

2/12/13

Week 7

James: We thank our audience here. You're very encouraging and we appreciate this time we get to spend with you. Thank you for sharing it with us. I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

We have a couple today that I think you're really going to enjoy meeting, Erik Van Alstine and his wife, Sandy. Erik has taught a seminar on *Breaking Free*. Robert Morris, pastor at Gateway and I taught a seminar on *Breaking Free: Breaking the cycle of defeat* which really deals with spiritual warfare. This is talking about economic freedom, about breaking free from the bondage that most people -- yes, most -- not many, most people find themselves in; similar to what our country and many nations of the world find themselves in because we've not managed correctly and we really are shackled by these bad decisions and bad ideas and practices -- poor stewardship. This is really fabulous.

As a matter of fact, you may know Rick Warren who wrote *Purpose Driven Life*, leading all time seller... of all time, this incredible book. And his church recommends the book, I mean the teaching series as being one of the best things that they've ever had at their church. Many churches are saying that. We'll tell you how you can get it.

I want you to welcome Erik and Sandy to *LIFE Today*. Would you welcome them? We're glad to have them.

Glad to have you!

Erik: Glad to be here.

James: Erik, you and I met some time ago and I think we really... met because of a mutual friend recognizing we both had a deep concern not only for our nation but for the world; for people to come to know Christ and to know him in fullness and freedom that he offers, and we began to share our concern about how we might really make a kingdom imprint, an impact on the world.

As we were talking you let me know that you had taught this series and it had impacted churches. How did you get interested in talking about financial freedom and

about the bondage that most people live in? Did you find that from personal experience?

Sandy: It's a funny story.

Erik: Yes, we are actually the poster couple for financial failure in our church. We actually built a company up from just a desk beside the bed out of college, up to multimillions in sales and over 80 employees. Sandy and I have both been entrepreneurs for many years. But when that company collapsed we'd been in our church for 20 plus years, and Sandy had just had her sixth child, and so we had a lot to lose and we lost it all.

After recovering from that and finding that people who are going through struggles decided to come to us because you know when you're going through trouble you think, who is the person best to talk about if I'm going through a complete financial meltdown? Oh, Erik and Sandy!

[Laughter]

So they come see us.

Sandy: We've come back from a lot.

Erik: And they saw how we recovered and we're really recovering in God strong, and so two to five people became ten, became... eventually became our most popular adult class. And our pastor said, "You need to put this into a small group curriculum so this could really impact and help other people." So it really is birthed out of our own experience of really going through it.

Happy to say, we've had a lot of strength in a very difficult time because of the things that we've learned. And we're so excited to be able to share that with other people to help strengthen families, strengthen churches, and ultimately, our culture.

Sandy: They say finances being the number one cause for divorce; just to teach people to live within their means and stay out the debt -- our country could learn that.

James: Oh, yes; no question about it. When we met and we talked and we had the opportunity of having some time with you all, you told me a very interesting little experience that you had that became quite significant. And I think it occurred when you were quite young, and as you explained to me you were living in rather

challenging circumstances. I think it would be a blessing to our viewers to hear what basically what you told Betty and me.

Sandy: You've just been... It's such a blessing to be here because you've been such a big part of my life and you didn't even know it, and here we are becoming friends, and to be able to share with you that I didn't grow up in a Christian atmosphere. I did not know God. I did not have a Bible. I did not know who Jesus was, and lived in, like you said, pretty rough circumstances.

And on top of just the financial difficulties and hard times we were going through as a family, my dad coped with it with alcohol and my mom coped in other ways. On top of that we had a pedophile living just a couple doors down, which made for a lot of memories that a little girl should never have to have. So it was very trying times and I had never heard anything about God or Jesus or that there was hope out there.

A neighbor that we had, a wonderful older couple, she would make cookies. So she would kind of draw us in with the cookies and they had a TV. So I would go over there and watch TV now and then. One day I just got captivated by watching someone on TV and he was this -- I didn't know then, but a preacher on TV, and I just watched the whole thing intently.

I remember, I was very young but I just remember fighting back the tears that were coming as I was hearing about this. And it was time for me to go and it was the first time I had ever heard about God. It was the first time I ever heard about the gospel; the first time that I ever heard that He loved me. And I remember saying, "God, if you're there, I want to be like that man." That was my first prayer ever and that man was you on TV. And the more we've gotten to know each other and become friends I can say wholeheartedly God has answered that prayer.

I know you came from a hard background as well, but I tell you, the thing we have in common... one of the common areas that God has made me like you, is I don't see people in need as a statistic. We don't see people -- we see the hungry, we see the thirsty, we see the people, the little kids who need shoes. We don't see a number. We see those people because there is something deep within us.

I was thinking about this just the other day. I remember a time, it wasn't too long after that where school was getting ready to start. And I was one of the kids that I couldn't invite anybody over. I was looking at the clothes that I had and thinking, I just went through a growth spurt, pants are a little too short and that's not in style. Shoes were

making my feet hurt and I couldn't ask for anything new; just feeling real down and not real hopeful about starting school.

And the next morning there were two huge bags on our front porch filled with clothes and hand-me-downs from a girl, and of all things the girl's name was Hope, that was her name. And they had some extra money and it was all hand-me-downs, but I'm telling you what, I put those clothes on and I felt like a movie star. I just looked at my coat and my shoes and I could run in the shoes and it didn't hurt my feet.

I know that those kids, even at Christmas, getting shoes, they're going to be so proud of those shoes, and I know that feeling they're going to feel. I know. It just put so much gratitude in my heart for not only what you spent your whole life doing, but now, to see these people that they're real people, real emotion, real feeling, real need, real despair and we can be hope, so to speak. We can be that person to provide that. Just seeing the children not having water -- water!

I was worried about my pants being too short and shoes a little tight but not to have water. But we can provide that and we see that; we see that it is not a statistic.

James: And that's what love does. I think the whole world needs to see that which never fails, it is love that never fails. It is too seldom practiced. You saw it expressed, it impacted you -- you heard it expressed, it impacted.

Jeff, you and I, and Betty and Sandy have been really praying for people all over the world that they would come to know the freedom and liberty that comes in Christ. Now you all found that and you had a business and you made some mistakes; right? And it collapsed. From those mistakes though you were able to rebuild and have quite a great success. But you also, you mentioned y'all have six children. You've had some challenges there that a lot of people think, well, if you live for God and love God, probably you don't have any real challenges but that's not necessarily the case ever. Tell our viewers some of the things that you all have faced with your incredibly beautiful family. And you do have a fabulously beautiful family!

Erik: We do. And our sons have both had some medical conditions associated with their chests and chest cavities not being able to support proper function and growth of the heart and the lungs. So we had to deal with pretty major surgery.

I think that the godly life is not an easy life. I think a lot of times maybe we have this idea that if we're going to really have an overcoming life we shouldn't have any troubles or things should never go wrong. We're living proof that things have gone

wrong and we've had challenges but Jesus said, "Take heart because I've overcome the world." He didn't say, "You'll never have trouble." He said, "You will have trouble, guaranteed, but take heart because I have overcome the world."

I just think it is encouraging for us to be able to speak from a position of not saying that we've had a blessed life and nothing bad has ever happened to us but to be able to say we have had difficulties but God is still good. And we're glad that we went through all that we went through because ultimately God does work all things together for good for us and we've seen it.

Sandy: And I would never, as hard as certain past circumstances have been, I would not trade a minute of it because it helps me reach people, and it helps me see people, and it helps me see the hurt in people. I can't pass it by -- I can't pass it by. I'm compelled when I see hurting people, when I see children without shoes and... it just compels me. So I would not -- I would not give that up. I don't want to live a life just for myself.

James: You've begun to do something, Betty, we've been helping in the sex trafficking all over the world but you found something happening on the west coast in a metropolitan area where young people, even the boys were actually recruiting girls from their schools into this. Tell us what that has done to your heart and what must be done to offset that.

Sandy: I've had a heart for this just having been... what we call "sexually broken" from a young age. I know, again, what the heart of that -- no little girl wants that. No 12-year-old little girl wants that. And unfortunately, that's the age, that's the average age of a girl who becomes recruited is the age of 12. They don't do it like you see as much on the movies where they come and they just steal you. They have a very detailed plan -- very evil minds. They have a very detailed plan and often they recruit handsome, young boys in the school, 15-16 years old will offer them \$500 or \$1,000 to be part of their team, and they basically court these young ladies. They actually look for girls in church. They want innocent young girls who maybe have never had a boyfriend, never liked a boy. They also look for troubled home situations where somebody won't notice if they're gone. So they have --

Betty: Where they see some vulnerability.

Sandy: Complete vulnerability; somebody who is maybe needing a little bit more attention and it all starts with them reaching out to the girl for just buying them a flower, buying them a little gift and they pretend to be their boyfriend, and then they

wait for them to fall -- from there on there is a very horrible process that I won't go into but they call it "seasoning" which gets them ready for the trafficking industry. But by then, they've already emotionally handcuffed them where they will not leave.

So many people have a misconception of when they see girls on the street, especially underage girls that that's their choice, and just because they appear to be willing and they appear to be fighting back but they really -- most of them have really been brainwashed from the time they are around 12 years old and they really think what they're doing is for the love of a boy, which many times they pretend to be younger and they're actually men, who they think that they're in love with, and then the process just goes downhill from there.

There's actually, now that you mention that, there's a film that we help support called Raped for Profit. It is a film that is a documentary showing exactly how this process happens. And so --

James: Is that something that would be available at a certain point in time?

Sandy: It would absolutely be available. Somebody --

James: Churches could utilize it and people...?

Sandy: In fact, we're hoping the whole nation will look at this film and see how many tickets sold, and bring it to their theaters. But really, what it does is it helps show awareness to the young girls. If they know what to look for -- no girl asked... When they grow up, they don't say, "I want to grow up and be trafficked." No girl asked for this but a lot of times they're really lured into it.

So the documentary just shows the process of what happens to these girls and shows why they can't leave. And then all the -- or I shouldn't say "all," but a large portion of the proceeds go to homes that are able to help these girls have an alternative place because right now, everybody under the age of 18 has to go to juvenile detention. They're treated like criminals.

James: You know Erik, when you hear Sandy's heart and you and I have talked enough about wanting to touch people all over the world, and we've talked about trying to get really the business community, the corporate world, people who have been successful, to begin to focus their attention, just like what Sandy is seeing, and you all have obviously started taking action to do something about it, I think one of the things we want to try to do together and what you're trying to do when you show

people out to break free and get things right from a stewardship standpoint with their own finances, we want to focus the attention of people who are successful, Erik, on the world and how we can make a difference in the areas where people have been hurt and been overlooked and been trampled down. Isn't that what God has put in your heart as a businessman?

Erik: Yes. I think ultimately as an entrepreneur, the goal is to serve, and it is to create value. What you'll typically find is that very successful entrepreneurs... I mean some may be high profile business people are sharks and they do things wrong, but successful entrepreneurs are there because they want to serve, they want to create value and they love to see people's lives transformed.

So I think the whole idea of *Breaking Free* is teaching people how to create value and protect and steward that value. But think about it beyond money. It's how do we create value and really impact the world? What's the value of saving the life of a girl who is trafficked? What's the value of providing water for a village that doesn't even have anything? There's incredible value to create out there and what entrepreneurs do is actually compete with each other to see who can serve best and create value. We're just guys looking to create jobs and help people.

James: You're not the enemy.

Erik: No! No! We're trying to help. And the truth is, what our country needs is to clear the way for the entrepreneurs who will actually create that value. And political issues aside, it is entrepreneurs, it's businesses going out there and serving needs, helping people in every area of life that's really going to impact our country the most.

James: What I'm hearing you say, and what I'm watching with businessmen, I'm seeing something I think is wonderful. I want to see the church become more like a family of faith putting loving arms around a broken world. But I want to see the business community not just say, "Okay, well, we enable the Fed with our taxes and our personal taxes and our corporate taxes" but rather, "We've got the ability to see needs and meet them and to be involved in the community." That's what we are really working toward that.

So you pray for us because we're actually meeting with leaders to try to focus the attention of people who have been successful on a broken world to make a difference because these people know how to make a difference. We know how to generate opportunity and income in that community, and we can also show others how they can do the same thing.

If you appreciate Erik and Sandy, would you just express your thanks?

I want to thank you for loving people the way you do and wanting to help people.

I want to say to you that if you'd like to have the *Breaking Free* series, what he has done, he said, "I'll make it available. I will send it to people who want to learn some of these things that we've learned financially the hard way and how you can come out of it and be a blessing and be blessed to bless. We want to help you."

What we're asking you to do, and they've said this, if you will help us give a cup of water, you'll help us drill a well, you'll give toward the drilling of the well we'll send to you, along with the other gifts that are spiritually inspirational in your life that we want to send you because we always want to bless you. What we found is there's no greater blessing than reaching out to bless others with the love of God.

I want you to watch this very closely because I think you're not only going to be moved with compassion, I think you're going to be moved to action. Watch closely.

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!

In the studio:

James: I hope you'll remember that the beautiful bronze, it's a commemorative, it's our 50th anniversary. And if you haven't gotten the dates to come and be with us for our special anniversary conference, well, you take note of the dates and we want you to come and be with us. We're going to have a couple of days together in the presence of the Lord. Some of you used to attend the old Bible conferences. You're going to say, "You know what? I like that!" You'll see a lot of the ones that we had during those conferences, and we'll have some special times because Beth will be there, you'll look forward to hearing her.

But come and be a part of it. We're sending you her beautiful devotional book to just say thanks for any gift.

I want to mention also, if you'd like to have it, Erik Van Alstine's *Breaking Free* series: Financial strategies that transform debt into wealth. Wow! That sounds like a very hopeful promise. Doesn't it? But truth liberates, and I think you'll be blessed by the insights.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks to Erik and thanks to Sandy.

Thank y'all for sharing. We love y'all! Bless those boys, they're doing well? Battling but they're doing well.

Thank all of you so much! Thank you for being a friend for life!