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Week Five: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Andi Andrew

Sheila: Hi! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh here with Randy Robison.

Randy: Hello, hello!

Sheila: And we have a great studio audience. But I'm also really excited about our guest tonight. The book is called *Fake or Follower*. When I read Andi's book, Andi Andrew's book there was such a sense to me of this being kind of a prophetic word for the times that we are living in. So let's unpack that. Please would you help me welcome Andi Andrew?

Randy: Good to have you back!

Andi: Good to be back.

Sheila: It's great to have you here. And your book really had an impact on me. But there is a couple of things I wanted to ask you about first. You talk about starting to write the book and then your mum, your beautiful mother-in-law passed. Talk to us about that and how did that impact your writing?

Andi: Yeah. There were a couple of significant moments in the middle of writing that. That was one of them that I had just begun the journey of writing. She was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. I call her mum because my husband is Australian. So she is my mum-in-law. She was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor and our hearts were completely broken. We were believing for a miracle. We had everybody on the

prayer list, intercessors around the clock, everybody praying and ultimately, we got to a place where I remember I was sitting in hospice, I had my laptop there on my lap, and really was grappling with this message and what I felt God was speaking to me.

As I watched my father-in-law (Voice breaking) Why? As I watched my father-in-law just loving her and kissing her on the forehead and she had lived such a beautiful life. Started to write music. Hadn't always been saved since I knew her but gave her life to Jesus and followed him with everything.

But as he was kissing her on the forehead towards the end of her life, I was sitting there and it was like the spirit of God asked me this question: If you knew the hour and the day that you would leave this earth how would you live your life? And what letter would you write to your children? What letter would you write to your church? And what letter would you write to the church? And this really, this book is that love letter and the times that we're living in right now.

So that was kind of one of the major moments and pivotal points of writing this book.

Randy: Why is that hitting you so hard right now?

Andi: I think because sorry --

Randy: I tell you what. We're talking about being fake or not and this is real. That's why I ask.

Andi: This is why my church laughs at me all the time because I'm like, "Oh, I'm crying again." They're like, "Yes. This is normal." Everyone is very used to it.

But I think for me because it was like that -- you know when you're going through the motions and we all get there. We don't mean to. We begin to follow Jesus. We have this moment where we're like, I'm done with the way my life was. I'm going to begin follow

him. But I don't know what happens or what triggers us to walk down this place where we begin to fake it and pick up this baggage and put up these walls. I think for me, that finality that life on this earth ends caused me to lean into the eternal again, and remember, oh, my gosh! Wake up!

I think it's the thing is I had this vision and this picture just while I was speaking to my church actually, about the church hitting the snooze alarm. I think God's been very patient with us but it is time for us to swing our feet over the side of the bed and actually wake up. For me, that was a wake-up call. So yeah, I think that's why it's hit me so hard.

Sheila: You mention another thing in the book that I thought, gosh, that's the last thing I would use to describe Andi. Because I remember the first time I heard you preach and you were like this little fire ball. I was captivated. But you talk about delivering a message and then this woman saying to you that you were cute and entertaining.

Andi: Yeah! That was a totally interesting story. I think for me, and it all coincided with the writing of this as well. God was moving powerfully. People were being healed; like crazy things were taking place in this meeting. So when I get down and this well-meaning woman comes up to me and says, "Well, aren't you just so cute and entertaining."

I was like, I think I might hurt you -- like actually hurt you.

I think why it was so disturbing for me that she came to be entertained or that I could be entertaining, and I went, God, if this is what I'm doing, if I'm entertaining people when this is meant to be the gospel, the good news, then I quit! I'm done! I don't want to do this anymore. Because if this isn't a message that is coming alive and changing people's lives, then what is the point? I realized that what we are creating, unfortunately, not everybody, but in this western church culture, are consumers, that are coming to consume. And I'm like, but are we be transformed by the gospel? Is this changing us? So I was angry.

So that night, I could hardly sleep. My poor friend was with me. She was like -- she

doesn't do well in awkward situations. She is like what do I do with my hands because she could tell I was like really angry, trying to not hurt this beautiful woman. But I went back that night...

Randy: Just being real here. Just being real.

Andi: Yeah! So anyway that night though, I actually had a crazy dream. I only want to share part of it because the rest of it is in the book. But in the dream I was actually walking through downtown Brooklyn, which I live in Brooklyn, with my two youngest kids, two out of four. I was walking there and in my dream my guardian angel was to my shoulder. And as we were walking, there was dead bodies piled up by the subway station; and people were taking selfies with the dead bodies and the police were trying to push them off. It was very disturbing to watch.

Then I came around the corner in front of Borough Holland, you could tell that the night before there had been a raid that had taken place and there was severed heads and charred bodies everywhere. It was super intense. So hi! Don't worry, I'll move forward. And there were land mines everywhere.

As I held my children's hands they had no fear. And my angel looked at me and nodded at me to walk right into the land mines. I walked out there holding my children's hands without any fear.

The next morning I woke up and I was like, so do I need to be praying for my city? Or God, are you trying to tell me something? And the moment I asked that question he said to me, actually, no, you don't need to pray. This is the state of the church today. Is that we're so all consumed with ourselves that there are dead people walking around, there are dead bodies piled up. We're taking selfies with dead people that need the good news of the gospel. We're so unaware that we are not even living.

What we are meant to do is grab the next generation by the hand and walk them into the

deepest, darkest of places, the scariest of places and shine the light of the gospel. So I was like, all right. So he woke me up in two different ways and said, are you faking this because I've called you to this city, to these people to show them that this works, that Jesus works. Because gone are the days where we can just check a box and have a pseudo Christianity where we show up for a church and that's it. That doesn't work. I think there is a generation alive today that's a little bit shaken up.

Randy: The title of the book, *Fake or Follower*, fakery is something that Christians are often accused of. But I don't see you as like accusing people of being fake, I think it is something we don't always realize we're doing necessarily. How do you look at it?

Andi: Yeah, no, I completely agree with you. I think that's the whole point. I want people to walk through and look at themselves and go, has this become a rote religion for me? Or am I actually -- because see, if you read the gospels, that's confronting. To actually follow Jesus in his ways is incredibly confronting and I just don't know that that's where we're at at the moment. So this is -- yeah, it is not accusatory, it is more like guys, take this. Because there is a shift happening in the church right now and if we don't pay attention, if we're not listening, I don't know what's going to happen.

So we have to awaken to this. It's a call to action. It is a call to wake up. It is a call to kind of step into the mess of our own lives and go, God, search my heart and show me how to live.

Sheila: What's the difference in your mind between going to church and being a part of community?

Andi: That's a big one. I address that. There is a whole chapter on community. It is interesting that when my husband and I, my husband is Australian -- I already mentioned that. I must really like that he is Australian.

[Laughter]

He's got a great accent. So when we moved from Sydney to New York it was interesting because we felt God asking us to call our church, like where we planted, "communities" which we hadn't heard that language before. But then when we moved to New York we realized it is the one thing that people are desperate for. That we're overly connected but yet so lonely.

I realized in New York City there are people everywhere but a crowd is a dime a dozen but to have true community, that's actually really hard and really beautiful. So what we realized is if millennials and the younger generation and these people that really are most of our church, I'm like I'll take more gray hair anyone. Please! But I love our church. I love that it is so young. But I think the thing that we realize is if people are not going to watch TV online and actually show up on a Sunday or show up during the week for discipleship then community has to be real. But it's not that easy to actually build. So we like, I think community has become a buzz word but to actually build it, it is really messy.

Sheila: Community is messy. What would you say to people who are like, I want to be a part of something like that but what if I share who I really am? And people are like, whoa, no thank you!

Randy: I was just going to ask that.

Sheila: One of us is redundant.

Randy: I think the problem is sometimes with transparency is that people see the ugly.

Andi: And that's what I think we're actually afraid of. It is the biggest thing we want and the biggest thing we're afraid of because what we're not sure of is when you see the real me will you reject me or will you receive me?

Randy: Or will you reject God because I'm so human?

Andi: That is true. It is interesting, I break this down. What ended up happening was in 2016, the summer of 2016 when there was all of those shootings of black men, and then the shootings in Dallas, like all of that, it really affected the church, it affected us deeply. I think what ended up happening was our community went into this big messy, messy season. We're constantly in a cycle if you will but I think what we ended up doing was having a conversation about race justice and unity within the church.

There is an amazing man, Cedric Johnson who came and spoke alongside my husband, amazing African American man building a great church in the city and he quoted out of a book that M. Scott Peck wrote about the four stages to true community. It was the first time where I went, "This has been the struggle that we're dealing with."

Those four stages are, the first one is pseudo community, fake community. That's when we come to church, we've got our facades up, and we're doing our best. We walk in. We look good.

Randy: We all dress the same.

Andi: We're homogenous or whatever. But we walk in and it's kind of like when someone says, "Hi! How are you?" You're like, "Good." That's really about all the answer. Plus, please don't really tell me how you really are because I'm actually not doing great and it is too messy for you to really tell me.

But then the second stage is chaos. Now look, I've got four kids so it's chaos all the time. The thing is we don't necessarily invite chaos but when does chaos happen? Whether that's news events, like a chaotic moment that happens in your life, trial, tragedy, all those things that cause our walls to come down even though we don't want them to and exposes our true hearts. So that's when you're sitting at the table. We're all saying, "We're unified. We all believe the same thing!"

Y'all, we do not all see the same way. It's only when you sit at a table and break bread and there is a little bit of chaos and you realize you disagree that your hearts are exposed and then maybe you learn something from each other.

And then the next stage after that, is the emptying of ourselves, which is when we basically, death and resurrection. When we die to ourselves, we pick up our cross and we follow Jesus and walk in his resurrection. I think that is the thing, that when we come to the table to break bread, to understand somebody else's plight, not necessarily needing to be understood but I sit, I want to understand you. I didn't walk a mile in your shoes. I don't get it. It's messy but I'm not here to be understood. I'm here to see you. As a person it is not all about me. Then you have true community. I think that cycle constantly is going on and on but really, we isolate ourselves from that because that's not easy.

Randy: It takes time.

Andi: And that, right there, is what a lot of us maybe aren't ready to stick around for because either what happens in the chaos stages, either people plant themselves and they're like, we're going to do this even though I'm scared out of my mind or they're like bye! But community is really important, I believe, in the times we're living in.

Sheila: I'm thinking of somebody watching this at home, Andi and maybe they live in a very different city, a different environment and they listen to you because you are very passionate, and you're a pastor in New York, you're very on the edge. Do you ever have times yourself when you're just like you know what Lord? I don't even know. What do you do when you find yourself in a tough spot where there are too many demands on your day, where do you run?

Andi: I'm glad you actually brought that up because over the last year, if my husband was here he would be laughing because I handed in my resignation like multiple times. I'd go, "I quit!" He's like, "Okay, babe!" But actually, at the end of our summer vacation

this year, I sat there at the table across from him. We had a staycation, and I was so exhausted because you're home so you're cleaning all the time.

Randy: With four kids, right?

Andi: And we got a dog because that's smart. Let's train a dog on our staycation. That's a really good idea in New York.

Randy: Lots of room.

Andi: Totally. So we're sitting there and I actually did say to him in that moment, I said, "I need to change my pace. I actually need to go part time. I don't want to quit but I do." So I just know the stage that I'm at, the place that I'm at for my mental health, I don't want to -- because I know my extremes. So I'm like if I don't recognize this right now I'll be like, peace out, babe! I hope you enjoy the church. I'm going to go move somewhere. Come if you want to join me. You know what I mean? I know that tendency in myself.

Randy: Does he know that?

Andi: Oh 100%!

Randy: Just checking.

Andi: He does. He'd be watching us going, yeah, that's true. But he's so steady and amazing. I'm like: I don't know how I married a man that is just so steady. I'm like whoo! Let's go on the roller coaster. It's like, oh, my gosh!

But what was amazing about that is I know if I don't do that, if I'm not honest with where I'm at that I will isolate myself from the community that God has called me to. Those three close friends, those beautiful friends and my husband, so that's where I go. There's that tight crew that you have.

And then there's those people that you just -- I'm an extroverted introvert. I don't know about anybody else but like I'm both ends. Like I will party. Like if there is a wedding, I'll be on the dance floor all night long. But when it is over, I'm like, bye! I don't want to see anybody anymore. I'm going to be alone for a few days. So is anybody else like that?

Sheila: I'm an introvert all the way. I'm an introvert unless I'm with people who you have been given the privilege of speaking to. I'm thinking of somebody watching, Andi, and thinking, I don't even know if I'm a fake or a follower. How do you identify that in your own life?

Andi: Well, I think for me what I had to do is peel back some of the layers. That's like, each chapter in this book kind of uncovers a lot of different things about where we can kind of self-discover, am I faking this?

Because here's the deal. We're all faking something, right? So can we be real about that? And I think it is just more of a journey of being patient with ourselves, walking out the journey on a daily basis. Because I talk about posting it or living it. I talk about the fact that we live in a time again where it is like praying for a hashtag or whatever. But are we? Are we praying? Like I don't know. Maybe it is just a really great hashtag. Love your neighborhood. Are you saying that because you think somebody else should be loving their neighborhood and you're mad at everyone right now for not loving their neighborhood? Or are you actually digging deep? All I'm saying is, I think there is multiple ways.

We've gotten so fast paced as well. Think about this. There are multiple things in here I talk about worship, I talk about being extroverted introverts. That Jesus was like all about the people but all about being alone. And are we really doing that or are we just go, go, go?

Randy: It is a balance.

Andi: It is a balance. I think it's us constantly being patient with ourselves, walking it out and taking it a day at a time, being patient with ourselves. Yeah.

Randy: I think I see when you pose that question, *Fake or Follower*, that's it's really an introspective question. Is that where it really begins?

Andi: I think it is an introspective question and then it's also -- yes! I would say that for the individual that would pick up this book and go, okay, I want to make sure I'm working this stuff out in my life. But also for the church today, my heart is that, oh man, that we would display a Christ that actually works because we could list today all the news cycle. It doesn't matter what day we're in the news cycle, it is crazy. And we need the kingdom of heaven, the gospel, the good news to be going into the middle of all of that.

One of my friends Phillip Atmore, he said, you know a lot of times -- he's an African American man. He's one of my friends where we talk about all of this race stuff all of the time. He goes, "A lot of times I think the church is waiting for these things to die down because it is like a distraction from us moving the gospel forward." He's like, "No. This is an entry point for the gospel. All of these are opportunities and entry points." I think that's what I'm saying to the body as the whole, come on guys! And also to the individual.

Randy: You know there is another great entry point into the gospel, into being real and that is getting out and meeting people's needs, Sheila. I know that you've been out in the mission field, I've been out in the mission field, we call it that, but that's just the real world, that's where we need to be as Christians. I want you to go see another one of our mission partners as she walks into an area where there is some real need. Then I want to tell you what you can do to be the gospel in someone's life. Watch this.

On the mission field

Tammy: East Africa, many would see exceptional beauty in the wildness of its terrain. But the family struggling to survive here every day sees a very different landscape. One marred by loss and darkened by grief. Claudine, a single mother in the remote village of Buganda is all too familiar with this view.

Open Captions:

>> I have two children now. I have also lost two children. They have all had the same symptoms: Bloated tummies and constant vomiting and diarrhea.

Tammy: It always seems to come down to the same issue everywhere I go and that is their water source.

Open Captions:

>> We drink dirty water from the hole we dig near our village. All this disease... All this death... Is because of this water, but we do not have a choice. If we keep drinking it, I fear that my remaining children may die as their brothers did.

Tammy: I have come to know that there is a solution, there is something that works. The truth is, there is water underneath my feet and I know that we could drill a well that will go deep enough to hit clear, fresh, clean, healthy water.

Open Captions:

>> I believe that one day we will have clean water. When you put your faith and trust in God, He provides.

Tammy: A divine opportunity awaits us. An immense need and a viable solution at a critical time. With your partnership, we can bring hope and health to countless families in desperate need of our help.

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: Sheila, she says when you put your faith in God he provides. I know there are people watching right now who have faith in God and they're the provision.

Sheila: It is so interesting because when I've walked in these places in Angola or Burundi, it is easy to watch on TV and think, oh that's terrible! But when you're actually there, and you see what it is like, these moms have no choice. The only water that's available for hundreds of miles are these dirty puddles.

And I've watched these children drink the only water that's available and I've wept with mothers who have lost, like that mom, two children, and are so afraid they'll lose the others. But they have no choice. You can't give your children nothing. So they just give them what they have and then they pray.

I think one of the greatest adventures in this life is to get to be the answer to the prayers of people we've never actually even met. Maybe you watched that story of that mom and you think I want to be the answer to her prayer. Well, it is so doable. Our goal for this year, for 2019 is we want to put 200 new water wells into villages. I've been in the villages where there is nothing. I've stood beside a mom at the grave of her latest little one and I've been in the village where we've put in a water well and the difference is literally night and day -- death and life. Would you help us?

Randy: Actually, those 200 wells, that's just the beginning of the year; that's how we're going to start the year. With your help, we will far exceed that this year. We're looking into 15 nations where we have provided drinking water in the past, clean drinking water, and we want to expand in those areas and just bless more people.

Let me break this down for you. One well on average costs \$4800, to drill that well, to put it in place. So here's how it works out. Your gift of \$48 will on average reach ten people for a lifetime with clean drinking water. Clean drinking water changes everything

for the people in these villages. I've been there. I've stood there at a well. I was just at one not too long ago in Africa and this is a place, it is interesting because we talk about community, Sheila, have you ever noticed that that water well becomes a point of community? People gather at the well, just like in biblical times. And they come there for clean fresh drinking water because it gives them life.

So as we go and we share the life and love of Christ in the gospel, will you go with us and demonstrate the gospel for these people by giving them that fresh clean drinking water? It saves lives! Go to the phone right now. Go online. Give the best gift you can. Help us put arms of love around the world through Water for LIFE.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Today, a mother living in extreme poverty will do the unthinkable -- give her children dirty, diseased-filled water that she knows could kill them. With no other choice what's a mother to do?

With your help, clean water is on the way. Mission Water for LIFE provides a way for parents to save the lives of their children, to offer them a bright future free from the fear of death. With your gift today, you can help drill and establish the first 200 water wells of the year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children, a gift of \$48 will help provide for 10, \$72 will provide for 15, and \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift, we'll send you the *Praying Grace* 55-day devotional. This new devotional will help you renew your mind to the realities of God's grace and help you pray powerful grace-based prayers for each day.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the "Praying Grace" tumbler. This reusable 16-ounce container is constructed with insulated stainless steel, perfect for hot or cold

beverages.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people, or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well and you may request the beautiful, new commemorative bronze sculpture, "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

On the mission field

Randy: The water behind me has already taken the lives of two children that we know of. I know because I just left their parents and their younger remaining sister in the graveyard. It's not right that children should die and it is not right that they should die with a waterborne disease that we can so easily stop. Let's give them fresh water. Let's give them water that will not kill them. Let's give them water that will bring them life. Let's give these children a hope and a future by giving them clean drinking water.

Go to the phone, go online, do it right now. Make the best gift you can. Help us bring this village and so many other villages like it a source of fresh clean water. Let's give them Water for LIFE. Let's give them a hope and a future. We can do it with your help.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much. If the phone is busy, keep calling. We get to be the answer to their prayers. We need to say, "Not on our watch is this going to happen!"

For any gift at all, we would love to send you Andi's book, *Fake or Follower*. As you can tell, she has a lot to say and it is all really, really good. So please, would you help me

thank our guest, Andi Andrew?

Randy: Thank you so much. So good to have you.

Sheila: Thanks for being with us. Randy and I just say God bless you and we'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*.