

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## **157. How to Overcome the Distraction of Multitasking**

You are listening to episode 157 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, How to Overcome the Distraction of Multitasking. Welcome to the podcast! I'm grateful you're here. Today's episode is the final episode in our "Big Five" series, featuring what I call the "Big Five" distractions. I discuss them in length in my book, *Right Now Matters*, but over the course of the last number of weeks, we've been peering into them and how we can address and overcome them in our lives. If you've missed any of the previous episodes in this series, you'll find the links in the show notes. Today's distraction is one many people don't believe is a distraction. In fact, women have challenged me on my take of it. This distraction is multitasking. Many of us do this on a daily basis, and friend, multitasking is not our friend. I share why and how to battle this distraction in our time together today. So, without further delay, let's get right to it and find hope for the distraction of multitasking.

### **Distractions rob us of life.**

We know this, right? Distractions pull us away from what's important to focus on lesser things. We know distractions keep us from living the abundant life Jesus came to give us. This final distraction of what I call the "Big Five," is one some do not believe is a distraction because they multitask themselves through every day. But, friend, it's one of the sneakiest ones because most people aren't aware of what the distraction of multitasking actually is and does.

The other day I found myself multitasking--again. I was attending an online conference while creating social posts simultaneously. Good thing I caught myself, but not before the headache began. I was doing two things at once--or trying to. After I realized what I was doing, I became fully aware of how I missed important parts of the conference, and how my creativity suffered as I was creating my social posts--at same time. I did a poor job at both. Good grief! I know better, yet I still fall prey to this pesky distraction of multitasking.

Do you multitask? I don't know about you, but I was taught somewhere along the way that if I wanted to be more efficient and effective, I should multitask--do more than one thing at a time. So, I did. And I got good at it. I thought this was my answer to get more done in my day. Little did I know how I was taxing my brain and causing confusion while creating discomfort to my mental health.

While writing my book, *Right Now Matters*, I researched all I could on the subject of multitasking. I read books, articles, listened to podcasts, and even took to God's Word on the subject. What I found was startling.

Brace yourself, especially if you call yourself an expert multitasker. Are you ready?

### **Multitasking is a myth.**

There, I said it. Don't sign off yet; please hear me out.

Here's why: our brains are not designed to focus on more than one thing at a time. God did not wire them that way. Multitaskers believe they are able to do two or more things at any given time, but in fact, they are actually switching from one task to another rapidly. Even if it may seem they are working on tasks simultaneously.

The scary part of all of this is that this constant switching from one task to another tires our brains out. Researchers say it makes our brains less effective and efficient, and it causes us to lose our focus. That's why an antonym of multitasking is the word focus. One can't possibly focus while attempting to multitask.

And that's exactly what I experienced the other day trying to pay attention to the conference while also creating social posts. No wonder I was wiped out by the time I was done. Again, I know better.

I don't need to tell you that our cognitive health is important. Maybe we aren't so concerned about it today, but we may be in ten to twenty years from now. And how we take care of our brains today matter later on in life. As I watch someone in my life decline cognitively, I'm all the more motivated to keep my brain as healthy as possible now.

### **Because we can't go to the store and purchase another brain.**

Believe me, I sometimes wish I could! We can't get an upgrade to the brains we have now. If we don't take care of them, what will that lead to later on? God gave us these brains, and I say it's important to care for them. I'm guessing you agree.

The less we attempt to multitask, the better it will be for us--for our brains, and for our lives overall. And the less distracted we will be. Because, yes, the distraction of multitasking is a pesky one, and it affects many of us. I know I'm not the only one who struggles with it.

For those of us who were taught to multitask, we were told we'd be more effective and more efficient if we mastered it. Well, studies show that's completely untrue. Multitasking causes us to make more errors and strains our brains more than when we focus on one thing at a time. It's also less effective and more time consuming. One study showed multitasking takes as much as 40% more time to complete a task than doing it alone. 40%! That's huge!

If God wanted us to do more than one thing at a time, He would have created our brains to focus on multiple things at a time. But since He didn't, why are we trying to make that a reality? We're only hurting ourselves in the process.

"Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind" (Ecclesiastes 4:6 ESV).

Do you struggle with multitasking? Do you know?

Pay attention for the next twenty-four hours and notice how often you attempt to do two things at once. Now, I'm not talking about walking and listening to music at the same time or chewing gum while getting

groceries. I'm referring to two separate cognitive tasks that you are attempting at the same time. Like attending an online conference while creating social posts. Both take conscious effort to do. So just pay attention and notice how often you do this.

### **How do we overcome this distraction of multitasking?**

I'll warn you--as I'm living proof--it's easier said than done. But it can be accomplished with diligent effort and work. It all begins with our heart and asking ourselves some questions.

Is this a habit or do I feel more efficient by trying to complete two things at once?

What's my motivation to multitask?

Have I asked God to help me with my tasks, so I don't feel the need to multitask?

These questions may help us get to the why behind our multitasking. Sometimes it's more than just a habit.

The next thing we can do to overcome this distraction of multitasking is to invite God in. To ask Him to help us stop this multitasking madness. To show us how to complete the tasks we are to do and how we can care for our brains in the process. God will show us when we ask. He always does.

Then commit to doing one thing at a time. I know, it feels weird if all we've known is to multitask. It'll feel forced at first, because, well, it is. But after some time and getting over the initial shock to our systems, it will feel less stressful and more peaceful. We won't feel as rushed or as harried. And we'll have a lot more peace in our lives. Our brains will be able to focus more clearly, and we won't be living as distracted. "One thing at a time" is a wonderful motto to live by. In fact, I offer you a lock screen and other helpful tools in my free Resource library on my site to help remind you. The link is in the show notes.

### **We can overcome the distraction of multitasking.**

Our brains need us to. Our bodies are craving for less-distracted activities. There is a better way of life than living distracted because of multitasking. Will you pray with me?

*Lord, we are a distracted people, but You aren't. We are people who've either been taught to multitask or have adopted it to be a part of our daily lives. But, Jesus, You never multitasked. There's not one instance we see it in Scripture. You were on mission, always intentional, doing the work of Your Father, one thing at a time. We can't continue in this way. We know, God, You did not create our brains to do multiple things at once. So we turn to You for help today. Please help us overcome this distraction by Your strength and power. Equip us scale things back and do one thing at a time, to live one day at a time. Calm our hearts and minds and help us to focus completely on You and Your will. Thank You, Lord. We love You. Amen.*

### **I pray this is a turning point for us today.**

As we recognize just how distracted we are living, 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 are missing priceless

moments happening right in front of us because of these life distractions. You'll find hope and biblical promise tucked inside, and 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 group 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.

As we wrap up this series of highlighting the "Big Five" distractions, may I remind us, God has good plans for our lives. And they don't include living distracted. As we trust God to help us overcome these distractions, we won't live a perfect life, but we will cling to Him knowing we can't live the abundant life Jesus came to give us on our own. That's the secret to living as what I call a Right-Now Woman. A Right-Now Woman is one who does all she can to embrace the right-now moment to receive all she has for her right now. So we are Right-Now Women because right now matters.

Thanks for tuning in today, friend. God bless you.

Links in this episode:

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

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

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

4-Episode 155, [When You Are Your Own Biggest Distraction](#)

[Ecclesiastes 4:6](#) ESV

[Access the "One thing at a time" lock screen](#) and other encouraging tools in my free Resource Library

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

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Lefebvre". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.