

# Encouragement for Real Life Podcast

## 229 Be Here for It

[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 Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I am so excited that we get to gather here together today. Thank you for joining me. And whether you're listening with your coffee in the early morning hours on your commute, or maybe as you are wrapping gifts or checking [00:01:00] your list, I invite you right now just to take a moment and breathe with me.

Here we are. Gosh, it is, uh, down to the wire, isn't it? Christmas is almost here. We are in our week three of a Different Kind of December series and this month we are choosing to step away from the pressure and the pace and the patterns this season often brings. And instead, embrace what really matters.

So two weeks ago, we began by choosing a word. A word for the month, one word to shape just how we want to live this December and how we want to just show up. And last week we talked about how to protect what matters most, so the noise of this season doesn't drown out the peace that God is growing within us.

And today, well, today we are talking about something so simple, but [00:02:00] so easily overlooked, and that is being here for it. Being here for the moments, the moments that matter, for the people who are right in front of us. For the beauty that surprises us in just ordinary places. But most of all, being here for God. Because He is not waiting for you at the end of the month or at the end of your list, right? He is in this moment right now. And when we slow down enough to be present, we actually start to notice Him in ways that we might have been rushing right past and we would've missed.

So today we'll talk about practical ways to embrace presence, presence with God, presence with others, and yes, even presence with yourself, even in a full

impact December. So I think this [00:03:00] is going to be an encouraging episode, and I'm so glad you're here for it. So let's get into it.

**Julie Lefebvre:** Imagine this, you're nine days away from Christmas, nine days. You feel the pressure rising, and a big part of you feels so far behind. So far. You've got your list. You're checking it twice. But you wonder how in the world are you gonna get everything done before Christmas, before the 25th? Well, then stress increases and you suddenly feel almost an electric surge move through your body. Your heart begins to beat faster, your skin starts to feel all prickly. Yet you hear this still small voice underneath [00:04:00] all of the noise saying, "Come to me". But you have to keep going, right? You feel God pulling you close, but your feet are taking you in the opposite direction.

And so you're off. Off to the next thing. Off to the next thing to cross off your list. Or off to the next thing that you think is most important. And you miss a moment with God. You miss a moment with maybe your family at the dinner table because your mind is full of what you need to do next. And maybe you miss a moment with yourself to just breathe, to just be, to care for you and to lower that adrenaline rush that always seems to be pulsing through your body. No wonder you're exhausted.

Friend, I realize this could be your very real scenario today, nine days out from Christmas, and you know what? It used to be [00:05:00] mine every single year. And every single Christmas season. I still fight this scenario. Every single one. I don't even know if it gets easier. But I fight it. So if you're with me, I hear you. I understand. I get it.

Hearing me describe this scenario, how did it make you feel? Not great, right? Not great. But many of us can relate to this, and no wonder we are exhausted. We're exhausted living this way, am I right? I hear from women all the time who are just in general missing the priceless moments happening like these, happening right in front of them. They may be physically present, but they are not mentally engaged and they are distracted by lesser important things that this life throws at them. And in my opinion, there's no greater season of [00:06:00] distraction than the season that we are currently in right now, the holiday season.

But I gotta ask, is this God's best for us? Friend, is it? I think, and I know, according to His Word, that He has something better. So let's take a look. Let's take a look together.

God helps us live the lives that Jesus came to give us. You know in, in John 10:10, Jesus says that He came to give us life and life to the full. Or your translation may say, life with abundance or a joyful and abundant life. There's varying translations. And God helps us to live this kind of life that Jesus gives us.

If we turn to Hebrews chapter 4, verse 16 in the New Living Translation, this is what it says. "So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy and we [00:07:00] will find grace to help us when we need it most."

Wow. So often we get swept up in the distractions. But you know, I love how this verse reminds us when we come close to God, when we draw near Him, His mercy and grace meets us every single time. He will help us live the abundant lives that Jesus came to give us through His mercy and grace. And that also means that He will help us live in the moment and be here for it. Because that is part of His abundant life, is to be here in the present as He is in the present.

A second verse that I just thought really speaks to the subject this week is it reminds us that it matters today how we live. And if we turn to Ephesians chapter 5, verses 15 through 17, and this one's in the Worldwide [00:08:00] English Translation, this is what it says. "Take care of how you live. Do not live like people who are not wise, but live like people who are wise. Make good use of the time because people live in very wrong ways these days. So then be wise and understand what the Lord wants."

Yeah, we are to live wisely and to make good use of our time, the time that God gives us. Being here for it is always a good use of our time. It may be the best use of our time. And we have a choice to live in the world's ways of distraction and rush, which we are seeing play out right in front of our very eyes, probably even today, nine days away until Christmas. Or we can choose to live in God's ways of abundance and intentionality. And friend, I suggest that you and I choose the [00:09:00] wisest thing, the latter, to live in abundance and intentionality in God's ways.

You know, in varying episodes here this fall, I have been sharing some highlights from my book Right Now Matters. And immediately in chapter one, I lay the foundation for why right now really does matter. Yes, as I mentioned, um, just a little bit ago that, you know, we may be missing the priceless moments happening right in front of our very eyes. But there's something that's even more important involved here when we're focused on living in the right now. 'Cause when we don't focus on living in the right now, when we do get

distracted and we miss those moments, we're not only missing that, but we're missing moments with God. And right now, the right now moment, is where God is. Yes, He was with us in the past and He promises that [00:10:00] He will be with us in the days to come. So He's always with us. But His presence is found here, right here, right now. It's the only moment that God is present with us. The only one is right now. Right now. It's present tense. It's not in the past. It's not in the future. He's in the present. And yes, of course He was in the past and in the future. But when we focus on too many of the past or the future things, we miss Him right now. When we begin to live our lives with this truth in the forefront of our minds, we, we just begin to grasp the importance of living in the right now and being here for it.

I quote also in chapter one, a very profound quote by a, a very profound author. His name is Henri [00:11:00] Nouwen and I, with permission, I am using his quote. I, used it in, chapter one. But it's from his book, You Are the Beloved. Check this out, what he says. Are you ready for this? He says, "the real enemies of our life are the oughts and the ifs. They pull us backward into the unalterable past and forward into the unpredictable future. But real life takes place in the here and now. God is a God of the present. God is always in the moment. Be that moment hard or easy, joyful, or painful. When Jesus spoke about God, he always spoke about God as being where and when you are. Quote, when you see me, you see God. When you hear me, you hear God unquote. God is not someone who was or will be, but the one who is and [00:12:00] who is for me in the present moment. That's why Jesus came to wipe away the burden of the past and the worries of the future. He wants us to discover God right where we are, here and now."

Wow. That is profound, isn't it? I have read this quote so many times. It helps me to keep my perspective on what matters most and what's most important in the right now moment. God meets us in this moment, not the one we're rushing toward.

I have a really sweet, uh, moment that I'd like to share, that really kind of just brings this home. At least it does for me, and I think it's gonna touch your heart too. One afternoon a couple weeks ago when our grandsons were here, we were together. We hung up our stockings, our um, yeah, stockings on the fireplace, and we set up our [00:13:00] nativity scene. And I really wanted to reserve to do these things with the boys because they mean so much to me. But I love this nativity scene. It was gifted to us from Bill's sister and brother-in-law way back when, when we were first married, gosh, 30, 33 years ago. And each year when we set it up, God seems to just bless me with great joy. And our kids used to join me in that joy as we would set it up together. But now that they're grown

and gone, this year He blessed our grandsons with that same joy. They picked up each piece and marveled at each one, and they wanted to know the story behind each one. They really just took care of, of just taking their time and, and looking at them and seeing things that maybe I didn't even notice. And then they gently set them down, laid them out. Mary and Joseph and [00:14:00] baby Jesus lying in the hay. And the wise men, the shepherd, um, the angel and all the various animals, like the sheep and the ox and the donkey and the camels. And they were giddy with excitement. It was a, a really fun moment and I was ready to move on, move on to the next thing that we were gonna do that afternoon. But they kept rearranging the figures and they, they began to play with them. Now keep in mind they're four. They were at that point 4 and 3. And, and since the nativity scene figurines are made out of resin and they aren't easily breakable I let the play go on. And I remember my kids playing with them. And I almost felt like I had a full circle moment that here I am watching my, my daughter's boys play with them. And so I just sat there watching, just watching these two little boys play with Jesus and [00:15:00] soaking it all in. I just thought, I'll never get this moment back. I'm staying right here. You know, sometimes I have to talk to myself like that. I'm staying right here. I'm right here for this, whatever it might be.

But then something incredible happened next, something that I didn't expect. Our 4-year-old grandson now, um, he's five now, he had a birthday since then. But he was four then, uh, just again, just a few weeks ago. But he began to sing at the top of his lungs, the stars in the sky, and then he kind of trailed off into some mumbled words. And I realized that he was trying to sing the song Away in a Manger. So I grabbed my phone and I found Away in a Manger, the song on Spotify, and I hit play. And his little face, you should have seen it, it lit up. [00:16:00] And he belted out as many words as he knew, as he was learning this song at preschool for their Christmas program. And it just, he didn't care who was watching. He didn't, he didn't care what it sounded like. He was just belting it out. And it was such a precious moment. And I just realized that here God was using our little nativity scene, the song Away in a Manger, and my beautiful grandsons to speak to my heart, to remind me that even when the pull is strong, to keep going, to keep doing, to keep moving, the most important moment is the one that we're in now. And I want to remember that moment forever, and I pray that I do. I just continue to get these lessons from God to just be in the present, to be here for it.

[00:17:00] But the thing is, December tends to pull us, right? It tugs us toward distraction and multitasking and rushing and scrolling and planning and perfection and all the things that just take, take our focus away. But being here for it tells us something else. It says, this moment matters. This person right in

front of me matters. And God is here and He matters. The world's culture it screams hurry while Jesus's culture whispers be here, especially in this season.

And I was thinking more about this, I really just thought, you know, there's, there's lots of kinds of, of presence that we can cultivate and pay attention to. But the three that I really want to focus on today are the three main ones, and I mentioned at the beginning, presence with God, presence with others, and [00:18:00] presence with ourselves.

So let's look at presence with God first. Presence with God means just staying present with God. Just, just being right with Him. Keeping Him in the forefront of your mind and walking with Him, not just at the beginning of the day, but all throughout the day, and even as we close down the day. And even if we wake in the middle of the night.

But some ways that we can just invite, this presence with God and to cultivate it in our lives is we could have a morning quiet moment, a few moments, two to five minutes, whatever it might be, of just time with God. And a listening time. A listening maybe not always I need this, Lord, will you give me this, please. You know, I'm praying for this. Maybe sometimes even just a listening prayer where you can just listen.

I encourage us to, especially the next nine days, to go to scripture before we go to our phone. [00:19:00] That's another way we can invite God's presence in. Go to scripture before going to our phone. And sometimes some of us have scripture on our phone, our Bible apps, and yeah, that, you know, of course do that. But what a great way to start the day.

Even pausing to acknowledge Him when you feel rushed. That can really stop everything in its tracks and just say, God, I'm right here. I know you're with me. I don't need to rush. Whatever it might be. But those are just some great things to just cultivate presence with God. God is not found in the rush. He is found in the right now.

Let's look at the second one. Presence with others. Presence with others is just being, being where your feet are. Just being present. Soaking up the the time with other people. Because it's time that we're never gonna get back. And I encourage you [00:20:00] at dinner time or when you're all together to just have put down the phone type of moments, where we don't have to have our phones in our hands all the time or in our pockets. But we can just focus on the people that are in front of us.

Making eye contact. That's another big one. Whether it's with the people that we love that we're celebrating with, or maybe someone in the grocery store. Someone that, you know, you just see some sadness in her eyes. Maybe it's the coworker at work. You just wanna look in the eye, make eye contact.

Another one is saying yes to people, not to perfection, and not to crossing things off your list. But just say yes to people. Be present with people. You know, if someone invites you out for coffee try to make it work. If it's, if it's doable. If it's not gonna add stress. If it's gonna bring you some joy, [00:21:00] do it. You know, even if you feel like, oh, I just feel like I have so much to do at home. We're never gonna get those moments back with people.

Another one is just listening without thinking ahead. And I, I don't know if you ever do this, but sometimes when someone's talking, I start to think about how I'm gonna respond. That's not staying present with people. No, that's just kind of rehearsing what I'm gonna say next.

And another way is to just create simple and meaningful moments. Even small ones. Doesn't have to be big ones. But just simple, meaningful moments with you and the person you're with. The thing is your people do not need a perfect you. They need a present you.

And then the third one, presence with yourself. Noticing your emotions is a huge part of just being present with yourself. Instead of pushing [00:22:00] your emotions down, notice them, address them. Do what you can with them. You know, you're not sure what to do with an emotion, give it to God. God, I give you this emotion of, of fear or whatever it might be. Give it to Him. He will show you what to do with it. Besides giving it to Him, He'll show you how to deal with it.

Another one is just choosing rest, simply choosing rest. And when I, when I say rest, I don't always mean sleep. Sometimes rest is just sitting in a quiet moment, breathing. Catching your breath. Maybe it's resting, listening to some Christmas music. It could even be resting in the car when you just have the, the radio off and you get to just be silent with God. Sometimes that is the important rest that we need.

Another one is breathing between tasks. Instead of rushing from one thing to another to another, take a moment to just breathe. Just a big, deep breath in and out. [00:23:00] Sometimes that just will help you cultivate presence with yourself.

Another one is to enjoy the beauty around you and soak it in. Whether it's Christmas lights or the freshly fallen snow or something special. Just something, the beauty around you. There's so much beauty around us in this season.

And the last one is being kind in what you say to yourself. Being kind in that inner dialogue, where you just say kind things to yourself. You don't allow anything negative. You just don't think about anything negative about yourself. 'Cause that's not what God thinks. Being present with yourself is honoring the person that God made, the beautiful creation that you are. So give yourself that gift as well of being present with yourself.

You know, I also talk about, in, in my book, at the end of each chapter, a little, tool [00:24:00] or a little, um, activity or a practice that really helps me stay present. And this is, um, I call it the four Ps. Pause, ponder, pray, and praise. And this is how it works. All right. It may take just a minute or less to do it. Of course it might take a little bit longer at first because you're learning it, but it makes such a difference. And I really want to invite you to try it this season in these next nine days and even beyond.

But you pause and you take a breath wherever you are. So pause right now. Take a breath wherever you are.

And then you ponder your surroundings. You notice what's around you, the sights, the sounds, the smells, the feels. Just notice them and soak them in. Notice God's presence, 'cause He's there.

And the next one is pray. Pray by asking something like, Lord, what are You doing in this moment? I don't wanna miss You, or it. [00:25:00] Who are You inviting me to be present with today? Is it You? Is it someone else? Is it myself? It's just a simple prayer. So we go from pause to ponder to pray.

And then the last one is praise. To praise Him for this moment and to be here for it, because this is the moment that matters. Praising God for this very moment. But we can't praise Him as well if we don't do the other steps first. The pause and the ponder, and the pray and the praise.

So try that this week. Try it. Try it today. And if you need to write down something to remind you, put it on your phone, put it on your schedule, the four Ps, and walk it out and see what happens. I think you're gonna be pleasantly surprised with how it brings you back to the present moment.



And I would give you one simple challenge this week. [00:26:00] Besides using the four P's, choose one moment every day this week to say, I am here for this. One moment every day where you just say, I'm here for this. Yeah, it makes such a difference. Let this anchor you to, to presence. And if you can somehow tie it to your word, your December word.

So of course I've already shared that my word for this this month is presence. Hmm. Yeah. P-R-E-S-E-N-C-E, exactly what we've been talking about. Not presents. P-R-E-S-E-N-T-S. That's what I used to be about. But now it's a different kind of presence. But, somehow tie it to your word. So, of course when, uh, I am saying I am here for this, maybe your word is joy. I'll just pull one out as an example. If your word for this month, I might have said word for the year, 'cause I'm so about that, but word for this month is joy. And you can [00:27:00] say, I am here for this. And tie it to your word, meaning that you're here for the joy. You are here for the moments that bring you joy and the moments that you don't even know that are gonna bring you joy. But yeah, you are here for this.

Or maybe your word could be, maybe it's um, what's another good word. Peace. You just want some peace in your life. And you say, I am here for this, in whatever moment that is, because you know you're gonna experience peace when you are here for this. It's amazing what happens when we stay present. All of those, those kind of words that we may choose this month. Peace, joy, love, gratefulness, gosh, grace, I mean, all of these words. They just flourish when we live in the moment. They're all tied to living in the right now. Isn't that interesting? Yeah.

Friend, [00:28:00] God, I wanna say again, is not waiting for you at the end of the month. He is here right now in the ordinary, in the small moments, in the laughter, and in the quiet, and even in the chaos. Yeah. He's everywhere. You don't have to chase a meaningful December. No. If you've been chasing it already, you can stop doing that today. You can meet Him in this moment without the chasing, without the rushing, without the stress. Yeah. I am praying this for all of us today.

And I hope that today this episode encouraged your heart, encouraged you to slow down just enough to notice God, to notice the beauty right in front of you, and to notice your own heart, because that matters. Being present isn't always easy, especially in December, but it's some of the most life-giving [00:29:00] ways that we can walk with Jesus, is being present. And friend, you're doing it. You're doing it by showing up today, one moment at a time. And you're doing it

by just being the person you are, because you desire to have more presence in your life.

And if you're looking for support as you continue walking out an intentional abundant life, I invite you to my abundant life mentoring. It's been a little while since I've mentioned it 'cause my schedule was full, but this one-on-one mentoring is a powerful way to gain clarity, to have some courage, and have some Christ-centered direction for your real life season, for every season that you walk through. And I invite you, you can learn more, you can schedule a free 20 minute connection call in the link at the show notes. It's there. And , I'd love to walk alongside of you in this season and beyond.[00:30:00]

And speaking I intention, I would also be honored just to have you, if you would, join me on January 3rd at 9:00 AM Central Time, uh, for my next online event. It's called Coffee and Calling, choosing Your Word for 2026. Now, I did one of these last year in person and, our room was packed and women walked away, encouraged, equipped, and ready for the new year. So, if choosing a word for December has been meaningful for you, imagine what choosing a word for your year for your entire year would mean. It's one of my favorite ways to start a new year with purpose and joy and intention. And so registration is open now and you can find all the details in the show notes, and it's a great gift to give to someone. To have someone join you online with me that morning at 9:00 AM on January 3rd. It's gonna be a great time together.

And [00:31:00] also if you would like to support this podcast, and maybe you're looking for a meaningful gift for yourself or someone else, or you just want to have, um, just more tools at your possession, I invite you to visit my brand new shop at [julielefebure.com](http://julielefebure.com). You'll find, scripture cards, resources, and beautiful items designed to uplift your heart and to brighten someone else's maybe too. The link to check all of it out is in the show notes as well.

And next week we will wrap up our Different Kind of December series with a special Christmas episode about celebrating with purpose. We'll talk about embracing the wonder of Jesus and finding joy, gosh, in the memories that matter most. Not in the ones that look perfect. Mm-hmm. But it's going to be a beautiful way to step into Christmas week together, and I can't wait to meet you back here.

[00:32:00] So thank you for joining me here today. I am so grateful for you, so grateful. I'm cheering for you and I'm praying that this week you experience the peace and the presence of God in every ordinary moment. And until next time, friend, keep living your one beautiful life with Jesus. 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.