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Week 42

James: Well, it is a thrill to share this time with you. We welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison.

Betty and I are still sharing in Colorado. We came up to talk to some of the high impact people in the state. We talked to Philip Yancey, you may remember. We talked to Andrew Wommack and his wife Jamie. But while we were here we wanted to talk to a pastor that began as an associate to our good friend, T.D. Jakes who has been on here; Bishop Jakes has been our guest many times.

I had the blessed privilege of praying the prayer of blessing on the opening of The Potter's House in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. And this associate pastor that was there with him was an evangelist for a while after serving with Pastor Jakes and ended up in Denver, the great Mile High City with The Potter's House Denver, his name is Chris Hill. He has quite a story, quite a journey.

Betty, so many people don't seem to have the ability to forgive and the person that really gets stuck and hurt is the one that doesn't forgive, not the one that is not being forgiven, however great their need may be. When you choose not to forgive, you're choosing to hurt yourself very seriously.

Well, Chris, we're glad to have you, buddy.

Chris: I'm so glad to be here.

James: And I like Bishop Jakes. Do you like Bishop Jakes?

Chris: I love Bishop Jakes.

James: He's wonderful, and you know, what a great influence he's had. You know he's doing all kind of things beyond pastoring, taking the message right into the theaters and it's been amazing how God's blessed him. Did you learn a lot from him?

Chris: I learned -- I always say that all the mistakes are mine. Everything good that I'm doing I've learned from my -- he's my spiritual father. He's really influential in my life. Being a fatherless kid, when he came in God really used him to set me up and to

train me and so much... not only just the Bible and preaching, but also how to be a man, how to be a father, how to be a husband.

James: Your journey, however, would not set somebody up to be much of a blessing. You look to me like you were set up to be one of those people we read about in the newspaper or we find in a prison somewhere because had you not responded properly to your... let's say the potential to hate, resent, and not forgive, you would have been sunk; right?

Chris: Absolutely!

James: Tell us your story.

Chris: Well, you hit it nail on head is that I shouldn't be here today, I should be a statistic, I should be a number. My dad walked out on my mom pregnant with me; left my sister and my mother and just went on to pursue his own life. So being raised in that home, she did the best she could, Godly woman, loved God, and loves God today.

But it was just one of those places where I was beginning to grow and fester a hate for my father -- never called, never checked on me. Father's Day was a living hell for me, Christmas, holidays, any time where other people would have a father figure or a father around it just brought that hatred up.

I didn't act out in negative ways or crime or -- I kind of went the other way. I was going to be the overachiever. My dream was to be able to say, "Look what I've done with my life, and you, dad, had nothing to do with that!" But it was still, even though it was positive action, the heart core of it was still bitterness and hatred.

I don't know a night I didn't pray, Lord, kill my father. I don't know a night I didn't end my prayers with let him know. I wanted him to feel my pain.

But that pain, that unforgiveness was eating me on the inside. I couldn't imagine being a father. I couldn't imagine being a husband. I figured how can I be a husband when I've never seen a husband? I was beginning to perpetuate a thought process that was going to destroy me and then I met Jesus.

James: How old were you?

Chris: When I accepted Jesus Christ into my heart, I was about two and a half years old.

James: Oh, come on!

Chris: Yes, sir!

James: Well, then why did you carry that hate past that point?

Chris: Because even though... that's the thing is I was a Christian. I was a good Christian. I'm a Holy Ghost Pentecostal Christian but I still hated my dad.

[Laughing]

James: But you were not walking in the fruit of the spirit.

Chris: Not in that area. I was good with everybody else but when it came to him, that area, that root of bitterness...

James: Because you actually heard the gospel when you were two and a half and you sensed it and you said, "I want this Jesus."

Chris: Oh, man. I walked down an aisle and came and Mother Catherine Dorsey led me to the Lord. I began to preach when I was five years old. Here I am, I'm a preacher, I'm a youth pastor...

James: So you're serious about God but you still had a hate.

Chris: Oh, yeah! He had to deal with that.

James: You had that thorn in your flesh.

Chris: Absolutely! And I think there are so many people who are Christians and love God but have a hard time with people. And for me, that was my area, that was my sticking point, I could love anybody else, forgive anybody else.

And then one day, I was about 21 years old, and I had one of those moments when God comes to you real strong and says, "I'm not going to take you forward until you let this go. You're too heavy."

James: So he made you aware that that was a place you were stuck. That it was a pit from which you had to be delivered; right?

Chris: Absolutely.

James: Okay. So what happened?

Chris: Well, I got on a plane and I flew to Augusta, Georgia.

James: Because you knew where he was.

Chris: I knew where he was, I knew the house. I hadn't seen him since I was 14 years old. I hadn't talked to him but I knew I was about to get married and I'd met Joy and engaged to her and I didn't want to carry that curse into my marriage. I didn't want to carry it with my kids.

So I went to Augusta, Georgia, knocked on his door. Stood on the front stoop -- that's what they call it in Georgia. He came to the door, six foot four, 250 pounds and I said to him, "You're an idiot. I've hated you since I knew how to hate anything."

James: Had he ever even checked on you? Did he have a clue, anything going on in your life?

Chris: Not a card. Maybe he did from a distance but not a card, not a letter, not a call.

James: In other words, if he tracked you he never let you know he was tracking you.

Chris: And what you find out later is he didn't know what to say; he didn't know what to do.

James: So he felt some guilt.

Chris: He felt tremendous guilt but he didn't know how to get past his guilt. He was stuck -- I was stuck, and he was stuck.

James: Now is he married to somebody else at this time when you went over to see him?

Chris: No more other kids, never married again, just locked within himself.

James: Was he a miserable person?

Chris: Miserable, educated, successful.

James: But empty.

Chris: But empty completely.

James: So what happened? Did you tell him he was an idiot? Did you actually say that?

Chris: Oh, yeah. I said he was an idiot.

James: That was a good way to start.

Chris: Yeah, it was a great way to start the conversation.

[Laughter]

James: You're a real spiritual Christian.

Chris: Yeah, I told you I needed prayer and deliverance.

James: Okay, so what happened?

Chris: But I said, "You know what? I was an idiot too and Jesus forgave me. And if he can forgive me for my sin, I can forgive you for your sin." I just stood there outside and this 250 pound strong black man melted in my arms like an ice cream cone in the noonday sun. And we knelt together and he gave his heart to Jesus.

James: Wow! In a pretty short time frame right there.

Chris: Right there! Right there! I baptized him.

James: Were you pretty well knocked back, taken back by what happened?

Chris: I didn't -- that was not what -- I didn't go there to minister.

[Laughing]

I went there to get free.

James: While this is happening to him and you're seeing him receive Christ, what's going on inside of you with your hate?

Chris: I never even thought of him as a human. That's the thing is we drink... Unforgiveness is like drinking a gallon of poison and expecting the other person to die.

I went there to get rid of my issue; I went there to move on, and I didn't know that 21 years earlier he was stuck in the same place when he walked away from me, it crushed him. God blessed him to let that thing go.

We just had a moment there. I'm not telling you it fixed everything. I still had to teach myself how to drive. I had to teach myself how to tie a tie.

You should've saw the day I was teaching myself how to drive. It was not a day to be on the road. Okay?

[Laughter]

Teaching myself how to ride a bike, all the poverty that we went through as a result of his neglect, you don't get that back but at least you get some forward. We got to build a relationship.

James: Did he stay there in that area? You didn't get in proximity closer?

Chris: No, no! We just began to try and build some kind of relationship. We have the same D.N.A. We sit the same way. We sit up the same way. Just being with him was really eye-opening. You have so many questions about yourself that is only answered in having that relationship.

James: You found out probably where a lot of his hurt came from too.

Chris: Completely.

James: Now, this story gets more interesting too because of some things that happened after that; doesn't it?

Chris: Well, God really let... that was the first step. The second step was that I met Bishop Jakes. And what was amazing about that is when I met Bishop, it was like

meeting the father that I never had. He began to... God used him to minister to so many different areas of hurt.

I think that's why we're Potter's House Denver is that I'm a son of that ministry, but really a spiritual son of the healing I received there. That was about eight years later after -- I believe honestly, that I would not have been prepared to receive a father in the spirit until I had released and forgiven my father in the natural.

James: That's good! And that father might not have come into your life because like you said, you would not have been able to receive him. Now didn't some other things happen physically and medically?

Chris: Well, yes, sir. Fast forward to me coming to Denver here, three, three and a half years ago.

James: And the church has really grown. You've got about 7,000 members or so now?

Chris: Yes, sir, God's really blessed it. He's really blessed it.

James: Potter's House Denver, where are you located?

Chris: We're right in southeast Denver right on the borderline of Aurora.

James: Got room for any more people to come if they want to?

Chris: I'll make room!

[Laughing]

If I have to build a chair. We love people. We love people!

James: What happened though? Some other things took place.

Chris: I was taking over this church here and my dad, I got a call from the V.A., the veterans' hospital in Georgia, "You're the only one who can make this decision. Do we pull the plug or do we let him live?"

He had gone into a diabetic coma. And I'm the son, and I'm the one who makes that decision. He wrote my name down to make the call.

James: Did you go to him?

Chris: I said to them, "Don't pull..."

Here I've spent half my life praying that he would die. I said, "Don't touch him until I can lay hands on him and pray for him."

I preached that Sunday morning, got on the first thing smoking, got down to Georgia, drove from Atlanta and got to Augusta. Laid my body on him and God raised him up. Raised him up and gave me three more years.

James: Are you serious?

Chris: Three more years.

James: Now was he normal?

Chris: No, he was wheelchair bound. I had to come in and take over his bills, take over his house, wash him, clean him.

James: Took care of the father that never gave you a moment.

Chris: Not a moment.

James: What was happening to you doing that?

Chris: I knew I was saved.

[Laughing]

There was no way. When you change somebody literally, when you're changing somebody who never changed you, you know that God has done a work of grace in your heart.

James: And you were loving him.

Chris: And it was the opportunity to give what I never got; the opportunity to be there for him. And I mean we were sitting up watching a baseball game and I'm sitting up, just on the television in this hospital room and he's saying... and I never in my life

imagined that my father and I would be watching baseball together. And he leaned over and said, "I can't believe you're doing all this for me." He said, "Why are you doing this for me?"

I said, "Jesus did this for me. And he loved me just where I was, just like I am. He worked with me. He loved me." And that's the kind of love that we have in Jesus. That it doesn't stop with us, it goes to other people.

I think it is the reason our church is growing is when people come into the grip of grace and begin to understand that God's love not only is for me personally but it is for me to be a conduit to share the love of Jesus with my family, with my friends, with my neighborhood, with people in Africa who are hungry, with people who are in need of shoes, just everything that you're doing is we're being that river of love. Not only when you're the river of love, you not only get blessed, you become a blessing.

I think that's why God's blessing our church. I think that's why God is blessing the ministry is it's really when people can genuinely see that you love them just like they are, and instead of loving them to death, you love them to life.

Betty: I think it is so important what you're saying about unforgiveness and how it can just stifle and stop your heart almost. You were going to see your father because you wanted relief, you wanted deliverance. But when you did that, you made that step, you decided to do that, God just started flowing out and your Dad's life was changed.

Chris: It is a miracle.

Betty: Most people when they're carrying, like you said, unforgiveness they think by doing that you're hurting that person that you can't forgive but you're hurting yourself.

Chris: Absolutely, I was the victim. Both ways -- he victimized me and then unforgiveness victimized me as well. Then that moment with Christ when he really said, "Okay, if you're going to move on from this, Chris you've got to let him go." I went really for my own healing and that's our message is that we have to be recipients of God's forgiveness and then forgive ourselves.

James: Yeah and your willingness to come to that place that you recognize the grace that forgave you and you extended it to him, he received it freely and it transformed his life, and you had those moments that not only that gave you a sense of glorious

achievement in the grace of God but it opened you up to minister to so many thousands and thousands of people who would have spent their life stuck even if they were quote good Pentecostal or good Baptists or good Catholics, Christians and yet they are stuck.

I hope all of you who are listening right now, I pray to God that you understand that this is really a message to any person that's been hurt. We've all been hurt. Life hurts, so much of it. People hurt people and hurt people really hurt people.

But to be able to forgive and realize that we can be forgiven when we ask the one who died that we might be forgiven, and we receive that forgiveness then we release it. This is the river of life that is to flow freely out of us.

That really, Chris, has to include forgiveness; it is a river of grace, it's a river of love and it is a river of forgiveness. So may God help you, I pray.

You've been hurt to experience not just what Chris experienced but what you, Father, want everyone to experience, why you gave your son, why he is alive. And I pray, dear God that someone hurt today by their dad, by even not just their absence but the fact that they're there and they're such a bad example and they've been so abusive, so neglectful, God give them grace. Give them the healing that will come to them and to the others; in Jesus' name.

If you need someone to pray with you, don't hesitate to call and get someone to pray with you.

You know, Chris, you talked about the things we do, drilling water wells, feeding people, giving shoes, just getting people out of the sex trafficking, our viewers love to do what works. Love never fails!

Programs too often fail because if they don't have a love connection, a compassion connection they don't have godly oversight, therefore they won't have accountability on the part of those being helped and responsibility assumed. You just create something dependent upon everything but God. So listen -- what we do works because love never fails.

Let me show you something that works. And you know what? Love working through you is what makes it work.

On the mission field:

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

Dalene: After my mother died, a lady came and told me she would raise me like her daughter. But instead, she sold me to a brothel to pay off her debts. I have scars from the chains they put on me. They force me to service eight to ten men each night, and we are not allowed to eat or drink unless we do.

If girls are disobedient, they're sent away by boat and they never come back. I haven't felt love since my mother died. I want freedom. I want to not live in hell anymore. This life, it is like hell to me.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: What do we need to do, Betty, to help her? Because I know it is possible.

Betty: We can help these young ladies, these children that are being trafficked. They're being put in prison of no choice of their own; they're being used and discarded like garbage, like trash but we can make the difference.

We can give them a place to go. We can reach out and help them and let them know there is someone that cares about them. We can give them that hope that they feel like there is none around them close by. She says she feels like she is living in hell every day. I can't even imagine! But we want them to know what it is like to have hope and peace in their hearts.

James: We want you to know that we did rescue her.

Father, thank you! Thank you!

And when I say "we" do you understand that although Betty and I give, there would never be a time that Betty and I wouldn't give to rescue quite a few of those girls because we ask God to let us do it, enable us to do it. We started one at a time but she's been rescued.

The beautiful thing is that Dalene has been rescued and she's having a new future built, and by the grace of God, we're going to be able show you in the future what's happened to her because of the love of God through someone like you.

Would you right now be kind and loving enough to reach out and dial the telephone number that's there, a prayer line for you if your heart's broken or you need comfort or counsel or encouragement? You just need someone to listen?

Today there is someone waiting to answer in behalf of girls just like that -- thousands of children that we can rescue before they're sold to the traffickers, oftentimes because their family is in debt. And they always believe the lie that if they let the child go for a certain amount of money they're going to take them and educate them and they're going to get a good job. Not the case -- they're sold into bondage and slavery, sometimes taken far from their home or even their country land.

But we have joined hands and hearts with the people who are rescuing them because they love them, with Christian missionaries who care so deeply, and we're giving them the wherewithal, the ability to take care of them. The average cost to rescue one of those girls is \$128; \$1280... And I wish you would do this if you could, we can rescue ten.

Along with rescuing these children where we've targeted the outreaches in various areas, some places we can name, some we can't, it has to be kept quiet in order to protect the workers, but right now we not only need your help, three quarters of a million dollars plus, to rescue those we've already seen in areas and we need to add a great addition, restoration to the Ukraine *LIFE* Center where we're reaching so many because it burned and was damaged.

So we're asking you to dial the number or go online. If you could make a \$128 gift or a \$1280 gift or give a special additional gift to help us restore the *LIFE* Center, please do so. We've got some beautiful gifts for you that will bless you and help you grow in your spiritual journey.

Remember, this is the last week and I'm asking you to call right now that number or go online and make the gift God put on your heart. Thank you so much for doing it.

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.

This is the last week so please call, write, or make your gift online!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Betty and I just want to say a big thanks. Thank you for responding to what we ask you to do and doing it with joy.

Let me give you a web site for Potter's House Denver. There it is on the screen if you want to check out how to get there, maybe some of the materials that Chris has made available. And he said he would make a place for you!

Go by and visit them and be a part of this love explosion through The Potter's House.

Chris, thank you! You're a blessing, man.

Chris: Thank you so much.

James: I can say to Bishop Jakes, he did good fathering here this son in the Lord and I

can see the glory of God on you just like on Bishop Jakes, and we love you and appreciate you.

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your home and thank you for extending the hands of the Lord Jesus to others. We really do appreciate that.