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Week seven: WFL

Randy Robison and Tammy Trent

Tim Ross #2

In the studio

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. That's Tammy Trent.

TAMMY: I am!

RANDY: That's Tim Ross. He's back! I love this. By the way, if you missed the other program with Tim, LifeToday.org, you can get all our programs there. You'll want to watch it. It will kind of explain some things but if you're just joining us, stick around.

Tim, *Welcome to the Basement*, the whole basement kind of thing is sort of a framework in which you live and minister. And without recounting everything, give us a little bit of what that basement mentality looks like.

TIM: It is about living an upside-down life. The kingdom is countercultural in and of itself; the way up is down, the way in is out, the way to life is death, and the way to get is to give. And so, teaching people what a countercultural lifestyle looks like is what is within the pages of the book and the philosophy that we live out every single week on our podcast.

RANDY: So one of the things—you shared a vision in the last program. You can just go to LifeToday.org, you can see that whole thing. The thing I heard there was the way to greatness is humility.

TIM: Absolutely correct. Yes.

RANDY: How has that impacted how you minister?

TIM: So my mom, she's a southern belle from Birmingham, Alabama, and so she has all these wonderful quips that she's said throughout my life. And this one is one that I hold very, very dear. She said, "Baby, no matter how high God takes you, just remember you will always be at the feet of Jesus."

That's incredibly calibrating. So for any success you have, by any metric, you understand that no matter where you are going or how people define it as successful, I'm still at Jesus' feet. And then there's commandments throughout scripture that say two words that are very, very profound: Humble yourself. That's loud to me. And I'm going to tell you why. Because what it implies very loudly is that you should know when you're filling yourself. You should know when you're prideful. So why would the command be to humble yourself if you can't recognize when you're not being humble?

So there's this commandment to attunement. There is this commandment to self-awareness. There is a commandment to look at yourself and go, I need to make sure that I'm not starting to act like I am the reason why I've accomplished so much. Like there's a difference between glory and credit. [Laughing] God is the only one who can handle glory. We're actually in the wrong bodies to handle glory. Our bodies can't handle it. Our bodies can barely handle praise and that's legal. So when it comes to these accolades and success by any measure, I'm just always reminded that I'm at Jesus' feet.

RANDY: There is something incumbent in that, too, in "humble yourself." Like we have a responsibility to do it. Boy, we've seen a lot of negative things in the church when people don't. How do you do it on a practical level? It is just saying oh! I'm so humble!

TIM: No, that's false humility. I think true humility is when you recognize who you are in relationship with who God is. If that in itself can't keep you humble, I don't know what else needs to happen.

RANDY: Do you think it might mean for a pastor, someone who is in a position you are in, to get out of it because they're not handling it right?

TIM: I think there's a lot of pastors that have overstayed their welcome in the pulpit because they've made what they do who they are. And so, this might get me in trouble but I've gotten in trouble before, since I started this podcast so I'm used to it by now. But pastor is not a noun it is a verb. It is not who you are, it is what you do. The gifts that Jesus gave us by the apostle Paul are the apostolic, the prophetic, the evangelistic, the pastoral, and the teaching gifts. Those are verbs, those are not nouns. Paul doesn't even call himself an apostle before he calls his name. He's given a name, then he tells you what he does, I Paul, an apostle. Right? If Michael Phelps walked in here right now, we wouldn't be like swimmer Mike!

TAMMY: I might!

[Laughter]

TIM: Like we know what he does but we will refer to him as who he is. I don't mind people being called anything. I don't want it to become what defines them. My name is Timothy.

RANDY: Whatever accolades we get we are to lay them down like you said at Jesus's feet.

TIM: That's exactly right.

RANDY: I want to ask you because you talk about going into the highways and byways, do you want to talk about that?

TIM: Yes, I do!

RANDY: I think this is important.

TIM: It is! So highways, byways, bushes, and shrubs because I turn everything into a chant. I

can't help myself. So highways, byways, bushes, and shrubs, the two synoptic gospels, Matthew 22 and Luke 14 both tell about the banquet. There are invitations sent out to this first wave of invitees and they all decline. And so, the host of the banquet gets upset and he goes, just go get anybody! It's just very, very flippant. Like just go get anybody! Lame, crippled, blind, go get them. And then, don't just go get those types of people, go look in the country lanes and the bushes. For a metroplex that we live in, it would be like go look under the freeway underpass, go invite them to the banquet.

That's what my commission was. I didn't know this when I first started the podcast. And so, what the Holy Spirit told me was you have been a really good host and waiter at the banquet but now I need you to join the search party. I was like I like the banquet hall. It's really nice! And I've been here for almost three decades so I like it here. He's like—

RANDY: You get the title, it could be your identity.

TIM: He's like no! Just go be a part of the search party. And so, I took off my little bow tie, visually, and my little cummerbund and my little suit jacket and I put on this. And I went out into the highways, byways, bushes, and shrubs and started looking for people who were hiding in their pain, or hiding in their jobs, or hiding behind their career, or hiding behind a facade.

The meme that came to me, was a GIF of Homer Simpson that is iconic of him just fading into the shrubs. I saw it when I read this passage and I texted it to all of my employees. I'm like this is who we're going after. [Laughing] We're going after Homer! And the Holy Spirit said, "That's exactly right, Tim. Because Homer is not the first person that slid into the bushes. Adam and Eve did."

Everybody has been hiding since Genesis three and all Jesus has been trying to do is say come out, come out wherever you are. And that's all I'm doing with this podcast. And that's all I'm doing with that book.

TAMMY: I was going to say the podcast *and* the book. *Welcome to the Basement*, you talk a lot

about upsetting people in here as well, which I had to kind of get past. When I first think about it, I'm like mad! I'm angry.

TIM: That's what everybody thinks.

TAMMY: Right? But that is not what you mean in the book. You do such a good job explaining this. You take us through so many different things welcoming us to the basement. If you left me with a revelation today, something in this book, Tim, what would it be that could set me on a path to begin changing my life?

TIM: That being upset by the message of love and hope of Jesus Christ would be the greatest upset that you would ever experience in your life. That living upside down because all "upset" means by definition, and I'm a wordsmith so I look up all definitions, all upset means is to turn over. [Laughing] And if you know that the kingdom is upside down, when you are turned over with the message of love and hope of Jesus Christ you are being set not upside down but right side up.

So my invitation is for people to willingly volunteer to have their lives upset. The Bible is the most upsetting book that's ever been written. Jesus lived the most upsetting life that's ever been lived. My life was upset by Jesus, and now this book teaches us how to spend the rest of our lives upsetting others.

TAMMY: Whoo! That is a great word for me! I don't know about you, Randy, it's so great for me.

RANDY: It's truth. And in an upside-down world to upset things is to set it right. I think that's why a lot of people watching right now may be going, this is resonating with me. I want to do this.

What do you tell someone who may be stuck in the lobby? And going, how do I get to this place? What do I do?

TIM: Two words, press B. Just press B. Don't press 100. Please don't go up there. Just press B. Whatever you think you're going to miss by being up there, whatever you think you're going to love by being up there, it's better in the basement. I mean you take a natural basement, a lot of people convert them and some basements look better than the main living room of their house. It is a really, good place. But in the time of a disaster, the basement is the safest place you want to be.

So, in our invitation to our podcast, and this invitation to this book, what I'm inviting people to is a safe place where they can be seen, heard, known, and still loved for who they are, as they are, right where they are. That's what every human needs to heal. That's what every human needs to be able to change. They must feel safe and they must be stable.

RANDY: Does that mean we need to go out and get everybody saved right now off the streets? Or is a lot of what we're doing just kind of laying a foundation for God to do more work?

TIM: Yeah! I'm so glad you said this! So I think the body of Christ has been so romantically involved with the harvest that we've forgotten about seed time and irrigation. We want the harvest. We want to meet somebody and be like do you know Jesus? No?

RANDY: That's how you measure the success of a ministry. Right? How many numbers can we—

TIM: And God's really into the long game. The first Messianic prophecy given with promise is Genesis 3:15, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent and he shall bruise his heel." It's 4,000 years before the prophecy is fulfilled. He is good at the long game. He is longsuffering for a reason. His grace and mercy are new every morning for a reason.

So every day I get up, I'm looking for an opportunity to upset somebody's life. And it is not—I've sown more seeds and watered more seeds than I have won people to Jesus.

RANDY: You know, we think we all need to be the harvester but we can't. We can't! It is okay for somebody—it is okay for Billy Graham to walk into a town and thousands of people come down the aisle but how many people have been planting seeds and watering for how long? We can be that person too, right?

TIM: I love going into a grocery store and paying for somebody's groceries behind me, and walking out without ever saying Jesus loves you, and here's a tract to my church, and here's a card, and let me pray for you.

Because here's what's happening. By just doing that one act, I have—I have started to rub away some of the hard edges of cynicism that somebody has in their life that says there's no good in the world. Just by that act. I didn't say God. I didn't link it to Jesus. I didn't talk about getting your life flipped upside down. But that seed said there is still goodness on the earth. Now somebody else is going to come behind that and water it. It might be me, but it probably won't be me. And then, like you said, three years from now they're listening to the gospel being preached and all of these things have worked together for their good.

RANDY: We have a real desire, especially in the church, to make everything formulaic. So you're saying you buy something for somebody, you don't even tell them who you are, you don't tell them why. But that's not necessarily the formula. Because the next person may be like, God just wants me to tell you that he loves you. Right?

TIM: Absolutely!

RANDY: And maybe that's it. And so every time we get into this kind of conversation, and we all try, oh, I've got to do this, I've got to do this. There's only one formula I've ever found that works, it is to know his voice and obey.

TAMMY: That's very good, Randy.

TIM: It's so good! That's exactly it. It is H.B.O. Hear, believe, obey. That's it! It's the best thing.

So when I get up there is not this cookie-cutter formula. It is how do you want to partner with me today to fulfill your works on the earth? Like that's legit it. That's all I'm trying to do.

TAMMY: Don't you think it takes the pressure off of us as well? Like we've been taught this is what you need to do. If you miss one of those in-between then you have failed. And so I think then some people think, well, I'm not even going to try then because I don't know if I've got them all in a row and I might fail so I'm just going to be quiet and shut up.

What I hear you both saying too is just loving people, loving them well, loving them right where they're at, sowing that seed, whatever God has asked you to do in that moment and it doesn't have to be all churchy religious, or full of religion, but just love well. And then sow that seed and trust that God's got somebody else on the other side of that. Or that person has been set up now. They've heard it, they've felt loved, someone listened to them, someone saw them. And then the next person that walks into their life they're like wait a second, what's going on here? Until maybe the long, down the road, three, four, five years they go, I'm going to grab the microphone and say I give up!

TIM: That's right! That's what it is. I had a beautiful—I did not need this as confirmation to know that this is what I'm supposed to be doing in this season of my life but it was really, really cool. So I'm at a church, and after the service was over, I was there to do a Q and A, they had a meet and greet and this young lady walks up to me and goes, "You have no idea how much your podcast is changing my life. Thank you so much. Would you do me a favor and just say hi to somebody really quick?"

She hits FaceTime on her phone and hands it to me. This lady comes on the screen. As soon as she recognizes my face she bursts into tears. She has on nurse's scrubs. She's at work. She is like, "You have no idea how much this has blessed me."

I'm like, "Thank you so much. Love you!" Hang up the phone. Give it back to her.

She goes, "Thank you so much for saying hi to her. That's my wife."

I said, "Oh! Okay!"

She said, "And we're getting a divorce. And it is because of your podcast." And she literally started going, episode 11 you said this. Episode 19 you said this. I brought my wife into the bedroom. By the time we listened to episode 20—she literally walked through the pods and told me how the Holy Spirit was convicting her and her wife about their marriage. And they said, "We realized that the Holy Spirit doesn't honor our marriage even though the law does." And they got a divorce.

Like I didn't do that. I didn't have eight episodes on lesbianism. You know what I'm saying?

TAMMY: You didn't have to shove it down anybody's throat either. You let the Holy Spirit do the work.

TIM: He convicts people way better than me. I promise you. Yeah!

RANDY: I love it. The basement, I think is a place of obedience but it is also a place of freedom.

TIM: It is!

RANDY: I love it. In fact, I want everyone to get into the basement. And if you request Tim's book, *Welcome to the Basement* when you support this outreach, you'll be blessed by it. But you will also be blessing someone else. I think this is a core foundational issue to basement living which is don't forget the poor. If you see a need, reach out and fulfill it. So here's something I want you to consider doing today.

On the mission field

RANDY: I had the privilege of being a part of *LIFE*'s mission outreaches. God, just touch this

child.

Each journey is life-changing as we witness desperate need and understand our ability to intervene. Our recent trip to Burundi was no exception as I saw just how bad the water conditions are for thousands of people in this area. I can't help but notice that they're working so hard to get water that actually—it could be kill them.

>> Yeah, but they have no other choice. They have no other wells or any water sources here that they can drink from. This is the only thing they have.

RANDY: It is tempting to think conditions can't get any worse. But when I meet another mother who has lost a child because of contaminated water, my heart breaks. And as we travel to different villages, the names and faces change but the struggle is the same.

Geraldine is a mother here in this village in Burundi. She comes down here to get water for her family like all the other villagers because it is the only place they can get it. But it is not good. After Geraldine collected her water, we accompanied her to her home where she told us about her two-year-old daughter Sandrine who died from a waterborne disease.

Open captions

>> She was a beautiful girl and she was growing and helping me here. Then she got really sick with blood diarrhea and when we got her to the hospital, she died two days later.

RANDY: I am a father. I have four children. I'm so sorry that you lost your daughter.

Lord, we pray for your divine protection for this family, for all these children. And Lord, we pray you would move on the hearts—

You can be that light by making it possible to drill a water well in Geraldine's village, and many more like hers. Every new well provides clean drinking water for a lifetime which helps prevent death and disease for families like this. When you give life to an entire village you become the

answer to their prayers.

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: You know scripture tells us to weep with those who weep and that's hard for me, to be honest with you, to be sitting there with a mother who has lost a child. And we've seen that over and over again. And then we pray, we pray for God's provision. We pray for comfort. But I think we're missing it if we don't go all the way and then do what is in our power to do. Scripture tells us if it is in your power to do good don't withhold that. Scripture says, "Remember the poor." It says don't be hearers of the word only but doers.

This is doing it. Water for LIFE is giving people water so that they can live. And with Pastor Amiable there, we are working as much as possible in so many places with the local churches, with the local pastors because we want them to know this was provided by Christians to you who care about you. We don't know you but we care because we know Christ and we want you to know Christ.

I hope that God will just move in your heart today and say, look, do something! And that something, that's between you and God. Let me tell you how it works for us on a very practical level. Our goal is 350 wells this year. It is our goal. I'd love to do more but that's our set goal in 20 nations.

One well costs, on average, \$4800. And that well will last about 70 years, that's a lifetime for many people. But many of you can't do that. Perhaps you could give \$144 and that would help provide Water for LIFE for 30 people again on average. Whatever you can do. \$48 will give water to ten people. The point is that we hear God say go meet the need and then we obey. And we say, Lord, whatever resources you have entrusted me with, I'm going to turn back to you so that others may know your love and your mercy and your grace. Will you do that?

Tammy, I know you've been to these places, you've been to Burundi where I was in that piece.

You've seen the pain, you've sat with the mothers, and you also have seen how we can change it.

TAMMY: I have. And can I just say something, Randy? I have been in the past someone who has withheld and not always been a doer. And so I want to say to the one today that has watched this show countless times and you've withheld like I have with things in my life, I want to encourage you today, I want to challenge you today, take it to God in prayer. I would love today to be that day when you become a doer like I did. I think it would change your life, and not just your life but the lives of so many other people. It is an incredible place to be in a place where God has blessed us so that we can bless other people.

So that's my challenge for you today. If you feel like you've withheld, if you're waiting for the next person to give, if you've watched the show and never had a chance to give be a doer today and watch it change your 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 hope you're going online and giving the best gift that you possibly can give. It is an incredible need, it is a serious need, and it is one that I know can be met by us today. Let's do something about it. Let's be the change for these people that need us so desperately. Because of your giving, we get to give to them. We get to do it together. It's quite a beautiful thing.

Listen, and for any gift that you're able to give today we want to send you Tim Ross's book, *Welcome to the Basement*. I know it's going to be a revelation for so many people like it has been for me.

Tim, it's been so good today. You have truly spoken life into me. Every time I listen to you, it is life-changing the way you see the word, the way you teach me the word. I'm grateful for you. And I know so many hundreds of thousands are. Thank you for today.

TIM: Thank you. I'm honored to serve. Thank you so much.

TAMMY: We love you. And we love you. Please come back next time. We'll see you on *Life Today*.