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Week six: WFL

Randy Robison and Tammy Trent

Jennifer Rothschild #1

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. Tammy Trent is with me. And I'm excited Tammy. I have a lot of favorite guests, but this is one of my favorite favorites.

TAMMY: Me too! Me too!

RANDY: She is the founder of Fresh Ground Faith and the host of the 4:13 podcast, Jennifer Rothschild. So good to see you again.

JENNIFER: It is so good to be back on *Life Today*.

RANDY: Now, you're always very insightful and uplifting and encouraging. You've got this new Bible study on the book of Amos. Well, I read Amos last night and it's got plagues and famines and meat hooks.

JENNIFER: It's pretty bad news.

RANDY: What did you find in there that made you go, we should do a Bible study on this.

JENNIFER: Well, Amos is not the book that most people turn to and say, I'm going to have a devotional to give me hope this morning.

RANDY: Right, my pages were sticky.

[Laughter]

JENNIFER: It's not an easy book. Well, first of all, I have a crush on the minor prophets, and Amos is one of them. And so as I was reading through it, I was so enamored by it. I knew if God is this beautiful God of love that there had to be love embedded in the book of Amos. And so as I was reading it, just like you, Randy, it was condemnation after condemnation after condemnation. And the Lord just basically downloaded for me what if—what if Israel had done what I asked? In Amos 5:4, Amos speaks for the Lord and says, "Seek me and live." So what if Amos had communicated that message and Israel had done it? Well, then it would have avoided the condemnation.

So it was as if the Lord said to me, just turn all those condemnations into invitations. When I began to read the book of Amos as a series of invitations, I realized, well, then if we accept these invitations to live faithful and justly and humble and prayerful, then we're going to live our best life. And so that's why I have looked at Amos now as an invitation to the good life.

RANDY: Well, that is fascinating!

TAMMY: It is fascinating, and I have to tell you, I was preparing for this interview, and I was watching all the videos of this study. And I was drawn, I was hooked. I was drawn in just as you said, and I wanted—how is it possible to live a good life? Is it possible to live a godly, good life?

And I love that you brought so many things out in this Bible study. Okay, a couple of things that I drew from it, to live humbly, you taught about that, living prayerfully. One of my favorites, living hopefully because I have needed desperate hope throughout my life in my own personal journey.

What could you speak to if I had said is it possible for somebody to live a hopeful life that just feels very hopeless and has been in a season of hopelessness and they don't know

how to get out of that? Is it possible?

JENNIFER: Well, I can say from my personal experience that yes, it is possible to live hopeful. I was diagnosed with a disease in both of my retinas as a 15-year-old girl and became legally blind, and very quickly after that became totally blind. So I have experienced what it means to live hopeful through the light of Christ.

And then I look at hope in the book of Amos, and after they had for eight chapters been getting bad news after bad news after bad news, it is like hope takes center stage and the lights come on and the music changes. And God says through Amos, "I'm going to repair the broken things. I'm going to rebuild these broken things. I'm going to restore the ruined things and I'm going to renew all things."

So no matter what someone is experiencing, whether it is a bad diagnosis, a bad relationship, or even just a bad day, because of Jesus he has repaired our broken beliefs, and our broken hopes. And because of his broken body on the cross, we have the hope of true spiritual and soul wholeness.

You know, our little boy, he was two years old, and he had brought home from preschool a pink balloon; it was not a helium balloon. And he wanted to take it outside and play with it. And you know what was going to happen. So I was trying to dissuade him, like "No, Connor. It's going to pop."

He wanted to so I finally said yes. So little Connor throws that balloon up into the air and it falls to the grass and he catches it. And then he throws it up again and it goes down toward the earth again and he catches it. And then he throws it up one last time and it comes down towards the grass and he doesn't catch it and it popped into a million pieces. And that little boy picked up all of those broken pieces and with his chubby little hands, he brings them up to his mama and he says, "Mommy, fix it."

[Laughter]

And that's what our lives look like. Like it is too many broken pieces to be fixed, but according to the God of Amos he said, "I will repair the broken walls. I will raise the ruins." And there is nothing in our life that is too broken that God cannot bring it back together, redeem it and restore and renew all things.

RANDY: You're right. I was reading through it, and I almost thought, I'll just let Jennifer explain it to me on the show. But I kept going. You know, I noticed that. I noticed that. I think even through all of the difficulties of life, his desire is to lead us to that good place, that good life that you talk about.

I did notice this, and Tammy touched on it, it seemed like one of the biggest if not the biggest thing that brought on the judgment, the destruction, was the pride of the people. You talk about humility. How do we—what are some of the warning signs of pride or some of the goals of humility? How do we get this just right?

JENNIFER: Oh, man! All of us have the potential for lethal pride, don't we? I mean the middle letter in the word pride is I, it is a giant letter i. And when it is all about me and I'm the biggest and most frequent thing on my mind, I don't need to think about it much, that's pride.

But what I learned, not just through Amos but through life because I've seen it demonstrated in people is humility, sometimes we think it is just an attitude, or it is just an attribute, somebody is humble. I'm convinced that true biblical humility is an action. It's not just an attitude, it is not just an attribute. It is an action, and it shows up in the way we love each other.

I was in the Dallas airport and because I'm blind, I always have to get assistance. And this happened to be a really bad night where there were cancellations, and the gates were changing. And it was like 11:00 at night and I finally got walked to this last gate. And I just knew, I'm about to get stuck because my flight is going to be canceled. And so the

guy from the airport who walked me to this gate, he sat me down and I was next to this couple. And this man asked me where I was going, and I told him I was going to speak at a Christian conference. And he lit up. I'm like, oh, yes! There is a Christian sitting next to me. I'm going to get some help. I've got a brother.

He begins to talk about, oh, well, do you know so-and-so? And do you know so-and-so? You know, we were just really relating, and then all of the sudden there is this announcement, "Flight such and such has been canceled. Please proceed to the gate to rebook." So at this point, my brother in Christ, who I thought we were like this, jumps up and grabs his wife and the suitcase. He looks at me and says, "You're so brave. Good luck!" And he left me!

The gate emptied. And so, finally, I do get some more assistance from the airline and I ended up in a hotel room by myself. I remember as I finally get into this hotel room, I just burst into tears. And I thought, what if my brother and sister in Christ who had been sitting there, who were so enamored by all the celebrities, talked about all the pastors and all the books and all the podcasts, but what if they had just had the humility to just love like Jesus and serve?

Well, then, here's the contrast. On the way back from that same conference, no kidding, I get into Dallas airport again, and the delays started. And the same thing happens. And so as I'm sitting next to this woman, at this point, I'm on the phone with my husband. I'm like, "Can you please book a hotel? I'm going to get stuck, I can tell."

Well, unbeknownst to me, she recognized my voice. She was Googling, I think I did a Bible study with a blind woman one time. What was her name? So when I hung up from my phone call with my husband she says to me, "Are you Jennifer Rothschild?"

I said, "Yes." I said, "We're about to get stuck here."

She goes, "I know." She is 80 years old. She says, "I don't fly much."

I said, "Well, listen. I fly all the time. I can't see, you can. We can share a hotel."

Her name was Mary. She did not know what she was doing. We get into the hotel room. She gets in her little bed. I get in my bed. Instead of bursting into tears, I burst into prayer, "Lord, thank you so much for providing for me through Mary."

And do you know what she said? "Thank you, Lord, for providing for me through Jennifer." And Mary was a picture of humility.

And so humility really is this action that we love people like Jesus. We come to serve, not to be served. And that is an invitation to live our best life when we live with humility.

TAMMY: Oh, my goodness! You have the best stories. The best things that have happened to you. Honestly, every time I'm out with you and you share some other story of how you've put makeup on the wrong place on your face, I literally can see it all, I can picture it all. But God has given you, Jennifer, such incredible sight for the Word of God; things that would never be able to see.

JENNIFER: Isn't he good?

TAMMY: Yes! He is so good. I'm so grateful. Even when you talk about Mary, it's like God knows just what you need at just the right time. And he will meet that need. Like keep your eyes open, watch for him, look for him.

JENNIFER: Yes, because he is there.

TAMMY: Yes! He is there. I'm so grateful for you and the gift that you have of like getting into the Word and it just comes to life. And then you present it in such a way that it is so practical for me. I learn so much from you. You are a gift to the body of Christ. You are a gift to me. I'm so grateful for the steps you keep taking in life, that you keep

fighting through those delays at the airport when you can't—when you feel alone, you can't see, you can't figure it out, but God keeps showing up for you. And I hope that in those moments you keep saying, God, thank you! I can do it again tomorrow. I can do it again and again. I'm so grateful that you do.

JENNIFER: Well, we are not of those who shrink back, are we? We are not.

TAMMY: No.

RANDY: Oh, boy. I want to get back to Amos a little bit because there are some other great lessons that aren't just obvious when you surface-read it. There is a lot—I think a lot of the judgment came on them, obviously, because of their actions and because they were not just in the eyes of God. And justice is this big kind of buzzword in our nation and yet, it should be the thing that Christians champion.

JENNIFER: Yes. Because God is the originator of justice.

RANDY: Exactly right. Exactly right. What did you see through Amos that applies to us?

JENNIFER: Well, I think I feel like a lot of people. I get what I call "social justice overwhelm" because everybody talks about it. We're not exactly sure what it is, if we're doing it right. I don't know about y'all, but the needs are so great. It feels like you can hardly make a difference. So we feel overwhelmed.

But what I learned in Amos is that social justice is not activism. It is righteous action fueled by love. You look in the book of Psalms and when God talks about the establishment, what the foundation of his throne is, he doesn't say it is love and mercy. He says it is justice and righteousness; that the foundation of his throne is justice and righteousness.

Well, that should be the foundation of our lives. And so when we live justly, and when

we live righteously, we become like that picture. It is one of the most beautiful pictures in the book of Amos; that justice flows like a mighty river and righteousness like a never-ending stream. So that means in the small and visible ways in our hearts that we truly seek good and shun evil. Because nothing that's ever going to be manifested publicly is genuine and has spiritual or any kind of merit if it doesn't happen in your heart first with purity, fueled by love.

And so when we live that way, I believe we live out the mission of Christ. And then it takes away so much of that overwhelm because I think of the disciples. Do you remember when the disciples were with the 5,000? And Jesus said, "Give them something to eat." They're going, "With what?" And so they just went and got what they could. They did what they could. They gave it to Jesus. And then through their empty hands, he flowed, and many were blessed.

It is the same with us. We do what we can in the moments that we have, and we live justly and we act righteously. And then, when we feel the overwhelm of God, I've got nothing about empty hands, that's what he uses to flow through. And that righteousness and justice will flow like a mighty river and a never-ending stream.

RANDY: I like that! I like that! I have a follow-up question if I may.

TAMMY: Yes! Ask it. Yes!

RANDY: Because the world's justice is oftentimes unrighteous, and it eventually becomes unjust. That's where it typically goes. So it is very interesting that God has justice and righteousness together. I see how this plays out publicly, but you talk about it privately. What is private justice?

JENNIFER: Well, I'll tell you what it looks like privately for me that I learned from the book of Amos that surprised me. I think there are two elements: Lament and repent. Sometimes we look at things in the world and think, that's not my problem or I didn't

cause that. But there is still legitimate suffering and injustice out there that whether we had anything to do with it or not, it is worth lamenting. And when we lament over human suffering that Jesus is broken by, then I believe we are finally positioned to act justly. But until we can feel a sense of lamentation over what's wrong in this world and how people are suffering, then we will never be affected. Yet at the same time, sometimes, when we truly lament it will lead us to repentance.

I remember I was a teenage girl, I was in the mall, and I was sitting with a bunch of bags around me on a little kiosk because my mom went to get the car. And I was blind at this point, but I didn't look blind. So the door opens from the mall, and I hear it and I naturally began to pull the bags toward me because I thought, they're in the way. And what I'm about to tell you is very painful for me to tell you, but it happened. I hear a young man's voice right after I moved the bags and he says, "You wouldn't have done that if I were white."

And I, as a teenage girl remember thinking—my mind raced. First of all, I thought, I couldn't even see what color you are. And I had the need at first to defend myself, but I didn't.

But later, over the years, his words echoed in my heart over and over. And you know what I feel about those words now? Lament. O God! What that young man's life must have been like that that would be his first assumption when a white woman moves her bags. That breaks my heart. Even though that wasn't my motive.

RANDY: A blind white woman.

JENNIFER: It broke my heart. So that is worthy of lamentation. And it is also worthy of the humility to say well, what if I could see? Lord, I repent. Humble me. Make me into the woman who has got her life so founded on justice and righteousness that I can love like Jesus and see like Jesus.

RANDY: That's good! I don't think I've ever heard that put quite that way, the idea of lamenting for suffering, even when it is not at our hands.

And Jennifer, we have an opportunity right now, and our viewers have an opportunity to reach out around the world to those who are suffering by no fault of our own. But we had the privilege of being called to feel their pain but then act and do something. Take a look at this and we'll tell you how you can do it.

On the mission field

TAMMY: When you lose someone you love unexpectedly, it can feel like your whole world is falling apart. It's almost too much to bear. If you know my story, you know I lost my husband in 2001 in a tragic scuba diving accident. I'd give just about anything to go back in time and stop that from happening. While I know God has never abandoned me, I've learned some memories stay with you for the rest of your life.

Recently in East Africa, I got to visit people with some very fresh memories, people who lost loved ones of their own. And in a way, I feel connected to them. My husband died in the water, and her husband died because of water and the lack of good clean water. Because the water they need to drink every day in order to live, well, it's killing them. Water that looks like this--and this. Water that looks like this.

These precious people don't have a choice in the water they drink. Right now, it is this, or it's nothing. But you and I have a choice, a life and death choice. Not life and death for us but for them. So will you please choose to partner with *LIFE Outreach* today? Will you help give Water for LIFE so that we can give them water like this.

[Talking and Laughter]

End of video

In the studio

TAMMY: It's so special. It's so special every time I get the opportunity to take a trip. It is something that I look forward to. It is so special. I think the feeling, Randy that I have every time I land someplace is how can I serve these people? How can I love them with everything that is in me?

You know I didn't get to have children. That was something that Trent and I didn't get to experience together so I think I find it to be such a gift each time I go into these villages. I think you'll see moments of me playing with the children. You know we play, we giggle, we laugh. And then my heart also feels so moved in those moments thinking that the hardship they're facing, many of these children don't even fully understand what's going on around them. When I walk around their villages and they lead me to their water sources, I watch them drink even at that moment, some of it, the most vile water I've ever seen. And there's feces in it, there's animals drinking from it, and this is their only water source? Sometimes I can't even wrap my head around it thinking, there's got to be something else. There has got to be another way.

How can God use me in this moment to help this village, to help these children, especially who are so vulnerable—especially under five, they're so vulnerable? And so many die from just simply drinking the only water that they have access to. It is always my privilege to tell their stories and to come back here and to put that piece together so you can see what I have seen and what I have experienced over there. That this is a real problem but there is a real need.

So yes, pain is real but so is hope. So what do we do about that? We join together, I tell you the need, I tell you what it's going to take, and then we step in and we change everything for that entire village for the rest of their lives. Why? By just drilling a well and giving them clean water for the rest of their lives? That's how simple the solution is to that problem.

RANDY: And the difference between clean water and contaminated water is life and

death. But you know the difference between the option of having to drink that water or not having to drink that water? The difference is you. We can't do this without our viewers' support. And that's why over two decades now we've drilled over—well over 7,000 wells in numerous nations in the most needy areas. And our goal this year is to drill another 350 water wells in 20 nations. Those places where, like the children you saw Tammy with, they very likely will become ill, and in many cases, they will die without clean drinking water.

But we can step in and stop that cycle of death. The average cost for a well is \$4800; that's when it's averaged across all the different places we work, and the different machinery required to drill to different levels. There are a lot of variables. When we average it out, \$4800, which is why we say your gift today of \$4800 will provide one well for life because on average they last about 70 years.

Now, not all of us could do that but there is something you can do. We're asking you to do it today. A gift of \$48 will provide clean drinking Water for LIFE for ten people. A gift of \$144 will provide water for 30 people. Will you do something today? Will you say, "I will be the difference between death and life for somebody?" Go to the phone or go online. Join with us. Give the best gift you can. Let's give life today.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: *Every day thousands of lives are lost to waterborne diseases, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through Mission: Water for LIFE, you can give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it's too late.*

With your gift today, you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year! Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten. \$72 will provide for 15. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

*With a gift of any amount, we'll send you *The Birthright*. This book is a liberating and life-changing celebration of your birthright as a child of the King. Discover the joy of coming home to your Father's warm embrace.*

With your gift of \$100 or more, we'll also send you the "Moments With Him" mug set. These two beautifully crafted coffee mugs feature scripture on the side, the perfect way to start your day and reflect on the goodness of God.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well, and request our new, inspiring bronze sculpture, "Consider the Birds" inspired by Jesus' words in Matthew 6:26.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: I hope you are going online or going to the phones right now. Your gift today will make a huge difference.

Jennifer, it is so great to have you. Okay, somebody that gets the workbook on Amos, where can they go to get the videos as you walk them through it?

JENNIFER: When you get the Amos, *An Invitation to a Good Life* Bible study, you automatically get for free all eight videos. They are streamed. And so in the back of the book, you see a code where you can watch all the teaching videos.

TAMMY: And they're so, so good! We love you and we love you! Thank you so much for watching. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*!