

10/17/18

Week 42: Mission: Rescue Life

Sheila Walsh

"Change the Way You Think"

Sheila: I'm Sheila Walsh. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. Thank you so much for the time that you commit to kind of partnering with us and watching our shows. I know that it means the world to James and Betty -- I know it does to me. The little notes you send, the little things on Facebook, and sometimes you ask questions as well.

One of the ones that really stirred me some time ago and actually caused me to do a whole chapter in my new book on, was a woman who wrote who said, "I want to be more like Jesus but every time I think about changing, I just think, no, I know who I am. I wasn't wanted. My husband left me. I'm never going to lose that weight." She was like caught in this place of just feeling condemned by her own thoughts.

So that made me want to really want to dive into God's word and look at how do we change the way we think? They say that it takes 21 days for a new habit to really take but I think we need more than just what we read in psychology books. That's why I've called this book, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay* -- not self-help, it's God-help because I've tried in my own strength to change things and usually I fall flat on my face. Maybe you do too. So one of the things I really wanted to emphasize is how do we change the way we think? I wanted to kind of walk you through that process and see what that would look like in your own life.

So again we had a group of some of our friends here at *LIFE Outreach* who came in and were kind enough to sit in the studios for a few hours with me and let me share my thoughts and share some of the steps, the eight steps that I included in the book. But I really wanted to be able to share those with you as well. If you know that you need to change the way you think, watch this.

Begin video clip

Sheila: Thanks! So one of the things I'd like us to look at this time is changing the way you think. Changing the way you think can change the way you live. For years I think I was very comfortable in what I did more than in who I am. My Dad's suicide when I was five left me believing, although I didn't ever say this, but it kind of left me believing that I wasn't really worth sticking around for.

When I gave my life to Christ when I was 11, I believed God loved me but I kind of believed it because I thought, well, that's what he does. God loves people. I believed that my worth to God and to other people was what I did on a platform or on a television studio.

I discovered that I needed my eyes bathed for a second time. Do you remember that story? We find it in Mark's gospel. It's Mark eight, verses 22 through 25. This is what it says: When they arrived in Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus and they begged him to touch the man and heal him. Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Then spitting on the man's eyes he laid his hands on him and asked, "Can you see anything now?"

The man looked around. "Yes," he said. "I see people but I can't see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around."

Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored and he could see everything clearly. That man was healed of a physical blindness but sometimes I think we need to be healed of a spiritual blindness.

I don't know what you might struggle with, what insecurities you might have. Perhaps it is as a parent. I had a long conversation with a friend of mine the other day and she is like, "What am I doing wrong? Why don't they listen to me?"

One friend of mine said, "Why are my sister's children doing so well in school and mine are failing miserably?"

We're so hard on ourselves. One of the most difficult things of all to bear is when you've brought up your children to love the Lord, to go to church; you've poured everything you can into them and then one of your children walks away. One of my dearest friends in life is in that place right now. She and I have been friends for 40 years. I've watched every single one of her children being born and she is a great mom. But one of her children has decided they don't want anything else to do with the Lord and they've gone off and they're into some pretty serious things. Sometimes when she calls me and we're literally both sobbing on the phone and then I'm like, praying in the name of Jesus to cover this boy. But she can't see at the moment that she is a great mom. It is as if her grief has blurred her vision and she doesn't see clearly.

And it can even be if, say you're married and it can be how you watch other couples interact. Maybe you watch how someone else's husband treats them and you think, well, my husband doesn't treat me like that. Maybe he did at one point but it is not like that anymore. Then you think, well what's wrong with me? What did I do wrong? Could be the same if you're a guy and your wife just doesn't seem as interested in you anymore. I think that's one of the hard, hard things to face when you just think, is it something about me? Did I change? What is it about me?

Sometimes we get very stuck in old patterns of thinking. We think, I don't pray enough. I need to change the way I am. But how do you change your thoughts when they're so deeply entrenched? Sometimes we get so used to thinking a certain way. Maybe you've been raised to that. And you know this verse, it is a critical one for changing the way you think. Romans 12:2: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Sometimes I wonder in the church if we emphasize right behavior more than right thinking. If we look on the outside like we've got it altogether and nobody really knows what's going on inside. I saw this not so long ago when our son Christian went to college. When he came home for his first break he said, "It's kind of strange. Some of my friends I was at high school with, we went to church together, it's like they've gone a little bit kind of crazy." I know part of that is just

spreading your wings but for some of that, some of them it was a deeper thing than that.

Here's what I think. If there is not a transformation internally then when external forces are removed, we do whatever pleases us. I talked to a couple that I love so dearly and their son has not done well since he's gone to college. She said this to me, "He never behaved like this at home."

The hard question remains, why did they live differently at home? Did they make good choices to fit in, to avoid discipline, to go along with what or was it because of a genuine heart and mind change? It's like you can do all the right things but if you don't know why you're doing them then you'll abandon them when they're no longer expected.

And it's not just kids who go to college, it's all of us. Because think about it. It must be the most natural thing in the world to copy behavior and customs or Paul wouldn't have written about it. I mean way back then he said, "Don't be conformed to the world but be transformed." So unless we've been changed inside, unless our minds have actually been renewed then all we're going to do when we become a Christian is just swap one list of things for another. It's like we give up drinking and we become a glutton.

[Laughter]

When you give up cursing and take up gossiping. Do you know what I mean?

It is like we think, well, this is how I need to behave now. I don't do this and I don't do that. But to me, being transformed into the image of Christ is a change, it is like a turning around and going in a whole new direction; not so the person that sits in front of us in church thinks, well, they're doing a great job. It's so we've been genuinely changed inside. That's what God wants for us.

Some of you might think, why are you talking about my mind? My mind is fine. I'm smart. I'm computer savvy. I'm way ahead of Paul's audience. No wonder he was telling them they had

to have their minds renewed. But it is not about information, it's about renewal, it's about being changed. We live, as you know, in a fallen world which means our minds are fallen too. We're made to worship God but unless our minds have been renewed we will worship whatever we want.

The word *renewal* Paul talks about in Romans occurs only one more time in the Greek New Testament and it gives me great hope that this process of being renewed is not like, okay, go home now and renew your mind. We're not left to do this by ourself. We need the Holy Spirit.

So Titus three, verses four and five say this: But when the kindness and love of God our savior appeared, he saved us not because of the righteous things we had done but, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

It's a joint work together. Our commitment to become more like Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit working in us. It is a beautiful thing. And if you've ever wondered, well, what do I worship? Ask yourself, how do you spend your time? Some days that's a really good indication as to what we worship. Don't beat yourself up. We all need to relax and watch the Dallas Cowboys go on to win the Super Bowl.

[Laughter]

We all have things that -- God loves us. We wants us to rest and be refreshed but watch where you spend all of your time. If you just go home and sit down and veg out, turn on the TV and you just veg, and that's all you do until you fall into bed then don't be surprised if you're struggling to change the way you think.

When Paul talks about putting on the armor of God, there's a little part toward the end I didn't understand accurately at first where he talks about, "And take the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God." Well, the word that is used there, just in that one place for sword is actually the word that's used for a dagger; like it's close contact. And the word that's used for Word of God, here in this passage it is not capitalized. It is always capitalized. And when it is capitalized it

means the Word of God. The whole cannon of scripture. But when it is a small "w" it means a particular scripture.

So what Paul is saying, "Find your little daggers." Like if you struggle with anxiety, with fear, whatever it is that your mind is tormented by, find your scriptures. I copy mine out on 3x5 cards. I put them on sticky notes in my car. Sometimes you have to almost re-wallpaper your mind. You know for the things you've heard over and over or the patterns of thinking that you got so used to. But honestly, we can change. It's not -- I know it might seem like, oh I've tried before. There's something different when you say, "Lord, I want to be renewed in my mind. I want to think differently, I want to live differently." But then when we do our part, when some days we just turn the TV off. Or like when I'm driving here to work it takes me about 30 minutes and I used to listen to news but I don't anymore. I've got two things I do. I have a worship playlist on my phone so I either listen to that but I have to be careful because I end up only driving with one hand because I'm worshipping, so that's a little bit dodgy. But the other thing I've downloaded podcasts from real men and women of God Bible teaching and I listen to that while I'm driving. It's like when you take more in of the things that remind you of what's always true, no matter what might be true for a season, it builds us up and it changes us. It changes how we think! Because suddenly, the bad news is there and the good news of God is here.

I also remind myself when I find myself beginning to slip into old negative thinking patterns and you probably want to make your own list but here's mine: I am a child of God. I'm not a TV host, I'm not a speaker -- I'm a child of God because that will never change. I am loved. I have a future. God is for me. I actually have that written on a little piece of paper and stuffed inside my wallet. When I find myself tired and stressed, I pull out these things and I remind myself, I'm a child of God. I'm loved. I have a future and God is for me.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: You might want to write some of that down for yourself because sometimes we need to

really work hard in transitioning from how we thought for so many years to changing how we think as a son, as a daughter of God. Because I don't know where you find yourself in your life right now. You may be in a bad place. You may be in a hopeless place. I was doing a little Facebook live recently and I always read all the comments and respond as much as I can and this one woman said, "I am all alone." My heart ached for her. But I'm wondering if some of you feel that way. I want you to know, if you have placed your trust in Christ... and maybe you think, what does that even mean? It begins with a very simple prayer. You can just call it... the Bible says, "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Not if nice people call on Jesus. Whoever! You just have to say, "Jesus, I know I'm a sinner and I want to be saved."

Once you know that you're a child of God that's when you begin the life-altering work of changing the way you think rather than all the labels that you've worn throughout your life: You're divorced, you're a single mother, an alcoholic, whatever! The label you proudly wear is: Son of God, daughter of the king because that's your true identity.

One of the privileges I get here at *LIFE* and I'm so grateful is to be able to actually go into the field and see the work that we're doing around the world. I want to show you something that may be a little shocking but I beg you to stay with it because when you change the way you think about yourself it changes how you see other people, it changes how you think about others. Not as people who don't have a hope. But people who have a hope, if those of us who know Christ care enough to go in his name and change their world.

I'm going to tell you how you can get a hold of a copy of my book. I want to send it to you. But first I want you to watch something that might just change how you feel about others. Watch this.

On the mission field

Sheila: I'm staying with our crew at a really nice, what I would consider kind of higher end hotel in Southeast Asia. But every single one of us last night had a card slipped under our door, very clearly offering sexual services. It is just -- I consider it an absolute hellish onslaught here in

Southeast Asia.

Very young girl in the picture made up as if she was smiling. But we have talked to these girls and their life is not one that they smile about. In fact, I was told by one of the girls, if we don't smile then we are punished. We are physically beaten up.

Open Captions:

>> My friend told me about a restaurant where I could work. I was brought into a room and given a soft drink. After I drank it, I became unconscious. When I woke up, I was alone in a room with a client. The men later threatened me, and said not to tell anyone what they had done to me.

Sheila: There's such pronounced evil here and that's why I think that our presence here, bringing the light and the fragrance of Christ and the message of the gospel is so important. It is so critical that we are here reaching out in Jesus' name now.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: That little girl, that sweet little girl I'm hugging there, she is 11 years old. Let me just give you a little context to understand what's happening there because maybe you're thinking, why do they get involved with that at all? So often these are the poorest of the poor families. And if one gets sick, the mom or the dad get sick and they have to get medicine, they have no money so they have to take out a loan. And then when the people come back and they want their money, they don't have it because the interest is made up and up and up. You know the way that goes. So the only choice some of these girls have is to go out on the street.

Now technically they go out to try and gather cans up because they can sell like eight cans for a quarter. But what so often happens as you saw in that piece is that they're taken by some friendly person, "Would you like a soft drink?" "Would you like a meal? You look hungry." And the

food or the drink is drugged. And at 10, 11, 12-year old girl wakes up in a horrible room with some man she's never met in her life before and realizes that precious gift of waiting for the one that she's meant to marry has been robbed from her. And from that moment on these girls feel hopeless, they feel used.

And it was such a severe mercy, is the only way I can describe it, to go and spend time. You might be asking, well, why are you sitting in a van? Some of the areas are incredibly dangerous. When we felt we could get out then we would get out and walk; and Janice and I would just be praying up and down the street, praying for God to intervene. And then we would find a quiet place where some of the local people we work with there would say, "You can come. It is a safe place to meet with these girls here."

But so many of these places, the streets are so dangerous. One little girl I talked to said she was literally walking home and two guys in a motorbike reached down and grabbed her and the next thing she knows she wakes up beside some 50-year old drunk man. She is just a child.

You and I ask change this. This is not a hopeless case. If you look at it just from the world's point of view, it is like, hey, why bother? Every single person is born in the image of God, the Imago Dei. And if you and I don't determine that this is not going to happen on our watch, who will?

So we have set up this amazing way that we can do it. We call it Reach: Get to the villages and teach these children before they're taken captive. Rescue, go into the places where they're being held and get them out of there. And then restore. Help them to understand who they are in Christ.

But we need you to work with us. We thought we would be able to reach 2,500 children this year but then some of our friends said, "No, we care about this." So a \$320,000 matching gift came in. So that means that you and I in this season, we can rescue 5,000 children -- 5,000! It used to be that if you gave \$128 you would rescue one child but now there's going to be a matching gift. So if you can give \$128 you're going to rescue two children who are literally right now begging God to help. If you can only do \$64, now with a matching gift together with a brother or sister in

Christ, you've rescued a child. Our goal is 5,000 children rescued because we have this amazing \$320,000 matching gift.

But we need you to do something today. Would you go to your phone? Would you give the very best gift you can?

[Begin video clip]

Announcer: Behind the bright lights there is a darkness where a world of violence and sexual abuse runs rampant scarring the souls of millions of young children. With their bodies broken and hopes crushed, these children are trapped in a never-ending nightmare.

With your help, *Mission: Rescue Life* can shine the light of God's love in this dark world to reach, rescue and restore children and young people to the beauty God designed for them to enjoy. With a generous opportunity of a \$320,000 matching gift, your gift of \$128 to help rescue a child will be matched to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help rescue one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 rescue gift will be doubled to \$64! With your gift of any amount today, we will send you the *Names of God* prayer journal. From Adonai to Yahweh, this journal is filled with beautiful photographs to help you reflect on 31 different names of God found throughout scripture. With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive the *Names of God* Bible. This special edition NIV large print Bible is engraved with the many names of God; a beautiful reminder that the God we serve is infinitely good.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,280 which will now help rescue 20 children and you may request the beautiful "Bridge of Faith" framed canvas print by Thomas Kinkade. Please call, write or make your gift online!

[End of clip]

In the studio

Sheila: So you can see the need is tremendous -- but so is the body of Christ. When every single one of us decides we're not just going to turn away and not look, I can't, thank you, Jesus unsee what I saw. But the pleas of these children, help us! So we just thank you for your gift.

If the phone's busy, please keep calling. We want to rescue 5,000 children and for your gift of \$128 we're going to send you this "Names of God" Bible. It is beautiful! And a journal as well that will explain something about the meaning of the names of God. And for any gift at all I get to send you my brand-new book, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*. And when you get that it is okay not to be okay because Jesus has made us right then you want to reach out to other people and let them know, hey, it is okay not to be okay because we have come in the name of the Lord to set you free.

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

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