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Week 7: WFL

James & Betty Robison

A.R. Bernard

James: Oh, boy! Thank you so much. Thank you! Welcome! I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to have you. A.R. Bernard is with us. This man is, in my opinion, a gift from God. I think he is a miraculous testimony/journey. He was part of what he referred to as a radical Muslim group. Came to know Christ; he has one of the most powerful churches in the country, The Cultural Center in Brooklyn. I just praise God for him. I want you to welcome A.R. Bernard to *LIFE Today*. Would you do that?

Doc, good to see you. You are going to discuss with us four things women want from a man. Probably the first thing they would ask is what do you know about what a woman wants from a man?

A.R.: Yeah! The audacity of me to tell women what they want. But after 44 years of marriage to the same woman, and 38 years of ministry, counseling couples and individuals I decided you know what? I need to put this into some form so I can get it out there. I've been very concerned about the state of relationships especially as we experience rapid cultural change, breakdown of all social values and social traditions that we have known for so long in our nation. 85% of relationships fail. 40%-50% of first marriages end in divorce. 60% of second marriages end in divorce. I wish that I could say the statistics were better in the church but unfortunately the church is mirroring the world.

We have a situation where we've gone through, and I talk about it in the book, a change in what motivates people to get married. You go back before the 1850s, before the Industrial Revolution, and it was quite basic. A woman married a man for protection, for shelter, for provision because of the hostility that existed in those times here in America. If there was love involved it was an added attraction. By the 1850s the Industrial Revolution comes in and everything changes. Women are now in the workplace, they get the right to vote, they're now earners within the household and that leads right up to the 1960s. And from the 1850s to the 1960s the motivation was love, companionship, things of that nature, which is still wholesome.

But with the Revolutions of the 1960s, everything shifted; then it became self-actualization, self-discovery and that became the motivation. So people are going into marriage, and this is so true amongst the millennials to discover themselves in the other person. You cannot resolve the identity crisis that is inward externally. You have to deal with it internally within yourself as an individual. So the divorce rate goes up because this is the dilemma that people are in.

So I wrote the book, first of all to give men an organized system of thought concerning women; secondly, to give women a framework with which to make better choices in their relationship with men; and thirdly, to address some of the issues in the institution of marriage in our nation.

James: Well, it's been out now for quite a few months. Have you found the response to be positive? I would imagine because what I've heard it is. Are you getting feedback that is gratifying?

A.R.: Yeah! It's come in #1 in several categories, interestingly enough. What I'm excited about is the millennials. The millennials are picking up the book and reading it. Single, as well as married. And millennials, their whole orientation is quite different. But when you talk about relationship, you get everyone's attention.

James: In what way do you say they millennials are different?

A.R.: Millennials represent 85 to 90 million Americans. They are the largest generation since my generation, the Baby Boomers. They are the most educated generation but they're also the most disappointed generation because they come out of school having all that education but burdened by an average of \$33,000 in student loan debt. Forty-six percent of millennial males live at home with their parents. Thirty-seven percent of millennial females live at home with their parents, and not because they are lazy but primarily for economic reasons. The cause of this depression is one of the biggest burdens that millennials carry, this struggling to deal with themselves; so you know they're going to struggle to deal with relationship with other people.

Betty: Do you think they think that our generation made a mess of things so now they've got to clean it up a little bit?

A.R.: To a degree but they're very creative and they're very purpose driven. Gallup put out a study of millennials in the workplace and how they've actually transformed the workplace and how the workplace is managed and led. And although they look for money, they want to get paid, they want a good salary, but that's secondary to the job giving them a sense of meaning and purpose. So when they're looking for relationships, they're looking for meaning and purpose within the relationship. If they don't find it, they move on to another relationship.

James: When I look down the table of contents that I was trying to find these four things because your top two words, four things so I'm looking and trying to find the four things in the

first chapter. It's about four things. I'm sure you explain it there under the Culture of Marriage but you go down to these four things. I want to ask you if this is the four things; all right? Maturity, decisiveness, consistency, and strength: four things. Do you want to touch on any one of those in the time frame we've got right here?

A.R.: Sure! I'll go through it very quickly. Let me say this to you that all the women that we interviewed for the book, after our conversation, they agreed that those four things really summarized what they were looking for. You take maturity. I can't tell you how many women said to me in the conversation, "I just wish he'd grow up!" Well, what do they mean by that? That's the question because men don't understand it. We don't get that right away.

Let me just go back very quickly to my wife. The #1 complaint that women have about men is that men don't listen. So when I finished the manuscript I gave it to my wife and she read it. When she finished, she called me. I said, "What do you think?"

She looked up at me and smiled and said, "You've been listening."

Those are my credentials for the book. But then she also added, "And I'm not finished with you." So I get it. So that will be another book.

But maturity does not come with age. It begins with the acceptance of responsibility. When a man accepts responsibility for his words, thoughts, motives, actions, and attitudes now he's on the pathway for maturity. So you can have a man that's 60 years old and immature, and a young man 21 years old who has accepted responsibility and he is mature.

The second thing that women look for around the theme of maturity is decorum. She wants to know that the man she is with knows how to conduct himself in any given circumstance or situation. Men, when they're facing an intimidating situation, they tend to regress into adolescence forcing the woman to become a mother to them and then getting mad at her for mothering him.

Betty: Nagging him.

A.R.: But I know none of your audience has been through that.

[Laughter]

James: Decisiveness.

A.R.: Decisiveness is the ability to make... Let me back up again. It's a woman's prerogative to change her mind but we don't have that luxury as men.

[Laughter]

Decisiveness is the ability to make decisions quickly and confidently. In order to do that you have to have a set of values and principles that guide your decision-making process. Your values are what's most important to you, what you stand for, what you're willing to pay the price for, what you're willing to die for. Principle is a broad and basic truth that requires wisdom, judgment and discernment. In order for a man to develop these things he has to do it intentionally.

We don't have the luxury of God's gift that He gave to women where they know these things intuitively. The Bible says: Husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge; which means we have the responsibility to make you a study but it never tells you to study us because you know us. We don't like that because you know our patterns, you know how we do things. It's just amazing. My wife knows more about me than I'm comfortable with.

Betty: And we don't forget; do we?

A.R.: That's decisiveness and consistency. A woman wants to know that what a man says and does have to be in agreement. Women look for safety and security in a relationship, and that's based on trust. So when his words and his actions are consistent, it allows her to feel a sense of trust in him and she feels safe and secure. She doesn't expect him to do everything right. She understands his humanity but at the same time there should be a degree of consistency that makes her feel secure in the relationship.

James: The last of the four: strength.

A.R.: Strength: not the macho...

James: Not at the gym all the time?

A.R.: No, the strength that I'm talking about is a strength and security that a man has in himself when he is secure in his own identity that allows him to be gentle and kind. Because when a man is strong, he can be gentle, he can be kind. The second aspect of strength is a strength that gives him the courage to live out his convictions because when he's a man of convictions, a woman knows that when he goes out into the world she can trust him because he's not going to compromise those convictions because he has the courage and strength to live them out.

James: Do y'all like what you've heard so far? We've got a lot of ladies here. I would say probably two-thirds of the audience is women and he's okay?

[Laughter]

Now how would you summarize the conclusion? When someone gets through this, what do you want them to walk away with?

A.R.: I want them to walk away with the sense that there's hope no matter what condition their relationship is in, no matter what they've gone through. I talk about times in our marriage where I just didn't get it and my wife suffered. I talk about 1984 where my wife actually miscarried because I had my priorities out-of-whack and the marriage was under such great pressure. I'm pastoring at the time and we're talking about divorce. God had to deal with me personally, deeply, and cause me to repent. So I talk about it in the book. It's a little funny but at the same time it's very hard turning.

James: That's really where we need to end up. We're talking about change in America. Everybody wants change. God calls it repentance which is a change of mind, a change of heart leading to a change of direction and action. I mentioned and because I know that in order for any man to be what a woman wants, for the couple to be what they should be in order to have a meaningful relationship, we need a relationship with a greater source of power. We need to know the Father because a lot of the problems in marriages come from a fatherless situation or a dysfunctional father or a dysfunctional man in relationships.

So something happened to you. You were a radical Muslim. Give us a little bit of what – because this is what everybody needs that says, “I just can't seem to get it together.” There's someone able to help us begin to put all the puzzle parts together. What happened to you?

A.R.: Well, I'm a product of the '60s. The '60s in America was filled with every revolution you can imagine, spiritual, social, racial, civil rights movement, revolution in music that was coming in from all over the world; and I was a product of that. I grew up without a father. I never knew my father. So I had the identity crisis that comes with growing up fatherless but at the same time my father was white, my mother was black, descendant of Africans who came to Panama where I was born to get work in a canal zone.

So I've got this social identity crisis, racial identity crisis, and I'm in a context where the identity crisis is exploding all over the place in communities of color. I was part of the desegregation program where they bussed us out to white schools in order to desegregate them. So I felt being an experiment but I was able to adapt to that reality and grow through it. So by the end of the '60s I had made a decision that I wanted to be socially involved. I was always socially aware, politically aware; the war in Vietnam, my problems with the military industrial complex that the war was feeding. I had friends who died in the war. Some who came back maimed, some who came back strung out on heroin. So I knew that something had to change.

So the nation of Islam presented order, strength, identity; those things that as a young man I needed. So I got involved in the nation of Islam from 1970 to 1975; radical Muslim movement. But I didn't find God. Nor did I buy into the notion that the white race was the devil. I understood that it was the system and the system is what had to change. So I didn't convert fully to the theology of the nation even though I bought into the social identity. After a while, I understood it as what it was.

See Professor C. Eric Lincoln was a friend of mine. Before he died he wrote the definitive work on the nation of Islam and it had to be understood as not a religion but a social protest against America's failure to deal with the socio-economic plight of blacks in this country. And the Christian churches failure to do the same as well. So I was there and I was going in a direction to really take on this radical persona to push revolutionary change in the United States.

At the same time, I was a banker. I was a banker from 1970 to 1979. And in 1974, God sends – I can say God sends now because I understand it – but a young lady came to work for me as a secretary. She was a Pentecostal woman. I was always cerebral; studied and read and I would ask her questions. She would go back to her pastor and ask him. Finally, he said, “Look. You need to stop talking to this guy because he's going to confuse you!”

[Laughter]

And what tormented me, and I use the word *torment* specifically, was her simple childlike faith in this Jesus. Jesus to me was one of the prophets in a long line of prophets but not God Incarnate. That I could not embrace. Not only that, Christianity was the religion of the oppressor. So how could I accept something that was an imperialist tool to oppress me and people like me. So she finally invited me to a meeting where a guy named Nicky Cruz was giving his testimony, his story. I'm using the language now.

James: By the way, he's been here. He's a friend because I'm close to David Wilkerson.

A.R.: So I went to the meeting. My wife came with me and he shared his story in broken English and all of the sudden I'm overwhelmed and I start weeping. I hear two things. Number one: I'm the God you're looking for. I knew intuitively that it was Christ. I just knew it. I can't explain it; I knew it. It was him.

The second thing I heard was: I and my word are one. Which turned me away from the pictures, paintings, images, and movies of the white Jesus, the Asian Jesus, the Indian Jesus and it took me to scripture. Scripture became the Word to me and Christ became the Word. So I went up to the platform. Nicky said, “Do you want me to pray for you?”

I said, “Yeah! Pray for me!”

He began praying. I felt like somebody put a blowtorch to my chest and blew a hole. I couldn't stop weeping. I walked to the back.

My secretary and her husband were there and she came down. She looked at me and I'm trying to straighten myself out. She said, “Did you get it?” I had no idea what I was supposed to get but she said, “Did you get it? Did you get it?”

I said, “Something happened to me up there, something very deep and very profound.”

They hand me a book by a guy named Merlin Carothers called, *Prison to Praise*. I read it in one hour. Within 10 days I was invited to go to a prayer meeting. I went there and I remembered the book said the hallelujah is the highest praise you can give to God so I started saying it. And boy, all the sudden things started happening to me physically, emotionally, and I realize that that moment I encountered God's Holy Spirit and that conversion took place deeply and profoundly.

James: Don't you say praise God? A.R., I love you buddy! I just thank God for you. This book is phenomenal. So it is in the bookstores, you can go online and get it. I think it's in Walmart, I think it's in the discount houses. It ought to be there because it's great.

I'll tell you what. A.R., we're going to try to give water not only to people who need a water well but we're actually going to be able to give water to people that's clean where you can't get a drilling rig in. It's one of the most exciting things I've ever been able to share. By the way, you help us give a cup of water, you help us give a family fresh water, we'll send you the book just to say thank you.

I want you to look in. I want you to see something that I think is going to really stir your heart, asking a question about why. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Child's voice: I take my mother's hand and I walk with her for miles to find water to drink. And I ask, "Why, Momma?"

I watch as she dips her cup into the filthy water that we share with the dirty animals and again I ask, "Why, Momma?"

I watch as my brothers and sisters, one by one become ill after drinking our water and still I ask, "Why, Momma?"

I look upon my brother's grave and watch my mother cry and I'm afraid to ask, "Am I next, Momma?"

Announcer: Our children look to us to make sense of what they see. Far too many mothers around the world must carry the burden of knowing they have no other option than to give contaminated water to those most precious to them, their own children.

They must daily live with the knowledge that by their own hands they may cause their children to grow ill and possibly die. It is not a matter of *if* but *when*. For many of us who look upon this dilemma we must also ask ourselves, when will we help stop this cycle of illness and death? If not now, then when?

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, it's going to be when because I'm telling you that I'm talking to people right now all over the world, not just here in the United States or North America, but all over the world who want to be in the truest sense of the word the hands of Jesus, to put God's caring arms around a suffering world.

And Jesus said, "You just give a cup of water in my name, you won't lose your reward." Don't start thinking about riches and resources. I want you to think about the reward of knowing you did something that changed someone's life and that you did something that pleased your Father who has poured out blessings upon us and wants to pour blessings out through us.

So what I'm asking you to do, and Betty, I've never been so excited. We're going to drill with your help 400 water wells. The missionaries have told us that we face several crisis situations that we have to, I'm talking about in rapid order, begin drilling and drill it's like emergency wells, 188 immediately, which means we're going to need to have a surge of support.

But Betty, we've also found, and you know most of the places where we drill we know there is water subsurface because they dig bore holes that become rapidly contaminated but we know the water is there. So we're able to drill and case it and protect it and give them a manual pump so they can get the water. But we've got many areas where the terrain does not allow us to take in a drilling rig. One of those areas that's in crisis right now is Burundi. And in Burundi they have got areas where they desperately need water in the terrain we can't get to.

Now here's what's happened. Someone, I think – you know people created in the image of God can meet any need. It's amazing what we can do. There is a filter that works like dialysis and it is a filter that you simply put with a hose out of a five gallon container and it filters the water by gravity, you don't have to have any power source, just gravity feed, and it goes into glasses, cups, whatever. It's like a miracle gift from God. Right now those have been made available, three of those filter system for \$100. They're just over \$33 a piece. That means three families, \$100.

Now here's what I want you to think about. When we drill water wells, many of you have done, because you've felt a commitment and leading of the Lord, you've done what we started years ago to do. We said, "God, we want to drill a well every time the missionaries call for it." God has enabled us to do that. We started back when they were \$3600; it moved to \$4800, it's a little bit of a challenge. Then we went twice a year to give the emphasis. We said, "God, help us!" Many

have joined and you're able to give a well. Some of you have a prayer group that does this, some of you have a business that does it, couples do it. Thank God if you can do that. Others, Betty, will give \$1200, pray three join, \$2400, and pray another joins. So do that because we really need some emergency support right now. But think about it. You can give three families water for \$100 gift; filtered, clean water. It's miraculous what it does!

Here's what I'm asking you to do. Right now, very prayerfully under the leadership of the Lord, you give what God put on your heart. You're giving water for life, the missionaries are going to tell them about the water of life. It's going to be the love of God that motivates the gift, enables the missionaries to deliver the message not just in word but in deed. So if you can help us, I'm asking you right now to go to the website that you see right there on the screen or dial the number that's there, always a prayer line and right now for you it's an answer-to-prayer line. That's what it is. I want you to take your bankcard and make the largest gift you can. You can give a well or a portion of a well, please do so. You can give \$100 to provide three families with the filter system. Many of our gifts, Betty, most of the support comes from people who give \$48 or \$144. \$48, 10 people basically water the rest of their life with the water well; \$144, 30 people the rest of their lives. There is a level at which you can support.

We have some beautiful gifts that we're going to be sending you: Sheila's book, the beautiful canvas, "No Greater Name" and the beautiful "Determined Eagle" bronze. So we want to say thank you but you're going to be giving the greatest gift. You're giving the gift of life. Right now go online, dial the number, use your bankcard like a check. Thank you for sharing life!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day children living in extreme poverty are forced to make a dreadful choice, drink filthy polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

Our teams have recently identified 188 remote villages in southern Africa where children are suffering from contaminated, disease ridden water. The situation is desperate. They need clean disease-free water immediately.

With your gift today you can help drill fresh water wells in remote villages across seven African nations. Your gift of \$24 will provide clean water for five people. A gift of \$48 will provide for ten. \$72 provides for 15 people. And \$144 will help provide fresh disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift we'll send you Sheila Walsh's devotional, *5 Minutes with Jesus*, a fresh infusion of joy to help you experience a deeper connection with God.

Please consider an additional gift of \$100 to help provide three families with water filtration kits in emergency areas where our rigs cannot reach. And you may request our “No Greater Name” canvas print.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request our beautiful new hand-painted “Determined Eagle” bronze sculpture.

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: We want to say thank you. You’re going to receive Sheila Walsh’s book. If you possibly can, I not only want you to get this beautiful bronze, I want you to be a determined eagle, determined to soar on the turbulence of the times and the challenges of the day. We’re lifted by the mighty power of God.

You help us provide water and you would like to have Dr. Bernard’s book, *Four Things Women Want from a Man*. Women approved it.

[Laughter]

It’s good stuff.

Would you join us saying thanks? By the way, we’ll say thank you with this book here if you want it. Say thanks to A.R. Love you, buddy! God bless you in Brooklyn. God bless your incredible ministry. God bless America!

Thank you for watching. Thanks for your help.

Announcer: In his new book, *Living Amazed* James Robison shares how divine encounters can change your life. *Living Amazed* -- coming soon to online and retail bookstores.