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Week 45: Fall Mission Feeding

Ian and Larissa Murphy

James: Oh, boy! I thank you. You are gracious. Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm James Robison. Betty and I are -- I guess we're both fairly tenderhearted. I think sometimes maybe I'm -- you know, I think sometimes my heart is too tender. But it really isn't. I think too often we're hard-hearted. You know I've had few things move me like the story I'm holding here, *Eight Twenty Eight*. You wonder, what's the significance of it? Well, you'll want to know.

This beautiful girl here and this young man here were dating and in love, and talked about engagement and marriage. Then Ian had an accident in his little S.U.V. It ran under a truck and he suffered traumatic brain damage. There was nothing good about the effect. But the amazing thing is that this girl that loved this strong physically outgoing guy had a wonderful father and family and dad that -- well, you're going to learn a little bit about him.

He was really hurt bad but this girl, Betty, she said, "I'm going to marry him." Even though she knew that he had been terribly disabled and she was going to have to care for him. Betty, when I watched it -- you didn't happen to be with me when I saw the presentation; it was almost more than I could contain.

I actually told Larissa and Ian, "I don't think I feel worthy to even sit in the room with you because I don't know when I've seen any greater manifestation of love."

I want you to welcome Ian and Larissa Murphy to *LIFE Today*. Would you give them a big welcome?

I'm glad to see y'all. Larissa, you really, you'll have to help Ian express himself. I know it won't be because he's not trying. He's going to give it a bigger effort than most folks.

But I could tell that you weren't doing something out of just some kind of mere duty or it would be the thing to do. You really -- you loved him and I think you somehow felt like if it had happened to you, he would love you.

Tell me what was going on. Why in the world would you take a step... there was no official engagement, there was no wedding date set but why were you moved the way you were moved?

Larissa: Well, Ian was and still is my best friend. Thinking about what life would be like without him was less appealing than a difficult life with him. And kind of as we were writing the book and I was needing to rehash like my decision and what did lead to that, it really stood out to me, especially then, the examples of marriage that we had between both of our parents and how that was such a... in ways we didn't realize, that was an example, and found myself making hard decisions just like our parents had in committing to each other and to love and marriage. So we had great examples of that in both of our families.

It just -- even though it was technically an option that I could have chosen something else, it wasn't really an option in my heart because I didn't want to have a life without Ian. I especially didn't want to make that decision before he could talk. It was two and a half years between his accident and when he regained his speech. So I especially didn't want to make any decisions until I could hear what he was thinking. Ian, what your perspective was on things, because that just didn't seem fair. But it all, I think, boils down to just he's my best friend and I knew he wouldn't leave me if the role were reversed.

James: Were you, Ian surprised after you had been hurt that she still wanted to marry you? Did that surprise you a little bit?

Ian: A "little bit" is a key phrase.

Larissa: "Little bit" is a key phrase.

James: Little bit. Because you saw the love was real so it didn't overwhelm you. Would you had done the same for her if she had been hurt?

Larissa: It would be really awkward if you said no at this point.

[Laughter]

James: There you are -- a little facial instruction there. "This would be an awkward no right now." I want to hear... Betty, did you want to jump in here and ask anything?

Betty: I remember before we started taping, when we were visiting with you, you also told us that you were a fairly young Christian at the time the accident happened; right?

Larissa: I was. I'd been raised in a church and with parents who fear God but my heart wasn't changed until college. By the time of Ian's accident, I'd really only been walking with the Lord for about a year so I was very, very new. And even though I had heard scripture growing up, it wasn't registering in my heart.

So I was kind of thrown into having to learn these huge truths about God that feel like they would have been easier if I had years and years and years of God's faithfulness to look back on but that was one of the ways that Ian's parents -- I moved in with Ian's parents when Ian was in the hospital. That was one way where they were huge in helping me to guide me through scripture of what does it mean to be sorrowful yet always rejoicing? What does joy look like in a trial? What does it mean in Romans 8:28 where it says: God works all things together for our good? So they were so instrumental in helping me because I was so young in the Lord.

James: I wonder if you could take us to that time when that accident occurred and what was going on in your mind. What were you thinking or what did you think or what had you been thinking?

Larissa: Well, the day of the accident his mom and I were at a wedding shower, ironically. And we just got a phone call from his dad that Ian had been in an accident and was in surgery in Pittsburg. So we had no other details than that until we actually got to the hospital. The whole time I was thinking, and praying, "God, let it be anything but his brain." Then we found out it was.

Any time you're kind of thrown into this type of situation it's all very blurry. I know I didn't really process how close to dying Ian was but Ian at one point, he was failing four out of five brain activity tests and we had to contact the funeral home. So we were going through the motions of this might be the last we see Ian. I remember just praying that God would spare him. But I know I was totally relying on other people's faith who were praying for us because it was just totally chaos, even in my mind in trying to process through things.

James: I wonder if you would like to explain why the kind of unusual title *Eight Twenty Eight* because it has more than one very special meaning. Would you mind telling us what the significance of this is?

Larissa: Do you want to say that one?

Ian: Our anniversary and our favorite verse.

Larissa: Our wedding anniversary and our favorite verse; and also Ian's dad's birthday.

James: This is your wedding anniversary date, and Romans 8:28. All right quote it.

Larissa: For we know that God works all things together...

Ian: For those who love him.

Larissa: And it's been so helpful; and also it's his Dad's birthday.

James: All things for good. It's his dad's birthday; I think you need to hear about Dad. What influence did Dad have? And tell us about his dad.

Larissa: What do you think that your dad taught you most in life?

Ian: How to love people.

Larissa: How to love people. Yeah, Ian's dad was -- he had been a pastor and knew God's Word. We just kind of sum him up as he was a good man, and he worked hard for his family and raised -- he has four boys and a little girl, raised them to fear God. He was Ian's number one advocate from the day of the accident.

Then in 2009 he was diagnosed with brain cancer. So for seven weeks -- he only lived seven weeks past his diagnosis. And even then he fought hard for his family. He wanted to make sure that we were all going to be okay. One of his main concerns was Ian's future and making a decision, at the time, we were just dating and he wanted us to make a decision to either go separate ways or get married, and not just stay in an ambiguous relationship. He fought hard for Ian. Do you want to add anything about your dad?

Ian: No.

James: He had a very profound impact. When we were talking, just our little circle together, my heart really broke because I told Larissa that when I saw their story, which I just saw a video clip of the story and the wedding, and the difficulty of her groom and everything that happened, and the love that was there, I thought, this is amazing!

And then when I talked to them both, and knew that a man had this kind of effect on them as a father, then it really just -- it really did hit me hard because we've got a fatherless nation. I believe God is going to use the two of you to inspire fathers. I believe, Larissa that you moved me before I ever met you when I saw your story because this love that you have is bigger than you. You can't muster it up and you're

working very hard and it's got to be difficult. I really believe, Ian that God wants to use you. We had a real special prayer time for God to restore his body.

You know what I found myself thinking while I was praying for his body? That maybe God the Father looks down and says, "I wish my body would get out of the wheelchair. I wish my body, the church would get healthy." And maybe Ian can be an inspiration to all of us to see that what's going to get us healthy is the love of the Father in our heart, Betty that I see in Larissa. Don't you see that in her?

Betty: Absolutely!

James: And I so long for this. I've tried to be a good father and a grandfather, not having the patterns always. But I'm just really asking you to join. I want you to get this book. It is a phenomenal love story, I'm telling you. It is the result of the inspiration of just somebody on this beautiful couple. You have a web site and you believe God wants to use you and there are going to be people who are going to know you can help them and bless them. But I believe there are people watching who may feel called to help you do what God's calling you to do that will have a real identity with you. What's the web site?

Larissa: Our web site is just IanAndLarissa.com. Where that really started was at the time of Ian's accident we needed a way to communicate to people what was happening with him and all the updates on surgery. So a friend started a blog that was called Pray for Ian. And from there, for eight years now, we've had people just following us and praying for us.

At this point, we are kind of at, God, what do you want with our lives? What do you want to continue to do through our story? And any prayers for people, for people to be offering prayers for God to just guide us and help us to know what our generation needs to hear and know how God wants to use us. We have so many examples of scripture of God using the weak and to the world, Ian would be considered to be very weak. But we know that God is mighty through him. So we want to continue to just offer our lives in whatever way God will use them.

Betty: A lot of us see people every day that seem to have everything in the physical. They've got their health for one thing, they've got all the material things they might need but yet they're miserable and they're unhappy. They have no peace, no joy. But I see all of that on the two of you, such peace and joy and the love of God just flowing out through your being. I know God is going to richly bless both of you!

James: I want the camera over here to zoom in on this right here, this picture. I just pray that every one of you right here would know that this is really the way the Lord wants to take your hand. He took mine as a fatherless boy, and I think I probably tried to shake loose. And he's really persistent; he holds on -- and he wants to hold on to you. He wants you to reach up and take his hand and know he will never let you go.

You ask him to forgive you, and to give you life through Christ Jesus, and let him know you give him your life. Tell him that. You want somebody to pray with you? I wrote a book called, *Knowing God as Father*. At least that's what happened to me. I'll be glad to send it to you. Just say, I want to know God as my father. Just call and we'll agree with you and pray with you. I want all of you here in the audience, would you just say thanks to God and to Larissa?

[Applause]

James: I do just thank you for being such a wonderful audience. I hope you'll tell your friends to watch *LIFE Today* because we try to share life every day. But tell your friends that they can go to LifeToday.org and they can click on this program and you can encourage people to watch it -- any of our guests -- to be blessed. Then I want to say this to you. We have a chance to make all the difference in people's lives. 25 years ago I started walking with a missionary in Africa, our whole lives were changed and we've been to the ends of the earth to do what I said a while ago, put up God's hand in a little hand.

I want you to listen to my mission co-laborer, the overseer of all our African outreach, Peter Pretorius. Just this happened -- he asked an unusual question with Tammy

Trent standing by. I want you to watch what these women said. I want you to watch what mothers and grandmothers said. Just please watch how they responded to Peter Pretorius in Angola where there is a horrible drought. Watch this.

On the mission field

Peter: Have any of you mothers here ever lost a child because of malnutrition, of a lack of food? And if you've lost more than one, then show us how many you've lost by showing us how many fingers.

Oh, my God! I mean look at that. That woman has lost five. That one has lost five. Seven! Oh, Jesus! I mean nearly all of them!

I think it is beyond words. I think it is absolutely horrible! I mean I struggle even for words to be able to explain what feelings are in my heart and I've never lost one of my kids, I've never lost one of my grandkids. And I just think if one of my precious little grandkids, if I lost them, what it would mean. And imagine if I lost them to starvation and I couldn't actually do anything about it because I didn't have any food; I didn't have any means to be able to help my child, and watch that child die in front of me. Well, this woman watched ten of them die in front of her. Please, James, let's do this and let's do it now!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Oh, boy. Would you please help us? Betty, what goes on in your heart when you see that? I just can't believe it when Peter sent that back to me.

Betty: That's a powerful question. I can put one finger up, lost one child but there's so many never to -- our child wasn't because she was hungry. Our child got all the care and the need that we could offer her and the help. But these children -- they lost their children because they just didn't have anything to eat. I can't even imagine. We can make the difference in that. I mean it should not be. It breaks God's heart. It should break our hearts. I hope you'll help us. Let's help get the food to the children. This is

not a way for them to have to die. It is not at all. They need to live. They need to be able to play. They need to be able to smile. Please join with us!

James: I really ask you to please, just move to the telephone or go to your desktop or your laptop or whatever and go to LifeToday.org or dial the telephone number and say, "Look, I'm going to help feed children. I'm going to give those kids -- I'm going to give them a little bowl of warm nutritious, vitamin-enriched nourishment that will stabilize the situation, save their lives, give them a future."

And when they get stable we'll keep feeding at the school areas to keep them going to school. In other words, we're going to do whatever it is to change their life. And we'll win them to Christ because we're going to show them the love of Christ. And we're going to love them if we never got to talk to them because love talks. But we do get to tell them about Jesus and about God's love because it's his love that moves us. And I'm asking you to help us save all those lives.

We've said many times, there is not a person watching that if you could have helped our daughter win her battle with cancer you would have. I know you would have! But we can see, like Betty said, we did everything we knew to do, we prayed, trusted God, and she's just doing awesome now, no doubt. But here's the thing, her children are, her family, they're full of God. But we can save these little children and we can get them in the feeding lines, we can give them the nourishment.

When I say "we" that's us together -- not me and Betty. We're among the strongest, most faithful givers of our ministry because we believe in it. We've given our lives, we've gone to the ends of the earth to try to put God's arms around hurting people and we'll never stop. You help us do that!

So we're asking you today to help us feed hundreds of thousands of children for the next several months. And a gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will feed three, five, or ten children for the next months. We'll send you some beautiful gifts, a devotional book, a beautiful study Bible that is absolutely fabulous! Beautiful leather-bound, easy-to-read, big

print just to help -- it's a beautiful reference Bible. I'm asking you to give us a chance to bless you.

But bless others by making the largest gift you can -- LifeToday.org. Make it online or write a check to *LIFE* and call us. Call that number. Others are calling to give their life to God today, to turn it over to Christ. I know that! But you call to say, "I'm going to give somebody life because he gave us life, and we're going to share his love." Please do that! Please make the call. Be persistent if you get a busy and say, "I'm going to make the call. I'm going to save some precious mother's child or grandparent's grandchild. I'm going to do it! I'm going to give them a chance.

Thank you for making that call. Don't let anything stop you, and may God direct you in your giving. Thank you for your love!

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 even some Ebola-threatened areas of Sudan.

With all of our previous reserves gone, and Angola facing its worst drought and food shortage in 20 years, we need to immediately replenish our funding and supplies for our feeding programs. Your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, \$100 or \$300 will help feed and care for 3, 5, 10 or 30 children for the next three months. With your support and the partnership of others, your gift goes a long way to help save lives. Please call us, write, or go online today and make your gift.

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you All Things New, a brand-new 31-day devotional featuring inspiration from a variety of special guests of *LIFE Today*; and an instrumental worship CD to bless you in your quiet times with the Lord.

With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed 10 children please request the N.I.V. larger print leather-bound reference Bible.

And finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed 100 children, be sure to request our commemorative glass sculpture, "The Blessing."

Please call, write, or go online today and make your gift of life to help feed and care for hungry children.

End of clip

In the studio

James: From the depth of my heart I thank you so much. I do hope, you know we talked about how a little does so much. I do need because there's -- Peter Pretorius told us he's found some areas where there's up to 100,000 children that absolutely, if we don't have a miracle response we're going to lose them. \$1,000 will feed 100 children. I need a lot of people to say, "I can do that. I might even be able to do more."

Most of the gifts come with the \$30 and the \$50 and the \$100 but we need some big help. We'll gladly send you *Eight Twenty Eight*; what a phenomenal love story. If you'd like to have it, just ask for it. It's in the bookstores. There is the web site again for Larissa and Ian. God may lead you to have them some way, to help them; you do what God directs.

Would you say thanks again to Ian and to Larissa?

We love you! Thank y'all for being here. We appreciate it very, very much.

God bless all of you for being Friends for Life. Thanks for sharing life.