

Week 3

1/14/13

James: It's a privilege to be here with all of you in the audience, and with you; we welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison.

Betty and I have a beautiful woman who... can you imagine that she would write a book called *God Loves Ugly*. And how can a talented musician, Christa Black, feel like she is ugly? She is a great songwriter.

My goodness! All the people that have endorsed this book from Michael Smith to Natalie Grant, Kari Jobe and Jordan Sparks, I'm telling you, it's fabulous.

She felt ugly. She is going to start out by, I think, giving you a pretty good shock at something. I don't understand. There are a lot of things I do understand about how people might do something but there are some things that happen I don't understand, and that led to a beautiful girl feeling ugly.

A lot of you don't have to have a real blow to feel unattractive. I think so many people feel that way and you're so incredibly beautiful if you could just know it.

Let's welcome Christa Black and let's hear her story.

Christa, good to see you.

Christa: Thank you! Thank you so much.

James: It's really, really tough for people to understand. My mother was raped when she had me and my mother's parents died before she was 11. My mother was pretty and yet she never felt pretty because she felt hurt and used. I guess that gave me a real compassion for what women feel and they need. But how is it you felt ugly?

Christa: Well, I always say that beauty is a perception issue; it is not just a reflection issue. Any time that you look in the mirror and you see someone that is unworthy of love -- the word *ugly* comes out. That's what we think, "Oh, I'm ugly." But really, you're looking in the mirror and you're thinking, "What I am, who I am is not lovable." That comes from all of these experiences that have happened to us. Wounded people wound people so my very first memory of life outside of the home, I had great

parents, but my very first memory of life outside the home was sexual. So every time I did look in the mirror, all I could see were all these horrible things that had been done and said to me. So I lived my life to make up for it.

James: At what age?

Christa: At the age of three. It was my very first memory. When you're that young, I really think that's why the enemy goes after the sexual. I think one in four now are sexually abused. One in three have an eating disorder. I struggled with both.

I really think that if you can get kids young... that's been the hardest thing in my life to overcome because my first belief systems about myself were I'm unlovable, I'm dirty, and I'm ugly, and you behave according to what you believe. So every day I lived that way. I lived according to the belief system that I'm dirty, I'm unworthy of love.

James: What did that lead to? By the way, she tells the story graphically, dramatically but inspirationally in a very meaningful and impactful way, a transforming effect it has. Because we help women who have been abused or trafficked because we help girls and support ministries where they are cutting themselves, where they're bulimic or anorexic or compulsive, and we know how these things happen and how much they need love.

Where did this lead you to, this sense of what happened to you when someone imposed horrific acts on a little three year old to start with? Where did that lead?

Christa: Well, my first time bingeing, which is overeating, bingeing on food, was when I was about eight years old and I stumbled onto late night pornography on HBO down at a friend's house. I ran into the kitchen and I just started shoveling food into my mouth. No one had ever told me to do that. I'd never seen anyone do that, but I was appeasing a heart and a soul that was in constant pain. So I was numbing the monster, so to speak.

Christian -- the Christian drug so many times is food and perfectionism and control. I used food; food was my main drug of choice over the years, and it turned into other things. In high school it was drugs and it was alcohol and then I had a radical transformation with Jesus when I was 18 and so it all went back to food, it all went back to performance.

So *God Loves Ugly* was my story of allowing the unconditional love of the father into those places in my life that I truly believed were unlovable. Because so many times we

go after the bad fruit of our lives; we go after the anger issue or the pornography addiction or the eating disorder or just even the self hatred and insecurity. But when we allow the medicine of his love into those places it displaces the lies with the truth. It displaces the fear, the anxiety, the self hatred and then you begin to change from the inside out. I didn't go after my eating disorder and fix it. I was loved to where food has no...

James: Who did you feel this love was coming from?

Christa: Well, when I was 18, I went to this church with my parents in Canada and my first instrument is the violin and this woman started playing this violin. I let down the drawbridge of my heart enough to where the Spirit of God came in. I was being physically loved. It was like electricity was pulsing through my body and I was experiencing the personification of unconditional love. I got addicted. I had been addicted to everything in the book and tried to fill myself... we weren't meant to be empty. We were created to be loved. Everybody wants love.

Betty: As a three-year-old girl, what was your little mind comprehending? Because you didn't know really there was an emptiness.

Christa: I knew -- that's the thing -- my dad's a pastor.

Isn't it interesting that you can know the Bible backwards and forwards, you can be told by your dad every day, "You're beautiful," "I love you," "you're worthy of love" and yet one lie -- if you choose to take that lie, whatever you believe about yourself is your Bible because you live according to its principles.

So my belief system, I put more weight and the experiences that happened to me than the truth of what the father said about me. That's why I needed an encounter with him. I needed to experience that love.

James: You share in your book that somebody, a boy might have said something that made you feel ugly. What was that?

Christa: Yeah, kids are cruel. Middle school is terrible. I hated middle school... and I was mean too. I was mean because I was angry at myself. But the cutest boy in the school came up to me and said, "You're an ugly dog and neither me or any of my friends would ever, ever go with you." You know you "go together" -- I don't know where we were supposed to go but we go together.

[Laughter]

I took his words and I made it -- I wrote those things on the tablet of my heart and I saw myself for decades -- decades -- as a beautiful woman, I saw myself as a dog because he had said that. I made it a part of my belief system so I lived that way.

James: What changed it?

Christa: That encounter in Canada changed it. And there were a lot "Aha!" moments along the way of Father not being just religion, not being just a story in the Bible and this big robed man in the sky, but the tangible... the tangible hands and feet of loving me into wholeness. I'd lay in bed in the morning and I knew what I was capable of in the kitchen and I would just lay there and I would just say, "Father, you have got to come. You have to come love me. You have to come love these places that I think are so shameful that nobody could ever want me."

And he would come so sweetly and he would crawl down into those places with me, and he would show me the truth over and over and over again to where that is what I got addicted to. I got addicted, not just to loving God but being loved by him. Let me tell you something, loving him is really easy when you know you're loved.

James: Betty struggled with performance. You talked about performance. How did that affect you because you had always to live up to it?

Betty: It's tiring to always feel like you've got to be somebody that somebody else expects you to be or something; that if they really knew what you felt like inside, they would think you were ugly and that you weren't fun to be with, and you wouldn't be a good friend or you wouldn't be a good person.

But like you said, when you receive the love of Jesus and that he is so eagerly waiting to give us his love, if we receive it, to him, and know that you have that relationship with him, it makes all the difference. Then the building process can start, that relationship with him and that love filling you. And then God will show you how to love.

James: She experienced one of the greatest moments of our 50 year journey in marriage when one -- either early in the morning or one night, I walked in and she is crying. She is laying in bed crying and she said, "James, Jesus has been in here holding me. And he's just telling me how much he loves me and that he thinks that I'm wonderful and precious to him. And I don't have to do anything. He just loves me."

Betty: I don't have to perform!

James: It was a very, very powerful moment in her life. And it's very hard to explain; it's just like what you were talking about a moment ago. It was like, honestly, you feel like Jesus picking you up.

I tell our viewers because I didn't have a father and my mother was forced to have sex and ended up having me because a doctor wouldn't abort me. But the thing is that all my life I've played things and nobody ever told me, "That's good." Nobody said, "Way to go! Good catch!" Never heard, "Good throw!" "Good run!" "Way to go, son!" Boy, you long for that.

I'm sorry but don't misunderstand what I'm saying but I hear God a lot. I'll be speaking somewhere, or I'll be talking to someone or maybe sometimes we're doing the television program and I just hear the father say, "That's good, boy! You're doing good." So he really wants to be our encourager and we don't have to perform, he just loves us.

Now you tell the story so well but you are a gifted singer and songwriter. You've written a song, *God Loves Ugly*. I think you said you could actually sing that right here.

Would you like to hear Christa sing *God Loves Ugly*? -- Because it is true!

[Cheers & Applause]

You said that I wasn't pretty
so I just believed you
You said that I wasn't special
so I lived that way
with critical gazes and brutal amazement
at how my reflection could be so imperfect
with all of my blemishes
how could somebody want me

[chorus]

But God loves ugly
He doesn't see the way I see
oh, God takes ugly
and turns it into something

that is beautiful
apparently I'm beautiful
'cause You love me

I tried to clean up the outside
all shiny and new
worked overtime

to thin up and look right
but inside I knew
that deep in the bottom

were secrets I thought

I could try to ignore
old ghosts in my corridors

never get tired

of haunting the past

that's in me

But God loves ugly
He doesn't see the way I see
oh, God takes ugly
and turns it into something

that is beautiful
apparently I'm beautiful
'cause You love me

help me believe

why you love me
when I know you see
you see everything
help me believe

why you love me
when I know you see inside

and you still say I'm beautiful
you're telling me I'm beautiful
you're screaming out, so beautiful!
and I'm finding out I'm beautiful
you're making me

so beautiful
and I can see

I'm beautiful

'cause you love me

Whoa, ohh

James: Christa, I know that you understand what I'm saying. People, no matter who they are or where they are when they fail or they falter, we feel so unlovable. And I think the thing that I hear coming from you, and you are such a beautiful person –

Would you agree? She is anything but ugly! She is just a beautiful person.

[Applause]

She has a great gift but I want all of you to hear this, please. I want you to hear how special you are to God. I don't know where you are. Nobody knows your name. Maybe your own family doesn't seem to even know you're alive. Maybe you're in a nursing home, maybe you're in assisted living, maybe you lost a marriage -- I don't know where you are. I don't know what's going on but I don't really care how deep the pit is or how forgotten you feel, just remember this, this is an incredible story.

Jesus said there was a shepherd. He had 99 safe but there was one lost. And the shepherd left all of them to go for that one. I know what it is like to be that one that seems to be overlooked and forgotten, nobody cares.

I don't know how well we can communicate, I don't know how affective we are, I know we want to be but I just want to tell you this, that the Lord God himself in the form of His son Jesus, the ultimate shepherd is looking for you and nobody is ugly to him.

Christa: Nobody!

James: And he covers all the shame. He took it, he takes the blame. And he wants to focus and let you know how beautiful you are. Focus the attention of almighty God the Father on you, and let you know you are precious and valuable to him.

Father, I pray for every person who feels so ugly or unsightly or forgotten and unimportant that they might realize how important they are to you. They are so special to you that you want to give them a life beyond anything they can imagine. You want to hold them in your arms and you want to carry them through the toughest times of their life. Lift them up with arms of love. In Jesus' name.

The phone number is there on the screen if you want somebody to pray with you.

I've got a little book called *Knowing God as Father* that's a simple Bible study. We would be glad to send it to you. Christa's book, *God Loves Ugly* is available. It's an incredible journey. And the CD, *God Loves Ugly*. Everything she does is beautiful because the God she praises is beautiful. I want you to know that.

But right now we're doing something that I think touches people's hearts as much as anything that you could ever do and that is to give people what we take for granted, to give them clean water. Where they can't go to a tap, they go to a dirty source and their children are dying. It just breaks your heart to see what's happening.

But listen, we can change all that. Boy, if you want people to know the water of life, let's give them Water for Life and watch how quickly they listen.

I want you to listen to this because I promise you, what you see and hear will move you to make all the difference in someone's life and be an answer to their heart cry and their need, whatever it is. Watch this.

Begin video clip:

Subtitled:

>> One year ago, my daughter got sick. She died because of the water we drink.

Jeanne: I just heard Falama's very sad story and it breaks my heart what this woman has gone through. It's like several generations have suffered from drinking this water in her family. Her parents died when she was young. She said no one was there to take care of her.

Her daughter died at a young age and her husband blamed her for it and so he left her. And now this mother is alone taking care of Tiju. You know what? Nothing has changed. They're still having to drink the same water... and that water has death in it. She's very concerned.

She said, "I lie awake at night worrying what's going to happen to my little boy? What will happen to him if I die from drinking this water? There will be no one to take care of him."

This is a desperate situation and we need to stop these generations of precious people in this village just dying off because of water... really bad water. It's making them sick. I know we can change that. We can change this for her. We can give them clean water. And in doing that, we give them life and we stop this generation after generation dying because of water.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: That's another mother and grandmother, that is Jeanne Rogers who accepted Christ when she was a teenager, and her son was actually with her on that trip, that mission trip. Jeanne's talking about what a mother feels. I know when you see that, Betty, and our viewers are watching and thinking about these children, and if we could give them a water well, it saves their lives, stops that death cycle.

Betty: It does make the difference, James, between life and death. As I watched that mother caressing her child's head, trying to comfort, everything that she knows to do to help her child but she is limited. She doesn't have the resources. We can be a part of the solution for helping these mothers care for their children and helping these children live long lives, and that's with the water wells. I hope you will join us and

reach out. If nothing else, just think about the mothers and how much they love their children. I know you'll want to help.

James: We've targeted, let's say, at the request of compassionate missionaries, where we've targeted 500 areas in 12 countries of great need and we're believing God to enable us to drill those 500 wells. As a matter of fact, I'm asking every one of you to pray about drilling a well this year.

Betty, you and I have traveled quite a bit together this year. We wrote a pet book about little Princess and about all of creation; how God teaches us through the little things around us.

And people have brought their children up to me and they'll say, here's a six year old, here's an eight year old, "They drilled a water well, \$4800."

"How did they do it?"

"Well, they went and they raised the money."

I said, "How old are they?"

"Six."

"Eight."

"Ten."

It occurred to me that when we're talking about drilling wells, and there's a world of hurt, what if everyone began to ask God what these little children are asking, "Could I drill a well?" Just make that a prayer request.

But keep this in mind, if we're going to drill those 500 wells, we've already targeted an area, the missionaries, they're hopeful. I think they've probably offered some hope to the people that we believe this can happen, pray! Well, if everybody will do what you can, we'll drill them.

Let me give you an example: \$48 will give ten people water for the rest of their life. Could you do that? \$144, see I believe there are different levels at which we've been enabled to help -- we can do it right now -- will give 30 people Water for Life. There are some of you who could drill a well. If children can, couples can, businessmen can,

moms and dads, grandparents can, study groups, prayer groups, churches can -- it's \$4800.

Could you give \$4800 or maybe \$1200 or \$2400 and pray three people join you or another person joins you? Would you dial the number right now and say, "I want to be an answer to that mother's cry, the need of those children." Give the best gift you can. Use a bankcard like it's a check, that's how you should use them, but make the best gift you can.

We've got some very special gifts for you. We want to give you Water for Life, literally. "*Blessed Mornings & Restful Nights*," Beth Moore's teaching. *Morning and Evening Praise*, beautiful hymns! You're going to love this, and a book to go along with it telling you the stories of the hymns.

You make the gift God's put on your heart. Many of you will want to get the beautiful, special anniversary -- 50th anniversary bronze that we're offering. Water for Life, do what you 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 500 new water wells for remote villages in over 12 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten 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 Beth Moore's "*Blessed Mornings & Restful Nights*," a beautiful new daily devotional to begin and end your day in God's presence.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request *Morning and Evening: I will Praise You*, a two CD collection of 20 instrumental hymns and the companion book that shares the stories behind each hymn.

Also, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well! And be sure to request the limited edition 50th anniversary bronze sculpture, *Living Water* by artist Robert Summers.

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

In the studio:

James: We're so grateful for your help. Thank you! We're anxious to send Beth Moore's -- I love this! "*Blessed Mornings & Restful Nights*," devotions to begin and end your day in God's presence. Who better able to help us than Beth? And then *Morning and Evening: I will Praise You* -- the hymns, praise instrumentals, and then how the hymns came to be.

I do want to say thanks again to Christa Black. Here's her book, *God Loves Ugly*. There's a web site if you just want to see where she is going, what she is doing. Well, there it is.

But I want you to join Betty and me in giving a big thank you to Christa Black. You are not ugly!

Christa: I believe it!

James: And you are not either! God bless you! Thank all of you. Thanks for your help.