

5/7/15
Week 19
Sandra McCollom

James: Thank you very much. We appreciate it. You're gracious and we welcome you. I'm James Robison.

Betty and I are thrilled to have a daughter of a very good friend who has been on the television many times. You see us together -- just kind of a little struggling television ministry, Joyce Meyer.

[Laughter]

We're usually either before or right after her in many, many places. Her daughter, Sandra McCollom is here. I want to tell you something. I'm really excited about you hearing what she's got to share because she's going to talk about a journey. But look at the title, *I Tried Until I Almost Died: Anxiety, frustration to rest and relaxation*. But what is it she is trying to do until she gets to a point that she is exasperated or frustrated until she nearly dies. Would you like to hear it?

You know Mother's Day is this weekend. I thought you might think it is wonderful to have the daughter of a very well-known mother, which is not always easy to be the daughter of a well-known mother or father, but I think it is a great story. Would you welcome Sandra McCollom to *LIFE Today*?

Sandra, it is an honor. It is a thrill just to have you. Your mom has been here a lot and she always blesses us. And we love Dave and your mother, we love them and appreciate them. I say to the whole world that I think that Joyce is a gift and a treasure for the whole church and the whole earth.

Dave, I know, Joyce knows and you know you are an incredible head, overseer, a wonderful lead and encourager. I don't think I've ever seen a man that wanted to be more supportive of his wife than I've watched you be, and I love you. It's an honor to have your daughter.

What in the world are you talking about? Trying -- you are a Bible teacher's daughter. Why are you trying until you're dying?

[Laughter]

Come on, Joyce! Hey, come on talk about this. What's going on, Sandra?

Sandra: I was trying to live the Christian life the way that I thought it was supposed to be lived. And I was trying to please God because I thought that he was only pleased with me when I was good, "being good."

James: And you had to define good, right? The way you saw it and thought he saw it.

Sandra: Exactly! I had misconception -- really, what was at the base of everything was I had misconceptions about God, and just the way that I felt that he felt about me. So I saw him as just a hard taskmaster standing over me just waiting and watching to see when I made my next mistake. So I lived my Christian life in fear because of that.

James: Did you think you were making a lot of mistakes from his point of view? Did you feel like you were failing?

Sandra: I did. I was never loving enough. I was never enough and I was constantly measuring myself. So I was always falling short.

Betty: I can understand as well because I grew up with a lot of that.

James: How did you describe it? What words did you use? Was it performance or what?

Betty: Well, I wanted to please -- please the church, please people, please my family, anyone I was in contact with, and I wanted to do everything like I thought I should do it. And if I got out of line, God was going to get me. So fear stepped right in.

Sandra: Right! So much fear in my life. Now that I have let God's love in, like First John 4:18 says, when his love comes in fear goes out and it is so awesome. So what this did is I just lived -- literally from the time I became a Christian at the age of eight, until the age of 42, the first 34 years of my Christian life I lived in anxiety and frustration trying, trying, trying to get it right. Not just my spiritual life but even in just my everyday life I lived by a list and I lived by running on my treadmill of accomplishment, that's what I call it. So I had this unrealistic list that I would make every day of what I thought I should get done. But I would hardly ever get it done because it was so ridiculous to begin with.

James: But if you even did get some of it done, did it even give you a sense of release or not? You were still in bondage?

Sandra: Only if I got everything done and even then I would allow myself off the treadmill for just a few minutes but then my mind would say, "Get back on! Start running because you can't lose momentum." Because that's where all my worth and value came from. So that was just driving everything.

James: It sounds like misery listening to you talk about it. No, it really does! It sounds like a miserable situation.

It also sounds like you've got such a warped impression of God. I really try to tell people, if you interpret the fear of God, it's the beginning of wisdom and knowledge and if you see it as being scared of God or afraid of God, you don't understand the fear of God.

See if you bear witness with this, Sandra. What I was able to tell our little grandchildren when they were toddlers, and we had a pool. We don't now but back then when our children were growing up and then our grandchildren coming along, we had one. And I always tell them, "Don't ever go out there by the pool without Mimi or Papaw because you need to be with us." You know what? They would come and get our hand, even when they were just little, and if they wanted to go out and walk around. And the Lord just spoke to me and said that's what the fear of the Lord is. You don't ever want to be out of his shelter and his shadow -- that's the fear of the Lord. Does that make sense?

But if you just know, I don't want to go anywhere without him; but it's not like he's going to push you in the pool. If they went by the pool, "Just push them in the pool! I told you don't go out there!" That's a tacky -- is that kind of the feeling you had?

Sandra: Yes! And not only me, now that it's been released, I'm starting to get some feedback, a lot of Christians live this way. I feel now that God has freed me and is continuing to free me, it's a process, now that he's doing that, I have such a burden to help others enter into that place of rest. That's what I believe he's wanting me to do, is just help others see it is 100% possible.

James: I think most Christians are living there. Professing Christians are living where you were. You think that, Betty? Because you certainly did. You were the original church lady and you were still miserable. You did everything so right.

Betty: And never met, got up to the standard that I thought was enough.

Sandra: Exactly! So I went like this for years, like I said, 34 years. Then at the end of 2011, I had serious health problems from this and all kinds of stuff. But then at the end of 2011, right after Christmas one day, I remember I said, "I can't do this anymore God. I cannot live the Christian life. I just need serious help." That's what I told him. That's exactly what he was waiting to hear. He needed me to come to the end of myself, of my trying and see.

See, what I was doing was I was living my life by my own self efforts. I began to understand what I was doing later that year when I read Joseph Prince's book, *Unmerited Favor*. That's has been such a blessing in my life and his teaching, and books too, God has used that. And it really has helped me see, oh, my goodness, I was putting all my faith in my own self efforts and not my faith in God. I wasn't trusting him, I was trusting me, myself, and I.

So after that happened, at the end of 2011, the next week I was in my devotional time and God, I was just praying and it was right -- it was January 2nd, so it was a new year. I wasn't a big proponent of New Year's resolutions but I was actually asking God, is there anything more you want me to accomplish this year?

Can you imagine that? I mean, I was already living to the extent we know, it was a ridiculous question to ask but still I wanted to do it all right so I was asking that. And that morning the love of God swept into the room like a tidal wave. God changed me that day by showing me that I'm okay. I remember going around my house after that and just saying, "I'm okay! I'm okay!"

James: He likes me too!

Sandra: And it's for me, he likes me, he loves me because I'm his daughter -- not for what I do. See what I was doing was I was living my life backwards before. I was trying to do all these things to get him to love me but now I've learned that when I live in his love, oh, and I do every day, I just daydream about his love for me. I'm not ever going to get off of it. I've heard people sometimes say, "Yeah, now we know God loves us, let's go on to the next thing." Oh, no!

James: That is the holy oxygen -- is the awareness of his presence and you take it in. You're living in his presence and you live amazed when you realize you're living in his presence -- and everything is amazing!

Sandra: It is! So now what that's caused me to do is now I want to do all these things for him but it is out of my love for him instead of my duty, just thinking, oh, he's going to be mad at me if I don't do these things. So then he just began to set me on a journey to understand the riches of his grace. Like I said, I didn't even understand what was happening at first but after that day

on January 2nd, I began to live in a peace -- I mean before this, I'm telling you, my husband did not know what to expect when he came in the door each night. I was just up and down all the time.

James: This is prior, before the refreshing.

Sandra: Before I came to the end of myself.

James: And he actually could see this? Did he ever tell you he could see it?

Sandra: He did. He's a real peace loving --

James: He was slightly annoyed about it a little bit or at least he noticed and he cared about it?

Sandra: Right, he did. Thank God for his grace and mercy. Even when we're not doing everything right, which is often --

James: You didn't need anybody making you feel bad, you had it on your own. You didn't need any help going there.

Sandra: Exactly! And my husband was really patient and loving but he did, on a few occasions over 20 years, a few occasions over 20 years, because he is a real peace-loving person, not confrontational, he would come to me and say, "You're not living in peace. You're frustrated all the time."

I could not take anybody correcting me because I already felt so bad about myself. So I would be like, "Well, you just don't see how peaceful I am. You don't see what I do right. You only see what I do wrong."

Of course, he didn't see it because it wasn't real. But after God began to do this work in my life, oh, I was able to set my family free because I had them buried.

James: You had a load on them and that's the last thing you wanted.

Sandra: Right, exactly. I was burying them under rules and regulations. So I was able to set them free.

James: Could they see the difference?

Sandra: Oh, my goodness yes! My husband is the one that actually suggested I write a book.

About halfway through 2012, he just kept seeing this is real; like she is living in this peace -- like peace that passes all understanding.

James: Who is this?

Sandra: He is the one that said, "You should write a book."

So then I prayed about it and the Lord did speak to me and say, "Write a book and have it ready."

I just thought, well, maybe I'll just be writing this book to leave to my kids. I didn't know -- all I knew was I thought, I should get this story down while it's fresh in my mind. Even the writing of the book, I'd never written before and I remember, I wrote the first chapter of that book, my family was gone out doing something and they came home.

I have twin girls, 12 years old and they came home and when I started writing it was just like, I couldn't stop. It was just the Holy Spirit. They came home and I just read that first chapter to them with tears streaming down my face and we all said, "How did that happen?" So I began to see what living under the grace of God does for a person because I got out from under my own self efforts and I began to put my trust in him.

Because of that, he just began to do one miracle after another after another. You can still find me with my jaw dropped to the floor any day of the week just...

James: What were the girls when you're doing this? Could they see something going on?

Sandra: They did. They knew what I was like. It's not like I was terribly mean mother or anything but I was very regimented -- very regimented and I wanted -- and I talk about it in my book, I just had them under so many rules because I wanted to impress people.

Betty: You wanted to be a good mother!

Sandra: Yes! I've been able to set them free. In fact, I dedicated the book to them and my husband and said, "Thank you for loving me and forgiving me and letting us start all over."

James: Do you like what you're hearing? I love it. Would you come and speak if people wanted you to?

Sandra: I think eventually...

James: Do you think primarily writing will be it?

Sandra: I had it on my heart to receive -- to take interviews that I get asked to do, so I'm going to do that and I do believe that eventually it will be in my future, I'm just waiting for God to give me the green light on that. We believe we'll know. It's been so neat because with this book thing and everything that's come after it, it's just been like God's just led us. And when I say us, my husband and I, every step of the way. Okay, it's time for this now. Okay, it's time for this now. It's just been so peaceful. There's been hard work involved. So I know when we talk about grace we say grace makes things easy and it does. I even talk about that in my book.

But it doesn't mean we don't work. It just means, and I like the way Judah Smith put it recently; we listen to him sometimes. He said, "The work behind the work is done." Jesus did the work behind the work. We work to do things. I had to work to write this book, but I was able to do it from a place of rest because Jesus finished the work and now we can enter into that place of living and rest in peace because of what Jesus did for us.

Really, if you ask me what my favorite thing is about this whole thing, Jesus helped me take my eyes off of myself and place them on him. God helped me take my eyes off of myself and place them on Jesus, and now I live for him, I'm not living for myself. And I'm just oh, I can't be any happier.

[Laughter]

Betty: Don't you think that's what people that are hurting so bad and keeping all this fear and anxiety, or whatever is going on in their lives, inside of them, is because they don't think there is a way out. But when they hear and see living testimony, that's what they're hungry for, to see that it worked, that God works in our lives if we allow him to.

James: Let me speak to you as just a father/grandfather figure. You are a beautiful person and you communicate, your eyes, your countenance, and you just need to hear it, the glory of God is on you Sandra -- it really is! I know so you're writing and I see you communicate in this very relaxed mode right here.

See, I've watched your mother where she is and it's just an amazing anointing. When she sits down and talks, she not as comfortable as you are sitting right here right now. It's very interesting. It's just an observation, and she would say that. I know something is happening up there. Something happens with you sitting right here. So it's almost like talking with a blog sense, and there may be ways now.

I've told you about us launching The Stream. I was sitting here thinking, I wish you would -- you know how I'm praying for the church to be the witness and the nation to be healed? You think in your situation, what if I could say something to women and to church people that might help them know how to identify with the heart of God toward the church and the nation? Think about sending us something like that. Would you? Pray about that really because I want the whole church to be whole, and I know you long for that. But I also want you to know you have an incredible ability right here. So I don't know where that fits. Maybe sometime mom needs a day off.

[Laughter]

Mom, let me just sit there like I did with James and let me just kind of talk. I'm being serious with you. I'm not playing up something. You have a special divine enabling. The anointing of God is not passing out on the floor. The anointing of God is divine enabling. He can knock you flat. But the anointing is divine enabling.

You obviously have already seen, you've got it miraculously to write. I'm sitting here telling you, you have an unusual touch and a glory on you while we were talking. It is captivating. So what does God want to do with that? We want to ask him.

We're going to show all of our viewers something that they wait to see. We're going to show them a need that God can meet through them. You said something to me a while ago that really touched my heart. Would you mind telling our viewers what happened to you when you were watching what our viewers watch?

Sandra: Yes. I watched a program with you, and Joseph Prince happened to be on that program. And at the end, the second half of it you showed a village where they were drinking dirty -- they didn't have anything else besides the dirty, contaminated water. Oh, I mean I was just a mess -- I was just a mess! It's just been a desire of my heart to take our backyard and make it into a haven of just flowers and I wanted to have a gazebo back there. We already had lots of money, a decent amount of the money set aside, including for the gazebo.

When I watched that program, I just really felt like the Lord spoke to me and said, "Give the gazebo money and do a well, do an entire well." I was so -- I was like, I'm so thankful. And any time I call my husband about any of that, absolutely. If he believes -- he knows -- not that I follow the leading of the spirit perfectly, believe me, I'm not perfect. I'm far from it. But he knows that when I say something like that I'm not just -- I've heard that, I felt like the Lord is leading me to do that and he said, "Yes, do it."

Then it was neat because we got our whole family involved and talked to them about it. We got a packet from your show about the wells and the pictures and so we got to look through all that. It was awesome!

James: Let me just tell you. I wanted her to say that because a lot of times you wonder if people see that and are moved like you are and do they respond wonderfully. This is the way we should all respond to God. That's what she found out in this incredible freedom. She quit trying until she wanted to die, and she began to live. Then all the sudden you're being directed by God and you found that joyful.

You told us when God moved on you, now you're telling about your family and how everybody got excited. When we start getting in line with the will of God it just carries us.

I want to show you something. Now listen. I want you to ask God, what can I do in light of what I'm about to see? Because you're the answer to a heart cry and a prayer. Watch.

On the mission field

Announcer: No parent should outlive their children. Behind Daruka's eyes a sadness has weathered into stoic acceptance that her children are gone from this world, taken too soon because of the lack of food. It was on a journey to Uganda in search of a better life when the tragedy struck.

>> We went to Uganda, which took us many days. On the way some of my children died, we had very little to eat, which is why they died. When I saw my children were dying, I came back to my own village.

Announcer: For many, a mother's love could have ended with the death of her children. What more could someone give who has lost so much? But today, these children all look to Daruka for care and guidance; though not hers by birth, she has taken them under her wing out of love. But with a new family comes old problems.

>> I am worried, because when they fall sick, I have no medicine that I can give to them. And, if they are hungry, I have nothing to feed them. I am worried.

Announcer: For Daruka the scenario is all too familiar. Without a proper food supply these children are more vulnerable to disease and their survival will continue to hang in the balance.

>> If someone could help me, life would be better. If we get help, these children will live.

End of clip

In the studio

James: There's a mother that has lost her children. And now she's taking others and wanting to help them. What does your heart say?

Betty: The thing that got me there at the close is she says, "I want help so I can continue helping."

That's what I thought she was saying because she's taken those children in because they have no one else. But she has come to the end of the rope, so to speak, as far as the food they need. She knows that without the food these children are likely to die. And she's one example of the many needs right around in their area of children and women and everyone that's without the food.

We have the answer. We can fill that need. We can give them that hope that they're looking for. Let's reach out and do that together. Will you join with us?

James: I guess when I look at the situation, Betty I think, well, like you just said, let's do what she's asking. I find myself thinking, Lord, if they don't hear what I'm saying or what Betty is saying -- but really, Lord, if they don't hear what you're saying, if they can't hear you speak into their heart then no one is going to reach out.

So it really comes back to God, I can try to say the right things and that precious woman said the right things but if you don't move God on the hearts so the people respond then we're just talking. And I don't want it to be that way. I want to somehow be able to express to you that this is the will of God to help. Just like that mother, having lost everything, is now reaching out to others who have lost everything themselves.

All they're asking us to do, because believe me, the missionaries are right there in the very pit of hell in pain and suffering, and all the missionaries are saying, "Would you not leave us empty-handed so they don't have empty stomachs? They're sick and we want to help them and show them there's a future. We just need to give them a life." They're not asking for a lot. They're not asking for entertainment. They just want to live -- and you may not believe it but they can live happy.

I've seen those kids with so little have so much fun -- if they just feel good, if they can just feel good. A kid will find a way. That woman in pain is finding a way to express love. Would you do it? Would you go to LifeToday.org? Go and get your iPad or go online, however you do it,

or go to the telephone and dial the number and just say, "I want to feed them. I want to help that mother."

We've got 425,000 right now located -- 25,000 right where she was. That's in an area of South Sudan where all hell has just broken out in a terrible way. That's why they lost so much. That's why she was saying, "Look what's happened here. But I want to take care of them and I will."

Would you please, if it's medicine or food... and we not only take food, we take in the medicine, because the missionaries know what they need. Would you right now go online or dial that number, take your bankcard and help us? \$30, \$50, or \$100 we can feed three, five, or ten children for the next months. I would ask if you could give \$100, or even \$1,000 to feed 100 children because that's what \$1,000 will do. \$100 will feed ten, \$50 five, and \$30 three.

We have some gifts to send you but you're giving life to those precious ones. Please do it right now. Would you do it? Thank you so much!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Disease, malnutrition, starvation -- all terrible human atrocities being faced every day by people living in remote and impoverished areas of Africa. Those at greatest risk are the children.

This month, 400,000 children are depending on us for survival. And now in South Sudan the suffering has intensified and our feeding efforts are desperately needed by an additional 25,000 children. Our mission teams are in place but your support is critically needed to replenish and distribute food supplies immediately. When you call or go online today and make a life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100, you will provide urgently needed food to three, five, or ten children for the next three months.

As our way of saying thank you, we'll send you *Heirs to the Kingdom*, four powerful messages on audio CD or U.S.B. flash drive. You'll also receive the award-winning book, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed ten children please request *The Story*, a running narrative Bible to help you engage with God's Word more easily.

And finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed 100 children you may request this beautifully framed canvas print of the "Forest Chapel" by the Painter of Light TM, Thomas Kinkade.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: Thank you so much for your help.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made: This body, you see how God made it, that's how he wants his body to function.

I Tried until I Almost Died; if you want this, we'll send it to you. It's online. Why don't you get copies for your friends? You can go to the bookstores and get it. I'll be honest, I hope it sells more than Joyce's books; okay? Not because I want Joyce to sell fewer, I just want what this young lady has experienced in Christ, I want it to get around the world.

I just praise God for your friendship. Would you join me and Betty in saying thanks to God and thanks to Sandra?

Sandra: Thank you!

James: Bless you, Sandra. You blessed us! Dave and Joyce, we love you! Thank you for holding up the Lord and magnifying him in his Word. Thank y'all for being here. Thanks for your help.

Announcer: If you're in the Dallas/Fort Worth area come be a part of the *Life Today* studio audience. Call or e-mail today to reserve your tickets. You'll be inspired and entertained!