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Week 34: Christmas Shoes

James and Betty Robison

Emerson Eggerichs

James: Thank you. You make us feel welcome. We welcome you. I'm James Robison; Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

Emerson Eggerichs is with us. He is a great marriage counselor. He and his wife will do some of those Love and Respect seminars. That was one of the bestselling book, *Love and Respect*. But I'm holding up this new one here and it just has a title that just kind of may stump you. But look at it. It is a nice looking book. It says: *The 4 Wills of God*.

I think my first response would be, he's only got four? You go to church and it is like hundreds. It is not the "wills of God," "the *rules* of God." So he said *The 4 Wills of God*. When you have counseled as many people as he has and you've impacted marriages, which sometimes they're tough to impact, and you've been effective and then you come up with something like this, I think it is worth inquiring about.

Would you welcome Emerson Eggerichs back to *LIFE Today*?

Emerson, good to see you.

Emerson: Good to be back.

James: We're glad to have you. I was commenting on your shoes. Hold them up. Put your foot up here.

Emerson: It is your boots that we're looking at.

James: But see it is the color. I wish I had --

Emerson: I want to have boots like yours. It says "King Ranch" on it.

James: It does. This is Texas but let me see your shoes. What's that?

Emerson: I think those are Italian. My wife bought them for me but I'm not sure. It's more these socks that you really like.

James: You call them "Michigan boots."

Emerson: Well, Michigan shoes. I was just comparing to your Texas boots, I'm from Michigan.

James: I gotcha. That's fine. That's wonderful. It's okay to be from Texas.

Emerson: It is. It is!

James: I said to a big crowd one time, I said, "Man, Texas is a great place! All we need is a little bit more water and little more air conditioning." A guy shouted, "Man, that's all hell needs!"

[Laughter]

That took care of the bragging in Texas right there.

The 4 Wills of God. Okay, man, you've been writing *Love and Respect* and now you're tried to narrow it down. Explain.

Emerson: Well, I think the back story in that is that I was a pastor for nearly 20 years

and the call on my ministry was to study the Bible for 30 hours a week and I did that for nearly 20 years. Now it is not because of anything other than the fact that I'm slow so they needed to give me more time. But the *Love and Respect* message came out of that study. I saw something in the Bible that I hadn't seen. It wasn't like I was going to launch a marriage conference. Sarah and I didn't think, oh let's start a marriage conference. I saw something in the Bible. I'm more of a systematic theologian and I looked at everything the Bible said about marriage.

Well, for 40 years I knew of four passages that say, "This is the will of God." Now we know there's more to the will of God than these four but these four identify God's will very specifically. They're unparalleled. They're matchless. It is almost like God has highlighted these in gold and said, "Start here."

People always ask, "Well, isn't there more to the will of God than these four wills?" Absolutely! But I know for me, if I ignore those four I'll probably ignore the rest. That's the way it works out. But it is like start here.

And for 40 years people have come to me for counseling as a pastor and these four seemed to hit almost all the issues. I've spoken on this topic in some churches and pastors of these large churches say, "These are the four reasons why people come to us for pastoral counseling. It is like the Lord understood this. And he is saying, "If you start here, if you respond to my universal will, if you follow this you're going to experience my unique will for you."

And that's based in part on First John 3:22: In whatever we ask we receive from him because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing to him.

There you see "do" is universal, experience the unique, you follow that verse. Ask whatever you want uniquely but if you've been keeping the four wills or the full will of God, God is going to respond to you personally.

But that can be overwhelming. Do I have to keep everything? The Sermon on the Mount, the Ten Commandments -- I get overwhelmed. So it is like, "Just relax," I say to people. "Let's just start with these four and let's align with these four and then the things that are on your heart, let's pray about that and let's see if the Lord doesn't uniquely respond to you. I can't promise that but let's begin here and let's see what happens."

James: Could you just name the four and then let's expound them a little bit?

Emerson: John 6:40 Jesus said, "This is the will of my Father that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in him will have eternal life; and I myself will raise him up on the last day."

So Jesus identifies the will of the Father as believing in Jesus Christ, first one.

First Thessalonians 4:3: This is the will of God, your sanctification that you abstain from sexual immorality.

So the idea of moral purity, Jesus said, "The pure in heart will see God."

Then First Thessalonians 5:18: In everything give thanks for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. You're giving him thanks.

Then Peter said in First Peter second chapter, verses 13 through 15: He said, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king, as the one in authority or to his governors who he sends to punish evil doers or to basically reward those who do right. And then Peter said, "For such is the will of God that in doing right you silence the ignorance of foolish men.

So I put this together in a very simple acronym called bags, B-A-G-S. This is the godly baggage that I should carry: Believe in Jesus Christ, abstain from sexual sin, give thanks in everything, and submit in doing right. If we are serious about that, none of us do it

perfectly, but if our hearts are there, we're not going to miss the will of God, we're doing his will.

But quite often then if we respond to what is on his heart, he will respond to us based on what is on our heart. And if he does not, the second part of the subtitle, *The 4 Wills of God*: "The way he directs our steps but frees us to direct our own." If I've been praying about these things and should I go to door A or door B and the Lord is not revealing his unique will to me, what do I do? Well, if you're doing these four, you're kind of free. You're free to go to A or B as long as you continue to respond to these four. You're not going to miss his will, you're doing his will.

My daughter Joy is the one that really wanted me to write this book and get it out there because she herself experienced this message and how it liberated her. She said, "Dad, you need to get this message out because so much Christians are fearful of missing his will and this just frees you up." If you're doing his will how are you going to miss his will? Relax. But quite often then when we follow these four, unique exciting things begin to happen. Does that make sense?

James: Totally! I think you started with the "believe in Jesus" and that really is a belief into a relationship and a spiritual birth that I think many people miss completely because they've substituted some religious practice or some kind of traditions of men which are often as Jesus said to the Pharisees, "The traditions of men taught as the commandments of God," which in fact they were not his will, many times. It was going through the motions. So everyone needs to know Jesus.

Now today, if you are rather absolute in a statement, especially from a faith standpoint, that this is the only way, which Jesus says, "No one comes to the Father but by me. I am the way, the truth, and the life." If he is who he said he is and there is no other, "No one comes to the Father but by me."

Now a lot of people say, "He was just a great religious teacher." No, if he is an outright

liar or if he's foolish enough to think I am -- "You've seen me," he said, "you've seen God. I and the Father, we're one. And you can only come to the Father through me. There is no other way there." Those are pretty absolute statements. So if he is not in fact who he said he is, then as C.S. Lewis said he is either a liar or a lunatic or he is in fact who he said he is, he is the Lord.

So when you're talking about believing in Jesus you're talking about a commitment that brings transformation, the new creation, we become a new person in Christ. Something happens in our life that actually brings us into a personal relationship with Almighty God, the Creator, the Father and we can have that fellowship and relationship. And that's what it is; to do the will of God is to come into not just saying something but the faith commitment of believing to where you actually enter into a relationship. Is that a close summation of what that means?

Emerson: Well, you're one of the world's best evangelists so I think you articulated it quite well. But from a personal standpoint, that I was not raised in a Christian family, and my dad attempted to strangle my mother when I was two and a half. And then when I was 11, I discovered my dad was committing adultery. I picked up a butcher knife once to say to my mom, "I'm going to kill dad." It was false bravado. But mom felt I needed to go to military school because there was a collision. So from 8th grade to 12th grade I went to Missouri Military Academy. But at age 16, someone gave us a Billy Graham film, *For Pete's Sake* and I received Christ. I went to that and received Christ. And then I went to Wheaton because I knew Billy had gone there. That's all I knew about the things of Christ, really. So I applied.

But my freshman year, my mom came to Christ, my dad came to Christ, my sister came to Christ who is five years older and my brother-in-law who is a professor came to Christ; my whole family came to Christ.

And my mom came to me at age 53, tears rolling down her cheeks and she said, "All my life it was right here in the Bible about a personal relationship with Christ; asking Christ

to come into me, that he would forgive me, that I could have his peace and have a sense of purpose." And she began to experience things in her life because Christ was in her now and she began to experience this unique leading. And my dad began to drive her to speak to Christian Women's Clubs. Their relationship came together. They are both in heaven now but one of the points I make is if he who would come to God must believe that he is says the writer in Hebrews. You've got to come to God on his terms.

But the idea of exclusivity that you were referring to earlier is very unacademic to a lot of people. The intellectual community does not like exclusivity. But I came to a point where I said, "Jesus made this statement and I'm going to trust him." And particularly for a person who is hurting and in need of forgiveness there comes a moment when you kind of lay that aside and say, "God, if you're there and Christ is your son, come into my heart and change me. I need you."

We just say to people, "He is not a cosmic killjoy. He is not out to ruin your party. He will respond to you but you've got to come to him first on his terms."

And he said, "This is the will of my Father that everyone who beholds me and believes in me will have eternal life; and I myself will raise him up on the last day."

James: I was dating Betty, as teenagers, and she was I say the first original church lady. She was so proper. I was talking to her one time about how real Jesus is on one of our dates and she said, "Well, Jesus is not real to me. He is just someone I've always heard about." Then what happened?

Betty: Well, I came to know him from watching his life, the miracles and the way God had transformed him. I began to watch him and I thought, I want that kind of intimacy and relationship that he has with Jesus.

And as I hear you talk about, the four wills, it can be used as a guide for our lives. And it is not to stop us from going one direction but it should free us up to go -- because God

directs us in many different directions, different seasons of life. My greatest desire growing up was to be a wife, a mother and a homemaker. And I felt when I got to do that, my life was complete. But Uh-uh! God has other plans. So that's a different step, don't you think? God said, "Okay, we're going to go this direction now. You're not out of my will, you're going to go this direction." So it is about our journey, don't you think in that relationship with him?

Emerson: So when I make that point, this idea of freedom and liberty, that there are going to be many choices over the seasons of life and the Jews were under a legalistic oppression but they learned that they were free. The widow was free to marry whomever she wishes in the Lord. This whole idea of freedom was so revolutionary that they had to actually address it, don't use your freedom as license to sin. It was so revolutionary that they had to kind of curtail it.

But this idea that God will uniquely direct us based on our preferences, based on our convictions, based on our spiritual gifts, based on our talents; and each of us as we go through these seasons, have that posture, Lord, what next? And how do we make sense of it?

One of the things I say if you're not clear, are you trusting Christ actively? Are you walking in moral purity? Are you giving thanks to him? And are you submitting and doing what's right? If so, relax! Let's just pray together, see what the Lord might do. But if he doesn't show you, you're in the center of his will. How can you miss his will when you're doing his will? Isn't that a beautiful freeing thing? That's been so liberating to so many people.

James: Well, it really is. And the spirit of gratitude, it seems like if we'd just look around at all the blessings we have. Look at where we can shop, look how well we can travel, how we can move about, it is like there is no limit anymore to the things that we can do and visit or see or even enjoy, if you know what real enjoyment is.

You really hit one of the points there and we've got less than five minutes left but I want you to touch on the one about sexual purity, about somehow keeping themselves committed and that to realize that failure to do that is actually damaging when the beauty and the magnificent, let's say attraction, excitement, the ecstasy if you please of that beautiful relationship that only God could imagine and create, that it so often when we commit immorality we don't realize that we've actually damaged ourselves, our body. So what do you want people to grasp in that?

Emerson: Well, certainly what you just said. Some people have said, "Well, you address this issue of abstain from sexual immorality and you're going to lose sales with millennials." So there is this attitude that people don't want to hear this. But I don't believe that. I believe that there are many Christ followers, no matter what the age, that know that Jesus said, "The pure in heart shall see God" that there is this encounter with our heavenly Father.

But there is a condition. And the question is, is it a price that we're willing to pay? One of the things we appreciate about Billy Graham is we know he walked in moral purity and look at how God honored him. But it comes back to that passage. Your sanctification is the will of God; this idea of positive holiness. But one of the major interferences of that is sexual impurity. And we live in a culture that has so many temptations and each of us has to come to a point where we make a decision.

I spoke at a mega church in Colorado and the pastor got up afterwards and said, "I remember the day and the hour that I said 'no' to pornography." That there comes a moment in each of our lives when we have to make a decision; there is a price to pay. But there is so much more on the other side of trusting and obeying that I'm taking the position that it is well worth it.

If you want to experience the hand of God and I give testimony after testimony, narrative after narrative of people who align themselves with that and began to encounter God moving. How many of us know people who... it just seems like God is all over them.

Whatever they kind of do. Well, if you sit down and you talk to them, they have made a commitment to live this way and they want to. In fact, they find pleasure in pleasing God. It is really secondary to what they're going to get from God. They're just kind of excited. I say to a person, "You can be in a prison cell and you can trust Christ with your heart. You can give thanks. You can be morally pure. You can do what is right in that context and you're in the center of his will, and the Lord will come to you in a way that's very personal and precious." We've got to trust this but we have to make a decision. And sexual purity is one of those crisis points that many people are at and they're going to have to make a decision; what do they want?

James: You're saying that if we even simplify, to just take these four things that kind of frees us up to walk in freedom and fullness to experience all that he is, Christ in us, the hope of his glory manifest through us and to the world, that's what you're longing for.

Would you say thanks to Emerson for being a blessing and really paying the price to write great books and to teach us? It's in the bookstores and online. Do you have a website if they want to go and find out some of the things you're doing or the places you're speaking?

Emerson: *LoveAndRespect.com* is our main -- *L-o-v-e-A-n-d-R-e-s-p-e-c-t .com*.

James: And that was a real bestseller and continues to be a blessing.

You know what our viewers like? I can't pick these up and not smile. We have four great grandchildren now. Their little feet, some of them are still too small. One of them probably already getting up to here and he is only three. But you look at these little shoes and I see the little people that will wear these shoes, precious little feet. You wouldn't think that something that simple could be one the biggest things that ever happened, bigger than getting a toy or some kind of gift, is to have shoes that are actually adjustable and they can grow in them and they won't wear out real fast. We've been giving Shoes and Smiles for Christmas now for several years, enough that we're going to be giving two

million kids shoes. I just praise God for it. This year we want to add another 150,000 and we want to ask you to join. Would you do that?

I want you to watch closely. I want you to listen to one of our staff that's gone all over the world now for over 20 years, more than 70 nations. She's carried a camera -- she's carried a burden. I want you to just listen to her.

On the mission field

Janice: Is he saying something?

Open Captions: He says, "It's paining."

Janice: Oh my gosh. I'm in a village in Angola and I came upon this child. This little boy is Augusto and this breaks my heart. His little feet are in some of the worst shape I've ever seen and there were many in this village with horrible conditions on their feet. But this little guy is just scratching. They itch so bad. They're completely infected. He said there is insects that have gotten into his feet. I'd be surprised if he doesn't lose his toe. And then the disease comes in through their feet and just goes throughout their body. It can actually kill them; all from going barefoot in conditions that we're in right here.

I know Shoes and Smiles is a campaign that we get really excited about and it's fun. But this is why it is fun -- because it saves lives. You would think just a pair of shoes is not lifesaving but in areas like this, in conditions like this it is and we can change it for Augusto. We can help him. We're going to clean these up and get him a pair of shoes and help him.

Please, do what you can. Help bring shoes to little children like Augusto all over the world. You can be a part of something big and something even fun. But this is the reason we do it. Please!

End of clip

In the studio

James: I don't know how I can add anything to that, Betty or I either one. You see the need. And literally, Jesus taught when you see a need, a person that is hungry or thirsty or naked or in prison, you see someone being held captive, you want to meet that need. When you see so clearly the obvious need... Betty, I'm so thrilled that our viewers don't just turn away, "I don't want to watch that!" Thank you. Thank you! Because Jesus never turned away from our hurt or our pain or our ugly or our need. He always addressed it and reached out. Betty, it is so simple to address that need by just giving him shoes. I believe our viewers will do it.

Betty: It is so much more than just a pair of shoes for these children. It can save their lives because as you saw there, the infection, the disease that comes. If you've ever just had a blister on your foot and you walk -- maybe from a new pair of shoes or something, and you think oh, I've got to put something on that to protect it. Well, their precious little feet have walked most of their life without something to protect them. They need our help desperately. Let's please put peace on their feet by putting shoes on their feet.

James: Well, that's what the love of God does because of his peace in our heart and the love that he's poured out on us, we want to release it. And I believe you will. Let me tell you what we're doing right now. We're asking you to help give 150,000 children a pair of shoes for Christmas. They come in all sizes, whatever the need.

We're giving away something that has really blessed our viewers, another little Christmas shoe. This one is a red crystal and you put it on the Christmas tree. Here's what happens, it will put a smile on your face every time somebody asks you about it. You say, "For Christmas, we gave some children shoes. For many of them, it is the first pair they've ever had."

We talk about disease through those open wounds. Hookworms oftentimes get into those little children's brain and it will kill them. There are many things that happen to hurt them so bad. Like our camera person, Janice who has traveled to the ends of the earth loving people, capturing pictures for you. She said, "You'll want to do this. Surely you'll want to do it." We've gotten the answer. I don't think there is a person watching that doesn't want to address that.

So would you right now understand this also? We're going to do cleft palate surgery. We call it Christmas Shoes & Smiles. We want to do as many as we can. This year we should go over 2,000 of those cleft palate surgeries which is giving children a smile for Christmas -- Shoes and Smiles for Christmas.

Would you right now go online or dial that number? Take your bankcard and give \$36 or \$72 and know, we just gave 10 pairs of shoes or 20 pairs of shoes. Or maybe you can give \$1,000 and know I gave two smiles or gave several hundred shoes.

We have some gifts to send to you to say thank you. You're going to like them. But you're going to be giving an expression of God's love not just yours to these precious children. Would you do it right now? We need to start now so we can get the shoes to them by Christmas and they will know the surgery is there for their child or for them.

Thanks for making the call. Thanks for going online and making the gift God puts on your heart. 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, Betty and I just want to say thanks. You're going to like this little shoe. Children are going to really like your gift. And the smiles -- beautiful!

Some of you are saying, "James, I would like to have something that simple that could just help me be in the center of God's will. I want to send it to you if you help give Shoes and Smiles, you make the gift God puts on your heart. But we'll just say thanks if you'd like to have this book too because we want to touch those children with the love of God.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to Emerson again for being here? Appreciate you, buddy! Keep sharing truth. Here's the book. It's in the bookstores too.

Thank all of you. Thanks for watching. Thanks for giving Shoes and Smiles.