

**1/19/23**

**Week four: WFL**

**Randy Robison and Tammy Trent**

**Melinda Doolittle**

**TAMMY:** Hi everybody! I'm Tammy Trent and this is Randy Robison. And welcome to *Life Today*. Today's guest, well, you might know her from American Idol, but I know her from hanging around my pool in Nashville, Tennessee having girl time together. She's beautiful! She's loving. She is deeply caring. She is charming. She is hilarious. And she loves Jesus. So welcome with me Melinda Doolittle. Love you, girl!

**MELINDA:** I love you! I'm so excited! Love you too. For sure.

**TAMMY:** That's right, Randy is here too. We've got girl talk.

**RANDY:** Right. I'd come to Nashville and hang out but you don't want that. No.

I'm curious because you've been on the program here before with us. It's great to have you back. A lot of people remember you from what 2007 American Idol? What's been going on with you lately?

**MELINDA:** I got old. I got very old. I have -- you know it's been the craziest career. Just the things that I never dreamt would happen. Like I mean I've been to Carnegie Hall and the White House, and done all of these huge things, traveled the world, and that all happened like in the first five years. I mean it just happened so quickly on a show like that that it has truly been like God meeting dreams I never knew I had. It's been a beautiful journey.

**RANDY:** Okay. I know a lot of you guys that are doing the type of thing that you do,

COVID just shut you down. Did you get --

**MELINDA:** Oh, for sure! Everything stopped. My last show was, I believe, March 12th of 2020. So I mean I was cutting it to the wire. I remember being in the airport where everyone was in masks, and everybody was like stay away from me because I don't know what's happening. I thought this does not look good.

But that was when we thought we were going to be home for two weeks. So I knew there were more shows coming up and all of that. And then everything just stopped. It stopped indefinitely. It gave me some time to be like okay, God, what's next? Is this what I want to wait on? How long will I be waiting? What does that look like?

So the COVID years were not the easiest, but they were a gift that I just have to at this point find something in it to be grateful for. And you know, I'm not obviously, you don't want people to be sick, you don't want to see death, but I'm always looking for how God is going to show up in these areas of devastation. And he truly has shown up for me in kind of showing me what else is in me. What else is there?

**TAMMY:** What else is in you right now? You talk about 2020 shut everything down, music was set aside, and life stopped, as you knew it. So where are you now as we're walking into another new year? Do you feel like you're on that same path? Or are you saying, truly, God, what is next for me? I want to do more than just music possibly?

**MELINDA:** It's that! It is me saying, Lord, what are you doing? Because I love being home. I've been on the road for 25 years. The longest I was ever home was five weeks and that was because I had surgery. So I was never home for over two weeks. I just was on the road from the get-go. I got home and I was like, oh, look, I have a living room. I can unpack things. I can live here and just see what's next.

And so I started thinking like normally, career-wise, everything felt like it was coming my direction, everything was about me, every interview was about me, and I thought, can

I do something that's about somebody else? What would that look like? And there is this organization called People Loving Nashville in our city and they work with people who are unhoused, people who are looking for housing, and people who have just gotten into housing but are having a hard time keeping it. And it has been everything to me. I now do it three days a week. I was there last night.

**TAMMY:** Were you? Oh my goodness!

**MELINDA:** Truly, I've met some of the most amazing human beings and seen the world through their eyes. And see not just how they're suffering or lacking but the joy that they have in spite of it. And how they have hope in spite of it and how we get to be part of the solution is absolutely beautiful.

One day I will find something that does bring an income this way, but I love what I'm doing in the meantime. It has truly been the hugest blessing to me.

**TAMMY:** Is that a scary place for you to be, even spiritually? Where you're like all I've ever known is music and bringing joy through music. But now you are kind of heading down a different road. You're still bringing joy to people but in an entirely different way. And also asking God, though, to provide for you somehow through so much volunteer work that you're doing. Is that a scary place to be? And how do you trust God when there are so many unanswered questions for you right now?

**MELINDA:** Absolutely, it is scary. But my trust in God is because he has always shown up. He's never not shown up. I have so many examples in my life. Like if I just look back a week, he just has always shown up. And it is not necessarily in my timing, but it's in his timing which is always perfect. So I do have this unexplainable peace right now. The Bible says that we will have that. I don't understand why I have peace in this moment, but I just know he is taking care of me. I just do. So there is no question.

**TAMMY:** Love that.

**RANDY:** So you have an updated version of *Beyond Me*, yes? Which is a wonderful book. One of the things that you talked about and I'm curious how this has worked out over the years, is not just this fear or apprehension that we have. You're going on American Idol, you're going to be nervous, and there is going to be some fear. You're stepping out in faith in ways and you're stepping out with your faith. There are a lot of places. But you talk about a paralyzing fear.

**MELINDA:** Yes! There is a chapter in the book entitled, "Do It Afraid." The reason it is titled that is because fear at its very worst stops you, it just stops you in its tracks. And you can't, it is like you can't even move. And I remember a time getting ready to go on stage for Idol and thinking, I've got this. I have it but it was JLo week, and she had told me how to like walk real nice down the stairs. I was like, this is not going to go well. And I panicked right before it was time, and they literally had to start the song twice because - - just in my rehearsal, the dress rehearsal, because my feet would not move. I was like, I cannot do this.

So fear, a lot of times, has paralyzed me and stopped me from going after what's in my heart. And so the thought is like if you can just take the first step even in the midst of the fear, God meets you there. That's the thing. It is that we don't even take that step. So I think that's probably the most important.

**RANDY:** Yeah, so you're experiencing some of that again where you are kind of expanding your borders? Is a little Prayer-of-Jabez thing going on?

**MELINDA:** I think being older, I just turned 45 last month --

**RANDY:** Oh, you're young! You're young!

**MELINDA:** Okay, I'll say that that's young. But getting into my 40s has shown me that even when I'm afraid, God is there. So while this is a scary time, I'm not like oh, no, I'm

not going to try to move.

**RANDY:** You're not paralyzed.

**MELINDA:** I'm at a point now where I'm like let's try it all. Let's just try everything. Meet me here and let's find out what works. So I am in a different place kind of in my heart and mentally right now.

**RANDY:** You say dream big, pray hard, and be prepared.

**MELINDA:** Yes. I'm a huge dreamer. I'm an only child so I have a huge imagination because I just had to learn how to come up with things to play. So I have a really big imagination. My favorite verse is Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto him who is able to do beyond anything you can ask, think, or even imagine." And I can imagine some of the biggest things in the world. So I feel like God has met me in places where he has taken my dreams and just god-sized them.

I love singing outdoors to crowds and I love singing to audiences that may not speak English. So we got asked to go to Tunisia one time as part of the U.S. embassy to be ambassadors for the U.S. And we did this festival in the middle of an old Roman coliseum. And as it started, the music started and I remember being backstage saying, God, I couldn't even have dreamt this. I thought outside and I thought let me sing to people who don't speak English but this? That's not -- that's not what I thought. But I'm prepared. I'm ready. I'm ready to walk through this door because I have dreamt enough and I've spent time with you, having conversations with you, and that means I'm prepared to walk through this door.

**TAMMY:** I am looking forward to seeing what God does in your life because when you say that I'm just going to take that next step and I'm not going to be afraid because I know, one, God, that you'll meet me there, you always do, you always provide. So I have to trust in that even in the unknown of my life. And I think that's what I admire so much

about you. You're a giver, you're not a taker. You constantly give and pour into people's lives and you're looking all around you for a need. Where is there a need and where can I plug into that?

I think when we have a heart like that to serve and to pour into people's lives, one, it takes our eyes off ourselves, and puts it on somebody else. I think in those moments, that's when I, at least, have always found great fulfillment. So you will find great fulfillment. God will provide for every need you have. He never has not done that in your life. So whatever those next steps look like for you, I pray that any fear that comes at you or tries to attach itself to you will just be broken and you'll be able to move like you've never moved before into a brand-new season in your life. And may it be filled with abundance and great things. And more than anything, just great joy that can only come from the Father that knows you better than anybody knows you.

**MELINDA:** I think that's the thing. Every time you talk about joy, every time you've spoken about it today, I, at the end of the day, the one thing I know for sure is that I'm here to bring some joy. So I'm like how do I just be a joy dealer wherever I go? Whether it's singing, whether it's meeting someone where they are, or whatever that need might be, how do I bring joy to the situation? And so that -- thank you.

**TAMMY:** You're welcome. You do it and it's a huge gift. People, we need more joy.

**RANDY:** I think you would bring some joy if you would sing a song for our audience. Are you willing to do that?

**MELINDA:** No!

[Laughter]

Of course, I would love to.

**RANDY:** We'd love to hear you.

**TAMMY:** Yeah! It would be awesome.

[Home]

When I think of home  
I think of a place  
Where there's love overflowing  
I wish I was home  
I wish I was back there  
With the things I've been knowing  
Wind that makes the tall trees bend into leaning  
Suddenly the snowflakes that fall have a meaning  
Sprinkling the scene, makes it all clean  
Maybe there is a chance for me to go back there  
Now that I have some direction  
It would sure be nice to be back home  
Where there's love and affection  
And just maybe I can convince time to slow up  
Giving me enough time in my life to grow up  
Time be my friend  
Let me start again  
Suddenly, my world has changed its face  
But I still know where I'm going  
I have had my mind spun around in space  
And yet I've watched it growing  
If you're listening, God

Please don't make it hard to know  
If we should believe in the things that we see  
Tell us, should we run away  
Should we try and stay?  
Or would it be better just to let things be  
Living here in this brand-new world  
Might be a fantasy, oh  
But it's taught me to love  
So it's real, real to me  
And I've learned that we must look inside our hearts  
To find a world full of love  
Like yours, like me  
Like home  
[end of song]

**RANDY:** So good! So good!

**TAMMY:** Honestly, like honestly, I'm almost without words, for real. Like I can't believe you're tone-deaf. [Laughing]

**MELINDA:** Yeah.

**TAMMY:** Unbelievable! So unbelievable and you're my friend. Right?

**MELINDA:** Right back at you.

**TAMMY:** Honestly, Melinda, I know you're going through this season of asking God what's next but when you sing it just changes the atmosphere. And God has given you a gift. I know that you'll be able to put that puzzle together. God will give you all the right answers in all the right seasons in time. I can't imagine music ever being removed from your life in any way. You have a gift of music. You have a gift of song that brings joy,



that brings life and life more abundantly.

So I'll be praying for you and cheering you on in my own little corner to yours and just asking God to be there for you as you walk out these next seasons of your life, my friend.

**MELINDA:** Thank you. I truly believe like music can't go away, obviously. And that song in particular is one that just speaks to like finding home in different places, like the world changing around you and finding how you fit there. And what it looks like and how it may be different. And how sometimes we go kicking and screaming but it is still a beautiful place.

**RANDY:** I have a question, you mentioned your age so that's on you, that's not on me.

**MELINDA:** Yes, 45. Go for it.

**RANDY:** What would 45-year-old Melinda maybe say to that Melinda who was thinking about going on American Idol all these years ago?

**MELINDA:** Don't do it! No, I'm kidding. You know, I think I'm one of those people that loves no regrets. I think I'd just let her learn. I learned so much in that experience that I was kind of glad I didn't know what I was walking into. I was glad that I just had to approach it and let God show up with me and get through the experience. I don't think I would -- I truly don't believe I would want it to happen any other way. I love taking adventures with God and seeing what happens. And that was sure a huge adventure. I'm really grateful for how it worked out.

I think I would just tell her like, it's going to be okay. She might have handled it a little better if she knew that.

**RANDY:** But back to your point about the paralyzing fear, just take that step even if you're nervous about it and God will meet you. I love it! I love it. That's what we ask you

guys to do when we reach out across the world with Water for LIFE right now. We say would you take that first step with us because God meets us when we all come together, and we take that step. It changes lives. Tammy, you know, you've seen it.

**TAMMY:** I know it firsthand, Randy.

**RANDY:** Well, let's take a look. I want people to see you in the field and the impact that you guys watching can have when you take that step today.

### **On the mission field**

**ANNOUNCER:** The most precious thing for these mothers in Burundi is their families, particularly, the next generation of children. Tammy Trent spoke to several mothers whose children have died from waterborne diseases. The impact of their stories caused Tammy to reflect upon her own losses.

**TAMMY:** I lost my husband in a scuba diving accident. He was killed. I lost my grandmother to cancer, and I lost my niece in a bicycle accident. Never once have I ever thought of losing anybody that I love because of the water that they're drinking.

These precious children have just led me to their only water source right here in this village. When I think about it, it represents generations. I think about their grandparents that drink this water. I think about their parents that are drinking this water. And I think about these little ones that are drinking from this water fighting for life with every sip that they take. And then I think about the generations to come. How many more will have to live -- try to live off of this only water source here? Many in this village have already died. We've heard the stories. My heart has been broken. And the beautiful thing is for me, I've traveled all over the world with *LIFE Outreach*, all over the world and I have seen a solution. I've been there when the water has come up from the ground from a well that we've drilled. So I know that it works. I know that we could come in here and we could drill them a well that will actually change then the generations to come.

I don't know about you but that's something I want to be part of, that kind of thing. I want to be a part of bringing life, I want to be a part of bringing hope, I want to be a part of planting seeds for generations to come. And we can do that today. We can do it together by coming in here and drilling them a well.

### **End of video**

### **In the studio**

**TAMMY:** I am always, always taken back when I look back at the places I've been and the stories we've told. The reality of the hardship with the hope that clean water can bring to these families, these villages, and especially, these little children. I always pray that God would give me a heart and the right words to share, to tell you of a great need that is taking place today right now. And then to give you an opportunity to join with us to make a difference, to impact the lives of these families and children for generations to come.

It's real. The pain is real. But hope is also real. What a privilege we've been given to be a part of such hope to share with the entire world that is in great need like these families that you've just seen. And so I'm going to ask you today if you'd consider joining us, joining this great ministry that is highly respected and filled with integrity and character to take every penny, every dollar that you sow, we will take it and we would do something magnificent with it. We will help change the lives for many, many, many children and families.

Would you consider doing that today, joining with us, partnering with us? There are so many ways you can do that -- so many ways! We're committed this year to drill 350 wells in 20 nations. For \$48 you can provide Water for LIFE for ten. For \$144 you can help provide water for 30. And for \$4800 we could go in and put in a complete well that will provide water for over a thousand people for a lifetime!

I don't know about you, but I want to be on the other side of that pain and sorrow. I want to be on the side of hope and life-giving opportunities. So I'm going to ask you today if

you'd consider joining me and the rest of us here and all the other partners that we have at *Life Today* in making this difference. Let's be the change. Let's make a difference this year -- a brand-new year filled with great hope and expectation, and life-giving water!

**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**

### **On the mission field**

**ISAK:** I want you to come with me and I want you to see the reality of what African children face, the hardship that these families face, and the tragedy that results from us not being able to get Mission: Water for LIFE to villages like this in time.

They're going to come down here now into the water and you'll see they'll come and collect water from this water source. But before they start picking up that water, just take a look at this water. I mean the water here is just so dirty. There is no way that I would ever be able to give my children this water knowing full well that this water may steal their lives. It's stolen other children in this village's lives but the reality is they have no option. There is no option here because they don't have a water well.

Please, help us today. Help us save this child, his family's lives, and all the other families in this village by drilling a water well here, by giving the best gift we can give, by giving the gift of water, giving the gift of life.

### **In the studio**

**RANDY:** Please go online, go to the phones, and make the best gift you can. You can make that huge life-saving difference in people's lives today. Melinda, thank you so much. It's been a pleasure seeing you again and hearing you sing and catching up with you. Is there a place where people can keep up with what's going on with you?

**MELINDA:** Yes. And it's really difficult. It is [MelindaDoolittle.com](http://MelindaDoolittle.com).

**RANDY:** Perfect!

**MELINDA:** That's it!

**RANDY:** Thank you so much for being here.

**MELINDA:** Thank you for having me!

**RANDY:** Thank you guys for watching. Join us again next time here on *Life Today*.