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**Week 40: Mission: Rescue *LIFE***

**Randy Robison and Tammy Trent**

**Tara-Leigh Cobble #1**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. Tammy Trent, good to see you again.

**TAMMY:** Thank you. I'm glad to be back.

**RANDY:** It is always good to have you. Many of you know about The Bible Recap, the podcast, and the Bible study series. But if you don't, just go ahead and write it down: Bible Recap. It will walk you through the Word of God. And the powerhouse behind that is Tara-Leigh Cobble. She is here today. We're going to find out why she loves God's Word and why she can help you do it.

I know you've listened to some of what Tara's done, read through some of—we've got Knowing Jesus as King, the latest one out. And these are coming out fast and furious.

**TAMMY:** Yes, I loved it. Can I just tell you, I loved it! So I'd heard about Tara-Leigh from a few of my friends. So I knew of her, I knew about The Bible Recap. And then when we got this book sent to me, I got super excited. I dove in and I know it is a study where it is one day here but I was like one day, two day, three day. I could not put it down. It's so good. It is like a study I had never experienced before. So there is something very special about Tara-Leigh and I'm excited that she's here.

**RANDY:** And she was a fan of yours, I heard.

**TAMMY:** I heard but we won't talk about that. [Laughing]

**RANDY:** Tara-Leigh, welcome to *LIFE Today*. Great to have you.

**TARA-LEIGH:** I'm so happy to be with you guys. Starstruck! [Laughing]

**TAMMY:** So many years ago.

**RANDY:** I grew up listening to her music, I like to say. She is just marginally, slightly—anyway! We're here to talk about The Bible Recap. My first question for you is where did this all come from? Because you're talking about going through the whole Bible. That's no easy task. Where did that start for you?

**TARA-LEIGH:** First of all, I'll say I became a Christian around the age of four. I grew up in a home that loved the Word of God. My family owns a Christian bookstore so I was working in the aisles of those Christian books at the age of six and up. So I was surrounded by the Word of God. I had probably pieced together a lot of scripture over time. But every single time I started out trying to read through the Bible—my church would always do the read-through-the-Bible-in-a-year thing and I would fall off in mid-February. I started jokingly referring to myself as a "Genesis scholar" because I had read Genesis like 100 times but nothing else.

A pastor friend challenged me to read the whole Bible in chronological order so I could understand the storyline and offered to answer my questions along the way. Because what I realized was every time I was reading, the reason I was falling off was not because I didn't want to, or I didn't have time. It was because I was only accumulating confusion. I was not accumulating understanding. I was just finding myself more and more disillusioned and I started to feel like a bad Christian. It was like I don't know what to do with this. I know this is true and I know I'm supposed to love it and build my life around

it but I don't want to read it. What a conundrum! Right? And then when you don't want to read it and don't read it, sometimes you think you know what it says but you don't.

So this pastor friend answered my questions along the way, that was how I finished the first time. After I had done that about ten times, I had read through the whole Bible ten times, I wanted to help other people to do the same thing because I knew there are churches full of Christians like me who keep trying and keep failing, and they need somebody to hold their hand who has done it many times like my pastor had done for me.

And so by that point, I felt like, okay, I've done this ten times now and I can maybe equip some other people, answer their questions along the way. Because I think that's the key. Is every day, when you read, you can come to The Bible Recap. And it is a podcast, it is a YouTube, it is a book, so whatever way you want to engage with The Bible Recap you can. And I sort of piece together the storyline; I explain some of the questions that I assume the listener or reader might have. And I also try to point to the character of God in every day's reading. Point to what we learn about God from the text that day.

So that's the origin story of how it all came together. I've been blown away by how God has used it.

**TAMMY:** I can relate to everything you just said. Like that same girl too even when I've gotten into word, I think many of us have felt confused at times so we give up. We put it on a shelf. Or I go to the books that I do understand. So I camp there my whole life—yes! And I just stay there, Tara-Leigh. And I know that I know that I know that I've got to know the word better than I do.

I wonder how you gain that spark and that love for the Word of God? I don't think it started there for you. It seems like as I'm learning more and more about you, I read someplace, and I love this, how you said the first time you read through the whole Bible that you didn't like God. Like what was it that made you feel like that? What triggered that? Did you ever figure that out or did you just stay with it? Or were you like I'm done!

**TARA-LEIGH:** Yeah, wow! The first time I finished you would think that I would feel this delight. I've done it! I've finished reading the Bible. But I didn't. I felt heartbroken and devastated because I know that the Bible is true, and I didn't like God when I finished.

My pastor who had walked me through that year, who had answered my questions all along the way said, "Okay, Tara-Leigh. Because I've walked you through this, I've seen the lens that you're reading scripture through. I know what you're looking for, I know what kind of questions you're asking, I know what kind of things you're getting caught up on. So my new challenge for you is to read it again and stop looking for yourself. Start looking for God. What does he love? What does he hate? What motivates him to do what he does?"

I didn't want to do it again because I'm like, what if I don't like him even more? And also, it already kind of felt like my world had come unhinged. I just told you I've been a Christian since I was four. My family is steeped in the Word of God. I was in full-time ministry and my world is shaken by the fact that I've read the Bible and I don't like him. So I was desperate. So I was willing to try anything.

So I was like okay, try reading it again. And I read it again with this new lens to look for God, not to look for me. Because my pastor said, this is not about you. This is for you, but it is not about you, it is about God. And so I'm reading it to try to find God. And I was—I think I was in the major prophets and I just fell in love with him. It's not the place you expect that to happen, in the Old Testament. It just changed everything to see the heart of God come alive in these pages.

For me, reading it chronologically and looking for God was transformative for me in helping me fall in love not only with the Word of God but the person of God.

**TAMMY:** You still feel like, I know you've read through it 16 times. Do you feel like

you're still discovering? Still falling more in love with him each time you read this?

**TARA-LEIGH:** Oh, so much! Which is so great because I think I had viewed the Bible, reading through the Bible as this bucket list item. I want to do that someday. What I realized is this is not a bucket list item. This is not a box to check. This is air to breathe. I want to be reading the word God. He calls it "daily bread." I want to be reading it every day for the rest of my life. And I don't know about you, but I don't like to be bored. So if I'm going to be reading something every day, I love that the Word of God is living and active. So that means no matter what changes in life I go through or how I adapt or grow, it shows up to meet me where I am to reveal something new about who God is. The Word of God does not change but he progressively reveals more about himself to me through the same passages.

For example, Psalm 23 is the most well-worn passage in my Bible. It's probably the second section of scripture I learned. I maybe learned it when I was five or six years old. I know it well. Probably six years ago, I discovered something in Psalm 23 that I had never seen before and I could not—I still can't stop talking about it. It is one of those things that just lights me up that there is still so much to learn about who God is. He is unsearchable which means, not that you can't search for him and find him, but you can never plumb the depths of him. There are still more riches to uncover. So I love it.

**RANDY:** There is another Psalm that I've heard you talk about that I quote all the time. That's this idea that God's Word is a lamp unto my feet. Because we live in the age of electricity but I've been in places where there was no electricity. There was an outhouse and it was a ways away. I know what it is like to have a dim light where you can only see a step or two in front of you but if you follow that light you'll get where you want to go. There is more to that though that I love that you unpack. Explain that one to people.

**TARA-LEIGH:** That's so good. I was studying that passage for The Bible Recap. I love finding those little nuggets like that that will engage the reader to show them how rich the text is. So I had always heard "Your word is a lamp unto my feet." That is a reference to

the foot lamp that people would carry, just like you're talking about, that illuminates just the next step.

But it goes on to say, and a light unto my path. And the word for light is a totally different kind of word. It is the fires of a thousand suns, blazing, all-encompassing light. It throws light on everything kind of light. So it is like when the lights come on at the football stadium. And just like poof! Everything is lit up. So the idea is that it is enough to meet you where you are in your every step and show you the exact place your foot needs to fall. And it is a universal truth, all-encompassing, everything is covered by the truth of the Word of God.

**RANDY:** I can't tell you how much I love that. Because I'm a little bit of a word nerd too.

**TARA-LEIGH:** Word nerd.

**RANDY:** Right. When I heard you say there are two separate words in the Hebrew. I'm like oh wait! But we live in a world of such confusion and darkness. When you say God's Word, the clarity, boom, some things. But at the same time, in my day-to-day walk, figuratively, I need that. I don't know what my next step is. And it is both. I love that.

So here's a question for a lot of people because you talk about being the Genesis girl and I get that because man, by the time you get through a lot of these begats you be tired. You know? [Laughing] What do you say to someone who is like, oh! I've always wanted to bucket list that. Which is noble; I get that. Where do they start?

**TARA-LEIGH:** I think some great places to start are either at the beginning of the Old Testament or the beginning of the New Testament. My reason for that is the chronology of the story, the order the story happens in is so important. So The Bible Recap reading plan we have a whole year reading plan, 365 days. It might take you more than a year. We also have a New Testament reading plan which is about three months long.

As a community, we start the Old Testament on January 1st, to read through the whole Bible. And as a community, we start the New Testament on October 1st to finish by New Year's Day. And the reality is anybody can start at any time. I started my first trip through the Bible in August. So I always say the best day to start is today. Whatever day it is, the best day to start is today. And I think that reading through chronologically is going to be helpful. No matter.

So if you start in the New Testament, the reality is you're probably going to get sucked in and you're going to want to continue through with the Old Testament when we start on January 1st. So anybody who is watching this, I would love to invite them to read it through with The Bible Recap. But you can start any day that you want. You don't have to start October 1st or January 1st.

**RANDY:** Having done this with a small group and we started in Genesis, I can't tell you how many times I had to people, keep going because it is—there is a story arc in there. The story is Christ and if you just start and you stop, you're not going to get a complete picture, I think if you—right?

**TARA-LEIGH:** Absolutely! I never go to a movie and show up halfway through, drop down for five minutes, and leave and expect to understand the plot. And I certainly don't expect to fall in love with the lead character. We honor movies and books in that way that is not the Bible and so I would think it would be wise to understand that our hearts are kind of built toward story. So to read the story of God as it happens to understand that overarching meta-narrative because if you just drop down, if you just flip your Bible open and go, here's what I'm going to read today, you don't understand the context of that and it is really easy to misunderstand the heart of the Father when you don't understand context.

**TAMMY:** Absolutely! So tell me, if there is somebody watching today who's been a Christ follower their whole life and has truly struggled with one, just understanding. Finding understanding, knowledge, clarity, all the things. There are so many obstacles in

our life that want to keep us from truth, that want to keep us from the Word of God. And so we've maybe not been in the word like we should be. We don't find it appealing, maybe we're bored. What would you say to somebody that's just struggling with that today?

**TARA-LEIGH:** I love this question and I know that there are tons of people watching and listening out there right now who feel this way. I believe God brought you to this segment today because he wants to engage your heart in this way. It is no mistake that you're watching this. It is no mistake that Tammy just asked that question that resonated so deeply with you. This is possible for you. This is God's invitation to you.

He has not left you to wander alone and try to figure out for yourself. There are tools that can help you with this. There are people who can help you with this. He wants to know you, and he wants to be known by you. He has an intimate relationship with you prepared. Jesus has made a way for that to happen. The Holy Spirit has made a way for that to happen. And I love that the father's heart is chasing you down right now.

I think some great things to remember as you endeavor to do this is A, it is good to not do it alone. So I would love to hold your hand through this process. I would love to be somebody who helps guide you through that and answer your questions along the way and helps train you how to look for the person of God in scripture. And other people in your community; like don't do it alone. Also, don't hold yourself to a standard of perfection. You're not going to do this perfectly. You're going to wake up one day and see your Bible across the room and dread reading it. That's going to happen. That's natural. We are at war with the flesh that we live in sometimes.

And so I think as you continue to make this a routine, there are going to be days when you fail. That's okay, get back in the next day. Every day that you're in God's Word you're right on time. So don't let your perfectionism get in the way of intimacy.

I would say if you're not doing it alone and you're not holding yourself to a standard of



perfectionism and you're looking for God, you're going to find joy that you had no idea existed in your intimacy with him. Maybe you're a person who loves worship songs or Christian movies or things like that. You love the Instagram accounts that are devotionals and things like that. Those little bits of intimacy that you feel delight in those spaces are going to pale in comparison to the way you delight in God once you get to know him firsthand, instead of just knowing him secondhand through other people's relationships with him. When you get that intimacy with him, the way that he is pursuing you, your heart is going to come alive!

**RANDY:** I love that you're helping people with that. The storyline is one of God reaching into a broken world, rescuing humanity, you and me, and then restoring us to wholeness. When you see that overarching story in scripture, you begin to have that passion and that love for the word that Tara-Leigh has. There is a picture of that in what we do and what you join us in doing in this outreach called Rescue LIFE where we reach, rescue, and restore people who have been physically abused and trafficked. You can—I think, sort of in a way reflect God's heart when you join with us in this campaign. Watch this and you'll understand how.

### **On the mission field**

**ANNOUNCER:** There is a war raging. It is unlike any other. This war is a spiritual battle and it is being waged right in front of our very eyes. Its toll on human lives is in the millions. The majority of its victims are women and young girls. It is known as human sex trafficking.

**DAVID:** These are children, these are kids that have been forced to go out and beg on the streets. These are kids who are forced to work all sorts of hours of the night and day. These are kids that are being forced to have sex with people. They're being abused and they're being photographed and doing things that no child should ever have to do.

**ANNOUNCER:** The physical and emotional toll that sex trafficking takes on a child is

beyond comprehension for most people.

**DAVID:** My mind goes to a child who is 16 years old, trafficked for years, and she was rescued. Discovered on the back of her neck, she was branded with a bar code indicating that she was a piece of property. Her story is not uncommon. Kids are often branded, they're beaten, they're abused, they're threatened. Sadly, some of these are drug addicted and some are even killed.

**ANNOUNCER:** *LIFE Outreach* has joined in the fight with our mission partners to free as many captives as possible. There is a plan in place to overcome this evil.

**CLAYTON:** We do three things. We rescue. We have a SWAT team that is partnered with the government and we are seeing lives rescued. We do the second thing which is restore. We have homes where these rescue girls go so that they can receive comprehensive care so that they can have a sustainable future. And the third thing we do is that we go upstream to the community, source communities are trafficking where these girls are coming from. We work in schools and churches and outreach programs to at-risk youth believing that heart transformation is the only long-term solution.

**DAVID:** Every single child matters to God. So then they have to matter to us. If we're going to go out there and help these children, it's going to take the efforts of all of us. Everyone has to get involved and we all have to do our bit to fight for the rights of these children.

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**TAMMY:** Every single child matters to God and so they have to matter to us. I don't know about you but I find it upsetting to watch most of that. We get to the end, it is the most joyous moment in my heart, especially when I see the girl being baptized. I think in that moment she has been given a chance at a new life, something brand-new that nobody

could ever take away from her.

But so much has been taken from those children at the earliest of ages. I can't even—I can't even imagine. Probably like me when you're watching that it is just how can this be? How can we live in a world that has become this? These children are being beaten, abused—sexually abused, emotionally abused, physically abused, mentally abused. So much trauma in their life. How could they ever come back from that is their hope. The beautiful thing is, today I can tell you beyond a shadow of a doubt there is hope.

We have partners on the ground that are being educated to know how to stop this. We have missionaries on the ground that are reaching these girls. We have homes that we've built where we're restoring their lives. There is hope and we are making an impact one child at a time.

But it starts with one. You've got to think about that one right now. Can we get to them? Can we get to them today? And I believe, Randy, that we can. We have a way. We have everything in place. We just need a little extra help right now.

**RANDY:** In fact, we've had someone already come alongside us, Tammy, and say, I want to make a big impact. When we look at the overall Rescue LIFE outreach, the overall program, and the financial commitment that it takes to make it possible to reach or rescue or restore a child, it breaks down to an average of \$128 per child. Now it is a little odd to put a price tag on it. I'm just trying to give you an idea of the financial reality behind all the outreach to fund the people that are in place, to fund all the programs for education, to sometimes provide a safe place for people, the training, the skills—all of the program.

But someone has come and said, we want to give a huge gift right now. We want to match all the gifts that the viewers of *Life Today*, just like you, make toward this outreach. So basically, the \$128 that it normally breaks down to—to reach, rescue, or restore one child—that will reach, rescue, or restore two children today. That's good

news.

Some of you, I don't know what God has enabled you to do but he has enabled you to do something. So I simply want to say, will you just say a quick prayer and say, Lord, what will you have me do? Hear his voice and obey. That's all because we are his hands, we are his feet. We are his love in action. When I say we I mean you.

And we can be that love and light of God in a dark place today, and we can save a life. Go online, go to the phone, and make the best gift you can.

### **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 do hope you'll call or go online and make the best gift you can. Look, if you want to call and talk to somebody and have somebody pray with you, maybe you want to start your own Bible journey, feel free to call that phone number. We have people standing by who want to pray with you and listen to you.

If you want to start your own Bible journey, Tara-Leigh Cobble has everything for you. I've got the big blue *Bible Recap* book here. Tammy, you've got—

**TAMMY:** I've got the study! I love this! There is a whole series she has. So I mean there are no excuses. There are so many ways to get into God's Word and get it in your heart. Just as I see all over Tara-Leigh, there is so much joy—there is so much joy! And there is so much joy that God wants you to have in an encounter and a fulfilled abundant life. Start today. Don't wait another day. Tara-Leigh, you are a gift to everybody.

**RANDY:** The website. I want people to see the website.

**TARA-LEIGH:** TaraLeighCobble.com. Or TheBibleRecap.com.

**RANDY:** Either website. And what will they get there?

**TARA-LEIGH:** We want to help people read, understand, and love God's Word. So

whether that's reading through the Bible with The Bible Recap or studying through the Bible with our individual study series, both of those are great ways to help you engage your heart with the Word of God.

**RANDY:** I love it! I love it! Thank you so much. And thank you guys for watching. You can be blessed by God's word. Start today! And come back next time on *Life Today*.