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Week 37: Christmas Shoes and Smiles

James and Betty Robison

Weston and Jodi Clark

James: I'm always happy to come into the home with you or wherever you're watching. I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

I've got to be honest with you, my heart's -- I don't know how to explain it. It's a little heavy. I've told folks, I've told some of the audience here, when you're in your 70s, you've been married over 50 years you start saying good-bye to a lot of people you love. We know where they are. We've got a daughter in heaven. But you kind of feel let's say compassion for people who have got an empty spot.

This time of the year, around 9/11, I don't forget. I remember when I walked into the family room. Betty said, "Somebody flew into the -- a plane hit one of the buildings in New York." I sat down and I'm sitting there to see the next plane hit. I'm sitting there when the buildings come down. I'm watching the first responders run in while people run out. When the buildings collapsed, I watched them run back in. They ran in to see if they can find some still alive and get them out.

I want to thank all of you, every law enforcement officer, every armed service member and family member, I just thank you. Excuse my tears but I love you. I love your love and I love your courage. I just want you to be honored and respected and protected too.

God, I pray for every armed service member and their family. I pray for every first responder or police and law enforcement, sheriffs, everybody, God, trying to protect people. I just want you to protect them and bless them. Let them know we love them and

appreciate them; in Jesus's name.

We have guests today that know what it is to love people. Weston and Jodi Clark. I don't know how to introduce you. Good gracious you look like a cowboy.

[Laughter]

You've got a real pretty little bride here, your wife you obviously love. You can tell y'all look like y'all really like each other. You're leaning over. You can't hear good enough?

[Laughter]

I want you to tell us about your journey. We're really glad to have you here.

Weston: Well, it is an honor to be in your living room here sharing our God journey. And if I may, can I tell the beginning from the end?

James: I wish you would. Yeah.

Weston: We have a show called *The Experience* on Discovery Channel where we surprise America's heroes with different country stars, celebrities, rock stars. We just got an introduction last week. But it is reaching culture. Just like you're talking about the first responders, they rush in with no judgment. They don't care what religion that person is, what color, ethnic group. They're rushing in with love and that's what we do, that's what we want to be able to do is to rush in with love, with no judgment, and to be able to influence culture. That's what we're doing is surprising America's heroes and giving them that honor.

I saw a police officer sitting out in the crowd and I want to say thank you. Thank you for serving. Thank you for putting it on the line every day. Thank you. That's a big thing to us. I think the flavor that we had walking through life gave us the ability to be able to

love and the compassion we do now.

When I was a little boy, my parents got divorced when I was three years old. Then that kind of escalated back and forth from bitter child custody battles. I was kidnapped as a child. I was kidnapped from one parent to the other, taking me away from my dad. Coming home from summer vacation with my dad he told me, "Run through the house, go down to your uncle's meat store, and then I'll pick you back up." He was trying to get me to come and live with him. They packed me in a box of meat because the police of surrounded the meat packing plant. They packed me in a box of meat and shipped me to my dad's restaurant to bypass the police.

James: That's an amazing journey.

Weston: So that was by age six. When I was eight years old, I had older sisters and they were in the drug culture. So I was eight years old, my sisters were getting me stoned in the third grade, fourth grade, my sisters were getting me stoned. When I was in the sixth grade I was going to senior kegs. And by the time I was in the seventh grade I was one of the largest drug dealers in school. Because my sisters were bikers; my one sister was a hard-core biker and so I was getting the drugs from her and taking it to school.

My eighth-grade year I ran for student council president and before I even got up and made my speech half the school stood up and applauded because I was selling to half the school.

[Laughter]

James: I'm sorry.

Weston: So that was my first campaign.

James: Don't let a lot of politicians in on your strategy.

Weston: Well, in Colorado.

James: Beautiful state making very poor decisions and it breaks my heart.

Weston: But it is a gorgeous state because you wake up in the morning and go, not another nice day. It's gorgeous there.

James: It is. And it seems like too many people have forgotten who created all of it and that he created it for the kids he loves -- he loves us. All right, you're messed up right now. Go on your journey. No, you tell us where you were winning the election because you got everybody high.

Weston: I won the election and my mother went through another divorce. She had got pregnant by a gentleman, so she was having a real tough time with it. But she always tape-recorded her recordings, whether it was with the D.A. or the attorney. And one afternoon I listened to her tape recording. It was a conversation with her and the D.A., and she had filed a state's petition to take me out of the house. They were going to come and get me and put me in a boy's home in Worland, Wyoming.

When I found that out, I sold my model 870 Wingmaster Remington to my wrestling coach for \$100. My girlfriend gave me a gold pocket watch, significance of that gold pocket watch will follow. I had a buddy take me to the train station in Rawlins, Wyoming, and I got a ticket to Chico, California. When I asked the lady, "Can I get a ticket to Chico?" She says, "Honey, I can't get you to Chico, but I can get you to Sacramento, which is 60 miles south. That will be \$99.98. So I had two cents in my pocket and a gold pocket watch.

It was amazing what God did and how he protected me. But I was on the streets. I was on the streets. I hadn't eaten in about two weeks, and I took that gold pocket watch and I went into a Denny's restaurant at 2:00 in the morning and I told the waiter that I'd got a

job and after my first check I'd come back and redeem that gold pocket watch. Obviously, I didn't have a job. I can remember what I ordered. I ordered steak and eggs, extra hash browns, extra eggs. Ate that and about two blocks down it all came up because I hadn't eaten.

So I lived a long time on the streets and working on the drilling rigs. Then I was selling very, very heavily. Got mixed up with the Mexican mafia. I was selling to a gentleman that had gotten cut off from the Mexican mafia and he was getting his cocaine through me. Then he had actually sold a machine gun to a, let's just say "outlaw biker group." I don't want to mention them, and he left town. Well, they found out that I was his connection. I've got to tell you, it is quite intimidating when you have five to six Harleys pull up at your door at 7:00 a.m. in the morning wanting money that you have no idea. That's back in the pay phone days so they were having me call. I would call a pager that he had. So I was having to put coins in the pay phone with five to six Harleys behind me.

So praise God that the Lord protected me there. So I ended up in Artesia, New Mexico. And I am giving you the Reader's Digest, the quick version of this.

James: Yeah, we'll have to have it.

[Laughter]

Weston: So I was in a relationship with a woman that had gotten a divorce. Him and a gentleman came over and pulled a gun on me. When the police showed up they actually arrested him and put him in jail. So he went to jail for about six months.

But in that time, I had actually had a buddy of mine, we were sitting on the couch and we were rolling up the joint and he looked at me and he said, "Would you like to go to church today?" I go, "Yeah!" I never even hesitated. I put it back underneath the couch. We went to a little Baptist church and I gave my life to the Lord that day. Came home after that and dumped the pot down the toilet.

Then I started going to a Foursquare Pentecostal church. They had asked for anybody that would like to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit to come forward. I did. I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But the problem was I didn't have discipleship. I didn't have proper discipleship. I was working in the oilfield. I kind of fell back into the old school way of things. But there was an elder of that church, of that Foursquare church, that him and his wife came over and they prophesied over me in my home.

Then when that thanksgiving night came where I was in a bar in Artesia, New Mexico this gentleman walked in the door, he had just got out of prison that day, the gentleman that went to jail for trying to pull a gun on me and kill me. He said a few choice words and I'm five seven so had to get there quick. I took him to the dance floor and knocked him out. He actually died three times on the way to the hospital. I heard it over the radio the next morning as we were coming back; and heard that he had died. I went and turned myself in.

When they took me for my arraignment, when they said, "All rise," when I stood up the man that walked out from behind the bench was the first man that ever prophesied over me. He gave me a \$600 restitution and barred me out of every bar in the state of New Mexico and he let me go. That was the grace of God with the plan, with the purpose of knowing where I was going to end up and what we were going to do.

In closing on that, I was married. I got married and she had three children. We had one together. We were helping and we were born again. We were serving the Lord and we were helping kids down in what we call Acacia Park in Colorado Springs. I was going to Pastor Dutch Sheets' church, great friend of mine, Dutch and Ceci, great people. We were bringing street kids off the street and putting them up in hotels and motels. And she ran off with one of them on our anniversary night -- ran off with one of those street kids.

Two years later, God did the most amazing restoration that I -- I can't say that I'm glad that it happened but I am in a way because of the way that God's restoration is that he

gave me Jodi, and gave me the kids that we have now and it's just been absolutely -- absolutely amazing. So that's where our heart is and compassion is to love and to minister and to nurture. But to see people in the eyes that God sees them. In the intended purpose, not where they're at, not in their sin, but in the intended, intended purpose and to love them right there.

James: How did Jodi connect in all this?

Jodi: Well, the essence of who I am is small town roots. I grew up in the Baptist church. I played ball and went to church; that's what we did. I found myself at 18 years old pregnant and scared. We got married, we had another beautiful son and actually two more but it was a very, very volatile and rocky relationship. We were married eight years and the day I walked out he had gotten mad at me in an argument and pulled a gun on me. I packed up my three boys with three days' worth of clothing and I never ever came back.

I moved up to Colorado Springs with my brother, who, him and his wife opened up their home to my boys and me. And that is where God started our journey. That's a short Reader's Digest version of mine.

Weston: I was at the mall with my little girl and I saw her going into a hair salon. And it just so happened to be that my little girl needed conditioner. You know?

[Laughter]

So I went in there and I said something about the boys, they were taking stuff off the shelves but then I walked out. I sat on the bench and my little girl goes, "Daddy! Why don't you go give her a card like you make me give the girls at the grocery store?"

[Laughter]

So I went back in and that's how we met.

James: How long have y'all been together?

Jodi: Fifteen years.

James: And how many children?

Jodi: We have seven. So I had three boys when we married. He had a daughter. We had four. We were a blended family. That in itself is a struggle. Then God decided to throw a wrench in our plans and gave us three more absolutely precious children.

James: Two years apart.

Jodi: Two years apart. Yes, sir! Yes, sir!

James: So on your reality show, are y'all able to share openly about the things of God freely?

Weston: We are moving into that in this season two because when we surprise these heroes, it impacts them, it changes them. And then when you get into some of these experiences and where we're at and at dinner time the power of God sets down, it is absolutely amazing. And the healing and restoration because I think it really dawns on them that out of all these people they could have chosen, they chose me. That's what we like to express to them is God chose you. This is a prophetic act. God chose you because he loves you, he cares for you, and it just ministers to them.

So absolutely, and more because it is on Discovery, we have to almost be a little bit of that Discovery-friendly, but now we're allowing that faith to move into that realm and reach by the Father's love.

James: Do you feel like you're going to be able to see a real manifestation of God's love

poured out on people through everything you're doing even on the Discovery?

Weston: Oh absolutely!

James: Maybe a real Discovery program. When they really discover what life really is. Because you know Discovery does present a lot of things because you're showing what the great creator has done. And people who appreciate all that appreciate Discovery.

I really do pray, I pray with all my heart that people will be able to see Jesus working in your lives. You're the biggest mess you could ever imagine yet you could look back and see the supernatural hand of God. I wish everybody watching right now would realize that you're not an afterthought to God. He is focused on you. You cannot imagine how much he wants to hold you close, how much he wants you to know what is on his heart -- you're on his heart. He cares about you. He wants to heal broken hearts. He wants to touch you in every area of challenge in your life and help you walk through it. But then he wants you to do what you're discovering, he wants you to share that life and love with others. Are you finding great joy in doing that?

Weston: Oh absolutely.

James: It is the essence of joy because it is what he came to do. As the Father has sent him even so he said, "Send I you."

Do you appreciate this couple and what they're trying to do? The journey God's brought them on. It is amazing!

You have no idea how happy I am when I hear you get saved in a Baptist church and then go over to a Foursquare church, and you weren't picking sides. The beautiful thing to me is because God has so stretched me so that my sail catches the wind of the spirit. I'm not blowing on the sail trying to move my ship. I don't go woo-woo. I just let the wind of the spirit.

You know what? To watch my Baptist friends fall in love with the four square leader, Jack Hayford, who just showed them so much of Jesus that it was so much more than Pentecostal talk, it was the power of Pentecost and watching this power flow through the church all over the world, that's one of the greatest loves.

Don't you appreciate the way you're watching some church leaders who were taught to not even like each other, they actually love each other? Wouldn't it be great if the whole family of God would love each other? Wouldn't it be great if the church could love each other so much we could teach congress how to have a civil conversation? Would that be a great miracle? How about we pray to such an end?

Thank God for what you're doing. You're going to have our prayers. Our viewers will keep up with what you're doing. I want to say to you right now, thank you from the bottom of my heart for the way you have actually put God's arms around people that felt like nobody ever noticed. And the only way people know oftentimes how much God notices is that they see God's love flowing through a human vessel like us.

I want you to watch but I think this is going to touch you big time. You just watch the glimpses of God's love being poured out on little children. We're going to ask you right now, I know it is way ahead of Christmas, and we're asking God to bless every first responder, and we want to show appreciation to all these great people who love us and give their lives to protect us. I'm going to tell you something, when you see a need that needs to be met and you can give them the joy of Christmas way ahead of time, because that's what we have to do, I think you're going to have a heart that leaps toward it. Watch closely.

On the mission field:

Announcer: This season *LIFE Outreach* wants to continue spreading joy and smiles around the world. We do this in very special ways. We provide shoes for children's feet,

and corrective surgery for those who suffer from a cleft palate or a cleft lip condition. Not only is receiving shoes fun for the children but it is a blessing for the mission team. Why? Because they know it helps ensure that the little ones will be protected from disease that can enter their bodies through bare feet.

Ralph: This is what we love to do -- is giving shoes to children. Some children need the shoes because they're worn out. Some children have never owned a pair of shoes. So this is a happy day for these little guys. It is a happy day for us.

Announcer: As for cleft palate surgeries, did you ever think that a trip to a hospital would bring a smile to the face of a little child? Well, it can once they've had corrective surgery for cleft lip or a cleft palate.

Our mission teams travel to remote locations in various countries to bring children like little Dui to modern clinics like these. Here they receive the best of care, all because the friends of LIFE, moved by compassion make it possible. And once again we are blessed knowing children and their families will experience great joy because of the corrective surgery.

As this Christmas season approaches, we want to continue to bless children around the world by providing them with a new pair of shoes and corrective surgeries that give them a chance for healthy and fulfilling lives.

End of video

In the studio:

James: I can't even express the joy that I get of seeing what can happen to those little kids. I'll never forget, Betty, in Rwanda, and it was so dangerous the first times we went. You couldn't go. I couldn't risk taking you. I didn't know if I was coming back. But here's the thing. We were getting the little kids together, these are orphans, and we were taking pictures. There would be a reflection in some mirrors and sometimes it would be a

monitor; had a little boy come up, wanted to be with us. He had a very bad cleft palate. All of the sudden he saw a picture of himself and he screamed and pulled away. He didn't want to see it. He didn't like what he saw.

It touched me so deeply that I shared that with our viewers back in the United States and around the world. People were so moved, and it was very difficult to get people out of those difficult situations and places like that to take them where they get surgery but the viewers made it possible to take him all the way to Johannesburg, South Africa with a great surgeon and gave that little boy a beautiful smile.

Betty, that is indescribable. You know what? That's what you do. When you saw those children, you saw the missionary and I've told you, that is our missionary overseer, who lost his wife just not long ago. He's never stopped going right back in to put his arms around those children. What a wonderful man Ralph is. God, thank you for him. He's rejoicing.

Would you give smiles and shoes for Christmas right now? We have to start way ahead of time because we know where the need is and we're going to deliver all over the world. Well, we need you to help. So we're asking you to give. If you can give the smiles, \$1,000 will give two of those surgeries. It would cost a lot more if you paid the full price. The surgeons are doing this to help out. So could you do that?

\$36 will give ten children a pair of shoes. \$180 will give 50 children a pair of shoes. We only have a short time left. I'm praying everyone that can help will help. We have some gifts to send you. The beautiful little Christmas shoes to decorate your tree. We love them, don't we? We have them all over our tree. I'm telling you what, I like that. People love to see them. We give a testimony of why they're there on the tree. It causes people to have an interest in doing something for someone else.

Would you right now go online, take your bankcard or would you dial the number and simply make the best gift you can? Please do it. Wouldn't it be great to give someone a

smile for Christmas? Or to give children shoes? Please join us in doing it. And thank you so much. Thank you for your gift.

On the mission field:

Ralph: Little Dui here is only four months old but he is one of our latest recipients of Christmas smiles. He is getting his cleft lip surgery done. His sweet family, his mother and father and him, they have traveled over 250 miles just to get to this point. We're here today because today is his big day. He is going to get his surgery done! Thank you so much for giving a Christmas smile to little Dui today.

I cannot explain fully in words the stories that I hear all around the world of the need for children, boys and girls just like little Dui who need this surgery. So I'm going to ask you to do this. Find the number on the screen right now. Call that number. Or if you prefer, go online, whichever gives you the greatest opportunity to give a generous gift to help little boys and girls just like Dui. And you're giving a gift that doesn't just last through the season, but it lasts a lifetime. Please give right now.

End of video

In the studio:

James: Betty and I just say thank you for your love. I hope you're getting the three shoes with a gift of \$100 or more. I always try to help you think bigger if you can. If you can give smiles please do.

I want you to know that Jodi and Weston are going to be back with us tomorrow and you're going to get to see them bless a first responder right here; somebody in the military who literally, basically, risked everything to give us life, to protect our freedom. You're going to be blessed when you see this.

Would you all thank Jodi and Weston for being here? Thank God for what he's doing. God bless y'all. Thanks for watching. Appreciate y'all. Love you. Thank y'all for your help.