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Week five: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Ted Dekker

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm glad you're here because Sheila, you know how excited I am about this show, right?

Sheila: I know you've been rabbiting on about it all day.

Randy: It is true because I love fiction. I love some of the darker stories, actually. I'll confess that right up front. Does that surprise you?

[Laughter]

But even more than the books and the fiction which I get real excited about, in case you can't tell, I have met the author that we have on tonight and he is fascinating and I am thrilled. So would you please join me in welcoming Ted Dekker?

Ted: Thank you! Thank you.

Randy: Was that too much for you? Did that make you uncomfortable?

Ted: It's okay! It's okay!

Randy: Well, I'm going to go on some more so just sit there and listen. So *The 49th Mystic* is a fiction book; it is part of the *Beyond the Circle* series. Let me tell you, if you are into fiction, fantasy, thriller, suspense, that kind of stuff, you're going to love this. If you know someone that

is into it, they're going to love it because I love it. And I don't just say that. His other book, the second book in the trilogy, *Rise of the Mystics*, is out as well. And so -- [sighs] -- wonderful fiction!

But even more wonderful, the man. So Ted, let's talk to you. Let's talk about -- let's not get into so much of the plot because I don't want to ruin it for anybody because I hate when people spoil stuff for me. But beyond a great story, dude, you are laying out some seriously heavy truth on us right out of scripture. What in the world is going on?

Ted: Well, Randy, I'm glad you asked.

[Laughter]

No, actually, I would say everything I've written, as a writer, I explore truth in my own life and the nature of reality through story because we live in stories. We live in the story of our lives. It all culminates for me, really, in *The 49th Mystic*. It's about, like -- I can set it up. I'm not going to ruin any plot for anybody but it represents all of our lives as a blind girl, a girl born blind; like all of us, in one sense, we're all born blind to the truth of who we are. And her objective is to find a way to see. Her father has been trying to find some kind of cure.

One night she goes into a coma. Through a series of events, she ends up in a coma and she wakes up in another reality and in that reality she can see. In that reality she learns that she is *The 49th Mystic*. And her objective is to find the five seals of truth before the realm of mystics can be destroyed.

So it is a massive quest story that covers two full novels. Her objective, she is a Christian, she grew up just like all of us. She represents us, she represents me, my journey from blindness to sight. And so she goes on this quest for these five seals.

The only problem is she has enemies. They're trying to stop her. They will do anything to keep her from finding these five seals of truth that will ultimately lead to her complete liberation from

blindness to sight, from fear to love, from darkness to light. It is a journey that we all go on.

My entire life has been a search for my origin, a search for who I am, my identity and what is the nature of reality and what is this thing called Christianity and who is God and my father? These are all questions that were just baked into me when I was very young.

Sheila: Well, you had a very interesting start in life though. You weren't like born in Idaho. Tell us a little bit...

Ted: Idaho would have been strange.

[Laughter]

Randy: For you.

Sheila: But you were born, tell us about, your mom and dad were missionaries, right?

Ted: Yep. I was born in the jungles of Indonesia amongst cannibals who killed and ate my parent's coworkers when I was six. But that didn't affect me so much because I was born there. This is what people did back there. What affected me more is they sent me away to a boarding school when I was six years old and I felt estranged -- I felt, really, abandoned by my parents. I cried myself to sleep every single night for months and months and months. It was very traumatic for me.

Randy: Did they do that to get you out of the dangerous situation?

Ted: No, it's just what everybody did. This is what the church taught them was the good thing to do to serve Jesus, basically.

Sheila: So you think all of that hurt and wondering who you are, a white face in a different place, and then boarding school, is that how you worked out your own journey through your

writing?

Ted: Absolutely! That was such a gift to me because I recognize now that I began a quest at age six to find my father. Jesus said, "Call no man on earth 'father' for your father is in heaven." He said, "Who is my mother?" When they brought Mary to him, "These are my mother."

So in a real way, I can only say this now 30-40 years later. You know, it is much easier in retrospect, in hindsight. But it is like oh, that was a gift. It was almost like I was born into a situation that was very difficult for me, almost like through some kind of agreement so that I could go on this quest to find my father.

Can I tell you another story?

Randy: You can tell stories as long as you want. I've got all day.

Ted: Let me tell you this story. This is a story of Jesus. He didn't tell this story but it is a story of Jesus that is my favorite. He is walking along the road with his disciples and they come across this blind man -- who is born blind. This is amazing to the disciples because it is one thing for someone to be blind but born blind?

So they say, "Master, whose sin was it that caused this man to be born blind? Was it his sin or his father's sin?"

In other words, is it his fault that he was born blind? His fault for something I guess before he was born? Or was it his father's sin?

Jesus said, "Neither. He was born blind so that he might... the glory of God, or the work of God might be made visible inside of him." You see. Then he said, "We must all do this work while there's day."

Meaning in mystic speak, we must all do this work during this life because night is coming,

death is coming when no man can work. It's almost like we're all born into this world in some kind of situation like that blind man, not out of punishment, not because of some fault of the previous life or previous experience or fathers or even back to Adam, not his father's sin, but rather a willful act to come into this life, in that case born physically blind so that he might discover the light within him. This is what Jesus taught. He said we must all do this.

Then he goes, he takes dust, remember? This is all John nine, you can read it, and he makes this mud and he goes look, and he symbolically blinds the man by the earth. You come into this world, you are blinded to the light within. This world blinds you to who you are and have always been.

"But," he said, "Go down to the Pool of Siloam and wash."

And he washes. Water is always the Holy Spirit, it is symbolic, and he comes out seeing.

This is the life we all lead. I was born into this world almost, my father knew, my heavenly Father knew. Maybe I was part of that choice, I don't know, but the point is I came in when I was the son of missionaries, I was going to be abandoned at a young age, go through a terrible heart-wrenching situation that would ultimately lead me to a place where I would begin looking for my true Father. You follow?

Sheila: It reframes suffering, doesn't it?

Ted: It reframes suffering and my identity because now I'm looking for who? My identity as the son of who? Not my earthly father but my true father.

So that is, to answer your question, everything that happened in my childhood was beautiful -- a beautiful gift. So many of your audience, right now, they're in difficult situations. What if you could look at every one of those situations as an invitation to discover the true beauty of who you are as the light of the world inside of you by letting go of your attachments, to the identity you have in this world outside of you.

Randy: Do you ever wonder why the disciples were looking for someone to blame?

Ted: Because that is our nature. We all think it is someone's fault.

Randy: It is almost like Jesus is like you're missing the point entirely. We're either caught up in legalism or looking for the blame. And yet, God is going, "No, it is all so my glory can be revealed in you."

Ted: Exactly! It is not about punishment. In that day and age, they assumed, everyone taught if someone was born blind -- if you were born blind, people would spit on you because they assumed it was your sin. It is kind of like the caste system in India or karmic system, you know karma. Bad karma leads to punishment. Christians are very karmic too. We believe you'll get punished if you do certain things; that's what Christians believe too. Religion tends to be that way in general.

Jesus was saying, "No. He was born blind, you are born in this body, you were born in this body, you were put in a wheelchair." You probably agreed to it. I don't know. You know what I'm saying? I'm storytelling. I'm assuming what if? I know I was born as a missionary kid so that I could discover the light within me; that it might be made visible inside of me. It's not so Jesus could prove himself through some kind of miracle. No, no! We are all born blind so that we might see the light.

Sheila: Let me ask you about something you said. With telling the story of the blind man you said, "It wasn't something he did or did in a previous life." We're not talking reincarnation here, are we?

Ted: No.

Randy: That may have been the sort of the question that, the presumption of the people at the time.

Sheila: I know our audience, so just be writing me wee letters. Save the postage stamp.

Ted: No, we're not talking reincarnation. Jesus that was just what he said. Back then they did believe in reincarnation. So that's not even the point at all. The point is why was I born into this situation? Why was I a missionary kid? In the case of *The 49th Mystic*, again, it is the same journey. A girl who is literally born blind and ultimately, through this entire quest that she goes through, through incredible adventure and danger and also love and romance too. We must not forget the romance!

[Laughter]

And through this entire thing though she comes to the end of herself to discover her true beauty, the light inside of her, the kingdom heaven that is within you the way Jesus taught.

Sheila: Did you say she almost had to put down everything she had to discover who she really was? I've watched some of your videos online on your *49th Mystic* website and you talk about that in your own life. You came to a place where you felt the Holy Spirit say, "Lay it all down."

Ted: Yeah. Letting go of this life, letting go of the things that have hurt us in the past or even the great aspirations we have to become something -- in this culture there is a mass of pressure for women to look a certain way, for men to succeed by proving themselves as I don't know either athletes, business, some form of success that gives us status. And letting go of that is very difficult.

It is a very complex web we weave as children. By the time we're adults we're not even sure what it is that is oppressing us and why we're so anxious for tomorrow. But we have to find a way of letting go of everything. And you can't -- the carnal nature can't do that. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit, ultimately, that you can... that you're led almost to the place where you surrender and you break. Can I tell you another story?

Randy: Yeah! You can. Are you going to talk about how fear plays a role in all of that?

Sheila: How about the forgiveness thing? I was kind of hoping he would go there.

Ted: Well, let's do forgiveness and then fear. We can end on fear. I'm going to tell the story of letting go because this has to do with fear too. Because really, the whole story is about love and fear. Think of it this way. There are like two forces in the world. We think of it as God and Satan. Let's put it in terms of something we can actually feel and that is love and fear, grievance and forgiveness, light and darkness, sight and blindness -- these are different ways of talking about the same thing.

So I wrote a book a few years ago on forgiveness called the *Water Walker*. We decided to interview one of my fans. Rather than me being interviewed, I was going to interview a fan. So we put names -- we had like 5,000 people put their names in this bucket. Like in 48 hours we picked one. Random! That's the point -- totally random!

I got on the phone. She was an Assembly of God pastor. As soon as I got on the phone with her she said, "I've got to tell you my story before we go any further. I've got to tell you my story. I'm a pastor but I've always struggled with weight and my weight went from 150 to 200, 200 to 250. And I tried every diet in the book and I tried to get it under control; 250 to 300, 300 to 350, 400. When I was at 450 pounds I knew that if I didn't do something I was going to die."

"One day I was walking in my room and I was crying out to God and here I am 450 pounds and then I heard this voice that said, 'You are wearing your grievance.' I knew exactly what the Holy Spirit was saying and I immediately recoiled. He said, "You are wearing your grievance."

She said, "I knew what he was talking about."

"So I put it away and for six months I refused to even think about it. And six months later I was getting heavier and heavier and so again, I submitted and I surrendered and again the sweet Holy

Spirit, 'You are wearing your grievance.'"

She said, "Ted, when I was a young woman, grade school, I was raped by three boys." She said, "I knew that's what this was about. But I'd been through therapy, I'd been through everything. I had forgiven them. I had forgiven them. How dare the Holy Spirit suggest that I was still wearing the grievance?"

And suddenly in that moment she was caught up in a vision and she was back in that same situation. Like she was there and she was being abused. And she was terrified. Right? Suddenly Jesus was standing there with her only he was looking at the boys with compassion, and looking at her with as much compassion, and this made her even angrier because how dare could he look at them with love and compassion in that way?

And she began to scream at him, "No! No! No!"

And he looked at her and said, "Don't you know I have absolved them. I have forgiven them."

And immediately when he said that, Jesus gave her his heart for those boys. And she immediately went from grievance and horror to whoosh, just love, agape, divine love. It holds no record of wrong, in which there is no fear.

She said, "I saw the boys. They had been abused. They had been..." It was this whole series of events. They were actually the products of their own kind of background and they're in this place and I just forgave them completely. For the first time I understood forgiveness is not absolving somebody but actually recognizing that they never really harmed you in the first place. You only perceived it as a harm. It is a whole different way of looking at forgiveness.

And she said, "Then I snapped out of it." She said, "Ted, the weight began to fall off me. Within one year I was -- now I'm 125 pounds."

Randy: How do you reconcile -- I hear you but how do you reconcile that with the fact that

they did do harm to her? It's one thing to hold no record of a wrong, it is another thing to deny that wrong was ever done.

Ted: So let's talk about fear and love. Now we're on a journey right now so this is a discussion that we're having, yes? About what love is and what fear is. We know that I don't think we awaken to love. We're only beginning to awaken to love. There is different kinds of love. There is eros, phileo and agape.

Randy: The perfect love.

Ted: The perfect love -- the perfect love is divine love. Love, that is the love that will evidence those that are following Jesus; those who have been born again, as Jesus put it. They will begin to see and experience the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is the light of love which holds no record of wrong. It is impossible, Randy for you and I, we will always take offense at someone who has offended us or threatened us; or our honor, we want to be honored, we want to be protected, and we want to protect our bodies.

Randy: And not even for ourselves but for someone were to do something to a loved one of mine, as in the case of your story. Right?

Ted: But what if we're seeing through the eyes of grievance and fear? What if, through the eyes of Christ, when the storms rise -- think of those offenses like storm clouds, a storm. When the disciples went out into the sea and the storm rose, Jesus was sleeping in the bottom of the boat. When they woke him they said, "Master, save us." His question to them echoes down through history, "Why are you afraid?"

"What do you mean why am I afraid? Don't you see my friends attacking me? Don't you see this storm called cancer? Don't you see that -- don't you see what I see which is all the dark clouds?"

And Jesus says, "Why are you afraid?"

Obviously, what he is seeing and what we're seeing are two different things. What if we could awaken to a love that holds no record of wrong, the love in which there is no fear for tomorrow or for today, and give people permission to step into that love themselves, that would do what? Change the world completely. But unless we ourselves awaken to that love, we will never actually lead anybody. Like who are we leading people to? This was Jesus' teaching. Awaken to this love.

Randy: Forgive them. They don't know what they do.

Ted: On the cross he did say that, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." Meaning forgive them by reason of insanity, in today's legal system, right?

Randy: Right! Interesting.

Sheila: I think of that scripture too, there is no fear in love, perfect love casts out fear.

One of the things that we have this unique privilege of doing here at *LIFE* and it is one of my favorite things is that we get to make an impact on the lives of people that we might not even meet here on this earth but God hears their cry and because God hears their cry, we hear their cry.

We have this passionate commitment this year to put water wells in villages where children are literally dying because they can't reach out for a glass of clean water. But you and I, are on this earth at this moment and it is not a mistake. We are here for a purpose. I want to show you how we can make huge changes in Jesus' name. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

Tammy: When you lose someone you love unexpectedly, it can feel like your whole world is falling apart. It's almost too much to bear. If you know my story, you know I lost my husband in

2001 to a tragic scuba diving accident. I'd give just about anything to go back in time and stop that from happening. While I know God has never abandoned me, I've learned some memories stay with you for the rest of your life.

Recently, in east Africa, I got to visit people with some very fresh memories, people who lost loved ones of their own. In a way I feel connected to them. My husband died in the water and her husband died because of water and the lack of good clean water. Because the water they need to drink every day in order to live was killing them. Water that looks like this -- and this. Water that looks like this.

These precious people don't have a choice in the water they drink. Right now it is this or it is nothing. But you and I have a choice, a life and death choice. Not life and death for us but for them.

So will you please choose to partner with *LIFE Outreach* today? Will you help give Water for LIFE so that we can give them water like this?

[Children laughing]

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: What a difference! Water like this -- filthy water, water that animals have been in or water like this, water that's clean and sparkling and that brings life.

I can't tell you what it is like to actually walk over those fields in Africa and walk for miles with a mom. I asked this one mom in a village, when we go into a village we ask the chief for permission to camp there for that night and then in the morning, I got up really early and I said to one of the moms, can I come with you to where you get your water? And we walked for probably a couple of miles with her children and I couldn't believe when we got there and I saw what they were putting in their buckets. It was absolutely filthy! Part of me wanted to stop the

children drinking it but I realized, that's all they had. They can't drive somewhere and get clean water. This is all they have.

But the thing is, you and I are here. We don't think twice about turning on the faucet and getting a glass of water or picking up a bottle of water. It is just second nature. But I think, wouldn't it be amazing if every single one of us, and I don't care if you're young, you're 14 and you've got an allowance, you could put some of that aside or maybe you're in a great place in life and you have some discretionary income. If every one of us decides to do something, we can literally change the world. That's why we're here. Not just to wait for Jesus to get us out of here, but to make a difference and to show the world -- to me, when you bring clean water then you have earned the right to tell them about the living water.

We have this amazing opportunity right now, Randy. Would you tell them exactly how we can do that?

Randy: Absolutely. You know the clean water you saw at the end of that with Tammy was made possible by viewers just like you. People who said, "Yeah, I want to give ten people clean water for the rest of their lives for \$48." Or "I want to give 30 people water for \$144." Whatever you can do. The average well costs \$4800 to drill.

This year we're working in over 15 nations. Our goal for the first half of the year is 200 wells and God willing, with your help, we'll do even more.

I'm asking you to go to the phones or go online right now and join us. Join us in giving people clean water for a lifetime. You can impact lives. You can demonstrate the gospel of Jesus Christ. You can reach out around the world and give people Water for LIFE! When you do that, and I pray you'll do it today, do it right now, we've got some wonderful gifts we'd like to give you just to help you grow in your spiritual journey and just remind you that you are part of something great. You are part of reaching out and saving lives through the Water for LIFE program.

So please, do what you can. No gift is too large, no gift is too small. Be a part of Water for LIFE

today.

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

In the studio

Randy: I do hope you will join us. You really can make a difference. I've got to tell you.

You start to wrap your mind around a little bit about what Ted is writing about in these books, it will make a difference in your life.

Ted, love you, man!

Do you appreciate this guy being here?

Sheila: Thanks so much! He's awesome! Yeah!

Thanks so much for being with Randy and I and we will see you next time on *LIFE Today*! Bye!