

9/10/24

Week 37: *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*

Randy Robison and Tammy Trent

Kerrie Oles #2

**In the studio**

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

**TAMMY:** I'm good today.

**RANDY:** Did you compose yourself after the last program?

**TAMMY:** I did. I pulled myself together. I had a moment. I had a tear in my nose; wanted to tell everybody about that. But I got it out.

**RANDY:** Okay. Well, and the reason was if you missed the last program with Kerrie Oles, you just need to go to [LifeToday.org](http://LifeToday.org). Her testimony, difficult at times but what a beautiful work God's done in her life. Kerrie is back with us. Kerrie, thank you for being with us.

**KERRIE:** Y'all are awesome!

**RANDY:** Listen. She is going to share the things that she has learned and that she is sharing with so many other people to confront their trauma, to face it, and to see the beauty on the other side of the pain. So you might need to call somebody and say, hey, you need to see this program. Or forward it. Or however, you watch it because healing is

there. It's what God wants.

So Kerrie, all right. I understand you developed much of this in prison.

**KERRIE:** Well, I wasn't in prison but yes, I grew up going to prisons. I've said that before. My brother was incarcerated nine times. I've been to a variety of prisons. But the last one I was in was where he had been and I had been called there to speak. Of course, I didn't want to do it. I was kicking and screaming because I grew up going to prison. I was like, I'm not speaking at a prison ever! And then it happened.

What happened in those two hours of my life was another transitional moment. It was life-changing. I went in, spoke to 200 women all in the same outfits. They were a very captive audience. They were beautiful people. I told them that this is where my brother resided and that he felt most at home in prison.

After it was over, this beautiful girl came up to me and she was like, "I just gave my life to Jesus!" I was like, "This is good news!"

She was like, "No!" She said, "I've been in here for seven years and I get out in seven days." She said, "But out there, I don't know how to stop being me." I knew that sentence was me all the years that I was trying to become like this perfect Christian. How do I stop being me? How do I stop malfunctioning and learn to know that God loves me no matter what my past is?

So I drove home that day and I was like, listen, Lord, I'm not starting a prison ministry. That is not going to happen. Nope! And he was so kind as he is and he just quietly spoke to me and he said, "I didn't ask you to have a prison ministry. But I am asking you to have a prison mentality ministry."

I just know that when I heard the words "prison mentality," I was like what does that mean, God? As I began to lean in and ask him what he was saying, he was trying to show

me that a lot of us are locked up in the real estate that's six inches right here. We may not have ever spent time in a physical prison but a lot of us are still locked up from our untreated trauma. We want to say no to it. I don't want to bring all that stuff up. But I believe that trauma is talking daily, and are you going to listen and treat it so that you can move on and turn that now into a truth about who you are and what you're called to do?

And so I said, what do you want me to do Lord? And he said I want you to pretend that you're writing a curriculum for someone in an eight-by-eight cell because that's where you've been your whole life.

**TAMMY:** Tell me about that.

**RANDY:** Before you do, I want to mention to people that this is in your book *Unlock Now* which they can get at your website, [unlocked ministries.com](http://unlockedministries.com): "Six steps to begin inner healing." So if you would, take us through the u-n-l-o-c-k of unlock.

**KERRIE:** Well, I just began all kinds of counseling and freedom classes, all kinds of things. So for years, I took what I had been going through, and put it in a simple, simple curriculum. Because sometimes I think as well-meaning Christians, we make things complicated. The first thing I had to do was uncover my wounds. So that's the U, obviously, but what does that look like? You've got to come to terms with the fact that I've got some stuff going on and be transparent with somebody. I don't care if it is a counselor, a pastor, a friend at coffee, your small group, whatever it is. I've watched it happen time and time again, when you're transparent about your trauma, you can bet someone in the room or in your vicinity is going wow! Me too.

So uncovering our wounds is learning that it is okay to be vulnerable. Learning that it is okay to be transparent about what's happened to you. Not to be ashamed of your story. That's where I had been my whole life. Even still becoming a Christian people would ask me, are you married? I would say yes. I didn't have to tell them I'd been married three times. I was ashamed of my story. This curriculum helped me even help myself learn that

this is what you've got to do.

So after you uncover your wound, the N is name your problem and never negate the negative. So you have to name it. Because I think we have shined it and that has suppressed our healing. So you've got to say, no, I was sexual my whole life because sex was introduced to me at six years old. I didn't mean to be. I didn't know I was. I didn't know it was bad. I didn't know that all the way into my adulthood I would still struggle with sex.

So you've got to name that thing. We can say things in church, sometimes we can say well, we opened the door to sin. Or whatever—the door was opened at six years old for me. I didn't mean to open the door.

And never negate your negative. Because a lot of times we'll go, well, my trauma is not like her story. I have people tell me that all the time, well, my story isn't yours—as if you can measure pain. You cannot. Pain is pain is pain. Yours may look different, but that doesn't mean mine is greater. And especially, if you've been abused. So I think a lot of us will negate the negative things that have happened to us. So we'll say, well, what happened to me wasn't that bad. But if it is making you malfunction today in your present, it was. It still needs attention.

And the L is, you've got to lean into the love and learn to understand God has laid his hand on my story and he has made all the trauma into a truth for me to now minister to others. So you've got to accept the love.

And actually, the L is my favorite one because in there we do this exercise where we write a letter to God. Once that pen is in your hand and you're writing a letter with those questions leading you, you'll be so shocked at what comes out. If you're letting the Holy Spirit guide you in that moment, I'm telling you, half your trauma will go away in the L.

And then the O is overhaul your thinking. Overhaul your thinking just means, Kerrie had

to stop thinking that her story wasn't worth telling. She had to come to the understanding that this is the story that I have. There were things that happened to me that I had no control over. And then because of those things, I malfunctioned and did things that were out of control.

So how do we bring those back around and now reframe those into hey, I'm not too dirty to stand on a church platform and speak to women now?

**RANDY:** I've got to jump in here. So we read in the scriptures that God loves us, forgives us, and separates our sin as far as the east is from the west. He doesn't condemn us. God came into the world not to condemn the world but to save the world. How do we get past the self-condemnation, the self-unforgiveness because those deny God's grace?

**KERRIE:** Well, I've been in a group now for the past five years and it was a leadership counseling group. They have taught me more about coming to love my story than anything I know. I had to come to terms with the fact that I had condemned my story more than anyone had ever condemned my story. So the second thing we do in here is we have God write us a letter. And again, you'd be shocked when you start writing what you think you're hearing from God. And before you know it, your ways that you think and all the shame that you have felt, you honestly start to feel a little bit of grace for yourself. And when I began to give Kerrie grace and the story that at six she didn't ask for, at 11, she didn't ask for, like when I began to give that little girl grace and say, hey, if I could pull you on my knee right now I would tell you how much you are loved. You are loved beyond the messiness and the dirtiness of your story. So when we start learning the truth about who we are and who we are to God, then I believe lots of our traumas turn into truth.

So overhauling your thinking, cleaning up your words, that's the C because I would always say things like, well, that was just the story I was worth. Well, that's a terrible thing to say. I'm not telling you to name it and claim it but what I am trying to tell you to do is start speaking things like the Bible says that are not as they were. Now you're

learning that you have worth. You're worth a better story so let God write it. So cleaning up your words.

And obviously, the K was just keep going. Because so much about trauma and working through your story is you get a little bit in and you're like, okay, I'm done. That's it! I'm good. I don't need to do this anymore. But the truth is, when you see something as the world calls it now, "triggers you," and you're like what am I so out of control of right now? It's great to ask yourself the question, God, where did this first happen in my life? Where did this emotion enter? And before you know it, you'll have a memory of something and you'll see that my pain in the present is very connected to something that was left unhealed in the past.

**TAMMY:** That's a great powerful statement right there because I think about my own life. So let me put myself in this story here because sometimes I react to certain things or I do certain things I certain way, and I think, where did that anger start? Did it start when my husband died? Did it start before that? Has it gotten better? Has it gotten worse? So I'm kind of processing for the person that might think, I don't know that I have trauma but I do respond in certain ways in my life in certain situations. So I start to think is there a little bit of trauma in all of our lives where we would all do ourselves a service if we dug into a curriculum like this that we might discover some things and begin to change?

**KERRIE:** Right. Well, I think just like the word *freedom*, we have overused "trauma" so much that we forget what is actually meant. So I think there is big T trauma and there is little t trauma. So big T trauma is like the death of someone; like what happened with me. You experienced that. Sexual abuse is a big T trauma because you were a child. Little t trauma is like, maybe you had like me, you've had a couple of divorces. Maybe you have an anger issue. Maybe it was caused because you used to experience physical abuse.

I think people think that they have no trauma because they're defining it as something catastrophic. But in reality, we've all gone through things. If you've had a relationship on this planet, you've experienced one of those traumas.

**TAMMY:** Ding-ding-ding-ding!

**KERRIE:** Yes!

**RANDY:** We have a picture of this in the Old Testament where the Israelites were set free from slavery, then they were in the desert and they wanted to go back because they thought, oh, it wasn't too bad. It was a little trauma, I can live there. But they had to keep walking through what felt like a barren place. A place of day-by-day dependency on God in order to get to what God promised for them. What we call the Promised Land.

Here's my question for you. For someone who is listening and they're going, hmm, I've got some little T, big T, I've got some trauma. What would you tell them is on the other side of that hard walk through the desert? What is that Promised Land? What does God have in store for them?

**KERRIE:** Well, that one might make me tear up. That Promised Land for me, I love that part of the Bible because I feel like that's who I was. The height of my life of trauma was when I was being sexually abused. I didn't know what that love was. I knew it was not what it should be but I didn't know it was wrong. And then by the time I was being physically abused, it was the same thing. I knew that being hit by someone was not how it should be but I didn't know how to stop it because I thought it was all that I was worth. Like that's all I could rise to.

Again, I say it all the time, we don't rise to the things we think are possible, we fall to the story we think we were worth. So I would tell anybody that if they have a heartbeat and they want to get to know themselves better, take a journey, that's why I wrote a curriculum. You can do that in the privacy of your own home. You can fill out the answers in there and you will have a self-discovering moment and that will be your Promised Land. Because let me tell you, even the Kerrie I was five years ago is in definite contrast to who I am today because I do not hate who I came from, I don't hate—

I hate the sin that happened to me but I don't hate that little girl who let it happen. I don't hate that 11-year-old who was neglected. I don't hate the girl who let herself be hit.

Now I know those are all things that I can use in my story to help others. It is the first time in my life at my age that I actually say, oh, I'm no longer ashamed of my story. Let me tell you who I've been.

**RANDY:** You have purpose. You have more peace?

**KERRIE:** Yes.

**RANDY:** Do you know what real love is?

**KERRIE:** Amen! I do! I do!

**RANDY:** All right, some of you watching, you want to be there and you need to take that first step. Pick up the phone. We have people waiting right now to talk to you, to pray with you. They will start you on your journey in a sense, or at least stand by you on that journey. It is a work between you and God.

But if you'll pick up the phone and call, somebody will listen, and they will pray with you. It's hard. Sometimes the first steps can be the hardest, but it is worth it.

**TAMMY:** Oh it is totally worth it. When you see Kerrie's life, you see the freedom.

**RANDY:** The smile! [Laughing]

**TAMMY:** Yes, everything, the transformation in your life. Sometimes we think, God cannot turn this around in my life and we give up and we don't fight and we don't keep going. But you are such an inspiration and example of what God can do with one life. But then with that one life what you're doing with thousands of lives.



What an incredible book that you've written. I'm going to—I'm keeping this copy. I think I love what you said, self-discovery! I think that not even knowing if I could find myself in these pages— [ crying ]

I think that as a follower of Christ, as someone chasing after the things of God, we should always want to be in a place of self-discovery. And if there has been hurt or trauma in our lives, big T, little t, I think we should want to chase after that to find absolute freedom in every area of our lives. The story is beautiful. Your life story is beautiful and the enemy wants to lie to you. He wants to tell you that you're not worth it; your story is not worth it. You can never be used. There is so much shame on your life. You can never be used and that is a lie. Jesus is standing before you today saying, I have so much more for you. Jump in, take action, move! That's my heart and my prayer for you today just as Kerrie has done, as she came to the Father and just growing in her faith and just wanting to be used. God is using every piece of her life. God wants to use every piece of your life today. I'm so glad you're watching and I pray this is a turnaround for you—a spark. This book I believe will help you if you need help and you need to take that first step, as Randy said, and you don't even know how to take it. This book may be the thing that helps you move in that direction to find total freedom in your life.

**RANDY:** Yeah. You can get it at Kerrie's website, [unlockedministries.com](http://unlockedministries.com). So go there if you need to go there and she will send it to you. Listen, right now we have an opportunity to go beyond ourselves. This is much of the purpose of *LIFE Outreach International* but I think it is the purpose of every one of us. That is to reach out and show true love to someone in need. There are people in desperate need. And also, some people just need a blessing. You can be that blessing and you can do it now. Watch this and then take a moment and say, Lord, what would you have me do? Because I think it is a beautiful work, a beautiful expression and love of God and we want everyone to be a part of it. Watch this.

### **On the mission field**

**ANNOUNCER:** This season *LIFE Outreach* wants to continue spreading joy and smiles around the world. We do this in very special ways. We provide shoes for children's feet and corrective surgery for those who suffer from a cleft palate or cleft lip condition. Not only is receiving shoes fun for the children but it is a blessing for the mission team.

**TAMMY:** We have had an incredible year at *LIFE Outreach*. We have done Mission Feeding, we have drilled water wells, and today, we're putting shoes on little children's feet. I'm so excited about it! John?

**JOHN:** I'm so excited, Tammy. It's been a special day. What is wonderful is for those children that have a little bit of trouble with their smile, we have a very special gift too.

**TAMMY:** Yes, we do!

**ANNOUNCER:** Did you ever think a trip to a hospital would bring a smile to a child's face? It has for these children because each of them has received corrective surgery for various debilitating neurological conditions. Daniel will now live a life free from spina bifida. As for Shalom, her life has been saved from an oftentimes deadly condition called hydrocephalus commonly known as water on the brain.

As this Christmas season approaches, we want to continue to bless children around the world by providing them with a new pair of shoes and corrective surgeries that give them a chance for healthy and fulfilling lives.

**End of video**

### **In the studio**

**TAMMY:** This is truly my favorite time of the year to be able to bring joy to these children. Every time I go on one of these trips like I was just in Central America, when I

get to hang out with these children and they're sitting all around me. We're trying to find the right shoe that fits just perfectly. There is so much joy, Randy, when you put it on their little feet and they go running off. Sometimes you don't realize that without shoes, what danger lurks around these children every minute of the day because they're out playing in the worst conditions, sometimes, that I've ever seen. And I've seen some pretty severe injuries. So the simplicity of giving a new pair of shoes to these children seems simple but it is so exciting and fun!

**RANDY:** It is. And that's why people, our viewers, love doing this. You're right! There is a health benefit to having your feet protected. So yes, you are giving them a gift but you're also giving them a gift of better health. That's why we like to talk about the shoes and the smiles. You've seen the before and after photos of these children with cleft palate surgeries.

**TAMMY:** Randy, sometimes it is hard to see. I know sometimes people watch and they think, oh I can't watch it. But can you imagine being the little child having to live with that every day?

**RANDY:** Well, it affects everything. It affects breathing. It affects eating. And of course, they literally can't smile. But when you reach out and you give a gift of love, you enable that child to smile. And some of the images of these children smiling, it is just—it is so heartwarming. I want them to experience it even more.

And then this year, with the surgical center, the new wing in Uganda, where some of the worst cases from around the region come. We're asking those of you who can give an extra gift of \$1,000 or more to contribute to that new surgical center, saving lives, literally saving lives at no cost to the families who need it desperately.

What a blessing you can be. So listen. Maybe it is the shoes you want to focus on. Maybe it is the smiles. Whatever you can do, let me give you a quick breakdown. A gift of \$36 will provide shoes for ten children. A gift of \$72 today will provide shoes for 20 children.

A gift of \$180 will provide those shoes for 50 children. And of course, \$500, is the average cost of a corrective surgery. \$1,000, many of you can give more than that this Christmas for the surgical center.

Whatever you can do, we pray that you will be a blessing. As God gave to us this Christmas, we want to give to others in Christ's name this Christmas. So please go to the phone, go online, and make the best gift you can.

### **Begin video**

**ANNOUNCER:** For almost two decades *LIFE's Christmas Shoes and Smiles* has continued to provide shoes for impoverished children throughout the world, as well as corrective surgeries for children with cleft palate disorders. By responding today, you can help provide new shoes for 150,000 children in time for the holidays, and for some children a beautiful new smile. Your gift of \$36 will help provide shoes for ten children. \$72 will help provide shoes for 20. \$180 will help provide shoes for 50. And a gift of \$500 will help provide a corrective smile surgery.

This year we have an incredible opportunity to help construct a new surgical center that will provide lifesaving surgeries to children suffering serious neurological conditions. This \$1.2 million project is up and above *LIFE's* normal budget but because of one generous friend for *LIFE*, only \$500,000 is needed.

As a thank you for your gift of support to this life-saving outreach, be sure to request the blue crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request this keepsake boxed set featuring four crystal shoe ornaments.

Finally, please consider an extra gift of \$1,000 or more to help construct *LIFE's* new surgical center. And with this gift, you may request this beautiful bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water."

Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** Please do go online, go to the phone. Make the best gift you can. It will make this Christmas so special and far beyond for so many. And if you need to start that journey of healing, facing that trauma, and you want Kerrie's help, go to her website, [UnlockedMinistries.com](http://UnlockedMinistries.com). You can get unlocked now and her other resources. This has just been such a blessing, Tammy.

**TAMMY:** So good. I've loved meeting you. I loved our time with you.

**KERRIE:** You're my new best friend. Randy, you can be too!

**RANDY:** That's okay. That's good. You girls do your thing.

**TAMMY:** Meanwhile, I'm so glad you're here. And I'm so glad you were here. We'll get to see you next time on *Life Today*.