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Week 35: Christmas Shoes & Smiles

Mission show 1

James: Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. It's an early time, I know for some of you to be thinking about Christmas but we're talking, Betty, about Christmas shoes and smiles. Now listen to me, I know for a fact, and of course, Betty and I have been married 50 years, 51 to be exact, okay, we've got some age on us, we've got some years, so we probably don't think about Christmas the way a child does anymore. But I think all of us realize how much children do love it.

Betty: I still love it pretty much!

James: You do, but it's still a little different from waiting for the gifts. So I want to say to all of you who might have some of those years on you or maybe you're a young adult or a young person, I would like you to put yourself over in the place of a child who gets very little if anything for Christmas.

It's probably shocking to some people, Betty, to realize that I lived in such impoverished conditions that for the Christmas when I was nine, our Christmas tree was a painting of a tree on a piece of paper that I'd painted and we hung it on the wall. I had put some little ornaments on it as a nine year old. There was a card table under that picture and no gifts. I didn't really think that I'd get any gifts.

I found out later my mother sent back some gifts that the pastor and his wife and an aunt had sent me because she was starved for love and she wanted her son to love her. She couldn't bear the thought of her little boy getting gifts from someone else when she couldn't give them. It had a pretty profound impact on me when I found out later.

And I would actually say that probably one of the most important things in my life was actually, to be very honest with you, was the fact that God gave me the grace not only to forgive that quite inappropriate act but also to understand that a woman who

had lost her mother and father before she was 11, married young as a very young teenager and was left by that husband and divorced, and then raped at age 40 by the man who was my father who impregnated her when he raped her on the job where she was working.

So here's a woman that had been hurt very badly and had placed me in foster care for a while until I was five, and then took me from that home and then the next 10 years we lived in terrible conditions.

You might say, "James, your mother should have let those people's gifts get to you." Yes, she should have but I want you to understand the greatness and grace of our God that he would not only enable me to forgive but to understand; that's how important love is to people.

I think, Betty, that's one of the reasons that God has given me some understanding of how people feel when they hurt and want to heal that hurt. So that's what we do when we give Christmas shoes and smiles; we do cleft palate surgery and we give these beautiful little shoes to put on little feet to give children not only the ability to play but to avoid disease that comes from infection, and even hookworms that can get into their brain and actually damage and even destroy their life.

I feel like all of you who watch us understand that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts to be poured out on others like a river. That's what we do at *LIFE Today*. Together we share God's love.

So when we talk about Christmas Shoes and Smiles way ahead of Christmas, we're asking God to enable all of our viewers to see, this is a big deal to the missionaries, it is a big deal to the parents of these little children who can get ill or hurt themselves badly with no shoes but it's a real exciting time for shoes. Little kids will dance around. Betty, we've got a lot of pictures of little kids jumping up and dancing and they're the cutest things. Aren't they?

Betty: They really are. That's what makes me smile, on my face and in my heart when I see these children. We give them the shoes, they start dancing. They're not only

happy smiles -- they've got smiles on their faces but they've got happy feet because their feet have some covering on them to keep them from -- they may not fully understand why we gave them the shoes but boy, they like it! They love to receive the gift.

And we love to give it because we know the meaning of the shoes and that is to save a lot of their lives because when that disease starts at their feet and gets into their body it can destroy them.

James: Well, I think that when you just saw those little clips of children dancing just then, it had to put a smile on your face. Remember, we want to put smiles on the faces of little children that have a facial deformity or cleft palate, and those surgeries are \$500 each, which is quite remarkable; it is because of doctors who give their love, their skill, and their time.

I'm talking to you about understanding the importance of helping others and even feeling what somebody else feels as it relates to Christmas. Let me show you a very special -- a very special girl who really heard from the Lord and got a burden. I want you to watch what God enabled her to do because of love.

Begin video clip

>> Over the years Monica has always been in Special Ed. She's always... her speech has always improved because there was a time when she was very young we didn't even know if she would ever say her name. We didn't know if she'd ever learn to write her name. This is who Monica has always been since she was a small child. This is just the first time we stepped out and let her be herself.

She has watched *LIFE Today* over and over again but for some reason when she saw this mission project, she was really captivated.

>> She told me, "Pastor David, I want to do this for the children." And she was just bubbling over with excitement, with joy. The morning that Monica got up on the stage and asked the church family for help was just an awesome feeling for me. And believe it or not, she stood in front of this entire church of 300 people and made that same plea to help the children have shoes.

>> For Monica it was never about how much money she had raised. I don't think she understood that part. She wanted to know how many children were getting shoes.

>> And it was amazing the response. Every Sunday, she would stand in our commons area with her basket and people would come by and just fill it up. And believe you me, Monica embodies that kingdom of God. She made this church come alive for missions.

>> She had collected a total of \$6,000.

>> Yeah, I did!

>> You did!

>> Uh-huh!

>> Through all this I now realize that she has been able to express herself using her own voice and her own words; not just to one person, but now all around the world.

Did I ever think -- did I ever think that she would be able to do this? No! But God did. He knew! She been passionate about it and she has done it and she has changed so many children's lives just because of her passion and her love to help someone else. And I just think that it is important that everyone knows that we all have a purpose. And no matter her mental ability or education or anything, we all have a call and we all have something that we can do.

>> Please help the children.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, mom, I want to say to you, you're a beautiful mother! Mom and dad, you're special. Monica, words don't even begin to communicate the depth of appreciation and love that we have for you.

And honey, let me just say to you in a very direct way, you're precious. You really did put the arms of Jesus around little children and we want to thank you, Monica. I want to tell you something else, I believe that God is using you right now to inspire people all over the world that if you can do that they can do something.

Betty, I have longed for so many years, I don't think I'll ever quit praying something that I think is important. I have prayed that we would do things together, that there wouldn't be a single person watching who had the ability to do anything that would not say, "I'm going to help."

Let me explain to you how simple it is. These little shoes which are all-weather shoes, they're like shoes that are called "Crocs" and they're very expensive, and a lot of people wear them. I wear them; they're kind of my house shoes. But these are, in my opinion every bit as good as Crocs. They're made very similar.

But we can get these shoes for \$3.60 a pair. That's buying them in large numbers and we're trying to give away 200,000 pair. But I don't think there is anybody watching who couldn't give a pair of shoes.

But the thing I find with most people is when they're looking at 200,000 they say, "Well, I'd like to make a dent in that." \$36 and 10 people have shoes. The telephone number that will be there on the screen off and on is always there as a prayer line for you, but I think it is important for you to realize that it is not only a prayer line for you, it's a lifeline, it's a love line to let love lift somebody up.

There's a beautiful song, "Love Lifted Me." Well, it will lift others too when it is expressed through us. So if you would be like Monica and her family and say, "I'm going to do something," and every one of you today would say, "I'm going to give some shoes," we'll have the 200,000 pair. \$144 will give 40 pairs of shoes. That's remarkable! And the smiles are \$500 each for surgery; \$1,000 we've got two Christmas smiles.

We're going to be sending you a beautiful little Christmas ornament and right now it may be a little early for Christmas but that's a beautiful little shoe. And for those of you who will step up to give quite a few pairs of shoes we're going to send you all four of the ornaments that we have offered over the last several years, including this year to say thank you.

So we're doing everything we can to express our gratitude in behalf of the children, their families, but also the missionaries who have planted their lives in the midst of need to not only tell people about God's love but show them what God's love looks like in action, not just in word but in deed.

I want you to look in at some of those scenes that Betty and I have enjoyed when we're reaching out in places, sometimes Betty we've been told "where angels fear to tread." I don't know, but the places these children tread is quite horrendous and dangerous for their little feet, especially. Well, just look in on it and see what it does to your heart to see these beautiful children that we love so much.

On the mission field

James: We want to give children like these, beautiful children shoes -- children all over the world. There goes another one! We want to give them shoes.

You know what Jesus said? "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not."

You know what? We are the representative of Christ. We are his body, we're his family and we can share his love. We love these little children. We're going to give these little children shoes. Look at these beautiful little feet!

Betty: They have nothing, really but they can still play, they can still have fun. They're children! I think that's what they're supposed to be instead of having to worry about walking around without any shoes where they step on stuff and hurt their feet and also get diseases through that too.

James: Betty, they just tough it out and they play but we found out right here in this area that hookworms get in the skin, maybe where they have a little tear in the skin, get in the bloodstream, ultimately into the intestines and cause very serious disease and sometimes death.

Just look here! This boy has had a blowout in his tennis shoe! He has played so hard and gotten so dirty.

You need to wash your shirt, man!

Isn't it great to see? The kids, they want to have fun. We're going to love them with your help. We're going to give them good new shoes. We -- not me -- all of us together! Let's put shoes on all these beautiful children's beautiful feet! It would just be such a wonderful gift to make at this time and I hope you will do all you can. Just give as many pairs as you can to bless as many children and their families as you can.

End of clip

In the studio

James: You know Walt Disney did a movie called "Happy Feet." How about some of you folks down there in Florida that work with Disney, why don't y'all just kind of double up and say, "We'll send 200,000 pairs of shoes ourselves!" And that's some real happy feet.

I'm really challenging, Betty -- I'm challenging the business community and I don't see them as an enemy. I don't see corporations and businesses that provide jobs and opportunities and services and products, things that people really need or things that people want, don't necessarily need but want, I don't see them as an enemy. And I don't see entrepreneurs and small business owners as enemies. I don't see them as enemies.

I think we need to refocus our attention on how all of us together, like a great family of love, can reach out in love to others and really, not have to depend so much on some institution or entity or the federal government to always take care of everybody without any real compassion expressions. That's the thing that makes what we're able to do so beautiful. We're seeing the love of God through missionaries who literally said to me and Betty, "Please don't stay here as a missionary. No matter how much your heart is broken for what you see, would you please go back home and tell the

people what we're doing and what God is doing? And ask them to help so we can stay here and do the work."

Betty, we felt like that was a divine assignment. And beautifully, the viewers of *LIFE Today* caught the vision and all of you today who are watching, you're going to be an answer to that prayer -- every one of you are going to do something. I mean every one of you!

You may say, "James, you don't understand."

Well, Father, I pray for the person that says, "You don't understand we're having a tough time." Well, God, I ask you to lift that person up supernaturally. I want you to make a way for them. And you just show them something they can do that will produce some return and some income and bless them and meet their need miraculously. And then Lord, touch the heart of every person watching to give whatever they can to put shoes on feet; in Jesus' name.

Would you dial that number right now? Take your bankcard, make the best gift you can. If you can, give 40 pairs of shoes, a gift of \$144; \$36, 10 pair. Could you give some smiles? Whatever God enables you to do, I pray you'll do it right now.

Go to the phone, take your bankcard, use it like a check or go online, LifeToday.org and make the gift God puts on your heart. Please do it!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Poverty is a killer and because of it children needlessly suffer not only for a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we take for granted such as a healthy smile or a simple pair of shoes. For most of these children they've never owned a new pair of shoes. While that may seem minor in the light of all their needs, walking in bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections that could lead to crippling consequences, disease, and even death.

By responding today you can help *LIFE* immediately secure and begin shipping Christmas shoes to 200,000 children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pair, and a gift of \$144 will help provide 40 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in

need. With your gift of any amount, be sure to request this beautifully crafted red antique shoe ornament, a treasure to place on your tree each holiday season. With your gift of \$100 or more you may request a special boxed set of *LIFE's* Christmas shoe ornaments from past years.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft palate surgeries. And you may ask our commemorative glass sculpture "The Blessing."

Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

On the mission field

Tammy: Something that we take so for granted is wearing a pair of shoes every day. I don't think any one of us watching this right now is without a pair of shoes but the reality is that there are hundreds of children around me at this moment that have no shoes. I love *LIFE Outreach* for so many reasons -- not just Water for Life or Rescue for Life or the food programs but even bringing shoes to little ones.

Listen, without it, they're in danger every single day. The simple things that we think about like even cutting your feet, walking in water that is diseased and full of bacteria getting into a cut. They could literally lose their life. What a privilege we have to bring them a pair of shoes. Every one of these little ones is going to get a pair of shoes today.

Tammy: What I love is that this simple pair of shoes has become a treasure to this little girl. I love that she is holding on to it like it's the greatest gift she's ever been given. And it costs very little! For a little amount of money we can produce thousands of shoes that can change a life, one child at a time, starting with her.

End of clip

In the studio

Betty: Wow! These children are so precious. They do treasure any gift, any expression of love that you offer to them. And it's worth the smiles that you just saw -- they're just beautiful! I want to make sure that we have enough shoes for the children when we go

into these areas. I don't want us to run out like we have sometimes with the food in the early days, James. I want it to be enough because it is a gift to them and they watch the others getting their gift. I want to make sure everyone gets a gift because James, I remember one Christmas when our grandchildren were very, very small. I'm so careful to pick out their gifts and to label them so everyone -- and I was counting around and I thought I had enough.

Of course, we have 11 grandchildren and we're all around the tree and we're passing them out and everybody's opening their gifts and so excited. And I came to the last one and I thought, "Oh, where is it? Where is it?"

And our little Alek was sitting over there on the steps in our family room just so quietly, and everyone else was opening their gifts. It broke my heart. I thought, I know I got him a gift! And I went all over the house, running and I found the gift. I had put them under a bed to hide them from the kids when they would come over and play. And I thought, thank you, Jesus!

But I thought, I want these children to be just that excited about their gift and anxiously waiting for it. So let's make sure we have enough of the shoes because they are so much more than just a gift. They can be lifesaving from the disease that they can get from walking around in their bare feet. Thank you so much for your help!

James: I remember looking over at Alek. He was sitting over on the steps coming into our family room. He was just sitting there quietly looking right at everybody else with their gifts and nothing for him. Then Betty realized what had happened. And he was so sweet.

But you know really and truly, these children are going to be shocked that they're getting anything. It's indescribable joy. And it brings joy to the missionaries who love these children so much. This is something that you might say is not critical to life and yet in many ways it is because if they get hookworms that get in through the cuts on their feet and can hit their little brains, it cannot only damage their minds but it can destroy their lives.

So it is more than something to have fun with. It's a gift that enhances their life. If you will, please, dial that number or go online LifeToday.org and make the largest gift you can. If there is any way you can help us give smiles and shoes and provide the cleft

palate surgeries, they cost \$500 each, we're asking people to prayerfully consider giving \$1,000. We're sending the beautiful glass sculpture, "The Blessing" to those of you who make a gift of \$1,000 or more and know in this instance, you're going to be contributing to shoes and smiles and you'll be making it possible for us to do the cleft palate surgeries. What a blessing that will be.

And also, to give the shoes, we have the little Christmas shoe ornaments to say thanks. And I'm asking you right now, either go online LifeToday.org or dial that number and make the gift God puts on your heart, whatever it is.

And I am praying everyone watching, that's you, will do something. I know all of you are praying but would you do something today to help, please? By the way, if you ever get a busy, you call until you get through.

Begin video clip

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End of clip

On the mission field

Betty: I'm standing here with these children and they're just a small example of children all over the world that they deserve to be considered and loved and cared for. We have an opportunity to do that right now among these children and those around the world to put some shoes on their feet, to give them a chance in life.

I ask you to help us do that. It is just a simple request but a very urgent and important one. Please join with us! You'll get such great joy out of it. I know you will! God bless you and thank you!

James: Well, we want to say thank you so much for your help. I hope that you'll make the gift of \$100 or more. Remember, \$144 will give 40 pairs of shoes. And then there are many of you who can help us give those smiles with the \$500 or \$1,000 gift. I pray you will. What a great Christmas -- what a great gift! I know it's early, I know we're way ahead of time but let's be thinking about the lives we're going to bless.

Betty and I say thank you so much for your help because you are going to make some little children very happy and you will truly see in the truest sense happy feet. God bless you all! You have a blessed day and a blessed week.