

6/13/17

Week 25: Spring Mission Feeding, Last Week
James and Betty Robison
Benjamin Watson #1

James: What a joy! My wife -- and this may surprise you -- is a great sports fan. By the way, I'm James Robison, and this is Betty, the sports fan. She thinks she coaches the Dallas Cowboys.

Betty: That's right!

James: Didn't do too good for several years, honey.

Betty: They're doing better! Hang in there. You have to be consistent.

James: You coach the Mavericks, especially when they won the M.B.A. Championship. And she coaches the Rangers. And she's tried to coach the Stars but she hasn't figured all that out.

[Laughter]

But this precious wife is a sports fan. She got into it watching our son. It's when she found out what a first down was. She didn't realize what was happening.

Well, we've got a football player that's gifted. Won a Super Bowl ring with the New England Patriots. Could have won another one this year if he had been there.

[Laughter]

He's recovering from an Achilles heel injury. But he plays for the Ravens, and he'll be playing this year. His name is Benjamin Watson. Okay. He is a great football player. He is a gifted person.

But let me tell you what's really great about him. He made a profound statement as a football player back during the racial tension, even starting with Ferguson that just went viral. It was fabulous! And we're going to talk about that book later this week and what he said there.

But this one just came out and it's called *The New Dad's Playbook*: Gearing up for the biggest game of your life. Now think about this. He's playing with a lot of athletes who have said to him,

"We don't know how to be a dad." But they're dads. They're talking about it in the locker room. He's got five kids. He showed us the pictures. They're a beautiful family! I mean it's beautiful! They get a baby a year. This guy, he knows what it is to be fruitful and multiply -- and so does his beautiful wife. This man understands the importance of a father.

I want you to welcome Benjamin Watson to *LIFE Today*. Benjamin, glad to see you.

[Applause]

Your family is absolutely beautiful, your wife is beautiful, your kids are beautiful. Okay. You said something when we were just sitting back here before we came out that you hear ball players talking about being a dad. Even in the locker room, they bring it up.

Benjamin: We talk about things other than football, contrary to popular belief. I've been in the N.F.L. for 13 years; about 1,000 guys that I've been around, and there's no handbook for fatherhood. Women have *What to Expect when She is Expecting*. The list goes on and on about what women have and there is nothing specifically for men that I know of that shows us or teaches us about fatherhood going from conception up until birth.

So really it was my wife that kind of -- when your wife tells you to do something you do it, right? So my wife has been urging me for the last umpteen years, eight years; our oldest is eight so she is being urging me since we had our first one to write a handbook for dads so this is that handbook, *The New Dad's Playbook*. What it does is it takes guys from conception all the way until the baby comes home a week after that. So everything from what is a zygote? What is a fetus? Why is her belly getting bigger? What to expect when you go to the O.B. appointment and you hear that scratchy little thing that's actually the ultrasound that's going to let you know what the heartbeat is like.

Men love to be prepared. So my goal is to prepare them with knowledge but also to show them that this fatherhood thing is important. We live in a time right now where a third of our kids don't have dads. Many people who are becoming dads didn't have a father demonstrate to them the importance of a father. But it doesn't mean that they can't change the trend. It doesn't mean that they can't be different. They have what it takes. So part of it, while I'm trying to educate these guys, I'm also trying to encourage them to prepare them for some of the things that are going to happen through pregnancy. These women need us to be men, not only putting a roof over their head, but they need us to support them through this pregnancy.

Betty: And it's a big responsibility to be a dad, to be a parent, period. And to let a father know that he can participate in it from the very beginning.

Benjamin: The amazing thing is I'm sitting there with our first. So we have five kids and the first one was actually due on Super Bowl Sunday in New England. And it was the one year we didn't make it to the playoffs. We were 11-5; we didn't go to the playoffs. Grace was due on Super Bowl Sunday. It was February 2nd, she came two days early so we actually watched the Super Bowl from the recovery room. So my wife and I are watching the Super Bowl; we didn't make it. It turned out great. I was there, all that good stuff. And we're about to go home and I'm sitting there thinking, are you guys going to give us like a handbook or something?

[Laughter]

Some instructions? Like what do we do? Are you just going to give us this kid and expect us to raise this kid for 18 years with no instructions?

[Laughter]

There are more instructions for putting together a bicycle than for raising a kid. So we just expect you to know, trial by error. So we've driving home, and of course, she wouldn't eat at first and my wife is nursing. We were young parents that were just struggling.

So being that I'm in it a little bit now and being that I have had some of these conversations in the locker room, guys coming to me, because I'm the old guy now talking about, "Man, I've got to buy diapers. I don't know which one to buy. What should I do? Should I even be there? Will the kid even know me? Does it even matter that I'm present during this?" I'm like, "Yes, it does. It does matter that you're present. It matters for her. It matters for that child and that's your number one priority right now."

So letting guys know that this is important. This takes precedence over everything else that you're trying to do outside of the home. Being a father is worth it. You are creating a legacy, even at this beginning stage when the baby is not even here yet, you're starting the legacy that can change the course of generations.

Betty: Do you find that they want to really be a part, they just don't know where to start or how to begin and they need some of that instruction?

Benjamin: I think there are two camps. I think there are some guys, obviously, that don't care. There are some men out here who they go from woman to woman and they really don't care. Then there are some guys that feel like they're being told that they shouldn't care because that's the cool thing. But deep down they do. Then there are some guys that want to be there but they just don't know how.

We have a tremendous opportunity to show them that, to teach them that, to provide information. Like I said in the book, the book is not all X's and O's but there are some X's and O's in there. There's some okay, this is a trimester. This is what to expect in the first trimester. This is what to expect in the second and the third.

Oh, and by the way, if you're going to get an epidural make sure you request the head anesthesiologist because that guy can get the epidural in. If you get one of these rookies, they will mess it all up. That's what happened to me. My wife was screaming and I said, "You know what? From now on I'm getting the head guy." So just practical things like that, making a birth plan.

But also from a broad point of view, we're going to be as men the first real encounter that our kids have with their heavenly Father. A lot of how we view our heavenly Father, good and bad, and obviously, we don't represent him very well at all but what a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to enter into a child's life and to do everything you can to show the grace, the love, the repentance, the integrity that our heavenly Father demonstrates to us. And that's what being a father of five, that's what I constantly try to show to my kids although I do it imperfectly. There are plenty of times when I have to go to them and say, "You know what? Daddy messed up. He is sorry. Do you forgive me?" But being a father is worth the time and the effort.

James: How important is it for a man to be the kind of man that can be the father that makes the meaningful impact on the children? How important for that father to know the Father and really have a relationship with God to be the dad that every kid needs?

Benjamin: One thing you have to understand is that you're not going to be the perfect father. There is only one of those. And as a recovering perfectionist myself there's been plenty of times where I've been so frustrated because I messed up, I can't do this thing right. Whether it is in my professional life or whether it is at home in my marriage, or whether it is fathering my kids, we're not going to do it perfectly but we still have to give the effort. That's where we exhibit, that's where he is made strong in our weakness, when we're willing to do that.

You mentioned something about you not having a father and I don't know you very well, I don't know your kids but what I've seen in talking to them today is that they have a father in you. And even though it wasn't demonstrated to you, you stepped in and God met you there. Because you were obedient, you changed the course of not only your family but millions of other people around this country.

So you mentioned communities that don't have fathers, it takes one guy. It takes one guy to do it. And a lot of times good dads think it doesn't really matter. It does. If you look at any ill that we face, if you look at poverty, if you look education, if you look at employment, it doesn't matter.

People that have fathers fare better than those that don't -- and that's statistical evidence.

James: When you look at the criminal activity too, the difference is dramatic.

Benjamin: That is statistical evidence that you can't fight. One of the best ways to get out of poverty is to be married and have a father in your home and graduate from high school.

James: And have a marriage commitment too.

Benjamin: Exactly! And those are some things that is just true. No matter where you're from in the world, United States or outside of it, there is a reason God created the family unit the way it is because it functions best that way.

The other thing is, sometimes we live in a fallen world. Things are not going to be ideal. There are going to be times when there is single parent, there is going to times when you mess up as a dad or a mom or whatever it may be but we live for a God who can patch those things up and a God that can turn things around and change the course of what is happening.

James: When you look at the tension in the black community and the reaction and response, a lot of it is the whole mind-set in America, we don't understand the weight or the burden that let's say is a reality in the black community. But I'm not sure that the fatherlessness in the black community is not as weighty as even the past horrors or inappropriate things that have been imposed on them. How do you think we can address, if you have a suggestion as an athlete, as a person who is --

Benjamin: That takes a lot more of the show than ten minutes.

James: It's a real deal. How do we say to them and especially when you even look at being able to walk in a school that if you were to reference that there is a father who always knows best, that they might know, it's almost like that would be illegal now. In other words, it is almost like our nation has become so foolish and fooled by the enemy's deception that we dismiss any reference to the Almighty or nature's God, or nature's law to where now we don't obey any law. Our hearts become lawless, we're fatherless, we're not listening.

How do we penetrate that barrier, that wall to get into these beautiful children's lives that are manipulated by all those who use them for all the wrong means? And especially using girls as a toy and a ploy, and not someone to love and admire and respect because they never saw it or heard it. And a little girl that doesn't grow up on daddy's lap, knowing she is beautiful and precious, first guy that tells her that, she is hearing it and wanting it and then he tells her what he wants her to do and he plays her like a fiddle and then plays her like a fool and damages her.

What do we do?

Benjamin: That's a huge problem, number one. It is very complicated.

James: You're one of the lights of hope.

Benjamin: Well, there was a time where there were more black men in the home than there were white men. There was a time where marriage was more prominent in the black community than it was in the white community.

James: Marriage is still more important in the eyes -- just like life is important in the black community.

Benjamin: I'm just talking about sheer numbers. I'm talking about percentages of households where that wasn't done in the black community.

James: What's happening now?

Benjamin: It was done in the white community more and then things have changed. So the reasons why things have changed -- there are a bunch of them. They go all the way from people getting subsidies if a man isn't in the home and that kind of being something that encourages men not being in the home because if a man is in the home you're not going to get certain things. That's a problem.

And so there is a bunch of other different things that we could talk about but I always want to draw something back to absolute truth. And so, if there aren't men in the home, clearly we talked about the incarceration rates, the education, the joblessness, all those things that are consequences of men not being in the home, but whether you're in the white community or the black community or whatever community you're in, my goal with every man that I talk to that is a father, and I talk to a lot of them that have kids and they aren't in the home, I take them to absolute truth. I take them to the word of God because the word speaks for itself.

We are fighting a spiritual battle as much as we're fighting anything else. We can go in and talk about the reasons and they're all important. We need to address a lot of these reasons that are systemic as you alluded to, but when I talk to guys in the locker room about them not being around their kids and them missing their kids' birthdays and they're missing this and them compromising and saying that it is okay, I take them back to the word of God. What does the Bible say you need to do as a father? It says love your wife. It says train up your children in the way they should go. Are you training up your child? Do you think this is going to have consequences? Well, yeah.

And it is amazing how when you sit down to have a conversation about it you see the toughness fall and they say, "Man, I know I'm not doing right by that kid."

James: Don't you appreciate his spirit? I'm going to talk to him in another program this week about what actually put in the forefront of American, let's say the eyes of the American people when he talked about what really made him angry and it became a very viral Facebook post that just put him front page.

But for him to be a father and have five kids and be saying what he's saying here to gear you up for the biggest game of your life, he's just trying to give common sense advice for a lot of folks that say, okay, from the cradle through the child growing up, from the pregnancy and conception right on, I'm going to give you some insight.

He is a very wise man, a great communicator, and you've already seen pictures there of his family. They're beautiful! They're radiant. The glory is on them because it is on dad. Mom feels loved. One of the greatest things that you can do for a kid's security is let that kid see how much dad loves mom. There is not one thing that happens, that's just almost a psychological absolute that any psychiatrist will tell you, anyone that observes marriages. So let him show you about this kind of love.

Do you appreciate Benjamin? Do you like this guy and his wonderful demeanor? You're a real blessing. By the way, our viewers, Benjamin, the people watching us, "You say, well, we don't play a sport. We do this here." A lot of the folks sitting out here watching us think, what difference do we make? I'm trying to tell you something that you've got to hear. Betty and I couldn't sit here, we don't have Coca-Cola or Pepsi Cola or some big store or book store promoting us. We don't have a sponsor, you're it! You make it possible for us to call the family in the family room and point to the Father and bring people in that encourage you.

But there is something else you do. You enable us to touch people all over the world who didn't think for one moment anybody noticed, certainly not God -- even the God that they're praying to. They hurt so bad, they're so hungry or so thirsty, in such pain and when they find out love notices, Betty, it's these viewers that make it happen.

I want you to look in, just watch and just know you're the miracle answer that you can see is obviously needed. I'm telling you. God in heaven let you know how precious and special you are to him in his kingdom purpose. Watch very prayerfully.

On the mission field

Announcer: War and conflict are predominant in the short history of the world's newest country, South Sudan. Villages are routinely attacked. Innocent families flee for their lives as their meager homes are burned to the ground. Those lucky enough to survive the ambushes have nothing but the clothes on their backs as they wander in search of safety.

Parents are desperate to find food sources for their children and often go without so their children can go to bed with a little food in their stomachs. As the years pass, surviving family members band together and do whatever they can to survive.

In 2015, the *LIFE Outreach* mission partners working in South Sudan met one such family, Leek, along with his father, grandmother, and older sister Nayagut were living under this tree. The family's main source of food was the wild fruit growing in the tree. As the fruit in the lower branches was depleted Nayagut began climbing the tree higher and higher as needed. She bravely and sacrificially tried her best to provide for Leek and her family.

Recently, the missionaries returned to that tree and sought out Leek, Nayagut and the rest of their family. Although they now had a simple hut to sleep in heartbreak and tragedy still plagued this family. Nayagut had passed away a couple months prior; most likely as the result of malnutrition. Leek says he misses his sister and the mission team was heartbroken by the pain and the hopelessness evident in his eyes.

As famine and starvation sweep across South Sudan, families such as these fear for their future. The grip of this crisis is tightest on the children. Leek and many other children just like him need food and they need it now.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Boy, if that little sister, big sister could climb that tree day after day to try to get the fruit, higher and higher after they had eaten that which they could reach and then she's -- the one who did so much trying to help the others is the one who is gone, the one who helped.

And now, Betty, we have a chance to not only take her place but to feed many families like hers. The missionaries have 400,000 already located that we can feed that are in place that have the same need you saw there and we can be like that precious sister that you might say in a way gave her life trying to help her family.

Betty: And I'm sure each family member has done all that they know to do, James to try to find some kind of little morsel to put into their bodies to feed, especially the little ones that will likely

be the ones to pass away first because their little bodies haven't developed and become strong like they could be.

I just ask you to join with us again. I know we ask you many times but we don't get tired of asking and I don't believe you get tired of us asking. So please join with us again and let's get food to these so desperate families that just don't know what to do. They love their children too as we love ours. So let's join together and make the difference and reach out. We can do it. We've done it before!

James: Well, when you think about the effort that that precious girl went to and the missionaries and relief workers, could we not go online or go to the phone and make a call and a gift that could save many lives and put in the hands of those beautiful little malnourished children and their families that which would give them life and a future while they overcome all the challenges they face?

Would you do it? Would you just reach out, even reach up to God and say, "God, show me what to do. Let me be the blessing they long for. Let me meet their need." Would you do that? This is the last week of this emphasis on Mission Feeding where we take a period of time. We try to raise the resources to take care of people for many months and we're asking you to do that right now. \$100 we can feed ten children for the next several months. \$1,000 we can feed 100. During this last week because the crisis is so great, the need so severe I'm praying many of you will give \$1,000 or more. \$100 we can feed ten, \$50 we can feed five, \$30 we can feed three. Don't think that that's too small -- for those three children it's life.

Would you right now go online or would you dial the phone number and take your bankcard and just make the gift God put on your heart. This is the last week now for this emphasis and we need to hear from everyone. Some of you have already given even in this emphasis but I'm telling you, we've not reached the goal. Together we can and I believe we must and I believe we will.

Thank you right now for making the gift God put on your heart. Remember this is the last week and it is really, really important that we hear from you and important to so many who have such a critical need. We can meet that need and we can do it together.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In impoverished and even now famine-stricken areas of Africa, children are suffering. The need is great and without food they face death by starvation.

LIFE's Mission Feeding program is ready. With your support, we're able to feed and care for

children in famine areas of Sudan, as well as Angola and Mozambique. With all of our previous reserves gone and Mission Feeding facing the worst drought and food shortage in years, we urgently need to replenish our food supplies to reach 400,000 children counting on us.

Your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for the next three months. Please also consider a special gift of \$1400 to help sponsor a school and help feed 140 children for three full months.

With your gift of any amount we'll send you My Daily Word Devotional. This boxed set of four seasonal devotionals will help you read, reflect, and renew yourself through God's word with space to journal your thoughts and reflect each day.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you'll also receive Kari Jobe's newest music project, *The Garden*, along with the story behind *The Garden* companion DVD.

And finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more, please be sure to request "Determined Eagle," our 2017 commemorative bronze sculpture.

This is the last week! Please call, write, or go online today and make your gift of *LIFE* to help feed and care for hungry children.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, I believe, Betty that our viewers did respond as God directed. I want to thank you. You've always been amazing. It's amazing grace that flows through so many of you so freely. Thank you.

We want to send you *My Daily Word*. It is a seasonal devotional book that you will love. And Kari Jobe, she grew up, she actually danced when she was about nine or ten at our daughter Robin's wedding. Robin is in heaven now, you know that, a beautiful mom. But Kari is just like family. This is her husband and her story about *The Garden* that she sings about.

We've had the most wonderful guest today, Benjamin Watson. *The New Dad's Playbook*, if you'd like to have this, you say, "You know what? I know a new dad. Or I am a new dad." I want you to have it if you'd like to. You help these kids we just showed you, touch them with love, and you say, "Would you mind sending me that book?" We'll be glad to. It is in the bookstores. Encourage others to get it. But join us thanking Benjamin for being a great role model. Look forward to talking to you a little later this week.

Benjamin: Yes, sir!

James: Thank you so much! Thanks for your help. Thanks for meeting needs.