

10/26/15
Week 44: Fall Mission Feeding
Craig Groeschel #1

James: I almost want the camera just to scan this crowd again. When you get up in your 70s everybody looks young.

[Laughter]

But I mean the majority of this crowd's probably under 30, under 35; a lot of them under 30, some of them in their 20s -- a bunch of them. Some of them younger than that.

[Laughter]

I've got a guy here, he's probably in his 40s; looks like he's 25.

[Laughter]

I'm James Robison, by the way, and this is my wife Betty. Pastor Craig Groeschel, and church leader, and inspiration is here. He's written a book and you know, I'm an older guy. This used to always just be a pound sign.

[Laughter]

This is hashtag. This is a big title. This is *Hashtag Struggles*: Following Jesus in a selfie-centered world.

[Laughter]

Welcome Craig Groeschel to *LIFE Today*.

[Cheers & Applause]

I'm already feeling stronger since you prayed for me. I asked Craig to pray I'd take better care of my body. God knows it need it. He really felt impressed to pray for me. He said, "This is definitely..." Craig, I really do love you. I love your wife, and you've got a great family. You

have a wonderful church and I know to God be the glory. Let's just cut to the chase. Pound sign -- *Hashtag Struggles*.

[Laughter]

Help us out. Where are you going with this?

Craig: I want to help you out but first I just have to express our love for you all. My wife, Amy is a passionate supporter of your ministry. We both are but we have a giving budget that she actually controls.

James: I understand that.

[Laughter]

Craig: She just loves -- one of the first places that she chooses every year to give is to your ministry. So we've loved y'all for years. It's a great honor for us to have a place that we can contribute to that we know is going to touch people in parts of the world that we'll never go to. So just on behalf of our family wanted to say thank you.

[Applause]

You ask about the book. This is a book I'm massively passionate about: *Hashtag Struggles*. What I'm doing is talking about something I'm really excited about which is the use of technology. Our church was honored to create the YouVersion Bible app, which is a free gift to the world.

James: If they wanted to get it right now because I'd like everybody watching all over the world to go, where would they go? Do they go to the app store or what?

Craig: Just go to the app store and type in Bible and it will be the first one to come up.

James: YouVersion of the Bible will come up. Is it a free app?

Craig: Absolutely free. It's something our church is passionate about giving away. I actually came to Christ as a result of someone giving me a free Bible years ago, the Gideon organization, and so now imagine our church gets to give them away by the tens of millions. So it's really an honor to give back in that way. So we love to use technology. We leverage it in every different way we can, giving away resources through satellite teaching, through church

online, through the YouVersion Bible app. Yet with all the amazing ways that technology can help us and influence us toward good, we're finding is there is also a lot of unintended negative consequences as well. The simplest of which you can go out to any restaurant right now and see a family of four sitting there and instead of talking they've got their device and all four of them, you all know what I'm talking about.

James: Even the older people.

Craig: Absolutely! Are just addicted to this. And technology can be a great servant or it can be a horrible master.

James: And they don't even necessarily talk to each other while their sitting around the table.

Craig: Not at all. That's really where was quite honestly, the journey started sitting at the dinner table when my wife Amy said, "Would you please put the phone down?"

James: To you?

Craig: To me -- over and over again, "And engage with the family." Because it's amazing how I was always doing something important but whenever someone else was on the phone, it was a distraction; you know what I'm talking about? -- Mine was important! The reality is it was taking me away from my family. So it started with that type of a struggle. And in the book we get into all sorts of amazing studies about how even selfies, we can take a selfie right now if you wanted to just for fun, but one out of three --

James: You'd probably want me to come over and get in it; right?

Craig: It wouldn't be good otherwise.

[Laughter]

One out of three photos taken on the phone today are people taking it of themselves. If you think about that, one in three of the pictures taken are people taking it of themselves. And about 92 million selfies a day now is what the estimate is recorded. What this is doing is it's turning a generation of people away from the great commandment of loving others, loving God and loving others to being lovers of ourselves. The book is really about discipleship. It's trying to teach people to follow Jesus in what I'm calling "a selfie-centered world."

James: Now you cover a lot of subjects. As a matter of fact, we wrote down some of the things. You felt like our viewers would want you to talk about eight values but you actually

wanted to talk about some of these. You talk about contentment, intimacy, authenticity, compassion, integrity, encouragement, rest. Grab one of those for our audience. You know some of the people, they're our age but probably half our audience is going to be in the 45, let's say to 65, but then a lot younger than that, men and women. What do you want them to hear?

Craig: One of the big struggles I write about is the struggle for contentment. We're always comparing with others. For example, there's a social media app called Instagram. I could take a picture right now of us, I could upload it to Instagram and then people would like it or they would comment, "Oh, James, you're looking so buff!"

[Laughter]

Stuff like that.

James: That's what they'd say! Especially compared to Craig!

Craig: What ends up happening is we see everybody else's highlight reels. Here's the high points of my life. Here I am on vacation. Here I am on a date. Here I am, I just got a new outfit.

Betty: All the fun stuff!

Craig: All the fun stuff!

James: Look how well-behaved my kids are!

[Laughter]

They're just beautiful -- all of them! They're like me!

Craig: They're matching and they've got matching lunch boxes. And I'm a great parent. Then we compare their highlight reels with our behind-the-scenes. We've got just a generation of people feeling dissatisfied because they're always comparing, always comparing, always comparing. I'll be real honest, I have what I consider to be a pretty exciting life but when I look at other people, I go, I'm not at the beach. And I'm not -- my pastor friend is hanging out with Justin Bieber.

[Laughter]

I'm nobody!

[Laughter]

I probably wouldn't want to hang out with a 21-year-old pop star if I could, but I still feel inadequate because we compare with other people and we feel very, very left out. This is a real significant issue. A whole generation is now being raised with being able to measure how popular are you?

When we were at school, if you kind of sat at the B table -- you know there is an A table in the cafeteria and then there's the B table. I'm probably at the B table.

Now you can say, "They have 400 followers; I've only got 200. I've got hard data that I'm not very popular. We can kind of laugh about it but it is really a big issue. They got in triple digit likes. They got 100 likes on their Instagram post and I only got 23. So now there are teenagers that are actually going in and acquiring fake likes -- very, very common.

Betty: So they rate themselves according to...

Craig: Basically just to make ourselves feel more important.

James: Easy to see how that would happen.

Craig: Before long we're almost creating a false life saying, "Here's the me I want you to see so that you'll like me."

So I go into a whole chapter dealing with -- and this may not be an issue for you but for your grandkids, it's where they live every single day. And they are very, very dissatisfied because they're comparing what they don't have.

So we really want to dive into where does our identity come from? And I push it always back to Christ, always back to Christ, always back to Christ.

James: When you...

Betty: I wanted to say, is it possible to find that balance? -- Because technology can be a wonderful thing.

Craig: It is a wonderful thing. We want it to serve us but we don't want to be mastered by it.

James: That's why you started the YouVersion of the Bible and it is one of the most incredibly wonderful places you can go. We launched the stream to try to get people some insight and

enlightenment about why things matter in this day in which we live. So you can use it positively.

Craig: Absolutely! But it's becoming an obsession for people and it's a real significant issue. A new phobia and this sounds like I'm making this up but I'm not, it's called nomophobia. It's a real thing. It's very, very real.

James: What does that stand for?

Craig: It means if I don't have this device, I don't even want to give it away because I'll like freak out. I need it.

[Laughter]

James: If I don't have it; what is me?

Craig: And 66% of the general population has extreme anxiety when their mobile device is not nearby; 77% at 18-25 year olds panic when they don't have their devices, and nomophobia is the fear. So they're literally starting kind of like you've got recovery centers for alcoholics or drug addicts, there are now recovering centers for people that teenagers that can't stop playing on games.

James: You told me that the sites that most kids can go to, and one of the things since I began to look at the various sites you go when you see what's there, I've been appalled and shocked, wondering how kids could be taken to these places in wherever it is they might take you ultimately. How do they survive? How do parents, grandparents understand the potential danger that's there and how would individuals –.

You made a great statement to me when we were just talking about it, that any one of us as men ought to be trying to take away the possibility of temptation even though we may think well, I'm totally able to overcome that but what about a year from now? Or what about when you've had a low moment or a weak moment and that something pops in? You're saying there is a way that parents can lock out or anyone, any individual that wants to, can lock out on their iPhone or their iPad or their devices; is that correct?

Craig: Let's talk about this. You've got a 12-year-old boy; here's your phone. That's pretty common today. This is basically, you could say this is porn in your pocket because just --

James: And that's not an exaggeration.

Craig: No, no, no, no! You just go to safari, type in anything you want and see anything that you'd never want your 12 year old to see -- worse than you can imagine. So let's say you're smart enough to make that go away. Well, your 12 year old gets on social media, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, whatever, and they're just innocently browsing around, click on a hashtag and someone uploads an inappropriate video or picture. They do it all the time.

James: And then that one would lead to another one like it.

Craig: They get sucked into it. They will stumble upon it very likely, if they don't know how to look for it, the chances of them stumbling upon it are very, very high. The average age someone is exposed to porn now is eight years of age and the number continues to decrease as we speak. So everybody listening who cares about their kids, who cares about themselves, you need to learn what is available and how to block it out.

James: Where would they find what's available to block?

Craig: I wrote a whole chapter in the book about...

James: In the last part I think you break it out.

Craig: Yes. So I write about like in my phone, to the best of my technology ability, I don't have the ability to see something inappropriate. Now that means my phone doesn't do what most other people's phones do. I don't have the ability to download apps, that's controlled by somebody else. I don't have different forms of social media on my phone. I actually have someone post for me when I post. I don't have a normal browser on my phone; I have that blocked out. I actually have a back door to the browser blocked as well because my youth pastor taught me something he learned from kids of how you get around it.

[Laughter]

So most 12 year olds will know how to get around this.

You might look and say, "Craig, you're a pastor of a church. Are you really that weak?" You could ask that question.

Or you could say, "Are you really that wise?" Because there may be a day when I'm vulnerable, not today, and probably won't be tomorrow, but why in the world would I resist a temptation in the future if I had the power to eliminate it today?

So I just -- so my stance is anywhere where I know there is something that could be potentially dangerous, I'm going to try and close and lock that door. And so I've done that with our parents, with our children. And what's really interesting is that other, a wife will say to a husband on staff, like, "Are you really that weak?"

"Well, Pastor Craig does that. Why would we not?"

I want to set an example that let's -- anywhere there's a temptation we can eliminate, let's eliminate it. I think parents, if for no other reason get the book, read that chapter: How do you block? There are several steps and we go through the steps on how to do it. How do you lock this down before you give it to your kid? Because I'll tell you right now, when I was 15 years of age, I was exposed to pornography for the first time. I remember to this day --

James: Probably nothing like what's there now.

Craig: Not even close. I remember to this day what I saw.

James: It is a tattoo in your brain.

Craig: It is a tattoo in my brain. If I tried to bring the image up, I could. So I would not have had the ability to resist the temptation at the age of 15 that's available there. So I'm not going to assume...

James: Your father was -- and we need to talk about this in the next program. Your father had a problem with alcohol. I didn't have a father because of alcohol. When those dents come in a child that's fatherless, there is no one to help you even have any appropriate understanding of how in the world you should respond. And boy, the difference there is daylight and dark, because I watch our children, our grandchildren with their parents who are so stable and I watched the difference on the way they're effected because they have someone there as a confidence builder.

But right now most children are fatherless. If they even have a father in the home, he's a dysfunctional father. Or he's like perhaps yours was when he was battling alcohol -- we'll talk about the miracle of what's happened to him in another program. Craig's going to do another program.

By the way, would you like for him to do another program and talk about the things that are on his heart?

[Cheers & Applause]

Because there really is a lot to cover. I really pray and I understand here I am a guy getting over into social media in a way I never dreamed I would and it's been appalling, shocking. If a person has any kind of curiosity at all, they will get a hold of that, the social -- they'll get you. They'll trap you.

Craig: The language of the day, they're all in social media and they should be because there are a lot of good benefits. But without education they're a sitting duck to things they're going to be exposed to. So if you're a parent, learn what's out there, learn how to talk to your kids about it, learn how to set up whatever safeguards you can and have an open dialogue. Or if not, it's going to damage their mind in ways that you cannot even imagine -- and hurt them for years to come.

James: See there's a tremendous amount of help that Craig's trying to pour out on all of us and everybody in this studio. If you love your family, your children, you love yourself, your testimony, let's get these safeguards. Let him help you.

I mean the book is online right now, you can get it, or you can go to the bookstore. It's just out. As a matter of fact, the week right now we're here it's going to the bookstores and you can get it online. So go ahead and get a copy.

But Craig, you talk about your wife and about how you all believe in our mission outreaches. We will, I think you'd be pleased to do it. We will want to give, as our ministry, this book to people who simply help us do the things to help people that you know are important.

Would you just express your thanks to Craig for his leadership? Incredible!

[Cheers & Applause]

Really, thank you for the incredible wisdom and leadership that you're providing for all of us. Our pastor, Robert Morris thinks that Craig is one of the greatest blessings. I heard a message he preached at one of the ARC Conferences in our church, one of the most powerful I ever heard in my life -- and he's just a blessing. If people wanted to access the web site, where would they go? Not only YouVersion of the Bible but for the church?

Craig: For the church you can go to LifeChurch.tv. You can also go and download the Life Church app and get all the messages there. And of course, the YouVersion Bible app is our gift to the world.

James: So please do that. But what we want you to see right now, really and truly is to look in

and see the need that together we can meet. Just see if through one of our mission staff members, you don't sense the love of God and don't identify with what can be done effectively. I think you're going to be excited and moved to do exactly what God wants done for his glory and to bless others. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Jeanne: Nine thousand miles by air, and hours in off-road vehicles; our journey to reach these desperate locations are long but they pale in comparison to the suffering of those who await us. I'll never get used to what we see here in these remote areas. But when we visit the clinics, we're confronted with the reality of what happens when mission feeding hasn't reached a village.

Peter: Just look at the way she looks at you. I'm struggling. I'm actually struggling to survive. I'm just struggling to live. That's what malnutrition does to the body.

Jeanne: I want you to live. [Praying]

Jeanne: We can make a change for this little one and for many, many like her. It doesn't have to come to this. This little girl needs our help. This momma is doing all she can do, giving all that she's got. We can help her. We can help a lot of mothers like this. Don't you want to see that? Don't you want to see these little ones live? Thank you.

End of clip

In the studio

James: God bless you, little baby! Beth Moore held a little baby boy named Matthew, and Peter Pretorius our mission overseer said, "He'll not likely be here tomorrow, Beth. I don't think he'll make it through the night." She prayed with a broken heart.

Then she and her husband Keith came and sat right here in the *LIFE Today* studio months later. I looked over at Beth and I said, "Beth, baby Matthew is alive. The *LIFE Today* viewers made sure. That baby is alive."

And then Beth Moore went back two years later and played soccer with Matthew. You want to know why? Because the love of God through people like you, and people like you who said, "I don't want to just weep, I want to heal, I want to help. I want to establish a compassion connection."

And the missionaries are there but they've got to have something in their hands and they've got to have a way. Right now we need eight more ten ton trucks. We need tens of thousands of those heat-resistant plastic bowls.

We have 400,000 children, Betty, we've already located that have need or they'll be in those malnutrition clinics that your love set up, made possible as a miracle, a last minute chance; but we've got 400,000 that we can stabilize their diet and save their little lives and give them health so they don't end up there or die. They have a future. Many of the children we started helping years ago are teachers in school -- some of them professors in colleges -- many of them are leaders in their cities. We have seen miracles -- the miracle of love!

Betty, I believe our viewers will help. I think they see the love of God expressed even through Jeanne.

Betty: We talk about the vehicles, the transportation, how important it is, but what makes it real is when you watch a precious little one like that that's struggling for a breath, for just a little more air into her little body. And then what really touched my heart was when the mother took her little baby in her arms, and we looked into the face of that mother and tears streaming down her face, because she knew she could do nothing to help her baby.

But you know what? We can. We can make the difference. If you've ever had your heart broken and you've ever wept with a broken heart, you know what those tears feel like streaming down that mother's face. You know what they're saying -- someone help my baby!

So please join with us and let's get the transportation so we can get the food to them so that they can live.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Honey, thank you for, I think, not only sharing the heart of a mother but the heart of God.

Here's what we need you to do. Go to LifeToday.org or dial the telephone number that's there that's always a prayer line but right now it's a help line -- it's a miracle line! And I want you to take your bankcard and you just use it like a check, you should always use it that way, whatever you do, and make the gift God puts on your heart.

Now keep this in mind, \$30, \$50, \$100 we're able to feed three, five, or ten children for the next months, this extended period of time, that's what it will do. Please help us! With 400,000 children we need a lot of people's help. For many months now, right now, we need your help.

And we need over \$300,000 for the trucks, eight ten ton trucks. They're absolutely fabulous vehicles. And to be very honest with you, Peter Pretorius has gotten an incredible buy on these trucks. And we need your help to do it. We need thousands of heat-resistant bowls.

So we need a miracle expression of love right now, please. Would you right now go to LifeToday.org or would you dial that number? If you want to write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call the number and tell us what you're putting in the mail. We have to know so we can let the missionaries know, yes, the help is on the way, the trucks are coming. Please do it.

We have some beautiful gifts to send you as an expression of our love and gratitude. You're giving to literally express and give life. Thank you for doing it.

End of clip

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 -- and those at greatest risk are the children.

Life's mission feeding program is there able to feed and care for over 400,000 children in crisis areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. With previous food reserves gone and malnutrition levels in Angola rising due to increased food scarcity, we desperately need to replenish our supplies for our feeding programs immediately. Your life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for the next three months.

Also, please consider an additional gift toward our \$316,000 goal to provide eight all-wheel drive trucks and 76,000 new bowls for the children.

As our thank you we'll send you this soft-covered journal Bible featuring the gospels, Psalms, and Proverbs for your devotional time in the word. With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed ten children please request the complete Holy Bible Journal edition perfect for keeping notes and insights as you read and study.

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 Thomas Kinkadee.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: This is a beautiful, beautiful Bible; and this journal edition, what a blessing it will be! We'll send you these as expressions of gratitude, the Kinkade "Forest Chapel," beautiful canvas framed.

But also Craig Groeschel; I believe that Craig is one of the greatest gifts -- understand I've been around awhile -- one of the greatest gifts God has given to the church, not just Life TV Church but to all of us -- and to you. And I believe what he shares is far more important than some of you may realize.

So you help touch them, we'll send this as an expression of thanks also. But it's online and you can get it in the bookstores. I hope you're passing them.

Craig is going to be back with us again. You want to say thanks to Craig Groeschel for being here?

Bud, thank you! I love you, man!

Thank you for watching. Check out stream.org -- check out stream.org.