

3/21/13

Week 12

James: Thank all of you! Thank you very much. Thank you for giving us this opportunity. I'm James Robison.

My wife Betty and I -- my wife of 50 wonderful years and 50 years of ministry, I want to remind you. Please mark this date down. You can go online, LifeToday.org and get more information. You must register. Seating is limited. We want you to come. We want our Canadian friends to come. Some of you down under; Christine Caine is going to be speaking, and Beth Moore, Andy Andrews, our Pastor Robert Morris and many others that you'll see listed, but we want to know you're coming. The 18th through the 20th of July -- Awaken Now. It's a charge. It's a challenge, not just an announcement. It is a necessity.

Betty, I'm positive that Jesus is coming; before he comes in glory, his glory will come on his church, the family, for we will be as a bride adorned in his glory. He's not coming for a defeated, desecrated, divided, dissentious, mean-spirited church. He's coming for a family that has been awakened. I believe we're going to be a part of that. So don't miss it.

We have a wonderful guest. Most of you have heard of the Gatlin Brothers, the Gatlin family. They have a sister who was a part of that group and who was a part of our ensemble praise group when Betty, it was like the church was awakening. The mainline church, Charismatics, Pentecostals, others, were finding a new freedom of expression and LaDonna came and was in our ensemble group with Jeanne Rogers in our great Bible conferences that really awakened so many people to the freedom they could have in worship. Well, LaDonna Gatlin has written a book, *The Song in You: Finding your voice, redefining your life*.

Would you welcome the Gatlin Brothers' sister, LaDonna, to *LIFE Today*?

LaDonna, it's good to see you. We're glad to have you!

LaDonna: Great to be here. Thank you!

James: I want you to tell us, I know you've had kind of an unusual journey. Some of our viewers may want to know a little bit about the Gatlin family and you used to be with them singing and then all of the sudden made a change but you went through some pretty trying moments. Just kind of cut to the chase and tell us a little bit about LaDonna and then what you really want people to know about the song.

LaDonna: Well, I'm the baby in the family; Larry, Steve, Rudy, and mwah. By the time I was less than one hour old my father had a pink ribbon in my hair because he was very proud to finally have a baby girl. He called me "Princess." And he made sure everybody treated me like one. So I have a princess mentality. No, not really!

My dad is my biggest fan and so are my three brothers, and it was a great way to grow up. My mother played piano in the church and she took us to church all the time. Mom and dad took us to church all the time and that's how we learned how to sing.

If you go to my web site you can see some pictures and I think they're going to fly some up here on the screen in a little bit of the three brothers, 2, 4, and 6; they literally were singing at 2, 4, and 6. Rudy had to stand on a Dr. Pepper crate to reach the microphone to be able to sing. And there's a picture of them singing and a very tired looking woman playing the piano in the background; that would be my mother.

Then I came along and the Gatlin Trio became the Gatlin Quartet, and we sang gospel music all over west Texas and all over the world, for that matter; then ended up in Nashville Tennessee in the mid 1970s.

Larry went ahead, as the elder brother -- eldest brother, and kind of paved the way for the rest of us; got a record deal and brought us all to Nashville and we began to sing with him. This whole country music thing just began to blossom and it was like, "Wow! Oh, I guess this is the song we're supposed to be singing." We moved from

gospel to country, and then in that time frame I got married to the love of my life, 38 years to Tim Johnson.

And when Tim and I got married in the mid '70s we just really had a reawakening of our own. I'll tell you what a reawakening is going to a Dave Roever meeting -- you know him!

James: Oh, yeah!

LaDonna: And we were in Nashville at the time and he was having a revival at First Assembly of God Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee. And Tim and I went. We heard his story for the first time and really recommitted our lives to Christ in the mid '70s. And that's when the Lord began to work on us and say, "Hey, I have a different path for you guys to follow, a different song for you to sing," if you will. So we recommitted our lives to Christ.

But then we had to face the Gatlin boys and tell them what our decision was and that was a tough one. It really was. Because my brothers, my family, for that matter had always thought we would always be together as a unit, as the Gatlins. We were called Larry Gatlin, Family and Friends back then. So for little sister, and especially the youngest one and the sister, to say, "Hey guys, I've got a different song to sing," that went over about like a lead balloon, if you can imagine. And there was some hurt feelings for about the first year or so. I understand that, I get that because this really blindsided them.

But we left Nashville and moved back out to Texas and joined Dallas Holm and became Dallas Holm and Praise, which was the musical part of David Wilkerson's crusade ministries at the time.

So that's... the second chapter in the book is called, "Do the Right Thing." Actually the chapters are: Growing up Gatlin and then Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do! And interestingly enough, we end where we begin by doing the right thing, and the decisions that we make define our lives. And of course, the first and most important decision is to make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life. I did that many years ago when I

was a little girl but it wasn't until really the mid '70s that I completely rededicated my life to Christ into ministry and to what he wanted me to do. I think I could have stayed with my brothers. That would have been fine but that wasn't God's best for Tim and me. He had a different plan for us. So I tell people, they went on to produce hit records, I went on to produce two kids. My brothers got famous and I got stretch marks.

[Laughter]

And it's all because I had a different song to sing.

When I say "finding your voice, redefining your life," it is really when you listen to God's voice that you find his voice within you and then you become the person that he created you to be so that you then can sing your song to the world because we are all fearfully and wonderfully made, uniquely made. Every one of us has something unique to offer in God's kingdom.

James: You know when you came with us, do you even know how because I'm not aware of how Jeanne Rogers and our praise team connected. I know we have Dallas; I know Dallas came. I know David Wilkerson and I have been good friends throughout his ministry. I was doing his first Teen Challenge crusades right after he started Teen Challenge and David spoke at a number of my Bible conferences. But how did you end up in our ensemble and doing the conferences with us?

LaDonna: Well, and we loved those by the way. We always looked forward to those.

James: They were a visitation of the Lord. There is no doubt.

LaDonna: I'm telling you, we had some amazing, amazing times at those. Dan Smith was the kind of the musical director that Jeanne always -- the go-to guy, and we had known Dan forever. And now he pastors a church in Fort Worth, Bethesda. So he had known Tim and me from doing studio work and background vocals, and just our musical ministry. So he said, "Hey, we've got some crazy folks over here doing some crazy things for God. Do you want to be a part of it?"

We're like, "We're in! We want to do this!" And those are some of our fondest memories.

James: We actually got to witness the move of God's spirit beyond Pentecostal circles into the mainline churches and it was a real visitation of the Lord, and we were able to bring people in that our Baptist family had never seen -- to see a freedom that was so powerful and the liberty so real. It wasn't anything that people were trained to do, just to fall in love with Jesus like a child loving God, and the liberty was phenomenal.

Oral Roberts came down to the conference and he was sitting with me on the platform. And he said, "I came, James, because I've been watching and I've seen on television some of the things that are happening and I was hearing, and hearing the music." He said, "I had to come and sit here with 12,000-13,000 people and watch as Pentecostals and Charismatics learn how to really enter into praise." He said, "You have literally inspired us in these communities where we thought we knew, you've shown us a liberty and a freedom."

And you saw that, LaDonna. You watched it. It was just really an awakening and a liberty that has really carried on. It started back in those days, you might say, right in the early '80s and on into the '90s, and it has gone all over the world. It was something we watched God do in a very deep way that was totally unexpected and it wasn't anything worked up, it was just a move of God on people that were liberated.

LaDonna: But let me tell you, it's folks like you that had the courage to lead that and to have the authenticity and the transparency to allow the Lord to lead that through you. We owe you and Betty and this ministry a huge, huge thank you for bringing all of that about because you stepped out on a limb. That was a little bit out of your comfort zone.

James: It was scary. It was scary.

LaDonna: But you were a man of God that heard from the Lord and you stepped out

there. And I know you didn't say all of that so I would say this but I see -- you brought in incredible speakers.

Tim and I -- we would just sit there in awe and listen to you and all the other guys that you brought in. It was just -- it was always such a time of -- it nourished our spirits to be there. You actually paid us to do that. And I'm thinking, "I would pay him to let me do this." It was amazing.

James: What happened to us, LaDonna, is we were caught up in that river of God's spirit and love and it wasn't water that you waded in, it was water that just carried. It was beyond us. We just yielded to it, thank God and he carried us along. You experienced the Lord in wonderful ways. Your journey became a little bit in some ways at a point reminiscent of Sheila Walsh, and I was at C.B.N. when Sheila left. What happened to you?

LaDonna: It was November the 19th of 2008 and I had reached the end of my rope. I was officially, clinically depressed. It is called anhedonia, if you want the clinical term. And it means, the short answer or the short definition is emotionally incapable of experiencing joy. You've heard people say, some people see the glass half empty; some people see the glass half full; I couldn't see the glass -- there was no glass. It was utter hopelessness, utter darkness, utter despair and I thought I was always going to feel that way.

I weighed 20 pounds less than I weigh right now. I was under the care of a psychiatrist. I was taking medications for it but I just -- wrong medications, wrong therapy, it wasn't the right thing for me and at the end of my rope.

On a beautiful fall day, it wasn't raining or cold, it was a beautiful sunny fall day in my own living room, I took 31 Ambien and God only knows what all else because after I took those, there were empty pill bottles all over the place. All I wanted to do... and my co-writer, Dr. Mike Marino, a most wonderful Christian man, Ph.D. in counseling. He put it like this. He says, "Nobody really wants to kill themselves, they just want to stop the pain." And I kept thinking, I just want to go to sleep and not wake up

anymore. And that's basically what I was saying. I just want to stop the pain because this darkness and this hole and this utter hopelessness had just consumed me.

With my loving husband begging me to eat, bless his heart, Tim was afraid to go to work in the mornings. He didn't want to leave me by myself. My parents lived right across the street. I was doing everything I knew to do and yet, it is like when a person has cancer, they have to go get the tumor removed. They have to sometimes have radiation therapy or chemotherapy.

My husband is a two-time cancer survivor. We applaud that. Or if you say I'm a heart attack survivor. We applaud that. But if you say "I'm a suicide survivor" people are kind of like -- oh, maybe not so much. And I want to be that voice or that face to destigmatize this. Depression is a disease and thank God it is a treatable disease. I have a Christian psychiatrist; I'm on the right medications. And y'all, this is as sane as I'm ever going to be. So you're stuck with it.

But I want to just say if there is one person listening out there today, if you were where I was on November the 19th of 2008, every day is not going to feel like that. You think it is, but it is not. I'm sitting here today by God's amazing grace. He snatched me from the clutches of death if for no other reason to say to one person listening out there today, there's hope, there's help, and there's healing and there's life after depression.

James: We really need oftentimes with certain challenges someone to walk through it with us. We need help. Confess your sins one to the other that you may be made whole, not feel better -- be made whole. There is something about opening up, getting the right person involved that can be trusted with your dilemma, your heartache, your hardship, your pain, and help you walk through it. Do you agree with that?

LaDonna: No question. Absolutely! We can't do life alone. God created Adam and then he said, "That's pretty good. I think I can improve on that." Then man was not meant to be alone.

[Laughter]

Then he created us.

James: Do you think if our viewers get the book that you wrote, that they will find the insight, inspiration and direction to find some of the answers that they may have been struggling to find?

LaDonna: I do, and I thank God again for the anointing on my co-author, Dr. Mike Marino to answer those questions. He's not too clinical but it is clinical enough to give you action steps. If you're feeling like this, do this. If you're -- but don't do this. And really, steps at the end of each chapter that can help you enact what we've talked about in that chapter.

James: And the book is in the bookstores. Do you have a web site if people want to know where you're going to be, where you're going to speak, where you're singing, what are you going to do?

LaDonna: Absolutely. It's LaDonnaGatlin.com. It's real simple.

James: Find out because it is possible if someone wanted to communicate with you and say, "Could you come help us in our church or in our setting?" It would be appropriate for them to communicate with you through your web site?

LaDonna: Absolutely!

James: I'm telling you, we love the Gatlin family. Thank God for them. Thank the Lord for what I believe is a faithful witness that they've done. Not only have they done a good job but they have said a lot of things and done a lot of things that are meaningful. In the entertainment community, they've been, I'd say, a step up on most all of them.

LaDonna: Thank you. God's been very good to us.

James: I want our viewers, LaDonna, to do something that we have found

indescribable joy doing, and that is joining our hands and joining together to put God's arms around a broken hurting world. You, the viewer, are the ones who tell us what we want to do by saying, "I want to do it." I want you to look at a situation that will move you not just to tears perhaps, not just concern but to very positive meaningful action. And every time we do something important, meaningful, every time we express the heart of God, we're going to experience the life of God in a very special way ourselves. Watch closely.

On the mission field:

Announcer: If brokenness had a face it would be Dalene's -- her spirit, her will, her body. All at the cruel hand of sex trafficking.

Dalene: After my mother died, a lady came and told me she would raise me like her daughter. But instead, she sold me to a brothel to pay off her debts. I have scars from the chains they put on me. They force me to service eight to ten men each night, and we are not allowed to eat or drink unless we do. If girls are disobedient, they're sent away by boat and they never come back. I haven't felt love since my mother died. I want freedom. I want to not live in hell anymore. This life, it is like hell to me.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Betty, you've led an unbelievably sheltered life and when you see something like that, that precious girl, what do you feel inside as just a grandmother, a mother, a homemaker?

Betty: It's because I've been so blessed, it is hard to even imagine what these children go through -- and they are children. And that precious girl thought that a lady was going to take care of her after her mother died. And ever since that lie, the lies have continued. If she doesn't obey what they do, they'll torture her or kill her or who knows what they will do to them. She says she is living in hell.

I would like to know that we can offer her the love of Jesus and let her know there is hope -- there is a life that Jesus wants to give her. There is love out there that we want her to have because someone cares -- because we care.

James: I'm going to... Betty and I love to support what we do. That's our team that's there with them. You make it possible for our mission team to go, to bring back reality. You make it possible for the missionaries to stay there to rescue them. You need to know this, that precious girl has been led to Christ and we were able to get her out of there. Now that's a miracle. In many ways it is dangerous. And there are many times that we don't even let you see or know the faces or the names of the mission workers that are directly involved. It is important.

Many times the cameras are hidden cameras. In some instances, we're able to do what you saw there. But she has come to Christ -- she is out of that hell. It happened because of somebody like you. It happened because of a missionary. It happened because our team went. It happened because somebody like you sent our team and made it possible for the missionary to be there and stay there. Now what the missionaries are asking us to do in order to enable them to keep doing it is to make it possible for them to care for those girls. It takes \$128 right now to rescue a child or a woman or a person out of that hellish traffic, terrible predatory condition that these horrible abusive people have taken her into -- that woman lying, using her to pay her debts, and then putting her in that bondage. We can get them out.

Here's what we ask you to do. Rescue life -- we're going to rescue many children before the predator gets them. We're going to get them out everywhere we can. We're going to put them in a safe haven. We're building *LIFE* Centers. We've built the largest outreach *LIFE* Center in Thailand, which is the sex capital of the world! And it has become a haven, a kingdom of heaven right there in the middle of hell all because of what you've done.

This year we need to restore one of our *LIFE* Centers in the Ukraine where a great part of it, nearly all of it burned. We're going to have \$275,000 in restoration. I'm praying 275 friends will just say, "I've got \$1,000." "I've got \$1,000." And let's knock that out. That's something we didn't expect. But we need to restore that center.

The missionaries are just precious; priceless in the work they're doing so let's restore that. But we need to raise -- we're going to have to raise a million dollars to do what

we've already put our hand to do with the missionaries to help them fulfill the outreach to rescue hundreds and hundreds of children and women from the sex trafficking.

Would you dial the number? Take your bankcard, make a \$128 gift if you can, \$1280 to rescue ten; whatever you can do, help us restore the *LIFE* Center that has been damaged. Please, make the call. Put it on your bankcard; use it like it's a check. If you write a check, make it to *LIFE* or go online at LifeToday.org.

We have some special gifts we want to give you that will bless you; Betty's story, *Free to Be Me*. Many of you are going to relate to it. We'll be so glad to send it to you. The *Life Application Study Bible*, we want to bless you. Thank you for helping rescue these precious women and precious children. We can't do it without you. You do what God puts on your heart.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Human trafficking... it's hard to believe it's happening but at this very moment innocent boys and girls, many very young are being forced into sexual slavery and exploited in every way imaginable and someone must save them.

Through *Mission: Rescue Life* you can help reach, rescue, and restore thousands of children from the horrors of the sex trade in Thailand, Cambodia, India, Ukraine, and many other nations. Your gift today of only \$128 will help rescue a child and change their life forever. And with gifts of \$64 or \$32 we will combine your gifts with others to help reach, rescue, and restore one more child from the horrors of their kidnappers.

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you *Free to Be Me*, Betty Robison's updated account of how she moved from fear and insecurity to true freedom. You'll also receive the companion journal for your quiet time and daily reflections.

With your gift of \$128 or more to help rescue a child, be sure to request your copy of the *Life Application Study Bible*.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help rebuild the *LIFE* Center in Ukraine destroyed by fire or \$1280 to help rescue 10 children, and you may request the limited edition bronze sculpture titled Christian.

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

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Betty and I want to say thanks in behalf of precious women like the one you just saw, and so many little children that we're rescuing before they get them.

Betty's book, *Free to Be Me* -- I like that girl! Fifty years married this year.

Remember the anniversary conference, 18-20 in July at Gateway Church right here in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. You need to preregister.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to LaDonna Gatlin, *The Song in You: Finding Your Voice, Redefining Your Life*?

Blessing to the Gatlin family! Blessings to you, LaDonna.

Thank you for being a blessing to us in so many ways. Thank you for helping us bless people all over the world. Appreciate your help right now and your prayers.

Announcer: Join James and Betty Robison July 18 through the 20th for the Awaken Now Conference at Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas! Featuring inspiring speakers such as Governor Mike Huckabee, Pastor Tony Evans, International Bible teacher and author Beth Moore, New York Times best-selling author and speaker Andy Andrews and many more, including musical guest such as Big Daddy Weave.

Register today for this once in a lifetime event, celebrating fifty years of ministry with James and Betty Robison. Go to lifetoday.org.