

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

167. 3 Simple Ways to Slow Down Time

Does it seem to you as if 2024 is racing by at record speed? I kinda feel like it's been the fastest year on record! At the airing of this episode, we're in the middle of October already, and we only have eleven weeks left of the year! What in the world? I don't know about you, but lately I feel like the world is trying to grab me and suck me into its fast-paced lifestyle. Yet I don't want to miss one thing God has for me in any moment He gives me. And if I'm going to fast, like the way time feels lately, I'm going to miss it! If you're feeling some of the same and are ready to take a step back to reclaim and redeem your time, well then, this episode is for you. We're discussing three simple ways to slow down time. So let's get into this episode.

Last Saturday I met some long-time friends for breakfast. We all used to attend church together, but for varying reasons, we've all gone our separate ways. But not in our friendships. A common theme arose among us on Saturday morning: life is going by too fast! One mentioned how she feels she missed September entirely. Another one said she's sad how fast time is going. Yet another said the days are more full now for her than they ever have been. I agreed. Time feels like it's speeding up. This year has gone fast, and I don't think it's going to slow down any time soon.

They say, "Time flies when you're having fun." And I get how that works. But are we having fun? I see women more stressed and anxiety-filled than ever before. Something needs to change, friend.

Think back to last year at this time.

What were you doing? What did your life consist of? I look back to a year ago this week and I was preparing to launch my first book, *Right Now Matters*. It officially released on October 17, and here we are, already a year later.

So before I go any further, I want to pause and celebrate this occasion and this moment! Because life events are worth celebrating, yes? This week marks the one-year anniversary of the release of *Right Now Matters*! It certainly doesn't feel like a year has passed! What a year it has been! I can't get over the success I've witnessed in this book and writing it and getting it out in the world has truly impacted my life in ways I never expected. As I have traveled and shared its message these last twelve months, I've met incredible people and have experienced the same common theme everywhere I went. People are tired of living distracted. I've heard inspiring stories of how this book has transformed women's lives, and I'm in awe of all God has done through it all. All glory goes to Him!

If you haven't read it yet, the heart of the message of *Right Now Matters* is that we are a distracted people who are caught up in this culture of distraction. We are missing priceless moments of God, happening right in front of us, because of it. One key truth I'm realizing more today than ever before is

this: when we're distracted, time speeds up faster. When we're not distracted, time slows down and we get to enjoy it much more. We'll talk about this more in a minute.

So thank you for celebrating this moment with me.

And if you have been a part of the success of *Right Now Matters* or the *Right Now Matters Bible Study*, I am so very grateful. Thank you.

Back to our subject of time, however, I remember my parents used to say how time seemed to speed up as they got older. But they had the same amount of time in a day as we do today, and so did their parents, and their parents. Time hasn't changed. But how we fill our time has. Daily distractions have increased because of numerous variables, but if we strip all them away, we still have the same amount of time in a day as we did 20 years ago. We each have the same 24 hours. Does every generation feel like time speeds by too fast?

But as my friends and I chatted over our eggs on Saturday morning, God gave me a new thought. It's a given we each make our own busy, and if you've read *Right Now Matters*, you know how I feel about the word "busy." But we each fill our time with something. God revealed to me as I looked around the table on Saturday, that we each have more on our plates now than we ever have. All of us sharing breakfast together, we have many things in common. One is our kids are grown. That doesn't mean we're still not mothers, because of course, we are. But we're also now grandmothers who desire to still be active in both our kids' and grandchildren's lives. We all have jobs and responsibilities outside of our homes. Some of us are caring for our elderly parents. And some of us are experiencing midlife in ways we didn't expect.

Not to mention how the things of this world, namely technology--even though it can be a helpful tool--can distract us from what's truly important in life. We all know how things like social media can be a big time thief. For example, just the other morning after my breakfast, I went to my phone to check the weather for the day. Twenty minutes later, I will still on my phone, immersed in Instagram! Good grief!

Like I mentioned a couple minutes ago, we live in a culture of distraction. I mean, look around us. Distractions are everywhere. We can't escape this culture, no matter how much we want to or how much we try. Unless we become hermits in our own homes, with no technology or contact with the outside world. But we'd still have ourselves, and if you're anything like me, some days I'm my biggest distraction! So there's that.

This world celebrates and glorifies everything that's fast: fast food, fast cars, fast successes, fast talkers, fast movers and shakers, and fast speed limits. If we don't do what we can to keep up with the fast pace, well then, we'll likely get bumped into to or worse yet, run over. Who wants that? Maybe the world also celebrates fast times. Because slow times sound boring, uneventful, and monotonous.

But is fast the way of Jesus?

Did God ever intend for time to go so fast? And does God call us to live at such a fast pace? Does He desire for us to feel like the days are slipping past us? I don't think so. In fact, when do we ever see Jesus in a rush in Scripture? I can't find an instance. He was never in a hurry, but He was always intentional

about doing the will and work of His Father. I say if the Savior of the world isn't in a hurry, why do we need to be?

And like I already mentioned, when we're distracted, time speeds up. When we're not, time slows down. And I think this is a key reason why time feels like it's escaping us. We might need to pause for a moment and ask ourselves a few questions.

1. What is distracting me now or lately?
2. What am I missing because of these distractions?
3. How can I overcome or eliminate the distractions?

I'll go first.

What is distracting me lately? It's my schedule. It's too full. What am I missing? I'm feeling torn in many directions, I'm missing God's blessings that He has specifically for me because I'm always focused on what I need to do next. How can I overcome or eliminate this distraction? Something needs to give, and I'm praying God shows me what that is.

Whew. That felt good. Sometimes a simple exercise like this can release unknown stress inside of us and can help us work through overcoming the distractions that plague us.

Because the thing is, if we keep doing what we've been doing, we're going to keep getting what we've been getting. If we want to slow down time, then we must do something about it. It's not going to happen on its own. May we allow Jesus to be our example. He was never distracted.

I believe we can change this. We can't add more hours to our day, but we can live wisely in the constraints of time God has given us. I believe we can take steps to slow down time in our own lives. Ready to learn how?

Here are 3 simple ways to slow down time.

And they all have to do with Jesus.

Follow Jesus' example by living in the moment.

Jesus was never distracted. Ever. Even when he was hungry, tired, and thirsty. Even when he was betrayed by the disciples. And even when people hurled insults at Him while dying on the cross. No matter what He was doing, Jesus always stayed present. He noticed the needs of others, He shared the truth of salvation with others, and He was always about doing the work of His Father. A few examples of Him living in the moment are:

He healed numerous people in crowds (Matthew 15:29-31).

He let the children come to Him while He was in the middle of speaking to a large crowd (Matthew 19:13-15).

And He filled nets with fish after teaching a crowd (Luke 5:1-11).

He calmed the storm at sea after the disciples woke Him (Luke 8:22-25).

He turned water into wine at a wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11).

When we follow Jesus' example of staying present and living in the moment, we can slow down time.

We'll experience His peace as we appreciate His time more. Imagine that!

Follow Jesus' example by following God's will.

Time will always speed by us when we're not in God's will. What is God's will, anyway? It's God's plans, desires, and intentions for us. I don't know about you, but I definitely know when I step out of God's will. And every time I have done it, it has not served me well. Seasons of that in my life have been a blur. Time was fleeting.

God's will is always best for us. Always. A simple way to follow God's will is to ask Him to show us. "Lord, what is Your will for me today? Show me and guide me. Help me to walk in it." God won't make us guess. He will show us and guide us through the Holy Spirit living inside of us.

Doing so will help slow down time to the point we're savoring each moment as we walk with Him in His perfect will.

Follow Jesus' example by resting one day a week.

I titled these three ways as "simple," but not "easy." This one is a challenge for me. Friend, learn from my mistakes please. God's Word is very clear about a day of rest each week. It's not about obeying rituals and rules, but God says for us to take a day of rest--a Sabbath--for our good. We need it. And I've not done a good job of this most of my life, and it shows. I've paid for it physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. But I'm again turning my focus to take a Sabbath in this season of my life. Jesus took a Sabbath each week. It would be wise for us to do so as well.

The words the prophet Isaiah spoke to the Israelites can convict us and encourage us still today. Isaiah 58:13-14 in The Message paraphrase says,

"If you watch your step on the Sabbath
and don't use my holy day for personal advantage,
If you treat the Sabbath as a day of joy,
God's holy day as a celebration,
If you honor it by refusing 'business as usual,'
making money, running here and there—
Then you'll be free to enjoy God!
Oh, I'll make you ride high and soar above it all.
I'll make you feast on the inheritance of your ancestor Jacob."
Yes! God says so!"

Do you take a day off with God? When we do this (again, I'm not the perfect example here), as the Scripture says, we will experience joy and will soar with God. This is one of the most beautiful ways we can slow down time.

Friend, which one is God prompting You to do this week?

If you found encouragement and hope in this episode, please rate it from wherever you're listening today and share it with a friend. You can always find more at my website at julielefebure.com.

I believe these three ways will help us slow down time. It all starts with God, using Jesus as our example, and intentionally seeking God to help us align how we use our time with the way He desires us to. Life doesn't have to go so fast. Let's do our part in it today. Lord, help us. We need You. I'm cheering you on, friend. God bless you!

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

[Isaiah 58:13-14](#) MSG

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