

10/11/18 Modified from: 3/22/18
Week 41: Mission: Rescue Life
James Robison and Randy Robison
Sanya Richards-Ross

James: I tell you what. Betty is not here. Randy our son is here. I'm James Robison with *LIFE Today*, we welcome you. Betty has some challenges with a knee that is making it hard for her to get around. We think we're really getting close to getting through it so just keep praying.

This lady here doesn't have any problem with her knees and running. The title of her book is called *Chasing Grace*. If anybody could chase it, of course, it's chasing us too, but if anybody could chase it it would be Sanya Richards-Ross. Sanya is an Olympic champion. Sanya has some records that are the world records longstanding, not likely to ever be broken. The fastest man that ever lived is from her country, Mr. Bolt. He knows this lady can run.

But she has a real testimony of grace and I want you to listen to her. I told her before we came out here she's beautiful through and through in every way. She is a champion but she is going to talk to you about the greatest champion, the one who gives us grace. I want you to welcome -- I want you to give Sanya a great welcome to *LIFE Today*. Would you do that?

Sanya, I'm glad to see you.

Sanya: James, thank you so much for having me. I'm so happy to be here. Randy, it's just such a thrill. Thank you so much.

James: You brought your aunt from Florida. She says she watches all the time. And I mean she was so glad to see us; I know disappointed Betty isn't here but she is such a sweetheart. What

do you call her? Aunt what?

Sanya: My Aunt Faye. My mom was originally supposed to come with me and I ditched her for my aunt.

[Laughter]

And she is in the audience.

James: Mom, you'll get over it, okay!

Sanya: I love you mom! But my Aunt Faye when she heard I was coming she was like I picked the perfect weekend to be in Texas. So thank you for being so warm and just so wonderful. I couldn't be happier to be here.

James: I want you to tell your story because you paid a not necessarily wise price let's say to run. Tell us about it.

Sanya: Well, just going to jump right in it?

James: Just jump right in because we need grace.

Sanya: So true! It was 2008 and I was going to the Olympics. I had become pro in 2005 and was the world number one at the 400 for four consecutive years leading to the Olympics, the heavy favorite to win. I was dating my now husband for about five or six years at that point, we were engaged.

James: A football player that broke the Dallas Cowboy's hearts more than once.

Sanya: We won't talk about that here in Dallas.

James: We have to have grace so we can forgive. Tell everybody his name.

Sanya: Aaron Ross. My husband and my college sweetheart! He had an amazing career in the N.F.L.

But I was headed to the Olympics and right before I left for Beijing I found out I was pregnant. As you can imagine, it was -- it is supposed to be one of the happiest times of your life but for me I felt like it wasn't the right time. So as a woman who had tried to be the best Christian that I could be for my entire life, and always kind of felt like I was doing really well and was making God proud for the first time, I felt like life wasn't just black and white anymore. It had gotten gray for me. I wasn't sure which way to go. It was really, really difficult.

I know it is hard to say that when you are going through this time that I was very prayerful. I decided to have an abortion. It was really hard for me and I remember thinking to myself, how did I end up here? How am I in this clinic? I boarded a plane to Beijing the day after I terminated my pregnancy. It was the first time in my life I realized that I wasn't running this race to win a gold medal, I wasn't competing against seven other women, I was in a race for my soul, for my life. I was physically ready to win but I was not emotionally and spiritually in a place to win.

And so I went out to Beijing. I ended up winning the bronze medal and a big part of that I felt like was because I didn't feel worthy of the gold. I felt like I had let God down. I had let myself down, let my family down. Didn't tell a lot of people other than my husband and my mom, not even my coach knew at the time what was going on with me. So I was just really, really broken.

When I think about that time in my life and the reason I landed on this title, *Chasing Grace* is because it was a time in my life when I felt God's grace most profoundly. I'll never forget it. After I won the bronze, I didn't want to go back to the village, I was so disappointed; felt like I had lost the gold medal. So I went to be with my family.

So I got on the bus, the public bus to get to my family. They were about five minutes away in a

rented apartment. I was crying so hard I could barely see through my eyes. I get on this bus and I realize I'm going in the wrong direction. So I jump off the bus and I literally feel like my internal turmoil is now my external experience. I'm in this strange place, no one speaks English and I'm lost.

I'll never forget it. I felt the love of God, I felt Jesus just wrap his arms around me and I felt forgiven even before I had the courage to ask him for it. I realized in that moment that that was why I had that experience. I felt like before I was a Christian and I had this relationship with God but nothing like that. For me, it made me realize that I cannot run this race called life without God. Whenever I get off track or whenever I try to do it by myself I realize that I'm just like everyone else, I'm going to make mistakes, I'm going to fall short. But when I lean into God, when I trust him I'm able to run the best race that I can.

James: So when you write *Chasing Grace* and you've already said you've got a whole download of it right there, you made a mistake, you did go on. You did go on and win more championships. You did win several gold medals in the Olympics and you and your husband are rejoicing over your precious child. Y'all have a nice company in Austin; they have a limo service. If they wanted to find it, what's it called?

Sanya: Our limo service is called Ross Elite Chauffeur Service so it is RossElite.com if you want to find us in Austin.

But what I did want to say, James, what I didn't mention too is after I lost the 400 in Beijing and I was home and I had that experience and I stayed home for two days and I was talking to God and just really loving on God and I felt his love. I stepped back on the track two days later to run, or four days later, I'm sorry, to run the four-by-four and our team had always gotten the baton in first. We were always -- usually when I run the anchor leg for team U.S.A. it is kind of like a victory lap. And for the first time I got the stick behind. I was behind the Russian team. I had this resolve in my spirit but I also had this peace. And I was able to bring my team back from behind and we won gold.

What it ultimately taught me was that God wants us to have the victory. So for me, after that moment I went on and like you said and won other gold medals but for me it was so much less, it wasn't about the gold medals it was about running with God and trusting him that he put in my spirit that I was going to be an Olympic champion when I was seven years old and he fulfilled his promises in my life. Even though I had some ups and downs and some highs and some lows, ultimately, and the reason I named the book *Chasing Grace* is that all of my life I was chasing, chasing medals, chasing records but the one thing I'm most grateful that I ran into is God's grace.

James: And that's why you wrote the book. You want people to get it. I told you when we were visiting earlier that you were gifted to communicate. Your whole countenance communicates. Don't you agree you can just see glory and grace on Sanya? I can just see it and I know all of our viewers can. What do you feel like if you wanted our viewers to be able to communicate with you? Let's just say if they said to you, "Would you mind coming and sharing about grace in our church?" What website would you want them to go to?

Sanya: You can go to my website at: SanyaRichardsRoss.com. You can email me at info@SanyaRichardsRoss.com. I feel like that's where God wants me to be right now. I would love to be able to be in churches where people are searching for God and searching for answers, to be able to share my story of God's grace I feel like would be the greatest blessing and opportunity of my life. So I would 100% love to hear from you. If you log onto my site you can get a signed copy of the book as well. So yeah, that's how you can get in touch with me.

James: Do you feel like now, are you trying right now to support or do anything? What's on your heart right now to do that you might say people pray for me or maybe even help me do it?

Sanya: There are a couple of things that I'd love to do. The first thing you mentioned I'm a new mom and God restores. I have a five-month old, a beautiful, beautiful baby boy. Being a mom --

James: Do you think he'll be able to run?

Sanya: I certainly hope so!

[Laughter]

You know it is so funny, we have one of those little walkers; at only five months, I think it's premature but he is running around the house already. I'm watching his form and correcting him and coaching him.

[Laughter]

So being a mom is like my number one priority.

But I would love to be able to do more speaking engagements now. My son is almost six months, we're traveling more. So I would love for God to be able to use me or to show me how he'd like to use me in that way to be able to communicate God's love with other people.

We've been doing some stuff with the book and doing signings. I still do some commentating for N.B.C. I was able to go to Rio and commentate for N.B.C. for their Olympics and I'm still doing that, and work with Nike and stuff. So I keep myself busy.

James: You've already given us an address. In your book you mentioned the four P's. Then you even said you have another one that you want to mention. Just tell us what those P's are.

Sanya: So even though in the book I'm very vulnerable and I share all of my experiences good and bad with God, also this book is meant to be inspirational and help you to run your best race with God. So the four P's is actually the strategy that I learned from my coach, Coach Clyde Hart that I think is the best coach in the world. He is down at Baylor. The four P's are...

James: Even though you went to Texas.

Sanya: Even though I went to Texas this Baylor guy helped you. Why don't Christians learn to

do that? Why don't democrats and republicans learn to do that? Right?

Sanya: Exactly! Exactly! So the four P's are push, pace, position, poise, and I'll just briefly talk about them. I feel like in life, whenever you have this big dream and big goal you have to push towards that goal. You've got to get up. You've got to get off your butt; you've got to work really hard to get there.

And then you've got to pace yourself. You've got to find a rhythm that you can settle into so that you don't burn out.

Then you've got to position yourself for success which is one of the most important P's. Do I have to move to California? Sometimes you have to take a risk to be able to be in a position to be successful.

And then you've got to stay poised. You've got to trust that you've done all the work, you've got to trust that God has you in the right place at the right time and you're uniquely positioned to do this thing that you know is in your heart to do.

And the fifth P, the most important P, the silent P is always stay prayerful because it doesn't matter how hard you've pushed, paced, positioned, and poised, if you're not in constant communication with God, none of those things will matter if you're not talking to him.

So those are the four P's that I share through the book that I think are how you can run your best race with God.

James: Randy, don't you love her spirit?

Randy: I do! I do! No, you're very, very encouraging to people.

I have to ask though, because you found yourself in a position that was very difficult when you're training, this is your whole life training, to run the Olympics, you're pregnant, the seventh

P or sixth P. And that's kind of almost not fair to you in a sense. I can understand how you would think, well, this isn't right. I shouldn't be pregnant. I've been training for something else and now I'm pregnant. So then you terminate it and you regret it later. You don't just run right by that. Something had to happen in your heart where God did some serious healing and work so that you don't carry around shame, regret, and just that wound. What did God do in your life to move you to a place where you're ministering now?

Sanya: Thank you so much. Such a good question. I think like you said initially I did feel all that shame and guilt and regret. And even today sometimes when I talk about it or think about it or see my son I still have those feelings. And I think for me it was really just being open and honest and communicating.

I remember the first time I talked to my pastor about it. It was crazy because when I called my pastor from Beijing I didn't tell him what was going on with me and he said to me that sometimes we feel unworthy. I thought, oh my God! He knows because that's exactly what I was feeling. Even though I didn't share it with him then, it took me a few years to share it with him, that was the first person that kind of helped me to kind of break down the walls and to understand that I'm not alone, that God is always with us.

Then I had this amazing conversation with my husband who I didn't know was also carrying great shame and regret. A lot of times you go through this, it is just the woman who thinks that we're experiencing this hurt and shame and the men carry it just as much. My husband thought we weren't ever going to get pregnant again. And we just had this amazing moment of prayer and just asking God to truly forgive us. I think what we have to do when you ask for forgiveness is believe that God has forgiven you and then you forgive yourself.

So I feel like I've been on that process. It is never ending. I feel like there are times where I do kind of go a little bit low again. I feel like why did I put myself in that situation? Then I come out on the other side and I know that God is with me and I'm human and he's forgiven me and now it is time for me to use my testimony to help other people.

Randy: Absolutely! Just don't ever forget that when the Bible says if we will confess our sins to Jesus he is faithful and just to forgive us. We get the faithful part because we think he is always very forgiving. But we don't always get the "just" part. He is justified. He is in right standing with God to forgive our sins so we don't have to carry around that burden of guilt and shame when he forgives us.

James: If somebody reads the book, what would be your little prayer for that person who reads the book, what do you hope happens to them?

Sanya: My prayer for everyone that reads the book is that they realize that sometimes in life we get so caught up with the things that we're doing, just like we're chasing, chasing, chasing and we're so lucky that we don't have to chase grace. God gives it to us freely. So what I hope for people that read the book is that they do stay motivated, encouraged, they go after their goals and dreams but they don't forget that the reason that they are able to achieve those things is because God allows us and walks with us. Even when you go through those low times in your life, he is still with you. If you'll just turn to him and lean into him he is always there.

So my prayer is that they will achieve their dreams like I did, they'll stay focused, work hard, but that they'll invite God on the journey with them.

James: Do you love this girl? Her beautiful grace is such a message.

Sanya, we are doing something that is really, our viewers are the ones that got us doing it. We started rescuing people from sexual trafficking. It's really hard to believe that anybody would exploit little children or they take a girl captive and make her a prisoner and even get her hooked on drugs to control her. Terrible!

But the love of God gives us an opportunity when we come together and we work together, we can literally reach these who are trafficked. We can rescue them and with love we can restore them. And here's the thing that's marvelous. If we do it together, working with the mission relief workers that have just planted their life in the middle of this pain, we can rescue one for

\$128 per child, per person, per woman and we can take care of them for a whole year. And of course, we'll ask you to take up another year if we're still having to walk through that process.

But the thing about it is, some of the viewers like you said, "We'll match what you do. That's how much we believe." So if you will help rescue one you'll rescue two. I want you to look. I want you to listen. Because this is pretty unbelievable but you can be the miracle that is so deeply needed and I think you're going to want to be. Watch it.

On the mission field

Sheila: I just wanted to explain why with this particular little girl, that we're not showing her face. She's 11 years old so we want to do everything we can to protect her. So when you were just nine years old, something terrible happened to you one night. Why don't you tell us about that?

Open Captions:

>> My dad is in prison and my mom ran away with some man. So I collected cans for food money to feed me and my brothers and my sister. Then one night... A guy on a motor vehicle grabbed me and took me to a bar. I was locked in a room and many different men would come in. If I refused to be with the men, I was beaten. After a year, they let me out of the room and I ran away. Right now I'm free but I still have to go out at night to pick up cans. I still have to buy all the food for my family. I'm scared that I will be taken again and made to go back into that room.

Sheila: I'm horrified by her story and the tragedy is she is not the only one. There are so many girls. And here's what I think. If we don't defend her, if we don't say no to those vicious predators -- and trust me, they are very well organized and they're very well funded so we've got to get organized, we've got to get funded. It is time to let our righteous anger rise to the surface. There is some things that we can say that is not good but this is evil. This is absolute evil from the pit of hell! And we cannot abandon these beautiful children who are longing to know that

there is at least one person on this planet who cares for them. I want her to know it's you and it's me and we're going to fight for them in Jesus' name.

End of clip

In the studio

James: You see Sheila walking there and that's just like the arm of the Lord Jesus, the shepherd with the little sheep. Did you hear that they got her when she was nine and now she is 11? But she goes home and she's so poor she collects cans and sells them to try and help her family. She is doing what we should all want to do and that's help. She's a perfect example of reaching. These are the ones we reach. By the way, she is going to be safe. She is not going to have to keep collecting cans and they're not going to get her back. See that's what's called reach and rescue. And those mission relief workers are not going to take their arm from around her.

Now then, we can actually get them out and take them to a place that's a safe haven they can't get them back. You made that happen. And we do it by one child or one person at a time, \$128, we rescue -- we reach them, rescue them and restore them and that's a year. Right now we've targeted 2500 that we want to rescue but our viewers some of them said, "We will match -- we will match to double that to 5,000.

So if you could help give the amount to rescue one of \$128 it will be two. Or if you say, "James, I don't even have \$128," \$64 will be doubled and you'll rescue one. We ask everyone who can, and I'm grateful to say I will do this by the grace of God rescue ten with a gift of \$1280. There are many of you can do that. You'll find great joy in doing it. Some of you can say, "I can do even more than that." I know you will if you can. But if you give the \$1280 you're not just rescuing ten now it is 20 because it is doubled.

It is amazing what God can do. Randy, I know, because you have four beautiful children, you've got a tremendous amount of love and now you're having some little nephew and nieces. What

does your heart say when you see this?

Randy: As a father of daughters, we've seen these stories now for years and it always kind of bothers me, it breaks my heart. Well, I saw that roll in, it was the sound of the little girl's voice. That's a child! That's a child! If we as Christians can't have the compassion to rescue a child, what good are we? We are salt that's lost its flavor if we can't reach into this world and rescue children.

So I hope you will join us. We've got everything in place to do it. We just can't do it alone.

James: You really are the answer. You're the answer to every prayer of every missionary and relief worker -- and every person that recognized the situation. So here's what I want to ask you to do. Go online or dial that number, always a prayer line for broken hearts paid for by love. If you go online or dial the number, I want you to get a bankcard and I want you to use it the proper way, like it's a check. I'm asking you to make the greatest gift of love you can right now.

If you can help us rescue several just know that the number you can reach out to it will be doubled. If there is any way you can rescue ten with a \$1280 gift we want to send you the beautiful, beautiful Thomas Kinkade "Bridge of Faith," it is a beautiful canvas, beautiful picture to say thank you because you've given someone a bridge of hope in life, it will be doubled to 20. \$128 will not reach one now but two. So at whatever level you can help, please, go online or dial the number and you release the love of God with that gift. It changes everything. Thank you for doing it.

[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]

[Video Clip]

Sheila: I've seen where these little girls start. I've been in their villages where they're just little kids playing with their toys and laughing. I've seen what happens when somebody comes during the day and manages to get them away from their family and they end up in the worst place where they're imprisoned and tortured and abused. And I've seen what happens when they're thrown in the garbage pit. I can't unsee what I've seen and to me, what is the hope? The hope is that we can reach these kids; that we can rescue them and restore them. We can't do it alone. That's why we need you to help us. Would you stand with us? If the body of Christ isn't going to change this, who will? We are the hands and feet of Christ left on this earth. It is no accident that you and I are alive at this moment in human history. Let's change the world. Would you help us?

[End of clip]

In the studio

James: But if you would like to have Sanya's book, *Chasing Grace* what a blessing it will be.

You can get it online, you can get it in the bookstores but if you'll help us rescue and really reach and restore all these precious ones, and you want the book, you say, "James, would you send it to me? I'm going to help." We'll be glad to. I want you all in the studio to join me and Randy in saying a great big thanks to Sanya for being a blessing and let us see the grace of God.

Sanya: Thank you!

James: You stay in touch with us.

Sanya: I'll be back!

James: You'll be back. I want you to. I want you to come back. Thank all of you so much! Thanks for watching. Thanks for caring and sharing.