

2/13/17

Week 8: WFL

James and Betty Robison

Jimmy Evans and Alan Kelsey

James: You want to welcome everybody since we're talking about marriage? She ought to be real excited.

Betty: Thank you so much for joining us on *LIFE Today*. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: Yeah, we're in that 50 year range, 54 range of marriage now. She gave me another one year contract. I made it barely but we got the counselors here to help us.

Here's the deal. You don't think about this a minute. Jimmy Evans and Karen, his wife, have been coming here a long time. Probably how many years, Jimmy, have y'all been coming to *LIFE Today*?

Jimmy: Fifteen.

James: When Jimmy Evans, all of the sudden and my pastor, Robert Morris, have tremendous respect for him, start telling me how Jimmy actually joined with another fellow to write a book on Strengths Based Marriage and he says really, the other guy is the strength of this book.

What I've seen that he is sharing is probably as dynamic, as affective as anything I've ever heard.

Then I call Robert. I said, "Look, Robert, I don't know that I know this guy, this Alan Kelsey. I think he is on staff there?" "He's on staff now." I said, "Well, you put a lot of people on staff. You'd probably give me a job if I needed one." He said, "No. This guy is good!" He said, "James, he is really good."

So I kind of reconfirmed with Jimmy. So I met him. You know what? I like him. So how about you welcome the author with Jimmy Evans, Alan Kelsey, Strengths Based Marriage. Would you welcome Jimmy and Alan to *LIFE Today*?

[Applause]

We've already had a nice meal together and you did a lot to straighten out this very damaged marriage.

Alan: Well, we've made some progress.

James: Thank you. Jimmy, why are you excited about what this guy shares? And you've joined him to try to pour it out. Why?

Jimmy: This is one of the most incredible resources I've ever seen and it really started in the business world. The number one business book in the world is called StrengthsFinder. It's based on Clifton's StrengthsFinder assessment that finds your strengths.

We've taken it at Marriage Today, all of our staff took it, all the Gateway staff has taken it: 15 million people have taken the Clifton StrengthsFinder, the assessment, to find their strengths.

Many corporations and businesses across America and around the world use that to help identify who their employees are --

James: It's proven accurate and reliable?

Jimmy: Incredible -- 40 years.

James: It's transformative when people find out what it is? It is beneficial to the business and the individual.

Jimmy: That's right. But it helps you to understand who you are dealing with. For an employee, and when they are placing employees they know if an employee has these strengths you want to put them here. So it's tremendously beneficial.

Well, Alan and I started talking about marriage. A lot of people know in business: This is who I am. These are my strengths and this is how it applies to business. But what about spouses? Because most people in marriage think there is something wrong with their spouse. We're attracted to each other. We get married. We love each other. Then in the process of marriage we have this thought that says if you were like me you would be normal. But you're not like me and you're really irritating me and so I hope that you get the memo that you're supposed to change so our marriage can be healed.

But here's the issue. You are different by God's design. The surest way to fail is to try to change the unchangeable. And what's unchangeable is we're different by God's design. So when you respect each other's differences and you celebrate each other's differences, and this is

what this book is all about, is understanding that you're different, understanding specifically how you're different.

This changed Karen and me. We didn't have a bad marriage. A few years ago I found out about the Strengths Finders because we took it at work. Phenomenal! I found out a lot about myself. Then Alan gave it to Karen and me.

James: The one, his test. The one he references here.

Jimmy: The Clifton StrengthsFinders, and then he sat down with us and after 40 years of marriage, we've been married 43 years, after 40 years of marriage, we had a good marriage, I understood my wife in a different way that I ever had before and I had a language now for her differences. This is what the StrengthsFinders does. He gives you a language of being able to sit down and communicate. And rather than thinking I think you're weird or I wish you were more like me, all of the sudden you're saying, "I thank God you're like you are because you know something? We make a fantastic team."

Since Alan and I have written the book we have had a lot of opportunities to sit down with couples and to talk to couples about their differences.

Recently we had a couple that we sat down with and Alan began to talk to him about his strengths and her about her strengths. And in the middle of the conversation, this couple had been married about 25 years -- pastors, really sharp people -- in the middle of the conversation the guy says, "I've always thought there was something wrong with her." And he turns to his wife and said, "Baby, I'm sorry. I have never accepted you."

And you can see the look on her face that for the first time in 25 years she was accepted for who she was.

James: And recognized. And that it was actually not a weakness but a strength. Jump in here Alan because, share what's on your heart that you want the viewers to see because we're not just here to talk about a book or talk about marriage or difficulties, you're actually here believing that people can have a miraculous transformation with understanding in the relationship that is meaningful and beneficial to them individually and collectively.

Alan: Absolutely! I couldn't believe in it more strongly. That's really a primary reason I wanted to try to see if I could coerce Jimmy into writing the book with me because I felt like really what we're trying to do with this book, James, we're trying to change the language of marriage. We're trying to change the language of marriage and here's why. Because historically, psychology has been about pathology. It's been about finding the pothole in the road; let's move it over, then I can travel the road unimpeded.

But nobody has paused until Dr. Don Clifton did in the '50s to say, "Wait! What if we stopped trying to figure out what's wrong with each other? There are still things you're going to have to work on, I get that, but what if we poured as much attention into the things that were right about each other and we figured out what those were, what kind of power might come on the other end of that?"

This book is dedicated to everybody who's got, they may have a couple of challenges but where is the material for the marriages who are saying we just want to get stronger. We want to get

better. We know there is a better tomorrow out there for us and we want to get into that.

What's out there for us?

James: Do you think that what you lead people to see and the tests that you lead them to take, would you call it a strength identifier or a strength or weakness identifier or just an identifier of reality? How do you look at what they're going to discover?

Alan: It is absolutely a strength identifier. Forty years of research has gone into this survey; 7,000 people take this survey every day. And here's why, James. Because we want to learn about ourselves. And the survey is designed in such a way as to help each of us get out of our own way.

Now here's the thing. If I want to know something about myself, I need something else outside of me to help me learn about myself. Either a friend, a story from my family or a mirror of some kind of. But if I want to see the whole me I have to have a full length mirror in order to be able to do that. I cannot see all of me in one shot unless I have something outside of who I am to help me see that. That's what that is.

James: Do you agree?

Jimmy: Absolutely! When I read my assessment, the top five strengths...

James: And it takes, how many do you look at and then determine five? You're looking at how many possibilities?

Jimmy: When a person goes on line to take their strength assessment.

James: And they're led there through the book.

Jimmy: That's right. And it costs \$15 to get your top five. And that's really all you need.

James: How many to get to the top five?

Jimmy: 34 and they take the 34 possibilities and give you your top five.

James: And is this really proven reliable? Almost irrefutably reliable?

Alan: Irrefutably. So here's the statistics on it. It's one-in-33 million chance that somebody out there is going to have the same top five strengths as me in my order -- one in 33 million. If we go to number six because you have 34 and you have 34 and he has 34 and I have 34, they just occur in different sequence because we're made in his image and he has all 34 at number one. So if I have 34, it's because I'm made like him but my sequence looks different. If we go to number six, it is a one-in-one billion chance of finding another person who's like me. If we go to number eight, it is a one-in-700 billion people chance of finding somebody who has the same eight strengths as me on my list.

James: Does this play out, let's say in the reality realm of personality traits, our tendencies that are just there like a D.N.A.? It's absolutely the way it is but your D.N.A. is unique to you?

Jimmy: Well, Psalm 139 says that God knit me in my mother's womb. I'm fearfully and

wonderfully made and Psalm 139 says, God has so many thoughts for me in my mother's womb, it is like the sand of the seashore.

See we were detailed in our mother's womb. James and Betty, you were made in your mother's womb to accomplish what you're accomplishing right now. God did that. And he put not only your strengths in you, he put you together to complement one another. So as a team -- see, God looked down at Adam and he said, "It is not good that man's alone." He said, "I'll make a helper comparable to him. That doesn't mean same. That means someone who complements him in his strengths.

Here is something that -- we're trying to change the language of marriage. Most people believe if they married the right soulmate that they would find someone who is just like them and they would live happily ever after. And a lot of people believe that. The reason I'm miserable in marriage is I actually married the devil's ex-wife and she is driving me crazy.

[Laughter]

That's what a lot of people believe.

James: By the way, if you accidentally married somebody much like you, a person can be miserable in a hurry.

Jimmy: Absolutely! So God in his mercy put us together with someone. This is marriage. In marriage our strengths do this, not this. We blend, we complement. So I look at 43 years of marriage, you guys have an phenomenal marriage. I look and I thank God every day that

God gave me Karen because Karen is such a blessing to fill in my strengths. I used to think if she was just like me, now I think, thank God she is not like me.

So when a person, when a couple understands their strengths they're going to understand we are a dynamic team. We respect each other. What I believe is the soulmate myth that a lot of people believe -- and remember, the devil is the accuser of the brethren. And the devil incessantly accuses us to each other to try to get us to believe that there is something wrong, they're against me, they're not the right person for me. And it is such a wonderful thing to wake up -- and this book will do that, and the assessment will do that -- to wake up and be able to look at your spouse and say, "Man! Look at what God did when he put us together."

James: Add to it, Alan because I know you're excited about what you've seen happen. You've seen people when they come to this point of understanding that just everything, it just moves forward in a very positive way?

Alan: It does. It gives you and your spouse a language to interpret behavior in a new way, a positively filtered way. So let me if I have you an example. My number one strength is "achiever." A few years back I came home from work, it was a Thursday afternoon. I knew Friday we were going to have dinner with Jeff and Sandra, they're coming over to the house. He knows who I'm talking about. I knew who the clients were that I was going to see on Friday was I was going to be late. So I knew that I needed to mow the grass that day so that it would be right for our guests the next day.

Well, I pull in the driveway. Stephanie has been in the kitchen cooking a meal for me and its her desire to get it to me hot and ready the minute I walk in the door.

James: You've got to go mow the yard.

Alan: I've got to go mow the yard. In my heart of hearts, James, my desire is to bless her to have the home beautiful and have everything right and so I fly out of the car. It's hot, it's summer time, I jump on that lawn mower and I'm out there, man. But I'm running out of daylight. Eventually the sun actually sets completely.

James: What's that meal doing?

Alan: It's getting cold.

James: It's bothering me, man.

Alan: Now I'm out there mowing by flash light.

James: By the way, I'm getting bothered and I'm not your wife.

Alan: I understand it. Well, finally I go inside and my heart is filled with love and joy. I think I accomplished something great. I'm blessing her for all that's about to happen. And she about came unglued when I came in the house. We had a confrontational conversation.

All that changes when you realize, okay, this man is built by God to achieve things. Number two, he is an incredibly strategic thinker so he is thinking about what's coming in the future and there is a plan here. I probably just don't understand what's going on. I bet I'm going to find

out what's going on. So that releases some of the pain and the anxiety in her.

James: She's getting an understanding of you but I've still got to get to when you're going to get some understanding of her?

Alan: So then it comes around for me because when I get inside and I go to say to her, "Honey, look at what happened." She expresses her discomfort then I get to talk with her about what's going on and we can come to a middle ground understanding.

James: And you understood where she was as a result of coming to understand who she is.

Alan: Yes. So it changes the dynamic because in situation A she is mad at me -- and listen to me. Listen to what she said to me. I walked in the door and she said to me, "You know what? This drives me nuts." I said, "What? I'm doing a good thing." She said, "I wish I was grass."

[Laughter]

"It doesn't make a lick of sense. Why do you wish you were grass?" She said, "Because at least I'd get mowed once a week."

[Laughter]

James: You know what my wife said when I was learning to fly? Because we couldn't get anywhere. Ministry, I'm driving 50,000 miles a year and I'm getting run off of the road three or

four times, in the ditches, head-on collisions. I said, "We've got to get there; it's safer up there." And they're letting old crazy people, I'm the only one crazy driving a plane. I'm working so hard to get my license. You've never seen anybody get their private license faster than I did.

Betty: 24/7 he was working on it.

James: I'd come in and she would say, "I just need to put a propeller on the end of my nose so you'll look at me.

Alan: It's the cutting grass story all over again! So now we've got this same scenario, two ways to play it out. One is I don't have the strength language. And we're just fighting at each other. She thinks I'm doing it to annoy her. I think she is being unreasonable because I love her and I'm trying to think strategically. It's a misunderstanding. The whole thing collapses, the evening is ruined.

Betty: So how do you make those strengths mesh?

James: So you can understand each other all the sudden?

Alan: So the same scenario played out where we understand each other's strengths. We come to the misunderstanding with the conversation of saying, "Honey, my achiever wanted to get it done. This is why I was thinking about it strategically. This isn't aimed at the exception of you. I'm trying to bless you by getting this done.

James: What was driving her to be this wonderful wife and person she was, what's that

strength that you were too stupid to see until you finally got the test?

Alan: Because James, I married up.

James: But when you saw it in her, what did you see to where you could then understand where she was?

Alan: One of her high strengths is "relater" and what that means is she strongly values intimate and close relationship. What she saw by me mowing was the forfeit of that. She wasn't able to have that. And she was so looking forward to us being able to have that time together. What she didn't realize was I wanted that too. I wanted it for the rest of the evening.

James: Jimmy, if our viewers would get the book, and you know they can go on line and get it, they can go to the bookstores and get it; you want everybody to get it?

Jimmy: Absolutely!

James: You believe it will help their marriage and you've been a marriage counselor a long time. You think this is a real asset? It will work?

Jimmy: Yes!

James: Here's a buy-in because I have confidence and you've won me; and your wife, she is lovely. Here's the deal. Did they win you? Because we had some time before we came out here. We had to check them out before we let you see then. We wanted to be sure. Here's

the deal. We want you to have the book.

Jimmy, you know because you've seen our mission programs around the world, Gateway helps us. You've been a part of that because you help approve -- let's help them. What we do works. If our viewers will help us get water to people, doesn't it change everything in a village and in a family?

Jimmy: Unbelievable! Saves lives.

James: It does. So here we want to save and build marriages. We want to ask you to help us save lives. Let's keep people with their children. Let's give them a future. Here's what we want to show you. You've known we can drill a water well if you watch us often. By the way, if you watch *LIFE Today* very often you're going to want to drill a well. You'll likely make it one of your annual goals. \$4800 drills a well. We've got a crisis situation where we focused on 188 areas. It's crisis. We've got to get the well quick. That means I need a miracle surge of people saying "I'll drill a well." "I'll drill part of a well." \$1200 and three people join, well, we've got one. \$2400 and another person joins and we've got another one. Whatever you can do.

But here's the good news. In those areas we can't even get a drilling rig in, the terrain is not passable for a big rig. We can get each family their own filter system. It is unique -- and listen to me -- three families for \$100 can get fresh clean water no matter how filthy it is. Their filthy water becomes perfect.

I want you to watch because you're going to see the miracle but you're the one that makes it

possible. Would you just watch? I want you to watch prayerfully because you are the answer to a lot of prayers.

On the mission field

Announcer: Our mission team sees many heartbreaking needs while on location. So it's especially rewarding to show viewers the profound impact your partnership with us has had in people's lives. Like this dedication of a freshwater well.

Families whose only choice was to drink contaminated water will now have permanent access to clean and safe water for the first time in their lives.

But many live in areas that are simply inaccessible to our drilling rigs.

Ralph: There are places up in the mountain areas especially where they cannot get well drilling rigs. The sources that they get this water from is just like mud puddles. It is full of germs. There is a shot of their water that they would bring to their home to give their children on a daily/weekly basis.

Announcer: Recently though, our missions director was shown a solution to this problem. And we think it is a game changer.

Ralph: *LIFE* has been given an opportunity to bring these water filtration systems into the mountains. This is the part that is going to clean the water into beautiful life-giving water. So you put the filter on, it screws on real easy and within just a few minutes they will have beautiful

clean water. They are no longer bringing water that is killing their child, they can get water that brings life to their child.

Announcer: Incredibly, this filter system transforms dirty water into clean water; and clean water is what we want every child to have. Along with drilling freshwater wells, this filter system represents powerful solutions to a problem God is using us all to help solve. One village, one family, and one life at a time.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I'm going to get my staff to cut back in the big well; and you see the water coming in and all of them happy. That's kind of in the community; you can see that. But right here, a mother can take that water home and then begin to filter that for that child.

Betty, you've watched so many of them pray, who had lost a child and knew they would lose another and possibly another. What does that do to you when you see how simple that is?

Betty: That's awesome! It's the best thing yet to come up with where you can't drill in certain areas to offer this to a family. Can you imagine the joy that would bring that mother to know that, did you notice the two glasses he held up? One had the diseased water in it and the other was pure and clean. Which one would you pick for your child? I know what these mothers would do. I know which one they would go for.

You can tell by the smiles on their faces, James, they were just so delighted and so -- it builds

hope within their hearts to know that they're doing something good for their children.

James: You know what I was thinking watching your smile? Which your smile is always beautiful. But when you are rejoicing with somebody else I think it takes even another step up. But you know what I was thinking of when I was watching Betty smile and seeing those little kids smile and then watching the joy when they get a big well? Now they've got that little cup of water that they can have all day long no matter what the source is like. I saw that smile, I've got to be honest with you, I felt like it pleased the Lord. I felt like that Jesus had said, "Suffer the little children to come to me," and he knew he was going to give them water. I'll give you water and you'll never thirst again. I'm talking about I'm going to give you some eternal water too. I'm going to give you water for life but I am the water of life. And this is what the missionaries tell these people. When they have given them water for life they point them to the water of life that inspired that giving mode. When you see the joy of those parents and those children, and looking at Betty, and I believe Jesus is smiling like he did when he saw those children. It was a very powerful verse, the joy of the Lord is our strength.

Can you imagine the strength we would gain if we were doing those things which gave our father and our savior joy? Betty, I want to live that way. I want to be a joy to the Lord. I want to put a smile on his face. I hope a lot of times he laughs with me and at me because he thinks I'm funny. But I'm going to tell you when he is so pleased that I'm doing what his son would do with his hands, if he was here, and he is in us.

But would you do this right now? Would you go on line right there or dial that number and take your bankcard and you make the greatest love gift you can make. If you can drill a well, Betty, we've got to have 188 emergency wells. We're going to drill 400 this year but we have

an emergency right now. I mean we need like the fastest response we've ever had of people. A hundred people, they say, "I'll drill a well, \$4800." You can do it. You're there. You're one. You're one of those. Or you give portion of a well, \$1200, \$2400: Pray another joins or three join and we've got a well. But in addition to that, now I don't think there is a person watching, I don't care where you are, I don't care if you're living in challenging circumstances that you couldn't give a family one of those filters and that would be a little over \$30 because three families for 100 dollars, each one of them get their own filter system.

Would you very prayerfully and compassionately go on line or dial that number and you make the gift God put on your heart. We have some gifts to send you to say thank you. They'll bless you. Would you right now bless someone, put a smile not only on their face and their families but on our father's? Please do it. Thank you!

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 provided 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: Well, we have beautiful gifts to send you. Sheila Walsh's devotion book, I'm telling you, fabulous! The beautiful canvas. I think this is the most beautiful bronze we've ever given away and you're going to be a determined eagle, you're going to soar like an eagle on the turbulence of the times and the challenges of the day because God is going to be the love that lifts you.

But I want to send you something else. We're talking about saving lives with that water. We may be saving some marriages, at least saving some relationships where they have better understanding. Don't you want that? You help give a cup of water, ask for the book, you can get it in the bookstores, go on line and get it. You help us share life and water, and you want the book, Strengths Based Marriage and then you want to take that test, we'll gladly send you the book.

Would you thank Alan and Jimmy for being a blessing to us today? Jimmy, thank you!

Jimmy: Thank you, James.

James: Now we're going to talk to someone tomorrow who took the test. Right?

Alan: That's right.

James: Somebody this week that took the test and they don't even know what the test said yet. So they're going to find out. Don't miss it. Thank y'all for being here! 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.