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Week 45

Betty: Thank you always for joining us on *LIFE Today*. We love you and appreciate you watching. I hope you're blessed. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: Well, we've got two authors with us and two people who have demonstrated mercy as much anybody we know. We know a lot of people who do it. Nancy Alcorn and Mission of Mercy and Mercy Mission, and Amy Ford who had a bump in life and that bump happened to be a pregnancy when she wasn't married. And she was going with another nice little church boy like she was a nice little church girl and got pregnant and almost had an abortion... but for the grace of God.

They're married, she and this boy, a wonderful couple. The boy that nearly was aborted is 15 now. And this young lady, Amy Ford and her church where she attends, where Betty and I go, Gateway, have started a ministry called Embrace Grace, reaching out to girls who are challenged, and of course, also to any mother, single mom who needs help but especially to girls that have been told, it is not best to have an abortion. It is really not right, nor is it right for people not to love you when you are challenged and to help you and to love your baby and love you with that baby and not leave you and just say, "Good luck!" We're going to help you. That's what Embrace Grace does.

This studio is filled with girls who are wearing Embrace Grace, some of the guys here too who are encouraging them, Embracing Grace because they know how important all of that is, just like Amy's husband does.

And then Nancy Alcorn tells the story of how she lost so many people she loved, including her baby sister and how her life could have been totally destroyed in every way, and then how she found mercy and how she found healing for the grief. But she has a ministry, Mercy Ministry and Mission that has incredible homes for girls who are literally defeated and need help. There's her web site. I want you to see it right up front.

And then the web site... and by the way, it will be on the LifeToday.org. You say, "Why are you telling us about that?" Because you're going to want to get the help and learn how you can give the help that Amy talks about, that Nancy talks about or how you can access it. So I wanted you to see that right up front.

Would you welcome Amy Ford and Nancy Alcorn to *LIFE Today*? We're so glad you're here. Both of you beautiful ladies have a marvelous ministry of grace -- mercy and grace. You know when you hear... you've been ministering for a long time. Even though you opened up, Nancy, to tell kind of your story of your pain that could have totally devastated you and how you had to get help. Even while you were helping others, you needed some help and you got it and you tell a marvelous story there.

Well, when you hear about what's happened in somebody's life, like Amy, and then what came out of it with the glory and grace of God and you see a ministry like that, what happens to you? What's your feeling about what you're watching happen with her?

Nancy: Well, what inspires me about Amy is that for the last 30 years Mercy Ministries started 30 years ago, God put the vision on my heart, and what I tell the girls, even though we have to categorize it as a home for troubled girls, whether it's pregnancy or some other issue that we deal with like addictions or eating disorders or cutting or sex trafficking or whatever, but it's called a home for troubled girls but the reality is that we would tell girls like Amy, if Amy would have come to us at her point of need, we would have said, "Amy, this is a place where God raises up champions and the enemy is trying to steal the call of God on your life. And what the enemy meant for your destruction, God is going to turn it for your good and a great ministry is going to come out of this. And God is going to use you mightily if you go on to follow him."

But to be Amy epitomizes what we do at Mercy Ministries because we do believe that every girl that walks through the door, that our job is to help her discover God's plan for her life. And we know maybe not specifically what it is at that point but generally we know Jeremiah 29:11 where God says, "These are the plans I have for you, Amy, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you not to harm you, to give you a hope and a future." And look at what you're doing today! And even parents that walk through the

doors with their daughters who have decided to not get an abortion but maybe they almost did and they're crying and, "Oh, my gosh, this is my baby. And she is never..."

And I just reach over and grab their hand and I go, "Let me tell you something, 10 years from now, maybe even a year from now, you're going to look back on today with these tears flowing and you're going to have so much joy because of this child."

And that's why I'm so proud of you because you did the right thing. You guys got married and now you have this huge ministry that's been born out of your decisions.

So yeah, she makes me proud because she represents thousands of young women that we've helped over the years.

James: And the glorious possibility if we give God a chance to be God in our lives. So here you go, now, helping everybody. What do you think about what's going on and seeing all of these happy people out here that when you first met them maybe they weren't very happy?

Amy: Yes, it's true. Yeah, it's so exciting to see what God is doing. He is just opening doors that definitely no man can open. It's pretty awesome to see how the ministry is just booming. And people, for the most part, have a very open heart. Every once in a while we'll get a church that will say something like, "Why are you rewarding the girls for their bad behavior?" And we just want to change that mindset. They did the brave and courageous thing to choose life.

Churches need to be just not pro-life, they have to be pro-love too. They have to love. It's a whole package that you have to... and they need spiritual moms and dads and mentors to come alongside them because a lot of them don't have that. And to just love on them and say, "You can do it." And just teach them how to go to God to ask for their needs and their problems.

We, just as leaders, get to watch it. We're just blown away. We get to see the miracles. We have front row seats to miracles every week. It's really cool.

James: Most of them think they just come and watch you glow and bubble because you're so full of God and love. You're just so happy.

Betty: You must continually be filled with excitement and expressions of gratefulness to God as you see these beautiful testimonies come out of these girls that didn't think they had any hope at all. They didn't think anybody loved them or cared about them or would walk through this tough time with them.

Amy: That's why I wrote the book. It's really an outreach tool. There is a reason why I wrote it because if a girl... either maybe she is on the fence and maybe she might be thinking about getting an abortion, or maybe she chose life but she's going through that lonely season like I did and just craving life words, and maybe no one is reaching out to her, so this is a great tool, an outreach tool to give to girls that have an unplanned pregnancy so that they can see the miracles that God can do and hopefully get plugged into an Embrace Grace program and just get into church so that they can get into the routine. They're so scared of walking through those doors of a church with an unplanned pregnancy. I'm hoping that this breaks down that problem of thinking.

James: And you tell incredible stories in here, in the book, and we'll be glad to send it to you and Mission of Mercy, which is so much more than just what happens with Mercy Mission. It is what God did in mercy to someone who started that who still had a lot of pain all the way back to where her little sister was crushed when she was only three and a half years old.

And then all of her close friends, or many around her, they died, and they're people she was leaning on. They were gone and it made it very difficult for Nancy to even form relationships with people and get close because it looked like if she did, they would be taken away. And it really created some real hurt and she tells you how to deal with that. You tell in the book here the stories of some of these. You mentioned to me and Betty that one of the girls you saw God work a miracle in that she was actually left by her mother with just what... a bottle of chocolate milk?

Amy: Yes, she was just ten days old and her mom, I think was on drugs and she just

had a dad. So she just put a bottle of chocolate milk and left in the middle of the night. The dad was working the night shift and so someone in the apartment complex called the dad and said, "I saw your wife leaving in the middle of the night but the baby wasn't in the car. Is everything okay?"

So he rushed home and found the newborn in the bed crying and she had just a bottle of chocolate milk. So she went her whole life without a mom. So then she comes -- well, at 13 she actually tried to find her mom and they did find her and she got to spend about three or four weeks with her. They would do every weekend she would spend some time, try to catch up and get to know and what was going on and what was going through her head, although she didn't really get the answers that she wanted. And then one day it was her time to go back over there and the house was empty, totally vacant. No one was there -- like no one lived there.

So again, it was just the abandonment where she was just completely alone. So she went through all of that again. So then when she was 17 she found out she was pregnant with twins. And she said, "How can I be a mom when I don't even know what a mom is? I've never been around a mom. I have no idea... and not just one baby but two?"

And she was so worried about how all her needs were going to be met, financially, two babies is quite a bit. And she was at, I think it was the doctor's office, and she met someone. A lady was like, "You look really young for being pregnant."

And she's like, "Yeah, I am." And they started talking about twins.

She said, "Oh, my twins just... I have twins at home and they just grew out of a lot of stuff. You can have the strollers. You can have our car seats. You can have everything. I have it all. I've been waiting for someone with twins."

You can't make that stuff up. That's just God providing the needs for these girls and that's what this whole book is full of that. God, every single time it's just miracle stories that we get to see and she is an awesome mom. She works hard and she is doing it, she's making it work with her twins, and they're two now and she's doing great! I'm totally proud of her.

James: You have a web site that people can go on. What's the web site if people want to learn how to do some things in their own little community or their own church? What is it?

Amy: Yes, it's IEmbraceGrace.com.

James: IEmbraceGrace.com and that's what the T-shirts out here say, "Embrace Grace." And that's more than a saying, embrace it. You do that by embracing others with a grace/mercy attitude.

Amy: Right! And even partnering with ministries like Nancy is great because there are some girls that we get and I'm the cheerleader and like, "Yay! You can do it!" But there are some girls that need more. They need professional help with like the issues that she has with cutting and things like that. And that's -- it's great for all of us to be on the same team so that we can all partner and work together and utilize our specialty so that we can send girls that need more additional help to ministries like Nancy's.

James: What do you say to some girl that's watching right now that's struggling with an unplanned pregnancy? What do you say to her, Nancy? What do you want her to hear?

Nancy: What I would want her to hear is that God is not mad at you. And he says, "I set before you life and death. Choose life that you and your seed may live." And God wants you to know, he's not mad at you. He loves you!

I tell every girl that walks through the door of Mercy, we take girls from all 50 states and unplanned pregnancy is one of those issues and we have a license adoption agency for girls who want to make that choice but we let every girl make her own decision. Our job is to lead her to Christ and help her to know God is not mad at her. He loves you unconditionally. He's so proud of you because our government and even some churches say abortion is the answer, but God is so proud of you for choosing life. He wants you to know that he brought you here so that he could lavish his love upon you. He can prepare you for whichever decision you make.

And whichever way you choose to go, whether you parent or whether you choose adoption, God is going to be with you for the rest of your life. He has a call on your life. We're going to preach and teach God's Word to you because we have the freedom to do so because we do not take any government funding. And you're going to leave here transformed by the power of God. You're going to know that God has a plan for your life. "The plans I have for you are for good and not for evil, to prosper you not to harm you, to give you a hope, to give you a future, you're called, you're anointed, you're appointed and you're approved!"

Betty: Amen!

James: Yeah! And if the government ever did get smart enough to put money in the best places, don't dare change your message just because they gave you a table or a chair or some food. You know really and truly, you don't ever compromise. We have been in communist countries, I never compromised a word in China when I was there and they were amazed. They said they were amazed. They loved to hear my story of a changed life. They even told me I could preach -- now they did say, "But we don't want you to give an invitation." I said, "Man, they can get saved standing right where they are!"

[Laughter]

Listen, this is so wonderful and it's so exciting. What do you want to see happen as a result of being on the program? What do you want to see?

Amy: I just really want for every church and for every girl to have an option to go to a church. I don't want a girl to feel shamed; that we want the church to be the first place they run instead of the last. So I want them to know that that's a safe place. And that Embrace Grace can be launched into every church so that every girl that has an unplanned pregnancy has a church to go to and spiritual moms and dads and just people to love on them.

James: And it isn't just because you got the burden. I want to say that just as an

example, the whole church rejoices in what's happening. We can show oftentimes on the big screen, and we have a wonderful group that works really hard to show you something, just like we're going to show you in a few moments something that's really going to touch your heart because it is reality.

But we don't just show you a pain or a problem without showing you the answer. And it is not just a hope, it is reality -- it works! Love works! And so what happens at our church, we'll show a need and then we show what love does and the whole church will begin to applaud. And right now we've got 25,000 people a week attending a church that's only 12 years old and yet they feel like they're a family. They don't feel like I'm just in this great big gathering. No, no! They get all excited because they see what different members are doing to put the arms of God around people.

Listen to me. I don't care how big your church is numerically, I don't care how big the building is or how small. How big is God in that little gathering? However large or small it is -- how big is he? -- That's the real issue. Is his heart, is his love being expressed through the people that meet there? Some of the greatest works -- and Nancy, you know this is true -- happen in some of the smallest little congregations that God is so big in the place glows and the glory of God is on them.

By the way, that's what he wants in every church. And the glory that you see on Amy, what you see on Nancy, the outreach, what you see happening right here through the missionaries, it all happens not just because of those missionaries and it is sure isn't because of us, we just happen to be a little vehicle, kind of a little channel that God can flow some truth and some love and some opportunity through. What happens happens because of people like you. Some of you are sitting at home. Some of you -- listen -- you know many of the checks we get you can hardly read the signature because precious people who can still barely sign, they want to write a check to say, "I want to give someone life." There's some people who can write very large checks.

By the way, quit criticizing people who have been blessed with means. The only way you can deal with an issue is to have the means to do it. Don't get angry at people who have been blessed. Encourage them to be a blessing and we find that they want to be and they'll write big checks... but you still can't read their signatures either, they write it

so fast. But the point is, everybody -- everybody has to pull together to express the love of God.

Would you say thank you to God and to these beautiful ladies for being an expression of the life and the love of God? Y'all look like Jesus to me. You look like Jesus to me! And you know what? You say, "Boy, I'm glad you can't see me." [Laughing] I bet I'd see Jesus in you. Let me tell you, even if your heart was broken and you say, "I wish somebody would talk to me." Why do you think that 800-number is up there? You think Betty and I pay that phone bill? God deliver us from that today. We can't. Love pays for it.

You say, "I need somebody to pray with me." Well, call. Somebody perhaps has been through the same thing you've been through; they'll pray with you. That's why the phone is answered 24 hours a day for somebody that's got a broken heart any time of day, you can find a friend -- somebody to comfort, somebody to talk to. Feel free to do that.

But I want you to see something else right now. And when you see, pictures always speak more than 1,000 words, but you're also going to see something else, this is really key -- actions speak far louder than words. Watch!

On the mission field

Subtitle:

>> I've lost all my children. I hope God can see me.

Announcer: Unseen, unknown, invisible is how Adut feels. In an area devastated by malnutrition, the suffering is widespread. Adut knows it well -- most recently her four-year-old daughter.

Subtitle:

>> She died on the 10th of this month. I buried her alone. I have no family, no husband.

Announcer: Now she sits alone next to her daughter's grave, the last of four children lost.

Subtitle:

>> This is where I live. I have nothing.

Announcer: Adut is not unseen. None here are. Not by God or you. We know God has called us to respond but we can only act if you do.

[Children crying]

End of clip

In the studio

James: I sometimes just feel like I don't even have the words or the ability to express what I know God feels... and that mother. We lost our baby girl, our daughter, the mother of three of our grandchildren -- and she lost them all. "I have nothing."

Listen to me, sweetheart. I know we do enable the missionaries to put their arms around you but I would hold you real tight in my arms right now and I would try to let you know God loves you. And believe me, the missionaries are trying. And the others who face losing their babies, Betty, we can head that off. In other words, we would have done anything for our daughter's life and we can do something for these.

Betty: We can. We can help save the lives of these precious children. I know the pain as a mother, losing one child, I can't even imagine losing all your family and no one to bear the grief with you, no one to comfort you, no one to hold you. We have all that. We have our family and our friends to encourage us and to bear the pain with us. We want her to know that we want to help -- can't hear -- that they don't have to get to this point to where they lose their whole families. Won't you help us feed these children? We can make a difference.

James: Everything we've talked about in our programs, about helping people hear because it's so important to them. We have our -- whether it's Beth Moore teaching or Christine Caine or we're having wonderful guests, we want to help you, we want to feed you spiritually because God loves you and we do. Everything we do is to try to bless people. And the missionaries are there to help hold those people and to tell them - not just tell them how much God loves them but show them. And not just to say, "Well, God cares," and "good luck." But no, God cares and his people share -- can't hear -- they express his care, his love, his concern. We are the expression of it -- the expression of his hands. --

All right, lady, we're going to be sure the missionaries are there to let you know you're loved, and you'll find love. And we're going to try to save the babies and children so other mothers don't have that story -- millions of lives saved and millions of people reach for Christ in those areas, really reach. So we're asking you to reach out today, dial the number, take your bankcard; you use it for many things that are so essential, sometimes nonessentials.

I found myself today thinking that what can I not get that I might want? Whether it is a cup of coffee, or something I enjoy -- can I just start adding that up, maybe I just start adding it up on a piece of paper at the end of the month. How much did I save not doing something I could have done just so I can do something else which means people who don't even have a lot can do, the people who have enough, we can do it. All of us can do something.

\$30 will feed three children for the next months -- stabilize them and give them a future and show them love. \$50 will -- next months. \$100 ten children -- \$1,000, 100! God, I pray many people will say, "I've got \$1,000" -- "I've got several thousand. I'm going to save babies like those. I want to bless mothers."

But \$30, what does that mean to three children, their parents -- \$50 or \$100? We have some gifts we want to send you to say thank you and to help you grow and feed you spiritually because we care about you.

But I'm asking you to reach out right now. Please do not be distracted. If you get a busy, be determined, I'm going to help someone, I'll make the gift. You want to do a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're mailing it. You can go online. You can go right now, LifeToday.org and make the gift God puts on your heart.

Father, I pray everyone will respond as you direct. Somehow I believe you will and I want to thank you. We're going to bless you by saying thank you with inspiration to help you grow and meet your needs. Thank you for reaching out.

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: I really pray you'll consider getting "Brotherly Love." This is so incredible! An older brother with a leaf feeding a little malnourished brother. But there's a bowl over here and thank God it is not empty because maybe someone gave \$30 or \$50 or \$100 and said, "I'm going to give three or five or ten of those bowls full of food." This is sent to people who will say, "I will give at least \$1,000 to feed 100 children or more" and we pray that you do it.

Also, remember if you'd like to have Nancy's book, *Mission of Mercy* or Amy's book, *A Bump in Life*, we'll be glad to send it to you.

You all join Betty and me in saying thanks to Nancy and to Amy. You're a blessing! Mercy and grace!

Amy: It's a good team!

James: Yeah! And I hope you tell like a whole lot of truth -- mercy, grace, and truth!

Thanks for watching. Thanks for helping.