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Week 36: Christmas Shoes and Smiles

Sheila Walsh

Paul de Jong #1

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. Now usually you'll see me sitting over on the sofa on this particular set, but I had the opportunity to have a guest today that I know you're going to absolutely love. We met he and his wife, when Barry and I had an opportunity to be in New Zealand, and just fell in love with this family and with this church. So please help me welcome Paul de Jong. Paul, I'm so glad you're here.

Paul: It's our honor to be here.

Sheila: And you just literally just flew in from New Zealand.

Paul: Right. Last night. So if we look a little tired, we are. But great to be here.

Sheila: Before we get into your book, you have this book called, *God Money & Me*, and seriously, before the show is over, I'm going to tell you I think every family should have a copy of this book. And if you've got kids, they should have a copy of this book. Before we get into that tell us a little bit of background. So you and Marie, how long have you been building the church in New Zealand?

Paul: So we went 28 years ago. I'm a New Zealander by birth, Maria is Australian, and God literally tapped us on the shoulder, something we didn't expect when we went back. Put an ad in the paper, pulled out a guitar. We started 28 years ago and have just seen God smile and God's blessing, really in our nation, lift the value of who God is. It's been amazing to be a part of it.

Sheila: Now your book *God Money & Me*, I honestly wish, I think I said this to you when we were in makeup, I wish that I'd read this book when I was a kid because I think it literally would have changed my life. What was the motivation for you writing that book?

Paul: I've been in church my whole life and when people hear even the title, *God Money & Me*, "Here we go again about money." But for me, being brought up in church, I discovered, in fact, 15 years after we had married that we had nothing because we kept giving things away. I realized that I had been taught on giving from way back when I was just sort of knee high but had never really been taught on money.

And so we found ourselves in a place, how would we ever get a home? How will we ever get ahead because there is always a need? I kind of had this theology of we don't know when Jesus is coming back, so it doesn't matter, just give it all away. And that was just echoed every Sunday. Just keep giving. Really, it sent us on a search saying God there must be more. We need to discover what is the other because it's not working for us.

Sheila: Now you said there is a lot of myths within the church around money. What do you think some of the greatest myths are?

Paul: I think one of the big ones is that we should give all our money away.

Sheila: Now that sounds spiritual though. People would say isn't that a good thing to do?

Paul: And we lived that life because that was all we heard. This whole myth that if we just sow, harvest will come to our door rather than realizing when you begin to look again at the Bible, the Bible says a man ought to sow, or a woman, we ought to give but there is the law of sowing and reaping. I had never saw it as two complimenting laws. That there is the giving but there is also therefore looking to make sure we have harvest. A farmer spends a lot more time in the harvest than in the sowing of seed. I thought, we're giving and just expecting it to turn up at the door rather than going and getting the grain and putting that aside.

I think the catalyst was really when I said, God, it is not working. I find so many Christians living at a poverty level, living in debt, and yet being generous. So we've got something wrong. I felt like God took me to Second Corinthians 9:8 and this is what that verse says: God is able to make all grace abound toward you.

I said, God, there is a grace for everything in my life? Yes. That you always, having all sufficiency in all things -- there is a lot of "all" in that -- will have an abundance for every good work.

I looked at that and that word *sufficiency* means the perfect state of life in which you need no extra aid or support. I thought, no, we have to work just to eat. How do we get that if that's normal Christian living? I think if we're all honest it is like we are, by and large, most of us generous but how do we build something that will have all sufficiency wrapped in the core?

Sheila: I know that some of the statistics you quote in the book, you talk about 50% of marriages end in divorce, it is because of financial disagreements, troubles, 70% of newlyweds in the first year disagreements are over money. Why do you think within the church we have such a poor understanding of God's plan for money?

Paul: I think we haven't stopped long enough to go, that money is not a bad thing, the love of money. That can be when you have a lot or when you have a little, when money becomes the essence of everything we do. So we have never gone deeper. And yet God knows that here on earth for the kingdom to expand it is going to take money. For us to build a generational echo it's going to take finances. So the enemy, I think knows the power of money. I think the church is a little naive. If it is not working then surely, we can stop and go, God, why did we stay in debt and yet we are doing some things that the Bible says but possibly not everything?

Sheila: You threw in the word *generational* there. That was one of the things that really arrested me in the book. You talk about, I took some notes: Money doesn't grow on trees, it grows on generational trees. What do you mean by that?

Paul: Well, I never knew that I was called, Proverbs says that we are called to leave an inheritance to our children's children. My dad came from Holland, met my mum, she was also from Holland; came with $25 U.S. in his pocket at the age of 21. My whole life, one of eight kids I am, said to us, "I came with nothing, it taught me some great lessons. You can start from nothing. It will do you good."

Even though that sounds right, the Bible puts it another way: Every generation should leave a platform for the next generation to stand on. So when it comes to money, if we just consume it in our here and now, how do we leave an inheritance to our children's children? We leave an inheritance of character, of godly understanding, of the way that we live their lives, but also financially. So you take that back to 2 Corinthians 9:8 as I said and you realize "all sufficiency in all things," that means I don't need to go to work so that I can buy a house. I have the sufficiency for this life already cemented. I go to work because I'm called to go to work and to extend my ability to build the next generation.

And I would contend in *God Money & Me* that in one generation your grandchildren will not have to live the life you had to live directly by money. People say, "Well, money is not my God." Yes, but it directs all of their holidays, directs where we live, directs how we live and the difference we can make in others. So it really caused me to go, I've got to get into God's word and find some real answer of how I can live a different way. A generous heart I had always had. We had always lived that part. So there were parts of the equation we had right.

I'm a pastry cook; well, I was for four years and you realize you need *all* of the ingredients to cause something to rise and to be cooked and made that's really presentable and people love to eat. If you cut the corner somewhere or you don't know -- I don't have some of the ingredients in the cupboard, you pray the price later. I think that's the same when it comes to *God Money & Me*.

Sheila: It's interesting, upstairs in my office I have a couple of letters from people who wrote in and said, "I've been tithing regularly but I still don't have any financial freedom." You say, you talk about that that in itself is not enough. Talk about your four jars. I love this!

Paul: Well, I remember in the church I was sharing around the whole *God Money & Me* thought is there are 13 reasons I found in the Bible how you can tithe and not get financial breakthrough. So it's not just tithing is the thing; you honor God with the first 10th. We talk about that stewarding, and that's important, but it is only one part of what I say are four ingredients to have a breakthrough financially and to be positioned to be able to create this generational echo. And see 2 Corinthians 9:8 become a reality for that generation.

The first is obvious, to honor God, to steward what belongs to God. So our increase. Every time we increase, it is not an Old Testament law, it was in the Old Testament. It is an ordinance. And around that thought of God's first, that 10th, it really decides what spirit is attached to the rest of the money we have.

The second thing we've been taught well in churches, seeding. And that's where over and above sowing into our local church, doing it God's way is seed creates a harvest.

What I didn't realize was the third component which was saving. How we've got to go and get the harvest and I now would say to people, you need to lock your seeding and your saving percentage together. That saving helps you buy a house. It is for anything that will go generationally. It is not for your retirement. It is not for a new car. It is not for a holiday. It is what will go into the next generation and then the next generation.

And then the fourth one, which we think we know how to do is spending. Where I say no, we need to restrict our spending, again in this principled format, as to what our income is. Then people said, "I couldn't live like that and reduce it." Well, maybe we need to work out other ways to get a greater amount in. Study a little more for seasons to get out of debt. We might even work a second job but those four things of stewarding, seeding, saving, and spending.

I think I put it in the book, I think the ultimate goal would be to live -- if the first 10th is God's, then the second 10th if we could get to that should be seeding because that creates harvest. And then if that's a 10/10 there should be a third 10th, ultimately, which would be that we are saving, putting into what will go generationally. So if you're in debt, we're going to pay off debt first, then we're going to build it into our house and that's going to have an echo in generations. That means we live on 70. Some people go, "I could never do that!" Well, start somewhere. God's God, that's a matter of obedience, start with two percent seeding, two percent saving and live on 86 percent. If you've got a lot of money, why wouldn't you live 10% goes to the church, goes to God's house, 20% seeding, 20% saving and live on 50%. So it works everywhere. I know I'm talking a lot, but I get pretty passionate because it's been...

Sheila: No, it's huge! This is life-changing stuff.

Paul: Well, I pray it was and will be because the echo back is exactly that. We have people in their 60s, 70s going, "Nobody taught me not to give everything away." And for Maria and I, we actually felt dirty for a while to reduce our seeding so that we could work principally. So we now, by God's grace are living in a 10/20/20/50. But we're living a principled way of living. And if God speaks, we'll do something in the moment based on faith, otherwise we need faith to live the principle. I would say to everyone, it doesn't matter where you're at, you can start reducing immediately your debt and start setting up your generations if you begin to say there is an answer. But it is more than just tithing. Tithing is honoring of God. It gets God's breath in us to be able to do the other things well and we will get ahead.

Sheila: Would you unpack seeding a little more? Because I think a lot of people might think, okay, I get the tithing thing but I'm not sure what you mean by seeding. For just the regular family watching this, where do they begin seeding?

Paul: So I would say, okay, if God's word is true and the first 10th belongs to God, then start where you can. Let's say, let's start 10/2/2/86. So two percent, you put two percent of your income aside. Many people do it after tax for the seeding. So two percent would go there and that begins to mount up and then you have a neighbor that needs something. You have a special building project you want to give to. You have missionaries you want to support. Whatever you feel to do, you've got money already set aside that you can be a blessing to.

So we have children at *LIFE* now who have four jars and if they get $10 a month or $10 a week, they live a 10/10/10/70 in their seeding job. They have a kid at school, they can buy lunch for him. They can give to special projects. They can help, again, other initiatives because it's already set aside. Not only that, whatever they're seeding, they're creating a harvest of equal value that's going to go to their home and go to the generations that follow them. So that's how we work. It's kind of like, I was taught you just sow and the harvest will come. Then I realized, no, a farmer goes and gets the harvest. That is what seeding and saving is all about. It's the ability to see things different and to take that principled faith approach.

Sheila: The thing I love but that is that sometimes when you hear of a need you're suddenly like where am I going to get any money to... But if that becomes a part of the disciplined part of your life then it's there and you're able to respond quickly. Because that was the thing that Barry and I noticed when we were with your church. They're a very generous family. And I think that that speaks from the leadership down that the people are learning to live generously but not foolishly.

Paul: No. I think sometimes, and we certainly were like that, we were giving money away that we didn't have because it was a great cause, and this is the will of God, and let's just do that. Whereas where we want people to get to is like, no, give away things you have put aside so you're giving what you've built to that point and then you're not forfeiting your future, you're living principled.

That's the thing. That's why I totally believe in tithing and stewarding. It brings God's blessing into our financial world but it's only one ingredient. Then the seed is what creates a harvest. Not just for us! Often in church we talk about seeding and it is all about our harvest. It is about the harvest that it creates for the kingdom. And also, it's then our saving is our security that is setting up the generations that follow. So we can experience the enjoyment of getting debt down and then getting our own home, but that's going to our grandkids. So our grandkids all have an account. So every time we get paid money goes into that account every week. They don't even know it. When they get married or 25, I think, we've decided, they might know but might not have heard about it, but we've got an account for them. It is not to pay for their wedding, not to pay for holidays, honeymoon, it's to pay for their home on top of whatever else is there so they don't have to work their whole life trying to find this sufficiency. They're beginning to go, this is normal Christian living.

And I would say to everyone, no matter where you're at, normal Christian living is 2 Corinthians 9:8. Read it over and over and get a revelation that that's where God wants me to get to and if I can help or we can help in any way, the *God Money & Me* will give you the pathway and undo some of these myths, which is money is bad and money is just going to come to you.

I've said this to many people. If you pray and ask God for money, you really don't want his money. People go, "What do you mean?" Because it won't have a serial number on it. It needs something that comes from a human hand. God has used somebody to make a difference. So we need to get practical and stay spiritual.

Sheila: The thing I wonder, when you as a church community at Life Church in New

Zealand, what kind of impact has that type of living have on your community, on your business community, on those who are watching in?

Paul: It's amazing. So we're 28 years now. This year we will do close to $10 million worth of community impact. So as one church we felt like we need to be the hands of Jesus. And so it is not like just give everything -- don't give everything away. If God absolutely speaks to you and he may do that a few times in the life, but that's not every time there is need. Live principally.

And by the end of next year our goal is that every calendar year, we as a church will give more than $20 million worth of community impact in our community. So we're not just known for church on Sunday, we're known for the difference of feeding people that are hungry, we're currently working on reforming foster care in New Zealand. The government has opened up the doors for that. We've got special needs homes. We've got educational facilities for people that can't get into the work force. I think we've got 500 students in there at the moment. And the government just said we are producing more outcome than any other organization nationally.

It is not look at what we're doing. It's like if we can deal with the money issue we can set up platforms where there is a paradigm shift of God at the center of it all but God doesn't want us to just live in the here and now he wants us to think about how do we live this generationally?

Sheila: Your book, *God Money & Me*, fantastic! We'll be glad to send it to you. You can get it on Amazon. But you have other resources as well. Don't you have video teachings maybe for pastors who want to start doing this in their church?

Paul: I think again, money is just a deep-rooted issue. So we did do a five-week curriculum, which all of those weeks have a 22-minute video that I've put together that you can have your small group sit down, I can talk through the video. They can get it online, access it online. If they get the book, the book is written in such a way, there is five segments, they can answer the questions, go to group, hear another perspective and discuss it. That has begun to unlock -- I'm not sure we make the shifts we need to make just by preaching on Sunday. I think we need to respond to it and communicate around it.

Sheila: Wow! Again, I'll tell you how you can get ahold of the book after this. But one of the great things is that when you begin to use your money the way God intended, then you're able to reach out and touch the lives of so many. I'm going to show you just one of the ways that we're very excited about doing that. Would you watch this?

On the mission field:
[Child crying]

Janice: Is he saying something?

Open Captions:
>> He says, "It's paining."

Janice: I'm in a village in Angola and came upon this child. This little boy is Agusto and this breaks my heart. His little feet are in some of the worst shape I've ever seen. And there are many in this village with horrible conditions on their feet. But this little guy is just scratching; they itch so bad. They're completely infected. He said there's insects that have gotten into his feet. I'll be surprised if he doesn't lose his toe. Then the disease comes in through their feet and just goes throughout their body. It can actually kill them -- all from going barefoot in conditions that we're in right here.

I know *Shoes and Smiles* is a campaign that we get really excited about and it's fun but this is why it's fun, because it saves lives. You would think just a pair of shoes is not life-saving, but in areas like this, in conditions like this, it is. We can change it for Agusto. We can help him. We're going to clean these up and get him a pair of shoes and help him.

Please do what you can. Help bring shoes to little children like Agusto all over the world. You can be a part of something big -- and something even fun! But this is the reason we do it. Please!

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: You might wonder why we're starting a little bit early for Christmas because we call this "Christmas Shoes and Smiles" but it is simply because we want to get all the supplies in so that we can make sure we get them sent out by Christmas. Our goal for this time is 150,000 children to be given their very first pair of shoes.

These shoes, we get them for $3.60 and they're great. They last well. When the children have to go into the water, the water drains out and it protects their feet from these terrible diseases. You can help. For $36 you can send ten pairs of shoes; $72, 20 pairs; for $180 you can send 50 pairs of shoes!

I so often think that in this nation we get so caught up in self at Christmas time and we buy a bunch of stuff that we don't need and we don't want. Wouldn't it be amazing to be able to sit around on Christmas morning and know that there are children running around with shoes on for the first time in their life?

There's a lot of moms out there, I met them last time I was there in Angola, who are praying not for a new iPhone for their kid. What they simply want is a pair of shoes. You can do that.

The other thing that Barry and I are doing this year for Christmas for each other is we have some amazing doctors who will perform cleft palate surgery, cleft lip or cleft palate. In some of these nations, when a child is born that way, there is superstition; they're looked on as if they're cursed by God which we know is not right. But some of these amazing doctors from the states will go and do these surgeries and they'll do one for $500. Wouldn't that be a great gift to give to your significant other for Christmas rather than one more sweater or another pair of shoes they don't really need? We can make such a difference this Christmas season to children all around the world who are just longing to know, does anybody even know that we're alive?

So would you go to your phone? Would you dial the number on your screen? Would you give the very best gift possible? And you know that every Christmas we'll come out with a new little shoe for your Christmas tree. This year it's green. For any gift at all we'll send you that. And if you're able to give $100 then we have three of them from the last two years. We have the crystal one, we have the green and we have the red. I know you don't do it for that. It is just our way of saying thank you. And also, when you see that hanging on your tree it is a lovely thing to think that there's a child with their very first pair of shoes.

So we can do this together, 150,000 children, if we do this together. So please, go to your phone, give the best gift possible and let's bring some joy with Christmas Shoes and Smiles.

Begin video clip
Announcer: Poverty is a killer and because of it children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack a food and clean water but also from a lack of things we often take for granted like a simple pair of shoes.

Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections and disease that could lead to crippling consequences and even death.

By responding today you can help immediately secure and begin shipping Christmas shoes to 150,000 children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of $36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of $72 will provide 20-pair and a gift of $180 will help provide 50 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request this beautifully crafted green crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display at each Christmas. With your gift of $100 or more you may also request this keepsake boxed set of *LIFE*'s Christmas shoe ornaments. Finally, please consider a gift of $1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft palate surgeries. And you may request the beautiful "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms" bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today!
End of video

On the mission field:
Isak: I'm going to tell you what a happy day this is for me. I'm here with 20 kids who have all received shoes today because someone like you was generous enough to say I'll give $72. Or maybe two of you gave $36 and that gift of $36 meant that ten or $72 meant that 20 children got shoes here today. Maybe you could go even further. Maybe you can give an extra special gift.
What that would mean is that you would extend this line just that much further. You would extend the expression of God's heart and his hands to these children and you would extend the joy in villages just like this.

Please! Do it today. Get online or dial that number on your screen and give. Give a gift, an extra special, above normal gift, that is the gift of shoes, the gift of joy.

Sheila: Thank you so much! And if the lines are busy, please write the number down and keep calling until you get through. Paul, I want to thank you so much. I know that you just literally got here from New Zealand but the fact that you would take time out to be with us. This is a fantastic book! I'm so grateful for it.

Paul: We're praying that every person finds a pathway to financial freedom. That there is a way in God that he has everything covered, we just need to understand it and implement it.

Sheila: Yeah. Awesome! For any gift at all too we will send you Paul's book, *God Money & Me*. I know I got a copy for my son but my husband and I, we're going through it at the moment and we've got a few adjustments in ours. But I just know that it will be such a gift to you and that it will really set you free to be able to live the way that God wants you to live in real financial freedom.

So for James and Betty, for *LIFE Today*, thanks so much for being with us. We'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*.