

Week 4

1/24/12

James: Thank all of you! You really are a great audience. And you're a great audience, wherever you happen to be watching, at home or wherever you happen to be... traveling. Many times people tell me that they're in a motel or hotel and there we are and so they tune in and listen. Thank you for watching *LIFE Today*.

I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to have a guest that's written a very interesting book titled, *Your Beautiful Purpose*: Discovering and enjoying what God can do through you.

Now Susie was actually here with us years ago when she was overcoming the incredibly destructive impact of Lyme's disease, and really, the aftermath of that continues on where there are still some battles, and that's where you're bitten by a tick. It's very damaging.

But women do have some conflicts and things going on that tear at them and I think that Susie Larson deals with it about as effectively as anyone I know.

Would you welcome Susie to *LIFE Today*?

Susie, good to see you. Glad you're here. I kind of have an idea how you break this thing out. I want you to tell our viewers because I think it is really clear.

Susie: Well, I'll start with I was the poster child of insecurity, of self doubt, of fear of man. And just quickly, when I was a little girl I was pinned down by teenage boys, you can imagine what happened after that. A year later I was jumped by a different group of boys and beat up terribly. So I grew up, even though I had a great family, believing my voice didn't matter, I was safe nowhere. But as a conference speaker traveling around I find that really my struggles were not unique. Women, we deal with insecurity, we're petty, we're gossipy --

James: Even if they're not beat up or they're not raped or molested they have the assault.

Susie: Absolutely. The enemy's tactics are the same. He uses whatever weakness or vulnerability he can to lie to us. So the fire in my bones right now after taking back the land that the enemy stole from me, and seeing what God does with someone who is

just audacious enough to say, "God, do an impossible thing through me." I'm looking at an audacious couple; so you're the poster children for audacity. But my heartbeat really is to motivate, challenge, and inspire women to be and do everything God intended them to be.

I camp on, I live by Ephesians 3:20, and "It is God is able to do abundantly above and beyond all you could ever dare to ask or think." But the clincher that we never hear much about the rest of that verse is: According to his work within you. So oftentimes you see women either getting ahead of God in self ambition, "I want to make a name for myself; I want to do this great thing," but there is a lot of self-stuff involved, or women hiding in self-preservation. And I've really found in my own life and the lives of women I've talk to, these are the prevailing things that keep women back from really living a kingdom call where his kingdom comes and his will is done in and through you. The book is about dealing with all the self-stuff this comes up as we dare to dream with God and be everything he intended us to be.

James: Repeat those two again. There were two of them that you really highlighted. Hit them both again.

Susie: Self-ambition and self-preservation.

James: Would the ambition be like promotion?

Susie: A selfish ambition where you're really building your kingdom under the guise of Christianity. I think God does put sincere desires in our heart and we're all wired different but some will have the drive to make something happen on their own. But I submit to you, whatever personality type that you have, however you're wired, God puts a desire in your heart but as you start to walk it out, the process of delays, the process of being betrayed and rejected and struggling financially, all these things that happen in your life that just sort of seem inconsequential, I believe are training grounds. William McDonald calls it "Training time for reigning time." These are places where we can sort through those self things. So whatever's in us will come up. We like to push it down and go, "I could do this dream or this call if I didn't have to deal with this thing." But this thing is the training place to get you ready to do the call.

I really just have found that God wants to extract from you the very things the enemy would use against you if that thing stayed intact and you went your own way. So he's a protective loving father. He knows what's in us more than we do. It's not enough to have skill or gift, you have to have the character to stand in that place. Because it is

not enough to get there, God wants you to stand there, he wants you to be able to fight there, he wants you to be able win there so you can go on from there.

And I think too often we celebrate skill and ability and giftings and we don't spend enough time on the character process. But God is very protective of us so if we trust his timing, he is going to get at some stuff in us, the self-preservation that keeps us lagging behind when says, "Run! Go!" And the self-ambition keeps us running ahead when he's like, "No, this is a season to wait. Wait on me."

Betty: Or as women, we don't feel significant at all. We don't know that we were beautifully and wonderfully made by God. And that all he has put in us, he wants to let it shine and bloom and blossom and to affect the lives of other people positively.

Susie: That's such an excellent point and it is absolutely true that it's easier for us to believe that we're completely insignificant and that God doesn't want to do something great through us. And what great is, is just different for all of us.

But I often tell women, "You don't have to have perfect thighs to move mountains." We celebrate all the wrong things; don't we? -- The externals? But like some of my greatest faith heroes probably weren't much to look at by the world's standards. You've got Harriet Tubman, Catherine Booth, Corrie ten Boom, these are giant women in the faith because they knew greater was he that is in them. And so for us to access that kingdom dynamic in our lives where we go, "Lord, have your way in me so that your kingdom will come and your will will be done."

The reason I'm so passionate is because you're born for such a time as this. You're living and breathing this hour for a purpose and the world is desperate for the kingdom influence that you're assigned to.

I read a quote once and I don't remember who said it but he said, "A thousand people are waiting on the other side of your obedience." Think about that. So if the enemy can get you to buy into the lie that you really don't matter; everybody else does but you don't. Or really, it's all up to you. So if it's to be, you go make it happen. If you buy into the lie, you miss the best parts of what God wants to do in and through you. And the thing is, we have to see how deeply, deeply loved we are by God for us to ever walk out the purposes of God.

James: And I believe that. By God, because I don't think even a man -- even the best man can make you feel that as fully as a woman wants to feel it.

Susie: Absolutely! And I'll tell you the clincher for me was when I was in the middle of that wilderness season of Lyme disease, babies in the hospital, medical debt, but I was relentless in my pursuit of God. But it truly felt like he had lost my address. I thought, he's not talking to me, and it was just a dry and weary land.

The Lord broke his silence with me one morning because I was like, "Lord, where is the victory? I spend all kinds of time. I'm memorizing scripture, I'm journaling but I get up from this place, I still care way too much what people think of me. I don't think I'm enough of anything. And yet your promises say you want to do this above and beyond thing. But all I can feel is self awareness. All I care about is what people are thinking about me. Where's the victory?"

And what the Lord spoke to me in that moment rocked my world. He said, "I get that you love me. But you don't seem to get that I love you. So until I tell you differently, every time you want to say, 'I love you Lord,'" he said to my heart, "Say, 'you love me Lord.' Turn it around."

So every time I would go to say, "I love you, Lord." I'd hear him say, "Turn it around. Say, 'You love me!'" I'd yell at my kids and then I'd feel bad about it. And he'd say, "Say it now." "You love me Lord." I'd do something great, he would say, "Say it now." And it was like over and over again.

The Bible says faith comes from hearing; hearing the Word of God. When I first started to speak that out I could tell it didn't feel true because it felt like an absolute lie coming out of my mouth. But the more my ears heard my mouth say, "You love me. I'm the object of your affection. You love me. You're not surprised by any of my weaknesses," something healed my soul that nothing ever, ever could.

But I think it's Ephesians one says: To know this love is to be filled with the fullness of God. I feel like if we spend the rest of our life going, "God, increase my capacity to know this love." Then to me the faith walk becomes a get to, not a not to or a should do. But if you don't know the love, you ought to pray. You should, you ought to; you know what I'm saying? But when you know this love, you get to camp in his presence, you get to read his Word. You get to reach out to people that you'll never meet and drill a well for them.

And so to me, walking this whole journey out of our purpose is to live in response to that love. You boil it down, it's that. You live in response to his love. You do the next thing he tells you to do. Then I'll push it a little further and say then I dare you then to

ask him to do the impossible through you. Because if everybody was as audacious as like you people are, imagine what would happen in this world! He's no respecter of persons. He is a respecter of faith. So I do feel the urgency of the hour. And I'm like, "If we can get this, if we can dare to take him at his Word, what could happen in our world today?"

James: I know that when I fail and I do, some of you may be surprised, "You fail?" Oh, frequently! Yes, quite frequently. The amazing thing is that not ever do I feel like God is disappointed in me. Does he know it? Yes. Does he understand why? Yes. Does he know it was foolishness? Yes. Does he know it was rebellion? Yes. Does he know it was stupid? Yes. But he absolutely pours the love on. It's like if you'll just give me the opportunity, I've got the grace, the gifting, the enabling to enable you. And just know I'm not down on you. I'm not putting you down. You dug that ditch, you got in it. I'm here to get you out of it. And that really needs to be the message that we're communicating as believers, that we want to offer that love so people can see it. Because a lot of times we can talk about the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of God, you like some spirit with some flesh on it, that we can see a little bit, see what God's like. I think that's what we must do.

Susie: That is something that burdens my heart as well is we are in process. I marvel that he'll use me on a Tuesday knowing I'm going to blow it on a Wednesday but he still does. He lets us, like we're a toddler carrying this precious heirloom. We carry this treasure in these earthen vessels. So I marvel that God is with us in process but we're not okay with each other being in process. Graham Cooke once said, "God is not disillusioned with you. He never had any illusions about you in the first place."

[Laughter]

I love that! So to really embrace the grace. My boys are in their 20s now but when they would mess up, we would get on their level and we would say, "You are too important to be making decisions like this." And even under discipline, they'd stand up a little straighter because we wanted to call them up. God's voice is always one to call us up because we've got better things to do. I love that about him.

One other thing I want to bring up though too that comes up. When you do finally dare to believe God and I'd be curious if you've dealt with this, everybody I asked has, but when you start to dare to believe him for the impossible, there's going to be some giants in your land: The giants of fear, the giants of the naysayers, whatever it is, there will be opposition because you're not going to take land unopposed. Right? And for me, as things started to open up for me in that way and I started to see fruit and doors

open and God is doing things, this fear thing came up in me that was so strong that it was almost strangling to me.

And very recently, God delivered me in a way that was absolutely miraculous. I've got to share with you, if you don't mind this story. A girlfriend was saying, "I can't believe all the stuff that is going on. God is just blessing you on every side." She's poking at me. She's like, "But you don't seem excited." And she is pinching my arms and like, 'Come on! Get excited!'

I said, "I'm so afraid. I'm excited but I'm afraid."

She goes, "What are you afraid of?"

I said it. It was such a hidden fear; I said, "Fear of exposure."

And she goes, "Exposure?" She's like, "You're the cleanest liver I know. What are you afraid of?" And to see that weird look from a friend was like a gift from heaven because I thought I'm not living a duplicit life; I'm not saying one thing and being another.

So I had to bring that back to the Lord. I'm like, "What am I so afraid of?" God started to unearth something. One morning I'm putting my makeup on getting ready to fly out and I've got to tell you, the fear of exposure, as he started to unearth this... I might just explain it to you.

When I was a little girl, I was one of seven kids and I went with my mom to the grocery store. We were just your basic middle class family trying to make it. We were putting the groceries on the conveyer belt, and my dad was the mayor of the local city so people knew of us, but we were still check to check. We get all the food on the conveyer belt and the cashier says, "Mrs. Ericson, we can't take your check today. Your last one bounced." And my mom was so mortified.

We get out into the car. I couldn't breathe. I'm looking at her and she grabbed the steering wheel and cried her eyes out. And my whole body ached. And this fear of exposure in public humiliation entered my soul. I didn't realize it.

Jump ahead. I'm a young mom with Lyme disease, \$27,000 of medical debt. We're sitting in a packed waiting room, and I'm waiting for one of my boys to be seen; tons of people in this doctor's waiting room.

The receptionist, "Mrs. Larson?"

I'm like, "That's me."

She goes, "We can't see you today. We need a little more than \$5 a month on your account." Everybody looks at me and I was publicly mortified.

You jump ahead. My very first speaking event. I heard the cassette tape after and I got one detail wrong because I had some memory issues with the Lyme disease so it's short term, and I was mortified that I said seven instead of five or whatever. And that enemy was like, "You will certainly dishonor him. At the right time I'm going to humiliate you."

And one thing after another, it's like the enemy wants to put dots out there hoping you'll connect dots, draw a wrong conclusion so you're strangled by your fear.

So here I am, jump ahead to just about a year and a half ago, and I had moments where advancement would happen and I'd be so scared out of my mind that I'm one step away, one wrong move away from dishonoring God and humiliating myself. I can't even explain to you because I never even dared say it out loud.

So I'm sitting at a sink putting on my makeup, that's what we girls do; I just want you to know. I'm doing my mascara. And I actually hadn't dealt with the fear in about a couple of weeks and it was like the Lord himself leaned into my ear and he said, "I expose the wicked. I defend, protect, and vindicate the righteous. Not because they're perfect but because they're mine."

And I literally gasped. What?

And he said it so loud in my ear, "I expose the wicked. I defend, protect, and vindicate the righteous. Not because they're perfect but because you're mine and you are mine."

And I sobbed my eyes out. I tried to reapply my makeup three times and I just kept sobbing it off. I mean I was guttural sobbing because it was like he took a stone out of my soul that was killing certain things in my life.

I want to say the next morning I'm crying, journaling, going, "Oh, Lord, the truth has set me free." I could have told you that up here, but it went right here. I couldn't believe it.

And without a hint of condemnation he said, "Do you remember the time..." And he reminded me of a time from years ago, and in a conversation I exposed another without saying her name. She was somebody that seemed Pharisaical to me and constantly seemed to block things that were important. And without saying her name somebody was like, "Why is this stuff not happening?" And I asked another question, which completely pointed to her. And the Lord took me out to the wood shed like for three days after that. This was several years ago. I almost couldn't move I was under the heavy hand of the Lord.

Here I am, jump ahead now. The Lord's like, "Do remember when that happened?"

And I said, "Yes."

And he said, "Do you see how closely linked your sins are to your fears? Do you see why I need to deliver you from these fears? You sin out of the places of your woundedness. You sin out of the places of your insecurity."

The next morning, I'm journaling again. And the Lord said, "What do you pray every day for the human trafficking victim?"

And without thinking about it, I said, "Expose the plans of the wicked, establish the plans of the righteous." And I have this whole prayer I do for friends that work with trafficking issues. And there was the word again, I didn't even realize it.

And the Lord spoke to my heart again and he said, "Do you see how closely linked your threat to him is with his threat to you? Do you see why we need to deal with these fears and insecurities? Because I'm calling you out and you've got to be whole and you've got to know that you're armed with me."

So when I start to think about, I don't have to be perfect, I've just got to be full of faith. And whoever touches me, touches the apple of his eye. So we are going to go out at times without feeling like we have all the answers, without feeling like we're ready. We're going to get it wrong every once in a while. He's not looking for perfection. He's looking for faith, he's got our back. And when we trust him, we're going to see great things happen and we're going to see our giants go down. But I think it is so important because if we get into striving, we forget that he's God.

James: Do you appreciate what Susie shared? Do you love her testimony?

[Applause]

The book, *Your Beautiful Purpose*. You help us provide water, we'll be glad to send you the book. And it's in the bookstores. You can find Susie if they want to know how to know where you're going how would they...?

Susie: SusieLarson.com.

James: Susie, we're doing something that our viewers love, we're giving life. We call the program *LIFE Today* and we give life today every day and you have a chance to do it in a very direct way.

I want you to watch this very closely. I want you to know this. You are the answer to the concern that is expressed. You are! Not another person, you can't hand this off to someone else, you're the answer. Watch closely.

On the mission field:

>> Welcome to black water. It's a fair description. It's actually the name of this village. And it's a hard one to shake because the toll this black water has taken on its people is not easily forgotten.

Subtitled: It happened so fast. They were so young. I couldn't do anything. I regret it wasn't me.

>> Fernando, a broken man. He watched helplessly as his wife, 15-year-old daughter, and 7-year-old son all succumb to the deadly effects of their contaminated water.

Subtitled: I remember when they played right here. My daughter wanted to become a teacher and my son wanted to become a doctor.

>> Now after the death of his brother, he's turned his attention to the care of his surviving niece, Beatrice. But unless their water supply changes...

Subtitled: I'm afraid that my niece will die like my children did.

Jeanne: God, give him hope. Give him hope in his heart, Lord. It's just so sad. It's sad for us to hear and it's sad for him to relive. But I ask you to bless him for sharing it with us so that we can help so many people. I know that's what you want to bring out of this; in Jesus' name.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: You know when you see a father, an uncle express the kind of concern there, Betty, you see those children going and carrying that water and actually carrying back what they think is hope and life and it is a slow form of death. It just breaks my heart when I know we can correct it.

I'm praying God will let us in my lifetime begin and be able to share water with people all over the world that don't have it. We found 500 areas like that, that area there where we know we can give them clean water if we just have the help to do it, the resources. We need to pay for the wells; we need to pay to get the water to them.

Betty: James, I can just imagine one of these children, they come to you and they say, "I'm thirsty. I need water. I'm thirsty." Do you deny them that water from the only source that they have which you know is diseased water? Of course not! They have to have water. What we're saying is let's give them a choice between clean water, by drilling the wells. They have a choice because James, this is a solution to a lot of their problems, life and death situations.

James: Well, it really does change everything in the whole community. And I've been saying to our viewers and I really want you to catch this vision. If we will give people Water for Life they're going to be open to hear about the water of life, which is relationship with God through Christ who is the water of life.

If you want people to know about the love of God, and know that he really loves them, a demonstration of that love prior to the discussion or declaration of that love is what opens their ears and their hearts. Would you help us drill 500 wells in places just like that? We have targeted that area. I can already tell you, Betty and I are going to give a well for that area. Now I think there are areas right there around them where they're going to need several because it is a pretty big population center. The wells cost \$4800. We asked God to let us do that years ago, to give a well every time the call comes. God answered that prayer. It was a specific prayer, you pray it. But you have to start somewhere. And you can start off in times by saying, "I can't do a whole well right now but I could give \$1200 and pray three other people give \$1200 and then we've got a well." Or "I could give \$2400 and pray it's doubled by somebody else who gives the other." \$4800 is the cost of the well. Do what you can. Make it a goal. By years end say, "I'm going to trust God, as children do, I'm going after a well."

But then remember this because this is where most of the resources come from. People say, "All right, I'm going to do what I can right now." And that's key -- to do what you can right now. \$48, ten people -- his family, ten people, water the rest of their life; \$144, 30 people water the rest of their life.

Would you dial the number, take your bankcard. Please? Just get up and go get the card. You use it for many things that are not really important. This is life-giving, lifesaving. Get the card, make the gift God puts on your heart. Use that card like a check. You write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're mailing it. You can go online LifeToday.org.

We have some very special gifts to send you to bless you in your devotion life, in worship and praise, with the hymns that are instrumental presentations of the hymns you love as well as the book that has the history of how those hymns were inspired and written.

Then we have the anniversary bronze, the 50th anniversary of ministry and yes, our marriage too.

We're asking you to make the gift God puts on your heart. We want to bless you with gifts. As you give the greatest gift, you're giving people a chance at life.

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 going to be sending you the beautiful devotion book, *Blessed Mornings & Restful Nights*. I love that title! Devotions to begin and end your day in God's presence with Beth Moore.

And then *Your Beautiful Purpose*, if you'd like to have it, Susie Larson has written this. I think it would be very meaningful to you. Some of you heard what she shared today and you say, "I'd like to know more of her spiritual insights and inspiration." You help us provide water, we'll be glad to send you the book also.

I want to remind you, if you'll go on LifeToday.org and you click right where we're showing you there on the screen to click, we want to help you with what we call "estate planning." You say, "What is that?" Save money for your family for your future but also do something with all God has blessed you with for eternity. Give us an opportunity to be a blessing to you and your loved ones.

Would you join Betty and me again in saying thanks to Susie for blessing us today?

Susie, thank you! Thank you for the book, *Your Beautiful Purpose*. Thank you for expressing it so beautifully. You're a great communicator. We bless God for you.

Thank all of you for giving us this opportunity to share. And there again, if you want to know how to get a hold of Susie, go on *LIFE Today* and we'll tell you how you can find her and perhaps go where she is or invite her to your area.