

Week 32

7/31/12

James: Thank all of you for giving us this opportunity in sharing with you. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James and this is Betty Robison, and we really do appreciate the privilege we have in sharing time with you that can actually change not only your life but the lives of many other people.

I also want to mention that in the bookstores right now, and online, you can get the book, *Indivisible*, and I'm encouraging you to get it, to read it, and to pass it on. You're going to find that what God has led us to do is to share, I believe, a message that many of you have been praying would go out and would help show us the way out of the wilderness of despair and disheartening and discouragement that so many people sense. We really do want to be a blessing to our nation by pointing in the right direction, I think that's what all of us as ministers should do. I believe there is a way that appears right to many men, the ways are the ways of death, but then there is the way of life and we're really seeking to point in that direction.

I want to hold up a book that is titled *Average Joe* and I'm really curious about that. The subheading says, "*God's Extraordinary Calling on Ordinary Men*." I know a lot of people feel pretty ordinary.

I know, Betty, you've told many times on our program, you're no average Joe but you are a person who felt like you were very ordinary.

Betty: Very insignificant is the way I felt.

James: I was watching you on the monitor when we came on and I said, "Boy, she's pretty! If I wasn't married to her and I wasn't married I'd try to get a date!" You are radiant; you are in no way ordinary.

But can you understand and we're going to meet the author in a moment and talk about the book, and his wife, and how people do feel like they're just average or so ordinary they don't matter?

Betty: Absolutely! I would imagine a lot of people feel that way. And being a woman, probably a lot of women, girls feel like who cares about me? How do I add to this life? Who would even miss me if I was gone?

James: It makes me very sad that anyone feels that way, and yet I know that I think you've probably heard me talk about my childhood without a father and without a family. And when kids would do things at recess and do things at school and they would pick teams, well, I moved, as I remember, about 15 to 17 times in a ten year period so I didn't get to know people a lot of times very well or at least for a period of time. But there were many times when they would choose teams and after they chose, I was still standing there when the other kids went off to play. I don't even think I have the ability to tell you how lonely that felt, how overlooked.

I really wonder sometimes, Betty, if a lot of people don't feel that way and yet I found an incredible, indescribable comfort in knowing God chose me.

And I think of all of you, and I really have an idea that's what Troy is going to try to communicate, the author of the *Average Joe* book, to communicate how God has chosen you and chosen you for a very special reason.

I want you to welcome the author of *Average Joe*, Troy Meeder and his wife Kim to *LIFE Today*. Would you welcome him?

It's good to see you! Glad to have you. Okay, *Average Joe*.

Troy: *Average Joe* -- absolutely!

James: Is that the way you felt about yourself?

Troy: Absolutely! I grew up in the '70s, early '60s, all through the '70s and had big dreams and things I wanted to do. I wanted to be a jet pilot. I wanted to be an astronaut. I wanted to scuba dive with Jacques Cousteau. I had all those things that as a guy, "Yeah, I'm going to conquer the world!"

I grew up in a blue collar family that college was kind of out of question. I had a chance to go one year to college. I took off and thought, I'm on my way. I'm going to make it happen! I'm going to have letters after my name. I'm going to have a brass plaque on my door that says my name to my office. I'm going to be somebody! And after a year I was done, I was out of money and my grades weren't that good and so I packed up my Volkswagen and headed back home.

That month, it was June of 1979, I started having a dream and it was a reoccurring dream that would happen about once a month. It was like I was in this third person and I can still see it today so vividly and there is this little old man sitting on the steps of Point Loma College down in southern California. And he's got long gray hair and he's skinny and scrawny and he's been there forever and he's got books everywhere and all around him walk the students that had promise. They were young, they were full of promise. They are going to be the doctors, lawyers, pilots, pastors -- all those guys walking around this little old man.

Then as the dream went on I realized that the little old man was me and that I had never left the school. I had never done anything with my life. All I had done is sit there and try and do something. Try and make myself something.

I can remember waking up from the dream time and time again feeling like, gosh, Troy you've done nothing with your life. You're still that old man that never finished school, you never flew jets, you never joined the Air Force, you're just an average Joe.

Several years ago, Kim and I were up in the North Cascades hiking like we always do. We had our little camper up and I had the dream. I woke up in the morning and Kim had some coffee on, and she kind of noticed in my countenance my countenance was a little bit down.

"Is everything okay?"

I said, "No, I had the dream again."

As my wife, she is a beautiful companion, she grabbed her laptop and said, "You know, let's talk about this dream that you had." And she started typing.

We got in the truck and headed up toward Yakima and Leavenworth, up in that area and she said, "Do you think that maybe guys like you may feel the same way?"

I thought, "Yeah, I bet there is a lot of guys that feel that same way. They feel like they're average. Like they had these big dreams..."

And not that that -- there is nothing wrong with that -- I don't want guys to ever feel like well, yes, I'm just married. I just have kids. No, that's the beautiful part of life! But we get so wrapped up as guys in thinking I have to do these huge things to be a man. No, you don't.

God's calling on your life, God's value of your life is not in what you do, it's in who you are. It's in how Betty sees you. Your value as a man, my value as a man is not if I have this wonderful TV show or this ranch for kids, there's the value, and even more so, there's the value when our Jesus looks us in the eyes and says, "Buddy, I have a plan for you." Maybe it's pouring a cup of coffee at Starbucks. But doggone it! You're going to be the best Starbucks coffee pourer on the planet! And you're going to love those people around you and you're going to be a man that loves your wife and loves your kids and does what he's supposed to do with his shoulders squared off and his eyes fixed on Jesus.

There's a scripture in the book that I wrote -- I didn't write the book -- there's a scripture in the book that I copied from Acts chapter four, verse 13 and it says that John and James were standing and speaking to the Jerusalem council, all the big smart guys, and the word says they were amazed at what came out of the mouths of these ordinary men. And then the back half the verse says, "...because they had been with Jesus." That's what makes them extraordinary!

I'm just a normal everyday guy that has a youth ranch for kids. Gets up in the morning and does -- yesterday morning I was digging a hole for a fence post and then scooping horse manure. Just doing average stuff but because of my Jesus and because of who he is in my life I get to live an extraordinary life.

James: What really breaks my heart is that a lot of people, they hear you talking about Jesus but they immediately identified with some kind of religious association that has never seemed to have much profound or positive effect on the people who identify with it, like you show up down at the church. They don't act like there's been any difference. There is no substitute for Jesus. It is not religion, it is a relationship.

A lot of people, they really want to meet God but they end up getting stuck in religion. But the churches are full of people -- many great churches -- full of people where God is big and where God is real and where the relationship is genuine and has transforming effect; this is what you're talking about. So you're not talking about people becoming extraordinary in their life as ordinary people because they associated with some religious group. You're talking about a relationship with Jesus that could take you when you're having a reoccurring dream and it looks like your life is just vanity, it's nothing, it's insignificant and you suddenly find out, Jesus makes the most ordinary people feel extraordinary.

And you then begin to let this life and love be expressed through you, because I've been around you and I've watch what you do, see what you're doing. You're working with kids on the ranch, the things you're doing and now then they're modeling this all over the

world where they're using animals and horses to try to minister to children. All of the sudden all these ordinary people that don't think they've got anything going, they're ministering to people who feel totally overlooked because they've become extraordinary because Christ in them is alive.

I don't know if I'm summing up what you're saying and experiencing but what I actually see is people caught in this crossfire between am I going to identify with the religion or am I going to have this transforming experience with this living Jesus that takes an *Average Joe* and does extraordinary things?

Troy: It's all Jesus! There is a story in the book called "The Gardener." It's this man that I spent time with and he was a 60 something Phyllis Diller, glasses, John Deere hat, Carhartt coveralls, lands keeper guy that loved Jesus. I don't even know if he went to church but I know he was passionately in love with Jesus. The words that poured out of his mouth while we mowed grass together and planted flowers together and did average stuff, the world would see him as just an old man walking down the street in dirty coveralls but he was an extraordinary man because of the calling God had on his life, and he lived that out in the place that God had called him to.

Talking about myself and the guys I spend time with, we get so wrapped up in the what if's, and I should be doing that, and I should be climbing these mountains and doing this man adventure, and those are all good things -- or starting a company -- and those are all good things but we forget the best thing is our relationship with Jesus, our day-to-day time in the Word with the Lord and just spending time with him, and being a man that says, "My yes is yes, my no is no, my handshake is my bond." If I told you, James I was going to build a house for you for X amount of dollars and we shook hands, by golly, we're going to do it. That's how it's going to be.

James: You mean even in these uncertain economic times?

[Laughter]

You'll get some calls. Let's put a phone number up.

Kim, let me ask you, have you watched this quote understanding of *Average Joe* and the extraordinary work God can do, and you've watched the changes in him; he shares in the book that you had a time of some tension come up because he was kind of let's say being really in the wrong way ordinary and not letting the extraordinary come forth.

Kim: I don't know a marriage that would not be honest to say that everyone goes through

that place of fire, and that tempering. I saw my husband struggle the most when he was trying to make his life valuable, not Christ being valuable through him. He was trying to find value in himself in what he could do and that's where we had the most tension in our marriage. I can tell you with certainty, women are not meant to lead a marriage.

And boy, I got beat up because I was getting beat up I would come home and beat up him because I was hurt, you were hurt. Our focus was not on Christ, it was on us. In this life we only have two gears, we're either focused on Jesus Christ or on ourselves. It's a short list. At that time both of us, we knew, yeah, we go to church, we punched the time clock as you said but the relationship was not being nurtured and grown -- that takes effort. And when you crossed that bridge of saying, Jesus plus nothing that's what I want.

Troy: And leading the marriage. I had stepped aside and said, "If you want to go to church, I'll go with you. If you want to pray, okay. We'll do that. Doggone it, I'd rather watch the ball game but okay." It wasn't until I stood up and said, "No, wait a minute. I'm the pastor of my home. There is a responsibility there. That's my job; that's my calling in life." When I took that mantle of responsibility and said, "From now on, we're going together but I'm the guy that God's called to lead this home." Boy, you could just see the health and beauty of our relationship totally change. And not in a "I'm the ruler" kind of guy -- not at all! Our Lord is a servant king. When I serve my wife and lead her in a way that is service and taking her to the arms of Jesus, that's when things changed.

James: That's what you really seek to inspire people to understand the importance of, and I think if you could really recognize and how often you feel overlooked or how insignificant you feel, that we really find our significance in Christ, in a relationship with him. And when he find that, we suddenly -- now if we really listen to Jesus and then we live beyond our world and begin to make a difference in other people's worlds in where they live because we literally release the river of God's love and life toward others. And really, there isn't anyone average, there's just people that feel average. And when they allow God to be who he is in us, it becomes a supernatural...

Betty: I think that it is key, is coming to the realization of who God is and how unlimited he is and wants to be in our lives if we allow him to, if we submit ourselves to him and let him show us who he is, all powerful, he can do all things. And he wants to take us -- he wants us to come as we are. So many times I think we hold back because we think we've got to dress up and be perfect before we even communicate with the Lord. That's not it at all. He says come to me just as you are and I will fill you with my love, with my spirit and let you -- give you that extraordinary because he is the one that is extraordinary.

James: I really do pray people will get the book. Bottom line, what do you hope they grasp when they get through the book?

Troy: The book is not about being mediocre, not at all. The book is about fighting for what is truth and what is right. I love the story of Eleazar, in the book of -- I think it was Second Samuel, one of the three of David's mighty men. The word says that he stood back to back with his king and drew his sword and fought the enemy until he could no longer hold up his sword. He was an *Average Joe*, probably a criminal, an outcast, who knows who he was, just a quick line about him. But here is a man that stood back to back with his king. I want to stand back to back with my Jesus and fight until the day I can't stand up.

James: And that's really what everybody needs to do. I want to recommend the book to you. Also, Kim wrote a book called *Fierce Beauty*. She actually, her dad killed her mother when she was nine and then killed himself and that's a pretty big blow, and is going to require a fierceness even in the realm of faith to find the beauty that God has. These two books are really, really meaningful.

Do you appreciate very much this incredible testimony?

Kim, both of you have been great ministering, a team to help young people. Betty and I have been a team now for soon 50 years, next year we'll be celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary. It's been a wonderful journey. There have been those tense moments. I've been the one at fault more often, none of you had to guess at that, you already figured that out.

[Laughter]

You didn't have to do any big research or be a rocket scientist. But I want to tell you, the thing that has meant so much to Betty and me is living beyond our world. And our viewers tell us, "James, thank you for the inspiration. Thank you for the testimonies. Thank you for the Bible teaching. But we appreciate the opportunity of changing somebody's world with love." I want you to watch closely.

James: When I saw that graphic go up, "no hope," and then "no life," I found myself saying, "Hope lives here. Life lives here" -- the way, the truth, and the life. Don't tell me there is no hope.

I listened to that mother in Madagascar off of the east coast of Southern Africa; all these children are sick, all they need is clean water. We're not looking for a cure for cancer or some undiagnosed disease and we got the cure. If just a cup of water you would give my name, hope said that, life said that -- Jesus said that. "You won't lose your reward." My mind never does race -- I guess I can understand some racing to think what might that reward be?

Betty, there is so much hope and life that God's put in my heart for others that it's reward enough to see that same mother see her children get clean water, to see her friends and their families come to a clean water source and no longer say "no life," "no hope" but have life.

We make that possible. God's love through us, through our viewers, make that possible. Betty and I give to the water well drilling program. We give to every mission outreach we're involved in, our lives, our time, but our resources. Any time -- it's amazing how we give and it's like God blesses where we're able to have more than enough. We keep asking God, "Let us give!"

So I'm asking you, would you do this? We need everybody all over the world, in Australia, you're so wonderful. Thank you! Sometimes I think you're helping us here in North America when we felt some of the weight you haven't felt and yet you've felt tremendous weight through the flooding and the problems you've had. God bless you! Thanks for your help... in the U.K., in Canada, all over the U.S. We need to hear from all of you, our goals of hundreds of wells -- its one well at a time, one gift at a time. Could you give a well?

I pray, Father, today several will give a well. I pray there would be someone today who would give several wells. Say, "I could do it. I've been blessed. I'll do it! Help everyone."

Do you realize \$48, 10 people water the rest of their life? \$144, 30 people water the rest of their life?

If you write a check, make it to *LIFE*; that's what you're giving. Use your bankcard like a check and call us and say, "Here's my gift." Or go online: *LifeToday.org*. It's always wonderful.

If you've made gifts today we got it. We can pass it on to the missionaries and those that are drilling water wells. Thank you for making that call.

We have some gifts to bless you in your spiritual journey and to say thank you for your love. Please make that special gift today. If you should ever get a busy, you just keep calling. Be persistent! Lives do depend on it and we need to hear from every one of you making the best gift you possibly can.

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 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. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything! With your gift today, we can establish and drill 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 impact 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 *Arise*, a beautiful new daily devotional featuring words of encouragement from inspiring women who have shared their faith on *LIFE Today*. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the *Arise* audio visual devotional featuring 40 days of inspiration from *LIFE Today's* favorite women guests.

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 Lion and the Lamb."

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

End of clip

On the Mission Field:

Beth: Isn't she absolutely wonderful? I'm surrounded by children just as precious as she is; children that deserve, just like every other child on the planet, to have a cup of clean water.

Do you realize that of 85% of the children's deaths under five years of age, 85% of those are from waterborne diseases? It is an absolutely critical need, and in many, many cases, a matter of life and death.

Would you consider being part of this with us, part of *Mission: Water for Life* offering a cup of clean water to children exactly like this precious one?

Please, do what you can. Go to the phone and join us in this partnership to give a gift of life through a cup of water.

In the studio:

James: The *Average Joe*, Troy Meeder, *Fierce Beauty*, Kim Meeder, our guests; say thanks to Kim and to Troy again.

Bless you in your work with young people. Thank you for the example.

I do want to remind you, *Indivisible*; get it and let's turn our nation back to stability and security. Thank you so much for your help. Thank you for being such a blessing to us and to others all over the world.

Announcer: Faith, family, and freedom are under attack. As America faces battles within, many wonder where to turn. In their new book, James Robison and Jay Richards call us to stand together before it's too late as one nation truly under God. *Indivisible* -- available in paperback at online and retail bookstores.