

Week 37
9/6/12

James: It's such a joy to share this time with you. All of our friends, this beautiful young lady out here has just been cheering us on. You're so special! And the family. We love you!

>> I love you too!

James: Thank you. We're so glad you share this time with us. I'm James Robison.

Betty and I are thrilled that we have the opportunity of talking to you as well as all our guests here. We have guests today who are a part of an outreach that is called Girlfriends in God Faith Adventure, and these are the Girlfriends in God, three ladies that just have an incredible, incredible story. And Gwen Smith is here with us and her husband Brad.

Now you're going to meet a really beautiful couple but they... you know, it's pretty easy sometimes even as a Christian, doesn't make it right, but it happens, but to compromise in your dating relationship, and sure enough they did. She was pregnant and they made a real bad decision. Bad decision number one was to compromise, and then they're pregnant, and then they made a really bad decision, they aborted the baby, and it took a heavy toll.

Trusting God is a story that three incredibly gifted concerned women that have journeyed and journaled their journey with the Lord in trusting God no matter what, how he will heal your heart and your hurts. When you consider how many people today -- and we've dealt a lot with abortion and the preciousness of life and when so many women have made the decision that's less than best, not only compromising all of sometimes our morals but also with a child's life that has incredible possibilities, how do you deal with it?

Well, let's let Gwen and let's let Brad tell us about it. Would you welcome Gwen and Brad Smith to *LIFE Today*?

Glad to see you. Now I know, Brad, that Gwen is going to kind of carry the story but you all did make a decision that wasn't best and then you made a decision related to the abortion. Is this something y'all decided together?

Brad: Yes, sir, it was a joint decision.

James: Now she's told in, of course, the book how it affected her, but did it have a pretty heavy affect on you too when you realized what you had done?

Brad: Yes. Men have a tendency to compartmentalize things pretty easily but it's had a significant toll on us. By the grace of God, he just allowed us to continue to stay together. The majority of couples never survive that type of fracture in their relationship and that type of decision but by the grace of God, I've never even considered walking away from Gwen even after that decision. By the grace of God, he kept us together.

James: And you have three children now, right?

Brad: We do.

James: How old are they?

Brad: 15, 13, and 11 and we'll celebrate 19 years of marriage this June.

James: Praise God!

Gwen: We're a miracle!

James: Yeah, that's great! And we've got 50 years going so we're a major miracle! That's how big God is.

Now here's what I really want, Gwen, you let our viewers know because you have a real sensitivity to where women are who have made this mistake. You actually backtracked and you couldn't just forget it. What did you actually do, related to this decision you made, when you look back on it?

Gwen: One of the things that God has not only shown me over the years was that when I used to consider what I had done and where I had been, I felt like that disqualified me for anything that was of value to God at this point. God had to contend with me about that and say, "Listen, Gwen, what's done is done. It's done, it's forgiven and you've never been qualified because of what you've done, it's because of what I've done through Jesus." It was that that actually gave me the courage to pursue

coming alongside women and sharing my story and sharing the hope of scripture and God's Word.

One of the ways that God gave me personal healing in my life has -- I actually went to a post-abortive retreat. They also have post-abortive Bible studies that are often sponsored by a pregnancy care centers. It was an amazing -- amazing time of healing where we opened up God's Word, we shared lady to lady, heart-to-heart and just unearthed the truth of forgiveness. But we were also able, in that time, to restore dignity to our child, to acknowledge that you are valid and real. They allowed us to name our child and we even had a memorial service. So there were layers of healing that I wasn't even prepared for.

James: So you recognized that this was a very real person and what happened was very real.

Gwen: Our baby waits for us in heaven and we can't wait to meet it.

James: What did you name the baby?

Gwen: Our baby's name is Ava Catherine.

James: And you feel good about that? In other words, that's a healed heart. You have... because you just mentioned several things like ministries to people who have been through some of this. Do you have a web site that if somebody wanted to go, they say, "Okay, I want to know more about Girlfriends, what you three ladies talk about."

Gwen: That's GirlfriendsInGod.com.

James: Not how to get a girlfriend. This is Girlfriends in God.

Gwen: No, we do get e-mails.

James: I'm sure you do. But they'll help you but if they want to go to the web site, and you have two web sites, if people wanted to know not only about the book and of course, it's in the bookstores, Multnomah's published it but you, I'm sure have it on the web site, but like if they wanted to know, do you all share where these kind of places are that you just referenced? Where would be the web site for them to go to for you to share insights with them? Where would they go?

Gwen: GirlfriendsInGod.com provides an arsenal of topics for women for us to really hit heart issues with women. We have a devotionals archived for years and there's a search bar so if topic search and then there's interactive component of them being able to leave a comment. We get e-mails all the time with Girlfriends in God. My Facebook page lights up every day with women praying for one another, with us talking about real issues and scripture. So Facebook.com/Gwen Smith music is that site. But really, GirlfriendsInGod.com is just a great resource.

James: Do you go out and do concerts, you sing and you minister? You do that? Do you do that as a couple or does she go and you pray?

Brad: She goes and I pray.

[Laughter]

I take care of the three kids that we have while she is gone.

Gwen: I am commissioned and they definitely participate huge.

Betty: Gwen, have you seen through your book and through what God did in your life, have you seen and dealt with a lot of women that have felt like they can't find that forgiveness and go on with their life -- that it's really damaged them?

Gwen: Every single day. That is when God first called me to start sharing my testimony, my deepest darkest secret, of course, I was not excited about it as you can well imagine. I didn't feel it was necessary. But he had a different plan and now I see that when I go there, when I'm willing, if you will, to bring my mess to the table, boy, that's when he does some real excavating in hearts. Because you know, 40% of women have that same testimony of abortion. It is astounding the layers of hurt that are in the hearts out there.

What God has shown me through his Word and through just the redemption and restoration that I've experienced in my life is that's just not Gwen and Brad's story, this is the story for every single person, every single woman, every single man, whose gone to places that they're not proud of, who's been through difficult things. It is not just a hope for us, it is a hope -- it's a promise found in his Word, that if we confess our sins God is faithful and he's just and he's going to forgive it. He doesn't continue to hold that over our heads and he says, "You're free."

Brad: We have a tendency to weight certain sins and certain sins that seem to be so big in our lives that God could never forgive me for that. And yet essentially what we're saying is that the death of Christ isn't enough to pay for that sin. We have to receive that forgiveness. There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. We regret the decision. Oh, it's the worst decision we've ever made but we have chosen to receive God's forgiveness and to move forward in his glory, for his glory.

Gwen: And we don't deserve it.

Brad: Not at all.

Gwen: But grace is not deserved.

James: You wrote a book also called, Broken into Beautiful. You've been broken into beautiful. That's what God does. When we realize, Lord, I missed it, I did make a mess. You make a masterpiece of what I did. Right?

Gwen: And God delights to transform lives. He's in the restoration business. This is what he loves to do. His love knows no end and it is truly about understanding the depths of his love which go way past our past and our pains and our mistakes and our mess to bring us up.

James: Well, he takes broken pieces and creates a masterpiece. You've got a song about Broken into Beautiful. Would you sing that to us? Would you like to hear Gwen sing that song? Hear that message? Broken, literally -- Broken into Beautiful. I know I'm an old guy but I've been broken into beautiful too.

She's smiling on the outside
But she's hurting on the inside
It's getting hard just living anymore
And the shadow she has clung to
Painful things that she has been through
Have left her feeling worthless, Lord
But You change worthless into precious
And guilty to forgiven
Hungry into satisfied
Empty into full
And all the lies are shattered
And we believe we matter

When you change broken into beautiful

We live with accusations
Sometimes heavy expectations
That tell us we could never measure up
And yet you repeat with mercy
That in your eyes we are worthy
'Til at last we see how much we're loved

Because you change worthless into precious
And guilty to forgiven
Hungry into satisfied
Empty into full
And all the lies are shattered
When we believe we matter
When you change broken into beautiful
We can't see how we can stand before you, Lord
We feel valued, priceless and adored
You change worthless into precious
And guilty to forgiven
Hungry into satisfied
Empty into full
You change worthless into precious
Guilty to forgiven
Hungry into satisfied
Empty into full
All the lies are shattered
when we believe we matter
When you change broken into beautiful
Broken into beautiful
Thank you, Jesus

James: Thank you! Thank you, Gwen. Did you write those words?

Gwen: I did, I wrote them with a couple of friends.

James: It is an incredible testimony. Listen, I think -- you know worthless into precious, broken into beautiful? -- Really all of us. God uses broken vessels. People a

lot of times talk about how freely I weep. Sometimes wish I didn't. It's messy.

[Laughter]

You see, shop towels -- Kleenex don't work that well. So literally I get it all over my beard; I weep. But you see, the brokenness in my own life and God putting the pieces back together, it's broken my heart for other people who are broken and hurt. And to me, the love and the compassion, the brokenness, to me it's an expression of what God pours out of his heart toward us; to take the broken pieces of our life and shape them like clay to make something beautiful. And the message really is for you.

The book, *Trusting God*, it's there, it's in the bookstores. And there again is the web site if you want to know how you can communicate with Gwen in some way or perhaps she could minister in your area. But you need to know that right now, God is saying to you no matter where you are, I want to pick up those pieces.

Maybe somebody broke your heart, crushed you, broke the relationship, just damaged you. Maybe religious people or church people hurt you but God wants to -- he didn't do it. It happened but that's life and that's why he came to pick up the broken pieces and put them together and the hurt and healing. Let him do it.

Father, I pray for every person that right now feels like something is going on in my life, I want something beautiful to come of it.

Would you just give God the yielded clay of your life and say, "God, shape it and make something beautiful out of it. Would you please? I trust you. I trust Jesus to be my Lord, my savior. Give me your life and help me share your life with others." That's what God wants you to do.

The telephone number there on the screen, if you want someone to pray with you, don't hesitate to call and say, "Would you pray with me today?" Would be so happy for someone to spend some time with you for a moment.

I want to just say thanks, Brad and thanks, Gwen.

Would you like to just tell Gwen thank you, and Brad thank you for sharing their story and the gift?

I want to say a very direct word of thanks and appreciation to all of you who watch us all over the world and who help us as I've said many times, become an answer to

someone's prayer. We pray, God, what if you get to be God's answer to that need or that prayer. That's really -- it's like a godlike act. It's like Jesus. Would you help us do something very godlike as we look toward -- and I know this is way ahead -- toward Christmas? That we would do something for children for Christmas? I think you'll want to. Watch this very closely.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Unfortunately, there are children around the world who have many different kinds of needs. Some are hungry and thirsty, in need of food to eat or clean water to drink. Others still simply have never had a new pair of shoes or they're unable to smile due to a cleft palate.

>> All year long we come to you and tell you about things that change people's lives, that save people's lives and you're a part of that. I want to tell you what we want to do this Christmas, is we do what is called "Shoes and Smiles." A little child just like this that has a cleft palate, that's never had a real smile, we give them surgery and this little child will have a new smile. Little kids like this that have never had a pair of shoes before in their life, we give them one.

Announcer: A child with bare feet may seem harmless but the potential danger for children living in these types of conditions can be life-threatening.

James: One of the things we found in the Central American countries is that they have a real problem with hookworms, which they get from walking in dirt or sand and then it creates a tremendous intestinal problem.

The answer is just shoes. We can provide literally for some of them the first pair of shoes they've ever had, not only for fun and comfort, but for health.

Announcer: During the past several holiday seasons, *LIFE Outreach* and its missionary partners have passed out thousands of pairs of shoes to children in many different countries around the world. In addition, we have been able to restore numerous children's smiles through corrective surgeries.

>> You know we put smiles on the faces of these children today as we've given them shoes but others need a little more, they need that cleft palate surgery. I hope you can help put a smile on even more children's faces. Do the best that you can and you can give shoes and smiles to children all over the world. So I have a special message just for you --

End of clip

In the studio:

James: You're welcome! You are!

That was our son Randy there with those beautiful children. As I look at them I just -- I love them. How do you not want to take the little children in the arms of God? How do you not want to pick them up and hold them? I love -- I love people! That's the love of God in my heart because I can be a totally self-absorbed person. I've never had any problem thinking about me; I've never really had a problem with that. But this supernatural thing that is so much bigger than I am makes me want to put a smile on a child's face.

That little boy you saw -- that you saw being rolled into surgery. I remember the first time we saw him. He actually saw himself for the first time. He lived where he didn't see mirrors; there weren't even cars around where he lived where he could see his reflection in something. We took a picture of him with us and he was watching. And then they turned around and showed him the image and when he saw his face he pulled back and he ran, he screamed. He had not seen what he looked like or if he ever had he thought it was awful.

It so moved us, I looked at our viewers, and I said, "We want to give that boy a smile. We don't know how we're going to do it," because there were no surgeons where he was. You know viewers like you said, "Whatever it takes." And we got permission and we got visas, we got the ability to move from one country to another to get him to Johannesburg to a great surgeon, and the surgeon donated, in that case, his time because he heard the story.

But somebody like you said, "We will pay to fly him if it takes a private plane, go get him." And somebody like you moved and gave him that smile. He got a smile. Well, we can do that over and over because now we've got doctors in place where we found these children with the missionaries, we can get them to it but we will pay for it. It will cost \$500 to give a smile. So we want to give smiles for Christmas.

But we also want to give the shoes for Christmas, for the little ones, for the older children and these they can wear actually for years; they are adjustable even in size because of the way they're made. They are \$3.60 cents a pair. We want to give 200,000 for Christmas, pairs like this. That means \$36, Betty we've got ten pairs of shoes. So I don't think there is anybody watching that can't help give some children some shoes for Christmas.

Some of you can give the \$500 or \$1,000 and give two smiles or give a smile. But whatever you can do, Betty, I'm praying every viewer will at least do something to help provide the shoes and smiles.

Betty: I think you will because shoes and smiles, what a great combination because we see the smiles come on the children's faces when we put the shoes on their feet. But also we can see the smiles of children that need the surgery to give them a smile that they've never had before. So join with us.

James: We're excited about what we can do to bless you. We always like to say thank you. Our son wrote a book, *God Wants You to Be Happy*. You're going to be happy when you give shoes and smiles but this is about the joy of the Lord. It is a fabulous book. I know our son wrote it but I can't write as well as he can and this is his first book to be published and I promise you, it will bless you. We're sending it for any gift to say thanks.

And we're sending the Christmas ornament to those of you who will make a special gift, we ask you to give \$100 or more, make a special gift to help us provide those shoes and those smiles. And also "The Lion and the Lamb" bronze, this beautiful -- if you make a gift of \$1,000 or more.

Really and truly, at this time of year as you think about Christmas gifts, you could make a sizable gift that would have an incredible impact right now so I pray you'll do it. Would you? Would you dial the number, take your bankcard, use it like a check? Write a check, make it to *LIFE* or you can go to *LifeToday.org* and many of you do that now. It's very convenient and it is an immediate gift and you make that gift. But please, please today give some shoes, give some smiles, whatever you can do, remember ten pairs of shoes \$36. It's big to those children -- that's a real big gift. Thank you for making the gift God put on your heart and that he has enabled you to make.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Poverty is a killer and because of it children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack of food and clean water, but also from a lack of things we take for granted such as a healthy smile or a simple pair of shoes. For most of these children, they've never owned a new pair of shoes and while that may seem minor in light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections that could lead to crippling consequences, disease, and even death.

By responding today, you can help *LIFE* immediately secure and begin shipping Christmas shoes to 200,000 children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will provide 20 pair and a gift of \$144 will help provide 40 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

In appreciation of your gift, be sure to request the inspirational new book, *God Wants You to be Happy* by James and Betty's son, Randy Robison.

With your gift of \$100 to help provide 28 pairs of shoes, you may request this beautifully crafted shoe ornament to place on your tree each Christmas.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide two children with corrective cleft palate surgeries and you may request "The Lion and the Lamb" bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

On the mission field:

Kathy: I've got to ask you to do something for me right now. You've got to look at these beautiful faces of these little boys and girls. They're absolutely little angels and they have one thing in common, they're severely impoverished. There must be a couple hundred here but *LIFE Outreach International's* goal is to put 200,000 shoes on the feet of children like this all over the world. Your gift will not only provide shoes for these precious children but it will also provide smiles, new smiles for the children who need cleft palate surgery.

Would you pick up the phone right now? Would you go online and give a gift, big or small, God can use it and you'll be blessed. Thank you so much!

In the studio:

James: I really do want to say thank you. I think the little shoe is so beautiful. Make a \$100 gift or more if you can. Or if you could give \$1,000 and help us give two smiles and let us send you "The Lion and the Lamb" bronze, it's a treasure. Boy, what a treasure those smiles are. I know you never give to get a gift, you give to give. But we like to give to give, to bless you because you bless others.

I want to again say thanks to Brad and to Gwen Smith for being with us. And the book, *Trusting God* is in the bookstores. Would you join me and Betty in saying thanks to this very special couple?

Thank both of you! Bless your three children! Give them our regards! Tell them we talked about them on television. Okay?

Thank you so much for helping us share smiles and shoes for Christmas.