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Week 17: Spring Mission Feeding
Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh
Dr. Rick Rigsby

Sheila: Hi! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh and I'm joined by Randy Robison. We gave James and Betty the night off. Well deserved.

I'm excited about today's show. Sometimes when -- I travel a lot, and sometimes you're out on the road and you bump into someone and you just immediately think, this is one of my people. That's exactly how I felt the first time I met my guest and his wife, amazing people and a fantastic book. You're going to love this. So please will you help me welcome our guest, Dr. Rick Rigsby?

Rick: Thank you, Sheila.

Randy! How are you?

Great to see you again, Sheila. Thank you.

Sheila: I liked a lot of things about you but the fact that you had once been a professor at Texas A&M... thanks and gig 'em!

Rick: Gig 'em! That's where your son is!

Sheila: Yeah, my son is a junior there and absolutely loves it.

Rick: It's a great school.

Sheila: It is a fantastic school. One of the things I found so intriguing about your book, it's called, *Afraid to Hope*: Discover the courage to dream again. That's an interesting title, *Afraid to Hope*. You want to unpack that a little?

Rick: Especially from a person that was never afraid to hope. I was the golden boy. I had great parents. Big daddy was rolling. I mean I had everything. I had an awesome godly mom and dad, expectations were high, we were taught to hope. I graduated from college; the day before I graduated I got hired as a television reporter. I married my college sweetheart. We had a couple

of children. I didn't have a bad day for the first 35 years of my life.

And then my college sweetheart, the mother of my two children, the woman that I was to grow old with developed breast cancer and six years later me and my two little boys walked up to mommy's casket. For a long time, I didn't want to live, I didn't want to dream. I was afraid to hope. I was mad at God.

Can you imagine this? You're holding God's hand with one hand and you're shaking your fist at God with the other. But I'm just here to tell you, he's not intimidated by our temporary lapses in judgment. He still pursued me. Yet, I was angry at him. I was mad at Trina for abandoning us; that makes no logical sense but you're not thinking logically, you're not theologically.

As a matter of fact, I did what I had done the previous 35 years. I made it all about me. And now what happens when you make your life all about you and the bottom falls out? I'll tell you what happens. You're afraid to hope because God let me down -- or at least that's what I thought.

Sheila: But there is something about that, Rick that is very honest and vulnerable because I think sometimes we're afraid to be angry with God. But if you look at the book of Job, at the very end the only one that God actually is pleased with is Job who said, "He spoke the truth."

Rick: That's exactly right. And what I found is this. I found that God created us in his image with all of our emotion. What I discovered was the more angry I got at God, the closer he came to me. I'm trying to push him back because I don't trust you, I don't want you in my space. I'm going to manipulate things. So I used food and feelings to manipulate my way to appease the pain, to medicate the pain. I don't want to live. I would see you and your husband and I would be jealous and envious. I would see you and your wife and I would think, that's the thing that's stripped from me. I don't want to live anymore. I don't want to live. I don't want to hope. I was afraid to live again. I was afraid to trust God again.

Sheila: How did, in her last days, how did your wife cope with the reality of the fact that she was leaving the husband she loved and the two children she loved?

Rick: Great question, Sheila. That was the turning point. My wife was in a hopeless situation but yet was filled with the hope of God. Watch this. Two days before she died, no hair because of chemotherapy, a tummy that pooched out because of a liver no longer working. She weighed 80 pounds. I remember very vividly on this particular day, I'm in the kitchen, she's on the couch surrounded by pillows. Our then youngest son walks down the stairs with a shirt. I hear Trina say, [raspy voice] "Andrew, mama... not always... gonna be able... to help you." She was saying good-bye to her baby. She knew that barring a miracle, the time of her departure had come.

I waited for Andrew to leave. I walked around, sat next to her on the couch and these are some of her last words to me. She said, "It doesn't matter to me any longer how long I live. What matters to me most is how I live."

I learned how to live from a dying wife. In a hopeless situation but a heart filled with hope. Guess what? It is my great privilege to go all over the world and just remind people, you might be in a hopeless situation but you serve a God of hope. And as long as you're breathing -- as long as you're breathing there's hope.

Randy: So hope, let's just hit *hope* for a second because to most people hope is a little bit of a wish. It's this is not the way things are but I wish they could be better.

Rick: That's right, Randy. That's a great question. We've neutered the power out of hope. Hope is a wish fulfillment. Hope has been relegated to the basement of human emotion because of the way that we casually banter about the word: I hope it doesn't rain. I hope our favorite team wins. I hope we get a chance to see this movie.

All of those are sincere declarative statements but that does not mesh well with Jesus as the hope of the world. That doesn't mesh well with Romans 15:13: May the God of hope fill you with his joy and his peace. So there is an incongruency there. If we believe the Bible and believe every word we are created in the image of God. If we're created in the image of God we're created with the component to hope. So hope has to be more than just a passive notion or a fleeting moment.

So I define hope as this quality that is within every one of us that places a transformative demand on the heart to expect the absolute best outcome. There's the rub. It is a fight between the flesh and the spirit. I want my outcome. Yeah! I want what's best for me.

Randy: The best outcome according to who?

Rick: That's exactly right. So when I started to look at hope from a real biblical perspective, I saw something that was dynamic, transformative, life changing. As a matter of fact, it's the prerequisite to faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. You can't have faith unless you have hope. So hope is really the quality that God has bestowed inside of us that causes us to get up, causes us to stand up, causes us to lean in, causes us to move on.

Randy: You knew this though going into the trials.

Rick: See there is one thing to know and there is another one to act.

Randy: That's my question, how did that go from being theory to reality?

Rick: Great question. I made it all about me. Any time you make it all about you neuter the power of God. Basically, what you're saying is you don't need God because I'm going to maneuver myself out of this situation.

So here I have these great parents who always said, "Don't ever lose hope."

And I'm saying, "But you never felt the pain that I felt. You don't have any idea what it is like to cry yourself to sleep every single night."

I made it about me for a long time. So when you make it about you, I can sense God saying, "All right, you want to make it about you -- but just remember one thing, I'm here. I'm right here."

As a matter of fact, I remember when I started to make that turn, I remember that wonderful scripture: "God is a very present help in a time of need." All I got out was "God is" but that's when I discovered that's all I needed -- God is.

But guess what helped me to move from disbelief to belief? The third grade dropout daddy who at the casket, at Trina's casket, you talk about a declaration of hope, at the casket he is crying. Trina is his daughter, not his daughter-in-law. I'd never seen my dad cry before. He turns to me and he says these words, "Son, just stand." In other words, keep hoping. Keep going. Don't quit. Don't give up the fight despite how you feel.

Then look at this line that caused me to turn around. "It doesn't matter, Ricky, any longer how long I live, what matters is how I live."

The two greatest influences other than the Lord Jesus Christ in my life: A third grade dropout daddy and a dying wife who said, "Go on. Hope, dare to dream again." So at some point my pain literally exhausted me.

Sheila: Tell me about the Genesis of this video that went viral.

Rick: What happened was I had nothing to do with it.

[Laughter]

Sheila, I'd been manipulating since I came out of the womb. But I couldn't have done this. I'm giving a commencement address at California Maritime Academy, April 2017, a year ago. And

ironically, it was where my father was a simple cook at this academy. A company called Goalcast saw it and decided to edit it and put a music bed to it. Now it is over 200 million hits.

Do you know what I think? I think it is a world saying, "Help me. Don't just show up with your blow-dried smile, help me. Don't just show up with your new outfit, help me. Don't just give me some Christian terms, help me! Love me! Just love me."

Billy Graham just went home. Guess what his legacy was? He loved people. So my great aim is to love others without expecting to be loved in return. I mean I love them all. I love gay, I love lesbian, I love rednecks, I'm a black neck redneck.

[Laughter]

I love people. I love people!

And this video is God's invitation, God basically said, "Son, I'm opening up the doors of the church to the world. Walk through and give them my hope."

So it is quite a departure from living for yourself. But I will say this, there is nothing like going through the valley. How could the worst days of my life be the best days? How could there be so much pain but yet be such a time of communion? My heart had to be broken so that I would have a heart for the brokenhearted.

Randy: That's what I'm hearing is that the hope didn't become real. You knew it was there, you knew it up here but it wasn't necessarily as real as it is now until you were broken.

Rick: You're right, Randy. You're absolutely right. For 35 years I was a hustler. I advanced my own agenda. I manipulated my way in and out of things. I did everything with one focus in mind and it wasn't Jesus but I wanted him to bless it.

[Laughter]

Oh yeah, baby! I wanted him to bless it. Walk into pulpits, just pretty much styling and profiling. You know what I mean? Yes, sir!

This is what's interesting. All during those years of preaching the gospel but not knowing the gospel, all during those years of preaching love but not loving people, guess what I was hearing in one ear? God saying, "I want all of you."

My response was, "No, I'm rolling. I'm good. I'm doing real well."

So I would reduce his voice to manageable proportions. I would reduce his voice to just a whisper and then one day he says, "I'm going to create this platform and ultimately, you're going to become a broken vessel and you will reveal my glory to the world. And you're not going to like me for a while and you're not even going to trust me for a while but I've got great news. And the news is you're going to get to know me for the first time in your life."

Sheila: Which is the story of Job, "My ears had heard about you before, but now my eyes have seen you."

Rick: I read those chapters and that's my life, Sheila. I can tell you, yet he slay me, at some point, I had to decide that I would trust in him.

Sheila: And did God bring a new woman into your life?

Rick: Oh my gosh! Oh yeah. You talk about a brick house now. Y'all need to put a camera on her. I'm trying to tell you right now!

[Laughter]

Listen to this -- only God. I had to get to the point where I remembered saying once I began to trust God, love him, and really realize that it was not about me, my boys needed just -- they didn't need just a dad, they needed a mama and a daddy. So I started remembering the words of a dying wife, remembering the words of that third grade dropout and started trusting again.

I remember getting to the point where I said, "Lord, if I don't ever get married again, I'm committing to you whatever you want me to do, wherever you want me to go, whatever you want me to say it has nothing -- I'm resigning from the Rick Rigsby Construction Company. I'm done!"

As soon as I made that declaration I start speaking again and I spot Janet. Trina was the love of my youth. Janet is the love of my life. First thing she did was she adopted those little boys, fulfilling Trina's dying wish that her babies not go through life without a mommy. She even called Trina's family and said, "We'll forever be close." We're as close to them as ever. She took Trina's pictures out of storage and said, "My husband and my boys are going to grieve in a healthy environment."

And then we decided to do something that at the time we thought was a great idea, have more kids.

[Laughter]

I'm tired. I'm worn out. It's been great. So now it's been 35 to 17.

Sheila: That's huge, though, Rick. She took those pictures out. I mean that's so honoring of all of your life.

Rick: We were together during a speaking engagement. She sits in the front row and hears this story constantly. Sheila, if I married you, if something happened to Barry, you've got about two maybe three times to tell everybody how great he was then I'm done. She hears this story and sits with grace. Janet is a trophy of God's grace.

Sheila: I've been watching her in the audience. She is grinning at you. Every single thing, she is just looking at like, isn't he the best!

Rick: Yes! You know what my job is? And I love -- my audiences, a lot of Christian audiences, thousands of men, I tell them my goal is to spoil my princess. My goal is to spoil her. I've lost one, I'm not going to lose another one because of neglect. I'm not going to lose another one because of selfishness. I'm not going to lose another one because I'm trying to advance my agenda.

Sheila: That's beautiful!

Randy: Tell me if I'm getting this right but it sounds like you limited yourself by holding on to a lot of your own agenda and not completely surrendering to God. But when you finally did because you were so broken, you found out that God could use you in a far greater way than ever before.

Rick: You are so right.

[Laughter]

You've got it. Where were you 25 years ago, man? I didn't have to go through this. I was so limited.

Here's the amazing deception of Satan. The amazing deception is this: You think that if you can control and manipulate you've got all the answers and all the freedom in the world. The reality is you're creating your own prison. And for years I was in bondage in a prison that I constructed. The best thing that ever happened to me -- brokenness. The best thing! I discovered my purpose. And I discovered that that purpose had nothing to do with me, it was inextricably connected to

J-e-s-u-s and to go out and give hope. You're absolutely right. It was a limiting life.

Sheila: You're going to love this book. It's called *Afraid to Hope*: Discovering the courage to dream again. I'm going to tell you how to get a hold of that in just a little minute.

But one of the amazing things is when God invades your life he washes your eyes again and you see everybody differently and you want to make a change in their lives too. So we want you to watch something and then we're going to tell you how you can help us do that. Watch this.

On the mission field

Isak: I'm here with little Bernardo who is two years old, who is fighting for his life; dying in a malnutrition clinic because of the tragedy called starvation, lack of food. I wish I could tell you that I believe Bernardo will actually leave this clinic but I don't know if he will. Because unfortunately, more children that come into these clinics don't leave than what leave alive. See you have the luxury of changing the channel and I really hope that you don't do that right now because I actually need you to do the opposite and to see the reality of what's on your screen.

You say, "But how do we change that? What do I do?"

I'll tell you what you can do. You can give a gift right now that is literally a gift of life -- the best gift you could ever give. The gift of life to Bernardo. You can reach out and you can give that gift to multiple children, to children out in the villages where there isn't enough food. Children that haven't got to malnutrition clinics yet. If we meet them before they're in this condition, we know we can save them. We do it time and time and time again. We can guarantee that we save their lives.

When they get to where Bernardo is right now, when their arms are the thickness of my thumb, I can't guarantee anything except that I'll do my very best. Please, do your very best today. Give whatever gift you can give because that gift is a gift of life.

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: I appreciate so much Isak being willing to go there. It's hard to be there. It's hard to watch those pictures. But you saw many times that bright orange bowl, that's something we provided, it's something actually *you* provided. Every bowl represents a meal. Every meal represents life. And every time we give that, we give those children hope.

This would be an impossible thing to do if we didn't know that we are in a position, that God has

put us in a position to reach out and save lives. That's what Mission Feeding is. It is life, it is hope, and it is all in the name of Jesus. So we have an incredible opportunity here to reach out.

Our goal is 400,000 children that we want to feed and not just once or twice but on an ongoing basis. We ask you to join us so that we can give food for three months at a time. \$30 will give food to three children for three whole months every day! That's revolutionary!

Sheila, I know you've been there, you've seen what just that simple bowl of soup every day will do.

Sheila: I remember something your mom said that our commitment is that the line would never be longer than the food that we have to offer them. That's what we said to so many of the villages that we've gone into and we're going back again. Randy is going to Angola and I'm going to Burundi and we've said that to the chiefs, to the teachers, "We will not forget you. We will not come home and suddenly think, well..."

In fact, somebody said something to me and it made me so mad. They said, "Well, don't you think they get used to that over there?"

Do you think any mother on this earth gets used to putting a child in a grave? There is no way that a mother would get used to that. I watched this one woman who said, "I wish sometimes there was a stairway up to heaven because I've got more children up there than I do down here."

If there was nothing we could do, if there was some terrible disease that we couldn't help, but this is so curable! It literally takes one bowl of food. It looks like super oatmeal but it is specially made over there in our factories to provide every kind of vitamin and nutrient these children need. I've seen it. The first bowl begins to turn them from death to life.

Then we've earned the right to say to them, "Hey, do you know there is a God in heaven who loves you?" But they can't hear you when their stomachs are empty. And those mothers are saying, "Please, would you help us?"

\$30, you can blow that just going to see a really bad movie and some really bad popcorn. So we can decide to stop living for ourselves and say that we are here as Christ's arms and hands and feet and heart. So please, go to your phone. Give the very best gift you can and then we can go back to those places and say, "We're bringing help and we're bringing it now." Please make the best gift you can.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In impoverished and drought-stricken areas of Africa children are suffering. The

need is great and without food they face severe malnutrition -- even death.

With your support LIFE's Mission Feeding outreach can save lives by feeding and caring for children in the hardest hit areas of Angola, Mozambique, and South Sudan. With previous reserves gone and Mission Feeding helping in areas with severe crop failure we urgently need to replenish our food supplies to reach 400,000 children who are counting on us.

Your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. And with your gift of any amount, we'll send you *Proverbs Power: Successful Communication*. This powerful CD series, along with study guide featuring Steven K. Scott unveils the secrets to incredible wisdom found only in the book of Proverbs. This series will give you the tools to transform your relationships in life.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the complete *Proverbs Power* library featuring five power-packed sessions that include: The Power of Vision, Breaking through Mediocrity, and much more.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request the "Bridge of Faith" framed canvas print by Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today.

End of clip

On the mission field

Isak: My heart is just broken sitting here in this cemetery surrounded by graves that are each and every one of them, graves for children -- little lives that have been stolen by malnutrition, children who have starved to death because they didn't have enough food. It truly breaks my heart.

You know what breaks my heart even more is the fact that we could have avoided this. We could have changed this. We could have stopped these graves from being filled with these little lives. We could have saved these children if we'd just been able to act in time, if we would have been able to get to their village, take Mission Feeding and give them a bowl of food a day.

So please, do whatever you can do today because \$30 will feed three children, \$50 will feed five and if you can find it in your heart to give that special gift of \$100, you can feed ten children today. That's ten children's lives that will be saved. Please give a gift of life today. Give the gift of Mission Feeding. Give life!

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: We appreciate all you do as we extend arms around the world to give life. We want to give you hope today. You, when you support the Mission Feeding outreach just request *Afraid to Hope* by Dr. Rick Rigsby and we will gladly send that to you along with the other gifts that we have available because we really want to minister to you too as you help minister to those around the world.

Would you thank the one who ministered to us today giving us hope, Dr. Rick Rigsby?

Rick: Thank you very much.

Randy: Wonderful, wonderful testimony. Praying for you that God will continue to open those doors.

We thank you as we open doors around the world to share the gospel. Thanks for joining us on *LIFE Today*.

Sheila: See you next time!