

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

155. When You Are Your Own Biggest Distraction

You are listening to episode 155 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, When You Are Your Own Biggest Distraction. Welcome to the podcast today! Thanks for tuning in. We are in a series covering what I call the "Big Five" distractions. These are the five distractions that I found were common among many women when I was writing my book, *Right Now Matters*. In fact, I dedicate a full chapter to these five distractions. In the past three episodes we've looked at the past, the future, and technology. Today we highlight an interesting and hidden distraction many don't realize: our thoughts/ourselves. Are you your own biggest distraction? Let's get into this episode to find out and receive encouragement and hope.

Distractions keep us from living the abundant life Jesus came to give us. They keep us from following what He's calling us to do. They also influence us in ways to be ineffective and inefficient in life. Sometimes we or our thoughts can distract us from what's important, but we may not realize our biggest distraction may lie within us. Here are three questions to consider:

1. Do you or your thoughts confound, mislead, or trouble you as of late?
2. Do your thoughts throughout the day often distract you?
3. Are you constantly thinking, planning, and pondering?

If you answered yes to any of these, let's dig a little deeper and see what God may be trying to show us regarding distractions in our lives. Let's be open to His leading and guidance today.

Does anyone want to be known as her own biggest distraction? I doubt it. But I remember the day my friend said those very words to me. She said, "I'm my own biggest distraction." She knew it because her thoughts carried her to places that were unproductive, ineffective, and unhelpful. Her thoughts wandered more often than not. She had a difficult time following through on what she set out to do. She felt she had too many thoughts, and there was no way she could wrangle them in. What could she do to overcome this distraction of herself? I suggested that she likely wasn't her own biggest distraction, but her thoughts likely were.

Maybe you can relate.

Maybe you feel like my friend felt--like you are your biggest distraction.

You're planning, thinking, pondering more often than not.

Your thoughts are random at times.

You worry, then you pray, then worry again on repeat throughout your day.

You get easily distracted by thoughts that have nothing to do with your current activity.

You're prioritizing, strategizing, figuring things out much of the time.

You walk into a room and forget what you went there for.

You wonder what people think of you.

Friend, you're not alone with all your many thoughts!

This internal distraction is a common one for many women, and I reassured my friend she wasn't crazy. You're not crazy either, in case that thought crossed your mind with any other thoughts in this moment. We just think a lot of thoughts!

It's not a terrible thing to do so, by the way.

God created you and me uniquely. My friend went on to say she is a "processor." She needs time to process her many thoughts. She tends to get overwhelmed when she doesn't have time to do that or she has too many thoughts to process. Maybe you're not like my friend at all. You aren't a "processor," but you know full well your thoughts take you to places you don't want to go. Maybe you catch yourself sometimes, and maybe you don't.

It's kind of like that Reel on Instagram I've seen where the woman begins to unload the dishwasher, but as she's putting away a bowl in the cupboard, she sees a dirty towel on the counter. She takes the towel to the laundry room and realizes the clothes in the washer need put in the dryer. But she must take the load of whites that's in the dryer out first. She takes the basketful of socks to the couch to fold them, but then realizes it's almost time to make dinner. Reaching for the pan in her lower cupboard, she remembers it's in the dishwasher. Which is where she began in the first place unloading it.

Our thoughts can be like that. Pinballing from one thing to another. Sometimes we return back to our starting point, and sometimes we don't. But we can do a few things to help us with these pinballing thoughts of ours!

What can you do when you believe you are your own biggest distraction?

It begins with recognizing truth. It's important to remember that God also created our brains. He designed them how they are. He doesn't control what we think, because that wouldn't align with His character, but He does give us the choice to align our thoughts with His. And this is a prayer I pray daily. "Lord, please align my thoughts, my words, my attitudes, and actions with Yours today." This is such a simple prayer, but it helps me release my own will (thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions) to God's. His thoughts are always better than mine. Mine are futile, frivolous, and rarely focused on eternity. My thoughts tend to be scattered, confusing, or conflicting. God's thoughts are far above mine. His Word says it's so.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9 NIV).

I certainly won't argue with that. God's thoughts are always better than mine.

Also, we don't have to believe every thought we think.

Sometimes I think the enemy of our souls can effect our thoughts or cause us to think things that aren't God-honoring. It's then when I ask myself the question, "Does this thought honor God? Is this something God would desire for me to think right now?" Friend, we can choose to believe the thoughts that are helpful and hopeful and to not hold on to the ones that aren't.

This goes along with one of my favorite Scriptures. It's Philippians 4:8 and it says, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (NIV).

What if we centered our thoughts on these "such things"? The noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy things? Wouldn't that make a difference? If we did that, and got into the habit of doing so, our thoughts might not be so distracting. But I understand this is easier said than done. Especially when we have so much on our minds most of the time.

But with God's help and practice, we can retrain our brains. We can choose to think different thoughts than what we've thought in the past. Not every thought is a distraction, however. Only the ones that veer us off course and ones we know aren't helpful or hopeful. It's wise to decipher our good thoughts from not-so-good ones.

The other night my brain was so full, I couldn't sleep.

Thoughts of concern, planning, confusion, hope, and discouragement were jumbled together. At least that's what my brain felt like. So I did something that I knew would help. It's a tool I share in *Right Now Matters*. I sat up, took out my note book (I keep a notebook in my nightstand drawer), and I jotted down everything that was filling my brain. Everything. Every thought I could think. I didn't worry about punctuation or grammar. I just attempted to get what was in my brain out on paper. When I get to the point of no new thoughts, then I prayed about thing I wrote down. I handed them over to God. These were His to handle, not mine. Every single time I do this, my brain feels at ease and my body follows. It's quite amazing the difference, actually.

The next time your brain is overflowing with thoughts, no matter what time of day, I encourage you to give this a try. It truly is a helpful tool for me, and I think it will be helpful for you, too. What have you got to lose?

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. I also invite you to share this episode with a friend who could use this encouragement.

To close out our time together today, be encouraged, friend. You are doing great at focusing on living an undistracted life, even if you feel some days you are your own biggest distraction. You and I can take a few helpful steps in keeping our thoughts on track, which will help alleviate us becoming distracted by them. Remember, God is the only One who can help us overcome these distractions to live the abundant lives Jesus came to give us. As a side note, next week will be our monthly guest episode, then we'll finish this series with the fifth distraction, multitasking, the first Tuesday of August. Thanks for tuning in! God bless you!

Links in this episode:

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

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

Episode 154, [When Technology Distracts You from Life](#)

[Isaiah 55:8-9](#) NIV

[Philippians 4:8](#) NIV

Access my books: [Right Now Matters and the Right Now Matters Bible Study](#)

[Check out my free Resource Library](#), filled with tools and ideas to help you live an encouraged life

