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**Week 47: Fall Mission Feeding**

**Randy Robison and Tammy Trent**

**Jeff and Tricia Bradford #1**

**Studio Discussion:**

**RANDY:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Tammy Trent is with me. I'm very excited for you to meet some people that you may be supporting. Jeff and Tricia Bradford are with us today and they're going to tell their personal story. But you need to know that when you support the outreaches of LIFE, you support the work that they do.

Jeff is the president of what is called the Human Coalition. It is one of the largest pro-life organizations in the United States. They're doing wonderful work. I know you see a lot of international things, critical food and water on *Life Today* and that is very important but we do work right here.

So this is going to be a very special program. When I mention the pro-life movement, that is a big thing to Christians. But sometimes, when we stand firm for the truth, we can oftentimes forget that there is a human side to that. You're going to hear a human story today that I think will spark some compassion in you in a way that you may not have experienced before.

Tammy, before we talk to Jeff and Tricia, what's going on with you?

**TAMMY:** Oh, gosh! I think today is a really important conversation, especially for people that might not even know how to help or minister to somebody who feels really, really broken about choices they've made or carried for a long time in their life. Randy, I have some friends in my life who have gone through this kind of trauma, abortion. I think today is going to be good for me to lean in and learn how to listen, learn how to love, and learn how to walk alongside.

Hopefully, for any of you on the other side too that have those same questions, how can we love,

how can we pray, how can we walk alongside people who are really carrying something much more than I have ever carried in my whole life?

**RANDY:** That's good! Jeff and Tricia, welcome to *LIFE Today*.

**JEFF:** Thank you for having us.

**TRICIA:** Thank you.

**RANDY:** Take us back. Take us back to where your story started, even though it is something that you didn't deal with yourselves for a long time, just so people can get a sense of where you've walked.

**JEFF:** Well, we've just celebrated our 31st wedding anniversary this past May so we'll start with that. It's been 31 years. The story of the book and why we wrote the book began in 2010. We were going through a lot. So we found ourselves in Christian counseling. I'll never forget, that first day we closed the door to that office, Tricia began to cry like I'd never seen her before. So as we dug underneath those tears and pain, we realized it was from a decision we made now 32 years ago.

During our wedding engagement, we got pregnant. Went to my father. He was a good man. We would have considered ourselves a Christian family but as we look back on it, it was a very cultural Christian family; that we didn't understand. So when Tricia and I went to him, and Tricia was very close to him, we got terrible advice, ungodly advice. And within a couple of days, we ended up at Planned Parenthood and took the life of our first daughter.

We didn't talk about it until that day when we closed the door to the counseling office. It was, for the first time for me, as a Christian father and husband that I saw the devastation under those tears of Tricia's. Everything began to become clear. God dropped the scales from my eyes of the issue of abortion.

And so that's where we started, that's really what brought us into this movement and into the life movement. Ultimately, God called me into that. As I mentioned, it was a tsunami of things that ended up bringing us to that moment but it was by God's grace that he allowed us to go through it.

**RANDY:** Tricia, I almost don't even know what question to ask, how to ask it. It's real easy for, especially, I think for men than women, to be like we're pro-life. We must stand for life. But how do we love women rightly who have made the decision and not damage them as we stand on truth?

**TRICIA:** I think one of the things we learned is that many women suffer in silence. They don't tell anyone that they've had an abortion for many decades. They don't reach out. They don't share that story. It is so painful they have so tried to bury it. So we have to figure out a way to talk to the leaders of the church on how to engage, how to connect with women, and offer resources that provide healing and forgiveness and wholeness. And ultimately, the truth about abortion.

**RANDY:** What helped you?

**TRICIA:** Good question! That day that we walked into that counseling office the Lord, he orchestrated that whole thing. And so the Lord ultimately wants us to be free, and we can't be free until we understand the truth about abortion. But he got us there. When we discussed that, the counselor asked me like the Lord prepared her heart. She asked me, "Have you had an abortion?" I was just like, "Oh, my goodness. Yes!"

And so we began to break that down and what that looked like. She offered to do a post-abortive Bible study called *Surrendering the Secret*, which was very painful to go through. But sometimes when you have to peel back that scab, it hurts but it is the only way to heal. So that was the beginning of just learning the truth about abortion, bringing it into the light. But yeah.

**JEFF:** One of the things that we've talked about a lot, just being church leaders ourselves, and not only leading from the front but also being in the pews and serving, so many pastors are not

willing to talk about this issue for a myriad of reasons. They think it is political. Or they're going to get hate mail from folks in the congregation who are upset about it. It is very politicized and can be a divisive topic.

One of the things we want to encourage people in, hopefully from this book is that talking about this, winsomely and gracefully, there are people in your pews -- we sat for 17 years thinking it was the unforgivable sin because no one talked about it, including us, including our pastor. So if there is encouragement, there are people sitting in your pews -- over 38 percent of women in the church have had abortions, and men have experienced that as well. It is in our churches, it is just hidden, it's silent. So we in the church must talk about this and bring healing.

**TAMMY:** Absolutely. I think you hit so much right there. There is so much shame and guilt. And it is heavy, especially in the church, especially among believers who feel like I should have known better how to handle this, and I didn't. I don't want anybody to ever know what I'd done. So for years, you carry it. I can only imagine, just as it affected your marriage, it's going to affect every area of your life. It is trauma. Unless you deal with it, it will affect every area of your life.

Why did you feel that it was so important right now to share this story?

**JEFF:** Well, just like you said, for many years we were too deeply ashamed to talk about it. We didn't even talk about it with each other. I talked about it with my best friend from high school on a hiking trip. It was a really hard conversation to tell someone else that you've taken the life of your daughter.

So when I began to work with Human Coalition, the former president encouraged me to talk about it with other men. I didn't want to talk about it with anyone. As I began to share with a few men, they then came up and said, I've never told anyone that I helped with an abortion. The pain that they still kept with that. So it encouraged me to tell the story and then slowly began to share that and began to bring healing. It brings truth and transparency.

So I've spoken about our story across the country at galas and other events. But when our

Director of Communications, Jason Law came to me and said, "Would you be interested in turning your story into a memoir? I think it would be really powerful." I was like, "No. I don't want to do that." I did not want to do it. But I said, "I'll pray about it."

I went home that week and I mentioned it to Tricia. She said, "You know what? I was just Googling. The Lord put on my heart about writing a book. Not this book just writing a book." We had talked about over the last decade about how can we help together and do something like this together. So I said, "Would you be open to helping me write the book?" She said, "No, no, no! You should write it." I said, "No. I can't do this without you, and our family." And so we prayed about it and we decided to dive in.

**TRICIA:** This is not just our story. This is millions of women's and men's stories. And then second, we didn't want to see this repeated in our family. So this was something, one, we knew we were going to have a conversation with our children. But also, our testimony and leave that for them and show the faithfulness and goodness of God, the redemptive love that he lavishes on us.

**RANDY:** The title of your book, *Beauty from Ashes*, and you know, the ashes in this case is abortion. And yet, the world tells us, nah, it is just a choice. It is not a big deal. For you, how many years again between the abortion and that counseling session?

**JEFF:** Seventeen.

**RANDY:** That's a long time to bury something. What did that do to both of you to try to just bury that, pretend it was no big deal?

**TRICIA:** Well, for me, we had major trust issues throughout our marriage. I never correlated the two. Going through the post-abortive Bible study, I learned that denial was my defense mechanism.

**JEFF:** It wasn't until we began our healing process that we began to see all the effects of the

abortion throughout the years and the bitter roots that had grown, the trust issue. And here me trying to spend all the years after that earning trust and continuing to press into saying, how can I make that up?

It is hard because I always tell this to people, there are two truths about abortion. Once you take a life of your child, there is never getting that back. They'll never -- we know we've been forgiven and the Lord has forgiven us but there is always pain associated with taking a life. It is not there because of me. And so that's a hard burden to bear.

The second truth is, there is no sin greater than the cross of Christ. There are many people in your audience today who have experienced abortion. I want them to hear that. They are forgiven. The Lord loves them and will use them. One of my favorite chapters in this book is where we talk about being fully known and fully loved by God. Sometimes, that's really hard for us to accept when we've realized, I've broken almost every commandment there is. Here you think you're a good person and you go, oh, my gosh! I've broken every commandment and you still can use me? That's amazing -- that's amazing grace!

**RANDY:** And that's the beauty from the ashes.

So Tricia, what would you say to someone who has that hidden secret? They're looking at it going, okay. They're saying that they were able to find some healing to whatever. You're in a better place than they are right now, they know that. What do you say to that person?

**TRICIA:** Well, seek the Lord first and he'll direct your steps. He'll direct you to community. I would definitely advise a Christian counselor to talk to about abortion. If your church offers a post-abortive Bible study, do everything you can to get in there and learn the truth.

No, the Lord sees you, he knows you, and he loves you. He loves you so much. That's where he wants you because he wants to set you free. He wants to make you whole again.

**JEFF:** I know I keep coming back to leadership and pastors but if we don't talk about this from

the pulpit, your congregation cares about what you care about as the leader, as the pastor, and God increases the moral priority of our churches. We cannot let it go.

**RANDY:** I'd like to have a long conversation about how we can handle this better as believers, in the church, individually, one-on-one. Because every four years it becomes a big issue. We've got to vote. Yeah, you've got to do a lot more than that I think. Can you guys come back and we'll do another program to talk about that?

**JEFF:** Absolutely would love to.

**RANDY:** I think that would be good. I'm excited for our viewers to know the Human Coalition and what you guys do because it's part of the outreaches of LIFE.

Tammy, I have a question for you.

**TAMMY:** Okay. I'm already crying. I'm already crying.

**RANDY:** Because as wonderful as it is to hear their testimony, and God offering some healing, as believers outside the situation, we oftentimes say the wrong thing. What would you say to them now?

**TAMMY:** Oh, man. My first thing, I would lean in and say, I'm so grateful that you're in this place in your life right now. I'm so grateful you finally got to a place where you can let it go and let God walk in and begin to heal the broken places of your life. I'm so grateful for healing and loss.

I asked you earlier if you had named your daughter because I know, and I know you know that she is more alive today than she's ever been. You told me her name was Sarah. I can't wait to meet Sarah, and I have a feeling maybe her and Trent are hanging out in heaven at this very moment. That brings me great joy when I think of your life, where you've been. I love you and I don't even know you but I love you. What an honor it is to watch the healing in your life and the

stance that you take now for life. We need to hear these stories.

I believe that there is probably somebody at least, maybe a handful of you who need to hear this story today that forgiveness is possible, freedom is possible. The enemy can only lie so much. He'll take enough truth and he'll turn it as much as he can so you feel stuck, you feel trapped, and you feel without. But today that can end in Jesus' name. Seek help, do whatever you need to do to find healing. Because it is an invitation for you today in this moment. Don't hesitate, don't wait for it. Let your healing begin today.

**RANDY:** Yeah. Call that number on the screen. Somebody will pray with you.

Jeff, I'm curious, you don't have to say it, are you comfortable praying with anybody who is struggling with what you've struggled with right now? Would you say a prayer for them?

**JEFF:** Lord, we're so grateful for your grace that's new every day. Lord, if you're struggling with abortion in your life, I just want you to know that you're healed, that the Lord loves you. That you're fully known; he knows every aspect of your life and yet, he still loves you fully and wants to use you for his good works and his purposes.

So Lord, I ask that you would use these individuals for your grace and your goodness and your purposes, Lord. Through our testimonies, Lord you can do amazing things. We thank you, Lord. We thank you for our lives. We thank you for the trials. We thank you for our marriage. We thank you for our children. Lord, we learn through trials and we draw closer to you, and you draw closer to us. We're so grateful for that, Lord.

We love you today. We for complete healing for truth and transparency that's brought through your saints. We love you today, in Jesus' name. Amen.

**RANDY:** Amen. Do call that number. And listen, if you want Jeff and Tricia's book, *Beauty From Ashes*, we are sending it out to those who support our mission outreach today. But more importantly, hear what they are saying. Hear what God is saying to you.



As you watch this, if God is leading you to participate in this opportunity to bless others, we really hope you will. Watch this and you'll understand.

**Transition roll-in:**

**ISAK:** There's malnutrition clinics like this all over this area in Angola where mothers bring their children that are suffering from malnutrition. In these parts of Southern Africa, child mortality under the age of five is the worst anywhere in the world.

Many of these mothers bring their children and they watch and wait to see will we be able to save their lives? Mothers like Angelina here with little Jakim. Jakim is a child that is being ravaged by malnutrition. Literally, the silent killer that is stealing the life out of her. This child represents so many in these areas. Her mother now can only watch, wait, and pray. Pray that we'll be able to save her child's life.

My prayer today is that it is not too late for Jakim. The therapeutic food that we're providing this child in this clinic will be able to save her life. But my other prayer is for the mothers in the villages all over these areas, mothers whose children aren't yet here, who if we don't reach with critically needed resources, with the food they need, their children will end up in these clinics fighting this battle of life and death.

You can help Jakim and Angelina, and you can help the mothers in these villages. Today, you can be the answer to that prayer if you'll open your hearts and if you'll help us to bring the resources that are so critically needed, if you'll bring life in the form of food to these mothers in their villages, and insure that their children never end up in these clinics, and never end up like little Jakim fighting the battle of life and death.

**Studio Appeal:**

**RANDY:** I know many of you join us in prayer for those children when you see pictures like

that. I've been in one of the malnutrition clinics and prayed for a child. But I've seen that child die that very day. That tells me, yes, we pray but we also need to take action. That's what I'm asking you to do today to take action. Let's do the faith and the works because it is a beautiful work but it's a critically needed work right now.

And Tammy, I love the joy we see in the mission feeding outreach because I've seen the pain.

**TAMMY:** Yeah. When you talk about the fact that you've been in a malnutrition clinic and a little one has died, I've had, I call it a privilege to have been in a malnutrition clinic as well, and praying, weeping, my heart aches every time I go into these countries and I'm with these babies, especially dying. We can't just let it end there. We have to act now.

I know Isak said they're waiting but some of them don't even have the time to wait. I want to get in there now before they even have to be in a clinic like that. I want to be able to bring food to these children right now and we can do that together, Randy if we come together.

**RANDY:** It's so easy. Let me tell you how easy. A gift today of \$30 will help feed three children for the next several months. A gift of \$50 will help feed five children. You can make a gift of \$100 and help feed ten children for the next three months. Some of you, and I pray you'll do it if you can, can give \$1,000, maybe even more, and feed so many children.

But that's the formula: Pray and act. I pray that you will act right now.

**Cause spot:**

**ANNOUNCER:** Right now across the continent of Africa, children are suffering, facing severe malnutrition and even death. Extreme drought and famine putting at risk thousands of lives means we must replenish food supplies immediately to keep feeding the 350,000 children and help reach more people in desperate need.

Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach, your gift of love can be an answer to prayer for a

hurting and hungry child in their time of need. Call now with your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months.

With your gift of any amount, we'll send the Daily LIFE devotional calendar. This perpetual calendar has 365 days' worth of scriptures and inspirational thoughts to remind you of the rest you can find in God's loving arms.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "The Light of Life" desk lamp. Find comfort and encouragement from Jesus' words in John 8:12 displayed on this stand-alone acrylic gas lamp, perfect for home or office décor as a reminder that Jesus is the light of the world.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water."

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

**End of video**

**Studio goodbye:**

**RANDY:** It is such an honor and a privilege to reach so many people with the love of Christ through the Mission Feeding outreach. It is only possible with your support. So I do hope you're making the best gift you can today. If you want Jeff and Tricia's book, *Beauty From Ashes* just request it with any gift. We'd love to send it to you. But most of all, we love that you are a part of such beautiful work abroad and here at home. Such a blessing.

**TAMMY:** Such a blessing! Thank you so much for being here today and for sharing this incredible story of God's grace. Thank you for watching. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*.

"You can do this."

**ANNOUNCER:** Tomorrow!

