

263 What Is Pulling You Away from the Life You're Living

[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.

Have you ever been in a conversation and realized that you really weren't listening? Or have you ever driven somewhere and suddenly you kind of just become aware that you don't remember the last few miles you drove? Or another one, [00:01:00] you're sitting with your family but all of a sudden your mind just goes to your schedule for tomorrow. Have these ever happened to you? Have you ever experienced any of these? Well, I have. And something that I have noticed in my life, in myself for years, is that it's possible to be physically present, but mentally, emotionally or spiritually elsewhere.

In fact, if you have read my, my first book, Right Now Matters, you may recall one particular moment exactly like this where I was physically present but - I was mentally elsewhere. And this moment had to do with my son on the soccer field. And this moment woke me up to how distracted I had been living my life. It changed my life. This moment God used to completely change my life.

Last week here we talked [00:02:00] about not missing the life that we're living. But this week we're gonna take it one step further. If we truly do not want to miss our lives, and I know some... You might be feeling this way, I am feeling this way right now that I'm missing my life. If we don't want to do that then we need to look at what keeps pulling us away from our lives. What is it? Because I don't think you or me are intentionally missing the moments that matter most. We're not. I think we're simply being pulled in so many different directions that we don't even realize it's happening. We don't.

So if you're ready for some timely inspiration and hope and encouragement, well let's get into this episode.

[00:03:00]

Welcome back to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I am Julie, and I am so happy that you are here today, that we get to just spend these next few moments together.

In last week's episode, I, I shared this story of the reel that I posted and, and how I didn't like the pace of my life. And we also looked at how, deep down, we do not want to miss the lives we are living. Because honestly, I think many of us are. Many of us, many of our friends, many of the women that we work with, we are missing the lives that God has given us. And the thing is, so many women don't even know it. - So many women don't realize that they're missing, missing out on really what's important.

So today, we are going deeper [00:04:00] into why this might be happening, why we are experiencing such things. And not necessarily what we can do about it, but we're gonna become aware of it. We're gonna talk more about what we're gonna do about it next week.

But, you know, uh, this is true, I don't think any of us wake up one day and decide to miss our lives. We don't say, "Hmm, today I'm gonna be distracted," or, "Today I'm going to miss what matters most. "Today I am going to be just so preoccupied with so many things that I'm just gonna get to the end of the day and miss everything about it." No, we don't wake up and say those things. But this happens gradually. It happens little by little, without realizing it.

So what is it that's pulling us away from living our lives? Let's think about this, and let's give, let's give some ideas. [00:05:00] There's so many different pulls in any given day, like the pull of tomorrow, where we're focused on tomorrow.

Or the pull of yesterday, where we can't stop thinking about what happened a day or two ago. Or the pull of pressure to do more, to strive, to keep up, to not fall behind. Or the pull of comparison. You may know what that feels like. I know I know what that feels like. The pull of the... It's, it's just trying to, to, "Okay, if she's doing that, then I need to do that. And if she's doing this, then I need to do that."

Uh, the pull of our phones. That's a given, isn't it? Oh my goodness. Our phones are constantly pulling at us.

And the pull of constant noise. There's so much noise in this world. So much noise. And we can get distracted and pulled away by all the noise.

You know, there are so many [00:06:00] pulls, think about it, in our everyday life that they can easily draw our attention away from the lives that, that God has given us to live. God has given you a wonderful life. He's given me a wonderful life. And when we keep getting pulled by these things, we can't begin to live this wonderful life, this abundant life that, that Jesus came to give us.

Here's some thoughts. Think about this. You're at your daughter's ball game, but you're answering emails in your head. You're eating dinner, but you're already thinking about cleaning up the kitchen. You're sitting at church, but you're mentally making tomorrow's grocery list. I don't know if I've done that, but I have made lists in my head while I'm at church. You're, you're on vacation. Ah, finally vacation, but you're worried about everything that's waiting for you when you get home.

You're [00:07:00] retired, but you're spending all your time wishing that you still had what you used to have. You're finally with your grandchildren, but part of your mind is already thinking about what comes after nap time.

It's, it's interesting, isn't it? How we think of these things. How our mind takes us elsewhere or emotionally we're elsewhere, we're spiritually elsewhere when our bodies and our physical bodies are right where we are right now, but our minds are so far away.

You know, God created our minds intricately. I'm not telling you anything you don't know. He did, and we can be physically present but mentally elsewhere or emotionally or spiritually elsewhere.

And the thing that I'm realizing for me is that the thing that -- pulls me away from my life, it's not my phone, even though [00:08:00] that can be a big one. It's not social media. It's not comparison. It's not even the noise of this world. It's the pace of my life. And I shared this last week. I move so quickly from one thing to the next that it's as if I, I never fully arrive where I already am. It's like I'm, I'm not fully there.

And talking about this last week and, and really preparing for this episode, I, I'm really-- I, I'm taking a hard look at my life and I started asking myself, "Is this how I want to live? Is this how I want to spend my days? Is this how I want to spend my years?" The answer is no.

Friend, what is your pull? Is it your pace? Is it your phone? Is it , your health? Is [00:09:00] it your, your..., All your re- responsibilities? What is it? What is your pull that keeps you from living the life God has for, for you? That, that keeps

you from embracing what's most important? What is pulling you away from your life.

It's interesting, as I thought about this, I have been studying distractions and working at living above them for over 10 years. Because that instance, what I wrote about in the introduction of Right Now Matters, that instance that changed my life in watching my son on the soccer field happened 11 years ago. And so I've been aware of this for years, and you would think that I would have this thing mastered by now. You'd think I would be the master of living above the distractions of this world. You'd think I would be the master of [00:10:00] staying present and living in the moment. But I am not. I am still fully immersed in this.

And I've also now, as, as I've trans- transformed into different seasons of life, that I firmly believe that different seasons can present new distractions and new enticements from what really matters. And this pace distraction thing, whatever I'm calling it, is one of those. I am learning how to overcome and to live above it.

But friend, it is not easy. But I am learning how to do it. I'm learning how to stay present again, even when my pace is crazy. And I, I'm learning how to recognize it and slow down and do the things that I know to do.

And I [00:11:00] also firmly believe that we each have something that pulls us away. I don't think y- I, I think you have one. I think I ha- I have one. I know I have one. I think our neighbor might have one. Our coworker might have one, maybe even multiple ones. That things that pull us away. We each have something. And yours is probably totally different than mine. And I'm learning that we are all in this together. No one is immune to this. I don't know about the guys so much, but us women, we have pulls in our lives that keep us from living this life that God wants us to live.

But I don't think it's just the pulls. I think there's a deeper issue here. The more that I sat back and have thought about this and kind of did some digging and some research and I, I believe that the internal direction of our hearts can naturally turn us to what's less important in life. [00:12:00] Yeah. I, I, I firmly believe that. It's not a surface thing. This is a deeper thing.

And I, I started thinking about our hearts. What is it with our hearts? And I could not s- I could not shake this scripture. It's not my favorite scripture in the world. But it's something that the prophet Jeremiah said about the human heart. Maybe you know this.

But he said in Jeremiah 17, verse 9 in the New Living Version. Excuse me, New Life Version. He proclaimed this hard to hear truth. Every time I read it, every time I hear it, I just, it's not my favorite. He said, "The heart is fooled more than anything else and is very sinful. , "Who can know how bad it is?" Let me say that again.

Jeremiah said, and again, your translation may be completely different, may say something a, you know, a little different. But this says in [00:13:00] the New Life version, "The heart is fooled more than anything else and is very sinful. Who can know how bad it is?"

Yikes. You know, we wanna think that we have pure hearts, that we make all the right decisions, that we have all the right motives. But our hearts are, you know, are, are sinful. We, we also know that too. So we can easily be tricked into believing that our hearts are leading us to God's best, to the right places through our desires and emotions and our realizations. But in all reality, we could be careening into places that we were never meant to be.

And that saying, "Well, just follow your heart," is really scary. Because friend, if I was following my [00:14:00] heart, that would lead me to very n- just, I'll just say not good places in my life. Our hearts aren't pure. I wish they were.

But once sin entered into our hearts through Adam and Eve, everything changed. Our hearts are-- they're divided. And when our hearts are divided, we can miss the very life that God has given us. Because we're not solely focused on God and His perfect plans for our lives. We get, we get pulled in all these different directions. We get divided. We get, we get confused. We get confounded. We, we... It, it all ext- it all extends from our hearts.

And then I found this verse that was really kind of, kind of breathed life back into me after reading that Jeremiah [00:15:00] verse. This is Psalm chapter 86:11. And in the Amplified Classic version, I wanted to get this. This is just really good. It says, "Teach me Your way, O Lord, that I may walk and live in Your truth. Direct and unite my heart, slowly, reverently, to fear and honor Your name." All right, I am going to read this again, and I'm gonna read it where the words "and" are italicized. So I'm gonna read it that way. Try to read it that way.

But here it says it again. "O Lord, that I may walk and live in Your truth. Direct and unite my heart sol- sl- solely, reverently to fear and honor Your name."

Wow. What a beautiful prayer that scripture can be. I, I think I need to write that down. And [00:16:00] I think I need to, I think I need to say that on a daily basis.

"Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk and live in your truth. Direct and unite my heart solely, reverently to fear and honor your name."

That's powerful. What a prayer. What a prayer. What a, what a heart attitude to have.

You know, we may think that our problem might be social media or our phones or something else, but really it's our hearts.

So say someone today, she realizes that Instagram or social media is pulling her heart away from what matters most. But she just decides to delete Instagram tomorrow because of that. Well, she'll still have a heart that can be pulled toward fear or comparison or regret or striving or always living just [00:17:00] for the next thing.

So it's not about the tool that we use to keep us from what's important. It's the condition of our hearts. It's deeper than social media being a distraction. It's the, it's, it's the reality of, uh, yeah, -- what's inside of us.

And the thing, the thing is we can't return to the l- the life that, to the life that we're missing until we recognize what's pulling us away from it. We can't. Because we'll just keep going. We'll just keep doing the same thing again and again and again because that's what we know.

So maybe the first step isn't changing our schedules or removing the app or, uh, putting away our phones or any of that. I think the first step is simply bringing our honest hearts [00:18:00] before God. Just opening up our hearts, being honest and open to Him and say, "Lord, show me what's been pulling me away from the life that you've given me."

Maybe it's writing out that prayer of Psalm 86:10, writing it out and making it into a prayer. And maybe it's possibly asking some deeper questions You could take out your journal. You could honestly just go to the Lord. You could, uh, sit with Him for some time and, and ask some questions that would really open yourself up, such as, "Where has my attention been lately?"

And you know, my phone is a big one. It is But I know it's, it's more than that for me. And I know my pace is a big one. I've s- talked about that. So why is,

why am [00:19:00] I feeling like I need to rush? Lord, what is in my heart? What is, what is it? What has been dis- what has been pulling at me lately? Where's my attention been? It's been all over the place.

Another question could be, what have I been thinking about the most? Well, in my case, I've been thinking about, okay, I gotta get this done, I gotta get this done. My grandsons are coming and, you know, I gotta get this done before they come. Whatever it might be. I gotta go get groceries. I'm, I'm doing this right now and then I gotta do this. It's, it's just... Yeah, that's what, , I've been thinking about the most is my schedule.

Another question. What seems to keep pulling me away from fully experiencing today? You can only answer that. I can't for you. I can answer mine. Yeah, my pace has been pulling me away from experiencing today. And is that drawing me closer to God, to the God-given life that He has, has, has blessed me with? Or is [00:20:00] it pulling me away from it? And it's pulling me away from it. I know that.

If we were sitting across from each other today, maybe enjoying a cup of coffee or a cup of tea or having some lunch, I imagine that we would, um, just be talking about this. And it would be so helpful, wouldn't it? Just be sitting across from each other and chatting and, and figuring out, hmm, really what has been pulling me away from my life. I could see us encouraging each other and helping one another to just kinda diagnose ourselves and seeing where God is at in our circumstances and maybe how He may be, how He may be just showing us exactly what it is that's keeping us from living the abundant life that He has for us. I think it'd be a really wonderful time together. And I think we maybe even [00:21:00] pray for each other and, and for the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds, to show us what we're missing.

You know, and even though we can't do that today, even though we aren't sitting across from each other right now, we can still go to God and we can ask Him to reveal to us what we can't yet see. To, to help us, to lighten our minds to His truth. To equip us to live these amazing lives that He's given us that we, we're missing out on. We aren't living it to the fullest, but we want to. We could do all of that.

So why don't we do that now? Even though we're not sitting across from each other, let's go to the Lord now. Would you pray with me? Let's do that.

Heavenly Father, You're so good to us. You, You have given us lives that, uh, are amazing. Even though they're not [00:22:00] perfect, we talked about that

last month. They may not be perfect, but they're still good because You are good. You've given us amazing lives, Lord, that, that can be abundant. It's the abundant life that Jesus came to give us. Yet, Lord, we are missing out. We are missing our lives. We are walking through, seasons of life that we may just be missing it all. We're just seeing what's the thing that's pulling at us. That's what we're seeing. We're not seeing all the blessings that You have for us.

And Lord, we're tired. We are tired of missing out. We are tired of missing the lives, the great lives You have for us. We're tired of just seeing only the thing that's pulling us away. Lord, I ask that You would capture our attention, You would bring us back, bring our, our vision back to You, our eyes back to You, our thoughts back to You, our attitudes, [00:23:00] our motives, everything back to You, Lord.

These hearts of ours, we know that they're, they are not, uh, pure as we, we want them to be. Clean out our hearts, Lord. Show us, Father, what is it that's pulling us away from You and from the life that You, life that You have for each one of us. Show us, Lord. Open our eyes to see it today. Not to fix it today, but just to see it.

We want Your will for our lives, not, not ours. Sometimes we think we know better, but we know that You know better. So Lord, we give You ourselves today. Do a mighty work within us. Change our hearts from the inside out. Open our eyes to see Your truth. We love You so much, Lord, and we are so, so grateful for You.

Thank You. In Jesus' name, amen.[00:24:00]

I'm really glad that we could spend this time together today. And I would love to have coffee with you sometime. I would absolutely love it. Or tea or whatever we wanna drink.

But I just, I wanna thank you for joining me here today, and I want to remind you that God has good things in store for you. God has good plans and purposes and, and yeah, the, the, the, the condition of our hearts can get in the way of that. The things of this world can get in the way of that. But God loves you so very much that He is gonna keep ... He's gonna stay with you. He's gonna keep wanting to get your attention, trying to get your attention, and mine too. He's not gonna leave us or forsake us, and His Word - is very clear about that.

But if you're maybe realizing today for maybe the very first time ever of what's pulling your heart away from what's important, and you are ready to fully

[00:25:00] step into the life that Jesus came to give you, well, one of the ways that women find hope again is, is through Abundant Life Mentoring. Abundant Life Mentoring, I designed it, um, to not be about fixing your life. That's not what it's about. Only, only Jesus can fix us, right? And it's not, it's not making your life perfect. But what it's about is having someone to walk alongside of you, to ask the good questions, the questions that need to be asked to, to point you back to God's truth, and to help you realize that the kind of life God has for you is right here and right now.

And if you've been wishing that there was a place where you could just continue these kind of conversations and maybe feel like you're having coffee with one another, with each other, um, with other women who, who are longing for the, the similar things. Well, I'm [00:26:00] excited to tell you that enrollment for my brand new, what I'm calling Abundant Life Together, is-- it's a mentoring group. And enrollment is open now. Beginning in September, we will gather each month to encourage one another, to grow in our faith. I'm so excited about that. To, to learn what, what it looks like to live the abundant life Jesus has for us. Not someday, but right in the middle of our everyday lives.

If either one of these, Abundant Life Mentoring or the Abundant Life Together group sounds like something your heart has been longing for, well, I would love to invite you to learn more. You can find all the details on my website, whether it's through one-on-one mentoring or through the Abundant Life Together, it would be just a joy and an honor to walk alongside you.

And one last thing before you go. If today's episode encouraged you, [00:27:00] would you just do me a quick favor? Think of one woman who might need this reminder today. Maybe she's just overwhelmed with a lot. Maybe she's waiting for life to get easier, and she doesn't really even understand how she's missing her life, but she knows she is. Maybe she's, she's just so bogged down with how she feels like this is just the way her life is gonna be for the rest of her life. Would you text this episode to her or share it on social media? Someone needs the reminder that there is more to life than this. There's more to life than just missing life. And you never know how God might just use a simple act of encouragement to remind another that He is here for her, and He loves her, and sees her, and knows her.

And if today's conversation resonated with you, I would love to hear from [00:28:00] you. That would just bring me so much joy. I love to hear anything that you would have gleaned from this episode. Send me a message. You can even leave a review if you're feeling extra generous. And, uh, tell me what

spoke to your heart. I read each and every one, and I pray for you at the same time. But each and every message I get encourages me more than you know.

So thank you. Thank you for being here every single week. Even if you miss one, thank you for being here. It truly means so much to me.

And as we've talked today, I don't know what's been pulling on your heart. I wish I could tell you, but God knows. You know, maybe it's the pressure to keep up. Maybe it's worry. Maybe it's always thinking about what's next. Maybe it's something completely different that we haven't even talked about today.

But God is with you. He, He's gonna-- He's [00:29:00] revealing this to you, not to shame you, but because He, He just loves you so much, and He doesn't want you to miss the life He has given you. Awareness is where change begins.

Next week, I invite you back. We're gonna be talking about what happens after this. Once we recognize what's been pulling us away, how do we return? What do we do? How do we get back to living the lives that God has for us? - With the kind of peace that, that Jesus offers. And even when life is full and the world keeps pulling at us, we're gonna be talking about all of that. So I hope that you will join me next week for that conversation too.

Until then, may God help you notice the life that He's giving you, draw your heart back to what truly matters most, and remind you that His abundant life is, isn't waiting somewhere in the future. It's right [00:30:00] here, right now, an invitation that He's extending to you today. So thank you for being here. I am just so happy that you are.

I am praying for you. 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.