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Week 31: Summer WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Priscilla Shirer #1

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me. We've got an enthusiastic audience because one of your friends is here. Why don't you tell us who is going to join us?

Sheila: I'm excited! I love this girl so much. I've watched as God has placed his hand on her life and just expanded her territory, just trusted her with new things and yet she has remained exactly the same, God-loving -- God-loving girl. Without any further ado, please welcome our guest, Priscilla Shirer! So excited.

Randy: I thought she was going to tear up during your introduction.

Priscilla: We've known each other a long time.

Sheila: A long time.

Priscilla: So you travel a little distance down the road with somebody and you keep seeing God's faithfulness in each other's lives with marriage and children. Gosh, Christian is 22 now? I remember when he was a little boy.

Sheila: And your boys were very little boys. Now they're like what?

Priscilla: They're giants is what they are. They're giants! So we're just raising kids and seeing God's faithfulness in that just makes you grateful.

Randy: Sheila alluded to your expanding roles and part of what we want to talk about today is your movie career. We can say that. You have a movie career.

Priscilla: I don't know how that happened!

[Laughter]

Randy: But it's been doing great. I just saw *Overcomer*, your latest film, it was really good. You, of course, were fabulous. But truly, what is it about the movie medium that gets you excited and made you want to be a part of it?

Priscilla: It is a challenge for me because I'm not trained in terms of acting and filmmaking and I know that people who did that for a living, it is a craft, it is a for real deal. So I feel very grateful that the Lord has allowed me to kind of stretch in this way. I feel a little weak but I love that because his strength is made perfect in our weakness. So I just offer him what I've got and go okay, Lord, if I were you, I would not want to embarrass myself.

[Laughter]

So if you'll take this little bit and make something that will glorify your name, I'd be so grateful.

What draws me to it is that we live in an age -- I'm so grateful that we get to live during the time period where there are filmmakers who are writing stories that are beautiful stories that are unapologetically gospel; that they're not trying to diminish the glory of Jesus Christ in these films. And there is excellence in their craft, technical excellence. There's never been a time in history where there's been such excellence in

cinematography matched and intersected with a clear message of Jesus Christ. So the fact that God is letting me be a part of that, I just feel grateful -- feel grateful for that.

Sheila: Can we go back to, can we go back a little bit to *War Room*. Did you have a clue -- I mean wow! How God was going to place his hand on this life, on this movie and the life that it was going to give to millions?

Priscilla: Unbelievable. Unbelievable!

Sheila: How did you get involved?

Priscilla: The Kendrick Brothers called me one day and said, "Every time we write these lines for this particular character, we're thinking to ourselves, what would Priscilla say? And we're writing it that way. So we just wanted to call to see if you would do it." I said, "No! I'm not going to do that. Are you kidding me?" Because we've all seen that movie before where it could have been a good movie except there was this one actor that was terrible.

[Laughter]

And so I actually said "no" to them to begin with; mostly out of fear and insecurity. It was just something I'd never done before, even considered doing before. I gave them the name of some actual actresses that would have been good in that role. They just said, "No. We kind of feel compelled to at least ask you to pray about and consider doing this." They said, "Read the script. When you read it, you'll see it's not entertainment only. It is ministry."

And of course, when I read the script, the Kendrick Brothers are basically preachers who happen to make films to share the gospel and it was clear ministry in that script. So I'm grateful that the Lord did not let me talk myself out of and work myself out of and allow my fear and insecurity to keep me from being a part of the gift that *War Room* was

because that's what happens with fear and insecurity. It doesn't stop God's work, it stops us from being able to be a part of God's work.

So the gift that it's been to me to be able to be a part of God's work through that film, because you're right, it's gone further and wider and broader than anything we could have ever imagined. We actually prayed as a cast and crew for lots of things but one of the things we prayed was that the film would be in the top five.

And the reason we prayed that is because if it's in the top five then entertainment outlets have to talk about it. If it is in the top three they talk about it regularly. And then obviously, we didn't even pray about it being number one. We were just like, Lord, if it could be in the top five that would be the biggest miracle ever because then they'll have to invite these filmmakers to be interviewed. And we know if there is a microphone in any of our faces we're going to tell them that Jesus Christ is Lord -- is what we're going to tell them.

So we wanted that opportunity, and then of course, the Lord as always, he did exceedingly, abundantly, above and beyond. It was number one. So we got lots of opportunities to tell people about Jesus.

Sheila: I wonder, what is the experience of working with the Kendrick Brothers when you're actually on the set? What's that like?

Priscilla: Well, you know with the Kendrick Brothers and then also another brother duo, the Erwin Brothers who also do incredible faith-based films, all of them are not only unapologetic about their faith on screen but on set. So everybody that is cast and crew, interns, everybody, it doesn't matter if you're in front of the camera or behind the camera, every single morning 7:00 a.m. we're all gathering for devotions and for prayer. Every single morning of filming.

And then when there are certain scenes that we're going to shoot where they feel like this

one in particular could be one where someone in the theater comes to know Jesus Christ as Lord or has some sort of moment with the Holy Spirit, before we film that one they will stop everybody, gather them together from wherever they are and we all get down on bended knee and we ask the Holy Spirit to be on that scene so that God can be glorified.

So man, I again feel grateful because they are trying to make sure that God is glorified, that his people are edified through these films. And again it feels like a gift to be a part of a set like that.

Randy: That's amazing, just from a production standpoint. I don't know if most people realize how long it takes to make one of these films. Like *War Room*, how long were you there?

Priscilla: Eight to ten weeks. So it basically took all summer. We just sort of moved to North Carolina, my family and I and its 13 hours a day every day.

Randy: I was going to say it's a long day every day.

Priscilla: It is a long day every day. It is a full on commitment. Of course, with this set, Sundays we had off so we could all go worship together at churches in the area where we were filming.

This next movie *Overcomer*, I was only on set for about two weeks. My role is a lot smaller. But they filmed the same amount of time, about eight to ten weeks. But over all it takes them two years to make a film between the writing and then the filming of it and then all of the scoring and everything, it's a two to three year project. So that's why it's been about three or four years since *War Room* came out.

The nuggets and the idea for this next film, *Overcomer*, I remember Alex and Stephen telling me about that four years ago. And the Lord just ruminating the idea around in their mind. The concept of drawing the church to recognize who she is, who her identity is

and who our identity individually is rooted in Christ Jesus, just that whole thing, they were ruminating about that four years ago. So to see the Lord now bring it onto screen and to know that it is going to be able to be seen by people coming out in August, I'm just excited about that...

Randy: You want to give people a little taste of this film?

Sheila: Yeah! You definitely want to see a clip. You'd like to see a clip? Okay. Watch this.

Begin video clip

>> You need to do your fighting in prayer.

>> You've been a good enough father.

>> I don't want to be a "good enough father."

>> Let's go! Let's go!

[Cheering]

>> Shoot it!

[Buzzer sounds]

[Cheering and applause]

>> The town's oldest manufacturing plant is closing its doors.

>> Most of my players have parents that work at the plant. This ain't going to be pretty.

>> I'm down three coaches but I do think I have a solution for cross country.

>> No! I don't even like running. Don't die! Don't die! Cross country is not even a real sport. Why would anyone want to do this?

>> I'm just impressed that you finished.

>> You are my best option.

>> Y'all here for tryouts?

>> No, sir. We're just hanging out.

>> Are you here for cross country?

>> Yes, sir.

>> I had one girl show up and she's got asthma.

>> Oh you mean Hannah Scott. Do you enjoy running?

>> It's really the only thing I'm good at.

>> Why have a season with one runner?

>> One runner matters.

>> Thomas, you got time for a visit?

>> Hello, coach! So you changed force. You still have got no team. Well, that's sad even

for me!

>> I get it. You have to coach cross country. But it's not the end of the world.

>> For someone who knows the Lord you're acting like somebody who doesn't.

>> You give some very inspirational speeches to your players about stepping up under pressure and going the extra mile.

>> Hannah, you're getting faster.

>> Your life is worth so much more than this.

>> To who?

>> When you find your identity in the one who created you, it will change your whole perspective. Something or someone will have first place in your heart.

>> Where's your team?

>> She's right there.

What have you allowed to define you?

[Cheers & Applause]

>> Is that?

>> That's Hannah!

>> Run Hannah!

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: August 23rd, write it down now! Get your tickets early. Just even that clip is so inspiring when he says, "Run Hannah!" I get goosebumps. Tell us a little bit, as much as you can without ruining the plot of the main themes of this movie.

Priscilla: Yeah, it really is about identity. It is about where your significance is rooted. How you really define yourself. We are made, created in the image of God. That means I get to be proud of my individuality and my uniqueness because it is an expression of the creative genius of God.

So when someone tries to diminish whether it is my gender, whether it is my race, whether it is the uniqueness of any part of my personality, I can say, "Oh no, no, no! I'm made in the image of God." He intended for me to reflect his glory in this body, in this packaging. And his uniqueness is displayed through all of the myriad of ways that he has reflected his own glory through the uniqueness of who we all are.

But then as a Christian, I am being conformed into the image of Christ. So as his image bearer, my whole job is to be a mirror that reflects his glory to the world. I need to find my significance in how well I'm reflecting my God to the world. Everything else will leave me less than satisfied. If I try to find my significance in my job or my ministry even, if I try to find my significance in what other people say about me or whether or not they validate me, man, I will be left wanting because I'm not made for that. What I'm made for is to be a reflection of God. To the extent that I do that is the extent that I will find fulfillment in my life.

Sheila: That is powerful!

Randy: It is interesting in the film that you are the character, you play the character who is communicating that to a 15-year old girl. We kind of have a generation that is searching for identity in so many ways. What kind of impact do you think the medium of this film will have maybe on some of the younger ones that see it?

Priscilla: It was very intentional by the filmmakers. We live in a day where because younger people, all of us, but younger people are being inundated through social media of this constant need for approval. They are constantly waiting on their posts to be liked, we're constantly waiting to see whether others are going to approve of our selfie. We can't even decide which selfie to post because we've taken 365 of them to see which lighting is going to be the best. It is all about me, me, me and whether others approve of me. There's no distancing from it because we've got the thing in our hand. So we're able to constantly be reminded as to whether or not we measure up, whether or not people approve of us.

So for a younger generation in particular, I think they're going to relate to this girl and how she is trying to navigate. And her circumstances, she's without parents so she is even trying to navigate the sense of loss there, the feeling of abandonment, and having to reorient the way she relates to others, the way she sees herself; having to reorient that and base it off of who God says she is not about what her past experiences have been, what people have said to her or of her. She is having to reframe her thinking.

But this is what the Word of God does. It renews our minds. It literally changes our perspective and our vantage point so we can start living out of the truth of who God says we are, not the falsities that we've heard either from the enemy or how the enemy has tried to use past experiences to sort of skew and distort our perspective of who we truly are.

Randy: How much -- we have tons of questions, don't we?

Sheila: You go first.

Randy: Okay, thank you. That message that's being communicated through the film, I'm curious how much of that resonated with you?

Priscilla: Well, a lot. [Laughing] You know what? Every single one of these films, *War Room*, and then last year, *I Can Only Imagine*, and then this one *Overcomer*, every single one of them and -- you'll know this so much, Sheila, every time we write a book, every time we write a Bible study, that's a work the Lord is doing in our lives, and ministry just happens to be an overflow of the stuff God's doing in us.

So with this, man, you don't really realize how much of your identity is wrapped up in something until it's stripped away. And when the thing is stripped away then you recognize that you were clamoring for it; that in some way you were trying to find -- your significance was tied to it. You didn't realize until when it was pulled away did it just disappoint you or did it decimate you?

And there have been some things even in the past year, as the Lord has allowed them, I think providentially, to sort of be pulled away just a little bit. I've gotten a clear view of myself and man, it's made me fall on my knees before God and say, Lord, forgive me for gosh, finding some sense of satisfaction from any external -- any external approval or appreciation from other people or certain group of people. Lord, help me to be so rooted in you and who you say that I am that I am not... maybe I'm disappointed but not decimated -- that I can move on. Because I know who it is that my daddy says that I am and I find my significance in you instead of someone or something else.

Sheila: Will there be some additional, you did this with *War Room*, will there be an additional product release? Like will we have a book from you? What will we have that will go with the movie?

Priscilla: This is one thing that I love also about these films. And you see the intentionality of, again, the Kendrick Brothers and wanting to equip people. That they're

not just wanting to entertain you, they don't want you to just have great popcorn and a good coke and a nice experience at the movie, they want your life to be changed. So they did ask me with *Courageous* to write *The Resolution for Women* to join with them in that effort.

They wrote *The Resolution for Men* there. And then with *War Room* they wrote *The Battle Plan for Prayer* and I wrote a book called *Fervent*. Then with this one, they have written a book and a Bible study that speaks to identity and they asked me to concentrate specifically on younger women. They said if there was something for teenagers, 20s, 30s, something that they could do a Bible study on for eight weeks, we've called that one *Defined: Who God Says I Am*.

And then a book as well called *Radiant*. It is just, again, being a radiant reflection of the creative genius of God through the unique way that he's created you both physically and in your personality, and then watching Christ change your whole perception of who it is that you are so instead of making decisions and relating to people based on insecurities and fears and shame or that sense of abandonment, whatever it is you're struggling with, you reorient that and you start living based on the truth of who God says you are.

Randy: I think that's important. It is not just like a marketing tactic. Because when you watch the film, especially if you're not a believer or you're struggling, that sets you up for a real change in your life. So I appreciate the fact that you're putting the effort in to follow-up and disciple that person who may have been impacted by that film.

Sheila: And I'm going to try and talk Priscilla into staying over maybe for another day and maybe we'll get to do another show because there is so much I'd like to talk to her about.

But remember, the movie comes out August 23rd. Thank you audience! Where would I be without you?

[Laughter]

But one of the things that I love so much about Priscilla's heart that means a lot to James and Betty, and also to Randy and I, is when you've had your life radically changed by Christ you want others to know that there is a God who cares about them. So we're going to show you just one of the ways that we would love to have you help us make a difference in the lives of some others. Would you watch this?

On the mission field:

Announcer: Water sources like these serve many purposes. Some provide a way for travel. Others, water for people's animals. Still others provide a means for bathing. But the problem is when these same water sources provide access to the only drinking water people have it can be deadly.

Open captions:

>> We get our water from the river Rusizi. My kids drink it and get very sick. I feel like I just want to die.

Announcer: Sopi's emotions overwhelmed her as she recalled the death of her two children after they drank contaminated water from the only source available to them.

Jeanne: As beautiful as this setting looks, it's so deceiving because this water is killing the children of this village.

Open captions:

>> My heart hurts because after my three kids died, I have four children that have to drink the same dirty water, and they will probably die too. I have no one to help me with my kids.

Jeanne: We can stop the *death* that's coming to this village because of water. We can change that for them. We can bring them water that is healthy and pure. And these parents won't have to worry about their children drinking this water and it killing them.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: This isn't just a problem in the countries where we work and where we put water wells. If it is a problem for anybody on the planet then it is a problem for us as the body of Christ. We are on this earth at this specific moment for a purpose. Where there is hurt, where there is brokenness, I can't imagine what it is like as a mom to give your children water that you know potentially could kill them -- but you've nothing else to give them.

I have walked in Angola with mothers down to their watering hole and I've watched -- and further up the stream there's animals in the water and it's filthy. I've seen the tears as some moms have taken me to the little graves where they've buried their children asking God, "Please! Please! I don't want to bury one more child."

But the great news is that you and I can make a difference. Our goal here at *LIFE* this year is 400 new water wells. Isn't that amazing? To be able to go into a village and say, "We have come in the name of Jesus Christ who is life and we're going to put life into your village with a water well." And we can do it if you will work with us. It is very doable. What do we have to do, Randy to get the specific numbers to make this happen?

Randy: Well, on average a single well costs about \$4800 to drill. That's an average based on ones we're doing. By the way, we're approaching this year, I'm hoping we'll hit 7,000 wells total that this ministry has been a part of which to me is very exciting. Because this is the part where I get excited. We can make a difference. We can change the course of these people's lives by giving them the water that will not make them sick but actually make them healthy. We can save lives.

So you ask about the numbers, yes, \$4800. If God has blessed you so that you can give a well today, I just ask you to take a moment and say a little prayer and say, "God, is that what you want me to do?" Many of you are like me, that's a lot of money. \$48 will reach an average of ten children for a lifetime providing clean drinking water. \$144 will help 30 people. Those are just average numbers. The important thing is that we do something. Because when we come together as the body of Christ, we can do a lot. Your little and my little combined with all the people that support this ministry, it makes a huge impact. You literally save lives.

So I'm asking you to do it right now. Go online, go to the phones, whichever you prefer but just do what God puts on your heart. Do it today and know that when you do, you'll not only be giving water for a lifetime, you'll be giving Water for LIFE.

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 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

On the mission field

Tammy: When you look around at the water in front of me you can see -- you can see that it is a source of water that is not life-giving. It is so heartbreaking to see some place that is so peaceful yet is producing such death. It makes you sit back and think, what can I do to change this situation? There's got to be a solution. There has to be a solution.

And the beautiful thing is that we know that there is a solution and we have people on the ground right now that can make a difference. But we can't do it ourselves. We need you. If we can come in and drill a well for these people it would serve over 1,000 people -- 1,000 people, one water well.

So I'm asking you today if you would partner with me and do whatever you can. Anything will help. Go to phones, go online and don't hesitate. The problem is here and the solution is here. They're both here but we need you to help. Please, won't you do something today?

End of video

In the studio:

Randy: Thank you for joining us. If you're still praying about it, don't pray too long. Go to the phones, go online, do what you can. It will mean a lot. You know what? On August 23rd, if you haven't already made plans, you should go see a little movie called *Overcomer*. What do you think?

Sheila: If you've made plans cancel them.

[Laughter]

And go see *overcomer* August 23rd. And would you please help us thank our wonderful guest Priscilla Shirer?

Priscilla: I love you!

Randy: She is going to come back, you know.

Sheila: I know. We've talked her into staying over.

Randy: One more show. Join us. Don't miss it on *LIFE Today*.

Sheila: See you next time! God bless!