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Week 50: Fall Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

Run in Your Own Lane

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm so glad that you're joining us. I was asked recently by a young girl, "How do I find out exactly what God wants me to do with my life? I know what my mom wants me to do. I know what my dad wants me to do. But some days I wonder, why was I put on this planet? What does God want me to do?"

I think that's one of the questions that every single one of us has to deal with, finding out the uniqueness about who you are. Sometimes when we get a little bit older, and maybe you've fulfilled certain roles, perhaps you're with an empty nest now or maybe you've retired and you think, well, am I done now? But I really believe as a Christian, if we still have a pulse, if there is not a white chalk mark around our body that we still have a job to do.

I look on my life as being on mission 24/7, not just when I have the privilege of coming into your home and talking with you or when I'm out speaking somewhere but to have the eyes of Christ every single day. Every morning I pray that; Lord, will you give me your eyes to see what I'm going to miss without you? And would you give me your ears to hear behind what somebody is saying to what actually might be going on in their life?

I've been thinking a lot about identity. I wondered, do you ever feel as if you're living someone else's dream for your life? Was there something, perhaps as a young woman or a young man that you thought, I would really love to do this. And then life interrupted and circumstances changed and you suddenly find yourself quite a bit further down the

road and you think, well, whatever happened to that dream?

One of the things I really believe is it is never, never too late to be who God created you to be. It is one of the things that I talked about in my book, *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*.

What do you do when a dream is kind of deferred? Is it too late to find it again? I don't think so. I definitely don't think so.

So we had some of our partners here in the studio and I had the opportunity to share some thoughts. One of them was on that very issue, what do you do when you feel as if you have been squeezed into a mold and it is what somebody else wants for you rather than what you want for yourself? Watch this.

Begin video clip

Sheila: Sometimes you're in a situation that's challenging and other times you're in a situation where other people want to fit you into a mold that you know you're just not called to. Have you ever been in a place where people want you to be a certain way and behave a certain way and it's just not you? I saw that when I was growing up.

The little Baptist church that we were in in Scotland, we'd been in for generations. I think my great-great-grandfather made the communion table. While I was a teenager, we had a pastor who came that I just adored. He was just a combination of somebody who teaches the Word of God but also shares the life, and has such compassion. That's the kind of man he was. I adored his wife. But she was not the typical Scottish Baptist church wife, pastor's wife. Because in Scotland, if you're the pastor's wife you're supposed to be able to play the piano. I have no idea why but you're supposed to be able to play the piano. And not only that, you're supposed to be able to lead all the women's meetings.

Now she was kind of a shy woman and I watched sometimes as some of the older women in our church tried to force her into a mold that she was so uncomfortable in. She actually became one of my dearest friends. I'd go around sometimes and say, "Listen. Just don't

listen to them. You get to be who you are. You get to stay who you are. You're not responsible for their expectations of you. You're answerable to God."

But then I went on to seminary in London and then I came to America. I heard that our pastor and his wife had moved on to a church in Glasgow in Scotland. So when I flew home to see my mom I thought I'm going to go and see them first and see how they're doing. I remember my friend opening the door and her face was just radiant. I was like, "Wow! You look great." So I went in and we sat down over a cup of tea. And I said, "Tell me what your life is like?"

She said, "It's amazing, Sheila. I have found what God put me on this earth to do." What she does now is with a small group of other women in the church with the same calling, she goes out on a Friday night and a Saturday night and ministers to all the prostitutes in Glasgow. They made homemade soup, they made sandwiches and they go out on the streets and they simply share the love of Christ. And it is like she is alive because she's found what God has uniquely gifted her to do. So often people will have other expectations but when you actually listen and say, "God, what do you want me to do" there is a freedom in knowing that God has a place for you that nobody else can fill.

I remember when I was invited to join *Women of Faith*, I'd never spoken before. I thought, I don't think I can do this. But I met some of the women, the other speakers, Barbara Johnson, Luci Swindoll, and Patsy Clairmont and I thought, well, they're amazing! I would love to do this. Until the first conference because I heard them speak. I hadn't heard them speak. I'm like, oh what was I thinking? I don't know if you've ever heard Patsy Clairmont; she is like the energizer bunny for Jesus. It is unbelievable! And funny! And Luci is so wise and witty.

There was a break before I was supposed to speak. Actually, I left the little side platform where we all sat and I locked myself in the restroom and I said, "Lord, I can't do this. I don't know why I thought I could but I can't do this."

You know what I heard the Holy Spirit say to me? "Sheila, run in your own lane."

I'm like, "Lord, I don't know what that means."

"Run in your own lane." It became clear to me as the Lord unpacked that inside me that when you compare yourself to the woman who is running beside you or the man who is running beside you, you're going to get all messed up because God has uniquely equipped and called you to do what only you can do. I can't tell you how freeing that was for me. It meant every time that I heard Luci or heard Patsy, I was able to sit there and love it and pray for them.

And even as a writer, when I see that Christine Caine or Priscilla Shirer or Lisa Bevere or Lisa Harper, any of my friends get a new book out, I'm online like, "Get this book! You'll love this book!"

When you get who you are, you get to celebrate everybody else because you don't have to compare yourself. You can say, "Look at them go!" And if we're all in this together to serve the Lord, it is a win/win situation.

I was looking through, I actually Googled when I was trying to unpack what the Lord meant by "run in your own lane," I Googled "run in your own lane." [Laughing] You know what came up? It was so interesting. It was an old piece of black and white footage from 1954. And at that point there were only two men in the world who could run a mile in under four minutes. One was a British guy called Roger Bannister, and another was an Australian guy. Just two of these guys who could run the miracle mile. But they had always done it in separate races.

So they set up this race where they were going to have both guys in the same race. They called it "The miracle mile." And TV cameras, you can actually look at it, YouTube has it. TV cameras from all around the world were there because they just wanted to see who is going to win this race. The interesting thing is, for the first, oh major part of the race,

the Australian is ahead. But as he's coming to the end, in a moment he turns to look over his shoulder to see where Roger Bannister is and in that moment Roger Bannister overtakes him and he wins the race.

Don't look over your shoulder. Don't look to your right or your left. You are you and that's the good news. God has created you uniquely. Maybe you think, it doesn't look as spectacular. That's because you are looking at it with earthly eyes. You have no idea what heaven is seeing. There is so many people who -- and maybe even some of you, maybe you're housebound and you can't go out and witness, you can't do a lot of things that you used to do but you sit there and you pray and you support ministries like *LIFE Today*. We see all the big people on the platforms but the people who are faithful where God has placed them, heaven values that.

I tease my sister all the time. My sister Francis is two years older than me and she has got a lovely singing voice. When she comes over to the states and she'll come to the conferences we've done and there's maybe 15,000 women in the arena and she's like, "Sheila, I could not do this!" But then I go home and I'll go with her to the things she does. She goes twice a month to this retirement home and on a good day there's maybe seven people. And the interesting thing, every time I've been there, six of them sit on the back row but this one woman, sits in the front. And every time Francis finishes a song and goes to start again she goes, "Oh no! She is going to sing again!"

[Laughter]

I'm like, "Francis, how do you do this?"

She said, "You know, I'm just blossoming where God has called me." I love that.

It is easy to look at the people that we just think have big names or sell a lot of books or do any of that. Heaven does not look at that. Heaven looks at our hearts. Heaven looks at how we serve. Heaven looks at every single thing you do in his name. Honor his name.

Someone asked me the other day about a little tattoo I have on my wrist. It simply says: "Yes, Lord." It's a picture, it's exactly the writing of the picture that hung on my mom's bedroom all my life, hung above her bed. The more I thought about -- when I grew up I was told you don't do that but the more I kind of understood the culture of that day, the more I thought I don't think that is really a spiritual issue. But I've started to think about our scars. The scars that we pick up in life. Some of them are very visible and some are invisible. Invisible is not a word.

[Laughter]

Invisible is a word. But here's a place I've come to in my life. I believe that we can celebrate your scars as tattoos of triumph of what God has done in your life.

In John's gospel, John Chapter 20, verses 19 and 20 we read this. This is after the crucifixion and the resurrection and all the disciples are gathered together and they're afraid. They don't know what's going to happen. We read this: That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them. "Peace be with you," he said. As he spoke he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord.

One of my favorite singer songwriters is a guy called Michael Card. I don't know if you know him but he is a theologian and a musician. It is just a beautiful combination. He has a song I love and it is called, "He will be Known by the Scars."

I read a comment one day on my Facebook page from a young girl and it made me smile. This is what she said, "I pray that one day I can be the fearless godly woman you are." I wanted to go on a plane and go sit down with her, and talk to her about the process of life. Sometimes you'll see someone at a particular place in their life and you think, you've just always been like that. You don't know the story of the faithfulness of God and what

it took to come to that place, of all the brokenness and meeting Christ in the midst of the brokenness and what he did there.

When Christian was a little boy he was flying somewhere with his dad and in an airline magazine they had one of those ads for a kit you could order to make a stone you could put in your garden path. The one that Christian saw in the magazine just said, "I love you." So he said to his dad, "Could I order that for mom for her birthday?"

And so Barry ordered it. When it arrived, I was banned from the guest bedroom. Barry laid out towels and he emptied the box and Christian was devastated. He said, "Dad! Look at it. It is all broken."

Barry explained to him, "No. You get to make your own."

And so for, I don't know how many days they sat there in the bedroom and they formed a shape of a heart. It was all sorts of different color of stones. Barry said to him, "You don't have to use them all."

And Christian said, "I'm using every one and I'm using purple because it is my mom's favorite color." And then he wrote with his little finger, "I love you, mom!"

If you ever drop by my house and go out in the backyard there it is. I treasure that. I treasure it for a couple of reasons. The first one, really obvious, I treasure it because my darling son made that for me. In fact, the morning he brought it in he said, "Mom, close your eyes and hold out your hands." He nearly collapsed my lungs. It was so heavy! But I love that. But the second reason I love it is because it reminds me of this profound spiritual truth. It is a beautiful thing that God will do with a broken life when you give him all the pieces -- all the pieces.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: So often when we see something as broken we just want to throw it away because we think it is worthless. But that's the glorious thing about our Father, that when we offer those to him he makes something truly spectacular out of them.

In fact, one of the things that they do in Japan with a certain kind of pottery is when something is broken, they actually repair it with gold. So all the seams are actually gold and it is more valuable and more beautiful than the original thing was.

I know in my own life, that's what God does. Sometimes when we fall apart and things break we think that our ministry and our worth to God is over. No. When you invite Christ into the broken places of your life you will discover that not only does he receive you but you understood who he is and his love for you at a depth that perhaps before you didn't.

On one of my trips to Africa we had the awesome opportunity of going to Angola. I don't think anything quite prepares you for what you see in a country where there is so much brokenness, where there are broken hearts, where you see broken lives. I began to see the tremendous need but also the tremendous opportunity for you and I to be the gold in Jesus' name that would repair the broken places and the cracks where there seems to be no hope. There are no throwaways to Jesus. Maybe that is even a word for you. Maybe you feel you've fallen too far and you've done too much. I want you to know that Jesus loves you. That he sees you. And that he welcomes you not to tidy yourself up and come, but to come as you are.

And out of that being received when you thought it was all over, I think there comes this fresh fire and fresh passion to reach out in Jesus' name and be his hope, be his healing, be those golden strands of life in the life of someone else. I met a woman like that. I'd love to introduce you to her. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

Announcer: Even in the best of times the journey of life is rarely easy. This has been especially true for Paulina who as a mother of five children became a widow when her husband passed away in 2011. As a single mother living in poverty she provided for her children the best she could. But sadly, it wasn't enough.

>> My child was coming home from school and she started feeling of some fever. Then the next morning my child died. The second one also came home from school with a fever. Then we went to the hospital. We were given two tablets but nothing helped. So we started digging roots and boiling them for him to drink. It did not do anything. At last he died. I lost another child the same way six months later.

Sheila: We've sat with these little ones for quite some time today and they haven't moved. Even the food that she is able to provide, it's all starch, nothing that will help her children get strong which is why -- one of them, literally came home from school one day sick and by the next morning they were gone because these little ones have no reserves.

This little mother has told us that if there was a stairway right now that she could just walk up and go home to be with the Lord and take her little ones with her, she would go because she's already at three deposits in heaven.

If you've ever asked yourself, "Lord, I'd love to do something for you this year, what can I do?" Here's what we can do. We can take care of widows. We can take care of their children. Mission feeding is so important because what we provide is protein, it is vitamins, it is everything that these little ones need to give them some resistance. And then we can honor the fact that we don't love God only in what we say, we love God in what we do and how we obey his Word.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: One of the amazing things about that particular story about Paulina, my friend Janice who takes all our great photographs for us here at *LIFE* on the road, she was back and went to that very village and now, because of your love, because of your help, Mission Feeding is in that village. And the difference and the countenance of Paulina from that time when I sat down with her and when Janice was able to sit down with her was night and day. Joy! Knowing that her children are getting a good meal every single day.

You look at that stuff that I was feeding the children with. It looks kind of to us like oatmeal but it is not. It is made in our factories in Africa specifically for these children. It is full of everything that they need. And from that first bowl of food it turns from death to life. It builds up these children so they have some resistance to any kind of disease.

But the truth remains, there are so many more children who we are not able to help at the moment. Do you know this is our 30th anniversary of Mission Feeding? And so many of you have stood with us and said, "Yeah, we want to help." But I remember something that Betty said. She said, "I never want the line of children to be longer than the food we have." So we want to be able to go into all the villages where we don't have a feeding program at the moment and change the life of these mothers and their beautiful children.

And here's how we do it. We do it together. \$30 feeds three children for three whole months. That's amazing! \$50 feeds five children. \$100 feeds ten. Some of you might be able to even give \$1,000 and if you're able to do that we have this stunning painting that we would love to send you. I know you don't do it for the gifts. It's our way of saying thank you.

But if every one of us would do something, then we can be the answer to the prayers of mothers like Paulina to be able to go back to her village and see that program in place. It is our way of saying, "Look! It works!" She was desperate. She buried three children and now she is able to feed those two children she has.

So there are so many more. We need you to help. So would you call that number on your screen? It doesn't matter, whatever you have, give the best gift you have and we'll be able to bring you more stories of hope for mothers who thought there was no hope. Please, would you call now?

Begin video clip

Announcer: In impoverished and drought-stricken areas of Africa, children are suffering. The need is great and without food they face severe malnutrition -- even death.

Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach you can save lives by feeding and caring for children currently suffering in parts of Angola, Mozambique, and South Sudan. With previous reserves gone and Mission Feeding helping in areas with severe crop failure, we urgently need your support to replenish food supplies to reach the 400,000 children who are counting on us.

Your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. With your gift of any amount we'll send you *Death-Defying Faith*, the extraordinary life of miracle man, Peter Pretorius. This autobiography, completed just days before his unexpected death, chronicles the thrill-seeking adventures of missionary, Peter Pretorius. You will love reading how God took this ordinary man and performed extraordinary miracles throughout all of Africa.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the beautiful "Faith and Hope" pen set; two beautifully crafted pens featuring the key words of Hebrews 11:1; a key verse for every believer especially when facing adversity, trials and challenges.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to

request the "Bridge of Faith" framed canvas print by Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

On the mission field

Isak: My heart is just broken sitting here in this cemetery surrounded by graves that are, each and every one of them, graves for children; little lives that have been stolen by malnutrition. Children who have starved to death because they didn't have enough food. It truly breaks my heart. But you know what breaks my heart even more? The fact is that we could have avoided this. We could have changed this. We could have stopped these graves from being filled with these little lives. We could have saved these children if we'd just been able to act in time. If we'd just been able to get to their village, take Mission Feeding and give them a bowl of food a day.

So please, do whatever you can do today because \$30 will feed three children, \$50 will feed five. And if you can find it in your heart to give that special gift of \$100, you can feed ten children today. That's ten children's lives that will be saved. Please give a gift of life today. Give the gift of mission feeding. Give life!

I need your help today. I need you to help me to insure that the next grave doesn't get filled with another child who died for no good reason. Please, give a gift of life today. Give the gift of Mission Feeding. If you can give, \$30, \$50, or \$100 you can save three, five or ten children. Ten children's lives that are relying on you -- ten mothers that are saying please! Please give that gift today.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! I don't think we'll know until we're finally all home with the Lord the difference that every single gift makes. I got a sweet note from my young boy who said he's been saving up his allowance and sending it in. So thank you. Every single gift counts. We're getting close to the end of the year. We've made a commitment to 400,000 children that we will be there, that we will make sure that when they show up we have food for them. So this is a great time to get your end of the year gift in and make a difference for those children and their parents.

And remember, for any gift at all, we're going to send you *Death Defying Faith* which is the wonderful book about the extraordinary life of Peter Pretorius, our partner in Africa for so long. And of course, I'd love to send you my own book, *It's Okay Not to be Okay: Eight steps to move forward*. But let's make a difference. It's coming close to the end of the year. I pray God has blessed you but out of that, let's be a blessing to those who need it so much. So thank you for helping us. Thank you for all you do. Thank you for your care.

It is our prayer here at *LIFE* that God will bless you and your family. So for *LIFE Today* I'm Sheila Walsh saying thank you so much. See you next time!