

[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: I was listening to a podcast the other day, and the host mentioned that he recently walked through a season where he felt dead inside. That's what he described it as, quote, "dead inside". He said that he [00:01:00] didn't really realize it at the time until something specific happened in his life, which caused him to feel fully alive and awake and rejuvenated. Then he realized how empty he had been feeling before this.

I know that he's not the only one who has ever felt this way, and maybe you're feeling this way today or something similar. Like you are going through the motions in your life and maybe you've lost your peace and your joy and your passion for what you used to have it for. You too, feel quote, "dead inside", but maybe you really didn't realize it until hearing these words today. I don't know. But sometimes this is when we get awakened to really what's happening in life, and this is the subject of [00:02:00] today's episode.

All month long, we're gonna center on this theme of, of spring cleaning for the soul. Yeah. Spring cleaning for the soul. I mean, some of us deep clean our homes this time of year and why don't we deep clean our souls as well.

And so that's what we're gonna do this month. Spring cleaning for the soul. And I invite you to journey with me all month long as we do some soul care and some life refreshment in making room for God's life giving and life transforming power. So if this sounds good to you, let's get into this episode.

One thing that I love about Spring is that the outdoors just [00:03:00] come alive. Don't you love that? Daffodils and crocuses, they emerge from the ground in my flower beds and I love that. Our trees, which appeared to be dead all winter, begin to produce buds. And the grass in our yard that has been an ugly shade of brown all winter transforms into a lush green carpet. I love it.

I enjoy watching this transformation each year. I think it just might be my favorite thing to watch in God's creation besides sunrises and sunsets, of course. And it's no secret that winter can be difficult here in Iowa. And actually, you

know, this winter hasn't been so bad. It's been cold, but not as cold as past years and not as snowy as past years. So I'll take it. But come March 1st, I am ready to [00:04:00] put winter behind me.

You know, some that I know struggle with seasonal affective disorder, which is also referred to as SAD. Seasonal affective disorder, which is a type of depression that's common in the fall and winter months, especially where we live. And a friend of mine said the other day when we met that I can feel the weather changing in my bones. Yeah, the weather does make a difference in her life and in her emotional state. And her words reminded me of the very passage in scripture in Ezekiel. Now, I don't read Ezekiel too often, but in Ezekiel there's a, an account regarding the valley of dry bones. Have you heard of that?

Well, the Lord said to Ezekiel, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, [00:05:00] dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. This is what the sovereign Lord says to these bones. I will make breath enter you and you will come to life." And that was Ezekiel chapter 37 verses four and five in the New International Version.

Now, it goes on to say, really what happens to these bones, and they do come alive and they, they get muscle and tendons and skin on them and they, they come alive. And I can't imagine the sight of dead, dry bones coming to life with tendons and flesh and and breath restored. Can you? I can't. But I know what it's like to feel life return to my nearly dead feeling existence.

God in his majestic power can breathe life back into His creation. Including into the souls that He created in you and in [00:06:00] me and in everyone else, including my friend who could feel it in her bones.

You know, this may not be just a physical thing where we feel dead inside. But feeling dead inside could also be maybe a more of a emotional or a spiritual thing. Maybe we feel emotionally or spiritually dead, like , a gaping, empty hole inside of us that we just can't describe. Or like the feeling of cobwebs overtaking our minds or hearts or our souls where not that long ago was filled with activity and vibrance. But now it's filled with cobwebs or it feels like it is. You know, cobwebs have a way of making home in places where life and activity are absent.

So right now, let's [00:07:00] just pause to ask some questions and to answer them honestly. There's only two of 'em. And the first one is, when was the last time you felt spiritually alive? And the second. Do you feel like you've lost touch with what once brought you joy and passion?

Now, I encourage you, friend don't just skim over these questions and move on. If you need to, pause this episode right here and ponder these questions and ponder your answers. I'm a big proponent of assessing and addressing where we are in life to be able to heal or to address what's happening, to be able to move forward. Acknowledging where we are can help us become aware of our reality, and it can assist us in recognizing where we are [00:08:00] emotionally and physically and spiritually. And God may just use this and our answers and this assessment of where we are for our growth and for His glory. And He's really good at doing that.

Like He did with King David. King David in Psalm 42, he recognized and said a number of times in that Psalm that his soul was downcast, and he even questioned why. He didn't just say, oh, my soul is downcast. But he asked, why is my soul downcast? And I think it's wise of us to ask that too. Why are we feeling dead inside?

And interestingly, every time that David questioned, his response then included praising God. And that's a good, good reminder for us, for you and me today [00:09:00] too. We can praise God, maybe not because of feeling dead inside, but for bringing it to the light and for helping us to be aware of it. You know, this allows God to begin the work of restoration in our lives.

So what causes us to feel dead inside? What is it? What, what makes us feel that way? Well, life circumstances sure play a part in that. We experience stress and discouragement and disappointment, pain. And even our routines can cause us to feel this way.

I know, you know this, life is hard and sometimes it completely knocks the wind out of us and knocks us to the ground. And some days we may just feel like giving up and giving in. And quite possibly we keep the same routine day after day after day, which [00:10:00] leads us to do the same things over and over and over. And we might just feel that we're living out the movie Groundhog Day, where things just happen again the same after, same after, same day after day.

Or we might just feel this way from something entirely different. Different than any of these. Sometimes spiritual dryness is often a sign of distance from God. And maybe life has gotten so full that we've placed God at the end of the line or on the back burner, so to speak. Sure, we love Him, but do we spend time with Him?

If we don't spend time with Him , or maybe if we haven't for a while, it's like with any relationship , the relationship becomes stagnant. And when we don't spend time with God, this can lead us to spiritual stagnation. It can [00:11:00] lead us to, uh, spiritual depletion. And if you've ever felt like this, you know that it's a dry, desolate place. I have. I know exactly what that feels like.

Is God calling you and me back to Him? Could He be doing that? Could He be prompting you and me to draw away with Him and to spend some dedicated time with our Creator?

In Matthew chapter 11 verses 28 and 29 in in the New International Version Jesus invites us with these words, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

What a perfect verse. Two verses, I guess. What, what a [00:12:00] powerful scripture there. Will we come to Him? Will we seek Him for rest for our souls, to clean out our souls, to do this spring cleaning in our souls? You know, there's no greater activity we can do to spring clean our souls than spending time with the One who created them. He makes all things new, including renewing our souls. It's time to clear the cobwebs out.

First of all, I wanna address this. I wanna say that I will always encourage you to seek out professional help if you are in a place where you need it. I was so against this for so many years, until I was at my end and I needed some help. That was years ago and I still see my Christian therapist every six weeks or so. It's one thing that I do to keep myself healthy and whole. [00:13:00] So I will always suggest that. If you feel like you need some help, seek out a Christian therapist.

And of course it goes without saying, but I wanna make sure I, I, I stress this too. If you feel that you're at the end of your rope and you just can't go on anymore and you need immediate help, please call or text 988 to talk with someone who can help you right now. That's so important. Yeah. I just wanna make sure that I address that first.

But after pausing and after acknowledging our current state, we can pray for renewal. In fact, let's pray for renewal right now. Let's do this together right now. I was just gonna say, you know, pray for renewal on your own. But I think it's important that we pray together right now. So let's go to God and pray. Just a short prayer [00:14:00] for renewal.

Heavenly Father, You know where we are. You know what needs renewed in our lives. You know how we're feeling. Father, we ask that You in Your mighty power, in Your strength, and in Your love and in Your sovereignty, that You would renew us today. That You would bring renewal exactly right where we need it. That You would breathe life back into maybe what our bones feel like, dead dry bones. That You will restore us, Lord, that You will rejuvenate us, and that You will just do a work in our hearts, Lord, that we know it's You.

Create life and abundance within us again and help us to seek You. Help us to search for You and help us to find You, Lord. We love You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

First of all, it's just so important to pray. I hope that you pray. I hope you talk to God throughout your day. [00:15:00] It makes all the difference in the world. It makes all the difference in our lives.

You know, we can also spend time in quiet reflection. Spending moments, journaling. Again, I always talk about journaling, but it's so important for me to journal. If you don't journal, that's okay. But journaling our feelings and prayers is a, a big way we can just spend some time in reflection or just sit quietly with God. 'Cause He's with you, and we can just ask Him to speak to us and pour our hearts out to Him.

Or listen to some worship music that uplifts and feeds your soul. Or read scripture and soak in the Word of God. Psalm 51 is a good one to begin with because we can ask God to create in us a clean heart and to renew a steadfast spirit within us. Such a great, oh, such a great verse. I mean, all of the Bible verses [00:16:00] are great, but sometimes one just speaks to us and I think that is a really good one to start with.

So what it, what is an action that God is prompting you to take today? Maybe it's some of these that I mentioned, or maybe it's something entirely different. But friend, I wanna encourage you, don't delay in responding to God. Take the action, that He is prompting you to take. Take it sooner rather than later. And those cobwebs, well, they will be gone in no time.

Friend, God does not leave us in a dry, dead place. That's not His will for us. He has promised to renew and restore us even on our lowest, lowest of low moments. And I think of the hope that we can cling to in many scriptures, including Isaiah 41 when it says that we who have hope in the Lord that He will [00:17:00] renew our strength and that we will not be weary or become faint,

but we will soar like eagles. Oh, love that. We just find such hope in scripture. So friend, what a hope we have. What a hope we have.

Spring cleaning of our souls can also include surrendering any weariness to God on a daily basis. Because sometimes, or maybe it's just me, I wake up in the morning already feeling weary. But let's ask Him to renew and refresh us with His presence and to make us aware that He is with us.

It may mean stepping away from distractions like our phones. Yeah, our phones or social media or something else for a time of refreshment and renewal. And to free ourselves from anything that may entice us from opening our hearts [00:18:00] completely to God. And just like a clean home is refreshing and rejuvenating, clinging to God, and His hope is the ultimate refreshment and rejuvenation for our souls.

As He renews us you and I may experience a season of blooming and blossoming as we see in nature right now. So take heart, friend God is already at work renewing you, renewing your mind and your heart and your soul. Even if you can't see it or you don't feel it yet, your blooming season is coming and rejoice in that.

And speaking of blooming. If you have been trudging through a season of feeling quote, dead inside and you are tired of feeling this way, or you know, deep down that in, in your soul, that there's got to be more to life than the life you're [00:19:00] living, well, allow me to come alongside of you and let me to help you bloom.

I can relate to how you may be feeling 'cause I have been there a number of times in a dry, desolate place. And because I've been through seasons like that, I can walk with you to equip you to live the abundant life that you were created to live.

My one-on-one life mentoring is designed to refresh your faith, to renew your mindset, and to embrace the abundant life that Jesus came to give you. So check out the link in the show notes for details, and you can schedule your appointment right there on that link. And I look forward to working with you one-on-one, and to help you live the life that you've always desired to live.

Thank you for leaving a rating or review from wherever you're listening today and or [00:20:00] tuning in - you may be watching on YouTube as well - and to make sure that you subscribe so you never miss an episode. And connect with

me on social media. I would love to hear from you. And share this with a friend who could also use some renewal and encouragement in her life.

Do you have questions that you'd like me to answer in an episode, or do you have a subject that you'd like me to dive deeper into in a series or in an episode? Well, friend, I am all ears and I would love to hear from you. Fill out the Encouragement for Real Life podcast form , the link is in the show notes. And I will do my best to cover your question or questions or your content request in future episodes. So check that out in the show notes.

And next week I invite you back for our next episode in this series of spring cleaning for the soul, where we will venture into dusting off weariness [00:21:00] when we're feeling exhausted. So if you are overwhelmed and exhausted, or know someone who is, this episode will be timely. So do not miss it. It'll drop next Tuesday.

So in closing, let's recap. It is time to clear out the cobwebs as we do our spring cleaning for our souls. We acknowledge the dead feeling that we might be feeling, and we can clear out the emotional cobwebs by returning to God and seeking Him, and giving all of our cares and concerns to Him. And then we can make room for new life by daily inviting His presence into our hearts.

If you feel dead inside today, take heart. God is in the business of resurrection, as we will see later this month, right, with Easter approaching. He can breathe life into any situation [00:22:00] no matter how dry it may seem. I pray that God breathes His life into your mind, heart, and soul today. So stay encouraged, friend.

And God bless you.

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