

Encouragement for Real Life Podcast

Episode 209 Summer of Abundance Week 7: Care for the Body God Gave You

[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 to week seven of the Summer of Abundance Series here on the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. We are over, goodness, we are over halfway through our 12 week series this summer. And I pray that God has been using it to encourage you in [00:01:00] living a full and abundant life in this season and beyond.

We paused this series last week with our guest episode with my friend Patty and it was just so fun to have her on the podcast and it just really blessed me to have her just right here beside me. I trust that her words blessed you as well.

Before last week's episode and over the last several weeks, we've covered a whole lot of territory in living an abundant life. We've discussed the first six elements of abundant living, which are identity in Christ, renewed mindset, intimacy with God, spiritual surrender, purposeful presence, and joyful gratitude. That's a lot. That's a whole lot. And today we dive into an element that I think that I could talk about forever. I am [00:02:00] extremely passionate about this subject and I've been looking forward to this episode ever since I created this series. And this element is so important. All of 'em are important. But this one is physical wellness.

How well do you care for the body God gave you? No matter how well or how not so well that you've done this have in the past or even currently, I just believe this episode will give you and me a fresh perspective on this important part of abundant life. 'Cause sometimes I think we don't think of this piece as a part of our abundant lives. But it so is.

So if you're ready just to step into some fresh perspective and some hope today, let's get into this episode.

[00:03:00]

Julie Lefebure: Right out of the gate today, I need to make a correction. Gosh, I don't like it when I have to make corrections. But I do this time around. If you're accessing the Summer of Abundance Companion pages, which are available in the link in the show notes, and it's not too late to access those. You can still use those for the past episodes and for the future episodes of this series. But I wanted to tell you that the key scriptures for this episode listed in the companion pages are incorrect. They should be 1st Corinthians 6, 19 through 20, and 3rd John, chapter 1, verse 2. I'll say that again. 1st Corinthians chapter 6, 19 through 20, and 3rd John, chapter 1, verse 2. So be sure to [00:04:00] correct those on your own copy, and I apologize for any inconvenience. I thought I had these companion pages just perfect. But no. Anyway. There's a correction for today.

But as I mentioned in the opening of this episode, the subject of physical wellness is one that I'm extremely passionate about. And this along with living distracted, I think I could talk about for days. Because as I've matured over the years, I've come to understand the value of taking care of myself.

And I, I understand that what I put in my body and what I do to my body, makes a difference. What I put in my body can either be good for me or not good for me, as well as anything else I do for this body of mine. And so I believe it matters to God how we care for our [00:05:00] physical, our physical bodies.

Well, we're gonna look at that in a moment. But, our bodies aren't separate from our faith. Physical wellness is a vital part of the abundant life that God desires for us, and I believe that some women just feel a disconnect between our faith and our physical wellness. However, I have to say that I really can't blame them, um, because I was really never taught that my physical wellness actually impacts my faith. I was never taught that. And I had to learn that the hard way on my own. Women may, we may care deeply for our spiritual lives, but often we neglect our physical wellness. Other women though, they see caring for our bodies as vain or unimportant or maybe even selfish.

But scripture reminds us of truth that our [00:06:00] bodies are temples, not trophies, not projects, but places where God's Spirit dwells. And when we think of physical wellness, we well we might think of exercise and staying active. But it's a whole lot more than that.

Back in the summer of 2021, I embarked on a personal wellness journey, I guess you could call it, that opened my eyes to just how our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wellness is all connected. One impacts all the others. One affects all the others.

And this takes us directly to our key scriptures for today, beginning with 1st Corinthians chapter 6, verses 19 through 20. And in The Voice translation, it reads like this, "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who comes from [00:07:00] God and dwells inside of you? You do not own yourself. You have been purchased at a great price. So use your body to bring glory to God."

Wow. I know we've probably heard that before. We maybe have heard that scripture before. Maybe we've quoted it before. But let's not skim over this. This is important my friend. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. They are where the Holy Spirit resides. Do we really comprehend and understand this? When, when we accept Jesus as our Savior, the Holy Spirit indwells us. I know we can't really under, can't really wholly grasp that with our, with our minds. But, but He indwells us, guaranteeing our sealed eternity with God.

And if you think about a temple, a temple is like a, a shrine or a, a sacred place [00:08:00] for the Spirit of God to live. To be worshiped and to be honored. So what we do in the body is always viewed by the Spirit. And when this scripture says that we don't own ourselves, it means that we are Gods, bought by the precious blood of Jesus when He went to that cross and died on that cross for you and for me.

So why wouldn't we want to use our bodies to glorify God? They are priceless. They were made by Him, number one. And then we, we are saved by Him, number two. And so they are His, these bodies are His, not ours. Yet, I don't think we think of it that way. I mean, He, He, He redeemed us. He bought us with the precious blood of Jesus. So our bodies are His. And this changes everything, doesn't it? I mean, think about it. It, it changes everything. Our perspectives, our thoughts. And [00:09:00] even helps us to take care of these bodies that God has given us.

So what if you and I lived with this reality every single day. Had this in the forefront of our minds. If we would just remember this truth, and ask God to help us to glorify Him through caring, caring for these temples of His Spirit, I think that it would really change our, our lives. It would really help us to live a different way. And maybe a more impactful way in how we care for ourselves. I think it would really help us. You know, God isn't calling us to perfection, but stewardship. To take care of what He's given us, including our bodies.

Then the next verse is, 3rd John, chapter 1, verse 2. And John makes it personal in the New Living Translation, and he wrote to Gaius, I think it's Gaius or Gaius, G-A-I-U-S, [00:10:00] a leader of one or more of the churches in Asia

Minor. But we can take his wisdom and apply it to our lives today too. It says, "Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit."

God's heart for us includes our entire beings, our bodies, minds and spirits, and our souls, and they are all connected. Abundant life isn't just about soul care, which we may think of it is. But it's all about whole care. W-H-O-L-E Whole Care.

This prompts us maybe just to, to pause and, and ask, are we as healthy in body as we are strong in spirit? This matters to God. It absolutely matters to Him. How we care for what He gave us matters greatly to Him.

So my friend, how can we [00:11:00] care, how can you and I care for the bodies that God gave us? Well, I've, I've come up with three areas of physical stewardship. And again, stewardship is just taking care of what we've been given, taking care of what God has given us. And we're gonna look at these through the eyes of grace and not guilt. Deal? Grace and not guilt.

So the first area of physical stewardship is movement. Now, it's not punishment. Movement is not punishment, but a celebration of what our bodies can do. Like walk and stretch and dance and just move with joy. How often do we, do we move our bodies? Are we sitting at a desk all day? Lemme tell you, if I sit here too long during the day? I just don't feel well. Movement is important.

How often or how often, either [00:12:00] silently or loudly, do we celebrate what our bodies can do? If we pause to just think about it for a minute, our bodies are, they are amazing and they can do incredible things. God designed them so intricately. God knew what He was doing when He created you and me. And the more that we can celebrate and appreciate these bodies of ours with movement, the more that they respond in wonderful ways to aid our health. Movement is important.

The second is fuel. Now we think of fuel, we think of, you know, just like we have to gas up our cars, we have to gas up our, our bodies. We have to feed our bodies fuel. Nourishing your body and my body with food that energizes us and sustains us is the key. It's not restricting, it's not controlling. It's just the [00:13:00] key to sustain us and energize us.

So I have this philosophy that the food that we eat is either poison or it's fuel. It's one or the other. And when I switched my thinking, and it all started way back when in 2021, when I switched my thinking to, to think about the things

that I was eating, I would ask myself, is this fuel or is it poison? So that totally changes what I put in my mouth. So let's put more fuel into our bodies and less poison.

So let, let's think. What could be a fuel? A fuel would be, um, clean food, organic food. Organic, uh, vegetables, organic meats. Poison would be processed foods, seed oils, uh, alcohol, sugar. So we got a choice. We can't, we [00:14:00] can't live an abundant life if our bodies are suffering. I mean, it's so hard to thrive when our bodies are not well. And we're gonna talk about this in a moment.

But let's move on to the third one. The third one is rest and prioritizing sleep and Sabbath. It's so important. If we treat it as sacred, not as selfish. Rest is not lazy, nor is it a luxury. Rest is necessary if we are going to care for the bodies that God gave us. God designed us for rest. That might be sleep or relaxation or resting our minds. It all adds up and it's a must for the woman who lives an abundant life. We cannot operate exhausted and live an abundant life at the same time. I've tried it. You probably have too. This isn't about [00:15:00] chasing a number or a shape or anything like that. It's about honoring God with what we've been given. And that's the bottom line.

You know, back when I began that health journey back in 2021, I knew full well that I was not as healthy on the inside as I may have looked on the outside. I'm one that just has exercised pretty much all my life. And so I may look different on the outside than I look on the inside. And I really began caring for what was on the inside.

I read and studied and followed people online who spoke to the issues I was facing with my health. Because, you know, there's a whole lot on that online world if you've ever dove into it, there's all sorts of information out there about health. And some of it may be good and some of it may be not good or true and not true. And I didn't know exactly what to do or where to look or how to begin. But [00:16:00] I started small. I simply began reading product labels on the food that was in our pantry. And let me tell you what an eyeopener. Oh my goodness. I wasn't even sure at the time what I was looking for, but I figured if the ingredient was something that I could not pronounce, that I probably shouldn't be putting it in my body.

Hmm. Oh gosh. And then what I would do next is if I couldn't pronounce it, I would do a search online for what that ingredient was. And I found out exactly what was in those ingredients, what it was, if it was good for me, if it was not

for me. And most of the things that I could not pronounce, I couldn't, you know, make sense of, I found out they were harmful and not healthy.

So fast forward to today with some years of experience under my belt and, and [00:17:00] some, some years of just learning and growing and, and trying to find my way in this health, health-minded, uh, perspective, I know exactly what are good ingredients and what are ones to avoid. So now we buy organic food wherever possible, as much as possible, and we make as much from scratch as we can because I know what's in it.

So say I am craving something sweet and I want a chocolate chip cookie. What I'll do is I will make a batch of cookies, but it's with organic ingredients. And it's with, with the ingredients that, uh, I know what's in them. I know what's in the chocolate chips. I know the butter. I know the, um, what the sugar is. I know, you know the flour is organic. I know all that because I'm putting it in there. I'll make 'em all, and then I may have one and I'll freeze the rest. So that way, if I am craving something like that, I don't deny myself. But I'll make it myself because I know [00:18:00] what's in it. We rarely eat processed foods here, and I am so grateful for that.

We have just eliminated seed oils. And if you don't know what I'm talking about, look up seed oils and you'll find out, uh, a whole lot about it. But it's amazing what a few simple changes in food can do to our bodies. And how much better we feel, how the brain fog lifts, how, uh, more energy we have and how better we look. Even our skin looks better. And even our rest. We sleep better when we fill our bodies with fuel instead of poison.

So again, I'm gonna be the first to say that I don't care for the body God gave me perfectly. I don't. I wish I did. But I, I prioritize moving my body and eating healthy for the most part, except when I want those chocolate chip cookies every now and then, and getting adequate sleep. [00:19:00] But it's not done flawlessly. So take, take heart if you don't do it flawlessly either. We're in the same boat. God does not expect perfection from us. But He does ask us to be good stewards of what He's given us. Even a small step in just caring for our bodies makes a difference. And more importantly, I believe it honors Him. It honors God. And that's what's most important, right? Honoring Him. Honoring God in everything we do. I just, I, I like, I like to think about that. Is everything I'm doing honoring God? And when something isn't, I'll know it.

But this reminds me of another scripture. So I guess this is a bonus scripture for today. 1st Corinthians chapter 10: 31 in the New International Version says, "So

whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." Amen to that.

May I [00:20:00] just remind you, friend, that you are already valuable. You are priceless, actually. Not in valuable, but you are priceless. And this isn't about proving your worth. It's about caring for the vessel that God entrusted you to. No matter if you've done well in this area in the past of caring for your body or or not, today is a brand new day. Right now is a new moment. And you already know right now matters. Right? You do. So with a fresh start, we can embrace an exciting journey of caring for our bodies well. So let's do it together. Let's begin today.

On social media this week, I am sharing details of what I do to care for the body God gave me. You're gonna see in my stories and things, some things, some extra things that I do that I'm not sharing here just because it would be a very long episode. And I would love to continue to talk about this. So if you want more information [00:21:00] or you just wanna talk to me, um, you can always contact me through my website or social media. But, um. So if you're interested in, in just learning more about what I do, follow along on Instagram and on Facebook. And you might agree with some things I do and you might not and that's okay either way. But I'm gonna share what's working for me. And a simple, you know, a simple, just start. Just start somewhere. But hopefully, maybe what I share will be helpful to you.

I love to offer a, a simple Biblical affirmation in in this series, in each episode. And so today's Biblical affirmation could be, my body is a gift. I honor God by caring for it with intention, joy, and grace. Something so simple, but it makes such a difference. I'll say that again. My body is a gift. I honor God by caring for it with intention, joy, and grace. Write that down somewhere. Put it on your [00:22:00] companion pages or in your journal. Or put it somewhere where you'll see it, where you'll continue to recite that Biblical affirmation all week long.

Make this maybe even even into a breath prayer. Um, that would be something you could do. Wherever you are, unless you're, you're driving, of course um, close your eyes. You don't wanna do it when you're driving, but close your eyes if you can. And take a deep breath. And you could say something like, well, first of all, take a deep breath in, and then you slowly exhale. And then on the next inhale, silently, say to yourself, this body is a gift. And as you exhale, say, I honor you God, by caring for it today. So it would be like this, this body is a gift. I honor you, God by caring for it today. Inhale and exhale. And breathe that in and out a few more times and say that again. It's just so simple, but it makes

[00:23:00] such a big difference. Inhale, this body is a gift. Exhale. I honor you God, by caring for it today. Let it be a quiet moment of worship.

You know, our bodies may not be perfect. Our, our bodies may not be exactly the way we want them to be. But they're the ways God made us, and they are purposeful and they are beautiful. God created it. He indwells it. And He invites you and me to care for our bodies with love, not pressure.

Here's some reflection questions to answer maybe in your companion pages or in your journal. But just to pause and answer these honestly. What's one small way I can care for my body this week with love and intention? Another one could be, in what ways have I honored or dishonored the body God has given me? [00:24:00] And what does abundant life look like in my physical health right now? Take some time to answer those.

And then what we do after we answer some questions, we put it into action. So let's look at some action steps. One could be move your body in a joyful way today. Maybe that could be walking or stretching or dancing. Hey, have a dance party in your kitchen. I love doing that with our grandsons. Uh, another one is to drink a full glass of water while thanking God for your body. Another one could be just to choose one night this week to go to bed 30 minutes earlier. Not go to bed and lay there and look at your phone. But go to bed and just rest in God's rest.

Would you pray with me? There's no better time to pray than right now about this subject, so let's do it together.

Oh, heavenly Father, I [00:25:00] just thank You for how You created our bodies so uniquely, so marvelously, so magnificently. And Lord, You want us to care for our bodies. Deep down we know that. And sometimes we just get sidetracked. We get distracted by the other things of this world. Lord, we wanna honor You with these bodies that You've given us. And whether we've done well in the past or not, today's a new day.

Father, I ask that You will help us to, to feed our bodies with fuel, to move our bodies, to get rest, to do whatever You're calling us to do, to take care of ourselves. Father, motivate us to just follow after You in this area. It's not about perfection and it's not about a number, but Lord, it's just about honoring You. Help us to do that today and beyond. Transform our minds, Lord, so we can take care of these bodies, that we can honor You with them. That's our desire today and every day. Thank You Lord. In [00:26:00] Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Friend if today's episode encouraged you, uh, just to care for your body with grace and with purpose would you share this with a friend who maybe could use this encouragement too? We all need this reminder every now and then.

And if you would like support in stepping into a full joy filled life, spiritually, emotionally, and yes, physically, abundant life mentoring that I offer is a beautiful space to grow. You'll find the link in the show notes. And I would love to come along with you and help you take care of the body that God's given you. Or any other part of your life. I would love to be able to walk alongside of you and help you.

And next week we take our health one step further by exploring healthy rhythms of abundant life. So we're gonna take it just a little bit farther and go to just more spaces of what we can do to incorporate more [00:27:00] healthy rhythms in everyday life. So that's what we're gonna be talking about. So come back next Tuesday to be refreshed and refueled. I can't wait to continue on this journey with you then.

God loves the body that He created for you. And you, my friend, are given permission to love it too. Enough to care about it the way God wants you to care about it. So know today that I am cheering you on. I am praying for you and I thank God for you. Thanks for being here.

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.