

219 The Cost of a Scattered Life

[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 the Encouragement for Real Life podcast today. I am grateful for you and I am so glad that you are here today.

Have you ever been in the middle of a conversation only to realize that you didn't hear a single word because your mind was fixated on something else?
[00:01:00] Or maybe you've rushed through a day so fast that you can barely even remember what happened? I have too, and probably more times than I care to admit.

That's why I'm so excited for this new series this month, Undistracted October. Because together we are going to talk about what distraction is really, really what it is, what it's costing us, and how we can live more present to God, to others, and to our own lives.

So today we look at the cost of a scattered life. So this theme of living undistracted, as you probably already know, is close to my heart. Not only because it's something that that, yeah, I'm still working on, but also because October is the two year anniversary of [00:02:00] my book Right Now Matters, which is all about living undistracted and living more present in the moments that God gives us.

So in celebration, I'm wearing my Right Now Matters t-shirt, and I absolutely love this shirt because it continues to remind me that right now does matter. So, this is the perfect time and the perfect season for us to set our intention this month to do something about the distractions that plague us.

Now I know if I have 'em distractions, then I know that you have distractions. So we do not have to continue living this way, my friend. And with one of the most hectic seasons of the year approaching, and I have to say quickly approaching, the holidays, it's the perfect time to fine tune our living

undistracted skills. Because what we do now will affect us in the months to come.

So if you could use some [00:03:00] hope and some encouragement in this area and in your real life, then I invite you to come back all month long. And connect with me on social media 'cause we're gonna be talking about it all month long as well. You don't have to live a distracted life any longer. So if you're ready, let's get into this episode.

Julie Lefebure: Distraction isn't just an annoyance in our everyday lives, it is actually robbing us of the abundant life that Jesus came to give us. Yeah, it's, it's actually stealing away our very lives. Distraction is subtle and it's sneaky, and it's often disguised as harmless scrolling or good opportunities or even activities that may feel productive. But [00:04:00] little by little one at a time, distraction robs us. It slowly entices us away to lesser important things. And before we know it, we, we pause one day and we find that we are completely off track from where we first began.

You know what I'm talking about? I sure do. I have lived this, and I'm guessing that you have too. This is one reason that I'm all about helping women live an undistracted life. Because for years, I missed the abundance that Jesus had for me because I was too distracted. I was too distracted to see it, to live it, to live it out, to share it with others. I was just plain distracted.

Yes, I was a Christian. Christians can be distracted too, but I was a confused, stressed, [00:05:00] ineffective and inefficient Christian. The enemy of my soul had me right where he wanted me until the day that God woke me up. It's like He shook me. And I share that account in the introduction of my book *Right Now Matters*. And it was a life altering moment. It took me missing an important moment that happened right in front of me, right in front of my eyes, for me to realize that I had a problem with living distracted.

That's what it took to wake me up. And ever since, God's been doing a mighty work within me, day in and day out, regarding distraction. Just because I wrote a book about it doesn't mean that I've mastered it. And just because I wrote a book about it doesn't mean that I, that God's still not working on me because He is. He though has completely changed my life when it [00:06:00] comes to distractions.

And that's actually why I wrote my book Right Now Matters. Yes it came out of years of realizing that I was missing the very moments that mattered, that mattered most. Sure I was present but not mentally present. So if you'd like encouragement and practical steps for living undistracted, I share a lot more, more in that book that, that I can't share here 'cause it's, it's too much. But it's, it's been a journey and it's been a good journey.

And also in the Right Now Matters Bible study, if you would like to walk through this in a, in a deeper way. But both are available for you and you can check those out at the link in the show notes.

But what, what's the big deal about distraction? You know, if you've been around here at all, you know that I've talked about it and I, it's kind of my, kind of my, my message along with living an abundant life. Because we can't live an abundant life if we're living distracted, right? [00:07:00] But distraction costs us much. And I don't think we, I don't think we think about the cost as much as probably we should.

But , as I was thinking about this, I came up with three things, three things that distraction costs us.

Distraction costs us our peace, first of all. When I'm scattered, my, my soul feels restless. I can't relax, I snap at people I love, and my thoughts are very noisy. Just a lot going on in my head. And maybe you've been there. Maybe you know that feeling. But God desires to give us His peace. But when we are distracted, it's impossible to live a peace filled life.

Imagine someone giving you a gift, but you are so preoccupied with everything else going on around you that you never really even notice [00:08:00] the gift. It's just waiting for you to open it. When you're distracted, think for a moment how you feel. How your body feels, how your mind reacts. It's certainly not peaceful, right? It's stressful and it's the the last thing that God wants for us. Stress is the last thing He wants for us. He doesn't want us to live a stress life. So kind of like that. You have a gift that's waiting for you to, to open it, but you're so distracted that you miss the gift. You're so distracted that you miss the gift of the day or the gifts that God gives you. And I'm talking to myself here. Because that's me. We can't be filled with God's peace and distracted at the same time. So yes, distraction costs us our peace.

Distraction also costs us our presence. You know, sometimes I'm at our kitchen table, but my mind's on my to-do list. Or my husband, or [00:09:00] my grandsons are right there, but I, I miss the moment, the conversation that they're

having because my mind is elsewhere. That's the cost of distraction. It keeps us from seeing what and who is right in front of us - our children, our spouse, our neighbor maybe waving to us from across the street. You know, we can even miss God's quiet whisper when we're distracted. We can't stay present when we are immersed in distraction.

Oh yeah. You know, we, we may be physically present, but certainly not mentally. We not only miss what God has for us in the moment, but we're, we're not giving our best to the people around us or to God. So, yeah, distraction causes us, I say this often that it causes us to sleepwalk through life. And [00:10:00] friend our lives are far too important to live it distracted and to sleep walk through it. So yeah, distraction costs us our presence.

And distraction also costs us our purpose. I can run a hundred different directions and still feel like I'm not going anywhere. Distraction doesn't just keep us on the go, it keeps us from walking in the purpose that God has for us. It also pulls us away from what we're called to do, our purpose on this earth. We lose clarity and direction. It's almost as if we're a ship on the sea that's being tossed by the winds and the waves, tossed back and forth. There's no stability and there's no course to follow. Just drifting and going nowhere.

Or we overcommit and we say yes to more than [00:11:00] we intended to. That's how we are when we're distracted. Our, our purpose disappears. Our focus becomes blurry, and we can easily get lost.

Distractions also cause us to get caught off guard. We could, we could get tripped up a lot more easy. We're more enticed to follow the ways of the world than, than God's ways. And we're more susceptible to living an ineffective life. Yeah, distraction costs us our purpose.

And I have to say that distraction has robbed me of all of these three, my peace and my presence and my purpose. And I'm guessing they probably robbed you of them too. All of these three things are important and when we don't have them, we know it, don't we? We feel it, and likely so do the people around us.[00:12:00]

Most recently, it cost me my presence. This distraction was my phone. I was in engrossed in what was on my screen instead of being present with my husband. I got this sinking feeling in my stomach when I realized an hour had slipped past me as we were sitting in our living room together. You know, he's more important than my phone. And so in that moment, I put my phone down, and we ended up having a wonderful conversation on life and the future and what our

next day might hold. And , if I would've stayed on my phone, I would've missed all of that. It was such a beautiful gift and nothing that was planned. Kind of spur of the moment. But I would've missed that if I would've stayed on my phone.

Do you ever [00:13:00] think about God's blessings that you've missed because you were distracted? I do all the time. And it grieves my heart because I don't wanna miss one single thing God has for me. And I assume that you don't wanna miss one single thing God has for you. And that evening, that was nearly one of them. Yeah.

I found a scripture that might encourage us today and its 1 Corinthians chapter 7 verse 35, and in the New Living Translation it says, "I am saying this for your benefit not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best with as few distractions as possible." In the context of the scripture, Paul was referring to the stance of marriage versus remaining unmarried to the people that he was talking to at Corinth. But we can still [00:14:00] find encouragement for our lives in this verse. That encouragement would be, we serve the Lord best when we have fewer distractions. And we also serve other people best when we have fewer distractions. God knows that, and so do we. Deep down we know that.

And Paul's words remind us that God's desire for us isn't restriction, it's freedom. He knows our hearts flourish best when they are focused on Him. And when our hearts are flourishing, we're better able to serve Him and those around us without distraction.

Living undistracted isn't about having a perfect schedule or zero interruptions in our day. Because we know that that's not reality, right? It's about choosing day by day, hour by hour, [00:15:00] sometimes minute by minute, to direct our attention to God first and let everything else fall into its rightful place.

We're not expected to do it all my friend. And God is the only one who can help us live an undistracted life. He is. We can't do it on our own. We've, we've proven that. I've proven that. We need God's help.

So the first step in overcoming distractions, and I share this in my book, is to, is to just notice them. Just pay attention to them. So what is your biggest distraction that's plaguing you right now? What is it?

In my book Right Now Matters, I share what I call the big five distractions, which are the future, the past, ourselves or our thoughts, technology and multitasking. Are any of these your biggest distraction [00:16:00] right now?

You know, just naming it helps you become aware of it. You can then begin to take action to lessen it if possible, or if possible, yeah, eliminate it. Eliminate it completely from your life.

My biggest distraction right now, I have to say is my own thoughts. I can get so lost in them that I have lately missed some beautiful sunsets. I saw the sun setting and I thought, I'm gonna go back and I'll check on that in a few minutes and then I get immersed in my thoughts and then I miss it. And you know, if you've been around here at all, you know how much I appreciate sunsets and sunrises.

And I've also missed just some simple quiet moments with God because my mind has been so loud, thinking of all the thoughts. You know, I'm in the middle of writing my next book, and when my creative mind gets [00:17:00] going, it doesn't wanna stop. I learned this the first time around when I was writing Right Now Matters. So realizing all of this, I've really had to pause more intentionally. To just allow my thoughts to settle down and to be quiet for a time. It's just something that I consciously have to do. Otherwise, my mind is racing all the time. I guess God made me that way and I have to reel that in every now and then.

I don't wanna miss this life that Jesus came to give me. And I assume that you don't wanna miss the life that He came to give you either, excuse me.

So no matter what's your biggest distraction, here's one simple way to start living less distracted this week. So grab a notebook or even get to your notes app in your phone and jot down the top three distractions in your [00:18:00] life right now. Then ask this question, what is this distraction keeping me from noticing? And then ask God to show you. To show you just one of them, to set a boundary around this week.

So maybe, um, your phone is your biggest distraction. So maybe you can start by turning off your phone notifications for good or putting it away during dinner time. Or maybe your distraction is you just have too much on your schedule. So maybe you can choose not to say yes to every request that comes your way this week. Or maybe your distraction is that you're just your time is so full that you don't have any time with God. So maybe this week you could designate some quiet time with Jesus every single morning.

But simply asking God to show you will [00:19:00] guide you in His perfect direction, which is always His best, right? This small step can open up space for peace and presence and purpose to return in your life. That's a good feeling and you'll be centered right where God wants you.

A scattered life costs us more than what we realize. But the good news is that we don't have to keep living this way. We can choose to live undistracted, which is God's best for us. One small choice at a time.

Friend, I know what it's like to live and feel scattered. I, I firmly know that. You know, and I wrote Right Now Matters because I was living distracted, like I said. And part of my calling now is helping other women not to stay stuck there. That's why I opened up Abundant Life Mentoring [00:20:00] to walk with women just like you into freedom and focus and fullness of life. If you're tired of being scattered and you want practical encouragement, well, I would love to journey with you. I have a few mentoring spots open this fall, and I would be honored to walk alongside you. So check out the show notes to book your free 20 minute connection call just to see if this is right for you. I can't wait to work with you.

And next week we are diving into taking back your attention. That's what it's called next week. Taking back your attention. Especially when it comes to our phones and technology. Because right now they are snatching our attention for for many of us. So come back next Tuesday, bright and early. The episode will be here waiting for you. And remember [00:21:00] friend right now really does matter. So thanks for being here. Until next time, 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.