

4/14/15
Week 16 Rescue Life: Last week
Onterio Green

James: Thank you! Thank you for giving us an opportunity to share *LIFE Today* with you. I'm James Robison.

Betty and I are thrilled to have one of the associate pastors of The Potter's House, where Bishop T.D. Jakes is pastor. I count it one of the honors in my life that I was able to be the very first one to help dedicate that incredible Potter's House and lead an "All World prayer" they called it and be there with them; and have been Dr. Jakes', Bishop Jakes' friend for a long time.

Onterio Green is just an incredible story. Think about this. His mother was a prostitute, who was actually here with us a few months back on *LIFE Today*. She's carrying her little baby boy around while she was turning tricks. You say what would that do to that kid? Well, why don't we ask him?

This is Onterio Green, Karen Green's son, now a pastor at Potter's House. Would you welcome Onterio to *LIFE Today*?

Onterio, good to see you buddy.

Onterio: It's an honor to be here.

James: We enjoyed having your mom here. You've got a lot of ground to cover. I want you to just tell me about... your mom's doing some things that would not meet with ready approval, you a little baby; and you were actually out with her when she was turning tricks and trying to make a living or whatever. Did you know what was going on as a little boy and as you got older?

Onterio: I think I started picking up on it once I got into grade school and started to figure out what was really happening behind the scenes, what my mom was really trying to shield me from and keep me from seeing from time to time. Once I picked up on it that's when life as I knew it really changed for me. I was an average kid just like any other kid, grew up with dreams and aspirations of doing some great things, wanted to be a firefighter, I wanted to do some great things when I grew up. Soon, and very soon, I figured out that I wasn't the same as the rest of the kids I was going to school with. The reason being is because I went to 16

different elementary schools, constantly changed school systems, constantly changing housing situations, constantly changing the people and the environments that I was in.

James: Was it because you mother couldn't afford to pay the rent or because she was pushed out? What was causing all the moving? Or were you put with different people?

Onterio: Well, it was a little bit of everything you just said. We had a lot of people in our lives that cared about my mom and cared about me so everybody extended a hand to try to help from cousins to second cousins to third cousins. I've met just about every single one of my family members in a very personal way; I've lived with a lot of them, I've lived with family friends, all types of people when times just got hard, when mom couldn't find somewhere for us to be. We've even lived in hotels or motels at times because we just didn't have anywhere to stay.

I even remember living in the Salvation Army here in the Dallas area for months at a time and eating cereal with water because they ran out of milk; so I'll never forget that and spent about a month there. So I've seen a lot of different changes as a child.

With that being said, it created a lot of instability in my educational patterns. So when all the other kids were learning their reading, writing, arithmetic, I wasn't because it was tough for me to focus on what was going on because I was constantly changing environments. It was really tough for me.

James: So you were a very low end reader. Did you even look back and think couldn't really read at all?

Onterio: Well, the truth is that a lot of these teachers were being sympathetic and they just felt bad for me at times and a lot of them were familiar with my situation so a lot of them would pass me on because they just wanted to see the best for me. But in trying to help me, some of them actually hurt me because --

James: And they weren't intending to. I don't ever believe any of them wanted... they were trying to say, look, he's got it tough enough so we don't want to hold him back here. We've got a lot to weep over when we see what people are dealing with. I think probably, just like you said, your family, your cousins, everybody was trying to help, and maybe their intention was not the best end.

But you even said something to us when we were talking before we actually came on the air. You said that you honestly believed that your mother was not just trying to be a prostitute or turn tricks, she had a drug problem but she was also trying to take care of her little boy. Is that right?

Onterio: That's right. Focusing on the branches on the tree would be to say she was a prostitute. But focusing on the root cause is she grew up just like I grew up without the proper upbringing, without the right home system to make sure that she learned the things that she needed to learn to be a good mother, to be able to have the education, to be able to get jobs and things of that nature. You guys know from talking to my mom she had a sixth grade education so it's really hard for a woman with a sixth grade education to get a quality job to be able to take care of a child.

Betty: So you knew she was doing her best to try to take care of you.

Onterio: She was doing her best.

James: Is that how you saw it as a little boy?

Onterio: I saw it the entire time that way that she was just doing her best to take care of us. At times, it made me grow up a lot faster because I felt like I needed to take some initiative at times and be tough; if I'm hungry, I don't need to say I'm all that hungry. I need to share what I have with my mom because I know she'll let me eat everything and she'll starve. So it created a great sense of responsibility in me that I didn't know was something God would use later in my life for his glory.

James: Were you ever tempted to get into the drugs and that kind of stuff? Or were you turned off by what you were seeing?

Onterio: I see in most situations like that most people will do one or two things. They will become exactly like their environment or they will become polar opposite of their environment. Even before I found Christ I was never really tempted with the street life to be engaged in it long term, to want to be on drugs or to live in that life. I saw the pain that it brought my mom; I saw the agony that she would have from night to night. I saw the instability. I saw my friends who had parents who would be there for them all the time. I just made up in my mind at a very young age that I don't want to be this way. I want to have something in my life. I want to do something. I want my name to mean something. I want to build a legacy. And I started thinking about this at a very young age.

James: You said the best thing that happened to your mother was she went to jail.

Onterio: That's right! When I was about 13 years of age, my mom violated her probation and she went to jail. They kept her for almost two years. It was the best thing that ever happened to

her. While she was in prison she heard something from Bishop Jakes via satellite, Woman Thou Art Loosed was going on and she got wind of it while she was in prison.

James: Woman Thou Art Loosed! Everybody can be loosed -- freed!

Onterio: That's right! No matter where you are! And my mom was incarcerated, locked behind bars and found herself more freer than she ever found herself when she was outside. So her life was being dramatically changed and transformed and she is being renewed.

And while she was going through that and life was great for her, transforming, my life was as worse as it could be because I was left with a family friend that was in a worse position than she was in, than my mom was in. There I was exposed to a lot of things while I was in middle school. I was exposed to a lot of fast-paced living, stealing from stores. I remember stealing shoes from the mall, baby shoes to come across the street and sell them to the people that were in the apartments just so I could have money so I could get shoes and clothes for myself. I began to engage in lifestyles like that and do things of that nature.

Because she had two sons that were a little older than me, and they became my role models in life because I didn't have a father, and I didn't know my father at that point so they became kind of a brotherly father figure in my life and I followed their lead and everything they did I did, where they went I went, when they ate I ate, and what they wore I wore. So my life was just falling apart.

I remember witnessing a murder one night when I was up late at night, it was two in the morning and we were outside playing dominos on a table. A guy ran by wearing red, another guy behind him wearing blue and shots were fired. I froze because I was afraid. The man fell between the car and a ditch and the guy walked up to him and unloaded his gun on him. I was probably about 10 or 15 feet away from this and it totally traumatized my poor little mind as a young man. That day, I made up in my mind that I would never join a gang because if this is what colors is about, then this is not what I want to be about as a young man.

So when my mom got wind of that, she heard about it, and she sent me, she sent the letter and she got me moved from there to another family member that was a bit more spiritual, and stayed with her for a short amount of time until my mom got out of prison. When she got out of prison, she was determined.

Now I'd seen my mom go to prison before and when she was in prison she would get out, she would do something crazy and go back so I was used to the cycle. Well, this time she got out and she was really focused on keeping me focused and doing something with my life. At this point I'd failed the ninth grade my first year. I'd gotten behind on my credits so it was really

bad. So I'm going into my summer, I was 15 years of age, and my mom began to drag me to the Potter's House. I tell people all the time, I started with a drug mom, and I ended with a drug mom; she drug me by my left ear and made me listen to Bishop Jakes. And I would fall asleep on "Mister, get ready, get ready, get ready" -- imagine that!

And she would force me to go over to the youth ministry. And when I heard they had some pretty girls over there, I said, "Ah! I'll go check it out. We'll go survey the scene." So I go over with the wrong intentions and it was a rainy night, July 7th, 1999. It seemed like all the girls I wanted to talk to weren't there; the crowd was half full because of the weather and they made all the people in the back move to the front. I sat on the front row. I'm frustrated. I don't understand why they're making me do this. The preacher gets up and speaks a message about the prodigal son. Then a mime followed it, a creative arts piece and my heart was broken for the very first time for Jesus Christ. I finally could see the saving power that saved my mom save me. I was finally open to it and I was exposed to it.

The thing that saved me was not the religious stuff or any of that, not the great songs. What saved me was the fact that this father still loved this son in spite of who he was. I felt like in God's eyes, at that time in my life, that I was despicable because I was coming to talk to girls. But when I figured out he loved unconditionally, even though you're wrong, it messed me up and ruined me for life, and I was radically saved and born again that day.

From that day I said, "I'm going to do something with my life." I go back to school and now I'm focused. I'm in the 9th grade again but I go and tell the teacher that I don't know how to read on a comprehensible level, I'm having problems. This teacher takes me and she teaches me after school Hooked on Phonics. Hooked on Phonics worked for me!

[Laughter]

She teaches me Hooked on Phonics for a full semester and improves my reading fluency by three or four grade levels by the end of the semester. Now I'm able to do my work faster, I'm able to focus more, I'm able to read the Bible and read about this renewed mind that I'm supposed to have and walk in. I went from failing and being a drop out in high school to now graduating top 50% of my class, president of the F.C.A. program and voted "most likely to succeed" in the yearbook. All these things happened when I allowed Jesus to come into my heart.

Here I am this young man that should be a statistic, that should be a prison -- should be gone to prison, that should be involved with gangs, that should be shooting people, that should be the product of his environment like his mother was, like his father that he never knew, but here comes Jesus in my life and his transforming love just totally messed me up to the point to where I wanted to live for him and I wanted to serve him.

James: And now what are you doing?

Onterio: So, that passion and that fire that I received at the altar that day at The Potter's House in 1999, by the way, the youth pastor was Pastor Chris Hill who has been on your show; he's the senior pastor of The Potter's House in Denver, Colorado, one of the fastest growing churches in America.

James: Good job, Chris! I've got one of your kids here.

Onterio: So he stuck with me. He stuck with me. He counseled with me every week, rain, sleet, or snow. Let me talk about my problems and my issues that I went through. And for 17 years he's been coaching me, behind me, whispering in my ear telling me what to do every step of the way; not only with ministry but with fatherhood, with how to be a husband and a father. I got married at 19 years young, and because...

James: We did too! And we've been married 52 years, so it is possible.

[Applause]

Onterio: I got married at 19 years of age because I knew what I wanted in life. My life had moved so fast already. I said, "You know what? I don't have time to waste. God, if you show me who she is I'll go after her. I don't care what I've got to drop."

And I ran after her with all my of my heart, might. She is beautiful and she is amazing. We've been married 13 years now and have three beautiful children. So God sent us to this school called Christ for the Nations here in Dallas, Texas.

Interesting story, a prophet was in my apartment complex, African guy from Nigeria. He hooks me by the arm, this is the most significant moment in my life where I knew God wanted to do something amazing with me. He hooks me by the arm and he walks me up the sidewalk and he

whispers in my ear what God wants to do in my life in the next three years. He says, "You're going to go to a school called Christ for the Nations. You're going to learn about youth and young adult ministry. After you graduate from there you're going to go to the northeast region of the United States. You're going to serve a ministry there. You're going to do this. You need to pay attention to this class, this class and this class while you're at Christ for the Nations. Don't worry about how you're going to pay. God is going to make a way."

So this school gives me a full scholarship that didn't exist. They take care of me. They give me housing, tuition. They gave my wife a job so we can have finances to take care of ourselves while I was a student at the school. I graduated with a 4.0 G.P.A. and top of my class, and go right into ministry.

Then finally, fast forward to Kansas City, Missouri. We're in Kansas City, Missouri serving in a wonderful church there, a mega church there, the largest multiracial church in the city and we get a call from Bishop Jakes and his staff to come back home to the Dallas area to serve on staff as their young adult pastor and their Internet church pastor.

So today, I serve the young adults at The Potter's House that are between the ages of 18 and 30-something, which some of them are here in the audience today. I have the privilege of doing what this church has done for me for the next generation, inspiring them, giving them hope, telling them that no matter what they've been through God can still use them despite the things that they've gone through, and allowing them to use their story for God's glory. So we're seeing a transformation happening. We're seeing an amazing thing just take place.

When I got there we had about 60-70 young adults. Last week we had over 700 in our service and we've only been there about a year.

James: Friday night at The Potter's House?

Onterio: Yes, yes! By the way, shameless plug for the Brick House. Brick House Young Adult Ministry meets every first and third Friday night right here in the Dallas/Fort Worth area at The Potter's House and we would love to see you guys. Find us on social media and I promise you, you won't regret coming out and checking us out. It is a wonderful, wonderful place. God is doing some great things with young adults.

James: Social media, what will they look for? Where do they go? Just Potter's House?

Onterio: No, the social media for the young adult ministry is The_Brick_ and that's on Twitter and Instagram. Then you can look up The Brick House at The Potter's House on Facebook and you can find us there. We'd love to connect with you if you're here in the Dallas/Fort Worth

area. God is doing something amazing in the hearts of young adults from all around the city. College students, married, single, it doesn't matter if you're 18 or 30 something, we want to see God use you and we believe now is the time.

James: And what you've got is contagious; isn't it?

Onterio: It is!

James: I want to say thanks so much to Onterio.

This is, in so many ways, our lives were similar. My mother didn't have those issues but we were moving 17 times in ten years. You live lonely, and a lot of people live that way right now. But when you find Jesus, you know here you were a little church girl and you met a little guy that didn't have a home, and didn't have anything but found Jesus, and you realized there was something bigger than church, bigger than religion.

She wanted to know Jesus personally like this little fatherless boy, teenager, that started dating her when we were 15. We're still dating. It's the love of God -- and it's for you!

Father, I pray for everyone watching today. I don't know what's going on in their life, it really doesn't matter, you love them beyond it. You want to lift them out of anything that holds them, and you want to give them freedom and peace and forgiveness and a whole new life. In Jesus' name I pray for everyone you are speaking to.

Now listen. God has, for you, more in store than you could even comprehend if you would just say, "Lord Jesus, be my master. I yield my life to you, every part of it. You have your way in me. Reveal yourself to me, then through me to others." And you'll see miracles.

Would you just say with us again thanks to Onterio for this great testimony?

Onterio, we're going to show you kind of the picture, not of someone that had a life like your mom had, but someone who was trapped and sold into sexual bondage. They gained nothing from it, they're prisoners. I want you to just look at this overview. Here's the thing I want you to know. This is no exaggeration -- you absolutely hold the perfect keys to the freedom of women just like the one you're going to hear. I'm not exaggerating. You can totally set them free. We can do that together. Watch.

On the mission field

>> There are a lot of things I dreamt I'd become. This was never one of them, but it is who I am now. They tell me I deserve it. They say my parents never want to see me again. I'm never alone here for long but alone is all I feel.

I can't keep them out because my door locks from the outside. I hear they've got my sister now. She's about the age they took me. She'll fetch a good price like I did. And of course, they say we're worthless anyway. There's no reason to smile here but I'm forced to. I hate this place but it's like we were meant for each other, filth for filth.

If I was worth anything, worth anything at all surely someone would have come for me. And though I'm all alone, I know there are many. I've seen too many come and disappear. Maybe they're the lucky ones.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I don't think that you need any prompting to want to set that girl free, and several thousand like her that the most dedicated, committed relief workers and missionaries have found by literally moving in to the very pit of hell, to rescue the perishing and care for the dying, to snatch them in love and pity from the snare and from the grave. That's literally what these mission workers are doing.

But here's the thing, we're the enablers. See the predators that take them and put them in bondage enable people to prey on them and use them and they get the money and other people, quote, supposedly satisfy their unquenchable desires in unfathomable fashion in the horror of their life. But they can be free and they can be free because of someone like you who connects with another member of the body of Christ, like this part of the arm with this part so that the hand of God, the body of Christ functions effectively to rescue them. Now these mission workers are incomplete without us giving them the resources to care for them. They can get them out. We, with your help, have built places to restore them, homes.

Would you right now enable us to literally reach out and rescue a target number of over 5,000 that we have found? When I say "we" that's the mission workers, that's the relief workers that are right there on the scene, right there in the midst of the pain and the suffering. Here's the average cost: \$128 to rescue them, to restore them for a year, to begin training them so that they can have a future; little children, begin educating them. We have many we rescued years ago who have now graduated from college, who are themselves teachers, some of them themselves

are working in the mission outreach as a missionary themselves. It is a program of outreach that works. We're truly rescuing the perishing.

This is the last week now we're asking you to help. Would you go to LifeToday.org and take your bankcard and use it like a check, please? I pray if you've never made a gift, you'll do it because you'll be giving them freedom -- you'll be setting them free. The keys to their freedom is in your hand as you connect with the mission workers. Would you do it? Or would you dial the number and take your bankcard? And there on the phone say, "Here's the gift I want to make." Use those cards like a check. If you write a check, make it to *LIFE*, but call us and tell us what you're mailing. We need to know because like I said it's the last week.

We have some special gifts to send you to bless you: The Songs of Freedom, these worship and praise songs are going to bless you, and you'll know you've set people free. We're going to help you see how we can help walk our nation out of the darkness we're in with a book that will help you see that. And the beautiful Thomas Kinkade painting, "Forest Chapel."

Would you do what God put on your heart? Please do it right now. Just go online or make the call. Thank you during this last week for reaching out with an expression of love and freedom. Thank you for doing it!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Innocent children created to be happy, loved, and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, their spirit and bodies broken under horrific emotional and physical abuse. Through *Mission: Rescue Life* you can reach out to save children vulnerable to sex traffickers. You can help rescue those already enslaved and you can restore their lives with hope for a future.

Your gift today of only \$128 will help rescue a child and change their destiny forever. With gifts of \$64 or \$32, we will combine your support with others to help rescue one more child from the shame and pain of sexual slavery.

With your gift of any amount we will send you the *Songs of Freedom* CD, a collection of ten uplifting worship songs that are sure to become a favorite for your quiet time, drive time, or personal worship.

In addition to the CD, you'll receive *Indivisible*, a powerful soul-stirring book by James Robison and Jay Richards.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 to help rescue ten children and you may request this beautifully framed canvas print of the "Forest Chapel" by the Painter of Light TM, Thomas Kinkade.

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online today..

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty and I are really praying that you will, if you can, make that \$1280 gift or even more; get the beautiful painting the "Forest Chapel." I also want to remind you to make your daily site for news, inspiration, to know how to pray and what to do about the challenges we face because we're to soar like eagles, on the challenges of the day and the turbulence of the times.

Go to stream.org. Go there every day. You're going to be glad you did and so will a lot of other people.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks to Onterio again for being such a tremendous blessing. Visit the Potter's House.

And what do you call the web site?

Onterio: The web site is ThePotter'sHouse.org and we'd love --

James: And do you have the Friday night services first and third Friday night every month.

Onterio: Yes. And we also have something amazing coming up that leaders are really going to need to know about, leaders and pastors because we need to rise up.

James: So go online! Go online and find that because that's where they get the information. Thank you so much Onterio for blessing us. Thank all of you for watching! Thank you for helping us rescue lives and restore them. Thank you so much!

Announcer: Be sure to visit stream.org, a rich and lively source for breaking news, analysis, and entertainment! Stream.org