

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

67. The Distraction of Busyness Says, "Be Busier."

You are listening to episode 67 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast, titled "The Distraction of Busyness says, 'Be Busier.'" Hello and welcome back to the podcast. Thank you for joining me here today. We've been discussing life's distractions lately here on the podcast because I believe these distractions are more than we think they are. Not only are they snatching our attention from the moment, but more importantly they are luring us away from what's God's best for us. The distraction we're discussing today is a familiar one for many. It's the distraction of busyness. If you've felt the pull of busy lately, friend you're not alone. And get ready, because at the time of this episode's airing, the busiest season of the year is just about to hit us. But the distraction of busyness doesn't have to be the boss of us. Nope, not at all. Join me for the next few moments and we'll find some timely hope and encouragement for our real lives right now. Let's get to it.

"I am so busy."

I'm guessing you've heard those words or said them recently. Am I right? I used to be the queen of busy. So, I understand busy. And I wore it like a badge of honor. And when people asked how I was, I always replied with my typical answer. "I'm busy."

Maybe you can relate. You feel busy, you can't get ahead, and you continually feel like you're falling behind. Your family knows you're busy. Your friends see your busyness. And you don't have the time to do all you want to do. To-do lists and your calendar control your life. And you consistently tell yourself, "There's got to be more to life than this."

I was taught somewhere along the way that, "Busy people get the most done," and "If you're busy, you're important." So, I lived these statements out to the best of my ability. But the thing is, the more I lived them out, the more I proved just how false they were.

Here's what I found to be true:

Busy people don't get the most done. Rested people do.

Your importance has nothing to do with how busy you are.

Amen? Amen.

So, years ago I removed the word BUSY from my vocabulary. Because busy was turning me into someone I was never meant to be. Busy was overwhelming my schedule and my life. And busy was not God's best for me. So, I stopped describing myself as busy and stopped saying the word all together. And it's nearly taking everything out of me to say it this many times in this episode. I seriously cannot stand that word. And removing it from the words I say entirely showed me we don't need this word in our language today.

But instead of running from it, let's look at it a little longer. What does busy mean? Dictionary.com defines it as full of or characterized by activity. Thesaurus.com adds the synonyms of hustling, hectic, bustling, restless, tiring. None of them sound great, am I right?

The distraction of busyness impacts our emotional and physical health in negative ways.

Jodi Clark, a Licensed Professional Counselor, says that being busy all the time can lead to feeling anxious, overwhelmed, stressed, frustrated, angry, sad, inadequate, and hopeless, and can cause restlessness, insomnia, digestion issues, headaches, inflammation, cardiovascular disease and other physical issues.

The distraction of busyness says, "Be busier." But God says, "Come to me and I will give you rest."

Which voice are we listening to?

In the book of Matthew, chapter 11, we read the opposite of busy in verses 28-30 (NLT). "Then Jesus said, 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.'"

When we're distracted with busyness, it's nearly impossible to rest. And when we don't rest, we get run down and burnt out. The distraction of busyness is not God's best for us. Because it entices us to live a life based on activity, not on productivity. To live a life of striving, not of serving. To live a life of relentless hustle, not of a rested heart.

Living in the distraction of busyness is a hopeless, helpless, empty way to live.

How do I know? Because I lived it.

God says there's a better way.

Let's take a look at the account of Mary and Martha in Luke 10. Verses 38-42 (NLT) says, "As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, 'Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.' But the Lord said to her, 'My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.'

Martha was distracted with all the preparations. She was operating in the distraction of busyness. But Mary sat at the Lord's feet instead. She wasn't distracted. She chose what was best, and Jesus recognized that.

But who else would make the dinner? we wonder. What would they eat if Martha wasn't so busy in the kitchen? The thing is, Jesus wasn't concerned about eating, He was more concerned about the importance of that moment. The moment He was teaching truth and transforming hearts through His presence and His Word. Can we do the same? Can we be more concerned about the importance of the moment? By not missing one single thing God has for us, instead of our schedules and to-do lists? Instead of the busyness that entices us away from living in the moment?

Can we choose living in the moment instead of living preoccupied with busy?

What if we stopped the busy, the hustling, the bustling, the tiresome activity? What if we refused to let busy be the boss of us? And what if we chose daily the "one thing worth being concerned about" that Jesus referenced in speaking to Martha? We can choose to live a life of fulfillment in Jesus or live a life of flurry under the distraction of busyness.

Friend, I pray we choose wisely.

Sure, we each have responsibilities and important tasks to do, but we don't have to do them with the distraction of busyness. We can do them with intention, purpose, and God's peace.

Believe it or not, we can remove the distraction of busyness from our lives. Are you ready to give it a try?

Ways to remove the distraction of busyness from your life:

1 - Pray. Ask God to help you align your day with His plans and purposes for your life. Ask Him to guide your steps and to follow through on what He directs you to do. He will lead you if you allow Him to. He won't make you guess how to live your life.

2 - Say no. You don't have to do or say yes to everything. In fact, you aren't called to do everything. If what you're asked to do is not something you can fit in right now, it's okay to say no. And if God isn't calling you to do this, it's wise to say no.

3 - Schedule rest. You can't pour from an empty pitcher. You can't give if you're empty. Schedule times of rest, and I don't mean just sleep. Schedule downtime into your day and into your week. Again, ask God to guide you. He will show you.

4 - Remove the word busy from your life. When you do, you will find peace you didn't know was possible. We don't have busy lives; we have full lives. Busy is not God's best for us. Never has been, never will be.

5 - You can be productive without being busy. Walk your errands instead of running them. Stop and smell the roses. Notice the little things. Operate from the point of wonder, not of weariness. Life is much more enjoyable without the burden of busy.

Which one of these I just mentioned speaks to you?

Which one will help you remove the distraction of busyness from your life?

You and I can still live lives of purpose, passion, and productivity without the distraction of busyness. We'll be more joyful, more encouraged, and a lot more fun to be around. Again, the distraction of busyness is not God's best for us.

We're taking this discussion over to our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. All week long we're discussing this distraction and how to eliminate it from our lives. It's a timely subject as one of the busiest seasons of the entire year is almost upon us (as of the airing of this episode). Come on over and join in the conversation. The link to this group is in the show notes.

Also in the show notes is the link to my Free Resources, like bookmarks, printables, lock screens, and social posts that are designed to encourage your heart and add a lift to your step. They are for your personal use and I pray they bless you!

As always, I welcome your rating or review of this episode, and I invite you to subscribe to the podcast so you never miss an episode.

In closing, the distraction of busyness tells us to be busier. But God invites us to live differently, and to come away with Him to receive rest for our souls. Which voice will we listen to this week? Which voice will we pay attention to? Because the choice is ours. Thank you for joining me here today. I'm grateful for you and for your presence. Have a great, peace-filled week. God bless you!

Julie Lefebvre