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Modified from 7/7/16
Week 2: Living Your Destiny
James and Betty Robison
Sheila Walsh

Sheila: Hello! I'm Sheila Walsh and welcome to *LIFE Today*! Sometimes I think we spend a lot of time sending our kids off to college; I think of my own son and somehow they're supposed to know at 18, 19, 20 what they're going to do with the rest of their life. And that can be pretty heavy; that's a lot to do. But sometimes later in life we think, Lord, have I really fulfilled my destiny? Have I really done the things that you've called me to do? Maybe there is even like a dream in your heart, something when you were younger you thought I know God wants me to do this. It's been kind of shelved for a while. Well, we're going to talk a little bit about that today.

We have a phenomenal resource available for you from some amazing Bible teachers like Lisa Bevere and Christine Caine. We asked each one of these girls, "How did you know what your destiny was in God?" And I got to be part of that series too, which was really fun.

But recently I had an opportunity to talk with James and Betty about the very thing that God is showing me about my own destiny, how even the wrong paths can even lead you ultimately to God's best. I'll tell you a little bit more about that later but first of all, watch this.

Begin video clip

James: Would you welcome Sheila Walsh? Sheila, we're glad to have you as part of *LIFE Outreach* and *LIFE Today*. You're doing a great job blessing our viewers. Thank you. -- And your participation in our mission outreaches.

I want you to just really cover some ground because you are a gifted writer and a gifted communicator. I sense here that you're taking us on what I would say is a life journey and you're talking about longings and you're talking about things that happened that had a definite affect on you. So what do you want us to hear and what do you want people to get from the book about the longing?

Sheila: It's funny. Before I started to write the book I had this experience in an arena during the kind of glory days of Women of Faith. I remember I was sitting there and there was 15,000 women in the arena. I was about to go up and speak. My husband was there, my son was there and I had this profound ache inside. I remember saying, "Lord, what is it? What's wrong with me? What is this?" And I had this -- I've never actually had -- I've never heard the audible

voice of God but I had this picture as if the Lord was taking me to a place where the arena was gone and it looked like I was in this castle. It looked like it was Scotland to me. I was invited to come into this room and it was clear to me that it was Christ who was sitting on this chair. I knelt down at his feet and he put one hand on my head and with the other hand he did like that as if to say nobody else gets to come in here.

And I began to understand that there is a place inside every man, woman, and child, those who acknowledge the presence of God, and even those who don't, and we don't know what that thing is but I believe it is a sacred ache. It is a longing for God. He is the only one that can fill that. And we'll have it, I believe partly until we see him face to face. When you don't get that you try and fill it with everything else; the woman who buys one more pair of shoes. It's really not a shoe longing that you've got. The person who goes and eats a pint of Ben and Jerry's ice cream when it stopped tasting good. The person who pops another pill when the pain is gone. You're longing for something more.

What I've come to understand is we were built to long for him and it's almost like this little stamp in our heart that says, "Hey, you're not home yet." And one day when we see Jesus face to face, those longings will all be gone. But until then, we need to understand why do I respond the way I respond in a certain given set of circumstances? Because if you don't understand it, you'll repeat it over and over until you get understanding.

James: And you come up empty until you get it.

Sheila: You do. It's like Edmund Burke, that famous Irish magistrate and great statesman said, "If you don't understand history, you're destined to repeat it."

It's like the girl who grew up with abusive father who then goes on and marries an abusive husband. Because as a child you feel helpless and you almost try and recreate the scenario longing for a different ending; this time you can change the ending.

The last time I ever looked in my father's eyes was turning in time to see him about to bring his cane down on my skull. Honestly, what I remembered more about that night wasn't just the sound of sirens as the police arrived and my mother screaming. It was the look in my father's eyes, a look of absolute hatred. I grew up thinking -- my father took his own life. He committed suicide. So nobody could tell me what my dad saw in me that made him hate me so much. And I grew up with such a profound sense of shame, which is to me guilt tells you you've done something wrong, shame tells you you *are* something wrong. And if you feel that, what do you do with that?

Some people try and hide behind drugs or alcohol, food; too much or too little. I found the perfect place to hide: Christian ministry. Who is going to say to you, "Put down that Bible or we're going to have an intervention!" It's probably not going to happen.

[Laughter]

But God is the only one who knows if we're serving out of pain or passion for him. I read somebody said, "The guy who knocks at a brothel door is really a knock at the heart of God." I was like, "Yeah right! Try getting that one past your wife!" Honestly, the more I thought about it, I thought, I actually believe that's true. Think how many men who are out there hooked on porn, one relationship after another. The next morning, do any of them feel better? No!

The woman who just buys one more outfit and you're in credit card debt and nothing is touching that place inside because it really is a longing that only God can fill.

James: How do you show someone to begin to make that connection? Because you've been on a journey making it. I don't think the journey for that connection or that closeness, I don't think it ends on this earth, you said, "Until we see him face to face." But that doesn't mean we live empty or we live with a longing that is so painful that we don't see progress. So how do you walk people through this? How do you help them walk it out?

Sheila: It is a shifter, James because I don't -- that ache, no, when Christ comes in, when you're filled with the Holy Spirit, when you learn to dive deep into God's Word and to worship, that fills so much, but there is still a little place left. But it's not the bad news; to me it's the good news -- it's a holy place. It's a sacred ache. Every single one of us can get away from the crowd and find that place where you just kneel down at his feet, feel the Lamb of God put his hand on your head and say, "You know I'm here. I'll always be here."

But I try to encourage women to like -- a woman wrote to me last week and she said, "I'm trying to control my husband but he is not listening."

[Laughter]

"I'm trying to get my kids to act right and they're not acting right." Part of our longings come from good places. Women want -- we want to provide a home where our husbands are happy and our children are happy but then if they start not to behave the way we think they should what's natural could cross into what is manipulative and destructive. And we either over-spiritualize, "I'm just behaving this way because I don't think Jesus approves of how you're living." Or we punish or we withdraw. That's what I used to be guilty of. It's like well, I'm still here but I'm not here. You vote yourself off of the boat. I'm learning that surrender is one of the

most powerfully weighty words in the English language. It is not just waving a flag and saying, "Okay. I quit." It's understanding we can't control what's going on around us. If you can barely control your own habits, how can you expect to do it with your family?

But to be able to lift those people to the feet of Christ and say, "Lord, I love this man. At the moment I don't know what he is doing." Or "I love these children but they're going off in crazy directions. You love them so much more so I surrender." And learn to work -- last week I had an opportunity to go to the Billy Graham library. If you've never been -- have you ever been?

James: I have not.

Sheila: Oh, it's brilliant! Such a sense of God's presence there. I wanted to see where my friend Ruth Bell Graham, where her grave is. I love what she wrote on it. It says: Construction completed. Sorry for the inconvenience.

[Laughter]

She's finally home free.

But whatever I remember she said to me was in the days when Franklin was really rebellious and didn't want to know anything about his dad's faith or his mom's faith and she said she used to just weep and cry and get on her knees. And then she remembered when Paul wrote to the church in Philippi he says, "Be anxious for nothing but in everything with prayer, supplication and thanksgiving." She said, "I suddenly thought. I'm not doing that!" And it shifted. She suddenly started getting down on her knees and thanking him for the day Franklin would come to Christ. Thanking the Lord for the day when Franklin would take his father's place. There's such a shift when you accept, I can't control this. But God, you are good and you have plans. So over to you and in the meantime I'm going to worship.

James: I've just looked in and I'm sure we can cut a picture of this in, but just yesterday I talked to my assistant in the office and I looked up at a picture of Billy Graham carrying a golf club, walking back to a golf cart. I'm sitting in the cart. If you look and you can see it, sitting at the table in the Graham home in North Carolina, and Billy is very much in years, just a few years ago couldn't hold a pen well but he wrote a message to James on that picture because I said, "Would you mind just signing this?" I didn't know it would be quite such a battle. But it was a greeting.

But here's what happened. He walks back and he puts the club in the bag and sits by me. I remember exactly where we're sitting, we're at the 9th hole and we're looking across the lake at a par five. By the way, he wasn't a very good golfer.

[Laughter]

Quite a preacher. He said, "Did you hear about my boy? Did you hear about Franklin?" He sits there on that golf cart and within about three or four minutes he tears up and he begins to tell me about Franklin coming to Christ. He says, "Can we just go in and get a sandwich and we'll play the back nine but let's do this. I want to tell you about it."

And T.W. Wilson was with us. We went in and sat down and Billy told me the story of Franklin coming to Christ. It was exactly what you just said. Billy said with the wisest counsel I've ever got was somebody said, "You can't confirm what he is doing, where he is, you just let him know always the door's open, son -- the door's always open."

And T.W. then told at the table how Franklin had let the people know even at his wedding how broken he was that he had hurt so many. What a great beautiful conversion of the rebel Franklin. We've been friends and I love you and you know that.

So the fact that they were able to do just what you said. You turned this over to God and really leave it. When you were talking about this journey and longing and you and I both having things we look back on in our childhood that's painful. Let me just ask you if this helps fill the longing.

When I'm reaching out and trying to know this Father. By the way, if you could just know the Father, the ultimate Father, whether we didn't have a father, had a missing father, had a father that was dysfunctional or whatever, we got the perfect Father. He knows he's not looking for perfect kids but he just wants to love you with a perfect love.

Here's what I found. If I can somehow move in and just say, "Let me sense your heart. Let me look and see the way you see and feel what you feel." It's amazing that he seems to do that. It's like he's waiting not only for someone to love but he's waiting for someone to love through.

Am I right in believing that the longing in us is fulfilled when whatever is in his heart finds a means of expression through a yielded vessel? Is that part of where you find fulfillment when you're suddenly seeing what he sees and you're trying to address it in harmony with his heart? Does that make sense?

Sheila: It totally makes sense. In fact, I spent two years studying First and Second Samuel and the Psalms because I wanted to take this journey with King David. But at the end of it, the greatest takeaway for me was understanding that no matter how great my longing for God may be, it will never hold a candle to his longing for us. Doesn't hold a candle! When you get that...

I had a picture the other day of I remember this horrible dress my mum bought me when I was just a little girl but it was all she could afford. It was for the school dance when I was 12. All the girls were wearing these straight little dresses and she brought one of those poofy ones. It stuck out. It was awful! It was blue with white little flowers on it. I went to the dance but I didn't go in. I sat behind the school all night because I thought they'll laugh at me if I go in. I went home and told my mum I had an amazing time.

But you know what I dreamt about the other night? I was dreaming and I was running across a field and I knew I was running into the arms of Jesus and I was wearing that blooming blue dress!

[Laughter]

It was just this awesome picture of you know what? I was there then. I'm here now. If you get how much I love you, you'll run into my arms every single moment of your life.

Betty: We can sense that longing, especially if we're going through challenges in life, if we've gone through loss, if we've gone through loneliness. Sometimes I've been around a crowd of people and I have a loneliness in my spirit and my heart. And I know that when I get alone with God that loneliness turns into a longing for him and I become fulfilled. I find myself looking for those moments anticipating those moments because God keeps the door open. He is always ready. Come!

Sheila: It's like the story of the prodigal son, Luke 15. We think it is this story of this bad kid and the good kid. It's not! It's the story of the father. It's like the father has thrown this ridiculous party and whether you think you don't belong there or whether you think you deserve to be there, every single one of us has been given a place at the party because it's the Father's heart.

James: I just find myself sitting here and I want so much because you don't do television -- if you have the heart of God toward people you don't do TV because you're looking for something to do. You're really wanting to be sitting in the family room with you, wherever you are. You may be in a bar. I don't know where you are. You may be in a hotel. It doesn't matter. But I look out, I find myself just really wanting you to understand that if you would let God take you in his arms and pull you up to his heart. And you say, "What would make me feel a peace and a contentment?" Just try this: Lord, would you, as you hold me, and you say you love me and you love me, and you're the shelter and the shadow. And as I just lean in, what do you want to happen through me?

Now just do this. Ask him because I believe this is his heart: Father, let me look out and see people as opportunities. Let me see them as someone that you want to touch, bless, assist, relieve in some way and let me be an expression of your heart toward them. Does this make sense? That this is what we do?

Sheila: Every single day, if we could pray this prayer, God give me eyes to see today what I would miss and give me ears to hear beyond what somebody is saying to what is going on in their heart.

Driving here to the studio I stopped at Starbucks, because one does.

[Laughter]

And there is a woman sitting outside and the Lord said, "Go talk to her." So I sat down on the sidewalk beside her and I said, "Are you okay?" She said, "No. I'm not okay." She'd just discovered she had terminal cancer. And to be able to put my arm around her and to lift her -- because she is my sister. To pray for her, to put my arm around her and say, "You know what? God heard your prayer. I'm heading somewhere else but he said, 'No, go sit down beside her.' God's listening. He cares about you."

James: You heard -- you really heard a whole download, a whole truckload of transforming truth during this little period. Your whole world can change when you literally become the person that changes someone else's world through the power of the only one who can change the world -- the one who created it and who can correct our course.

Would you just right now say, "Lord, with all my heart I want to start doing that."

Sheila: I think there are moments like that in every day where we pass someone and you might feel that little nudge and you think well, should I speak? I think those are really Holy Spirit moments when we get a chance to speak into somebody's life.

We did something so exciting, so close to my heart to tell you about. When I was maybe 16 or 17, the reason I went to seminary was because I believed that God wanted me to be a missionary in India. Interestingly enough, it is the only country I've never been to yet? I'm still believing.

But do you know there is something fascinating about that nation. God is fully beginning to move in India. And in the big cities it is not so hard to reach people, but there are so many people who live in the outlying villages. They need to know the gospel of Jesus just like the woman sitting at the side of Starbucks needed to know that God saw her. There are so many people in these villages who've never even heard the name of Jesus.

But the fascinating thing is movies are huge in India. So if you say to people, hey! Come see this movie, flocks of people, hundreds of people will come and we have the privilege to show them not just a movie, we have the privilege to introduce them to a person who will radically change their lives in India. Watch this.

On the mission field

Announcer: From football stadiums to convention centers to city streets, over the past five decades James Robison and *LIFE Outreach International* have used just about every means available to spread the good news of the gospel around the world. And even now, through the showing of a film produced in India with an all Indian cast, millions have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. *LIFE Outreach* has partnered with John Gilman of Dayspring International to mobilize hundreds of film teams to travel to remote villages of India and present this unique film on the life of Christ.

John: In this village tonight we're going to show the story of Jesus in all of its glory and these precious folks are going to see the gospel for the first time in their life and many of them are going to find joy and peace in Jesus Christ because of what someone did to help send this team here tonight.

Open captions:

>> While I'm watching the Dayasagar film, and the crucifixion scene come, I asked myself why Jesus died a very terrible death. Then I asked myself, because of my sin he died? Then I accepted Him, and I received Him as my personal savior. God did a miracle in my life.

>> I was very young when I saw Dayasagar. For my simple mind, at that time, Jesus was a great person. So I gave my life completely to Him. And now He is my horn of salvation. Then I showed the same film to my children. After that, this small guy, he said, "God is good!"

>> The night which I saw the Dayasagar movie, that night, I could not sleep because of the things that happened on the cross. Eventually I went to ask those who screen the movie from Dayasagar, can they pray for me? Because I've seen the real God today.

John: I want you to pray and ask God what he would have you to do to send our mobile teams into these villages so that many more can hear the good news of Jesus and his love.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Isn't that amazing? That absolutely blows me away! So we need to help these people. Isn't that what Jesus said before he left -- to take the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth?

And some of these people, it's unbelievable, they'll get their equipment and they're on bikes, they're doing all sorts of stuff. If they know there's a village somewhere, they are going to get to it. They just need us to help on our end. And it's really reasonable.

For \$40 you can actually share that film with 400 people. \$1,000 shares it with 10,000 people or 25 villages! Or if you feel you can do a little bit more, \$4400 will equip a team that will give them the DVD player, everything to set it up in the village, and they go. These people are committed. I know these people well. I've known them for 20-30 years. They are dear friends of mine.

And to get the stories back of the numbers of people, of young children, men and women who suddenly they watch the story of Christ and it becomes alive and real. Really, there is a revival beginning in India and you and I get to be a part of it.

So please, will you give your very best gift? With any gift at all we have this *Living Your Destiny* CD. It's got Beth Moore, Lisa Bevere, Sheila Walsh, Christine Caine, Sarah Jakes Roberts.

Now if you give a little bit more, if you're able to give \$120, then we're going to send you my book, *The Longing in Me* and Christine Caine's amazing book, *Unashamed*.

But let's do this. Let's make sure there's not one village left in India that hasn't heard the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It used to be so hard to be a woman in India. You probably know something of the caste system too where some people are made to feel the lowest of the low. When these people see that God Almighty became the lowest of the low so that they could find a way home, they respond to the gospel.

So let me just remind you, it's so doable! A gift of \$40 -- 400 people in a village will see the movie. \$120, you'll share it with 1200 people! Isn't that amazing? To think that what you might pay to go out and have a meal will suddenly mean that there is 50, 60, 1200 people around the marriage feast of the Lamb when this is all over down here because you cared enough to make sure that movie got to every single village in India with the good news.

The amazing thing is I've talked to John Gilman and he's told me that most of these people, it's the first time they have ever heard that Jesus came. Let's take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Go to your phones right now, would you? Thank you!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Go into all the world and preach the gospel. In a nation filled with so much poverty and spiritual darkness, *LIFE Outreach* has partnered with John Gilman to present a powerful motion picture on the life of Christ that displays his miracles and demonstrates his love to the people of India.

With your support, 2.4 million souls who are looking for our savior's love will be reached with this unique outreach. While the number is great, the cost to present the gospel message is only 10 cents per person. That means your gift of \$40 will share the light of God's love with 400 people! \$80 will help share the film with 800 people. \$120 will share the film with 1200 people. And \$1200 will help reach 10,000 people with the life-changing message of the gospel.

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you the exclusive audio CD series, *Living Your Destiny*. Hear five outstanding Bible teachers and women of faith share how to live the life God destined for you.

With your gift of \$120 or more to help reach 1200 people with the gospel through film evangelism, you may also request two outstanding books, *The Longing in Me* by Sheila Walsh and *Unashamed* by Christine Caine.

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

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: So really, it's a perfect marriage, isn't it? It's as if we're moving those people into their great destiny with God.

We want to send you this, *Living Your Destiny*. Really, we love the way you partner with us all around the world and make such a difference. I really think it wouldn't be until we're finally done here and we'll all get home that we'll see the impact of what you did because you reached out in Jesus' name.

So for James and Betty, I'm Sheila Walsh saying thank you! God bless you!