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Week 41

James: Thank you very much! It's always a pleasure to come into your home. I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

If you watch us, and I pray that you'll watch us consistently, you are going to meet some very interesting people, you're going to hear transforming stories of true life experiences and you're going to be inspired. But you're also going to be moved, I believe, by the Spirit of God to be involved in making a difference in someone's life because God's made a difference in your life or you want him to. And one of the best ways to get God involved in your life is to become involved in someone else's life, to begin to reach out to them and to help them.

I'm holding a book here in my hand called, *Secret to Serenity: Transforming from sexual abuse to spiritual healing*. Now the book was written by one of our neighbors where we live in the Dallas/Fort Worth area; lives about two houses over, she and her husband, and their little girl, and she began to tell me about her concern. She's loved helping people ever since we've met her. She and her husband just want to be a blessing, and they've been very active in that. But not long ago she came to me and talked to me about the adverse affect of sexual abuse and how really prominent it is in girls' lives all over the world and here in the United States.

She has a very close friend named Chrysty Sturdivant. And she and Dr. Nina Rios-Doria have written this book together, and it is absolutely amazing; isn't it Betty?

Betty: It really is.

James: It tells the story of Chrysty's abuse starting at a very young age, and then with a trained counselor, licensed counselor with a Ph.D. in studying how to be a help, they wrote a phenomenal book -- absolutely phenomenal! I just glanced at page two and the story of Jesus and the price he paid and how we can have victory and how we can be clean and healed and new. It is just phenomenal.

I want you to welcome our neighbor, Nina, and her friend Chrysty; this is Nina and this is Chrysty. Would you welcome them to *LIFE Today*?

[Applause]

I am grateful that you all have paid the price, put in the effort to write the book. Chrysty, I'm grateful that you've been willing to tell your story. Nina, you began to tell us about your concern and you told us about Chrysty. Now I want to know why you became so interested and so actively involved. What moved you to do it? Was it just Chrysty?

Nina: Well, Chrysty and I have been friends for a long time. So as a therapist, I was never her therapist. We were always just good friends but I knew she was a sexual abuse survivor. So I, as you mentioned, I always wanted to empower youth and help youth, it was when I started working with teens of sexual abuse and hearing their stories, it was just so heartbreaking. I'm like, I want to do more and I want to reach out more.

And Chrysty and I started having these long conversations about sexual abuse and how prevalent it is. One in four children will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. One in nine will tell. Those are just horrible statistics and that's the title, Secret to Serenity. That's what made us begin to think about this book that developed through Chrysty's story.

James: How is the response? What's it like, the response to it? Is it positive?

Nina: We have heard some great things. Chrysty has some stories as well to share about that.

James: I want you, if you would, Chrysty, because we've read your story and Nina had told us about it, but for our viewers, tell us something about your journey and the affect that the abuse had on you, and what you see people having to, so to speak, dig out from or being lifted out of.

Chrysty: Well, I'm a sexual abuse survivor and my abuse was from my uncle. It started when I was six and my sister was three. My parents, unbeknownst to them in the '60s dropped us off at my grandparents' house that day and had no idea what was going to be ahead for their children. We were -- my sister, I took my sister by the hand to go outside and play that day. And my grandmother said, "Don't go near the water," because she lived on the lake and, "Don't go beyond the tree," and the tree was the marker. I took my sister by the hand and I led her right to the edge of the boundary that we were told not to go to.

Unbeknownst to either one of us, our uncle was waiting there and lured us with a boat ride, "Come on a boat ride." And what two little girls, at six and three wouldn't want to go on a boat ride with their uncle? So we trusted someone that we knew, someone that we grew up, someone that was a family member, and we walked forward. And I had no idea that memory would be burned in my mind forever. I remember what I wore. I remember what my sister had on. I remember taking her hand. I remember contemplating not going because I do believe there was something in my spirit at that time that was saying there was danger but I was six. I moved forward into the boat with my sister and we went on a boat ride that really changed everything. That day -- I took responsibility mentally, for my sister, and it changed things -- it changed things.

And the abuse continued and was repeated from there. Satan really put a message in my mind that day. This is what I believe sexual abuse survivors make and relate to and that is the shame and the guilt and the responsibility that you take for that because you start to own that you had something to do with it. I took that on that day, as well as I took on the responsibility of my sister. It brings shame and guilt.

I knew that God loved me. I believed in Jesus at a very early age but Satan's voice became really loud that day. He tried to steal my mind. He says he tries to -- well, the Bible tells us he will steal it and he tried to take it that day. But Christ wins -- he wins!

James: I think it is really important for you to understand, I don't know where you are in your spiritual journey, I don't know where you are as far as biblical truth or anything related to God but most people who may even doubt God or righteousness do understand there is a terrible force of evil in the world. You don't have to wait for a shooting in Connecticut or some of the horrific things you see you just know there's a force and it tends to prevail.

The thing I think is really important for you to understand is once somebody's been hurt, they've been damaged, that hurt is big enough but the real crux of the matter is that it makes that individual vulnerable to what she just said, to the tactics of Satan. Once your will is broken or once you get shame or guilt, the enemy can come in like a roaring lion. He can come in like a flood and just pound you down, and you can spend a life deceived and beat down. And isn't that precisely what happened? Didn't you feel this way? Did you have a sense of worthlessness and lack of value that haunted you for an extended period of time?

Chrysty: Absolutely. And it does beat you down. It is a daily... from that point on... for a long time, it is easier now but it still... Satan can get in there but that's exactly what happens. He wants to tell you that God doesn't love you. Where was God?

James: Nina, what are you finding to be helpful when you walk in... as you've watched Chrysty and then you all have been involved in reaching out to others and you've written something that not only gives people assurance and comfort, but it gives them some very specific steps to healing? What have you found in your dealing with people who have been hurt and watching the process of change?

Nina: I think when someone is able to step out and just share their secret, that's a huge step. That's like the biggest step to start your healing process. When I've worked with the girls -- for those girls to step out in faith and finally tell somebody, they feel relieved and they can start healing. It is a long journey working on what happened to you through sexual abuse.

Our book is a great therapeutic tool to start. If someone doesn't want to tell anybody, they can connect with Chrysty's story because it is a conversation between her and I. And then I provide educational points about why they are experiencing this and then they have time to journal so they're able to process their own thoughts. So our book is a great therapeutic tool to get them to another place, to maybe reach out and go see a counselor as we suggest in the book.

Betty: That's one thing I really appreciated about your book as I read through it. I just saw from the very beginning as you were telling your story, and then Nina, as a counselor, you would have input in there because the emotions, even as they read the book, your story, it is going to stir things and remembrance in their life and the tragedy that they went through.

You took time -- time and tenderness is the way I looked at it -- as you would tell your story, then you would step in and give suggestions and help them work through that specific need right there or that hurt that they were dealing with. I thought that's so important. You can't just rush through something like that. Like you said, it takes time. It's a step-by-step... help them walk through it.

Nina: We actually have a chapter on forgiveness that we write that we walk them through the process about how to forgive somebody. And we've had people come up to us and say, "This chapter helped me... I'm not a sexual abuse survivor, this chapter helped me to learn to forgive somebody in my life." So this has been just a great therapeutic tool for people.

James: Don't you find that it is very difficult for those people who have been abused

to take that first step? You waited until what age before you were even willing to talk about it?

Chrysty: Well, I waited until I was 29. What happens is that you tell your -- I was told I would be killed. And I believed it. It's truth --

James: If you told somebody you would be killed?

Chrysty: Or my sister -- so I had not just -- I had a lot of -- her and I to worry about, and I believed it. I did believe that that was absolutely capable -- and in a child's mind and it went bigger than that. Well then this person could probably kill my mother and my father, and my mind went crazy because Satan does that. He takes it.

James: So you finally told so that's the step Nina was talking about. You've got to get started. The Bible says "confess your sins one to another that you may be healed or made whole." But really and truly, this is not so much as confessing your sins as somebody else's sins against you, but that still needs to be brought out in order for healing to occur because there's been damage and part of the damage is that you feel partly responsible; children feel partly responsible for what happened, even though they had absolutely nothing to do with it, they were not contributing, they were used and they were literally taken advantage of. But nevertheless, you need to go ahead and open up and that's one of the things that you all make clear in the Secret to Serenity.

Now you've got a web site by that title, SecretToSerenity.com. Right? If someone... because a lot of churches, they really don't know what to do. I have -- when I've preached on freedom and for people to be healed and delivered from the past, and I just mention those who have been abused or girls who have been molested, if there's a few hundred people who have come forward for prayer, they'll be a shriek, scores of them, and sometimes hundreds of women who have been hurt or children, sometimes boys, who were taken advantage of and they are hurt. So it's very important to begin to talk.

Now if someone in a church group would like for you all to come say to their church, and help equip people to minister, that's part of what you want to do too. So if they go on the web site and communicate with you, that's there. They can also get the book, they can also learn perhaps something about how to help or find the counseling. You would help direct them to that. Right?

Nina: This is about intervention, this book, and prevention. We want to -- I want the viewers to know, just the three things before we leave is talk to your children early on

so that they will always share any secrets -- if someone tells them to hold on to a secret. Talk to your kids about what appropriate touch is and that no one should tell you to hold on to a secret; always tell mom and dad and trust that they will always be there to keep you safe and never be mad at you. And then last thing I want to say is 80% of children that are sexually abused happen in one-on-one situations. Make sure, if you leave your child somewhere one-on-one that it is observable, and interruptible because if it is not, then something is wrong and you just want to be careful about that. People that are sexually abused, it is people you know and trust. So we want to educate our children, talk to them so that they're not holding on to any secrets, that they can come to mom and dad.

James: You're trying to help people get free. You're trying to help people who have been the victim of this to find the way out. So I think your web site is important. I think the book is important. I'd be more than happy for us to send it to those of you who would like to have it.

You know what we're doing right now, and I know you keep up because you've been a wonderful neighbor, you've been a great supporter of what we do. You not only pray for us and care about what we do but you help us. But we are trying right now to rescue girls that have literally been taken captive and they're selling little girls and selling children in prostitution, in sexual trafficking and we're trying to get them set free.

That's critically important; isn't it? When you see something like that, Nina, what does that do for you when you see the need and yet you see viewers who watch *LIFE Today* and people all over the world caring about it. Is that encouraging to you?

Nina: Yeah, we want to help! We want to do more. We want to reach out and do what we can to make a difference.

James: Well, I really do thank both of you for your concern. I thank you for your involvement. I've got to ask you, how are you now? Because I can tell it is not like hip-hip hooray. This was a heavy, heavy thing; but how are you?

Chrysty: I am blessed. And it's been a journey and I feel transformed. And it's been a life journey. I just want to inspire and give hope that tell -- just tell someone. Sexual abuse survivors want to tell. It is locked up in here but they really want to tell. Their behavior show it -- their behaviors mostly. And I just want people to tell. That can begin that transformation that God just has whispered in my soul every day since, "I

love you! I love you!" I had to turn Satan down and turn Christ up. You know what? That's what's transformed me.

James: How important has someone like Nina been to you?

Chrysty: It's been amazing! She's been wonderful to -- just to be able to talk through my story and to help give insight. I think it's made the book really special.

James: Are you blessed now to see that your journey and your journey toward serenity now is going out to help lift others out of their despair and their hopelessness?

Chrysty: I feel blessed, I feel honored. I can't thank you enough for your time. It is really a surreal moment right now to be completely public.

[Laughter]

Nina: And I want to say it takes courage to share a secret but she's not only shared it but she's sharing it with everybody and sharing her story, and that just says a lot about her character and who she is.

James: Do you feel safe here?

Chrysty: I feel totally safe. I forgot about the audience.

[Laughing]

James: Would you say thanks to God and thanks to these beautiful, beautiful ladies? And the book is titled, *Secret to Serenity*. There is the web site if you want to communicate with them. Say, "Would you come and help us in our setting, our church, and minister to people who have been hurt or help us know how?" We will be glad to send you the book.

We're giving Betty's book, *Free to Be Me*. It is hard to believe a little -- I call her the original church lady. She was so good. And yet as a church lady and in the choir and a Sunday School teacher, she didn't really know Jesus. She told me, a kid that didn't even have a home, met Jesus and Jesus is so real to me, she said, "Jesus is not real to me. He is just someone I've always heard about." And then he became real.

But also, the shy girl, sitting by her husband, she says sometimes, "Well, you just take me kicking and screaming all the way up there to the studio." Not really. She has been

such a blessing. Many, many viewers say, "James, you know the reason people listen to you? You may have the gift of gab but we listen to you because she affirms you and we believe and trust Betty." I thank God for her. Her story is a blessing.

We're going to send it to those of you who will help us rescue people just like what you're going to see. Let me tell you something, this is hard to watch but you're really going to be glad you did because you're going to be the difference maker.

On the mission field:

>> I know I once was a child.

Some still say that I am.

But what I remember of it has been smothered by the darkness I know now.

Look at me! Not past me!

My life is not mine.

I'm owned yet I'm disowned.

I can hardly breathe.

My mind is shattered into a thousand pieces -- shattered!

There have been times, eight times a day at the hands of strangers -- over 2500 times this year -- at the hands of sick strangers.

Please... someone rescue me!

Put me back together.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: I'm not sure, Betty, I could stand to look at that if I didn't know we could do something about it. Even when I saw that report come back, my first question was, "Were we able to rescue her?" And the answer was "yes." And we're only able to do that because someone says, "I'll help you."

When we saw this need, it is horrible. When we brought it to you, you helped us build the largest center, *LIFE* Center in the sex capital of the world, Thailand, to rescue these children. It's beautiful! I mean it's a showplace in the sense that it is so beautiful. But the real beauty is these little children that we got out of the trafficking or got them before the trafficker got them; when they came in and told the parents lies about how they will take their children, take them into the city and educate them, and give them a future, and they can send money back -- which is all a lie.

So we're able to head off the enemy and get these children, and get them in a good setting, and then get those girls out of it, which is very dangerous -- very dangerous. It is a great risk. So the people who are willing to go in and risk it and plant their life there, for us to undergird them, that's what gives them the encouragement and the strength.

Betty, doesn't it give you joy -- that's horrible to watch. As a matter of fact, I remember you said, "I don't know if our viewers will tolerate that." We didn't know and it was a risk, but our viewers not only tolerate it they said, "We've got to help them." So our viewers have been doing it. But when you see those children set free and full of life, doesn't it just cause your heart to leap with hope?

Betty: It really does, James! It would be impossible for me to sit there and watch that if I didn't know that we had the opportunity to help them, to give them hope, to help them be set free from all this captivity and the struggle. And I guess, James, the thing that got me, she said, "Please rescue me and help put me back together." That just tore my heart out! Because she feels like, probably, a piece of trash that's just used over and over again and then just discarded until they get ready to use her again. She wants to feel like a person again. She wants to feel like somebody that has hope in their heart -- and we can do that.

James: That's what the love of God does. You don't just talk about the love of God, you demonstrate it. So here's what I want to ask you to do: Help us rescue them. The missionaries have broken it down. It takes \$128 per person. We're trying to raise right now, to do what the missionaries have said, this is what we can accomplish -- a million dollars. In that we need \$275,000 to restore one of the *LIFE* Centers that had a terrible fire; and there are no more dedicated workers on the planet than this missionary couple. We not only want to rebuild, we want to expand it because the work is that important.

So I want to ask you to help us with that \$275,000 need. Could you give \$1,000 or a few thousand toward it? Would you do that please? But then think about this, this is critical because this is the key; the key to rescuing them is to cover that cost, \$128. If you can give all of that to rescue one, do it. If you can give part of it, know somebody else will join you because it takes every one of us doing our part in God's heart to share his heart and to put his hands and arms around broken lives. Dial the number. Take your bankcard, use it, and make the best gift you can. Go online, LifeToday.org. Many people do that now. Thank God! Would you make that gift? Write a check to *LIFE* but call us and toll us you're mailing it. It is really important we hear from you.

We have some special gifts to send you to bless you in your spiritual journey because we want to be a blessing to you.

Thank you for helping us rescue those precious girls and precious children.

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: I hope, if you can, that you will ask for the commemorative bronze and make the \$1,000 gift to help us rebuild that *LIFE* Center that burned and expand it. If you can give \$1280 and help us rescue ten, do it!

We're sending Betty's book, *Free to Be Me*, for any gift. We send that beautiful bronze for the gift of \$1,000. *The Life Application Study Bible*, what a blessing! And if you would like to have *Secret to Serenity*, written by our wonderful guests today, we will be happy to send it to you because there may just be a place in your heart or life where you need this or you know someone who does.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks again so much to Nina and to Chrysty for sharing.

Thank you, ladies! Appreciate you very, very much. God bless you!

Good to see you neighbor!

Thank all of you for your help. Thank you for watching. Encourage your friends to watch *LIFE Today*. Encourage them to be involved in touching someone's life every day!