

183 Why Following Your Heart Is Not the Best Choice

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I'm Julie Lefebure, your host. Life is remarkable, sometimes raw and always real. And some days we could use a little extra encouragement for our real lives. Here, you'll find that, along with personal life impacting stories, helpful life hacks, timely inspiration, biblical insight, and a fresh perspective.

The Encouragement for Real Life podcast equips you to be a light in this world and to shine bright wherever God has you. I'm glad you're here today.

Julie Lefebure: Just follow your heart. We hear this saying all the time, don't we? But is this really good advice? Sure, these words may inspire us to take action, to achieve our dreams and goals, and maybe to [00:01:00] set us on the course to, follow what we feel like we're supposed to do, what we're called to do. Yet they can also take us to places that aren't God's best for us.

Today, we are uncovering why this popular mantra can lead us astray and what we can do instead to live a purposeful, God centered life. We will learn exactly why following your heart isn't Biblical, nor is it the best way to live. So, let's get into this episode and find some encouragement and hope together.

Julie Lefebure: I was on top of the world [00:02:00] in my sparkly periwinkle evening ball gown. I had just accepted a plaque on stage in front of hundreds of people that signified my achievement of leading a group of incredible women to over \$350,000 in retail sales for the year. I was living the dream. Diamond rings, fancy ball gowns, prestige, money, and yes, even a pink Cadillac.

It was a night for celebration. And as I glided down stage's steps, I remember I was about ready to go pick up my next diamond ring that I had just earned for that achievement. And I can remember thinking that I thought my life couldn't get any better than this. You see, God had given me this wonderful business opportunity to help women. He taught me leadership [00:03:00] and personal skills through it, as well as giving me a means to contribute to our family's household income, all the while staying home and raising our two young children. It was an amazing business venture, but somehow and somewhere

along the way, my focus had changed. It got caught up in things that shouldn't have been a priority in my life. I began following my heart and not my head.

Material wealth and possessions became my desire and my goal without even consciously becoming aware of what was really even happening to me. I had worked hard for my accomplishments, and even though I said I put God first, my heart was ever so slowly being drawn away from Him and towards the things of this [00:04:00] world.

Yeah, I was following my heart, living my dream and trying to take as many women with me as possible because I wanted this for them too. Until the moment that I realized that the things of this world were not making me happy.

Now, there's nothing wrong with owning possessions and achieving rewards and having money and all those things. But when those things take the place of God in our lives, like they were in mine in that season, they certainly aren't the best things in life, after all. They actually become the worst, because they're pulling us away from what's most important, and Who is most important. It was then that my eyes were opened. And I realized following my heart was not my best guide. And following my heart [00:05:00] clouded my vision of what was truly important and it left me feeling empty and sorrowful and searching for more. I knew there had to be more.

Now, I understand how people mean well when they tell you and me to just follow your heart. But from my experience, it's one of the worst pieces of advice that we could ever follow. After looking into this a little bit further, follow your heart is not found anywhere in the Bible. Nowhere. God hasn't said it. Jesus never said it. So who knows where this saying originated. But I'm going to suggest that you and I never voice these words again. And here's why.

The first reason is that the heart can be deceptive. This is Biblical right here. Jeremiah chapter 17, verse nine, in the New Living [00:06:00] Translation warns us this, "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things. And it's desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" Yikes. Yikes. And Matthew chapter 15 verse 19 in the New International Version reminds us of really what's in our hearts. It says, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander."

Oh my goodness. All of those things. They're hidden in our hearts. So we might think that our hearts are pure and right, but oftentimes our hearts can lead us to self centeredness or to temporary desires that really don't align with God's will at all. Our hearts will naturally always seek to please ourselves, always.

Our feelings like to convince us that [00:07:00] something's right or good, even when we know that it's not, or it goes against scripture. My experience here is a perfect example of this. because I knew better. I knew better than to allow the material things to take the place of God in my life. Yet, I followed my feelings and my temporary desires.

The second reason is that emotions are unreliable. Hmm. Yeah. Think about our emotions for a minute. Emotions are a normal and a God given part of being human. , He gave us emotions and they help us to experience life fully. But they were never meant to lead us. No. Feelings can change in an instant. One moment we're confident in the decision that we made and then the next, fear and doubt and uncertainty creep in. Emotions can shift [00:08:00] based on external circumstances like our mood, or the weather, yeah, or even what we had for breakfast.

Wow, I mean, think about how fickle our emotions can be from one minute to the next. One minute, I can be happy, and the next, I'm questioning my happiness. Good grief, my emotions can be all over the place some days. And scripture reminds us to be cautious about trusting our feelings and emotions. Proverbs chapter 28 verse 26 in the New Life version says, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool. But he who walks in wisdom will be kept safe." Yeah, that's beautiful, isn't it?

Our emotions can be a gauge, but not a guide. A gauge helps us identify what's happening internally. Like, why am I [00:09:00] feeling this way? A guide, however, tells us where to go. And that role belongs to God and His word, not our emotions. Good difference, right? Let's remember that. Our emotions can be a gauge, but not a guide.

And the third reason is that the heart can prioritize comfort over growth, and it probably will most of the time. Our hearts tend to point us to what's comfortable. They are naturally bent this way. It's kind of like having a plan to get up and exercise every morning. But when we wake, we're so comfy under the, the warm covers and our, our nice comfy bed that we just choose to stay put instead of getting up and getting moving. The bed is comfortable. Yet we know exercise is growth. [00:10:00] And we sometimes have to fight what's comfortable to choose the option of growth that we know that is best for us.

So God continues to call us out of our comfort zones. I share this scripture often, and it's absolutely one of my favorites. You probably already know it because I share it so much. But it's Proverbs chapter 3 verses 5 and 6. And in the Message paraphrase, it says to "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." I love that so much that I have almost memorized that, that, that translation, almost. There's one little part I get messed up on, but it's so true that He is the one who will keep us on track. We can trust God to lead us beyond our own [00:11:00] understanding and our emotions. And when we do, that's the best place that we can be fully immersed in Him.

So, the saying following your heart isn't the best choice, is it? We just proved it with those three reasons.

So let's choose these behaviors instead. The first one is to seek God's wisdom. You probably already knew that I was going to say to start with God, right? Cause that's what I always say. He is always the answer. God is always the answer. God has equipped us with logic and wisdom and knowledge. Yes. We are wise people, right? We know a few things. And if we have some years behind us, we've, we've had some experiences. But our wisdom will never come close to God's wisdom. Never. And we will every time fool ourselves [00:12:00] when we only rely on our own wisdom in making decisions and in living out our everyday lives. But God's wisdom will always be greater than ours. Always. And did you know that we can ask for God's wisdom? And if we do ask for it, He will give it to us?

Did you know that? Well, in the book of James, chapter 1, verse 5, in the New International Version, it states this, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all, without finding fault and it will be given to you." You know, when we seek God and His wisdom, in our desires through prayer and reading scripture, He can reveal whether these desires align with His perfect plans for you and for me and for His will.

Is this his will? He will show us. Seeking God first [00:13:00] is the wisest thing we can do instead of quote, following your heart. So let's do that today.

The second is to guard your heart. Another great verse in a wonderful chapter, um, Proverbs 4 verse 23 in the New International Version reminds us of this truth. It says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Yeah. Wow. Think about that. But what does it mean to guard your heart? Well, it's being intentional about what you allow to influence your thoughts, your emotions, and your desires. Everything we do flows from the condition of our hearts. Everything. If our hearts are filled with unchecked emotions, unhealthy desires, or worldly influences, well, it will lead [00:14:00] us to unwise decisions or spiritual stagnation. Or even just decline in our lives.

So, for an example, if we're constantly feeding our hearts with things that contradict God's truth, whether that's through media or relationships, or even our own self talk, our decisions will start reflecting those things, reflecting those influences rather than God's wisdom. So, it's wise to filter our influences, to take every thought captive, to stay rooted in God and in His truth and continuing to pray for wisdom and discernment.

And the third is to align your heart with God's will. Again, because our heart will always seek to please ourselves. It always will. It's not naturally bent to please God or please other people. And so, [00:15:00] pleasing ourselves isn't always what's truly best for us, is it? But surrendering our hearts to God helps us desire what He desires. It's wise for us to remember His desires will always be the best for us, rather than our own desires.

And this reminds me of Psalm chapter 37, verse 4 in the New International Version, which reads, "Take delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." I love that verse. When you and I prioritize our relationship with the Lord above all else, we find joy, contentment, and fulfillment in God Himself.

This is how we take delight in the Lord. And as we do this, our desires will naturally conform to His. That's so encouraging, isn't it? Focusing on God's will [00:16:00] is better than following our hearts.

So to circle back regarding my experience that I shared at the beginning of this episode, I still own this business today. But back then, after my realization of choosing material things over God, I pulled back from the striving and the achieving, and I allowed God to just strip away from me everything that I had put ahead of Him. It was a very painful season. Yeah, it was a very painful season. But you know, it's one that changed my heart and my life forever. And I'm so grateful, still today, for this lesson. Following my heart will always get me in trouble. But following God will always lead me to an abundant life.

Friend, are you feeling stuck or [00:17:00] stagnant in your life or in your faith? Would you welcome a trusted friend who could come alongside of you to guide you in uncovering the fullness of life that God offers? Well, I am soon offering personalized mentoring designed to help you refresh your faith, renew your mindset, and embrace the abundant life God promises. So stay tuned in the next days to come for more information. More will be coming soon. A vibrant, faith filled life is waiting for you.

And who in your life could use some encouragement? Think about that person. Well, I invite you to share this with her, and you never know what one word from someone can help someone else. So I invite you to share this with her, to share this with your social media, on your platforms, if you found encouragement in this episode today.

And please consider leaving a rating and a review [00:18:00] of this episode from wherever you're listening today. And subscribe so you never miss a new episode. I also remind you that we are on YouTube as well.

So in closing, let's recap and remember that following your heart is not the best choice. The heart can be deceitful, emotions can be unreliable and the heart can prioritize comfort over growth. But the better way to live and make decisions is found in seeking God, in guarding our hearts and aligning our hearts with God's will.

Today, let's begin to trust God to lead us and to trust His will over our feelings, over our emotions, over anything else. He has good plans for your life and mine, friend. And I invite you to pray this week about that decision that you're wrestling with or to [00:19:00] seek God regarding that thing that you want to do, but you're not quite sure if you should. Take some time to journal. This is a great opportunity to journal your thoughts and maybe to journal some ways that you can practically guard your heart.

I welcome you to share your thoughts and any related experiences that you have on my social media or message me directly on my website. Those links will be in the show notes. And hearing from you would be a wonderful gift and I would love it.

So thanks for tuning in. Next week we are diving into how we can grow a heart for God by cultivating a deeper relationship with Him. You won't want to miss this one. So friend, thanks for tuning in. And God bless you.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. You can find more at JulieLefebure.com and until next time, [00:20:00] stay encouraged.