

**11/08/23**

**Week 46: Fall Mission Feeding**

**Randy Robison and Tammy Trent**

**Sheila Walsh #1**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Tammy Trent is with me. And also, someone who was in this chair for six years is here. Sheila, I just want to say, I know I've told you this but you meant so much to me on this set, in front of the whole world. I sat here and I learned and it is just an honor to have you back.

**SHEILA:** Well, thank you! That's the sweetest thing. And honestly, I've told your mom and dad this, you taught me a lot. Because one of the things that Randy taught me—

**RANDY:** What not to do?

**SHEILA:** No! Absolutely not! But sometimes I'd kind of over-prepare for shows. So I'd have like 53 questions for the guest, and Randy would say to me sometimes, "After question two they said something interesting that maybe you should have gone with that." I learned as much from you, so thank you. By the way, you two are just doing a brilliant job. I'm so proud of you!

**TAMMY:** Thank you so much.

**SHEILA:** Tammy, I feel like your mom.

**TAMMY:** I know! You're like such a big sister in my heart. And I've known you for so,

so long. It almost felt like I sat under your ministry at *Women of Faith* for so many years. I love the depth that you find in the Word of God and how you bring it to life for so many people. You've done that for me for years. You're truly one of my favorite Bible teachers. And the way you tell a story.

And you're one of the funniest people I know, Sheila. Going through *The Gifts of Christmas*, I can't tell you how many times I laughed out loud. There are so many incredible Christmas past stories, and inspirational stories, and things I didn't know about Christmas. But also some hilarious moments throughout your life, your marriage, just stuff.

**SHEILA:** Well, you've met my husband. There is a lot of material there.

**TAMMY:** It makes so much sense to me. But I love you so much.

**RANDY:** So you mentioned it, we're talking about *The Gifts of Christmas*, which is Sheila's book. I know you love Christmas. Do you ever take your Christmas tree down?

**SHEILA:** Our Christmas—now you make it seem like it is one tree. No, no! We're talking four trees have been up since COVID. Four trees, the big one in the den, which I get up every morning and let our wee dog Maggie out, put our Christmas tree on, we have one in the bedroom and we have two downstairs.

**RANDY:** Why is that?

**SHEILA:** Because I like them. It's cozy. I think during COVID everything seemed so bleak after a while. And everything was so uncertain. There was something about putting on the Christmas lights. And it was just—Barry and I are Christmas nuts. We start watching Christmas movies usually about July the 5th. Not quite, but I don't know why but I absolutely love it.

**RANDY:** I think it is a comfort.

**TAMMY:** I was just going to say that, Randy. I think it is comforting, I was going to say. There is something that's not—the evergreen that doesn't change on a Christmas tree. So to know that things can change all around us but that's something that never changes. And when you actually see that every day and go, I can take a deep breath no matter what's going on in my life and know that God never changes either.

**SHEILA:** That's really true. And even just doing a little research, because I've never written a Christmas book before. This is my first ever. And just doing research on some things like the origin of the Christmas tree. I wanted to know: where did that come from? Going way back to the 16th century, and realizing it was Martin Luther walking home one snowy night in Germany and he sees that the snow has fallen on the evergreen trees. And the way the moon is hitting the trees, they're sparkling. And he thinks I think my children would love that. So he cuts down a tree and treks it home. And that was the first Christmas tree in a home. So things like that are just fun to learn about.

**TAMMY:** Yeah, and I think that to me in your book, just like that story, so many things, I had no idea. You also talk in the book about—what day is it? We're talking days here, which I love, 25 days. I almost didn't want to read it yet. I wanted to save it to start it December 1st. But it is a book that you can read throughout the year, especially at Christmas.

But there is a particular day when you talk about "Silent Night." I had no idea the meaning, really the depth behind "Silent Night."

**SHEILA:** That really, blew me away. I've always loved finding out the origin of songs. It was interesting you mentioned that because when I went to do the audiobook of this devotional when I got to the "Silent Night" one I had to stop because it made me cry.

Because this gentleman wrote the lyrics to "Silent Night" and never thought it would ever

go any further than his village and his town. But then it became very popular in Germany. Go to World War I, it is almost Christmas time. And Randy, you're a student of history. World War I was brutal. I mean these British soldiers, European soldiers, and German soldiers are in the trenches. It is muddy. It is freezing. The Pope even asked, "Could we have a cease-fire on Christmas Eve just to honor something of the season?" But no side makes an agreement.

So it's bitterly cold, miserable, and suddenly this one German soldier, who before the war was part of the opera in Berlin, he was this beautiful baritone, stands up in the trench with his gun and begins to sing "Silent Night" in German. And there is this kind of hush. And then he starts to sing it in English. And the British soldiers, they know it. And suddenly, they start to sing. And for that one Christmas Eve for just—they all put their weapons down and they come out of the trenches, and they meet in the middle. And suddenly, they're no longer enemies, they're sons and fathers and brothers. And they're singing about the gift that makes us all put our weapons down.

**RANDY:** There is a great movie that was made about that. I don't know if you know that.

**SHEILA:** Really? No, I didn't know that.

**RANDY:** I think it may be in German but it is good. Here's what I see in that, what I think you see in that and what you want to world to hear. Is in a day and age where we're so divided, we can't seem to agree on anything, and every post on social media is a weapon, Christmas is a time where we can say, hey look. Let's look beyond all the turmoil of this world. Let's be still. Let's be quiet. Let's look to God. Because there is something transcendent in that that we can't grasp on our own. We need help here.

**SHEILA:** That's why I wanted to do 25 days so it was like an advent study so you would have one for every single day. I think people get so distracted at Christmastime. In fact, it is something that Barry and I have been talking about. That you know, you get so busy trying to make sure you've done everything you're supposed to do that you forget that no,

this—this changed all of human history. If you draw a line in human history, what happened when Jesus Christ was willing to leave the glory of heaven and become this tiny fragile baby, which the more I've been studying in Revelation for something else I'm working on recently, and the more you understand the glory of what it's like, where the angels are crying out, "Holy! Holy! Holy!" Where it is just magnificent! And he left that to come down to say to you and me, you're not alone.

And you're right, Randy, everything is so polarized at the moment and people are so angry. I'm just—it's a calling, it is a calling, come in and let's be still and be quiet and remember.

**TAMMY:** Yes! And many people, I think, even at Christmas fight loneliness—fight loneliness. So even when you say that he came for the one, he came for the one that was lonely so you wouldn't have to be. There are so many moments throughout this book, Sheila, that I also cried. My tears are right at the surface and so is my giggle.

**SHEILA:** That's one of the things I love about you.

**TAMMY:** It doesn't take much for me to cry or giggle quickly on a dime. But there were so many moments like that. So I looked today, 11, that hit me differently because you share about your journey there a little bit. And then you talk about Ruth Graham bringing you in and reading to you. It's the lamp in the window. I said I'm not going to cry today. And I'm doing good so far but can you share a little bit of that because it is so special?

**SHEILA:** When I think back to this incredible privilege of ever having known Billy Graham and his wife Ruth, and particularly Ruth, she was such an anchor in my life, such a motherly figure. I'd met her before because I used to sing at the Billy Graham crusades in England. And so I'd met her and she was always kind. But it was after I'd spent a month in a psychiatric hospital, and if you've lived your whole Christian life thinking, that God's love for me is based on my performance, that was my understanding—very wrong but my understanding. It wasn't on the finished work of Christ. It was because my

own dad seemed to stop loving me after his brain injury, that I assumed that was possible with God too. So I was going to get it all right. So when you end up in a psychiatric hospital for a month—I felt so lost and so alone. Once I get out of the hospital, Ruth calls me and says, "Listen, Bill's off doing a crusade. I want you to come to Montreat and I want you to stay with me for a few days."

I'll never forget that first night because she knew I was very fragile. I was just in a place where I felt very vulnerable. So she showed me to my bedroom and beautiful Swiss linens on the bed that she had from when she was over at some things that she did with Mr. Schaeffer and that kind of stuff.

And she said, "Let me bring you a cup of tea." And she brought me a cup of tea.

And then she said, "Do you mind if I read to you?"

I'm like, "Gosh, no." I felt like a child again.

She sat on the end of the bed and she read me this story from a book called *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* which she then signed and sent home with me. And it's all about this Scottish man who is very religious and he has a daughter. And after the wife's death, the daughter starts to rebel a little bit. But the father is so harsh, there is no grace. There is just here's a list of things you do to make God love you. And if you break any of them, forget it. And she's had it and she leaves and goes to London. And he takes this thing—in Scotland, like my grandmother had this, you have a family Bible. It's usually in the middle of the table, and all the names of the new children as they're born and the grandchildren, the dates. Well, Lachlan MacLachlan, the father, takes his pen and he rubs out of the name of his daughter, like you're no longer my daughter. You're not pleasing to God so you're not pleasing to me.

And then a lady from the church comes over one night and says, "Have you heard from your daughter?"

And he opens the Bible and says, look.

And she says, "Lachlan, if God treated you the way you've treated your daughter, we would all be lost."

And God in that instant, in that glorious way the Holy Spirit can do, it's like he holds up a mirror and you suddenly see yourself in all your sinfulness. So he breaks and he lights a lamp and he leaves it in the window in case his daughter ever comes home.

Not knowing that only in the way that God can do, God is working behind the scenes. For those of you who think your kids are lost, for those of you who get on your knees every night and you think, God, I don't even know where they are, God is on the move.

And that's what's happening with this girl in London. She's miserable and wretched. She finds herself outside a church and she creeps into the back and she hears this message about the grace of God. And she thinks, what if that could be possible for me? And she decides to take a risk and she goes all the way back home. And as she is walking across the hill, she sees a light in the window. And she runs into her Father's arms. And he writes in the book that night, "My darling daughter lost on—found" and puts the new date in.

And that's what Christmas is all about. We're all messed up, we're all lost, but when you've placed your trust in Jesus, he writes your name in the Lamb's Book of Life and nobody gets to touch it.

**TAMMY:** Welcome home. Welcome home.

**RANDY:** I think that Christmas for many people is like that lamp. It is that reminder that okay, maybe there is some hope in this dark world.

This is a very—we joke about you leaving the trees up and things like that but I think there is something really deep going on even within you that you're able to express through your love of the meaning behind so many things about Christmas. I don't know, where are you in your life that—what's important to you now? I'm just curious.

**SHEILA:** That's a great question, Randy and let me relate it to one of the days in here. Because I've never liked mistletoe. Because people hold it up and they're supposed to kiss you. I was not an attractive teenager. I mean, I had bad skin and greasy hair and I was plumper than I am at the moment. In Scotland, we eat for ballast. It's windy. So we eat to stay secure on a windy night. I just wasn't an attractive girl, that's how I felt about myself, anyway. So mistletoe was always—I avoided it like the plague.

But it was only recently when I was doing some research for this that I found that mistletoe, it's called, I think it is called the thief of the forest. Mistletoe cannot survive on its own. Unless mistletoe attaches to another tree and draws all its nourishment from the tree it will die. And the more I've begun to understand about my own life, that I cannot survive without Jesus. And I don't just mean three weeks down the line, I mean today. I mean every single moment. So understanding this joy. And I saw when we were in—I was in Israel this year, earlier, and being able to talk to some Jewish people there about the honor of being grafted into the tree; about that those being my ancestors now too, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and David. But it made me realize again that God has left these pictures everywhere to look at. Do you understand that we need to be grafted in.

So to answer your question is, I've never been in a place where I feel more dependent on Jesus. More—because I still struggle with my own dark days and that's one of the reasons I wanted this to be an encouragement to people. Because I think people used to think you give your life to Christ and then it is just plain sailing but it is not. Last night, interestingly enough, I was studying that passage where Paul is talking about his thorn in the flesh but realizing that Paul had this unusual gift, and he doesn't tell us. He says, "I was taken up to heaven, whether I was in my body or I wasn't I'm not sure. And I heard things and I saw things I'm not allowed to talk about down here." And he said, "In case I



became too boastful, I was given this thorn in the flesh."

I am so—and I'm not like, Lord, get me out of here. I think, Lord, make me useful while I'm here. But I have such a sense of the fact that our real lives, it's almost not just begun yet. We're in this place where the whole point is to become more like Jesus. And so that's really, like my heart is like Lord, every single day I want to become more like Jesus. I don't want to become like the times we're living in. Even those—even people we all know who are like, you know what? Yeah, I'm not so sure about my faith anymore. And I'm not so sure about that. And I'm not so sure about any of that. And I'm more sure of that than I have ever been. But the Word of God, you can rest your life on.

**RANDY:** At the risk of sounding a little weird.

**SHEILA:** Oh, Randy, we all know and love you just the way you are.

**RANDY:** You think about nine months in the womb and we don't remember that but we were there. But it is formative. And it's preparing us for living in this world. I wonder sometimes if this life isn't like the womb spiritually, preparing us for eternity.

**SHEILA:** No, I get that. I think that's a great illustration. Or it is like a seed. I used to wonder must my grandmother could take these bulbs that looked like nothing and plant them. And then suddenly, when spring came, there were these gorgeous flowers. I think that's a bit like because I used to think, Lord, I long for something that nothing down here is working for. You know, you think, if I could just get a nice house. If I was just married, if I could only have a kid. If I could just get that job. Or if I could just be ten pounds thinner, then I'd be happy. And I used to despise the longing, now I embrace the longing because it is there for a purpose. It is to remind us we're not home yet.

**RANDY:** And what better reminder than Christmas? Okay, so I have a lot more things to ask you about. We didn't talk about candy canes or the shepherds or the Christmas star or Tickle Me Elmo. [Laughing] Can you do another program?

**SHEILA:** I'd love to!

**RANDY:** Because I know people love Christmas. And I know people will want to get *The Gifts of Christmas*. In fact, Tammy, I'd love to send this to everybody who is watching. And we're going to ask you to do something. If you will support our outreach to show people the love that we're talking about, this Christmas love that God is with us, then we will gladly send this to you when you request it. But watch this and see how you can be a blessing to someone.

### **On the mission field**

**ISAK:** All there is, is the dry, burnt-out remnants of the last crops that were here, the dry soil that is a testament to the fact that nothing can grow here.

Monica has brought her child here to this screening clinic in the Kabul area of Angola today. You can see, I don't have to describe the condition of this child. You can see that this child is suffering. But you know the reality is it is not just a lack of crops. It is not just dry, parched soil, it's lives. Lives that have been stolen by the lack of food. Not a war, not some human-made crisis, simply the fact that there isn't enough rainfall to grow crops to feed their children. And that is what is stealing their lives.

This child is suffering from severe malnutrition. Why? Because there is no food at home. Literal starvation, children in these areas are starving to death, and children dying of malnutrition. Many parents telling us we don't know what to do. We don't know where to turn. We've done everything we can do—but we can't feed our children.

For five years there has been a drought in this country that's meant that mothers like Veronica are not able to grow food for their children and are not able to provide what their children need. And you can see that this child Samuel is just a representation of more than 250 children that are here today, 250 mothers that have brought their children

saying, "Please! Help me! Help me save my child's life."

The solution is food. The solution is expressing God's heart and extending his hands. And I'm asking you to do that, please. Give that gift. Give the gift of food. Give the gift of life.

### **In the studio**

**TAMMY:** They have done everything they can do but they can't feed their children. But I want to help. I want to be the one to help. And I want to ask you if you would consider helping as well. They're doing everything they can do but they need help. So I know you hear us often, every day, talking about the need out there and asking you to help join with us and make a difference in the lives of these children. I hope you don't grow weary. I hope it is not hard to keep hearing the stories. And especially for those people over in those countries that are hurting so desperately and are asking for help, I hope we think about them in this season, in this moment to know that we can be a difference.

Randy, there is something simple that we can do. We've seen it, we've been there as we've traveled. We know that that bowl—that bowl is filled with life. Every time we give this to a child and fill it up, it changes their life. I know that we want to stop them from going into a malnutrition clinic. And we've been there too. And I hold this because I'm thinking, I've been with children that have been even tinier, their wrist than that. So I know we want to stop that. There is a way we can do that together. And I know that you've been a part of that too.

**RANDY:** Yeah, it is the success of the Mission Feeding outreach. Literally, 350,000 children every day get a bowl of food because of your love. Now let me explain how it works. The way we have people on the ground, systems in place, and a track record of doing this so that we're able to get food to people, your gift today of \$30 will help feed three children for the next three months. Your gift of \$100 would help feed ten children for the next three months. So it really is that easy. Many of you could give \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000, whatever God has enabled you to do. I just ask you to take a moment

and say, God, what would you have me do to share your love?

Now, you can get into the complexities of the various situations where we feed but the bottom line for me is regardless of the reasons why someone is in that situation where they can no longer feed their children, the response is what's critical in my mind. Because we serve a God who says, don't forget the poor. When you see someone in need, don't withhold good when it's in your power to do something good.

So for me, the world is a mess. We know this. There are all sorts of negative things going on. And sometimes, it is just the circumstance of weather, the crops don't come in. It doesn't matter to me. I look at it and say, what are we to do as followers of Christ to show his love to someone who is hurting, to people who are dying? And this is it—Mission Feeding. We go in, we give them food, we tell them why we're there. We share the love of Christ in word and deed.

I just pray you will respond in love to these people who are dying and hurting. Go to the phone, go online, and make the best gift you can.

### **Begin video clip**

**Announcer:** Across the continent of Africa children are suffering, facing severe malnutrition, and even death. With food reserves gone, and many areas experiencing severe famine, we urgently need to replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us.

Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach your gift of love can be an answer to prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need. Call now with your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months.

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you the brand-new *LIFE* planner. Bound in soft-

touch leather, this planner will help you with your daily walk, with space for you to record your appointments, goals, inspirational notes, and prayers.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "God's Promise" serving bowl. This beautiful and versatile ceramic bowl is decorated with Second Corinthians 9:8 and will make a lovely addition to your table or home.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our 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**

**TAMMY:** Thank you so much, honestly, for the way that you've given to the ministry for so many years. Truly, you must know the difference that you're making in the lives of so many people, especially right now at Christmas time. What a gift we get to be to so many children, especially, and their families.

And what a gift Sheila is to us. I want to make sure to get you this book. *The Gifts of Christmas*: "25 joy-filled devotions for Advent." It is an amazing gift year-round but especially right now. So when you request it, we're going to get it to you today. Sheila, we love you so much.

**SHEILA:** Love you too. It's just an honor being with you.

**RANDY:** We look forward to doing another program with you.

**TAMMY:** Yes, let's do it.

**RANDY:** Yeah. Y'all come back because we've got more. We're going to talk about Christmas a little more with Sheila and Tammy.

**TAMMY:** I love it. I love it.

**RANDY:** Don't miss it. We'll see you again next time.