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**Week 37: *Christmas Shoes and Smiles***

**James and Betty Robison**

**Susie Larson #1**

**In the studio**

**JAMES:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*. Betty and I are so thrilled to have one of our best friends, Susie Larson. She's been here a lot. Sometimes she thinks this is her TV show, so she just comes here and shares. She is so gifted, so truly anointed of God, and divinely enabled. You know you try to get your definition of anointing, what does it mean? I think it is divine enabling. And it is normally for a divine purpose, kingdom purpose.

Here is a book that's just come out. She's written so many. All of them are great! *Closer Than Your Next Breath*. What? Trouble? Attacks? Yep! That's not what she's talking about. That's a given. But the Creator, the Father, God is closer than you think. Susie, we're so glad to have you.

**SUSIE:** So honored to be back with you. Thank you for having me.

**JAMES:** Do you know how many years now you've been coming here?

**SUSIE:** I think the first time I came was 20 years ago. So yeah, thank you! It's amazing you keep inviting me back. So thank you.

**JAMES:** We'll never stop because you'll just continue to inspire us all. For 30 years, you have been under attack physically. Did the attacks start 30 years ago? Did it intensify or start with Lyme disease? Because I know you have Lyme disease which is just one of the most confusing, strange, dangerous, and deadly diseases that can come from a tick. Is that where most of it started?

**SUSIE:** I would have to say, I'd have to back up and I've told parts of this story maybe on past shows with you but I often say that the enemy sees your potential long before you ever do. And you can just go back to your childhood and you see this threat against you. It's so connected to your threat to him and he will go after you before you even know that you have a target on your back.

So I would say as a child raised in a denomination, I knew God was real but I didn't know Jesus was accessible. I didn't have the gospel preached to me or anything like that. And at nine years old, I suffered a sexual assault at the hands of teenage boys. I didn't tell anybody about that because my dad was the mayor of our city. I was so confused about whose fault that was. I just absorbed it and basically, insecurity, a spirit of fear, all those things, really were so big for me.

Ten years old, I was walking home from school and I was jumped by a different group of boys in our suburb and beaten terribly. They punched me, kicked me, and pulled fistfuls of hair out. And when I got up from that beating, I heard in my ear, not audibly but it might as well have been, I can get you anytime, anywhere, and God will never stop me.

So as a little girl, I knew God was real and at that moment I knew the devil was real. When I came to Christ in eighth or ninth grade, it would be even going into my young adult years as a young married woman, I knew I was saved, once I became a Christian, I didn't know I was loved. So that's probably true for a lot of believers, even seasoned believers may know they're saved but they don't know they're loved. If you don't have that resolved and you have a lot of trauma, and the enemy will go after every one of God's children, you won't always resolve those things in light of God's love, you'll be tempted to accuse God of things that the devil is guilty of.

And for me, as I was telling you before the show, during our third pregnancy, I was on bed rest for six months. Prior to that, I was serving on five committees at church because even though I was saved I didn't know I was loved. So what you do when that's the case

is you use your time, treasure, and talents to prove something Jesus has already proven. So I was super Christian because I was so grateful. But I felt like I had things to pay back and I had things to earn. So to go out to bedrest was a nightmare come true because everybody was doing favors for us, they were getting tired on my behalf, and it confronted all my insecurities.

So when the doctor let me up for one day, I'd been in bed for three months, with a one and a three-year-old. And one was strong-willed so not everybody wanted to watch him when they offered to babysit my kids. But I was allowed up for one day because I hadn't contracted in a couple of days and the doctor said, "Let's just see how you do." And so I met my old college roommates, it was a fall day, went for a walk, and had lunch. We were so careful. I was contracting by night and two weeks later my face went numb, and my memory started to go. It took a year to find out that that one day out I was bitten by the deer tick unknowingly.

And what happened in my heart, Lord, I mean the enemy, "I can get you any time anywhere and God will never stop me." And so even as a serious Christian that lie was embedded in my soul. And something I had to wrestle through my whole life because this disease is wretched, as you say, James. So I've been here since I had a massive relapse. I did pretty well for the last 20 years. I've been able to manage it, I'm a fighter, I want to live. I have things I want to do. And probably, a handful of times a year I can't get out of bed. But then I get out of bed and I start swinging again.

About eight years ago, I had a pretty terrible relapse. I was in my bathroom getting ready, I work in radio as a talk radio host, and my arms went numb, my face, and my neck went numb, the room started to spin, a high pitch ringing in my ears, and I'm going, no, God! No, God! Please no, God! And I hear him whisper, "The storms reveal the lies we believe and the truths we need." I'm like what? "The storms reveal the lies we believe and truths we need." What is the lie that I believe? And at this point, my neck is going numb and my esophagus is spasming so bad I can't swallow. It was like the enemy had me by the throat up against the wall. And he says, "I can get to you anytime, anywhere." And there was

the lie.

So I wrote a lot about that in previous books. This book is about moving from bracing for impact to anticipating God's goodness. Because when you've had a lot of trauma and loss, it is easy to live that way. And I really thought my locked elbows—like I still worshipped God, I was in the word, I serve him as best as I can. I thought this bracing kind of posture was just a natural result of some years of hardship but it was a mistrust of God. And when I started to understand in the silent seasons, in the active seasons he's the same God and he is for us. Even if you can't sense his presence, it is for our good.

So this book is all about understanding that you are tethered to a good God whether you feel him or not. So it's all about his presence. But I have to tell you, when I got the book back, when it was time to read for the audiobook, it was a healing balm to my soul. Because I'd already been through other battles with this health challenge and it was just a reminder that he is who he says he is and he's going to do what he says he'll do. It doesn't mean we're exempt from really hard, hard stuff but he's with us in the battle and that means a lot.

**BETTY:** I feel like listening to you, you said, it is a reminder. We need those reminders, don't we, in our life of how close he is to us? Because as far as church life, I had a similar deal. I was active in church, did all the right things, thought I had to prove my loyalty and my dedication until I met someone that hadn't been in church at all that had a real relationship with Jesus. And through him, I came to know him. It made such a difference in my life.

but there is more. Accepting him, yes, that's the first step. But there's more to knowing how to live for him and with him in our hearts.

**SUSIE:** He has so much more for us. And one of the things I explore in the book is what is the presence? And is feeling good the same as feeling God? And what I've noticed in scripture and people I've interviewed in my own life, when you have a manifest present

moment, and I would guess this would be the same for you, when you point back to real God encounters, where you're like, that was God, I encountered him, I often see that it is so often about lordship or it is about identity or it is about calling or an upgrade in faith. When God breaks through into the natural circumstances, he's trying to bring a greater revelation of your identity or his lordship or the calling and purposes of your life.

But when you encounter God and it is so life-changing, you get a little panicky when you go through a silent season. Again, that's one of the reasons I wrote the book too, what do you do when you can't hear him, can't sense him? Is he the same God?

**JAMES:** I want us to dwell on that in just a few minutes. Let me ask you a question. From the time I was conscious as a toddler even, I was under attack. I was a hated being. I do believe that the more you're aware that some force is coming at you, the more clearly you should understand God has a kingdom purpose for you; that you are divinely enabled, supernaturally enabled to accomplish that actually frightens the enemy because he loses ground, he loses people, he loses territory. He hates that so he hates any of us that have been especially gifted and chosen. He attacked you when he is attacking everybody out there.

But the enemy had hit me and hit me, and I said something to him after he delivered a pretty severe blow. I really did flip that on him. And I used it for the glory of God to see people set free in areas the enemy never would have believed he would watch happen. Here's what I said to him, and I just want to see if you bear witness with this. I said, listen to me. And I'm talking to the devil! Whatever you hit me with, whatever you hit my family with, you will regret it because I will use it as a club on you to make you regret the day that you delivered that blow. Does that make sense?

**SUSIE:** One hundred percent, amen! One hundred percent. I will tell you, a lot of times they say when you have a passage that you keep defaulting to it is like a life script, you're just talking right now about Psalm 18 because that's a passage that speaks of going from victim to victor. I didn't have a Christian context so all the stuff that was happening to

me, it was like I had the word but I remember God saying, are you a believer only because you've secured your eternity? Or do you believe this stuff? When are you going to shift your weight onto the promises to see if they hold?

And when I found Psalm 18, the enemy confronted me on a day I was weakest. He does that. He goes and hits us when we're down, and he fights personal, and goes after those we love. But my cry reached his ears and the Lord got so angry. This is the thing, he treats his children differently than those who don't fear and revere him. He does. Our cry reaches his ears. And it says, he veiled his approach in darkness. So we don't see him coming but neither does the enemy. He rescues us from on high because he delights in us. He puts us in a spacious place. And I would say in that place is where he heals us but then he trains our hands for battle. He allows us to walk on high places. And then the rest of the Psalm, you chase the enemy down. You put your foot on his neck.

And I'm telling you, when that enemy had me by the throat it was terrifying. For months, every time I looked down my esophagus would spasm. One time when I came to be on your show, I'd lost eight pounds in eight days. I was living on bites of food because every time I ate the spasms were so bad and I didn't think I was going to make it. I almost canceled the flight. When I think of the ways that he has hit. But that neck thing was so personal to me, and when I read that in the Psalms that your foot will be on his neck, I said almost the exact same thing, James. I'm like I'm going to make you sorry you ever messed with me. Because everywhere you come against me, God wants to bless me. And overwhelming victory belongs to me because I belong to him. So let's do this.

And I feel that way. I never say, bring it on, I don't. I fear God and I've seen enough, I'm not asking, I'm not picking a fight but I'm not backing down either.

**JAMES:** Yeah, you're not going to back down or bow down to him. You need to understand—I want all of you to know this. This program and the next program, you don't need to miss. This is for you. God is wanting to show you—how is it that we don't see how deeply he loves us in the gift of his Son Jesus who took all of our sin, all of our

shame, all of our failures, all of our guilt and he died for us to cover it? And deliver us as far as the east is from the west from the eternal effects of that sin and that failure. He gave us life. It is the love of God that gave it. But it is so hard sometimes for you to believe how much he loves you.

In these two programs, you're going to come to see how much God loves you and the very fact that you may have been attacked, and you may be confused and puzzled about why things happen. Because the enemy hates God's purpose in you. And you've got to let the enemy know God is going to succeed in my life and I'm going to live and make an impact for his kingdom purpose. God's will can be done on his earth. And the church has got to believe that. That's the only way we're going to have a future.

I want you to kind of wrap this show with some sort of invitation to the viewer to move into a place and we're going to talk very much about the accuser. And how a lot of times when he says, we know we failed. A person who has ever met God, has ever known grace regrets the fact that we do fail and they don't realize that the whole Bible was written by failed people. And failing people, not perfect people!

I was praying the other day. I said Lord, what's the deal with all these people that you use so mightily and they fail so much? He said, "You know I have a real problem with people who are self-righteous. All these failures don't have a self-righteous attitude. They know exactly where righteousness is and who righteousness is."

I said, "Well, boy, that's for sure. I don't have a problem with self-righteousness. I know where it is and I know my failure."

So please, please, please give us a chance to help you understand that you can not only lean on God's shoulder, you can be in his arms. He is the shelter from every storm. But he also has a purpose of life and love and meaning to flow through you. Share with our viewers what you hope they're hearing even in this first program and we're going to talk more in the next one.

**SUSIE:** Well, it's not that we love God, it is that he loved us and we have to know he loved us first and he loves us first every time. I will tell you, one of the revelations that came to me was in Psalm 106, it is the amplified version. Because I want to learn from the Israelites' mistakes. Because I've been so curious, feeling like we're an exiled people. So I'm like how did they get it wrong so I want to get it right? One of the things is they stopped listening to God's voice. And when you listen to any other voice but God's, your heart will automatically harden.

But Psalm 106 in the Amplified version there's a little nugget of wisdom for us. Three things that they did wrong that I think that we can do, that will change things for us. One, they forgot to marvel and remember the significance of God's miracles. So I say to you that if you are waiting for your miracle, pull the miracles from the scripture of old and bring them to the forefront because those are your miracles. And I would dare say you've got some of your own testimonies from your history, bring those to the forefront, and say this is the same God. Because it broke God's heart that they didn't remember or appreciate the significance of his miracles.

Second, is they no longer marveled at his mercies, the abundance of his mercies. And just as you were saying, James, all the things that he's forgiven in us. And the fact that he sends new mercies to our door every morning before we even have a chance to blow it, shows you how he's gone ahead of us. That should keep us perpetually in awe.

And the third mistake they made is they didn't imprint God's loving kindness on their hearts. So I say stay in awe by remembering his miracles, marvel at his mercies, and keep rehearsing the fact that God is good. It will change your physiology, it will change your brain, it will change your faith perspective.

**JAMES:** Betty, I want to ask you to pray for our viewers that you will hear and apply what's just been delivered so effectively. Well, will you just pray for our viewers to experience the mercy and the presence of God?



**BETTY:** God, we do come before you right now in your precious name and ask all that are listening God, as they yield their hearts to you, God, they want to hear from you. They want to know your truth and your love and your joy and your peace, dear Heavenly Father. They want to be reminded of that love. God, your word is a good reminder of your love for us. Your son Jesus is a good reminder.

So God, bring us to that point again. Show us, remind us of the blessings, God that you have put upon us of the miracles that you have performed in our lives, dear Lord. Every day is a miracle. Every breath is a miracle. So God, we just come to you right now on their behalf, on our behalf, that God you'll just bestow your love and peace, and your power and your wisdom upon us, in Jesus' name.

**JAMES:** Amen! I hope you realize that we all fail. We're all under attack. Nobody understands better than our perfect Father. Do you know what Betty has just prayed for you to experience, I believe with all my heart you're going to experience.

Susie, we're going to talk more about how the accuser convinces us too often that he's right, we're wrong, God's wrong, and we can flip that around just like we talked about. We're going to go into it in depth.

I hope you'll get this book. I'll tell you what we'll do. You can get it online, you can get it in the bookstores but we'll send it to you today if you will help us give Christmas shoes. These are Christmas ornaments. We have these all over about a six or seven-foot tree when all of our grandchildren were growing up. We had one tree, I think it was about 10 or 11 feet tall. But we covered it with these all over it. Well, now Betty not only has them all over our Christmas tree, which I think is like a seven-footer now, even though we have 26 grandchildren now, we've got 15 great-grandchildren to go with the 11 others. The thing about it is we've got little bitty Christmas trees and we have these hanging on them. We're giving these shoes, these beautiful little Christmas gifts to people who will give children, 150,000 of them, shoes.

Now these shoes were brought to me by a businessman in the community where we live in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. He said, "You know, these look like Crocs." They're basically like Crocs, you know how expensive they are. He said, "James, I can get a pair of these for \$3.60." And he said, "We can take \$36 and give ten children a pair of shoes. Why don't we give children shoes for Christmas?"

Betty, we started and I guarantee you we got serious about it. As a matter of fact, this year, with any gift you make, you're going to get these two little green shoes. If you will make a gift of \$100 or more, you're going to get a set of three different colors of those we've given away in past years. Would you consider making a gift of \$36, giving to ten children or would you give over \$100 and know I'm giving far more than that? Would you do it, please?

Do you know what else we're doing? Betty, every time we look at a child, whether it is here in the States or overseas, and we see a cleft palate, we see a beautiful little face that doesn't have a smile. You and I saw children like that and we started personally giving and raising money to send those children that we found to a surgeon, and it was a miracle that changed us in so many ways to give a child and that family a child with a smile.

So we're giving not only shoes but smiles for Christmas. Medical doctors joined the mission teams and do these surgeries. And they cost \$500, far more than that here, in the advanced world. But this is a mission gift. Would you give a smile for Christmas? Maybe give \$1,000 and give two children a smile? We're giving *Shoes and Smiles*.

I want you to listen to one of our favorite mission voices that co-hosts with Randy, Tammy Trent on the mission field talking about how we can give children shoes and how we can give them love. You're going to like this.

### **On the mission field**

**TAMMY:** These are tough conditions. These people are living in absolute poverty. I'm

sure it is hard to provide for your family. I don't know what they have. I don't know what their need is. But I love that I don't have to figure it out, God just sends us. He sends us and he says, show up.

It's what I do love about *LIFE Outreach*. For the many years that I've traveled with them around the world, wherever we see a need we just jump in. Whatever it looks like, we're thinking of kingdom-minded things. We're thinking of saving a life but saving their very life, their soul. To me, that's the gospel, what it's all about—spreading the love of Jesus Christ and sharing the good news of Jesus.

You know, James and Betty started this *Christmas Shoes and Smiles* years ago. I think their heart was absolutely about just showing the love of God, especially to these children all around the world. And it's so, so wonderful. The joy they feel getting something brand-new! Gosh, it just could change everything for you! Oh my goodness, baby, you need—you need these shoes.

These shoes that protect their feet will keep them from danger, will keep them from infection, from injury, from hookworm that ultimately could lead to death. This is an important need right now all around the world.

So if you've given before, thank you so much. If you've never had a chance to give to this ministry, this part of it, *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*, then I would encourage you to make the best gift you possibly could. We want to keep putting shoes on children all around the world. We want to do it all. It's been a great year, it's been an incredible year of ministry, whether it's been water, whether it's been food, or whether it's been shoes. Right here we're so blessed to do kingdom things. And together, we are changing the lives of people all around the world. We couldn't do it without you. We love you, we appreciate you. Thank you so much!

**In the studio**

**JAMES:** Tammy has been going to the mission field for 20 years. Randy is right now on the mission field in Africa and they're drilling wells. He called us so excited about what had happened today in an area where they'd never had water. And you're the ones that make that happen.

No one ever imagined that we could bless so many people with shoes. And when you think of what it's going to mean this Christmas, that's why we raise the money now so we can deliver the shoes for Christmas. And of course, the Christmas story goes how the love of Jesus, the Savior, the one who was born on Christmas, and who died for us and lives to live in us.

Would you right now, would you make a gift? I'm praying you'll make a gift of \$100 or more. And let us send you the gift of several shoes. Any gift, the \$36 gift gives ten children a pair of shoes for Christmas. And could you give a smile? Isn't it a wonderful sight to see those little children get a smile they never dreamed of? And what does it do for their family? Would you do that for Christmas? What a beautiful gift! Could you give a smile? Maybe two smiles?

Whatever you can do, we've got gifts for you to bless you. But you're giving the greatest gift, you're giving God's love in an expression that is undeniable. God loves through you these children. Would you go online right now? Take your bank card and use it like a check. Would you dial that number where people can always call for prayer? But would you call today to say I want to give some smiles? I want to give shoes. Please do it. Make the best gift you can.

### **Begin video clip**

**ANNOUNCER:** Poverty is a killer, and because of it, children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we often take for granted, like a simple pair of shoes. Far too many children living in extreme poverty have

never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections and diseases that could lead to crippling consequences—and even death.

By responding today, you will help secure and make ready 150,000 pairs of Christmas shoes to be shipped and delivered to children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pairs. And a gift of \$180 will help provide 50 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request the beautifully crafted, green crystal shoes ornament, a treasure to display at each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request this keepsake boxed set featuring three of *LIFE's* crystal Christmas shoe ornaments.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft lip or palate surgeries. With this gift, you may request the beautiful bronze sculpture, "Consider the Birds."

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

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**JAMES:** I want to send you this book. You know you can get it online or you can get it in the bookstores. But you make a gift of shoes, whatever God puts on your heart if you want the book, we'll send it to you. But more than anything, we want you to know how close you can be to him.

In the next program, we're going to talk about the great accuser who accuses us non-stop but how we can, in the power of God, overcome it. I'm excited to talk to our viewers in

the next show. Thank you so much for sharing his heart with us. I look forward to the next show.

**SUSIE:** Love and appreciate you both so much. Thanks for having me.

**JAMES:** Well, looking forward to the next program with you. Tell your friends to watch.