

# 221 Say No to Good and Yes to God

**Julie Lefebure:** [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.

Welcome to Encouragement for Real Life today and to our Undistracted October series. This is the third episode in our series, and over the last two weeks, we've talked about the cost of living a scattered life, and about taking back our attention, namely from the Big [00:01:00] Five distractions.

So today we are zooming out a bit and we're gonna look , kind of look at our lives as a whole - our commitments, our calendars, and the choices that we make with our time. Because sometimes, yeah, sometimes distraction doesn't come from bad things. It comes from good things. And we don't always think about it that way. Right? But good isn't always God's best. So let's get into this episode, and as we do, we are gonna learn how to say no to good and say yes to God.

**Julie Lefebure:** For years, during the month of December, I would pack my schedule more full than I would stuff a suitcase for a week long vacation. You know how that goes, right? [00:02:00] You fill your suitcase so full with everything you think you possibly might need, and then you have to sit on the lid to be able to zip it shut and then it ends up being way too heavy to carry, and once it's opened, the contents almost like explode out of it and spill everywhere, right? If you've ever done that, packed a suitcase way too full, you know exactly what I'm talking about. I have done that more than I care to admit.

But this kind of scenario would repeat every single December. Not me packing a suitcase, but me packing my schedule so full that I would just cram so much into the month. You know, full of, of holiday gatherings and celebrations and decorating and baking and tasks, and you name it. It became so heavy, each December became so heavy, kinda like [00:03:00] carrying a heavy suitcase.

And when opened instead of the contents exploding and spilling out everywhere, I would simply just end up sick on Christmas morning.

I have talked about that here on the podcast before, and it's one of the things that I just vowed every December that that was not gonna happen, but by the end of the month, I would be sick on Christmas day or on my birthday, which is the day after Christmas or the week after Christmas. It never failed. Because I was running myself ragged and I was packing my schedule too full. With good things. I was saying yes to too many of those good things, but not necessarily the best things.

Now, none of those things were wrong. You know, I love Christmas. I love the holiday season. I, I love doing everything I possibly can to celebrate it. So these things were all good, [00:04:00] but they weren't all mine to do. They weren't all mine to carry.

And one year specifically, I woke up to this reality that this was happening. And, you know, I, I, I, I knew that I had to stop saying yes to all of the things so I could choose God's best for me in December instead. And what a difference. What a difference. God's best is always the best. And so I've been doing this ever since. And lemme tell you, it's, I find much more peace than packing my schedule full. Sometimes the peace comes when you just sit back and let God align your life. That's when true peace comes, and God's best isn't always doing the most. Let's remember that. God's best is not always doing the most.

[00:05:00] This leads me to think of the, the scripture in Hebrews chapter 12, verse 1, and in the New Living Translation it reads, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up and let us run with endurance the race God has set before us."

I, I used to think that this scripture, um, when I, when I thought about the weight that slows us down, I thought it, it referred to sin. I thought this, this passage referred to it as sin. That that was the weight slowing us down. And it certainly can be. But I, I believe it's much more than that after studying and reading further. I believe it also includes anything that impedes our spiritual journey, [00:06:00] which can include sin, yes, but also distractions, unfruitful habits, worldly concerns or desires, or even negative emotions like shame and fear. Those things slow us down, right? What slows us down in our spiritual race can be good things that weigh heavy on us. Yes, even a schedule that's jam packed with good things that are way too heavy for us to carry on our journey, like a heavy suitcase.

So I think this is timely, not just because you know we're gonna be entering the holiday season soon, but timely for us today to really pause and take a real look at our schedules and what we're filling 'em with.

But before we do that, let's look at an example, in the Bible of Mary and Martha. And it's found in Luke [00:07:00] Chapter 10, verses 38 through 42. And in the New International Version, this is what it says. This is so, so profound for us today. "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 called 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."

Yeah, Martha was [00:08:00] distracted by what was good. Yet Mary chose what was best, to sit with Jesus, to sit with Him at His feet. That was the one thing that Jesus referred to. That was the best thing.

So what good things are you doing that are keeping you from God's best? You know, I look at that story and Martha wasn't doing anything bad, right? She wasn't. But she wasn't doing what was best. Yes, someone had to prepare the food and someone had to do all the things. But what would've happened if Martha would've sat by Mary? Don't you think, that, the Lord, that Jesus would've made a way for all of the preparations to be done. Maybe Martha didn't have to be the one to do it. Maybe, the best choice, according to Jesus was what Mary was doing sitting at His feet.

But what are some of the good things that's keeping you from God's best things? You know, maybe [00:09:00] we can think about overcommitting to volunteering or working long hours, which that means we have no energy left for what's important, like our family and taking care of ourselves. Or maybe we're taking on just one more event or responsibility at church and we're getting burned out. Or maybe we're saying yes to every social invite and finding yourself and myself spiritually empty. You know, these are real life scenarios and if you're feeling that today that you are just doing way too much, God may be getting your attention today and saying, I have something better. Yeah, what you're doing is good, but it's not best.

I've come up with three principles for saying no to good so you can say yes to God. Are you ready for these? They're really simple.

But the first one is to [00:10:00] know your race. To run as the scripture said, we just looked at, run with endurance the race that God has set before you. Not someone else's race. Not your neighbor's race. Not the girl on Instagram. Not her race, but your race. Clarify what God has called you to do in this season. Not last season and not anticipating the next one, but right now. What has God called you to do? Not someone else's, but your calling. Yours. What He's called you to do, He's equipping you to do. And if you don't know what He's called you to do, then seek Him. Inquire of Him, Lord, show me what are You wanting me to do? What is Your best for my life right now? He will show you friend. Just seek Him. Spend some time with Him. [00:11:00] Draw near to Him and listen. Ask those questions and listen.

The second is to discern the difference between good and God's best. Some practical, what I call filter questions would be if you're contemplating doing something, you could ask, does this align with my current God-given priorities? Will this draw me closer or further from what God's asking of me? Is this producing fruit or just taking up space? These questions will help clarify what God is asking you to do. They clarify your calling and, help you to see the difference between good and God's best. He will always show you when you just pause and ask some questions. God has His best in mind for you, and He will show you.

And the third [00:12:00] is to trust God to what you turn down. That's hard. Ugh. Saying no to something often triggers fear like fomo, fear of missing out, or the fear of disappointing someone, or the fear of if I say no to this, then what are the results gonna be? We fear that, that there's gonna be negative results. That's natural. But saying no to what's good in obedience to God, that that makes room for His best.

I, I think of like the time that I said no, um, I was asked to be a teaching leader, for a Bible study and I, I didn't know what to do. It was a, a great honor to be asked. And I, I think about it now and at the time though, I couldn't, I couldn't say yes or no, and I, I had to seek God, [00:13:00] of course, and I just didn't have this peace about it. I just didn't have a peace. I had all these other things going on in my life. I had a brand new grandson that I knew I wanted to make a priority in my life. I had, I had a lot of other ministry things that I felt God was calling me to. And looking back now, yeah, I could have done it, but I knew that God was guiding me to say no.

And I remember one person when I told her that I, I was asked, but I had to say no and she said, oh, what an opportunity you've missed. And I didn't though. I didn't miss an opportunity. I didn't. 'Cause that was not God's best for me. It was

God's best for the person that did say yes, but it wasn't God's best for me. I knew I had to say no. And I didn't really understand at the time why I didn't have a peace about it and why God wasn't calling me to do it. Because why would He not want me to lead this Bible study? Why would He not [00:14:00] want me to be this leader? But after saying no, after being obedient to that, , that knowing that He wanted me to say no, He opened up the opportunity for me to begin the Encouragement for a Real Life podcast that very month.

I know that this podcast would not have happened if I would have said yes because I couldn't have done it. That would've taken more time than I would've had in my schedule to also begin a podcast. This was His best for me. Sometimes it doesn't make sense in the moment, but it will at some point.

So take a look at your schedule and your commitments this week. Ask God to show you one good thing that might not be His best for you right now. Then prayerfully consider saying no, or stepping back, or just [00:15:00] pausing it for a time if you can to make room for His yes, to make room for His best and to make room for what He has in store for you.

Maybe journal about what you're believing God is, is leading you to release. And you already know this about me if you've been around here for any, any given time, that that I always find clarity through journaling. Maybe you will too. Take out a piece of paper. It doesn't have to be an elaborate journal. You know, we say journaling and we think it's some big event or some big thing, and it's, it's not. It's simply just spending time with God, writing down your thoughts, and sometimes the clarity comes from that. And that is the best. When you know that you know, that, you know that God is leading you to His best.

I share a lot about this, about saying no to good and, and saying yes to God in, um, [00:16:00] and I share a lot about, excuse me, distractions and how some aren't always negative in my book Right Now Matters. I have a whole chapter, uh, dedicated to instead of calling 'em distractions, I call 'em diversions, that they're actually a good thing. And it's a whole nother take on this. . Not only that, but how we can, invite diversions into our lives that are good, but get rid of the distractions in our lives and the overcommitments. So when we get rid of all the negative things, it opens up space for what matters most.

So if you haven't read my book yet, Right Now Matters or you haven't walked through the, the Right Now Matters Bible study, either alone or with a group, they are available for you and they are a perfect place to begin your first few steps of just un distracting your life. You'll find the help and the hope that you're looking for.

When you say no to what's good and you [00:17:00] say yes to God it's nothing magical that's gonna happen. But what's gonna happen is that you're, you're opening yourself up for the opportunities that God has for you, and you're allowing Him to work through you in ways that you could never imagine or expect. So yes, take a look this week at your schedule. What are you saying good to that really maybe isn't God's best for you? Prayerfully look over your schedule. Prayerfully discern, God, is there anything in my schedule, anything that I'm doing right now that isn't Your best for me? Like with my story about not being a Bible study leader. It may not make sense in the time, but it will make sense at some point. If God's calling you away from doing something that you're already doing now, He will make it very clear someday as to why.

God has so many good things in store for you friend. Don't [00:18:00] settle for anything less than His best. You deserve God's best. And that's what abundant life is, right? The abundant life that Jesus came to give us. In John 10 10, it says, you know, the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. But I have come to give you life and life to the full, life abundant.

God has good plans for your life, my friend. And if you need help discerning what to release and how to build rhythms of focus or just some assistance in, in finding God's best for your life, this is what we do inside Abundant Life mentoring. I have a couple spots open yet this fall, and if you're interested in that, you can find the link in the show notes and you can, um, schedule your free 20 minute connection call to see if Abundant Life mentoring is right for you. But I would love to walk with you one-on-one and journey through the experiences that you're walking [00:19:00] through in your real life right now.

So, friend, let's remember this. Saying no to good is not failure. Mm-hmm. It's faithfulness. It's being obedient. God's best comes with faithfulness.

Next week is our guest episode for the month, and joining me on the podcast is someone extremely important to me. Our conversation is full of truth, lightheartedness, some really great stories and hope filled reality. So come back next Tuesday to be encouraged once again.

I can't wait to see you then. Until then, remember friend, right now really does matter. God bless you.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. You can find more at [julielefebure.com](http://julielefebure.com). And until next time, stay encouraged.