

Encouragement for Real Life

246 You Were Made for More Than Running on Empty

[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: Have you ever felt tired? Not the kind of tired that sleep can fix? 'cause we all have felt that kind of tired, right? Not even just physically tired. 'cause we've probably felt that too. But mentally tired, emotionally tired, even [00:01:00] spiritually tired. Like no matter how much you rest, you still feel behind, you still feel drained. You still feel like you, you're giving more than you really have to give, that you have available to give.

And maybe in those kind of seasons you've told yourself, well, this is just a hectic season in my life. Or this is just being responsible. This is part of being an adult. Or, this is just what life looks like right now. But what if it's not just your schedule that's full? What if your soul is empty?

Today we are continuing our series, You Were Made for More and we are talking about something that so many of us women are silently carrying - this feeling of constantly running on empty.

So if this sounds like something that you could use some encouragement in, [00:02:00] well, let's get into this episode.

Julie Lefebure: Welcome back to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I am glad you are here today. And all month long we are talking about the truth of that you were made for more. More than just getting through your days. More

than just running on empty. And more than settling for less than God's best, for less than the life that Jesus came to give you.

And this message is so close to my heart. Especially as my new devotional titled Made for :More 365 Devotions for the Woman Who Refuses to Settle releases today, April 14th. So yay, it's release day for Made For More, and I'm really excited about it.[00:03:00]

This book was written for the woman who is, who's tired, not just physically, but deep in her soul tired, and she's ready to experience a different way of living. She knows that there's got to be more to life than this.

So running on empty. We've heard that saying before. We've heard a song, isn't there a song called Running on Empty? Um, and I think we all have, have related to that, uh, that kind of lifestyle at one point in our lives or another.

But what does running on empty really look like? Well, for years of my life, you could have just looked at, at my life. I, I was the poster child for running on empty. But running on empty may look like you're always thinking about what's next. You can't really stay in the moment. You're always thinking, alright, what's the next thing?

Or you rarely feel caught up. Or you [00:04:00] give your best energy to everyone else but have nothing left for yourself. Or you feel guilty resting. Or you don't even know what fills you anymore. You're just like going on autopilot. Time with God feels rushed, distracted, or even skipped. Yeah, you're functioning but you're not flourishing.

Yeah. This was my life for so many years and I didn't even realize it. I didn't even realize it. And that's where I'm finding women today are not realizing they're running on empty. This has just become their normal. Running on empty doesn't always look chaotic, though. Sometimes it looks like being capable and dependable and showing up yet being completely depleted.

So why do we live this way? Why do we [00:05:00] live this way? And I hope that if you are feeling, you may not even know that you're running on empty, but if you are feeling this nudge, I pray that this episode will, will encourage your heart and your soul, uh, to the point where you are aware and now you're gonna do something about it. Because this is not the abundant life Jesus came to give us when we're running on empty.

So why do we live this way? Well, uh, I think we've learned, we've learned to push through instead of pause. We do what the world does and that's what they do. The world has taught us, the people of the world have taught us to push through. You don't pause because that's weakness. And that's not true. We equate productivity with purpose. That's me. I've lived that for so many years. We've normalized constant output. It's just what we do. We constantly just give and give and, and push and [00:06:00] push and do, and do. And we don't wanna let people down.

We think that rest is something that we earn after everything is done. And you know, as well as I do that, that never happens. But somewhere along the way, many of us have stopped living from a place of being fulfilled and started living from a place of being drained. But friend, you and I don't have to continue living this way.

And maybe as you're listening or watching today, you're, you're realizing this isn't just a hectic season. This has become your way of life. This has become your normal. And that's the part that we don't always know what to do with. So we're becoming aware. Now, what do we do?

Well, let's, let's first of all, turn, turn to scripture. [00:07:00] Let's see what God has to say. , A big biblical truth is that I just have to remember that Jesus never asked you or me to sustain ourselves. He never asked for us to just do it alone and to provide for ourselves and to, to just be an island to ourselves and to to do it all. He's never asked us to do any of that.

And I thought of the scripture of Matthew chapter 11 verses 28 through 30. And I'm always drawn to The Message Translation of these verses. Um, a friend of mine who is a, uh, a mentor of mine and a pastor, she has quoted this scripture in this translation, numerous times, and, uh I can't help but think of this, these verses without this translation attached to it. So in the Message paraphrase, Jesus says this, "Are you tired, worn out, burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me [00:08:00] and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest, walk with me and work with me. Watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on. You keep company with me and you'll learn how to live freely and lightly." Amen. Amen.

You know, , when Jesus said this, He wasn't just speaking to the people back then. You know, those, the people were, were struggling with, um, a whole lot of things. And, um, even the, the Pharisees that were, were, putting extra regulations on them. I mean, they were, they were struggling with a lot. So, but

He wasn't just writing it to them. I firmly believe He was also speaking to people like you and like me. People who were tired of trying [00:09:00] to keep up, tired of feeling like we have to hold everything together, all at the same time. Tired of, of carrying more than we were ever asked to carry. To have a burden that we were never meant to bear.

For us, maybe it might mean that we're fatigued by trying to earn our way to heaven or to being good enough, quote and quote in God's sight or in the sight of others. Maybe struggling with the pressure of keeping up or maintaining everything in our schedules. Our schedules are so full. Or trying to be everything to everyone at every single moment of the day. Or unable to just shut off our brains at night because they are so full of all the things. Yeah, our our lives are full, aren't they?

But friend, no wonder we are running on [00:10:00] empty. No wonder. I just picture God or I picture even Jesus just standing off to the side saying, here I am. I'm over here. Come and spend time with me. You don't have to live this way. I didn't come to give you that kind of life. I came to give you an abundant life. Can't you just picture Him?

But He is not gonna come barging in and say, here, let me take over. Let me run your life. He's not gonna do that. What if we just invited Him in and that's it. Let's not miss this today, that Jesus invites the weary in this scripture. He, He doesn't invite the put together. He doesn't invite the ones who have got it all together, because none of us have it all together. You know, His, His statement of come to me is the, the starting point. He's not saying to fix yourself. No, He says, come to me.[00:11:00]

And rest is not a reward. It's, it's an invitation. Other scriptures say that, you know, His yoke is is easy and light, and this, you know, uses different words. But, um, it, He's meaning that with Him is is a much better way to walk. It's gonna be lighter. He's not gonna put anything ill-fitting on us. It's gonna be a lighter kind of life with Him than without Him.

And He also didn't say, come to me once that you've handled everything. He said, come to me because you can't. I am gonna say that again. Jesus never said that uh, He never said, come to me once you've handled everything. He said, come to me because you can't.

Friend, we can't handle everything. Yet so many of us are trying to do it. So many of us are trying to handle it all, to take it all, to put it on our shoulders. Say we'll carry [00:12:00] it. That's not meant for us.

If I could be, uh, completely honest with you, um, recently I was running on empty and I had this fear that I was going to be running on empty. Uh. But let me back up here. One thing you probably know about me is that I'm a doer. I like to get things done. Isn't there a commercial that says for the people who get things done? Anyway, I do like to get things done. I have a, I have a list. I work from a list diligently, and I work from it until all is accomplished and crossed off. And sadly, um I've been known to have that list, contain my time with God. Like it's another thing to check off. And, uh, I want you to know I'm still a work in progress. I, I pray that I can give you some hope. [00:13:00] That, my quiet time with God is not always perfect.

And after returning from vacation on March 10th, um I hit the ground running. Because I was preparing for this book launch and had a whole ton of, I mean, on the way home, we drove, um, on our vacation and I had a list, uh, you know, a list a mile long is what I wanted to say. It felt like a mile long. It wasn't a mile long. But it was a very long list of all I needed to do to get, uh to today, to for the book launch day. And I worked every single day in preparation for it. Uh, every single day. Some days were beyond stressful. Some days I felt so alone because if you've ever published a book, it can be very lonely. I felt so alone. And that added to it. And other days I just questioned my sanity with all I was [00:14:00] doing thinking, huh, what am I thinking I can do all this.

And I hit my end when, um, a dear friend of mine passed away of cancer at the end of the month. I can't remember if I talked about this in last week's episode. Uh, my brain is so full today. But it all became too much at that time. It all became too much. Um. Losing my friend was really hard on top of everything else. And I just, that was the point I got mentally and spiritually drained. And I would talk with God throughout the day. I would, um, you know, I would shed tears. I would read my Bible. Um. But that last week of March, I looked at my husband and I said, I can't keep going like this. And I couldn't. I knew that I needed, I knew I needed to [00:15:00] heed Jesus' words in Matthew 11 to come to Him. But I didn't do anything about it. I just kept going.

Until a few days later when I felt completely empty. I needed Jesus. Not just a few moments with Him, but some dedicated time with Him. I was lacking connection with my Savior. I wasn't just tired. I knew that. I had slipped into trying to live my life without staying connected to the One who actually fills me. I was doing all the things. At least on the outside it looked really good. But on the inside I was empty.

And the thing is, you and I, we were never meant to be our own source. But the world says we should be our own source. And so we sometimes slip into that,

don't we? And when we try to be our own source, our own strength, our own peace, our own capacity, our own [00:16:00] provision, we will always run dry. Always. Every single time.

Let's look at it this way. I want you to, to picture a pitcher of water. A pitcher of water. Just picture one. You might have one in your, your kitchen that you use. Um, think about it. If all that pitcher ever does is pour out, so say you are that pitcher. You are pouring. You are pouring. You are pouring. Eventually that pitcher runs empty. And the only way that it can be filled again is if it's placed back under the source.

A lot of us are living like that pitcher. We are pouring, we are pouring, we're pouring into our families, pouring into our responsibilities. We're pouring into everything around us. But we're not staying connected to our source. And then we wonder why we feel [00:17:00] depleted and why we feel empty. It's not because we're doing life wrong. It's not because we're messing up in a certain way. It's because we're trying to pour from something that hasn't been filled. We're trying to pour from an empty pitcher, and we have nothing left to give. We were never meant to be the source. We were meant to stay connected to it, plain and simple.

And here's what we tend to do. Sure. We notice we're running low, so we try to manage it. We pour a little less here. We try to conserve some over here. But the problem isn't how much we're pouring. The problem is that we're not being filled in the first place. So the solution isn't to stop pouring. The solution is to return to our source and get filled back up again.

[00:18:00] Now, true filling, what does that look like? Well, it's unhurried time with God, and that is so hard for those of us who are doers. But even in small moments, it's just stopping and un hurrying ourselves. And just spending time with God, just for a few minutes, even. Allowing Him to fill our souls back up again. It's staying connected to Him throughout the day. It's releasing what was never yours or mine to carry in the first place. We were never meant to do all that we do. I firmly believe that. And it's receiving instead of constantly producing.

I used to think that rest was simply stopping my activity. If I just stopped that was considered rest and maybe taking a nap. But rest is actually reconnecting. Reconnecting with my source, Jesus.

If I could invite [00:19:00] you today to just allow this to soak in instead of trying to fix everything. What if you and I simply returned to our source to be

filled today? Jesus, fill us. Fill us to overflowing. We are empty. We are feeling that we just have nothing else to give. But Jesus fill us. Something as simple as that. Help me to pause. Help me to accept what You have for me, to be filled with what You have, that You wanna fill me with.

But, you know, filling is always better and more sustaining than fixing. It is. We don't need to be fixed. We just need to be filled. We don't need to be fixed. We just need to be filled. And it's filled with the things of God. Filled from Jesus, not from the world.

A simple reset, [00:20:00] this might help this week, is if you just pause for a moment, if we just paused, we took a big breath and we acknowledge where we feel depleted. Where do we feel depleted in life? I felt depleted in all of my life at the end of March. And then we bring that honestly to God and allow Him to work in it, to fill us so we're not running on empty. So we're not pouring out of an empty pitcher. So we can be efficient and effective for Him. Because we can't be when we're empty.

And that's, I think one of the, the secret tools that the enemy of our souls will always use against us is to deplete us. To run us so ragged that we become empty. My mom used to say something to me, and I've shared it here on the podcast before, she used to say, [00:21:00] "Julie, you are burning the candle at both ends." And she she always knew when I was doing that, always. And she was right. And I get it now. I didn't get it then. She was trying to protect me. So if you're burning the candle at both ends, pretty soon that candle's gonna , it's gonna burn and there's nothing left. Let's stop from burning the candle at both ends.

Maybe some questions you could ask today or we could ask ourselves is, where am I running on empty right now? What have I been trying to carry in my own strength? And when was the last time I felt truly filled? Not just rested, but truly filled?

Friend, I pray that this episode encourages your heart today. I pray that it does. And I pray that God will just meet you right where you [00:22:00] are. Especially if you're feeling like you're running on empty.

And as I've been walking through this message and in this season, you know, I always believe that, that I learn the most um, the things I talk about. The things that I go through first of all, God's gonna use in my life. And He's definitely using this, this full season. But as I've been walking through this message, I've been thinking so much about this devotional, my devotional Made for More. It's

releasing today. I, I can't help, but I mean, it's, it's in the forefront of my mind. Uh, just namely because it's releasing today. But also because of the message in it. Because I know what it feels like to love God and still feel empty.

And I wrote this book for women like me and like you, who love God, but we just know that something's missing. We wanna spend time with Him, but we've lost our way. This book is designed [00:23:00] to meet you right in the middle of your real life. Not when everything is calm or perfect or, or, uh uh, or just right? No. But sometimes even in the overwhelming days, even in the trying days, even in the days that don't make , sense. Each day is it's a simple invitation to reconnect with God, to be filled by Him again and again and again, and to be living from a place of fullness instead of depletion. That's what this book is.

So if this episode resonates with you, I think this book will be a very meaningful step for you. And you can find it on all major online, um, outlets, uh, and also on Amazon and my website. And I'll have those links below.

But if you've been running on empty, [00:24:00] please hear this clearly today. You are not weak because you're tired. You are not failing because you feel depleted. But you were never meant to live this way. Jesus still invites you today not to try harder, not to do more, but to come closer. To come to Him. To be filled again. To be strengthened again. To be renewed again.

And the fact that you might, the fact that you're feeling this way, if you feel this way, that you're running on empty, that you know something has to change, that's not something to ignore. That's an invitation. An invitation from the One who loves you most. Come to Him. Because you were made for more than just running on empty.

And as we continue this series next [00:25:00] week, we are going to, we are, we're gonna be talking about something that so many of us don't even realize that we're doing. It's quietly settling for less than the life that God has for us, than the life that Jesus came to give us. So I invite you back next week. Make sure to come back for that episode. And it'll drop early next Tuesday morning.

So I'm just so glad that we get to journey through life in this way together. Thank you for joining me today. It's always an honor. Have a great week and God bless you.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. You can find more at julielefbure.com. And until next time, stay encouraged.