

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## 171. The Truth About God and Our Discomfort

Last week we began a short series on how discomfort can make most of us uncomfortable. Because we like the comfy things in our lives, and we prefer comfortable lives. It's just natural to run away from discomfort, right? Whether it's the weather, or a situation, or a new thing that stretches us beyond our comfort zone, we desire to remain comfortable. In last week's episode we dipped our toes into this subject, but today we're diving in swimming into the deep end of the uncomfortable pool. We may just learn discomfort isn't such a terrible thing after all. At least I hope we will learn that! So let's get into this episode.

I got to thinking the other day of the many lies people believe about God and our discomfort.

Lies such as, God doesn't want me to be uncomfortable.

Since I'm a Christian, doesn't that mean my life will be easy and comfortable?

A comfortable life is a godly life.

Have you ever heard someone say these or have you thought them yourself? I have, before I knew better. *God wants us to be comfortable, right?* Well, maybe not. *I'm a Christian now, so my life should be easy.* I don't think that's the way it works. *If my life is comfortable, then I must be in God's will.* That's not truth either.

As in last week's episode, I suggested the truth that God cares more about our character than our comfort. I'm assuming that ruffled a few feathers out in podcast land. But, in looking at biblical examples such as Moses, Esther, Mary, and Paul, we see people who followed God's unique call on their lives into unfamiliar and uncomfortable places. God worked through them to achieve His plans and purposes in and through their discomfort.

### **Would God lead us today to similar spaces of discomfort?**

It's possible and probable. The more I study Scripture, the more I realize that anyone called to do anything by God will experience discomfort. I'll share why in a moment. *But isn't He a loving God? One who desires His best for us?* Well, yes. Yes, He is. Because He is, and because He does desire His best for us, could it be that maybe--just maybe--what's uncomfortable *is* His best for us?

Now I realize none of us in our comfy places prefer that possibility. I don't, and I assume you don't either. As I shared last week, we are fond of our comfort zones. We like what makes us comfortable, whether that's our favorite comfy sweater, our yummy comfort food, or our comfortable heated seats in our cars. (Yes, I've already turned mine on this fall!) But when we look back over our lives so far, we often see instances when God used discomfort to bring about good, even if it didn't feel good in the moment. God uses discomfort in our lives for many reasons. No, we may not like it in the moment, but if we take our eyes off of the short term and expand it out to a bird's eye view over the entire situation, we might just look at discomfort in a positive light instead of a negative one.

When God's involved and He calls us to go beyond what's comfortable and what we're used to, it's natural to feel uncomfortable. We don't feel uncomfortable doing something that we do day after day, right? No, it's routine or a habit or it's something we really don't think about anymore. But at some point in our lives, that routine thing was new to us and it likely made us feel uncomfortable.

### **It's kind of like potty training.**

This is front and center in my life as I take care of my two grandsons two days each week who are learning the art of this training. But I used this example in a post on Instagram last week, "Don't run from discomfort. Potty training was uncomfortable at one point in your life but look at you now." It's kinda true, isn't it? What's familiar isn't uncomfortable anymore.

For example, when God prompts us to do something that we're not used to, we naturally feel discomfort. When He calls us to step out of our comfort zones, we experience discomfort. And when He calls us to say something, do something, or change something, yes, we can get uncomfortable. Why? I have two thoughts on this, based on my own personal experiences: 1) it doesn't feel natural or normal, and it's something we're not used to; and 2) because it's what I call kingdom work. It's the act of using our abilities, talents, and gifts to serve God and His kingdom. It's working to build God's kingdom, present and future. So of course that will feel uncomfortable! Why wouldn't it as God calls us to serve Him and those He puts in our paths.

I fully believe because we're created by God, there's a God-shaped hole in each of us and our Creator wired us to do godly things. But sin entered the world in Genesis 3, and instead of us naturally focused on doing godly things and following wholeheartedly after God, we now have to contend with our sin nature wreaking havoc within us. Apostle Paul experienced this too and described it well in Romans 7:19 saying how he wanted to do good, but he continued to do what he didn't want to do.

He continues to say in verses 21-25 (NLT), "I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin."

We get enticed by the world and its ways, and as we daily battle our sin nature, it feels uncomfortable to step beyond the realm of this world to do the holy things of God. When I choose to do the things of God, I'm always met with discomfort. Because my natural tendencies will always lead me to not do the things of God. So embracing this discomfort and not running from it isn't easy. But it's absolutely worth it. For my good and growth and for God's glory.

### **I don't want to let this sin run and rule my life.**

I desire to let God run and rule my life instead. Again, He's my Creator. He knows what's best for me. I do not.

So, if I can summarize this into one sentence, it would be this. Discomfort is normal when we follow God. And this isn't a bad thing at all. It's a good thing. So instead of running from what's uncomfortable, let's

see it for what it really is. When we look at discomfort with a fresh view like this, it changes everything--our motives, our attitudes, our actions, our very lives. It changes us!

So, it's no wonder why God allows discomfort in our lives, right? It's no wonder He doesn't want us to live lives of comfort and ease. Would we rely on Him if our lives were comfortable all the time? I know I wouldn't. And I would slip ever so easily into the thinking that God was in my life to serve me, not the other way around.

I don't know about you, but some days I can make myself think I'm my own god, and I have to remind myself who sits on the throne of my life. Is it me or is it God? If it's me, then I'll do what I want to do, when I want to do it, and how I want to do it. I'll do all the things that make me happy and that bring me satisfaction.

But if God is on the throne of my life, I've given Him full authority to lead me to His best for me. I'm just to trust and follow Him wholeheartedly. It's kind of like thinking about who's in the driver's seat of my life. Me or God? If I drive, I know it's only a matter of time and I'll be running into obstacles I can't see and driving into unknown detours that will do damage. But if I let Jesus take the wheel, I may be uncomfortable in the unknown of where He's leading me, but because He knows the way, I can fully trust Him in the discomfort.

God often allows us to experience discomfort because it can be one of the most effective ways to grow and mature us, to deepen our faith, and ultimately to draw us closer to Him. This is the truth about God and our discomfort.

#### **Here are seven reasons why God may allow discomfort in our lives:**

##### **1. To Build Our Character**

Because God is more concerned about our character than our comfort, discomfort challenges our patience, humility, and integrity. It refines us, helping us develop virtues like perseverance, kindness, and compassion. Romans 5:3-4 speaks to this, saying, "suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (NIV). Our character is fine-tuned through discomfort.

##### **2. To Cultivate Our Dependence on Him**

When life is comfortable, we might rely on our own strength rather than turning to God. I tend to do this without even realizing it! Discomfort often drives us to lean on Him, recognizing our need for His guidance, provision, and peace. This reminds me of Proverbs 3:5-6, and The Message paraphrase spells it out for me. It says, "Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track." Discomfort can open our eyes to realize that we can't do life all on our own. We need Him!

##### **3. To Move Us into Our Calling**

God sometimes stirs us out of our comfort zones to lead us toward a purpose we may have otherwise missed. Uncomfortable situations can act as God's way of repositioning us for His perfect will, preparing us to fulfill specific roles, relationships, or ministries we may have avoided if we remained comfortable. I think of Esther as an example as God called her to a role that would save many lives "for such a time as this," as referenced in Esther 4:14.

4. **To Grow Our Faith and Trust**

Walking through discomfort tests our faith and pushes us to trust God even when we can't see the way forward. It stretches our faith, kind of like when muscles grow through weight bearing exercises. Our faith and our trust in God becomes stronger in times of discomfort. It's also in these times when we may learn to rely on God's promises and experience His faithfulness more fully.

5. **To Increase Compassion for Others**

Experiencing discomfort often gives us a greater capacity for empathy and how it feels to walk in another's shoes. When we experience pain, loss, or struggle, we're better equipped to understand and support others facing similar hardships. It softens our hearts and prepares us to minister to others with genuine compassion. As it says in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV), "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

6. **To Deepen Our Relationship with Him**

Discomfort often drives us to seek God more earnestly. In our hardest seasons, we may pray more frequently, study His Word more deeply, and listen more intently. These times can become some of the richest, most intimate periods of connection with Him. I can't help recall the season after my mom's death. It was the most excruciating and painful season of my life, but it was also the most intimate season with God. My life with Jesus became more alive, vibrant, and special. I'll never forget it. The discomfort of losing Mom drew me closer to Jesus.

7. **To Shift Our Focus from the Temporary to the Eternal**

This is a big one. When life is easy, it's tempting to settle and find satisfaction in earthly things. Discomfort reminds us that this world is not our home. It encourages us to set our hearts on eternity and focus on things that truly last. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 (NIV) says, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." Discomfort helps us focus on what's eternal.

**The truth about God and our discomfort is this: He may allow it to bring good into our lives.**

Which, if any, are you experiencing today? Has God allowed discomfort in your life, do you think, for any of these reasons?

Discomfort is rarely enjoyable, but when God allows it, we must remember He's not allowing it to punish us or to do it out of any other motive than for our good and His glory. Discomfort often has a purpose that reveals God's desire to make us more like Jesus, fulfill our unique calling, and prepare us for the joy that lies ahead. Its purpose is far beyond what we can see in the moment.

I pray this encourages you today, friend. If it has, would you please leave a rating or review from wherever you are listening today? Be sure to subscribe so you never miss an episode.

Are you ready to transform your self-talk and embrace God's truth in every word? If you live local to me, our next women's Evening of Encouragement is happening next week! It's Speak Life: Embracing God's Truth in Self-Talk, on Thursday, November 21, 6-8 p.m. in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. You'll experience an

inspiring, uplifting evening where we'll connect, empower, and encourage one another to walk boldly in faith. Tickets are \$25 and only 30 are available. You can find the details and purchase your ticket at the link in the show notes. I can't wait to transform our self-talk together!

In next week's episode we will look at how to navigate discomfort and uncomfortable situations and seasons with grace and resilience, so I invite you back next Tuesday. We'll close with the truth we began this episode with: God cares more about our character than our comfort, so let's care more about that today, too. As always, I'm cheering you on. Thanks for being here. God bless you!

Links in this episode:

Episode 169, When Discomfort Makes You Uncomfortable

[Esther 4 NIV](#)

[James 1:2-4 NIV](#)

[Hebrews 12:1-3 NIV](#)

Women's Evening of Encouragement, [Speak Life: Embracing God's Truth in Self-Talk](#)

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*Julie Lefebvre*