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Week 29: Summer WFL

James Robison and Randy Robison

Kyle Idleman

James: We've got a guest back I've really come to love. He kind of thinks this is part of his expanded ministry of television. Kyle Idleman is here. His former pastor, Dave Stone, one of the men I admire about as much as anyone on the planet.

I'm James Robison, by the way. This is not Betty. Betty has a very bad cough so Randy said, "I'll stand in for the week." This is our son, Randy. You see him with Sheila Walsh and they're just incredible in exalting Jesus.

But Kyle Idleman came in as a teaching leader. I wouldn't even call him really necessarily teaching pastor. He's a young man that's teaching and Dave said he is really remarkable. So we started having him and now he is pastor. At Easter they had 58,000 attend. Did you hear what I said? 58,000. I said I can hardly wait to tell our Pastor Robert Morris at Gateway because for Easter Gateway had 55,000. Kyle up in Louisville, Kentucky, they had 58,000. Robert, get to work.

[Laughter]

So here is Kyle, this incredible young man that just has a gentle spirit and a compassionate heart

and a wonderful gift. And he wrote this book that he wanted to come and talk to us about. It is called, *Don't Give Up*: Faith that gives you the confidence to keep believing and the courage to keep going.

Okay. I want you to welcome the author and the pastor now. Welcome Kyle Idleman to *LIFE Today*. I'm so glad you're back. What is the name of the church now? What's it called?

Kyle: Southeast Christian Church.

James: That's it. So that's been pretty much the term. And Christian Church meant like it was part of a Christian group.

Kyle: Yeah. It is a non-denominational church so a lot of different backgrounds represented there. But Jesus is the foundation.

James: But you're actually Christians; right?

Kyle: That's right.

James: How unusual for a religious church to be Christians. And that's what you really want. Listen. I love your former pastor. I love the man who discipled and loved you and saw your potential; probably saw your potential before you did. He helped fan it and we've tried to encourage it. Let's cut to the chase, *Don't Give Up*. Why did you write this book?

Kyle: As a pastor I have talked to, like you, thousands of people in all kinds of situations.

And I usually, after those pastoral conversations, I'll pull out my phone and I'll write down just a couple of notes about that conversation: What that person is going through, how I prayed for him, how I encouraged them, just as a reminder to me.

In 2017, at the end of that year I went through all of those notes and just started noticing a very clear thread. That it didn't matter what the situation was, it could be family, could be financial, it could be a spiritual crisis, a faith crisis of some kind, certainly suffering, but what every person really needed was this courage to not give up. And not as a trite comment of, "Hey, don't give up!"

Where you try to psych yourself up with positive self-talk and you look in the mirror while "Eye of the Tiger" is playing in the background. I can do it! Because that gets exposed. Life will show you that you need more than that. But a "don't give up" that is based in faith, not confidence in ourselves or our strength but confidence in God, confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

I've just seen this as a pastor too often. When people are struggling and they feel like giving up, we are quick to put an arm around them and comfort them but what people often need is courage. They don't necessarily always need someone to say, "I'm so sorry for what you're going through."

Sometimes what we need is someone to say, "Hey! Get back in the game. This is not the time to step away, this is the time to step in."

James: Don't you think when they fail and they, let's say, get knocked down or they stumble

that they oftentimes get disheartened and a lot of times their discouragement is over their own inadequacy and failure, and that adds to the tendency to give up, to quit. Because the accuser is telling them how really rotten they are and they already feel rotten that they can't seem to have a good relationship or even a meaningful positive conversation that goes forward. It just looks like it turns into contention.

And they have a tendency to give up because they feel beat down. They feel ineffective or inadequate and they kind of tend to check out. And once you get knocked down and stay down you're pretty well finished. Did you find them buying into that?

And so you decided to take off and address it because I'm going to go over some of these titles, and I know you're going to want to camp on some of them, but what it looks like is that you laid out a plan to say I'm getting up. I don't care how I got down. I don't care if it was me, I don't care if it was her, them, him, circumstance, whatever, I'm down, and you're saying that's not where you stay. Nobody wins staying there; right?

Kyle: That's right. If you look at the Bible there is a lot of examples of language like be strong, don't give up, don't quit. Galatians 6:9 says if you don't quit, in due time you will reap a harvest. It doesn't give a date on that like in due time doesn't give you something you can circle on the calendar but in due time you will reap a harvest if you don't give up.

So my experience is that usually you can trace giving up to either fatigue or just tired or failure. You've blown it and you think, it's too late for me now. So God's grace gives us the ability to get up after failure, and God's strength and power gives us the ability to get up when we're tired and worn out.

James: Don't you think he is giving us a charge to give up? You kind of referenced some of those. When Paul was writing Timothy and in these really intense days, "Be a good soldier to the Lord Jesus Christ." And to the Ephesians he said, "Suit up in an armor" like you're going to battle against forces that are even unseen.

Kyle: And then I go through Hebrews 12 where it uses the metaphor of running a race and says, "Since we're surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, let us run the race with perseverance." It says, "The race marked out for us." So my race and your race, they may be different but they're all going to have obstacles. We run the race marked out for us with perseverance.

James: Randy, what do you think about when you -- I know you have great respect, admiration, appreciation for him and I know you're a writer, you recognize really effective writing. What goes on in your mind when you just look at what Kyle is sharing and saying?

Randy: I love what he is saying. There is a proverb that basically says, "Success or failure is not measured by how many times you're knocked down but how many times you get up." Right?

I'm curious though about the title. You touched on this a minute ago. When you say *Don't Give Up*, the world will kind of, maybe that would imply don't give up on yourself. But are you saying a little more? Because sometimes we need to give up on ourselves in submission to God in order to succeed.

Kyle: Yeah! We need to surrender ourselves so that we can find his strength so that we won't

give up. Yeah, that's why it has to be rooted in faith. As a pastor a number of years ago, I think probably four or five years ago I got a call to come to the hospital because we had a young couple in our church who went in to have their firstborn and the family had been called to gather. It was going to be a great celebration but the baby was stillborn.

I went in to the hospital to visit them and try and encourage them. The first room I went into the mother was lying in the bed surrounded by some family and friends. I was pointed to the room next door where the father was in a rocking chair holding the lifeless body of his baby girl wrapped up in a blanket, in a rocking chair saying good-bye.

You know there is just no words to say in those moments. I sat with him for a few minutes. And I knelt down to pray for him and as I was praying, in the room next door where the mother/wife was with some of the family, I started to hear them singing, "How great is our God."

I sat there and my ears couldn't quite make sense of it. And they sang it with more conviction. I don't think they knew the verses because they just kept singing the chorus, "How great is our God! How great is our God! How great is our God."

I was struck by the difference faith makes in not giving up. You can't talk yourself into that. That doesn't come from an inner strength; that comes from spiritual strength. That is God-given power in a desperate moment.

I walked out of the hospital room to give the family some time and there were three nurses standing in the hallway. You could see in their eyes -- well, two of them were not sure what to make of the whole thing. But there was one of them who had this look on her face. We looked

at each other and she knew that I knew and I knew that she knew because that's God's power. That's not something you can explain of human will.

James: Well, we have a person living in us that you can't keep down. He won't drown. He walks on the water. The grave can't hold him. Death can't hold him. There is no power of the enemy that can hold him down; that power lives in us. So when we say, "Don't give up" that's a charge. Don't stay down. Don't let the enemy put his foot on your neck, put yours on him. Walk over him like dust and like serpents. You can do that. I give you that authority and that power.

And so, what you're telling people to do right here is keep believing, keep fighting, keep perspective. But then you touch on some things and you talk about throw off weights. You say throw off anxiety and be unleashed from lies and untangled from unbelief. Touch on those a little bit.

Kyle: Some of this comes from Hebrews 12 where it says to "Run this race with perseverance and let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles." That word for hinders is any kind of weight, just any kind of weight. So I've noticed culturally that a weight that keeps a lot of us back and holds a lot of us down is anxiety. That we have a hard time moving forward. We're more likely to give up when we are overwhelmed by just the anxieties of life.

I think this culturally is an epidemic. I've seen this in our church where I preach. It is a big deal. So one of the things that I talk about in that book is learning, as Peter says, to cast your anxieties on God; not to carry a weight that he wants to carry for you.

And one of the most significant pieces of this is learning how to pray in such a way that gives you perseverance. It is not to deny that life is hard; right? Like that's not faith. Faith is not believing that everything is going to work out the way I want it to. Faith is a confidence in who God is and his faithfulness. So if I can pray that way, if I can pray with the determination of Paul in Second Corinthians four that says we're crushed. We are! "We're pressed but we are not crushed. We are knocked down but we're not destroyed." If I can pray with that kind of confidence the anxiety will go away.

So I've learned to pray with people in such a way that they don't spend all of their prayers telling God about their anxiety because that's what happens. I'm going through this difficult time and my whole prayer is about how difficult my life is, how hard my circumstances are, and I get done praying and I feel more anxious and overwhelmed than I did before. If you study the Psalms you'll see this switch, that David will flip the script in his prayers. He starts by telling God about his anxieties and then he starts to tell his anxieties about God. And the focus is not on how hard everything is but on how big God is.

I've just learned that if we can teach people to pray that way, perseverance, endurance, and strength will start to come.

James: Bigger than every mountain, able to lift us out of every valley and literally comfort us. You say, "Be unleashed from the lies." What lies?

Kyle: So as a pastor when I talk to people about not giving up, I just learned that oftentimes there is a lie that they have believed and as long as they believe that lie they're not going to be

able to endure. So if you wake up every morning and you're reading from a script for your life and that script says, "You can't do this. You don't have what it takes." Or "You don't need any help." Or "God just wants you to be happy today." If you read from a script like that, you're going to give up, you're going to quit.

So if you can identify a lie. So here's a -- if I could be personal about this for a moment. I struggled maybe four or five years ago in ministry because I was believing a lie that I didn't need help. That I should have the answers, I should be strong enough, I shouldn't ask people for help because people came to me for help. I was tired and worn out. People were *bothering* me when I used to love those same people. I needed to recognize the lie that I was believing when I said I don't need help.

I did need help. And one of the most spiritually significant moments for me is when I realized if I ask somebody for help, a lot of times they'll help me. If I say to someone, "I don't really know what I'm doing as a husband, as a father. I'm not sure what to do about this situation; will you help me?" "Yeah! I will help you." I could have been helped a long time before if I would have humbled myself enough to say, "Will you help me?" But I was believing a lie that I shouldn't need help.

James: Wouldn't it be wonderful if the church would see how much we need to move like a committed, connected, healthy body submitted to the one head, Jesus and his heart. I sense that when you're talking about not giving up you're talking about suiting up in an armor, recognizing that we have more than a conqueror living in us, therefore we can be more than conquerors submitted to that power.

I feel like as a pastor, teacher, leader, you're taking people through a simple journey to learn how to suit up so they don't have to live down, downtrodden, beat down, trampled on by the enemy but live as overcomers. Is that your goal?

Kyle: That's right! And that faith is what makes all the difference. Perseverance and endurance should come to Christians in a way that no one else can really experience because of the faith we have.

When I was a kid I would go to my grandmother's house and she would keep her puzzles in a Ziploc Bag. I'm not sure why. I think she would have said it had something to do with the Great Depression but I didn't know what that meant.

But anyway, she would work these puzzles and she would leave them out and then when she was done she'd put them in a Ziploc Bag instead of a box. As a kid we didn't have anything to do at her house so we'd get these Ziploc Bag puzzles and we'd dump them out on the table and we'd try to work these puzzles. But trying to put together a puzzle when you don't have a picture on a box is really difficult. So you'd like force some pieces together but you don't know what the picture is. You don't know if it is a skyline of Chicago or if it's like three cats with that look of entitlement that cats have. You don't know what that picture is. So we'd work at it and work at it and then we'd always quit. I never finished a Ziploc Bag puzzle because I never had the picture.

So faith allows us to say, I'm going to keep at this. I'm going to keep working at this because there is a picture. God knows what the picture is. I'm trusting that his picture is better than the picture I've got in my mind. So I'm not going to zip this up and put it away I'm going to stick with it. So when we are living in faith, when we are living with the confidence that God knows

the picture on the box, it allows us to keep with it even when a lot of those pieces don't make sense. Faith is what makes the difference.

James: Don't you appreciate a pastor that shares so simply, powerful transforming truths? I just want you to know the book is in the bookstores. Kyle will be a blessing to you.

Kyle, I know you, I know your church family and so many of the people in your church, they love our outreaches for Christ, to the least of these, to people too often overlooked. Our viewers don't overlook.

I want you to listen to our missionary overseer. He said good-bye to his wife not quite a year ago but he's spending his life trying to save the lives of those who are too often not noticed. I want you to listen to him share about the needs of others that we can immediately cure and become the miracle their heart longs for. Listen to the heart of God through this missionary overseer in behalf of others.

On the mission field:

Ralph: I'm kneeling here next to a little grave. The little boy's name was Pana. He barely made it past his second birthday, I believe. Pana died just simply from drinking contaminated water here in his village. The water that should have given life literally killed him.

Open Captions:

>> You have seen how bad my water is. I have to use this water near my house. Every time my kids drink it, they get sick.

Announcer: Millions of families around the world continue day after day trekking great distances to collect water from contaminated sources because it is their only option for survival. Approximately one in ten people on earth live without clean water resulting in over 400,000 deaths a year from drinking water that is unsafe.

Open Captions:

>> All my kids are always sick. Last year my two-year old son Pana and my seven-year old got very sick with fever, bloating and typhoid. They operated on my seven-year old's intestines but my Pana never got better because of our bad water, and then he died.

Ralph: But this story doesn't just happen in Cambodia. You can let this story be symbolic of people all over the world who drink contaminated water every day. That's why at *LIFE Outreach* we drill wells all over the world, globally, all year every year. Because people like Pana, little children, mothers, fathers, they're believing, they're hoping it will give them life, but it actually takes their life.

So please give that gift today so that we can tell families the water you're drinking is not there to take your life, it's there to give you life.

End of video

In the studio:

James: That's a very significant picture right there that -- that grave. That's a precious life that's gone. We have the perfect cure for it. It's not just a cup of water but a well of water. You've helped -- people like you drilled 6,000 and we're seeking to complete drilling another 400. We just need the help of all of our viewers if they could realize that people watching us right now are the miracle that stops that death cycle.

Randy: Recently, a relative of yours handed me a check for water. I don't normally open those. I send them to the right department and let them handle it appropriately. But he texted me later and said, "Did you see it?"

I said, "No. I don't normally do that."

He said, "Well, open it!"

I said, "All right."

So, I opened it up. It was enough for a well. So, there's one. We need 399 more.

But he was excited to do it which I loved the enthusiasm. But I texted him back and I said, "Man, you're just going to have to take my word for it, I wish you could see it. But that well will change everything for a lot of people for a long time -- a lifetime for many of them. It will change everything!"

That's what I wish you could see. I've been there. I've seen it. I've been where there is not a well, there needs to be a well. I've knelt by the graves of too many children. But I've seen what putting that source of life right there where they live every day does for them. It changes everything! I wish everybody could feel the excitement that my cousin felt in providing that well.

James: And that's what people tell us. They say, "We don't have a greater joy than giving a well or even part of a well."

It's amazing that the wells are \$4800, and that check was for \$5,000 because you texted me and told me. I texted him to say...

Randy: I got excited! I get excited every time we're able to drill another well.

James: And really, he's a young man. For him it's a big step. But people tell us what it means. And yet people also say, "I'm able to help you drill a well." And most of the support comes from \$48 chunks which gives ten people water.

Don't ever look and say because the well is \$4800, "If I could do it." A lot of people say, "I make it a prayer, goal every year to do it." And they're able to do it! They found God miraculously letting them do it.

But the \$4800 or the \$144 that gives 30 people water the rest of their life, there is a level at which you can become the miracle in someone's life. And we not only give them Water for LIFE, we tell them about the water of life, Jesus. And when they've seen love and they've experienced the effect of love giving them life, they're ready to hear about the source of that love and that life that's eternal.

Thank you for what you're doing. Would you right now go online please? The website, or dial that number that's a prayer line and right now you've just turned it into a lifeline, a miracle life line. Take your bankcard, go get it, use it like a check. If you think you're going to forget that number write it down but call it and make the best gift you can right now. If you can give a well or part of a well, do it!

We have some gifts to send you that I promise you will bless you. Beautiful "Fruit of the Spirit" bowls, one of the most beautiful gifts. I can just see so many women and so many homemakers excited, boy! This is going to be incredible. It is. Because a lot of people are going to see the "Fruit of the Spirit," not just in what you serve but your spirit and you can say, "I gave Water for LIFE." It becomes a conversation piece.

We want to bless you but you're giving people life because of the life in Christ. Thank you right now for making that call. Thank you for making the gift.

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 else can she 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 400 water wells this year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten. \$72 will be provided for 15. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift, we'll send you the "New Mercies Each Day" desk calendar. This 17-month calendar will not only help you keep track of important dates but also remind you of the Father's love and goodness with scripture quotes and encouragement from all the hosts on *LIFE Today*.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the "Fruit of the Spirit" bowl. This beautiful and decorative ceramic bowl features scripture revealing the "Fruit of the Spirit," a lovely addition to your table or home.

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 our "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms" bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio:

James: Well, I appreciate Randy standing in for Betty. Pray for her, that she will get over this cough and be back at my side. Thank you for loving her like I know you do.

If you'd like to have Kyle Idleman's book, *Don't Give Up*, I promise you he's an effective communicator with his pen. Be happy to send it. If you say, "James, if we give water and we

help, would you send us the book as a gift?" Yes, we will.

Would you join Randy and me in saying thanks to Kyle Idleman?

Kyle: Thank you.

James: Bless you! Bless the church. Thank all of you for being here. Thank you for watching.
Thanks for helping us share the life and love of God.