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Week 16: SMF

James & Betty Robison

Erwin Lutzer

Studio discussion:

JAMES: Welcome to *Life Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty is here. We've just got one of our wonderful friends. Moody Bible Church, one of the most high-impact churches on the planet, and the pastor emeritus, Dr. Erwin Lutzer, who was there when I first got to know Moody, and got to know Dr. Lutzer, was at a very important time. We became very good friends. He's written a book. He's written a bunch of them. But here's one that's just come out *The Eclipse of God*. He's going to tell us some about it, I'm sure.

Dr. Lutzer, I'm really crying out to God for what I believe will prove to be and must if we're going to see earth touched like God wants us touched before he comes. The world needs to see Jesus in his body, the church, and needs to see the family that looks like the Father because of the way we love him in them and one another. So, I'm really praying for that. I feel like you've made great contributions over the years to help the church keep their eyes on Jesus, be grounded in truth, building on an unshakable foundation of God's truth, and his principles. I know that's always on your heart. I know you have a whole lot of that, I'm sure, in *The Eclipse of God*.

What do you want? And you have a tremendous audience all over the world here today, on *Life Today*. What do you want the family of God, the church, and perhaps, just the world at large, what do you want them to hear that you believe matters to God and to them?

DR. LUTZER: First of all, I want to say this. There are many people who say they believe in God, and they're very happy to say it as long as they get to choose the God in whom they believe. So, we here in America, and it may be true around the world, we have taken God and we have pared him down to manageable proportions. We want a God that we can control. We

want a God who is really for us without having to deal with deep issues of repentance and faith. So, we have constructed our own ideas of God.

We're living in an era in which God is whatever people want God to be. I wrote *The Eclipse of God* because you'll remember in the book of Isaiah it says very clearly, "God says, 'My arm is not short, that I cannot help you. My ears are not deaf. But your sin has separated between you and me, and I have hidden my face from you.'" And the God of secularism has hidden the face of God.

So, I share your heart for revival around the world. But we have to deal with the God who is revealed and not the gods of popular culture. And to say more than maybe I should, when we look at the Bible, we can't treat it as a cafeteria where you just go through and choose all the chocolates. On the one hand, we understand that God is love, but God is also a God of great justice, a God of judgment, and we need to preach that side too. We do it with brokenness and humility but the God of the Bible is oftentimes not the God that is proclaimed from a lot of pulpits. Because it is an imbalanced view. God loves you. Yes, for sure. But Jesus, I quoted this this morning in an interview. The Bible says that Jesus is going to come in flaming fire -- flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, that being all said, what I want to say to everyone who is listening, it is the wrath of God that makes us appreciate the grace of God. The reason that grace is so wonderful is because of God's hatred for sin, because of his wrath, and to put it as clearly as I possibly can, grace is really not sweet until sin is bitter. So, the more we understand about God's wrath and anger against sin, the more appreciative we are of God's grace.

And I say to anyone who's listening, and I know that you say it often, the issue is not the greatness of their sin. God is able to forgive the vilest of sinners who truly believes. God is able to forgive them but it takes the humility to say, I can't save myself. I have to run to Jesus for refuge, for forgiveness, and for my acceptance before God.

JAMES: And that is the gospel.

DR. LUTZER: That is the gospel.

JAMES: Absolutely. And you have blessed so many people. What do you say to the individuals who get this book? I know you have a hope for it, but what do you want to be sure they don't miss?

DR. LUTZER: Well, one of the things, certainly, is the whole issue of truth. Now, there's a lot in there about philosophers and so forth. It's really under the category of apologetics. But let me put it to you this way. Every chapter, by the way, has an area where it says "Our declaration of dependance" because that's what we need. We need a declaration of dependence, and then an action step.

But let's talk about truth. Parents send their kids to university today, and the kids come back, oftentimes, and they don't believe what the parents believe, and they're very, very different! What I point out there is we've gone from the area of truth to truthiness, which was the word of the year in 2006 in the Webster dictionary. And truthiness means some things may be true at times and may not be true at other times. Now, our nation has basically, when you and I were growing up, James, and that was quite a long time ago, wasn't it? We believed that truth was objective. We work toward it. Sometimes, we think we found it and sometimes we didn't but it was something outside of us. Karl Marx comes along and says that truth is constructed. It's constructed by people who want to stay in power.

So, what has happened? Truth has shifted from something objective to feelings. Facts are now feelings and feelings are facts. So if I feel something should be right, it makes it right. You know, the whole debate about same sex marriage is based on feeling. And even *love* can be evil. We have to say that to this generation. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, they didn't stop loving, they just started to love the wrong things: Lovers of pleasure, lovers of money, lovers of themselves. The Bible defines love: Herein is love that you keep my commandments, and so

forth. So, I could go on and on but I want to very quickly talk about a biblical view of truth because that's what we want people to understand.

Do you remember? The two of you will remember clearly, Jesus is standing before Pilate and Pilate says, "I have power to crucify you. I have power to release you." And Jesus said, "No, you don't have any power except given from above." That in itself is precious, isn't it?

JAMES: Yes, it is.

DR. LUTZER: But then Pilate said, "What is truth?" Because Jesus said, "I am truth." And then he goes and he doesn't listen. Now, Pilate learned something. You can crucify a man but you can't crucify truth. The thing is this. The truth in the Bible is based on God. There are arguments philosophically for that. But also, truth is very exclusive. You'll notice the subtitle, "The Disastrous Search of America's Inclusive Deity." No truth is exclusive. When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes to the Father, but by me," he was undercutting all other possibilities. So, it's very exclusive. Two plus two is equal to four. That cuts out a myriad of millions and billions of other options.

One other thing, and then you can pick up on it. The truth oftentimes is offensive. In the 15th chapter of Matthew, we find that Jesus is talking to the Pharisees. The disciples say to him later, "Don't you know that you offended the Pharisees?" Jesus didn't go back and say, "Oh yeah, that's right. I shouldn't have offended them." Jesus said instead, "Every plant that my Heavenly Father has not planted shall be uprooted." Wow!

And then one other example. Then you pick up on where you want to go with this discussion. The sixth chapter of John, Jesus says some very hard things. The Bible says people were offended and they all left. And then, Peter remarkably said, when Jesus said, "You can go too," "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." And I might say that a Muslim who read that passage came to saving faith in Christ. Because he says, "In our religion, if you leave the religion, you can be in deep trouble. I mean, there are places where your life could be at

stake. And here this teacher is saying, 'If you want to leave, leave. I'm not going to bend the truth to be what you want it to be. But truth is truth and error is error.'"

By the way, Booker T. Washington said, "Error never becomes truth, and evil never becomes good just because the majority believe it to be so." So, the bottom line, my heart, we have to get back to truth and truth means a biblical understanding of God, and not just the understandings that we find in popular culture.

JAMES: And I would say that biblical truth, when it manifests, it is manifested through the life of the yielded to God, clay in the master Potter's hand; shaping us into vessels of honor through which God flows freely his love, his truth, and his hope. He gives us everything and he wants to flow it through us. Too much of the church spends fruitless discussions talking about things men believe rather than what God says is truth. Unless you receive *the truth*, you will never have *the life*. This is the truth you're hearing.

What do you want people to get the minute this book gets in their hands and words go into their hearts? What do you want to see happen?

DR. LUTZER: I want them to do two things. First of all, to understand the culture, to understand where the darkness has come from philosophically and in other ways. Secondly, I want them to ask this question and answer it. What price am I willing to pay for the truth? Proverbs 23:23, "Buy the truth and sell it not." See, we're talking to a lot of believers right now. Some are unbelievers and they're all welcome but we're talking to a lot of believers who have bought the truth. They've received Christ, but they're selling it. And they're selling it because of compromise. I point out that throughout history in the church, and this is very sad, it's really deserving of tears, that sometimes, good people have left the truth because of pressure and compromise.

And, you know, propaganda has always been an interest of mine. I've written about it at times. You have these powerful cultural streams, and you had better not stand against them, because if so, you're going to get some mean tweets on your social media page, you're going to be vilified.

You're going to have to really give up your job, maybe. So, in a society that has lost its way over and over again, we're going to have to ask ourselves this question. I bought the truth. Am I selling it at basement bargain prices? That's the challenge of the church.

JAMES: That's when you've been totally deceived. Betty, what do you hear? Well, you're hearing a lot of depth, you're hearing a lot of deep conviction.

BETTY: Well, I'm hearing a lot of truth. You hear the phrase so many times, "Sometimes truth hurts." But also, truth can be redeeming if you learn from the hurt and the pain that you might have to go through.

DR. LUTZER: And Jesus said, if you know the truth, the truth will set you free. But it's a certain kind of truth. It's not --

BETTY: What we've learned in so many ways is to make truth whatever we are comfortable in, to make it whatever we want to do, instead of finding the real truth.

DR. LUTZER: Yes! Very quickly, James, and I know this time goes so fast. In Ephesus, there are stores where you can buy things, and there's a store you can find online: Genuine fake jewelry for sale. I'm serious! It's there. Now that jewelry is fake, but it's genuine fake. To the natural eye, you look at this wristwatch and you think it's worth thousands of dollars. It's worth \$25. And that's the way many believers are. I wonder if there are people watching us right now who are fake but they're genuine fakes. They have fooled everybody around them. I mean, think of this. Judas, who betrayed Jesus, I mean, to the disciples' everlasting credit, they didn't say when Jesus said, "One of you is going to betray me." Oh, yeah! We know who that is. Of course, that's Judas. They asked the question, "Is it I?" And I want everyone who is hearing us today to ask the question, is it I? Am I a genuine fake?

JAMES: Wow! Let me just tell you that you're watching this show, well, because you see a couple that obviously, married now 62 years, who love one another and it's obvious. But you also see a couple that love God and love people. And you see a couple and a ministry that loves

the overlooked, those Jesus called “the least of these,” and reach out to them and put his arms of love and assistance and the miracle of life because of the love that's expressed through what we do, you see the miracle of God and it's captured your heart. That's what truth is supposed to do. But if you turn away from the truth, you will be led away from all that is really meaningful in life.

Dr. Lutzer talks about truth that transforms and truth that inspires a couple to not only go to the mission field, but at their request, to be enabling him to stay there. They begged us not to come and stay at their side. They said, “Please go get us help so we can stay and be effective.” And lo and behold, Betty, we found viewers who actually wanted to do that and put the arms of God around a broken world he gave his son to redeem.

Well, Dr. Lutzer is inspiring people to do just that with everything he writes, everything he does. We've been very close friends since we met more than 25 years ago. I just thank God for him. We've really found joy in praying for one another and rejoicing in the blessings of God on our ministries. I want to say to all of you, I want to ask you today, and Dr. Lutzer, we are right now reaching out to feed 350,000 starving children and their families. These viewers have enabled us to do that.

We got attacked this year by people who hated us, and they cost us millions of dollars and it nearly disabled us. I'll say if we don't have a miracle of response, we won't be able to feed the 350,000 that the missionaries have found who are starving. We have to lower it to 100,000 or maybe 250,000. Don't let that happen. I'm asking everyone to pray that won't happen. And I'm also going to say that if you make a gift today, we have some beautiful books that teach you about life and health and living a meaningful life that we're going to send you. But if you'd like to have Dr. Lutzer's book, we will also send you that. You're going to be giving life by giving food to the starving.

I want you to look in on the real setting and scene that the love of God, through you overcomes. Watch carefully. Watch prayerfully.

Transition roll-in:

ANNOUNCER: All across Sub-Saharan Africa, mothers are challenged daily to find innovative ways to provide food for their children, often reverting to desperate measures in order to appease the cries of their hungry stomachs.

JOHN: There's one mother named Youdeet, who'd lost three children. I looked down at her feet, and she's literally missing a toe with still an open wound on it. I'm thinking most people would not be walking, much less climbing a tree to gather whatever little bit of what they call "white fruit." It's really kind of like an almond. It's all they have to eat. Here she is, with an injured foot, climbing a tree way up, shaking that tree as hard as she can hoping that something that's left will fall to the ground that she can pick up, take it home and make a little bit of a soup or something out of it. She had such a sweet, sweet presence about her, but she didn't want to talk about the names of her children. She didn't want to remember them the way we would because it brings too much pain.

There was a little mother here that we interviewed. Her name was Joesa. She told us the story of the loss of her child and the suffering that she had done. Our team was able to pay a visit to her house. She showed us a bone that she boils in the water. It's not a bone with meat on it, like you and I would make a stew out of. It's just a bone! And she boils it in the water, and then gives the water to the children. And these are her words, "To deceive their hunger." In other words, she's giving them everything she can to take away hunger; that pain that's in their stomach.

ANNOUNCER: A mother's love knows no end. But even she can only do so much. For mothers like these, their hopes and prayers are for someone to notice their struggles and reach out in love to help feed their children.

JOHN: All people really want to know is that somebody sees me, that someone cares about me.

Studio appeal:

JAMES: I cannot watch those images and not remember over 30 years ago when Betty and I walked into those scenes of death. I remember holding those precious little children who could be close to breathing their last breath. But I remember in one hospital, we watched the baby die. The mother you held out in the lobby area; she'd walked outside the room. Did you know, we literally fed all the people who were bringing their children to that hospital? It became a miracle place. One of those babies showed up as one of the most famous pictures in the world when Princess Di in England held a baby at that same clinic who was so chubby and beautiful, the whole world marveled.

Well, you, people like you gave those babies that were dying life! And that's what we're seeking to do right now with 350,000 that we've located. Now the missionaries are saying can you please send the resources and the food and all that it takes for us to care for these children? Betty, our viewers are the only way we can do it.

BETTY: You always come through with love and care because you care about these children. That mother doesn't know if her children will live another day so she searches and she searches. She climbs trees, as you saw, anything she can find to give her children, to help them live one more day.

We can give them food so that they can live more than one day. Please join with us, will you? You've been so faithful. Please continue!

JAMES: Your love, people just like you, have saved millions of lives. I'm talking millions! In the first few years, the nations of Africa that we were working in told us we'd saved 18 million of their children, and that was more than 10 or 15 years ago and it has just continued. But right now, we need a miracle.

Father, we've been hit hard. We've had enemies attack us, try to hurt us, try to damage what we're doing. Lord, you are going to overcome it, I know, through the people that have your love

in their heart. They will give the needs to meet what those children have a great need for right now, food.

Answer the prayer of those mothers, would you please? Would you go get your bank card and use it like a check? If you write a check, make it to LIFE. But would you please make the largest gift you possibly can to help us care for these precious children these mothers love so much? That mother that had lost three, she didn't even want to talk about the one she has now. We had an idea it was a couple more but she didn't want the thought of losing them. She was doing all she could to save them. We can do it.

Would you go right now? Get your bank card, use it like a check. Would you make the greatest gift you can? Because you're giving the greatest gift, you're giving life. They're going to all know it came because of the life of Jesus. Please do it.

SMF Cause 2025

ANNOUNCER: *Right now, across the continent of Africa, children are suffering, facing severe malnutrition, and even death. With food reserves gone, and many areas experiencing severe famine, we urgently need to replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us.*

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, we'll send you Natural Remedies. This beautifully illustrated book explores ancient nutrition and the health benefits found in God's creation to help you live your best life. With your gift of \$100 or more, please request your "Health and Wellness bundle." This three-book set includes Natural Remedies, as well as Essential Fasting, a simple eating strategy to accelerate weight loss, crush cravings, and reverse aging, and the probiotic diet that gives effective strategies to improve digestion, boost brain health, and supercharge your immune system. Finally, please

consider a gift of \$1,000 or more, which will help feed 100 children, and you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Lion of Judah."

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

JORDAN: Hi, I'm Jordan Rubin, and for over two decades, my wife Nicki and I have been supporting the ministries of *LIFE*. With any gift to mission feeding, you will transform the lives of 350,000 children in Africa by giving them nutritious food and a hope for the future. With your gift, you'll receive a powerful wellness bundle, which can bring the power of health and nutrition into your own home. Transform the lives of thousands and your own family. Do it today.

Studio good-bye:

JAMES: I am believing God has answered our prayer and the prayers of many mothers and many missionaries to meet the need. We will gladly send you what we mentioned to you in all the opportunities and offers. And also, if you help us with any gift to give the gift of life to those who are starving, and you want Dr. Lutzer's book, you just ask for it.

Dr. Lutzer, I love you. Thank you for sharing truth, for holding up truth, and demonstrating the truth.

DR. LUTZER: And thank you for your heart for the world.

JAMES: God bless you. And by the way, it's his heart manifested through you that enables us to share life. Thank you so much. We want to share life today, every day all over the world. You help. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Dr. Lutzer for being a blessing. Always a blessing. God bless you.