

1/25/24

Week four: WFL

Randy Robison and Tammy Trent

Robert Morgan

In the studio

TAMMY: Hello everybody. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Tammy Trent and this is Randy Robison. I had never met Pastor Robert Morgan.

RANDY: Oh! You're in for a treat! Our audience loves him.

TAMMY: I love him. As I started reading his book, he's got this new book on *Calm Your Anxiety*. I absolutely loved it! Learned so much about him as well. But I want to read something that I wrote down as I was studying getting ready to talk to Pastor Robert. It says, "Nothing compares to living in the middle of God's will as best we can. He knows the way for every day. He leads us in stages. Every stage of life is better in many ways than the preceding ones. And all the earlier stages of life prepare us for what's next. Praise the Lord!"

Praise the Lord, Pastor Robert Morgan. It is so great to have you here.

ROBERT: Thank you, Tammy and Randy. Thank you for having me. We always have to look forward. We glance backwards with thanksgiving but we look forward with anticipation. That's the great joy of our faith, of being a believer.

RANDY: So Tammy mentioned the book, *Calm Your Anxiety*. I said, "Great topic!" Because a lot of people deal with that. "Who is the author?"

They're like, "Robert J. Morgan."

I'm like, "He is one of the most chill dudes I have ever met." Are you telling me that this is a struggle that you've dealt with?

ROBERT: Yes. Well, right now the whole world is in one giant panic attack, and the whole nation is. But yeah, I've always battled anxiety. I had panic attacks in middle school, junior high school we called it back then, and I didn't know what they were. No one had ever defined panic attacks. So I thought, what's wrong with me?

And it's just a matter of going through life and realizing that we have different genetics, we have different pressures, we have different stresses. And everybody, to some extent, nowadays battles anxiety or there are things that worry them. I tell people there are a lot of reasons to be worried but there are better reasons not to be. And that's what we have to focus on.

TAMMY: I was shocked too, Randy, to hear that he might have had a problem or still does with anxiety. I felt the same way. I'm like what? I think so many people like you said are struggling with that. I've said many times on this show when we talk about anxiety, I've often said, "Well, I don't struggle with depression or anxiety." And then I go home and think, am I dealing with anxiety right now? Like how does a person even know if they've got an issue that needs to be addressed like anxiety?

ROBERT: Well, with me it is like electrical currents that are all going off. You get this queasy feeling, and you get this fear, and it can just cripple you! But the symptoms are different with everybody.

But there is fear. There is worry. A lot of times, there are physical aspects to it; you know with your stomach or with your breathing, with handwringing. I would become so worried, and my wife Katrina who is in heaven now, she didn't worry about things. She just had the capacity to trust the Lord and go on. And so she would say, "What are you so worried about? Don't you know the Lord has this under control?"

And I would say, "I know! But I'm still worried." It is something that many of us have to work our way through.

And so did the characters of the Bible. That's what's so interesting. The Apostle Paul, for example, was high strung and he said on one occasion that he went to the city of Troas to plant a church. The Lord opened a great door for him but he simply couldn't go through that door because he said, I have no peace of mind about what was happening with his people in Corinth, which was a disaster for him as a church planter.

So we share the same D.N.A. with the characters of the Bible. And if people have anxiety, it's not that something is wrong with them, it is just that they have an opportunity there to let the Lord work in a special way in their lives.

TAMMY: How do we do that?

ROBERT: Well, it's good I think to see a doctor. I'm not against medical help or counseling. But the spiritual foundation we have in the Bible is what is essential. And the whole Bible is written to anxious people. You can open the Bible almost anywhere and you'll find passages there having to do with don't fear, don't be worried, don't be discouraged. Have faith in God. Trust the Lord with all your heart. For me, Psalm 37 and Matthew 6, where Jesus said, "Do not worry about your life; consider the birds, consider the lilies." And Philippians four, that passage is really what this book is based around, *Calm Your Anxiety*, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything but in every situation by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God and the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

The Apostle Paul there lists a series of things, almost like he was writing them down on a prescription pad. I have gone to work hard to make those patterns part of my life, habit

patterns in my life. And that's the foundation we've got to have. It is based upon God and His Word.

TAMMY: What are those—you're talking about habits, the patterns, the habits. To me, what I hear you saying that I can grab from even our conversation is scripture; memorizing scripture is incredibly important. But what other habits, I'm sure that's one of those, but what habits have you found work for you to balance stress, depression, and anxiety?

ROBERT: Yeah, well let's just work our way down the list there in Philippians four. He begins, the paragraph begins by saying, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice." So it is the habit of joy. He says to rejoice in the Lord. Even if everything goes wrong, we can't always rejoice, Tammy, in our load but we can always rejoice in our Lord. And so learning to do that, putting it into practice. You have to make up your mind, I'm going to wake up today and I'm just going to be joyful.

So that is where Paul begins. And then he says, "Let your gentleness be evident to all." You say what does that have to do with anxiety? But if you are angry or harsh, the anxiety level of everyone around you goes up. If you can stay gentle, then the anxiety all around you goes down.

So Paul just lists these steps like that in order that we have just had to learn to implement.

RANDY: I think it is interesting because, in that passage in Philippians, people just get "be anxious for nothing" or "do not be anxious," depending on the translation. And they hear that in different ways. Some people hear it as condemnation. Some people hear it as wishful thinking. And some people hear it as just completely impossible—or unrealistic. Of course, I should be anxious about this or that or COVID, or my children's future—the bill collector. There's every reason in the world to be anxious but how do you view that phrase?

ROBERT: That's one of the most popular verses in the world. But people don't add verse five to it and the context. So the next phrase says, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." And that's the real key. The Lord is near so do not be anxious about anything. So we have to practice the presence of God.

Randy, I think that verse, to answer your question directly, is we grow into it. We may not absolutely fill it to perfection but there is no aspect of the Christian life that we're going to be perfect on until we get to heaven, but we can grow in that as we learn to trust the Lord. I think over the years, I've had a lot of things to worry about. We all have. But pressures that—I never expected it to be so hard to go through life as it's been. But we have to learn to say, Lord, you have told me here, do not be worried about anything. That is so universal: Do not be anxious about anything. And when you memorize that verse and learn it, and you realize it's based on the Lord being with you, then the more you quote that verse when you're anxious, and pretty soon we are transformed by the renewing of our mind through the process of scripture.

TAMMY: Love it! I love that. Worry, pastor, I've heard it said before, stop worrying, it is a sin. What do you think about that when people say that?

ROBERT: I think it is. Because it betrays a lack of faith. When the Israelites were worried in the desert, what are we going to eat? We're out here in the desert, what are we going to drink? We're in the desert, there is no water here. And they worried when the Lord wanted to meet their needs all along.

Jesus said, "Do not worry." He said that six times in Matthew six, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, what you will drink. Do not worry about tomorrow. Why are you worried? He said. God clothes the birds and he takes care of the flowers and he'll take care of you. Do not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. So I do think that the extent to which we allow anxiety to dominate our lives is an indication of how little we may be trusting the Lord. And Jesus would look at someone and he said, "O you of little faith." He'd look at

somebody else and say, "Oh, I've not seen such great faith." He wants our faith to grow. And as our faith in him grows, as we see what he does for us then we're better able to handle the pressures and the anxieties of life.

RANDY: I think every new anxiety brings us an opportunity. We can either grow in our faith out of it or we can give in to it and it just gets more miserable.

ROBERT: It is! It is a lesson we learn over and over, isn't it? But every time we learn it, I think we're a little further along. The Bible uses the word *sanctification*. It has to do with our growing in Christ. We should always be growing.

They did a survey recently, or a study, a research project came out that found out that trees never stop growing until they die. Every year they will be a little bit higher. I didn't know that. In fact, I don't think they knew it until this research project came out. That's the way we should be. The Bible says we are like trees planted by rivers of water that bring forth our season. As long as we're alive, we ought to be growing spiritually. When we grow spiritually, we're better able to handle anxiety and worry. The key is there in that Philippians four passage.

TAMMY: How do we practice putting our worry and anxiety into perspective?

ROBERT: I just have to go for a walk or I have to lay down and close my eyes and practice biblical meditation. Joshua chapter one, verse eight says that we should meditate on scripture day and night. And in Philippians four, the very next passage Paul says, "Whatever is good, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy think about these things." And some translations say "meditate."

So we have to learn—well, Martin Lloyd Jones put it this way, "We have to stop listening to ourselves and start preaching to ourselves." I think that is so brilliant. That's what the Psalmist did. Why are you upset, my soul? Why are you disquieted? Hope in God.

So we have to pick ourselves up and give ourselves a talking to and quote scripture to ourselves. I can't tell you how many times I've done that. Another thing I do if I'm really worried, I'll get my notebook and in black I will write what I'm feeling and what I'm worried about. And then I'll open my Bible and with a red pen I'll write down the verses God gives me. And then I'll say, "Lord, get me out of the black into the red. I want to be in the red zone." That kind of exercise allows you to substitute God's thoughts for your own. And that practice of displacing worry with the word is at the very heart of what we're talking about here.

RANDY: I like that. That's very practical and doable. And I like that you gave me permission to talk to myself. I'm going to tell my wife.

[Laughter]

Dr. Morgan said it is okay to talk to myself. You mentioned your wife, and not everybody watching knows your story. We've talked about it in previous programs. I'm curious how that played into your whole battle with anxiety; something you've dealt with in the past. Obviously, you can give them the short version but what you went through there, I mean if there is anything to be anxious about, you lived it.

ROBERT: Well, my wife Katrina had Multiple Sclerosis. She was diagnosed and battled that for about 25 years. And the last ten years or so, really more than 25, but the last ten years were increasingly difficult.

I finally stepped away from the pastorate, which was very hard for me to do because I love being a pastor. But I couldn't take care of her and do that and do the other things God had called me to do. But I will tell you that even during all of that she helped me. When people say, "Are you her caregiver?" I would say, "We're each other's caregivers." Because she would help me so much spiritually, and I would be worried about something.

I remember once she was in intensive care, having trouble breathing, and I was concerned with her, I was there, and I didn't know if she was going to live or die, which the Lord gave us a good deal more time after that. It was a critical time but I was so overcome with anxiety about another matter that I was there struggling with my fear about her and anxious about this other matter.

She was struggling to breathe but she said, "Well, let's pray about it." And we got close, and through her oxygen mask around her, and with gasps, she would pray and say, "Lord, help Rob not to be worried about this. You take care of this." And then I would try to pray through tears, you know. And I have just got to believe that God heard prayers offered in that kind of situation. And I miss having her encouragement. But I've got to depend upon the Holy Spirit now to do what Katrina would do and say, what kind of idiot would worry when God has given you all of these promises? That's the sort of thing she might have said.

TAMMY: I like her so much! I see you're still wearing your ring.

ROBERT: Yes. I don't know for—I've just felt the Apostle Paul said sometimes it is just better to serve the Lord and give your complete time to him, and I haven't felt differently from that. It reminds me of her. I don't feel, I have pictures—I know you've got a similar story.

TAMMY: I still wear something as well and I can relate to all of that.

ROBERT: Yeah. I think in some ways yours was harder than mine because I had a long period to adjust to it. And your loss came very quickly. But it's hard. In any event, it is hard but the Lord is near.

RANDY: Did that peace, did the answer sometimes to your anxiety, and your prayers come through other people? Did God use other people to come?

ROBERT: He would send me encouragement. He would send me people who would encourage me. And then some of my anxiety was caused by people. And I would see God answering prayers in their lives. But there really is a peace that you grow into. There are biblical truths you grow into.

When I was a little boy, my mother would always buy me clothes too big for me. We didn't have a lot of money and I said, "Mom, these are too big! These shoes are too big."

She said, "You'll grow into them." I think the spiritual clothing the Lord gives us, we have to grow into it. And that's true for peace and joy, and the ability to manage anxiety or worry. These are growth areas for the Christian. We just have to keep working on it and never give up.

TAMMY: We can learn to manage them. And I think that's important to be able to do that. And to do that with a godly perspective.

ROBERT: Well, the Bible has a verse that says we should be sanctified through and through. So from one part of us to the other we are constantly growing, and that includes our emotions, it includes our attitudes. But right now, people are very anxious and it is affecting children. The level of childhood anxiety, and the level of adolescent anxiety, young adults are so anxious. People are just so anxious. But the Lord keeps saying, "Calm your anxiety, trust me. I can take care of these things. I can take care of you." We have to keep reminding ourselves of it. And sometimes, we just by sheer faith go onward and rejoice and say, I'm going to praise the Lord anyway.

TAMMY: Amen!

RANDY: Okay, do you feel calm? Do you feel a little less anxious? We hope you do. Actually, we would love to send you Robert J. Morgan's book, *Calm Your Anxiety* when you support an outreach. And this is perfect because the topic here fits the situation that we're seeking to remedy. There is great anxiety and there is great reason to be anxious in

so many parts of the world where children are literally dying from a lack of clean drinking water.

Well, we can calm their anxiety and we can introduce them in many cases to our Lord and Savior. This is a huge opportunity and I'm hoping you'll watch this with a prayerful heart. And if the Lord just gives you that nudge to say, I want to be a part of the answer to their problem, do it. But most of all, we want you to be a part of what God's doing in your life and the lives of others. Watch this.

On the mission field

ISAK: I've just been talking to Monica and she's been explaining her story to me. The story of her life, the story of how water has impacted that life. She's got five children. But then she explained that she's lost two of those children. She lost them because of exactly where we're sitting today, where we found her, and what she's doing. She actually said this water, maybe it looks like it's clean to you, I've got to tell you it doesn't look clean to me at all. But she said, "Maybe it looks clean to you," she said, "but you don't know what's in there." And she explained how she lost two children because of waterborne disease.

The pain was so evident when she spoke about the fact that she had lost these children. That's why she cried out to God as she said angrily, "Why didn't I die first?" I can understand. I think you can understand. If we lost our children, I think we'd feel exactly the same way. Why could I not have died first?

But you know what else she said? She said that she dreams of having a water well here. Right now, what her immediate need is, is water. Monica's story broke my heart. I'm sure it's broken yours but don't leave it at that. You can't leave it there. Because then all we're left with is three broken hearts, yours, mine, and Monica's. And what Monica is left with is no future for the three children that remain. But if you'll act today, we'll make Monica's dreams could true. If you'll give that gift to Water for LIFE, you'll be giving life for

Monica, life for her children, and life for the people of this area.

End of video

In the studio

TAMMY: Isak, I do understand. I'm with you on this my brother. Absolutely! I would do anything to help her dreams come true because she is not asking me to build her a million-dollar house. She is not asking me to buy her a brand-new car, or even pay her debt. She is just saying, could you bring me some clean water? Could you drill a well and help save children in this village and families in this village? That could change everything for them. Could you just do that? So for me to think about just helping to make her dream come true, it really doesn't take very much to help her do that! It's unbelievable how simple it is.

We're in 20 nations. We're wanting to build 350 wells this year, hopefully even more. We've got big dreams. We've got big hopes for these people. It only takes \$48 and it will provide water for ten people. \$144 will provide water for 30 people. And for \$4,800, to me that's it! \$4800, we could go in there and put an entire well in that village for Monica, her family, her friends that will last for their lifetime, that will be life-giving to them instead of the fear and the worry of death and losing someone they love.

Those are the kind of dreams I want to be part of. And we want you to come alongside us in that dream, in that vision to help make that possible for so many people around the world. Would you go online? Would you make a call to us today? If you've given before, thank you so much! It means the world to us. Maybe today you're in a position where you could give again or a little bit more. I'll challenge you, come alongside us. Let's do it. Let's make some dreams come true right now for these people, Randy.

RANDY: We can! And you know I think it is important to say, because there are a lot of organizations that do good work, and we applaud good works, but when we go in, it is a demonstration of the gospel. We share God's love in word and deed. So yes, we're asking

you to meet a practical need today because we can. And God, I think has entrusted us with it. But we're also asking you to do a supernatural thing, to come in and give them drinking water for their bodies, but to give them that eternal living water for their souls.

So I just want to reiterate what Tammy said, will you go online, will you go to the phone, make the best gift you can? Let's give them water. Let's give them life.

Begin Video

***ANNOUNCER:** Every day, thousands of lives are lost to waterborne disease, 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 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 Daughter, written by James and Betty's granddaughter, Laney Rene. This insightful book invites all girls and women to walk in the freedom of their God-given identity and embrace who they really are.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "Great is the Lord" decorative blanket featuring the words of Psalm 145:3. This beautiful blanket is perfect for comfort and cold weather and a reminder of your help with Water for LIFE.

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 bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water," inspired by Jesus' words in Mark 9:41.

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

TAMMY: I so hope you're able to go online and give the best gift you can give to such a great mission outreach that we have. It changes lives all around the world. So make that call, go online, do what you can. We would appreciate it so much. And honestly, with any amount that you can give today, we want to bless your life too. We want to send you this book. Just make sure to request it when you give a call.

RANDY: And you know, it will *Calm Your Anxiety* because it is scripture and it's encouragement. And Pastor Robert Morgan, thank you for sharing with us today. It's a pleasure to have you.

ROBERT: Thank you so much. My joy!

RANDY: I hope to see you again. And hope to see you again. We look forward to seeing you here next time on *Life Today!*