

**3/6/24**

**Week ten: WFL, last week**

**Randy Robison and Tammy Trent**

**Jess Connolly**

**In the studio**

**TAMMY:** Hello everybody. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Tammy Trent and this is Randy Robison. It is great to be with you. You look a little tired.

**RANDY:** I'm tired. That's my normal look.

**TAMMY:** Are you tired? Do you struggle with being tired?

**RANDY:** I do.

**TAMMY:** Do you really? Overwhelmed?

**RANDY:** Stay up too late.

**TAMMY:** That's it?

**RANDY:** It is my own fault. It is my own fault!

**TAMMY:** Yes! You can change that then.

**RANDY:** Okay.

**TAMMY:** Well, we've got an awesome guest on the show today. Randy, I love her. I've done a women's event, maybe two, I can't remember. We were trying to figure out where it was in the world we were together.

**RANDY:** Your brain's tired.

**TAMMY:** That's true! But I love her so much. I remember the first time I met her. I enjoyed being with her. Her personality was so down to earth. The way she taught the word was practical. I just literally loved her. I've not crossed paths with her since until today. I'm so happy to have Jess Connolly with us. She has a brand-new book out called *Tired of Being Tired*.

**RANDY:** Love the title!

**TAMMY:** I love it. It's so true. "Receive God's realistic rest for your soul-deep exhaustion." I'm so glad you're here, Jess. I'm tired. I don't know if you're tired, but I'm going to start up at the top because you say you have never met one woman or probably anybody you're talking to today, a woman, probably, or a man, Randy, who isn't exhausted, that is not tired. Why do you think that is?

**JESS:** Oh, goodness gracious. There are a million reasons why. I love that you ask me if I'm tired. Because a lot of times people now assume, so I guess you're never tired anymore.

The reason why humans are tired is that we live under the effects of a fallen world because we live on Earth. It is too much—mentally, emotionally, it is too much. There is too much to distract us. There's too much overwhelming us. There are too many tasks—we're tired because we work. We're tired because we raise families. We're tired because we serve. We are tired because we lead. We're tired because we're human. So I don't know anyone who is not tired at some point. The question is are we receiving God's rest for our fatigue?

**TAMMY:** I'm going to jump right into something with you. Because when you were writing this book you were in a place of feeling exhausted. You even talk about having,

which is almost hard to believe, a mental breakdown. There are so many people who watch our show every day, Jess, who can relate to all these feelings, feeling absolutely broken. You've gone so hard, you've run and you've raced so fast. You add so many things to your list until you fall apart. And I think that's where you were in your life.

**JESS:** And they were all good things. All the things I had on my plate were things that were even God things. Things I believed he was presenting to me to do for my good, for others' good, for his glory. But the way in which I was doing them, mothering, leading, teaching, writing, the way in which I was doing them was continually leaving me exhausted and fatigued.

**TAMMY:** And how were you doing those things? What brought you to that place?

**JESS:** So I was specifically leading my church with my husband. We planted our church ten years ago in Charleston, South Carolina. We have four kids who are—not one of them is quiet or super gentle. They're wild kids in the best way. And just showing up to work and to lead. I was doing them, and I think the way it looks normal in our culture right now. So I was pushing, pushing, pushing. And then when I felt like I could, when I felt like I had done enough, when I felt like I had earned the capacity to rest, I would. I would try to rest. I would take little bits of rest.

But what I learned through researching and just pouring over God's word is the coolest thing in Genesis is that we see God makes the morning and the evening and then as he sets day into motion. It says there was evening and then there was morning, the first day. And so God establishes this order that we work from rest in the very beginning.

And so I realized I was working, working, working, and then trying to rest a little bit if I felt like I could. Now, one huge shift I've made is I've started to work from my rest; to establish my rest first, to establish my connection with God first, to get the renewal I need first, and then move into the things that he's called me to.

**RANDY:** That's interesting because we tend to work the other way around, rest when we can. But we're not very productive when we do that I find. I need to ask you about this because you experienced some fatigue that was not just from busyness but a physical condition in your body. How do we differentiate or even identify whether we're suffering from a physical thing that is making us tired or an emotional thing that is wearing on us? Maybe some other mental stress that makes us just not want to face the day? Or whether it is something that's purely spiritual because you don't always know.

**JESS:** That's the question. I think one reason so many of us continue to live tired and continue to live fatigued is because we're resting in ways that we don't need. So maybe we're thinking like oh, I just need a nap or I need a little bit more sleep. I need physical rest. But what we're struggling with is mental exhaustion or emotional exhaustion or even spiritual exhaustion.

So I think one of the best ways we can figure that out, it is hard to hear, it is not always that life-giving but we do have to kind of slow down and pay attention. The great news is for those of us who walk with God, we have access to Holy Spirit, and wisdom and insight, and other people. We can slow down and say, okay, how am I doing? Let me check. Mentally, how am I doing? Do I feel fresh and clear and ready to start each day? Or do I feel constantly overwhelmed? That would be mental exhaustion. Or emotionally, am I able to access how I feel about things? Do my emotions sometimes supersede the situation that I'm in? Maybe they're bigger than they're called for. Or maybe am I not able to access them at all? Do I go long periods without being able to feel or being able to process how I feel with God? That might look like emotional exhaustion.

A lot of us know what the common signs of physical exhaustion are. We're yawning, we're cranky, we're achy, we're just actually physically tired. But again, sometimes that's different forms of exhaustion leading in. But what you touched on is so important. I think a lot of us are struggling with a deep spiritual exhaustion that comes from forgetting the gospel, forgetting the good news, forgetting what Jesus has done for us, and not taking care of our souls. I think the best way to find out what kind of tired we are is to slow

down and pay attention.

**RANDY:** That's interesting. Jesus even took those moments to pull himself away from the good work—who is doing better work than Jesus? And he would pull away and go to the mountain to rest but not necessarily to sleep. Like he is spending time with God.

There are times, especially in a year like this, when I just want to turn off all the news. I want to put my phone down and put it on "do not disturb." Not so I can sleep, although I like that, but to withdraw from the world's noise. Obviously, you get in prayer, you get in scripture, even just talking with my spouse and just listening.

There was a football game on recently and my wife was like, hey, where are we going to eat dinner? She's like, "We can sit where you're watching the game." My team was playing. It was an important game. I started to and I went, you know, Uh-uh. I need to just sit and be with you. And that is a form of rest because I was toning down the world. That's—how much has that meant to you because you've studied this, you've gone through this? Does that kind of thing rejuvenate you?

**JESS:** Absolutely. And number one, I love that you bring up Jesus. In my research, I found 22, at least 22 times in the New Testament where we see Jesus draw away and on many of those occasions, we see in scripture that he is drawing away from people who are waiting on him, who need healing, who are expecting something from him. And so to have that example of our good and perfect Savior and friend Jesus who takes care of his soul, his emotions, his mind, and his body, even while he is doing the most important work, it's such a good reminder for us that this is beautiful. It is one way for us to honor God. It's one way for us to worship. It is one way truly for us to obey God.

But yeah, I think a lot of what you're touching on is that many of us are finding and figuring out that what we thought was resting was also sometimes numbing. We were turning off our minds, not paying attention to our emotions, or stuffing them down. Or maybe we were trying to ignore our physical needs or the needs of our bodies. And also,

kind of quiet what's happening in our soul and our spirit and that doesn't leave us rejuvenated.

This is why we hear people all the time say, "I need a vacation from my vacation." Or like "Oh, it's Monday but I wish it was Friday again." It is because we aren't necessarily always resting but we're numbing and we're not paying attention too. So that's absolutely what I found. A lot of what I was calling rest before I had this kind of breakdown of sorts was not what made me feel more recreated or more connected to God.

**TAMMY:** So many people can feel disconnected from God in these seasons. I've been in those places too where you feel like scripture isn't working for me. Matthew 11:28, "Come to me all those who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." But I can't find it, and God isn't giving me rest. How do you speak to that person that feels so empty today? It feels like they keep showing up but they feel like scripture isn't working for me.

**JESS:** What a kind and compassionate question. So my first answer is I would try to answer it with that same compassion and I would say, I think, number one a lot of us are feeling exhausted about our exhaustion. We're feeling *Tired of Being Tired* because there's such an inherent shame mixed in with this. We think it is our fault. We think that somehow, we're not productive enough. Or we're not doing rest correctly. Or we're not doing the exact right things. Or we're weak and that's why we're the problem. That's why scripture isn't doing it. Or that's why church isn't doing it. Or that's why any of the rhythms aren't doing it.

But I'm so grateful that we have a Father who is compassionate and kind toward us. I believe even about our fatigue, he is moving toward us in mercy. And he wants rest for his kids. Psalm 127 says, "Don't you know? He gives rest to those that he loves." And this is such an encouragement for me to remember that he isn't standing off to the side saying like why can't you get it together? Why can't you rest better? Why isn't this working for you? Why can't you drink a green smoothie, get a nap, and figure it out? He's compassionate toward us. And Jesus, our friend and Savior has experienced every

temptation that we will, including exhaustion. And again, there is so much compassion and mercy there.

So I would say okay, if scripture isn't hitting, in some way that you're spending time with God is somehow not renewing you, it might be time for a reset to say, what is it that you're trying to get out of it? Are you utilizing even those beautiful spiritual rhythms as a way to somehow get closer to God or figure him out better instead of just receiving what he has for you?

And that's where a lot of that spiritual exhaustion comes in. So many of us are doing all these things because we believe we should, to earn his love, His grace, and his favor. And instead, we might need the reminder that all of these rhythms, God's Word, prayer, and scripture, they are things he wants for us, not from us. They are gifts to us so we can experience his nearness, not somehow get closer to him as if sanctification was a scale. He's already come toward us; he's already come for us. So even a reset to say, why am I reading scripture? Am I trying to make myself better? Am I trying to fix myself? Or am I going to God's Word to receive what he has for me? That might help us so much.

But mostly, I just feel so much compassion towards anyone who is feeling that way.

**TAMMY:** Me too! And I love—you give us some practical tips, which are things that you did. You said you journaled. What are some other things that you did, Jess, that could help someone today? Like okay, I want a new perspective today. I want scripture to work for me so I'm going to believe that it does. Here are some things I'm going to do to move out of this place in my life where I'm exhausted and I'm tired. Maybe do I stop saying yes so much?

**JESS:** Yes.

**TAMMY:** Maybe do I stop feeling—[Laughing] Maybe do I stop serving, serving, serving—so many have been drilled like serve, serve, serve to get, to get, to get. And our

to-do list every day is so enormous. So what are some practical tips that you could give me to stop feeling so tired?

**JESS:** I'm going to give you a few practical ones but I believe are simple and also radical. I think they're simple because they are things anybody can do right now today with no money. You don't need to go on a silent retreat. You don't need to change your whole life. And many of us cannot quit our jobs or our responsibilities. These are simple and practical but they're also radical because I don't think most people do them.

So number one, before you say yes, pause. Any time you're asked to do anything, it is a beautiful answer to say I need to pray about that. And then this is wild, but maybe actually pray about it.

**TAMMY:** That's a wild concept! [Laughing]

**JESS:** Ask God for wisdom, am I supposed to say yes to this or am I supposed to say no? That's a really simple one. Instead of saying yes in the moment if somebody says hey, can you just do this? Or can you be at this? Or could you just add this to your plate? Say, you know what? I'm going to need to pray about that. Guess what? Bonus points, people think that sounds really wise—because it is! So it is a great thing to add to our life.

**RANDY:** I'll say, "Let me ask my wife. Let me talk to my wife."

**JESS:** Listen, that's good! I like to say, "Let me talk to my dad." And by that, I mean my heavenly Father. I need to talk to Dad about that. I need to ask him for permission. So really, actually pause and pray before you say yes to anything. That's a big one.

Here's another one. It's practical but radical, turn your phone off just every day. A lot of people don't know this but you can turn it off.

**TAMMY:** There is an on and off button? I did not know that!



**JESS:** People know how to turn it on when it dies but you can turn it off. And right after I tell this to people I get a ton of caveats, but what if something happened? Or what if I missed a call?

**TAMMY:** True! All valid questions.

**JESS:** But all of those are also a way that we kind of are obeying fear in a worst-case scenario. We are too reachable, we are too accessible, and so by literally simply turning it off, I would advocate for some point every single day, even if it is just for an hour, but maybe bumping up further and further. It is free, and it is life-changing. And more than it just providing practical rest because we're not accessible for a few moments, I do believe it does something for us mentally, emotionally, and spiritually to say this is not my whole life. My life is right here where I'm at and I can receive God's rest in this way.

I would also say having a prayer of release. If there is something that's feeling heavy, exhausting, or overwhelming have a prayer of release where you say, God, I give this to you. I remember that you're in control of it. I'm going to show up and do what I can do but I'm also going to expect that you're going to move in big and mighty ways.

And those are just a few. Of course, we know things like actually getting more physical rest, moving our bodies, or drinking more water but also, just making a to-do list before you end your day of what do I need to get done tomorrow? So it is not weighing on me all night long.

**TAMMY:** Can I read a couple of quotes from you that I absolutely love? "You will continue to experience spiritual exhaustion if you believe that every rhythm, every expression of love and service is only about what God wants or needs from you. Man, that is a place where you feel so bound up. It is not true. It is not true. I refuse to keep living a life where the best I can hope for is an endless loop of exhaustion and listless living." Such good quotes!

Jess, you have so much stuff in this book that I think can help a lot of people who feel exhausted, that feel tired, and don't know what to do about it. You give so much wisdom and knowledge, both practical and spiritual. Great stuff that I was able to tap into and go, I'm free from being tired today. And also, just the freedom of saying no sometimes. Realizing that we can say no; that we don't have to do everything but take it to the Father first. Take everything to the Father and say, let me pray about this. Let me ask the Lord what he would want for my life.

**RANDY:** It is about obedience at the end of the day. If you want a formula, that's the only one I've got: Hear God's voice, obey, and he will give us that rest.

Jess's book is available for preorder right now so you can go online where you get books and order that book. But right now we want to show you a situation where people are physically exhausted in many ways. And we can come in not just with a solution for the physical exhaustion but with a whole new dimension, a place where they can find spiritual rest and abundant life. Watch this and you'll see how you can be a part of that.

### **On the mission field**

**RANDY:** In so many places around the world, we see people that don't have water—any water to drink. If they do, they're scraping it from the worst places possible. But in some places, like where I'm at right now in Burundi, there seems to be an abundance of water. But the water is not safe.

### **Open captions**

>> My baby's name was Stella. She died earlier this year. Her whole body was swollen and when I got her to the hospital she died. She was vomiting and had diarrhea. Adults suffer from this but the kids suffer so much more than us.

**RANDY:** It was this water source where she would come and get the water every day in these jugs and take it back to her children. And it is this water source that took Stella's

life.

### **Open captions**

>> It is very difficult to think about her. It is very painful for me. I wonder why I am still here. I wish I could die and join her.

**RANDY:** I don't want Jacqueline to go through this again. She has other children. She's doing all that she can. Are we doing all that we can? We can change this. We have the power. It is within our power to give them clean drinking water so that she doesn't get to the point where she wants to die.

That's why it is critical that we do something right now. You and I can do something. We can come in and we can put in a well in this village and they will have clean water. There are so many other villages just like this. So many other mothers that are experiencing the same pain that Jacqueline is feeling.

We want you to join us in reaching around the world to places like this and giving them clean, pure, drinking water. Will you do that? Will you give life? Will you give Water for LIFE? When you do, you will be changing the lives of mothers like Jacqueline all over the world. Do it today.

### **End of video**

### **In the studio**

**RANDY:** One interesting thing about this situation with contaminated water, is that you see adults drinking this water all around. You wonder why they would do that. The ones that are drinking it as adults survived childhood because contaminated water comes in, especially when an infant goes from nursing to drinking the water, and then as they're growing—so it is the young children that are hit the hardest. That's why the mothers suffer so much.

Going into a village like that and so many others across the world and simply drilling a well to get deep enough to the water that is uncontaminated, and then building it in such a way that it will last for an average of 70 years, which is what we do, that's why we call it "Water for LIFE," we change that village, and the villages around it. We give those children who are at the most risk a chance, a much greater chance at life.

The thing that separates us from a lot of organizations that do wonderful, charitable work is we do this for one reason, because of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Because the gospel is an outreach to those who are needy, those who are hurting. Because the Bible says, "Do not forget the poor." That's what we ask you to enter into with us—reaching out with the love of Christ in word and deed.

This is what it looks like for this particular campaign, and this is the last week we'll be talking about it on the air, it will be ongoing, so we always need your support. Your gift of \$48 today will basically provide water for ten people for 70 years—for a lifetime. A gift of \$144 will provide that same fresh clean drinking water for 30 people. A gift of \$4800 provides on average a well.

We need to know this now, we need to know this today because we have people down the line in these different places, missionaries, rig workers, pastors, in some places, and we need to tell them, okay, line these villages up. We're coming in. We're giving them Water for LIFE.

So please, we want you to go to the phone or go online right now. Don't delay. Make the best gift you can because you can enter into their world of suffering and give them some relief, give them the gospel. Tammy, you know what it does. This is such a beautiful ministry of hope.

**TAMMY:** It is, Randy. I appreciate your heart so much for those people of Burundi and that peace, it's just—I know I've been there. When you're actually with the people on the

ground, it's so emotional. It is hard to hold it in sometimes. I couldn't do what I do, I know you couldn't do what you do either when we travel to these countries if we didn't know that there was a sure solution. There is a solution and we know how to get there and we know how to bring them water with your help.

So let's do it today. Let's make a difference. Let's bring water—Water for 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.*

*This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.*

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** I have the honor of being able to see a lot of those situations firsthand as you saw. But it is also a bit of a burden and that's why we want you to come alongside us. This is the last week we'll be on the air talking about Mission: Water for LIFE but it will be ongoing. We need your help. Please go online, go to the phone, and make the best gift you can. Let's give them life. You can do it.

I'm actually a little rejuvenated by today's discussion with Jess. I so appreciate it.

**TAMMY:** Oh, I appreciate you! It's been so fun to reconnect with you here on *Life Today*. Maybe I'll see you out on the road sometime soon. You're one of my favorites. Glad you were here. So glad you were here.

And we're glad you were here. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*.