

4/23/24

**Week 17: Spring Mission Feeding**

**Randy Robison and Tammy Trent**

**Michael Molthan**

**In the studio**

**TAMMY:** Hello everybody. I'm Tammy Trent. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. This is Randy Robison. Great to be back with you again. Honestly, it is great to be back with you guys.

I'm so glad you are here. You could be anywhere else today but you're with us and I pray that today is a good day for you. That you feel hope, that you feel encouraged, that you know that you are never too far gone. And such is the testimony that we have with our guest today, Michael Molthan. He has confessions of a felon that he is going to share with us which I think already, wow! What is this going to mean? He is an amazing guy with an incredible testimony: Recovered drug addict and alcoholic. He says that God was never even anywhere on his radar. He's gone through depression, he's gone through suicidal thoughts. He's had 26 or 27 mug shots or something. I mean he's been through it. But he's come out on the other side. We're going to talk to him about that today.

Michael, it's great to have you here.

**MICHAEL:** What an honor. I'm just so honored to be here with the two of you of y'all. I appreciate that. I can't wait to hear what I'm about to say. [Laughing]

**TAMMY:** I can't wait either. So let's start at the top. Tell me about your life. How did you get to here today? What did you go through to get with us today?

**MICHAEL:** Well, at a young age I grew up in the Dallas area. I grew up in Plano, Texas. At a young age, I experienced major trauma. My grandfather, as early as I could remember, sexually abused me at a very young age. He was a cop. He was a border patrol officer.

I grew up, I tell people, I grew up on the wrong side of the tracks. I grew up in a well-to-do family. We had money and I grew up in country clubs. I grew up learning how to gamble and play golf and lived in the men's locker room. And so my definition or perception of a man, that's what I saw in the men's locker room. These guys taught me how to drink, they taught me how to gamble, they taught me how to work. Hung out with real estate tycoons. Little did I know they were teaching me how to die.

But behind closed doors, there was a lot of abuse as well. So I was very confused. When I was told I was going to grow up to be just like my grandfather because my mannerisms were like his. I kept this secret hidden for a very long time.

**TAMMY:** When did the abuse start, did you say?

**MICHAEL:** From him, as early as I remember. From a very young age.

**TAMMY:** It carried out for...

**MICHAEL:** It carried out to probably about the third or fourth grade because he passed away of throat cancer because he was a raging alcoholic. It's a big part of my story today because my mission is to help, not to influence others or be popular. God is not interested in celebrities, he is interested in servants. You know, that's what he's looking for.

I want to help people see life through God's perspective and not the world's or the culture's because when I truly forgave him, I realized—and then I speak, and was speaking and shared this story with someone, they broke down and it touched them. I realized that God was using my grandfather to speak through me as a vessel to share

solutions to sexual abuse. Now I realize why God was doing what he was doing.

**TAMMY:** So what happened in your teenage years? How did things begin to evolve and fall apart?

**MICHAEL:** So what happened was I had my first drink of alcohol when I was ten years old. I tell people I should have had it when I was six. But by ten years old I had my first drink, and something happened. There was that sense of ease and comfort.

I drank alcohol and I did drugs because I wanted to feel like everybody around me looked. I wanted my insides to match their outsides. So as I was doing this, I kept drinking more and more to get that feeling. And then there were consequences. I wanted to drink more and more to get rid of the bad decisions I was making. So I was creating self-inflicted trauma on top of real trauma. I was in this trap that finally caught up with me. When I was apprehended, I got my very first mug shot as a very successful home builder. I kid you not, they took me down to the jail and it was scary. It was scary. I became this man I'm never going to be. Didn't even know how to bond out. I didn't know how to do that stuff. And so, I get bonded out. I swore I didn't reach out to God, but I swore I was never going to drink or do drugs again. And I meant it.

Twenty-six mugshots later, on my 27th mugshot, I finally realized that God was all I needed because he was all I had. He had stripped me of everything—family, money, everything. For me to turn to him because I never had control in the first place. And he used an illiterate murderer to change my life.

**RANDY:** Wow! You get your first mug shot, not your last one, what got you from the repetition of addiction and crime, if you will, to present? Because eventually, the clock ran out and you got locked up.

**MICHAEL:** So Judge Jennifer Bennett in Dallas, who I call my professional photographer, chased me all around the state of Texas because I disrespected her. She

tried to help me and I was a runner. I'd violate probation and I'd get locked up and get picture after picture. Until she finally said, "You're going to mind somebody" and sent me away. So out of six years, I did four years incarcerated.

It was the last time where I had this spiritual awakening and that's where God set the bond and he gave Christ the key. Literally, put it in the lock and set me free. [Laughing]

**RANDY:** You know, that's not the first time I've heard someone had to go to prison in order to be set free. But now that right there is an amazing story. I really want people to hear it because no matter where you're at, no matter where your loved ones are, God hasn't abandoned you, he hasn't forsaken you. He still loves you. He still loves those loved ones that you think may be hopeless. And there is always hope even when we seem to be at rock bottom. You're going to hear about that from Michael in just a moment.

But I want you to see another situation really quickly where we have the opportunity to extend hope to those who feel like there is no hope. Watch this and you'll see how.

### **On the mission field**

[ Music ]

**TAMMY:** We talk a lot about the children. As I'm traveling, I spend a lot of time with the children. I see their need, especially the little ones under five that are so vulnerable. And sometimes, the elderly in these communities can be overlooked because we're focused so much on the children.

Today was a different day for me when I've come to this village. Yes, I see the children. Yes, my heart is wrapped around those kids but I'm sitting with this elder of the community, 80 years old, and I think about my own parents. They should be thriving. They should be in a season in their life where they are not struggling, where they're looking around and seeing people prospering, living, laughing, and all he does is cry, feel

the weight of the burden, and he can't do anything about it.

Even as a father or a grandfather, he can't change it because his hands are tied. There is no water, there are no crops, there is no food, there is nothing. They have very little to survive on and they're barely making that happen.

I have no doubt he is struggling and carrying so much weight every single day. We could do something to help lift that from this community. We could do it today. We could do it together.

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**TAMMY:** He is beautiful. I just see his face even now and it just takes me right back there holding him. I remember we had this embrace and I just—I felt the weight. I felt the weight that he carries every single day. I wanted to lift that from him. I wanted to take it even in that embrace. I just wanted to take it from him.

I don't think I have ever in my lifetime had to carry such a weight that he and so many other elderly grandparents and parents in that village have had to carry every single day. It is deep hopelessness. Honestly, when we walked into that village it was heavy—heavy because they have nothing. Can you imagine having nothing? Everything is gone.

The drought has taken everything from them. The lack of rain has given nothing to them. They were hopeless. And yet, in the middle of the deep despair, it was like they were hanging onto that mustard seed. Just something, something. I think even when we showed up, it was enough to give them hope.

So I couldn't leave there and come with you and sit here today without helping to offer them hope. Would you come alongside me and *Life Today* and *LIFE Outreach* and help us offer them hope? That's what my cry is today, Randy, when I see that piece. It is just

offering them hope.

**RANDY:** There is a beautiful shot in there, Tammy, where you're holding his hand. What was going through your mind?

**TAMMY:** I think just the difference in our worlds; that our lives are so different. We look different. We have different needs and different things but coming together felt like we're one. We're one at this moment. I have the ability to do something, to help you, to do something. I've been given that ability. They don't have the ability to do anything for themselves right now. But I have been given the ability. So to come back with you and to talk about that today is huge.

**RANDY:** You know what that picture of hands coming together, I think that's God's heart. That's what we're asking you to do today with us. Be that hand that reaches out to someone who is in need and show them the love of Christ by doing something. We've broken it down very simply just to give you an idea. \$30 will help feed three children for the next three months. \$50 will help feed five. \$100 will help feed ten for the next three months. A gift of \$1,000 will help feed 100. That just gives you an idea of the power of coming together and giving food to desperate people. And it is not just food. That's what they need right now but it is also the spiritual food by demonstrating the love of Christ.

So will you just take a moment and say a quick prayer and say, Lord, what would you have me do? And then listen and obey. That's all I ask. For some of you, it will seem small but it is big to God. For others you, it will seem huge because it will have a huge impact. But it is all the same obedience. It is us coming together holding hands and sharing that love. Please go online, go to the phone. Do it now.

**Begin video clip**

**ANNOUNCER:** Right now across the continent of Africa, children are suffering facing

severe malnutrition and even death. Severe drought and famine, including in crisis areas like Ethiopia, means we must replenish food supplies immediately to keep feeding 350,000 children and help reach more people in desperate need.

Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach your gift of love can be an answer to prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need. Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months. With your gift of any amount, we'll send *The Blessing of Taking Communion*. In this book, discover how the sacred ordinance of communion helps to feed your soul and reminds you of the transformative power of receiving the Lord's Supper.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the LIFE Legacy Journal. This beautiful journal and pen will help you write your personal story and share the experiences that made you who you are. One day, the generations that follow will be able to look back and learn from the legacy you've left behind.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water." Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

**End of video**

### **On the mission field**

**ISAK:** We've come to this village today because our team made us aware of the fact that there literally is a food crisis that is going on here. And as we came in and we started meeting children, some of the adults started sharing with us the condition in this village, and it became evident. The crisis here was a food crisis.

That's why I'm asking you right now to get online or to dial that number on your screen and to give that gift. Give the gift of food. Because the gift of food is the gift of life. It is the gift that this community needs right now right here. And it is the gift that I can give to

them. If you'll dial that number, if you'll respond with your heart and say, yes, I'll give the gift of life, I'll give the gift of food.

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** I hope you will go online or go to the phone and make the best gift you can. We can show the love of God to these people who desperately need to hear from God through us. You are God's hands and God's feet so let's give them that hope today.

Now we've been talking with Michael Molthan who was someone you might think was completely hopeless. And Tammy, we hear about the abuse, we hear about the addiction, about the cycles of repetition. But man, something happened in prison.

**TAMMY:** Something happened and he got hold of a book. He got hold of a book that changed everything.

**RANDY:** Tell us about that.

**MICHAEL:** So out of all the tanks I was in, I met some great people, smart people. But this last time, they diagnose you when you get apprehended and they put you in different tanks. But they put me in what's called an "aggravated assault tank." It is all murderers and people who are never going to be set free. So I'm in this tank and I'm in a four-by-nine room. My cellie, who is my cellmate, they called him Oowhee. We had prison names. I was Rabbit because I couldn't sit still.

And so another guy gave me a book and said, "You can have this." And so the book, I just threw it on my bunk.

And Oowhee said, "Hey, what does that book say?"



I said, "Well, it says *Detours* by Dr. Tony Evans."

And he says, "Oh! I love me some Dr. Tony Evans. That is the diesel."

I said, "Well, here you go. You can read it."

He said, "Will you read it to me?"

It was just so weird. I've never heard. I go why?

He said, "I can't read and I can't write."

And so I started reading this book and it was the story of Joseph. I could relate to what Pastor Evans was talking about. And people have said, "Michael you've got the story of Job and Joseph." Yeah, there are similarities but I didn't have faith in God. They did. And so as I was reading this story, it led me into the Bible. And on July 7th, 2017, in my top bunk, I couldn't breathe. I had this pain in my chest. There had been nights where I'd been wanting to kill myself. God, if you are real, or Christ if you're real, I'm just going to lob it up there, help save me—years before this.

And on July 7th, 2017, I couldn't breathe. And it wasn't like medical. I just breathed out and all I felt coming out was anger and rage and resentment—and all this stuff coming out. I took this deep breath in and it was like ice water coming into my body. I feel it today. And when it came into my body, I was like going, I love you. I love you. I love Oowhee. I saw the guards, I love the guard. I just loved.

I was full of so much love and I felt so free. I felt the presence of God and I realized that being in the now, right here right now is the safest place to be because that's where God is. The enemy wants me to go in my head to the future alone and in the past alone. God says, "I'm right here right now. Look at your feet."

And so as a result of that, I read Matthew 6:14-15. I'll do my own translation, if you forgive the ones who hurt you, next verse, I'll bless your game. Because if I'm holding onto resentment and anger, God can't use me. It's blocked. And when I truly did that, I kid you not, October 13th, 2017, 300 miles away they came over the microphone, I'm doing a two-year sentence, I've only been locked up eight months, they came over the microphone and they said, "Michael Molthan, bunking junk." That means you're free. And the whole tank who couldn't read and write, this whole tank was illiterate. They were murderers. The guards were amazed. When they came over, there were guys crying. They were like, what's going on? They had to physically push me out of prison.

I made the journey 300 miles back to Judge Jennifer Bennett's court. She said, "I've heard what you've been doing." She says, "I want you to go pay it forward." And so that's what I'm doing today.

**TAMMY:** You're paying it forward today. Paying it forward.

**MICHAEL:** Doing exactly what my judge said.

**TAMMY:** On October 13th, 2017, God said, get up and walk. And you started walking and you've not stopped ever since?

**MICHAEL:** Not stopped. But I've also encountered major spiritual warfare with what I'm doing. Every time I want to quit doing what I'm doing and get a real job, y'all call. Another network will call. It happens just like that.

**TAMMY:** And you're reminded that you are exactly where God wants you to be. It gives hopefully strength to you. Michael, do you find that you still have times in your life when you struggle with wanting to take steps backward?

**MICHAEL:** Absolutely!

**TAMMY:** And how do you fight that? There are probably plenty of people that are watching today that whatever their circumstances might be, they're in a good place but tomorrow might not be a great place and they struggle with that. So how would you encourage people? And how do you encourage yourself when you're struggling?

**MICHAEL:** Well, today I recognize the behaviors way before. I have a couple of male mentors in my life and when this is happening, I talk to someone about it. That's the solution, is to talk to a godly man. Women work with women and men work with men; I could talk to them about being the solution.

But I recognize my little triggers. I'm in a great relationship that I, for the first time I can talk freely with this woman. And I'm not scared. I was always scared to talk to people because I would get hit. So I didn't know what to say. Yeah, I still struggle. I'm human. But I also know that God's allowing it to happen. He's allowing it to happen so I can see it through his perspective to share with all of your audience, this is why it happened. That's my prayer today. God, you know what is going to happen today. Help me accept it and see it from your perspective and not mine.

**RANDY:** So let me ask you this, because when you look back on your life, the abuse at the hands of another, not your fault, right, but the trauma that that creates. Out of that, the addiction, the self-medication, the repeated behavior that just made things worse. Obviously, God did a miraculous work in your life. You're a new creation. The old things have passed away, and all things have become new.

Was there anything on your part that you think you had to do? You mentioned forgiveness, obviously, a big one. You can't earn this for yourself. Is it just a matter of surrender? I'm asking because if there is someone watching who is in that cycle of junk and they're wondering, okay, how do I get out of this? What would you say to them?

**MICHAEL:** Well, you hear that they get honest. Get honest with yourself. That's cliché,

which is right—that's right. Ask for help. That helps. But for me, true honesty is when I say I don't know. I don't know why I'm doing the things that I'm doing, and I'm willing to go to any length to change.

But true forgiveness is this. The sooner that I can accept the role that I played in it—I played in it—is where forgiveness comes in. Wait a minute, you played a role in your grandfather sexually abusing you? Come on, man. I did. I played a huge role in it. The role that I played in it was I chose to hold on to the resentment. But I look at it through God's perspective, I look at it differently.

**TAMMY:** You say that the crisis today is the missing man. What do you mean by that?

**MICHAEL:** Our crisis today is the missing man. It is time for fathers to take back the dinner table. Everybody I did time with, including myself, has little or no relationship with their father. So women are doing the jobs of men today. We have a lot of males but we have very few men.

What is that? Being a man, okay, is the way God defines a man, not the culture, and that's what a true man is. Is that well, I've got to work. No, that's your part-time job. My full-time job is to serve my wife and love my wife like Christ loved the church. That's hard.

**RANDY:** I want to ask you to speak to the audience one more time. But if you're watching right now and you have someone in your life that you think, they're never going to change. It is hopeless. They're self-destructing. I can't get through to them. I hope you've heard Michael's testimony today and heard God say, it is never too late for me to work on them. Don't stop praying.

If you want someone to pray with you right now, there is a telephone number on the screen. You call and another believer will join with you in prayer on behalf of yourself or that loved one. Just know our God is greater than anything that you or your loved ones are going through. So don't lose hope. Don't lose heart. Keep praying.

Michael, I know you get this because people would have said, that guy, he's hit rock bottom. We need to just write him off. What do you say to that person who is praying for someone and hoping but they're losing heart?

**MICHAEL:** Families are important. Families hurt a lot over this and there is hope for them too. And we offer that. But I realized that every time I kept hitting rock bottom all these times—the rock at the bottom all these times was Christ. And so why would I want to get out of the bottom? So I stayed there and I let godly men and murderers pull me out of the bottom.

**TAMMY:** So there is hope. There is hope and accountability and finding people that will surround us to walk these seasons out with us. Maybe when we can't walk ourselves. Someone that will carry you when you can't carry yourself. So find somebody. I think that's what I hear you saying.

**MICHAEL:** Connection.

**TAMMY:** Connection with people, godly people, godly counsel. And to fight for your spiritual life. Fight for your life because God has such a plan for you and a purpose. You're walking in it now but there is so much more for you, Michael, I have no doubt. You and your wife-to-be, there's a lot of great things that God has in store. There are a lot of great things God has in store for you today as well. What a great place for us to be, Randy, and a place of hope in anywhere in our lives.

**RANDY:** Well, I like at the bottom the rock is Christ. That is the only foundation we need. And sometimes, we have to be stripped of all of us to get more of him. So thank you. I appreciate your sharing.

**MICHAEL:** Thank you. Because my sharing put me in the safest place in the world for 30 minutes. It's right here right now. When I get in that parking lot, he's out there doing

push-ups waiting on me.

**TAMMY:** It's so true.

**RANDY:** Thank you so much. I appreciate you guys being a part and we do again invite you to be part of our Mission Feeding outreach, sharing the gospel in word and deed. We'll see you again next time here on *Life Today*.