

[00:00:00] Decluttering Your Heart When You Feel Distracted

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: Welcome to Encouragement for Real Life. In today's episode, we are tackling a challenge that so many of us face in our everyday lives, and that challenge is [00:01:00] distraction. And if you've been around here for any length of time, you probably already know that this subject is one that I am so passionate about and well versed on.

After all, I wrote two books about it. Whether it's endless to-do lists, constant notifications or racing thoughts in our own heads, distraction can quickly clutter our hearts and minds and our whole lives, making it hard to focus on what truly matters. So if you're feeling distracted and overwhelmed today, well, let me tell you, this episode may help you declutter your heart and refocus on what God has for you in this very moment and for your life.

Julie Lefebure: So let's get into this episode.[00:02:00]

If you've read my, my book Right Now Matters - it's right here. If you're on video, you're seeing it - Right Now Matters. And I share in the introduction about the story of really what grabbed my attention when I was living distracted. I knew I had a problem at the time, but I didn't really know that I could address it or was I ready to address it. Until we were sitting in the soccer stands watching my son play soccer in his senior year of high school. And this was 2015, 10 years ago. And I was there, my husband was there. We were having a great time surrounded by, you know, our other friends, that their kids were also playing soccer and for some reason, one quick moment, my mind went elsewhere. I was physically present, but I was not mentally present.[00:03:00]

I was probably either focused on, you know, what I was gonna do next that evening or the things that I had on my to-do list. And the next thing I know, I hear the roar of the crowd. And so I kind of come to, and you'll never guess

what happened. If you've read the book, you already know. My son scored a goal and I missed it.

I was so focused in my own mind, the things that I was thinking about. I was not fully present and I missed my son's goal. Now this wouldn't have been such a big deal, but he, he was a defender and defenders didn't score goals. Forwards do. So when he scored that goal, I just thought, I will never get to experience this again.

Well, I did later on in that season, but thankfully, but I knew right then I had a problem. I was living distracted. I was missing the things happening right in [00:04:00] front of me. The special moments happening right in front of me. You know, we live in a world of distraction, so naturally we will be enticed by the distractions of this world.

Distractions aren't just everyday annoyances, but they're much more serious than that. They're actually keeping us from living the abundant life that God has for us, for you, and for me. Living distracted affects everything we do and how we live, including our relationships, our peace, and our ability to hear God's voice clearly.

They're causing us to miss these priceless moments happening right in front of us. Just like what happened to me that day at my son's soccer game. When we are distracted, we almost become like the seed sown among the thorns as we read in Matthew chapter 13:22 in the Bible, where the distractions [00:05:00] choke out the life of the Word in us and we become stagnant and ineffective in our faith and our life.

And here's what that verse says, "And the one on whom the seed was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the worries and distractions of the world and the deceitfulness, the superficial pleasures and delight of riches choke the word and it yields no fruit." And that's in the Amplified translation.

So what does distraction look like?

Well, I probably don't even need to describe what a distraction looks like because I assume that you experience it as often as I do. Every day. But distractions come in two forms, external and internal.

Now, external distractions are things like social media, constant notifications, dinging on our phones [00:06:00] or the demands of daily life that keep pulling our attention away from what's truly important.

And internal distractions are our own worries and fears and endless thoughts that race through our minds, making it hard to settle and just to focus on one thing at a time. So if you were to guess right now, which is affecting you more in your life, the external or the internal distractions? And what would you say is your biggest distraction?

We'll take this a bit deeper here in just a couple minutes, but in chapter five of Right Now Matters, I list the five most common distractions based on the responses of real life women that I polled. And to quickly summarize them, they are the past, the future, technology, our thoughts or ourselves, and [00:07:00] multitasking.

Yep. The big five, I call them. But think about these five. Don't they just seem to just stand out to you? You know, if we are concerned about our past, we're thinking about the past, we're stuck there. Or we're focused on the future, either worried or excited about what's to come. We get immersed in our technology. Of course, that's a big distraction. And our thoughts ourselves. We can sometimes be our own biggest distraction. And then multitasking, of course. We are not designed to do more than one thing at a time. And when we start to do that, we start to do more than one thing at a time, we get distracted.

So right now I would say that my biggest distraction is an internal distraction from the result of an external one. Let me explain. My calendar is becoming quite full of speaking engagements and ministry opportunities in this season, and so my mind is [00:08:00] planning and creating and doing all those things. I'm in that kind of mode. So much so that I'm focused on all I need to do, everything on my plate, and my full schedule that I'm missing the priceless moments happening right in front of me.

So I know when that starts to happen, I know that I need to scale things back and , change some things because I don't like living distracted like this. But if you're anything like me, the distraction that plagues me can change from day to day. Right? It's as if almost, if I battle one distraction with God's help and I overcome it, but then there's another one, maybe a different one that follows it right after it. And when we give into these distractions and allow them to run and rule our lives, we live in a perpetual state of living distracted.

And as I say often, life is too important to [00:09:00] live it distracted. Living distracted can not only cause us to miss life and the everyday moments that God has for us, it can also lead us to feeling overwhelmed and disconnected, especially from God and unclear about our priorities. It can also contribute to emotional burnout and spiritual dryness. And we discussed those two things in the last two episodes.

And we aren't the only generation though that that has lived distracted, that has faced distractions. Distractions have been present in life in every, every era, and we see people, even in Bible times who struggled with distraction.

In chapter two of Right Now Matters, we discuss how many of us feel as if there's got to be more to life than this. In this chapter, we peer into the story of Mary and Martha, and that's [00:10:00] in Luke 10 in the Bible. So let's refresh our memories of this scripture. It's verses 38 through 42.

And in the NIV, the New International Version translation, it says, "As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister named Mary who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said, 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, but few things are needed or indeed, only one. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her.'" [00:11:00]

I love how Jesus gently reminded Martha that Mary had chosen the one thing that was better. Staying undistracted and focused at Jesus's feet. That's what is the one thing that's better. As I stated in Right Now Matters, often I make other things the better things, and I can frequently be distracted away from the one thing needed, and that is Jesus. That one thing is still better for us today.

Proverbs chapter 4:25, in the New International Version says, "Let your eyes look straight ahead. Fix your gaze directly before you." And this is a great verse for when you and I feel distracted. It's one that you and I can recite to help keep our hearts and minds on what truly matters, with what's right in front of us. Focusing on Jesus is always what [00:12:00] matters, and this is the key to live an undistracted life with an undistracted heart.

So are you feeling a bit distracted today? What do you normally do when you feel distracted? Maybe now would be a good time to do a little decluttering of our hearts to eliminate the distractions that we can. Of course there's some that we can't eliminate, that they're gonna come externally. But we can deal with them when they arise.

So step one is to identify what's distracting you. So I invite you to take a moment just to notice your current distractions. Ask questions like, what is taking up most of my mental energy right now? Are there habits or routines that contribute to my distraction? And how often am I checking my phone or social media, instead of being present in the moment. [00:13:00] Jot down or quietly think about the things that are crowding your heart and mind. You may be surprised and amazed.

Step two is to simplify your life and your schedule to create space for focus. This will help to, to simplify things. Examine your commitments, and cut out any unnecessary activities. You know, it's okay to say no. And saying no is a vital part of decluttering.

And I invite you to make time for quiet. When was the last time that you just sat in silence? It's probably been a while for me, in full transparency here. But I invite you to block out some time in your day to do just that, just to sit in silence. Whether it's through prayer or journaling or simply being still before God.

We can refer to [00:14:00] Matthew chapter six, verse 33 in the New International Version, which says, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well." So simplifying and prioritizing what matters helps declutter our hearts.

Step three is to set some boundaries around these distractions. Uh, let's look at some digital boundaries, what we can set for managing technology. Like turning off notifications for non-urgent apps. We can schedule specific times to check our social media or email. And we can set a tech-free time in the evening or during meals. You know, my husband and I still do that. We, we set some tech-free time aside so we're not enticed by our phones.

And I also suggest, use the tool of the four Ps to help you to, to stay [00:15:00] in the present moment. And these are called the four Ps because each letter begins with a P. So pause, ponder, pray, and praise. And those are also in, in my book *Right Now Matters*.

Step four is to prioritize time with God. To seek Him first, as we just said in that, that beautiful, uh, scripture verse. But the importance of spending time with God each day to help clear away the distractions. And this could be through prayer - oh, that's so important - scripture reading, or worship. Even just playing worship songs or singing out loud or singing in your head or whatever might be worthy for you to pursue, to, to bring God , into your day, to help you declutter your hearts.

But decluttering your mind with His Word is a great way to do it. To memorize scripture, to meditate on God's promises and to help fill your mind with truth rather than the noise [00:16:00] of distractions.

We can rest in His presence. We can talk to God about anything. We can stay in His presence. That's another way we can declutter our hearts and renew our minds.

And then step five is to focus on what truly matters, to live with purpose. You know, I think sometimes that helps if we just have a purpose that helps to keep some of the distractions at bay. But we can refocus on what matters most - God's calling our relationships and our self-care. We can take one step toward a more focused, intentional life. So I encourage you to do that. Take one step toward that, that focused intentional life. Whether it's spending time with a loved one or diving into a project that God has placed on your heart or simply sitting quietly with Him.

And speaking of focusing on what truly matters, [00:17:00] if you've been overwhelmed with distractions and you wanna live this life that you've always desired to live, but these distractions continue to get in the way. Well, I understand because I've been there and I have done that. Oh my goodness. And I'm still working through distractions.

But friend, I can help. I can walk with you to equip you to live the abundant life that you've been created to live. My one-on-one abundant life mentoring is designed to refresh your faith, to renew your mindset, and to embrace the abundant life that Jesus came to give you.

Check out the link in the show notes for details, and you're able to schedule your appointment right there. We can even schedule a connection call just to see if this may be right for you. I look so forward to working with you one-on-one, and to help you overcome the distractions that have been trying to run and rule your life. Life is too important to live it [00:18:00] distracted.

Julie Lefebure (2): Well, I'm excited to announce the next online session of the Right Now Matters Bible study. Right here. I'm holding it up on video. It begins next Monday, April 21st. Uh, we are gathering on Zoom and it's at 7:00 PM every Monday for five weeks. This is 7:00 PM Central Time. And I would love for you to just consider joining this Bible study. If you are serious about living an undistracted life and facing these distractions head on with God's help, then you will want to be a part of this study.

Every one that we have done, every session we've done has just been, they've been enlightening and encouraging, and I believe, well, the the testimonials speak for themselves. But each person that has attended has just really walked away with tools to be equipped for life and how to live an undistracted life.

So, um, the link for this group, you can [00:19:00] register, the link is in the show notes. And again, that starts on Monday, April 21st, 7:00 PM Central Time. It's free to attend. Um, but you'll want to get the book and the Bible study. So you'll probably want to order those or see me, and I can get those to you. You can get 'em on Amazon or on my website. We'll be meeting for five weeks, every Monday for five weeks. So our last time together, I believe is around the 19th of May. So I'm looking forward to growing with you and, learning everything we can about what God has to say about living an undistracted life. So join us. It's gonna be a great time.

Julie Lefebure: And thank you for leaving a rating and or review from wherever you're, you're tuning in today. And make sure that you subscribe so you never miss an episode. I'd love for you to connect with me on social media and share this with a friend who could use this encouragement as well.

You know, we have covered a lot in [00:20:00] this episode, so let's summarize. Let's summarize how we can declutter our hearts and minds to live an undistracted life. First of all, we can identify what our distractions are. We can simplify our lives, we can set boundaries, and we can prioritize time with God to declutter our hearts.

The two things that I'm drawn to do in this list is to declutter my mind. I want to to simplify, simplify the things that are on my plate, but find ways that I can simplify my life. And to prioritize time with God because I know without that time with Him, I will be even more distracted.

So if you're feeling distracted today, take heart. It is not too late to reset. With God's help, you can clear away the clutter and refocus your heart on what truly matters. [00:21:00] So I invite you to pick one area of distraction that you want

to address today. Whether it's setting a boundary with technology or carving out intentional time with God or carving out some time with someone that you just haven't really spent much time with lately. Taking that first step will bring greater clarity and peace, and that will help you be undistracted and have an undistracted heart.

So let's close with prayer. Let's ask God, invite Him in, um, to clear away the distractions and to focus on what truly matters. Let's pray.

Oh, heavenly Father, we just thank You for this time. We thank You Father, that you are not a God of distraction, but You are a God of order. We praise You and we just give You all the glory for that. Lord, You know the distractions that we deal with on a daily basis. You, You see what we struggle with. Father, I just pray that You will help [00:22:00] us to keep our focus fixed on You. To center our thoughts and our intentions on You. Not the things of this world, not the things that pull us away from You, but on You. And Father, will You help us to just keep that mindset of where You are we don't have to be distracted. We can completely focus on what You have for us and Your calling for our lives. Lord, remove the distractions from our lives and, and if You want to teach us through these distractions, Lord, then help us to stand under the weight of them. Help us to learn how to deal with them and to give them over to You when they come. We thank You for this time together. We thank You for your equipping and Your encouraging. We thank You for Your Word. We thank You for Your truth and Your promises. In Jesus' name, we pray these things. Amen.

Friend, thank you for joining me today. I am cheering you on. God bless you.

[00:23:00] Thank you so much for joining me here today. You can find more@julielefebure.com and until next time, stay encouraged.