

7/11/24 from 1/22/24

Week four: WFL

Randy Robison and Tammy Trent

Andrew Carter

In the studio

TAMMY: Hello, everybody! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Tammy Trent and this is Randy Robison. Do you love to pray?

RANDY: Not probably like I should.

TAMMY: I know! I kind of feel the same. Like do we look at prayer as a privilege or do we look at it as an obligation? Maybe we need to start looking at it a little bit differently. It really should be looked at as a privilege.

And we have a guest with us today, Randy. He's amazing. He's got an incredible back story which I want him to tap into a little bit with us. Because I think getting to the place of understanding in his life, where prayer became a privilege, is a big deal. And it might help some people today.

RANDY: I think it depends on how you define it.

TAMMY: Probably. Yeah.

RANDY: Because "pray without ceasing" doesn't work if prayer is a formal kind of religious thing.

TAMMY: No, totally.

RANDY: That's where I think I struggle. So this will be good.

TAMMY: Well, I want to welcome Pastor Andrew Carter with us. He's got a brand-new book out, *The Privilege of Prayer*: "Find healing, transformation, and answers." I want answers today, pastor. So bring on the answers.

But before we start with that, can you just give us a little back story about you and your life? I want to know; did you grow up in the church? Were you raised in the church? I kind of have a feeling based on your book, I know the answer but people might not know.

ANDREW: So first off, thanks for having me. Yeah, I'm a pastor of a church in Englewood, California. And I did not grow up in church. I did not know the name of Jesus until I was 17 years old. The name of Jesus was as real to me as the Easter Bunny or even Santa Claus. A very non-religious home. A home where drugs and alcohol and sex were permissive. They were allowed in the house. There weren't any restrictions. It was kind of a free-for-all. That's the way I grew up.

RANDY: What did it do to you? Where did that lead? It didn't lead to the church.

ANDREW: No. No. A life like that led to a lot of destructive behaviors, a lot of poor choices, and defense mechanisms as a young man that I carried with me into adulthood that didn't serve me. So because of a lot of those bad behaviors and defense mechanisms, I got myself in trouble. I wound up in jail, then to prison; got into a lot of issues, and relationship problems, as well.

RANDY: Where did God come into that?

ANDREW: God came in multiple times. Looking back at my life I could see where God intervened and showed himself. But initially, it was at 17 years is when I first gave my life to Jesus. The thing about that is things didn't change. I didn't get saved and then jumped into a church or get good mentorship or discipleship. I went back to the same destructive home that I was a part of. And so I was introduced to Jesus and then spent the

next decade trying to unwrap what it looks like to have a relationship with him.

TAMMY: When you started that relationship with Jesus, were you still doing the same things even though you came to Christ at 17? And how did that change over the ten years, that decade for you? Did it take a while for you to finally go, wait a second? This doesn't feel right anymore. These decisions don't feel right anymore because Jesus is in my life. I think I need to make some different decisions.

ANDREW: Immediately nothing was the same. So the night that I gave my life to Jesus I went back home. And if I'm just being honest with you guys, I was smoking weed back in those days. So I went back home and tried to smoke. And immediately, I felt paranoid; it didn't feel the same. When the Holy Spirit came into my life the drugs, the sex, the alcohol, all of those things were no longer satisfying. It was a switch that clicked. So not knowing what that was, I did what most people do, I tried to do more. So I tried to smoke more to get rid of that feeling of conviction. I tried to drink more, to blackout so I would try to ignore that. I would try to sleep with more women in order to get that feeling that I once had before meeting Jesus.

So the opposite happened. The scales didn't fall from my eyes and I was like a new saint. I actually went even further away trying to understand what happened.

TAMMY: Did you hit rock bottom?

ANDREW: Eventually, yeah.

TAMMY: And what happened at the bottom?

ANDREW: Well, at the bottom a lot of hardness of heart. Hitting rock bottom made me resent God. I didn't think that I should be at rock bottom. I was like I didn't choose to be here. This all kind of happened by happen-chance, by accident. So I was frustrated, my heart was hardened, and I ran further away from God even at rock bottom. Like what am

doing here? Like, who is this God guy and why is he messing up my life?

RANDY: You're a hard case, man. So what was the breakthrough? What happened to turn all of that around?

ANDREW: So the breakthrough was—there was a season in my life where I was going to church. So at about 23 years old, I'd just got out of jail, and I found myself in a real solid Bible-believing church. The goal of this church was to plant churches. So I got into an intensive, like pastor/discipleship program where they were just preparing me to eventually be a leader and to be a pastor. After a couple of years in that church, they gave me a prophetic word and spoke this over my life, and I didn't like it. They said that I would be called to ministry, that I had words of gold and I would speak to millions of people about Jesus.

When they told me that, I was mad. I was upset because I didn't want to be a pastor, I didn't want to be a leader, I didn't have words of gold. At the time, I was building manufactured homes. I was like working in a factory. And so, when I got that word I left church completely, just went off on my own. I did so for over ten years, building a business, and going back to school. I actually started to succeed, according to the eyes of the world. So I was racking up achievements, accolades, and awards.

Unfortunately, some of those defense mechanisms I told you about were never healed, I never got counseling, I never got the help that I needed and I ended up in prison. So away from church, on my own succeeding, still ended up in prison. And it was after prison that this prophetic word came to fruition. I watched it unfold in my *LIFE*.

RANDY: If you told me that a giant fish came and swallowed you up and then spit you back at the front door of this church, I'd believe it by now. Because this is a pattern of knowing something but running from something. At some point, I mean, something has got to give. When was your, okay, I surrender all moment? Was there one? Was it a process?

ANDREW: There was a moment, it was a road to Damascus moment where my eyes were blinded and then the scales eventually fell off. I encountered the Holy Spirit in Jesus. And it was through social media; I had a TiK ToK account in 2019. So not even five years ago. I was there posting things, trying to build up my following at the time. I was in fitness, so I was doing a fitness account trying to get people inspired physically, not knowing that I would do that for the spirit down the road.

But I posted a video and it was a 15-second video. I didn't say a word during this video. I pointed at boxes. And the boxes said, "Things God's carried me through" and not in this order, foster care, prison, divorce, and everything else. Something to that effect. That video went viral. I went to bed with 200 followers. The next morning over 15,000 just went crazy.

The Holy Spirit moment was the confirmation as I was going through the messages and a guy reached out and said, "Andrew, I've been to prison, I've been divorced, I've been to foster care." He said, "And last night, I was going to take my life." He was like, "But I saw that God carried you through those things, and if he could do it for you then he could do it for me."

And in that moment, I was overwhelmed with emotion. I started weeping and I felt the confirmation of the Holy Spirit saying you were made for a time such as this. And this is the vehicle that will have that prophetic word come to fruition. So now we speak to millions of people, I've got words of gold, and I'm in ministry pastoring a church in Englewood, California.

TAMMY: Incredible. Like okay, so you put the—just my mind here. You pointed at a bunch of things. I'm going to start doing that. Was it like the next day? Like obviously, I think the same when we're reading the responses of people, what a gift that is to us. It's confirmation to me that God is saying you, Andrew, are right where you're supposed to be. So did you just, from that moment, that next day, like I'm making the call, I'm going

into ministry. Did you just jump all in at that point when God confirmed to you, I'm going to use your life and it starts today? Andrew, do you want to go for the long haul or do you not? Like we're all in or we're all out. Like did you know at that point, like God, I'm all in. And I'm jumping in right now. What did that look like at that moment?

ANDREW: Absolutely not. I'm a hard-headed guy.

TAMMY: Oh, my gosh! Not even then!

ANDREW: No! No! From my story you can see the pattern is I was convinced, and I started leaning in that direction but everything was just real gentle steps. I was like this is great. Now I've got all this influence, let me do some more workout videos. And so I wasn't ready to quite let go of where I was at. And it took some refining, it just took some time. So for the next six months or so, God was cleaning up my life, he was cleaning up my act. Even though it was a Christian video that went viral, my life didn't reflect Christ in that moment. I was reading my Bible, and I was going to church occasionally, but my faith was kind of small. It was almost dead. It was being revived. And it was a process over the months of it being revived and coming back to life.

RANDY: You know, just for anybody watching, if you see something online or you hear something from somebody and then you see some lack of spiritual maturity, don't condemn them. Pray for them. Because one of the things you talk about in your book, Andrew in *The Privilege of Prayer* is the transformation that takes place when we make prayer that regular part of our lives. And that's what you needed. That's what we all need. It is an ongoing thing. It doesn't—we don't have a testimony where I was transformed for three months, back in 19-whatever. This is an ongoing thing.

When will you look at prayer in your life today, how has that transformed you since you started that slow walk towards full surrender and obedience?

ANDREW: Prayer has completely transformed my life because I have a better

understanding of who I am because I talk daily to the one who made me. So I know who I am. I know what I'm called to do and where I'm supposed to be. Because I'm getting my marching orders directly from the source rather than the different outlets of social media, entertainment, news, outside opinions, and other voices. Prayer has transformed who I am because I am in a relationship with the creator of all things.

TAMMY: Why is it important then to stay consistent in our prayer? A lot of times people look at prayer as that crisis. When I'm in a crisis, now I pray. But why is it important that we stay consistent in our prayer life?

ANDREW: Because we need it on both the good days and the bad. Sometimes, we only—I call it the same thing "crisis faith." You're knocking on the door when things aren't going well. But I think if we talk to him on the good days, we might not find ourselves in as many bad positions as we do. Sometimes, we find ourselves in crisis because we weren't connected to him in the first place. So I find it's important to stay consistent, stay connected on good days and bad. And again, I find myself in less situations where I'm crying out in crises asking him to fix something that I messed up because I've been walking with him the entire time.

RANDY: And it's okay. If you're in a crisis, reach out. If you want to talk to somebody on the phone that will pray with you, we've got a telephone number. You can call somebody and it won't be Andrew, but somebody who loves Jesus who talks to him every day, will pray you through that crisis. But also, into that life where you're—it's not the one-time thing. It's a daily thing. And as Andrew says, it is a privilege. I like the way you use that word in the title. Because religion will tell you it's a duty, life will tell you that it is a last resort, you know? But it's a privilege. Explain what that means to you because I love the truth in that.

ANDREW: Yeah, I think you nailed it. Religion would have us think that it's a burden, like it's an obligation that we have to, every day, and this isn't to knock on somebody's routine, that you have to get on your knees, fold your hands, close your eyes, and recite

the same thing over and over.

But the truth of the matter is that prayer is open, honest, vulnerable, and transparent communication with God. I pray when I'm driving. I pray when I'm in the shower. I prayed before I came up here. I'm praying without ceasing. I'm constantly staying connected and that is a privilege to experience the fullness of life, I believe, that we need to do so in the order that God created us to do so. He created us with the original design to be intimately related to him, and to be in communion. So prayer is that vehicle to make that happen.

RANDY: Yeah. I think part of the beauty of it is when you understand the freedom of it and what it does, then you can go back to liturgy or back to some of the things that are more traditional. Because they provide another thing that you say is important which is discipline. Because there are some times the discipline aspect of I'm going to stop my day, its busy, but you know what? I'm going to make time. If I can make time to watch TV, to watch a basketball game, I can make time for prayer. How has discipline transformed not only your prayer life but your whole life?

ANDREW: Discipline and consistency go hand in hand. Discipline is me saying that I'm going to do many somethings even if I don't feel like it. That's the thing because I don't always feel like reading my Bible. I don't always feel like stopping what I'm doing and getting into prayer but I know that it is important. So showing up to the commitments that I make to myself empowers me, emboldens me, gives me confidence, and reinvigorates my relationship with God.

TAMMY: But do you ever struggle to live out your daily life, like your own book? Do you ever struggle with prayer? And what do you do and what would you say to people that do struggle with praying? What's something we can do practically every day that those of us that struggle with prayer?

ANDREW: Absolutely. I would be a liar to say that I didn't struggle. There are times

where I might go through something and I'm like why am I going through this? I've done the prayer, I've done the devotion, I've read the books, I'm living a life that is filled with integrity. I'm living the same in public as I am in private, why am I still going through these things?

TAMMY: And it is not working. People think God, it is not working! What am I doing wrong?

ANDREW: And the fact of the matter is you're not doing anything wrong. Is that nobody is immune to the issues, obstacles, and trials that come with life? And somebody watching this might be experiencing grief or hurt or heartbreak, financial issues, health stuff, that is a part of life. So it is not necessarily that you're doing something wrong. What helps me get through that is exactly what Randy said, is the discipline. Do I show up even when I don't want to? I know that prayer and devotion are going to help me.

It is just like the gym. I don't always want to go to the gym, I don't always want to eat healthy; but I know that if I do so, it is this mathematical equation, consistency plus discipline equals results. And that goes for your finances, that goes for your spiritual health, your emotional health, and every aspect of your life. So even when I don't feel like it, I show up in prayer, I show up in devotion, and I know God is going to get a hold of me no matter where I'm at.

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

RANDY: Yeah. Who is this Jim guy he's talking about?

TAMMY: Yeah! Who is Jim?

[Laughter]

RANDY: I don't know him.

TAMMY: Why is Jim so disciplined?

RANDY: A serious question though for you. When you pray, does God always say yes to your prayers?

ANDY: Oh, I wish! I wish.

RANDY: But does God always say no?

ANDREW: No.

RANDY: So what do we do with the “no’s” that we don't like, or the “not-yets,” or the seeming silence at times? Because I think that's a hard part; that's an obstacle for a lot of people. I prayed about it, but nothing happened. Or you know—and we just give up.

ANDREW: We have to understand that he loves us, and he wants what's best for us. And so his no has goodness written all over it. So his no could keep us from walking into something that we don't see. His no could protect us. It could redirect us. It could keep us from settling for less than what he made us for. So because I know who he is and who I am in his eyes, whether it is a yes, no, or a not yet, I know that it is always best.

I like to use the analogy of I have three kids, and if my son came to me at 11:00 pm and said, "Dad, I want some ice cream. Can I have some ice cream?" I will tell him no, not because I don't love him, or because I don't care about him. I'm telling him no because if he has sugar at 11, he's not going to sleep well; he's probably going to have a stomach ache which means tomorrow he's going to be a little cranky. There are going to be repercussions to his actions and decisions. So my “no” isn't because I don't love him. It is because I love him. In the same way, we might be asking for things that seem good in the moment but we don't understand what is going to come with in the tomorrows.

RANDY: Yeah, and it is a hard lesson to learn. We don't like it but it's so true. And anybody that's had a prayer life for any length of time, you know, you don't always get what you ask for. But whatever God gives us, as Andrew says, is always good.

All right *The Privilege of Prayer*, wonderful! I just love the topic. I love your openness about it, and your honesty about it. But the intimacy, the change, the transformation that it can bring, it is a beautiful thing.

I would actually like to ask our audience, if you guys wouldn't mind, to pray about something really quick and if God tells you yes, act on it, if God tells you no or not yet, that's fine too. But take this in prayer because we have an opportunity right now to actually be the answer to many people's desperate prayers. They're in that crisis moment. And sometimes, God will answer it directly. Sometimes, I find that he uses his people to walk it out. Watch this and you'll understand.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: Water is essential for life. But when there's no choice other than drinking contaminated water, lives are put at risk. It is a known fact that 800 children under the age of five die every day from diseases linked to unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, or poor hygiene.

RANDY: As you can see, it is very busy here right now. Everybody is coming down. There are jugs lined up everywhere. They're getting water. You'll see them sweep, sometimes, the water with these big cans trying to clear off the surface. But the reality is they can't clear away what's underneath.

This happens every day not just in this place but in places around the world. And though it looks like we have a beautiful lake of water behind us, the reality is, it's contaminated water. Children are dying right here in this village because this water, which is their only water supply, carries diseases and waterborne illnesses. You wonder why they're doing

it? It is their only choice. If they had a choice to drink water that was clean, uncontaminated, that wouldn't potentially make them sick or kill them, they would make the choice to drink the clean water.

Help us give as much clean drinking water to as many people as we can, as many beautiful children. When we give them the choice of clean water, we give them life.

[Cheers & Applause]

In the studio

RANDY: I love seeing them dancing under that rig. We had just drilled a well in that one village at the end. But in the earlier spot, Tammy, it is crazy because we drove kind of down the side of the mountain and you could see this beautiful, looked like a beautiful lake. But the closer and closer we got, the more we saw, man, this is not good. In fact, what's here will kill them. In so many cases, we found out by talking to mothers that they had lost many, many children. So you go, okay, even in the places where we think they have drinking water, what do we do?

Well, the answer is Water for LIFE. It's drinking water that is not contaminated by going down into God's earth and pulling up what he has given and blessing people with it. Here's the breakdown, just so you know what it looks like. As we go into about 20 nations around the world, and we help to reach our goal of 350 wells this year, maybe exceed it, I'm praying, the breakdown is that the average well costs \$4800. There is some variation in there depending on the terrain, depending on how remote it is, depending on how far we have to drill down into the earth. But the average cost for the program is \$4800. That means \$4800 will provide on average one well which on average will serve about a thousand people for about 70 years. Now for most people that's a lifetime. That's why we say it is Water for LIFE.

Now many of you are not in a position to be able to provide one well, but you can join others. Your gift of \$144 today will help give Water for LIFE to 30 people. Most of you

will give \$48 to help provide Water for LIFE for ten people. Here's what you need to know. Every single child, even the men and the women that are there at that contaminated water source, they're at risk. They need an answer to a prayer and you are that answer. And that's why, Tammy, I think it is critical that we do just what we can. When we all work together, we can change it.

TAMMY: Randy, I couldn't have said it any better than that. You laid it out. We always lay it out. Here it is. We present it to you and tell you this is the need and this is what we need, and how we need to help meet this need for these people—that will change everything for them. I love how you talked about the celebration and the dancing. I've been there in Burundi as well and I've danced with the people. But it would be incredible to go back into that village and put a well in for those incredible families, for those children, and to dance with them. That's what my goal is. That's what my hope is. That's what my dream is. That's what my prayer is. And I'm asking you, we're asking you today, would you come alongside us? Would you come alongside us today and let's get it done? Go online, make that call, give the best gift you can today, and let's make a difference in the lives of so many people all around the world.

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

TAMMY: I hope you're going online and giving the best gift you possibly can give. What an incredible opportunity we've been given to help so many people right now today. Randy, what a great day it's been.

RANDY: If you want Andrew's book, *The Privilege of Prayer*, just request it when you make any gift towards Water for LIFE. Andrew, I have a quick question for you. For the person who has watched this and they're thinking like some have said, you know, if God can do it for him, he can do it for me. What's your prayer for that person?

ANDREW: Oh, I just pray that they would believe and trust that God has a plan and a purpose for their life. I would encourage them to lean into the pain that they've experienced. The story that I shared with you guys was acquainted with pain. And I believe the pain that we go through gives us a platform to minister and to share with others. So trust God, he has a plan, lean into the plan.

RANDY: Yes, he does. Amen! I hope you are encouraged today. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*.