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Week 29: WFL

James and Betty Robison

Christopher Cook

**In the studio**

**JAMES:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*! Betty and I are thrilled to have the opportunity to talk to you. And we're thrilled to talk to our guest. This one today has written a book called *Healing What You Can't Erase*: "Transform your mental, emotional, and spiritual health from the inside out." By the way, that's the only way it happens. But his story is pretty typical of many. His mother got cancer; the battle was serious. He lost her when he was right at 30. Then he was diagnosed with MS. Speaking about *Healing What You Can't Erase*, he understands it well. But you need to hear his journey here, and what he's sharing with us to help us find the spiritual healing, Betty that God wants us to have.

It is just like when we lost our daughter at age 40. When you can't find any reason to lose what seemed to be the most beautiful Christian on the planet that was so loved and three children, a beautiful marriage, dynamic leader in her church and she is gone. You can't even imagine being able to deal with that. And Betty, the healing didn't come overnight and the pain didn't just go away. It still hasn't. You were weeping yesterday over what somebody said related to our daughter.

Christopher, talk to us about the experience of what your mother went through and what it did to you when you lost her, and then the diagnosis. Tell us how that impacted you.

**CHRISTOPHER:** I think first I just want to acknowledge your loss and say I'm so sorry.

**BETTY:** Thank you.

**CHRISTOPHER:** The thread through our stories is this, and it is the title of the book. We all experience circumstances, adversities, and losses that will never be erased from our life stories. And yet, there is this opportunity by the power of the Holy Spirit to experience transformation.

This is not about developing amnesia about our past, experiencing denial, or walking in denial I should say, but rather this is the journey of moving forward with scars. I want to say that again for the folks that are joining us via television today because all of us experience losses in life. The goal is not to move on and somehow take an eraser to that season of life. But instead, by the power of the Holy Spirit, experience transformation.

James, you set the story up well and I'll sort of meet us where my inflection point began. It was October of 2014, almost two years after I had lost my mom, after her 18-year battle with cancer. Mind you, she was diagnosed when I was 11. So a narrative is built in all of our lives when we experience trial, especially of great length. It was the only thing I knew. So when she went to be with the Lord, there was a moment of who am I? In the height of my grief and really experiencing what was later diagnosed as complex posttraumatic stress, I found myself in a devastating situation in September of 2013. I was sitting in a neurologist's office and he told me I have Multiple Sclerosis. So I feel like I'm kicked while I'm down.

And I think many folks joined with us today could resonate with the fact that I've experienced the greatest loss of my life and then this happens? Lord, where are you? This is so important, James and Betty. Adversity is loud. Y'all know it when your sweet daughter went to be with Jesus. Adversity is loud. And adversity challenges our ability to perceive the steadfast faithfulness of the one who said, "I will never leave you or never forsake you." And it is a great challenge for all of us.

And so I had reached this point of saying, Lord, I can't live like this anymore. The pain is

too great. I was having 20 severe panic attacks every single day.

**JAMES:** My goodness!

**CHRISTOPHER:** And in the book, I talk about how I went to a time of prayer and really, it was just I turned the TV off and I was annoyed. I said, Lord, you've got to do something. You're my Father. You've got to do something. He said, "What do you want me to do for you?" And I realized, that because we serve a God who knows all things, he wasn't asking me that question because he didn't know. It was rhetorical. He was saying are you unwilling to be defined by the adversities of your past?

And I think for folks watching us today it is important to know that no one disqualifies the severity of the loss. But the day that we decide that what Jesus did for us is greater than what happened to us, I've heard it said this way, is the day I believe we'll take that first step into saying yes to transformation.

Now that is not a flimsy platitude because the last thing we need in the height of our grief and loss are platitudes. But in that moment, the Lord was rousing something in me in my human spirit to say okay, will the pain of regret of not making a change overshadow the pain of experiencing transformation?

And that began the journey, James and Betty, for me to step into a season of saying, okay, transformation. I say yes. This is so important for all of us to understand. We're not talking about just changing our soul affections to the surface-level responses of life. That is so important to understand. Transformation is spirit. Scripture talks about all about the broken spirit and how it affects us, spirit, soul, and body. But here's the key. And really, this is the synthesis and the thesis of my message in this book: Transformation does not happen in one day. It happens daily.

Psalms 16, verse eight, "I have set the Lord continually before me. Because he's at my right hand, I shall not be moved." I feel like that is a word for someone joined us today

because they're saying, Chris, James, Betty, everything around me is being shaken right now. You're telling me I won't be shaken? The word is true. "I have set the Lord continually before me." Transformation happens daily.

Psalms 25, verse one, "Unto you, O Lord, do I bring my whole life." In Psalm 25, verse ten, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and steadfast love." Including the journey of grief, the journey of grieving our losses. Because there are folks joined with us today who perhaps have experienced the death of a spouse, the death of a child like you. I'm so sorry. We never have to move on, like I said at the beginning of our conversation. But there is an invitation to all of us to move forward. And it hurts. Change is hard. Change is costly. We wrestle with the issues of the heart. But by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us, change happens daily.

I talk about this in the book, *James and Betty*. This is also one of the angles I approach in the book *Healing What You Can't Erase*. Self-help says to look inside yourself to find the solution. What I discovered is that while I might be able to change my behavior, transformation is not a life hack because I can't change my heart. This is the core issue. In the height of my grief, I'm sure in the height of your grief, what is the question you want to ask? Why?

Here's the great challenge. Imagine if the Lord said, "Here's why." It is not going to heal my broken heart. So I come to the Lord and I come into his presence, Lord, here's my broken heart. Here's my broken heart. Lord, I want to receive from you. And he does that. He does that. I've experienced a level of redemption and restoration in my heart that I never knew was possible. And yet, there is nothing I wouldn't give to have my mom back.

**JAMES:** Chris, one of the things that God led me to begin to ask that I've passed on to so many who hurt, I wonder if this ever came through your mind or actually may have settled in your mind. And that is the better question would be to ask, what do you want to do with it? Not why because we'll never get a satisfactory answer. But what do you want

to do with it? What can you do with it? What do you will to do with it and what will you allow Him to do with it?

God really moved us to where we became a healing factor to others who are actually reaching out to our grief. They found that when they identified they had their own grief, the question was what are you going to do with it? And they watched Betty and me allow him to do some marvelous things with that grief. Does that make sense to you when you look at your journey?

**BETTY:** Well, I feel like—excuse me, I feel like I can identify with everything you've said because we have walked through some of the same places you have. It was your mother, but it was our daughter. And you still like you said, you can't wipe the past away from your thoughts, your memories. But God can take that and walk with you on this journey. You're on a journey. We don't arrive to where it doesn't hurt anymore. It's always going to hurt because you miss them. You said you wish your mother were back here. We wish it every day. But she is in a way. She never left our hearts or our thoughts. Our memories are precious. And if we allow God to walk with us and go before us and show us the things that he wants to show us, I'm like you, I feel like I never would have learned some of the things had we not gone through this.

Not to say I didn't wish it wouldn't have happened. But God has shown us in the relationship that I have grown with him, and he has walked with me through it. It's been so precious.

**CHRISTOPHER:** Something that I learned in this process. I so resonate with what you said, Betty, is that we have to get so close to the heart of the Father, which is a whole other level of risk. Because when we've experienced adversity, the reflex is to hide and to self-protect because we can't withstand more pain. And yet, it is through vulnerability and in community that we are healed. And like branches, we have to get grafted back onto the vine.

Because watch this, I studied when I wrote the book. I studied how a branch grafted back onto a vine. You recut the branch, and you recut the vine and you place them together. The vascular tissues of the vine meet with the branch. And when we bring our wounds as real, as traumatic, as painful, as systemic, as permanent as those are, when we bring our wounds to the hands of the wounded healer, by his stripes we are healed and made whole.

Jesus is not just after, and I don't want to minimize physical healing, but he is after wholeness—spirit, soul, and body. Proverbs talks at length about the broken spirit. I believe this is part of the core message of this book, which is why self-help cannot touch this because the broken spirit influences all we are. Proverbs says that the human spirit can endure in sickness. But Solomon asks this question, "Who can withstand a broken, crushed spirit?" It is the wind in the sail which is our soul. It gives us our inner drive. And when that is collapsed the only one that can heal the broken spirit is King Jesus. And the way by which that happens is risky. It is yet again, here I am, Lord, here's my heart. We have to give him our heart all again, all afresh. It is risky business for sure because the wounds are so real.

**BETTY:** Well, as you can tell, it's been 12 years but the tears still come, and they always will. But as you say, we don't have to live broken but we can live in brokenness before the Lord that we serve him with our whole hearts.

**CHRISTOPHER:** Broken is not our identity.

**BETTY:** No! No, it is not.

**CHRISTOPHER:** It might be a condition and that's for someone who is with us today. Broken may have happened but broken is not who you are, in Jesus' name.

**JAMES:** I think the Lord has helped me define an understanding of that is like yielded clay in the potter's hand. Yielded clay is soft, pliable, shapeable clay. You can shape it into something magnificent. He said he can shape us into channels of blessing that would

be channels through which his blessings, his love, his compassion, his forgiveness flows if you'll just give him that. Does that make sense that in this process you're giving it to him?

**CHRISTOPHER:** Oh yes!

**JAMES:** When people read the book and get to the end of the book, so to speak, what Chris wants to happen is what we're watching happen in our lives and others, and that is that we keep daily offering him this sacrifice of a broken, contrite heart. That we yield ourselves to him. And when you give him that clay, his shaping hands will shape Christ in us.

Father, for every person, whatever they're going through, we can all spend hours talking about the pain of our crisis and our disastrous encounters and experiences in our life that hurt deeply because you gave us the ability to be sensitive to pain, sensitive to the things that can give joy and pleasure and happiness. But also, to feel sorrow on others' behalf as well as our own. But you're the healer. And it is like Chris has said, it's daily. So I'm praying for everyone who will read this book or hear us today, to just say Father, I'll never get a satisfactory why answer in this life. So what do you want to do with it? What can you do with it? I'm going to yield myself to your will being done in me. I give you yielded clay, my life, daily that you may shape Christ in me, in Jesus' name.

That prayer is for you; that's praying with you not just for you. You can get the book online. It's a joy to have people come in and share their story. Chris, we have an audience who love to meet people from different backgrounds and different journey experiences, but who find the adequacy and sufficiency in the fullness of God, the fullness of Christ, and the power of his spirit.

But we've also found that there is tremendous joy in sharing his life and sharing life with others. Jesus said if you feed the least of these, you notice the least of these, you clothe the least of these, you give water to drink, you're doing it to me. And he says—and this is

so important—it is one of the few times you say these are my sheep. That's what my sheep look like. My sheep. The sheep of my pasture, my family. They notice the overlooked and they give them what they need.

That's what we do when we give people water, all over the world clean water because dirty, contaminated water is the greatest killer on the planet—the greatest killer. I want you to look in on a very real scene, one that Betty and I have been in the middle of many times. But one people like you are totally changing, one of the greatest miracles ever witnessed on this earth. We need one. We need them in several places right now. See if you'd like to become the miracle that's needed in what you see.

### **On the mission field**

**ANNOUNCER:** Water! Earth's most abundant natural resource: yet out of this abundance only a tiny fraction of it is suitable for drinking. And suitable is a loose definition.

**TAMMY:** This is their only source of water right here. This is his only source of water. And this is where they have to come every day, all the way down here, to get their water. I mean, you can look around and you can see that it is very dirty and muddy, and there are frogs all over that I actually see at the moment. And you can see the contamination in it. You can see that there has got to be much disease and illness with each sip that they take.

**Announcer:** While the problem here is serious, the solution is surprisingly simple, and it's already been implemented in this Central American village.

**Betty:** This is a time when I don't mind watching them stand here and pour water over their head because I know it is good water.

**James:** That's right! This is a place for which we give great praise to God in gratitude. But we need to drill hundreds of wells like this all over the world. And you can see, if you can't



look at these children, look at their faces, look how happy they are, and understand the importance of clean water, it becomes the center of life, schools spring up. We want children to get an education and we want them to come and get healthy, clean drinking water.

[Cheering]

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**JAMES:** You see they don't have a choice. But we have a choice. And we can give them a choice. We can give them clean water. We can give them the miracle they need.

Betty, when we complete the 350 wells that we have designated areas where drilling has already started in more than half of them and we need to complete that right now. There are a lot of wonderful things going on to help us get this point to where we're going to drill the 350 that will give us over 8,000 wells that the viewers have given. And you're giving millions drinks of water. Billions since we started. And we're asking you please today, would you give a cup of water, in Jesus' name?

When you think about it, Betty, it is an amazing thing to realize that you can literally give ten people water for the rest of their life for \$48. \$144, you give 30 people. And for \$1200 you're giving one-fourth of a well. \$4800 will give a thousand people water every single day. We're just asking you to do what you can do.

We have gifts to send you that will be a blessing. Betty, you have a tumbler like this. I think you have one just a tiny bit taller than this. But these are absolutely beautiful. And the devotional, God's Word for my day. Such a blessing! And the cup of water bronze, many of our viewers have told us that they actually had to buy shelves to put the bronzes on because the bronzes told a story of love, God's love, and the fact that they were able to share that love.

So would you right now, would you make the best gift you can to give the greatest gift? Betty, it is hard for people to imagine but clean water is the greatest gift many of the people in this world will ever get.

**BETTY:** It really is. I know you would love to be there in person to see those children, the smiles on their faces. They just glow when they see that fresh clean water come out. We can't all go, we can't be there but, in a way, you can be through your gifts and your love and your prayers for these precious little ones. To see the smiles on their faces when they know that water coming out is fresh and it won't hurt them, harm them, make them diseased and sick. God bless you for caring. God bless you for sharing God's love.

**JAMES:** I'm praying for a miracle right now. You get your bank card and you make the best gift you can. Betty, we've taken it where they were burying thousands of children every month and we've gone back in those areas where love through people like you totally turned it around and we've drilled wells. We had these children by the hundreds singing praises to Jesus. In a matter of years, singing those praises in English because we teach them English in the schools. And we give them food in the schools. That's what love does. But it all started with a fresh water well.

Would you please get your bank card? Use it like a check. Call that number or go online. We have gifts to send you that will bless you. But you really are, you're giving the greatest gift, the gift of life. And they're going to learn that it is because of his life given for us that they received that gift, and then they will hear about the greatest gift. Thank you so much. Thank you for sharing his love.

### **Video begins**

**ANNOUNCER:** Every day thousands of lives are lost to a waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through Mission: Water for LIFE, now in its 25th year, you could give mothers hope and children a future as we provide

clean life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it is 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 help provide for ten. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With a gift of any amount, we'll send you the "God's Word for My Day" devotional set. These four seasonal devotionals each contain a daily reading, an encouraging verse, and a thought to ponder for each day of the year.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "His Word is Life" tumbler set. These two 20-ounce stainless steel tumblers each inscribed with a scripture will inspire you throughout the day and help keep your drinks well-insulated while at home or on the go.

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 beautiful bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**JAMES:** You can also get Christopher's book if you'd like to have it. You just give water; you just help us. Chris, if they wanted to find out how they could access your, I think you have a daily page that you have on social media, do you have a website they can go to find out how you might come and speak in their area or they could see you?

**CHRISTOPHER:** Certainly. WinToday.TV is the best place to find me. I'm on social media. The handle is Win Today, Chris. The book is available everywhere books are

sold, Target, Walmart, Barnes & Noble, and Amazon. Get it wherever. But WinToday.TV is the best place. And I host a weekly podcast, mental health, emotional health, and spiritual growth. It is called Win Today with Christopher Cook.

**JAMES:** Thank you so much, Christopher. And thank all of you for watching. Thank you for sharing life, not just watching Life Today but sharing it. Thank you so much.