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Week 18: Spring Mission Feeding
Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh
Alli Worthington

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. I'm joined by Sheila Walsh as always. You know one of our friends, dear friends of the ministry is Christine Caine.

Sheila: Yep! Love her so much.

Randy: Started the wonderful organization, Propel. We've got another fine part of Propel with us today.

Sheila: Actually, I've been looking forward to meeting this woman for some time because so many of my friends just talk about how amazing she is and what a leader. And so it's a great honor to have her here. Will you please help me welcome Alli Worthington?

[Cheers & Applause]

It's funny; I met Christine the very first time here at *LIFE Today*. We were both guests on the same program. We both had funny accents; she is Australian and I'm Scottish. And there was something I just captured in the first five minutes -- that she was a passionate person. But the first time she told me about you, she told me the same thing; that you're a passionate person and that you have tremendous vision.

Talk a little bit about what the last few years have been like for you.

Alli: Well, my husband and I have five sons, 9 to 19; that's my big claim to fame that my husband and I have survived it. And I've had the great honor of working for Christine.

About five years ago my husband who is the rock of the family, the runner in our family, he came down with a mystery illness and it turned out to be a very severe form of adult onset asthma, which for him he would go a few weeks and be healthy and then one of the boys would bring home a virus and it would turn into bronchitis and pneumonia and a fight just to get enough oxygen.

So for years we battled that. We battled the fear of what was going to happen next, the fear of when he would get sick again. It was about two years ago that Christine Caine, wonderful Christine called me early on a Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m. and she said, "Alli, I need to talk to you. Sit down."

When she calls, you listen. She said -- I had just released my first book. She said, "With this book you're taking territory away from the enemy and I'm calling you today to tell you that the enemy is coming after you, he is coming after Mark and your boys."

And I, being the mature woman I am burst into tears and said, "Chris, I haven't told you this but Mark is so sick. We're so afraid. Everything is falling apart."

She said, "I know. That's why I'm calling you. Now sit down and listen to me."

She encouraged me to stop hiding out from the storms of life, to stop letting the fear of what was going to happen next steal my joy and encouraged me to fight. So it started this journey in my life to learn what it meant to fight back against fear.

Sheila: Because your book is called *Fierce Faith: A woman's guide to fighting fear, wrestling worry, and overcoming anxiety*. I can't think of a message that is more applicable in the culture that we're living in today.

When you talk about overcoming fear about your husband Mark's health, is this an ongoing situation or is it resolved?

Alli: Just in the last six to eight months he has gone into full remission. No medication whatsoever. No treatments for him. He is right now skiing.

Sheila: Oh that's awesome!

Alli: On a trip skiing. If this was a year ago, we never could have imagined it. But it went on straight for four years where it was touch and go all the time. Even with great doctors and medication we weren't sure if he was going to have enough oxygen.

Randy: So you're facing a tough situation as it is. It's tough enough just raising a bunch of boys like that, I'm sure but then with that situation, it is tough. Let's be honest. What did the fear do? I think I know the answer but how much worse did the fear itself make an already tough situation?

Alli: Well, the fear would steal my joy when nothing was wrong. The fear -- I kind of consider

fear, worry, and anxiety this big mass of emotional turmoil. Experts break it into different things but it just means that even when things aren't bad, we're worried about when the next shoe is going to drop. It takes our eyes off God and how he provides for us and takes care of us and keeps us focused on just surviving. I believe fear and anxiety is this tool that the enemy uses to take us out. He wants us distracted and depressed and derailed.

Sheila: So when Christine sits down and with that kind of -- that's a heavy, weighty message and I know there would be a lot that resonated with you, thinking, I know this is right. Where do you begin? I'm thinking of our viewers watching right now who are struggling with fear. I've heard from so many of them recently who are in situations where they don't know. It is the what if's that are really hard to cope with. How did you begin to step out of a place of fear into a place of faith?

Alli: Well, when I hung up the phone that day I thought, well, I don't even know what fighting looks like. I had never even admitted to myself that I was overcome by fear. I thought I was just dealing with a tough situation.

What made matters worse is I realized that I was blaming myself for being afraid. Because we know all through scripture it says "be strong and courageous, do not be afraid, I am with you." So I was not only afraid, I was heaping self condemnation on myself for being afraid because I thought, do I not have enough faith? Do I not love Jesus enough? What am I doing wrong?

I had this realization that to overcome fear we have to battle on two levels, the physical and the spiritual; just like we live in the physical and the spiritual. So we attack fear through I learned through prayer and worship for me are my strong tools. Then we needed practical tools like when you wake up in the morning and you have that ball of anxiety in your stomach, what do you actually do? So combining the truth that we find in scripture, the weapon we have of worship and prayer with really practical day by day tools, that's how I found my way out.

Sheila: So describe, what does that look like for you though when you say prayer and worship? I got a question the other day on my Facebook page, a woman saying, "Can you only worship on a Sunday?" Like is worship something that you go to. What did worship begin to look like for you?

Alli: That's a great question. For me, it all clicked one day. I was going to the pharmacy to pick up medicine for my husband who was very, very ill. I got in my car, turned on the ignition, and noticed that my hands were wet and then I noticed that my shirt was wet and I'd been crying. I didn't know how long I'd been crying because you know when you're a mother or you're in a tough situation you just keep going, you're taking care of everybody.

What I would normally do is turn on the ignition and drive home and jump back into life but that day I turned on the ignition and turned on my favorite worship songs and I just started singing. I prayed. I said, "Lord, this is terrible. I need you to help me. I don't know what to do. I need you to help me walk through this season with grace. I need you to help me to be strong enough to survive this." I sang and I sang and I sang that day in the pharmacy parking lot. I sang that I was no longer a slave to fear.

Sheila: That's a huge song for you; isn't it?

Alli: So strong that God was a good, good Father; that he was an anchor in my storm. And I literally sang from my spirit until my body started believing it.

Sheila: I love that! I have a playlist on my phone and when I get into the car and I'm driving to the airport to travel or I'm driving up here to the studio, some days I struggle with depression and some days are bad days and that's what I do. Whether I feel like it or not, I put on that and when I get to -- it's reminding yourself of what's always true, no matter what might be true for a moment. There is power in our worship.

Alli: We become warriors when we use worship for our battle. When my kids are off at school, I will put on my earbuds and I will walk around my house and sing. And I sing terribly. I sing so badly I will scare the dog behind the couch. But I will sing until I feel better because that's sometimes what I need. Some days when I don't know what to pray, I'll start by singing and then something in the spirit breaks through and all of the sudden I know what to pray and I'm ready to talk to Jesus.

Sheila: That's so great!

Randy: You rightly describe it as a battle in yourself, as a warrior. One of the keys to winning any battle is to identify the enemy. In your book, you identify some of these enemies. Give us a little bit of an idea. One of them I know intimately, and that's the brooding. But tell us some of these things so we can know what to look for so we can know how to battle it.

Alli: I call them the five bad B's because if it all starts with the same letter we can remember it.

[Laughter]

These are the five unhealthy ways that most everyone uses to combat fear and anxiety and worry.

The first one is busyness where we stay so busy we just don't have time to think about it. The second one is blame; if you've been around children for any amount of time you see blame when

someone will do something, "My brother made me do it." But we also do that when we're afraid. We look for something outside of ourselves to blame. Binge, and I'm not talking about a healthy Netflix binge but --

Randy: Thank goodness!

Alli: Or watching a favorite show.

Binging, when we're trying to numb ourselves from fear and anxiety looks like it can be exercising too much, eating too much, shopping too much, whatever it is that we're using to try to numb ourselves.

For me, it is the internet. So I went through a period of life where I would go to bed every night and I would use my phone and scroll through Pinterest or Facebook. I would stay up late at night until literally the phone would hit me on the face sometimes when I fell asleep. It wasn't because I was having fun. I realized, I think the Lord revealed to me it's actually because when my head hit the pillow I would worry. So I was numbing myself through using the internet. So I realized that I to deal with what was upsetting me.

Then the fourth bad B is bury. So that means we avoid it, we deny. I was a big denier. So until Christine called me that day, I wouldn't have even have admitted to myself that I was afraid. And the last one is what you talked about which is brood. It's another word for rumination. Rumination comes from the way cows eat, which is kind of gross. But they will eat grass and they will chew it up and swallow it and throw it up again over and over; and that's what we do with our thoughts. We throw up these scary thoughts over and over and over again.

Sheila: You talk about something that we've talked about as a family here at LIFE and that is social media rejection. I think our anxiety has increased as social media has become so hugely popular. How do you see it impacting how we worry?

Alli: Oh 100% you're right. I'm a huge research nerd. So here's this fascinating thing that I learned researching for *Fierce Faith*. The same areas in our brain, the scientists have done MRI's, the same areas that light up when we're in physical pain light up when we feel rejected.

Sheila: Wow!

Alli: So our brain doesn't know the difference between feeling rejected by someone on social media when all your friends are at lunch and you didn't get invited, our brains don't know the difference between that and a literal punch in the gut. And because we have phones with us all the time and everything that everyone does is documented, there's a possibility to be rejected

many times a day on social media. It is very difficult and I'm personally thankful it wasn't around when I was a teenager.

Sheila: Oh I know! Can you imagine?

Alli: I can't!

Randy: Have you seen this thing, I know it is a bit of a side track. Have you seen this thing called speed dating?

Sheila: Speed dating?

Randy: It's for single people and they get together and they have these quick little dates. It's like if being rejected once a week isn't enough, you can get rejected three times in an hour: Bang bang bang.

But I think you're exactly right because it's a little bit of human nature. We tend to do this. How do we, once we've identified the thing that's causing the fear or feeding the fear or falsely trying to comfort us when we're in fear, how do we go about battling it?

Alli: Well, for social media and for rejection especially, I've had to put rules on myself to say, "I can only look at Instagram and Facebook and those other things when I am emotionally healthy." If one of my kids is sick and I'm cleaning the carpet, I don't need to go look at vacation photos. You know?

[Laughter]

Randy: Yeah, yeah!

Alli: But it is really interesting. Another really interesting bit of research is they found when we passively scroll through social media that's when we can start comparing and feeling worse about ourselves. But when we actively engage by liking or commenting just like we would in a conversation that protects us from that subconscious comparison that can happen.

Sheila: Because one of the things that I think sometimes we feel like we're more connected as a culture but just having 5,000 followers doesn't mean we have 5,000 friends. Those people don't really know us. You talk about -- you have a whole chapter where you talk about F-FOMO. I had to look up see what that meant. I had to ask my son. But it is fear of missing out. How is that something that impacts us?

Alli: Well, like a mentioned earlier, everything that we do is documented so you can just imagine this feeling of turning on your phone and seeing all of your friends out at lunch or all of your children's friends out together; that's something that is really difficult as a parent of a teenager. Everyone is together, so-and-so is not invited. It's very, very difficult. And it's even causing some people not to make plans with other people because they're waiting to see if something better is going to come along; if they're going to miss out on something.

Sheila: How do you as a mom of five boys, how do you help them navigate this crazy world?

Alli: I think the best thing that we can do is listen to them sometimes. Sometimes as mothers, as parents we want to jump in and solve their problem but sometimes it is just important to be there and sit with them and say, "I'm so sorry that happened"; and just be there with them when it is tough.

Randy: Yeah, parenting can be a real challenge. I know for me, one of the biggest areas that I fought fear is that fear of something happening to my children. I think there is a level of that that is godly and healthy because we love and we care, we want the best for them. But that can also, I think come with some unhealthy brooding, worry, and if you're not careful, that can really start to do some damage.

Alli: It can. I became an expert in parental fear from the time I was first pregnant. I actually, our first son, we bought a sensor for under his crib mattress so if he stopped breathing an alarm would go off. Well, but when your baby wakes up in the middle of the night you would just go pick up your baby and forget to turn off the alarm and scare yourself to death.

[Laughter]

Finally, having so many children I think helped me realize, I just don't have control. God formed them, they're fearfully and wonderfully made. He has a plan for all my children's life and I had to give up control to his plans because he knows everything that is going to happen.

Randy: And if we love our children, and we do, how much more does he love them? There is some comfort there.

Sheila: You talk, too, Alli in the book about fear of never measuring up. I think that one of the things I feel so strongly about is if we as the body of Christ are on the planet at this point the world should be different, things should be different because we are here. But so often because we compare ourselves to what somebody else is doing, like she is a better speaker, or she bakes better cookies for the kids, how do we navigate that fear of never measuring up and simply show up?

Alli: Well, I developed this *Fierce Faith* mantra because it's easy to remember. I put it on a post-it note; I use it all the time. It is four simple sentences: Show up. Be real. Love others. And don't quit.

Sheila: Repeat that again. That was good!

Alli: Show up. Be real. Love others. And don't quit. So we've all heard the statement "showing up is half the battle" and it's trite but it's trite because it's true. So often we get nervous or we let fear make us want to not show up and we take ourselves out before we ever get a chance to do what we're created to do. So for me it's just a reminder whenever I'm nervous, whenever it would be easier to stay home and not put myself out there that God created me for a reason and I'm going to show up.

And the same thing with "be real." For most of my life I would go into any situation and kind of get a read of the room, take the temperature, and then figure out what people wanted from me and literally, turn myself inside out to be that for other people. But God creates us with passions and gifts and unique abilities and it is not by accident. He wants us to be the people that he created us to be, to show up in this situation and to be who we really are.

And of course, "love others." As Christians there is nothing more important than loving others. We should be *the people* known for our love.

And simply "don't quit." For me, I think for years I had this false belief that if I was doing what God's will was for my life, if I was doing everything he wanted me to do that it would be easy and it wouldn't be difficult. That I would just show up at the field and throw some seeds down and I'd have an orchard. But God revealed to me that so often in my calling in my life he'll call me to a certain field but it is going to be full of brush and the dirt's going to be in terrible condition and he wants me to clear off that brush and grab a plow and then prepare to sow the seeds. So it's just a reminder to me that until God calls me away from something that he has called me to, I'm just not supposed to quit.

Sheila: It's great! It's a great book!

Randy: It is. I think people should get it, especially if that is a struggle and I know it is for a lot of people.

But there's something we've been doing for a long time. We haven't quit doing it. We're not going to quit. And we need you to show up. Would you watch this for just a moment with Sheila and me?

On the mission field

Announcer: Almost one child in five in Angola does not live to see the age of five. This malnutrition clinic is a place of last resort in trying to save children's lives. When this administrator was asked about the number of children's deaths at his clinic the answer was shocking.

Open Captions: One or two children die here every single day.

Announcer: Malnutrition is an underlying cause in most of these children's deaths. That's why the work of these men is never ending -- digging small graves.

Isak: Behind me you can see a grave digger. He is digging a grave, just a small grave, the size for a child. Here today they have pre-dug more than ten graves already and they will just keep digging grave after grave after grave. These are graves that have no name yet, but the children that will go into these graves have a name. They're a life, a precious life that means the world to their mother, to their family.

You see, you say, "How do you pre-dig graves? How do they know?" They know! They know their children will die because of the ravage drought in this area and how impacted these villages have been; because of the fact that all around here village after village there are families that cannot provide enough food for their children.

When you act, we're able to keep a child out of one of these graves. But your silence, your inaction means another child filling another grave, means another mother whose heart is broken.

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: It breaks my heart to look at all those graves waiting to be filled. There is something else that is waiting to be filled and that is a bowl. I'm asking you to join us in filling bowls so we can fill stomachs so they don't fill graves.

Sheila, it is easy to do and it is profound in its impact. I know you've seen it.

Sheila: I'll never forget the last trip to Angola and walking into a malnutrition clinic and watching these precious little ones who it took every effort just to take the next breath, watching their skin literally peeling off, their hair turning a strange color because of lack of protein.

When we were there last time we watched a mom who brought in her little one that literally had moments left to live. The clinic didn't have an incubator so this little baby was wrapped up in tin foil to try and restore some body heat. It was absolutely heartbreaking.

But the thing that was amazing to me was the next day we went to another village where we already had Mission Feeding in place and the children that I saw there that were lining up to get this bowl of food -- it was night and day. They were the way children should be; they were laughing and talking and playing. It made me realize that so little can do so much.

We can't all change the world but we can change the world for somebody -- literally, just for \$30. Do you know that \$30 could provide food for three months for three children? That's nothing! If you go with a friend to a movie you blow more than that. But this will literally change a life.

I've walked by these little graves. In fact, the last time I was there, we were filming and I said, "Oh hang on, guys. We need to quit." And we had to walk away because a family was arriving with their little one to fill one of those graves.

This doesn't have to happen. If we're the body of Christ on the planet at this time this should not be happening and it is not a burden for us to do, it is a privilege! What a joy that we get to be the answer to some mother who is on her knees right now saying, "Please Lord, God, would you send somebody to help?" Randy, we can do it!

Randy: Yeah, we are the answer to their prayers. You are the answer to their prayers. When you fill that bowl, you fill their stomachs; you fill them with the love of God. It's so easy.

Go to the phone right now please. Do the best that you can. Go online and give \$30, \$50, and \$100 that feeds three, five, ten children for three whole months. We've got some gifts we want to spiritually nourish you as well. So request those when you call. But most of all know that you can have a profound impact on someone's life. You can save a life.

Join us today as we reach around the world with arms of love and feed these beautiful children in the name of Jesus.

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

James: Beautiful children! And they're lining up because of love -- not just food, they're lining up because of love. I just thank God for his love and I thank God for the love that you express that is the love of God for all these children. Betty is here right now and she's serving up the soup.

Betty: You know we've seen lots of lines over in the states, kids lined up for games, kids lined up for parks, kids lined up to go to a movie. These lines are different. These kids are lined up for food, for life. Won't you join with us? These are the kind of lines that really count. These children need our help. They need someone to make a good choice for them and that's for life. Please join with us and help us with the mission feeding. Thank you so much!

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much. If the phone lines are busy please keep calling, we can change the world. For any gift at all that you send in, we'll be happy to send you Alli's book, *Fierce Faith*; a woman's guide to fighting fear -- and I think a man maybe too -- fighting fear, wrestling worry, and overcoming anxiety. It is a great book!

So Alli, thank you for writing it. It's awesome!

Alli: Thank you.

Sheila: Thanks for being with us. Would you help me thank Alli?

Randy: And thank you for being with us. All of you joining us here on *LIFE Today* every day. We thank you so much.