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Week Seven: WFL

James and Betty Robison

Oneka McClellan

James: Boy, y'all are nice! Betty, I'm glad we have a nice audience here. I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I've got an unusual name here. It is not like one you hear all the time. It is Oneka. Yes, I got an amen. McClellan but it is Oneka. I said it right?

Oneka: That's right exactly.

James: Look at that beautiful smile!

Oneka: Thank you.

James: Would you have smiled if I'd said it wrong?

Oneka: I still would smile. I still would smile yes. When I was in college my husband nicknamed me Bigo, so if you forget Oneka, you can just call me Bigo.

James: Where did he get that, for crying out loud?

Oneka: I have no idea!

James: I'm surprised you didn't punch him out. Man! I want to have a little counseling session with him sitting out here. He's a pastor. I don't know about that. But let me tell you, you're beautiful Oneka, through and through. Your husband too. You've got a church

over in Dallas. I haven't figured this out yet, you've got some campuses called Shoreline. Listen to me, folks. It is called Shoreline. Shoreline City Church?

Oneka: Yes.

James: So I can assume it is in a city, the whole Dallas metroplex, right?

Oneka: And in Antigua.

James: And in Antigua. Okay and then you've got one in Guatemala? Correct?

Oneka: That's correct, yes.

James: There's no shore, there is no lake.

[Laughter]

But it is Shoreline. So it came with the name of the church that really your husband was an associate pastor in and God showed him he wanted him to be a pastor. And so they let you bring their name and they give you a little support. Now they didn't pay to bring your name, did they?

Oneka: No. No. No. Not at all. But it helped us get kind of our sea legs and then...

James: Sea legs? You don't have to have sea legs!

Oneka: Then after the first year, and now, we've been on our own ever since then and it's been a miracle. Every Sunday I cry as I look out into the faces of the people and think, wow! Who would have thought?

James: Now you've got the campuses. Is your husband, is he preaching, like we do

where it is up here on the screen and it goes to the campuses and they listen to him? Or do they have their own preacher over there and you better checkup on them? You've got to be sure they're in line.

Oneka: Both/and. It depends on the location and the leader in each location. So some video and then some live. Yes.

James: God's really blessed. It's growing, right?

Oneka: It's been miraculous.

James: Six-year old church?

Oneka: Seven years this month.

James: Let's talk about this *Born of a Woman*. What do you mean "born of woman?" Isn't everybody *Born of a Woman*? I know today we're discussing it.

Oneka: I was reading Galatians 4:4 and it says Jesus was *Born of a Woman*. When I read that, literally the scripture illuminated to me and I thought, what else can be *Born of a Woman*? If Jesus was *Born of a Woman* what's placed on the inside of other women that God has something he wants them to give birth to. And so that's how the whole journey began.

James: So that's what the book's about?

Oneka: That's exactly right.

James: Tell us some of the components that you want people to hear because you didn't have what you'd call just the best childhood. It was kind of challenged like a lot of people have. Single mom? Tough situations? Was she not always doing everything right?

Oneka: She was amazing, actually. Worked really hard, very professional, very polished; put me through private school and always wanted to make sure I had the best. So I had a really great example of a hard working mom.

But I didn't have a dad that was present, cheering me on, saying, "Know your value, know your worth." So as a young girl I made a lot of poor choices because I didn't know who I was in Christ and I was always looking for affirmation from men.

So it wasn't until I actually went to college that I met someone in a clothing store who befriended me. Her name was Jorie. She was this cute little blond cheerleader.

James: Was she working where you worked or is she just shopping there?

Oneka: She worked with me. So one night we were cleaning the store, like straightening the store and putting all the clothes away. Because I love shopping and fashion I thought, well, that's a perfect mix. I'll get a job at a clothing store where I can get a discount.

[Laughter]

So we were cleaning up the store one night and I said, "How old are you?"

She said, "I'm 21."

I said, "21?" I said, "That means you can go to bars and you don't get carded and you don't have to use a fake I.D."

She said, "That's not my scene." She said, "I'm actually a Christian."

When she said that, something jumped out at me and I thought, I want what she has. She was so full of life, so vibrant, so passionate and so fresh. I thought, there is something she

has that I don't have and so that began a journey. And through friendship, she actually led me to the Lord. She kept inviting me to church, kept taking me to coffee, lunch, dinner, never judged me.

James: You said she was 21, how old were you?

Oneka: I was 18, 19.

James: Isn't that great? So you saw something in her you might want to imply she is getting it at the bar, but she made clear she is not getting it at the bar. But you figured somebody this high and happy must be high on something. But it wasn't what you thought.

Oneka: That's exactly right. And something that was so beautiful is she just loved me for me and she saw me. And she didn't feel the need to kind of beat me up with the Bible and quote scripture at me and talk down to me. She actually just loved me. It was through that love that then built something in me that said, "I'm going to come to her church." So I finally said yes. She probably asked me to church for almost a year.

So I want to encourage anyone because sometimes you think, I'm going to stop inviting because they're not coming. But she didn't give up on me and I'm so thankful that she didn't give up on me.

James: When you got to church, what difference did that make? You've already seen something in her that got your attention so you hadn't pushed her off. She's impressed you. So now you went to church. Why was that important?

Oneka: So I walked in the doors and I saw so many young people that looked just like me that loved Jesus. So now it wasn't just her I saw...

James: Where was this church, by the way?

Oneka: It was in California, southern California.

James: Christians in California?

Oneka: Exactly! Who would have thought?

[Laughter]

I looked around the room and I saw other people that looked like her and looked like me that were worshipping God, that were so engaging. There were older people there. Everyone seemed so happy to see me, as if they had been waiting for me. So when it was time for the altar call the pastor said, "If you want to make that decision today" and literally, my arm just shot up. There's been no looking back since then.

James: So when you got in the church you felt affirmed that this girl cared about you. She's telling you, "There's a reason something is inside of me" and you were seeing it. So when you got to church and you saw what looked like a family of people that loved, did you somehow in church see this Father that was going to actually love and affirm you? Did you sense that?

Oneka: I did. She actually invited me. A couple of things, two things that happened: One is she introduced me to her older sister who taught me how to read my Bible, taught me what it meant to be a woman of God. And they actually, so I was in a relationship at the time that was very unhealthy. And they said, "You know what? We just want to encourage you. We don't want to control your life. You can do whatever you want to do. But we just want to encourage you to be single and to learn who you are in Christ and trust him with who he has for your future."

And then I went to this little seminar on dating. So that pulled me in that it was on dating but then come to find out, it was on a Christian perspective on dating and marriage and

what that could look like. So I saw healthy couples, healthy husbands and wives talking about dating the right way. So it painted a new picture of what relationships could look like.

Betty: You began to get a foundation.

Oneka: That's exactly right. And so it made me decide, I don't want to settle anymore. Because so many times women settle because they feel insecure and they don't think they're worth but what the person that's paying them any attention. And so it was at that point, it was those layers that helped me understand who I am in Christ. I don't have to date around. God did have someone amazing for me and I'm so gladly stopped.

James: In California?

Oneka: No, actually in Oklahoma. I met him in college.

James: Oh my! That's closer to the Promised Land. That's on the border of the Promised Land.

Oneka: That's right! That's right!

James: Did you meet this guy that's sitting out here that you're married to that is a pastor?

Oneka: Yes! Yes! I met him in college. So by the time I met him I hadn't dated for three years; just still on fire for God.

James: You were on fire for God. You were serious about it.

Oneka: Very much so.

James: Okay. Were you at O.R.U.?

Oneka: Umm-hmm. We met at O.R.U.

James: And there are some other Christians there, right?

Oneka: Just a few. Just a few.

[Laughter]

James: Our son went there and he met his wife there. Now, you met there. He's sitting out here looking at us right now. He's watching. Now was he serious about Jesus at O.R.U.?

Oneka: Very much so. He was just the same way that he is today; so down-to-earth, so humble, so much favor, so passionate, into basketball, loves Jesus, and knows no stranger.

James: Did he know he was going to be a preacher?

Oneka: He did. When we started dating, he said, "Just so you know..." At the time he thought he was going to be an evangelist. So he said, "I'm going to be traveling and preaching and I just want to make sure that you're okay with that." So very early in our dating relationship...

James: Well, he's still an evangelist. He is announcing good news. She's good news, right? [Husband nodding and clapping]

Here's what I want. I want you to help everybody know that you go to a lot of trouble to write this book and to pour your heart into it. I'm going to flip over here. I'm going to glance and see if any of the chapter titles get my curiosity.

What did you want to happen when you wrote the book? When you say... okay, boy, there's 22 chapters. They're not so long that they're going to wear you out. This is good stuff. You have like Chapter 2, "Born of a Woman." I want you to expand on that because of the title of the book. What do you want all of the women to get? Because I really think you're focusing in on women; am I right about that?

Oneka: That is correct.

James: What do you really want them to get out of that?

Oneka: I'm hoping that we all continue because it is a lifelong journey, to understand our value and worth. And to know that Jesus has a plan and a purpose for our life. And that all of heaven is cheering us on to be all that God's called us to be. I think sometimes women discount themselves and forget because you get so busy with life, you get so busy raising kids, you get so busy in your job that you forget in the midst of that that God has something on the inside of you that he wants to bring to life.

So my prayer is that as women read this book that they will awaken to their purpose and the plan that God has for their life, no matter the season they're in.

Betty: It's a matter of God's perfect timing for the different seasons that he takes us through. Because there is nothing more important than being a wife and mother, a homemaker but then that's not where it stops. Even in that moment, in that time you can be all that God purposed you to be and have some value and know that value that comes from the Lord.

Oneka: I think sometimes some women get the chance to stay at home, which is such a gift, and then some women work full time. But I think the key is understanding that he sees you sees your kids no matter the season of life that you find yourself in. Does that make sense?

Betty: Yeah! I think women sometimes too, like you said they get so busy, they're life is so full with their families and they love their families but sometimes they can feel forgotten.

Oneka: That's exactly right. So my prayer is that we would all wake up to the plan that he has for our life. And if you're at the playground, he wants to use you at the playground loving on another mom and start a play group with her or a Bible study. If you're in the board room, he wants you to set an example by being on time, being sharp, having some of the best ideas and inventing all that he's called you to do. So I feel like from the playground to the board room to a college campus that there is something on the inside of us that God wants to give birth to.

James: See I'm praying in my heart right now and God listens to me. You're going to have to hear, we talk. We talk and the father talks. And I'm just saying, "Lord, I want you to take this beautiful, beautiful, vivacious, powerful, loving exuberance that I see right now in this beautiful woman that you're in such beauty and I just want it to spread. I just want it to go through all the women. I know that's what you want right here.

Would you have ever believed, Betty that God would take you from the home and put you here on television in front of the whole world every day Monday through Friday? Did you think that?

Betty: Not at all. No! [Laughing] I was one of those girls, very young, growing up feeling very insignificant. I felt lost in the crowd. I felt like if I just be quiet and not make any noise and everything, be good enough, that I'll be okay. But God already had plans for me that I didn't even know.

Had he told me at that time, I'd probably passed out or something -- fainted. But his timing is so perfect. We're on a journey. We learn and grow every day, hopefully. That's what it is all about. It is about the journey and all the things he puts out before us. And

sometimes we kind of stray a little bit but if we allow him to pull us back into line he'll get us right back on the right path.

James: I remember Betty saying many times. She said, "I tell God, "God, I really want to love you with all my heart. If I really do, you'll probably make me go into Africa on the mission field."

So here we are all going to Africa on the mission field. "I told God I'd end up on the mission field!" -- the last place in the world you thought you wanted.

Betty: That's right. God must have chuckled.

James: We went all over America on the mission field winning people to Christ and then we ended up for more than 20 years on all the mission fields of the third world countries. And it was like our son-in-law, Terry, he would send us to every war. Wherever there was a massive civil war, wherever the Soviet Union is collapsing, wherever there is a big battle going on over in Romania, whatever it is, you were there when the Berlin Wall is going down, they just sent us like right into the middle of hell. What a wonderful journey.

But we meant it -- listen, we meant it. We just want God to have his way in our lives. He's having it. That is why you wrote this book. You want every -- if women get the book and they get to reading the book, what do you hope, when you talk to God about the women that read this book, what are you praying? God, let this happen; if you could just put it down in a few paragraphs or sentences.

Oneka: That's right. I'm praying that he would wake us up. As we were driving here to be a part of today I just saw all these rocks. To me it represented people that feel dead in the situation they're in. And I'm praying that as they read these words that these words will become just an army of just angels that are fighting for them, warring for them, waking up what's on the inside of them.

Because I feel like so many people feel dead in their season, dead in the situation that they're facing. I'm just praying that the spirit of God would take those words and that those words would breathe life on every single heart and that it would start something so beautiful. Because then it would impact not only them but then their kids and their husband, then their places of work, and their communities and so on and so forth.

James: We have so many great women who minister here. Christine Caine, she preached on our Awaken Now conference. My gosh, it was our 50th anniversary. She preached the greatest message on witnessing I've ever heard in my life -- period! I'm telling you, the absolute greatest.

Jack Graham said, "I know we're not supposed to say this as a Baptist." But he said, "Christine Caine is the greatest preacher I've ever heard." He said, "Don't tell anybody I said that." But the point is she is unbelievable. Her message there, you can get it. You can get it from us in our library. But it is phenomenal.

But then we have Sheila Walsh. And what a tremendous power. And then Lisa Bevere comes and she says, "Women need to be like a lioness."

I want to give you my read looking at women. I just live with the most unbelievable person. Now here's what I believe. I see it in you, I see it in women all over the place. Here's what I believe. Outside of the Holy Spirit -- now listen to what I'm saying -- outside the Holy Spirit, the greatest force and power, influence, and inspiration on the planet are women. Now that does not mean that the enemy can't twist something and make them very dangerous, deceptive, seductive. We understand that. Men have a tendency to be very weak in areas where women can be very, very seductive and distracting in not a wholesome way. But within women is not only this *Born of a Woman* potential but out of women come so much. I really believe this.

I deal with leaders a lot. Some of my strongest advice to the President is, "Listen to

Melania more, and watch her. Watch how calm and collected and cool she is." Wouldn't that be wonderful if we could all do a little bit of that?

So the point is that I believe women have within them the ability to give birth to one of the greatest movements perhaps the world will ever see and that would be a move of the love of God that no one can express more effectively than a woman, and a mother.

Father, I pray that. I pray that you will use this book, Lord, that you will use Oneka and her husband to really bless people, this Shoreline City Church and all that they do. We just thank you for them.

Would you say thanks to God for the way he's using Oneka?

[Cheers & Applause]

Shoreline City Church in Dallas. Oneka, one of the things that has really blessed us and this is the neat thing and I want to say this. I know couples help us in what we do. But the majority of checks, I'm going to guess that in 80-85% of the checks that come to *LIFE Outreach* are signed by women, filled out by women. That doesn't mean that the woman is saying, "We're doing this, honey! No, it is pretty much couples. Sometimes men will tell me later, "Well, my wife had the burden before I did." But women care. I want to thank you for your sensitivity.

We're drilling water wells right now. And boy, when you talk about a mother wanting her children not to die, not to be sick, mothers hear that. Here's what I want to ask you to do right now. I want all of you watching to just say, "God, how can I be the miracle someone's praying for? Can I be the answer to someone's prayer?"

Now listen to me. You can be the miracle that keeps a child alive. You can be a miracle that gives families a future with health by simply giving them clean water. We're talking about giving thousands of people, ultimately millions, clean water by giving them a well

in their community, their village, their area. We're asking you to help us drill another 200 wells right now toward, you know we've been drilling 400 a year. That's our goal; we want to see that happen. We start with 200 and then we come back to complete the 200 later in the year, the other 200.

But I'm asking you right now, please, you listen and you watch because you're going to see the need that love meets miraculously through you. And then you ask God, what do you want me to do to be a miracle in that person's life and that family? And you let him lead you. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Announcer: Recorded history tells us one of the critical factors in determining where people decided to settle was access to water. That criteria is still used today.

Unfortunately, for hundreds of thousands of people around the globe, this decision can have deadly consequences.

Open Captions:

>> My grandchildren died of cholera because of bloated tummy and vomiting. It's very heartbreaking to lose my grandchildren.

Announcer: Each day as Antoinette returns to a small stream to collect water, it serves as a reminder of the deaths of her grandchildren. She told our team that one grandchild died at a clinic where she had taken him. And by the time she returned home, her other grandchild had died as well.

Open Captions:

>> I can't find words to describe, to say what I miss about my grandchildren. But what I know is that I will never forget them. They are still in my heart.

Announcer: The pain of losing her grandchildren once brought her thoughts of suicide

but somehow Antoinette is still able to hope for a better life.

Open Captions:

>> If we could get clean water, this would bring real change in our village and in my family. My children and everyone would no longer suffer from those diseases due to unclean water.

Announcer: We can turn Antoinette's plea of *if* she can get clean water into *when* by drilling a well that provides her and her village the gift of life: Fresh, clean, drinking water.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Can you imagine trying to save a child or a grandchild's life and then go back to find out that you lost the one at home, the one that had been drinking contaminated water?

I'm holding clean water right here and the words on this beautiful cup that we've given people through ever season, "He is faithful." How does God express his faithfulness? Through our faithfulness to him and our love. It is love that never fails. Do you know what the answer for that situation is that she was talking about? It is clean water. Jesus said, "If you will give a cup of water in my name you won't lose your reward."

You see there is a phone number there on the screen? It is a prayer line. Do you know even now while we're talking about saving lives, 80-85% of all calls that come in, if there were 1,000 calls that come on that line, 800-850 of them would be please pray for me -- broken heart. That's what it's there for.

But in this moment I'm asking you to make it an answer-to-prayer line. People are going

to keep calling because they need prayer. Because we want to pray for them, we love them, we care. So we share their burdens and we try to help them see their load lightened by God.

But if you would right now make this an answer-to-prayer line, make it a lifeline, and say, "I'm not only going to give a cup of water in Jesus' name, we're going to help provide a well of water for that entire community."

Did you know that a gift of \$48 will give ten people water the rest of their life? Where can you put \$48 that will have more impact?

\$4800 and we've given an entire community, an entire village water for the rest of their life. That's amazing, isn't it? If you can give a water well, please do. Many people tell us it's the greatest joy of the entire year for them. For some, they say it is a real effort, James but it is a joyful effort. There are some that can give even more than a well and we have those who will do it. Thank God for that! Aren't you grateful? Answer to prayer.

Whatever you can do, do it. You may say, "James, I can't give the \$4800 but I can give \$1200 and pray three join me." Do it! Pray they join you but you start the process. \$2400, pray one more joins you and we've got another well. \$48, 10 people water the rest of their life; could you do that?

Would you right now make the gift God puts on your heart? Please do it! The number there, just call it, or go online, take your bankcard, use it like a check. If you write a check, call us and tell us what you're mailing in but make the check to *LIFE*. Thank you so much for doing it. You're becoming the miracle someone's heart longs for. You are becoming the answer to prayer. You're going on the answer-to-prayer line. You become the answer. Please do it right now. Go get that card and act now as God directs. Thank you.

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**

James: Well, I've got joy in my heart, Betty. I just feel like answer-to-prayer calls are

coming, not just prayer calls. Boy, we treasure the opportunity to pray with you so don't ever think that doesn't mean a lot to us and to our staff, our prayer partners. But boy, it's going to be neat today to see answer-to-prayer calls.

If you would like to have *Born of a Woman* you can get it online but if you'll help us give water, we'll send it to you to say thanks. Oneka has poured her heart, God's heart into the book and you can tell she's just got glory and grace all over her. Would you just say thanks to the Lord and thanks to Oneka for being a blessing to us?

[Cheers & Applause]

Thank you! You've got the glory of God on you. Thank all of you for watching. How about telling your friends to watch *LIFE Today* and share life every day with someone -- his life!