

4/24/24

Week 17: Spring Mission Feeding

Tammy Trent

Jenna Quinn

In the studio

TAMMY: Hello everybody. I'm Tammy Trent. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm so glad you're here with us today. It is going to be a great day. And it is a great day to be alive. And yet, I know for some of you it might not feel that way. Maybe you find yourself just hanging on for dear life today wondering where God is in the middle of it all.

I want to remind you that God is with you. You face nothing alone. Your pain and suffering does not go unnoticed. Jesus can bring meaning and healing to even the toughest situations in your life right now today. Trust that he is walking with you right now in every challenge you might be facing. And his love is unwavering. I promise you, it is unwavering through it all.

My guest today, Jenna Quinn, knows all about that. After the unthinkable walked in and tried to steal everything from her including her own desire to want to live. She chose life for herself and many others along the way. Jenna, welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm so glad you're here.

JENNA: I'm so honored to be here.

TAMMY: Girl, we're going to have a great conversation today. It is such an important conversation. I first want to start by telling you I read your book this weekend. I couldn't put it down. You take us through so much throughout that book and you bring us to the

other side of just the miracle of what God has done in and through your life.

But for those that have never met Jenna Quinn as I have, can you take us back to the early childhood in your life and how things began to unravel?

JENNA: Absolutely. I can take you there quickly. Even though we all know it is a process, walking through healing and walking through pain and betrayal and trauma. For me, I do understand pain. I do understand suffering. I am acquainted with sadness and betrayal. The thing is, for me being a survivor of child sex crimes, this is something that is very hidden mostly in our society until recently. And so for me, man, I can just sum it up in just a few sentences.

TAMMY: Don't sum it up. I don't need to know all the details. They were horrific. They were awful, Jenna but I think for us to be able to see the absolute beauty of what God has done in your life, I mean, it is a tough story to read. It is probably hard to continue to tell but I think the power in it is just how far you've come.

There was deep depression that you've dealt with. There was cutting, there was suicidal thoughts, there were so many things because of one man that walked into your life and wanted to rob this stuff from you. He fought to rob this from you but you kept fighting your way through it. I believe that began at the age of 12 in your life? Can you just take us through just a little bit of that so that we can come out on the other side with you today?

JENNA: Yes, so my story is similar to millions of other survivors out there. It is estimated there is one in three girls and one in five boys that are survivors of some type of child sexual abuse. And that's just in our country—that's just in America. So for me, I fell victim to what we call sexual grooming. Many times these predators understand how to groom the victim. They pick the victim, they groom them. They groom caregivers. They groom families. These offenders are very skilled at grooming institutions even. They will groom environments. It is a whole process, if you look at offender psychology.

But it is easy to miss if you don't know what to look for, especially when you're a young child. For me, the grooming started very, very, very early in elementary school.

TAMMY: Really? So even before 12?

JENNA: Even before that. Yes. Getting to know the family, getting personal, spending time with us, spending time with the family. That's, many times, how these offenders work. It makes it very difficult when there is sexual grooming involved. Over 90 percent of the time a child or youth is abused by someone they know and trust, and many times, might even love. So offenders work very hard at establishing a level of trust with their victims.

So for me, it happened slowly, it happened over time, and unfortunately, I learned that what is kept in secret has power over you. The child sexual abuse didn't just happen once, it happened many times and for many years. I understand what it is like to live in shame and guilt and fear and blame and intimidation because part of why these offenders get to know their victims so well is because they want to get to know what makes them afraid.

I understand what that's like. I suffered. I had depression, anxiety, insomnia. I had horrible demonic night terrors. I was self-harming, and I just really didn't want to live anymore. I concluded that it would just be best not to live with this type of pain, not to live with this type of suffering. And so I understand the shame, the guilt, the condemnation, the self-condemnation that comes with this.

TAMMY: And the question of where is God in the middle of all this? I know I read that in your book as well. And many people, I think, have gone through trauma in our lives. If we have had any kind of abuse, especially sexual abuse in our lives, like you said, it is kind of where you wonder, why didn't, or isn't God intervening in the middle of this? And I know you struggled with so much of that too of just God, are you there? Why aren't you stepping in? How did you find God in the worst season of your life?

JENNA: That is a real question that is not wrong asking. It is okay to wrestle with God. You can wrestle with God and win. The thing is that we don't understand that we can wrestle. In fact, we must wrestle with God. But many times with this crime, because of the shame and the blame and the fear and the guilt and the condemnation, you hide from God. Shame keeps us from having a clear conscience before God. So how can we have confidence? How can we go to the throne of grace if we are filled with guilt, shame, or condemnation?

For me, it came to the point where at age 16, my bags were packed for a mental institution. Because everyone who loved me, my family, all the prayers, everything, it was like well, we don't know what else to do. So it came to that point. Once you get checked in, you're not sure when you're going to leave an institution like that.

But really, I love how the Lord works. Love came down. It is true that love trumps all. To have faith is not enough sometimes. To have hope is not enough sometimes. The greatest is love. And so if we get that revelation and that understanding of God's love for us, that God is not the enemy, he did not cause this, this doesn't come from him. He's not angry, he is not upset. In fact, he is the only one who can heal it.

So I learned that instead of asking why didn't God intervene, the better question is why does Satan hate us so much? It is because he comes every day to steal, to kill, and to destroy us. And many times, with sexual crimes, that affects your inmost being, that affects your innermost part, your spirit, your soul, your body. So you feel it in all of those areas where God created us to feel things holistically. And even the research shows that there is a spiritual impact to abuse and to child sexual abuse or to sex crimes. The research shows that in a study of 527 abuse survivors, they found a significant spiritual impact, feelings of guilt—it's everything I talk about in the book—guilt, anger, grief, despair, doubt, fear of death, and belief that God is unfair.

And so we have to address these things. We have to expose these things and bring them

into the light so that God's power can heal it.

TAMMY: So Jenna, when did the healing start for you? Was it at that hospital? Was it when you came out? Was it before that? What steps did you take? How did God begin to heal you?

JENNA: It really came in the secret place. Everyone has been there to some degree where it is just you alone and God. These spiritual issues which any type of child sex crime is fully demonic, and anything like that does require a spiritual solution.

So when I was able to go through inner healing and when I was able to go through deliverance, I was able to learn and unlearn some things, those strongholds in the mind that build over time. Because what happens is if we don't—when we don't report, when we don't tell, when we don't get help, when we don't find resources to help us, especially when we don't turn to God things progress and they can get worse. So what happens is the enemy is never satisfied. In the same way, as believers we go from faith to faith and glory to glory, the enemy wants us to go from guilt to shame to condemnation to despair and eventually death.

And so we have to catch that progression early because what I learned is there is a big difference between guilt and shame and condemnation. Guilt says I've done something wrong. And many survivors feel like it is my fault. Maybe I should have done this. Maybe I should have done something different. So guilt says I've done something wrong. Shame says I am wrong. And condemnation is when you're in really troubled waters. Condemnation says I deserve punishment and I've already rolled out my own sentencing.

TAMMY: Jenna, you better preach. You better preach, girl. I'm going to tell the rest of your story a little bit, and then we're going to jump to something else that I think is so important. Your sister Stephanie. I absolutely love her, loved her in the book. You needed someone to step in with you where you felt trapped, where you felt like you couldn't even—you don't want to destroy other lives. You felt like my life is destroyed, I don't

want to destroy their lives. So your sister saw something, she sat you down and said, "Look, I need you to be honest with me."

I think we all need friends, sisters in Christ, people in our lives that will just hold us up when we just can't hold ourselves up anymore. To me, that's what Stephanie, your sister did. And just looked at you and said, "Tell me, Jen, is someone hurting you?" And I think it was at that time that you said you just lost it. You broke. And there it was. It was all on the table. And at that time she said, "It stops now. It stops now. We're calling the police and it stops now." And even in that moment, I think that's even when the healing began. Like it stops now.

Well, as I read the rest of the story I was cheering and I was fighting. I was saying please arrest this man! And please, he needs to be held accountable. And he was held accountable. But beyond that, Jenna is what God has done with your life since that accountability, and the fight he gave you inside to begin to stand up for other children that are being abused around the country nationwide. I'm just going to say this and you can jump right in but girl, you were significant in passing an enormous law called Jenna's Law. Tell me about that.

JENNA: It's another miraculous moment. I'm so grateful that I get to be alive to see God's goodness and to see the promises of God. It is so difficult when you're in that moment of pain, when you're in that moment of suffering, when you're in that moment of grief, it is so difficult to believe. It is so difficult to believe. I'm so messed up. I've done so many things. I feel like I'm too far gone. And how is God going to redeem this? Because we really can't see it. We have our limited perspective.

TAMMY: I just want to say so many of us can feel that in whatever circumstances we're going through right now. Jenna, yours was deep but we have all been there.

JENNA: Every single one of us in so many different ways. It is a real place to be and we have to be honest about that. I'm grateful that there is legislation; that there is my name

called Jenna's Law. And our former Texas governor, governor Perry signed Jenna's Law in 2009. Senator Tan Parker championed Jenna's Law.

TAMMY: So is it working?

JENNA: It is working. So we have it in Texas and over half the country has passed similar legislation now. It's been filed federally in Washington D.C.

TAMMY: What does that mean?

JENNA: It means that it might be written as the law of the land in the United States of America, the Jenna Quinn Law for child protection. Protecting other children now. So it requires prevention, education, recognizing and reporting this specific crime. Because as you learn from the book, I go through those behavioral indicators, and the emotional indicators, the warning signs. I had every red warning sign blaring. Every type of red flag grooming sexual behavior was all there but nobody was able to see it. It was all happening in plain sight. So this is the education. It is the lack of knowledge that people perish. So you can literally die for something that you did not know. That information was at your fingertips but you didn't know it, and that's a reflection of my story.

TAMMY: Jenna, your story, I mean, it goes beyond our conversation today. And God is not finished. I think that's the exciting thing. He is not finished with that law. He is not finished with your life. What the enemy meant for bad, oh, man, he fought hard to rob from you and steal from you but look at what God has done. He will always have the final word. You've stepped into that. You're working alongside Jesus to further your life and coming back to life again. You're married, you have children, you're thriving, you're doing incredible things.

There are also people today that probably feel stuck. Feel stuck in the despair and the heartache and the disappointment. Where is God? He is not intervening. So if you could take a second or a minute to just speak into somebody's life that needs to know the same

hope that you found.

JENNA: Absolutely. We know God's Word is true. God is not a liar. He says he's close to the brokenhearted. He is near to the brokenhearted but if it gets to the point where your spirit is crushed, a crushed spirit is difficult to come back from. But if it gets to the point where your spirit is crushed, he will be the one to save you. We have to unlearn maybe who we think God is, how he views us, and how we view him. We have to stand firm in a knowing and a walking out and believing that you will see the goodness of God in the land of the living.

TAMMY: Yes, you will! I think that's a great word right there. I want to take just a second, Jenna, and I want to show our viewers something special to me where I believe two people that are struggling around the world right now are going to see the living God in the land that might not be feeling like it is flourishing right at this moment. But God is in it, he is in it with them, and I want you to see a glimpse of this as well. Let's take a minute and watch this.

On the mission field

TAMMY: So I've spent the week in Africa listening to countless stories of desperation and great pain. My name is Tammy.

[Translator repeats]

TAMMY: What is your name?

[Translator repeats]

Open captions

>> Baritoo.

TAMMY: And what is the name of your baby?

Open captions

>> Safara. She is five years old.

TAMMY: I know you have very little food. I'm wondering if you could help me understand what it is that you're able to eat.

Open captions

>> I gather some wild leaves to eat. Sometimes I earn enough money to buy a little sorghum. I try to find food anywhere I can.

TAMMY: I can see—I can see that your daughter is struggling. I can see that she is—it's hard to say that word, hard to say, "wasting away." It's hard to say that but it is true. And it's because she is malnourished, and it is because she has no food. I can't even imagine the pain that you must carry with you as a mother. I'm so sorry! My heart breaks.

I've been given the privilege to come here and spend time with these amazing people that work harder than anybody I know, and struggle more than anybody I've seen. They are just asking for a little help. Would you help today? Would you help save a life?

End of video

In the studio

TAMMY: Whoo! I sat with so many families in Ethiopia not very long ago. So the impact it had on my heart is still right at the surface. It always will be. I remember that day really well, sitting with her and her precious little girl, who not only did I feel was wasting away, I was so fearful that she was on the brink of death. She was so tiny and frail and had other medical conditions that you could see. And I couldn't help but think it had everything to do with the lack of food. And her little body fighting for life every single minute. Not just every day, but every minute.

I could not be here with you today if I didn't offer you an opportunity to help this precious family, and so many others that I had a chance to spend time with, offer you and give you an opportunity to come alongside us as a ministry. Because our heart is to change, to help, to bring hope, is to bring Jesus in any way we can. And right now, it is dire, it is urgent, and what the need is Jesus and it is food.

So would you consider—would you consider giving something today to that family and so many more? We are out feeding 350,000 children every day and we want to do more. So for \$30, you could help us feed three children for the next three months. For \$50, we could feed five children. For \$100, we could feed ten children. For \$1,000, we could feed 100 children for the next three months. Would you please consider coming alongside us?

Randy, it is so critical right now.

RANDY: I know, Tammy, and that was very hard to watch. That little girl *is* wasting away. We've seen it over the years. We've seen the classic signs of malnutrition. I've prayed for a malnourished child and that child died that night. It is very difficult. We live in such a bubble of privilege here in the West. And I think it is the abundance that God wants for all of us. We can't forget those who are in desperate need.

Tammy, you're 100 percent right. I couldn't sit here and show those pictures and talk about it if I didn't know that what we do through Mission Feeding works. We can turn it around and we can turn it around fast. But we have to do it now. If we don't do it right now, we will be filling graves. I know that is harsh but it is the reality—I've seen it. I've seen it in person.

The situation in Ethiopia is bad right now. They desperately need Mission Feeding. So I know it is heavy. I know we're coming to you with a real sense of urgency because that's what we're facing, that's what they're facing. But we need to hear from everyone right now.

Please go to the phone, go online. Make the best gift you can.

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

In the studio

TAMMY: That was probably one of the hardest trips I think I've ever been on, where I saw and experienced some things that will probably take me the rest of my life to process. I sat with countless families and heard such heartbreaking stories of starvation,

and people living without food. It is a wonder many of them are still alive today. I was shocked to see what they would gather every single day to try to eat in hopes that would be okay, in hopes that it would be enough to keep them alive. And sadly, it is not enough for most of them, especially those little children just like you saw. How could anybody survive for very long on leaves or seeds or who knows what? It was truly devastating for me.

I went into a malnutrition clinic where I watched a little tiny baby dying before my eyes but fighting for life. I walked out of that clinic to hear that another little child had died in another room. How could this be? How could these children be without the basic necessities of life? Food. Through no fault of their own, they have fought hard to live and survive. They've done everything they can but it is that eight-year drought—eight years of drought. In many of these areas, it has taken everything from them. All their crops and food sources were gone. They were wiped out. Everything was gone. They had nothing.

But they were waiting—waiting for help to come and waiting for some kind of relief. They kept preparing the land with hope. They've tilled the soil with hope. They hold on to hope. They pray for provision. They believe for that miracle to come. I kept thinking, God, bring the rain. Could you bring the rain? Bring the miracle these people need. Please, God, answer their prayers.

And then I realized that maybe God is giving me an incredible opportunity to be an answer to their prayers. Maybe God is giving you that same opportunity to be an answer to their prayers today. I want you to know that I believe in this ministry. That I've walked alongside them for more than 16 years now, and I want you to know that I've seen firsthand how critical the need is just like this one.

But I've also seen what love can do. I've seen what your love can do and has done for so many years. We together have helped change and saved lives for the kingdom of God. And I'm here today to tell you, especially after a trip like that to Ethiopia that there is still so much work to be done. We've got to do something today because they cannot wait

until tomorrow. Tomorrow may never come for many of them.

Would you help us? Would you help bring Mission Feeding to these desperate villages in Ethiopia and beyond? Right now, we're feeding 350,000 children every single day. Our hope is to go way beyond that to bring Mission Feeding to these areas too. Here's what that would look like if you could help us today. \$30 feeds three children for three months. \$50 will feed five. \$100 will feed ten. And \$1,000 will feed 100 children for the next three months. Man, that's something to get excited about.

And remember, with any gift you'll receive *The Blessing of Taking Communion* book. And if you can do more, for \$100 you will receive the *Life Legacy Journal*. I'm believing that together we can be an answer to their prayers and help bring hope.

So please go online, make a call and give. Give whatever you can today. Just give. Let's help bring life. Let's help save a life today.

Begin video clip

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End of video

In the studio

TAMMY: I hope you're going online and giving the best gift you possibly can give. Pray about it today. If God's asking you to jump in and do something and come alongside us then that would be incredible. It would mean so much to us, it would mean so much to these families. Make sure to go online or make a call and we'll be there to take that call with you today.

Jenna, honestly, I've loved this time with you. I feel a connection with you. I don't know if it is that we sort of met years ago at a women's conference where you were there and bought my own book. And so what an honor for me to think that in any way I may have encouraged you somehow in your journey that you've traveled. An incredible woman of God that is doing absolutely incredible things.

I love you, and I'm glad that you're here. I pray favor and blessings on your life. How can people find your book?

JENNA: They can find it pretty much anywhere books are sold. But you can go to my website, JennaQuinn.net. You can order it through the website or Amazon.

TAMMY: *Pure in Heart.*

JENNA: *Pure in Heart.*

TAMMY: It is a great book. I'm telling you, you will not be able to put it down. I could not put it down. Everything is in this book that is filled with hope; not just despair but it is filled with great hope. The Lord Jesus promises to stand with us in the hard times. I felt it in my lifetime and time again, and I know Jenna has felt it too. His comfort, his strength, his presence is an enormous gift to all of us knowing that it is real. Even if it feels unfelt at times, he is there.

Lamentations 3:22-23 says: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. They're new every single morning. Great is your faithfulness." Jesus, he is faithful through it all. May we all feel that today no matter where we're at or what we're going through.

God bless you. Thanks for being with us today and we'll see you next time on *Life Today*.