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Week 47: Fall Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Dr. Robert Jeffress

James: I'm telling you what, it is a joy to be here with you -- and with you. I'm James Robison. Welcome to *LIFE Today*.

Betty and I are thrilled to have Dr. Robert Jeffress with us. You've got to understand there's a lot of emotion involved when I introduce the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dallas because before I'd ever preached I knelt in that pulpit at night, the building was always open, I'll ask Dr. Jeffress if it is now, he'll say, "We're always open," I'm sure. But the point is I went in there at night as an 18-year old and I said, "God, some day I want to preach here." Little did I realize I would preach there a lot with Dr. Criswell, and the guest would be listening to me as a young man.

Would you welcome what I believe to be one of the greatest leaders, pastors on the planet? Would you welcome the pastor of First Baptist Dallas, Dr. Robert Jeffress to *LIFE Today*?

Robert: Thank you. It's great to see you. Thank you for having me. It's great to be here.

James: Every book you've written, as far as I'm concerned has taken off. I'm glad but it is amazing to me you keep coming up with these extraordinary titles. This one says: *Choosing the Extraordinary Life*. Now why did you come up with that title?

Robert: James, last year you had me on to talk about my book on heaven, *A Place Called Heaven*. It became an instant bestseller because people want to know what God has planned for us after we die. But the good news is you don't have to wait until you die

to experience a great life. So I wrote this book, *Choosing the Extraordinary Life* to talk about what God can do for you right now.

Most Christians aren't living an extraordinary life. I think about that Chicago sewer worker who was asked one time why he did what he did. He said, "Well, let me think. I dig the ditch to earn the money to buy the bread to get the strength to dig the ditch."

[Laughter]

James: That's a cycle.

Robert: That's how most Christians are living their life. They get up, they go to work, come home, eat supper, watch a little TV, go to bed and do the same thing over and over again. God has more for us than that.

What I do in this book, *Choosing the Extraordinary Life*, the subtitle is: "God's seven secrets for success and significance." We looked at the character in the Bible, Elijah. You know the Bible says Elijah was not a spiritual Superman. He was an ordinary person like you and I. He had doubts, he had moments of disobedience and discouragement, and yet God used this ordinary person in an extraordinary way in his culture. God wants to do the same for us.

So I used the seven secrets from his life like discovering your purpose, unleashing the power of prayer, knowing how to handle bad days, waiting on God's timing; all of those things are part of an extraordinary life.

The foundation for an extraordinary life, secret number one is discovering your unique purpose in life. If you'll give me two and a half minutes to talk about that because I guarantee you those of you sitting at home right now, if you'll write this down, it will change your life or change the life of somebody you care about.

We all know we have a general purpose in life to glorify God but God also has a unique purpose for us to achieve that overall purpose. I say it this way: God is writing a unique story in our life to tell his story. I use that word *story* as an acrostic for five ways to know your unique purpose in life. The "S" stands for: Start with scripture. The starting place is always the Bible. Now admittedly, you can read the Bible and not find your vocation unless you're into shepherding or tax collecting, but other than that you're probably not going to find it there. But saturating your mind in scripture reminds you of God's general principles. So it is the starting place.

The "T" in story stands for: Talk to others. One way God reveals his purpose to us is in other people. Proverbs 13:10, 20: In the multitude of counselors there is victory.

I remember when I was in the ninth grade I had a speech teacher. Her name was Miss Fry. She was one tough old gal, I'm telling you. She wore army boots. She scared us to death. She would stand on her desk and start yelling at us, "Speak louder! Speak louder!"

One day after class she said, "Jeffress, I want to talk to you." Man, I was just... She said, "Jeffress, you're going to be a preacher one day and it scares the bejeebers out of me because you can sell anybody anything."

She's the first person who ever envisioned that I would be a pastor. Years later, when I was already in the ministry I got word that she had died, and in her will she had stipulated that I would preside at her funeral service. Because back then she knew I would be a pastor. So listen to what other people say.

The "O" in story stands for: Obey your passions. Folks, this is so key. You know one of the best ways to discover what God wants you to do is to ask yourself, what do you want to do? When you're walking with the Lord, he makes his desires your desires. Psalm 37:4: Delight yourself in the Lord and he'll give you what? The desires of your heart.

You know we've got this funny idea, James and Betty, that God's plan for us must be the

worst, more distasteful, the most unpleasant thing we could ever think of. We think, okay, if I'm surrendered to God, I guess that means I go to a third world country and live in a hut because that's the worst thing I could think of. Let me let you in on a secret. You know why people go to third world countries and live in a hut and go to missions? It is because they want to. They have that burning desire to do that. Some people have a desire to work with children. Some in medicine. Some in business. But God puts that passion in your life. So obey your passion.

James: And some, by the way, have a desire to just help people do those things and to pray for them as they do it and that's no small thing. That could in fact be the greatest thing! Because even in the preaching of the gospel, how shall they even go and preach it unless they're sent? Somebody's got to send them.

Robert: That's right! So obey your passion. The "R" in story stands for: Recognize your gifts and abilities. You know if God is calling you to a unique purpose he is going to give you the gift to do it. He is not going to call you to medicine and you faint at the sight of blood. He is going to give you a gift. Philippians 2:13 says, "God is working in you giving you the desire and the gifts to do his will."

I'd say to those of you watching, just ask yourself this question, what do I do that just seems to come naturally, easily? What is it that when I do it other people say, "You were born to do this." I know for you it is speaking and so forth. People say, "You were born to do that!" What are your unique gifts? Recognize those gifts.

And finally, the "Y" stands for: Yield to God's leading. Once God has revealed what his plan for you there is a time that you have to decide what you're going to do. When I was -- from the time, James and Betty, I was like six years old until I was 15 I thought I knew what I was going to do. I was going to be a television producer. When I was five I was on TV and I was so fascinated with what happened behind the camera, I thought I'm going to spend my life putting together TV programs. I was fascinated with broadcasting and business. When I was 15, it was the second Friday in June of 1971 at 11:55 a.m. in

the morning God called me to be a pastor. Interestingly, God didn't change my interest or gifts, he just redirected them.

God has a plan for your life and the beginning place for that extraordinary life is discovering that unique purpose for which you were created to tell his story.

James: Don't y'all love listening to this man? Don't you love the truth that just goes out? You really do amaze me. I thank God for you. "Unleash the power of prayer." One of the things I said to the audience before we actually began to welcome you, I was talking to them, and I said, "Don't make prayer something that's not important. It is significant. You need to pray. Pray for our country."

God is actually healing our country in many ways because people are serious about praying, because we have serious areas of need in the country. There is one person who knows how to correct it and it is God and he said, "Call on me." So how important is prayer? And when you look at... Because see, I know you're interested in the country. I know you're not just interested in First Baptist Church and just the things you do, you're interested in what's his church, his people, his kingdom imprint and impact is on every area in American life.

Robert: And that was Elijah -- Elijah wasn't just interested in the committed Israelites, he believed God was sovereign over all creation, all of Israel, even the evil government of King Ahab. So he believed in the power of prayer to change things.

That's one of the secrets of an extraordinary life, learning to unleash the power of prayer. You know when James said in James five: "The effective prayer of a righteous person accomplishes much" the next verse is Elijah -- look at Elijah. He was Exhibit "A" of a person who learned how to pray powerfully.

And real quickly, three things you learn from Elijah about prayer. First of all: Pray honestly. Pray what's really in your heart, not what you think should be in your heart.

James: Tell God the truth about the situation.

Robert: He already knows it, you're not going to fool him. So pray honestly. Secondly, pray boldly. Elijah didn't -- most Christians suffer from bless-itis. You know what that is. Bless this, bless this, and bless this. How do you know if God ever blesses it? No! Pray boldly. Pray for big things.

I was telling your producers before we started, my daughter and her husband suffered three miscarriages over several years and they were heartbroken over that. But they decided to pray something big. They prayed that my daughter would have triplets. One life to replace every life that was lost. I remember she told me that and I thought to myself, oh Julia, you're setting yourself up for disappointment. I hate for you to do that. She said, "Dad, if you're going to see God do big things, you need to pray for big things."

So she started praying for triplets. Last December she gave birth to triplets that I dedicated this book to as a testimony of the power of God. So pray boldly. Ask God, Elijah did, for the fire to fall down from heaven.

Then finally, pray persistently. We all know the story and I tell it in the book of Elijah praying that 62-word prayer and the fire of God came down and consumed the animal sacrifices on Mt. Carmel. That was a one-time quick answer. But most people don't realize that at the end of First Kings 18 he prays for the rain to come. Goes up on Mt. Carmel, prays one time, nothing. A second time nothing. He prays seven times and the rain finally comes. What if he had given up the third time or the sixth time? No, Luke 18:1 says, "We ought to pray at all times and not to become discouraged."

Don't just pray when the answer seems obvious. Pray when it seems impossible. Keep on praying Jesus said until the answer is one way or the other and that is a real key to *Choosing the Extraordinary Life*.

James: One of the things that I've learned in my own prayer life is that one of the greatest aspects of praying is learning to listen while you pray. That God will speak to us.

Tell me if I'm right in this when I try to look at Paul saying, "Pray without ceasing." You think, what do I do? Do I stay down on my knees all day? Do I sit in a closet all day? What do I do? What I understood that to mean and develop in my own life and you feel free to correct me because I'll repent, I hope as fast as anybody you ever preached to. But the point is, I feel like if we really live in a close relationship with the Lord, we're living in a conversational relationship where we can talk to God about what's on our heart or on our mind. And actually have fellowship with him. Does that make sense?

Robert: You have nailed it exactly. Prayer is an ongoing conversation with God.

You know when Paul said, "Pray without ceasing," you know what that Greek word "without ceasing" literally means? It means with the frequency of a hacking cough. Since I got up this morning at 2:00 it was on FOX News, I had this hacking cough and I just prayed that it wouldn't start up while I was in the interview and sure enough it came. Right now I'm battling. I'm, oh don't come! Don't come! But I can't help it. That's what it means to pray, with a frequency of a hacking cough. You try to suppress it but you can't. You have to talk to your heavenly Father. That's what it means.

James: I live in that relationship. It is a joyful relationship and I don't know why people can't get into that. God likes to talk to his kids. He doesn't just want to write them letters. He wants to talk to you.

Robert: It's a good way. What you're illustrating is so powerful, James. When you wake up in the morning, before your feet hit the ground, just thank God for the day. Ask for his guidance. When you're getting ready to go into a difficult meeting, pray for God's wisdom. When you're barreling down the freeway at 80 miles an hour, pray for God's protection.

[Laughter]

Before you drift off to sleep at night, let the last conversation be with your heavenly father.

Betty: I like to, sometimes I'll wake up suddenly or something and I am praying. The supernatural should be natural with us. One thing that you talk about, we can choose to have an extraordinary life. That doesn't mean we have to get behind the pulpit, but everyday life, a homemaker, it's possible.

Robert: That's right! There are perhaps homemakers at home right now with small toddlers and you think, man, what is extraordinary about this? Or in a monotonous job and you think, there's no end to this. You can't imagine sometimes what your life is actually going to do to impact the gospel.

I tell the story about a man named Edward Kimball. You know the name but he is a Boston carpet salesman who lived in the middle of the 19th century. Edward Kimball taught a Sunday school class on Sundays. He got burdened about one of his 18-year old students who didn't know Christ yet. So one day at noon he went down and over the break shared with him the gospel and that young 18-year old accepted Christ as his savior.

People say, "Well, that's real nice. But what's extraordinary about that?" Well, the young 18-year old was named Dwight Lyman Moody -- D.L. Moody. And of course, he was the most successful evangelist of his day of the 19th century. But then in the book I trace the lineage of D.L. Moody and all the impact he had for the next 150 years and it ended up with another young man named Billy Graham. Billy Graham became a Christian through Mordecai Ham that traces all the way back to Edward Kimball.

But you know what? It doesn't stop there. Billy Graham, the greatest evangelist of his day continued to have a worldwide impact ministry. In 1954 he came here to the

Dallas/Fort Worth area. He had a Cotton Bowl crusade and my mom who was pregnant with me was not yet a Christian. She trusted in Christ as her savior at the Cotton Bowl.

The next Sunday they announced Billy Graham would be coming to preach at the First Baptist Church in Dallas. She did not like First Baptist Church of Dallas but she said, "Okay, I'll go hear Billy Graham." And she was seated up in the balcony with my dad.

When Billy finished preaching he came down from the pulpit, took Dr. Criswell by the hand and joined the church that day. My mom sitting up in the balcony looked at my dad and said, "Well, if it is good enough for Billy Graham, it is good enough for me." And she and my dad joined the church. And that is why I'm a Christian and pastor of First Baptist Church Dallas because of a carpet salesman in the 1800s named Edward Kimball. You never know what impact you're going to have for the gospel.

James: You know what? You have blessed me beyond words! Our viewers love you. I want to thank you for sharing *The Extraordinary Life*. Let me say this to you. You know what I feel about our viewers. You know what they do. You know one thing is they pray for us. Have you gotten to watch God use us in extraordinary ways?

Robert: Absolutely! To see what God has done in this ministry for 50 years is unbelievable -- well, it's extraordinary! It really is. You are reaching the world with the gospel, not just in word but in deed.

James: Exactly! It's because of the viewers. It isn't just because of a gifted person or a committed couple. It's because people out here say we love the truth. We want to share it. I want you to let you know.

By the way, we're giving away an unbelievable story of Peter Pretorius's life, *Death-Defying Faith*. Peter Pretorius went to be with Jesus but Peter Pretorius was used of God to change our lives and change this ministry in many ways. But I'm telling you what, doc. These viewers have lived extraordinary in the sense that they said, "We're going to send

the gospel to the ends of the earth, not just in word but in action and in deed." And this is precisely what we're doing.

By the way, we're going to give this book to anyone that will give somebody something to eat that needs food to live. We'll also send you this book, which you can go online, you can get it. I pray you'll get a copy like he said for your friend or for several of them that you know it's going to bless them to know they can have an extraordinary life and this man can inspire them to go there. Incredible communicator, God has blessed his ability to write the same way.

So here's what we're asking you to do. I know you're going to love this, doc. We're asking every viewer to help us feed children for the next months. It is amazing what love can do. Listen closely to me. We're going to show you a need. You're going to hear our son sharing what he has witnessed. I'm so glad he is there. I'm glad our grandchildren have been to the mission field and love it. I'm glad they grew up as grandchildren wanting to help missionaries. I want you to listen but just know this, you can become the answer to mothers' prayers. You can become the miracle that people must have to even live. And you can be a part of the miracle that points them to the source of life now and forever. Watch carefully. Watch prayerfully.

On the mission field

[Woman crying]

Randy: We've just arrived at the malnutrition clinic. Just as we came here a mother came rushing by us carrying her child and screaming in her language, "My daughter has left me. My daughter has left me!"

Announcer: Today, Maury faces the unimaginable. Like so many mothers in Angola Africa she wages a daily battle with starvation fighting desperately for the future of her

three children. Recently her middle child, Berta began to suffer the dangerous effects of malnutrition.

Open Captions:

>> Her stomach started to get bloated, and she went from being very bloated to very skinny. I knew I needed to take her to a doctor.

Announcer: After two long weeks of fighting, Berta's body could take no more.

Open Captions:

>> I told the nurse, "My daughter is weak." They took her in to run tests. At that point, my daughter reached out and said, "Good-bye Mom."

Announcer: With Berta's last breath, Maury joined a chorus of grieving mothers.

[Weeping]

Open Captions:

>> My whole body lost strength, and that's when I shouted, "Oh, my daughter! No!"

Announcer: Tragically, Maury's story is not uncommon for too many mothers and children in Angola, access to food and medication comes too little too late. But hope is not lost and malnutrition won't have the last word.

Randy: It is heartbreaking. How do you comfort a woman whose child is just died? All I could do is hold her hand and pray. But we can do so much more. We have to do more.

[Children crying]

End of clip

In the studio

James: We can do "the more." We can offer the perfect answer. I'm going to ask you right now to be the answer to the prayers of mothers like that. Betty, we do know what it is to lose a child and our child was in faith fighting for her life and every viewer would have offered a perfect cure for her. I know they would have. There is a perfect cure. It is food. When you've listened to that mother, and you listen to our son saying all he could do is try to comfort her, but what we can do together is we can head that off by just simply feeding those children. That's what our viewers have helped us do.

Betty: Absolutely. We do know what it is like to lose a daughter and it hurts deep, and God feels that hurt along with us. But these babies, these children, this daughter didn't have to die if we would have just gotten the food to her in time. There is many more that if we don't get to them, they will die.

So please join with us. Let's get the food to them in time. Let's don't hear another heartbreak of mother having to bury her child. Please!

James: For 30 years the viewers of *LIFE Today* have been the answer to mothers' prayers. I do not exaggerate when I tell you more than 10 million lives have been saved by the outreaches of *LIFE* right here where people watch. And simply respond to this request, for \$30, \$50, or \$100 we can feed, not total child care but the balanced nutrition necessary to totally stabilize their diet and restore them to health. \$30, \$50, or \$100 we can feed three, five or ten children for the next several months.

So we ask you a couple times a year to please make the gift God puts on your heart. And I will always say if there is any way you can help ten children, be the answer to ten parents' prayers for their children, would you do it by giving \$100? Use your bankcard or write a check and make it to *LIFE*. But call that number, please do that, and let us know what you're mailing. Or use that card and say, "I want to make this gift." \$30 means everything to three children, to that family. It changes everything. It gives them life. \$50

reaches five. There is a level at which you can help.

Then remember this. No exaggeration, when we've reached 10 million, 12 million, 14 million to save their lives, we have literally led that many people to Jesus Christ in those same regions because love opens the door to people's hearts. When they see love, they respond with the greatest love story. It is the love of God through Jesus.

Would you right now please go online or dial that number? Take your bankcard, use it like a check or if you write a check, make it to *LIFE*. We want to send you Peter Pretorius' incredible story. He is in the presence of God right now but our lives and the lives of millions of people were changed by a man that lived with *Death-Defying Faith* and saved the lives of millions. That ministry is about to expand amazingly.

Please right now go online or dial that number. Make the gift God puts on your heart. We have several gifts to offer you and we'll be glad to send you if you'd like to have it, Dr. Jeffress' book. What you're doing is extraordinary. The difference you're making is extraordinary. Thank you so much for making the gift God puts on your heart.

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

In the studio

James: Well, as much as we're able to express it, we want to express the gratitude of parents and their families for saving the lives of the children they love so much, and for pointing them to Jesus Christ.

I want all of you who are watching in a moment to join this audience here to just give praise to God for a great gift from God in Dr. Robert Jeffress. What a blessing he is to the church and to the nation and to people all over the world.

This is a great book for you to get. If you have a millennial relative or friend or know one, this is a great book to give them. It really is. I'm 75 now and Betty is chasing after me, Dr. Jeffress is not that far along but he is not millennial anymore. But he really impacts them. So this is a great book.

Would you join me and Betty in saying thank you to Dr. Robert Jeffress?

Robert: Thank you so much, James! Betty, thank you so much!

James: Bless you and bless First Baptist. Hey! Visit them sometime. Okay? You'll be happy you did. God bless you and thanks for watching. Thank all of you for being with us.