

Week 50

12/3/12

James: Thank you! Thank all of you. You're kind and we appreciate it and welcome to *LIFE Today*.

I'm James Robison. This is Betty, my wonderful, beautiful wife.

You look lovely. She always asks me before we go out, "How do I look?" And she just comes in and models for me. And I'm telling you, you've got to know the right things to say to your wife when they come in and ask you those questions.

Betty: It's a test; isn't it?

James: But I always tell you the truth, you look beautiful and you do!

Now, we have a guest who is a Ph.D. He is a philosopher. He has his doctorates degree yet he has a book with a little kid with a rubber ball on their nose. And this Ph.D., he goes to churches and he believes in Comic Belief, not just relief but belief: *Life Lessons with Laughter*.

Dr. Charles Lowery has a ministry that literally is committed to excellence in our lives. And I think in just the time that I've been with him, and I've listened to what he has to say as he shares with huge groups, he knows what he's talking about. I'm anxious to hear, because if there is one place we need some laughter and some joy that is not put on but it's the real deal, it's in our churches. Wouldn't you agree?

Would you welcome Dr. Charles Lowery to *LIFE Today*?

Charles, good to see you.

[Applause]

I've got to just ask you, when you talk about Comic Belief: *Life Lessons with Laughter*, why do you seem to think laughter is so important?

Charles: Well, laughter really is the shortest point between two people. If you laugh

with somebody you connect with somebody. If you think about the things you remember are probably the things laughed about. And the Bible is full of humor.

Jesus -- the religious people didn't think he was funny now but everybody else did. When he talked about that log in your eye and the speck, they were rolling in the aisles probably, because it was pretty funny in that day. So he used humor. And of course, I believe we can lighten up because God gets the last laugh. So we cannot take life so seriously; we can take God seriously.

Joy is probably the greatest evangelism tool of the church because everybody wants to be happy, everybody wants to see joy, and unfortunately they haven't seen a lot of joy with Christians. The Bible says, "The joy of the Lord is our strength." I tell people most of us couldn't whip a sick rabbit because we've lost our joy. We get too serious, too spiritual, and people say, "Are you sick?"

"No, I'm a Christian. I look a little miserable."

[Laughter]

And if you lighten up emotionally, it comes from physically -- everything is connected. That's what I learned being a psychologist, that it's all connected. You can't take this over here and this over here. So that's my ministry, basically, is putting that in -- using humor, but humor really also moistens the needle.

You can tell people things with humor that they will take, otherwise they would get angry with you or upset with you so you use it as a connection. I tell people, "You've got to connect with people before you convict people." Most church people want to convict people without connecting and that just turns people off.

Betty: And laughter really can bring healing; can't it?

Charles: It really can. Research says if you can just laugh those endorphins in the body help you get better. So laughter is -- a lot of doctors do it for medicine. As a matter of fact, we got that idea from a medical doctor who goes in with -- on his nose, to lighten you up a little bit. So that's what we do. But we're not a comedian, we're a communicator. We only use humor as a tool to enter into somebody's life so that they can get better physically and psychologically at the same time.

James: I've been a good friend with Charles Stanley for a long time. Charles said he

was just talking to God and he said, "Well, why do so many people not like to go to church?" And God said, "Because they've been."

[Laughter]

A lot of times when you go to church and you see people... Charles went on to say that he asked God about that, even a little deeper. And God said, "I don't go much myself." The reason is that where people are all bent out of shape and there is no joy, it seems like there is an absence of the real presence and power of God.

Do you see what I see when you look out at church people? Sometimes it's scary. I preached in churches for 50 years and crusades looking at Christians. And people used to wonder why I was mad. Because they said, "You're an angry preacher." I said, "Well, you just look at church folks all the time, you'd be mad too." Do you know what I'm talking about?

Charles: I use the expression, "Born-again Christians are a bigger pain the second time around because they think they're right about everything and their philosophy is: Do you agree with me or are you wrong?"

[Laughter]

It's tough to be around them; that's why Jesus hung around with sinners. Let's be honest.

[Laughter]

He had his choice and said, "I'm with you guys."

[Laughter]

So that's what the church -- if we are his church, if we are the church of Jesus, and the worst sinners were comfortable around Jesus. The Bible said they were comfortable around him. How can we do that as a church? Let them feel comfortable around us? It's a spirit, really, of acceptance; it's realizing... we get to the point we're really, after a while, we think we deserve to be here, that we're good and they're not. That will kill

you every time. It will kill you from the inside out. You've always got to get to the point of I know why I'm here. We're all defective. We've all been recalled by our maker. And humor is not to degrade somebody. Humor is to point out that we're all defective; we all have got the same problem. And really, nobody does their best.

I love to tell the story about two farmers sitting on a porch and a dog goes by chasing a coyote. And the old farmer turns to the other one and says, "Your dog, he's running pretty good!"

And the old farmer said, "Oh, he's not doing his best."

Then about ten minutes later the dog is coming back the opposite direction, ten coyotes now chasing the dog. And he says, "Now he's doing his best!"

[Laughter]

The fact of the matter is, I don't do my best... you don't either. If we had an honest group here, which Christians, that's hard to do because we'd rather look good than tell the truth. I know that's hard!

But when I go to churches I say, "Raise your hand if you ever told God you'd do something and you didn't do it." Or "Raise your hand if you told God you wouldn't do something and you did it." And they all raise their hands.

James: If they're honest, their hands are going up.

Charles: That's all of us. Even the Apostle Paul, not a teenager, the greatest Christian ever lived said, these things I want to do, I don't do. And so we can rest though because God sent his best. Jesus lived that life we can't live. But the paradox and it's why you can laugh. The paradox is when you give up on trying to live it, then you're able to live it. Then you can relax because it doesn't depend on it.

Just like we saw the rider cut with too much pressure, you can't handle it. And that's the way it is with us. Too much pressure, we can't handle it. It has nothing to do with your salvation; that life has been lived for you. When you relax, that's that perfect love that you feel that cast out that fear. Then you can live by faith; you can really be that person God wants you to be.

James: It's really sad when the one who started it all, Jesus, who paid the price, who

gave his life to give us life, who is alive to live in us and he said, "If you'll take my yoke upon you, its light. My burden is easy." Most people in churches look like they're heavy-laden because they're trying to carry the load that he's ready and anxious to carry if we'll just yoke up with him. And when you get yoked up with him, and the things that seem unbearable become lighter, life becomes brighter and there is joy unspeakable and full of glory. You're not pretending anymore; you're not putting on a facade.

I really think when you put on the cloak of religion you miss the cloak of his righteousness. I'm really sorry to say this but I think a lot of churches are filled with people who have on religious garments. They're not only in situations that make other people uncomfortable or even sick, they nauseate God.

He said, "You say you're rich and increase with good, and don't need anything but you don't know but you're retched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, and you make me sick." It's really too bad. This has to change. You go to Prestonwood Church, which they've taken the Baptist --

Charles: By the way, I'd like to preach a message one time called, "Who Stole the Easy Yoke?"

[Laughter]

Where did that go? And if you notice that scripture says: Come unto me. We come to church, we come to other things but Jesus said, "You learn of me and you'll find out that this is easy." But anything -- I use the word joy, J-O-Y: Jesus, any other thing, and you; any other thing that gets between you and Jesus, whether it is church -- because a lot of people are addicted to church. They just come to church to feel good, to sing and God loves me but they don't change their life. And they go out and have a miserable life and then they want to go back to church to feel good again.

So those people want to go to church all of the time because they don't know how to live but they love church; that's why we end up having church all of the time because they don't know how to live life, they just want to be in church. They get addicted to church and their real life is a mess. And they have no credibility in the world because the world looks at them and said, "I really don't think I want to be like you."

James: Let me ask you a question. What are you going to learn going through this book? Are we going to hear a lot of jokes or are we going to get a lot of counsel?

Charles: We're going to hook you and we're going to teach you some psychological and spiritual principles but you're going to have fun reading it.

James: It says "De-scenting a Skunk" right here. Tell me what that's about: De-scenting a Skunk. I've been around some Christians --

Charles: There's a lot of stinking people out there and you've got to get along with them because they're everywhere. God is still making them; you've just got to get along with them.

So it's a life lesson. It's for men... and women love it because women will read anything. But to get a man to read a book, you've got to be good. You know what I mean? You've got to give them one-liners; you've got to hook them a little bit. So we try to hook them a little bit. I call it -- well, you're from Texas. I call it a long hornbook: A horn on each end, a lot of bull in the middle.

[Laughter]

But it gets the point. We do have a point. It's really like I preach. It's a lot of funny stuff, have a good time, learn a few things and know Jesus. If you look, that's what Jesus... he just went out in the marketplace, talked about real life, real situations, and then in the end said, "This is the way. This is the way to live. This works." And the great thing is the Christian life does work. It's a great life.

James: It really does work. I think -- I want to say to those of you who watch *LIFE Today*, thanks for watching. Thanks for staying with us. One of the things we hear, doctor, is that this doesn't seem to be typical religious programming. It seems like it is real life. It seems like Betty and I really like each other. She's cute and she smiles -- look at this. Get a close up. How do you not fall in love with a smile like that? She got me more than 50 years ago -- she's still got it.

Charles: Well, the question America asks is how did you get her?

[Laughter]

James: That's what everybody wants to know.

Charles: In the south we say you outputted your coverage.

James: How big is God? But people who watch our program, they say, "We don't feel like its stiff old dull religion. We feel like there is a lot of love and that you really care about us. That you wish you could help us. And that you love to help people and you've shown us that it is fun to help people. Just to share life and enjoy life." But a lot of people don't have meaningful relationships. Here we're going to begin 50 years; marriages are tough. What do you say to couples?

Charles: It's a tough time. By the way, your show -- I've watched your show for years and you really come with people rather than come at people. When you come at people, they start to put up the barriers. But you come with them. You're honest and you say this is the way life is. And it's not always good but God's good. This is how we get through it.

Marriage today is under attack. There are so many difficult issues today in relationships. And one thing, I think that we don't see the -- relationships are not secular, they're spiritual. That's why we call it holy matrimony; it's an act of worship. And we look for people to meet our needs that they can't meet.

Jesus met a lady; she had been married five times. She was giving it a whack -- five times! "Surely, there's a good man out there." Five times! And now she is living with a guy. And Jesus says, "It isn't going to happen. You're not going to meet a man, find a man, who can love you unconditionally all the time and give you total forgiveness. You're not going to do it. You're going to feel thirsty, you're going to feel dissatisfied and think there is something else, there is something more."

And then because of our Adam's suit that we got from the Adam's family: As a rule, man's a fool. When he's hot he wants it cool. When he is cool, he wants it hot. Always wanting what's not. As a rule, man's a fool. You know that, don't you?

So we're always thinking, if we can get this other thing, we'd be happy. He said, "No, another man is not going to make you happy. You're going to be right back in the same shape. What you need is living water. You need unconditionally love, total forgiveness all the time. And I'm the only one who can do that. A husband, he'll be a pretty good husband but he'll let you down. He can't be your God."

So when you start to understand that, that you start to focus on God's faithfulness instead of the faults of your mate, when you start to focus on God's promises rather than performance of a mate, it frees you up to love that person the way God wants you to love that person.

As a matter of fact, in First Peter chapter three verse seven, talking to men it says: Men, don't even bother to pray unless you make your wife a partner, and start to understand her a little bit. That's where the power in your life comes from. And once you start to understand that part of the relationship and just to be realistic, our world is so --

I wish I could slap Walt Disney because let's find Cinderella and just wonderful -- she's going to pick up the britches for the rest of your life. Or you find the Prince Charming and he's going to buy you shoes for the rest of your life. But they don't tell us that there's a lot of toad in every Prince Charming. There's a little bit of nag in every Cinderella.

[Laughter]

So opposites attract from a distance but opposites attack up close.

[Laughter]

The very thing that you found this perfect person, they look good, they smell good, they never go to the bathroom. And you get married and then you find out, they don't always look good, don't always smell good, spend their life in the bathroom; you've got a real person. So you got trouble right there.

So we try to teach people you've got to work at it.

James: I love what I'm hearing. If viewers say, "We're desperate," how would they get a hold of you? What web site?

Charles: Just go to Charles Lowery.com, it's pretty easy. It's L-O-W-E-R-Y. And I'm not the singer, Mark. I don't know "Mary Did You Know?" I'm not Mark! So it is L-O-W-E-R-Y. It will have where we're speaking and that kind of thing.

James: And you would come and you try to cover the bases in a day. You actually take the crowd that is seemingly sometimes really needs a resurrection and then you'll spend the day with them and try to help.

Charles: And they need to be hooked. In other words, we have a message that we hook them. "You come back at 4:30, I'm going to teach you this." One of our hooks is: We'll have a miracle at 4:30. It's never been done but it's right up there with the Red

Sea. If you bring your man back at 4:30, I'm going to teach men how to listen.

[Laughter]

You know that's a miracle... but I do it every Sunday. You bring him back, I'll teach him! And then I tell the men, "If you'll come back, I'll do another miracle. I'm going to actually teach women how to appreciate men. And you know that's a miracle too!"

[Laughter]

So we have to hook them to get them to come back. You have to motivate people to come back because they're used to church. Most of them are bored out of their mind at church and they're thinking, I'm coming back again? They're not doing it. So you have to hook them, get the enthusiasm, the motivation.

Because most people, they really want to have a great relationship. Most people know the greatest pleasure in their life will come from relationships, and the greatest pain in their life will come from relationships. So they want to get better at it.

And we teach the same principles like Hewlett Packard, lots of companies we've got to talk to. Same principles because they're God's principles and they work! So if you start to understand how to communicate and how to meet people's needs, great things happen in your whole life.

James: I like you! Do you like Dr. Lowery? Do you like what he says?

There is... there on the screen is the web site. You can go to LifeToday.org and get more information. But write it down, go to his web site and here is Comic Belief, it's in the bookstores or I'm sure you can order it on his web site. I think it would be great if you'd get him to come have a little resurrection party and a little relationship building conference in your church. Pray about that. Encourage others you know.

You say, "You know something? I know someone who can help you." And pass that information on.

Charles, your brother, as a matter of fact, helped us years ago drill a whole bunch of wells by getting the children in his church over in Bossier City, First Baptist Bossier City --

Charles: He got real excited about that. It's amazing. A lot of people want to do good things; they just don't know what to do. And we give them specific things, "You can go do this," they'll go do it.

James: We're asking our viewers to help us feed hungry children and you've let us know that that's one of the greatest joys in your life. I want you to listen to one of our supporters and what he has to say as a businessman about why he loves to share life. Listen to Steve.

Begin video clip

Announcer: He's the owner of a highly successful tortilla business. But nearly a decade ago, Steve Martinez helped feed people in very different and desperate circumstances.

Steve: Well, I worked for *LIFE Outreach*; I worked with them for seven years, was on the mission field feeding children. So I got to see where the money was going; how much of an impact it was making.

Announcer: While Steve and his wife Sarah have always supported mission feeding, over time much of their attention shifted to raising two young boys until they recently saw a little boy named Lazarus on a *LIFE Today* program.

Steve: He was five years old and he was laying there in bed -- on his death bed; he was skin and bones. And Janice, the photographer for *LIFE Outreach* snapped some pictures of him. And on the camera there is a view finder and the little boy asked, "Can I see the picture?" So she turned the camera to him to show him and he just looked at it.

We just lost it because how many times have our kids, my little five-year-old boy Maverick has asked me, "Daddy, can I see the picture? Can I see it?" And so my wife and I really felt like the Lord showed us a part of his heart for these children.

And he led me to a scripture in Ezekiel that talks about Sodom and Gomorrah. And the Lord says of Sodom and Gomorrah, their sin was being overfed and unconcerned, and they did not remember the poor or the needy.

Announcer: Steve's thriving factory continues to churn out thousands of tortillas each day. He is directing even more of his profits to food factories half a world away.

Steve: These kids don't need a cure, they just need food. My wife and I support *LIFE Outreach* because we have seen the need firsthand and we know how effective *LIFE Outreach* has been in meeting that need.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: I want to just say thank you, Steve, you and Sarah. But I wish I could call all of you who are watching, and all of you who have ever helped by name and say, "Thank you." I would like to be able to say thank you to those of you who have never helped but you're about to.

I want you to look at little Lazarus again. I want you to look at his little body. And as you look at that precious little boy, we all prayed what Lazarus needs is a resurrection. Not from the dead but from the death he is facing.

And, Betty, it was quite a miracle when Jesus raised Lazarus. I don't think we have to have as great a miracle but we have to have a great one; it's called the miracle of love, a love for a little life that through whatever circumstances brought him to that place.

And there are thousands of kids right now, not all of them quite at that place. We try to head it off before they get there. But our mission feeding programs have saved now over 10 million lives that we know of, and we've led that many people to the Lord in the areas where we've been feeding them. It's really remarkable because when you show people love then they want to hear the story of love -- God's love.

So what we need our viewers to do, Betty, right now is to go to the phone and do what Steve and Sarah do and that's make the best gift you can. But I've got good news, we just had an offer of a food grant of \$3.8 million if we can come up, in addition to the hundreds of thousands of kids that we're trying to raise money to feed right now, and keep the missionaries there, it takes \$30, \$50, or \$100 to feed three, five, or ten children for the next several months. But we can get this \$3.8 million food grant, which just assists everything we're doing if we can come up with another \$640,000 to guarantee the delivery of it.

That means we're going to have to have some more transport, we're going to have some more workers in place. And we've got to let them know soon because you see, if they put it out, they've got to know it's got to be delivered. I'm glad! That's the way

governments or any nation ought to be when they say, "Okay, we're going to do something for the poor and we believe your people, your workers will deliver it."

Well, that's where you come in. What you give right now in the last days of this mission feeding emphasis, it will be multiplied six times. That means a \$1,000 gift immediately... immediately \$6,000 in its effect -- \$100: \$600 -- \$50: \$300.

Would you dial the number and take your bankcard and use it like a check? That's how you should always use it. Would you do it right now? I mean if you have to run to get it. Come back, get the number written down, call it, and say, "Here it is, the best gift I can."

Lord, I pray you'll direct each person in what they're to give and give them joy in doing it; in Jesus' name.

Would you do it? Would you love Lazarus and others like him? And keep others from getting there and give them a chance at life so we can tell them about the greatest source of love and life, in demonstration, in deed, not just in word."

You can go online LifeToday.org and make your gift. Make a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're mailing it. We have some special gifts for you to bless you and they will. Thank you for blessing others. Thank you so much for going to the phone.

Pre-taped video:

Announcer: At this very moment children are drawing what could be their last breath, struggling to stay alive due to a lack of food. Today you can stop the cycle of death. You can help save a life.

Life's mission feeding teams are in place right now ready to answer the hunger cries of 400,000 suffering children in remote areas of Africa. And now we have a miracle opportunity, a 3.8 million dollar food grant has been offered to us for our mission and relief efforts. All we have to do is guarantee we can deliver the food at a cost of \$640,000. This means your gift today can now have six times the impact. \$30 to help feed three children can have a \$180 impact. \$50 for five children can have a \$300 impact. And \$100 to help feed ten children can have a \$600 impact for feeding.

With your gift you can receive James Robison's newest book, *God of All Creation*. Through his personal observations of animals and wildlife, James shares heartwarming stories and spiritual lessons of God's love and grace.

With your gift of \$125 to help feed ten children, you may request the new *Jesus Calling Devotional Bible* featuring 260 scripture insights from the author of the *Jesus Calling* devotional, Sarah Young.

Finally, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help save the lives of 100 children, which today can have a \$6,000 impact, and you may also request "The Lion and the Lamb" bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty and I do remind you, this is really the last days for you to help us in this emphasis. We come a couple times a year but this is the end of this emphasis. We need to hear from you.

I want to send you a book that's going to bless you. You're going to want to get copies for your friends and family for the holidays. And then I want to also remind you about Dr. Charles Lowery's book. This is *Comic Belief* but I want to tell you something, this is dynamite too and I highly recommend the book. Thank you for helping us.

Would you say thanks to Dr. Lowery for being with us and being a blessing to us?

Thank you, buddy! Bless you!

There's his web site again if you want to get this doctor to come put a smile on your face and mend some broken hearts and relationships. I believe he can do it. Thank you so much for watching!