

Encouragement for Real Life Podcast

203: Finding Abundance in the Unexpected with Reverend Barbara Furman

[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: Well, welcome to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I am thrilled that you are here today. Of course, in every episode my hope is that you find truth and hope and encouragement for your everyday life.

And so in today's episode, it's our guest episode for the month, and it's a special treat, I believe, [00:01:00] that we get to just hear from someone who is so near and dear to my heart. All year long my guests are those who have directly impacted and influenced my life for good. And so this month I have the deep honor of introducing you to someone who has greatly shaped my life and my faith in immeasurable ways.

She's an ordained minister. She's the founder of a local mission. She's a woman that I call a dear friend. And she has been my Christian mentor for years. And she's the one who pointed me to Jesus in that fateful night in 1991. I share this in my book, my book Right Now Matters. I was living with her daughter Tina at the time, and I put my faith and trust in Jesus that night, and my life has never been the same since.

And so this wonderful woman's name is Reverend Barbara Furman. I call her [00:02:00] Barb. And her story is one of deep surrender, of unwavering faith and in glorifying God through every season that she has walked through. Even in the midst of suffering and hardship. Life has not always been easy for her. But she walks through life just trusting God and wanting to follow Him and to honor Him. And so her mission remains the same still today to follow Jesus and help others do the same.

So I believe that her words, are going to bless you today. They're going to stir in your heart and strengthen your faith, and I think that they're gonna remind you of the beauty found walking closely with your Creator, no matter what season you're in.

So if you're ready for some encouragement and hope, let's get into this episode.

[00:03:00]

Julie Lefebure: Well, welcome to the podcast today, someone very special in my life and I cannot wait for, for you who's listening to hear from her. So welcome to the podcast, Reverend Barbara Furman. Barb, thanks for joining us today.

Barbara Furman: It's a pleasure, Julie. I'm so glad you asked me. It's good to be here.

Julie Lefebure: I am so glad too. I'm so glad that you are here and, uh, I know you by, I'll call you Barb, or my kids call you Grandma Barb, and, um, and you're like my mentor. You're like my second mom. My, my mentor, my,

Barbara Furman: I feel like your your second mom.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. And I, it's been so, it's been, it's just been such a blessing to have you in my life all these years. And I share in my book Right Now Matters in chapter 6 that Barb is the one, her and her daughter Tina, who's my best friend, led me to the Lord back in [00:04:00] 19, oh goodness. 1990.

Barbara Furman: Wow.

Julie Lefebure: 1991. 1991.

Barbara Furman: Okay. Okay.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Long time ago.

Barbara Furman: Long time ago.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. So Barb,

Barbara Furman: It was an exciting time in your life and

Julie Lefebure: yeah.

Barbara Furman: You know, it's just a, it's a blessing to be the one on the other end of that. You know, all the people that came before me, that continued

to, uh, to teach you things and show you things. And then Tina and I got to be the, the

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: last that led you to the Lord. It's a blessing for me.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Oh, it was such, it's such a gift to, to have that person be you and Tina, yeah, in my life.

So Barb, there's probably, um, I'm gonna call you Barb. I know that that's probably what you prefer, right? But you are an ordained minister and there's probably someone listening today that doesn't know who Reverend Barbara Furman is.

[00:05:00] So would you tell us about you, who you are, what you do, what you're passionate about, just anything you wanna share.

Barbara Furman: Okay. Well, as you said, Julie, I am ordained in the United Methodist Church. It's been nearly 30 years. That doesn't seem possible.

Julie Lefebure: Wow. No, it doesn't.

Barbara Furman: Yeah, it's been a long time. And, uh, I've had, I've had several ministries, uh, several callings. I'm gonna say callings. Uh,

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: Because when I think about, you know, when I think about my passion, I think, I don't necessarily think so much about my callings, but I, I think about I wanna please God. That's, that's really my passion.

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: You know, whatever He calls me to do, I wanna do it to the best of my ability. And, I wanna be obedient to it. And that's where my heart is, you know? So I'm gonna say my passion is to please God and glorify Him.

Julie Lefebure: Hmm. Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: However He [00:06:00] chooses to use me.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Yeah. And you do that so well? Yes. And you have a, you have a family, right? You have, I mean, just tell us, tell us any, any other details about, a little more about who you are as a person.

Barbara Furman: Well, Julie, as you remember, um, It's been nearly six years ago that, um, went to bed one night, got up the next morning and my life had changed.

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: I had I developed a pretty serious autoimmune disease. A couple of 'em actually. I couldn't walk, I couldn't drive,

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: I couldn't go to the grocery store. Something as simple as that. And there was no more ministry for me. I mean, it was over. Just that quickly.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: uh, so I've been retired. [00:07:00] I've been retired since then. And it, it really hurt. It really hurt. I, I, I grieved. I grieved a lot. And, uh, I had to work my way through it with the Lord, you know, it's, it's

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: not an easy thing to do. But I feel I've kind of gotten past that and maybe not totally past it. But um, you know, I can see, where, you know, initially, you know, I thought my life was over and,

Julie Lefebure: Right.

Barbara Furman: uh, what's left for me now? I mean, I, I didn't even feel like I had my identity anymore because nobody called me Pastor Barb anymore.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Right.

Barbara Furman: I mean that's what I was called all the time

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: I, I just felt like I had no purpose anymore. And then after struggling with that, like I said, grieving over that for two or three years, maybe four, I finally, um, [00:08:00] came to the realization that, you know, I've really grown

Julie Lefebure: Hmm.

Barbara Furman: in this time.

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: I'm in a place now where couldn't have been without all that happening to me. I'm stronger.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: I'm closer to God than I've ever been in my life. I mean, I need Him. We are like pals, buddies. He is my friend, my Creator, my Redeemer. He's my God. I mean, He's, He's everything me.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: And, uh, He's just with me all the time. And I, I live alone and He's just, uh, He's just there. And I just never felt this close to Him.

Julie Lefebure: Hmm.

Barbara Furman: And it's prepared me for heaven really, because I've been studying more. I've been praying more. I've been, you know, uh, trying to get closer to Him. As close as I can. So for that reason, I feel a lot of good came [00:09:00] from that. You know I think it's in Romans 8:28, Paul says, "All things work together for good, for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."

And, uh, He turned this disaster, this horrible, horrible thing in my life. He brought so much good from it.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: So much good.

Julie Lefebure: Wow. Wow.

Barbara Furman: So I haven't been. I'm sorry.

Julie Lefebure: Go ahead. No, no, go ahead.

Barbara Furman: doing much ministry, um, for the last six years, unfortunately. Um, my granddaughter got married last year, Grace and she wanted me to do her wedding, and I just didn't know if I could do it or not. You know, with this disease that I have, it's very painful and, um, fatiguing and there's no cure for it. And I mean, I, in a sense, sometimes I walk kind of crooked and things like that. But I thought, I'm going to, I'm gonna [00:10:00] make a commitment to do this and I did. And you know what? The Lord just blessed it. He really blessed it.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: But, uh, you know, that was probably the last one I'll ever do. But, um, I was so glad I could do that. You know, I miss doing those things, but I've got to accept it. , It says we should praise God. The Bible says we should praise God in good times and bad.

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: So I'm pretty much at peace right now with everything.

Julie Lefebure: Good. Yeah, and you did a fantastic job. Because we were at that wedding and, uh, just watching the Lord just shine through you. It was, it was beautiful. It was beautiful. And you'd never know that you were, you know, struggling with a disease. God just carried you through that. And I know we had a good conversation about that afterwards. And

Barbara Furman: Yes.

Julie Lefebure: And so it just goes to show that He's still using you in, in ways that may be different [00:11:00] than you, you're used to.

Barbara Furman: And I'm a firm believer, if He's not using us, then we wouldn't be here.

Julie Lefebure: Right, right. Yeah. , And the words that you've just said, you know, someone is listening today that needs those encouraging words. So thank you for sharing that part of your story. 'cause it's, it's a big part of your story now, and you're not giving up. You're drawing close to the Lord.

And , I mean, I've always looked at you as the, the woman who, just has a really strong, vibrant relationship with God. And for you to say that you're more close to Him now than you ever have been. That is just, that's amazing to me. Yeah. And it's so encouraging.

Barbara Furman: It, it changed me. And at first I thought it was for the worst, but really it was for the better. It was.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Yeah. And during this time though too, you put out your book. You, you wrote a book, right? While you've been dealing with your autoimmune. He's still using you as [00:12:00] you wrote your book. And it's called, uh, It Is Well with My Soul.

Barbara Furman: I have a copy right here. I thought I would show it.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Yep.

Barbara Furman: It's called,

Julie Lefebure: It's called. Go ahead.

Barbara Furman: It Is Well With My Soul, My Story.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: And it's an autobiography, about, tough times in my life when I was a child and, um, in my marriages and I wrote this book because felt God told me to write it. And when I was writing it, it was probably one of my most sickest times. I had a lot of pain. But you know, as I wrote it, , God used my writing to distract me from all of that pain. And so

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: that was really good. And, um, you know, I, I, I wanted to be obedient to God. I wanted to be faithful to Him and, [00:13:00] and do what He asked me to do. And I always had thought about writing a book. But here I

was older and I thought, well, it probably isn't gonna happen now. But, uh, but I had the time to do it then.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Right. Yeah.

Barbara Furman: I don't know, maybe that's, uh, one, one reason that God allowed to happen to me what, what happened, I don't know. But, you know, God has to allow it. For anything

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: to happen

Julie Lefebure: Right.

Barbara Furman: because He's the ultimate power. And I shared a little bit in here about how I would fight God and He would, carry me back or drag me back towards that finish line. We've had, uh, we've had a lot of, a lot of conversations, early on, before I did get sick, what He had me doing and, how I, I didn't feel good about myself. I didn't think I could do the things He was asking me to do. [00:14:00] And, one thing is when He told me to go to college. and I was, can't remember how old I was. I think I was 32, maybe a little older than that. You know, I almost flunked outta high school. And I said, I said, Lord, you want me to go to college? What am I gonna do in college? You know, and, it took a long time for me to, to surrender to that. But I finally did and, and, um, He blessed me through those four years of college.

And I took psychology and criminal justice as a double major. I thought, well, I'm kind of interested in those things and maybe I won't flunk 'em. And so that ended up being, uh, what God was going to lead me into after my college days. I didn't know it, but He already had it planned out.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Yeah. [00:15:00] So what, what did He lead you to? I know the story, but yeah, what did He lead you to? Yeah, that was like a, kind of like a, I wanna say not a turning point in your life, but it, it probably was,

Barbara Furman: It was a big turning point in my life. Because, you know, I swore if I ever got outta high school, I would never go back to school again.

Julie Lefebure: yeah. Yeah.

Barbara Furman: And um, after I graduated, I was fortunate enough to get a, to get a job with the Department of Correctional Services. And I was with them nearly seven years and I felt God spoke to me, show me things. You know, He speaks to us all in different ways. And, uh, I felt that He was telling me that He wanted me to go to seminary. And I said seminary. I mean, I couldn't even believe it Julie. Me? I mean, no, I'm not, I'm not equipped. I don't have the right stuff to go to. I didn't even have the right stuff to go to college, let alone seminary. [00:16:00] And so, um, we went around and around with that. And finally I said to the Lord, you know this, but I will share with, with your audience. I've always had a fear of speaking. Oh my goodness. It was, it was really bad. And, I finally said to Him, I said, Lord, I'll go, but don't make me preach. I cannot preach. And so anyway, I, I did go to seminary. And, uh, then the Lord led me to, um, and I did have to preach, by the way.

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm. And you're a great preacher.

Barbara Furman: He had to teach me. He had to teach me. And, uh, that led to, uh, I don't know, a job at the jail. I think it

Julie Lefebure: Uh huh.

Barbara Furman: I think it was my last year of seminary when I got on at our local jail here as a chaplain. And so I was still kind of in training and, I would meet with the inmates. Mainly men, because I think at the time we only had like 8% [00:17:00] of the population were women. So it was mainly men and I just, I just fell in love with them. I mean, all of them. I mean, God gave me a love for them. He put them in my heart. It makes me tear up when I think about it. Um,

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: He just put that in me an unconditional love for the incarcerated and, and the poor and, and the homeless and, um, people that, are looked down by society and,

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: Because I was there. I mean, I, I didn't feel good enough either. I know what it's like to feel like you're a nobody or you're an outcast. 'Cause I was quite a rebel when I was younger and, I had a very, very low self-esteem. And I just, I couldn't shake it. And it stayed with me. I mean, it stayed with me a lot of my life. It left a lot of scars. And I guess maybe that's

[00:18:00] why I was so shocked that God would call me to seminary, you know?

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Yeah.

Barbara Furman: But anyway, I started at the jail and, um, what I noticed was there was a pattern with the inmates. They would, they would get arrested to come into jail. They'd come to church, they would accept Jesus, and then would finally get released. Some of 'em went on to prison. But some of 'em got released. And well here they were coming back again in a couple weeks. And it was just a, you know, revolving door. I think that's used quite a bit. And it was like they would go out, they'd come back in. Go out, come back in. And I took a little retreat one time and uh, I just went to a hotel and I wanted to spend time with the Lord. I wanted to get away from my surroundings. I didn't want any pressures on me like, well, maybe I should throw in a load of clothes. Maybe I can just do this or that. I totally wanted to be alone with the Lord without [00:19:00] any thoughts of, uh, house cleaning or, or doing other things. And so I took myself on a little retreat and, uh, I began to pray and I asked the Lord, I said, what can I do, Lord? Why are they coming back? Why do they go out and come back and go out and come back. And I felt that, He said to me over a certain period of time in different ways, that there needs to be a place in the community where people can come that are getting outta jail and prison, or the poor, the homeless - anybody can come

and

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: they can be loved on and they can be encouraged. And they can take a Bible study and, and come to worship. And they can know that they're accepted and that we're not looking down on them. And so that's when, um, that's when [00:20:00] Mission of Hope started and

Julie Lefebure: Uh.

Barbara Furman: the Lord did so much with that ministry. And it's my understanding He's continuing to do a lot with it now. Um, yeah.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. And I was there for what, five, six years and

Barbara Furman: I was hoping that you would bring that up.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah, and you're,

Barbara Furman: Didn't I need you or something? I don't know. I don't remember.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. You had breast cancer.

Barbara Furman: Oh,

Julie Lefebure: And, and I called you, just distraught. 'Cause it was like my own mother having breast cancer. And I said, what can I do for you? And you, you said, I, I still laugh at it because I'm like, this is not what I wanted, but you said, can you go help at the mission once, one day a week? And I, I, I wanted to say no, but I couldn't. But I couldn't say no to you.

And so I showed up there on a Tuesday and it was [00:21:00] you know, my Mission Tuesdays for a very long time. And it, God changed my heart for the hurting and the homeless through Mission of Hope. And that was a turning point in my life when I just started seeing those, those people, you know, that the society labels, um I just started to see 'em as real people and the, they were no different than me. And they just made different choices than I had made. But, so thank you for you. I mean, God just used you in so many ways to change so many lives through that ministry while you were involved, including mine. So thank you for, for starting it, being brave enough to just be obedient to the Lord and step out and do it.

Barbara Furman: I mean, you know, I asked mom if she would come in and help me and we rented a little office and

Julie Lefebure: Yeah,

Barbara Furman: made up a bunch of food bags and I mean, that's how it started. People would come in and they'd say, uh, they needed a ride to, fill out an application for work. And I'd [00:22:00] load 'em up in my Jeep, I'd take 'em there and, it just slowly started coming together. And, you know, we ended up with a, a shelter and and, uh, worship services and Bible studies. And it was you, Julie, that, suggested that we do the Bible studies over lunch.

Julie Lefebure: I did.

Barbara Furman: people came in for lunch

Julie Lefebure: Hmm. I don't remember that. But I remember the Bible studies. Yeah. Keep going.

Barbara Furman: They came in to eat. Which most of the time we had homemade food. And, you know, I felt that the Lord said give, give these folks the best. They deserve the best, you know. And so , I wanted to give them good things. You know, so often in their lives they, they'd never had a new pair of shoes or a nice coat, or been able to sleep in a decent shelter. So, uh, we always try to give 'em the best.

You know, God blessed us so much. Remember Julie? I mean, it was like [00:23:00] would, uh, come in and they needed a, they needed a pair of shoes. And, and somebody would come in the back door and they were donating a pair of shoes that was that person's size. I mean, stuff like that happened all the time. You know,

Julie Lefebure: Yeah, yeah,

Barbara Furman: God would do one miracle after the other. It was a blessing

Julie Lefebure: yeah.

Barbara Furman: that ministry.

Julie Lefebure: It was.

Barbara Furman: it was a big blessing. Yes,

Julie Lefebure: yeah. And that's when I, after I left, that's what I missed the most was seeing God tangibly at work right in front of my eyes. 'Cause I saw it there every day. Like, like the day one morning someone donated a, a huge box of ice cream cones. And we were like, what are we gonna do with these ice cream cones?

That very afternoon another person, brought in a whole bunch of ice cream. And we're like, we can't, we can't, we can't plan this. This is totally God. You know,

Barbara Furman: It was, yes,

Julie Lefebure: yeah. So they, they got ice cream cones that afternoon as a treat. I mean, it was just, it was just amazing what God would do.

Barbara Furman: It was.[00:24:00]

Julie Lefebure: So do you have a favorite story or something that comes to mind that even just chokes you up today about maybe something's God has done through any of your callings or at the mission or at the jail? Or is there one certain story that maybe stands out to you that you would love to share with us?

Barbara Furman: You know, I, can't think of any one thing really. But there were so many, I mean, it, was like every time I turned around, you just said, you could see God working.

Julie Lefebure: yeah.

Barbara Furman: You could see Him loving on people. You could see the people uh, they would first, come in and they would be, um, you know, reluctant to trust us. Or, or you know, they were checking us out or waiting to see if, if, uh, if we could be trusted. And, and you know, we saw that all the time. And it took a while, but so many of [00:25:00] them, they, they warmed up to us and they became our friends. I think you're the one that first started calling them friends. These are our friends. Um, and then, then they, got involved into taking care of the place.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Yes, I,

Barbara Furman: And that became their place.

Julie Lefebure: yeah.

Barbara Furman: I mean, it was no longer really Mission of Hope. It was their place. Because they were doing the work. They were carrying tables up from the basement. And when we had, lunch, first Sunday of the month, they

Julie Lefebure: Yep.

Barbara Furman: they were stacking chairs. They were, making the food. Uh, was just such a blessing to see them

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: just turn around and give of themselves. To other

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: people after maybe they had had years of taking,

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm. Yeah,

Barbara Furman: Watching people change.

Julie Lefebure: That's right. Yeah.

Barbara Furman: And I used to say [00:26:00] this, you know, you may see somebody and think that person just by looking at 'em and saying well how has he changed? He probably hasn't changed at all. And if you would've been there and watched him when he first came in, he went from here to here.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah,

Barbara Furman: And we were the only ones that saw it, you know?

Julie Lefebure: yeah. Yeah.

Barbara Furman: God showed it to us all the time and

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: what a miracle ministry that was. And I am just so grateful for it. That, that I had that in my, life.

Julie Lefebure: yeah, yeah. And I don't think you're the only one grateful that it was in, you know, it was in my life and in so many others' lives. Yeah. Yeah. It just, it warms my heart to talk about it. 'Cause it was such a big part of my life for so long. Yeah.

Barbara Furman: I remember this guy came in, uh, one time with a, it was snowing and he had, he had tennis shoes on, no socks,

Julie Lefebure: Oh.

Barbara Furman: and he had snow packed around his feet inside of his shoes. [00:27:00] And somebody went and went upstairs and got him a new pair of socks. I mean, we, we always tried to give people the best,

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: As know new socks

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: uh, nice clothes. Sometimes new jeans.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: uh, or new coats. And, uh. And his eyes lit up when he saw those socks. And they were brand new, you know, and he couldn't hardly believe they were for him.

Julie Lefebure: Wow. Yeah. You have story after story of these, don't you?

Barbara Furman: And you know, that's just loving on them, you know. The way Jesus loves on them. And,

Julie Lefebure: Yeah,

Barbara Furman: it was just so neat to watch Him work. To watch Him minister to people.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Yeah. And, you know, God gives us His best. So why would we not give,

Barbara Furman: That's right.

Julie Lefebure: You know, the people that came in our best. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Um, on the podcast this summer, we're talking [00:28:00] about summer, it's called a Summer of Abundance. And, um, so we're looking at what abundant life is. And you know, I, I look at your life and it looks to me as it's abundant. But what, what would you, how would you describe your life as abundant right now. Versus maybe even what it looked like years ago. Um, or , how would you define an abundant life today in your current circumstances?

Barbara Furman: Well many years ago, well before I got sick, things were just starting to come together for me. Uh,

Julie Lefebure: yeah.

Barbara Furman: I was starting to get a lot of funerals. That's after I'd, after I'd retired from the mission. Started getting a lot of work. Pulpit supply and, and, uh, felt so good about that. Uh, being able to be independent and, and make a living for myself. And, and I thought, well, someday maybe I can travel. Maybe I can make enough money to travel or, um, you know, go places and buy some new things and. [00:29:00] And as, as I look back on that today, that, you know, success and, and prestige and, um, all of that is not an abundant life. Not for me. And really my abundant life started after I got sick. I, I am, I am being serious, Julie. I

Julie Lefebure: Wow.

Barbara Furman: The closeness that I have with God now. I pray so much more than I ever prayed before. , I read more than I've ever read before. I mean, I'm just, I just wanna please Him. And I feel like there's not a whole lot I can do, you know, because I can't work or anything. But, there are some things I can do, you know? And,

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: This is living the abundant life, even though I, I'm in pain quite a bit and, and, uh, I can't always do what I want to do. But, but the Lord's with me and I, I just feel so comfortable with it.

Julie Lefebure: Wow.

Barbara Furman: At peace, you know.[00:30:00]

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: Peace and joy that I hadn't had before,

Julie Lefebure: Wow.

Barbara Furman: And it took that for me to get it.

Julie Lefebure: Hmm. That's amazing. That is encouraging. So kind of on that subject, what would you say to someone who is struggling in their own circumstances today? What would, what would that word of encouragement be that you would have for them? Because you've been there and you're, you're living it now. How would you encourage her today?

Barbara Furman: It's hard. I know it's hard, um, to be struggling and think that maybe God has forgotten you.

Julie Lefebure: Hmm.

Barbara Furman: I thought that lots of times. You know, when is it gonna happen for me God?

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: See other people get blessed and, uh, you wonder what's wrong with yourself because, uh, nothing seems to open up. But

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: I have learned throughout my [00:31:00] life in, uh, college and seminary and the different ministries God had me in and through my illness, I have learned that, um, after everything I've been through, after everything I've been through with the Lord, um,

I think the one thing that He showed me - because I must have quit a hundred times in my head, you know?

Julie Lefebure: sure.

Barbara Furman: But the one thing I really, really got through all of this is don't give up. Don't give up hope. Because no matter how you feel about yourself or how you think that you've missed the boat or it's never gonna happen to you, you've got to continue to try. Try to trust Him. Try to be obedient. [00:32:00] And wait, wait on God to give you you've been asking for. Because eventually it'll happen if you don't throw your hands up in the air and say, that's it, I'm done.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: Don't give up.

Julie Lefebure: Wow. That's really good. Powerful. Thank you for sharing that, Barb. Yeah.

Barbara Furman: I like to encourage people, Julie, I really do. This book, you know, um, uh, God told me to write it, so I wrote it.

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: It was an act of obedience initially.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: . As I was writing it, I thought, I really wanna, I really want this book to encourage others, you know.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Yeah,

Barbara Furman: If they've ever been where I was at, I'm hoping, and I'm praying, I prayed that it would, [00:33:00] they would say she, see, she made it. She's Reverend Barbara Rose Furman. She made it. She was

Julie Lefebure: yeah,

Barbara Furman: down there and the Lord brought her up.

Julie Lefebure: yeah.

Barbara Furman: And then I thought too, you know. This is a book that perhaps it's gonna help the medical community know more about my illness. Because it's very rare. And uh, you go to the ER and maybe ask the doctor or the nurse if they've ever heard of NMO or TM, they would say no.

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: I always try to fill them in a little bit on what it is. Because, not too many people have it. And then also I thought about this book, it's a, it's a, it's a legacy for my children.

Julie Lefebure: It is.

Barbara Furman: And my grandchildren. My great, great, great grandchildren they may not, they, they never have met me, but they know me

Julie Lefebure: yeah,

Barbara Furman: by [00:34:00] reading this book.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah,

Barbara Furman: and I love that.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. I do too.

Barbara Furman: I wanted to leave them something, you know, that would have meaning

Julie Lefebure: Yes.

Barbara Furman: And I think it's me, you

Julie Lefebure: Yeah,

Barbara Furman: I'm leaving them me.

Julie Lefebure: yeah, yeah, yeah. I agree with you. And your story is just incredible. I mean, people look at you now and may say, wow, you know, she's got it all together. Sure. Maybe she might have an illness. But you, you've gone through some things. God has taken you through many things that He has just delivered you from, and you share it all in your book.

Barbara Furman: it was to get me to this point.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: Julie, it was necessary. God had to allow those things to bring me to where I'm at today. There

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: was no other way I was gonna change. I mean, I look back at some of the things I did and, and, um, things I said and the ways I've acted

and, and, um, [00:35:00] you know, I was, I was gonna say, when you ask about abundant life, you know, what is abundant life?

It, you know, it's not the, the money and the power and, and all of that. It's what we have in our heart.

Julie Lefebure: Hmm.

Barbara Furman: That's what abundant life is, is what we have in our heart. And, how we treat people. And, um, the choices we make. The good choices that we make. The right choices.

Julie Lefebure: Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: I mean, abundant life.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah, you're right. Mm-hmm. Barb, I could talk to you for hours.

Barbara Furman: I could talk to you too for hours, Julie.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah, this has been so encouraging and so good. I just appreciate you being on here today. Um, if someone wanted to, to read your book, where would they find it at?

Barbara Furman: At Amazon.

Julie Lefebure: Okay.

Barbara Furman: I think

Julie Lefebure: Yeah.

Barbara Furman: I think it's \$14 or [00:36:00] something like that. And,

Julie Lefebure: Okay.

Barbara Furman: they do have the, they have the, um, what do you call that, Julie? Where

Julie Lefebure: Ebook. The ebook?

Barbara Furman: Yeah, the ebook. I

Julie Lefebure: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Barbara Furman: almost \$5 or something like that.

Julie Lefebure: Oh, okay. Yeah. Yeah. It's a great book. It's a very good book.

Barbara Furman: Thank you so much.

Julie Lefebure: Yes. Yeah. So thank you Barb, for being on today and just sharing your heart and, um, just who you are and encouraging us through your own words and through your own life. We appreciate you.

Barbara Furman: Thank you, Julie. I appreciate you.

Julie Lefebure: Yeah, thank you. All right, well, we'll sign off for now and thanks for being here.

Barbara Furman: Thank you.

Julie Lefebure: Friend, I pray that this conversation touched you as deeply as it did me. Barb's life is just, it's a beautiful testimony of faith that endures not just in the easy or the exciting seasons. [00:37:00] But also in the hard and hidden and hurting ones. Her story just simply reminds us, reminds me especially, that even in suffering, we can glorify God.

God's not done with us yet, right? If we're here, He still has something for us to do. He still has purpose and plans for our lives. And even in our humanity and in our weakness, His strength shines through. And that's something that we can absolutely trust no matter what we're walking through.

If today's episode encouraged you at all, would you consider sharing it with a friend who may need to hear this message of hope too? That would just be a wonderful gift. And if you're longing to live a more abundant life in every season, well, I invite you back here next week. Check out the rest of our Summer of Abundance series right here on the podcast. And next week, it's a perfect follow up [00:38:00] after my conversation with Barb as we look at how to stay close to our source, God, and how building a vibrant relationship with Him is the answer. We're gonna look at how to do that.

So come back next Tuesday and hear more, and find that encouragement for your own summer of abundance. So until next time, keep walking closely with Jesus because He is with you through it all.

Thanks for being here 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.