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Week 28

Announcer: Coming up on LIFE Today, author, speaker and musician, Jennifer Rothschild explores the questions we ask God when life doesn't make sense.

>> It is as if we have a blanket of faith that we cover ourselves in. And when a tragedy occurs, it puts a hole in that blanket of faith, and that missing piece usually represents questions.

Announcer: Are the missing pieces keeping you from trusting God or are they drawing you closer to him? -- Next!

Music

James: Thank all of you! You make us feel so welcome. We appreciate it. We welcome you. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are glad to be sharing this time on LIFE Today with you. We don't have many people here that we don't already have a friendship and relationship with because of the impact that they've made, either on what they're doing, what they've written, what they're saying or something they have experienced in their life. Now our guest today is a guest that we actually encourage to come back as often as possible because she is such a blessing. Her name is Jennifer Rothschild. She has been blind since she was a teenager and she is a beautiful person. She has written a book and it has a Bible study with it that is packaged as beautifully as I've ever seen. I want to say to LifeWay, you do so much so well. We appreciate all you have done to encourage Beth Moore. I know you appreciate all she's done to encourage you. We just thank God for you. But I think you, in many ways, outdid yourself on this one. It is just fabulous! It says missing -- missing pieces. I teased Jennifer because she is blind, she couldn't see. I said, "Jennifer, I noticed on the back that there's 28 little chocolate spots here but there's only five chocolates left. Where did they go?" And then she confessed that she has an issue with chocolate. She really likes it. Would you welcome Jennifer Rothschild to LIFE Today? Welcome Jennifer. Jennifer, glad to have you here!

Jennifer: Thank you! I'm glad to be here.

James: Do you really like chocolate a lot?

Jennifer: I do! I do! And I must say I probably am capable of consuming 23 pieces at one sitting.

James: Did you ever get like cherry chocolates?

Jennifer: Oh, I love any kind of chocolate.

James: You know what I do? My kids would always give them to me. I don't eat sweets like that now but they would get me the chocolate covered cherries. And you

know how they have a layer in the middle? I was so under control. I would just eat one layer at a time. I would eat that whole layer. It used to be 12 on the top and then the next one, and 12 on the bottom. You think that was good for me?

Jennifer: I think that was pretty compulsive, is what I think -- and impressive! And impressive!

James: Do you have anything on deliverance from compulsive...

Jennifer: I'm not your girl. I've got a chocolate addiction; you probably ought to talk to someone else.

James: All right. *Missing pieces*, what inspired that?

Jennifer: Well, *Missing Pieces* refers to the fact that stuff happens in our life that sometimes doesn't make sense to us and it hurts, it is painful. For me, of course, blindness -- living with blindness is one of those missing pieces that just doesn't make sense. But it is like when something happens, James, when a family member dies or when you pray for healing and God doesn't choose to heal here on earth or when we have prayed for financial provision and we lose a job, it is as if everything that happens like that cuts a hole in our faith. It is as if we have a blanket of faith that we cover ourselves in and when a tragedy occurs, it puts a hole in that blanket of faith. And that missing piece usually represents questions like God, how could you let this happen? Are you fair? Or God, you must really not be paying attention to what I'm going through. I'm not really sure you're really aware, God. Questions -- we've all got them. For me, of course, blindness has given me a classroom in which to ask those questions for many years. But it's only been in the last two or three years, and this is the reason I wrote *Missing Pieces*, that I've had to take those questions from up here and feel them in my heart in a deep place. Because I went through some changes physically and it caused depression, a true full-blown depression -- and I'm a happy girl. I really am a genuinely happy girl. I really do trust God more than my feelings, and this was more than I could manage. When depression lasted so long it invited these questions which ushered in doubt, which made me realize I couldn't handle being blind. I could barely handle being a Christian. And it was through that dark place of those real mysteries of faith, those missing pieces that I realize, God doesn't fill those missing pieces with answers. I still don't understand a lot about faith but what God did for me, which is so much more satisfying, is he filled those missing pieces with himself. And the encounter that I've had with God through this very dark place has been so illuminating to me. It's allowed to ask those questions and realize that God may not give me an answer but if he doesn't choose to give me an answer it is because he's given me something better, which is himself.

James: You mentioned before we came out here and we're going to talk to Jennifer two days this week. Today she said, "I want to talk about these: Are you fair? Are you there? Are you aware? Do you err? Take off on this.

Jennifer: I'll tell you one of the most poignant to me and it is one that resonates with every broken heart is this question of God, do you err? God, do you make mistakes? Because we've been taught in scripture and I trust God and I believe scripture. And we're taught in scripture that God's ways are perfect and his ways are above our ways. But I'll be honest with you, I have really had to encounter the reality that yes, his ways are perfect but they seem more perfect for her than they do for me. They are more perfect for somebody else. I'll never forget the day this came to such a hard reality for me. I'd been given a cassette tape, so this was several years ago and it was of a woman who had shared her testimony. I'd had this tape for years but I had not wanted to listen to it because I knew what it contained. So one day I was going to a summer morning movie when our oldest son was just about three years old and here we were in this movie theater and I was bored to death, you must admit. So I brought my little walkman. As soon as the movie started, I put the earphone in my ear and I pushed play. I was listening to this story of a woman named Marilyn who had the very same eye disease, retinitis pigmentosa that I do. She was ten years older and she described all the ways that she struggled with blindness; I could identify with every one. Then she got to the point in the story where I could no longer identify and I knew what was coming and it took sheer courage to listen to it because she talked about how she and her husband got on their knees and they prayed. Well, I've done that with my husband, and how she cried out to God for healing. Well, I've done that too. And God answered her prayer and it was a bona fide irrational miracle. She could see perfectly. She went to the eye doctor. She had no retina. She could see perfectly. It made no sense. I remember hearing that and having to be confronted with how God's ways are perfect even when they don't feel perfect for me. It was as if I had to look straight into the face of God and at the same time I saw healing, I saw blindness, and saw that both of those answers are perfect answers. I felt as if I had been like Jacob wrestling with God, "I'm not going to let go until you bless me. I'm not going to let go until you heal me." I realized that day I entered into that difficult struggle of asking God, "Are you really perfect? I know you are perfect for Marilyn but are you perfect for me?" I felt like I left that wrestling match with God blessed. I already came into it injured but I left with a deeper blessing because I was able to rest in the mystery. But I don't understand his ways. But he never claimed to be I think or I feel. It really doesn't matter what I think about his ways. He's not I think and he is not I feel, he is I am, and his ways are perfect.

Betty: I can identify with what you're saying because of losing our daughter just not so long ago. We asked all those questions. It's not fair. It's not fair, God. We prayed. We were faithful. We asked for a complete healing and our daughter stood the whole time and said, "I win!" And we did not get the physical healing that we asked for but she did win. She is healed, and she is with Jesus and she's happy. But you know what, I've come away with that and still in this process of healing, from the heartache and hurt

that I didn't ever want to experience as a mother losing her child, but here we are -- it happened. It's real. But I have come away each day knowing and learning. I thought I knew a lot about God. I'm really getting to know him. He is so precious. He weeps with me. He comforts me. He brings me joy. He's with me when I'm angry. He's with me when my heart hurts. But He's also with me at those times when I just want to run around the room and scream and holler. God is so near if we allow him to be. He makes me complete even without my daughter.

Jennifer: You know, Betty, I think one of the things that I learned about asking these hard questions is each question really does represent a broken place of us. Unless we are willing to really take God in his wholeness, in the mystery of who he is, in the things we don't understand, even in the things we don't like, unless we're willing to accept God in his wholeness, we're never going to experience our own. It's just not always going to make sense. I think we all ask that question, "God, are you fair? Your faithful children who serve you suffer. Is that fair?" And I know for me, God has answered that question for me. No, he's not fair. And I don't answer that in the way that you might think.

James: Life is not fair.

Jennifer: Life is not fair. But you know really, God isn't fair. He's divinely unjust and I'm really glad because if God were really fair to us, we would get what we deserve. And what we deserve in this life is separation from him, and it's separation for eternity -- that's what we deserve! But Psalm 103 says he doesn't treat us like our sins deserve. But as far as the east is from the west, so far has he separated our sins from us. I'm glad God isn't fair. So this same divine unfairness that allows us to be spared from our sin and the consequences of our sin is that same sweetness of God, his hard mercy that allows us to share in suffering and to cry and to feel that loss and to feel that pain. But I'm convinced he is a compassionate and good God and that's what he allows -- it has to be because his ways are perfect. When we rest in his ways then we find that we can rest in his heart.

James: Here's the thing, Jennifer that comes to me. When you went through your depression, we're going to talk a little bit more about it and you're going to share on the next program about a song, "Take Me to the Cross" that you wrote. I didn't know you sang. You'll hear her sing in the next program -- it's quite beautiful. But in those moments like that, when we reach that point of despair, we've been able to find hope. A lot of times we get encouragement from a friend. There are many of you watching us today, this is what really moves me, Jennifer, they don't have a friend. I want you to listen to me. I want you to listen real, real close as though I'm sitting there with you and I can tell you this, no matter what you look like, no matter what condition you're in, no matter what age, if I were able to kind of just get over closer to you, slide a chair right over to you, I would reach out and I would be able to look in your face and tell if there's heaviness and loneliness. A lot of people call our phone center, this is a phone

call we get quite frequently, sometimes daily, somebody will call and say, "I'm just calling because I need somebody to talk to. No one ever calls me." And our prayer partners are so glad to talk to you. So I would move over to you, the lonely, and a lot of people in nursing homes and nobody has ever visited them, I'm so sorry. A lot of people in prison, no family members ever come to see them. That hurts me because I live in the presence of God and people who would come to me, who would reach out to me. You may not understand this, you may see us giving water to the thirsty on the other side of the world or trying to feed a hungry child or something and think, he couldn't care anything about us. Yes, I would. I'm like a river. They have to keep me from people in need. I'd give away everything we've got. They watch me on TV and say, "You going to give away the building next? You give away everything?" When I see you -- if I saw you and I saw you're hurt, I would want more than I can put in words to fix it, to make you well, to heal your heart. Here's what you've got to get. This is what Jennifer is trying to help us all understand. All these missing pieces, all this pain, none of us can really correct it for you but he can. The one that cares more than any of us can describe, he is ready and anxious and able to heal the hurt, to hold your hurt. I'm asking you right where you are, just reach up and just say, "Jesus, I really need you to hold the broken pieces of my life. I need you to mend my broken heart. I need you to give me understanding and comfort." Go ahead and ask him. He says, "Call on me." He says, "Knock on the door, it will be opened. If you ask, you will receive." We don't always receive what we ask like Jennifer said, it is better than we ask because he is better. When he fills in that emptiness, it is bigger than you can explain. Father, I pray for everyone that you've spoken to and touched today, that they'll receive the fullness of your love, your cleansing, your forgiveness, your comfort, your peace; in Jesus' name. You want someone to pray with you? Don't hesitate to call -- don't hesitate to call. If you would like to have the book, *Missing Pieces* this is an incredible study. It will take you to truth. It will take you to the word. We'll be glad to send it to you. I know LifeWay will rejoice that we're doing that and hopefully, you'll get the bible study. Would you just say thanks to Jennifer for being such a blessing? Jennifer may be blind physically, but you see so clearly in the spiritual realm, the real realm. Jennifer, we are, by the grace of God and with the love of people who watch us, I can do more than just weep over people with needs, we can meet a lot of them because we do it together. Right now we're seeking to drill freshwater wells. We do it every year, twice a year. We take a goal, we say, let's reach that goal and we emphasize it two different times. Let's do it. And it takes that emphasis and it takes all of us together, every one doing their part, sharing God's heart. We want to drill 500 wells. I want you to listen to something that kind of caught us off guard when our mission worker and our great friend Tammy Trent just asked a simple question. When it was interpreted, translated, and then she got the answer, it kind of took us back. Listen to what she said.

Tammy: Farsha's kids are sick again just like yesterday, and the day before that, and the day before that. It's the water... their only source of water. We dream because we can usually see the possibility of a better tomorrow. When survival mode is home, hope doesn't exactly abound.

Open captions:

Tammy: If I had the ability to provide for you today clean, fresh water, what would that mean for you?

Open captions:

Tammy: Though we now understand, Farsha's response floored us. The idea, the hope, the dream of clean water or the possibilities beyond it, that should not be unimaginable. But that is up to us -- it's up to you.

James: I'd almost like a freeze frame on that little boy a minute. Mom says, "I can't even imagine what it would be like for me to be able to reach down here and take a cup -- clean water." Mm! I've been thirsty a few times. Frankly, I've been thirsty on the mission field when we were aware there wasn't any clean water and we would run out; and maybe we gave away some of it and then the day went long and we didn't have any. That's not the kind of thirst a lot of people have and those people that go like that mother and those people there, to those old filthy places to get water to get for their children. And that mother said, "I can't even imagine what it would be like to be able to just get clean water for my children." I looked at that pretty little boy, that little profile reminded me of our first grandson. Just looking at him, precious! I can't even imagine that it is hard for us to imagine somebody feeling that way.

Betty: Here we so readily can go to the grocery store and buy a whole case of bottled water. We can go home and turn on our faucets and the water coming out of our faucets is so much better than the water they have. That's the only choice they have. And it will make you stop and think when that mother says, "I can't even imagine." We have so many privileges and we're so blessed here, and all she would like is some clean water for her children so they don't get sick. It's a simple solution for us. Let's make it a simple solution for them -- a well that they can go to and get that pure clean water for their babies that they so dearly love! They put their whole lives into their babies. Let's join together and drill the wells for them.

James: At our daughter's funeral, we sang the song, I Can Only Imagine. Andy Chrisman who is a lead singer for 4Him for so many years, he's at the Church on the

Move in Tulsa, I can only imagine. And that mother said, "We can't imagine because it is so great" -- our daughter's alive forever. But that mother said, "I can't even imagine being able to give my children clean water." Let's show her what it's like. Let's show her what the love of God can do. That it's not just something we talk about; God so loved that he gave but he so loves; when we receive his life that we share it. Jesus said, "If you give a cup of water in my name, you won't lose the reward. You won't lose the blessing I have for you." Don't try to figure out what it is. Let God bless you. But let's determine a blessing for that mother, and for all those people in that village. Let's drill a well there: 500 areas like that in 12 nations. And would you drill a well? Would you say, "I'll drill one there." \$4800 -- would you do it? Or "I'll drill part of it, \$2400 and somebody match me." Or "\$1200 and three people join me today." I know you can do something toward it. Listen to me, \$48 -- can you do that? That will give ten people water, basically the rest of their lives -- a fresh clean water well. They will have to have a manual pump so everybody can use it. If they have a power loss, they can get it. We're not putting it in everybody's home. Most of them don't have any way to do that. They barely have a home. But in that meager situation could they not at least feel good and love their children and be able to imagine what it is like to give their children clean water? Let's give them a well: 500 different areas where the missionaries have poured their love out on the people. Now let's demonstrate it, not just in word but in action. Would you call the number please? Take your bankcard, make the best gift you can. If you can give part of a well, do it. You give \$48 or \$144 will give 30 people water. There's a level at which you can help us. Please do it! Don't think it is too small. It's not! What you think is small may be the biggest gift in God's sight. But for those people it's life. You want to go online, LifeToday.org and just make your gift. Use your bankcard like a check. You write a check, make it to LIFE but call us and tell us you're mailing it. We have some very special gifts we want to send you. We want to send them to you to bless you, to show you the greatness of our God and his name is Majesty. We have some witness pens that will bless you. We have the beautiful commemorative bronze, "Living Water" to say thank you for giving water. We're going to give them Water for Life and we're going to tell them about the water of life in demonstration power. Please go to the phone. Be persistent. If you should get a busy, you say I'm getting through. I'm going to do my part to share the heart and love of God. Thank you for doing it.

Cause spot

James: Well, I hope you will make a gift. And if you can, ask for that beautiful commemorative bronze, "Living Water." Majesty: We'll send this to you if you simply make the gift God puts on your heart. Today, if you'd like to have Jennifer Rothschild's book, Missing Pieces -- wonderful, inspirational study guide. Not only gives you

questions we all ask, where you find the answers in the Word of God. Jennifer will be back with us on another program. But will you thank her along with our guest here for being with us? Jennifer, thank you. We love you! I'm looking forward to talking to you again; okay? Thank you for being a friend for life. Thank you for sharing life all over the world. Let's drill those wells. You do your part.

Music

Awaken now 1

>> Why does God love us? Why does he carry us? Why did he cry our tears? Why did he bear our pain?

Announcer: Jennifer Rothschild tomorrow!