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Week 39: Christmas Shoes and Smiles -- Last week

Wednesdays in the Word: Sheila Walsh

It's Okay Not to Be Enough, Part one

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm so glad you could stop by and join me. We really don't take that for granted. We're so grateful for your viewership. But not only that, for the way that you undergird the ministries here at *LIFE Outreach International*. I love the fact that sometimes when I'm on the road I get to meet some of you too and read your messages and I just want to say what an encouragement it is.

That's kind of what I want us to look at today when you just feel like you've had enough. Where is God when you're in those moments when you're really at the end of yourself? Have you ever had one of those days when you're just done? If you have to do one more load of laundry or find one more recipe for chicken or take one more kid to a sports practice you might just physically combust!

Some of our issues though, as you know, are far greater than that. I'm thinking of a dear friend of mine. What she deals with on a daily basis is hard for me to even imagine. She is very sharp and she is wheelchair bound and has to rely on others for everything. She has no family where she lives so she's dependent on local health workers to bathe her, to bring her food and every other thing that I can do for myself without even thinking about it. She, like me, and like you I imagine, wants to live a life that is honoring to God. And yet she's told me sometimes it feels as if it is not enough -- that she is not enough. I think if we're honest, we've all been there.

For me, somewhere deep inside, although I'd never admit this to anyone but just you, I think I can be like super woman. I'm too old for the tights but the rest would work. I want to be the best mom in the world, I want to be the best wife in the world. I want to honor God with every thought and every action and sometimes -- sometimes I just don't. Some days I'm very aware of

God's presence, and prayer and thanksgiving flow easily. But other days -- other days I pick up my Bible and open it and it can even seem dry. And then prayer, prayer can be hard work. I think one of my problems is I have a habit of stretching myself too thin. I want to say yes to everything and be a super hero for God. I don't think I'm alone. I've talked with lots of women and men who feel let down by their lives. It is a common thread.

Here's my question though. Are we discouraged because of the unrealistic expectations we put on ourselves, expecting ourselves to be what God never designed us to be? Think about it for a moment. How many times do you feel like you're not enough? It makes me wonder where we got the idea of what *enough* is.

Take a typical Sunday morning. You finally get everyone ready for church, into the car, dropped off at their various classes and flop down in your seat. Phlbb! At first it is hard to enter into the worship because of -- it is just like a million other things going through your head. But eventually, eventually you feel the presence of God and you focus your heart and your mind. The message that morning seems to have been tailor made for you, every scripture speaks to you and you leave so encouraged. You remember who you really are. You're not just Sam's mom or Rachel's husband, you're a child of God and you're loved. On the drive home you even think up one more way to cook chicken.

Then Monday morning comes -- Monday morning Jesus. What happens between Sunday and Monday? Why does it feel like Monday morning Jesus is not always as clear and present sometimes as Sunday morning Jesus? When we leave the service on Sunday we believe certain things to be true. I'm a child of God. God loves me just as I am. All things work together for good to those who love God. God is for me. My prayers matter. Yet as we move into the week it's harder to believe that God loves us just as we are because honestly, we don't love ourselves just as we are.

There's always things that we want to change about ourselves. Like we'll compare ourself to others and we don't always come off very well. What about believing that truth that all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to his purpose?

What happens to that when something really hard hits your family? Then you ask, how can what's happening right now be good? It's hard not to ask that question in the back of your mind. Is God really listening to my prayers because nothing is changing? I want to say something loud and clear right now. It really is okay not to be okay. We're not supposed to be perfect. Jesus is.

Well, a few weeks ago some of our partners joined me in the studio as we unpacked some of the amazing truth from Romans Chapter 8. Would you watch this?

Begin video clip

Sheila: Sometimes we look at the circumstances of our life and it is hard to understand. We have that beautiful text, Romans Chapter 8, verse 28. Let me read it in the New International Version first: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

This is how the New Living Translation gives it to us: And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Here's what it doesn't say. It doesn't say that all things are good. It doesn't say that all things feel good because we know that's not true. What it says is that God himself has told us that he will work all things together for good. And sometimes, if we're honest, that's hard to see.

So as I said before, this book that I wrote, this is not a self-help book. This is a God-help book. So I wanted to know, what does God say about who you and I are? Does God expect us to have it altogether, to have all of our ducks in a row? I lost my ducks several years ago. I have no idea where they went.

[Laughter]

Why do we always feel that there's something just a little bit not right? Have you ever noticed that? Maybe you're excited about something and you think, once we get into this new house everything will be amazing. And you get into the new house and it is great but there's still something. Haven't you just noticed, there is just a little longing underneath everything? Or if you've been dying to get married and you meet Mr. Right or Miss Right and you get married and it is great but there is just this little something inside that all of these things don't touch. We have this feeling that there's supposed to be more.

Well, to understand that you and I are going to have to go way back in our history back to plan A. Let me read to you from Genesis Chapter 2, verses 15 to 25: The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and to watch over it. But the Lord God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit you are sure to die."

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept the Lord God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib and he brought her to the man. "At last," the man exclaimed, "this one is bone from my bone and flesh from my flesh. She will be called woman because she was taken from man."

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked but they felt no shame.

I don't think I could say that since I was about two.

[Laughter]

Can you imagine though what that must have been like? Not only naked in the flesh but naked in their emotions. No shame ever. No fear -- never a tinge of fear. No guilt. No questioning. Eve never had to ask Adam, "What do you think? Do you like what I'm wearing?" Well, I guess she wasn't wearing anything so that really... "What do you think of my hair?"

[Laughter]

But there was never any of that. No comparing, no sickness, nothing!

Then at the beginning of Genesis three, we read how Satan entered the picture. If you look back at Genesis two every single time that God is mentioned he is called by his correct title, "the Lord God" until Satan enters the picture.

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

He dropped "Lord" from God's title. He took away the name of God Almighty. God alone. But it is interesting to notice if you read Genesis three, the woman follows his example.

Here's what she said: "Of course, we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It is only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we're not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or not even touch it or you will die.'"

Something so subtle and so dangerous about that. The minute that we step outside the will of God we're stepping away from his authority and we're stepping away from his covering. It changed everything.

Genesis 3:7 says -- you'll remember they took from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that they've been told not to touch and it says: At that moment their eyes were opened and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. Then they hid.

The story continues in verse ten when God asks Adam, "Adam, where are you?"

Adam replied, "I heard you walking in the garden so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

Do you think God didn't know where Adam was? God knew exactly where Adam was. When God asks a question like that like, "Where are you?" I think it is because God wants us to take a look at where we've moved to, the position that we have stepped into.

It is so interesting that from that day until now fear, shame, hiding, entered the picture. That's why I think inside we have this feeling that things should be different. We know that something is a little wrong with everything and we've tried to fix it but the truth is you and I can't. That's why Christ, the second Adam came.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Yes! That is why Christ came. When Christ came he didn't come to return earth to Eden at his birth, he came to pay the price for our rebellion and our sin and make it possible for you and I through faith in Christ to spend eternity with him. Then everything that was lost will be restored.

Here's a sneak preview of the greatest upcoming attraction you could ever imagine. This is Revelation 21: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne saying, "Look! God's home is now among his people. He will live with them and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.

Can you imagine? That will be a day like no other. No more death or suffering. No more cancer or disease. No more broken relationships and broken hearts. All of these things will be gone forever. God himself will wipe the last tear off of your face. Hallelujah!

But the reality is we're not there yet. You and I are living in the aftermath of the fall and that is

hard but it is important to remember that we're not home yet. But even now in our brokenness, I want to remind you of who we are. If you have placed your trust in Jesus here's what God word tells us about our identity, about who we are.

First Thessalonians 1:4 Paul writes this: We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people.

Do you get that? That's huge! We are chosen by God. You're chosen on your good days and on your bad days. On days when life makes sense and days when it absolutely does not. I used to hate games when I was in school where you had to be divided into two teams and the captain of each team would choose team mates one at a time. I'm not a very good athlete to put it mildly so I was always chosen last. Not with Jesus. With Jesus he looks at you and me and says to you, "I choose you."

Perhaps you don't always like what you see in the mirror. Maybe cruel things were said to you when you were a child and those can stick to your soul and change how you see yourself. Or perhaps -- perhaps you're tormented by things in your past, things that you did that you can't undo.

But again, again our brother Paul reminds us of this truth. You'll find it in Second Corinthians 5:16-17: So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun.

You are a new person. You're not who you were. You are not what you did. When you place your life in Christ's hands you get to begin again and again and again. If you tend to condemn yourself, if you feel weak, if you beat yourself up over and over again and you think you'll never change, remember this. A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Do you hear that? You're strong not in your own strength but in the Lord and in his power. It's

never been about you and I getting it right. It's always been about Jesus who makes us right.

Perhaps one of the greatest truths Paul shares with us is this: If you are in Christ, if you've opened your life to him, there is now no more condemnation.

I love Romans Chapter 8 verse one. It tells us this: So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

When you feel condemned, that is not from God. Conviction, that's different. Conviction is from the Holy Spirit but condemnation never is. We think we have to be okay in our own strength but it really is okay not to be okay because Christ has made us right.

Whatever you're struggling with right now, would you take a step toward God and let him bring healing and freedom to the places that feel broken and stuck? It's never too late to start again. So often if you're like me, we want to see huge changes in our lives but each journey begins with the first step. Life is a process. It is not a quick fix.

One of the things I love about when we begin to see the work of God in our own lives, then we begin to want to make a difference in the lives of other people. I found a great way for you and I to do that. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

Clint: We're approaching a time of the year when *LIFE Outreach* does its Christmas Shoes & Smiles campaign. The smiles are for corrective surgery. But what we're doing today is we're getting these young boys and girls shoes for the very first time. You can actually see the importance of what we're doing because look at this little girl, Veronica, she's got these sores on her feet already. She's obviously never owned a pair of shoes. She's been walking around bare feet.

James: Betty, they just tough it out and they play. But we found out that right here in this area that hookworms get in the skin, get in the bloodstream, ultimately into the intestines and cause very serious disease and sometimes death. We can turn it around by simply giving them shoes.

Sheila: Something as simple as a pair of shoes can really change a child's life. This is a happy place today. [Laughing] Look at this face! Who wouldn't want to give her a gift at Christmas? So thank you so much on behalf of her family, those who love her. I think you've put the biggest smile on her face that we've seen all day. So thank you. Thank you for the gift of shoes. Thank you for the gift of life!

[Children yelling]

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Isn't that awesome? And we're going to do it again. This Christmas, what we want to do is provide shoes for 150,000 children. That may seem overwhelming until you understand that these little shoes that we give them, they're very durable. They can wear them on the ground, they can wear them when they're in the water. They just cost \$3.60 a pair. So for \$36 you could send ten pairs of shoes to children. If you could do \$180 you could send 50 pairs of shoes.

But one of the things that I feel really strongly about, some of my trips I've seen children who have cleft palate and cleft lip and there's a lot of superstition and so often when a child has a deformity like that, they actually believe that that child is cursed and that child is not able to have a normal life. Well, we know that our Jesus came and removed the curse that hung over all our lives and so now we get a chance to reach out.

My husband, Barry and I have decided that this Christmas we do not need one more sweater, one more pair of boots, one more anything. So we thought what I'm going to give to Barry and what he is going to give to me is a surgery for a child. Its \$500 each and that's way above what some of you can do but some of you can do it. If you can, would you join Barry and I? And then I would love to later on bring you the stories of the children who have suddenly had their lives changed.

But we can all do something. That's the thing. Let's make this the best, most giving Christmas

ever. So would you go online, would you call the number on your screen? Be persistent. I just think it is such a beautiful way to share the love of God. Christmas shouldn't be a time of us just getting and getting and getting. It should be a time where we give. And we give in our local communities, we support all sorts of work going on here in the states. But I think, too of children who literally, if they step on something where there is terrible waterborne illness, then those children aren't going to make it.

A simple gift of a pair of shoes we can change that. So let's do this together. We can do 150,000 children. We want you to call because this is the last week of Shoes and Smiles. So we need to know that we've got all the support we need so that we can get it all bought in and all sent off so on Christmas morning these kids are going to get the biggest surprise of their life! We'll go back with a team and we'll bring you the footage and we'll show you what your gift did.

Let's do this. Together we can do this. We can change the world for a child. So please, would you call now? Would you go online? Would you give the best gift you could give as a family, as an individual, as a single woman, as a teenager? Let's do this together in Jesus' name.

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.

This is the last week. Please call, write or make your gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! Let's make this a great Christmas for these children. For any gift at all this is our little shoe this year. I've got these all over my tree. So any gift at all we'll send that. I also would love to send you my new book, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*. If you can send more then we have some beautiful gifts, as you saw, that we would love to send. But I know that's not why you do it. I know that's not why you do it. But we just want to say thank you. So make this a family project.

Remember this is our last week of Shoes and Smiles. We really need your help today. We really need you to stand with us and together we can make such a difference in the lives of these children.

Thank you so much for being with us on *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. God bless you!

Announcer: If you're in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, come be a part of the *Life Today* studio audience. Go to: LifeToday.org/tickets