

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

58. Surprise! You May Be Distracted If...

You are listening to episode 58 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, "Surprise! You May Be Living Distracted if..." Welcome back to the podcast, friend. I'm thrilled we get to be together today. Yep, I'm talking about distractions a lot lately, because I see first-hand how damaging distractions are to us, to our minds, to our very lives. And the more I personally fight against these distractions, the more I realize just how easy it is to be enticed by them. Yet, many people don't even realize they are living distracted because these distractions are subtle. And so many have been living this way for so long, they don't even realize they are living distracted! This is the subject of today's episode, and I invite you to journey with me for this next short while. Together we'll find hope and encouragement for our real lives right now. Let's get to it.

Are you living distracted?

I'm guessing right out of the gate you answered no. *I'm not living distracted. I'm not even sure I should be listening to this episode because I don't think it applies to me.* If you're thinking this or a similar thought, that's okay. Hang with me here though.

Because I feel completely compelled to continue raising awareness of how distractions are affecting us and how we can overcome them to create a more fulfilled and peace-filled life, I invite you to look closer to your typical day with me. Because when I began doing this, I was able to see more clearly how distractions were consuming my life. I wasn't aware of how distracted I was living on a daily basis!

It came as a complete surprise and shock to me!

So, if I wasn't aware of how I was living distracted, maybe you aren't aware either. And right now, that's okay. But in order to live the abundant lives God has for each of us, shedding light on any sort of people, place, or thing that's distracting us allows us to see it for what it really is. And it allows us to address it and make any changes necessary.

This episode is not to make either of us feel defeated or less than or a failure or a mess. It's not to make us feel terrible about ourselves. No. It's to help us become aware of the distractions that may be plaguing us so we can live the full lives God designed us to live. It's to wake us up to the reality there's more to life than how we've been living.

And I'm right here with you, joining you in this endeavor, because I still don't have this living distracted thing mastered. But I'm focused on making some changes and changing how I think and what I do.

Do not allow this world to mold you in its own image. Instead, be transformed *from the inside out* by renewing your mind. As a result, you will be able to discern what God wills and whatever God finds good, pleasing, and complete. Romans 12:2 VOICE

So, let's together, look a little closer. Let's dig a little deeper to find out if we may be living distracted. Let's trust God to enlighten our minds and to grow us through this process.

Ready?

Let's think about our last few days, and while we do, we'll ponder these prompts objectively and to the best of our ability.

You may be living distracted if...

- **you have a difficult time staying focused.** At work, at home, behind the wheel, out with friends do you find your mind wanders away often? Do you catch yourself thinking about something else instead of what you're doing in the moment? Are your thoughts scattered much of the time? Have you driven to your destination, but you don't fully remember every part of driving there? If you answered yes to any of these, it's a good indication you might be living distracted. (For additional help in this, listen to last week's episode, episode 57.)
- **you find it challenging to complete tasks in a timely manner.** If you're anything like me, your to-do list or task list can be quite long some days, and it feels like it's a race against the clock to get them crossed off. Do you find you aren't often able to get the things done you need to get done? What stops you from completing the tasks and crossing them off? Is it other people? Other issues that pop up? Is it your mind wandering? Or your notifications dinging? If you continue to have to move your task list to the next day, you may be living distracted.
- **you find yourself in a rush often.** This is a big indication one may be living distracted. Because the more distracted we are living, the more we will feel the need to rush. Because we're always feeling behind. Rushing is a distraction in itself. Because we miss what's going on around us when we rush. This is the one I probably struggle with the most. If you're often rushing too, it's wise to pause and ask, "Why do I feel the need to rush today? Why am I in such a hurry?"
- **you've lost your joy and peace.** This is another big one. The thing is, many of us don't even realize we've lost our joy and peace. We just keep doing what we're doing, not paying attention to the joy and peace (or lack thereof) we have on a daily basis. Let's do a "joy and peace check." How much joy are you experiencing right this very moment? (Remember, joy isn't the same as happiness. It's not dependent on our circumstances.) How much peace do you feel in your life right now. If one or both are low, it's a good indication you may be living distracted. Distractions have a way of robbing us of both our joy and peace.
- **it's nearly impossible for you to enjoy the moment you're in.** When you're with your friends or family are you able to enjoy their company? Or are your thoughts taking you away from the moment? Can you sit for more than a short while, soaking in what's around you? Or is your mind filled with what's next on your list? Do you have a difficult time appreciating this precise moment, right here right now? The sights, the smells, the tastes, the feels with the reality around you? This is another challenging one for me. It's not easy for me to sit and be still. I continually feel I need to be doing something, thinking of what's next for me. I get it if this is a struggle for you, too. It's a good clue we may be living distracted.

So, are you living distracted?

If not, then great job! Kudos to you. I'd love to learn more from you and how you avoid the trap of distracted living.

If you are, and if any of these resonated with you, know this: you're not alone.

And also know we have hope. We don't have to continue living this way. We may be living distracted now, but we can tweak a few things and change some habits to live more in the present and in the moment. To enjoy the lives God has given us to their fullest measure.

But how?

How do we move past this way of living? How do we overcome the distractions of life?

We look at what's distracting us.

We pay attention over the next few days to what's capturing our attention. What's taking us from the moment.

We decide to make some changes.

And we ask God for His help in doing so.

Is it people, places, or things that distract us? External distractions like our co-workers, our messy environment, our phones, social media, or the discouraging headlines?

Is it more of the internal distractions that entice us from the moment? Like our thoughts, excessive planning ahead, the past, or just plain daydreaming? Or our emotions, our health conditions, weighing decisions, or frustrating disappointments?

When we pinpoint the distraction(s), we become aware of their presence.

Then we are better able to refuse them any more space in our lives. We can fight them off by remaining in the present and rejecting their enticements.

For example, a big distraction of mine is multitasking. One evening last week after dinner I drew some water in the sink to wash a few dishes that aren't dishwasher safe. I realized I had laundry still in the washer from a couple hours before, so I took off my dishwashing gloves, set them aside and switched the laundry to the dryer. I then folded a few clothes and put them away in their respective drawers in our dressers. Then I realized it was nearing bedtime, and I still needed to remove my makeup from the day and brush my teeth. I then went to bed and called it a day.

Guess what I woke up to the next morning? Remember the water that I drew to wash the dishes? It and the dishes were still in the sink from the night before. That, my friend, is living distracted.

So, knowing I have a tendency to do these kinds of things, and live this way, I am more aware of instances like this. Yet, as noted in this story, I still struggle with living distracted. I don't have it mastered yet. But at least I'm aware of it now, and I can make changes throughout my day.

What would have been better in that situation was to finish the dishes first. Then go switch out the laundry. One thing at a time is now my new motto. I don't always do it well, but I'm learning.

This isn't about perfection. It's about growing.

And God continues to grow us through all situations and circumstances in life if we let Him. Including the circumstances of living distracted.

Will you pray with me?

Father God, thank You for how You continue to mold us and shape us and grow us to be more like Your Son, Jesus. You continually have good plans and purposes for our lives, and we praise You for that. Father, as we discern if we are living the lives You've given us in any sort of distracted way, please help us in this. Please help us become of aware of the distractions that are consuming our lives. Of the distractions that are taking us from what's important and from what You have for us. Because we don't want to miss one thing from You. We don't want to be distracted to the point that we miss Your blessings. Enlighten our minds, please. Show us a better way. Keep us in the moment and refuse to give in to the distractions all around us. Help us keep our minds and eyes on You. Thank You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The secret to overcoming distractions is found in Ephesians 6:10.

Finally, let the Lord make you strong. Depend on his mighty power. Ephesians 6:10 NIRV

May we depend on His power. Let's allow Him to make us strong to resist living a distracted life. He will do it. May we simply partner with Him, one day at a time.

If you have questions about any of this, please contact me through my site. The link for that is in the show notes.

I invite you over to the Encouragement for Real Life Community, where this week we will continue this discussion about how we may be living distracted, as we share ideas to overcome those distractions. You'll find this space to be uplifting and encouraging. The link to this group is in the show notes.

If you found some enlightenment, hope, or encouragement in this episode, would you consider rating it and/or reviewing it? This is one way how others find this encouragement too. Also subscribe to the podcast so you never miss an episode.

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In closing, we might have learned something new about ourselves today. We may now be alert to how distractions are affecting our lives. Friend, we may be living distracted now, but we don't have to remain living this way. When we become aware of what's distracting us, we can partner with God in removing them and refusing them space in our lives. We have hope, my friend! And isn't that what we continue to find our our relationship with God? Hope! I sure appreciate this time spent with you. Thank you for showing up today. Have a great week. God bless you!

Julie Lefebvre