

11/12/24

Week 46: Fall Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Jeremy and Suzanne Stalnecker #2

Studio discussion:

JAMES: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. Have you ever heard of an organization, an outreach called Mighty Oaks? Well, I'm going to tell you what, Mighty Oaks casts a great shadow, a great shade. It could be an incredible blessing. The acres that the Oaks produce think an awful lot of wildlife.

Well, we've got somebody here right now that heads up and works with an organization called Mighty Oaks. It puts God's arms and our arms and our gratitude in play, in force, to let everyone who is a first responder, fire department, police, sheriffs, whatever, and all armed service members, it puts our arms of love and appreciation around them. It does more than that, it says we want to help you win the battle you're fighting now because you fought the battle and paid a great price to save freedom and give us a secure future for our families.

Well, Mighty Oaks is helping those who without the help of Mighty Oaks said they had tried so many things that if this doesn't work we end our lives. Well, it works. One of the great individual couples that God blessed by Mighty Oaks and now is leading in the Mighty Oaks impact is Jeremy Stalnecker and his wife Suzanne.

We welcome you back. It was great to have you yesterday. I'm praying that many people who watch are already saying I'm going to sponsor one of those men to go through the program that will save their lives, no doubt about it. Jeremy, Suzanne, however, y'all want to take it, let's just take off on sharing what God's love through people like our viewers does for people who are desperate and have often given up hope, and this becomes last hope, and yet it is a transforming, life-giving effect. Tell us how they can be involved.

JEREMY: We're so thankful for the opportunity to talk about this. It's not just life-changing, it is eternity-altering for these men and women who have served us. Donations and support make it possible for those like we're about to see to find that identity, purpose, hope, healing, and restoration. We talk about this a lot. We could tell a lot of stories but we have the privilege of hearing from somebody who has been to our program and is now very involved in our program, Korey Scott.

Korey served as a United States Marine and then became a police officer, which is not uncommon. And in the process, lost himself, lost his marriage, and came to that point of hopelessness and said, "I don't know where to go from here." That's the story we get to hear today.

JAMES: So we're going to hear from him. What is his name?

JEREMY: Korey Scott.

JAMES: All right, listen to Korey. I think you're going to be blessed. Here's the thing. Somebody like you can make something like this happen. I pray you will. If you could do it for one person yourself, but if all of us joined together, we could do it for quite a few. Listen to him.

Video begins:

KOREY: I grew up in Wyoming. My grandpa was in World War II. He's always been a hero of mine. I joined the Marine Corps because I thought it was the hardest thing. My parents had to sign for me. I was in the delayed entry program. They signed for me when I was 17. After graduation, I left and went to boot camp.

I recently married my high school sweetheart right after Desert Storm. Got back home from that, and we got married. Felt like I'd started a new path in life and the Marine Corps was slowing down on bodies so I got out. I talked to my wife, I've always wanted to be a police officer. Three years on patrol and immediately went into --

We didn't talk about PTSD. They didn't talk about PTSD when my grandpa went through World War II. Nothing can prepare you for shift after shift after shift of stuff. The last thing I did in uniform was put handcuffs on this dead guy and climb out of the car. My buddy was fine. The guys in the unit were all fine.

But then we'd just get together later and drink. I was in the department for just over three years, right around the three-year mark and I had an affair. I'm divorced; in an apartment now by myself. I let down, obviously, my wife, my daughters, my family and I didn't care. I was just so selfish.

Ended up reconnecting with a girl I knew in high school who was divorced. We get together. She starts talking about Jesus. Here's a woman who wants something that I can't offer. I'm retired. I don't have any responsibilities and I'm just in a dark place.

I remember having suicidal ideation off and on throughout the years. But at this point in my life, it was like the loudest it's ever been. Somehow, I got a relationship again with my daughters; I don't know how. Things are getting better. Everything is getting better and everything inside me is getting worse.

I came back home and I remember I just sat on my bed and I cried. My wife just like held me. And I knew I needed help. The guy that I used to train jiu-jitsu with before the police academy, I go in there and I start talking to Pete about this guy. He started talking about this Mighty Oaks program. And there is something different in Pete. And when I saw Mike, there was something different in Mike. I knew both of these guys. I remember thinking if that would work for those two guys, maybe it would work for me.

Ended up going. I didn't want to go. I was scared because if this didn't work for me, I didn't know what was going to work for me. I felt like I was at the end of my rope. I come here. I go into my room; there are assigned rooms. There is a note. I open up this card with my name on it. There is a card inside and people tell me that they prayed for me. Like --

And as this week starts rolling and we're sitting in these classes, these guys are saying things that I don't want to hear. And they're not gentle. One of the questions they ask is, "Do you want to get well?" Pretty basic, right? I mean, that's a pretty basic question. I never really thought about it. I went through that week, finished that week up and I knew there was hard work moving forward. These guys had prepared me for that and had given me a plan on what to do moving forward.

It's different when you have that change and you see that you grieve God, like the creator of heaven and earth. But man, when you've got a wife that's been praying for you and wants the best for you and you come home and you know that that's what you want for her as well, then everything changes. That's been so good. It's been good.

In the studio:

JAMES: What do you think about now when you watch Korey?

JEREMY: It makes me very emotional. I know Korey really well. We've become good friends since he came through the program. It's been a number of years. You can see he is wearing a polo with our logo on it. He works with our folks.

That's a short part of his much larger story. There would be no Korey today were it not for those guys who came into his life and said, look, we've got a place for you to go. We've got a place where there is hope. We've got a place where there is an opportunity for you to understand what it is you've been missing all this time. And Korey is very involved in his church and very close to his pastor who I've gotten to know very well. What do you say to that? Only God can do that.

BETTY: That's true!

JAMES: Betty, we think of the military as we think about the men. You whispered to me, even when he started talking to say, "Remember it's --

BETTY: Men and women.

JAMES: And it is so very important. Suzanne, you know how important that is. Women are as devastated. I hate to see a woman hurt. I didn't have a good home. I didn't know my mother very well until you took me from the home she put me in to be adopted; and took me into total poverty for ten years in misery. But I saw how bad she'd been hurt and I never wanted anybody to hurt a girl or a woman -- still don't.

It's exciting that this is for women and it works. They need it too because they carry such a heavy load. And sometimes, probably, maybe feeling even more lonely than men, do you think?

SUZANNE: I think there is a likelihood of that, for sure. Yes. I feel like one of the most, probably one of the saddest things I have done, and one of the most fulfilling things at the same time has been to serve the women that come to our program with Mighty Oaks. Just to hear what you're saying, women who have been so hurt and so broken in their life. But then so fulfilling because at the same time, we get to give them the message of hope and the message of healing that we're able to provide to them that maybe they've never even heard before.

So I think you're right. It could be a lot of times, the most lonely place to be as a woman because you feel so helpless, and maybe you don't know how to help, what to do, where to turn. And so for us to be able to provide that to them.

We're about to hear a testimony from one of the ladies that has been through our program, Tara. She is now serving on our women's program team. So she is a team leader. She is one of the ladies that will teach a couple of classes but then she also takes a smaller group throughout the process that she went through when she came as a student.

So we're going to hear her testimony. I think there is a lot of hope in hearing stories like this. Tara's husband was a police officer for a number of years, now working in federal law enforcement. So just to hear their story, there is a lot of hurt in it but also a lot of healing, and a lot of hope as well.

JAMES: I just want to say to both of you, you're a real blessing. You put God's arms, and that's really what you're doing -- you're putting God's arms around people. You just don't have any idea how much God would like to hold you in his arms. You can live in the shelter of the almighty. You can walk and live in his shadow. He loves you so much.

Let me just say to all the ladies, you are the greatest force for positive influence on the planet. No one that can demonstrate the unselfish love of a mother, the focus of a mother, the sacrificial living, giving of a mother. I want you to know we love you and we're sorry for any of you, maybe you've never been a mother. That's a heavy place. But whatever load you carry, we want you to know we love you and care about you.

I want us to listen to Tara Cougall. We're going to listen to her testimony because God used Mighty Oaks to give her hope that likely she thought was none.

Testimony Video:

>> My name is Tara Cougall. My husband was a law enforcement officer in North Carolina. I was raised in an abusive household, even within the church, and so was my husband. We got married but we didn't realize that each of us was carrying a lot of baggage into the marriage.

I feel like we were trying to hold our marriage together, our bleeding marriage together with band-aids. Like it was not working. Within us, we were broken, and at home we were broken. We put ourselves on this island and we isolated ourselves. When we had the help around us but we were afraid would we get judged? We were afraid of what people would think about us. And so we thought that with enough time we'll just eventually get over these issues that we're dealing with.

My husband's job was going really well for him. I didn't realize that things started happening on his job. He had certain calls that he went to that I was never aware of. He began to struggle but he couldn't say anything to anybody around him because he thought that was weakness.

Well, we began to struggle within our marriage. That led to some really deep betrayals. It led to problems with alcohol, a financial crisis, which ended up leading to a loss of his job. Ended up dealing with adultery with that and trying to heal, and all without trying to talk to anybody. We had nobody. Ultimately, everything that my husband and I were going through led both of us to really deep thoughts of suicide. It got really dark.

We had heard about Mighty Oaks for a really long time. We had just kept putting it off. We realized there was a need now to do something so we were going to risk going to Mighty Oaks, and let's just give this a try. I wasn't the first one. My husband was actually the first one and it is not like him to do anything like this. And so I was kind of shocked he agreed to go. He came back after the program and I remember seeing him as if he was a different person.

I was able to go to the program just a month later. When I went to the program I was really reserved. I was around a bunch of women I wasn't used to. I wasn't used to speaking, talking, or sharing, so I was really reserved. But after a couple of days of realizing that all these people who are involved here, these leaders, they come from a place of brokenness too.

I remember at the end of the program sharing my testimony and instead of being surrounded with judgment, I was surrounded with support. That was the first time I'd ever experienced that in my life. Now we both had a support system behind us. We realized we weren't alone in our struggles.

We decided, my husband and I, when we came back from the program that we were going to start fighting differently. And so instead of fighting with each other, we were going to start fighting for our marriage. I can honestly say if it were not for what God is doing through this program, we would not be married today. And I honestly don't even really know if my husband and I would be here today. Because of this program, our marriage is still together. The biggest blessing that's been in our past few years is we wouldn't have our fourth child who was just born two years ago.

I can't say enough good things about this program and the way it's impacted us, and the lives I'm

able to see changed here. I'm so grateful.

Studio discussion:

JAMES: All you can say is wow!

BETTY: Wow! That's what I say. God loves all of us, no matter where we are. If we're in a pit, if we're in darkness, he reaches down and says, "Grab hold! Grab hold! I'll pull you up. I'll pull you out. I'll surround you with my love and with those who care. I love all of you. Just reach out. Open up your heart and let's do this. You can do this with my love in you and those that are surrounding you to help you."

Thank goodness for Mighty Oaks, they were there when this couple needed them, when the woman needed them, when the man we heard earlier needed them. He made himself vulnerable to God. God says, "Give it up for me and I will take care of it."

JAMES: We heard from Korey and we heard from Tara. I notice it looks like you have the women in one area and the men in another area. And then I can see, it looked like you were wise enough to put these places in pretty places. Now can you name how many areas, how many cities have the location where you can go?

JEREMY: Sure. We have five locations. We have a location in California, two here in Texas, one in Ohio, and one in Virginia. So five separate locations. We actually do our women's and men's programs completely separate so they're not even on the same week. Turns out men and women are a lot more honest when they're alone.

So beautiful environments, and great food. We try to make it as comfortable as possible so that again there are no distractions for God doing what he wants to do in a life.

JAMES: But you actually provide the way for them to get there. You will pay their way to get to wherever the location is that best suits them, correct?

JEREMY: That's right.

JAMES: So when we talk to you about the \$3500 for a person to go through the program, that includes getting them there, taking care of them while they're there. Probably, getting them home. This right now is an answer to our prayer because we help in different ways all the things to thank our military. We just do it. In all the things we're doing, it takes everything we can do.

So we're asking you to help us send 30 through the program; and that's \$105,000 this week. If you could send one through and give \$3500, would you do it? If you could give \$1,000 toward that and pray three others and somebody with \$500 joins us. But if you give \$35, or \$100, whatever it is, would you please help us send 30 men and women through this program?

Tell us some more that you would like our viewers to hear and know about how important this is and how effective it is.

JEREMY: Well, we heard in both of those testimonies and this is true of I would imagine just about everyone who goes through the program that the last thing a person who is at that place in their life wants to do is get help. And so we do everything we can to remove the barriers to getting help. That means paying the cost of the program; and paying for travel to get to the program. Making it a comfortable environment where they can get the help that they need.

We understand that all of that is not really about travel or comfort or good food. It is about life and eternity change. We talk about -- we call it our "Legacy Program" because it is about changing legacies. Not just for the student, the man or woman that's there but for their kids and their families, and for whatever comes next. That's what this is all about. That's what this is about. It is about getting help that is more than just today, it is for eternity.

JAMES: We asked our viewers who helped us drill thousands of water wells to save millions of lives from starvation, tens of thousands freed from sexual trafficking, giving shoes and smiles, that's corrective surgery. We're building an incredible surgical center, It is our viewers and people who watch and are watching us right now. What do you want them to hear about the

importance of their gift? Of course, if they could pay one person's way, it is like you save that person's life. That's what they say. Because they say, if I don't get help here I'm going to take my life. This is my last shot. And put them through the program that will save them. So what do you want them to hear?

JEREMY: This is an opportunity and what we do is an opportunity, there are so many wonderful opportunities, but what we do is an opportunity to serve the men and women who have served us in uniform, whether that's in combat, we talk about the rights that we have and the wonderful country that we're able to enjoy. It is because of men and women who stand up and do that, and then come home and need help. This is an opportunity to help them.

On our law enforcement and first responder side, it is an opportunity to support the men and women who are taking care of us every day. They say things aren't real until they're personal. We talked about supporting law enforcement for a long time. Our son became a police officer a couple of years ago and man, that becomes so personal to you. When you understand they're real people who are struggling and they get up every day and do the work, this is an opportunity for us to support them.

JAMES: And they are freedom's heroes. If you want to know who a hero is, it is the hero that risks their life and limb, and family, because they risk it all for us. They're the heroes. I don't think we can do too much for them. I don't think we can do enough but this is certainly one thing we can do.

Betty, you and I do it on our own faithfully, and we always will because we consider them the greatest heroes.

BETTY: I want to say thank you for serving our country. I feel like the men and women that go over there have an unselfishness in their hearts. Yes, they can get an education while they're in the service but they go to war. They go to war for us. And you come back and you may have helped the war over there but in some ways, you bring the war back home in your heart. That's what you're talking about that they battle so, so much. The enemy will say you're the only one

like that. He will put you alone and by yourself until God sends people to help you to know that you can come out of it and be stronger than ever, and live a life with a family and a heart for God. To me, that's just so exciting what you're doing.

JAMES: Well, I believe that all these people who put God's arms around the most overlooked people, the ones Jesus called "the least of these," right now, you can -- could you put one through? Would you help us put 30 through by giving toward this \$105,000? Would you please get your bank card, go online, or call that number and make the best gift you can? Whatever it is, it is a great gift because it is saying thank you to the true heroes who helped save freedom and give us a future.

Cause Spot:

ANNOUNCER: We live in a country with nearly 23 million veterans. Sadly, many of those who have served come home carrying the invisible scars of war. With 22 veteran suicides each day, and so many of our nation's heroes, including first responders, suffering posttraumatic stress, these men and women often live in despair.

But you can help make a difference today and offer these warriors a bright new future. *LIFE Outreach International* is excited to honor our nation's bravest men and women as we partner to send 30 veterans and first responders through the legacy program offered by Mighty Oaks.

Here these heroes will be equipped with tools to fight through life's challenges and uncover their God-given purpose in life. At a cost of \$3500 per participant, a total of \$105,000 is needed to make this possible. Please give what you can as a way of providing hope and saying thank you to those at the core of the freedoms we enjoy. Call, write, or make your gift online.

Studio good-bye:

JAMES: I'm believing every one of you who can will help. I want to thank you two for putting

God's arms around these wonderful heroes.

JEREMY: Thank you so much for the opportunity. And to those who are watching and listening, thank you for what you do. It is because of you that the men and women we're talking about today do what they do. And this is an opportunity to continue to support them. So thank you very much.

JAMES: We sure do love you. All of my viewers will be praying for you and Mighty Oaks all over the world. I pray it just grows and puts God's arms around more of our true heroes, the armed service members, those who protect us. We sure do love you. Thanks for sharing his love. You're amazing! Thank you!

Endorsement montage:

>> You're not dead until you're no longer breathing, and yet there are a lot of people who are breathing who are living like they're dead.

>> I started listening to them. Everything they said just kept hitting me in the heart over and over and over again. It is like all the things that I didn't know that I needed to hear. I opened my heart to God that week. I've been a different person ever since. I can't even describe how quickly all that emptiness that I had that I couldn't fill with women, with drugs, with liquor, with anything -- [snaps fingers] Boom!

>> I was immediately greeted by a staff of men that knew what I was going through, had been in my shoes.

>> You could imagine a rope with a thousand knots and little by little each knot was being undone.

>> Everything that I was told here just made sense to me. It's given me like a new lease on life.

>> I thank God for saving me.

>> They're exposing the pain for you to understand where it is coming from. And for you to move forward.

>> This is the first week in a long time where I've laughed and I smiled.

>> When I think about my husband, I can't imagine the man that he was before. And now, he is the one that brings the peace in our home. In the past two to three years, we've been through some of the hardest things personally as parents and just a lot of trials that we've ever been through, and I know it would have wrecked our marriage if we didn't have Mighty Oaks.

[Cheers]