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Week 34: Christmas Shoes & Smiles

James and Betty Robison

Jeff Allen

James: Oh yeah! Thank you. I'm already smiling. We welcome you. I'm James Robison; my wife Betty and I are glad you've joined *LIFE Today*.

Jeff Allen is going to be out here in a few minutes. Jeff's funny. Now I don't know if he is going to do what he said he is going to do or not because he doesn't know what he's going to do. It's like when I get up to preach I never use notes. Most people say, "I heard you preach. You ought to use notes."

But anyway, he's coming out here and if he does what he said he said, "I'm going to talk about the America I grew up in." Wow! You look back, things are different for me and Betty. Over a half century, three quarters of a century now, a lot of things have changed. Jeff said he's 60 now, to us that's like kid stuff. He's still a kid. Got to grow up.

But anyway, he says that's what he's going to do. So I'll tell you, whatever he does, we want to welcome him. Would you welcome Jeff Allen to *LIFE Today*?

Come on, Jeff!

[Cheers & Applause]

Jeff: Thank you! It is nice to be back at *LIFE Today*. It is even nicer you dropped the charges and let me come back to your fine place.

[Laughter]

It's good to be back in Dallas.

I've got to tell you a little bit about myself and then we'll move on. I'm 62 years old -- actually next week I'll be 62. I'm married, I've got two kids, grew up in Chicago. I now live in Nashville, Tennessee.

Some more things on a more personal note. I'm a recovering drug addict and alcoholic the last September I had my 31st year without a drink or a line of cocaine so that's a good thing.

[Applause]

Nineteen years ago my wife and I filed bankruptcy; we lost everything financially. Twenty years ago my wife said to me one afternoon if things don't improve in this marriage, she is going to file for divorce. I only tell you this because I draw my comedy from my life experience. Right now that's pretty much my life -- the highlights: Alcoholism, bankruptcy, and divorce.

[Laughter]

So strap on your party hats folks!

[Laughter]

Mr. Sunshine flew to Dallas just to cheer you up.

[Laughter]

My favorite philosopher, Woody Allen, said that comedy was tragedy plus time. What that means to me is if you have time to heal from the wounds in your life, you should find humor in the wounds. To give you an example of a wound in my life. I was a nine-year old boy, my parents bought me a dog. It was my dog. I don't know why but one day my dog attacked my

father and bit him. My dad didn't like that. Took my dog out in the backyard and blew him away with his 12-gauge. That's tragic but I learned at a young age never to bite my father.

[Laughter]

Just came here to make some lemonade out of a lemon, folks! The only thing I remember about that night is my mother. I was nine years old, I was sad, I was crying, my dog got shot. My mother patted my little hand and goes, "Shh! Stop your crying. You don't want to upset your father."

[Laughter]

I forgot.

I should also tell you I was diagnosed with adult attention deficit hyperactive disorder. I don't even know what that is. I really don't. How do you quantify and measure attention? I really want to know. Don't you have to know what full attention is before you can figure out what a deficit of that is?

[Laughter]

I have been around fully attentive people in my life. Trust me, they're frightening people. We used to call them cocaine addicts. I don't know what you call them. You've got some guy glaring at you for 20 minutes. "Louie, blink! You're frightening people." "Huh?"

[Laughter]

I used to think I suffered from attention deficit but I realized I don't suffer from it at all. It's the people around me that seem to have a problem with it. It turns out I'm perfectly happy the way God designed me.

And I'm a functioning hypochondriac. I should mention that as well. This is how God looks out for his children. It is my A.D.H.D. that keeps my hypochondria manageable.

[Laughter]

On those days that I'm thoroughly convinced I need an ambulance, by the time I actually get to the phone to call one I've been distracted four or five times.

[Laughter]

I usually wind up in the kitchen. I got the telephone, I can't remember why I have the telephone so that's when I order our pizza.

[Laughter]

My kids love me. Dad's dying again! All right, pepperoni, baby!

[Laughter]

I mentioned that I'm 62 so that means when I was 60 I had a physical; that's every ten years. When I was 50 I had a physical. So at 60 I have a physical. I go in. At 50 I went in and they told me I was fine. Everything was great. I figured 60; what's changed? Right? Ten years. So anyway, I get home, two weeks later the nurse calls my house and says, "Doctor says if you were part of a wildebeest herd the lions would be circling you, pal." He said, "Do you do anything aerobically?"

I said, "I don't know. Let me look the word up, I'll call you back."

So my wife goes out and buys me a Fitbit for no other reason than to show me how little I move; that was the whole point of the purchase. Fitbit monitors my entire life. I don't know if anybody has a Fitbit, I mean apparently I wasn't giving up enough of my privacy to Apple, Google and the

government.

[Laughter]

What can go wrong with a corporation monitoring my sleep habits, for God's sakes?

Fitbit tells me how many times I get up in the middle of the night. Am I the only one bothered by this?

[Laughter]

I get a text message, "You were up five times last night, Jeff; restless?" Well, Brad and Angelina are splitting up. Who can sleep?

[Laughter]

Then I'm watching the golf Channel 2 months ago, I'm on the couch at ten in the morning; 2:00 in the afternoon I get a text message from Fitbit, "Are you dead?"

[Laughter]

"You've taken 78 steps in four hours." And most of that is because my foot fell asleep and I was banging it on the floor. Leave me alone!

And like everything in life I found out you can game Fitbit. You really don't even to take any steps. You just move your arm up and down. I could sit in a chair and move my arm up and down. So a couple of weeks ago I'm in a hotel room eating potato chips and my wife calls me. She says, "What are you doing?"

"Oh I'm running a 5K I'll call you back."

"What's that crunching sound?"

"It's my bones; I'm brittle and old."

So anyway, the doctor said I had to move; that's the whole point. I had a physical, you've got to move, find something. So my wife says to me one morning, I'm not making this up. She comes downstairs and she says, "I was thinking about what the doctor said and I've always wanted to ski."

I said, "You've always wanted to ski? We've been married 30 years and this is the first time hearing of it. You got any more secrets you've kept for 30 years? You have another husband I don't know about? What's going on?"

I tried skiing when I was young and coordinated. I got knocked unconscious by the chair lift. What more sign from God do you need? And the insurance company wouldn't cover my head injury. The guy called me up at home and asked me, "You got hit in the head with a chair lift?"

I said, "Yes, sir."

He goes, "Wow! That makes you a moron. We consider that a preexisting condition around here."

[Laughter]

They had me. It was a loop hole.

So my 60th birthday rolls around and Tammy's gift, my wife's gift to me, I'm not making this up, 12 hours with a personal trainer. Yeah, that was my reaction.

[Laughter]

Gee thanks, babe! Twelve hours with Todd, "Hi, Jeff. I'm two percent body fat Todd."

"Well, hey two percent, I'm 80% flabby Jeff. How are you doing?"

So the first question he asks me was how long has it been since I had an exercise program?

"Well, let me ponder that one, Todd-do. Well, it's been awhile. Let's see, to be honest with you, Todd, I haven't moved with any purpose since I won the race at conception."

[Laughter]

"So that would make it about 60 years 9 months."

[Laughter]

"I outran about four billion that morning, I'm still exhausted."

So Todd says, "Well, you might want to start out a little slow."

So I slept with ankle weights on for a few months.

[Laughter]

We'd all exercise, everybody on planet earth would exercise if the weight we gained were in a more uncomfortable place on our bodies. Where do we gain weight? Our stomachs and our behinds -- it's never in our way. A couple pounds on your forehead would get you to a gym. Standing there, man, I can't see nothing!

And my wife is dieting which means we all diet; that's the rules. She came home with rice cakes. I'd never seen a rice cake, never eaten a rice cake, I don't know what a rice cake is. I look at it and I go, "What is that?"

She says, "Dessert."

I love the audience's responses today. Yeah! So that night I'm foraging around looking for something to snack on. I see the rice cakes. I took a bite. Never made it to my throat. What is that? These things are stale.

"They're not stale. That's what they are."

It's not food, its insulation. Who are they kidding?

I told Tammy, "We could save money, just eat the Styrofoam peanuts that came with the thigh master you bought. My dog ate nine rice cakes. Went in the backyard and passed a thermos. What more do you need to know? Really?

Honestly, I can't keep up with the food anymore anyway. G.M.O. non-G.M.O. gluten, gluten-free, I have no clue. All I know is my father gave my brother and me food that my sisters didn't have to eat. It was man food -- sardines in a can. That's what he told us. He said, "Boy, this will put hair on your chest." I'm nine years old and going, "That's a good thing?"

He goes, "Every man wants hair on his chest, boy!"

Who knew in the 21st century every American male would be waxing all the hair off their body? Are you kidding me? Tammy, my wife, says to me, "I want you to look into that waxing thing."

So I looked into it. I came home and told her, "Get use to the pelt, it's not going anywhere!"

Are we nuts? Have we lost our mind as a culture? We pay billions of dollars to have the hair ripped out of our body by the root but yet we can't pour water on the faces of enemy combatants. You know, people that want to kill us. You know what I think? The C.I.A. needs to open up a series of spas around the world. Yeah! "You know, Achmed, before we send you back to the

battlefield, as part of our new western civilization catch and release program, we're going to clean you up a little bit. You know those 72 maidens you're dying to lay next to in the next life? They don't want to lay next to a throw rug so get in the van."

You guys have been great. Thank you! God bless you! Thank you! Thank you.

James: Do y'all like this guy? Oh my gosh! I pray to God that you experience good medicine because I sure did.

Jeff: Well, I've got to take this. Because you mentioned the America I grew up in and I didn't get a chance. I just want to say this. I went to the playground with my granddaughter. What has happened to America's playgrounds? The slide -- it's not a slide. It's a scoot. I put her on this plastic thing that's like three feet high and she goes two inches, "Wee, papa! Wee, papa! Wee, papa! Wee!"

I'm not kidding you? What did we have? A six story high, solid steel, your butt's on fire when it hit a temperature of 245 degrees. You'd lose three layers of skin going down the darn thing. You'd hit the ground like a flat rock on a pond. You'd lose another layer of skin. And you'd get up and go, "Yeah!"

[Laughter]

Now lawyers hang out at the playground just waiting! So anyway, I was a free range kid.

James: Oh boy! This is a gift. You're a gift. We have great love and appreciation for you. Your wife shared her battle with cancer, got his attention right here. And we've just held on to you with love and watched you. Is our relationship special to you like it is to us?

Jeff: Yes, absolutely!

James: How is Tammy doing?

Jeff: Doing great. Almost 18 years cancer-free. Praise God!

[Applause]

James: Well, we love you! Thanks for being such a good sport and letting him just have fun with everybody. Jeff, I'm concerned about our country. I'm concerned about where we're headed but I think there is a chance we can turn it around. I know you were on our friend Huckabee recently. Don't you love him? Isn't he a statesman?

Jeff: He is a good man. My first time on, without really spending any time with him, he came to our church and spoke but again, when they come they're surrounded by a lot of people and so this is a chance to sit with him and talk.

James: He just represents the principles of God well. What's on your heart? How do you we pray for you? What do you have ahead of you? What are you going to be doing? Because I know you've got opportunities. How can we pray for you with what's before you and what's perhaps on your mind or on your heart?

Jeff: Well, the enemy is obvious. Most artists, I think if you really got down and sat with most artists it is the self-doubts, the doubts of not knowing where -- my prayer every day is just somehow let me put one foot in front of the other and do your work, whatever that looks like, whatever doors open.

At 62 years old I'm not in the same position I was at 42 or 40. I have a heart for the next generation. I have grandchildren. Somebody I saw on another talk show, I'm not sure which one it was, it might have been Tucker but he had a guest on that talked about European leaders and a lot of them don't have grandchildren. He said, "That changes your perspective."

And it hit me while I was sitting there, he's right. When you have children you kind of look 20 years down, you're in the middle of making your own way in life while you're raising your kids but then the next generation comes, my grandbabies, I look at those four grandchildren I have, that little five-year old girl, and I think, what's the world going to look like in 30-40, you know when she is having children?

And I want to reach these kids because they're going to colleges, they're going out into the culture and they're getting their childhood faith knocked out of them. It's almost as if a lot of Christian parents protect their kids away from all of that but then they get thrown into it. And they're shocked. From what I'm reading is that they're losing the battle over something as silly as knowledge. It's just -- there is no new arguments. The peer pressure and the social media and again, it is stuff I'm trying to get up to speed on.

But I don't know what my next ten years are going to look like. So if you're going to pray for anything, just have him reveal to me what's that's going to look like. And when those doors open, give me the courage to walk through them.

James: Let me just go ahead and share with you, Jeff, and with all of our viewers and I really pray you hear this. Betty and I have been married 55 years. We're both 74 and so three quarters of a century, you've got to figure we have lived, well, if we live to be 100 we've lived 75% of our life. Most people say, "Well, probably more like 85%, maybe 90%." I don't really care about the percentage.

Here's what I want you to know. Jeff, none of us are too old to make an impact, no one is too young. There is no group that can be separated out from the will of God and not accomplish it. Now listen to me. We as believers were left here by our Father God and commissioned by our savior to be ambassadors for Christ to be the children of a Father that loves unconditionally and to release that love. And we're to show the world what a real family looks like by being a family which he calls "the church" and he actually says it is his body and even says it is his bride that he's coming to get. He says that bride will be adorned in his presence, his glory.

Jeff, don't you think it is possible that we, the people of God behaving like the family of God could reveal to the world the living Jesus before he comes back?

Jeff: Absolutely! You ask yourself this, if supposedly 80 million professed Christians in America, ask yourself why aren't we affecting the culture? It's going to take courage. You've got to be willing to...

James: Small organizations do more to impact policy and the direction of our nation, a few million in a group but they're totally committed to what they believe in do more than the 80 million who say they believe in the greatest person and greatest truth ever. I want to see that changed.

If all of us who do know him will begin to share him with love and open -- like so many of our viewers do, and I'm praying we step up and say we we're going to take it to the ends of the earth.

Jeff, you are a blessing. You have got our prayers and we will never not have our arms of concern around you, always be available to help lighten your load and lift it up. You do that every time I'm around you. You brightened our today. You made me almost choke laughing so hard. Then I'm crying I'm laughing so hard. Would you say thanks to the Lord for Jeff Allen? And thank you, Jeff. What a blessing!

[Applause]

If our viewers want to go online and get every humor DVD, CD, whatever you got, where do they go?

Jeff: JeffAllenComedy.com.

James: And can they find some things there?

Jeff: Absolutely.

James: And do you have a schedule you print there every now and then?

Jeff: We have a full tour schedule. I'll be at --

James: Well, let's go to your website to find it. Because this can air one day after you were just there.

Jeff: I can't remember where I put my shoes most days.

[Laughter]

Well, I'm glad you remembered to come here. We really love you and you come back often. I wish you would come often.

Jeff, we are -- you can't remember where you put your shoes, we're trying to help kids who don't have any shoes, their beautiful little feet, precious little feet. And our viewers thank God for all of you here but all of you there, I think you're the greatest most charitable people on the planet and I know you're going to want to do this. I want you to watch closely and then please respond. Not like I may ask you to but the way the Father leads you to, and let's pour some love out on little children and let's shod them with the gospel of peace, Betty and the love of God by giving them shoes. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Open Captions:

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news. Isaiah 52:7

Announcer: Through your generous support, the mission teams of *LIFE Outreach International* have extended the hands and feet of Jesus to the far corners of the globe providing sustenance for the malnourished, water for the thirsty, medical aid for the infirm, and freedom for the captives.

But on a recent trip to the African nation of Burundi our missions' director, Ralph Done, was introduced to a young boy named Jahdu who highlighted another crucial need that countless children share.

Ralph: I've just seen so much poverty, so much sadness. One of the things I've noticed is there is no kids wearing shoes hardly. Almost all of them had no shoes. The terrain here can be really tough even walking in shoes but much less barefooted. Jahdu was brought to me here. I saw his feet and you can see the toll that it's taken with him not wearing shoes, probably most of his life if not all of his life.

Announcer: Like Jahdu children in villages around the world endure cuts and sores while walking barefoot through contaminated water, soil, or animal feces which can open the door to deadly diseases and infections including hookworms.

Ralph: You can be a blessing today by giving a child like Jahdu his very first pair of shoes. It will change his life forever. It will change his walk. In fact, I believe one day he's going to be a little champion for Christ and it will help him even walk with God. So please partner with us to provide Jahdu and children just like him all around the world with a brand-new pair of shoes this Christmas season.

End of clip

In the studio

James: You have no idea what just a little gift like this can mean. Betty, you and I years ago started going into the impoverished nations even in Central America and going to the dumps and

seeing the horrific conditions where the children were. And then we actually went out and saw children that were already being treated because they had gotten the hookworms from getting in the open places in their little feet and then ultimately ending up in their brain. We saw what love could do when we would go in.

Do you remember us sitting in one of those villages and there was a real pretty little girl that looked shy and she just kind of disappeared behind the little huts. I just said, "Betty, I'm going to pray that little girl back. I want to sit on the ground and I want that little girl to come sit in my lap and I'm going to tell her how loved she is."

Do you remember she came and sat in my lap? The missionaries said to me over the years even in Rwanda and the horrors of what happened to those children, they were amazed that kids would come and just crawl up in my lap. There is a picture in the entry of our studio of me with a bunch of little kids in my lap. Their parents had just been killed with machetes. What made them come? Love! Love! What causes people to want to say, "Let's meet that need?" Love! It's the love of God.

And Betty and I can go all over the world and we can weep. Betty, if the people watching us don't say, "James, Betty, we will help the missionaries and the people love those children, love those families" we simply weep when we have no results. Our viewers make the difference.

Betty: They really do. You really do! You're such a big part of what God wants to do here in putting the shoes on these precious little feet. We've been there and had the opportunity to personally put the shoes on the feet of these precious children. Their little hearts just light up. They're faces light up with a smile. As you saw they were dancing around. They had something to celebrate. Not only that they had received a gift from those that loved them and cared about them but they received a gift that is going to possibly save their lives because it protects them from all the disease and all the ugly things they have to walk through. So please join with us and let's put shoes on these precious little feet!

James: If you'll join us with Shoes and Smiles for Christmas, please, go online, dial the

number, take your bankcard. I want you to make the largest gift you can. \$36 will give ten children shoes. \$72 will give 20. Please! If you could give \$180 and give 50 kids shoes, would you do it? There is some level at which you can help. Would you do that please? Whatever you can do, we're asking you to do it right now. Please!

We have some gifts to send you. The beautiful little red crystal Christmas ornament, this little shoe to go with others that we've given you over the years, and the beautiful scented candle. This one is cinnamon and vanilla. And it says, "The light shines in the darkness." And you turn the candle, "And the darkness can never extinguish it." You can never stop the effect of love.

Would you right now make the largest gift you can, please? Thank you for doing it. Let's give Shoes and Smiles for Christmas. We need to start now so we can get them to the ends of the earth by Christmas. Thank you for doing it!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Poverty is a killer and because of it children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we often take for granted like a simple pair of shoes. Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a new pair of shoes and while that may seem minor in light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections and disease that can lead to crippling consequences and even death.

By responding today you can help immediately secure and begin shipping Christmas Shoes to 150,000 children around the world and for many, just in time for the holidays! Your gift of \$36 will help provide 10 pairs of shoes, a gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pair and a gift of \$180 will help provide 50 pairs of Christmas Shoes for children in need.

As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request this beautifully crafted red crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display at each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more you may

request "The Light Shines in Darkness" frosted glass candle featuring a beautiful golden design that's scripture from John 1:5.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft palate surgeries and you may request the "Bridge of Faith" canvas print by Thomas Kinkade. Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, you know I'm holding up a beautiful little Christmas ornament. Betty got a little tree she started decorating. She said, "I'm going to have to get a bigger tree now; I can't get any more shoes." A little tree but we also hang them because Betty and I, we're faithful givers. We love to give. We find great joy in it. She's got them hanging up and you can't even see them sparkling on the big tree. I just want to thank you.

I want to say thanks to Jeff Allen again for being our friend and just blessing us. We pray for Jeff's family and everything that God's put before him. Join Betty and me again saying thanks to Jeff Allen. Jeff, we really love you. God bless you. Come back often. Let's try to work it out at least the time of year anyway.

Thank all of you! Thanks so much for your help!