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Week 44

James: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to have this opportunity. We've told you that this is 50 years of marriage and more than 50 years of being in love because we dated for a few years. We behaved ourselves. You were probably pressed a few times by this guy you were with but she was strong.

Betty: Strong and still strong.

James: Yeah, I put a move on her now and she says, "I'm still strong!"

[Laughter]

It's amazing when you think about it, that we're just like the exception that we've been married a long time. And you know you really wonder about a lot of people who are living together if they really even like each other very much or if it is kind of an arrangement.

We've got a couple that were in church work and yet got so crosswise with each other and cross ways that they went and got lawyers. The lawyers kind of pitted them against one another. They got private investigators. They would wear a wire, a mike trying to catch the other one, and then the judge made them live in the same house for 15 months, a war zone. I've got to ask them, why did the judge do that? Was he trying to see who was going to live through the fight?

[Laughter]

So you don't have to worry about someone else -- they're dead! I really wonder. But the miracle is they got divorced and then they came back together and got remarried. They say you need to bring authenticity and wholeness to your marriage so *Let's Get Real*, Dale and Jena Forehand. Let's listen to their story. Welcome them to *LIFE Today*.

[Applause]

You act like you actually... like you're happy.

Jena: Well, we love each other and we like each other and that was not the case before.

[Laughing]

James: And you were church folks.

Dale: We were, James. That wasn't the problem. We always say it like this. Our problem was that we were religiously active but we were not spiritually intimate. We could go through the motions, go to Sunday school, deacon, leading soloist; we could play the part but behind that mask of performance our marriage was dying a very, very ugly death behind the four walls of our home.

James: Is tragically that story perhaps too often true with many people who are sitting in church or someone even on the platform?

Jena: Absolutely.

James: Because I know you have ministry to people now like that so is that the truth?

Jena: Absolutely! Because I think we've bought into the lie at the church that we have to come perfect. And if somebody knew our stuff, if they really knew, they might not like us and then we wouldn't get to do things and we wouldn't get to be a part. So let's just play the game, put on the mask.

And when I was a kid, those masks were those plastic with the rubber band that got caught in your hair. But after a couple of houses you were suffocating so you took your mask and put it on your head. You had to show everybody the top of your head. And I think that's what happens. We'll wear that mask, and wear that mask, until we are just -- it either becomes who we are or it suffocates us to the point where we just want to rip it off. And I think that's really what happened to us. We were just tired of

playing the game.

James: How long were y'all married in this wonderful relationship?

Dale: Well, it wasn't always bad. We have to start by saying that. But about eight and a half years into the marriage it was very broken; fighting escalated, chasing the American dream, pursuing the corporate ladder, trying to raise kids, looked like everything is okay on the outside and then we brought some brokenness and woundedness to the marriage we didn't know about, and so all of the sudden eight and a half years in the marriage I just said it was over. I packed her bags and I put them in the car and I told her to get out.

James: Why didn't you get out?

Dale: Well, because I was the man. I was in charge; right?

[Laughter]

So it was just --

James: I already see why you had a problem. My goodness! Did you tell him you were glad for him to pack them and you were ready to go? Did it shock you when he did that?

Jena: It shocked me yeah. It shocked me. But you're in this mode of what do I do? What do I do? What do I do? He took the children with him and he went to play a round of golf because again, you've got to put the mask on, you have to play the game. I've just kicked my wife out of the house...

James: This is after he said this.

Jena: I just kicked my wife out of the house but I've got to go save face so I'm going to go play golf with the guys.

James: And took the kids? Did you get them a little cart behind the cart?

Dale: I put them at the swimming pool with my mom.

James: You really had it together.

Dale: I did.

Jena: So I went and got them. He called me and said, "The reason our marriage isn't working is because you're not doing what I tell you to do, and I didn't tell you to go get the kids."

And so, I said, "I just feel like we're not safe with each other. I feel like we need some time to cool off."

And he said, "No, if you don't come and bring the kids home I'm going to find them and when I do, I'm going to take them from you."

About a couple weeks later I guess, it was Vacation Bible School at our church and I had to go. I had butter cookies to hand out; right? So I have to go. And nobody knows. I don't tell anyone. I take my children to church and just act like everything is fine, and he and his brothers came and snuck up and grabbed the kids and took them.

James: Now how old were these kids that were being dragged around?

Dale: They were six and two.

James: Did they know what was going on? Or did they think this is kind of the way it is supposed to be.

Dale: I think our six year old did know. Our two year old did not. Honestly, that's the big tragedy of what took place in that 15 months.

But I've got to tell you the good news is that on the day that we get remarried our son comes to us at the age of six and a half and says, "Hey, since God put my family back together, please tell me how I can receive Jesus as my savior." So our anniversary of our remarriage is our son's spiritual birthday. I always tell people, you never ever want to underestimate your one single act of obedience because you never know what you do right, what that will do in the life of somebody else.

So we're a walking example of doing the right thing even though it was broken and messed up. James and Betty, we're an example of God's grace and second chances. And as ugly as it was, there is another side today that God is using to really strengthen families.

James: What's that son doing now? How old is now? What's he doing?

Dale: He's 22, just got married and he's answered the call to ministry. He's going to be a worship leader. God has fully restored that and redeemed that.

Jena: He's a redeeming God!

Dale: He really is.

James: And your daughter?

Dale: She is in a school for people going into ministry called Highlands College and so they're -- God's redeemed that. So that's the good news of our story is that there is second chances.

James: You've got a DVD series here. Is this something you make available to people who want it that you teach? And what are you doing now? Seminars?

Dale: We have a conference called Let's Get Real and we go to the local church and we teach couples the things that we wished we knew then that we now know: How to be safe in a marriage, how to really demonstrate real love, how to look at what you brought into your marriage and unpack that so that your spouse is not your enemy but

now your ally, locking arms to fight the enemy who wants to steal, kill, and destroy the marriage that God ordained. And so we went to work real hard figuring, how does a Christian couple like this find themselves in a courtroom fighting over their kids with a broken marriage?

Jena: But in church every time the doors are open -- how does this happen?

Dale: So that's what we've written about. That's what we teach. We've got some real life principles that we learned the second go around, if you will, of what it really means to live in a marriage that's whole, fulfilling, thriving. And that's why we smile when you first saw us because God's changed us and it's a different marriage.

James: This is no phony facade mask that you're going to pull back later.

Jena: Listen, I've got to tell y'all. One of the things that we... people started saying, "Well, y'all share your story." So we're like sharing it at weenie roasts, we don't care, wherever we can go, we're sharing our story, what God did. And then they started saying, "Well, teach us about how we can..."

James: You're a little country. You're a little bit southern; did you know that?

Jena: I am a little. Yes, I am.

James: I'm a little country.

Jena: But anyway, we actually went to a marriage conference like six weeks before we actually divorced. And one of the things that was asked of us was we couldn't talk unless you held this pin...

Dale: Or a feather or something.

Jena: Or something. You had to something in your hand and you had to talk and you couldn't talk as long as I had this, and then I could hand it to you and then I couldn't

talk. By the end of it I was like, I wanted to poke his eyes out with the pin. I was like, "Give me the pin! I need to talk to you and tell you..."

So Dale and I, when we began, for people to start asking us, "How did you put your marriage back together?" We were like let's go for the roots. Scripture tells us, if you have bad roots, you're going to bear bad fruit. But if you've got good roots, you're going to bear good fruit. So let's stop quit trying to fix the fruit on the tree and let's get the roots out.

And when we started going through all of our heart issues and what we brought into the marriage and the expectations we had in your marriage and you're supposed to meet all my needs and God doesn't need any. It is all you. Why aren't you doing this? And you're supposed to complete me. And you're a mess.

James: She's good, man!

Jena: All these things that we blame each other on.

James: I hope you wrote most of the book.

[Laughter]

Jena: So when we started getting to the root of the matter things changed.

James: I've already got the jury in your favor.

[Laughter]

Jena: When you start looking at the -- when the roots start getting right and their based on the principles of the Word of God, and then you put it to practice, you bear good fruit.

Betty: Let's go back a little bit. You got my curiosity up about the lawyer thing and

then the judge ordering you to stay together in the home while you were going through the divorce?

James: Did any lawyer give you any good advice? Did they tell you anything worthwhile or bad advice?

Dale: Because we were fighting for custody of our children we were told that if one of us left the marital residence, the other would say you're an unfit parent and so you can't leave.

Jena: And you abandoned your children.

Dale: So you can't leave if you want to win.

James: So you had to stay at the house with her.

Dale: So I'd stay at the house. So we got a 6 p.m. curfew. We had to be in the home by six. I'm like, "I'm not going to eat your food until you taste it first."

Jena: He would! He would make me eat it first.

James: She was your tester.

Dale: But honestly, our home got real small. I look back now some 13 to 15 years later and go, "How do we get through that? How do we survive that literally?" I really believe, obviously God was still chasing us, still pursuing us, getting us through that because there are a lot of pain in broken relationships and I think the good news about our story is on the other side, God's grace has always been sufficient. We're just examples of how he came through for us. There's so much we know now, how he pursued us, he wooed us, he drew us back.

And then when Jena broke on a telephone conversation in a fight and said, "Dale, I want you to come home and let's see if we can fix this thing," that step out there, that moment of big time faith by her, started the process of us...

James: This is after the divorce?

Dale: After the divorce; yeah.

James: Why did you say that to him? I hadn't found a good reason yet!

[Laughter]

Jena: You know what? I just have to be really honest and say that it was the Holy Spirit. I know that probably sounds really bizarre but it was. I mean I'm telling you, it came out of my mouth and I thought, where in the world did that come from? And I'm not even sure I even want that. But it –

I said, "What have we done? You just need to come home and we need to try and fix this." I wish I could take credit for it but it was just the Spirit of God.

That is one thing, if I can say anything, I appreciate the fact that you were led by the Spirit of God on your shows. Thank you for that! I was raised in a Christian home but I was never introduced to the Holy Spirit until I was like 21 years old. When you began to discover, you didn't have to do all this on your own, the Lord deposited his spirit in you to help you, I was set free. I believe that's what happened in our marriage. We had a Christian marriage but Christ was not the center of our marriage. We weren't two spirit-led people in a Christ-centered home and that makes all the difference in the world.

James: I see so many people that they're broken. How are they being impacted by what you're saying?

Dale: I think it is the title of our book. Because we've gotten so real, we took off the mask and our transparency and our vulnerability is breeding transparency and vulnerability in those people in the church. They're sitting in the room going, well, I thought I was the only one who felt this way or thought this way or dealt with this.

But because we've been transparent they're taking their mask off and they're actually entering into some truths now; they're building good seeds and their marriages are bearing good fruit.

We're hearing now that young married couples, newlyweds are going, "I went through premarital but what you just taught me in this curriculum or this studying in this DVD series, it's changing the way I look at my marriage."

So we got empty nesters all the way down to newlyweds who are going, "Wow, this stuff is building a foundation in my home now, something I can build off of." Like how to be a safe mate. That's one of our favorite sessions to teach because we lost safety. How do you hold your spouse's heart well in the midst of stress, worry, financial problems, wayward kids, all those things? How do you maintain a holding of the heart well with your spouse so that they're not your enemy? Then you lock arms and you become free, authentic and whole.

James: If viewers wanted to get this, is it in the bookstores?

Dale: It's in bookstores, web sites.

James: Let's Get Real. Your web site; what is it?

Dale: DaleAndJena.com.

James: So if they wanted to get the material they could from you. They could probably also get some insight. Now I want to know, would they find out contact information if they wanted you to come and speak in their community or their church?

Dale: It's all right there, our web site, how they can contact us, the resources, examples of our teaching, podcasts, blogs. It's all right there.

James: And you're so excited about what God's done in your relationship that you believe it cannot simply be contagious but it can be something that becomes a reality

because they hear truths that help them unravel some of the obvious areas of bondage or know how to literally deal with situations that have driven them apart.

Jena: Absolutely!

Dale: James and Betty, if you don't know what to do, you'll typically do nothing. So what we've tried to do is we just unpack our journey for couples. We're just a real Jane and Joe couple who actually have been there and done that and got that T-shirt. Now all of the sudden God has given us a call to help fight for the marriages in this country. If we can give them some tools, and with the power of the Holy Spirit alive and well in their hearts, we really believe that you can change the marriages in this country and we can reclaim that for the glory of God.

James: See, the thing that is really beautiful is it really is a miracle of God's grace because here are two people trying to do church and trying to act like family who are anything but, totally unlike the father. Now you really have gotten in his sheltered shadow, you've fallen in love with him and one another, you're children and everybody that sees you knows. You can see it in him. You can see it in her. You became one another's encourager.

Here's the thing I'd like all of you to hear. I don't care where you are, I don't care where you've been, if you could ever look beyond yourself, behold his glory and his grace and really begin to love that person that you're at odds with or you don't understand or you wish you could fix and you become their champion –

A lot of you men are looking for a cheerleader. Have you ever tried to be one for your wife? Have you ever really tried to build her up and let her know how incredibly beautiful and valuable she is?

Driving up here tonight, did I tell you how beautiful that sweater was?

Betty: You did.

James: In the car. I told you it was brilliant. I told you you were beautiful. Did I not

tell you at lunch today with a lot of 30 year old women around, "Do you realize that you're as pretty as any one of those women right out there?" Did I say that to you?

Betty: Yeah, you did.

James: Did I tell you your complexion is just as beautiful? Now did that make you feel good?

How about you try that some time? How about you really try to build up people around you? Watch what happens.

Do you appreciate this wonderful couple? Are you glad they came back together? I'm glad!

Here's the material. It's in the bookstores. There's their web site. Get it!

Now I want you to do something. I have told you this and boy, if you ever reach to try to get the remote and change the channel, okay, I've heard what they've got to say. Now I know what they're fixing to do. They're going to ask me to do something. Don't you dare touch that remote! You stay right there and listen to me.

When you're saying, "I wish I could get some help. I wish people would help me." How about you begin -- just start right now -- I'm going to find somebody I can effectively help. It might just change the whole world for them. I want you to just look and see if you were in the situation you're about to see if you wish somebody would not touch the remote and check out on you but check in. How about you check in on somebody's life? Watch what happens to yours. Please watch.

On the mission field

Announcer: She's seen this before. And she knows what's coming. She's fought so hard. But no matter what she does, the signs still say severe. The single thing she loves most is fading away. Life...slipping right through her fingers and she knows it. She knows because it's happened before.

Last year her four-year-old daughter died from malnutrition. Now she watches as her son, Akol fights for his life just like her daughter did.

Subtitle:

>> I took my daughter to the hospital. The treatment didn't help. I stayed with her until she died.

There is no food. If you are sad like me, then you will help me.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Oh, but there will be. Mmh! No more food -- there will be! There isn't any way for me to tell you how much I wanted to put my hands up on that lady's face and tell her how precious she is.

We lost our youngest daughter this year, this past year. She lost her child and now they're measuring for the malnutrition affect on her little son.

Betty, we're blessed with three children. We're surrounded by all the wonderful things that freedom and opportunity gives us. Those babies are the subtotal of those precious women's life and joy. Isn't that right?

Betty: Yes.

James: "No more food," she said. Well, there's going to be by the grace of God because Betty and I are going to do all we can to get some food to them, and we've been doing this now for more than 20 years faithfully. And our viewers like you who don't check out on pain or need but say you step up and you reach out and touch someone with love. You're going to provide the food. And that's what we're asking you to do.

Betty, I'm believing with all my heart our viewers are going to do it. We'll answer that problem.

Betty: Absolutely! If you're a mother, you know you would go to the ends of the earth, you would do all you know to do to help your child live. This mother evidently

has seen one child die and likely to see another one die if they don't get the help they need. And it is a simple solution for us to help them and give them food for their children to help them live. Let's reach out and do that. Just as we would with our own children, we'd go to the ends of the earth to help them. Let's reach out to the ends of this earth for them and let's help their children because they can't help them.

James: And we can save their lives. The missionaries and the relief workers in the foreign nations have reported that we have saved millions and millions of their children's and their families' and their people's lives.

When I say "we" I'm talking about you, the viewers of *LIFE Today*. Would you dial the number? I mean right now.

Father, I pray there wouldn't be a single person who wouldn't reach out and say, "I'm going to give somebody some help today." Please! In Jesus' name, for their sake and for your glory.

Look, if you could reach out and take your bankcard... how often do you use it for something that is really not real important? And you always want to use it like it is a bankcard, like it's a check; you want to use it like it's cash. But take it and say, "I'm going to help you take care of ten children." \$100 will help us feed 10 children for several months. And we've got hundreds of thousands -- over 400,000 right now in place that are waiting to hear, are you going to keep the food coming in these areas where we found them. Would do you it?

If you could give \$50 we can care for five. \$30 -- there is not any gift too small. Those children, look, who will help save that woman's little child and get some strength and some meat on their bones, so to speak, and give them a chance and give her hope? You can. Only you can do it for many mothers like that. You might be able to give \$1,000 to help us take care of 100 children easily with your help. Would you do that please? Would you just make the gift God put on your heart?

Look, we want to send something to you to help you *Move Past Your Past*. You don't have to get stuck and downtrodden and defeated.

You say, "James, why do you offer gifts?" The same way we offer gifts to help those children live and those parents and those families. We want to help you live a more fully blessed overcoming life of peace and joy and understanding. We want to give to you words of life, spiritual food, spiritual water. So we say thank you. We'll tell you what you do and how we're going to send to you books that will bless you and teaching by Christine Caine, so anointed, so full of God's love.

Please dial the number or go online at LifeToday.org and make the gift God put on your heart. You're actually giving the greatest gift. You're giving love and life and we thank you for it. Make the best gift you can.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In remote and impoverished areas of Africa, families are suffering, facing death by starvation, and those hit the hardest are their children.

Life's Mission Feeding program is there able to feed and care for over 400,000 children in crisis areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. Our mission partners urgently need your support. Our food reserves are gone and we desperately need to replenish our supplies at more than 800 feeding centers immediately. Your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for the next three months.

With your gift we'll send you *Moving Past Your Past*, a powerful new series featuring author and speaker Christine Caine. In *Christ There are No Yesterdays, Only Tomorrows*; in this series, Christine provides you with the keys to leaving your past behind and receiving all God has for your future.

For a gift of any amount you'll receive the audio CD series along with Christine's book, *Can I Have and Do It All, Please?* With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed ten children, please request the entire teaching on both DVD and CD. And as a bonus, we'll send you Christine's latest book release, *Undaunted*.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed 100 children and you may request our 50th anniversary bronze sculpture, "Brotherly Love." Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of clip

In the studio

James: From the very depth of our heart, Betty and I express gratitude to you for being sensitive to needs.

By the way, if you dial and call for prayer and you get a busy, you call until you get through. We want to pray with you, we want to be a blessing. If you call to help and get a busy, be determined, "I'm going to get through. I'm either going to go online or I'm going to get through on this line and I'm going to make a gift to give life." Thank you for that!

I want to say thanks to Dale and Jena Forehand. They are a blessing! You are a beautiful, miraculous expression of God's grace. Join us saying thanks, if you will, for Dale and Jena. Here's their material; it's in the bookstores. There's their web site and you may want to invite them to come to your church and be a blessing to you. Thank you so much for watching.