

8/16/18

Week 33: WFL

James and Betty Robison

Jamie Radtke

James: It is a joy for us to be with you. We want to thank you. And thank all of you. I'm James Robison. My wife Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

We're in the last week of our emphasis at this time on Mission: Water for LIFE. I don't mind mentioning that because you have made it very clear that you really love to give fresh clean water to people that have never had it because you know you're giving them life. And you're not only giving them Water for LIFE they're going to hear about the water of life.

Well, our guest is a very gifted person and has been part of establishing a website that really inspires people to *Explore God* and actually discover the greatness of God because of the effectiveness of it. But Water for LIFE had a whole lot to do with the first time she really got to know *LIFE Today*. Her name is Jamie Radtke. I want you to welcome Jamie to *LIFE Today*. Would you do that?

Jamie: Thank you!

James: Jamie, I'm just glad to get to visit with you. My son Randy and I had a wonderful time talking to you about the website *Explore God*. Just tell everybody where they would go to find it. Is that all they do is type in *Explore God*; is that it?

Jamie: They can. They go to ExploreGod.com is the website and then we're also on six different sort of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter and Instagram; you can find us there as well. And in Spanish, ExploraDios.com. We've got it all covered.

James: And how many followers have you? You've grown mighty fast in a short period of time.

Jamie: We have. We are closing in on 10 million followers on our social media platforms in over 80 different countries; and 38 of the 50 states just in the last ten months. So it's been amazing to see how God has blessed this ministry. And just frankly, just the hunger that we see on the internet of people trying to search for purpose, for meaning, answers to some really basic questions that either they're going to find the Christian answer or they're going to find some heresy.

James: If they type in a concern or a question, give them an idea. They go to *Explore God*. Let's say they're being challenged. Let's say if they're in a battle with depression or if they're having tension or there's resentment or bitterness or dissension, how do they find some help?

Jamie: So the whole objective to *Explore God* is really to try to redefine what spiritual conversations looks like, what evangelism looks like, what outreach looks like. So really trying to change the tone where it's a safe non-judgmental place to come and actually have a conversation. What we have found with this younger generation is that they really want to have a dialogue. So we have multiple topics. They can go and click our topics tab, they can watch videos. We have over 150 videos, over 200 articles on things like, "Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering?" "Is Jesus really God?" "What is My Purpose and Meaning in Life?" Really, we have collected and curated answers from people from sort of all over the country; authors, poets, musicians, pastors that sort of answer those questions and engage people in dialogue; both on the website as well as in our social media platforms.

James: Well, I mentioned when I came on, Betty, that she met us while we were talking about water. But would you mind telling our viewers what happened? What you were doing and what you heard and your concern; and then what you saw?

Jamie: It's kind of neat how everything comes full circle. So I have four children, three

biological and one we just adopted actually this past February. But my oldest, Abigail, when she was five years old, the *LIFE Today* show was on in my bedroom. And I was getting ready in the morning and the next thing I know I hear the door shut to my house.

James: Going outside?

Jamie: Going outside which is never good when you have a five-year old and a three-year old and you hear somebody walk out the door. And I run to the front door and I said, "Abigail, where are you going? Get back in this house!"

She said, "I'm going to raise money to build a well."

I was like, "excuse me?" Because I'd been getting ready. So she came back in and I said, "You just can't go and knock on doors and ask people to give you money."

But it was clear that she had been really moved because I remember it said "Every seven seconds someone dies of dirty drinking water." That really penetrated her mind. So I said, "All right, let's do something. Let's bake cookies, and we'll go and knock on doors."

The next thing I know she is getting invited to Kiwanis and Junior Leagues and like four or five weeks later she had raised more than \$5,000 for this well. It was really amazing!

[Applause]

So ten years later she still has a heart and passion for the Lord. She has a savings account to be able to go on mission trips. I took her on a mission's trip to Peru just two years ago. It's pretty amazing.

James: How old is she now?

Jamie: She just turned 16.

James: That's great! Thank you! You're watching, I know and thank you, thank you, thank you! I'm grateful that we not only got to meet because we did a story on that. As a matter of fact, while we were talking they were cutting in some clips of her. I'm glad we got to meet.

But I was very excited and I know Betty, you've watched my interest in trying to learn how to speak in the social media world. It's a whole different world but it's very captivating and interesting. Well, what did you hear her talking about a while ago that might have gotten your interest in what they're doing?

Betty: Well, I think just the title *Explore God* because there is a lot of curiosity, don't you think, of people in the situations in their life that are wondering where are you God? Or all about wanting to know more about him.

Jamie: I think the thing that is really fascinating is if you look at the statistics of this next generation. So for all the grandmothers out there, for all the parents out there, the moms out there, a lot of the research shows that just in the U.S. alone that 85% of that generation really does not have a personal relationship. In the United States -- not in a third world country, in the United States shows that one-third of this generation claims to be nothing. When you ask what their religious affiliation is they say, "I'm nothing." 70% of this generation, if they grew up in the church and they go off to college then they leave the faith. So there's sort of a pandemic happening in the U.S.

And yet, with all that sort of negative statistics what we see is that they've been told they're an accident of D.N.A. slapping together and they're saying, "Why am I here? What is my purpose and meaning in life?" And they're trying to figure out the pain and the suffering. We have found that they're incredibly hungry to be able to engage in a conversation -- and that's the beauty of the internet is that it is safe. You can hide behind that computer screen and you can ask any question. We saw just recently that the research shows that every month 3.8 million searches on the word *Jesus* on Google -- on Google -- on Google, 3.8 million searches just on the word *Jesus*. Well, if you go and do that you'll see that there really is no Christian answer. It's

Wikipedia, the Mormons, and the Jehovah Witnesses.

So *Explore God* is trying to occupy space on that real estate to be able to engage young people. Also, really to equip grandparents and parents to be able to have those dialogues with their children, to be able to have dialogues in high schools and colleges and everywhere else. How do you in 2018 have meaningful conversations about Jesus Christ and about the questions that people are asking? And that's the space we're really trying to fill.

James: Do you have some well-known speakers and teachers that people would know that are on there in particular? Or do you just find someone very gifted to communicate in that particular area?

Jamie: We have all sorts. We've curated a really great group of different speakers. We have people like Eric Metaxas and Gabe Lyons and Andy Crouch and Lysa TerKeurst from Proverbs 31 and Jenny Allen; just a lot of groups of people that we've pulled together that can speak into their personal testimony and we're really trying to talk with stories and also with apologetics.

What we had really seen was if you looked at the world today there is a lot of discipleship material out there. I mean there are thousands of books on discipleship. And there is a lot of books on *how* to do outreach but there really isn't a lot of tools to actually do the outreach. Like what do I use nowadays? We grew up, my grandfather was a Baptist preacher and we would go door to door with our gospel tracks. People don't answer the door anymore. You can't go door to door. Billy Graham had tents and he leveraged TV like yourself and radio to share the gospel. Well, how do you share the gospel in 2018? Well, you use the internet. This generation spends nine hours a day on the internet -- nine hours! I mean it is like this. You can see them. It is pretty amazing how much time they're spending there. If they have a question about God...

James: Much of it is anything but good.

Jamie: It is. And if they have a question where we would have gone to the library or Britannica or our Sunday school teacher, if they have a question it's Google or they ask a friend

on social media.

James: Now are you finding people curious about God or finding their way amazingly to your site?

Jamie: Absolutely. The response has been exponential. We've been growing -- this has really been going on for four years, four or five years and we're up to ten million. It's been growing at like 10% quarter after quarter. But I think the thing that's really interesting is that if you go to our *ExploreGod.com* Facebook page you'll find conversations taking place between Muslims and Buddhists and atheists and Christians, and not in a hostile and confrontational way but a real, meaningful, transparent dialogue that is going on about who is God, who is Jesus, why does God allow these things? It is a great place. Our number one country outside the U.S. is Pakistan.

James: That's amazing!

Jamie: It really is!

James: So are they asking questions about Christianity from Pakistan?

Jamie: They do. They ask questions about -- we have a lot of conversations about who was God and who was Jesus. One of the things that we have found that is really important with this generation, this next generation is they don't want to be preached at. They don't want to be told. So the philosophy at *Explore God* is to present the truth, have a dialogue, and then let the Holy Spirit do the rest of the work. So we do a lot with asking questions. We ask a lot of questions and let them through that question process really think through, what is it that I think about this? And then well, here's what the Bible says. Here's what Christianity says.

But it's really unique what we see taking place of *Explore God*. We're really just trying to let as many families know about it and as many churches know about it as possible to use it in the outreach in churches because I think churches are really struggling with what should evangelism and outreach look like in today's modern era, in the digital era? And everything we have on our

site is free. That's the big catch.

Betty: Can you tell from the people that do ask the questions as they go on your site, are there very many that have indicated they have a Christian foundation that they grew up on or are people just not aware and really don't know anything about God?

Jamie: We really get it all. It's sort of like this continuum of where people are on their faith journey. We get some people that are right at the beginning and they say, "I'm an atheist." And we get some people who grew up in church and left and have been disenfranchised for whatever reason. So we kind of meet everybody along that continuum really.

James: You said your grandfather, I believe was a preacher. Didn't you have some challenges in your own life that might have prepared you to understand why people want to have a clear understanding? What happened in the challenges that you had?

Jamie: I grew up in an interesting family. My dad was an Air Force pilot so I grew up moving every three years; actually lived in West Germany when it was divided during the cold war. My mother was obviously the preacher's kid, a Baptist preacher, and so my dad really found Christianity to be for the sort of weak, maybe for the stupid and was sort of embarrassed by a lot of it. Thought Christianity was a bunch of hypocrites.

So from the time I was 13 years old, every night at the dinner table there were lots of conversations about well, how do you explain this? How do you explain that? I can remember him sending me letters in college, that's before email... [Laughing] ...and they would literally, he would highlight quotes from Richard Dawkins, "What do you say to this?" So I had to give a quick defense to what I believed or maybe he has a point. So that idea of being able to stand up for truth and figure out how to do that was a real passion for me.

Then I went into a political career for almost 25 years and found that people were just as interested in these questions even in that sphere. So I had run for U.S. senate a couple of years ago and found that I would find myself in these really fascinating conversations with all these

20-year olds that I was sort of an enigma to because they would agree with me on some issues but obviously not on a lot of these socially conservative issues. We would have these fascinating conversations and before I knew it, I was talking about C.S. Lewis and John Piper and Ravi Zacharias.

So that was really what I saw that there really is a hunger. That's the thing is there is a hunger. The question is where do you go to reach this generation? You can't go door to door, they don't answer their door. But they're nine hours a day on the internet and they're searching for answers -- and they're going to find an answer, whether it is the right one or the wrong one is a different issue. But they really do want to engage in conversation. We see that all the time.

James: You're very excited about the fact that you can offer this to churches and to people who want to help people totally free and any church can use it. And it looks like churches are jumping on board to really take access of what you're offering.

Jamie: Yeah, we've had thousands of churches use it. We have a piece of content shared about every 90 seconds on the internet. So we do see a lot of interest. And we get stories all the time. We received a story last year of a Hispanic gentleman who was struggling with suicide. And he felt like he had done things that were unforgivable to his family. He didn't really elaborate, and had come across our site and said, "I didn't even know I had purpose and meaning in life." Right? And sort of the encouragement that he found through *Explore God* encouraged him to find faith in the Lord and move forward.

That's just the thing, right? He was suicidal and where did he go before he made a decision? He went to the internet. That's really our heart of *Explore God* is who is the answer going to be? There are 3.8 million searches on the word *Jesus* and is the answer going to be truth or is it not going to be truth? When they do come, how do we engage them? That's the thing that we're really excited about is that tone.

James: Well, this is definitely the way to communicate. Do you appreciate what Jamie is doing and the passion and vision God has given her? I'm very grateful.

Jamie: I would encourage your audience and your listeners, if they go to *ExploreGod.com* we'll have sort of a *LIFE Today* free resource that they can use too; that they can use personally or with their children and grandchildren. We would love to give it away.

James: Well, thank God for that! Again, thank Jamie. We appreciate her being here. Jamie,

I'm going to take all of our viewers, we're offering this beautiful coffee cup. We have one for the morning and one for the evening, and our viewers seem to enjoy that. I guess they like to watch *LIFE Today* sometimes when they're maybe having a morning coffee. But we're going to go back to where your daughter pointed you. Are you glad she saw that? Are you excited about what she did?

Jamie: Well, it's formed her and shaped her. She opened a little savings account and would put her dollars, allowance in to be able to save because one day she wants to be able to go see that well she built in Africa. That's one of her dreams.

James: Isn't that great? Well, I tell you what. I wish you could see all of them.

Here's what I want you to see. This is our last week for this emphasis and we need a miracle. You say, "What kind of miracle?" We need people that say, "I will give a cup of water" or even more, "I'll give toward a well of water that will just keep giving water to people for the rest of their life and give them life."

You're going to hear from this mother how vitally important that is. I pray your heart leaps to be the answer to this need, this heart cry and this genuine request. Watch prayerfully.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In Cambodia, finding water often isn't the problem. It can be seen in abundance nourishing rice fields and livestock. But for its people it presents a devastating choice, share this same water with your children or go without. Mothers like Kunmau know this burden all too well.

Open Captions:

>> My three year old baby got sick. Diarrhea... All the time. I was also pregnant and then I started to get sick too. I tried to get my baby to the hospital... But before we arrived he died.

Announcer: Tragically, Kunmau lost her son to waterborne diseases and yet she must again return to the same source which robbed her of so much.

Open Captions:

>> When my kids get fever and diarrhea, I worry I will lose them too.

Announcer: In the midst of unimaginable grief, her only water source constantly reminds her of the decisions she must make.

Open Captions:

>> I've told my kids the water is not safe. But I have no choice but to make them drink it.

Announcer: You can change that. With your help, we can tell mothers like Kunmau that her children no longer need to drink from sources like this. That fresh clean water is on its way.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty and I have been blessed with three children, 11 grandchildren, now four great grandchildren. We have three little girls. They're the prettiest little girls. One of them could stand there like that one now; she is old enough to stand.

I watched that mother going down there to get that precious little girl and thinking about how much we love our children and want the best for them and that mother wants it too but she has no choice but we can give her a choice if we just will.

Betty: We can. And as I listened to that young mother's broken heart, and the sorrow she has already experienced from the loss of her little boy and now she has the other children that she's concerned about, she is worried about because she has to force them she said to drink the water

just to be able to live at all. But knowing that she could face that same sorrow any time, any day, any moment that they continue to drink that water.

I hope your heart's been touched. I hope you will reach out and let's drill the wells for these precious families that are in such dire need. And they have nowhere to turn but to someone and say, "Please help me."

James: I'm really glad that the missionaries and relief workers can call me and Betty, and call us here at *LIFE* or send us an email or a note and say, "James, we've got a real serious problem here and we felt like the viewers of *LIFE Today* would want to help." It's not a compliment simply to me and Betty at all, I'm glad they can call us, but it's really a compliment to you. Because you are sensitive, I believe, to the heart of God, not only the concern of that mother or the concern of those mission workers but you're concerned about what God's concerned about.

And if Jesus talks about giving a cup of water as being significant and how significant would it be to give a well of water? Well, some of you can actually give a well. The average cost is \$4800. If you can do that and you know, some people tell me that's probably as great a joy as I've ever had. We've had a lot of children do that as you know. They would go raise the money for a well, just kids.

Well, can you give a well? Could you give part of a well and pray others join you? \$1200 or \$2400, I need another or three more join. Most of the money, Betty, that comes for the wells comes from \$48 gifts, that's the majority and from \$144; \$48 gives ten people water the rest of their life, \$144 gives 30, that's how it breaks down. That's not an exaggeration.

So would you be a part of that miracle this last week? Would you go online, take your bankcard or dial that number and take that card? If you want to write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're sending it in. Please, we really need a tremendous surge this last week.

Father, I pray every person watching will hear not only the heart cry and the desire of that

woman, that mother, but they'll hear your heart, your love and they will reach out in love right now; in Jesus' name.

Would you please go online? Would you dial the number? Would you make the gift God put on your heart? Thank you for doing it. We have some gifts to say thank you that you're actually giving the greatest gift, you're giving the gift of life. Thank you for doing it.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Today a mother living in extreme poverty will do the unthinkable: give her children dirty, diseased-filled water that she knows could kill them. With no other choice, what's a mother to do?

With your help, clean water is on the way. *Mission: Water for Life* provides a new beginning for thousands of children and their families; a bright future with better health.

With your gift today you can help drill 400 water wells in remote villages in 15 nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten. \$72 will provide for 15 people. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift we'll send you *The Miracles of Christ; What Living Beyond Impossible Looks Like*. Filled with scriptures, prayers, and stories of Jesus' miraculous power, James Robison adds insight about how to walk in faith and live beyond the impossible.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the Morning and Evening coffee mug set. Each mug features beautiful artwork and scripture from Psalm 92:2, a wonderful reminder of God's faithfulness each day.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people, or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request the beautiful "Bridge of Faith" framed canvas print by Thomas Kinkade.

This is the last day! Please call, write or make your gift online!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, I just feel like a lot of prayers are being answered just like the mother you saw. I really believe that. I want to send you the book, the gift book, *The Miracles of Christ*: What living beyond the impossible looks like. Words and truths that I share and many of our guests shared; the beautiful coffee cups, it's really nice. We've given away a lot of nice coffee cups. And you know what? People like them. But you don't give to get a cup. You give to give a cup, a well of water. Thank you!

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to Jamie Radtke again? And *Explore God* -- real easy to find. You can *Explore God* and tell others how to go there and use the resource material to help others. Thanks so much for watching. Thank you.