

4/13/16 week 16
Spring Mission Feeding last week
Sheila Walsh
Living in Love #3

Sheila: Hi! Welcome to *LIFE Today*! We have a beautiful studio audience. It has been an amazing week as we've talked to James and Betty Robison about 53 years of marriage -- what a legacy! What a legacy to pass on to your children and your grandchildren. I do believe you have one little great grand?

Betty: Great grandson; that's right!

Sheila: That's such a standard of security to pass to a family. But one of the things I wanted us to talk about, which I have discovered for many of my friends and also in my own marriage is when you don't handle money well that can be such a -- for many people they say that's why we divorced. Financial trouble caused us to fall apart.

When I was reading parts of your book out to Barry and I was saying, don't you wish we'd read this years ago? He was like, "Absolutely!"

Talk to us about how you have approached handling money within your marriage.

James: Well, Betty was too nervous to even write a check when we first got married. She wouldn't make a long distance phone call. That was complicated.

Sheila: Many men pray for that.

James: Here's the thing. She is now the one who manages all of our finances.

She is the tech expert in the family. Somebody complimented me on the phone today about, "You're a tech guy!" Betty started dying laughing because it was on speakerphone. She said, "Now this is really funny!" -- Because she has to tell me how to turn on everything and how to navigate on my iPad and my iPhone.

But when we started out, we made \$6,000 the first year we were married; that's combined income and she produced most of it because I was a preacher and she had a job. Preachers always said, "Well, maybe the next church down the road will take care of you." I would say, "I

thought this was down the road!"

[Laughter]

But anyway, "Somewhere they will take care of you." But we didn't have much.

But here's what we did. We determined we would live below our means.

Sheila: Below your means.

James: Which meant that we lived in a 10 by 50, Betty says don't call it a mobile home, it was a trailer. I'm not exaggerating. It wasn't a 14-footer, it wasn't a 16-footer, it wasn't a double wide; it was 10 feet wide. Now you could barely get a king-sized bed in the only bedroom. When you're first married, that isn't a bad deal. You'd just walk in, all bed. We're good.

Now here's the deal. We had nothing but we lived below our means. We were told by Reverend Hale that we had to established credit. And we said, "How do you do that because we're going to pay cash if we buy a television or a washing machine."

Betty: If we didn't have the cash we didn't get it.

James: That's how we were going to do it. We simply wouldn't have it -- furniture, anything. As a matter of fact, when we first rented an apartment, which we finally did rent a small apartment we said why don't we buy the furniture on credit and establish credit, even though we've saved enough we can pay for it.

But why don't we, rather than paying for a furnished place and paying for their furniture, why don't we pay for ours and do that on credit? And we'll pay it off real quick.

He said, "That's great! That will work to establish credit."

Because we could have just bought it but we had to get the credit established. Didn't understand all that. Today everybody wants you to have it so they can get you to have a whole lot.

Now here's what happened. When we first got a credit card we would sit and look at it. We thought this is amazing. You can go and buy something with this. But here's the deal, this little couple, we thought that was a plastic check that when you bought on it it was that month. Now think about this. You may say, "You are not very bright."

Sheila: Oh, I think you're brilliant!

James: Well, I'm telling you. When our daughter was engaged to her husband Terry, who is brilliant and the father of those four kids, and now have grandkids themselves, one at least now, and the thing about it is he told us that all the kids at Baylor were in huge debt.

I said, "Where?"

"Credit card debt."

"What? What do you mean credit card debt? You pay that at the end of the month."

"You don't have to pay it at the end of the month. You can run it out for months. They've got thousands of dollars."

I said, "You do that with a credit card?"

Now understand our daughter is 20 years old before we understand that you can run that up. Something wonderful had happened to us about living not on credit and it is marvelous how much money you save when you don't pay interest. It is wonderful what you can do.

I opted out of social security when I'm 18. I said, "It's a bad idea. I want to be able to take whatever I have and make my own investments." Think about this. A little 18 year old kid that never had a dad, never had a home but I had a father in heaven who knew more than some people know.

So we began to think that way. And it has been a miracle journey.

Betty: And it's really been good because back then, something we thought we might need, we'd find out we didn't need it so much when we didn't have the cash to pay for it. It was something we could wait on and plan on. We needed to get the things that were a must.

Sheila: So here's what I want to ask you. When you're making \$6,000 a year between the two of you, it's easy to think, okay, this is what we have so we won't buy. But then life moves on and God blesses you a little bit more and you have more. One of the mistakes my husband and I made was well, if we're making more then we should have slightly more of a house. I think there's a pattern in America where we think the more we have the more we should have as opposed to the lessons you have learned about continuing to live below your means.

There is not a person watching right now who doesn't think, where have you been all my life? There is so much wisdom there about the freedom that comes from not being in debt.

James: Our pastor has been preaching that. You think about this. We've got a church, Gateway that's just over 15 years old and one of my little boys pastor it, so to speak. He began teaching people first things first and the blessed life, "It is more blessed to give than to receive. Don't even think about what's coming back, think about what the gift does."

That means that you put God first. You live below your means. You think about how you can bless others not how you can do and get. There is something marvelous about that. There's something very biblical about that. So I suggest people consider that.

Sheila: You make a very interesting distinction in the book between training something else and something else that I wrote down.

James: Tell them and you can tell them loud. If you shout at your kids you'll rear a bunch of shouters. They won't respond until you do shout. If they don't have to do it until you get angry, you're teaching them not to move until you're angry. You're training the child to do that rather than training to respond to a soft voice.

Our children learned with this loud mouth dad, when I finally got it from God, that if I said, "Don't do that," that was all it took. The amazing thing was our grandchildren would come and I'd say, "Don't do that." Well, when Papaw said "don't do that," you don't do that. You didn't need to get your list and start begging and go, "We're not going to have a little session here or discussion. We're not doing that."

Now as they got older if they say, "But what about this..." and then they would begin to kind of bring their ideas. Say, "Is this not reasonable?" And when you see they're bringing a reasonable deal you discuss it with them.

But what we did was train a child to respond to the word, which God wants all of us to respond to his Word, not to our anger, not to our shouting, not to say, "One... You better do that! I'm giving you to three. Two... I mean it. You realize I mean this? Two and a half... you better not let me get to three!"

You're training that kid to ignore your word, to wait for your threats and really, you're raising a monster. It's not going to work. We did not have to say -- Robin, we just talked about in the last program how joyful and happy she was. I don't even remember.

Now Rhonda our oldest child, she remembers, got that wooden spoon applied to the seat of education continually. But I didn't do it.

Betty: She was the first one and we didn't know what we were doing.

Sheila: You practice on the first one, I know.

James: We had to make up for lost time with Rhonda. But we didn't even have to have those disciplines for Robin. She caught on. She saw what Randy was doing. Randy was pretty tricky. He would come in. He knew he was going to get it so he would just go in there and he would just kneel down and lean over the bed and wait for a little spanking.

Betty: Wait!

James: He was just so humble, he's so sweet. He was just clever is what he was. He was clever; kind of manipulate. They get smart.

But the point is, they learn. Then we watched our grandchildren learn to respond that way. It has been a beautiful thing to watch.

Betty: I think one thing that's really key is that don't let your children figure out that they can play the parents against one another. He let them know and I would tend to probably be the weak one as far as the discipline. He helped me a whole lot; he really did.

James: She would wait for me to come home and apply the board. I'd say, "They disobeyed you. Why don't you do it? Why do you want me to be the bad guy?"

Betty: They don't want dad to come home then. So we had a few discussions over this parenting.

James: But what I said was right, of course.

[Laughter]

Sheila: Remember what I said about humility in that last show?

James: Forget it!

Betty: He told our children just really when they were young, "If your mother has told you you can't do something, don't come ask me then."

Sheila: I love that. Then you're presenting a united front, and children shouldn't be able to come in-between that.

Now I want to move on in this last section to something that honestly, as a mom I think is every parent's nightmare and that is the loss of a child. And I remembered hearing when Robin was sick and then when Robin went home to Jesus and I thought, I can't even begin to go there as a mom.

Some of the people who wrote to me on Facebook said, "Would you ask them how they survived that? And how that impacted their faith? And how that impacted the way they pray?" Hard question to ask but I wonder if you could speak to that.

Betty: Well, as a mother, and I feel like mothers probably get more of the attention when there is a child that's lost but I want you to know this dad loved his little girl. And he hurt deeply over her just as I did. But a man responds differently than a woman does.

When this came, even though she had been ill for quite awhile, you still have hope in your heart. You don't give up. She always said, "I win, mother." You know she did. She didn't win the way we would have liked her to win here on earth but she's perfectly healthy now and she's happy. And she's with the Lord Jesus and we're going to see her again someday.

But when this journey hit us, which we didn't ask for, but sometimes... and if you live very long you're going to go through a journey that you didn't ask for by any means, especially the loss of a loved one or a child. I just -- I'm so thankful for my relationship with God. I don't see how parents that don't have God at the center of their life, how you make it because it is tough enough when you have God in the center.

I can say this. My relationship with God has grown. I can't even describe it. God is bigger than I ever imagined him to be. Because every time I was on my face weeping, every time I was screaming and saying "why?" or "it's not fair!" God was right there holding me and said, "It's going to be okay. You're going to get through this and I'm going to use this experience to bless and to bring good because what you learn from this, you're going to be able to share with others and you're going to understand what they're going through."

When we go to the mission field and I would see these mothers that had lost their precious little ones, I'd tried so hard to have the compassion that a Christian would have for that. But yet, I couldn't understand completely. Well, now I understand. They lose more than one most of the time. But even one, it's crushing to the heart.

But every day when I would get up off of my face, God was there with me and walking me through that day. The fact that our relationship was centered around God, we could lean on one another. We'd weep together -- we still weep! We will never get over but we live through it. We're on a journey of healing and God is bringing remarkable healing in our lives.

Like we said earlier, we laugh about the things that we remember about Robin. She was so precious. She wasn't perfect. None of us are perfect but we like to think our children are perfect -- all of them. We have two other wonderful children and that was one thing God reminded me of, "You've lost Robin for this moment, for this time in life but you have two other beautiful children that have beautiful families and you need to rejoice over that and live life to its fullest."

Sheila: That is such a word, Betty! Because I think sometimes when a child is lost the parents are so engulfed in grief for that child understandably that the children who survive often feel like they are less than, that they're not loved as much anymore; that they've lost their parent as well as a sibling.

But I have to say I've noticed in both of you and I'll speak to this because you're my sister Betty, you've always been amazing, you've always been kind but there is a strength. Something is rising up in you that I see and I think only God could redeem the pain and transform it into making you the kind of strong woman who is going to be able to minister to so many other women.

Betty: There has been one point through this journey that God brought me to that when I would be weeping, I could sense in my spirit that he turned those tears from personal tears for the loss that I was experiencing to the loss that others are experiencing. And I wept. I began to weep for others that were so heartbroken. I think that's what God wants to do in our lives. He wants to turn our focus to those others that are hurting and in need.

Sometimes hurt and loss paralyzes you. God says, "There's so much more that I want to show you and I want to give you and I want you to share with others."

Sheila: And when you have lost you're so vulnerable. I'm thinking of all the people's lives that have been impacted, the mothers who have lost children. And the fact that at their most vulnerable, life reaches out and says, "We care about you."

You know what I love about *LIFE*? You've enabled every one of us in this audience and at home to become a missionary from our own living room. That's amazing!

James: What's happened with us in this journey, I've preached on freedom and being set free: Jesus come and set the captives free. But that first verse in that announcement starts with, "He

came to bind up the broken heart." It's become even more important to us to bind up the broken hearts of people around the world.

And just in the last week, Robin's oldest son who gave the greatest message you could ever hear at his mom's funeral, where Pastor Willie George walked up after and said, "Never in my life have I ever witnessed anything like this." -- All three children speaking, with mom down front. And this last week Chris got engaged. And Robin was known as the greatest party giver on the planet for the church, for the football team, for the cheerleaders, for all the kids. She just loved - she would go up and do stuff for the teachers. So the fact is that she would be planning a wedding and she's not.

And I told this to Betty today as we were thinking about our anniversary and now another grandchild getting engaged and thinking about, because we were looking at pictures of Chris down on his knees with candles all around him out in their first backyard, because Kenny redid the first home they lived in where the kids were born. There he is on his knees with candles and decorations all around him proposing to this beautiful girl in their church that's on the praise team. We could just see Robin standing there.

I told her today, "You think she wouldn't be laying out all the plans for this incredible wedding?" And I said, "But Betty, she sees it all." And she wouldn't come back. So help me, Kenny said that to me the last time I talked to him after he talked about Robin and the joy, "She wouldn't come back."

So what I say to everybody listening and watching, don't miss what he's prepared for you. Don't miss what you can experience in him right here -- in Christ, not in religion -- in relationship. Don't miss what he's preparing for you.

If you've never given your life to Christ, bow your head right where you are and say, "Jesus, I want that love. I want that life, I want that relationship. I want the forgiveness and the joy that only you can give. I receive you as my life. Thank you, Jesus."

I'd love for you to call and just tell someone you just prayed. I'd love to send you the book, *Knowing God as Father* just to bless you.

Sheila, I know this is our last time to talk about our journey together that continues but you're such a joy to us and such a part of our team. We're so glad you're here.

This is the last week of our mission feeding. So I just want to ask all of our viewers if they would, please, I want you to just look in and see and hear a mother's heart and hear the needs, and then I want you to respond the way God tells you to. Would you do that? Just watch.

On the mission field

Janice: Just a few minutes ago we rolled into this village, a very small village. I asked how many lived in this village and an estimate of over 500 people. Then we asked any women that had lost a child to come over. And here they are. This group of women have lost over 150 children. It is not a club you want to be in.

It's just not right! They died because they didn't have enough food.

Nowhere in our world today should women expect to lose a child to malnutrition for lack of food. I just ran past each one of these ladies and asked them individually to show me how many babies they've lost. To lose one child would devastate you for life. But these women together have lost 150. Many five -- many over five!

I went one by one and looked each woman in their eye and held the fingers of the number of children they lost and I said, "Please heal them, Lord! And please don't let another child die in this village."

She's lost eight children. Can you see it in her eyes?

We as a body of believers are for justice and part of justice is making things like this stop, making the death cycle in a village like this stop. And if we have in our ability to change something we should do it. We must do it. Be a part of making this cycle end.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Janice, I know you're watching the program. That was Janice that was holding that lady's fingers representing babies. The way Janice held her hand was tender and caring that I somehow identify with the pain.

And we want to stop the cycle. Betty, we've been able to stop the cycle in so many areas, miraculously. The thing you need to understand is it's been more than 25 years that we have been reaching out. Many of the children whose lives we've saved are now leaders in a community, they are teachers, some of them are professors. Many of them are in some form of law enforcement for their own nation and country. We have seen nations totally transformed by the power of love.

One of the examples is Mozambique. A miracle took place there -- and I'm talking a big miracle! You are the reason that that took place. The African government, every one of them, have reported to us that "You've saved millions of our children's lives." So who did that? God did that through people who wanted to reach out in love.

And Betty, I'm believing that every single viewer this last week of mission feeding, this particular emphasis, that every viewer will help and I believe make the gift so we can share life and food with these children.

Betty: James, our friends have been so faithful. You really have. You've really come up and filled the need with your love, your support and we thank you so very much. This is important! These children don't have to die because of lack of food. We can help these mothers.

Can you imagine losing eight children? We've lost one and it's so heartbreaking but I can't even imagine the burden that that mother carries -- and could be others dying if we can't reach out and help them with the food.

So please join us. Let's make the difference in the lives of these mothers to see their children smile. You know what it's like to have a child to smile back at you.

James: Well, I believe the miracle is going to occur. This is the last week now of our emphasis. We've got 400,000 children that are now organized in areas where we can feed them. The missionaries and relief workers are there. We're the ones that give them the food to distribute.

Would you right now please go to LifeToday.org or dial the number there? People are calling today asking throughout the program to pray for their marriage, to pray for someone in their family, and rightly so, and that call is paid for by love.

Well, would you also call right now to say I want to make a gift or go online? A gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100, we can feed three, five, or ten children for the next several months. But a group of our friends have said they will match what you give to care for 50,000 children, which means that what you give will be doubled. \$30, \$50, \$100 will feed 6, 10, or 20 now; so it actually doubles in its effect.

We want to send you to say "thank you," Sheila Walsh was kind enough to comment on how she thought the book would bless you. We will send the book, *Living in Love* to help you live in the power of God's love and in your relationship; and find encouraging words for you and perhaps someone you want to share it with. We'll send that just to say thank you for any gift.

We also have the beautiful bronze for those of you who will reach out with a gift of \$1,000 to now not just care for 100 children but now for 200. So whatever God puts on your heart, please make that gift in love: LifeToday.org or dial the number there on the screen and let us know what you're sending if you write a check made to *LIFE*.

Thank you for doing it!

Begin video clip

Announcer: In remote and impoverished areas of Angola, Africa, families are suffering, crops have failed. There is no food. And those hit the hardest are the children.

In response to this crisis, Life Outreach has received a 50,000 children challenge that with your help will feed and minister to 100,000 children over the next few months. With previous food reserves gone and Angola facing a severe food shortage due to crop failure, this challenge could not have come at a better time to help replenish supplies for the feeding programs touching the lives of children across Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan.

The 50,000 children challenge means more children can be saved and your gift will have a double-impact helping to feed twice as many children. Your gift of \$30 to help feed three children will now be doubled to help feed six children! Gifts of \$50 to help feed five children will be doubled to help save ten. And gifts of \$100 for 10 children will be doubled to help feed and care for 20 children.

With a gift of \$1,000 or more you can double your impact to help feed 200 children. And also request the "Majesty" bronze sculpture featuring a beautiful buck in regal stance reflecting God's presence and majesty in all the earth!

This is the last week. Please call the number seen here, write LIFE, or go online today to LifeToday.org and make your life-saving, double-impact gift today!

End of clip

In the studio

James: As we were just now waiting for you to have your response, we've just had a real circle of concern and prayer for you and your family and your nation, wherever you are. And we've just really been praying and calling the church together like the remnant to pray for an awakening. So Betty and I want to say thanks. You just need to know you were really prayed for just in that little break while you were perhaps calling or giving. Please do! We'd be glad to send you *Living in Love*.

Sheila, we really do thank you for talking to us this week.

Sheila: I just want to say in behalf of all of our viewers and our studio audience, thank you for the beauty of 53 years of marriage that has left a path for all of us. Thank you for your life, for your ministry. And as one of our audience said recently, "And it's not over yet. There is still a lot of great stuff still to come."

Let's thank James and Betty!

James: Thank you, Sheila! Thank all of you! Thank you so much!