

11/24/16
Week 48: Mission feeding
James and Betty Robison
Susie Larson

James: Thank you! You're wonderful! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to have Susie Larson with us. Now Susie has a radio program and it covers a great part of the United States. I've been on it a number of times and she just kind of lets me download. It doesn't take me long to get going but I can tell she is cheering for me, she is encouraging me.

I want to tell you, she treats me with unbelievable respect for which I'm very grateful. It's great to feel like you're loved and appreciated. I think maybe the fatherlessness and being left places and not knowing if anybody is coming back, never knowing sometimes where I'd be, maybe there is a hole in our heart, and honor and respect and appreciation, it really goes a long way with somebody that has felt that in their life. By the way, it's much of the nation have the father-hole in their heart.

Father, I pray for all those that do. That's a big hole. I believe you're the only one that can fill it but it is still a reality and we like to see it in the expressions of others when they let us know they love us or appreciate something about us. I pray people right now that I'm praying for will sense that; in Jesus' name.

Susie Larson is a gift from God. I want you to welcome her. She has written a book called *Your Powerful Prayers; Reaching the Heart of God with a Bold, Humble Faith*. Would you welcome Susie Larson to *LIFE Today*? Susie, it's good to see you.

Susie: It's an honor to be back with you guys again.

James: You were here, first time how long ago?

Susie: About 15 years ago and that's a funny story if I could tell it because the ministry that God gave me was really born out of the ashes of pain. I didn't wake up wanting to make a name for myself or to accomplish anything great. I was hit by Lyme disease as a young mom. What wiped out my short term memory wiped out my health? I had a passionate walk with God.

James: And that comes from a tick. And the thing about it is we've just been hearing about it and all of the sudden here she is.

Susie: Yeah. I was devastated by the disease. So I went from having a passionate walk of faith to praying that I would live long enough to see my kids grow up. I literally would get in the word and read. The next day I would see my own writing in the margin and not have any memory of reading. So I had no more vision for my life.

In the midst of that mess of just feeling like God had lost my address a woman called and said, "I've been praying for you and God's given me a picture, a platform he's building with your pain. Lean in and learn everything you can and the Lord will do it."

As I started to get better and different people would ask me to speak at events, I eventually self-published my first book but I didn't have a web site or anything. And a lot of the... I want to think of a title here but different people, well, maybe a few years down the road from me were telling me I was naive if I didn't get a web site, if I didn't start marketing myself and sending brochures to every church that I know of. That made me nauseous, really. I'm just like, I can't do that. I don't want to do that. But I would bring it back to the Lord because I thought, I want to be teachable. He didn't want me to do that either. I just had a real sense of, "Rest in me. This is going to be a different kind of ministry born out of the ashes of your pain."

Well, one day I get a letter in the mail from *LIFE Today* and I threw it away because I didn't think it was real. I thought it was coupons or something. I don't know what I was thinking. But I threw it away.

My husband was like, "What are you doing?"

I'm like, "I don't think that's real."

He's like, "Why not?"

So anyway he called the number and it was real. So I came to the show...

James: Was it like a letter that was inviting you to come be on *LIFE Today*?

Susie: Yeah, but I'm like how do you --

James: It would be better to read these things.

[Laughter]

I believe you'll pray more.

Susie: It's true. Touché! Truly. It was a time when you were shooting probably four or five shows in one night. One of your guys had been with NASA, I think. One guy had just golfed with Carl Rove at the White House. And I literally am singing to myself around the table, "One of these things doesn't belong with the other." Because I'm like, what am I doing here? I seriously thought if I ask you, you'll say, "What? You're not Sandi Patty? Why didn't you say something?"

I was like if I draw attention to that I really shouldn't be here you might notice that I shouldn't be here. So I seriously tipped toe in and did the show, tipped toed out.

And I'm on the plane going, "How did that happen?"

And the Lord whispered to my heart. He said, "I know where you live. I know your address and I can get you a gig any day of the week. You can trust me."

It changed everything for me. I decided I'm going to rest in the Lord.

But little did I know that people would learn about me from the show.

[Laughter]

And do you know all these years later one of my key intercessors first learned about me on *LIFE Today* show and she caught up with me at a conference. We became friends and she is in my prayer circle now.

James: I want to say thanks to all the audience. Thanks to all of you. See you're the ones that make *LIFE Today* possible. We do mission all over the world. I think you need to understand our primary mission is not feeding people, we do that, but it is feeding people spiritual food that causes you to want to meet legitimate needs effectively. So our viewers became an encourager to you.

Susie: Indeed. Truly, it was a God thing because I seriously still don't know how in the world you found out about me or got me on the show. I was seriously afraid to ask. But you know, it's water under the bridge now. Thank you for having me.

[Laughter]

James: Tell me about this: *Your Powerful Prayers*. I understand that you didn't necessarily have what you considered much of a prayer life.

Susie: When I first came into marriage, in fact, I talked about my back story on previous shows with you but just in a nutshell, I was raised in a great family, great parents, big family, but when I was nine years old I had a pretty traumatic event at the hands of teenage boys. I was pinned down and I won't say more than that. But it opened a canyon of self-hatred, self-loathing and I was raised in a denomination where I knew God was real but not that Jesus was...

James: By the way, sometimes when people have that happen to them, does the enemy manage in some way try to put some of the blame on you like part of it was... isn't that a shame?

Susie: Yeah! Truly, self-loathing, self-rejection, self-contempt followed me all the way into my adult years. So again like I said, I knew God was real but I didn't know Jesus was accessible. So I would pray, "God protect me." And at 10 years old I'm walking home from school and I was jumped by a different group of boys and I was beat up very badly, pummeled. The lie for me that the enemy got into my soul was, "I can get to you anytime, anywhere and nobody can stop me."

So my prayer life began begging, pleading, "Please protect me so nothing bad happens." Well, when the deer tick happened I mean I was on bed rest for six months at the high risk pregnancy. The docs let me up for one day just to test the waters; met some girlfriends from college. We went for a walk, back in bed by nighttime. Two weeks of that date my face started to go numb. So the tick attached, dropped off, I got sick. So here again, the lie is, "I can get to you anytime anywhere."

So I will tell you my early years as a young adult, it was a begging, pleading kind of prayer. And then crisis happened with the health issues and my insecurities and my fears because I couldn't strive my way, I couldn't be the perfect Christian and serve on five committees. I was dying on the vine. I was so sick trying to parent three little kids. But there was a point where I was being swallowed alive by anxiety and I had legitimate reason to fear. We were on the verge of losing our house because of medical debt. We didn't but we were on the verge of it.

I'm in my 20s and I feel like I'm 90. I have three little boys to raise and the Lord just downloaded a truth. He said, "Fear and faith are opposing forces and you have to turn your back on one to behold another. Fear and faith are opposing forces. Are you a believer just because you're going to heaven or do you actually believe this stuff that I promised you?" And that was a turning point for me when I thought, I'm going to shift my weight on to the promises to see if

they hold. And they did and that's when I started to get an appetite for the promise of God that we would apprehend it and walk in it. I've seen too much now. There is no going back for me.

I would tell you, I get the most done in my day in my prayer closet. So my heart is to see an army -- an army of believers mobilized in prayer, and not ranting things out on social media. These are dire times. Get on our faces before God because he wants to hear from us. And the prayer of the righteous accomplishes great and powerful things. So you can tell I'm very passionate about that.

Betty: Everybody has challenges. If you live very long you may have tragedy and loss in your life. When we come to those challenges or that loss or that tragedy, a lot of times the tendency is to turn away from God and say, "He failed me" or "He disappointed me." But we have a choice to make. We can turn toward him or away from him. I found it to be more pleasing to my heart and more comforting to my heart if I turned toward him because that's a time when I really need his arms wrapped around me.

A lot of people know we lost our daughter and that was a real heartache for me as a mother, especially. I found that I got to know God so much better because I turned my heart toward him. I depended on him for every breath I took, for every tear I shed. I just felt him so close to me. So we have a choice to make; don't we?

Susie: We have such a choice to make. I don't know why I'm thinking of John the Baptist as you're talking but you know here, Jesus says the greatest man, "there is no greater man" and yet he saw the heavens open up over Jesus but when he's finally in a prison; so the actions out there, it's not happening for him in there, that's when he starts to doubt. And he sends his friends, "Are you the Christ or should we be looking for someone else?"

And as I thought about that story I was thinking, you know what? Jesus' answer was truth with caution. "Tell him the lame are walking, the blind see." In other words, "The miracles you saw, they're still happening. You might not be seeing but they're still happening." Then he finishes with, "Blessed are you who are not offended with me."

I think many Christians are so offended with God because as you say they tried, it didn't work. So they may be walking but at a distance. They're missing the best part I think of fellowship with God. And you're right. Why turn from the very one who can help us?

But I'll tell you for me, what helped me because I worked through some hardships myself, my mentor told me about ten years ago, she said, "Susie, you've got to discern the difference between expectation and expectancy." She said, "Expectation is premeditated disappointment. It's creating a bulls-eye telling God what he must do for you to be okay." And so many

Christians do this, "If you hit this target we're good. But we don't dictate to God, he dictates to us; right?" She said, "When people don't get their expectations filled they walk around disappointed and they throw prayer out, the baby out with the bath water so to speak. But expectancy is to say there's a mystery to following God. He's bigger than I know. His ways are higher than I know. And I'm going to live with an open-handed wonder knowing that any day now he is going to break through. And it will probably be different than I think. But the prayers I prayed back then I'm going to see glimpses of those glories now. And there are going to be losses in this life but this is not all there is and I cannot put a period at the end of the sentence that God is still writing."

That has helped me so much because there has been loss in our family as well and it's so gut-wrenching, especially when it seems untimely. But I agree with you. My best comfort has been found going, "I'm not going to be offended. There are things I don't know but I know you're good and you'll always make a way." And you're right, that's when he moves close and brings the comfort we so desperately need.

James: So if somebody reads *Your Powerful Prayers* where are they going to go? What's going to happen in their journey if they're really let's say focusing in on what you have birthed and what you're praying will happen in them as they go through the pages in what you're sharing?

Susie: That's a really great question. My heart's cry is that we live out of the love of God and because of that we are mobilized to pray audacious prayers. Because the scripture says we don't want to be ashamed at the Lord's coming. He's talking to Christians there. There is also a passage that says we will give an account. And there are those who are going to barely escape through the flames. In other words, they were saved but they lived the rest of their lives bearing so little fruit. I'm convinced many Christians are going to live and die and realize I was saved but I wasn't free.

So my prayer is for us to get beyond just reacting to our constant issues of fear and insecurity to the point where we are mobilized, where we are so sure of who we are in Christ that we can take his promises as they stand and we pull ourselves out of the smaller story to see ourselves in the bigger story. I'm telling you what, I think we can get a lot done in our prayer life and I think we can get a lot more done in our prayer life than we can on our Facebook debates. I'm just saying! It's just my opinion.

James: Now, when we lost our daughter, I must tell you something, when you've got a little girl that prays and believes like she did and never wavers and was the most beautiful example of Jesus her friends and her family had ever seen, she was like a hero to her brother and her

sister and everybody that knew her, and we lose her. I said, "If I hadn't known him so well, I don't know if I would have liked him."

I think it's really important for people to understand that if you're waiting for the pain and brokenness to bring you to him without ever going to him, you may find that ditch very, very deep -- very difficult. That's why I think people need to hear, even when you were going through those trials, you had already decided, you with all the pain and hurt, you had decided this is the one that will bear -- you had made a decision, I'm going to love him.

And then he began to work the impossible for good, just like showing up here, the things that you'd never expect. And suddenly, he's shaping everything so that you actually learn in the pain and pressure how to have an intimate intercessory relationship with God where you're not just talking, you're hearing him; right? When you enter that prayer closet, you're not just downloading, he is downloading on you; correct?

Susie: Absolutely. He has the best parts to say. For sure!

James: There is no question. We're in right now a season of Thanksgiving. You make your prayers and supplications known with Thanksgiving. Don't you think the ungrateful hearts of people in the United States and many places around the world and even the church has had a profound limiting effect on the effectiveness of our prayers if we would just enter his courts with Thanksgiving, come into his presence with praise? Can't we right now in the Thanksgiving season start praising God and being grateful? Don't you think that's a part of an effective prayer life?

Susie: Oh, 100% yes! In fact I've said for years that ingratitude makes us spiritually blind and spiritually deaf. We can't hear and we can't see what God is up to. Because the Bible says it is the pure in heart that see God. I think when you're full of ingratitude it is entitlement. I deserve more than God is giving me.

But man, life on earth is short. Life in eternity is long. What we endure here, the Bible says the suffering we endure here is nothing compared to the glory that is revealed to us later. I have heard more Christians say, "I didn't sign up for this."

And I'm like, "But yeah, you did." Surely.

But the Bible does say our light and momentary troubles are producing in us a glory. I'm thinking, light and momentary? The loss of a daughter? My brother-in-law just died recently. My Lyme disease has been activated again. I've had it really rough year health-wise. I wrote that crawling through the valley. That's just the honest truth. But when I read the word and it

says "your light and momentary troubles," I'm thinking, there is nothing light or momentary about this but your word is true so the glory that is going to be revealed later must be mind-blowing to me. I'm going to put my weight on the word even when it doesn't feel true. That's how we stand, I think in this day.

James: Thank God! Would you say thanks so much to Susie? She's such a blessing! And this book, *Your Powerful Prayers*, I tell you what, it's in the bookstores, you can get it online. We're offering right now one of your friend's books, Lisa Bevere's. She is such a blessing. And for children, this is just great. I'd love to show you every picture in here because this is not just kind of good illustrations, it is absolutely spectacular. You talk about capturing your children and grandchildren's attention. We'll send these to you and Susie's book, if you'd like to have it.

Here's what we're asking. I want to tell you something. You're about to get to be a part of an unbelievable miracle. This is one of the most moving things, Betty you and I have ever seen in our life. I told our staff that presented this, I said, "That was birthed in the mind and heart of God." Unbelievable the way you presented the reality that we're dealing with and that love can absolutely address miraculously. Watch this.

On the mission field

Announcer: I am a mother's worst nightmare. I thrive on the pain of children. I do not discriminate and I show no mercy.

Sheila: You look into the eyes of a child who is seriously malnourished and there is just nothing. It is like somebody just turned the light off.

Announcer: You won't see me coming but you will soon hear me in your children's cries.

[Children crying]

My touch brings bloated stomachs, thinning hair that changes color, painful skin disorders and tiny bodies so thin and frail they appear as living skeletons.

Sheila: To see this little helpless one with the skin literally peeling off his arms and his legs was such a horrifying sight.

Announcer: I am slow but sure. My name is malnutrition and my legacy is death.

Sheila: I heard someone on the news one day make a comment about the devastating deaths of children in some countries in Africa. And yet the reporter suggested that perhaps the mothers there were "more accustomed to that because it is very much a part of their life." [Sighing] I've

seen with my own eyes what I knew in my gut -- no mother will ever become accustomed to burying a child.

The thing that really has blown me away the most, all of this is reversible.

[Children Laughing]

End of clip

In the studio

James: I don't know. Oh, boy, when I look at that enemy, I feel helpless sometimes. I think God, we've been doing this a long time and it works because love never fails. It really doesn't. It doesn't work on our time schedule and our frame but it's miraculous.

I couldn't bear to look at that, and I know Sheila couldn't either if she wasn't able to point to the remedy. Those little bodies -- and I'll just tell you, I could spend my life doing nothing but just saving those little kids. But I'm called to minister to you and to bring people who minister to you, and who can bless you because of spiritual malnourishment in so many people's lives and the need for hope and help, which is why we come every day.

But it's why we also, in behalf of the missionaries and the heart of God and the heart of mothers and people who love, we come and say would you please be the miracle? All that food that they saw being processed, Betty our viewers paid for. The food factories, you built them.

Betty: James, there are some diseases that we battle in life that we haven't been able to find the cure for and it breaks our heart but that doesn't mean we don't give up. Well, this is a disease that has a cure and it's simply offering food to these children, to the mothers to give to their children. Mothers never want to tell their child they can't provide for them, that they can't -- when they hear the crying and the hurting of their children it breaks their hearts just like it would us. So we have an opportunity here to be the cure for these children in these situations and to put a smile in the heart of a mother that's doing all that she can do but she doesn't have the resources. So I hope you will help us.

James: If you've ever said, "Father, I'd sure like to have my prayer answered." Well, let's find the joy of being an answer to prayer right now -- a heart cry, a heartache. Let's be an answer to malnutrition for literally hundreds of thousands of children. We've got 400,000 of them located and organized where we can feed them. Who did it? -- Missionaries that you support. -- Volunteer workers that the missionaries oversee.

And we're asking you right now to go to LifeToday.org or dial that number and we're asking you to get your bankcard or whatever way you can do it, if you want to get a check and write it, make the check to LIFE. Here's what we're asking you to do. Make the most love-filled, love gift you can make.

Some of our friends have said they will match what you give. They've given us a \$400,000 matching gift challenge to match \$400,000. That means what you give today will be doubled. Now look what love does. \$30, \$50, \$100, three, five, or ten children fed for the next months -- three, five, or ten. You make that gift it will be doubled, 6, 10, or 20. You give \$1,000 and you're caring for 100, now 200 kids.

If you would help us feed a school, which once these kids get stabilized we try to get them into school because we're giving them a future; we're not making them dependent, we're going to train them to be independent and to work for their future. We want to teach them how to live. That's what the mission workers do. We're committed to them for helping them with their life and eternity. We point them to the love of God and to Christ.

You can sponsor a school for \$1400 and that will be a gift; that will be doubled, the gift will be doubled, the matching gift and so you've got two schools. So there is a way you can come in.

Father, I pray every person right now will be moved by your spirit to give as you direct and do it joyfully; in Jesus' name.

LifeToday.org, go online -- please do it now! I know you want to do it but it is so easy to get distracted. So do it right now. I believe God is speaking to you: LifeToday.org or dial that number where people are calling for prayer. You can call to be an answer to prayer. Use your bankcard like a check. Make the best gift you can, it will be doubled. If you do want to write a check, make it to LIFE but let us know what you're sending in knowing that that will also be doubled. We have some gifts to send you to be a blessing to your spiritual life and we're so glad to do that.

Thank you so much for making the gift. Thank you for defeating the enemy of malnutrition, being the miracle many are longing for.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In remote and impoverished villages of Africa children are suffering, desperately in need of life saving food, facing death by starvation.

LIFE's mission feeding program is there, ready now to feed and care for children in crisis areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. With all of our previous reserves gone, and Angola facing

a record food shortage due to crop failure, we need to immediately replenish our funding and supplies for our feeding programs.

As an answered prayer, a group of *LIFE's* friends have set a \$400,000 matching gift challenge for mission feeding! This means your gift today could have a double impact! \$30 for three children will be doubled to help feed six children! \$50 to help five children will be doubled to save ten children! And \$100 for ten children will be doubled to help feed 20 children! And don't forget, your \$1400 gift to sponsor a school will now be doubled to feed children in two schools!

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you *Without Rival* by author Lisa Bevere. With your double impact gift of \$100 or more please request *The Complete Illustrated Children's Bible*. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1000, which will now be doubled to help feed 200 children and you may request our beautiful Majesty bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, you know we appreciate so much you defeating that enemy of malnutrition. We've got the Illustrated Children's Bible for your children and grandchildren. *Without Rival*, this is a fantastic book by Lisa Bevere. She is a tremendous blessing to us.

Your Powerful Prayers, if you'd like to have this inspirational book to help you in your prayer life and your relationship with the Lord there, Susie Larson. It is in the bookstores. You can get it online. Or if you just say, "James, would you send it to me? I've tried to help you with those children and want to do it. I know you want to help me in my prayer life, and we're glad to do this." So just ask for the book.

Join me and Betty in saying thanks to Susie. What a blessing you are. Susie, we're glad to see you back. I want you to walk in health.