

10/16/16 -- Week 42
Christmas Shoes and Smiles
John Bevere

Randy: Hi, I'm Randy Robison. It's good to have you here. My parents are taking a little time off so I took a little opportunity and got the uncontested queen, first lady of Women of Faith, Sheila Walsh. Would you welcome Sheila?

Sheila: Thank you very much. Well, I'm one of them.

Randy: No, I'm really glad you're here. This topic we're going to talk about today is tough in a lot of ways and amazing.

Sheila: Totally, I have to say that John Bevere's book, *Good or God* has sparked a fire in me for -- it's almost like a clarification where you think, what I believed on this before is almost obscene. It's time we wake up and grab hold of what is truth.

Randy: Would you welcome John Bevere to *LIFE Today*?

John: Good to be with you.

Randy: So good to have you.

John: I've got to say this. The queen of Women of Faith -- my wife, she is queen to my wife. My wife absolutely adores you!

Sheila: It's very mutual. You know what I love about Lisa Bevere? There is three people on this planet that if I'm in a not good place, you know when you're struggling or just in a hard place, I text Lisa and immediately she is on her knees on my behalf.

John: She cares deeply for you, Sheila.

Sheila: What a gift to have a woman like that in your life. She is amazing.

John: I'm proud to be Lisa Bevere's husband. That's the way James introduces me.

[Laughter]

Randy: Let's talk a little bit about the dynamics of relationships, husband and wife relationships because that is a picture of God's relationship he wants with us.

John: There is a statement that I like to make in branding this book and that is have we substituted good in place of a genuine relationship with God? We have to remember the whole reason this all exists, the whole reason Jesus came is because God passionately wanted a relationship with us. That's why a marriage is so beautiful because it exemplifies the passion he has for his bride. So this is where the aspect of holiness comes in. Now when you say the word *holiness* today people recoil, they go, "Ehhh! Don't put that legalism on me. Don't put that bondage on me."

Sheila: "Don't make me wear a hat!"

John: "I'm under grace." Think about it. The most important description of the church -- it's the only description of the church Jesus returned for, it's not a leadership driven church, it is not a community church, it is not a love church, it is a church that is holy without spot or wrinkle. Think about the number one description of God in the whole Bible.

When John sees the throne, when Isaiah sees the throne, what are those angels crying out? They are not crying faithful, faithful, faithful! Is God faithful? Yeah, he is faithful but that's not his attribute that stands out above everything else. They're not saying love, love, love! Is he love? He is pure love. But that's not the attribute. They're crying out holy!

So why should this word scare us? It actually should be the most delightful word in the New Testament other than Jesus because it was misrepresented.

So here you are the devil. You realize the number thing that Jesus came back for was a holy church; right? So what are you going to do? Get a bunch of mean-spirited preachers who hate people, who should not even be speaking the Word of God because they don't even like people. That's why I love James and Betty; they love people!

But anyway, and beat up people with this legalistic holiness. It is all about being in my club. You don't watch what I don't watch. You don't do what I don't do. Right? So people are like, it's the old proverb, the cat that's been scalded by the boiling water will fear the cool water. What will bring that cat life, he will fear now because he's been scalded by the boiling water. What will bring people life, relationship, genuine relationship with God? They fear. That's why the Bible says: Pursue holiness without which no man will see the Lord. We've got a video that I think will really set this up and then we can kind of talk about it. Can we watch this video?

Randy: What are you setting up?

John: What I'm going to set up is relationship. But let's just watch this video and we'll kind of play into it when it is over.

Randy: Let's take a look.

Begin video clip

>> Emma, these past seven months have been incredible. Honestly, when I saw you seven months ago I knew -- I knew from that moment that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with you. You're kind, beautiful, smart. I can't picture a more perfect woman. So Emma Lily Thompson, will you marry me?

>> Yes! Yes! Yes! I have to see other guys on the side but yes!

>> Wait what? What other guys? What are you talking about?

>> I'm the perfect woman just like you said. I'm going to have gourmet meals for us every single night. Our house is going to be perfect. It's going to be amazing, babe! I mean you're not really expecting me to be a one-man kind of woman anyway!

>> Uh, no, that's actually like a big part of marriage -- like you and me together!

>> Yeah, but I can't give up every guy. That's asking a little much; don't you think?

>> A little... A little... I just asked you to marry me. If we're married you can't see anyone else. No, I'm sorry.

>> Wait! Shh! That's okay. Listen to me. Listen to me. Look at me. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that. You're right. I was wrong. I totally understand where you're coming from. This is our moment and we're going to be so happy together. -- Every single day except once a week.

>> Once a week?

>> Just once a week.

>> Did you not listen to anything I just said?

>> Every other year?

>> No!

>> On a leap year?

>> No! Okay, Emma, I can't do this.

>> Once a week on a leap year and you're going to freak out?

>> Emma, we're done.

>> What? Babe, you were just asking me to marry you! Are you kidding me? Seriously? Really?

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: Ouch! Really? Nobody would go into a relationship like that.

John: No human being would ever enter a relationship with that. So the question I have to ask is what makes us think that Jesus is coming back for a bride that's the same? What makes us think that Jesus is coming back for a bride that says "just give me a little bit of the world"?

So herein is holiness. Holiness means set apart to be completely and totally his. The way Jesus is presented today is more about what he can do for you; it is not about relationship. So if you look at the Bible, the Bible says: Pursue holiness without which no man's going to see the Lord. Now that word *pursue* -- now remember, this is written to Christians -- the word *pursue* means chase after with the intent to apprehend. So if you're like...

Because some people will say out there, "Oh, you don't have to worry about holiness. When you get saved you're holy and God made you holy and you don't ever have to do a thing." This is because people don't understand that there are two different aspects of holiness the New Testament talks about. The first one is our positional holiness.

The Bible says that God created us in Christ to be holy and without blame from the foundation of the world in Ephesians 1:4. That is our position of holiness.

The way I would look at it is this, 33 years ago Lisa and I got married. I'm not more Lisa's husband today than I was 33 years ago. I'm just as much her husband today. That's my position

with her. But before I married Lisa I would flirt with girls, I would get their phone numbers, I would date girls. But after I got married to Lisa there was a behavior that changed because now I was completely and totally hers. I don't flirt with girls anymore. I don't get their numbers.

Now did I come out and separate myself from every girl on the planet except Lisa? No! I sit next to them on planes. I have girls on our team, on our ministry team. I'm around a girl on this set right now. But I have an appropriate behavior toward them. Jesus didn't call us to come out of the world, he called us to go into it but have the behavior of being his bride that would represent him well.

So if you'll look at First Peter, Peter says: As he is holy, you be holy in all your conduct or manner of living. Peter is not talking about position there; he is talking about our behavior. So when you look at "pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord," everybody is going to see God. The Bible says every eye is going to behold him. So he is not talking about judgment. What he is talking about is this: I'm 56 years old. I've been under 10 presidents of the United States. Their jurisdiction, their leadership has affected my life but I've never seen one of them, I've never been in one of their presence, I've never seen one of the 10 presidents of the United States.

Now there are other Americans, they're friends with the president. They're in his presence every single day. They get to enjoy his presence. Well, there are Christians that are under the jurisdiction of Jesus. His leadership affects them but because they're not pursuing holiness they aren't in his presence. So what he is talking about there is the presence of God.

See Jesus made this statement, in John 14:21: To him who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who really loves me. He who really loves me, I will love him and I will manifest or show or reveal myself to him.

So what it's like is can you imagine if I said to Lisa, "Lisa" -- this is what a lot of Christians think we can do today -- "Hey, here's our marriage license. We're technically married, babe so hey, I'm secure in my marriage here but let me go sleep with all my girlfriends from high school." I would never have intimacy with Lisa. Lisa would never open her heart and share the secrets of her heart with me.

Randy: Or the door to your house.

John: Yeah, she probably wouldn't. Knowing Lisa, I probably would be shot dead. But anyway, what I'm saying is, here is all these Christians and the reason why their Christian life is so shallow, so empty -- and this is the greatest burden I carry -- is because why? They're not enjoying what we've been created for -- intimacy with God.

So what we've done is we've created great atmospheres and we've substituted atmosphere in our church services for the presence of God.

Now don't get me wrong. I think we can have atmosphere and presence but what I'm concerned is a lot of people say, "Oh, great atmosphere!" Everybody's happy. We've got a great style of music, we've got great decor, got a great foyer that encourages everybody to communicate to each other. That's great. We need that. But what we need most is the presence of God because that is when we change.

Sheila: Let me ask you, John. For a woman, a mother who is watching at the moment, she is got three kids, she lives a busy life, she's trying to get everything done, school starting and all that crazy stuff. She wants to know where do I start? What does it mean to be holy? I want that. I absolutely want that. What do I do? Because the example with you so far are sexual ones, to deal with relationship, but what's the bigger picture of what holiness looks like?

John: David made a statement. He said, "I have always set the Lord before me." What we do to really set ourselves apart is we have the conscious awareness that he is with me constantly.

So in other words, I could spend my entire day with Lisa and not say a word to her and I've missed out the whole day of enjoying her. Or I can spend the day and interact with her. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing. Prayer is not a one way conversation, it is a two way.

So the problem is, number one, we are not acknowledging him, and because we don't acknowledge him James says draw near to God and then he will draw near to you. We have to draw first. And James says in order to do that we have to purify our hearts from worldliness. That's what he is talking about. So in other words, again, it is coming out and separating ourselves and saying, even though I'm in this world, I'm completely and totally 100% yours.

Randy: Let me ask. Is it you do something in order to be separated or God separates you and therefore you behave a certain way?

John: My wife has seen through every time I've done something for her that I was trying to get something out of her. She is like, I know what you're doing. But my wife also knows when I just want to be near her just because I want to be near her. Now if my wife can figure that out with me how much more do you think God can figure that out? When we want to be around him because we want something out of him and it is all based on our works and our behavior or when we say I just want to be so close to you.

Randy: And if that's what we want out of him is that relationship, is that holiness.

John: I want to hear what you're saying, I want to hear what's on your heart today, that's when we become involved in his life.

Sheila: One of the things that I get more letters and messages from on Facebook, from women in particular, is struggling to believe that God really loves them, that God knows them completely and really loves them. You talk in this book about God's thoughts towards us. Can you talk a little bit about that? Because that just blew me away.

John: James 4:5 says "the spirit." Now you've got to remember the spirit is the only one on the earth right now of the Godhead; Jesus is at the right hand of the father, the father is on the throne. They're a few billion miles away. So the spirit who dwells in us yearns -- now listen to that word *yearn*. The word *yearn* means that he longs for intensely and consistently. So what does it mean intensely?

When I think of God yearning for us, this is what I think of. I think of what David wrote in Psalm 139, verse 16. David said, "Lord, if I consider the thoughts that you have about me personally" -- this is not the church collectively, this is me as an individual -- he said, "If I was able to number those thoughts they would outnumber every grain of sand that is on this planet."

Now will you think about every grain of sand that is on this planet? Every beach, every desert, every golf course -- that is a lot of sand! Right? So God says my thoughts about you personally, Randy, or about anybody sitting in this audience, or anybody watching us on television right now, if it is just my thoughts about you personally outnumber every grain of sand that is on this planet, do you understand how much he is thinking about us? Now you never think about people you don't want to be close with. So God yearns for us and it also means to yearn consistently.

Now if I wake up Lisa at 2:30 in the morning, as much as we love each other, I guarantee she is not yearning for me at 2:30 in the morning. She is going to say, "Honey, why did you wake me up?"

But you know what? I've gotten out of my bed at 2:30 in the morning and I went into my office and the Holy Spirit is waiting and we had amazing time together.

Randy: If you think about someone that much and want to be with someone so much but you're denied the opportunity, I think it leads to that aspect that we usually think of negatively, but you say is a good thing, and that is the jealousy of God.

John: That's why God says, "I'm a jealous God." He is not jealous of us, he is jealous for us.

One of the things that a man will have to encounter if he commits adultery on his wife, right? He is going to have to deal with her hurt, her disappointment, her utter disappointment, but he is going to have to deal with her jealousy. She is going to be jealous of the other woman.

God is saying, "I'm jealous of you" meaning I want all your heart. I don't want you to have other lovers. The reason...

That was my son, third born son, actually our third born son that did that acting. I thought he did quite well; that's Alexander. But anyway, the reason Alek walked away from her is because he knew that even though she was saying, "Hey, just on a leap year, every four years," he was saying, "I don't have your whole heart. You still have a place, even though it is every four years, you still have a place in your heart for those other guys."

This is why James says to Christians, "You're seeking a friendship with the world? You're an adulterer." Now that is a strong language. An adulterer is someone who has a covenant relationship with somebody and violates that covenant to establish a relationship with somebody else; that's an adulterer.

So this is the deal, God wants all our heart. He said, "I want to be your husband and I want you to be my bride. I want us to spend eternity together."

Randy: We're about out of time but I want you to tell us what is the product of living that kind of life?

John: The product of living that kind of life is the wonderful presence of God. And when you get into the presence of God you change.

Do you ever meet a Christian who has been a Christian for years and yet they're not changing? You want to know why? They're not in the presence of God. Because the Bible says as we see him, as we enter his presence we are changed into his image from glory to glory. So a Christian that is not being transformed in their behavior is a Christian that is not in the presence of God. They're in a club, they're in a really cool Jesus club, but they're not changing because they're not experiencing his presence.

Now, I don't know about anybody that's listening to us, what I want more than anything else in the whole world is the presence of God. If I have to choose between his presence and his promises, I'll take his presence. But I'm just glad he says you don't have to choose.

Sheila: You said on the last show that someone you respect greatly told you that this was the book that you were put on this earth to write. I really have to say a huge amen to that, John,

because I really believe this shifts so much in our life. I personally want to thank you for it because I have learned so much from it and I cannot commend it highly enough. It's amazing.

Randy: I hope people will get it and that's why we're offering John's book, *Good or God?* Not just as something to give to you or another book to put in your hands but something to radically change your life. We're doing that for those who will help us radically change the lives of children around the world through our Christmas shoes and smiles campaign. But you have the opportunity to do something that can put a smile on a child's face, maybe even make it possible for them to smile. I want you to see this and just pray about how you can be involved this Christmas. Watch this!

On the mission field

Announcer: From your family to our family, your generosity has empowered *LIFE's* mission efforts around the world -- and the look on these children's faces makes the impact obvious. It's in the smile of Mateo as he receives a bowl of food made possible by your giving or of Gabriella as she quenches her thirst from a clean water well that you helped drill. You could even say you make it your business to give children smiles.

Well, this Christmas we'd like to give a smile to someone who might not easily be able to smile otherwise. You see, all over the world there are children who have trouble smiling because they were born with a cleft lip or palate. But a simple surgery by loving doctors can radically transform the appearance of children like these and greatly improve their quality of life.

But they won't be the only ones smiling this Christmas because with your help we also want to give a brand-new pair of shoes to children who have never had them.

Tammy: You can see all of the little ones, honestly, the smiles on their faces, it's so exciting to be a part of it. You can look around at all of the children in this village and most of them are without shoes. They can lose their very lives because of an infection that they could get on their feet.

Announcer: Help make this Christmas special for a child like this. Help us provide Christmas shoes and smiles.

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: Good stuff! We've got some gifts for you. This is a Christmas ornament; you can hang

it on your tree so you can remember what you did for children. They will never forget what you do for them. I encourage you to go to the phones, go online and let's give some shoes to some kids. What do you think about this whole thing?

Sheila: I think it's beautiful. One of the things my husband Barry and I have been talking about this. And before our son Chris was born we were told that there was something really wrong with him. We were told he was not compatible with life. We were told to end his life. We said, "No, we..." I remember saying to Christian, even though I was only 20 weeks pregnant, "I will fight for every breath that you get to take." And the wrong results had been put in my chart and we have this beautiful healthy boy who is about to go off to college.

But as Barry and I talked about this, we want to do two -- we want to provide for two of those surgeries. When you look into the faces of those little ones, as they grow up, not to be able to eat well, not to be able to look in someone else's face and smile because you're ashamed of how you look. So if you feel that's something you could do, \$1,000 will provide for two of these surgeries and literally change the life and the future for some children. Maybe you can only do one -- that would be wonderful! But some of the stories we'll not get to hear the end results down here but when we get home and we see the difference that we made in the life of even one child, that's the best Christmas gift of all.

Randy: Very cool! Thank you for doing that. You're literally going to enable a child to smile. How does that make you feel?

Sheila: Amazing because my son said to me, because he's only got 13 days before he goes to college, "Mom, stop staring at me." And I'm trying but it's hard not to because I adore this boy.

John: Well, you have a handsome son!

Sheila: Thank you. But to be able to put a smile on the face of another child and what that will mean for the mom and the dad? To be able to do it is a privilege. So it's an honor to be able to change another child's life.

Randy: I can't thank everyone who helps because it does take a lot of people who do this but I can thank you. So thank you for engaging with us in the Shoes and Smiles campaign. The shoes are actually very critical. You don't think of shoes as something that may be a life or death situation but in many cases it actually is because of the infection that can get in. So it's really, astonishingly simple -- \$3.60 provides a pair of shoes for a child; \$36, you'll put shoes on 10 children. You'll change their lives, and it's a Christmas gift -- it's a great time of year to remind people around the world of Christ but it's also a Christmas gift that will give and give and give.

So go to the phones, go online, give the best gift you can. You can be like Sheila and put a smile on a child's face.

John: You know what? Can we help on the feet? We'd love to do 100 kids. So we'll do 100 kids for the shoes.

[Applause]

And I say that. I was just wondering should I say it? But I want to say it here because I want to inspire others to do it. That's the only reason I'm saying it right now publicly.

Randy: Good stuff! Join John, join Lisa, go to the phones, go online. Put some shoes on some kids and smiles on their faces.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Poverty is a killer and because of it, children needlessly suffer not only from a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we take for granted such as a healthy smile or a simple pair of shoes. For most of these children, they've never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in the light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections that could lead to crippling consequences, disease, and even death.

By responding today you can help *LIFE* immediately secure and begin shipping Christmas shoes to 200,000 children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pairs. And a gift of \$144 will help provide 40 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

With your gift of any amount be sure to request this beautifully crafted green antique shoe ornament, a treasure to place on your tree each holiday season. With your gift of \$100 or more you may also request a special boxed set of *LIFE*'s Christmas shoe ornaments from past years.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft palate surgeries. And you may request our beautifully framed canvas print of "The Forest Chapel."

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

End of clip

On the mission field

James: Betty what do you think about all these beautiful feet and these beautiful children?

Betty: I think they deserve some pretty little shoes on their feet: Don't you? It's not just to give

them shoes -- it is to bless them, we want to bless them! But the shoes have a real important use too, James. They can protect their feet from getting cuts and bruises and also from disease.

James: We found out that hookworms actually get in the skin of their feet just sometimes walking in dirt or sand and then it actually ends up in their intestines and it can be deadly. Let's put shoes on all these beautiful children's beautiful feet! It would just be such a wonderful gift to make at this time. I hope you'll do all you can. Just give as many pairs as you can to bless as many children and their families as you can.

In the studio

Randy: I hope you're going to the phones or going online to give the best gift you can. We can really change a lot of lives and do something wonderful this Christmas. I hope you're doing it right now.

Sheila: You know what's amazing, Randy? I know that right now we're not close to Christmas but there are moms and dads on their knees somewhere around the world praying that somebody would provide for their children. What an incredible privilege that we get to be the answer to their prayers. I love that!

Randy: You can do it! When you do it, be sure to ask for John's book, *Good or God?* It is thick with truth and it is going to bless your life. John, you have blessed us by being here. You've challenged us and I just want to say thank you. Would you say thank you to John for being with us?

John: I'm so honored. Thank you both!

Randy: And we thank you for watching. Set your DVR to watch *LIFE Today* every day! We'll see you next time!