the show notes.

And if you found encouragement and hope in this episode, I invite you to subscribe to the podcast and rate it and/or review it so others can find this encouragement as well.

As we intentionally look for God in our daily lives, we will find ourselves drawing closer to Him. Our hearts will naturally turn towards His direction, and we will more sensitive to His leading. All because we are paying attention to His presence. I pray we find ourselves in awe of Him often. Thanks for tuning in today. God bless you!

Julie Lefebvre