

5/27/25

Week 22: SMF

James & Betty Robison

Rob Decker

Studio discussion:

JAMES: Well, Betty and I welcome to *Life Today*. It's always a joy to us to be with you. I wish we could see you. You may say, "No. You don't want to see me." Yeah! We would love you no matter what. Thank you for watching *Life Today* because you find exactly what the title implies. You find life today.

Well, you're going to meet someone right now who is an amazing person. Rob Decker, I've been glancing down here at how much of his life was like mine. Betty, I lived with a foster couple that weren't my parents. Then my mother dragged me out from under the bed when I was five, and told me I was going with her. We hitchhiked all the way across the state. Many of you've heard that story. Well, Rob Decker. Rob, welcome to *Life Today*.

ROB: Thank you.

JAMES: I've kind of started with this story because you found out that you had a man living with you that you thought was your father, and found out it wasn't. Somehow, that made an impact on you and you made some not-so-good decisions. Tell us about it.

ROB: Yeah. When I was in kindergarten, I found out that my dad wasn't my biological father. I came home with a diploma from kindergarten, and it had his last name on it. My parents sat me down to tell me that he wasn't my real dad. So, then he wasn't my real dad, and my sister wasn't my full-blooded sister. And then I started asking questions like, well, who's my real dad and where is he? I truly believe that that just started sending me down a path of destruction based on the neglect and abandonment that I was feeling from that conversation.

JAMES: So did the full impact of the negative aspect of that hit you when you were like in your teens and you began to make bad decisions?

ROB: Well, I think a lot of things compounded on that. I got into pornography when I was very, very young. I was molested when I was eight years old by a neighborhood kid.

JAMES: By the way, I want to say, I think that's probably one of the most damaging things in the whole world. I don't think people with natural appetites and then we get attracted to the fabulous beauty that's there and what God did. But I believe it hits so deeply and I believe it twists. Would you agree? It twists your whole thought process to where you can be sowing suicidal seeds and destructive seeds, or losing your capacity to even think straight and walk straight. Do you agree?

ROB: Absolutely 100%. I think that my mental health and my development were tampered with at a very young age, with being molested, and then being around violence all the time. Abuse. And then following the molestation, I started getting into pornography. So that started to ruin my thought process on intimacy.

Then when I was a teenager, the first girl that I ever really cared about, I watched another man take advantage of her in front of me. It was the first time I'd ever drank, and he got us drunk. I think that just really sent me down the wrong path. So, for 20 years, I was battling these issues with my family, my dad, my real dad, and just all the trauma that I was constantly exposed to all the time.

JAMES: When you met your real dad, what effect did that have?

ROB: Well, I met him at 16 when my dad who raised me left the house, and my mom thought it'd be a good idea to bring him in. And I ended up walking in on him as he was smoking drugs. He was smoking meth. And that was at 16 years old. And so, between the relationship between my mom and dad, and then what I saw with my biological father, I didn't have any of that fatherhood guidance in my life.

JAMES: I want you to tell me how you got to this interesting title on a book, *God's Awning: A Story of Rejection and Redemption*. He works with people who are very challenged, and he gets them in shape. He'll help get the body of Christ, the temple of God where it's a little bit more useful. But tell me about this *God's Awning* and tell me about the ministry that God and how he moved you into it, how God moved you into the ministry you're in, and what you're doing now.

ROB: Yeah. So, *God's Awning* was named because I was falsely accused of rape and attempted murder. And I had a decision to make. I could go to prison, or I could take my life. I opted to take my life. I jumped headfirst out of a third-story loft window. My foot clipped the awning and changed my fall. I severed my spine, broke both my arms, and collapsed my lung; I went to the hospital. After a ten-hour surgery, I was arrested in the hospital.

But God showed up. God showed up in the midst of all that. I was highly medicated, and I heard the Lord's voice loud and clear. He said, "The charges will be dropped, bills will be paid, and you will walk again." And all those things happened. But I ran back to my old ways and continued to drink and use because there was a lot of stuff I wasn't handing over to the Lord.

And so, my ministry hinges on being delivered from drug and alcohol addiction; understanding what it's like to grow up without a good relationship with your father, or having a great father figure around, just battling my own demons. The suicidal ideations, all the time. Jumping out of the window was one thing, but battling suicide was something that I suffered from my whole life because I didn't feel like I had a purpose or a place or anything like that.

And so everything that I do now in my community through Rise as Lions and Recovery Rebel Softball is trying to create that space for people to be able to share the harder topics in life. A lot of us men are not taught to share and express our feelings. We want to be able to create that, and let men feel safe so that they can start their own healing journey.

JAMES: Why do you call your ministry, was it Rising Lions?

ROB: Rise as Lions. It's to resurrect like Christ. It's about resurrection and restoration. So, it was a play off of Jesus because that's who I serve and that's who I love. He's done a lot for me.

JAMES: What all has been going on in this ministry you've got now?

ROB: Well, I get to mentor and help a lot of people. I've kind of become the individual who when folks are struggling with addiction or suicidal ideation, people just send them my way. We start to get to the root of the issue with a lot of them. They feel safe and comfortable having those conversations with me. And then with the sports, we're just providing a resource in our community for people to gather with the same idea in mind. We're here to support each other and lift each other up. And recovery looks different for everybody. It's not just drug and alcohol abuse. Drug and alcohol abuse tends to be the self-medicator. It's usually the brokenness, the neglect, the abandonment, the trauma, whatever it is that a lot of us haven't addressed. So, we just create that space so those conversations can be had.

BETTY: You help a lot of people now. At what point in your life did God send someone in your life to help you change?

ROB: The Holy Spirit! I will say this. I was very blessed to have people on my journey who cared enough about me to bring me to their home, to love on me, to take care of me, especially after I broke my back but it was a journey. It was a journey for me. I had to walk it out with the Lord myself. I had to make a lot of mistakes. I think for me, I became a survivalist. I didn't know how to thrive. So, a lot of times when life got hard, I reverted to old behaviors where I wasn't trusting in God, I was trusting in what I knew. God just walked it all out with me. But I had a great group of individuals that were praying over me a lot.

BETTY: It is a journey. It definitely is that we're all still on.

ROB: Well, I've been sober for about 12 years now. God delivered me from drug and alcohol abuse just like that. Through repentance and surrender, He took it away from me. I believe

everyone can have that. So, part of my mission is to meet people where they're at and to let them know that there's freedom in Christ and there's freedom from drug and alcohol abuse.

JAMES: You're based in Colorado Springs.

ROB: I am.

JAMES: If someone wanted to know how to get ahold of you, see what you're doing, maybe want to somehow be a part of that process you're taking them through, where would they go? Where would they look?

ROB: RiseAsLions.org.

JAMES: I hope you'll look at that. Check that out. Is it something that people are able to do, of course, if they come to where you are in person? Do you do things during the week on certain days that you're having a group?

ROB: Well, we have four softball teams now. So, there's a lot of softball being played. But, I always give people access to me so if someone hears my message today and says, that's the guy I need to talk to because I resonate with his story, I always leave myself open to have those conversations. And so, a lot of times what I do personally is one-on-one counseling or mentorship or conversing with whoever may be struggling. That's just become part of the ministry at this point.

JAMES: There was a pretty bad accident that could have been worse than it was, a car accident. Tell us about it.

ROB: Oh, the car accident. Yeah, I got behind the wheel of a car. So, after my suicide attempt, I was still running back to drugs and alcohol, and I got a hernia. So, God had given me my life back. I was working out all the time. I had a great job. I met a beautiful, young woman who's now my wife, Alyssa. I was kind of having a temper tantrum and pouting and playing the

victim. I decided to go get drunk, and I got behind the wheel of a car and ran into somebody's property. I ended up having to flee the scene of the crime. But the beauty of that incident was, with all the physical damage that could have taken place, I didn't hurt anybody, I didn't hurt myself but I ended up under a porch at someone's house. That's when I gave drug and alcohol abuse to the Lord, and I apologized to him because I realized that he really loved me, that he was being patient with me, and that I was holding on to trying to fix the problem in my own way through drugs and alcohol. In that moment, through repentance and surrender, he delivered me from drug and alcohol abuse.

JAMES: You indicated to my staff, and just briefly to me that you crossed paths with me and Betty somewhere.

ROB: Yes! Yes!

JAMES: It had some kind of an effect. I'm curious about it.

ROB: When I found out that I was going to sit across from you two, I almost broke down crying. But I'm too macho for that, right? So, when I first gave my life to the Lord, I was watching your show all the time. I looked at you two like an amazing Christian couple; like your marriage and ministry, the way you serve and give back, and your love. I'm like, it's possible! And so, you carried me through the very first few years of my Christian walk. I am so grateful for that. Don't make me cry on TV.

JAMES: Thank you, Rob. I'm saying thank you, Rob, for giving the testimony but hey, thank those of you who not only watch *Life Today* but share literally, not the title of a program, you share life today through the program *Life Today* because we can't pay to feed the 350,000 children that we're trying to feed right now. We found them and they're starving. You are the miracle their mothers and their families are hoping and praying for. You're the only miracle hope that they have. They're starving! And you can be the miracle provider. You can give them the future. That's what we ask you to do. Here he is telling how *Life Today*, which these viewers, as surely as they give food and give water, you were given the water of life and food,

which we try to share with you every day, and you were giving it to people like Rob. It does make an impact.

I can tell he liked us. He saw what we were doing to help people. Did that inspire you in any way to see the importance of helping people?

ROB: You taught me how to serve. I think that's been the greatest gift. Everything that I do now is to give back to others because people are in need. And so, I thank you for that again.

JAMES: If somebody got your book and got into *God's Awaiting*, what do you think they would see and take from it? What's your prayer that they take from this book?

ROB: There's hope for healing and it will always be through Christ. Sometimes, what we have to hear as humans is that other humans went through it and made it out on the other side. And so, I want people to find hope, help, and healing in that book and draw closer to Christ because of it.

JAMES: You can go online and get it. Rob is praying that it'll be a tremendous blessing to you, and probably, to somebody they know. Invariably, we find people who are in a predicament that we haven't been in, but we see someone who was, and we pass something on to them. I hope and pray they'll do that.

What's your prayer for being on the show today? What do you want to come out of being with two people? You say that we ministered to you and helped you through this process. What's your hope of being here today with us? What do you want to see happen?

ROB: I just want seeds of hope to be planted in somebody today who is going through a very tough time mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I want them to feel full and renewed. I want them then to take that and give it to other people. That would be my prayer. That's how we can serve each other, is to pour what's been poured into us into other people.

JAMES: How do you want people to see God in some way like you did as an awning? You say the awning broke your fall to where you weren't killed. You were certainly hurt badly. How do you see people finding an awning in their life?

ROB: So, awning means protection, right? So, what I realized in my process, in coming out of all of it, and it's all hindsight, 20/20 for me, is that he was always there even in the hard times. What I appreciate about the trials and tribulations that James speaks about is finding joy in the trials and tribulations, because that's what builds us up. That's Romans 5:3. That's what builds character in us. So, a lot of times we're in a lot of pain, but a lot of times we can use that, build from that so that we have the ability to heal and give back to others. Without those trials and tribulations, we can't build strength. We're fitness guys, right? How do we get stronger? We go to the gym and lift weights. It doesn't always feel good. We add weight to get stronger. God does that with us spiritually as well. So, some of the stuff that's being poured onto us, it's because he has a special plan for us, and he wants to use us in a very powerful way.

JAMES: You were a beautiful little church girl who just did everything right and came out of the choir to get saved. Nobody in the church could believe it. But when you see people like Rob, like me, what do you think about Betty?

BETTY: I was sitting here thinking as I listened to your story, and I know our stories, of course. The journey that God carries us on is not always a smooth journey. Actually, it probably won't be but we have our ups and downs. But I just want you to know, as you're watching today, you listened to Rob's story, he had setbacks but God always picked him up. God's always there. You say, "Where is God?" He's right here in your heart. If you haven't received him, all you have to do is say, Jesus, come into my heart and save me. If you are a Christian but you feel far away, he's right there at your back. He's ready to cover you. He's ready to walk ahead of you and be your protection as the awning was for you, Rob.

So please don't give up on yourselves. God hasn't. Turn to him right now.

JAMES: Well, that's an invitation from God, not from Betty. We've been married for 62 years. We dated for four years, so we've been together for 66 years. I'm just telling you this, Betty, all over the world, we've watched people come to Jesus and see their lives changed. And every day on this program, hundreds of lives, even thousands, are saved. We've had the joy of bringing millions and millions of people to Christ. We found out the other day from one mission outreach that 100 million people have come to Christ, we'd sponsored all of it and had signed up and taken a full Bible study. That's miraculous.

Well, that's what *Life Today* does, and that's what you provide. Our viewers, just like the supporters of what you're doing, and all you're doing with your outreach, are supported by people's prayers and by their finances. I hope you will check Rob out.

I want you to watch the son of our mission partner, Peter Pretorius. We lost him a few years ago, but we had led tens of millions of people to Christ all over Africa. Listen to him. Our son is actually with him on this trip. I just listened to him talking. I know Randy, our son was kind of listening at a distance, but listen to him talking about what they're seeing at the hospital area clinic, and then what they're seeing out in the bush. Listen to the need and know you're the miracle that is needed. You really are. Watch prayerfully.

Transition roll-in:

ANNOUNCER: Villages in South Sudan are experiencing severe food insecurity. News reports tell us that over half the population are facing crisis-level hunger. Desperate mothers are doing whatever they can to survive. They forage for anything to feed their families in an effort to stave off the pain of hunger. The result? Their children are not receiving the proper nutrients for their developing bodies and there has been an explosion in the number of children suffering from severe malnutrition. If not treated in time, many will end up in an early grave.

ISAK: These mothers with their children have come great distances. Some of them have walked one, even two days to get here. The reason they've come here is because we have a malnutrition clinic here. We're doing malnutrition screening. We're able to provide these

children with what they so desperately need, which is food. Food that will save and sustain life. You're just getting a small picture of some of the mothers that are here that have come from all over this area. But this clinic is a much larger clinic than what you're seeing, that is filled to capacity with children. The screening areas just have mothers and children literally sitting outside. Inside the buildings, there are so many who are here, which is the true devastation of this story. Because the crisis that is, all those mothers being here is the crisis of malnutrition, of the fact that these mothers have come in desperate hope, hope that we will be able to answer what they need.

I need you to please be an answer to prayer today. I need you to open your heart. I need you to express God's heart and to extend his hands to the children like this, to the malnutrition clinics that so desperately need our assistance. But to the mothers out in the villages, if they get those resources, they can keep their children from ending up here and battling that battle of life and death.

Studio appeal:

JAMES: When I look at those little children, I can feel myself holding them. The missionaries warned us that we shouldn't hold the children. Many of them have very contagious diseases. But we never could help it, Betty. Don't you find it easy to love those children and want to be the miracle prayer that mothers are praying for? Don't you want that for them?

BETTY: Absolutely. James, the thing that blesses me so much is when I see the lines, the children lining up to get a bowl of porridge or whatever nutrition that they need that we've sent over there. Maybe you've helped us. You probably have. Please don't stop! These children need care. The mothers have done all they can do. They have nothing to offer them. But hopefully, we do. I hope you'll join with us, and let's feed these precious little ones that God has given these mothers to care for.

JAMES: As I was watching the video and I saw the desperate situation in those children, many of them had reached a clinic that we helped establish, which is a last-ditch effort you might say,

to save them. And they'd walk for days, sometimes, to get there. But we like to meet them in the field, and right there where they are, and take the food right to them. Which is what we do. Which is what we do when we drill a water well. We drill it right in the midst of the pain and the suffering.

But I was looking at that and thinking how many of them we watched come to get the food, and we put it in whatever they brought. Sometimes, they'd bring a plastic bag, and it would burn through it. Sometimes, little children would hold their hands out, and they couldn't hold it. It was hot. And then we watched many of them with old dirty tin cans. Something like that. This would have been a nice one. But when I was watching the video and I saw those little bowls, I remember where these came from. Someone like you watching said, why? Why are you giving those children that porridge in that dirty container? Why are you pouring it in that plastic bag and it burns through? Why don't we give them a nice plastic bowl? And the missionaries said, "We can't afford that. We can only afford the food. We can't afford a plastic bowl." Do you know what our viewers said? Do you know what you said? "Well, we can! We want to give them bowls."

We've given out millions of these, Betty. And there was – did you see that long line? Did you see how far it reached? And every one of those children, they'll stand there for two hours or more. Thousands, sometimes we'll start feeding 2,000 or 3000 in an area and 2,000 will show up three or four days later because they'll walk 50 miles to 100 miles. They found out there was food, and it was in a plastic bowl that love provided.

Betty, that's what our viewers are! They're expressions of love. Would you right now go and get your bank card and use it like a check, please? If you write a check, make it to LIFE but do it now! Call us and tell us you're mailing it. Go online and make the best gift you possibly can. \$30, \$50, or \$100, you feed three, five, or ten children for the next months. Could you give \$1,000 or more and feed 100? Father, please, please move those viewing with your love, your compassion, and your help in Jesus' name. We are his hands and his arms. Would you reach out, put his arms around someone right now, and give them life? 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: Thank you for being the miracle some mother prayed so fervently for, faithfully. You know the books we're offering to bless you and those you love from Jordan Rubin.

Rob, I pray for you and your ministry. Thank you for being with us on *Life Today*.

ROB: Thanks for having me.

JAMES: Keep sharing it. Okay?

ROB: Thank you for inspiring me.

JAMES: Love you. Thank you for helping us love so many with his love. God bless you.