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Week 40: Rescue LIFE

Randy Robison and Tammy Trent

Bianca Juarez Olthoff #2

In the studio

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Tammy is with me and I know Tammy is excited because she loves our guests. I don't know if you missed the first program with Bianca Juarez Olthoff, that is on LifeToday.org, as are all of our programs. But we talked about this—oh, I'm sorry. Welcome back, you never left.

BIANCA: I never left. We're having so much fun.

RANDY: Great to have you. We left off last time. We're talking about this idea of *Grit Don't Quit* which is the title of your latest book. But I have a question for you. Is there a difference between quitting and moving on?

BIANCA: Oh, I love it. So for the person out there that's on the fence of whether or not I should stay or whether or not I should leave, there is a caveat in the book. And I quoted Kenny Rogers, "You've got to know when to fold them and know when to hold them. When you need to leave and when you need to stay." So we're going to dive into that.

Just a couple of caveats because on the last episode, everything was about we don't quit, we don't quit, we don't quit. We've got the strength of God, we don't quit. But I do think that there are some times where we need to remove ourselves for safety, or maybe out of a toxic work environment, or in the case we're about to dive into, what happens when maybe you move? Or do you realize that you've outgrown a friendship? Or there is a

transition that you know needs to take place? Or a season has ended?

So in writing the book I was like, I think people need to know how do we quit and when to quit and how do we quit well? And so this isn't part of the book but in the appendix of the book I do walk people through when is a good time to quit.

So to answer your question. Let's use a modern example. Let's use you as an example. Has there been a moment recently where you felt like whether circumstance or choice where you felt this no longer serves me, I shouldn't be here. Or maybe this relationship isn't good for me. Could you be our example?

RANDY: Yeah, but I didn't want to talk about Tammy live on the air.

[Laughter]

BIANCA: Well, we need counseling and prayer before this goes live. Okay, family?

RANDY: You know, actually, a few years ago, almost three years ago, my wife and I moved across town. And we could have made the drive back to the church where we've been for 19 years where I'd served, volunteered on the worship team, was close with the pastor; a lot of deep rooted relationships there but I felt like God wanted us to go into a new season which is a little harder the older you get and get rooted in a church closer. And that was a tough goodbye. But it wasn't a quit, it was a new season, it was a moving on. You know what? The church where I am now, God's just—it's been a blessing.

BIANCA: So, this is the perfect example because there was no animosity or bad blood. So what I want to walk people through is identifying when this season has ended and you need to transition. So people can say, oh, you quit that church. But you didn't, you transitioned and you transitioned well. So how do we know when a season has lifted? The number one thing I'm asking people, is do you feel released? It's one of the questions that I ask in walking people through.

I wish I could take credit for it but it was a coworker of mine. When I worked in a nonprofit organization I had mentioned, a global anti-human trafficking organization, the work in anti-trafficking is heavy and it is dark. And to be honest with you, I was going through a season of where I just felt this is too much. I can't do this. It's too heavy and I want to quit. My coworker looked at me across the desk and she said, "But are you released?"

I had never heard that nomenclature before. Released? What are you talking about? I didn't grow up in a church where that was regular language. And then she kind of provided some theology. Remember when Jacob was wrestling with the Lord and he wrestled and wrestled until the wrestling stopped? You need to figure out if God's hand is off of you because if God wants you to be here and you sense that he wants you to be here, you can't quit. And I prayed and prayed and prayed, and I knew I wasn't released from that job. So I asked a different question, God, if this is the place for me to stay, I need your strength and I need your grace because I can't do this in my own strength.

So for you, you sensed that that season was done. And what I love about your transition is that it wasn't like, deuces! Never going to see you again, pastor. Thanks for 19 years. No! You reached out. You had a conversation. You let them know the intent of your heart and you kept the bridge intact.

What I'm seeing a lot, especially in my generation and the next generation is people are dispensable. Jobs are dispensable. Churches are dispensable. Pastors are dispensable. And that's never the heart of the gospel—that's never the heart of Jesus. So we finished well. How you end one season is how you begin another season. I think the fruit that we get to see in your life in this new church is because you finished so well. You met with the pastor. You let them know in gratitude.

RANDY: There were tears.

BIANCA: Yes! Yes! Mourning is part of finishing well. So what I would love to communicate to people is yes, there are seasons where we can say this season is done. But can we do that well? So I provide a couple of questions. I think a framework for transitioning or quitting well.

TAMMY: What are those questions? I want to ask myself because I've been in a season before, I was in, years ago, a bad relationship. I knew that it was not good for me, it was not God's best for me. I didn't listen to the Holy Spirit's warning and I stayed in longer than I needed to. I finally finished well but I had to quit that as well and absolutely cut that off. We are not friends. No communication. It was not good for me. I could see the destruction down the road in my life had I stayed in.

And that case for me personally, I had to just quit. It wasn't even about doing it well. Like bye-bye! I'm done. I've stayed longer than I was supposed to kind of thing. But in the end, I saw how I actually did finish well because I finally listened and was obedient to the voice of God in my life. But for those people too Randy handled that well and that was kind of a different thing. Some of us are also in bad situations, toxic situations—

BIANCA: Whether it is relational or professional. Even spiritual.

TAMMY: Yes! Very much so. So yes, there is a way to handle that too. Is there ever a good time where you're like, you just need to split, cut this off, and move. Get away. Do you answer some of those?

BIANCA: There is a disclaimer at the beginning of the book where I talk about if there is abuse, if there is infidelity. There are very serious situations. Before diving into you don't quit, I wanted to give people some practical handles. Before we dive into this journey, use wisdom, meet with a pastor, a counselor, or a therapist to make sure you're making the right decision.

But the five questions at the end, whether we are transitioning and it is a good transition,

or we're quitting, we know this relationship is not for me, it doesn't serve me, it is not glorifying to God. And these five questions whether we're transitioning or quitting, I think everyone should ask. One of the questions is what exactly is frustrating me? So sometimes, we can't articulate a feeling. Maybe this is another question, is it me? So after identifying what exactly is the problem? Why do I feel this discontent or this malcontent? Why do I feel like I just want to walk away? Identify the problem first. You'll learn a lot about yourself in that process. And then ask yourself is the problem me? Is it me?

TAMMY: Is it Randy? Or is it me? Is it Randy?

BIANCA: Tammy, it's Randy. It's Randy. Randy, this is an intervention. [Laughing] No. But asking ourselves the honest and hard question, am I part of the problem? And sometimes, it's hard for us to identify that ourselves. So bringing in a trusted friend, I believe in threes, I bring in a trusted friend, a counselor, and someone who is like a mentor, someone who is older than me and who has no dog in the fight. They're not just trying to assuage my ego, they're going to shoot it straight. So I love the self-evaluation of asking ourselves, is it me? And having people speak into that as well is crucial in decision making.

RANDY: The inability to do that is why people repeat mistakes over and over. I think we all know someone who has been divorced multiple times and you go what is the denominator in all of these bad relationships? It is you.

BIANCA: And there is so much self-transformation that can take place when we realize that the situation or circumstance has come to an end, whether it is the end of a job, end of a friendship. In some cases the toxic, maybe even the end of an abusive marriage; asking ourselves what our responsibility is in this equation.

I heard this statistic that even people who are in abusive situations, we're not condoning abuse, but even people who are in abusive situations or toxic situations, there is a component of brokenness in us that chose to stay for that long. So we're repeating the

cycle like you said because we don't know our portion in the problem.

RANDY: That's a healthy thing to do regardless of the situation because you may find out no, they're the bigger problem or the circumstance is the bigger, the job is the worst situation, whatever. But God will still teach us some things about ourselves that will help us maybe not walk into that again.

TAMMY: We will keep repeating what we don't repair.

BIANCA: Yes! Yes!

RANDY: Frustration, that's something I've experienced more than once in my lifetime. I think God allows that frustration, that feeling just aah!! As a warning sign. Have you seen that?

BIANCA: I call that a holy discontent—a holy discontent.

RANDY: That's better than what I would have called it. What do you see in it? Because I've had to deal with it. My wife had to walk me through that.

BIANCA: So a holy discontent will awaken what you can't articulate. So you're feeling something but you don't have the language to articulate it yet. People will say don't trust your feelings, but the truth of the matter is feelings help us articulate a holy discontent. Sometimes feelings give us clues about what God is talking to us about.

RANDY: Well, see, had I—had I known then what I know now, had I listened to my wife sooner than I did, that frustration would have pointed back to me and allowed me to move on from where I was stuck and let God deal with the things in my life that he wanted to deal with. Because I think we look at frustration as a negative thing when it can be that wake-up call. And the problem could be me. The problem could be the situation. But whatever it is, I think we need to listen to that. That's what I hear you saying.

BIANCA: That is wisdom, Randy. That is like absolute brilliant wisdom, whether that came from God, your wife, or community of people speaking that. It's the truth. And that holy discontent can help us articulate and bring—this is step one of a self-evaluation: Is it me, Lord? Or is it the circumstances around me? Are you—my eyes that is not something of you or something unholy. Trust that. Trust that.

RANDY: And it could be both—a little of both.

TAMMY: When you talk about released, a lot of times I've used the word too, is my assignment done?

BIANCA: Yes! That's a great one. So this conversation going back to release, the Lord will call us into friendships, the Lord will call us into workplaces or even churches with an assignment. I do believe that. And so sometimes, what I'm seeing right now, again, especially with my generation and the next generation is that with a tap, a touch, a swipe we can get anything to our doorstep, we can get groceries at our doorstep, we can get delivery food to our doorstep. We can get inappropriate relationships to our doorstep. So everything is instant access. So the idea of having to face a problem, the idea of having to wait, or the idea of even having a moment to pause and think is this best for me, it's gone now. It is so easy just to walk away. To say, oh, this season is done, this job is done, that friendship is done. My morality is done. It is so easy.

So what I want people to do is hold on to the fact that the fight is worth it. It is hard but it is in that wrestle and it is in that fight that the best things inside of us are produced.

RANDY: When we feel released, as I did from that church that I loved, and it wasn't, and it wasn't—if it had been an abusive church, kind of to your point, Tammy, if it had been a real bad situation I would have just walked out the door and not come back. So there is a difference, right? But if we are somewhere like when you were working with the organization fighting sex trafficking, which we are all on board with, you felt released. Is

there a way to leave well that maybe some of us overlook, some simple things?

BIANCA: I love that question so much. I mean are you a professional interviewer because you really should look into that. It could be your calling.

RANDY: I have good help here to give me these. They're over there holding up signs.

BIANCA: I lived by an adage, you can never go wrong doing right. So even in maybe a bad church experience or bad work experience, I just believe you honor up, you honor down, you honor around. You do. It's hard. And it feels like death to self, but you want to know it's producing something in me that I want to value and like and love. I want to be the person that is a champion of everyone. Now I can champion everyone from a distance but I don't have to be in a relationship up close. Because if there is a toxic church environment, work environment, or friendship, I don't want to be associated with that. Honor is given, respect is earned. So I can honor somebody from afar.

RANDY: Okay. Say that again because so many people think I'm—that person, they did me wrong. A friend of mine was fired from a mega-church around here unceremoniously, wrongly, and I was like, man, that pastor is a jerk. But you know what he did on his way out? He thanked him for the time there. After he left, when people asked him about it, he only spoke—he didn't lie, but he didn't trash them. He honored them. And I even asked him, why would you do that? You know?

BIANCA: How long ago? If I may ask, how long ago roughly was it?

RANDY: Oh, gosh, maybe 15 years now.

BIANCA: And the fruit of your friend's life—

RANDY: See now that—if you want to measure it that way.

BIANCA: This is amazing because that is the measure.

RANDY: Not only that, yes, very fruitful, abundantly fruitful. Not just that, but that pastor ended up reaching out to him years later and asking him for help and he did it. He even—it flipped everything upside down.

BIANCA: And this is what honor does. Honor is, I believe, it's the hands of Jesus. Even when people hurt us, we can honor them well.

RANDY: They don't deserve it.

BIANCA: They don't! You can admit it. And I also, here's a small caveat. Your friend, he honored publicly, but there are certain places where we do need to grieve and honor the hurt and honor the shame that is accompanied with that. So whether that's through a trusted counselor or a small group of community of friends, I don't want people to hear me say lie and deny your emotions.

RANDY: That's the thing, he never lied about it.

BIANCA: But you can honor. Because honor is given, respect is earned. So honor is a choice. I get to honor people who have hurt me. And you know what? As God's creation, I'm going to love them from a distance. I don't have to do life up close but I will love them from a distance. And that's wisdom. And we're watching the fruit of your friend's life. And I'm watching the fruit of my life when I honor those people even still to this day who are still saying negative things about me. I choose to remain silent and I will love and honor them well.

TAMMY: Who are they, Bianca?

BIANCA: I will give you names after the show! No, just kidding! Just kidding!

[Laughing]

RANDY: That is powerful. Have you ever done that? You ever had to work through, I don't respect what that person is doing but I'm going to choose to honor them.

TAMMY: Yeah. I think all of us in ministry probably had at some time or another just—I certainly have but you're right, the measure is in the honoring and knowing that when we make the right choices, when we do the right thing that's honoring to God. Him number one, it's amazing to see the fruit come back into your own life. And it might be years later but it will show up.

RANDY: Can I ask a quick question? You said you worked for an anti-sex trafficking group. What did you take away from that? Because even though you were released from that, I'm guessing something stuck with you.

BIANCA: You know, with millions of people enslaved, statistics are staggering. More people are enslaved today than in human history. The oppression and the darkness, the sadness, and above all the sin of treating Imago Dei, the creation of Christ as subhuman, I walked away with such a sense of hope because I saw restoration firsthand. I saw what the power of a transformed life could be and it was worth every tear that I shed, every nightmare that I had, every horrific statistic, and every sad story that I read. It provided such a sense of hope and such a sense of belief in Jesus that he will go far and wide.

In the same way that A21 reached the globe for people who had been trafficked, I got to be a microcosm and see God's hand of faithfulness. And the best part was seeing a life transformed. So for anyone out there that just feels like everything has been taken from me, I feel emotionally enslaved or I'm on the mat of life and I just to want to quit, hang on. Hang on because your life transformed will bring freedom to so many people in your wake.

RANDY: Absolutely! And you know what? When you support Mission: Rescue Life you help A21 that she worked with, as well as our partners around the world in a beautiful

work. We want to show you what that looks like. Take a look at this and see how you can be a part of giving the hope that Bianca is talking about.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: *When we began bringing you the stories of girls trapped in human trafficking over a decade ago, you responded in a big way. Through the work of Rescue LIFE, we began to shine God's light in the very darkest places on earth. And when that light appeared, the evil ones scattered like cockroaches back into the crevices and corners that they came from. But they never stopped their terrible crimes. There is too much money involved. Instead, they have continued underground. Their progress has been slowed but our work is more critical than ever. Because the traffickers have been chased out of committing their crimes in the open, there is fresh fear among the girls to speak with us. Many don't want their faces shown because they're scared for their families if someone finds out that they're helping end this industry.*

But we want you to know that these girls, even the ones we can't show, they're real. Their pain is real. Our tears have fallen together on the same floor as they've told us over and over that they want freedom but they don't know how. Well, we know how.

Our partners all over the world are reaching these girls, in many cases, preventing trafficking altogether through education and border intervention. We're rescuing them through investigations and SWAT raids. And we're restoring them through safe houses and skills training so they can have a life and an income when they leave our care.

It is ironic that our success has made our work more difficult, but we won't be stopped—not until the last girl is freed. We need your help today more than ever. We need you to speak up for these precious ones who cannot speak for themselves. They're waiting and hoping for rescue. We can't let them hope in vain.

End of video

In the studio

TAMMY: And I won't stop talking about them until the last one is freed. I just got to take a trip recently to Central America and I remember going into one of our safe houses. I saw a table and a bunch of little girls sitting around it living life and laughing and eating. They looked healthy. They looked well. And I recognized that because of the environment they were in, they were safe. They were okay. They were on their way to being restored.

And I went upstairs into their bedroom and I saw the little bunk beds in that room and before we left, I remember walking—[Emotional]—I remember walking over to the beds just saying a prayer of blessing of new life and future on those bunk beds. And hope and freedom, because I think that's what we all want for these children, to be free as much as they want to be free.

These stories are real. The lives are real. The restoration and freedom are real and it is possible. We have a ministry here, *LIFE Outreach*, we know how to help them. We know how to reach them. We know how to go to the borders and stop it, to pull them out of there. And we know how to begin to restore their lives back, bringing them hope, telling them who they are in Christ. We've done this for many years and we're not going to stop. We will keep fighting. But we have a goal, we have a vision, and we want to help bring freedom to as many as we can.

RANDY: Absolutely. And what was that line from *The Sound of Freedom*? "God's children are not for sale."

TAMMY: No, they're not!

RANDY: Phew! Man, that one hit me. The interesting thing, when you look at the global problem, and it is a global problem, it's also a domestic problem, and we are doing some

things here in the United States to shut down networks, especially ones using online methods, and we're supporting homes to give women some training, a safe place to go, some training for a future. But there are a lot more support systems here in the United States—a lot more! And when you get into some of these underdeveloped countries that we're going to, there is no support at all. We are it. Well, you are it. And that's why we do focus a lot of our energies overseas because there is nothing else.

The way it breaks down is that the average cost, when we look at the overall budget of the program, we go how many do we reach? How much did it cost? It breaks down to about \$128 per child that is reached, rescued, and restored.

Well, Tammy, I'm excited because through a matching grant right now that cuts that in half. That means your gift of \$128 today will go towards reaching, rescuing, or restoring two children. But many of you can do more than that. Many of you could help 20 children right now, a gift of \$1280. But whatever—whatever it is God puts on our heart, we're asking you to join us to say to these children, God sees you, we see you and we're going to take action on your behalf.

So will you take action on their behalf today? Go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can. Let's rescue as many lives as we can.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: *Innocent children and young people longing to be loved and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, forced into the evil industry of human trafficking.*

Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to warn children who are at risk for sex trafficking, rescue those already enslaved, and restore young lives and give them a future. With a generous \$320,000 matching gift, now your gift of \$128 to help reach, rescue, or restore one child can be doubled to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be

matched to help save one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

With your gift today, we'll send you "Declare." This beautifully designed 31-day devotional reveals 31 names of God from scripture and gives insight into the character, grace, and the depth of God's love for you.

With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive The Gospels book set. This special edition collection of the four gospels in the classic King James version includes journaling space opposite each page of scripture so you can reflect as you read. The perfect companion for your daily time with God.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 which will now help save 20 children. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Consider the Birds."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: I hope you will go to the phone or go online. Make the best gift you can. Make the gift God puts on your heart to reach, to rescue, or to restore. And if you'd like Bianca's book today, request it. It's called *Grit Don't Quit*. It will bless you. But most of all, when you support Mission: Rescue Life you will bless others. This has been so much fun.

TAMMY: It's been amazing. I appreciate you so much. So grateful God gave you words, words to speak and to share and to breathe life into people. If that's you today, you have no words, we've got them for you. We're praying for you. Call the number on your

screen. If you need prayer, we're here in Jesus' name. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*.