

12/3/13
Week 49
James and Betty Robison
Danny Gokey

James: I just asked Betty, "Do you want to do the welcome?" She said, "You do it."

Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison; my wife Betty and I welcome you.

Danny Gokey is here. He was one of the finalists on American Idol and I was telling him a while ago, that was back when American Idol was really still the big, big thing. Now there's so many others that are introducing fresh talent, undiscovered, for many people who have never heard them, and frankly, I think it's good. I was never crazy about the title American Idol. It's like we've already got enough of them.

Jeremiah said, "Why don't you call out to all your idols for your help since you've got more than you've got cities; so call on them." So I wasn't crazy about the name.

I really did like what they were doing to let you kind of showcase people that had a great gift and nobody knew about it. But there's a lot of different ones going on now that give people a chance. I've been thinking maybe we ought to do something for Christian artists sometime to see, boy, they've got something great. I've actually wondered about that, if there wouldn't be something to that, to be a great witness.

Well, Danny frankly is a Christian witness and has continued to be, not just a finalist, but to go right on for the glory of God. But he really faced something right before he went on American Idol, the contest that could have destroyed him. I want you to listen to that story and then the journey that's continued.

Would you welcome Danny to *LIFE Today*?

Danny, good to see you.

Danny: Thank you guys.

James: I'm not sure the show just kind of went down because you didn't stay around there for a while.

Danny: I'd like to think that way but...

James: Well, you really took on the chin, so to speak, in the heart real hard not long before you showed up on American Idol. What happened?

Danny: Well, me and my first wife Sofia had planned to actually... that year to go try out for the show. I never really got to watch it because I was busy. I was a semi-truck driver, I was a worship leader for two churches; my pastor had two locations. I knew God had called me to be a worship leader so I wasn't home a lot. The church couldn't pay me enough to do that full-time so that's where the trucking job came in.

Finally, three out of the four years of our marriage, we lived with people because we couldn't afford to stay on our own. And then finally the fourth year of marriage we got our little apartment, a D.V.R. and she was a fan of the show and she was like, "Listen, we're going to watch this when you get home from work." So she recorded it. I get home from work and I got hooked automatically.

I think every singer's desire is that they want to go on American Idol; they just act like they don't. That was me. I was like, "No, no, no! I'm not ever going to try out." But I was hooked that year. And the thing that got me is like this is my last opportunity to try out -- I'm 28 years old. You don't have a chance after this.

James: So you were leading praise but you were also a soloist; right?

Danny: No, I wasn't -- at a young age I always submitted my gift to God. I always felt like if I just give it to God, he would do something with it, and that's what I felt. That's why I wasn't trying to pursue a solo career. But all of the sudden -- obviously, prompted by the Holy Spirit -- I decided to go try out that year. I even sat down with my pastor and after I made my decision I said, "Can I have your blessing to go?" Because I was pretty involved in the ministry.

He said, "Buddy, I think you're going to do well." But then one month before the audition that we were supposed to go to, she unexpectedly passed away and it devastated me. I was at a rock and a hard place and I was like I don't even know if I want to do this, but I don't have a chance next year.

But little did I know that God was in the midst of writing a story of my life, and that he was getting ready to open up a whole new chapter that I didn't see, and that he was birthing a story of hope that people could look at to find hope.

James: And you actually have started a ministry helping people as a result of what happened. And by the way, you've married since, a couple years later and have a child?

Danny: Yeah, I have a son. He's almost a year now and he's just the best thing that's ever happened to me. Did I tell you that?

James: You're pretty excited about him.

Danny: I don't like being away from him that much but today I found out he is doing all kind of stuff that I'm not there seeing that's kind of disheartening a little bit but God has me -- God has given me plenty of time with him.

Yeah, a ministry was formed out of that. That's another part of the story that I didn't see is that. It's so cool. God writes our stories and our listeners, our viewers, they see that. Just because you can't see it, God sees. And if we can just see it through his eyes and not through our eyes we're going to be okay.

So I just switched from my insurance benefits to her insurance benefits. What does that mean? I'm sure people are saying, "What does that mean?" Well, because I was always trying to save money because we struggled, but switching to her insurance benefits, unknowingly, when she passed away, I did it months before she passed away, there was a death stipend attached to it. And when the principal gave me the check two weeks after she passed away, I said, "This is not my money." I took this little bit of money, it was \$39,000 and I said I'm going to start something. I was in pain, I was hurting, I didn't know what I was starting.

As the story goes on, a few years later we start this organization we're helping youth but then all of the sudden a man comes up to me and gives me a \$4 million facility for free. I'm like -- my goodness. So now we're taking in homeless families, we're providing food, we're providing shelter. We're not just putting them in old dilapidated...

James: Where is this located?

Danny: We're in Nashville, which is our homeless facility and our music and arts facility. But in Milwaukee we have a facility as well where we just do music and arts.

James: What is it called, the organization?

Danny: Sofia's Heart based after my...

James: Sofia's Heart because she had a heart condition. She actually went in to have what was a pretty simple procedure, you can read in the book, get it because it is really powerful and the complication, she didn't make it.

So now then you're actually helping so many people that don't have a chance. And the web site there, there again, there it is, go on. You may want to be involved. You may find people that can be helped with what they're doing. This may be the kind of thing that can grow into other areas. So it's just really a miracle.

Now I want you to take us from the end of the show, which you were a finalist, you didn't win, but then what happened after that? What's happened with your future and what are you doing now?

Danny: Well, right now what I'm doing is I just signed with BMG records and I'm in a studio creating an album.

Another cool kind of thing I released our line from -- weird, I wore glasses on the show, I was known for that, and now I have eyewear in stores and it's just so unique.

Obviously, doing the book tour but people need to know today that there is hope, and that sometimes we have to let go of what we thought was the best plan for our life so that the best plan can actually happen that God has for us.

I think a lot of times we think we know what's right for us. I'm not saying it was the will of God that she passed away but what I'm saying the will of God was that he still had a future and a hope. I think we struggle in terms of -- one of the lessons the Lord taught me is that I had to let go.

Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still and know that I am God." I remember God telling me that during this time in my life. I remember like okay, here I am. I'm still, I know you're God and it is not helping. It's the honest to God truth. So finally I started studying that verse and it literally said: Stop striving with God. And it said: Forcefully make yourself let go. Forcefully break your grip.

I remember during this time because I was in this depression while I'm going through the American Idol auditions, and I sat at the edge of my bed with tears coming down

my eyes, because it was like I was hanging on to her casket while she was being buried because of all the questions of why. Years of praying that weren't answered.

And literally, I pictured myself, I said, "Okay, God, I get it." I literally pictured myself with a hammer breaking my grip and saying, "I refuse to let this be the last of me." And that's really the message that I want to get to people today: Don't let that break you.

Understand it has a grip on you and you probably don't even know it and you let it go. You have to sometimes forcefully do it. Like you have to literally grab it and go and pull yourself, otherwise you're going to be buried with it and you'll never see it the beautiful chapter ahead.

Had I hung on to that I would never have got remarried, I'd never walked on that Idol stage, I would never have a beautiful wife and a beautiful son. God literally wants to make your today so good that you'll forget the pain of your past.

James: The book *Hope in Front of Me* -- *Hope in Front of Me* and the hope that's within you, that's key. This is a fantastic story. "Find purpose in your darkest moments," Danny's done that.

Now you've got a song and I know our audience here and the people at home want to hear you. Can you still sing?

Danny: We're going to find out.

[Laughter]

James: Tell us about -- you want to tell us about this song?

Danny: Yeah, this song is a powerful song. It's called "Tell Your Heart to Beat Again."

James: "Tell Your Heart to Beat Again." A lot of people watching us, their heart is shutting down.

Danny: It's actually based on a true story. The idea of it is that there was a doctor who had done surgery on a lady and I'm giving you the short cliff notes of it but they did everything they could and she wasn't responding with this heart surgery. And literally, the doctor finally got down and said, "Listen, lady, we've done everything that we could do. It's up to you. You've got to tell your heart to beat again."

And the listeners have got to know, God's done all the work on the cross. It is time to let go and it is time to tell yourself it's time to get that heart pumping.

James: Do you want to sing that?

Danny: I do want to sing it!

James: Would you like to hear Danny sing this song, "Tell Your Heart to Beat Again"?

[Applause]

[Danny sings "Tell Your Heart to Beat Again"]

Shattered like you've never been before
The life you knew
In a thousand pieces on the floor
And words fall short in times like these
When this world drives you to your knees
You think you're never going to get back
To the you you used to be

Tell your heart to beat again
Close your eyes and breathe it in
Let the shadows fall away
Step into the line of grace
Yesterday's a closing door
You don't live there anymore
Say good-bye to where you've been
And tell your heart to beat again

Beginning, just let that word wash over you
It's all right now
Love's healing hands have pulled you through
So get back up
Touch that one
Leave the darkness
Feel the sun
Because your story's far from over

And your journey's just begun

Tell your heart to beat again
Close your eyes and breathe it in
Let the shadows fall away
Step into the light of grace
Yesterday's a closing door
You don't live there anymore
Say good-bye to where you've been
And tell your heart to beat again

Let every heartbreak
And every scar
Be a witness that reminds you
Who has carried you this far
'Cause love sees farther than you ever could
In this moment heaven's working
Everything for your good

Tell your heart to beat again
Close your eyes and breathe it in
Let the shadows fall away
Step into the light of grace
Yesterday's a closing door
You don't live there anymore
Say good-bye to where you've been
And tell your heart to beat again
Your heart to beat again
Your heart to beat again
Beat again

[Applause]

James: Oh, boy! I think that Betty and I understand what it feels like to tell your heart to beat again.

Betty: We really do because in losing our child, you think the world has to stop. Don't they know what we've lost, who we've lost? And you do literally have to say, "God, let my heart beat again for you so that others will be blessed and you'll be blessed."

Danny: And he makes all things new. And he turns it all out for our good. That's why we need to have his eyes because those darkest moments he's a shining light, he sticks closer than a brother and he brings so much hope. There is hope today. I want people to know there is hope.

James: I hope you'll get the book, *Hope in Front of Me*. It is in the bookstores; you can get it online. I will be happy to send it to you if you'll do something. I really do -- I tell people, we don't sell things on *LIFE Today*, we ask people to give life on *LIFE Today* and we try to give you life every way we can and offer you those things that will strengthen your life.

Danny, I feel like there's a lot of people watching that need to tell their heart to beat again.

I just want to, as directly as I can, as a matter of fact, let me just talk to you, just me and you for just a minute right here. Can I do that? I don't know what is going on but don't ever think that you look at somebody that looks like, okay, you've kind of got it all together. You're looking at a guy that's just had his 70th birthday. I never thought I'd get out of my 30s. 11 beautiful grandchildren, three children, one of them is with the Lord -- that broke my heart -- but I lived with a broken heart as a child because I never had a father, I never had a home, didn't have much at all.

God really has blessed me as I've pursued him. But I know what it is to have a broken heart; I know what it is to have a broken heart for others. I just want to tell you right now, that I know God cares about you more than you may realize. And what Danny just sang about tell your heart to beat again, it's God that will help your heart beat again. It's God that will fill you with hope.

I really want to pray for you. I want you to know, I'm telling you, God is focused and zeroed in on you. I'm going to show you some people that he's zeroed in on that most people never notice. We're going to be the eyes of Jesus and the hands of God to help these people. But you need to know right now God is reaching out to pick you up and to hold you real close and to say, "I've got a hope for you and a future for you and the best for you."

There's a telephone number there on the screen. You want somebody to pray with you? You call and say, "I want help. I want to turn my life over to God. I want my heart to beat again."

And Jesus says "two agree it will happen." There will be someone there that will care, that will agree with you, that will love you and pray with you. Don't hesitate to call.

Father, I pray that people right now listening and watching will allow you to pick them up. You gave your son to die for them. You raised him to live in them, not with a bunch of religious rhetoric but with a relationship. God, I pray today that they will receive that gift, that grace, that mercy, that forgiveness, that freedom, that light, that hope; in Jesus' name, and for the benefit of those persons that right now we're lifting up to you.

Would you just say, "God, be my father. Come into my life, Lord Jesus. Be my master, my Lord, my savior! I give you my life; you gave yours for me I give you mine."

You want someone to pray with you? I'd love to send you a book I wrote that simply tells about *Knowing God as Father* to help you get on your journey. Then also I would say to all of you, we're going to give you an opportunity to help.

Would those of you like to just say thanks to Danny for telling his story?

[Applause]

And for offering us hope! We'll be so happy for you to have this book. It is in the bookstores.

Danny, I want you to look in with our viewers and I want you to see what's happening right now. We're very actively involved in healing but we cannot complete the healing process unless we do it together. You watch this closely. I promise you, it's going to move you in a very positive way.

On the mission field

Announcer: Everything is gone... only ashes remain. Rebels... in the night they came setting fire to homes and killing many. Most who fled survived... but for how long?

Subtitle:

>> We stayed in the woods for 2 weeks. When we came back everything was burnt. All we have are the clothes we are wearing.

Announcer: So they now live beneath the trees, the roof over her head isn't Rebecca's

greatest concern. It is their food supply. All their food storage went up in flames and it's created a crisis in this village.

Subtitle:

>> We are living with no food. My children are suffering.

Announcer: But her children aren't the only ones. Rebecca too suffers but mostly because the only food she can gather will not sustain them and makes them sick.

Subtitle:

>> When we cook the leaves, the children will not eat because it hurts their stomachs and they are crying.

Announcer: Rebecca and her children survived the cruelty that night but the food crisis they now face is often harder to escape. And it's a story that can be told 1,000 times across Africa. A shortage becomes a crisis. Hunger turns to starvation, and malnutrition sinks in its teeth. But with your help today, we could begin to reverse it.

End of clip

In the studio

James: That's my prayer. Honey, when you look at that and you see those beautiful children, you know the crisis -- what goes on inside of you in your heart?

Betty: I listened to a mother, her heart must be broken because there's nothing any dearer to a mother's heart than her children, and to care for them; it's natural for the mother to want to care for them. She wants to be able to give them the food they need but she has no resource to call upon. We need to be that resource to reach out and join with the heart of that mother to help her children. I hope you will help us.

James: We've been working now for over 20 years to literally rescue the perishing. We've watched that nation born, really in result of missionaries many years ago who went there and led those people to Christ. When we first went there with Franklin Graham, and we landed on a dirt strip and the children and their families were singing praises.

Franklin told us on the way, I'm going to show you New Testament Christians. I'm going to show you some Christians like the Christians in the book of Acts. And boy, you talk about a line of resistance to the radical Islamic belief, and to the terrible plundering that was going on, there it is. It is a beautiful line that is drawn by faith.

Those precious people there now need so much our help. We've been there for years distributing food. The missionaries won't leave; they'll risk their lives to be in the pit of hell, literally, where angels fear to tread, so to speak and yet they are there.

And then all over Africa where there's the areas of pain. Betty, we're there to save their lives in crisis, to stabilize them and show them how to work. We do not teach them to be dependent. We teach them to learn how to go forward.

And I'm telling you, really, the people who want to develop the resources there need to go with the idea -- I wish our business people would say, "We'll go over there and help them if you'd focus on helping the people and developing and giving them the jobs." That's my prayer that will happen.

We feed at the schools once they get stabilized so we can get them going to get a trade. Would you help us help those precious families? Would you help us take care of the hundreds of thousands of children right now, and their families that we've got in feeding centers? For the next several months, if you'll make a gift, we'll be able to take care of those children.

We come to you twice a year and ask for your help: \$30, \$50, or \$100 we can feed three, five, or ten children for the next several months. Could you help us care for three, five, or ten? \$1,000 we can care for 100 children for the next months. It's not total childcare, it's emergency crisis feeding and stabilizing the situation, then feeding them on a regular basis in schools once they get stabilized.

You know what's happened? We have some friends that care so deeply they said, "We'll match the gift the viewers give today." If they give \$30 or \$50 or \$100, it will double. And rather than just help three children they'll help six, rather than five it will be ten, rather than ten children it will be 20. If you can give \$1,000, you are now helping 200.

Father, I pray everyone watching would do their part sharing your heart; in Jesus' name I pray.

Would you get your bankcard right now; please? Dial the number, take that card and say here's the gift God's leading me to make and it will be doubled -- it will be doubled in the outreach. You'll reach twice as many children. You can go to LifeToday.org and make the gift online.

Remember we're sending Christine Caine's teaching *Moving Past Your Past*, books that she has written that will be a tremendous blessing. We want to invest in you to help you grow while you're reaching out to touch people with the love of God and to give them a chance. Thank you for making that love gift. Thank you for sharing life.

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. But our food reserves are gone and we desperately need your support to replenish our supplies at more than 800 feeding centers immediately. As an answer to prayer, a group of LIFE's friends have set a \$550,000 end-of-year matching challenge for Mission Feeding. This means your gift today can have a double impact!

\$30 to help three children will be doubled to impact six children! \$50 to help feed five children will be doubled to help save ten children. And \$100 for 10 children will be doubled to help feed and minister to 20 children.

With your gift of any amount we'll send you Christine Caine's powerful new teaching series *Moving Past Your Past*, on audio CD along with her book, *Can I Have and Do It All Please?*

With your double impact gift of \$100 to help save the lives of 20 children you may request both the audio and video series. And as a bonus, we'll send you Christine's latest book release, *Undaunted*.

Finally, please consider a double impact gift of \$1,000 to help save the lives of 200 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 want to remind you, there's just a few days left now for us to really secure the resources and the support to help these precious children; help this older brother feed his little brother -- brotherly love! I hope you'll get that bronze and help us feed not just 100 children but 200 now.

If you'd like to have Danny's book, *Hope in Front of Me*, we'll be glad to send it to you. Thank you so much for your prayers. Thank you so much for your support.

Would you join us thanking Danny for being a blessing?

Danny, God bless you, buddy! Bless you!

There's his web site or you can go to *LIFE Today*. We'll tell you how you can find his web site, what he's doing. You may want to get involved with him.

God bless all of you! Thank you!