

Encouragement for Real Life

238 What We Do Not Want Anyone to See

[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 just so happy that you were here today. We are wrapping up our three part series this month. We're doing that in this episode. The series is The Stuff We Keep Inside. And it's been an enlightening series. It's been an [00:01:00] eye-opening series. It's been a kind of just a freeing series.

In the first episode, we talked about what we think, but do not say. Those kind of just those quiet thoughts that we keep edited and hidden. Last week, we talked about what we're carrying that no one knows. This could be the emotional weight and pressures that so many of us just hold silently & never talk about.

And today we are talking about the third, the third part of this series, and maybe this is going to be the most tender of all - what we do not want anyone to see. And I, um, I believe it's tender because there are parts of us that we work really, really hard to keep covered. And we may [00:02:00] think that we're the only ones doing this, but every single woman, I believe hides something. Not because we're trying to be dishonest or we're trying to be fake, but because we're afraid. Fear is a big, uh, a big denominator when it comes to this, this, that we, we, we tend to hide in our lives. We get, fear of being judged. Afraid of being misunderstood. Afraid of being labeled something. Afraid of being rejected. Afraid that if people really saw the true us, the messy parts, the insecure parts, the the struggling parts, they might pull away. They might. So we keep showing up. [00:03:00] We keep putting a smile on our face. We keep functioning as well as we can, yet we keep hiding.

And maybe for you, it's not one big thing that you're hiding. And maybe until now you've not even thought about this. Maybe it's a quiet insecurity that you've carried for years. Maybe it's a part of your story that you just wanna bury and you never wanna talk about. Or maybe it's something that you're currently walking through that just feels way too personal to share. Maybe it's a struggle that you've learned to just manage in private and to continue to, to push down because you don't want anyone to know that you're not okay.

But friend here [00:04:00] is what I want us all to know, you and me to know as, as we begin today - that God already sees what you and I are trying to hide. He already sees it. We talked about that, I think in the, the first episode of this, this series. He already sees it because He sees all that we do. He knows everything about us.

And we also talked about in that episode, and I'll remind us here again, that it's, this is not to scare us. It's meant to comfort us. God sees us, and so He, He knows the things that we hide. He doesn't want us to hide them anymore. Because we certainly gonna aren't gonna hide 'em from Him. Because the God who sees you and me fully is the God who loves you and me completely. I'm gonna say that again [00:05:00] because it's so, it's something that I think we forget. The God who sees you and me fully is the God who loves you and me completely. He doesn't expose us. He doesn't shame us. He doesn't um, condemn us. He invites us into the light to heal us.

So if this episode feels a little tender right from the start, I, I want you to know, um, it's, it is gonna be tender. But we can take a deep breath right here. You and I don't have to brace ourselves. We don't have to pretend. We don't have to even perform right now. Especially for God, we never have to do that. You and I can simply just be honest.

And my prayer is that by the end of this episode, you won't feel condemned, you'll [00:06:00] feel loved and cared for. You won't feel exposed, you'll feel covered by His grace. And you'll be reminded that the abundant life in Jesus that He came to give us, it includes freedom, healing, and His peace, even in the parts that you and I have been trying to keep hidden.

So if you're ready to find some healing and hope today, let's get into this episode.

Julie Lefebure: As you can already tell, this episode is gonna be a little deeper than surface level stuff. Um, it's about the, the parts of us that we try to keep covered. And there could be many things. And again, I wanna stress that [00:07:00] every single woman has something. Every single one of us has something. Maybe it's shame from the past. Insecurity from, um, could be a body insecurity, a physical insecurity, aging, um, confidence, personality, insecurity, fear of being judged, like I mentioned, fear of being labeled, feeling spiritually dry and empty. Maybe it's an anxiety that you don't wanna talk about. Or marriage struggles or parenting struggles. Or even just the fear that if people knew the real you that they'd pull away. The things that we don't want anyone to see are often the places where I would describe it as we feel most vulnerable and unlovable.

[00:08:00] So I invite you to just take a moment and just reflect here as I ask a couple questions. What's the part of your story that you try to keep covered, and what's the thing that you work hard to make sure that nobody notices? And I'll add one more. What's the thing that you hope never gets brought into the light?

All right. Now, those questions can make us feel a little panicked, a little uneasy, maybe a whole lot uncomfortable, but this moment is not for shame. This is a moment that will begin healing. When we take time to answer those questions and allow us to truly be honest, healing is already happening.

But why [00:09:00] do we hide? Um, we hide because of, of, of fear. Like I mentioned just a minute ago, the fear of rejection, the fear of judgment, the fear of being misunderstood, the fear of disappointing people. Oh goodness, that's a big one. The fear of being labeled something that you don't wanna be labeled. The fear of losing control. Fear of being seen as weak or fear of being out of touch or too much or not enough? We hide things for different reasons. And we hide because we believe that being seen will lead to rejection. But we know that that's not true with God. He's never gonna reject us.

But this struggle of hiding things is not new. This struggle is not new. If we [00:10:00] look back to the garden in Genesis chapter 3, uh, after Adam and Eve, Eve had eaten the fruit. Genesis chapter 3 verses 7 through 10, in the NIV says, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to man, where are you? He answered, I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

Yeah. Shame entered once they ate that fruit. They covered themselves. They hid themselves from [00:11:00] God. But yet God came for them, looking for them, and asked, where are you? The thing about shame, is shame always drives us into hiding. It drives us into burying. It drives us to not allowing ourselves to be honest.

But I love this, that God, how He pursued them. He will always pursue. He always pursues us in our hiding. His question of, you know, where are you? God's question, it wasn't of condemnation, it was of invitation. God didn't come to, to make them feel, um, less than. He didn't come to condemn them. He came to restore them and that's what He does with us.[00:12:00]

You know, there was, um, different times in my life where I have felt shame and I have felt that I've hid things deep down that I didn't want anyone to know. Um, there was a time too in my life when, I felt that God was just doing a work in my heart. Like He was excavating. You know what an excavator is, right? One of those, uh, earth work, earth, uh, movers, earth, that digs, with a long arm. My, my grandsons love them. But I, it was a time in my life when I felt like God was just excavating all of this gunk out of my heart. It really felt like it. All the things that I was hiding, my shame, my guilt, my past, things that I didn't want anyone to [00:13:00] know because I had buried it for so long. I had buried it and I didn't wanna, I didn't wanna think about it. Anytime any thought would pop in my head, I would just keep pushing it down and keep pushing it down.

You know, we all sin and we all fall short, and the Bible tells that clearly reminds us of that. And once we confess our sins, then we're released of those sins. Scripture also says that God removes our sin as far as the east is from the West. But yet I had a hard time with letting go of some of those sins. God had forgiven me, but I hadn't forgiven myself. And that turned into shame. , And burying, I think made it worse. Burying made it worse.

And then I started to feel like it was taking a toll on me. [00:14:00] That there was, um, physically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally, until I just gave it all to God. And that's when the excavating started to begin. And it was hard. And there were a lot of tears. And it was not over in a day. It was a season. And I remember talking to my small group about it. Not all the details, but um, I felt comfortable in sharing, um, just some of what God was taking me through. But when I brought that into the light, that's when God was able to deal with it. That's when God was able to free me from it. I realized that I wasn't hiding these things from people, but I was hiding from healing. Because God couldn't, couldn't deal with them until I was ready to deal with them.

So that's what hiding [00:15:00] does. This is what hiding does. And I think the enemy gets involved, the enemy of our souls, because he, he wants us to stay stuck. He wants us to keep hiding those things. Because he's the one that's telling us that you don't wanna let anyone know this. They're gonna walk away if you do.

But hiding also produces isolation and loneliness and emotional exhaustion, spiritual distance, perfectionism, performance, feeling like a fraud, increased shame and increased fear, to name a number of other things. Yeah, the enemy can use shame. Enemy can use the things that we hide to make it even, , more of a mountain than what it would be originally. Hiding these things don't protect [00:16:00] us. Hiding, isolates us.

Let's take a moment to look at, what scripture has to say about this. These are some verses that I found comfort back then and they still comfort me now. Let's look at Romans 8:1, also, in the New International Version, it says, "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. No condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Psalm 1 39 verses 23 and 24 says, "Search me God and know my heart, test me, and know my anxious thoughts." He does know our hearts. He knows our anxious thoughts. He knows everything about us, and He loves us immensely. I'm gonna keep going on in verse 24. "See if there's any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." Amen.

Psalm 34, [00:17:00] 5 says, "Those who look to him are radiant. Their faces are never covered with shame." Amen to that. God's gaze is not condemning. God's gaze is healing. He sees everything and still loves us fully. He does not love a cleaned up version of us. He loves us. Period.

And one thing I think I love about God the most after walking through that season in my life is that God brings things into the light to heal you and me. He doesn't bring it for any other reason, but He excavates that kinda stuff to bring healing and wholeness. I love how He does that. Like I said last week in our live episode, and thank you for those of you who joined live and who caught, caught it, uh, later. But, um, I said [00:18:00] that, you know, God cares about the details of our lives. He does. And He wants to bring healing from anything that's holding us back.

It's interesting what shame can do to us. Shame says hide, but Jesus says, come. Shame says you're disqualified, but Jesus says You're forgiven. Shame says,

cover yourself. But Jesus says, I already covered you. Friend, Jesus desires to redeem you and me. Yeah, and He does a beautiful job of it.

Let's look at another verse. 1 John verses 1 through 7. "But if we walk in the light , as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, his son purifies us from [00:19:00] all sin." We can walk in his light and when we are brought to his light, when we walk in his light, it's, it's a way of life that's freeing and it's peaceful and it's full of grace.

It does not mean that we tell everyone everything. It doesn't mean living with zero boundaries. It doesn't mean exposing the private things. It does mean walking in the light means just being honest with God, honest with yourself, and wise honesty with safe people that you can trust. No longer living in denial. Isn't that a wonderful thing? Imagine no longer living in denial, and that's what walking in the light of Jesus does. Walking in the light is, is opening yourself and myself to God, to be completely [00:20:00] honest. There's nothing like it.

So what do we do? What do we do with what we don't want anyone else to see? What do we do with that? Well, we start with just naming what we're hiding. God, I have been hiding blank. Just naming it. We can, um, stop calling it "that's just who I am." Some things really aren't just personality traits. They can be pretend protection. So we can just bring it to God. I have been hiding this.

And the next step is just to let God in. Let God in and let Him shine his light on it. Bring it to God and be open and honest with [00:21:00] Him.

Next step is just ask a question. What am I afraid will happen if this is seen? Now, this is gonna expose our fear. This is gonna show us why are we so fearful of let anyone seeing this?

The next step is just to receive Romans 8:1, that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Then replace the shame with truth. Shame will say, I am whatever. I am a failure. I'm too much. I'm a mess. I'm a sinner. I am, uh, full of anxiety. Whatever it might be. But replace that with God loves me fully. God loves me fully. [00:22:00] And watch what happens.

Another step is to just confess. Just give it to God. Don't perform. Don't polish it. God can bring healing from just plain and simple honesty. That's what He wants, is just your honest heart. Confess it and give it to Him. And then think about this. Who in your life could you open up to about this? Is there one person that you could open up to? Who is it? Maybe it's a counselor. Maybe it's a friend, a trusted friend. Maybe it's a pastor or a woman's ministry leader or a

person in your small group at church. Maybe it's your neighbor that you trust. But not everyone is safe, but someone [00:23:00] should be safe in your life.

And then let God reframe your identity. You are not this hidden struggle. You are not this. You are His daughter. If you have to write that out somewhere, I am God's daughter. Put it somewhere where you see it daily. Watch what God does with that. He will reframe this for you.

And then keep choosing to walk in the light because healing is a process. Like we talked about last week, we tend to wanna pick things back up. But continue to lay it down. Continue to lay it down because freedom in God is a daily choice.

You know, I wanna remind you that you are not the only one. You are not a fraud. God is not disappointed in you. God is near, He is gentle, He is full of grace, and He is for you. [00:24:00] The enemy wants to keep you isolated and he will do everything he can to do it. But God wants you to be healed. He wants you to have this healed, abundant, joy filled life where there's nothing that's buried in there that's just making you feel less than or rotten. You know, and that's kind of what it happens when we keep something buried inside, it just starts to kinda rot and it, it impacts our relationship with God, it impacts our relationship with ourselves, and it impacts our relationship with others. Let God remove it today. Let Him excavate that out of your heart.

So I have a, just a, an action step for this week that maybe will help. Um. It's the the one honest sentence prayer. Can be something like this. God, I've been hiding blank. [00:25:00] Help me bring it into Your light. Show me one next step. I'll say that again. God, I've been hiding blank. Help me bring it into Your light. Show me one next step. And then write it down. And pray it daily. Ask God who would be the safe person to talk to. If not, He will be the safe person to talk to. And keep staying close to Him walking in His light, hand in hand with Him as you work through this together.

So let's pause here. We prayed last week. I wanna pray again this week. 'Cause I think it's really important to pray about these things that we keep buried. So let's pray.

Oh, heavenly Father, I just thank You for this time. This is a [00:26:00] a tender episode, kind of a heavy episode. But Lord, it's one I believe that You are going to use mightily. You have, shown us through Your word that there's no condemnation in You. And so we rest in that today. We trust in that today. The

things that we have been burying, hiding, covering, Lord, they've been there maybe for a very long time and maybe we've even forgotten about them.

But Lord, I pray for each one listening right now that You will meet her right where she is. That You will help her to understand that You want Your best for her life, to free her of these burdens, to lift her out of the, the pit that she might feel like she's living in. To set her feet [00:27:00] on Your solid rock. To clean all that stuff out, Lord, that, that she's been carrying and burying, and covering for so long. It's not an easy process, but it is a loving, beautiful process from a loving Father, You.

So Lord I, I pray for each one today. Encourage her. Keep her away from shame. Help her to be bold. Help her to trust You in this and that she will just continue to walk in Your light. Thank you Lord for hearing our prayers, for answering them, and for loving us like You do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Friend, if today's episode stirred something in you, if there is something that you've been hiding or something you've been [00:28:00] carrying quietly or something that you're just, you've been afraid to let anyone see, I want you to know that you do not have to navigate this alone. One of the reasons that I created Abundant Life Mentoring in the first place is because I know how isolating it can feel to carry this inside stuff by yourself. Because I did it for years and I understand. Sometimes we love God deeply, but we still feel stuck. Sometimes we want healing, but we, we don't know where to begin. Sometimes we're not even ready to talk about everything. We just know we can't keep holding it in. Abundant Life mentoring is a safe, faith-filled space where we slow down, where we get honest and invite God into the places that we've been trying to keep hidden for so long. There's no pressure to [00:29:00] perform. There's no need to have the right words. There's no expectation that you share more than you're ready to share. It's simply a place to process what's going on inside, to be encouraged in truth, and to take the next step forward in support so you can live lighter, freer, and even more whole in the abundant life that Jesus came to give you.

So if you feel like God is nudging you toward that kind of support, you can learn more and schedule a session at the link in the show notes. And if you're not sure if mentoring is right for you, you can still click the link and read through it and, uh, book your 20 minute connection call. It's free. No pressure, just an open door.

Next week. I invite you back for our monthly guest episode. It'll be one that this episode will bless you, encourage [00:30:00] you in your real everyday life, and I believe this episode's gonna help you expand your perspective.

Come back next week and see who my guest is. I can't wait to see you then. Until then, friend, keep walking in the light of Jesus. 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.