

Week 8
2/14/12

James: I've got such a wonderful staff!

Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison; my wife Betty and I are thrilled to have you here.

I've got this little note because we have a guest today, and oftentimes they'll show me how I'm supposed to pronounce the name. My name is Robison. And it's often pronounced Row-bison, Robe-son. But here it says that if you want to know how to pronounce your guest's name it is pronounced like Robinson without the middle N: Robison. That's because our guest is a Robison. It is our son, Randy Robison and his wife Debbie.

Would you welcome Randy and Debbie to *LIFE Today*? And it is Robison.

And I bet you got used to people calling it Robinson, and Row-bison.

Debbie: Constantly.

James: And does that make you happy? But it is a challenge; isn't it?

Debbie: It is.

James: To continually just correct people. It is no big deal. It is one way God keeps some of us just humble.

Randy has written a book, *God Wants You to Be Happy*. When I first saw that it took me back. There are quite a few books written along this line. Of course, I know true happiness coming from an inner joy. Well, I looked at the subheading: Discovering Deeper Joy than You Ever Imagined by James Randall Robison -- and four Robison children, two boys, two girls.

Is that what makes you happy?

Randy: That's one of the things. The book is divided into three sections. We talk about the obstacles to happiness. What I call "the mixed blessings" in family is one of those because as the Bible says, your children can bring you happiness but they can also bring you great

grief. And then there is the paths to happiness, which are guaranteed ways to have more happiness in your life and it's all drawn from the Bible.

James: Well, I really am pleased, Randy, when I read the spiritual depth of which you addressed and touched on all the different subjects that you were led to touch on. I want to say to you that you are, as all of our children, you have not brought us grief, you have brought us great joy. We even found it interesting when you talked about how you learned in crafty ways to manipulate certain things in order to get away with it as though you were really succeeding.

But that in fact did not give you -- but you're honest and as we read this, we thought, well, what else are we going to find in here? And he's talking about being happier -- we're going to find some things to make us very unhappy. Well, I want to ask you, why did you write the book? What led you to write it?

Randy: Well, it's been a long journey to this book. It's been one of introspection, one I've had to try to learn out myself and I'm still not there yet. But the thing I think that got my attention was when I went with the ministry to Rwanda, about a year after the genocide there, and I didn't -- I mean I expected to see a lot of misery and it was a horrible situation.

I didn't expect all the things that I saw, which were yes, we saw traumatized children, but we also saw children who were laughing, children who truly seemed happy with each other. I saw a Canadian couple that was there working who was -- they were working in very difficult conditions. They didn't have nice things. Everything was difficult over there. They were truly happy. Do you remember Fred Nkunda? The *LIFE* Center in Rwanda in Gitarama is named for Fred Nkunda, a Ugandan man who had given up everything just to help the orphans. He eventually died from cancer; he didn't have good medical care. But he was happy.

James: He died caring for those orphans. He himself was an orphan who had been driven out during the war between the Hutus and the Tutsis, and he came back in when the genocide started to take care of the orphans he knew many had crawled out from under piles of their own parents' bodies, killed with machetes. He went in there and loved them. And Randy, he wouldn't leave. Even while he was fighting his own disease and ultimate death, he wouldn't leave these children. Like you said, he was filled with an overflowing joy.

Randy: He was! He smiled; he was a joy to be around. Then I came home and I saw people who were impatient, who didn't smile, who didn't greet you, just around town,

around here. Even my own children were not very happy with the food we would give them sometimes. In Mozambique, they're thrilled with that bowl of mush.

I thought, okay, something is wrong here in this picture. These people who have nothing but trauma and grief have some happiness and it is not fake, it is real. And yet, we in America who have so much, so many people are unhappy. That caused me to look at my own happiness, to look at the things we take -- draw our happiness from and to kind of get into some of what is real happiness.

So this is the product of two things, a long journey of realizing that God does want us to be happy in his context, our happiness affects other people very directly, and it's also something that affects, I think, the cause of Christ because if Christians are unhappy, then who wants to be a Christian? So I went to the word and I looked at over 600 instances of joy, rejoice, happy, happiness, delight, goodness, gladness, and I really wanted to find out what does God mean by happiness? Why would Jesus say, "I came so that you might have joy and that your joy be made full?" What is that? What is that? It's something that although we use the word happiness in a lot of context where it's not real happiness.

To me happiness is a cookie with walnuts and dark chocolate, but that's pleasure -- a lot of times we use happiness to express our pleasure, and happiness and pleasure are not the same thing. Real happiness is joy and it is something that stems from our salvation and it is something that is stronger than anything else we can face in this life because we will face hardship, we will face grief, we will have losses, but yet there is a joy that is stronger than all that and that's what I think God wants to really instill in us right here and right now.

James: You know we've watched... in our family, a lot of people look at our family and think, well, y'all don't have any challenges, and yet our life is filled with challenges. Our youngest daughter has had a battle, as we told you a couple years ago, with throat cancer. Randy, we've all watched her. We watched her lose weight to where you didn't even recognize your own sister, she had lost so much weight you didn't know her. And I think we can -- when you're talking about joy and a peace, we never saw that leave Robin.

Randy: Never! Not once!

James: She signed every e-mail, "I win." She told her sister in those real deep moments of sharing, which she didn't even want to talk to mom and dad about, she told her sister, she said, "I can't cry." There was an inner peace. There was a peace so great in her that all of us said, "Lord, we want that peace." That's the peace you've written about when you talk about joy, you're talking about an inner joy.

You've had some real challenges with your eyes. You have macular degeneration. I remember saying to you when it looked like you might -- you nearly lost the sight in one eye and then the other one hit very dramatically and I was with you and went to the hospital. We didn't know if we were going to be able to get it attached. We didn't know you're going to be able to see when I took you back to see if you could see.

I remember saying, "Randy, I know your job, you're a writer and you do our web site." He does the ministry web site for *LIFE Today* and *LIFE Outreach*. I said, "That's your job. You really need to be able to see."

You said to me, "I just want to be able to see long enough to see my children grow up." There's been an inner peace there, Randy, and to me, that's what you're writing about.

Randy: Barnes' notes on the New Testament define happiness as a state of mind free from trouble. And if you think about it, it is not an ignorance is bliss kind of free from trouble, it is knowing all that is going on but having an overriding peace to where you're not anxious about anything as someone we know said. I'll tell you an interesting story --

James: Jesus said be nothing in anxious. There is volumes -- Randy really exhausts expanse what that means, not to live anxious.

Randy: I'll tell you a quick story if you'll let me. The whole macular degeneration and vitrectomies, which I had detached retinas in both eyes and I've had other surgeries, I learned something interesting and it's in the book. But one of the guaranteed paths to joy, greater joy, real happiness is adapting a godly perspective. I learned something -- we're told to walk by faith and not by sight and a lot of times I don't think we really grasp what that means. I learned to drive by faith and not by sight.

[Laughter]

James: Scary thought to everybody in the metroplex. You hear it now.

Randy: Yeah, we can talk about now because everything is all right. But after the second surgery, in my left eye there was a lot of muscle damage. I had some difficulty just keeping my eyes looking in the same direction. That makes it real hard to drive because when I'm sitting and I can focus I can get my eyes to look and it is not a problem. But when you're driving everything is moving and when everything is moving, this left eye, after surgery, it was floating. And so I would look at the road and I wouldn't see one road,

I would see two roads. I don't mean like one here and one here, I mean one up here and to the side. It was that bad.

Here's the thing. I could see clearly out of that eye. It wasn't that I couldn't see. I could see great -- that was the problem. I had to know that my right eye was seeing what was true and what was right.

My left eye, which could see would have led me right off the road. When you talk about walking by faith and not by sight, our faith shows us what is true and what is right. So sometimes our perspective can be off but if we will stick with what is true and what is right according to God's Word we won't end up in the ditch. So I drove that way for a while and things are better now.

[Laughter]

James: Y'all can all be at rest in the metroplex.

[Laughter]

Randy: But that's one of the guaranteed paths to happiness, when we learn to adapt that godly perspective, we do find greater joy in our lives.

James: What are some of the obstacles that you point out in the book, Randy, you touch onto the joy and the happiness, like disobedience and so forth? What are some of those things that keep people from having the joy and the happiness?

Randy: There are several things. Disobedience is one of the more common ones and I know I struggle with that, I think everybody does. There is no shame in admitting that we struggle with obeying God. Psalm 119, verse 35 says: Make me walk in the path of your commandments for I delight in it. Now for -- when I was younger I would dismiss that really as nice poetry because I don't like anyone to make me do anything, as you know very well.

James: Yeah, we had some real nice confrontations.

Randy: I tend to be independent but --.

James: I tend to be confrontive and forceful.

Randy: Oh, okay. That's a whole other show.

James: That's the next book!

Randy: That comes after the therapies and -- I'm teasing. But *commandments* is a word that I generally don't like. I don't -- it's like --

James: I would agree, I don't either.

Randy: Most people don't. I looked at the Hebrew in that and there are only four words in that whole thing. The first word make me walk is to lead or to march; there is some discipline implied there. A path, the word for path is literally a pathway but it also means traveler. The interesting thing is that the word we translate as commandments means God's code of wisdom.

And then the delight part is actually to take pleasure to find not just happiness but pleasure. That scripture says: God lead me down that journey to your wisdom and I will find pleasure and happiness. Right? Now that I can get excited about.

So when you talk about obedience because we like to not always listen to God. I think the classic story in the Bible is Jonah. God says, "Jonah, you need to go east across the land."

Jonah says, "I hear you, God. Why don't I go west across the water?"

[Laughter]

Right? I fight that in my own life. I know God wants me to do something and I go, "I think I'm going to do just the opposite."

Sometimes you're not even willingly trying to disobey God, it's just you kind of go your own way. Well, it led to misery, and not only misery for Jonah as he is sitting out there in the storms, it led to misery for the people around him. They were not happy. And a lot of times when we disobey God, not only are we unhappy but we make people around us unhappy, and if you're a father, that's huge. You affect your wife, you affect your kids, and you realize, man, my disobedience is not just working against me but everybody around me.

Betty: And that is a part of the parenting when...

Randy: Oh, yeah, we owe it to our children to be happy.

Betty: Even though those times are not fun, necessarily, for them to be obedient or to discipline them in a way that we know a lot of times through experience what the consequences are.

James: And Jonah got disciplined. Jonah got corrected.

Randy: I'll tell you what he did. He said the right thing. He said, "This is all my fault." He didn't blame the church. He didn't blame his parents. He didn't blame the government. He said, "This is on me." Things instantly got better.

James: He had an interesting ride.

Randy: Yeah, things instantly got worse because they threw him overboard, and sometimes in our disobedience we've got to realize that admitting that it is our fault will bring some consequences. But the good news, as he was thrown overboard, is that he died to himself in that picture of being in the belly of the whale for three days and he was moved in the right direction and that's the beautiful thing about repentance is that when we repent and allow God to take over, he moves us in the right direction and that right direction brings us greater happiness because we're living in his will.

James: Well, we've watched both of you, in our opinion, seek to be the best parents. And it's a joy to be around you and all four children, even though teenaged children. And they're all so different, so diverse and yet the heart harmony that we see in your family, it's something that as parents, we thank God for every day.

And Debbie, how do you feel about Randy having his first book published when you've watched him work so hard and write and wait for that day? Are you excited about the message?

Debbie: I'm so excited! Just for somebody to write a book to me is just amazing because I can't even write a sentence hardly. So a whole book is...

[Laughter]

James: A whole book! Well, I want you to know that we really encourage you to get the book today and it's a great joy for me and for Betty to literally present to you a message that we believe God is not only given but developed and is developing in and through Randy's life and the life of his family because they have found a source of joy. We find joy in watching it and observing it on their journey.

It thrills me as a minister who really wants to share the life and the love of God and all he offers with others to see our son doing it perhaps in a way far more effectively than we may have ever done it. And we really admire what we see in him. I know you do.

Would you just say thanks be to God for what we've heard from our own son today and the book? We just say thanks to Randy and Debbie for being with us. Randy referenced the -- he referenced the mission field just a while ago, and going to Rwanda where we've been able to save the lives of tens of thousands of children there.

When I say "we," that includes the viewers of *LIFE Today* who made it possible for us to build the largest orphanage in Rwanda, and to place more children and to see an entire nation actually pass a law against using any racist term. You can't even use a racist term, you have to be Rwandans, you can't be Tutsi, Hutu or some other race. Much of that came out of orphanage that Randy was talking about. We watched it birthing through the love of God there and they saw it and it impacted a nation and still is. That's the joy of the Lord we've seen in children who have so little.

You know where you'll find joy that is as great as any you'll experience? -- Fulfilling the will of God. Jesus said, "Giving a cup of water in my name you won't lose your reward." Part of that reward is the presence and the blessing and the joy of the Lord -- the joy of the Lord is our strength. What pleases him? -- Alleviating suffering -- giving water to the thirsty. You're going to hear a very sad story. You and I have the answer. We can stop this pain and we can replace it with joy. We have that opportunity. Let's do it together.

On the mission field:

Translator: My name is Miriam Bonegas. It was sudden; he was five months old. He had never been sick. I was carrying him in my arms and then I felt he had quit breathing. He couldn't breathe and he didn't want anything. Here is where I saw my son die.

>> The doctors said it was the water that took him. For a grieving mother this somehow hurt more. Miriam had given everything as a mom but giving her son Tyson water to drink wasn't optional; unfortunately, neither was her water source. River water, contaminated. Left with no choice, Miriam gave Tyson water that attacked his body like a poison.

Translator: That morning my son woke up feeling bad, vomiting and wouldn't eat. I got

scared and started to take him to the health clinic but it would take three hours to walk there.

I have to travel that road a lot because it's the only one out of our community. It's hard because I always remember what happened there. I miss him so much.

>> There is little worse than helplessly holding your dying child in your arms, not from an incurable disease but because of unclean drinking water.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Boy, she's lost what's so precious. And they have so little in the impoverished areas where they just need water, fresh clean water. Betty, we really do have the answer for that mother, for the children around her.

Betty: James, I'm watching and as a mother, you can sense the heartbreak of that mother, it was so deep, so big, to her. But you know the solution is simple, they need fresh clean water. They need water free from the contamination and the disease that they have no option of right now. That's all they have. We want to give them an option, an opportunity to choose from the good and the bad. Won't you help us do that? We would appreciate it so very, very much.

James: I'm convinced that every person that has a heart, any measure of sensitivity would like to meet legitimate needs. I think Americans are somewhat concerned, Betty, any time a child is lost or missing or you've had some kind of natural disaster, the American people rush to that scene; same way all over the world, you rush in to help. The thing people are not excited about doing is maintaining programs that don't seem to affect, don't seem to make any difference and just funding something that doesn't work.

We found that people just like you are excited when I know I can do something. Let me tell you how simple this is. This isn't wishful thinking. We can drill several water wells in those areas, the water is there. It's accessible, very accessible. As a matter of fact, the wells in many of the areas are going to be inexpensive but where it is a deep well and very expensive, it still averages out to \$4800. Now we don't know how long that's going to hold but it's holding now.

And we're going to drill as many wells as you enable us to drill; we've targeted hundreds of them in many different countries, and to be an answer to that need that that mother addressed so effectively. It does work, but you're the ones that make it work. This isn't just

something you hope works -- this isn't throwing money at something where it doesn't make the difference -- it works!

We're asking you if you would dial that number right now. If you had a prayer need, it is always there for you. You know that. That may be why you call today. But I'm asking as many of you as can, I'm asking you, would you call and say, "I want to help give water to people like Net. I want to help drill a well."

If you could give the \$4800, I'm asking you to do it. I've had some people say, "I have been able to do so in the past, I can't this year. I'm praying somebody will take my place." Well, perhaps you're that person. Can you do it? Can you give \$1200 and pray three will join you? Or \$2400 and pray someone else will match that. Whatever you can do, please, dial the number, use your bankcard, or write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're mailing it because we have to know it is coming.

We've got to let mission workers and the well drilling teams know that we're going to have the resources. So please make that call. Would you do it? Or you can go online *LifeToday.org*.

Remember this, I'll always ask you to shoot for the highest level you can give but \$48 -- don't consider this small -- for ten people that's water the rest of their life. \$48 toward the well, \$144, 30 people. So whatever level you can participate at please do so.

We have some wonderful gifts to bless you in your life and your spiritual journey but you're going to be giving life, real life and hope. Thank you for making that call.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Every day millions of children are forced to make a dreadful choice, drink filthy, polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

The good news is that there is a solution -- Mission: Water for Life is one of the most exciting and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. The suffering can end because clean water changes everything!

With your gift today we will begin drilling 350 new water wells for remote villages in 12 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people! A gift of

\$48 will help provide for 10 people! \$72 will reach 15 people. And \$144 will help provide fresh clean disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift be sure to request, *Believe This Not That* a brand-new topical Bible promise book that will encourage you in every area of life.

With your gift of \$100 or more you may request our newly released *Water for Life* mug set, a daily reminder of the clean water you make possible to those who thirst.

Also please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And be sure to request the 2012 commemorative bronze sculpture, "The Lamb and the Lion."

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: We are sending to those of you who make a gift to help us, *Believe This Not That*. And today, if you'd like to have it, we would be more than happy to send you our son's book, *God Wants You to Be Happy*, and it really does tell you what that joy is. It's not just little trite frivolity; it is an inner peace that even in the face of storms and challenges, there is a peace and a joy that passes understanding. It's supernatural!

Randy, thank you!

Debbie, thank you! Are you happy about being here?

Debbie: I'm so happy!

James: She is kind of like Betty in the sense, "I like to stay in the background."

Would you say thanks to Randy and Debbie?

You did great, Debbie! You did great. You made us happy!

Thank you, Randy!

Thank all of you. Thank you for letting us share this time. Thank you for your prayers for our family. Thank you so much for helping us share the life and love of God.

Announcer: Faith, family, and freedom are under attack. James Robison and Jay Richards encourage a divided America to stand together before it's too late. *Indivisible* -- coming soon to online and retail bookstores.

Beth: I'm never trusting anybody again! Because I would have thought if I could have trusted anybody it would have been that particular person.

Announcer: Spiritual discernment tomorrow on *LIFE Today*!