

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

52. Life Is Too Important to Live Distracted

You are listening to episode 52 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, " Life Is Too Important to Live Distracted." Welcome back to the podcast, and thank you for joining me today. Do you ever become distracted throughout your day? Maybe the notifications on your phone ding while you're concentrating at work. Or maybe your thoughts snatch you from your present moment. Or you just can't seem to get focused or stay that way? So many of us are dealing with distractions throughout our days, so much so, we're becoming accustomed to living distracted. Friend, life is too important to live distracted. This is the subject of this episode, and I invite you to journey with me for the next short while where together we will find help and hope for our real lives right now.

Bill Keane once said, "Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future, but today is a gift. That's why it's called the present."

Today is a present. And it's so special. Why? Well one reason is we'll never get to live it again. Ever. This moment is the same. It, too, is special. And we'll never get to live this moment again either.

So, let's take a minute right now and appreciate this moment.

Let's appreciate the breath in our lungs, our hearts beating, our blood pumping, the simple fact we are alive. Let's pause to notice our senses, what we see, what we hear, what we smell, what we can touch, and if we're eating right now, what we can taste.

Our lives and our schedules don't always welcome this pause but stopping for a brief minute to appreciate the moment allows us to better live in the moment.

Yet, I've been known to just barge ahead throughout my day and not pause to appreciate it or the moments I'm given in it. I've been known to live in the past or be so focused on the future that I miss what's happening in the moment. How about you? Have you done this too?

Or I have also been so preoccupied by my own thoughts, or the next thing on my to-do list, or my mess ups or mistakes that I have not noticed what was right in front of me.

If you've experienced this too, then you know how it feels.

It feels awful, doesn't it, and we wonder how in the world are we missing so much? How can we be physically present, yet miss priceless moments happening around us? Moments we'll never get back?

The truth is, many of us are living distracted. We can't stay focused on our work, on the person sitting across the table from us, on what we went into the kitchen to retrieve. Am I right? I mean, am I the only one who walks into a room and stands there in dismay because I can't remember what I was going to do or get in that room? Please tell me I'm not the only one.

We are a distracted people. We don't set out to be, but we are. And the thing is, we can't embrace life fully if we're preoccupied with something else. We can't embrace each day and live in the moment if our minds are elsewhere.

We can't live encouraged if we're living distracted.

In fact, a couple weeks ago I read an article highlighting a study from Harvard that said people spend nearly 47% of their awake time thinking about something else than the activity they are doing. 47%! For almost half of our waking hours our minds are wandering away from the current moment we're in. This mind-wandering is causing people to not only be unhappy, but to be and live distracted.

Yikes! That's crazy, isn't it? That's alarming. But I can see how it's true, can't you?

Yet some of us aren't aware of just how distracted we are.

Some of us just know we're missing moments throughout our day, not realizing it's because we're distracted. It doesn't matter what the distraction is, because anything these days can be a distraction. If it draws us away or pulls our attention from what we're doing, it's a distraction. Even what we may consider "good" can be a distraction.

You may be living distracted if you can't keep your focus.

You may be living distracted if you continually forget things/activities/tasks to do.

And you may be living distracted if all you do is multitask.

You may be living distracted if you are often physically present but your mind is elsewhere.

You may be living distracted if you find yourself missing moments that are happening right in front of you.

And you may be living distracted if you can't remember what someone told you two hours ago.

So, what do you think? Are you living distracted?

Think back over the last couple of days. What took your attention away from the present moment? What thoughts distracted you from what you were doing? Was there something that stole your focus or your concentration?

Even what we may consider "good" can be a distraction. This reminds me of the story of Mary and Martha in the Bible. We read how Martha was distracted. Take a look with me in Luke 10:38-42 NIV.

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha was distracted with doing many things. Mary was only doing one thing, the better thing of paying attention to Jesus. I saw we be more like Mary.

But the enemy of our souls uses distractions to cause us to be preoccupied with the distraction itself.

Even if we're not consciously aware it's a distraction. I know, that's a lot right there. I'll say it again. But the enemy of our souls uses distractions to cause us to be preoccupied with the distraction itself. Even if we're not consciously aware it's a distraction. What do I mean? Well, in this story, Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. The enemy of her soul was keeping her preoccupied by this distraction, pulling her away from what was important and what (Who) was right in front of her. Jesus.

He does this still today. He distracts us and entices us away from what's important, from what's right in front of us, from what makes an eternal difference. Distractions are an effective tool this enemy uses against us. But we aren't defenseless. We don't have to give in to the enemy's schemes. If we look at 1 Peter 5:8 CEV, we find the solution.

Be on your guard and stay awake. Your enemy, the devil, is like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to attack.

Yes, this enemy is looking for anyone to attack, and some translations say devour. But did you catch the first part of that verse? Be on your guard and stay awake. When we're alert, guarded, and watchful, we are less likely to fall prey to the distractions this enemy sets before us. We are less likely to live distracted.

Life is too important to live distracted.

If nothing else, I pray this episode wakes us up to reality, and helps us see how distracted we may be living. Friend, life doesn't have to be this way. We don't have to live distracted. We have a choice in the matter. And it begins with right now.

Just like we began this episode with appreciating the moment, when we do more of that throughout the day, we bring our awareness to the present. We center ourselves in the moment we're in. And we're better able to remain alert for the distractions the enemy throws at us.

I believe we can live distraction free in a distraction-filled world, but it's going to take intention and effort.

We won't live distraction-free overnight, and the odds might not be in our favor as we live in this distraction-filled world. But choosing to live in the moment and dispel the distractions that entice is worth it. After all, this is our very lives we're talking about here! It's so important!

Would you pray with me?

Father God, we come to You today with open hands and open hearts, and we rejoice in Who You are and that we are Your children. Thank You for Your continued care and unconditional love. Father, some of us have been aware we've been living distracted for some time now, and yet some of us are just waking to this reality today. We know living distracted is not Your best for us, and we realize distractions do not come from You. Please help us be alert and awake throughout today. Help us to live fully in each moment we're given. Equip us to fight any distractions that lure us away from the present. We cannot do this without You, Lord. We need You, and we love You. And we desire all You have for us, today and every day. Thank you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

We're moving this discussion over to our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. I invite you to join our group over there to be encouraged and inspired as we ponder our distractions and the hope we have in spite of them. The link for this group is in the show notes.

Also, please rate and/or review this episode if you are encouraged after listening. Others may find this encouragement, thanks to you. Subscribe to the podcast so you never miss an episode.

In closing, life is too important to live distracted. Thankfully we can choose to remain present and stay in the now. We can appreciate each moment we're in, and we can pray for God's help, guidance, and wisdom. With God's involvement and our diligent effort, we'll can live encouraged as we live in the moment. I'm cheering you on today, friend. God bless you.

Julie Lefebvre