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Week 37

James: Thank you very much. We welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison; Betty and I are thrilled to have this opportunity.

Now I know none of you who are watching have ever heard of Victoria Secret. Betty used to get the magazine all the time. Why did you order the magazine?

Betty: I didn't order it! It just came.

James: It just came. Do you think it's because you bought something online or you shopped and used a bankcard?

Betty: I get a lot of magazines that I don't order.

James: And Betty kept cancelling it and it would keep coming back. And she kept thinking, well, I've cancelled it; you must be ordering it, James. And really, we weren't, just like we couldn't get them to quit. But finally they did. I don't even know what we finally did to stop it from coming.

But we've got a Victoria Secret runway angel that won the Runway Angel contest competition. Don't leave! She's written a book. Her name is Kylie Bisutti. It's titled, *I'm No Angel*. Now listen to the subheading: From Victoria Secret model to a role model. Interesting! Beautiful girl. Exploited. Used. Why don't we let her tell her story?

Would you welcome Kylie to *LIFE Today*?

Kylie, glad to see you.

Kylie: Thank you for having me!

James: So you've been away from Victoria Secret now since what, did you say 2010?

Kylie: The end of 2010 I stopped lingerie modeling.

James: I want to read something that might have been really around the turning point. I want to say that from our understanding, your husband really had a lot to do with it;

just the kind of person he was. And if I understand correctly, he was quite happy when you, so to speak, as an angel saw the light; right?

Kylie: Yeah.

James: Now listen to this: His anger boiling over, the photographer dropped his camera at his side and he glared at me. Then in front of the entire light and makeup crew he yelled, "What's the matter with you? You're ruining this shoot. You're a Victoria Secret model."

Was he a little bit like me right now talking this way? "For Christ's sake, you're a Victoria Secret model." I know it must have been for Jesus' sake that this was happening. "This is your job. Don't you want to be like Giselle? This is what you get paid for."

"That's when" she says "it finally hit me. I was being paid to tease, to tempt and tantalize men and it wasn't just my job. As a Victoria Secret angel I was expected to make this my whole identity and it colored the way everyone in the industry and in the world viewed me.

It had taken long enough for the epiphany so hit. I'd known for years that a big part of the industry was selling sex, especially when it came to lingerie but until I heard him say the words, 'This is what you get paid for,' it never hit home before. I felt sick to my stomach. There was only one type of woman I knew of who sold sex for a living and the idea that people all over the world might be casting me in that light made me physically ill.

As I sat there hugging my knees to my chest, shaking with anger and shame, a mirror of images from the past three years raced through my mind: The CD Saran Wrap photographer, the ridiculously altered Grand Central Station shot, the sexy runway walk Victoria Secret expected, the other angels bumping and grinding with the burlesque dancers at the after party, the partying at Saint Barts and the see-through bathing suit, the porn sites, and now today's shoot. It wasn't just the situations surrounding the job that were the problem, it was the job itself.

I'd managed to convince myself that I could separate the two but the truth was, one couldn't exist apart from the other. The work and the activity surrounding it were inextricably elite. By taking on the persona of an angel, I had unwittingly signed a deal with the devil. And in doing so, I pretty much had surrendered every moral conviction I had."

Your husband was glad when you reached that point; right?

Kylie: Yes!

James: Tell us what you want girls to hear, men to hear, people to hear and why you wrote the book and why everything changed for you.

Kylie: Well, God has really put on my heart this crazy passion to share with girls about all of the pressures that the media places on them to have to feel like they have to dress a certain way, usually a provocative way, to feel accepted in this world or to feel beautiful.

Unfortunately, some of the images that I used to take put that kind of pressure on young girls and women as well. And I also want men to know that the majority of these images that are being taken are absolutely an illusion. There is nothing real about those images. That's important for girls to know, for men to know because there are men that look at these images and lust after them and it's really all fake -- everything that they're looking at is just absolutely fake. It is all an illusion. It creates a lot of destruction.

James: Now do you think girls look at the models today, even the size of the models, their figures, and then they get trapped by comparing themselves with them, even getting eating disorders, a false sense of inadequacy themselves that they don't look like that. Some feeling like they have to try to compete with that, some of them try to compromise, feel they must to get attention because they don't quite look like that. If they did, they'd have the attention.

Do you think they are getting all of these incorrect and damaging impressions and making bad decisions because of it?

Kylie: I definitely do. That's something I struggled with myself, being a young girl, and looking up to all of the models, watching America's Next Top Model. Seeing all of these images of the models in the magazines, I immediately started comparing myself to them. I feel like a lot of girls now are doing that and that's why the girls are getting younger and younger with eating disorders; one in five women and girls have an eating disorder. It is a huge problem in our society and I believe a lot of it is caused by the images that they're comparing themselves to.

Betty: How did you get started in the modeling? Was it from seeing this yourself portrayed? You think, that would be a neat thing to do?

Kylie: Yeah. Growing up people around me always told me that I should get into modeling. One of the things that really drove me is that I would see these models and like many of the young girls today, they see these models and they think the models have it made. The world calls them beautiful, the world says they're important, they're successful, they have money. Men flock over them. And young girls, they really want to be desired.

What they don't realize is that we have an amazing God in heaven who desires you. But these young girls, they're looking to the world to call them beautiful. And that's where I was when I got involved in modeling. I was looking to the world to tell me that you're accepted, you're worthy; that's why I really pursued the modeling industry.

James: Now, Mike saw you when you were a model and yet he really didn't like what you were doing; right?

Kylie: Right. He didn't even know about -- you said you don't think anybody knows about Victoria Secret. He never even, knew about the fashion show when I met him.

James: Hey, Mike, I need to meet you sometime! But when he found out you were there, it was disturbing to him?

Kylie: Yeah. He was really heartbroken about everything that took place. He was constantly in prayer about it, just trusting in God that God had a plan for all of it and I was going to come out of it. His prayers were answered.

James: So he really was a contributing factor. You know that really is almost the flip side where the boy influences the girl.

I really believe and I've said this numerous times and I don't think it is an exaggeration, I don't think it is an over statement. I think the greatest source of power, influence, on the planet apart from the Holy Spirit is the influence of women. I really believe the greatest source of inspiration, whether it is starting with the mother or someone who wins the heart of a boy appropriately, not just his eyes.

By the way, Kylie, it is easy for boys to desire a girl but that doesn't necessarily mean they love them. They want them and they'll use them and discard them for another toy. Isn't that true?

Kylie: That's definitely true. I came across that all the time in the modeling industry, especially with photographers.

James: And you saw a lot of girls hurt.

Kylie: I did! I would say 99% of the models that I've met throughout the entire time that I was in the industry, they all just have hurting hearts -- every one of them.

James: You said in the book, one of your cousins said something to you. Tell our viewers what that cousin said.

Kylie: Well, this is something that really broke my heart. But I'm very thankful that God has used this to really just open my eyes to how many girls like her are out there hurting. But my younger cousin, she was eight at the time when she said this to me. She told me that she wanted to start throwing up her food to feel pretty, like me. And she obviously had seen my success in modeling and she actually thought that she had to resort to throwing up her food in order to just feel pretty or adequate.

James: Do you think girls have a difficult time no matter how they're built or how they look, feeling that they're pretty? Do you think that every girl fights that?

Kylie: I do! I think every girl fights that.

James: Do you think there is anything that can make a girl feel any more beautiful than a father who convinces her she is beautiful, or a boy, or a husband who convinces her that she is beautiful and she knows that he means it, and he is not just after something -- he really means it. Do you think that's the greatest affirmation that a girl can have?

Kylie: I have found that just having my husband, he's been so amazing, but he definitely makes me feel that way. But what I know is the reason why he looks at me that way is because that's how Christ looks at me. Christ looks at the beauty of our heart. He is not concerned with our outer appearance. He loves our hearts; he desires our hearts. And so I know that's what my husband loves about me; he tells me all the time. That's one of the reasons why I fell in love with him because he wasn't just a guy that was looking at my outer appearance; he was truly looking at my heart.

And I know you've shared about your wife's sweet humble heart and that's truly what I think -- it's really on my heart to share that with girls because I feel like young girls, they grow up trying to win a man by their outer appearance and dressing provocatively but they don't understand. I have a story in my book about being in high school and what happened to me when I was doing those sorts of things. You're just going to get discarded that way.

Betty: What they really need to see is the inner beauty that God puts within them because doing what you did as a model is not the answer to everything because you still -- I'm sure you've seen models -- they still struggle with those same things and it probably intensifies because of the competition amongst them.

Kylie: Yes, it does. I tell people this all the time but the nights that I was crowned the Victoria Secret Runway Angel, those were some of the most insecure nights of my life. Most people don't realize that supermodels are very, very insecure. They have very low self-esteem.

James: Well, if a supermodel that most people would think are beautiful are insecure, I wish I could -- I really wish -- as a matter of fact, I want you to zero here on me for just a minute. I may want you to come back where I could bring Betty back in the shot in a minute but I want to talk to you, I'd like to talk to every woman, every girl.

And Kylie, most girls don't feel at all pretty and they look at you and say, "Well, something is wrong with you because you don't feel pretty. And when we see pretty girls, they ought to feel pretty."

But listen to me, because she just said a mouthful. She said what God wants you to hear. You're beautiful! You're indescribably beautiful. And no matter what you see, like Kylie said, God sees you as beautiful. You're uniquely beautiful and precious. You're a treasure. Now you really want to feel that way. God wants you to feel that way.

I want to encourage boys and men and husbands and fathers to make your girls feel pretty, every little girl wants to feel pretty.

Am I right about that Kylie? Isn't that what you want to know? No matter how many children you might have, no matter how long y'all are married, you want him to make you feel beautiful. And you want girls to understand what real beauty is; don't you?

Betty: I think it is important that men know that their wives need to hear that from them. I'm very blessed. My husband tells me every day how beautiful he thinks I am and how much he loves me. Women need to be encouraged -- husband, boyfriend, whoever -- they need that encouragement. They need to know from you, the one that loves them so much, what you think about them, what you see when you look at them.

James: Have you cared about how the secular or fashion industry feels about your decision? Has it disturbed you at all the way they act?

Kylie: It's been a little stressful but I really don't care what they think.

[Laughing]

James: You care about what young girls think that will make a difference in life; you care what boys think. I said to one of our grandsons when he happened to find one of those Victoria Secret magazines before we got them to stop coming, and he was looking at it.

I said, "You were looking" --

He hid it and he said, "No! I wasn't looking at it!"

I said, "Yeah, you were. You were looking at the girls in here."

He said, "I don't like girls."

[Laughter]

I said, "Yeah, but they're pretty; aren't they? They're real pretty. And we need to learn to respect them and love them and honor them." And it changed a little boy's heart; he didn't feel condemned.

Kylie, it was important he wasn't beat up for noticing, and he's a great man -- he's a great man. *I Am No Angel*; get the book. I really encourage you.

As a matter of fact, if you say, "Well, I've got a daughter or granddaughter I want to bless," I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll send you the book today because I think it is a story worth telling.

Lisa Bevere taught, Beth Moore teaches on our program, Christine Cain, they talk about the beauty of purity and that's the beauty. That's what I see.

I need to just say this to you as an older guy, I see the beauty in you. You're a pretty girl but you're a beautiful girl too, through and through, I see Jesus. I see the sweetness in you. And I want to thank you for sharing it to inspire us.

Would you thank Kylie?

[Applause]

And thank God. The book is in the bookstores if you'd like to get it. I will gladly send it to you if you'll do this. Help us put some shoes for Christmas on some little children. I know it is way ahead of Christmas but we've got to get the 200,000 and Betty, I'm praying we'll go past that.

You determine it: \$36 will get ten pairs of shoes: Four times that, \$144 we've got 40 pairs of shoes. And then we're wanting to give smiles; we want to do miraculous surgeries for children. We want to give shoes and smiles for Christmas.

I want you to watch this. This is going to move you to express love.

On the mission field

Tammy: This is something new for me. Coming into the home of this precious family to talk about the conditions of this little child who suffers with cleft palate, and it's probably the worse condition I've ever seen. It affects so many things; can even affect the hearing, the way they speak, their teeth, the way they swallow. There's just so many things. I feel like I'm truly at a loss for words. My emotions completely take over because no child should ever have to live like this. No child should ever have to fight to fit in.

I've been given so much in life and I've lost so much too. I know the feeling of pain and I know the feeling of heartache, and of suffering, and yet, even my own pain and my own suffering, it seems so minimal to me in this moment.

Sometimes you look around and sometimes you think, is there anything that I can do? Is there anything that I can do to change this? If I just left it right there, I think we would all feel pretty hopeless, but the truth is I don't just leave it right there. There is a great hope and there is a great future. And truthfully, it doesn't take much to come in

and to take her to a doctor and have this fixed for her, give her a chance at an even more beautiful life.

I'm asking you to be the change today. I'm asking you to make the difference today -- that could change everything for her life!

End of clip

In the studio

James: We're not looking at something that can't -- can't be corrected. It can be corrected. Don't you want to correct that?

Betty: Absolutely, James.

You know when God shows us that there is a way we should, in our hearts, leap with joy because we can be a part of the way to help little children like this.

I know that when our babies were newborn, the first thing that a parent really looks for is that first smile. Come on! Come on! Let me see the first smile. Some of these children would like to have their first smile. What a joy it would be to be a part of that, James, to know that we were able to contribute to be a help to that one child, if it was one child it would be worth it.

James: Oh, boy. That's a beautiful way to state it. Give them their first smile, give them what that mother wants. I've said it over and over, and I think it is appropriate that if you want your prayers answered, be an answer to somebody else's prayers. And Betty said it right, every parent wants to see a little grandchild or a child smile -- smile? Smile! When that little child can't smile.

And the thing is we can give them a smile. Yes, we can. We work with medical doctors and the mission doctors that if we'll just make it possible we'll do the cleft palate surgery and the facial surgery to give them a smile. We've done it now for years. We've given children smiles that were horrified when they saw pictures that we'd taken of them and then we let them see them in the video camera and it scared some of them. They really didn't know quite what they looked like because in some of the third-world countries, unless they see a reflection somewhere, they don't necessarily know what they look like.

Tammy's heart was touched, ours was. So I just say to you, if you could give a smile for Christmas, we call this "Shoes and Smiles for Christmas." The surgeries cost an average of \$500 and we're asking people to pray about giving two.

We want to send you a beautiful commemorative bronze of an orphan boy that we rescued in Romania, being held by a missionary.

We're also going to give shoes like these; they're little slip-on shoes but they're all-weather, and they are adjustable in size. Little children like that you see these little shoes always touches your heart.

So here's what we're asking you to do, I know it's way ahead of Christmas, I understand that, but we've got to do it now because we want to give 200,000 pairs, at least that many pairs of shoes, \$36, \$3.60 a pair, \$36 will give ten pairs, \$144, four times that, that will give 40 pairs of shoes. And we're asking you to do that. If you can give 40 pairs of shoes, do it. If you can give ten pairs of shoes, do it. We want to send you a beautiful little Christmas ornament of a little shoe that will become a witness and conversation piece in your home.

We'll send you the beautiful bronze to say thank you if you'll help us provide a smile for a child like we just talked about there. Would you do that please?

Father, I pray everyone watching us will say, "I'm going to do it." It may be a big step. What a Christmas gift! -- That they go ahead and make it now, in Jesus' name.

Dial the number, take your bankcard, use it like a check. You write a check, make it to *LIFE*. Make the greatest gift you can to give the gift of love, give a child a smile, give some children some shoes. You can go online, LifeToday.org and make the gift but do it. Thank you for doing it. I believe you're doing it right now. You're an answer to a mother's prayer, to a child's need.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Poverty is a killer and because of it, children needlessly suffer not only from a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we take for granted such as a healthy smile or a simple pair of shoes. For most of these children, they've never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in the light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections that could lead to crippling consequences, disease, and even death.

By responding today you can help *LIFE* immediately secure and begin shipping Christmas shoes to 200,000 children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pairs. And a gift of \$144 will help provide 40 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

In appreciation of your gift, be sure to request our 2013 Christmas shoe ornament. This beautifully crafted antiques ornament is a unique reminder of your gift for Christmas shoes, a treasure to place on your tree each holiday season.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft palate surgeries. And you may request the limited edition 50th anniversary bronze sculpture, "Christian" by renowned artist Robert Summers.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: We're excited to send you the beautiful little Christmas ornament. Put it where people can see it and then tell them what you're doing. They may join you next Christmas to give shoes.

We'll also send you the bronze if you'll help give a smile. Don't you want to give a little child like that a smile, like the one you saw? You can! If you help us by giving shoes and you'd like to have Kylie's book, we'll be glad to send it to you because I think it will inspire you to feel good about yourself and to know you don't have to do certain things to feel good. I think she will be a blessing to you.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to Kylie?

Thank you very, very much.

Kylie: Thank you for having me!

James: Thank all of you. Thank you for blessing others and joining with us to do it. Thank you!