

184. What Is a Heart for God and How to Have One

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I'm Julie Lefebure, your host. Life is remarkable, sometimes raw and always real. And some days we could use a little extra encouragement for our real lives. Here, you'll find that, along with personal life impacting stories, helpful life hacks, timely inspiration, biblical insight, and a fresh perspective.

The Encouragement for Real Life podcast equips you to be a light in this world and to shine bright wherever God has you. I'm glad you're here today.

Julie Lefebure: Do you have a heart for God? Well, what does that even mean? Well, in today's episode, we are pausing to answer these two questions because this subject matters. Our relationship with God matters, [00:01:00] and it's the foundation of everything else in our lives. Everything we think, everything we say, and everything we do, it determines and influences more really than we can comprehend. And it's the key to living an abundant life in this world and in eternity. So yes, this matters greatly.

I believe that you and I both desire a vibrant relationship with our Creator, not just a lukewarm one. Am I right? It's just something that's in us, that God put in us. We have this desire. Maybe it hasn't come to the surface yet, but I believe it's in each one of us. And so if this is true of you, then this episode will help you have a heart for God and will give you hope in growing your relationship with Him. So, let's get [00:02:00] right into this episode.

A heart for God. It sounds great, doesn't it? But do you and I have one? We need to know first what it means. What the definition is of a heart for God before we can even determine if we have one or not. Well, this is a heart that loves, seeks, and desires God above all else. That makes sense, right? A heart that desires God above all else is a heart for God.

Julie Lefebure: But I'm guessing when we think about having a heart for God, we might think of someone who loves and seeks and desires God [00:03:00] above all else perfectly. I know full well that I don't love, seek, and desire God above all else perfectly. And I'm guessing that you don't either.

But do you remember David in the Bible? Do you remember how God described him? Well, let me remind you. In Acts chapter 13, verse 22, and this

is in the New International Version, the Apostle Paul references God's description of King David. And he said it this way, "After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him. I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do." Wow. You know, I think about how could God define David as a man after his own heart [00:04:00] when David committed such awful sins, such as adultery and murder. And scripture tells us that David was far from perfect. God knows everything, everything about everyone, and he surely knew David's failures, right?

But he also knew David's faith. David's heart was turned towards God. He had absolute faith in God. And remember how he trusted God to deliver him from that giant Goliath? And how God intervened on David's behalf with a sling and a stone. Do you remember that?

David's faith pleased God. He loved God's Word. After all, he penned many of the Psalms that we read in the Bible today. David was thankful and he was also repentant and acknowledging his sin. And that's important too. [00:05:00] David was willing to do everything God wanted him to do even if he lived an imperfect life. That's a heart for God.

And this can encourage us today in our imperfect lives. You and I don't have to live a perfect, beautiful, amazing, uh, yeah, perfect life to have a heart for God. We don't. We likely will try to live that way. We try to live the way God desires us to, but we will mess up. We will fail, we will falter. But when our hearts are turned towards God, He sees that too.

I would love to be known as a woman after God's own heart, and I'm assuming that you'd love that too. But this has nothing to do with living a perfect and holy life and everything to do with living a trusting and [00:06:00] faithful life. This can include longing for the things of God, like a hunger to read His word, the love of prayer and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. So we can take a big sigh of relief. Thankfully, no matter what we've done in our past or what we will do in the future, It doesn't discount us from having a heart for God. I'm so thankful for this truth, aren't you?

Having a heart for God begins with the specific truth that is stated in John Chapter 14, verse 6, also in the New International Version. It reads, "Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, Except through me." A heart for God begins with having faith in His son, Jesus. Some religions will dispute this. But for those of us [00:07:00] who believe in the God of the Bible, we know this to be true. It all begins right here with Jesus.

So, are you wondering how you can have a heart for God and cultivate a deeper relationship with Him? Let's look at a few ideas.

The first one is to spend time with God daily. Yep, you know I always start with God. It's hard to have a relationship with someone when we never spend time with him or her, right? Think about that. It's the same truth with God. When was the last time you invited God into your day? I love thinking about God with me all day long, when I'm doing dishes, or when I'm getting ready for the day, or when I'm working at my desk. Spending time with God doesn't necessarily mean just sitting down with our Bibles open and praying and, and worshiping. Even those are [00:08:00] vital and are, are key things to grow our relationship with Him. But spending time with God is talking with Him, taking Him with you throughout the day. It's just involving Him in everything that you do. It's seeking Him in the decisions that you and I make, and it's trusting Him to provide the resources when we just can't find a way to do it on our own. And it's also choosing to pay attention to Him and the Holy Spirit's promptings in our everyday lives.

Psalm 27, one of the psalms that David wrote, by the way, says in verse 8 in the New International Version, "My heart says of you, seek his face. Your face, O Lord, I will seek." I'm linking this Psalm in the show notes because it is so encouraging, the whole entire Psalm 27. [00:09:00] And I invite you to take a few moments in the next day or so, even today if you can, and read it for yourself because you will definitely be encouraged.

A second way is to engage in meaningful prayer. I love how we can just talk with God like we would with anyone else. We don't have to recite structured, memorized prayers like I was taught to as a child. And if we pause to consider who we're really talking to, I mean, it's amazing that we can actually communicate with the very One who created you and me. I mean, doesn't that just blow you away that we can actually talk to the Creator of the universe? It just puts me in such awe. But a heart for God desires to talk and to listen to God. And the key thing is that listening is just as [00:10:00] important as speaking to him.

A third way is to delight in God's Word. Yeah, this is, this is one of my favorite ones is to open our Bible or our Bible apps and reading God's Word. It's one of the best ways to cultivate a heart for God. The Bible is kind of like God's instruction book for us. Psalm chapter 119 verse 105 says it this way, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." I love that. It is our best guide in this life. It's, it's kind of like our manual. And we also get a glimpse of who God is through His Word. And we see His character and His love for me, for

His people, for you. The more we get to know God through scripture, the more that our hearts will be turned [00:11:00] towards Him. That's just a natural progression. Then when we take the next step and apply what we're reading to our very real lives this very day, well, we can't help but have hearts for God.

A fourth way is to stay in community with others. My pastor reminded me of this last Sunday when he was talking about why we go to church. And one big reason is this, to stay in community with others in the faith.

You may know that I am one who has been on the receiving end of some damaging stuff from a church body. Actually twice. Now that I think of it, twice. You know, and one was from someone I trusted, someone in leadership and, um, [00:12:00] actually was my boss at the time. So I understand when people tell me how they've been hurt by the church or how they've been hurt by people of a church. I, I totally understand. I may not have the same situation, but if it's happened twice to me, it's happening to others too. I don't like it, but I get it because people are flawed. Even people in churches are flawed. And it took me a number of years to allow God to bring healing and wholeness in my life regarding these specific hurts. But I always knew I was missing out on this very piece of my faith journey when I stepped away from church. Because I desired , that journeying with others who believe in Jesus like I do was just a part of my, [00:13:00] my faith. It just felt like I was missing out on that when I wasn't there. And I needed that. I needed that family kind of bond again. And so I just had to trust God in this, and I'm grateful that He showed my family the way back to church.

Now, I'm not saying that church is the only way to find community with others of faith, but for me, it's necessary. There's power in encouragement and accountability, no matter where we commune with those who love Jesus too. And Psalm 27 verse 17 is a perfect verse for this is, it says, " As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Yeah, we need community with others.

A fifth way is to walk in obedience and trust. As we learned from King David just a little bit ago here, [00:14:00] obedience matters in our faith and in the eyes of God. And walking in what God calls us to do is indicative of a heart of God, a heart for God. God doesn't expect us to do it perfectly. But trusting and obeying Him comes from a heart that loves Him and is turned towards Him.

And Jesus reminds us of this in John chapter 14 verse 15 in the New International Version. "If you love me, keep my commands." That's what He said. Yeah. God doesn't complicate things. He just gives it to us straight forward. Just as we need it. Trust and obey. You know that song, Trust and

Obey When There's No Other Way? I want to look that song up again. That just came to me and I just, I love that song. But trust that God knows what's best for us and obeying what He calls us to do. That's really it. Trust and obey.

[00:15:00] Not because we have to, but because we want to.

And the sixth and final way is surrender and let God lead. I know, I know, surrender is an unpopular word. It's one that I think many people try to run from. But what if we looked at surrendering differently? Hmm, think it would make a difference? Well, I do. I often say in my prayers when I start the day, Thank You, God, that You're in control and that I don't have to be. That's surrender. Giving myself over to God's control and taking the pressure off of me because I don't have to be in control.

So why do we put this pressure on ourselves to think that we have to try to figure out and control everything that is in this life or every decision that we make. We don't have to do any of this on our [00:16:00] own. God sees everything that we can't. And if we assume that we're in control, well, we're sadly mistaken. Oh my goodness. I'd rather not fight God about this and about His sovereignty. He is sovereign. He is in control. So I'm just going to trust Him instead. And one of my favorite scriptures is Psalm 25 verses four and five in the New International Version. And I actually happened upon this verse, I don't think I happened, but I think God put it right in front of me when I was doing the research for my book, Right Now Matters. And it says this, one of my favorites, I pray it almost daily. "Show me Your ways, Lord. Teach me Your paths. Guide me in Your truth and teach me. For You are God, my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long." Mm. Isn't that so good? A heart for God surrenders to Him and allows [00:17:00] Him to lead. Yeah. So good. I love that verse.

So these all sound helpful, right? But you know as well as I do that we will likely come against barriers that may try to stop us from growing our heart for God and a relationship with Him. After all, a vibrant relationship with God is the last thing that the enemy of our souls wants for us. He desires for us to stay stuck and stagnant and ineffective. He'd rather we slink into a hole than to do what it takes to be the women that God desires for us to be.

Some of the things that we might come against could be distractions and busyness. In fact, I wrote a book that addresses these. It's called Right Now Matters. And in Chapter 2, we look at the contrast between two sisters, [00:18:00] Mary and Martha. When Jesus came and visited them in Mary's home, and you might be familiar with the story, but Martha chose busyness and distractions, but Mary chose to sit at Jesus's feet.

You know, I think I have a tendency to be more like Martha, but I so want to be Mary and just sit at Jesus's feet. I'll link the full story, um, in the show notes so you can read that on your own. But it's, it's a perfect example of this and it shows that we have a choice. May we always choose to sit at Jesus's feet like Mary.

We might encounter doubt and discouragement, especially when we feel like we're no closer to God than when we first started. Well, we might question, yeah, if what we're doing is making any sort of difference. If any of those , six things that I just shared, those ways , are they really [00:19:00] making a difference as we do them? Well, we might question that. Because if we can't see or feel a difference, we might wonder. But may we remember this, God sees our acts of faith and our obedience. Even if we don't see something changing, we can trust that God is behind the scenes, working it all out for good, and is changing us in the process.

We might also experience a lack of consistency. This is probably my biggest one that I struggle with. When our consistency begins to slip, instead of getting down on ourselves or beating ourselves up, let's consider what we would say to a friend if she was experiencing this. Let's tell ourselves what we'd tell her. Then let's return to God and pick back up again right where we left off. You know, God isn't [00:20:00] disappointed , in us, when this happens or when we become inconsistent in doing any of these things that will help grow our hearts for Him. But He's glad when we return back to Him.

And so speaking of returning to God, are you feeling stuck or stagnant in your life or in your faith? Would you welcome a trusted friend who could come alongside of you to guide you in uncovering the fullness of life that, that God offers? Well, I am soon offering personalized mentoring designed to help you refresh your faith, renew your mindset, and embrace the abundant life that God promises. So, stay tuned in the days to come, more will be coming soon, and a vibrant, faith filled life is waiting just for you.

Who in your life could use some encouragement today? Well, I invite you to share this episode with [00:21:00] her. And please consider rating and or reviewing this episode from wherever you're listening or watching, and be sure to subscribe so you never miss an episode. And just to remind you, we are on YouTube as well, so you can catch the video also.

So to recap today, a heart for God is one that loves, seeks, and desires God above all else. Some ways that we can have a heart for God or cultivate a heart for God and to deepen our relationship with Him are spend time with Him daily,

engage in meaningful prayer, delight in His word, stay in community with others, walk in obedience and trust and surrender and let God lead.

Deepening our relationship is a journey, my friend. And I guess that's why it's often called as a walk with God, right? A walk with [00:22:00] God is a journey. So how will you take one step today to deepen your relationship with God? I am cheering you on friend.

Thanks for tuning in and God bless you.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. You can find more at JulieLefebure.com and until next time, stay encouraged.