

1/12/16
Week 3 WFL
Amber and Seth Haines

James: Thank you! Thank all of you for your encouragement, your prayers, your support and thank you so much for giving us this time to share with you that I think can be very meaningful and enriching in your life. I'm James Robison; Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. We have a couple here and this couple has each had such a dramatic story that they each have their own book.

[Laughter]

It's not like it's a couple writing a book, this is two individuals in the couple; it is hers and his. Hers is called *Wild in the Hollow*, which is, I think, the beautiful drainage areas and parts of Alabama; wherever the tributaries run the growth is great. But you can hide there too. You can do all kinds of stuff out in the wild.

She said, "On chasing desire and finding the broken way home: *Wild*." She's not talking about what was wild. I get the impression that she was the wild. I think you'll find out she was.

And then they had a painful experience -- massively painful. It didn't affect Seth the right way. He tried to escape all the wrong ways. And then he had to come clean, even as a church leader, visible and yet trampled.

Would you welcome Amber and Seth Haines to *LIFE Today*?

We're glad you're here.

Amber: Thank you.

James: I don't know who wants to start. It took a whole book to tell your deal.

By the way, are y'all okay now? You could write a book together now?

Seth: Yes!

Amber: Yes.

James: And do y'all share and teach together? Or do you do individual things? Or do you just stay home and take care of the kids?

Amber: We do all that. Yes!

James: Do you have a ministry together?

Amber: We very much have a ministry together. We don't have a title but that's our whole life is our church.

James: And you serve in the church and help others?

Seth: We serve in the local church. We love our local church.

James: Where is the church?

Seth: We live in Fayetteville, Arkansas so we attend church in Fayetteville.

James: Now who is going to start? Your story was first because he didn't necessarily know you when you were wild.

Amber: No. Well, yeah. I think wild takes on different meanings as we move through the story -- and so does the hollow. Because originally it is a literal hollow at the base of the mountain that can be filled by anything. It started off for me filled with a lot of joy and a lot of good things. I have a beautiful family; I come from a beautiful family and a beautiful place. I planted gardens with my daddy and I walked behind him in the garden and I played with my sister; had a very gorgeous Edenic experience -- I think of it as my own Eden. I think a lot of the wandering I've done since then has been to get that feeling of home back. I think everywhere I go I sense in people, no matter where I am, a kind of homesickness; like we all just want to get back home. I think we long for heaven more and more. We do.

James: And it is not necessarily going there, it is literally what Jesus said, "Pray it here." We want the Father's house-comfort of the Father, and the heaven, "Thy will be done now as it is in heaven."

So tell us about the *Wild* though. This title, *Wild* is the top deal.

Amber: You know it starts with, I grew up in the church: Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, full on youth group no matter what. And my perception of what it meant to be good and acceptable to God was what it meant to be acceptable to the church. I came to believe kind of early on that I was not going to make the cut. I was not going to be -- I was not going to fit that mold.

James: You weren't living up to the standard you saw that you thought was being set by religious people.

Amber: Yes! I kind of imagined there was an umbrella and everything under the umbrella was covered by grace and I saw myself as way over here.

James: Well, then did that add to the distance, the fact that you were already saw yourself estranged? How did it express? How did it manifest?

Amber: Well, I kind of thought that church would feel like home. All along, I think I was looking for home, like I said. When I decided I wasn't going to find it there, and then I looked at the church and said, "But you people don't look very free either," I pursued my freedom elsewhere through rebellion in a very cliché way as a teenager: Drugs, alcohol, promiscuity. I gave up early on and just said, "I'm going to have fun."

That led me down a road to... even as I got older and desired to be good, it led me to a pregnancy at age 18 and then to an abortion. My body refused to heal after this abortion. So it was my soul, my mind, my body, everything -- I was sick.

James: And you were able to say that's really never the best decision.

Amber: Right! Yes! Oh, yes! The fruit of that decision was nothing but pain. Yeah.

James: Now because of the time, bring us up-to-date. What happened to you? Because we want to get over to what happened to him when you all had a child with some challenges.

Amber: This is a big gap so basically, I came to understand that... I met the Lord in the floor at my very lowest moment. I came to understand that he loved me where I was right there at my very lowest.

James: And he does.

Amber: And he does. That set me free. But I wish the story ended there with my pursuit of freedom in the wrong places. So I threw an affair in there on this one when I --

James: After you married?

Amber: After we married, an emotional affair.

James: But when you all married, had you come through a healing process through where there wasn't any question you had experienced salvation?

Amber: Oh, no.

James: Then what caused that little flame?

Amber: When we were married we moved straight into ministry as youth ministers and that was an unhealthy experience. I heaped a ton of unforgiveness toward the church. We were able to look back and see when you harbor unforgiveness, especially toward the church, the fruit of that is destructive.

James: It is lack of judgment. You don't have discernment, you don't make good decisions. So you were very vulnerable. Evidently, you sought some escape or what?

Amber: I did! I was seeking intimacy. I mean still, I think it is looking for my place, my place of acceptance. That emotional affair stopped early and I harbored it and tried to cover it up with other things; just shame, that's what you do. When I confessed that to Seth, then we were able together to go through the process of... Well, more for me, of forgiveness toward the church.

James: Now you've got a lot of ground to cover here. You had to deal with this and then you all had a child that gave some real challenges and then you sort of went off the cliff. So y'all are not being best examples that we've interviewed here on television.

[Laughter]

Seth: The good news is we've never both gone off the cliff at the same time. So that's something; right?

James: That's good!

Amber: We have had so much healing. I will say that loud and clear.

James: I can tell that. I can see it in your face. But tell us about this girl here, this *Wild in the Hollow*, and then she decided to have a little *Wild* break and then here you are a church guy.

Seth: So at the time that Amber is describing, I was lay leader in the church. I've done music ministry, worship leading since I was 18. I was very involved in the church, even after such church pain I continued to be involved in the church.

But after she confessed the affair she went through a process of healing that was really restorative to her and restorative to our marriage. We entered into a really healthy, fruitful, beautiful time of our marriage.

James: So you actually found someone while being unhappy for some reason with church, maybe very justifiably, did you actually find some help in the church too? Somebody connected, at least in the Lord, but were they actually connecting in some way with His church?

Seth: Yes. There was a church home and it is the church that I write a good bit about in *Coming Clean*. But there is a church back Fayetteville, Arkansas that accepted us, allowed us to tell our story, allowed us to share our baggage. They loved us with some kind of longsuffering patience.

James: That sounds like the father, that sounds like the home she is looking for -- that's the father's home.

Now then, in the marriage here, something happened when you had a child that was a big blow that was unexpected. Am I right about that?

Seth: Yes. Our youngest child, Titus, became gravely ill. We didn't know what was wrong with him. He went through a season of weight loss, several months. We prayed and we prayed and we prayed and nothing happened.

James: Is he just a few months old when this was happening?

Seth: At the time he was about six months old. He went into this tailspin of weight loss. And as we prayed for him and we weren't seeing any results the doctors finally came to us and said, "We don't know what to do but we need to send you to Arkansas Children's Hospital," which is a specialty hospital in Little Rock. So we went to the hospital and we were in the hospital for two weeks probably with him. And in the course of that time, I just decided I'm done praying. I can't pray anymore. Because God, if you don't heal my son then I'm going to believe that you're capricious or mean or angry because I want my miracle.

James: And I believe in miracles. I believe in healing. I believe Jesus heals and we have a need for healing and you're the healer so get on with it.

Seth: Yeah! And it didn't happen so I called my sister and I said, "I need you..." -- who is a saint by the way. She is awesome! She is great!

But I said, "I need you to find me a bottle of some Jim Beam liquor and smuggle it in to the hospital room." And she did. And that became -- that was the moment where I started to drink away my pain; my pain that I thought maybe God is not an abiding, healing God.

James: You tried to drown it out and cover it with alcohol, another substance. And it actually became so compulsive that basically you found yourself what? -- An alcoholic?

Seth: Well, I don't really like terms because I think a lot of people will look at the term "alcoholic" and say, "Oh, well, if I'm having six drinks, seven drinks then I'm an alcoholic, otherwise I'm okay."

I think the truth is, any time you're addicted to any substance to try to alleviate the pain, whether it is alcohol, drugs, materialism, sex, whatever it is, to try to alleviate the pain, whether it is one drink or 20 that's a dangerous place to be because you're actually not walking in the way of Christ.

James: So what happened to you to turn you around because I know you look like you're sober now?

Seth: I am sober now. I've been sober for over two years.

James: And I've visited with you for quite awhile and you seem like you all are actually a happy couple. But your son still has the challenge. What's the name of the disease that he has?

Seth: It's called Eosinophilic Esophagitis.

James: If you even read it you couldn't say it. But it is very, very debilitating; right?

So you were actually medicating a little bit to escape from that and the fact you didn't see God come through the way you were asking him to or expecting him to.

All right. What happened to set you free and get both of you kind of on an even keel in the Father's house and in his presence? What happened?

Seth: I was in a church in Austin, Texas and I was at a little conference for activists, and there was a woman there who I'd known for years and years and she was a recovering alcoholic. She was walking across the lobby to me and I heard God say almost as clear as us talking here, "You can either take care of this now or it can get really bad."

She walked over and she said, "Good morning!"

And the appropriate response would have been, "Good morning." Right?

I said, "How did you know you had a drinking problem?" And the minute I said it, you're trying to pull the words back or whatever.

But she said, "You know; don't you?" And she began the process of walking me through. What does a problem look like? How do you get help? Who do you talk to? How do you begin the process of dealing with all of this pain that you have? -- Pain and resentment and anger towards God.

James: Now here's what I know. You put your stories in these two books because it's his glory and his story that wrote the new chapters. You wanted others who have gone through the same hollow or *Wild*, or the need to *Come Clean*, you believed your story would help them. Am I right about that?

Amber: Yeah.

James: So what do you want everyone to hear from the two of you right now? If they could take something away right now what would you want them to hear? Amber, what do you want them to hear?

Amber: I met God on a linoleum floor and that's the moment that I had the very most hope of my entire life. I believe that it is our brokenness; it's like the hollow. That's where we get to be filled. He says that when we're weak his power will rest on us.

I think the church will receive a great deal of healing if we would come out with our struggles, our own brokenness, and we would seek out those who are suffering shame; that we would say, "We have a shared brokenness but he is our healer." And we wouldn't try to cover ourselves up and make ourselves look pretty, and like this is what it means to be good but this is what it means to have freedom and be restored.

James: Seth?

Seth: I met God in the pain of doubt. I want the church to hear that it is okay. It is okay to have pain. It is okay to have doubt. And when we sit in the pain and when we sit in the doubt God comes. He is the abiding God. Scripture tells us that it is not the well who need the physician, it is the sick. And so I want to be the first to say, "I'm sick. I need the physician." And only by sitting in the pain can I confess that I'm sick and I need the physician.

James: And you've experienced it.

Seth: I have.

James: And now you want to share it. That's the reason for the books, the reason for your story.

Would you like to just say thanks to this couple for coming and sharing their story? Writing the books to tell the story?

And let me just talk to you if I can rather personally right here for a moment. Can I just, like I'm sitting there in the room with you? I don't know what your story is but his story, his grace and his glory will deal with every challenge that you've ever had. This is a real person, Jesus. He really lived. He really died for you. He really lives now to live in us.

I've written a book that I'll send you called *Knowing God as Father*. A very simple little introduction how I came as a fatherless child, the product of a rape on a practical hospice nurse by the son of the elderly man she is caring for. And she conceived at 40; a doctor refused to abort her baby. I was born. But I was born again and I met the father and he's there for you.

I want to send you that little booklet, *Knowing God as Father* and it has a simple Bible study. You just call and say, "I want this Jesus. I want a new start."

Betty, we have had such a joy over the years winning people to Christ, watching them grow. But one of the greatest things you'll ever experience is to share his life, his love with others. I want you to just simply watch and listen. And you just say, "God, could I be the answer to that challenge? Could you use me to be a miracle?" Watch!

On the mission field

[Plane engine spluttering; then starting]

>> We were landing on floater planes. We've been riding in these boats it seems for hours at a time to get to these remote areas. We are spending days out here in this remote village in this jungle and people have asked us why.

Announcer: The heart of *LIFE Outreach International* is the desire to help people through sharing the transforming truth of God's love in word and in deed. Every family in this region of the Amazon has suffered either sickness or death because their only water source, the river itself is contaminated. Having learned this, life's mission team traveled into this remote region to see just what the conditions are like and to determine what can be done to help these precious people.

>> We've been passing villages, seemed like village after village who don't have clean water. Just imagine how many more there are that we haven't even seen yet! And we've been told by others who live here, there is just multiple villages that still exist without clean drinking water. The river itself is dangerous. And on a daily basis these children are coming down here, going in harm's way just trying to get a cup of water, get a bowl of water. And then to find out the water they do get is so contaminated and it is deadly, and people are just getting sick and dying on a daily basis.

We want to change that. We want to bring change to villages that are looking for hope. If we can just go one by one and drill and bring fresh clean water it just changes the whole village -- it brings life to a village who desperately need it.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I don't know if you understand why Ralph and our mission team members, and why Betty and I would go literally into the pit of hell to try to bring heavenly hope. It's because that's what Jesus came to do. In the midst of our hellishness and our defeat and our destiny without hope, Jesus came to bring hope, the water of life.

Right now our missionary team members are in strategic places all over the world just like that in the Amazon. And they're there because they want to share life and hope; the life of God but not without an expression of compassion and love. There in the midst of all that water where they land the plane on the water, and that's dangerous, where they travel in those difficult areas in those less than the safest boats, and go into areas of disease to try to get people water where they have water all around them but it is filthy and contaminated. And then to go in there and say, "We will drill you a freshwater well."

Who is we? We who love God and allow the love of God to be shared freely through us. As I've said many times, we suddenly express the heart of God the Father by extending hands of compassion and care.

And, Betty, we can give every one of those areas a fresh well. And we've targeted 500 areas, many of them right there, where water is all around them but it is filthy, we can give them clean water, and we can change everything for them because of love. I believe that our viewers will do what they have indicated they want to do, they're going to be an answer to the need there, they're going to be an answer to the prayers of the missionaries, to the parents, to the people and give a water well.

Betty: James, as I was watching that I thought, you and I have never had to worry about diseased water. We freely go and open the tap and drink it, and never even think about that.

They deal with this on a daily basis -- all the time. Some families lose child after child. The heartache -- they live with heartache and brokenness because they have to offer their children the only water they have knowing that that water could kill their child.

Let's help them! Let's give them hope! Let's reach out to them and let's drill these water wells so that they can have the fresh water and their children can have an opportunity to grow up.

James: Well, I'm thankful to say you and I made a commitment years ago that whenever we had the opportunity, the need was there, we would give a well. And it became a trust and a faith factor, and God has enabled us to do it. We've actually increased to where we talk about it more than once a year because people say, "We want to help." And because we're going to drill 500.

Could you drill a well for \$4800? Or give part of that, \$1200, and pray three join, or \$2400 and pray another joins? Could you do that? Please do! Those people need our help. We can give it in the name of Jesus in love. \$48, if you break it out will literally give, think about this, people water for the rest of their life -- 10 people for \$48. You give a well, it just keeps giving. Your gift keeps giving. And we're going to share with them not only Water for Life but the water of life, we're going to share Jesus.

We have some gifts to send you to say thank you that will bless you. But you're giving them life. Please right now go to LifeToday.org or dial the number there on the screen. Use your bankcard like a check and make the gift God puts on your heart. Thank you so much for doing it!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day millions of children are forced to make a dreadful choice: drink water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

Mission Water for Life is one of the most exciting and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything.

With your gift today we can establish and drill 500 water wells for remote villages in over 15 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for 5 people; \$48 will help provide for 10 people; \$72 will impact 15 people. And \$144 will help provide for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift we would like to send you James Robison's book, *God of All Creation*. Through his personal observations of animals and wildlife, James shares heartwarming stories and spiritual lessons of God's love and grace.

With your gift of \$100 or more, be sure to request *Majesty*. This beautifully illustrated book teaches you the blessing and significance of the names of God, including Jehovah Rapha, your healer and Jehovah Jireh, your provider.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well.

And you may request our beautiful new "Majesty" bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Betty and I want to say thank you so much for your help. Please pray for the mission workers and please pray that God will give us the resources to drill wells in all those 500 areas in 15 countries.

We've got two beautiful books to send you that will bless you. This will be an inspiration, I promise you! -- The God of All Creation. I wrote this knowing how much what you see even in your little pets can point you to the greatness and grace of God.

Majesty, the promises revealed in the names of God. This is a beautiful coffee table book that has so many beautiful pictures. If you would like to have either one of these books because the particular story applies to you, you just say, "I'm going to help you give somebody water. But would you share with me the book *Wild in the Hollow* or *Coming Clean*?" -- Because

something was shared in either one of these books that really hit home with you. Feel free to ask for it.

Would you join me and Betty in saying thanks so much to Amber and to Seth?

Thank you for your story! Bless your ministry and your witness to people.

And thank all of you for being such affective witnesses. Thank you for helping us share the love of God.