

Week 40

9/27/12

James: Hey, thank you! Thank all of you. We welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison.

My wife Betty and I are thrilled to have our special guest Ruth Graham with us. I talked to Franklin here not too many days ago and I always ask how daddy was at the time. He said, "Well, daddy's sharp." He said, "It's amazing how keen his mind is." He said, "He's sharp enough he could be preaching."

Well, Ruth is here and I just thank God for the Graham family. I thank God for the friendship we've had with Ruth because she's been our friend for quite a while. We're kind of like family. Would you welcome our good friend Ruth Graham to *LIFE Today*?

Ruth, it's good to see you.

Ruth: Great to see you. Always great to see you.

James: Do you even remember how far back it was and what year; do you remember when you and your husband came down here at Billy's request, your Dad's and some of the others to come down here and help this evangelist? We were really young folks then so you were helping a young evangelist. Do you even remember?

Ruth: I don't remember the exact time but I do remember coming down. I remember meeting you. I remember going to some of your crusades. And we would go along, and then of course we went on vacation together which was probably dangerous.

[Laughing]

But we had a great time. A friendship was forged early on.

James: You wrote a book years ago, *In Every Pew There Sits a Broken Heart*. Why did you write that? Was that just observation in being the daughter of a highly visible evangelist, the most famous in the world and you just saw this?

Ruth: No, I was the broken heart in the pew. I had the mask on and I made everybody think I was fine. You know, I'm fine! I'm fine! I'm fine. But my heart was breaking and I didn't feel like I could tell anybody; I didn't feel like there was anybody I could share

that with because I didn't know whether I'd be marginalized, prayed for -- you know how we love to pray for people in the church. And so I just kept it to myself. But I was breaking inside until I really began to crumble.

I realized that there are so many more people like me. I thought I was alone but I wasn't. There are so many more people sitting in the pew with a broken heart and that's why I wrote that book, to encourage them to know that for number one, they're not alone and that there's hope and we encourage one another.

James: You have been on quite a journey. Your first husband, of course, is deceased, he is with the Lord. Your family has had some challenges, you talk about it. You had a daughter that had some challenges. You have a son that had some challenges. You've experienced personal challenges based on decisions. What do you feel like you're learning and have learned that you want to pass on to others who may be experiencing some of the challenges you've had?

Ruth: James, as you know so well, you and Betty know that I have been called to motivate the family of God, to move by God's grace and unconditional love to places of brokenness to places of healing and wholeness. And that's really what God has called me to do; partly because I've experienced that. And we all have broken places. We have to admit our condition and know that we're all broken. None of us have it together. We love to pretend that all the sinners are on the outside of the church but hello, here we are.

[Laughter]

So we're all broken and we have to be honest about that. Then we have to realize... Examine the brokenness; what caused it, what is it? We need to be honest, we need to tell ourselves the truth and I'm really good at self deception and manipulating advice, manipulating the scriptures to make it suit what I want it to say. I had to learn to tell myself the truth.

I got myself in a lot of trouble by deceiving myself, and healing will only come when we speak truth to God, to ourselves. And once we acknowledge this broken area we then have to acknowledge that it hurts. This is a painful experience, whatever it is that it is and then let it go through forgiveness so that we can grow. As long as we are holding on to these broken places and not dealing with them and keeping them covered over, they're going to fester and like a boil, they have to be lanced. Then we can move on to growing, and to grow you have to be in a community that's authentic.

You have to be in a community that will hold you accountable. You have to be able to be honest with them and transparent with them. They have to be a safe place. I love churches that are safe places. I had the privilege of speaking in a number of churches that are offering safe places to their congregation and healing is taking place and growth takes place.

James: It's like the church is moving from a meeting house to a home setting. It's more like we used to go, it seemed like, to say we checked in and showed up. It's like now they're realizing that God really put us here as a family, as a hospital and a place for people to come who are hurting and to have a family relationship. That's what I hear you talk about as corrective measures; not only what we do individually but what we find our way into. So you're actually saying something to the whole family of faith, to the whole church.

Betty: Isn't a lot of the problem though, as Christians we don't think that we are allowed to admit we are broken or hurting because then that's saying well, we don't have it altogether. We're supposed to --

Ruth: We want to make Jesus look good.

Betty: So if we do too, we think well, our life is destroyed, it's over if we admit something is wrong.

Ruth: But there is such freedom in being honest and transparent. Recently I spoke at George Fox Evangelical Seminary up in Portland, Oregon. I talked about transparency and I shared a little bit of my story and I was transparent with them.

Not too long ago I got an e-mail from one of the faculty up there and he was to address the devotions for his department. And he said, "Because of what you did, you were transparent, I'm going to take the risk of being transparent myself." And he had a story of abuse and he cautiously, with fear, shared his story.

And then he sent me the e-mails and the letters he got back and how people said, "It was a blessing." "It was a gift." "You changed my life." "I'm so glad you shared that." Transparency ministers to people. When we share our story, it ministers.

I often tell the story when I went to church one day, I was sitting in the pew and a friend behind me said, "Oh, how are you, Ruth?"

And I said, "Oh, I'm fine." And put the mask on. During the service the Lord convicted me that I'd lied to her. So after the service I went to her and I said, "I lied to you. I'm not doing fine. Things are not well at my house."

And she said, "Oh, I'm so glad you said that! Because it's not good at my house either! Can we pray together?"

Well, see, if I hadn't been honest with her that ministry never would have taken place. I am convinced that we have to be transparent with each other for ministry to take place.

James: I feel like, and again, you've watched Betty and me up close and personal and from a distance, and I feel like our viewers have seemed to appreciate and respect us not only because God gave us a broken heart for the broken, and our viewers believe if you can actually make a difference in an area of suffering, we would like to help, and they say that. But they also communicate the fact that Betty and I have talked about -- it seems like we talk mostly about my childhood story, where I needed help. And everybody said, "We can easily agree with that."

But when we open up and talk about those challenges or my failure, it is like there is a trust factor and there is an identification factor that comes in to where they say, "I believe he would understand me. He would really still love me if he knew me because after all, he's telling me about his weakness, not telling us about his strengths that we might think we see. He's admitting he is vulnerable. He has failed and he found grace. Now he offers grace."

Ruth: And we can identify with that. We can't identify with perfection and people who have it all together. We just don't because we know our hearts and how we struggle. So it is nice to find a fellow pilgrim who struggles too. And so often these self-help books talk about they want to build on strengths. God wants to build on weakness. As we give it to him, he can build strength out of the broken places.

James: Paul said, "In my weakness He is made strong."

Ruth: One of my core broken areas is abandonment. As a little girl my father was gone so much. As a little girl, I read that as abandonment. He was doing what God called him to do. I'm not blaming, I'm not finger pointing but as a little girl who needed her daddy, and he wasn't home, I saw that as abandonment. When I was dropped off at boarding school with mononucleosis, didn't know a soul there and was isolated in an infirmary, my mother had to go on to Europe to be with my father, I felt

abandoned. When I was first married, my husband went off for two weeks to help rescue a scout that was lost in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and I was abandoned. I'm scared to death. And of course, his --

James: Now he was doing what he should have done, all of them are doing what they should have done but yet it registered with you as here I am alone again.

Ruth: I needed to realize that my security didn't come from others, it came from Christ. But all my life I've made decisions trying to find that security, trying to find that father figure, if you will, and I made terrible mistakes as a result. Now I'm realizing that Jesus is my security. God is my father. Yes, it is wonderful to have father, brothers, friends, but you have to center it on God and that's really freed me up a great deal.

James: I think that we have a real father dilemma, missing fathers, many homes are fatherless. If the father is even there, he doesn't function as a healthy father with a spiritual sensitivity. And then we get a misconception of what this father is like by either not having a father or having a father that's dysfunctional in some way. So I think there is this real crying out for father.

I know for me, not having a father, I long for it; I still long for affirmation. I told you, when we left a meeting earlier, I said I'd probably turn to you and say, "Is what I'm sharing okay?" What am I actually doing? I'm asking the father to say through you, a woman, to say, "That's good!" I still want to hear the voice of the father. I will ask Betty, "How did we do?" So we all have that longing.

Here's the thing that I'm discovering though is that what you just said, we can really develop a relationship with God, it doesn't mean that we wouldn't still have an interest. It's really nice for God the father to have some flesh in front of us to manifest the father's heart to us so there's nothing wrong with that. I really sense you're trying to say to everybody, if we get well on the inside, relate properly to the father we're actually going to reveal the father to a broken world in desperate need of the healing and hope.

Ruth: Yes! That's the whole point of it is to give healing and hope to other people.

James: What do you want to do? Here you are, Billy Graham, Ruth Graham's daughter, named Ruth after mom; what do you want to do now? We have pastors and churches and people all over the world that are saying if you would come to our church, let's say for the weekend and you would speak, do you want to do that? Do

you want pastors and churches to say, "Invite me to come, I would like to share not only from the pulpit, if you want me to share but if you want to have sessions where you have certain part of the church come who maybe are hurting." Or maybe, "I'm in an area where you're ministering to people or maybe everybody is willing to come in and say, 'Hey, we're hurting, let's talk.'" Is this what you want to do?

Ruth: Or if they just want to see what Billy's other kid looks like, that's fine too. I don't care how they get there.

[Laughter]

I just want to minister to them.

James: That's what Billy's kids look like now. Look at the one who's had the most trouble. You can say that. Look at Billy's daughter that had the most trouble.

Ruth: At least the one that's admitted it.

[Laughter]

James: Okay, I'll talk to you all maybe later. See, by the way, I know the whole family and they've all been here. They're our friends and we've just had Tullian on. You've got to be Charismatic to pronounce his name. Then we have a lot of fun and we love the whole Graham family. But the thing about it is, it is an interesting thing when people get to hear -- to say your mom and dad were legends, to say they're great historic Christian figures is almost an understatement.

To meet a daughter and the family in my opinion, because I know them, they love the Lord. And for you to come say, "Here's my journey. Here's one in the family that is talking about where I've been and maybe you and I have had some similar challenges and I'm willing to talk about it because I want to help you, and in this journey we're going to both grow." At least that's what I hear you saying.

Ruth: Absolutely. And I love people and I love looking in people's eyeballs. When I go into a church, I don't stay in the back, I want to meet the people. I'm out there to have lunch with them, if lunch is offered. I want to be with them because I want to touch their hearts. I want to know their hearts. I want to hear their hearts. Knowing that

what God has done in my life and the grace he has given me and I want to pass it on. I want to be a channel of God's grace.

James: And you've seen God work miracles. We talked about your own children facing some challenges. I think probably, I think it might have been from Windsor but some of the letters I got when mom was going through some challenges, was that the one that was probably -- it was awesome!

Windsor was awesome. It was really -- now I'll be honest with you, it was like love letters from Jesus. And it was love for mom, it was love for all the challenges. In other words, you were there. I want to just thank you. Let me just say that your sensitivity, your expressiveness was a wonderful gift from God. So thank you for that.

See you've watched the Lord do some beautiful things. I talked to your son not too long ago. We had a wonderful -- it was almost kind of like a father to son type talk. It might have been more like uncle but it was great that we were able to talk and he knows I have love for him because I've been praying for him from the time he took a hard fall. I never forgot it because we could have lost him out there.

Ruth: Absolutely, he could have been crippled for life.

James: Absolutely. And so we're just thanking God. So see, you're a part of my prayers and mom's a part of my prayers. But you have such an interesting story. I feel like and I've told you this to your face, and I've said it on national and worldwide television, you have a great anointing to communicate. You have a glory on you that comes from the Lord because of what you just said a moment ago. You said, "I really like to look at people. I really care about people." She really cares about people. She would love to be with you. So I'm going to say web site -- what web site do we put up?

Ruth: RuthGrahamandFriends.org.

James: So you go to that web site and then you'll know how to communicate with her. Just say, "We would like you to come." Now let me just say this to you. As an evangelist, take care of her when she comes. Would you do that? In other words, bless her. Bless her life. Say we love you. We want to bless you and we want to invest in what God has called you to do. I'm asking you to do that.

Ruth, I just really pray that God will open more doors to you than you've ever witnessed because I think that much of the church, and it's not just a broken heart, I think there are broken, overlooked and oftentimes, to be honest with you, they're

downtrodden because they've been trodden under the foot of religious people. A lot of people are leaving church because they met people in the church who didn't seem to have met the father. And they've been hurt but you want them to know the Father God, you want them to know forgiveness, you want them to know restoration. Am I right about that?

Ruth: That I have received myself. I'm not speaking from some high place. I've been in the ditch and I know what it is like to hurt. I know what it is like to be dead and alive, lost and found. I know the story of the prodigal. That's my story.

James: And you know what it's like to be the one found in the ditch. And you know what it is to find someone in the ditch. So you know what both sides feel like. I think what I sense God sending you out to do is not only try to get the person out of the ditch of despair and hopelessness, but to get them up to where they are able to reach in and pull people up.

Ruth: That's the whole point. If we're not healed in order to help, then we become stagnant. We've got to flow out.

James: Well, Father, I just ask you to bless Ruth. Bless the whole Graham family and all the kids and grandkids, just the whole family, everything they do. And Lord, I ask in a special way to bless Ruth as she really now says, "Look, I've experienced some things that I know people can identify with. I want to meet those needs in Christ." So Lord, I ask you to enable her in the greatest way ever to do that; in Jesus' name.

Would you just say thanks for Ruth Graham being here and just sharing her heart? I'm telling you, it's awesome.

By the way, we're offering Randy Robison's, our son's book. And let me read what Ruth said about Randy's book because she read it. She said, "If you want to know happiness as God intends it, read this book." That was wonderful! And we're offering this, Ruth this book that Randy wrote about the joy of the Lord and it is absolutely excellent teaching. It's biblical. It is wonderful. We're offering it to all of you who will do this, and I know how much you like this because you're a missionary and you have a mission heart, and your mother's parents were missionaries and they have that great heart.

These shoes that we're giving to little children, we're asking you to help us. We call it Christmas Shoes and Christmas Smiles. We're asking you to help us give 200,000 children shoes for Christmas.

I want you to watch this. I get a smile because I see need, yes, but I think about the joy of just putting shoes on little feet where they never had it. Watch 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: Do you like that?

Betty: I love it! And it's so... it's so exciting to think that some of these children for the very first time they're going to have their first pair of shoes. They may look at it and say, "Oh, good! I've got something to put on my feet." But I look at it as a mother and grandmother saying it's going to help protect their feet from all the disease that can come from just walking around barefooted.

And then, James, just to think about the smiles; I know how excited we were as young parents for our firstborn to be able to smile back at her mom and dad. And some of these little children have never been able to smile because they can't and we can make that difference.

James: When I look at the children my mind right now is racing back at the images. Of course, the children are dancing and they're so excited and they're so happy but I also saw the little children there with their little cleft palate and they were standing there by the other children and I don't know how you see them. I kind of have an idea we identify.

I don't think you look at them and thought that they weren't pretty too. I think you thought they were beautiful too. But I think you would like for them to smile too. I don't know how often they might not feel pretty.

You know being different, just feeling different is one of the big challenges we have in the world... left out, different. We can correct that. Love is the most awesome force on the earth, it never fails. I want to ask you to reach out and touch someone today with love. I want to ask you to dial that telephone number.

If your heart was broken right now, and you said, "I really need someone to pray with me, I'm hurting," you'll be like the thousands of people that call every day because the majority of people who call every day, 70-80% of them, it's still people calling to say, "I need someone to pray with me."

Here during our last week of the Shoes and Smiles emphasis, the Christmas special gift we want to make, we want to ask you to reach out in love and dial that number and say, "Here is my gift to provide shoes." We want to provide 200,000 children a pair of shoes. And we want to give as many as we can a smile; the surgeries cost \$500. We're asking you very directly if you could give \$1,000, two surgeries; could you do that?

We're sending the beautiful "Lion and the Lamb" bronze. It's a collectible, it's an art piece. You don't give to get. We give to you to bless. And these artists say we want to bless the people who help you bless others. So we want to send that if you'll help us provide those smiles.

Then the shoes, \$36, ten children have shoes; they're \$3.60 a pair. \$72 we've got 20. \$144 we've got 40 pairs of shoes. Whatever you can do, we're asking to you make that gift.

Reach out and dial the number. Take your bankcard, use it like a check. If you write a check, call us and tell us what you're mailing. You can go to *LifeToday.org* and make your gift.

We're going to send you Randy's book. Our son wrote, *God Wants You to Be Happy*. We will send you the beautiful little Christmas ornament, the little shoe that's beautiful. Every time you look at it think about those kids smiling right now, around Christmas because we gave them shoes. Please make that gift. Please make that call. If you write a check, let us know you're putting it in the mail. Call us and tell us what it is; would you please? Thank you for doing it.

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.

This is the last week! Please call, write or make your gift online today.

End of clip

On the mission field:

Betty: James, I look around and I see all of these beautiful children and I think it is not things we're trying to give them, it is life through shoes to put on their feet because there are so many diseases that comes from walking around in their bare feet. They pick up so many things that get in their system, in their bloodstream, and it slowly destroys their little bodies. So it's a need that we're asking for. It's not just a luxury. They need our help.

James: It is not even comfort. It's a chance and we're asking you to help make this special gift a reality for so many children all over the world. By making a call or going online, *LifeToday.org* and make the best gift you can because you'll be making the greatest gift, you'll be making the gift of life.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Well, Betty and I want to say thanks so much for your help. We're anxious to send you the special gifts.

I want to remind you that Ruth Graham is available. I'm asking them to put it up right now. There's her web site, *RuthGrahamandFriends*. If you'd like her to come to your church, it would be a blessing. I can promise you, she wants to get straight into the hearts of the people you love as pastors and church leaders. You have a special group. You'll know how to contact her. You'll be praying for her that God will use her at this very special time in her life to be a blessing.

Would you join us again in saying thanks to Ruth?

Ruth, we love you and we're praying for you. We're family! God bless all of you. We're family. Thank you for helping us give shoes and smiles for Christmas in this last week. Thanks for your help.

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* - now available in paperback at online and retail bookstores.