

10/08/15
Week 41: Rescue life
Holly Wagner

Betty: Thank you so much for allowing us to come into your home or wherever you may be watching. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: Well, we've got Holly Wagner with us and she's got a book. It's got boxing gloves on there; they're pink. They're a little bit sissy. But she says she is a warrior.

Holly: Oh, now you're starting already!

James: She's got her gloves on over here already. It's a powerful book. She says, "Rising strong when life wants to take you down." She's actually, I think, been through some things that most people say would take you down. So join me and Betty in welcoming Holly Wagner back to *LIFE Today*.

Holly: Oh, thank you! Thanks for having me.

James: You've been here quite a few times with Women of Faith and the Women of Faith are kind of winding down as we've known it, but there are a lot of women of faith like yourself who are just going to continue to share. Tell me what you're implying here, *Warrior Chicks* because we're not talking about raising chickens. We're talking about girls.

Holly: Thanks for clarifying that!

[Laughter]

James: We're talking about really suiting up and going into battle.

Holly: You know this; I've heard you talk about it. Just the time in history that God has trusted us with; this time that is filled with more heartbreak and more disease and more famine and more catastrophe on the big scale, the global scale -- that's what's happening today.

James: And more threats, actually against everything that in any way implies security or peace; we're under constant threat of not only being hurt but destroyed.

Holly: Right! So there's the big global threats and then there's just the everyday challenges that we all deal with, whether it is cancer or the loss of a loved one or a marriage breaks down. So there are the big global battles and then the everyday battles. I think sometimes we think that courage is only for the big extreme things: Jumping out of an airplane or going on a big trip. But sometimes it's just everyday courage. That's really what *Warrior Chicks* is about; it is about having the courage about rising as the warrior in just the everyday battles that we fight. Because as you know, we're not -- we are not living in peacetime.

Sometimes we can try to pretend that we are but we're living in wartime and we better suit up, we better put on the armor. Ephesians 6 talks about that armor. I wrote a chapter about the armor and the interesting thing about it is that nowhere are we told to take it off. We're told to put on the armor.

James: Don't take off the armor.

Holly: The other interesting thing, you can fix me if I'm wrong, but the interesting thing I noticed about the armor is there is not much to cover our backside because we're actually not supposed to be running from the battle but straight up the middle. That God is trusting us. He says, "I've equipped you, you do this. You can fight this battle -- whatever it is."

James: He says he is our rear guard. He'll cover us.

Holly: He'll cover us if we'll just --

James: Exactly, keep moving on.

Holly: Head into battle.

James: And it is fierce and it is raging. Many people don't even seem to know there is a battle and live so defeated and so downtrodden that they just miss the battle. They didn't even get suited up. We must because it is raging and it is against the purpose of God in our lives. This is where the enemy wants to take us out. He is not so mad at us as he is angry with the very possibility of what God wants to do with us and his kingdom purpose in us. You've been through some battles.

Holly: Well, just even to your point right there. When the enemy wanted to take out Moses as a baby, it wasn't because of what Moses was doing as a baby. It was because ultimate of what he would do. When he wanted to take out Jesus it wasn't because Jesus was doing, as that infant, it was because of what he would do. He's more afraid of my tomorrow; he's more afraid

of what God has trusted me with. To me, that's why we have to understand who we are. Ten years ago I was diagnosed with cancer; fought my own battle. I didn't choose that battle but I had to fight it. There are some battles that choose you and you have to make the decision to rise in the midst of them. Boy, this last year has just been... phlbb! Have you ever had one of those years! Oh, my gosh!

James: Sad to say but yes.

Holly: Yeah, just horrible. It started with my father passing away suddenly. Then just shortly after that we kind of had some identity theft issues that tens of thousands of dollars were stolen from us personally. Then the F.B.I. had to get involved; then we actually never got it back. Then we just had to deal with a betrayal. And that's really horrible thing to hear someone say things about you that just isn't true and then to have to just wrestle with that. So you're kind of getting one punch after the other. Then my husband gets diagnosed with lymphoma. So now we're dealing with that. Then we finally get him through that and then he, I guess because his immune system was so compromised that he got shingles and like got a really bad case where he couldn't even walk for three months. You know men. When they get sick... Yeah, capital S, sick. Yeah!

James: Most people don't understand.

[Laughter]

It's hard to imagine.

Holly: It is!

James: We want to make sure you know.

[Laughter]

Betty: Every day!

Holly: And I'm like a good nurse for like ten days and then I'm like okay! Snap out of this!

James: I don't believe that. I think you suited up for battle.

Holly: I did! I did! So the thing I learned is wouldn't it be great if battles came one at a time? Wouldn't that be so tidy? That if it just came and you could rest in between them? No, but they come one at a time. So when he talks about the sword, that the sword is his Word and that is

what we fight the battles with. And so for me, it was like okay, I'm fighting the battle of sickness on this side. I'm declaring that Jesus is my healer and it tells me that God took sickness from them so I'm fighting that. When I'm right in the middle of fighting that and then we have to deal with the financial loss. So then I have to swing my sword over here and deal with that.

Then you have to deal with the lies that people are saying about you over here. So if you're going to be a warrior, you actually have to let use his Word and fight the battles.

James: By the way, were you writing this book when all this started or had you already written it or were you nearly through with it when it intensified?

Holly: Can you remind me to never write a book called *Warrior Chicks* again? Because...

[Laughter]

James: In other words, even in the midst of it or while you're saying these things are true it intensifies.

And I would say, Holly that for that battle to intensify that it's not just against you, but what you're sharing could do for these other people who need to become warriors. Some of you might say, "I really don't want to get in the will of God if it is going to intensify."

I want to tell you something. The misery when you're not suited up and walking in the shelter and the shadow of the almighty is indescribable. But you do expect battles to intensify when you sign on to win with the winner. But I'm telling you the excitement of being in the battle. Look how many of you will become excited about some sporting event.

My wife is a sports nut; she really is. I wish you could just watch her cheer for the Cowboys; sometimes they're not worth cheering for, honey. She cheers for the Rangers. And she cheers for the Mavericks and she is pulling for them.

People like an intense battle and they like it when they beat somebody that's good, not somebody that is crummy -- we beat somebody good. We need to understand we have been invited to the most intense battle and we have been given the armor and the ability to win a Super Bowl trophy virtually every week. That's what God has given us. You can live that exciting life but you've got to suit up.

So here you are, in the midst of it, and everything you've been talking about now, you're having to live out. So how did things go and how did you do in the midst of it?

Holly: Well, certainly some days are better than others; right? In the midst of it but...

James: But he never leaves you when you're down.

Holly: Oh, that's what I was going to have to say. I had to just remind myself who God is. And there are days when I went, "Whoo! They say God doesn't give you more than you can handle. He must think I'm really tough!" [Laughing]

I had to find moments to laugh. I think see, if the enemy can steal your joy then he gets your strength. And if he gets your strength then you're not really going to be able to fight the fight.

I also had to realize that I have a responsibility. My husband and I pastor a church. We've been pastoring a church for 30 years together, which that is a miracle too that we've managed to do that and not kill each other -- but it's been awesome -- in the city of Los Angeles.

James: It is anything but the city of angels.

Holly: I love that city! I love that God's trusted us with that city. My heart bleeds and breaks and loves my city and nothing makes me happier than every weekend to see dozens and dozens of people make decisions for Christ in our services. So I love that. So he's trusted us with that city.

So for me, I realize that I don't have the luxury of abdicating a battle. I don't have the luxury of walking away because there are people looking to me to see how to navigate it. In Titus chapter two, and I've read through the Bible plenty of times, which is helpful when you're a pastor to read the Bible.

[Laughter]

But there was one time when Titus chapter two just kind of jumped out of the pages at me. This part basically said: Older woman, your job is the younger woman. It says it to the men too, but woman. And I remember reading, awesome! When I get to be 106 then I'll be that old woman and I'll help all those young women.

And God said to me, "Is there anybody younger than you on the earth?"

I went, "Well, like a few people."

And he said, "Well, then she's yours."

So for me, then that changed how I communicated, it changed how I wrote books. I realized that I have a responsibility to bring a generation through that knows the word, that knows how to stand on the word, that knows how to use the word, that knows how to have joy in the hard times. So I don't have the luxury of backing away because I have a responsibility to hand the baton to a generation. Right? Christianity is a relay race and the focus isn't on me, it's on the baton. My job is to -- as good as I can run my lap --

Betty: It's so needed, especially today, because of broken homes. So many families are single parent homes and we need that encouragement for those that have been through some of the battles that we're facing. And the younger generation, I look at them and I think, God's taught me a lot in the years that I've been here on this earth. And the things that I treasure so much in my heart, I don't need to keep them in my heart, I need to let them out and share them for the benefit of those. Like you said, kind of pass the baton.

Holly: Again, I think we have an obligation to. There are people who have managed to stay married for 52 plus years and still like each other like most of the time.

Betty: Most of the time.

[Laughter]

Holly: That's another show; we'll get to that one.

Betty: We will! Not that we had battles; did we?

James: That's why you're a warrior.

Betty: I need some new material!

James: I thought this lady was going pretty good there for awhile!

[Laughter]

Holly: Then there are people who have navigated abuse. We need to know how they did it. What did you do that did that? So that's what I'm saying; we have a responsibility and an obligation to actually help bring a strong generation through. And the older I get, there are a lot more young people now. So I just think that we have that responsibility to realize that there is a baton exchange coming.

James: Either one of the things, Holly that I think is so critical if we're going to understand what it is to be really suited up in the armor of God in the fullness of his spirit and that is to have a love for people that never moves the Word of God or the will of God to accommodate the failure.

Right now we're seeing the tragic taking of the most innocent life in the wombs of mothers -- more than died in the holocaust and even in some of the world wars. Somehow we've let it go on. We're beginning to see how really truly horrific it is. Sometimes for the first time people are seeing it clearly. But we've got an assault on marriage and then we've got this same sex attraction. I really believe this is very important. If we're suited up in the fullness of God, we're going to look at people who are defeated in any area and we're going to look at them as we would want someone to look at us in the areas where we're defeated -- whatever it is, whatever compulsive behavior or attitude or action or addiction or compulsion that seems to hold you. And you want someone to reach out but you don't want them to move the standard, you want to move to it.

No matter where a person is love them, but don't move or change the truth of God into a lie in order to accommodate their weakness or the area of their defeat. Say to them, "We love you but let's move to the standard." You don't really love someone who is addicted to drugs by telling them, "It's okay. Most people are using drugs today. A lot of people use drugs today. It's no big deal." Yes, it is a big deal because it is taking away the life that you could live.

When we miss the truth of God, we're missing all that he is offering us freely. It is for freedom that Christ made us free. He wants us to live as overcomers. But when we're defeated we don't need someone clubbing us with the standard. We just need to say, "You can go here. And Jesus kept the full standard perfectly and he wants to be in you to enable you to be an overcomer."

Isn't this the message that a warrior chick needs to communicate? Isn't this the message the church needs to communicate in this age when there is so many people that are hurting and defeated?

Holly: Yeah. What I find just even in Los Angeles, obviously, that is a pretty interesting city.

James: Well, your whole state has almost embraced the things that God says are against the standard. It's sad; isn't it?

Holly: So for me, my job is to love the people, is to demonstrate the heart of the father. I find the better I am at doing that, then the more people are intrigued with this love. And they go

what? It's magnetic. I was just in a store the other day just chatting with a woman and by the end I thought she was just going to follow me out the door. She wanted to know what I knew.

James: He said, "Lift me up and I draw men to myself" -- and women!

Holly: And it wasn't because I was telling her how wrong she was. I just was loving her, finding something to agree in and love her.

James: Here's the thing. This is a good book. I hope you get it. Let me say something to all of you who are watching. I don't know what is going on in your family, I don't know what is going on in your life, but I know the God that is able to lift you up out of any pit of despair, any valley of the shadow of pain or death, and prepare a table before you in the presence of accusers and enemies, and lead you beside still waters and green pastures; make up to you for the years the locusts have eaten.

Father, I pray for every person watching today. I feel like there are some you are really speaking to. They've wanted to move the standard to accommodate their failure or their rebellion. But today, they want to return to it. They want to look to the cross and see the price you paid for them to have life; in Jesus' name.

The phone number there is a prayer line. Someone will be glad to pray with you today. Love to send you a book called Knowing God as Father. It is a simple little introduction to knowing Him, and then a Bible study that is so simple but you'll like it.

If you'd like to have Holly's book, we'd be glad to send it to you.

Would you like to say thanks to Holly for just telling her story, and for writing and serving as a pastor and church leader?

Holly: It's always fun to be here and pick on you.

James: Well, we love you being here. Here's what we want you to see. Holly, here's a beautiful woman who was actually a fashion model who had actually been sexually abused and trafficked, and found freedom. But left her role as a model to go back and rescue children that have been sold into sexual bondage.

I want you to just watch and then I want to tell you something. We have just had a family give us an opportunity to be part of a miracle. They have offered \$820,000 to help us build a safe house for these children that need to be rescued from sex trafficking. I want you to watch this then let me tell you what it will take to complete the miracle.

On the mission field

Giselle: This is Gudi and Mangla and Sonai, and they're ages 13, 14, and 4 years old. They're at terrible danger and at risk of being trafficked and sold into sex slavery. If we don't help them, that will be their fate.

Announcer: The slums where we found these three sisters is where they call home. Today their father is away at work. But while that seemed encouraging, their story took a turn when we learned his work is in the local brothels as a pimp. Their alcoholic mother seems indifferent to their plight.

The grave reality for these sisters is a future that is deeply disturbing. Once they're sold as a sex slave they'll go through a breaking-in period to subdue their will to fight back. Their virginities will be taken through rape. And they'll be beaten until they willingly surrender to their fate as a sex worker. As seen in this hidden camera footage the brothel doors have locks not on the inside to keep them safe but on the outside to keep them captive.

Giselle: These children are so precious. It's incredible how vulnerable they are. We just want to protect them and let them be safe and go to school like all children should be able to, to enjoy their life.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty, it's just -- it's almost impossible to imagine that precious children are taken into situations like that but it's a reality. So when you watch it as a grandmother, a wonderful mother, and a caring person, what goes on in your heart?

Betty: I can't even -- there are no words to describe the terror and the fear of these precious children, these little girls must live under day after day after day. And then when they're thrown into the action of the brothel; they feel like that's the rest of their life, what life they have. If they don't obey them, they will kill them. If they don't do exactly what they say they beat them and they just destroy their lives.

James, it is hard to even concentrate or think about what happens on a daily basis. I feel like they're saying, somebody care! And they're crying out in their little spirits, somebody notice.

Please help me! Can you imagine being down in a well or something and hollering out, "Somebody help! Help!" I feel like that's what their hearts are crying out for.

James: And God hears that cry because Jesus left the throne of glory and came to us to rescue us from bondage and destruction, and then he's left us here as witnesses.

Giselle that you watched, that girl, a model, a fashion model, who had been trafficked earlier in her life, she basically left her career to go back and rescue, in the very areas where she was hurt. Right now we've got a miracle opportunity to build a rescue center, a safe haven where we'll actually be able to get girls. We can't even tell you exactly where it's located. We cannot do that because we're going to take these children -- actually we're going to get them out of the situation and take them where they will be protected and safe.

Now the people that risk their lives to work there, think about that. Think about the miracle of the love of God in them. And we're going to build the most beautiful center. I'm telling you, it looks like some kind of a complex built here in the states. It would cost many millions of dollars to build it. It is just beautiful! And the actual cost there and I'm telling you exactly what it is, it is \$1.23 million -- almost \$1.25 million.

But here's the miracle. We're going to build that. When I say "we," I'm talking about you, all of us together. Betty and I are going to do our part but every one of you watching I believe you're going to have a part.

Here's the miracle. One family said, "We so want to help, our family is giving out of our family foundation \$820,000 toward that amount." That means we need to raise, we, right here together, you who are watching, we need to raise \$410,000. Now here's the miracle. That means what you give will be multiplied in its effect three times. You give \$1200, its \$3600 impact. You give \$40 and it's tripled to \$120. You make the gift that God puts on your heart, it's multiplied.

Father, I pray every person watching right now will go to LifeToday.org or go to the phone and make the best gift they can to set these precious children free; in Jesus' name.

I believe you're going to do it. We have some gifts to send you. Sarah Young's incredible devotional book; the best of her devotions incredibly illustrated. This is probably one of the most beautiful books that I have ever looked through! And what a gift Sarah Young is -- millions of books sold. This one is put together to be an inspiration in the beauty of God's creation and the power of his Words.

And then the Thomas Kinkade "Forest Chapel" painting, already framed; the canvas of it to you a gift for giving these precious ones an opportunity to be free because of the love you express.

Would you go to LifeToday.org right now? Or would you dial that number? Take your bankcard, use it like a check and make the best gift you can. I believe you'll do it and I want to say thank you. Please do it right now and thank you for 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.

Our dream is to build a unique child rescue center in Southeast Asia, a safe haven 100% dedicated to rescuing young victims from sex traders and helping them begin the recovery from the abuse they have suffered. This dream of a new rescue center can soon become a reality with your support, combined with a promised \$820,000 matching gift. All we have to do is raise an additional \$410,000 to begin construction. That means your gift today will be matched two-to-one having a triple impact! Gifts of \$20 will be tripled to \$60! \$40 will be tripled to \$120! \$80 will be tripled to \$240! And generous gifts of \$1200 will be tripled to \$3600 to help us rescue children from sexual slavery.

With your gift of any amount we'll send you Sarah Young's newest book, Peace in his Presence; favorite quotations from Jesus Calling.

Also, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help us build the child rescue center and you may request this beautifully framed canvas print of the "Forest Chapel."

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: I believe God touched your heart. Thank you.

By the way, if you can't give, would you just pray, God, touch some other people like that family; touch some people who can do something that for most of us seems like an impossibility. But you do what you can and prayer is no small thing.

If you'd like to have Holly Wagner's book, *Warrior Chicks*: Rising strong when life wants to take you down. Boy, it is the enemy of life that's taking us down. It's what happens in life and the enemy orchestrates it but we can win because we have a mighty warrior in the Lord Jesus.

Would you join Betty and me thanking Holly Wagner for being here?

Holly, thank you for being a bright light and a witness in such a dark world!

The book is in the bookstores. You help us help these children, we'd be glad to send it to you if you want it. Thank you so much for watching. Encourage your friends to watch. Go every day to stream.org. Check it out every day!