

8/15/13

Week 33

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

**James:** We have a lot of heroes around the country, a lot of people we admire, we appreciate because of the contribution they have made to the benefit of every person that their message or life has touched.

Bill Hybels is one of those people like that, Willow Creek Community Church in the greater Chicago area, has been a friend for a long time. He blessed so many people in our conferences here in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, also in Canada, and has just imparted truth. He said something at a time in my life that I was going through what I would describe, I guess in a polite term as burnout. It was really basically total destruction from doing far too much. Yes, doing the work of God and yet being out of the will of God because I was operating in the gifts of the spirit and the gifting of the spirit without the fruit of the spirit prevailing.

Bill talked about how preachers make a big mistake of always rapid charging their batteries and not triple charging. That contributed to the transforming work of God in my own life that led me to really many directions that were very positive.

His daughter is a truly anointed person, a communicator, a writer, a fabulous beautiful book. Her name is Shauna Niequist and she has written a book called, *Bread and Wine*. That aroused my curiosity, pastor's daughter writing about bread and wine. What are we going to do? Are we going to learn a little bit more social etiquette or are we going to learn how to eat more? I don't know many church folks that would have a problem eating more.

But I really was curious about it and I began to really look through it. I thought, my goodness, she's got an incredible gift. She's got a gift from God that she's sharing not

only as she has written it but as she communicates it in light of what God's put on her heart to write but also speak and share.

Would you welcome Shauna to *LIFE Today*? Shauna, we're so glad to have you.

**Shauna:** Thank you! Thank you!

**James:** You didn't happen to begin writing because you were a preacher's kid. Did that inspire you to write? Did that have anything to do with the journey at all?

**Shauna:** Well, first of all, thanks for those sweet things you said about my dad. He says hello to both of you.

I don't know what it's been like for your kids but I think sometimes when you grow up with parents who do something really, really well at an extraordinarily high level and God uses them in a really unusual way, it is easy to think -- I could never -- how do I find my way in this family? How do I do something that's even close to that? I think that's the wrong question.

I think the question is what did God make me uniquely to do regardless of the family that I was born into? So I'm totally not a preacher. I'm not a leader. I'm not a church leader. I'm not a pastor. I'm a reader and I'm a writer and I'm a storyteller. So for me, the words that I want to say are not words that you'll hear necessarily in a pulpit, they are words that show themselves in the form of stories. That's how God has used... stories are what have bound me to God and taught me about him and healed me and challenged me. So to be a storyteller feels like a high calling to me.

**James:** Well, I think it's great and it is a gift from God and I'm glad that you've recognized it, you're committed to fulfill. Now *Bread and Wine*; I've already kind of alluded to that. Are we talking about going out to dinner or what exactly are we doing here? Help me help our viewers understand because I won't have any trouble getting them to eat bread. And now wine, there may be some discussions about that because

coming from a Baptist background there will be lengthy discussions about it. Go ahead.

**Shauna:** Well, I'm not a Baptist but it's not about wine, it's about communion. It's about the idea that there's this very sacred practice that we observe in our churches and I love it! I love taking communion in my church. I have great memories of sitting with my parents or sitting with my husband or my close friends as the plate is passed.

At the same time though, when I go back and I read that story, that story didn't take place in a church, and it wasn't led by a pastor. It was a man and his friends, his family, his community, and it was in a home, and it was a meal, not an activity that we do in the course of our church life and I think that's significant for us. We both know -- we all know how fast ministry life can be and how fast regular life can be.

Sometimes when I get to the end of a week I realize that most of my interactions with the people I love have been text messages or running down the hall at preschool or passing a neighborhood and waving or seeing each other at church just for two minutes. And what I crave is what I think Jesus and his friends experienced in that upper room. The time to be together, to look one another in the eye, to share stories, the full version, not just the one you catch up really fast.

I think we have essentially wandered away from the table. I mean both the communion table and family table. I think really great things happen, sacred things happen when we gather around the table to share life together and to tell the truth about what God's doing or to tell the truth about what is difficult. I think he can do extraordinary things through one another, through each of us in each other's lives when we gather at the table.

**James:** So when you wrote the book, what were you seeking to inspire people to do because you have written beautifully? It is fascinating. There is not a part in the book that doesn't capture interest, just like your ability to communicate right here. What do you want the reader to get and what do you want to happen? You've already alluded to it but be very specific what you're hoping for.

**Shauna:** So in the very last chapter of the book it starts off and it says, "This is what I want you to do, tell someone you love them and dinner's at six." That's really it. I want people more than -- it would be a great compliment to me if someone read the book and said, "Wow, she is great writer!" But I've been surprised what has really moved me is when I've gotten e-mails from readers and they've said, "I put down your book and I invited people over for my first dinner party ever. And I learned how to make salad dressing for my first time. I didn't even know you could do that."

[Laughter]

I think the lost art of gathering around the table is one worth reclaiming. And so more than people shifting their ideas about the table, it is really gratifying to me, I feel like I've done what I came to do when someone says, "I've never invited people into my home. I'm nervous; my house is not very nice. I don't know how to cook. I pushed those things aside and I created sacred space around our table and something extraordinary happened when we all showed up. When we got over our nervousness, when we got over the fact that the food wasn't perfect, or the space wasn't perfect or the kids were going crazy and we showed up any way to see and hear each other." That's what would make me feel like I did what I set out to do.

**Betty:** I believe what you're talking about is that fellowship time, that catching up time. But it has to be sharing your heart with people, it has to be those surrounding you that you trust, that you have a heart a likeness and heart with, that you feel safe to share and pour out your difficulties or your joys, whatever; isn't that correct?

**Shauna:** Totally. And some of what I'm talking about getting into the habit of spending this kind of time with people is because you have to log a lot of time together to get to that point in friendship. So some of our most life-changing experiences of community have happened when we've said we're going to do this every week, every Wednesday at 7:00. You know how it is with friends and schedules and kids. Some weeks you go home and go, "I don't know why we did that. We did not talk about anything of substance." You did it because you're logging the hours and the minutes for when you do need to have those deep conversations. A lot of the time we spend

together in friendship is storing up for when things fall apart so that we can really meet each other's needs in those moments. And so that's why I think the rhythm of life around the table is important. Not just for those significant moments, so you have it in the bank when those significant moments happen.

**James:** You're building the trust factor. When I've talked to you and when I've looked at what you've put in the book, we've talked about how the church needs to be this as a family where we really offer the people a feeling of community that is one of love and safety and security.

When we started *LIFE Today*, the thing I heard so clearly from the Lord because I had stood in pulpits and coliseums and stadiums preaching to tens of thousands of people, and the thing the Lord showed me that he wanted me to do, and Betty to do together, which she had never really spent any time talking but she had certainly spent this time in the family room, we believe the Lord said, "Call the family in the family room; help people get to know the Father so they can behave more like my family." And that is precisely what the viewers have told us. They see something going on in our relationship that we actually didn't just live together and exist for 50 years but that we actually had a relationship that is meaningful and expressive, and that there was that safety where I could bare my heart and my soul and she could handle it, she could mine, we would work it together and then we wanted that to be something others were invited into and they feel that. They feel that when they see us. They feel like we're family. I hear you saying that.

There is something that God is saying to every one of us, Father, family, one another, trust one another, communicate that you can be trusted and they can trust you and open up and find the security and safety that God wants us to have. I hear you saying that. Am I reading it right?

**Shauna:** Absolutely! I really do think that friendship or community is one of God's greatest evidences of himself on earth. I think there are some people who are very moved by nature or by animals or by seeing the stars. I'm very moved by the mechanism of friendship.

When I watch two people care for each other well, when I watch one friend help to mend the broken heart of another friend. We had a series of losses; I had multiple miscarriages and a long season of infertility, and in the same way that some people see the face of God when they look out at the night sky, I saw the face of God in the men and the women who cared for us in our deepest pain; who came to our house, who sat with us sometimes silently. The girlfriends who held my hand when there was nothing left to say. God gives us representation of himself through the people that he puts in our lives. A lot of times, I find, at least in my life, I move so quickly that I miss those sacred opportunities. I could have been sitting for an hour with someone, and instead I was off to do a million things.

So for me, the table is a place where time stops and I say I want to be the kind of person who sees everything there is to see, who listens to the whole story, who doesn't miss what you might not tell me at preschool drop off because things are so fast, you might not even tell me at church but you might tell me something in the space of my family room or around my table that really desperately needs to be said and I think that's why it is important to build our lives around these routines.

**James:** You're talking in the book too, very specifically and you've said it over and over about let's have a meal, let's talk. I'm trying to not eat much bread even though bread and butter is a big temptation. But frankly, you're not going to talk me into going out and having bread and butter because I'm not going to because it is not really good for me.

[Laughter]

So I want to know, since you're talking so much about food, have you ever struggled with food? You know a lot of times when people have a real battle with something, then they overcome it and then they can go ahead and talk about it. Did that ever bother you any? Food, like I just said, bread could just possess me. I can just eat the whole loaf. If it's good, let's get all of it. If it's a temptation, let's get it behind us. Betty said, "Yeah, you're getting it behind you all right."

**Shauna:** Well, absolutely. I think most people who love food and who love to eat have

struggled at one point or another with their weight; and frankly, most women I know have struggled with their weight. We live in a culture that has very narrow messaging for what beauty looks like. We don't celebrate 100 different kinds of beautiful in our culture. We celebrate about one and it is really little.

[Laughter]

So it is difficult to live a sane, spirit-filled, generous, confident life with the messaging that we're constantly given about food. And consequently, sometimes when I talk to women they say, "Hey, this book really scares me. I don't want to learn to cook. I don't want to have people around my table. I'm terrified of food because it is the enemy, because it is what's going to keep me from looking the way that people want me to look in order to love me more." I think we have to find a way through that together. We have to find a new way to feed ourselves and to be healthful and kind and accepting, and not excessive. But there has to be a middle ground between we're terrified to eat and we can't stop eating. I find sometimes when we're willing to join together at the table and talk about this stuff together; we can find a good middle way.

**James:** I think that would be true of any challenge we face in life. The more we can open up and talk about it... I think a lot of people fight distraction or attraction to the wrong things or addictive tendencies or compulsiveness and they don't feel like they can sit around and talk about it. Yet everybody in the room has probably got some kind of a problem; they have a very similar problem, they have the same problem, they don't want to talk about it.

We were talking earlier, I said it looks like Alcoholics Anonymous taught the church more about how we help one another appropriately and spending time together and being honest with one another is a process. This should be the example of the church and I'm sure the church and inspiration had a whole lot to do with the positives of Alcoholics Anonymous. All these things... and I hear you saying let's behave like a family. You don't even see that much anymore.

I think the texting is not really good. All you do is text. I know my kids get it, my grandkids get it, okay, it's the only way I can talk to you. Let's talk! I want to hear

your voice. Can you still talk? Did you lose it in college? Have you gotten too old, our children, that you can't talk anymore? Let's talk. I really believe, this is what I'm hearing you say, let's talk, let's communicate, let's deal with issues, let's share one another's burdens, let's be friends, let's be family, and for heaven's sake this is what the church needs to be. Am I hearing you right?

**Shauna:** A thousand percent! That's exactly what I think. I think a lot of times when we're isolated we believe we're the only ones who are struggling – with whatever it is.

**James:** Absolutely! We definitely believe that.

**Shauna:** And I think the nature of pain is that we isolate. I found that to be true in my life. When I've had a broken heart, I feel like I'm the only one and everyone else is happy. Joy tends to be the opposite. When you're happy, you think everybody is happy. When you just get engaged, everybody is wearing diamonds. When you're pregnant, everybody is pregnant. But when your heart is broken, you would just swear you're the only one -- but you're never the only one!

**James:** Or when you're defeated. When you got a hang-up and a problem that just keeps hanging you up, you feel like I'm the only one. I don't want anybody to know. We ought to have that ability to tell it, "I've got an issue; let's do it." This is good stuff.

Would you say thanks so much to Shauna for sharing with us? This is good. It's a beautiful book published by Zondervan. I think you will treasure it and I don't think it will cause you to eat too much. I have listened the whole evening and I'm not going to eat more bread and butter, I'm just not because I found it wasn't best for me. I know you understand what I'm saying. Part of my process and I've shared it with Betty and she helps me with that. So I just think I hear what you're saying, I thank God for you.

Shauna, one of the things that has really, really blessed us is to share out of our blessing and life with those who don't have something that seems so little to us and insignificant and yet it is huge to them -- water! I want to just say to you, in behalf of millions of people, thank you for giving a cup of water in Jesus' name and many wells

of water together! I want you to look in on scenes that I think will move you not only to God but to express the heart of God, the love of God -- literally, the hand of God.

### **On the mission field**

**Tammy:** I'll never forget getting that phone call from *LIFE Today* asking if I would be willing and available to take another trip with them to India. And as soon as I landed, I knew that a great adventure was ahead of me.

I traveled every day for hours out in some of the driest land I've ever seen. The ground itself was crying out for water. And yet I looked around at all these people that were also crying out for water themselves and they would take me down to these water holes that they would drink from every single day. And at moments it took my breath away because I just thought, how could anybody survive this?

I think at that moment as I would look to the Heaven and the sun would beam so hot on my face and I would feel so thirsty myself so I would sit alongside the edge and watch little children dip into the water and drink it. And I just wanted to stop them. Just stop! Don't drink that! It's killing you. It's filled with death and disease.

My heart would cry out to God, what can I do to change this situation? It's always my prayer that somehow I captured their heart and I tell a story of not just death through the lack of water but the possibility of life. I stood before drills, I've stood before them as water has sprung up...

[Laughing]

...all around me. What an incredible moment! I have seen with my very eyes how our giving has impacted hundreds and thousands of lives. But it took me and it took you, it took all of us having a vision and a hope in bringing them a future through life-giving water.

**End of clip**

### **In the studio**

**James:** Boy, there is sorrow overcome with great joy. When you have seen what disease does to little children because they were drinking water they had to have to even live another day, and then to see it destroy their precious little lives, their families and the grief that can be so easily prevented.

Betty, I love watching that water just come up. You know we've got so many pictures of little children and of many women and their family rejoicing when they suddenly just -- it's better than striking oil! This is real life right here. This is not just the ability to get somewhere, this is the ability to live and it all happens because somebody with love gives those people a chance at life. It is a simple thing for us to get water. We've got tap water at home and restaurants and it is amazing how many people want to be really sure it is clean so they go get bottled water from somewhere. We don't know if they just got it out of a tap somewhere and put a nice label on it and sold it in the stores.

The point is this -- and of course, they didn't do that. I think somebody would probably call their hand. But the point is that we are saying we believe clean water is so important we go to great extremes to be sure and take care of ourselves. Well, could we not go to the effort together of making a gift of a well? We have targeted 500 areas this year in 12 nations where the missionaries have pointed us to the need and we believe you want to meet the need.

Betty, I'm believing every single person watching will either give \$48 or \$144; give ten people Water for Life the rest of their life or 30 people water the rest of their life or do what we've been doing with gratitude to God...

**Betty:** James, those that have joined with us before in drilling the water wells, they come back with the response, "It is joy unspeakable" because they know that they're doing something that is going to save the life of a child.

So if you want to be a part of that and have the expression of love that Jesus would offer them, the clean pure water, please join with us and let's do this.

**James:** And I'm believing they're going to.

**Betty:** I do too!

**James:** I believe every single person watching is going to do something. Now can you drill a well? Betty and I have had the joy of doing that. We ask God to let us drill a well. Ask him! But I tell you what. We started with what we could do while we worked toward the well, and we've been able to give a well.

There are couples, there are individuals, there are small businesses, there are churches, Bible study groups that give a well, they're \$4800. Could you do that? I believe you will. The \$48 for ten people, that's where most of the support comes from. There are

people who give \$1200, three others join them and we've got a well -- or \$2400, at whatever level you can do.

Please dial the number, take your bankcard, use it like a check. If you do write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us what you're sending. Remember, you can go online, LifeToday.org. Special gifts we'll be sending you to say thank you. Thank you for giving the great gift of Water for Life. Thank you so much for doing it!

### **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 *Majesty*, an inspirational new, fully illustrated book that will help you discover the promises behind the many names of God.

With your gift of \$100 or more, be sure to also request "The Names of God" pen set custom crafted with the various names of God and the gifts of the spirit.

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*."

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today!

### **End of clip**

### **On the mission field**

**Tammy:** When you look around at the water in front of me, you can see that it is a source of water that is not life-giving. It is so heartbreaking to see someplace that is so

peaceful yet is producing such death. It makes you sit back and think, what can I do to change this situation? Like there's got to be a solution -- there has to be a solution!

And the beautiful thing is that we know there is a solution and we have people on the ground right now that can make a difference. But we can't do it ourselves -- we need you. If we can come in and drill a well for these people it would serve over 1,000 people -- 1,000 people -- one water well!

So I'm asking you today if you would partner with me and do whatever you can. Anything will help! Go to the phones, go online, and don't hesitate. The problem is here, and the solution is here; they're both here but we need you to help. Please, won't you do something today?

**End of clip**

### **In the studio**

**James:** This is a great book, *Majesty: Promises that are revealed in the name of God in the Bible*. Majesty, Jack Hayford wrote the song titled "Majesty." Some day we're going to share what Jack Hayford saw when he watched our daughter go into Heaven. I really look forward to the time we will share that with you. I think it can be used to see millions come to Christ because no one is going to want to miss it.

*Bread and Wine*, Shauna Niequist, and it is a treasure because she does have a remarkable gift. It will take you far beyond just merely eating together but that's important too, to be family -- a family of God and families together.

Would you say thanks to Shauna for sharing with us? Get the book in the bookstores.

By the way, do you have a web site where people can go and see where you might be speaking? What is it?

**Shauna:** I do. It is just my name, [ShaunaNiequist.com](http://ShaunaNiequist.com).

**James:** Just the name. There it is. There's the web site if you say, "Hey, we want her to

come and share with us! We like her." That's how you can get a hold of her. Thanks so much for helping us share life.