

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

154. When Technology Distracts You from Life

You are listening to episode 154 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, When Technology Distracts You from Life. Thank you for joining me here on the podcast today! Welcome! We are smack dab in the middle of our series covering what I call the "Big Five" distractions. These are the five distractions that were present among the women I polled when writing my book, *Right Now Matters*. We covered the past and the future in the last two episodes, and today we're highlighting one I think we can both relate to: technology. I invite you to hang with me here for this next short while and together we'll find help and hope for when technology distracts us from life. Let's get right to it.

Technology: we love it and we despise it, all at the same time.

Am I right?

I mean we love having everything at our fingertips. We enjoy accessing instant information, entertainment, social media, photos, and events from our devices in our pockets or purses. We binge watch our favorite shows, and we are able to work on the go easier than ever. Technology is our friend, and where would we be without it?

Yet, is it really our friend? Have we given technology too much access to our lives? The buzzes, dings, and beeps pull at our attention. Playing video games and watching TV allow us to escape the reality of our lives, and social media entices us for hours to watch others live their lives instead of us boldly living our own.

For many, technology is a huge distraction.

I'm not telling you something you don't already know or that you haven't experienced. It's not only a distraction, but it's also very addicting. I share a statistic in my book that 31% of adults say they are online constantly. I think this stat is generously low. This isn't our children, friend. These are adults! Sometimes I think we believe that our kids or children in general are online more than we are, but I'm not convinced that's true anymore.

Unless we are people who live unplugged, or what my husband calls "going acoustical," technology affects nearly every part of our lives. Think about it for a moment. We use it so often because it's just a daily part of our routines, we don't necessarily pause and consider its implications. How is technology affecting us and the lives God has given us to live?

Technology affects our attention, our mental health, and our relationships. It overstimulates our brains and is affecting our souls more than we realize. We expect quick answers and instant entertainment. It's conditioned us to anticipate receiving immediate results because we can access most any answer from

the internet in .0002 seconds--no matter what we're waiting on. We have a more difficult time than ever waiting for anything, especially God. Some say we're disciples of the internet, and the more I read, the more I believe that could be true.

Technology robs us of our sleep, our time, and our peace. How many times have you picked up your phone to do something, but something else grabbed your attention, and twenty minutes later you found yourself scrolling your favorite social media app? (I'm speaking from experience here.) And when you can't sleep at night, how often do you grab your phone to scroll to try to relax, only to awaken your brain even more by the images and lights your phone displays?

Now, let me be clear here, this episode isn't to bash technology.

(Even though I think I've done a pretty good job of that so far here.) But it's just to make us aware of how much technology distracts us from life. It's one of the biggest distractions I see today across the board. Yet so many of us use technology for our jobs, our livelihoods, our daily routines. I'm the Director of Communication for the church I work for, and my role there is to manage what needs to be communicated for the church. This includes digital communication, our website, and social media. So, every day I'm working in some form or fashion on online platforms. Every day I'm on our website or social media. I'm grateful for the technology we have.

But I've forced myself to set boundaries after feeling so engulfed by it during a past season. I've even set timers to limit my exposure to it. This is what I've found to be true: technology is a good thing, but it must be partnered with boundaries. Otherwise, it can take over. I'll give you some examples.

The other evening, we were out to dinner. A man and woman were sitting across from each other not far from us. They were both on their phones the entire dinner, except for when they ordered their food. They rarely said a word to each other.

Another example happened at a restaurant while we were on vacation in March. A family sat near us during dinner--a man, a woman, and three kids. After they ordered their food, the woman (I assumed, the mom) lifted three devices from a bag. One for each child. The children sat for the rest of the dinner staring at the devices without muttering a word. Even while eating their chicken nuggets and fries. The man and woman conversed with each other, but the children were immersed in whatever they were watching on the devices.

Without placing judgment on either of these involved parties, both scenarios saddened me. These are just two instances of how technology distracts us from life. I'm guessing you've witnessed instances of technology taking over, too. Maybe even with your own experiences.

Not to mention how the buzzes, dings, and beeps interrupt our workflow or our thought processes. Or how the TV keeps us from doing the things we're called to do. Or how video games take us to another world to escape the one we live in. I think we both can agree technology can control our lives if we let it.

What do we do when technology distracts us from living the abundant lives Jesus came to give us?

On Day 10 in the *Right Now Matters Bible Study*, the companion to my book, *Right Now Matters*, I offer a small quiz to help decipher if technology is a distraction in our lives. In fact, why don't we just pause to take this three-question quiz now. Just answer these with a yes or a no.

1-Do you feel you cannot live without technology? yes or no

2-Do you panic when you can't find your device or phone? yes or no

3-Do you spend more time immersed in technology than anything else in your day? yes or no

How did you answer? If you answered yes to any of these three, I encourage you to take them to God and ask Him to help you begin the process of overcoming this distraction of technology. Ask Him to reveal to you tangible ways to master this distraction. God does not want you or me to live under the burden of the bondage of technology (or of anything else, for that matter). He's the one who can help us break free from it, to live the abundant lives Jesus came to give us.

You and I desire to live that kind of life, don't we?

Paul's words speak loudly to me in 1 Corinthians 6:12. In TLB translation it reads, "I can do anything I want to if Christ has not said no, but some of these things aren't good for me. Even if I am allowed to do them, I'll refuse to if I think they might get such a grip on me that I can't easily stop when I want to."

These words of Paul addressed the issue of sexual immorality of the day, but we can apply them to anything that is beyond the scope of God's best for us, including the distraction of technology. If technology has such a hold on us that we can't stop when we want to, it's time to do something about it. Now. And the hope here is this: we can. We control how much we're on our devices, or how much we watch TV, or how many video games we play. It's wise to set limits--and boundaries--for us when it comes to technology. It's okay to turn our devices off for a time or to set them aside.

We can give ourselves permission to not be on them 24/7.

When we do, after the shock has worn off and we've adjusted to less time on our devices, we will find peace, less stress, and more joy. Our sleep will improve. Our relationships will improve. And our mental state will improve. Our lives overall will improve. Try it, friend. I think you'll be amazed.

As we discuss these distractions, I invite you to pick up my book, *Right Now Matters: Empowering Right-Now Women in a Culture of Distraction*. I wrote it for us who may struggle with distractions in life (isn't that all of us??), and who are missing priceless moments happening right in front of us because of them. It's encouraging to hear from women that they had no idea just how distracted they have been living until they read *Right Now Matters*. You can find it and the companion Bible study in the link in the show notes.

Also, we will be resuming our *Right Now Matters Bible Study* group sessions in the fall. The *Right Now Matters Bible Study: A 28-Day Guided Adventure to Living as a Right-Now Woman* can be done on your own or in a group. I have to say it's much more fun walking through it with other women. I host these both online and in person. If you'd like to be notified of the next sessions, find the link in the show notes to join the waitlist. They will likely begin in September.

If you found some encouragement and hope in this episode today, would you please leave a rating and/or a review from wherever you're listening? This might just help another find this encouragement too. Subscribe if you haven't already to never miss an episode.

In closing, just because we use technology every day, it doesn't mean we have to be distracted by it or addicted to it. With healthy boundaries and a proper perspective in using technology, it can be our friend. I'm praying for you and for me regarding this distraction today. As I say often, life is too important to live it distracted. Thanks for tuning in today, friend. God bless you!

Episode 152, [How to Live Now When You Are Stuck in the Past](#)

Episode 153, [How to Stay Present When the Future Distracts You](#)

[1 Corinthians 6:12](#) TLB

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