

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## **148. You May Be Living Distracted Lacking Joy and Peace**

You are listening to episode 148 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, You May Be Living Distracted Lacking Joy and Peace. Welcome to the podcast! Thank you for tuning in today. We've been discussing over the past number of weeks indications we may be living distracted. We took a detour from them last week with our guest episode with Heather Jeffery (wasn't she a great guest, by the way?), but we're back with the fourth indication of living distracted today. Are you lacking joy and peace? In this episode we discuss how this can suggest distractions are running and ruling our lives, and how we can find out. I invite you to hang with me here for these next minutes and together we'll find some help and hope for our real lives today. Let's get into this episode.

I stood in front of the crowd of 125ish women and asked them the question I'll ask you in a couple of minutes. I was stunned at their answers. In fact, I wasn't quite sure how to respond. Yet, I was the one who was leading this talk, and I needed to keep the conversation going. But all I could think of was that I wanted to stop and go around to each woman in the room and give her a hug.

I knew how they felt. I had been there before. And maybe you have too. Maybe you're there right now. The thing is, many of us are walking around with no joy and pace, and we're not aware that we are!

**One big indication of living distracted is we've lost our joy and peace.**

Have you lost yours?

Let's find out. I'm asking you the same question I asked the women who attended my talk that day. On a scale 1 to 10 (10 being the highest), rate your personal joy and peace right now.

When I asked the women sitting in front of me that day to share their number out loud, many responded with 1s and 2s. A couple responded with zeroes, but I'm guessing many more weren't brave enough to voice their low numbers. I looked one of these women straight in the eye and quickly whispered in my head a prayer for her. Her eyes looked empty, and her posture reflected her number. My heart ached for her, and I desperately wanted God to reach her.

The thing is, the more distracted we are living, the lower our number will be. Because distractions rob us of our purpose, our hope, and they keep us sidetracked from following God's plans for our lives. And when we're sidetracked, the joy and peace God gives us gets buried. Also, distractions cause us to carry burdens we were never meant to bear, and they keep us from enjoying the abundant life Jesus came to give us. They are effective at keeping our focus on less important matters in life. So, it's no wonder when we're living distracted our joy and peace disappear.

**So, what is your number?**

Is it low or is it high? It can vary day to day, yes, but so often we aren't aware of our abundance or lack of joy and peace until we pause to rate them. We've not been taught or have never thought to inquire. I mean, who pauses throughout the day and asks, "Is my joy and peace high right now or low?" I'll tell you who does. Right-Now Women do this because it makes a difference. Right-Now Women understand the importance of acknowledging where we are so we can keep focused on what's important in this right-now moment. We adjust in our present circumstances to keep in step with God and His plans and purposes for our lives. And we fully understand how distractions will continue to try to steer us off course of where God is leading us.

The more we do this activity of checking our joy and peace, the better we will get at it. And pretty soon we won't even need to pause and ask ourselves because we'll know when our joy and peace begin to wane. Once we become aware, however, we can gauge if distractions are pulling us away from God's best for our lives. And if they are, we can do something about them.

**I'll give you some simple examples of how I experienced this recently.**

The other day I woke up after an awful nightmare. I'll spare you the details, but that nightmare impacted my first waking thoughts negatively. Waking up in a bad mood doesn't really describe how foul my mood was right then. Joy and peace were not present. But I knew enough to not stay in that mood. While lying in bed I silently prayed. I asked God to remove the nightmare from my mind and replace it with His thoughts and what He would want me to think. I asked Him for His joy and peace.

My thoughts were my distraction, and they were getting the best of me. Just because we think a thought, that doesn't mean it's always going to be a helpful one. We can choose what thoughts we want to keep. This reminds me of 2 Corinthians 10:5 which reads, "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (NIV). I knew I needed to take my thoughts captive and obey Christ with them. My joy and peace returned, and I hadn't thought about that nightmare until sharing this example.

**Another example has to do with my phone and social media.**

I pressed share on a recent Instagram Reel and the post that followed it caught my attention. I spent the next few minutes watching other Reels and looking at others' posts. I soon realized my attitude was suffering and I began to feel agitated and disheartened without realizing why. Until I paused. Here, I had just spent twenty-five minutes on Instagram. What?? Before I did, my attitude was great. But after twenty-five minutes, my attitude was suffering, and so was my joy and peace.

The thing is, God is calling me to live the life He has given me, and to not be so absorbed in watching others live theirs through social media. He is calling me to be present and live in the moment, not to exist through my screens. Not that social media is always a terrible thing, but it cannot replace real, in-person, in-the-moment living. Yet, it and our phones can be some of the biggest distractions of our lives. I know that's not news to you. Are these distracting our lives to the point that they deplete our joy and peace? I believe they easily can. I had just experienced it.

So I closed out of my app and set my phone on the counter. Then I asked God to help me live in this moment and to alleviate the pull to be on my phone. I walked outside and left the phone in the house. My joy and peace returned.

**Distractions will always try to rob us of our joy and peace.**

But we don't need to let them win.

If we realize our joy and peace are low, it's a good time to notice what is taking up our time, what's pulling our attention, and what is flooding our minds. I also suggest carving out in your schedule some time to spend with God daily. That's the biggest and most important thing we can do to alleviate distractions and invite joy and peace back into our lives. And let me tell you, distractions are very good at keeping us from doing this. I know because I live it almost every day. But I am determined to not let the distractions win.

I don't want you to let them win, either.

To return to the story of the women in the audience that day, I connected with the woman I silently prayed for after my talk was over. She was lovely, but she was burned out. Distractions were keeping her stuck with overworking at her job, and her time with God had nearly halted. She ended up joining our last session of the *Right Now Matters Bible Study* online, and it was a joy to hear how God was meeting her and encouraging her through her study. She's glad she now knows that when her joy and peace are slipping, she can do something about it.

**Life is too important to live it without joy and peace.**

By the way, if you'd like to be notified when the next session of the *Right Now Matters Bible Study* begins, you can join the waitlist at the link in the show notes. It'll likely take place late summer or early fall.

If you live local to me, our next women's evening of encouragement, we call these events, "Real Encouragement *LIVE!*", is happening the last Monday of this month on June 24 in Cedar Rapids. We're learning how this world is in a hurry, but we don't have to be. We're halting the hurried life. If you live within driving distance to me, I'd love for you to come to this fun girls' night out with a purpose. Details and tickets are available in the link in the show notes.

Also, if you found some hope and encouragement in this episode, would you please leave a rating and/or review from wherever you are listening today? Be sure to subscribe so you never miss a new episode.

To wrap up today, I pray God reminds you in the days to come that He desires for you to live in His joy and peace, and when they begin to wane, that you will return your focus back to Him and His good plans and purposes for your life. Distractions will always be pulling at us, but our joy and peace are much more important. I'm cheering you on and praying for you today, friend. God bless you!

Links in this episode:

Episode 147, [Living in the Right Now Moment with Heather Jeffery](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:5](#)

Join the [waitlist for the next session of the \*Right Now Matters Bible Study\*](#)

Find the details of our [Real Encouragement LIVE! Event on June 24, Halting the Hurried Life](#)

[Access my Free Resource Library](#) for tools to keep you living as a Right-Now Woman