

5/18/15
Week 21 Spring Mission Feeding
John and Sam Eldredge
Killing Lions

James: Thank you! Appreciate it. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison; Betty and I thrilled to have John Eldredge and his son Sam.

Look at this. Now think about this, *Killing Lions*: A guide through the trials young men face, John Eldredge and his son Sam. John's been here many times. He is a tremendously gifted communicator/writer and he's been able to bless so many fathers, families, sons, daughters. And now then his son has joined him to share their journey; and now they're sharing it with us.

I want you to welcome John Eldredge and Sam Eldredge to *LIFE Today*. Would you welcome them?

[Applause]

Well, how are things in Colorado, John? Is it okay?

John: It is still cold! It's going to be cold until July!

James: Yeah, it's cold in July. It's nice when summer is down here we think that is pretty neat to hear about what's up there.

John: You don't just hear about it, we see a few of you show up.

[Laughter]

James: Smart people! Sam, we're glad to have you.

Sam: Thanks for having me. It's great to be here.

James: You just finished college how long ago?

Sam: Gosh three? Graduated in '11; so going on four now.

James: Four years and I've got to ask you about the title, the book, and what led to this, and why the two of you are sitting here together, and why you were so willing to open up on your own journey together; seemingly, not just tell your family's story but with real purpose in mind. So cut to the chase, whoever wants to take off, and tell me how this book was birthed and what your intent is.

John: Yeah, start with the title.

Sam: The title, *Killing Lions*, we couldn't call it killing dandelions because it's a metaphor. It's a metaphor for the Maasai warriors; in their tradition they are not considered men until they have killed a lion; and they can lead, members of their tribe, they can marry.

Also, the same story with David and Goliath; by the time David was facing the challenge of Goliath, he had spent years in the desert, he had killed bears and lions; he had this rite of passage. He knew he could handle his life.

That's really what we're after for these young guys through this book of *Killing Lions*. We feel like if there would be some trial, some thing, a rite that young men could walk through that we might carry a greater confidence, we might feel like we're able to handle the lives in front of us. That's really where the title came from.

James: And it's really -- it's allegory of battles, challenges that you face, not necessarily an animal.

John: Facing your fears, overcoming adversity, and then you have a subtle confidence that you can handle what's coming at you next. It's crucial to a young man's journey and almost all of those traditions are removed from our contemporary culture. We don't -- when you get your driver's license? Right? You get a high school diploma, maybe a college education? It is not enough.

And you have all these young men out there who are desperate to know that they are men; that they can handle a marriage, a family, a career, a life with God. So this book is like practical guidance into that settled assurance, if you are a young man, and you have a role in the story.

James: Did he come at you with some challenges and questions that led you to see that we really ought to go ahead and address some of these things? And didn't you, in fact, in the book actually go through in conversation, both of you talking about those lions? And would we be right to say those challenges, obstacles as the lions, even addictive potential and practices and

distractions and unhealthy attractions -- all those things? Is that part of the lion group we're after; is that the pride we're after here?

Sam: It totally is. Actually, the book started when I graduated from college. I entered whatever real life is and had my first job. About a year in I really felt like I was treading water and not going anywhere; actually, I felt like I was taking on water and slowly sinking. I looked around at the other young guys in my life and we all seemed to be in the same boat, we all seemed to be directionless, and it was up to ourselves. It feels like a generation of fatherless men. We have the generation of the divorced parents -- four parents. We start having these weepy phone calls.

I knew that there was a guy in my life, my dad that I could call to talk with about all these questions about career, about the girl I was dating, about friendships, about God, about my identity. So what followed were these really cool conversations where we got on the phone and we would walk through things once a week. A little ways into it my dad asks, "How many young guys in your world do you know have something like this?" I didn't even have to hesitate, I knew none -- not a single guy came to mind.

John: And we're talking Christian college, we're talking good young men. This isn't the inner city where we know fatherless is an issue. We're talking millennial leaders and fatherless.

James: In a Christian-based school, and yet they didn't have dads?

Sam: No. And actually, that Christian micro culture, the bureaucracy of it really beat me down. I grew up in a Christian family, went to a Christian school, and I encountered there the stick that I think a lot of Christian organizations can use of shame, whether it was academic or spiritual. If I wasn't going to church six times a week, I just felt that I was somehow a misfit, I didn't belong, I was out, I was disqualified. Actually, in these conversations my dad asks, "I think it's a book here. Would you consider maybe doing a blog first or something like that?" And I actually turned him down.

John: I suggest the book, three months into these phone calls and like, "This is killer!" -- If you'll pardon the pun.

[Laughter]

Sam, the conversations we're having about work, money, how young millennial men look at career, dreams -- all of that. I'm like, "Sam, let's write a book. This will help a lot of guys." And Sam says, "No."

Sam: Yep. And partly, that was out of -- I was still living with the identity I'd been given at

that Christian school. And part of it too was as a young guy, I do want to find my own way, I do want to fight for my dreams. I don't want to ride on coattails. I'd seen young guys inherit like the family business and they really never worked to earn it. I didn't want that to be my story. So it was only a couple years later after I'd worked through a lot of the pieces of identity and how I saw myself and able to stand on my own two feet that I came and said, "I'm in." There's nothing I'd rather do more with my life than to get to write and get to write a project with you.

James: So this is years after these conversations and he said "no" to the book, which obviously, he wasn't quite in touch with the heavenly Father like he needed to be.

[Laughter]

But that's where you were trying to get him. How many years later then did you say this, "I'm in"?

John: Maybe a year. He marries the girl, he's on his honeymoon; God shows up on his honeymoon in a pretty cool story and says, "Sam, this is what I've called you to do. This is who you are. Don't fear this." And then this became the lion that needed to be slayed in Sam's life as a young writer, like to do a book with his dad, to put it out there. And he puts his story out there pretty honestly, pretty vulnerably.

James: And did it put him in some vulnerable places too?

Sam: Well, I'm taking these questions of the heart to him. I'm putting him in that place of dad, I've got these questions. I don't necessarily need you to tell me all the answers, I need to walk with you alongside and so there was a tricky position for a father to be in, I think and yet it was an amazing summer. We got to rehave all those same conversations again, to dive back into all those topics and then kind of assemble this book project, and then to share it with these friends I have in mind when I'm writing it. I knew -- I knew these guys out in California can use this, I know these guys out in Colorado could use this, I needed it; this book began as something I needed and now it's something that we're just so thrilled to be offering to all those young guys out there.

James: When you're talking about guys, there's a little gal sitting over here and God likes gals. We like them; God likes them.

Betty: But I would think as a father it would be a fine line for you to walk because while you're trying to give him advice, as his father, you also want him to know, you to know, that you can hear God for yourself.

John: That's it exactly. Betty, that's so good. I think as Christian parents, especially, we in fear we get a little nervous. We want to secure the outcome right away. And we don't want our kids to question the faith and we want them to turn out to be fine citizens and so we don't allow room for the process, we don't allow room for the questions. We rush to the answers. Part of what we're trying to do in *Killing Lions* is model how to have these conversations with young adult children. How to give the space for the questions and the honest -- he pushes back on things in the book and that's good, and that's healthy, so that they can come to their own solid place with Christ.

James: Did he help you find better answers with his questions?

John: No question -- no question.

James: So in other words you were learning while you were trying to share.

John: In fact, you want to hear a beautiful part of the story in this too is I was kind of done writing actually, as a career. I was kind of done. Then Sam comes along and says, "I think this is a great idea, these conversations we're having, offer this to young men. There's a whole generation of fatherless young men out there now.

James: And that is a fact. Let's dwell there a minute. We've got a fatherless nation. And the thing I think we really need to understand is that there's no father who could ever equal the Father. John and I both are sitting here talking. John hears the father trying to talk to the son, here I am a father who actually put *LIFE Today* on to invite people into the family room to get to know the Father and I didn't have a father, he didn't have a father but we met the Father.

The thing you need to understand is if you didn't have a father there's a great father waiting to be Father. If you are a father, the greatest thing you can do is point your children effectively to see this father, to love this father, and relate to this father because if that happens, then their journey is literally redirected in the most positive and divine way. So that's what needs to happen. So no matter where you are, you can be a better father by knowing this Father. If you had no father, you can have the best father right now -- you can learn. That's what they're trying to do. You're actually trying to help them not know John father but God the Father in these discussions.

John: Exactly! James, your story and my story is fatherlessness. And yet look what God has done with our lives. That's the hope -- that's Christianity. If Christianity is anything it's that you're a daughter you have a father. You're a son, you have a father. So right, *Killing Lions* is an oh, wow. If you had John Eldredge as your dad...

[Laughter]

James: God just breathed a sigh of relief right there. He feels he's bright you know.

John: But this is an opportunity to experience fathering as it can come to you through God.

James: I want to ask you this since you've primarily focused on the guys and since as I said girls, they're kind of a challenge. One of the big challenges girls have are finding a guy that has a clue about the Father, who probably never had a father. And what kind of husband is a guy going to be who's clueless about the Father, and being a father?

Do you think there is anything in here that a girl would learn, not just about guys' challenges and maybe understand them a little better? Because we've already given up on understanding you girls; it's impossible. We give up. But do you think it could help them not only understand guys better but you think that girls might actually see some things here that would clear some things up in their mind? What do you think?

Sam: Absolutely. I feel like these questions are deep-seated in all of us and if they're not answered when you're in your 20s or in your teens, you keep asking them for the rest of your life. We've had guys in their 30s and 40s come up to us and say, "This has brought me fathering. This has answered so many questions." To get that sneak peek into that son or daughter's world to what we're asking, the world that we're encountering, it's huge. The whole book is the invitation to be the son who receives fathering, to be the father who knows what must be spoken, and all point directly towards the true Father of all.

James: I, without a father, accepted Christ when I was a teenager at 14-15 years old; I was called to preach right before I was 18. And it was like Charles Finney said, and we had a guest this week also who referenced waves of liquid love. Charles Finney talked about the infilling of the Holy Spirit as waves of liquid love.

Betty was there the night God called me to preach and I just thought, how can I do this? How do I live?

God just said, "Where is your faith?"

I said, "It's in you."

I was immersed in what I can only describe as waves of liquid love. I don't like people pursuing experiences. I just say yield the vessel to God, let him fill it up and experience it however he

wants that to happen but don't trust feelings, trust him. But nevertheless, something remarkable happened in my life and I can remember that.

But here's the deal. In my mid 30s, I experienced what I would call the most incredible deliverance as a defeated preacher who had gone to the Bible to get sermons rather than going to the Bible to get the Word of God and to get life. I'd lost intimacy with God therefore I was defeated. I experienced a tremendous experience of freedom and fullness in the spirit.

Here's what I want you to get. I didn't suddenly at 15 or when I was called to preach at 18 or when I was delivered and had an incredible fullness in the spirit, that didn't end the journey. I still needed a father. I still needed someone to answer my questions.

I'm 71 years old right now and I still need that intimacy with the Father, I still need his answers. So you don't graduate beyond Father. Most people have never seen Father in the father, but you can know the Father no matter where you are. But you don't get through knowing him and you don't get through learning.

Do you agree it's important for people to realize this as we get older? We still need to keep asking him these questions and getting the answers?

John: I think you just lifted a lot of shame off of people to tell them, you're not broken because you still need the Father. Like you always need the Father, right?

Jesus of Nazareth says, "I actually don't do anything without my Father." Our friend Morgan helped us with this. In Ephesians one where it says long before God planned the world he planned on you; to be your father, he took pleasure in adopting you into his family. What he pointed out to us there was that God isn't the backup plan for guys like us who didn't have a good dad. It's like, well, if you didn't have a dad, there's always God.

[Laughter]

Like no, no! Before the creation of the world the plan is that he would be our Father. So like the hope of that, wherever you are, whatever the story is you're a daughter, you have a Father who loves you, you're a son, you have a Father who loves you. Now let's look at what is like on a daily basis to be open to being fathered, to receive fathering because there is some pushback there.

James: Do you appreciate what you've heard? Do you thank these guys for opening up, *Killing Lions*? You can go online or you can go to the bookstores and get it. I really encourage, when you go to get a book, don't just get one for yourself. Think about somebody God wants to

love through you that could really use what's in the book. This is not going to like say, here's a sermon for you. No, this *Killing Lions*, that will get their curiosity; what are you talking about?

Well, challenges come to all of us and I just think you might like it because I'm about to read it but I thought you might like it and we'll talk about it. In other words, look for a way to help somebody else with the things you're looking for. We will send you the book.

We're sending you an incredible book. We're sending you a Bible that's in story form. It's fantastic. We want to bless you. We'll send you this book that literally talks about the human body and teaches about the body of Christ, phenomenal book.

Also, if you'd like to have us send you this book to say thank you, you say for what? What are you thanking us for? If you will help us give hope to those who think there is no hope. But the hope we offer is not just wishful thinking, it is an absolute fix to the challenge. We want to show you some children, some families that all they need is a hand extended giving them food and love so they have a future. Watch closely and prayerfully and respond as God directs. Please do!

On the mission field

Peter: We're with people here who really have some desperate, desperate needs. The thing to understand is they've lost everything. Before they actually ran from the conflict they had cattle, their children drank milk from those cattle, they had crops that they planted that they harvested but when they fled from the conflict they left everything behind. Their houses were burned. They took nothing with them, literally having to fend for themselves.

When I spoke with these people just a little while ago and asked them, "Have you lost any children through starvation or malnutrition?" More than 60% of them responded and said, "Yes." They had lost at least one child.

You know that... to me, it's not right. These are innocent kids. These are people who are caught in a situation where they haven't been able to grow crops. It's not that they're lazy. It's not that they don't try and fend for themselves. They haven't been able to grow crops. And they, right now, are sitting in such a precarious position that they fear that their other children are going to starve to death.

We have to help these people. We cannot just walk away from here and turn our back. It doesn't take a lot from each person to help a little boy like this, to actually change his life. Because you know what he needs? He just needs a bowl of food. That's not complicated. It's so simple. He

just needs a bowl of food, and you can provide that bowl of food. If you'll do that, we will make sure that it gets to these people. So please, please respond and respond now.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Boy, Peter, I wish that you could hear me. I know you watch *LIFE Today* there in Southern Africa. More than 30 years you've been going -- 25 years we've been going with you. I hear your heart.

Just think about it -- tobacco farmer, race car driver. He was a Formula One race car driver. He was a pretty wealthy guy. He met Jesus, his wife met Jesus and they went to Mozambique where people were in trouble. And the plane that was supposed to come back and get him didn't come back for more than a week and he watched people die. He went to get a man a cup of water, and leaning up against a tree the man died before he could get back with a cup of water.

He came home and said, "I'm going to raise all the money I can. I'm going to go rent a semi and I'm going to load it up and I'm going to go help." And he never stopped.

When we showed up there, Betty, I just went and met a man that loved people. I said, "Show me what you're doing."

He said, "I would love to show you."

He said, "I can't believe that you said you want to help us." I asked him if he wanted us to stay.

He said, "No. I wish you could go home and ask people to help us so we could stay. Would you just help us so we can stay and save the people that are dying all over our continent and tell them about Jesus? We don't just tell them about love, we need to show it to them."

So we started asking you to give food and they would put it in tin cans and oil cans and plastic bags is all they had. And our viewers said, "Why don't you give them a bowl?"

And the missionaries said, "No. We've got put the money in food."

Our viewers said, "We'll give them a bowl too because we love them. We don't want them to burn their little hands." You've been doing that now faithfully.

And Betty, right now some of our viewers have said, "We so love what you're doing for those precious people and you've changed third-world countries to give them a whole future. You took Mozambique from the poorest nation in the world to now one of the most advancing democracies. It is a miracle. When we were there it was Marxist warships everywhere and fighting and people shooting A.K. 47's around us -- and holding me hostage.

Here's the thing you've got to understand. We went there because of the love of God to save people's lives and watch country's change -- and they're changing because of the love of God. But those people are desperate; 25,000 right now are facing death in Sudan because not only of drought but of fighting around them. And then 400,000 that we've got located in hard-hit areas and the missionaries like Peter said, "Would you help? Would you save these children like this and their families? Would you give them the bowl of soup in the very bowls your viewers have provided?" But we need the food.

Well, Betty, some of our viewers said, "We'll give \$400,000 right now that will match anything you give."

So whatever you give is doubled. So would you right now take advantage of this incredible expression of love? Listen to this: \$30, \$50, \$100, we can feed three, five, or ten children for the next several months; \$30 feeds three, \$50 feeds five, \$100 feeds ten, \$1,000 will feed 100.

But now because of this matching gift, \$30 will feed six, \$50 will feed 10 and so on. It doubles everything. It's love impacting the love you express, doubling it.

Would you respond right now to Peter's request in behalf of those precious people he loves, God loves, and he loves through us? Would you do it right now? Go to LifeToday.org. And many of you are making your gifts online. Would you do that? Take your bankcard, use it like a check. Or you can dial that number; others are calling for prayer every time we offer the opportunity to people to call, "Pray for me." But would you call and say, "I want to be an answer to somebody's prayer today?" And use that bankcard; make the largest gift you can knowing it will be doubled.

We have some gifts to send you, to bless you, to say thank you and help you grow in your spiritual life. Thank you so much for making that call. Don't put it off. Don't wait. If you get a busy, when you call, you be determined, I'm getting through because I'm going to be an answer to prayer. I'm going to save lives. I'm going to share the love of God. Thank you for doing it.

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.

As an answer to prayer, a group of *LIFE*'s friends have set a \$400,000 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 ten 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, we'll send you *Heirs to the Kingdom*, four powerful messages on audio CD or USB flash drive. You'll also receive the award-winning book, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*.

With your double-impact gift of \$100 or more to help feed twenty children please request *The Story*, a running narrative Bible to help you engage with God's word more easily.

And finally, please consider a double-impact gift of \$1,000 and request this beautifully framed canvas print of the "Forest Chapel" by the Painter of Light™, Thomas Kinkade.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: I'm so anxious to send you, as an expression of thanks, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. I pray you will get into this book to realize as God made our bodies, so we are the body of Christ -- 30 times, we are the body of Christ. Not *like* his body, we *are* his body. How should it function? -- With great diversity and supernatural unity.

If you'd like to have *Killing Lions*, you don't have to be a guy to get it. Girls, it will help you understand guys better. Like I said, we'll never quite understand you but it will help you understand guys. And it will be a real blessing to you because it will help you see the Father from a good father who knows the Father. We'll be glad to send it to you to say thanks for your help.

Would you like to say thanks; first to God, but then to John, and also to Sam?

John Eldredge, appreciate you!

Sam, good to meet you.

They're going to be back. We're going to actually go into some of the things that they discuss while they're killing lions. Don't miss it! Go to stream.org every day and pray.

Announcer: Introducing stream.org, a rich and lively source for breaking news, analysis, and entertainment. Stream.org is a new information stream where those concerned about our nation's course can now gather for news, wisdom, and inspiration. Working together we will see the promise declared in Psalm 46:4, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." Be sure to visit stream.org, a new site to unite us!