

4/125/18
Week 17: Spring Mission Feeding
Wednesdays in the Word
Sheila Walsh
Diane Strack

Sheila: I'm Sheila Walsh. Welcome to *Wednesdays in the Word*.

We're going to do something a little bit different for two or three weeks. Usually, it's just you and me unpacking maybe a passage of scripture or looking at an issue that really we can find help on in God's word but recently I met four women and their lives really impacted me and it kind of showed me something different I wanted to do with *Wednesdays in the Word*. I wanted us to be able to see what God is doing through different women in different parts of our country and different parts of the world so it wouldn't be just me sharing what God's doing maybe through my life but how we would capture this kind of divine commission that every single one of us can make an impact no matter where we are. That the body of Christ would really rise up in these days and begin to reach out and change our culture.

So today you get to meet the first one. She is really kind of the catalyst. Please welcome with me Diane Strack. I'm so thrilled that you are here.

Diane: Good to be here as well. Thank you.

Sheila: Could you kind of in a nutshell just tell people basically what you and your husband do?

Diane: Well, we founded Student Leadership University. My husband was in crusade evangelism for years. In fact, he started with James Robison.

Sheila: He did?

Diane: Which is really kind of fun. And he's always been -- he's spoken in 10,000 high schools, public high schools and colleges to over 10 million students. He looked at me one day and said, "I want to impact these kids up close." He said, "It is one thing to preach to them and see them receive Christ but to really influence people you have to be up close."

So he wanted to start what we call Learning to Think, Dream, and Lead. Our logo is that:

Leadership begins at the feet of Jesus. We're finding out that these students, may be raised in a Christian home, and can be just wonderful students all through high school and leaders, and they get to college and this liberal mentality is so strong. My daughter went to Harvard and she wrote a paper and she used one scripture and it was circled in red, "What were you thinking?"

So we hear all the time that our students are being told and you've seen it on the news in the liberal colleges but it is just transcending down to community colleges as well. So we really believe we needed to give them a head start and to help them understand how to share their faith in a multicultural diverse world -- and really, even at home in a multicultural diverse area. So we want to teach them how to share their faith, to know that you know that you know what you believe. Not because it is Mom's faith, not because it is Dad's faith, not even because they taught me that all through Sunday school; my whole life I learned it, but because I really get that.

So we do a lot of behind the scenes of experiences. I think my favorite -- well, of course, Israel, how could you want anything more than that? That's our 401, but I love what happens to them when they go to D.C. because the light kind of comes on in their second year. First year they're just getting into it. All of the sudden the light comes on and they begin to understand, I've been called by Christ to make a difference and I can make a difference.

So thank you for letting me share that because it is very dear to our heart and we just love Student Leadership University.

Sheila: So what would be -- I know we're early in the show but what would be the website for that because I want people to see all of what you do.

Diane: Please, thank you! If you go to www.SLULead.com and there you can see the different programs: We have a program in Europe, we have a program in Israel and actually, we're putting together for the fall something that you guys can pray for us about, Palestine. We really believe that there are so many Arab Christians but they're a minority there in Palestine. And they're really losing hope as far as being able to get jobs and being able to have any hope to move forward in the future.

So my husband and I woke up, both of us without ever having talked about it and one morning sitting at breakfast we both said to each other, "I believe the Lord is calling us to go to Palestine." Now we love Israel. We take our students every year to Israel but we just believe that there's a lot of Arab Christians who need a little help. They need a little encouragement. So we're going to start in Bethlehem and Nazareth, Jericho, Jerusalem and Jordan.

Sheila: That is amazing! We will certainly pray for that. But you sent me -- you have a book and I think it is maybe a workbook specifically to help single moms. But I have to tell you,

Diane, reading through it, it helped me and I'm not a single mom. There was so much; and there was a couple areas that I would love for you to unpack for us. First of all, you talk about inner healing. What does that mean? And what is your heart for those who maybe are so wounded and they have just withdrawn from life?

Diane: Well, thank you for sharing that because I found a lot of similar things in your book *In the Middle of the Mess* that were helpful to me. For me, I was sitting and hearing my husband's testimony and so many broken homes, all the abuse and just the nightmare as a child that he went through. My heart was like, where was the church when all of this was going on? And I asked him that, "Where was the church down the street?" He said, "Oh yeah. They used to drive the bus by to pick kids up and I would throw stones on it, throw rocks at it."

I thought, you know he threw rocks at that bus because he wanted somebody to stop. He wanted somebody to say, "Are you okay in this house?" But no, that's the house where the police go. Don't go near that. Don't stop there. That's the house where there is always fighting. So where was the church?

As I began to really reach out and try to minister to hurting women who I saw were single and another subject we can talk about for hours is just what happens when you're lonely, when you feel abandoned, and that loneliness and you just make really bad choices which is what his mom continued to do over and over. This loneliness just consumes you.

So I started writing this workbook and I started a program. I was going to get this girl a job and do this and do that and it hit me one day, that's just not enough. That's just not going to do it. I discovered that everyone's pain is different, is unique, it's personal but everyone can process through the Word of God regardless of your pain being different. You're still going to be able to take scripture that processes your pain. That's what a lot of people don't do, they stuff it. They stuff that pain down.

So I will say the number one thing that I believe makes a huge difference is that in this ministry for single moms there is a listener, a mentor, a friend who is beside you. You know nobody listens to single moms. Really, nobody just says, "Hey! Sit down and tell me your worst pain. Tell me everything." You don't. So really to listen to them and not to give them advice but process the Word of God. That's where we started. And from there... I don't want to overtake the time.

Sheila: Go for it! No! The thing I love about you, Diane is you would even say that is not enough. Because most of the time we think, well, we're doing something. But sometimes doing just a little is almost worse than doing nothing at all because it leaves people in their pain.

Diane: Exactly! So how I learned about this is that and what really happened and listening to my husband. And the second thing that happened I was in the world's largest McDonald's. It was crazy. It was so noisy. It is in Orlando, and it's three stories of games and noise. Suddenly, the room went completely silent. It was so loud that I was like, "Hey! I've just got to get out of here." I had brought a tourist friend. "I've got to get out of here."

And the room just went completely silent and I heard God say to me, "Pray for that woman." I saw this woman. She was across the room. I couldn't meet her, talk to her. "Pray for her".

So I said, "All right, Lord I will."

A few months later I was at the Orlando Magic Arena which is 18,000 people. I go through one of the doors and she is sitting over there across and again, I can't -- I'm not able to reach her but I see her and in the noise of all of these thousands of people the room goes silent and the Holy Spirit says, "Pray for that woman!" So I do.

Fast forward again to a couple months and Jay's preaching at First Orlando. There is probably eight entrances at least to the sanctuary. I walk into the sanctuary, I sit down, and after the service starts that same woman walks in and sits in front of me.

Sheila: Oh my gosh! Wow!

Diane: Isn't that wild? So I'm like, gosh, Lord, I think I get it. You want me to pray for this woman! So during the invitation she goes forward and I come down to the counseling room and I just ran up and hugged her. I said, "Hi! I'm Diane. I've been prayed for you for six months."

She introduced and told me her story of abuse since childhood and what she had been through with sexual abuse. I listened and I got all my girlfriends together and we were going to change her life and get her new clothes. She was making money as a dancer, which a lot of single moms do because while your kids are asleep you go out and you make a fist full of cash, come home, nobody knows; right?

And so she was making this money. She was making it this way. We found her a job and we got her new clothes. And we did everything we thought was really good. But you can't live on \$8 an hour and you can't transition from one life to the other without someone being there and walking you through it.

So that taught me, Diane, you've got to do something else. So we wrote this Bible study and we started teaching that. You've got to do something else. And this is really a passion of mine is that if a woman feels like I can't be a mentor, you can! Just listen. And just open the Word of God

and let her read it with you and talk about what that means in your life. You can be a force to change her life in a very profound way.

Sheila: I think a lot of women hold back because they think, I don't know how to do this. I think we can be intimidated by thinking we're not enough. But what you're describing is actually very doable.

Diane: You're right. We aren't enough. We can never go into that situation and say, "Oh! I'm going to change her life." No, it is being available and being prayed up enough and understanding the scriptures enough to just go through a book, a study that processes her pain.

Because in our book we talk about you've got to focus on the facts first of all. When you focus on the facts you start to have a different thinking pattern. You don't think constantly about the hurt and the pain and the betrayal. You begin to think about how much God loves you. And these women, and not just single moms, but when people have been through abuse or trauma as you know, you feel so beaten down. You're just feeling so low and so unworthy and you're always looking for a place to stow your baggage; never to unpack it but where can I stow it? Which is why, when I read your book about climbing into that toy chest, it was just like so vivid to me. I could see women sort of doing that and putting their suitcase in there, a baggage of feelings and baggage of abuse, and baggage of betrayal.

So to focus on the facts is to really understand first of all that God is on my side. They don't get that. They're like no one's on my side. I'm completely abandoned. So beginning with focusing on the fact that God is on my side. And then beginning to process through that of feeding your faith and really focusing on what a real intimate relationship with Christ is and to forgiving your foes.

Sheila: Now that's huge. Because the thing that I was impressed with most about this workbook, to me, it was almost like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. It is like they're walking along and Christ is unpacking everything. To me, you've given us a resource here where you walk along beside somebody who has been hurt and you face every single little obstacle as it comes up. Because you talk about what forgiveness is and what forgiveness is not.

Diane: As you talked about in your book about writing the letter to your dad, which I know was difficult to share but thank you for doing it because I think it's really helpful to people. We ask our moms to write a therapeutic type letter to their offender. Not to mail it -- they don't have to mail it because you know what we find out, the offender doesn't really care. So you're like all holding on to this package of I'm so mad and I'm so hurt and I'm so angry and they've probably already moved on to offending somebody else, or maybe not. You hope not. But they don't care as much as you do.

To really learning that forgiveness, it is an illogical choice. Why would I forgive? This person hurt me. So forgiveness doesn't mean it is not real. It is real, it did happen and you have a right to feel pain and probably you feel some shame, whether you should or not, it may not have been anything to do with your fault but that's kind of what --

Sheila: It smears your soul.

Diane: It does! You know I've never heard that phrase and I love that -- it smears your soul. I love that. So just this illogical response, why in the world would I forgive this offender? Well, we have to remember that Jesus is not looking at us going, oh that's so dumb, just get over it. That's not what he's saying. He's saying, "I know exactly how you feel. My family betrayed me. My closest disciples and partnership in ministry betrayed me. The religious leaders betrayed me. My neighborhood, my family, my... betrayed me."

Sheila: Everyone you could have expected to stand up for him did not.

Diane: Exactly! Did not. So he looks at us and he says, "I get it. Not only do I understand what you're going through but I have felt that same pain. I've gone through that same pain." He was real. He was a real man. We know that he was hurt. We know that he wept. We remember in the garden where he just wept tears and "Lord, do I have to do this?"

That takes me to the next step in forgiveness which is making a *choice*. Not only is it a choice to forgive someone but it is a choice to send that part of your life away. And even though no one is asking you to say, "Oh, it didn't happen. I'll never talk about it again. It is gone." What we're asking you to choose is to start thinking positive thoughts and thoughts of the future and thoughts of building a new life and thoughts of healing.

So it is a choice that you make in forgiveness to not only say to that person I refuse to give you any longer power over my life but it is also to make the choice to I'm going to move forward. What's really important with single moms is we've got to break the cycle for our kids. It takes us to a modern day story that is really 4,000 years old and that's the story of Hagar whose son and mother could not forgive, would not forgive, felt that holding on to the bitterness and going their own way was the most important thing they could do. We are all seeing that 4,000 years later.

So to our children it may make sense to say, "Your father was the worst. He hurt me. He was horrible." But it also might make more sense to say to our children, "How wonderful that we have Jesus as our Father and that he loves us so. And that he has a plan for us and that he believes that we are special."

That's really what I try to say, "You're special! You might be different but we're all different."

But you are special, loved by God and he has a plan for you. So if you begin to focus on that, your life will be different.

Sheila: I love the fact that you've referenced Hagar because she is the one who for the first time calls God, El Roi: The God who sees me. Which is when nobody else did, when she had nothing going for her, she didn't have the wealth, she didn't have the family, she didn't have the backing, she had nothing but she said, "You are the God who sees me."

Diane: Can I talk about her for a minute because that is really one of my favorite stories in dealing with this whole putting the past behind you and who God is and how much he loves you. I am just overwhelmed with the fact that God said to her, "Name your child Ishmael which means God hears." And then just a short time later when she finds herself in the wilderness of despair, I mean she has moved in. She is like, "Life is over, it is done. I'm just going to go ahead and die. I'm putting him -- just going to let him die."

And God speaks from heaven and says, "I have heard the voice of a child crying."

Wow! Abraham said, "Here's a bottle of water. Go on out to the desert." That was her alimony. Right? Here's your alimony, a bottle of water.

But of course, God said to her, "Hey! I need you to lift your head up and look over to the other side and there is a whole well. So Abraham gives her a bottle, God gives her a well. She shows us that God's -- when we have a need it is an opportunity for God to bless us, it is an opportunity for him to show how much he loves us. So we have to start looking at our needs that way. As oh wow! I can't wait to see what the Lord's going to do. How he is going to pull this off. That's I think what was happening to her there in the wilderness. I really love that story of how he came after her because I believe that when we take even one step away from him he comes after us.

Sheila: That's powerful! I want to remind you later again how to access Diane's website and all the things they're doing. But one of the things we love to do here at LIFE is that because God has seen us he's washed our eyes so that we see others who really need his help right now. So I want you to watch this piece. I was recently in Angola and began to see a way that you and I can make such a difference. Watch this.

On the mission field

Sheila: I woke up this morning in this village, this is my first time in Angola and I honestly don't know what I expected but I didn't expect what I experienced. I didn't expect to see a child who is a year and five months old and weighs six pounds. How does a child like that even survive?

I think one of the things that surprised me most was the profound affinity I felt with the moms. If you're a mom, all you want is for your child to be healthy. You want to be able to put a meal on the table at night and know that your children go to bed with a full tummy. But here I've seen what the ravages of malnutrition do.

In many places where we've been the crops had been destroyed this year and that's what they depend on. So, so many of the moms have to go out and work for two days to get one small meal for their children at night. The meal that they provide has no protein. So when they get sick they go down so quickly.

But the other thing and this is the thing that blew me away, is I saw the difference that Mission Feeding makes. To be able to be in a village and to see this long snake line of little kids who are behaving like little kids should, they're laughing, they're excited and happy. That's why I know there's hope.

Mission Feeding is not some great idea we came up with. It's simply living out the gospel of Christ. And when we put one simple bowl of food into the hands of these children in Africa, it changes their lives forever -- thousands and thousands and thousands of lives, one life at a time.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: I will never -- I will never forget that first trip to Africa and walking into that malnutrition clinic and watching a mom bring in a little one who was, I mean I probably counted three breaths in the time she was holding him. And the baby obviously needed an incubator, there was no incubator available so they wrapped this little one in tin foil to try and hold on to some body heat.

It was just -- it was heartbreaking. Can you imagine a child a year and a half old weighing six pounds? When my son was born he was seven pounds and eight ounces. That's what every mother wants for their children. These moms in Africa, they're not asking for a car, they're not asking for an iPhone. They're simply asking for the ability to feed their children. But to go from that malnutrition clinic which was heartbreaking and I actually said, "Father, burn these images into my mind. I don't want to ever forget what that looks like and what it sounds like and what it feels like."

But to go from that to a village where we've set up Mission Feeding, it is amazing! I tried some of the food before I gave it to the children. It looks like oatmeal but it's not. It is specifically made for that area of the world. It is full of vitamins and minerals and nutrients. The first bowl

literally turns them from death to life. It is the way it should be.

Here's the great thing. What we do is we set up the programs in school so the children have to come to school to get their bowl of food. So they learn and they get an education. So you're breaking that whole cycle of poverty.

Now every one of us can do something. You might not be able to do a lot but do you know for \$30 you can feed three children for months -- \$30! You spend more than that if you go to some crummy movie. \$30, three children for months. \$50, five children for months. And \$100 -- I can do that, I'm going to do that at the end of the show -- \$100, 10 children for months! Our goal is to continue feeding 400,000 children.

I'm going back there soon and I want to be able to say to the amazing people who are boots on the ground, the hands of feet of Jesus right there, "Hey listen! We're never ever going to let the line of children be longer than the food that we have to give them." So if we all do something we can change this.

Would you go to your phone? Would you call that number on your screen? You can go online. If you're 12 years old, save up some of your pocket money. Do you know how great that will feel to be able to know that there is a child that maybe you'll never meet until you meet them in heaven but you made a difference in their life. Because my personal belief is we don't have the right to share the gospel until we feed their hungry, empty stomachs so they have the ability to hear. So please make the best gift possible and we're going to change this for a generation of young people, who when they grow up will be the ones who change their nation for Christ.

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

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much. If the lines are busy just keep calling. I really appreciate it.

Diane, is there another website, is there something new that you and your husband are involved in that you might want to direct people to?

Diane: Yes! But first of all I want to tell you I want to give to this ministry. It is just so amazing. And watching the passion in you and just -- it's the real deal. It's so exciting.

So I want to give you the single mom website which is: OneMoreChild.org. And One More Child works with trafficking, with adoption, foster homes, feeding, we fed seven million meals last year internationally. So I just thank you for having me. Thank you for letting me be a part.

Sheila: Thank you so much, Diane. Thanks for being with us. We'll see you next time on *Wednesdays in the Word*.

Announcer: Are you concerned about keeping your family well-equipped to manage your resources when you pass away, and leaving a lasting legacy? Contact Life Planning Services today!