

2/14/13

Week 7

Betty: Thank you so much for joining us on *LIFE Today*. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: And we're thrilled to have Jimmy Evans back with us. Now if you watch *LIFE Today* very often, you see him quite frequently. I tell him that we just pay for the television bills and here you've got another television show. We take care of him because we like what you teach. He teaches on marriage and family, and has a television program, and of course, a great church out in Amarillo. And he's one of our apostolic elders at Gateway in Southlake. *Lifelong Love Affair* -- now the subheading: How to have a passionate deeply rewarding marriage -- *Lifelong Love Affair*.

Now Betty and I... 50 years we've been together.

By the way, welcome Jimmy Evans. Here I am talking about his book.

Jimmy: Thank you very much.

James: I guess you just thought they're just going to sit around and talk about your book. Now we're 50 years, and how long did you say? -- Because you're just a novice at this. You don't really know...

Jimmy: You guys are 50 years this year; we're 40 years this year.

James: So you're just a kid.

Jimmy: Well, we're looking up to you guys. We're trying to make it 50.

[Laughter]

James: I know you're excited about this book. You know we have all those special occasions. I don't care if it is Valentine's Day, I always tell Betty, every week should be special. We don't overlook those. We've had some pretty fun times. I remember when we've some real little parties around Valentine's Day.

Betty: Now that's just between us.

James: But here's the thing, if we live in love, the life should be filled with joy. Jimmy, it seems to me most couples don't seem to have that, "passionate rewarding marriage." It is more like hanging in there and just... there doesn't seem to be that joy. When I watch people come to your seminars, which I've been able to sit in on -- you have incredible attendance.

By the way, there's the web site if you want to know how you can find him, say, "Where is he going to be teaching?" Or "How would we get him to come to our area?" Well, there's the web site. You can watch him on their television program and it will bless you continually.

But you may say, "I want him in the area." Or "I want to know where they are. I would be willing to take a day or two and just go and attend it." Well, go to that web site and you can find it. But for you to have spent a tremendous amount of your time writing, and now then you've got a real passion for what you've written here. Why is this something that's so exciting to you now?

Jimmy: Well, we almost divorced. We had a bad marriage and I was a terrible husband, a Christian, went to church every Sunday -- was a jerk, dominant, verbally abusive husband. We almost divorced, but by God's grace we would be divorced.

I was in business. I came in the ministry from business. The way I came into the ministry was that when God healed our marriage people just started coming to us for marriage counseling and we never told anybody that we could help them in their marriages but for some reason they all came to us. And the pastor of the church came up to me one day, that we attended, that I've pastored now for 30 years, he came up and asked me to come on staff as a marriage counselor. So I came on and did pre-marriage and marriage counseling just out of our experience.

Then he left and I became the senior pastor 30 years ago. And then Marriage Today started and all that. But our passion is for marriage, James, because people want to succeed in marriage, but they don't know how. We got married and we loved each other and we wanted to live happily ever after, we just didn't have any skills for it. What we love to tell people is you have a 100% chance of success in marriage. A lot of people are thinking, "Well, maybe it is 50/50." It's 100% when you do it God's way;

God created marriage. And by God's grace, he saved our marriage and we began to learn about marriage and we love to teach people because most people failing at marriage are not evil people that want to fail. They're wonderful people but they don't

know how to succeed. So *Lifelong Love Affair* comes from our 40 years of marriage and our 30 years of ministering to marriages in giving people skills, just very simple skills in how to succeed in marriage.

And one of those skills, if you'll let me talk about just vision for just a minute. A lot of people, and I did not understand the importance of vision. The Bible says, "Can two walk together unless they first agree? -- Amos 3:3. It is a question; the answer is no. You cannot walk together unless you're in agreement. Well, marriage is the longest journey of all. And then Proverbs 29:18 says, "When people can't see what God's doing, they stumble all over themselves. Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained." What it means is, when you get married and you don't know what you're going to do, when you don't have a vision, an understanding, you're not going to be able to be peaceful in the relationship -- you're going to fight. One person has a vision looking this way and the other person is looking this way and they're battling the whole way to see which way they're going to go. But when you get God's vision you see one way, and you live in peace and harmony.

Now Karen and I, our marriage was healed and we had a good marriage. And out of that our marriage ministry came. But one day I was doing a marriage seminar in Oklahoma City and a friend of mine -- there is only one guy that I've ever looked at, maybe with the exception of you, James. There's only one guy I've ever looked at and thought they had a better marriage than me, and it was David Smith. Y'all know David Smith, David and Linda. I was doing a marriage seminar in Oklahoma City; he was there at the time pastoring. And we were going golfing one day, Tom Lane, Clark Witten, and David and myself, and David and I were in the back seat.

So David always bragging on his wife Linda; kind of to the degree that you got sick of it. He was all -- "Linda's so great." "They're so great." You're like, "Oh, can it, David." So we're in the back seat and David looks over at me and says, "Linda and I are going on our vision retreat next week."

I said, "What's a vision retreat?"

He said, "You don't know what a vision retreat is?"

I said, "I've never heard of a vision retreat."

He said, "Good grief! Every year we go three or four days by ourselves, get a hotel room." He said, "In the mornings we wake up and we talk and we pray about every issue in our lives until we believe that we're in agreement about what God is saying."

And we write it down and for the next year that's what we do." He said, "We have five children. We pray for every one of our children individually until we believe we've heard God for that child for that year, and for the rest of the year we do what God says." He said, "Finances, schedule, ministry, every area of our life we pray about." He said, "You cannot imagine what happens when you go on a vision retreat. That's the first half of the day, the second half of the day you have fun. You're romantic, you're together, and you just have fun." He said, "We've done that every year."

And I was with David today and David told me that they've scheduled their vision retreat for this year again. And so this is -- I've known David for 25 years. They still have to this day a fantastic marriage, a fantastic family. And so when he said that, I thought, well, I believe in vision. I was a pastor; I thought I know you have to have a vision for your church. A lot of business people know you have to have a vision for your business. But I never even thought about a vision for marriage.

So Karen and I talked about it. We had a good marriage but we had several areas where we still had friction and one was money, the other one was our children. They were kids, teenagers at the time, and the other was my schedule. And these were areas that if we were going to fight, we fought about those areas. So we had our vision retreat. We had our first vision retreat.

So we went -- someone loaned us a lake house and we went away for four days. And in the mornings we woke up. Now when you take a vision retreat you might fight a little bit. That's okay. Get it over with.

[Laughter]

Just sit down and just talk it out. So we sat down and we talked about every area of our marriage and prayed. We didn't dominate each other. And we just decided we're going to talk until we believe we've heard God.

Some people are seers, some people are hearers, some people are feelers. In other words, when you're talking about vision, Karen is a feeler. When she hears God, it is a feeling. She believes something deeply; it is a deep conviction.

A lot of times I hear or I see. So we sat down and we would talk. And we talked about money, we talked about our children individually, we talked about schedule and ministry and romance and sex, and every part of our relationship until we believe we had heard God and we wrote it down. I'm telling you, when we left that place, our

marriage went from here to here. It was amazing! And we've had a vision retreat every year since and that's been 25 years ago. And so --.

James: And you give David a little credit for that discussion. Did David actually make the book? I'm not sure David ever got to make a book before?

Jimmy: David could not write a book, James, but I wrote it. But what David did do, is he helped us. This *Mountaintop of Marriage*, on our web site, we offer this, this is the workbook. *Lifelong Love Affair* talks about the importance of a vision retreat and many other issues in life; specific skills to help people to have a passionate and deeply rewarding marriage.

James: Do you talk about some other things like you just mentioned some, but how they can actually focus in on the things that need to be a part of that discussion?

Jimmy: That's right. And then *The Mountaintop of Marriage*, this is what you take on your visionary retreat. It actually helps you prepare for your visionary retreat before you go, tells you what to do, what not to do. What to take with you; just the structure of the retreat.

But then when you go on the retreat and you're sitting down talking; there's some questions that you start with. Let me give you an example of this. When you ask people if God put them together, they'll almost always say yes. I'm almost sure that every couple watching right now, if you ask them, did God put you together? Absolutely!

The second question is why? And they'll go, "Huh?" Well, the first question is, why did God put us together? If you answer the big questions, the little questions answer themselves. So you start with the big questions. Why did God put... why did God put you together? James and Betty Robison, God put you guys together to change the world; you know, to help hurting people, to bring the gospel to people that ordinarily would not have the gospel; as well as to build a great family and all the other things that you guys have done.

Imagine -- imagine what your marriage has produced from the Lord. God put you guys together and you know. But you know why. A lot of people fail simply because they don't know what they're trying to accomplish. They don't have a goal. So why did God put you together? Individually, and as a couple, what does God call us to accomplish in the coming year to further his purpose? What's this next year about? What are we trying to accomplish?

And then it says: What are the major ethical and moral standards that we want our family to live by? What are our standards? What are our values in our family?

Here's a good one: what kinds of things would we want people to say in your eulogies when we're gone? My saying is, "When I die, I want a lot of people to show up and cry really hard."

[Laughter]

That's one of my goals in life.

James: Do you ever wonder if anybody would show up?

[Laughter]

Jimmy: I don't want to be ignored, James, when I die.

[Laughter]

But these are the big questions. Then it gets into the smaller questions of children, finances, spirituality -- all those kinds of things. What is your vision?

Okay, so you sit down and you talk and one person has his opinion, the other has an opinion; you may disagree and that's fine. But you make a commitment that says, "We're going to stay in this process until we believe that we're in agreement about what God is saying." And both spouses are going to have input into this. It is very important you don't bully each other and you don't make each other pay a price for saying how they feel. But at the end of this, you have one vision. And Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people cannot be kept together peaceably." That's what that means.

The opposite of that is, when you have vision you're together peaceably. You have one vision for each of your children. You have one vision for your money. You have one vision for what you're trying to accomplish in this next year. And you're walking the path of marriage as partners in an intimate and passionate relationship. Everywhere I go, I teach people how to have a vision retreat. And now thousands and thousands of couples all over the world are having vision retreats. And over and over, we hear back the miracle that's happened. That's one of the simple skills that we talk about in *Lifelong Love Affair*.

James: I almost think we have kind of a vision retreat weekly because we go over things over and over. I don't know -- I'd never really thought about this but I've got to be honest and say that I feel like, this is where we plow along. Could we be doing that?

Jimmy: You haven't succeeded by accident. You have -- when I talk a passionate, deeply rewarding marriage, you have that. Why do you have that? -- Because you're doing things right. And when you do things God's way you thrive and you love each other, you're excited about your marriage. You have a vision for where you're going, you know what you're trying to accomplish. A lot of people -- see, we want people to thrive in marriage.

James: I can see people don't. I can see the desperate need for this. By the way, I'm not downplaying. What I'm saying is I think we found some of that, which is one reason that we're passionate about life and still passionate about one another. And when you were talking about having this vision retreat and having these times of intense discussion, we have those quite often. And we're both comfortable with being intense.

James: Is that why your marriage is so good, Betty?

James: Exactly. Well, she's right. Here's the thing.

Betty: What did you say? I'm right?

[Laughter]

James: No doubt about it. The thing is, she has learned to be so... she's always been strong, but she could back down or be backed down. I never liked doing that. I've never liked to see even a puppy come in the room like this. I sure don't want to see a wife or a woman come in like that. I don't want to see anybody live like that. I don't want to see -- I don't want to see a church full of people dodging like that because they're being preached to. I want them to come in feeling embraced.

So when Betty comes at me, honest to God, we'll be having an argument, I know I'm right, I've got to get her convinced, but she's coming so strong I start cheering for her. Really, I'd get the pom poms and cheer for her because I'm so proud of her for standing her ground, making her point, making sure I hear it; because to me, if couples don't do this, they're really staying in opposite ends of the house. They're in miserable condition.

Jimmy: There is a lot of frustration, there is a lot of animosity, they're not talking. They may feel as though they're going to pay a price if they talk. In one of the principles that we teach, there's proactive communication where you sit down and do it purposefully, that's what you guys do. There is reactive communication, which means we're not sitting down and talking things through so we're reacting to the kids, we're reacting to stress, we're reacting to money.

And then there's radioactive communication -- somebody is going to get hurt. It means that... There are so many things in our relationship that now we can't talk about it without fighting and somebody is going to get hurt. Go back to the proactive communication. When you invest three or four days, don't take the kids -- it doesn't have to be expensive. You can go to a cheap hotel. You can use a tent. Be together, by yourself, go away, and spend time talking and praying and listening to each other. Let your spouse complain and be honest without paying a price. And see marriage is a win/win deal; biblical marriage, no one loses.

And so when you leave a vision retreat successfully, one person hasn't dominated the other or enforced a vision on the other. So we both have two halves of the brain, and when they both get to talk, we get the whole brain.

But when one person tries to dominate the other, you're not going to get the full picture of what God wants. And Karen is like Betty, she's a lioness for God. And I used to kind of beat her down and stuff but she got too healed; she kind of dominates me now. I'm saying that because she's not here. But the point is, she is a strong woman and what I've learned is we make better decisions together, and we make the best decisions when I allow her to speak, I honor what she is saying. I speak, she honors what I say, and at the end of day we just sit down and say, "Here's what we believe God is saying." And it just brings you together.

When we left our first vision retreat -- any time we leave a vision retreat the intimacy is unbelievable. You just don't fight. You want to be together. You just have a sense of excitement. See because when God shows you the vision, it just puts oxygen in your world. It is what you want to do. When God gives you a vision, it is not like you have to do something -- it is you *get* to do something.

James: Absolutely. That's why I've said even here after 50 years of ministry, I feel like my life has just begun. I feel like ministry has just begun. I feel really that's the way God wants us to live. We're just full of life and that flows like a river.

You appreciate Jimmy and what he shares? I really love it. I like it! I'm glad that I can listen to you and not feel deeply convicted that we haven't done something right. I like to hear a guy preach. And I find out, you know what? He's right and it's working and I get to do that. I'm seeing it work. It's not like, "Oh, my goodness." I need to adjust all the time. And it doesn't cause me not to like preaching because he is not always correcting me. I like to say, "Hey! I found out how right that is." Are y'all listening? It's not like I'm thinking I'm above anybody. It's like I found something I'm learning it. But I get... let me tell you, I don't ever read a book to see what it says to somebody else. I read it to see what it says to me. I read the Bible to see it first what does it say to me? I think that's what you're doing when you go off on a vision retreat to find out.

Well, if you'd like to have *Lifelong Love Affair*, we'll gladly send it to you. By the way, there is Jimmy's web site so you can go and find out where he's going to be, where they're going to have a seminar, and you'll always be blessed. You'll always learn so much. I watch a whole family learning together -- thousands of people say, "Boy, I like that!" You can tell it's changing their lives. This book will do the very, very same thing.

Jimmy, we're doing something that our viewers tell us -- and they love everything that we do. It's one reason they watch. They get help when they watch because this is our main ministry is helping the viewer. It is not just thinking about the person on the other side of the world. What we've done by helping you is you notice the person that feels unnoticed. I want you to look right now at some that probably feel nobody... I guarantee you their parents and grandparents notice. The sad thing is they don't get to keep them very long. We can change that.

On the mission field:

Kyle: Desperation at a level most of us will never encounter -- the idea of drinking this. It's almost unimaginable. It's death if you do.

Lena's mom and dad did. Lula's sister did. Fernando's wife did... and so did his daughter and his son. For this to be their only option... for this to be their better choice is a tragedy. It's death if you do... but it's death if you don't and that's a choice no one should have to make.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: And they won't have to if we make the choice to make a difference. Please help them. The missionaries bring us the opportunity. Yes, they bring us their burden, their

broken heart. They bring us the broken heart of parents, grandparents like those you just saw, and they want to meet the need and they're there loving those people. They're telling them God loves them.

And then they found out that Betty and I not only love the missionaries, we love the people they love because God loves them. And then they found out that we've got a lot of friends. We call them Friends for Life -- friends of life. We call them viewers of *LIFE Today* who want to give life today. And they come to us and they say, "We've got an area here where we need a well and the people are so precious." That's how we're able to go into those areas and that's how we've been doing it for so many years.

So we've got 500 areas targeted in 12 countries -- critical needs and we're asking you to drill a well. They cost \$4800 -- that's the average. Some of them are more than that because they're much deeper. There are some that are shallower and it doesn't cost as much. But at this time, it still averages \$4800.

Betty and I asked God to let us give one every time we have an opportunity, and we've been able to do it because God answered our prayer. If you could give a well, we ask you to do it. If you could give part of a well, \$1200 and pray three people join you or give \$2400 and pray somebody else joins you and you've got a well. But here's the thing, Betty, \$48, 10 people like those -- \$144, 30 people have water the rest of their life. There's a level at which everyone can help and I think everyone will want to help. I believe that.

Betty: James, and the hope is, its life if we do. We have to act. We have to do what we know God would have us to do and that's to give them fresh clean water. Give them a choice.

James: Well, I believe you'll give them that choice by you making the right choice. It's very, very simple to, as Jesus said, give a cup of water in his name. We're going to give them Water for Life so we can tell them about the water of life. And really, when people have seen the love of God, it's so much easier for them to believe and understand that God does love them -- they've seen it.

Would you right now reach out and dial that number? Or go to your computer and go online, and a lot of people do this, go to LifeToday.org. Say, "I want to give today." Or you can write a check, make it to *LIFE*. Or take your bankcard, call the number, and tell us what you're mailing in, what you wrote the check for. Would you do that? Or use your bankcard and say, "I want to give it now." If you can give a well, please do it... or part of a well. And don't look lightly at the \$48 that gives 10 people water, think

about those that you just saw. It would have given all of those people life that you just saw. If only they had had the clean water. We can give it if you'll make it possible. 500 areas, we need a lot of help. Could you hit one of those areas and say, "I've got the well there." "Here's my part. I'll take care of 10... or 30."

We have some gifts we want to send you to bless you and encourage you. We want to thank you for sharing life. Please go to the phone or go online and do it now.

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!

End of clip

On the mission field:

Randy: Many of these precious children behind me have lost siblings, playmates to waterborne illnesses. We can stop that cycle of death. It is as simple as giving them a cup of clean drinking water. Each water well will serve about an average of 1,000

people. Look at all these kids behind me. We can reach into areas, this area and so many more just like it, and save thousands of lives.

I pray you'll do what you can right now. Go to the phone, go online, make the best gift you can, and when you do, know that you'll be saving precious lives. Join with us as we reach into villages all around the world with Water for Life.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: From the bottom of our heart we express thanks in behalf of all the parents and grandparents, and all the mission workers. We just bless you for blessing others.

Blessed Mornings & Restful Nights -- we'll send you Beth's devotional book. We'll send you the incredible book on how the hymns came to be, as well as the instrumentals.

I hope you get the anniversary commemorative bronze and help us drill a well. Make a very meaningful gift, every gift is meaningful but some of you can do something perhaps to drill a well -- an entire well or a great part of it -- thank you! And ask for that.

Also, today if you'd like to have Jimmy Evan's book, *Lifelong Love Affair* and learn something about how you can get your vision, let's say really shaped and focused together in oneness, I think you'll be blessed. We'll gladly send it to you. You just help us literally give a cup of water in Jesus' name.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks to Jimmy Evans.

We appreciate you. Tell Karen hello! We love y'all.

Thank you for helping so many people! Thank you! Thank you from the bottom of our heart.

By the way, go on our web site. Get the date for the anniversary conference and come be with us. It will be held at Gateway.