

Encouragement for Real Life Podcast

232 What if You Are Not as Unseen as You Feel?

[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 and happy New Year. Goodness. Yes. Welcome to 2026. Can you even believe it? Last year went so fast. I remember my parents saying, time goes faster when you get older, and I didn't believe them. But I [00:01:00] do now.

Anyway, I am glad you're here today and January, here we are. January has a way of sometimes making us pause, right? The calendar turns, the noise quiets just a little maybe, and suddenly we're left alone with our thoughts.

And while the world talks about fresh starts and new beginnings, which is all great, many of us step into a new year just carrying things that we didn't expect. Maybe weariness, grief, disappointment, unanswered prayers or just a quiet sense of being unseen.

Maybe you thought life would look different by now, or maybe this year didn't begin the way you, you hoped or you thought it would. Or [00:02:00] maybe you're doing all the right things. You're showing up, you're loving well, and still you're wondering if anyone really notices.

If this is you, I want you to know that this episode is for you today. This January, all month long, I am sharing three Bible stories that I find myself coming back to again and again. Stories that have met me in different seasons of life and continue to remind me that God still is writing my story. He's writing your story still. So I'm calling this series Stories I Come Back To, God is Still Writing Our Stories.

Today I want to start with one of my many favorites. It's a biblical story. Now, all of these are biblical stories. Now, story, I don't mean as in a story that a fable that's not true. Because I firmly believe that everything in the [00:03:00] Bible is true and is from God. But this biblical story to start with is one of my all time favorites. It's the story of a woman who felt, I'm sure, overlooked, powerless and forgotten. Someone who found herself in a place that she probably never planned to be. Her name is Hagar, and her story asks a, a gentle but powerful question for the beginning of this year. What if you are not as unseen as you feel? Yeah. What if you're not as unseen as you feel?

So let's talk about her, her story and what it might mean for you and for me right here, right where we are today. So let's get into this episode.

[00:04:00]

Julie Lefebure: Hagar's story begins in Genesis 16. That's where she comes on the scene and she begins with a situation that she didn't choose or really have any say in the matter. She was an Egyptian servant to Sarah, Abraham's wife. Now, back then, um. Sarah was actually named Sarai, S-A-R-A-I, and Abraham's name was Abram. It wasn't until Genesis 17 when God changed their names to Sarah and Abraham. So for now we're just gonna call 'em Sarah and Abraham.

But Hagar found herself caught in the cross hairs of someone's selfish, selfish plan. That's the only way I can describe it. And you can read the full chapter. I'll link it in the show notes if you want to read the full, the full account.

[00:05:00] But for Hagar, when things became tense and painful as she was powerless, uh, socially and relationally in this situation, she ran. She fled into the wilderness, which is sometimes also known as the desert in certain translations. She was pregnant. She was alone. I'm sure she was afraid. And she probably was very unsure as to what was going to happen next.

And it's there, right there in that moment in the desert that scripture in Genesis 16 tells us something beautiful in verse 7. That the angel of the Lord found her. That the angel of the Lord found Hagar.

Likely feeling like no one saw her or , that no one even cared about her, Hagar couldn't have expected to meet, to meet God there. She couldn't have [00:06:00] expected that. But you know, God didn't wait for Hagar to find Him. He went looking for her. The angel called her by name. He acknowledged her pain, and for the first time, Hagar realized that she was seen. She wasn't just a thing to be

thrown away. She wasn't just a thing to be used. She wasn't just taking up space on this earth. The God of the universe, her Creator, saw her. And that's the moment that everything shifts in this story. Not because her situation changed, but because she realized that she was not invisible to God. It's a beautiful story.

And then moving on into a little bit farther, in Genesis 16, in verse 13, it tells us that [00:07:00] she responded by giving God a name. You are the God who sees me. Then she declared, I now have seen the one who sees me. Wow. I now have seen the one who sees me. She knew God saw her, and she was declaring this. Uh, it's so encouraging for us today, and we're gonna get to that in a moment.

But years later, Hagar finds herself in the wilderness again, or in the desert, whichever way your translation reads. But she finds herself there again, this time with her son, the son that she was pregnant with in the wilderness the first time. And Genesis 21 tells us that she, she reached a moment where she believed that her life and her son's life were over. And she sat at a distance from her son, she sat down and she [00:08:00] wept. And once again, God met her there.

This time He opened her eyes to see a well. A well that had been there all along, but she just couldn't see it. The same God who, who saw her before, saw her again. And this is where Hagar's story meets us. Because sometimes the, the hardest part of feeling unseen, it isn't the, the pain itself. That's hard. But it's not just that. It's the quiet fear that maybe this is all there is.

Hagar's story isn't just about what happened to her. It's about what happens when someone realizes, when some woman of God, when some daughter of the Lord, realizes that God sees her. [00:09:00] Even in a place that she never planned to be.

Sometimes God doesn't create something new. Sometimes He helps us see what He's already provided us. And I come back to Hagar's story in seasons when I, I feel like when I feel overlooked. When I'm doing all the right things, when I'm showing up, when I'm being faithful and I still wonder, is any of it really mattering at all? Does any of it matter?

Hagar's story reminds me that God sees what others don't. That He sees me when I, when I feel invisible, or when I feel empty or when I start to question everything. And He even sees me in the hard and difficult places. You know, He even sees me in my sinful moments [00:10:00] and in the moments where I don't include Him or I, I turn my back to Him. He sees me. Not, not out of shame or disgust, but He always wants to draw me back.

Those wilderness places are hard and they're, they're not fun. But we don't have to walk in them alone. God sees us.

For you, maybe the wilderness, maybe it might not look so dramatic, like Hagar's story. It might look like caring for others while no one checks on you. Or showing up to work that feels invisible. Or grieving a life that didn't turn out the way you hoped. Or quietly carrying disappointment that you don't talk about.

Maybe you're walking through an emotional wilderness of [00:11:00] grief, disappointment, loneliness. Or a relational wilderness like feeling unseen, unappreciated, and misunderstood. Or a spiritual wilderness of that spiritual kind of dryness or unanswered prayers or God feeling distant. Or maybe you're walking through circumstantial wilderness as life is not turning out like you planned or you hoped. Excuse me.

What if, what if the God who saw Hagar sees you just as clearly right where you are? What if? And what if He's already providing you what you need, but you just don't see it yet?

This is why Hagar's story matters so much to me. Because being seen by God isn't a [00:12:00] one-time moment. Yeah, it's not a one-time moment. It's, it's a way that God stays present with you and me across every season. We know He's always with us and sometimes we forget. Sometimes we don't see that He sees us.

This story is, is a beautiful reminder that He sees us and He's not gonna let us go too far from Him. He's not gonna let us run away. He wants to help us. He's with us, He's guiding us, He's leading us. And I love Him even more because of this story.

And you know, the story isn't saying that God caused Hagar's pain. He's not causing your pain. It's not saying that wilderness seasons are easy or quick because we know that's not true. And nor is it saying that we have to pretend that we're okay. [00:13:00] Hagar didn't. And you don't have to. And I don't have to. But this story shows us how God meets us, honestly. That God sees us without minimizing our circumstances and He provides for us without shaming us no matter what we've done or what we haven't done.

I invite you just to pause with me right now and just, just reflect. Reflect with me. Where in your life would it help you to remember that God sees you right now? In what specific circumstance would it help you, would it encourage you

to remember that God sees you right now in your, in your specific circumstances, in your specific situations?

And I'm gonna invite you just to pause [00:14:00] with me and pray for just a moment.

Father God, thank You. Thank You that You see us, that You aren't leaving us alone in the wilderness places. That You meet us like You did Hagar. And You help us to see the things that we have missed. Like Hagar, You opened her eyes to see the well that was already there.

I pray for the one that's listening or watching right now. I pray, Father, that You will remind her that You see her, that You know her, You know her intimately, You know the number of hairs on her head. You know what she's walking through. You know how she feels unseen. Father, remind her today that You see her, that You're with her, that You're providing what she needs, even if it doesn't appear yet. Encourage her heart today. Help her to lift her eyes to [00:15:00] You. Help her, Lord, to see the God who sees her, to help her see You in all of her circumstances, Lord. I thank You for this time. I thank You for the one that we're praying for today, that I'm praying for today. Thank You for her heart. Minister to her today. Minister to us all today, Lord. We love You. In Jesus name, amen.

I'm so grateful that God is with us in all of these seasons. Friend, you are not unseen. You are not as unseen as you. You may feel you are today. He is with you. He sees you. He loves you. He's never gonna turn his back on you. I pray that this encourages you today.

And before we, we get to closing out this episode today, I, I just wanna remind [00:16:00] you of this truth, that, that being seen by God doesn't mean that everything suddenly feels better or that it gets easier. We can use Hagar as our example. She came back to the wilderness a second time. Her life probably wasn't a whole lot better, and it probably didn't get easier. But it does mean that you are not alone in this. Hagar wasn't, and you're not.

Hagar didn't leave the wilderness immediately. Her circumstances didn't magically change overnight. But she left with, with something that she didn't have before - the assurance that God saw her.

And if you're in a place right now where life feels quiet or heavy or unseen, I want you to hear this clearly that God sees you too. He does. He [00:17:00] sees

the life that you're living. He sees the things that you carry quietly, that no one knows about. He sees you, right here.

As we begin this new year, I, I know that many women are craving more than good intentions. Many of us are longing for clarity and for peace and for a sense of direction, especially if life hasn't turned out the way that, that we expected.

If this episode stirred something in you, if you're realizing that you've been carrying things quietly or feeling unseen in this season, I want you to know that you do not have to walk through this alone. Through Abundant Life mentoring, I offer a one-on-one space to slow down, to listen, to gently discern what God is inviting you into next.

And [00:18:00] it's not about fixing your life. No, it's not about that at all. It's not about figuring everything out. No, it's, it's about being present with God right where you are and taking intentional steps forward. And for a limited time this January when you schedule a mentoring session, I'll also send you a copy of one of my books to support the work that we begin together. Either Right Now Matters or the Right Now Matters Bible study. You can learn more and uh, you can schedule a session by visiting my website at the link in the show notes. I'd be truly honored to work with you in this new year.

So next week we're gonna continue on with this series with another story that I come back to often, the story of Esther. [00:19:00] It's such an encouraging one as well. And we'll talk about what it looks like to realize that maybe you're not just here by chance, but you're here for a reason. If you've ever wondered whether your voice matters or if this moment of your life is significant, this episode coming up next week is for you.

And until then, please remember that you are seen, you are loved, and your story is still being written. I'll see you 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.