

[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: Welcome back to the podcast today. You know, we all have seasons where life feels slow or hidden or far from where we thought we'd be. But what if the very place that you and I are in right now, maybe the ordinary, the overlooked, or even the [00:01:00] uncomfortable was the exact soil that God chose for you and I to bloom.

In this three part series just starting fresh in this month, it's called Bloom Where You're Planted. We're leaning into God's process of growth. Whether you're waiting for something to change or you're wrestling with where you've been placed, or you're wondering if your life is making any sort of impact at all, this series is for you.

We'll explore what it means to trust God with the unseen, to stay rooted in every season of life and to bear fruit that brings Him glory right where we are. Friend, you don't have to wait for better soil or a different season or anything else. God is doing something beautiful in you right here, right now, even when you cannot see progress.

So friend, if you're ready for some encouragement today, let's get into this [00:02:00] episode.

Julie Lefebure: One day in March, and every single year this happens, my husband emerges from our basement with his arms full of seed packets, trays, stands, and growing lights ready to begin his annual seed sowing. He'll spend the day perfectly placing the chosen seeds into the prepared dirt in one of the six plant wells in the seed starting trays. And in a matter of weeks, these little seeds will become green plants destined to be placed eventually in our vegetable and flower gardens. And by the way, you should see my husband's vegetable garden. I shared a lot on social media last year, and I probably will again this year. But his vegetable garden is pretty amazing. [00:03:00] Yeah, it really is. And this year he's already sown the seeds, he did this early in March, sowed the

seeds of peppers, tomatoes, goodness, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, parsnips, which is my favorite. Uh, what else? Some basil. These are just to name a few, and I'm sure I've forgotten some.

But you know, before all of that happens, before they get taken out to our garden the seeds, they're buried in the dirt, right in these little tray wells and he puts them under grow lamps and on warming pads for weeks. My husband waits and waters and watches. Until one day something, something green peaks up through the dirt. And my grandsons are amazed at this process because they see this little tiny seed in their hand and then they see this little green thing pop up through the soil. And you know, that seed looked like an ordinary seed. Um, but it becomes something so much more. It [00:04:00] grows. How cool is that?

I mean, it really should amaze us this whole process. And pretty soon that little green thing goes from a sprout to a small, tiny plant that has leaves on it and will eventually produce food for us to eat, or beautiful flowers for my flower garden. You know, it's quite miraculous when you think about it all, don't you think? Yeah, it really is.

But before I get ahead of myself here, let's back up. What's really happening in the dark and in the dirt, before any sight of green emerges through the surface? I mean, it appears as if nothing is happening, right? It appears that the seed is dead, that it's lifeless, that it's useless. But just wait. Just because we can't see anything happening on the surface doesn't mean that God's not at work, in sowing seeds in the garden and in our lives. [00:05:00] Friend, if you've ever wondered if anything is happening in your life spiritually or in any other area of your life, or if you felt like your efforts are just too small to matter, well, you're in the right place.

I'm reminded of the scripture found in Zechariah, and I love Zechariah. I don't read it very often, but our son is named after Zechariah. Uh. Yeah, 'cause his name is Zach. But in Zechariah it's in chapter four, the verse I'm talking about here, and it's the first part of verse 10. And in the New Living Translation, it reads, "Do not despise these small beginnings for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin."

Good stuff, right? It's in the small beginnings when often it seems as if nothing is happening. Kind of like with these newly planted seeds. I mean, I can't help but think how God must celebrate the beginning stages of no matter where we are in those beginning pieces, those beginning stages of life. [00:06:00] Not even as a a baby, but beginning stages of life, when we accept something that

He has for us. When they're invisible to everybody else, including us, they aren't invisible to Him.

As an example of this, when I first began writing my book *Right Now Matters*, it felt as if nothing was happening. The words were hard to come by. I remember sitting here struggling and my thoughts were scattered all over the place. I literally felt buried underneath the weight of what seemed like a monumental task. I mean, I've never written a book before, how do I do this? Could I even do it? Could I really write this book? Do I have what it takes to write and share my story? Plus to be able to encourage other women in their walk too? I mean, I felt so insignificant and so unsure about myself. And I went to God time and time again and asked if His belief in me would become mine. I mean, I [00:07:00] knew He was calling me to write it. I just had to believe that I could do it. So putting one foot in front of the other or maybe I should say one word in front of the other, the weight of feeling buried, lessened. And I, I felt God's presence every time I sat here in this chair at this desk in front of this computer to write this book. And after much time and effort, that seed that God had planted in me to write this book, sprouted and grew into something more beautiful and precious than I could ever have imagined. And when I held my completed book in my hands for the very first time, tears flowed as I just recalled all the steps that God had taken me through and how God had bloomed this book within me. When I couldn't see progress, God could. When my efforts felt useless, God was working behind the scenes. I could [00:08:00] feel Him working. And when I questioned my ability, God had me already covered. He had it all figured out. He did it all. I just needed to show up and do what He called me to do.

Maybe you need this reminder today too, friend. When you cannot see progress, it doesn't mean that nothing is happening. Just like with those tiny seeds, God is at work before the blooming begins. You and I can trust this to be true.

So let's look at God's process of growth because it's not always what we expect, and it's not always what we imagine, and it's not what we see in the world. But the first part of His growth, how I see it, is that God works in hidden places. Just like with a seed, growth begins underground in the unseen and oftentimes that's when the growth happens [00:09:00] within us. God's growing us and molding us and transforming us to be more like His son Jesus. It's not a surface level kind of growth because we know that surface level kind of growth, excuse me, doesn't last. But it's a deep rooted kind, which is actually more important and vital. It's what's going to keep us stable, steady, and strong in Him.

Again, just because we cannot see progress doesn't mean that there isn't any. I've heard it said that God is more concerned with the depth of our roots than the height of our reach. That's so true, isn't it?

The second thing I've noticed about God's growth, His process, is that small is not insignificant. Many of God's greatest works started small. I mean, look at the examples listed in the Bible for us to just to learn from. We see examples like David or [00:10:00] Ruth, or even Jesus being born in a stable, in a lowly stable. What a humble beginning. And even the parable of the mustard seed, how small that little mustard seed is. We see in them what God can do with small beginnings. This should encourage us and remind us that God is in the small details of our lives. God uses little things for big purposes. Like our obedience to do something maybe that doesn't make sense to us. Or in those quiet prayers that we feel are insignificant. Or even in our everyday faithfulness when we really don't feel like being faithful one more minute. But simply showing up may feel so small. But God can use our obedience in ways that we just will not comprehend in the moment.

We're not the only ones, though, who started small, right? And the example that I'd like to take a little bit [00:11:00] better look at is in the Bible of David. You know, King David. David was not the one that they expected to be king. 'David was a shepherd, right? He was not born a king. He was born as a shepherd, excuse me. But when the prophet Samuel came to Jesse's house to anoint the next king of Israel, David was not invited in the lineup. He was not invited to be there with his other brothers. 'Cause Samuel had asked Jesse to bring out all of his sons. Well, Jesse didn't bring out David because Jesse didn't think that David was king material or king worthy. He, he didn't count him among his other brothers to be worthy of being named King. He was out in the field doing the lowly unseen work of tending sheep. But God saw him. And when Samuel asked, are these all of your sons? When he asked Jesse that, Jesse finally mentioned, well, yeah, David the youngest. He's still out in the pasture. [00:12:00] And it was in that quiet place with no spotlight that God was preparing David. While he protected the sheep from lions and bears, he was learning courage. And while he played his harp in solitude, which gave him such comfort, he was cultivating worship. And while no one else noticed, God was shaping a king. That field was David's beginning, but it wasn't small to God.

So if you feel like your life right now is made up of just things like just raising kids or just going to work or just waiting or just hidden, friend, don't discount where you are. God often does his greatest shaping before the bloom ever breaks through the soil. Again, exactly what He does in a seed He does with us.

[00:13:00] David's field didn't look like a throne room, but it was. It was holy ground because God was there shaping him. And the same is true for us.

And the third thing that I've noticed about God's process of growth is that growth takes time and trust. In our hurried and fast-paced culture, we naturally expect results quickly, don't we? I mean, goodness, we prefer microwaves over, uh, crockpots. We want things fast. We want things in a hurry. We, we want things shipped to us to receive it this afternoon if we ordered it this morning. We desire to see immediate gratification and immediate results and immediate growth. We've been conditioned this way. But that's not how God works. His timeline is different than ours and different than the world's. God's growth is slow. It's, it's deliberate. It's sustainable, and it lasts. [00:14:00] We see this in Biblical examples that I just mentioned. In looking at David's life as well. Slow growth is the best kind of growth.

Trusting God's plan for growth means releasing our need for instant results and then embracing daily surrender. When we cannot see progress, you and I must choose to be faithful in the waiting, trusting God that He will bring the bloom at the perfect time.

So I'd like to ask you a couple questions. Where in your life do you feel small or unseen right now? Where are you tempted to give up, showing up because you cannot see progress or see any sort of growth? And what would it look like to trust God instead? Just like my husband tends to these tiny little seeds, by providing all that they need - water, light, and warmth - we can do the same to [00:15:00] tend to our small beginnings. Spending time with God in His Word, reading scripture, learning more of God and His ways and His will for our lives and His promises for us. We can go to Him in prayer, talking with Him in our waiting, pausing long enough to hear His voice. And we can continue to show up in faith, trusting that God will produce the growth in His perfect timing, not a minute sooner. It's in doing these kinds of activities and these kind of tending that we become changed and more like His Son, Jesus. We'll then be able to be ready for when the growth happens. And you know, I have learned the hard way, that we don't want the growth before He has us in the place where we can receive it and where we can handle it.

Friend, God sees you buried under the dirt if you're feeling buried today. He knows that you're there. He hasn't forgotten about you. And He rejoices [00:16:00] in the beginning work that He's doing in you.

If you're resonating with today's message and you can relate to any of this and you wanna go deeper in your personal growth and in your faith, well, I invite

you to take the next step with me in the process of blooming. Whether it's with my book Right Now Matters, or my one-on-one Abundant Life mentoring, or my free resource library that I designed to, to help you stay rooted in God's Truth, you'll find everything you need linked in the show notes. So go ahead and visit there, and I'd be honored to walk with you and to help you bloom right where you're planted.

And I invite you to follow me on social media as I am often sharing the process of my husband's garden. I haven't done much of that yet, but the season is just kicking off and I always share a lot. And it's quite amazing just to see what God can do with some seeds [00:17:00] and some obedience and a garden.

So let's close today with a bit of encouragement and maybe a journal prompt. I thought, you know, I might just start giving a journal prompt, at the end of some of the, the podcast episodes because you know how much I believe in journaling. But a journal prompt for today could be, what seed of faith has God planted in me that He's asking me to trust Him with? What seed of faith has God planted in me that He's asking me to trust Him with? Ponder that. Journal that. See what God shows you.

And let's just say a short little quick prayer before we go any further, before we close out today.

Father God, thank You for being the God Who sees all the small details in our lives. Thank You for being the One who we can trust when we don't see any blooming happening. Lord, help us to trust You in the journey. Give us joy, Lord. Give us joy in the journey. Help us [00:18:00] to trust You in all things. Help us to have a bigger picture, a slow waiting picture, of the things that You're growing inside of us, because 'cause we know, Lord, Your growth is worth it. Help us to be encouraged today in Your love and in Your compassion, and in Your grace. It's in Your name we pray these things. Amen.

And one more scripture before we close out today. It's Lamentations chapter three verses 25 and 26. And in The Voice translation, it reads, "It is good. The eternal one is good to those who expect him, to those who seek him wholeheartedly. It is good to wait quietly for the eternal to make things right again."

So let's recap. Friend, trust the small. Water what's planted. Trust God is working in the waiting. I invite you back next week to our [00:19:00] second episode in this Bloom Where You're Planted series, when we look at while you

bloom, how to flourish right where you are. I promise it'll be another impactful episode.

Continue to care for the soil in your life as God guides you. Keep showing up. Even with what seems small and insignificant when we place it in God's hands, it's not. I am cheering you on today, friend. God bless you.

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