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Week 21: Spring Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Michael Ellison #1

James: Thank all of you. It is a joy to come into your home or wherever you're watching. I'm James Robison. My wife Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. We just had someone in the audience ask, "How is it that Betty stays so young, looks so young?" They don't ever ask me that.

But anyway, I said, "I'm crushed."

But here's the thing. We've been married 56 years, we're 75 years old. Betty says, "You don't have to tell them we're the same." I'm about a month older than her.

She says, "Why do you have to tell them that?"

Well, because you're a miracle.

She doesn't look like she's 40, as far as I'm concerned. She's beautiful.

But you say, "James, where do y'all get the zeal and the health and the stamina?"

Because see, there's no retirement in me. I'll sit down some. I try to get in the presence of the Lord and listen to him. I want to hear his heart and his mind; share it with you because I love you. But see, one of the reasons that we have the health we have is because of the guests we have right now. As a matter of fact, and you talk about a labor of love, this is a labor of love but it's a labor that I watched him write for 25 or 30 years that we were very close when his wife fought Stage 4 cancer for ten years and

miraculously God walked her through that. It's a miracle.

But all the things that they were learning that Michael Ellison, who by the way is the reason many people are on Christian television right now is because of what he did, because he helped so many, helped us. As a matter of fact, it was our guest that first got us to look at the third world and the mission fields.

Well, he's written a book. It's called *10 Habits of Wellness* for a happier, healthier life with less illness and disease. But the thing you really need to get and that you'll see when you go through this, because boy, this is a labor of love. He wants you to understand that we have wellness and health because we have purpose life -- purposeful life. We live with purpose and if we're going to fulfill God's purpose in life we need health. And he's going to tell you about what happened to him that has led him to help so many people like us have health.

Would you welcome Michael Ellison to *LIFE Today*?

Michael, good to see you.

Michael: Thank you, James. Thank you, Betty.

James: You've been supporting our ministry as one of the strongest supporters for 30 years. You did inspire us to go to the mission field. Why did you have such a passion when you were helping people with evangelism through television, through media because that was your gift, but where did you get this burden to even share with us the mission fields?

Michael: Well, first of all let me thank you for having me on *LIFE Today*. I think you and Betty have an awesome show. We watch it on a very regular basis. You are inspiring many people. So thank you for having me here as your guest today.

You know as a teenager I ended up in India. When I went to India I saw millions of people, James who physically, emotionally, spiritually, I felt like, could have a greater experience in life. I saw those who were dying and literally being picked up and burned. Well, as a young man that was incredibly impactful on my life.

I went to other countries. So when God really birthed in me the vision of a world in need of physical, emotional and spiritual wellness that is when I made a commitment, God, I will do whatever that you purpose for my life in order to be able to touch that world.

So when I met you out of that call on my life I was like, "James, there is a world and they desperately need what you have to offer and that is wellness."

James: Well, you know, we literally went to the mission fields and we came back and you remember because you were in the prayer meetings when I was saying I don't know if television viewers will help missions and starving people. Because if you have a missions conference at the church, that or a prayer conference, seemed to be the least attended meetings -- mission conference, prayer conference. So I don't know if people will help missions.

But we started selling things to start feeding kids and saving their lives and loving them and winning them to Christ. You immediately were helping us and encouraging us along the way. And our viewers, they jumped on board and said, "We want to do it." So they've carried us.

Would you agree that the viewers of *LIFE Today*, because you've tracked us and followed this whole ministry for a long, long time, would you agree we've got some of the most amazing people who watch this program and put God's arms of love around the very people you were concerned about?

Michael: Absolutely! You couldn't have done the significant work all over the world that you've done without amazing donors, and people who have caught the vision that

you have shared with them, that God put into your heart. No, I just think it is amazing the viewers and the relationship that you have with them.

James: Well, we are so grateful.

Michael, you, and what you share in this book, he shared with me and Betty personally. Betty, would you say that what he and his wife shared with us changed our lives to where we not only begin to take nutrition seriously but exercise, just staying active? And we don't live in a gym or a workout place but he got us doing the things to keep us where we are full of energy and life. Do you believe that what Michael shares, if our viewers would grasp it, that it could change their lives?

Betty: Absolutely! You know as Christians, of course we care about our spiritual walk with the Lord. We want to be strong in that, and we want to be faithful to the Lord, and we want to proclaim his word in all boldness and truth. But you know if you don't feel good physically you can't even go out in the right way and do that. I think they both tie in so well you can't have one necessarily without the other in it. God gives you that. We're the temple of God. How else can I say it? And he's given us the responsibility to take care of our bodies. And this is what Michael and Susan have inspired us to do. We've watched them walk it faithfully. And I think well, if they can do it I can do it with God's help.

This book gives you simple steps. I would say it would be a great handbook for someone that just says where do I start? What do I do? Sometimes you say well, is it too late? It is never too late. As long as you can take a breath, it's never too late.

James: Michael you had in your family some challenges with health and you had quite a startled situation when you were trying to do everything right. I want you to share that testimony and then let's go into what you want people to get from the book, *The 10 Habits of Wellness*.

Michael: I think the habits and the wellness essentials come out of our own pain and our own ignorance because one thing, and you have known me for years. I've always been fit and I enjoy fitness. I enjoy the mountains. I love the outdoors. I love everything that God created. I've always wanted to be at top fitness to be able to enjoy that. But I really didn't understand wellness. Wellness is something, if I may, I'd like to define it because it is a big subject when we talk about it. And we have all kinds of mindsets and interpretations and then there's medical. We own a medical clinic so I understand from the medical side of it.

One of the things I wanted to do in the book is I wanted the book to have clinical evidence, I wanted it to have biblical evidence, and I want it to have scientific evidence. You'll notice in the book that at the end of each chapter the references are there. It's not just one dimension.

James: Scientific studies confirming what you're sharing and biblical truth -- irrefutable.

Michael: So here was my ignorance. I really didn't understand wellness so sleep is one of the essentials that we talk about. And sleep is so significant. But for me, I looked at sleep as a waste of time.

Betty: You really did.

James: It slowed down your progress.

Michael: It was like they would say seven to eight hours of sleep. Well, you don't have to be a mathematician to realize that's one-third of your life you're going to spend in bed. I could not even imagine spending a third of my life in bed! How boring!

[Laughter]

What I didn't realize is -- I didn't realize I had an overactive adrenal gland. So for me, it

was just go as hard as you can go and I always had energy. And then something happened. And so here's what happened. Sleep deprivation, overactive adrenal gland -- now I'm jogging typically 25 to 30 miles a week. I'm running in Arizona up the backside of a mountain and I got about halfway up and all of the sudden the pain started going down my left arm. And it was like oh no!

I had just turned 50. My grandfather died at 41 years of age. He was in a hunting camp with all of his buddies, told a joke, threw his head back in laughter, dropped over dead. That had a huge impact on my father. At 38 years of age, my father was diagnosed for a quadruple bi-pass. Well those two things for me it was like I will do everything that I possibly can to keep good cardiovascular health, and so I did a lot of those things but fitness was my primary way of doing it. I didn't realize sleep had anything to do with health and wellness.

By the way, if I could just insert here on sleep: sleep when it comes to dementia and all the ways that the brain works, right, and the degenerative aspects, especially in the aging population today, sleep is huge. Because when you are asleep this is actually when the -- I call it the maid service -- the maid service of the brain shows up when you're sleeping. Because when you're awake you're creating toxins and you have waste protein that is occurring. Well, it's when you sleep is when it has its own cleaning fluid -- this is different from your lymph system, this is different than your cardio -- this is the brain now saying, "I need to cleanse the brain." So sleep is such an important part of our lives and our essential.

But let me finish my story; right? So this is going to -- I'm thinking I'm having a heart attack so I sit down on the side of the trail. And I'm sitting there and it's like, okay, am I going to die? Lord, I've got so much I want to do! The purpose of my life, my wife! I didn't die. So I got up, went back to the house. I walked there. Next morning, you know me, I'm going to run the mountain. So I get up. I get up the mountain and I don't make it to the top. Now it's not down my left arm it's down my side.

Well, to shorten the story, I end up in the Mayo Clinic. What's going on with me? Because now it had got to the point that I'm like having these jolts just go through me. I had no quality of life at that point, James and Betty. But an amazing thing happened, as far as related to it. I didn't have heart disease, I didn't have cancer, I had an overactive adrenal gland and I had raw nerves.

Well here's what they said to me. They said, "We really can't do anything for you. We can give you medication." And thank God I chose not to just mask my pain but I accepted my pain. I said, "God, I don't desire this because wellness for purpose."

James and Betty, it's why you are embracing wellness. You've got such amazing purpose in your life, the missions and the people that you reach and the audience everyday that's being inspired to go on in their spiritual walk. That's why you are embracing wellness because you have such amazing purpose. Well, so does every individual have that.

But here's what happened to me. I went home from Mayo Clinic, a well-recognized institution worldwide, and I got on the floor and was like, "God, heal me."

I didn't get an answer to a prayer. In fact, it felt like it was an iron ceiling. But here's what I did. I got up and it was like okay, I don't think God is going to heal me. I know I'm not living the way that I can fulfill my purpose. And I did this. I said, "You are his temple." That's what it says in Corinthians. That's what Paul said, "I am his temple." I will learn to nourish and I will learn to nurture. And I am on my wellness journey, and God, I am going to have wellness for the purpose you put in my life. And my life radically changed with the essentials that I write in that book, James.

James: And you started changing our lives and others. And how old are you now? That was 50 when all of this was taking place, how old are you now?

Michael: Oh, do I have to say?

James: Yeah. You've got to say it.

Michael: I'll be 73 next month.

James: So don't y'all think Michael looks like he's learning something about wellness? And you've learned it, and your wife fought this battle with cancer miraculously. So much you teach and taught us, and your wellness clinics, and a company you started called TriVita that gives as fine a product as you can possibly get to help people. All of that you did to try to help people get well and live well for kingdom purpose, God's kingdom purpose. Not just their purposes, that's important too because God cares about us but his purpose, purpose-filled living. And that's what you've inspired.

And then these are the habits of wellness. You broke it down in ten chapters. The first ones talk about basic things we do. The last five in the second half of the book talk about emotional, mental, and spiritual things. All of it combined, all of it what I call "godly oversight." But because of the habits, would you say you've watched this guy who doesn't like to get regimented and disciplined, have I become faithful at doing the things that you've taught?

Michael: You have created the habit of nourishing your body.

If you think of a habit just real quickly, out of this is -- a habit, if you can create the belief, then you have the attitude, then you have the feeling, and then out of the feeling comes the action or the behavior, then the reward. Well, the belief is you are his temple; right? I will nourish, I will nurture this temple. I will glorify God in my body, which is not mine it is the Lord's. There is the belief. Out of that comes the attitude, out of that comes that opportunity; have the feeling of just knowing that every day I get to glorify God in my body and to make the choices that make that happen. That's powerful.

James: You have told us that you wrote this book for all the people you can possibly help that God loves so much. But what we've watched happen is we've watched so many

people's lives changed. You've made it the whole practice of your life, you've seen it with us, and you told us because you inspired me and Betty to actually look to the foreign fields in the third world and see the suffering, not knowing that our viewers would ever step up -- but they did. Michael, you began supporting us in what we're doing.

Now thank you for that -- Susan. Thank your company, thank all of you. You've encouraged people who shop on your web site, "Help *LIFE Today*." Let's do these things. Help take care of the people.

But you said this to me. You said, "I want to give this book, *Habits of Wellness*. We just want to give it to those of you who will just share life and love with the hungry and those that are needing help. Listen to me. This could change your life. When you see that your body is the temple of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and you were left here for a purpose, and you need to live well to fulfill what God wants for you, not only what you have in your heart that God understands and loves and cares about but you say, "Lord, I want to be well to do what you put me here to do." Michael wants to help you do that.

Michael, we're going to show our viewers some of the precious people that have gotten your attention and others. And I believe every one of you right now in our mission feeding emphasis, I believe every single one of you are going to say, "I'm going to help nourish those malnourished children. I'm going to help those that are actually starving. And I'm going to give them the hope and the miracle for a future. And we know the missionaries will tell them about the love of God but we're going to demonstrate it."

I want you to watch closely and then you just say, "God, show me what I can do and what you want me to do." And you take joy in doing it because that's one of the reasons, that's a purpose in our life that gives glory to God and changes lives. Watch very closely.

On the mission field

Isak: Now 200,000 plus children die every single month from malnutrition alone. They die in a village like this. They get buried with a little wooden cross with their name etched on it.

Announcer: Over the past week our mission team has traveled throughout South Sudan and Uganda overwhelmed by the devastation of countless families fighting an unrelenting crisis.

Isak: We've sat with mothers here today, mothers that are grieving the loss of their children. They've explained to us that those children have died because of malnutrition, because of starvation, literally, because there is no food in this village. There is no livestock. There is no crops. There is no food at all.

Announcer: Our team witnessed further heartache in the malnutrition clinics where mothers have risked long journeys with their children for just the hope of a life-saving miracle.

Luke: I've been in places like this. Now you have your own kid that's about the same age as all them and it just -- you just can't fathom if your own child was going through something like this.

Announcer: With these dire circumstances spread throughout South Sudan, thousands of mothers have embarked on the treacherous journey seeking food.

Luke: It's not God's heart to see mothers wonder what they're going to feed their children when they wake up in the morning. So today, I'm asking you to be the solution, be the answer to these mothers and children's prayers.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty, that's your grandson, our grandson Luke, who has a beautiful little baby girl, about a year now. She is just a doll. There he is. He's been many times to the mission field but not when he had his own little baby. What do you feel when you know what you feel as a mother and a grandmother and now a great-grandmother. You see your grandson talking about those precious people and their children, what goes on in your heart?

Betty: As I watch, and I pay close attention to the mothers because I have a mother's heart. And I see those mothers hold their little babies. I remember when our babies were tiny. I'd hold them up and I'd see how cute they were and then they'd just smile back at me. I watched these mothers and they would give anything to see their babies smile, to see their babies little tummies full, to see their babies happy and cooing and laughing and smiling.

We can help that happen if you'll join with us as you've done many times maybe. Please do it again! These mothers want to see their babies smile again. Please do this for them.

James: Boy, I tell you so many of them only hear them cry or whimper. A lot of them are too weak to even cry -- they just kind of whimper. And it just really does tear your heart out. Let me tell you this. I couldn't take it if I didn't know we could correct it. If I didn't know that love doesn't fail when you release it and you've done it so beautifully. I'm glad that our children and grandchildren can see the needs of others, and like so many of you want to join in helping. I wish I could give you a big hug and thank you for everyone you've helped us love and feed and care for.

You know those mothers want to see their children get to go play and these little children in third world countries all over Africa, the only toy they may have is a ball of string that they make a ball out of it. They may just have a stick and they knock rocks along with it and that's their game.

I want to ask you right now please, would you just ask God, "What can I do?" We need a

miracle. There's such a crisis on the border right now of Sudan where people are being driven out and many of the parents or the men are being killed. We need 270,000 additional dollars in addition to the 400,000 children we're feeding to meet a crisis there that we actually had UNICEF and the United Nations say, "If you'll get it to the people, we'll give you the food to take them in those crisis areas." Our missionaries computed the cost, in addition to the 400,000 we're feeding, we need 270,000. They broke it down to be able to deliver the food that's being given by the United Nation and UNICEF and U.S.I.D.

Luke said, "They just cried with us when we said we'll try to find a way to do it." And they were so thrilled that somebody would go and give what nations gave but it takes that love. So we need to be able to have the support to feed 400,000 the missionaries have already organized, and now a crisis that needs to be addressed. There was also a crisis, a cyclone, like a hurricane in Mozambique that just disabled so many. It shocked the missionaries.

You're the answer. You're the solution. Would you right now just say, "God, can I help feed ten? Could I help feed 100?" \$1,000 will feed 100 for the next months. \$100 will feed ten. \$50 will feed five. \$30 will feed three. Would you just say, "God, what do you want me to do?" Would you immediately go on online or dial that number? Go get your bankcard and make the best gift you can. We have some gifts to send to you to say thank you.

I just pray, I'm asking God, "Lord, raise up 270 people that will say, I'll give \$1,000 to make that other miracle happen." Unbelievable! Would you do it?

We have gifts to send to you to bless you and to say thank you because you are blessing people with the greatest gift, the gift of life because of the love of God. Please dial the number, go online, and use that bankcard like a check. If you make a check, make it to *LIFE*. Call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail. We really do need to hear from you.

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.

With previous reserves gone and mission feeding helping in areas of great famine, we urgently need your support to replenish food supplies to reach the 400,000 children who are counting on us. Your life saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months!

Please consider an extra gift to help ease the suffering of innocent families who, due to tribal warfare, have had to flee their homes in South Sudan to neighboring Uganda, in desperate search of food.

World Food representatives have asked for our immediate assistance. That's why an additional \$270,000 is urgently needed to help provide food to those who are starving.

With your gift, we'll send you *The James Code* by O.S. Hawkins. You'll also enjoy this beautifully crafted leather bookmark.

With your gift of \$100 or more request *The Passion* translation Bible. This edition ignites *The Passion* of the Bible to modern readers by merging *The Passion* of God's heart with the life-changing truth of his word.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our commemorative bronze sculpture, "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms."

Please call write or make your gift online today.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I can tell you, Betty and I are believing God for a miracle -- that you will do what God leads you to do. We're sending you *The Passion* translation along with *The James Code* to those of you who will give \$100 or more.

And Michael Ellison says, "I want to send to any of you who will just help us give those precious people a chance, and those children, love to send you *10 Habits of Wellness*." Could change your life!

Thank you so much. Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to Michael Ellison?
Thank you, Michael. Thanks for being our best friend and helping us share God's love.

Thank you for helping us share the love and life of God all over the world with the least of these, the overlooked. Thank you!