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Week 37: Shoes and Smiles
Randy Robison & Sheila Walsh
Christmas Shoes and Smiles Special

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. This is a fun one! I'm glad you're with us. I hope you'll stick with us because I think you're going to see that you can do something very special. Sheila, have you started any Christmas shopping yet?

Sheila: Oh, gosh! No. I haven't actually. I'm hopeless. Every year I think next year I'm going to start like in January because everything is on sale then. I meant to do it but then I think, oh, gosh. No. The shops are too busy because the sales are on.

Randy: I can't imagine you're worse than me. I'm one of those guys that like a week early is early.

Sheila: Oh, gosh. No! I'm better than that!

Randy: Yeah, that's why my wife -- if you get a Christmas gift, it's probably something my wife picked out.

Sheila: Actually, let me just say something and I'll tell you about it later but I already have my husband's Christmas gift.

Randy: Wow!

Sheila: And he already has mine and we both know what it is but I'll tell you about it a little bit later.

Randy: I love it! You're going to make us wait. Well, we're a little early this year. We're talking about Christmas. There is something you can do. I hope you will choose to be involved in this because you can really make this a special Christmas for some children. We're going to show you some of that.

I want to read a scripture. Can I just tap into my YouVersion app here and read something? Because this jumped out at me a few weeks ago and I think it ties in nicely with the spirit of Christmas and with what LIFE is doing around the world.

Paul is writing to the Ephesians and he says: For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Christmas is the time where we celebrate that gift. Jesus' birth started all that. It was the ultimate gift that God gave to us. So when we talk about the gift we see it as... "Not as a result of our works" -- thank you, Lord! -- "so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

That is such a beautiful verse to me, Sheila because a lot of times we think, we've got to do these things. Paul is saying look, it is not what we do. The works is not what gives us salvation or gives us righteousness or holiness or any of that. It is the gift of God through his Son that enables us to turn around and do the works that he has designed us for.

Sheila: I love that. It is kind of like a godly paradox. It is like you know what? You don't have to do anything. Christ did it. On the cross he said, "It is finished." Once you get that, then I think the natural, the most natural thing is you want to turn around and share that love with other people; to put feet to what Christ has done in your life.

Randy: And nice phrasing because it says "so that we may walk in them." You know walking is kind of what we're talking about today.

Sheila: Absolutely! What I love about what we're going to show you here is I think this year, wouldn't it be cool if we kind of revolutionized Christmas? If we take it back from the malls and the stores and decide you know what? We're going to start with the very littlest, the youngest among us, and we're going to remember what Christmas is actually all about.

There are some people I want to show you that have done that in just the most remarkable way. This church, this group of people have really given a gift to their kids in understanding that Christmas is not just all about what you get, it actually can be something that you give.

Randy: It is. I'm going to tell you a little back story here because these shoes mean something. Several years ago my parents were in Central America and they decided to do something fun for Christmas and give out just some simple shoes, and the impact was beyond what we even understood. So we have asked other people to join us and we've seen some amazing results. Watch what one church did as they decided to join us in our Christmas shoes.

Begin video clip

Marla: I'm Marla Moreland and my husband, Bob and I, we live in Halfway, Missouri and we run a small Bible study. We have a great youth program and they love to get involved in missions. If we don't teach our children to follow Christ the world will teach them not to. So my goal is to teach them very, very young that they need to be out there serving others.

Our kids are very, very blessed here and I want them to have some sense of knowing that it's not like that everywhere and that they have to do their part; that everyone should do their part. And for my kids to be able to understand that they can make an impact on the other side of the world is just amazing.

So when I seen the shoe project on the television show it was a perfect fit. The kids loved it. It was something they could relate to.

>> Because we wanted to learn about God and Jesus, and give the other kids some shoes; they didn't have no shoes.

Marla: Taking off their shoes was like prying them off their feet, almost because they love their shoes.

>> We walked around the track to feel how the other kids felt whenever they didn't have any shoes.

>> I went barefoot like, I think half a lap, and then I had to put my shoes on because it hurt my feet really bad.

>> It felt like needles stabbing into my feet.

>> When I actually do that it really hurts. I just looked for the spots that there's like not that much rocks.

>> Walking around the track without shoes, it didn't feel very good at all. It hurt.

>> I thought my feet were just going to blow up. My feet hurt but I bet their feet hurt ten times worse.

>> When I saw the video, it made me feel really sick because we have shoes and they don't.

>> When I saw the kids, I really felt bad for them.

>> It would hurt their feet if they walk too much on rocks.

>> It's sad that they have to walk on that stuff. Their sores are so big. Like I don't know how they can stand -- I couldn't stand that if I was them.

>> They don't have anything really and their feet are all tore up and it can get infected and they can die.

>> You can help people by just doing little things. Just helping little kids out across the world is cool.

>> The shoes, it was like one of the biggest presents that they've ever gotten.

>> Happy that they're going to get shoes.

>> I just think it is really good what we're doing for them.

>> When you gave the shoes to those kids, I think it made them really happy.

>> I would think that they would be so happy they would almost burst into tears because I don't think they would have ever had any other shoes.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Gosh! If every Bible study in America adopted that and said, "Hey, let do that." That's stunningly beautiful!

Randy: Oh, my goodness! And you've been overseas, I've been in several places where we've handed out the shoes and you know, these kids just light up because it's special to them but it's also a big deal to them.

Sheila: The thing I love about this, Randy is the way they taught our kids here that Christmas is not just about you receiving stuff. Honestly, usually by Christmas Eve, kids have -- Christmas day they've forgotten half the stuff but that will stay with those children. They know something that we did made a huge difference in the life of another child.

Randy: Literally, they put them on every day and they're reminded, hopefully of the love of Christ because everything we do we do in the name of Jesus Christ because we're not just a

charitable organization, we are a Christian organization. So it's a wonderful blessing to just be able to be a part of this kind of thing. What stood out to you the most when you were overseas handing out -- did you handout several shoes or did you..?

Sheila: It was funny because we were basically over doing mission feeding but at the end of the day there was this one little boy who would not smile at me at all. I discovered we had a pair of the shoes in the van so I thought, dude, you're getting the shoes. It was just the sweetest thing to be able to -- because his little feet, he had never worn shoes. I looked at some of the ground they were walking over. I mean it is hard, it is rough.

Also, if you get a cut in your foot here, immediately, your family takes you off and you get a tetanus shot. You get a cut in your foot there, you end up with ringworm, you can end up with protein deficiency, you can end up with brain disease, all sorts of things. But when you put shoes on the feet of these little ones, sometimes you have literally saved their life.

Randy: Yeah. That's, I think, one of the things that struck me the first time I was out, the infection, it is really a terrible list of maladies; the hookworm is one of the biggest culprits. But yeah, you're right. We're not just giving them a nice pair of shoes, even though they are a nice pair of shoes; they're waterproof, which is very helpful. They are malleable so they fit; they're comfortable. But you're right, they save lives. Shoes actually save lives. So it's a wonderful thing to be able to be involved in something that makes a kid smile but also protects them long term.

Sheila: And they're so reasonable! Do you know for \$36 -- you cannot buy shoes, sneakers for your kids with that. Do you know you can buy shoes for ten children \$36? If you had \$72 you could buy them for 20 children.

We can all do something. That's what that last piece showed us. So please call! Please go online and while you're doing that, we want to show you something else that I think will really move you. Watch this.

On the mission field

Announcer: LIFE Outreach International's mission is to share the truth of God's love in word and deed with people throughout the world. This season we once again have the opportunity to impact the lives of thousands of children who are exposed to the ravages of hookworm disease simply because they don't have protection for their feet. It is a simple remedy, shoes; shoes that can prevent children from suffering anemia, malnutrition, and in severe cases death caused by hookworms that invade their bodies through their feet.

Randy: This is a significant outreach towards improving the health and the lives of children all around the world. Not all of you can come here and have the privilege that I have of actually putting the shoes on the feet of these beautiful children but you can still be a big part because really, we can't do it without you. Do what you can. Give as many pairs of shoes as you can. Every time you do it, you'll be making a child's day and you will be improving their health.

[Child laughing]

Randy: So simple! So simple and so beautiful, Sheila.

Sheila: Just to see the joy on that little one's face -- just amazing!

Randy: We've seen it time and time again. It is so, so simple to make this Christmas so special, so memorable and possibly lifesaving as we pointed out for kids around the world. We've been doing this in China, India; it's a laundry list of countries -- doing it all around the world. And we want you to put those arms of love around the world by joining us in this outreach we call "Christmas Shoes and Smiles." Sheila, you know why we have the smiles in there is because shoes are not the only thing that we do. We do even more.

Sheila: It's interesting because when you talk about putting shoes on the feet of a child it brings a smile to their face. But one of the things that is really devastating is when a child is born with cleft lip or cleft palate and they can't smile.

There was one child in particular, it was something that I just naturally do when you're in a country and a child has never seen themselves. Sometimes I take a photo on my iPhone and I'll show it to them. I'll be like, "Look!" And usually they're like over the moon. There was one little boy when the camera was turned and he saw himself he was devastated because he didn't know what he looked like. When he saw what he looked like, it was a completely different reaction. He wasn't thrilled, he was horrified. But even the way those children are treated by other people; it is as if you're a monster. There is something really wrong with you.

But we were so moved by compassion and we were able -- he's had his surgery now. He looks so different. And he's so happy. I mentioned earlier that my husband and I already have decided what we're going to give each other for Christmas and what we're going to do is in Barry's name I'm going to do one surgery, which is \$500 and he is going to do the same for me. Some of you can do that. Honestly, that changes not just the immediate comfort of a child, it changes their destiny. It changes who they see themselves as.

For any gift at all, actually, you know what we're going to do? We're going to send this beautiful little shoe for any gift that you send in.

Randy: And \$1,000 will do two surgeries. So just do whatever the Lord is leading you to do. I just ask that you be involved in some way whether it is \$36 for 10 pairs of shoes, whether it is \$1,000 for some surgeries. A few of you could probably do a whole lot more. I just ask you to pray about it and do what the Lord leads you to do.

I think the important thing is that we do as I referenced earlier, those works, good works that we were created for. God gave us a gift, a gift we can never match at Christmas. You can give a gift. It's hard to put into words just how much it means to these children when they receive something from someone they don't know. It's moving when we consider the fact that God has enabled us to put his arms of love around the world.

So I just ask that you pray about it right now. I know it is early, Christmas is coming. But we have to prepare because we have to get the shoes over there. You can have a huge impact this Christmas. Join with us with Christmas Shoes and Smiles and put a smile on a child's face.

Sheila: And honestly, because we can all do something and then you'll get this to hang in your tree and it reminds your children. This is about more than just me. So please, would you go to your phones? Would you dial the number on your screen? You can go online and go to LifeToday.org but do something -- and do something now!

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 take for granted such as a healthy smile or a simple pair of shoes.

Far too many children living in 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 could 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 just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pairs. And the gift of \$180 will help provide 50 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

With your gift of any amount, be sure to request this beautifully crafted crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to place on your tree each holiday season. With your gift of \$180 or more you may also request this keepsake boxed set of LIFE's Christmas shoe

ornaments.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft palate surgeries and you may request our “Determined Eagle” bronze sculpture. Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of clip

Begin video clip

>> Over the years Monica has always been in special Ed. Her speech has always improved because there was a time when she was very young we didn’t even know if she would ever say her name. We didn’t know if she’d ever learn to write her name. This is who Monica has always been since she was a small child. This is just the first time we stepped out and let her be herself.

She has watched *Life Today* over and over again but for some reason when she saw this mission project, she was really captivated.

>> She told me, “Pastor David, I want to do this for the children.” She was just bubbling over with excitement, with joy.

The morning that Monica got up on the stage and asked the church family for help was just an awesome feeling for me. And believe it or not, she stood in front of this entire church of 300 people and made that same plea to help the children have shoes.

>> For Monica it was never about how much money she had raised. I don’t think she understood that part. She wanted to know how many children were getting shoes.

>> And it was amazing, the response. Every Sunday, she would stand in our commons area with her basket and people would come by and just fill it up. And believe you me, Monica embodies that kingdom of God. She made this church come alive for missions.

>> She had collected a total of \$6,000.

>> Yeah, I did!

>> You did!

>> Through all this I now realize that she has been able to express herself using her own voice and her own words; not just to one person, but now all around the world.

Did I ever think – Did I ever think she would be able to do this? No! But God did. He knew! She's been passionate about it and she has done it and she has changed so many children's lives just because of her passion and her love to help someone else. And I just think that it is important that everyone knows that we all have a purpose. No matter her mental ability or education or anything, we all have a call and we all have something that we can do.

>> Please help the children.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: And a child shall lead them. Gosh! We get so sophisticated and so sure of our own giftings and we think some people are not able to do anything. That beautiful girl heard the heart of God and responded. I think it is like 16 -- how many?

Randy: Over 1600 pairs of shoes.

Sheila: Over 1600 pairs of shoes through that little girl who technically has no voice but used her voice to make a difference around the world. I'm just so moved by that beautiful sister in Christ's love for God.

I often think, people get depressed around Christmas because they think it's just all about more, more, more, and more and spending and eating and everything. We can change that. We could actually live as the body of Christ and do what we're on this earth to do.

We think of missions. This should be real life. We're on mission 24/7 and we're giving you an opportunity this Christmas to change the life of children around the world either by any gift at all -- any gift at all and we'll send you that darling little shoe to hang on your tree.

Barry and I save up during the year for each other because some days when it gets close to Christmas money is tight and to be able to have the privilege of sitting down around our Christmas tree with our son thinking that two children by next Christmas are going to look so different because we were able to do those surgeries, that's what life's about!

Randy: Absolutely! Ralph Done, our missions director was recently in China and there was a little girl named Mei Mei. She needed the surgery. Because of someone like you we were able to provide it so she can smile now.

The thing about Monica that stands out to me is the power that one person can have. You're that one person today. You can change lives. How many? It's up to you -- between you and God, but just knowing that you can impact a life, change a life, put a smile on a child's face, protect them from disease. What a beautiful gift God has given us, the ability to give that gift. Reach out. Go to the phones. Go online, whatever you're most comfortable with, just do something today. You can have that impact this Christmas that will last for years.

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End of clip

On the mission field

Sheila: It's been quite an amazing year. Through your help we've been able to feed thousands and thousands of children. We've been able to put water wells in villages. And also, a new venture you remember, for the first time we've been able to work with children who have clubfoot. You have helped us change the lives of children all around the world.

At Christmas time I know that you think of your kids and you want to do something really special for them. Well, I also know that you want to do something really special for children like these.

If you look at this darling little one, here in Angola, he is like every other little boy or girl I've seen, he has no shoes. We felt, wouldn't it be cool to be able to let every boy and girl have their very own pair of shoes? Not just because it will save them from cutting their feet when they run but so many diseases in these countries come through injuries to the foot, like hookworm comes through the foot. So what a wonderful thing to do in this season to see the little ones like this little darling boy in Angola, hey! You can have your very own pair of shoes.

So on behalf of my little brother, may I simply say obrigada.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: You know what I love about this show? It's the impact that children are having on the lives of other children. I think it is a great thing. To be able to show your child, particularly, we know it is not Christmas yet but we have to get the funds in early so that we can actually physically get the shoes there in time for Christmas. But to get your kids involved and say, "You know what? Life's about more than just what you get. It's what you give." And when you give kids a chance, they love to do it.

Randy: Christmas is sort of about children, "Unto us a child is born." We saw the power of children reaching out to help other children. And then we're asking you to reach out and help some children. So do whatever you can.

Please, if you haven't already gone to the phone, gone online, do it -- do it now! Don't forget. I know it gets busy. We forget so just do something today. You really can have a tremendous impact. Sheila, it's going to be a good Christmas!

Sheila: I think it's going to be amazing. We're going to make a difference in Jesus' name to children all around the world. And every time you see that little shoe hanging on your tree it will be a reminder that Christmas is not about what we have received, but in Jesus' name what we've been able to give. So thank you so much!

On the mission field

Betty: I'm standing here with these children and they're just a small example of children all over the world that deserve to be considered and loved and cared for. We have an opportunity to do that right now among these children and those around the world, to put some shoes on their feet and give them a chance in life. I ask you to help us do that. It's just a simple request but a very urgent and important one. Please join with us. You'll get such great joy out of it – I know you will! God bless you and thank you!