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Week 40: Mission: Rescue Life

Randy Robison and Tammy Trent

Tara-Leigh Cobble #2

In the studio

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. That is the lovely Tammy Trent. How are you doing?

TAMMY: I'm good today. Great day!

RANDY: I want to recap something and that was the last program with Tara-Leigh Cobble. And a little play on words because she's got The Bible Recap, the podcast, the book, a whole series of Bible studies. We're going to give you a little more information on that.

But if you missed the other program with Tara-Leigh Cobble, just go to LifeToday.org. All our programs are there. You can watch them whenever you want, in whatever order you want. Just bookmark that one and make it a part because it will give you encouragement and hope.

What we're talking about today, a little bit deeper is God's Word. You saw in the last program how Tara-Leigh loves the Word of God.

TAMMY: She lights up, Randy. You know when people are faking joy. You know when people are just putting something on for the moment, whether on a platform or off a platform, whatever. But there is something about her life that—just her life for one

speaks for itself. But then when she talks about her love for God's word, there is something that changes in the atmosphere. I think it is so contagious. That's what I love about Tara-Leigh so much. Let's do it.

RANDY: Welcome back!

TARA-LEIGH: I'm so happy to be back. Thanks for having me.

RANDY: So you've read the Bible how many times now?

TARA-LEIGH: I'm on my 16th trip through now.

RANDY: Sixteen! Which is amazing. At what point did you actually start to love it?

TARA-LEIGH: One and a half.

TAMMY: One and a half?

TARA-LEIGH: Yeah. Halfway through the Old Testament.

TAMMY: So like where was that half where you're like now I'm loving it? Because I want to start there.

TARA-LEIGH: I think I was in the major prophets. It is actually still my least favorite part of scripture which is amazing that that is the place I fell in love with God the most. But he found me where I wasn't expecting him to find me in those spaces.

RANDY: I love it. The last time you talked about some things that are important to me, and these are keys to reading God's word. I'd like to get into a little bit more. One of them is the lens. What lens should we come to God's Word with?

TARA-LEIGH: I think the natural human lens is the lens to look for ourselves. If you see a group photo, isn't the first person you look at yourself?

TAMMY: How did you know?

TARA-LEIGH: It is so natural to look for yourself. That's the way we tend to treat God's Word. We tend to treat it like a book about us. My pastor, wisely told me, "It is not about you, it is about God. It is for you but it is not about you." So training myself to look for God in scripture felt very unnatural to me. I would get a whole day's worth of reading done and have forgotten to look for God. I was looking for my application points, my takeaways, and my to-do list. How do I be a good Christian? And then I also was looking for what promises has God made me that I can hold him to. And less of a God is faithful and can be trusted and more of how can I back him in a corner to get what I want? And in my mind, those two things were pretty closely related. If I do what God asks of me, then he owes me what I want. I would pull verses out of context to mean what I wanted them to mean.

RANDY: You're not alone! I've seen it on Instagram.

TARA-LEIGH: And sometimes, I didn't even know I was doing it. I was doing it secondhand because it is what had been taught to me through whatever I was choosing to let teach me about who God was as opposed to him. I'm learning about God secondhand, so it is very natural when you don't understand and know the full counsel of God to misunderstand snippets of the counsel of God that have been snatched out of context and twisted, either accidentally or intentionally.

And so, I myself would wrestle a passage like "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart." Well, I think I know what that means and God is not living up to that promise. Just those kinds of things that can be very tricky. So for me, learning to look for God was a discipline I had to learn. Every day of The Bible Recap, which is our read-through-the-Bible-in-365-days program, we end every day with what

we call "The God shot." It is a snapshot of God and his character from that day's reading. Just a little reminder every day that we're not here for application points. We're not here for a takeaway or a to-do list, we're here to look for the person of God. And having that repeated every day, we find so many people who do the program with us who will say, my God shot today is that I need to be nice to my kids. I'm like no. That's a through-you shot. Your God shot is perhaps, God is kind a patient toward his children when we rebel, when we sin, when we run away. He is kind and patient toward us and pursues us. And when we behold the character of God in scripture, the Holy Spirit activates that in us in ways that are surprising sometimes. To see him do the doing through us because we become what we behold. And if we're beholding God, he's transforming us, conforming us to the image of his son.

RANDY: You know, I mean, Jesus puts it right there in the New Testament. If we want good fruit, we've got to stay connected to the vine. How did knowing God impact you even as a lifelong Christian? Is that a question that makes sense?

TARA-LEIGH: Absolutely. There is a line of demarcation in my life of being a Christian since I was four-and-a-half years old, since I was a child. My earliest memories include Jesus. And all of that time of getting to know God secondhand, getting misinformation about God, all those things that I had accumulated about him, there is a line of demarcation when I started reading scripture to look for God.

I can't even tell you, and the things that happened in my life after that were the hardest things that ever happened to me. And thank God, I knew who he was. Because of the things that happened from that, it was such a gift—such a gift that my pastor challenged me to read the whole Bible when he did. Because that was in 2008, and in 2016 my sister died of brain cancer, I had to have two open-heart surgeries, and I was accidentally electrocuted in the second open-heart surgery and should have died.

RANDY: Oh my gosh!

TARA-LEIGH: All that happened within a year's span. So for me, undergoing tragic loss, financial, physical, relational, emotional, all of those devastations were happening to me in that year. And it could have been a moment where I turned away from God. The way that the Lord enveloped me and carried me through that space, I had such fond memories of those times. During my two weeks spent in the hospital for open-heart surgery, I have delightful memories of my time in the hospital because of who God is and who the people of God are. I had surrounded myself with people who know and love God.

So it has transformed everything to know him, to have built up an understanding and a knowledge and a relationship with him that laid the groundwork for me to not be shaken in that time. There is the house on the rock and there is the house on the sand. And the good news for the people who have houses on sand right now, houses that are not built on the character and the person and the Word of God is it is never too late to relocate. It is never too late to relocate. Start today engaging with the character and the person and the Word of God because you don't know when the storm is coming.

TAMMY: What I hear you saying, Tara-Leigh that resonates with me is knowing the heart of God, knowing his character. You knew who Jesus was and that changed everything for you in the worst darkest moment of your life. Like when I stood on the edge of the water for me, everything shifted and changed in a moment. But I knew Jesus. I knew somehow that I wouldn't just survive but that I would be an overcomer. The only way we are going to know that, Tara-Leigh, is by being in the Word of God. I love that you just light these fires everywhere for us to get into that.

But there are people that are struggling and say, I hear this but how do I apply this to my life? What is going to be different about this Bible study from the other five or six that are sitting on my shelf right now?

TARA-LEIGH: One of the things that we do in the Bible recap and in this Bible study series, which is the first of a series of Bible studies that we've written. We took that Bible

recap model and applied it to these studies. So in The Bible Recap, we're taking eight minutes a day in a podcast or YouTube to fly over three or four chapters of scripture. With this, we're going through line by line, verse by verse, looking for the character and the person of God, the story of God throughout scripture.

So every day, we're peeling back another layer of his story and who he is. And as we do this, how do you fall in love with a person? You get to know them better. And so my understanding of the problem that most of us encounter with being able to connect with and fall in love with the Word of God is that we're treating it like a pharmacy where we go to what's my hope? What's my encouragement? What are some verses about divorce? What are some verses about loss? And we treat it like a pharmacy as opposed to the story of God. And when you treat it like a product like that, there is a wall that keeps you from engaging in intimacy.

This is a book that reveals the person of God to us. If you look for him, if you get to know him that's how you fall in love with him. You don't fall in love with him by him giving you everything you want. In scripture, the people who loved him the most as it seems by the Word of God, encountered horrific trials that most of us will never even touch. The Apostle Paul, the longer he knew Jesus and the more he encountered trials, the more his joy overflowed. He's writing letters of encouragement to other people about all the joy he contains in prison. It's like what?

They demonstrate to us that joy isn't found in circumstances. Joy is found in a person and his name is Jesus. And we end every day of The Bible Recap, book, podcast, YouTube, and every week of study in these studies is he's where the joy is. He's where the joy is. David says in Psalm 16:11, "In your presence, there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Not in getting everything I wanted, in you. Period.

RANDY: You talk about the hardship that people in the scripture went through, and Tammy just talked about losing her husband in that diving accident. You lost your sister. I've lost a younger sister. During those difficult times, with a diagnosis, open-heart

surgery, oh goodness! You were rooted in God's Word. How much did God's word come back to you to minister to you during those moments?

TARA-LEIGH: So much! It was, I tell people the time to build the storm shelter is not when the tornado is in sight. And thank God I had built up this knowledge of him. So I had stored up truth about him that I had also memorized specific scriptures. That's one of the other things we endeavor to do in these studies is to memorize a section of scripture. Every week we memorize a verse but it is not just a verse snatched out of context. We are memorizing a verse in context so by the end of the study you know 10-12 verses that are hooked together in the story of scripture. And as I've been memorizing the scriptures over the years, all of that would just sort of auto-populate in my mind in times that I needed it. I had stored it up and the Holy Spirit was activating it in my memory. And so over the course of time, I memorized the whole book of James, the Sermon on the Mount. Things like that that when you store them up you have no idea when you might need them. But the Lord does and he activates those things in our memory at times when he knows we will need them most.

RANDY: I might have to start with Jude.

[Laughter]

So I heard you say that you were hoping to go through the Bible with 300 people when you started this. This is impacting a lot of people. What kind of feedback are you getting back from people who are walking through scripture with you?

TARA-LEIGH: Oh it is my favorite. Because there are people like me who thought they had all there was to get of God. I'm meeting other people, who like me, are falling in love with him for the first time. I met a woman in her 60s who did The Bible Recap and was like, "I'm going to go to seminary. I just signed up to go to seminary. I'm so in love with the Word of God."

I'm meeting five-year-olds who walk up to me with the first phrase out of their mouth is how I greet people on the podcast and YouTube every day. I say, "Hey Bible readers!" And these kids are like, "Hey Bible weeders."

[Laughter]

It is adorable. So we started developing a kids' line because how great would it be if these kids started reading through the whole Bible every year when they were five, six, seven, eight? They never become the person that I became when I was an adult and had no idea who God was but thought I did. They get to bypass that whole section of their life.

So we're building all these other products and people are falling in love with the Word of God who never thought it was possible for them. Who hoped and watched other people love God and thought, man, I don't know how they do that. Are they faking it? How do they get there? Maybe they're just built differently than me. And I'm watching their hearts being ignited for the Word of God and the person of God. They're coming alive and it is incredible.

TAMMY: I love it! One question, there is so much racing around in my brain right now. Racing around! I know you even said you're going to start in October the New Testament and I'm like can I just jump in there? Or do I have to wait until the first of the year? I'm jumping in. So mark my words, I'm jumping in because I want to know—

I have to know for myself. If I call myself a woman of God, if I'm chasing after the things of God, the fighting for my spiritual life, I've got to know why. Who am I fighting for and with? Does God see me? Is God still speaking today? Where can I find this voice? You can find it in church sometimes. You can find it in a devotion. You can find it in an Instagram post.

The greatest place you will ever find the purest truest voice of God is in His Word. God has Father-anointed people. God has anointed and appointed very specific people who are

here on earth right now this side of heaven, to teach us, to show us how to walk, to give us the tools to walk in a healthy, pure relationship with Jesus.

Do you want that today? Do you want to know Jesus in an intimate way firsthand? He's given us an opportunity to know how to do that today. He's given me an opportunity. He's given me a tool. I've looked at different places in my life to find God and I found him. I found bits and pieces. And I made him the God that maybe I've wanted him to be. But is he so much more? He is so much more than you could ever imagine!

He has so much more for you today. Whatever it is you're carrying, whatever circumstances, whatever load, whatever burden, Jesus is in the middle of this with you and he is speaking to you. He hasn't left you alone. He is speaking to you. So find his voice. Find what he has to say to you today. Don't wait until tomorrow. He has given us this day, this moment. It is for you.

Tara-Leigh, you are a gift to me, a gift to so many. I'm so grateful for you.

RANDY: People watching need to know that we have a telephone number that you can call if you want someone to pray with you. Whatever you're struggling with, you know, you've heard a lot of things laid out there today. Pick up the phone, someone who just cares will listen, and will pray with you. This is just an extension of our love for God sharing his love with you just by having someone at the end of that phone.

There's also another opportunity I want you to take a look at and consider joining us and sharing God's love with people in a very real and tangible way. Watch this.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: *For over two decades, LIFE Outreach has been locating children at risk of starving to death because of food insecurity or dying from drinking diseased*

water. In our reaching out to the overlooked, we made a discovery of children at risk not from starvation or waterborne diseases but of something straight from the pit of hell. Children at risk of falling prey to sex traffickers. Once we had seen the tragic toll it had taken on its young victims, there was no turning back on our entering the war against human trafficking.

LIFE Outreach now has mission partners on six continents who are actively engaged in one or more programs of rescuing and restoring survivors who fell prey to sex traffickers. Another of our programs is using preventative programs in schools and rural villages to reach out and educate the most vulnerable who are at risk of being trafficked. Once the children are rescued, our mission partners lovingly care for them through Christ-centered restoration programs.

This is a war fighting the evils of sex trafficking and it is far from over with many battles ahead. Our continued fight depends on the support of those who will stand with our partners and us so those at risk will never have to endure the horrors of being a victim of sex trafficking.

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: It is a beautiful picture we see of that child restored, when we see them rescued from the darkness, when we see them given a hope and a future, and oftentimes, the skills to make that future possible. I love to see a beautiful outcome made possible by viewers just like you. But at the same time, Tammy, I know there are so many more in need. I think we've got to reach that one more.

TAMMY: There are so many more in need. First of all, thank God for lots of different ministries out there, Randy that are chasing after these bad people. They're chasing after these children and getting them back. That's why I love being here at *LIFE Outreach International*.

It's a hard trip for me when I land in a foreign land and I'm about to see things I've never seen before. I've been in the presence of so many children who are crying out for help, who are crying out for hope. They're crying out to be rescued. But are longing to be restored and have no idea how to even get there.

When I'm with these kids, I just keep thinking, have we done everything we can do? We know they're out there. Have we gone after them? Have we done what we can do? Now, I know not everybody can get on a plane and go. But God has given us an opportunity at this amazing ministry to partner with our missionaries who are on the ground right now and are actively going after these children to save their very lives. And they've asked us to come alongside them. They're waiting. They're on the streets. They're in the home helping to restore their lives but they're waiting for us.

RANDY: She talked about going into foreign lands and we do that, obviously. And the images you're seeing are from overseas. We fully recognize that we have trafficking right here in our country. And much of our Rescue LIFE outreach, we do things here in our own country. But we also have tremendous governmental resources, and other people on the ground addressing this in our own country, and in many countries, Canada, Australia, and the like.

We are going into places where they don't have the resources that we have here. Where if we don't go, nobody is coming. What you're doing through Rescue LIFE, whether you're reaching with the educational programs, whether you're rescuing by knocking down doors with local police or restoring, which is to give that skill and to give the gospel, which is another key component, the gospel of Jesus Christ to these people.

Someone's come and said, "We want to give a huge gift right now. We want to match all the gifts that viewers of Life Today, just like you, make towards this outreach."

So listen, that \$320,000 matching gift that has been so generously given to this

organization to reach these young boys and girls, means that your gift today will be doubled in impact. We parcel it out like this, \$128 gift today will help reach, rescue, or restore two children. That just is an average number that it takes for the overall program.

The bottom line is this, the more you give, the more children we can help. I'm asking you to go online, go to the phone today, and just make the best gift you can—whatever gift that is. Because God gave his best to us. We want to give our best to those in need, and we can only do it when you partner with us. So please, go online, go to the phone. If you can make that \$1280 gift, that's wonderful. If you can do more than that, that's great. But just do what God has enabled you to do and put on your heart to do knowing that you will make a difference in a child's life today.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: *Innocent children and young people longing to be loved and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, forced into the evil industry of human trafficking.*

Through Mission: Rescue Life, you can reach out to warn children who are at risk for sex trafficking, rescue those already enslaved and restore young lives and give them a future. With a generous \$320,000 matching gift, now your gift of \$128 to help rescue one child can be doubled to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help save one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

To say thank you for your gift, we will send you Worship, Wisdom, and Wonder. The pages of this beautifully crafted book are rich with words that will inspire you as you experience the worship found in Psalms, receive life-giving directions to the wisdom of Proverbs, and be reminded of the wonder of our God.

With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive the Refuge of Life framed artwork, a beautiful, matted picture frame with printed scripture that reminds you to set your mind on worship through the words of Isaiah 44:3.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280, which will now help save 20 children. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: I hope you're going online, going to the phone right now. There are so many people that need a touch from God today. We have people in place but we need your support to do it. We can reach one more, one more, one more with your help.

Tara-Leigh, thank you so much. Wait, today's October 1st!

TARA-LEIGH: Today's October 1st!

RANDY: It is a good day to—

TARA-LEIGH: It is a good day to start the New Testament with me at Bible Recap.

RANDY: Can you give the website again?

TARA-LEIGH: TheBibleRecap.com.

RANDY: Thank you so much, Tammy.

TAMMY: Yes! I'm jumping in with you today. I love you so much, Tara-Leigh. You're

my new best friend.

TARA-LEIGH: I can't wait to be your new best friend, Tammy.

TAMMY: I love it. Thanks for watching and we will see you next time on *Life Today!*