

12/15/14

**Week 51: Fall Mission Feeding**  
**Joel and Amie Stockstill**

**James:** It's a joy! Thank you! You are really gracious and we thank you for this opportunity. I'm James Robison; Betty and I are thrilled to share this time with you.

Joel Stockstill and his wife Amie are literally a walking miracle together because Joel, it's like from the time he was a teenager, it was like he was trying to leave us. His kidneys failed when he was 16 and you would think that would be challenging enough for a person to go through, especially grew up in one of the great Christian families at Bethany Prayer Center down in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where the father, grandfather Pastor Stockstill was for so many years the chairman of my counselors at the first city-wide crusade I did in Baton Rouge back in the 60s.

Larry pastored that great church for so many years; now his other son, one of the sons is pastoring. But Joel, the one that has been fighting all these battles has really become an ambassador of hope. He actually, you'll hear about it, he lost his wife. You just think, the guy's already living on dialysis, his kidneys are gone, and he's battling for his life, loses his wife, and why didn't he lose hope?

Well, he didn't. As a matter of fact, hope wins and Amie is his wife now of several years. She is absolutely beautiful and she is so full of life and love and Jesus. This is one of the most beautiful couples you'll ever meet. I want you to welcome Joel and Amie Stockstill to *LIFE Today*. Joel, Amie, we're really glad to have you here.

**Joel:** Thank you.

**James:** Doesn't she have a pretty smile?

**Joel:** Beautiful! I tell her every day.

**James:** I bet you do. I want people to hear your story because there is a tremendous amount of, almost a sense of panic over all the things that are going on even in our nation but around the world; a sense of uncertainty. I think people are really almost desperate and some people feel like they've run out of hope.

To be quite honest with you, I tragically refer to the fact that a lot of people think the only hope is to get out of here when we were actually left here for a purpose. He could have taken us a long time ago but we're here to be witnesses to the ends of the earth and that's what you are. But I mean you've had every reason to lose hope. Just tell viewers who need hope what you've been through.

**Joel:** Well, James and Betty, it is such an honor to be here today. Amie and I just love what you guys are doing around the world.

There was a defining moment in my life that I look back at now, about 15 years ago at the age of 20 I'd been battling for my life for about four years, been in the hospital a good bit of that time. I was six five, 127 pounds. The doctors called me in with my parents and I was with my mother, actually that day, and the head of my nephrology clinic said, "We want you to know, Mrs. Stockstill, and you Joel, we believe if you do everything we tell you, you'll live six months. If you take your medicine, do your treatments, eat the right diet, you have about six months max to live. If you don't, you have about six weeks or less."

That was not what you want to hear at any point in life much less at 20 years old. That moment was kind of a microcosm of what was to come in the whole story of my life because in that moment, out of my spirit man came a verse. I didn't know where it was. I didn't know the Word of God like I do now. I hadn't been reading the Bible every day for years. But Psalm 118 came out of my spirit and I just blurted it out and said, "I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord." Even in King James! At 20 years old I said it in King James, "I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord." And the doctor really didn't know how to take that.

But I saw him six years later and that's what had happened. Six years later I had miraculously recovered from where I was at that point. I was still battling some in my health and have had many battles but the Lord had raised me up and I'd begun to preach the gospel. And my whole life has been that back and forth of the enemy trying to say it's over and then the Lord just strengthening me supernaturally and saying, "It is not over. I'm not done."

John chapter nine, verse four: The time will come where it is night and no man will work but right now work while it's day.

I just live by that. I've just said you know what? I've got breath in this body, I'm going to continue to declare the gospel because once I go to heaven I won't be able to reach another soul, I won't be able to help another hurting person. So I've got to do all I can and it's given me an urgency to do the work of the gospel. But that hope has stayed alive all these years.

**James:** And it's obvious, and as a matter of fact, you have shared it in a book that is available, *Faith that Endures*: A story of hope and perseverance, which is something we so desperately need today. I'm telling you, this story is phenomenal. You went through something else that would set anybody on their heels and would pretty well bring things to a screeching halt. What happened?

**Joel:** Well, as I said I began to minister, I began to be used of the Lord; I became an associate pastor under my father. God's hand came on my life at an early age similar to what happened with you, not in the same scale but in a similar fashion.

About 21 I was preaching to our church on the weekends and I married a beautiful girl. About three years after we had been married she started having some problems in her throat. Come to find out, diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. They said it was very treatable, 95% cure rate. For about three months the treatments, the chemotherapy worked; it looked like everything was going to resolve. And then

something happened and the situation turned and it went downhill fast. And February 11th of 2008 she went to be with the Lord.

Even though it happened over an amount of time it was sudden; she was 27 years old, never sick her whole life, and all of the sudden she was in the presence of the Lord. That was probably the greatest trial of my faith that I've ever had. Obviously, I had a much stronger relationship with the Lord but I'd never been hit that hard in my heart where it goes way beyond your mind and your emotions to the point of just the depths of your heart.

It was only God, through really my family, my father, my mother, my grandfathers, whom you know, you mentioned earlier that steadied me and walked with me. The night she passed away my father was with me and took me home and said, "I want you to know I'm with you; every step of this, I will be here."

I remember that night just wailing and kind of... it just comes and goes. It went that way about six months -- even as far out as nine months it would still come, the grief that you feel. They were just there. They just walked with me, my brothers, my sisters, they spent every night with me; I never spent a night alone. They walked with me. My brother pastor Jonathan Stockstill, I would live with him three days a week and all the while going through dialysis treatments. So it was like fighting on one hand in the physical, fighting on the other hand in the emotional, in the area of the heart.

Somehow I just endured it. That's the only way I know how to say it. I just kept putting one foot in front of the other. I think if there is anything I wanted to say to those of you who may be out there and you may be in the midst of the most dire situation and I've been blessed in my life with so many things but I've also faced a lot of difficulty, keep putting one foot in front of the other, walking towards the cross.

That's the key. It's not just keep walking -- keep walking toward Jesus -- keep walking toward the cross -- keep walking and standing on the word -- keep allowing people who are strong in the things of God to stand with you and let them love you and let them support you and you will come out on the other end. That's what the Lord said to me about hope. He said hope is seeing light at the end of the tunnel when you're

standing in the pitch black. I'm telling you, I was in the pitch black. It was just as dark as you can get. But I began to see that light and I began to walk towards it and then I came out and that's what brought me to the story that we share.

**James:** I've watched you walk it.

**Betty:** It's his grace too -- his grace is sufficient in those times. He really does fill us with his grace and his love and his comfort.

**James:** I want to say something as directly as I can to you. I want you to come in on me just a minute where I can talk to you. I think I just sensed as Joel was talking and he was giving that expression of gratitude and praise for the people who walk through the pain with him, and I just felt a tremendous wave that I felt was coming from viewers that said, "I wish I had somebody to walk with me." I can't tell you what that did to me.

I don't even know how to describe but I feel in my heart what I think you're saying. And you're saying, "I wish I had somebody to walk with me."

Listen to me. What you really do need to understand, you could have been watching a dozen things but this is somebody that's trying to walk with you. We are. Yes, we are!

You may say, "Well, I've heard about you. You help people all over the world."

No, we start helping people right here. Our major focus is right here -- you! To offer you hope and help; that's why we're here. That's why Joel was telling you, God is bigger than any mountain, burden, valley or ditch or pit of despair that you've ever been thrown in or you've ever fallen in or you ever dug and jumped in yourself. Whatever it is, this was for you.

I'm telling you from the depth of my heart we care about you. That's why we're here. Betty and I are not looking for something to do. We're here by divine assignment for you, to point you -- there is hope. We're here because we care.

Here's something else I want you to know. The phone number right there on the screen, there's somebody that will pray with you and the chances are when you talk to one of our prayer partners, they may have been through some of the very same things you're going to share. The majority of the calls that will come in every day, as much as we need help, we're trying to save the lives of desperately hungry children right now but most of the calls will be people saying, "Will you help me?" Yes, we're going to walk through it with you.

Father, I'm praying for everyone that's got a broken heart right now and feels lonely. I'm praying they'll know that you set them in front of that television today to hear the hope that you are extending to them and that even today they can get someone to join with them in prayer; in Jesus' name.

May I say something to you very directly? One of the best ways to get our prayers answered is to become an answer to somebody else's prayer, seek to be an answer to their prayers. One of the best ways to be blessed is to seek a way to bless somebody else and we encourage and give you that opportunity.

Joel, I really thank you for the walk because I've watched you -- I've watched you battling for your life, I've been with you when you didn't know if you were going to make another week even later in the journey. We've prayed with you. You know that. We've been your buddy. We sat and ate with you and shared hearts. But now you've got a treasure sitting here by you.

**Joel:** I do.

**James:** You've got an angel. And this angel is here in living color and I mean you can touch her! She's the real deal. That's a beautiful smile. This girl knew when she signed on you she was signing on to a challenge. Right, Amie? You knew you weren't marrying a guy, Tarzan, that hadn't ever had a battle in his life, just whipped everything. He had been walked on some; he had a lot of hurt.

How is it that you were attracted to this guy and marry him? I can see why he was attracted to you. He probably ran clear across the church building the first time he saw

you and said, "I've got to meet her." Why were you drawn to a man in such a battle who had so much heartache?

**Amie:** He taught me mostly everything I know about the Lord. Under his ministry I got filled with the Holy Spirit. I just learned so much from him in the way that he treated me when he pursued me with such respect and honor, like a queen. It took me a while to come around but after a few dates it was actually after he had his surgery that failed on his arm that I said... I was so upset about it I said, "I must really care about this man." So after that surgery, we started talking again and I had always prayed for him but I just thought, this is a man who I love.

**James:** Betty, can you not see the Spirit of God in her countenance and her demeanor? She walks in the room and the whole room lights up. She's just -- I don't even know how to explain it. How do you explain what's going on in her?

**Joel:** Well, just the -- what happened, I had met her and was very impressed with her. I'd never met her before my wife passed away but I met her shortly after and was very impressed by her. Then several months later I was holding a meeting for some students in our ministry and she came in and was sitting on the back row. I was leading in a time of worship and I saw her worshipping Jesus back there with her hands lifted and -- it's hard to talk about -- I just could see Jesus on her and I saw the way that she loved Jesus. I could see the purity, the holiness, just the innocence in her life. It went beyond beauty -- it was an eternal beauty. It was something that only comes by the Holy Spirit.

That was kind of where I really got interested. In fact, I did go straight to her after that service was over, I went straight back there and spoke to her and began to endure in my faith until I had won her over.

[Laughter]

That was easy. I didn't have any trouble enduring in that situation. I would not be denied. That's where it all started.

**James:** When you look at this couple, Betty, what goes on in your heart as you look at this incredible couple?

**Betty:** Well, I just see in her the sweetness of Jesus and a couple that just really trusts God completely for every hour of every day. And I know you do, Joel because you've had to do that, just trust God for every moment of breath. I just see God working in them together as a couple. She's a strength to you and also you to her; you bring her security and love and that's very, very important. You trust one another's love for you.

**James:** The glory of God is on these people. I'm telling you, the glory of God can be on you. I don't care what condition you see yourself in, God's glory -- shekinah shining, revealing glory -- manifest glory can be on you. It is a peace; it is a countenance. I kind of feel like I walk in and out of it. I just wish I didn't but I know what it is to stay in it. Some of you have never even gotten in it.

Father, I pray people will get in the presence of your glory and really will be so full of love for you and for others that it will radiate. I pray, Lord you'll lift their chin, lift up their heads, look to the hills from whence cometh their help, not Washington, not Capitol Hill -- you! And Lord, they'll trust you and you'll be their hope and their healer; in Jesus' name.

You don't know how much you're loved today. You've got to hear that. How is things with your health right now?

**Joel:** They're better than they've been in 20 years. We just had a real breakthrough medically. They believe now they're going to be able to do a transplant and so we're pursuing that. Just asking the Lord to bring an end to this long battle; to be able to go to the nations and preach the gospel and meet the needs of people.

**James:** Well, I tell you what I'd love to do -- would you say thanks to Joel and Amie? Aren't they a beautiful couple? -- A beautiful picture of the love of God.

And Larry Stockstill, and the whole family, you just really are a blessing. The whole family, you are really a blessing.

Bethany, bless you guys! Thank you all for praying for us. This book, glad to send it to you.

Joel, we're going to ask people to do what you know your dad and your granddad and your brother have tried to get all the people to do and that's to be really mission minded. Our viewers are. I think they are the most mission minded people.

Joel Osteen's dad, John told me before he died that he thought Betty and I had brought the mission fields of the world into people's homes so they could see it. I feel like that's been our privilege. John Osteen thanked us for that. Many people have told us that.

But here's the deal. We can show you the mission fields of the world and all of us weep until we're weary but unless you touch the need and you meet the need, all we do is weep and the others weep more intensely for whom we should be weeping but not only weeping but helping.

I want you to watch this closely because I'm going to tell you something, we've got the answer. It doesn't have to be this way. What you're about to see can be totally changed by the hope and the love we offer together.

### **On the mission field**

**Announcer:** Time... it can be a formidable adversary. If we could turn back time... If we could have brought help sooner we could have saved Julia. We could have rescued Abel. We could have fed Leo before it was too late. We've seen it too many times -- something our mission feeding program could have prevented.

We can't turn back time; however, God has given us right now. And right now you have the chance to fill these bowls here so these children don't end up here. Please take the time!

**End of clip**

### **In the studio**

**James:** Or they could actually end up where Betty and I too often have seen too many long rows of graves -- not very large, for little children, and where we've been watching dig those graves. I know that the natural tendency is to look away. It is too painful.

I marvel at how I know people watch the little spots for the little pets; they just look so lonely. But I understand everyone wanting to help them. I think that's wonderful. I find, however, people sometimes will look at a little pet and be more moved than looking at a child. I don't want to believe that's ever the case with the viewers of *LIFE Today* because I think when you see what Kyle Rogers, who grew up the son of one of our team members for so many years, Jeanne Rogers, that's her son Kyle, grew up with our daughter, our youngest daughter who is with Jesus. And she was a great influence on Kyle, he said so many times. That was a tremendous message Kyle gave us as a missionary himself.

You see what if and if we could back it up, what we have right now? And right now, Betty, can't back things up but it can straighten things out and it can give those children hope and life and a future and it can answer the heart cry of those mothers for their children that have often, many of them, have already buried a child.

Now they're at that malnutrition clinic, which is the last place. Most of them aren't even able to get to the clinic -- and we help furnish those clinics and give them supplies. But it is our feeding centers out in the areas that are suffering where we stop that pilgrimage to that place or that sense of desperation.

In other words, what we do, this is where love never failing can be witnessed firsthand. Many of the children we started helping 25 years ago and saving their lives have been to college and graduated and some of them are now college professors. Some of the countries have been totally revolutionized and changed in a positive way

like Mozambique and the death cycle has been slowed so drastically that you don't hear the cry anymore and they're beginning to become progressive.

Please! Please hear the heart cry, not only that missionary's voice but hear the cry of those mothers saying, "Would you help my child?"

I want to remind you this is our last week for mission feeding right now and we've had a miracle matching gift, the largest we've ever had -- one and a half million dollars to match what you give right now -- to double it! If you could give \$100 to help feed ten children for the next months you would be feeding 20 -- it will be doubled. \$30 or \$50 feeds three or five -- now it will be six or ten. Many of our friends are able to give \$1,000 to feed 100. If you could do it now, you would be feeding 200.

Father, I pray there would not be a person watching that wouldn't go to the phone and make the largest gift of love they can make; in Jesus' name.

During this last week, this emphasis right now, would you go to the phone or go to LifeToday.org? Would you do that now? Take your bankcard and use it like a check; make the largest gift, give to give -- not to get, give to give life and watch what happens. Be a blessing and you will see the blessing of God through your life on others in a beautiful flow. Please start that flow.

We have some gifts for you but you're giving the greatest gift, life, a chance at life, and people witnessing the love of God firsthand because you cared. Thank you for doing it!

### **Begin video clip**

**Announcer:** In remote and impoverished areas of Africa, families are suffering, facing death by starvation, and those hit the children 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. 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.

As an answer to prayer, a group of *LIFE's* friends have set a \$1.5 million matching gift challenge for Mission Feeding. This means your gift today can have a double impact! \$30 to help feed three children will be doubled to impact six children. \$50 to help feed five children will be doubled to help save 10 children. \$100 for 10 children will be doubled to help feed 20 children. And \$300 for 30 children will be doubled to help feed and minister to 60 children!

With your gift of any amount we'll send you *All Things New*, a daily devotional with an inspirational music CD. With your double impact gift of \$100 or more, please request the N.I.V. larger print reference Bible.

Finally, please consider a double impact gift of \$1,000 and request our commemorative glass sculpture, "The Blessing."

This is the last week! 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:** I really am anxious to send you the Bible. I'm thrilled that you might give the \$100 gift or more and know that your impact will be doubled. If you'd like to have Joel Stockstill's book, *Faith that Endures*, and boy does his faith -- this young man and now this couple have walked in, powerful story!

Love this young man -- love his family -- love their testimony! I really pray that you will do all you can. Ask for the book if you'd like to have it.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks to Amie and to Joel Stockstill and the whole Stockstill family! -- And the whole Bethany family! There is Joel's address. There's his e-mail. If you want him to come preach, he's going to declare the glory of God and he's going to declare hope. So there's how you can get a hold of him -- right there! You e-

mail him and say, "Come here and help us!" Well, you take care of him when he gets there.

**James:** I do want to remind you of the Christmas season of giving. This is also a very important time to make special year-end gifts, which will be so meaningful to you -- and I'm grateful that it will -- but it is going to mean so much to others and it's going to be doubled. So consider that year-end gift coming right now, and I thank you for it!