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Week 24: Spring Mission Feeding, last week

Sheila Walsh

Victoria Osteen

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm excited about today's program because as you know most often I'm sitting on this set by myself and just sharing with you. But I have a very special guest today and I'm thrilled that she's here. Her book is out now. Hasn't been out for long but it has a great title. So would you please help me welcome Victoria Osteen? I'm so glad you're here.

Victoria: Thank you! This is so much fun. I'm excited to be here with you. I admire you. You're an amazing woman. Exceptional woman!

Sheila: Why did you call the book *Exceptional You*?

Victoria: *Exceptional You*. People love to ask that question, right, because you always wonder how people got the titles of their books. And I really believe that God has made each one of us exceptional. He made us in his image and he is an exceptional God. So we are all created to be exceptional.

I just really believe that too often these days that we are just not understanding who we really are and our true identity; and the fact that God has put gifts and talents in all of us, every one of us, Sheila, as you know, are on a path and it's unique to our own life. But the destination for all of us is victory and it really is. And so I think too often we're comparing ourselves with other people.

Sheila: Which is deadly.

Victoria: Which is! We're usually comparing our weakness with their strength. So there's such a contrast there. And we just have a tendency, I believe, sometime to reduce in our own minds our gifts and talents down to just mundane and ordinary. I really believe that people need to stir up what God's given them and understand that they are unique -- as unique as our finger print.

Now we've always heard this; right? That everyone has their own finger print. But think about it, there's never been another person born with your finger print. How unique is that? So I believe when we begin to understand whose we are then we understand who we really are, and we don't fall into the trap of what this world wants to do, discount us many times, cause us to feel like we're not a success, that we're not measuring up to other people's standards. And so I really believe that when we understand I'm exceptional, just the way I am and I'm growing and when I put these practices into place I'm able to produce the exceptional every day.

Sheila: Have you ever struggled with your own identity or have you always had this deep sense of the exceptional person that God has created you to be?

Victoria: Well, the truth is no one is exempt from struggles and challenges. That's just the way it is. Sometimes we look at people and we think they have it all together and aren't they... But there is no one that is exempt from challenges -- and the voice of doubt. We all have to fight that voice of doubt. We have to learn how to shut that voice off.

I always say if we're going to erase something in our mind we're going to have to replace it. We can't just leave our mind open and empty and expect to, you know, say okay, I'm not going to think about that anymore, I'm just going to move forward. But no, you have to replace it with who God says you are and who you are as a child of the Most High God.

Yeah, I really have struggled before with just doubt -- just am I enough? Can I do this?

Do I have the right resources? Am I talented enough? I come to the conclusion that, you know, just like you I've traveled so long but every time I shut my suitcase I always say the same thing, Sheila. I'm like gosh, I hope I left nothing out!

[Laughter]

Because when I get there what if the weather changes? Do I have an extra this? Do I have that? So every time I shut that suitcase I think, oh, I hope I haven't left anything out! You know what? Really, God has packed your bags and he's left nothing out. Everything you need is in there. You just have to shake it, you just have to shake off the doubt and you have to stir up what's on the inside of you and believe that God's plans for you are good. And when you get to that destination you're going to have what you need. You may not have it right now. You may not feel like you have it, you may not feel exceptional but you've got to believe that when you get there you're going to have what you need.

Sheila: God's tucked it in there. You talk about how we should view our mistakes and failures. I found that very refreshing because a lot of people think that disqualifies them from moving forward. What do you say about that?

Victoria: Well, I say that we are not our mistakes. We are not our failures. They are something that happened to us but they don't need to define us. We're not a divorced person, we're not a person with a bad childhood, we're not a person that's addicted, we're not a person who's having financial difficulties -- we're a child of the Most High God moving through these challenges.

I speak about lifting your eyes in one chapter. When we set our eyes on the problems they become larger, they become all we can see. We have to shift our eyes from our problems to God and his promises. And too often we forget that God is doing a new thing today. He is not waiting until our challenges are over. He's not waiting until we fix ourselves up, he's doing something new today but it's up to us to perceive it, to look for it.

And there is no coincidences. You know that. I think too often we brush off these things that happen to us that are good and we don't bank those things. We don't say, you know what? That was God. It was him helping me. We don't take the good things and put them in our memory box so to speak because there is always challenges coming against us. We can either take the good or we can take the bad. So we have to learn to sift through this stuff and say, you know what? I'm going to choose good today. I'm going to choose to remember the good.

The Bible says that out of the good of our heart will bring good things to our life. So we have to have that good stored in our heart if we're going to produce that good.

Sheila: I think when I go out and speak to women so many women are defined by labels that have either been placed on them or they've placed on themselves. They do see themselves as the single mom or the divorced woman or the... How do you begin to replace those labels with the truth of God's word?

Victoria: Well, you have to know God's word first, so you have to see what God says about you. You have to know what he says about you; that you are hand-chosen, you are hand-picked, you are adopted by God to be in his family and he already wrote the plan out for your life.

But I really believe that we have to appreciate what we have. Sometimes we don't appreciate what we already have because we're chasing after something we don't have. And God is...

Sheila: So true.

Victoria: Yeah. So when we begin to say okay, I may be a single mom here but look at what I have. Look how God has provided this child for me -- this beautiful gift! Children are a gift, they're a heritage of the Lord and I think sometimes we don't appreciate what

we have. We kind of take it for granted.

Sheila: It's true.

Victoria: I always like to say it like this, what you have that maybe you're not appreciating, someone else is praying for. So we have to understand that what we have is so precious in the eyes of God. When we start appreciating it and valuing what it is we're going to start enjoying it and we're going to start seeing the gift in it. That brings joy to your heart. It brings blessing to your heart.

And I think to live exceptional doesn't mean that you're not going to have any problems. The enemy is not going to roll out the red carpet for you but it's what you believe about what God is doing in your life and what he's placed in your life that brings that joy and that peace and that satisfaction.

Sheila: How do you keep your memory box full?

Victoria: Well it's so funny because people used to compliment me. They would say something nice. Everybody gets a compliment. And in my mind, I would literally say to myself, "They don't really mean that, they're just trying to be nice." I wouldn't receive that compliment because it was like, well, they're just -- how could that be?

One day I realized, not only am I hurting myself but I'm really very disrespectful to the person just brushing that off. It was as if God said to me, "Next time you get a compliment, Victoria, receive it as if I'm speaking it to you." And I thought, okay, Lord.

So, when someone gave me a compliment, I would just first take a minute and receive it and tell them thank you very much. That's so kind of you. And then I would shift my attention to say, "Thank you, God. Appreciate you giving me this compliment, cheering me on."

But I really had to pause and say am I going to brush this off or am I going to receive it as a gift from God? Because God uses people and he uses people to speak things into our life. I don't want to just discount what God is trying to speak to me because I need that. I need that in those challenging times. I need that fuel and that ammunition. If I don't have it in there, then I'm going to be running on empty.

Sheila: I think sometimes as Christian women we almost think it's kind of spiritual to deflect compliments. No, it's... I remember when somebody said to me one time, "You have a lovely voice." And I was just, "Oh no! It's just the Lord." Somebody said to me, "Why would you say that? If God gave you a voice and somebody's been blessed by that, why wouldn't you receive that?" It took me a while to learn that lesson. I think sometimes we even think that's spiritual.

Victoria: Yeah! We think let me humble myself here. But really it's like your own child. I can watch my kids walk across the room and think they're the greatest thing in the world. Look at them walk across the room!

Sheila: Using both legs! Wow!

Victoria: Look at that! Are they amazing? Think about how God feels. He said, "I put that in you." The enemy is not really after what God's placed in us. He's trying to -- it's not really even about us, it's about what God has put in you that he's trying to steal. If someone is taking from your child what you see that they have on the inside of them, a God-given gift, that will just set you off; won't you? It's like wait a minute! Because that's the plan. Let me take your worth, the value God's placed in you.

And that's really what the enemy has been trying to do from the beginning. He tried to take -- he tried with Jesus, "If you are, prove it." Jesus had nothing to prove. He knew who he belonged to. He knew God had a plan for his life. He's like, "I don't have to prove myself." I think so often we're trying to prove ourselves when we really just need to accept ourselves as who we are, accept the gifts.

I can't sing, Sheila, I wish I could but I can't. But you know what? I celebrate you and your voice and the gifts God... I have to celebrate myself as well and I really believe we have to learn to applaud ourselves for those little things. You know what? I may not be Sheila but I was nice to somebody today. I did smile at someone today. I did change my perspective today. So we just have to applaud ourselves for those little things.

Sheila: Because in reality, you're applauding what God is doing in your life and who God has made you. In reality, you're giving glory back to him which is beautiful!

Victoria: Absolutely! If your kids came home when they're down and out you're like wait! Come on! Get up a little bit. But I really believe when we understand who we are we can reflect that onto other people. Because if we are walking in shame and guilt and not enough, we see through those eyes and we reflect that on other people. I really believe when we're full and we can accept every day, even though we may not feel exceptional today but if we can live this truth we are exceptional because God made us that way. I believe that we can reach out to other people. We can pull people up because we don't feel lacking in our own self.

Sheila: You talk about loving well. How do we love well in this culture?

Victoria: Well, the truth is we're not going to agree on everything. So everybody has different opinions, we're different backgrounds but I really believe we can find common ground. If it's no more than you are God's creation and I am to respect you for that and find that common ground because the Bible talks about unity and where there is unity there is a commanded blessing. It doesn't say we are to agree on everything. But we're to find a common ground of unity and respect. It is just a great common ground; I respect you because you are God's child and you were made in the image; he breathed his life into you whether I agree with you or not.

So, I think in our own minds when we can come to that place -- and we can't straighten

everybody out. It doesn't mean they're going to respect us the way we're trying to respect them but you know what? It is about the heart. David had a heart after God. I think when we have that heart after God is when God can really do something in our life.

Sheila: Do you get troubled by social media?

Victoria: I try not to pay a lot of attention to social media. I really believe -- and I really believe this is a new generation and I'm praying that they will master social media and not let it master them. Let it be a servant and not a master. So that's what we have to do. We have to see how it can serve us well but not master us, not define us. Because I'm telling you I can look at social media and I can feel about two inches tall. I can feel like I'm doing nothing. You know what? My hair is bad, my skin is bad, and I'm this I'm that. I'm way overweight. You know what I mean? You can really let that get in you because instead of celebrating other people if we're not careful, we cause it to make us feel less than.

Sheila: That's so true. You talk about living in the now. I think that's really important because so often people think, well if this happens or if that happens? How do we live in the now?

Victoria: I really believe living in the now is to not let these precious times go by. Have you ever seen a kid at Christmas? It's like they've got five gift there and they're unwrapping next, next, next. Sometimes that's how we can be in our own life. It's like what's next? What's next? What's next?

I really believe that we have to savor the moment and really reflect and that's not always easy to do in our culture because we are in a fast-paced culture. But when we can just take time to reflect. I want to reflect on this conversation with you, Sheila. I don't get a chance to sit down with you. What a joy! What a privilege to sit down with an amazing woman of God and get to speak from our hearts! Well, I don't want to just blow by, get home, and get on the plane. I want to take a minute and just say, you know what? That

was fun today! That was a good day! What a great thing God allowed me to do.

So sometimes I really think as simple as just reflecting on the good and not just moving through life so quickly that we don't know where we've been or what day it is.

Sheila: I think that really is antidote to all the epidemic of anxiety in our culture because we never slow down. We're just moving, moving, moving. And I think you're right when you talk about living in the moment and seeing -- do you keep a gratitude journal or any of those things? My husband does that and I haven't started it yet but I often think it helps you notice.

Victoria: Absolutely! And I have to be honest with you, I was just talking to my son about this the other day. I said, "I'm going to start keeping a gratitude journal."

He looked at me and he goes, "Yeah, I do that."

I was like, oh now I really feel bad. Now I really feel guilty.

Sheila: You raised him well.

Victoria: I really feel bad. But I really do. It causes us to appreciate. I know there are people watching here today who say, "Well, I don't get to sit down with Sheila Walsh. Yeah! Lucky you!"

But the truth is, no matter what it is, even if we're going to a job we're not really happy about, it is not fulfilling us, if we'll learn to appreciate the things about that job and just say, "God, you know, this isn't exactly where I want to be. I don't want this to be my final destination but I'm not going to let today go by without enjoying it and learning and embracing the good." Because I really believe when we can embrace the good that it prepares us for tomorrow.

Sheila: I love the section on powering up, about drawing close to God. Speak to that just a little because I think of people who feel well, I'm not good enough to draw close to God.

Victoria: Yeah. Isn't that something? I believe we've all probably felt that way when we've made a mistake, "Well God doesn't want to hear from me again." Or here I go with the same prayer! God, I'm sure he's tired of this. But you know what? He's never tired of us. He never tires of us. He wants us to draw close to him.

I liken it to a house that's -- a beautiful house I went in. My friend had just remodeled her house. She was so proud to show it to me. We walk in the house and she flicks on the lights and nothing happened. So we go a little deeper into the house and we're realizing that the air is off. It is hot in the house. And so she's going to show her brand-new remodeled house off. She's not living in it yet. So she calls her contractor and she says, "You know what? What's going on? I'm here trying to show my friend this house."

He said, "I'm sorry. We had to do a few things with the electrical. We turned off all the power at the electrical box. You have to go out and you have to turn on the main switch."

So, she went out, turned on the main source to the whole house. We walked in. The lights popped on, everything. The tour begins.

And I think sometimes we have a beautiful life, a beautiful house but we're not plugging into the main power source. We're not going to God for what we need every day because we feel like he's heard enough of us. We really have to go plug into the power source every single day if we're going to be able to function the way he wants us to. That house now can turn on the washing machine, turn on the driver, and turn on the -- all at the same time! So I really believe that God wants us to connect with him so that we can be everything that he's called us to be.

Sheila: That's fantastic. I'm going to tell you in a few moments how you can get a hold

of Victoria's beautiful book, *Exceptional You*. But one of the things that we recognize as God's sons and daughters is that because of everything he's poured into us we get to pour out and see other people who right at this moment are struggling to find their worth. Watch this and then I'll tell you how you and I can make a huge difference.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Empowered and equipped by Life Today viewers, our mission teams continually search the world for areas of need.

Luke: So, we're here in South Sudan and it was a fight the trek just to get here. Four planes, over 60 hours of travel. But man, that's what makes Mission Feeding so special, is that we get it to places that so many can't reach.

Isak: By being here in these villages and getting out to the village, what we're able to do is Mission Feeding then kicks into place for children on different levels. Some will get a red bowl of food, like we see so many times in the Mission Feeding programs.

Announcer: If you're familiar with the iconic red Mission Feeding bowls, you know they've helped save millions of lives from death by starvation and malnutrition. That part is the good news.

But right now, outbreaks of tribal violence along the southern region of South Sudan are driving people from their homes. And children are caught in the middle.

Ralph: Margaret's story here is a story that just breaks my heart. She and her husband were chased out of their home. On their journey they went days without food. You can look at the health of these babies. We can tell it was many days, a long time, without food.

Announcer: Margaret and her children represent nearly 800,000 people who have

narrowly escaped a violent death. And they're in desperate need of food if they're to survive. Mission Feeding is uniquely positioned to help save their lives.

Ralph: So, let's don't let Margaret's story end with death. Let's let it end with life.

Announcer: Today you hold the power to offer hope for Margaret's children, the power to offer life, the power of Mission Feeding.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: I'll never forget the first time that I had the privilege to be the one who sat there and poured life-giving food into those bowls. As I was doing it I remembered Betty's words, "Never let the line of children be longer than the food we have." So that's the commitment we have made here at *LIFE Today* and you've helped us so many times. We're committed to feeding 400,000 children.

If you go to a malnutrition clinic and you realize that that child is taking their very last breath simply because they didn't have any food, it's heart-breaking. Then you go to a village where we already have mission feeding in place, and they're like regular children, they're laughing, they're playing, they're in school, they're reading. They have a future and they have a hope. So that's our commitment. We will never change on that to feed 400,000 children.

As you know \$30 -- I mean we can all do something -- will feed three children for three months. \$50 feeds five for three months. \$100, you can blow that as a family at the movies but that will feed ten children for three months. We've done that. We will continue to do that. But this is a fresh crisis. I just saw there the situation in South Sudan is devastating. These families have literally had to escape with their lives from the little simple homes they had. Can you imagine as a mom walking across the desert with your children and have nothing to give them?

Uganda has said yes, you may come but they can't provide all the food they need. So we need at the moment for our partners to step up and say, you know what? We will give an additional gift. Maybe you have a monthly commitment but we need \$270,000 to be able to get the food to the people. James said if 270 people gave \$1,000 that will take care of it. 540 give \$500 each we can do this.

But what we need is just do your best. These children are crying out not next month, they're not looking towards Christmas, it is today -- they're starving today. They're running for their lives today. And you and I, we are the body of Christ on the planet at this moment with the answer. We can't look to government for the answer. God looks to his children to say, "Do you see them? Do you see these children who are struggling and who are suffering?"

So please, would you go to your phone? Would you make the very best gift possible? And if you're already committed to giving, may I ask you, would you give an additional gift so that we can respond immediately to this crisis that's happening right now to be able to take care of those who have lost everything? Let them know there is a God in heaven who heard your cry and he sent us and we come in his name. Thank you so much.

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."

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much! I forgot to tell you, this is the last week of mission feeding so we're desperate to be able to meet all the commitments we've made.

We would love to be able to send you Victoria's book, *Exceptional You*, seven ways to live encouraged, empowered, and intentional. So please call and make your best gift possible. We would love to send this to you.

And Victoria, I just want to say, what a joy it is. Not everybody gets to sit and talk to Victoria Osteen! So thank you so much for being with us.

Victoria: Thank you. It was so much fun.

Sheila: And we will see you next time. God bless you. Remember God sees you.