

11/05/13
Week 45

James: Yeah! It's great to see all of you. Many of you have gotten a whole lot of help and a whole lot of love. Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm James Robison; my wife Betty and I always love to share this time with you. You're going to be happy about having spent this time together.

I want you to welcome the girl who had a bump in life and as a nice little active church girl dating a nice little active church boy, she had a bump -- it was a baby bump. A baby bump in today's world can be easily terminated but it didn't happen -- something wonderful happened.

Welcome Amy Ford to *LIFE Today*.

Are you glad to be here?

Amy: Yes, I am!

James: Yes, she came out... she came out with her camera and took a picture of her name up on the billboard to be here tonight.

Amy: I knew I'd see my name in lights some day!

James: She said, "I've never seen my name in lights" and she invited everybody to come. And a lot of the people that are here are the people you've helped. Tell us your story but I want you to also get to what I know you really want to talk about and that is how we can embrace grace and offer it to people in need. Tell us your story.

Amy: Well, I grew up in an awesome Christian family and I just... everything was perfect. I don't have any reason for going down the road of having a sexually active lifestyle but I did. Me and my boyfriend had an unplanned pregnancy, and we were very ashamed. I think the biggest part for us was that we were scared to tell our parents. It is not that our parents were -- I don't -- looking back, I have no idea why that was -- I know it was the enemy. The enemy was lying to me and saying, "You're going to be homeless."

James: You don't want to disappoint people that love you either.

Amy: Right! There was a lot of shame. I was just really ashamed of what I had done in the situation I'd gotten myself in, and so did my boyfriend which is now my husband. But we were just terrified. We could not see past telling our parents. It was that -- we couldn't even think about a baby. It was like we're going to die before we have the baby so...

[Laughter]

And the enemy just lies to you in that moment and just starts telling you things that are not true at all. Even though when I was young, we actually would go to abortion clinics and stand outside and pray for life, and I grew up knowing abortion was wrong, it became a real option for me in that moment because of just being so scared and just ashamed.

So we went to the abortion clinic and we had heard there was a pill you could take if you're less than six weeks along; it will just go away. I couldn't think about where it would go to I just thought, it just goes away. So we did the sonogram and I was very emotionally distraught. I was just hyperventilating and just crying a ton. So they did the sono and they said, "You're a little farther along than six weeks." They started talking about the methods they would do for the abortion.

When they did, I just started bawling hysterically and just could not -- it got to the point where I couldn't actually breathe and I ended up passing out in the room, in the abortion room. When I came to there were nurses over me, standing over me. They were fanning me, trying to give me water, and I still was just crying.

I believe I had an angel of a nurse because now working with a lot of girls that have either had abortions or contemplate abortion this is not of the norm. But she said, "You're too emotionally distraught to make this decision today. You can go home and reschedule if you want but today you're not getting an abortion."

So I walked back out into the waiting room, and they wouldn't let my husband, now my husband, they wouldn't let him in there with me, so I had to be by myself. So I went back out there and I said --

James: Now he was your boyfriend at the time.

Amy: He was my boyfriend at the time. And I said, "We're still pregnant." And it was just at that moment that we just decided let's do this, let's deal with the consequences of what's going to happen. And I remember my sister had to physically push me into my parent's bedroom one morning to tell them. And of course, they were disappointed but it wasn't even close to what I had thought it was going to be.

But it was a very hard season. I didn't have a lot of friends. I feel like now looking back it's like the elephant in the room. It's like your friends kind of just stop calling. They don't know if they should say "I'm sorry" or if they could say "congratulations" so they just don't call. So you just go through this season of pregnancy just alone and you're just craving someone to just speak life words to you and tell you it's going to be okay. I didn't have that a lot. I just felt really alone.

We actually did end up getting married. I know that is not the right situation for every girl with an unplanned pregnancy but for us, we had been -- we had talked about marriage before that so we got married.

And now our son is now almost 15, and he's just amazing. We have four kids now. I really feel like all our kids are called to an amazing destiny in life but there is something --

James: Does he know how close he came to not being here?

Amy: We just told him because with the book coming out...

James: How did he handle it?

Amy: He's very mature about it. I tried to explain to him that Satan had a plan for his life to not even be here and now that we resisted those lies and we decided to keep and look at what his life has impacted now.

James: Let him know if it be of any interest to him at all, that that same thing happened to me. My mother went to the doctor to abort me and he simply wouldn't do it. So there was an angel there too or I wouldn't be here.

Amy: And that is what I feel like, that he has like some sort -- I feel like he might be like the next James Robison. So just get ready!

[Laughter]

James: Hey! I'm ready to go sit on the porch! Come on! What's his name?

Amy: Jess.

James: Come on, Jess! Let's go, buddy!

[Laughter]

Amy: It's pretty neat. So that just inspired -- later I went to -- I was actually at a Chris Caine conference at Gateway, a Pink Impact conference and she just said, "I want you guys to all leave this conference different and changed." And she asked us all to close our eyes. The presence of God was so thick and heavy in the place. And Kari Jobe had just led worship, it was amazing.

She said, "I want God to speak to you or give you a vision of how you're going to leave here. How are you going to leave, your life changed?" And so I had a vision and I'm not one for visions, like this had not happened to me before but I was praying, and I had my eyes closed and I started seeing snapshots and the snapshots were of me with an unplanned pregnancy and just that lonely season. I was just kind of sad and I knew it was a blessing but just being alone, it kind of made it kind of a sad season. Then the snapshot started changing and that specific year -- I'm a party girl. I like -- in a good way -- a good partier.

[Laughter]

But I had thrown 13 baby showers that year and so I had... like my friends had a baby boom. So I love to celebrate life anyway so the snapshot started changing to me celebrating life and honoring these girls that chose life even though most of my friends were like married but still it is just celebrating the life.

And so it was like, God, what does that mean? How --? I don't understand what that is. And we met with pastors and we decided, let's start a little Bible study, four girls with unplanned pregnancies. We'll throw them a baby shower. That will be the way to get them in there, tell them they get free stuff. But just try it, and introduce them to God.

So we did; we had three girls and they were so precious. And just as a leader, it completely changed my life getting to see -- I remember one girl, it was August and she

was wearing a coat because she didn't want anyone to see her belly. But you could see like the physical -- just that one semester we spent loving on them, speaking life words into them, you could see a physical transformation. Obviously, their belly is getting bigger but it's like their shoulders start getting a little bit taller and they have this sparkle in their eye and you can just see, it is like a blossoming and a bloom. And by the end of the semester they had confidence and they knew... they realized their baby was a blessing and their heart had started to transform through the process and her coat came off.

So we did that one semester and we were like this is awesome! And so we did it again, we had three girls. And this has been five years now and now it's gotten to be, like we have a standard of about 25-30 girls per class and now other churches are calling us and said, "What are y'all doing? And what are y'all teaching? And how does this work? And this is really cool." And that's what prompted us to start Embrace Grace Ministries, a nonprofit, so that we can provide all the tools necessary for the churches to have to be able to open their doors to these girls with an unplanned pregnancy. We want the church to be the first place they run to when they find out that they have an unplanned pregnancy instead of the last because of shame and guilt.

I feel like a lot of the girls, especially the first day of the first semester -- like every semester there's a first class and all the leaders, we're just texting them or calling them or saying, "Don't listen" because we know the enemy is lying to them and telling them. We say, "Don't listen, just come! Just come. Just show up. That's all you've got to do, that's the hard part, just show up because God does the rest." We're just cheering them on, and just speaking life words and God just totally transforms their life.

And so when they get there they start thinking -- they already tell me they thought we were going to judge them. They thought we were going to talk about all their sins and tell them how they're going to hell and all this stuff. I'm like why is that the first thing they think about the church? Like what have we done wrong to make it so that they feel so much shame and that they're going to be judged that it is not a safe place for them to come to?

And so that's what we really were created to inspire the church to open the doors because I really feel like sometimes the church contributes to the problem of abortion. One in three girls have unplanned pregnancies and 75% of those girls, almost 75% say that they're Christian. So that's huge statistics. Something is not right.

James: A lot of these girls that you help, and a lot of them sitting out here, they don't necessarily have a husband yet but they've got a baby bump and they're going to have a

baby and they're going to have it knowing they're loved because you're doing what God says do. And they may not have a husband or family at all but all of the sudden they find the family of God being the greatest family anybody could ever have. There's nothing greater than that.

So this is what you have literally initiated that was born in your heart and you said Christine Caine, this little gal here, probably, she was talking about being Undaunted and you sure enough were, and you went out. But now then this has caught on. It could go to every church in America, in Canada, in Australia, in all over Europe, in all over South America and she doesn't have time to teach but online and through the outreach of Gateway, which we're just a part of the church. We're not the whole of the church but we're a part of the church that wants to help the church be whole -- and that's our effort, Betty and I as members, we all work together. And you've done this and it is exciting.

And you tell the stories of some of these girls. You want to share one the miracles that is an example and typical?

Amy: Yes, there's one girl that just -- I really feel like just gave me a whole perspective of what Embrace Grace is about. She was in our third semester and she had a dad, she was an only child but her mom was not -- she left when she was two weeks old so she'd never had a mom so it was just her and her dad growing up.

She finds out she has an unplanned pregnancy and she's totally freaked out. She thinks that she's going to maybe get an abortion, she's not sure. She goes back and forth and her dad hears about it and he says, "You're going to be a horrible mom. Do not keep this baby. You can get an abortion; we can look at families to do adoption. You're not keeping this baby. You're going to be a horrible mom." And she was just so torn.

She's like, "I don't feel like I'll be a horrible mom but I don't know what to do. I don't have anybody to talk to." So she worked at an U.P.S. shipping store and she had gone to church like a couple times as a little kid but that was it. She shows up in the parking lot right before she goes in and she says, "God, if you're real, will you bring someone to my counter that has the word church on a label so I'll know that I can talk to them because I don't know who else to call."

So she waited all day and it was five minutes before closing and finally here comes a guy. And she's got church on his label. She's like, "You work at a church?"

He said, "No, I don't work at a church. I have a business that caters to churches."

She said, "Oh." And he could see she was disappointed.

He said, "But I go to church."

[Laughter]

She said, "You do?"

He said, "Yeah! I go to Gateway across the street."

And so then that was her cue to just totally -- she is bawling and, "My dad says I'll be a horrible mom. I don't know what to do. I'm so scared."

He's the dad of four boys so I'm sure he was like oh, my God! He's like, "Well, let me get your information. I'll have my wife call you. I think that we do have a program that can help you."

And so she's like, "Okay."

And he kind of said some encouraging words to her as he left and that was that.

Then she came to our class and told us about how she heard about Embrace Grace and her whole situation. There was one thing she said under her breath that has completely changed my life and my whole perspective of our life words. Because she said, that man -- or she said, "My dad says that he thinks I'll be a horrible mom but that man at the U.P.S. store says he thinks I'll be a good mom." And that was a man that she would never see again. Those life words were like... she craved it. She needed it. Just someone to say, "You can do this. You're going to be okay. You can do it."

And she is amazing. Her little boy is like three or four. She told me she has \$5,000 saved for college for him already. She works hard, goes to school, she's doing it. And grandpa is like... got this little boy... they're adorable together. They love each other.

And so that's what we're doing is just saying, "You can do this." We can't fix all their problems, we can't do it all but God can. We just point them to the one that can and we promise them that they don't have to do this alone.

Betty: As Christians, we can all be an encouragement like that. You never know who is standing right next to you and you can just say one word and point them in a different direction and express the love of Jesus -- that never fails!

James: This studio is full of girls up here from Embrace Grace.

I want to ask you, anybody getting any help from what Amy's doing and what Embrace Grace is doing? Anybody feel like -- do you feel like it ought to go all over the country and all over the world? I do! And I want you to get the book.

As a matter of fact, we'd just send it to you to help you because there's a whole lot in here to inspire you to see happen in your community, maybe with somebody in your own family that is going to need what is offered, and you could begin to offer it. And then there's information, there's the web site there at Gateway and how you can go online and learn how you can set up an outreach like this.

And I can tell you, Betty and I are at Gateway, it is a wonderful outreach. But we'll see on the screen many times a story of what's done for single moms who just need to be loved. There isn't anything better --

I mean, Robert is a great preacher. I even preach there sometimes. I do okay, I get by. But here's the thing -- listen to me -- they put up there on the screen what the church individuals and what the family together is doing for single moms like around holiday time or Christmas.

Hey! Robert, I know you're watching. Hey! You can't even equal it, buddy, as good as you are. The demonstration of people doing what you preach is the most beautiful message the community will ever see. And we want to help people do that all over the world.

Don't you want to see every church reach out and Embrace Grace? That's the will of God!

[Applause]

I want to show you where we can express grace and I am so thankful that Betty and I can say that the viewers of this program all over the world, in our opinion you're the most grace-filled people. I've tried to say the missionaries are the greatest Christians and expressions of love and grace and they always correct us. "Those people that watch *LIFE Today* and people like them that enable us to be here, they're the greatest Christians." I'll tell you what I want you to do, I want you to listen to a mother please.

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: Somehow I feel in my heart, I feel like you really want to help. Some of you I think are going to start thinking, how can I find ways to help? Because when you're giving life, no gift is small when it contributes to changing something. It is God's will for us to do that.

We'll gladly send you also, along with Christine's book, we'll send you Amy Ford's book. And there's the web site again if you want to say, "I want to learn how to do this

and have this in our community. I want us to Embrace Grace -- be a demonstration of it."

And we, as individuals and a ministry at our church, we want to be a blessing to your church and your community and the people that God wants to love through you. Join us in saying thanks to Amy.

Praise God for Embrace Grace! Thank you!

[Applause]

I tell you what. I bet you... if you go online, I bet you could get you an Embrace Grace T-shirt for somebody.

[Cheers & Applause]