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**Week 35: Christmas Shoes and Smiles**

**James Robison**

**Scott Turner #2**

**James:** I tell you what, I am thrilled we're continuing the discussion that I began the other day on another program with Scott Turner.

I'm James Robison. I welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I explained that I came in to do this program kind of right in the middle of the day when Scott could arrange his schedule from Washington back here to get in at a time that he could tape and we could talk about an initiative that is going to bless people that is an answer to prayers that I've been praying for 20 years, for people here in the urban communities, the inner city who are so often it seems overlooked.

And sadly, in many instances, there's a tremendous amount of fatherlessness in those areas and a lot of desperation. I said, God, would you please help people who know how to create jobs, who know how to create wealth, who know how to create opportunity? Would you please lead them into those areas with the heart, love of a father, like Tony Evans? Dr. Evans says in the *Urban Alternative*, go in with a mentor heart to show the father. Boy, Tony is an inspiration to all of us.

Well, I'm seeing the prayer answered right now coming right out of Washington. Actually, amazingly, right out of the White House with the oversight of another fatherless person, like I was fatherless, Dr. Ben Carson. What incredible -- what an incredible gift he is to all of us. Not only gifted hands, he's a gifted man, a gifted mind, a gifted heart.

Now the man that I'm about to interview that I talked to the other day, Scott Turner, great football player; played for several N.F.L. teams, and he is really overseeing this under Dr.

Carson's leadership. I'm telling you, he is excited.

Would you welcome Scott Turner back to *LIFE Today*? Scott, good to see you. We're going to move past all of the football and all the excitement and the disappointment that the Dallas Cowboys didn't have enough wisdom to keep you here. Then you wouldn't have been with all the other teams. You wouldn't have been playing for the Redskins, you could have helped beat the Redskins. It would have been so much wiser if Jerry just had that wisdom. So we're going to pass football.

Right now you introduced to us in Washington D.C., we had been invited that evening to have dinner with President Trump and Melania and other leaders, and you walked in the room with spiritual giants. One of them was your pastor over in north Dallas, Prestonwood, Jack Graham, one of my best friends. I think he is one of the greatest spiritual leaders in the country. But that room was full of spiritual leaders. Am I right about that?

**Scott:** Yeah!

**James:** And it was spiritual leaders that at one time they wouldn't even get together because they come from a different sectarian point of view. But couldn't you feel in that room these leaders of huge groups of people, some of them over groups of millions of people, and could you feel the love they had for one another? And did you feel loved when you walked in?

**Scott:** I did!

**James:** It was like a miracle! It didn't feel like Congress, did it?

**Scott:** No! No! I knew I was in the right place.

**James:** You knew. But see, this could happen in Congress. Listen. Pray for this. We're supposed to be a family. Pray for it. God heal -- heal our nation, heal our heart, heal our attitudes toward one another. Show us we can be a family.

Okay, you walked in that setting and you thrilled us beyond words. You blessed us because you talked about an initiative, to many people we would consider who often live in poverty, they are in challenged areas, many of them in fatherless communities, sadly, and you talked about what? What's it called?

**Scott:** So it is called... and thank you for having me. I'm so blessed to be here. And to your part, yeah, that room, the spirit of the Lord was there. I was not surprised and I was very humbled to stand before you and the other spiritual leaders that were there.

And the initiative, and this mission that God has called me to in this season is called the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council. This council came as a result of the legislation that was passed in 2017 called the Tax Cuts and Job Act. And out of that the Opportunity Investment Act was created, which created the Opportunity Zones.

Opportunity Zones, very simply are the distressed communities of America. Those communities that have been under served. Those communities that have not seen investment in many, many decades, many, many years. And each state leader, each territory leader, District of Columbia, and tribal leader was given the task to nominate, if you will, census tracts. Nominate these census tracts or these communities, if you will to the treasury.

Then the treasury certified over 8700 of what we're calling Opportunity Zones. And inside of these Opportunity Zones, just to give you and the viewers kind of a sense of what it is, the poverty rate in these Opportunity Zones is around 37%. The median income in Opportunity Zones is 32% lower than that state median income. The unemployment rate is about 1.6% higher. The amount of adults that do not have a high school diploma inside these communities is staggering. The life expectancy is three years shorter in Opportunity Zones than it is in the national life expectancy, if you will because of lack of health care or good health care, the lack of healthy food and other issues.

Historically, there has not been investment in these areas because of several things: high poverty,

high crime, lack of quality education, lack of trained work force. And so investors, if you will, entrepreneurs, if you will, have shied away from these Opportunity Zones or distressed communities because of these factors.

So now with this new legislation it gives an incentive to investors to invest capital gains that they have either from a sale of a property, or the sale of a business, a sale of a stock that created a capital gain. Now private investors can take these capital gains and invest them into a qualified opportunity fund, which is very simple to create. It is a self-certifying fund.

You get a paper from the I.R.S. you create an opportunity fund, you invest these capital gains and the incentive is you leave it for five years, you get a 10% discount on capital gains. You leave it for seven years, you get 15% discount on the capital gains you pay. But the preference is to leave it for ten years, inside of this opportunity fund, which is invested inside this opportunity zone to create new business, to create jobs, to substantially improve existing businesses. You leave it for ten years, you pay no capital gains on a profit that is made in that fund. Along with public investment, which is where the council comes in.

**James:** And everybody that creates wealth has to be in a free market economy a risk taker. When you minimize the risk to any degree, especially to a particular degree or a large degree, you really bring that investment in. Then when it is purposeful investment in areas that have been overlooked too long and with that investment comes the oversight, the legitimate interest in that investment, even though there's less risk, you still have a vital interest. And you do it for long-term, you have long-term interest.

What I see and I just think this is absolutely has to be something that is built-in and inspired, if that wealth creator will make certain he's bringing some of the oversight ability and the entrepreneurial skill into that community also, with either those who understand it and work with him or even personally, I love to see the leaders in these great wealth creating funds come in with some personal oversight and interact with the people.

Do you believe that personal interaction from people...? See like even talking to you and you

knew challenges because you were hurt by your family's divorce, but you gleaned some good things, but nevertheless you were overlooked as a very gifted athlete. But miraculously you didn't lose your dream, miraculously it was lived out. There had to be some points of encouragement.

When you look back over your life, didn't those moments of encouragement where somebody got involved with you, didn't that do a lot to boost you? And can't you see with this investment, if you bring that kind of personal interest in from these individuals who have been successful and they show that they care, can't you see that giving a tremendous jump start to people who felt like nobody even noticed them much less cared?

**Scott:** Absolutely. For me, James, a family, the Bassil family was that family that came in at a time when I was a broken young man; hurt by the separation of my family, hurt and feeling as if I was all alone. And God sent this Bassil family not to just give me everything, not to just hand me stuff but to show me that there's greatness inside of me, and then to lead me and teach me how to tap into that along with the love of my mother and the hard work of my father. Now the Bassil family comes in and takes just the whole package and says, "You can do it!"

So with this, you now have public investment from the government, which is the council and the 16 agencies that make up the council.

**James:** It looks to me like it is government commitment with some oversight and interest and giftedness on the part of those overseeing. Not using the people to keep somebody somewhere but actually putting something into those people, the hope you're talking about that you saw and you got it at a time when you needed it.

But when I heard you come in with this, I heard a person excited about like somebody that loves people with a legitimate love, I actually felt like somehow, even in the White House, a man that is criticized non-stop that I've gotten to know very well. I've never been around -- see I've been around him behind the scenes. I've watched him walk over to all the people nobody notices when he's back stage, not when there's any cameras at him, and go to the people that nobody pays any

attention to, and give them earnest attention.

So I got the impression when you came in talking, and Brooke Rollins who loves God so much and we've known for so long, she seemed to be excited about this and said the president really wants to help the people that are overlooked.

Now tell me the truth because you seem to be excited that there was personal interest. Do you believe the President of the United States, and the people right there in the White House, do you believe they really care about what's best for those people that you're talking about?

**Scott:** Wholeheartedly! And the council would have not been created had they not. This is a top priority for him personally. It's a top priority for the administration. Conveying in this council together is no small or easy task. The people that work on the council, which are those agencies that I talk about, have total buy-in. They have total passion to see this not just work but have a sustainable, long-lasting, generational impact. We've been to the cities already. I've been to seven cities in just six short weeks of being appointed by the President for this Executive Director position. So you have public investment and you have private. I have been with the entrepreneurs. I've been with...

**James:** You think they actually care and actually caring about more than money. In other words, they know a risk taker has to minimize the risk and any time he can come in with less tax burden or get some kind of benefit for moving into a particular city, a wise investor is going to do that; that's just common sense. But you're seeing that there's an excitement on the part of these individuals, which is, asking my opinion, be inspired by God or by somebody for this to happen. You really believe they care and they would love to see these people that have been downtrodden or used for somebody else's advantage to actually see them lifted up out of the mire of the misery some of them have lived in for a long time?

**Scott:** It's happening!

**James:** You actually believe that?

**Scott:** As we speak. I've been on the tour. So not only do I believe it, I've seen it.

**James:** Okay, are they responding in those inner-city communities when they see you come in? Is there a joy? Tell me the truth.

**Scott:** There is.

**James:** They don't think somebody is shooting them a line of bologna.

**Scott:** No. Obviously, because historically, the government hasn't gotten things right. That's why this is unique in a sense of you're bringing investors and you're bringing public investment to come together.

**James:** And it is not even government money. It is their money.

**Scott:** It is private money that's coming in. And with this is creating the opportunity for long-term sustainability inside of these communities. So when we've conducted round tables in Chicago and Atlanta and New Orleans and Cleveland and Las Vegas, people are not only excited about it, they want it to work because they understand it can revolutionize, as Dr. Carson has said, it can revolutionize our country. Because now you have people that have been in poverty, that have been underserved, you now have people now that say, "You mean I can go get a new job or get a better job and actually have ownership? Those kids that are truant that have great skill sets, you mean they can actually now be trained to be responsible citizens and to be a trained work force in the community that they live in?" This is something that hasn't been done. So not only do I believe it, not only have I heard it but I'm living it.

**James:** Would you like to look at the American believers and people all over the world and tell them how you want them to pray for what you're doing? Just look at them right there. Just look at them right there from that camera.

**Scott:** So I would say to you, my beloved American citizens to pray for us that true revitalization comes to the distressed communities of America. I would ask you to pray for true godly transformation that will outlast, long outlast all of us that are working on this, that it will have a generational kingdom impact.

The President, the administration, those that work on this council, those that are involved in this in the background, every day have a true passion and a true heart for those that have been forgotten and want to see this initiative, this mission that God has given us not just be successful but be truly transformational so that those in the communities of America, that the hope and the dignity will be restored to those who have wanted to work, now they can work. Those that have wanted to start a business in the community now can start a business. Those that want to invest in these communities, now have not just motivation but a tool, if you will, to invest for long-term sustainability.

And my heart and the spirit that I have behind this is that not only do we just check the box, not only do we speak about it but that we have hands and feet on the ground to be the hands and feet of Jesus inside of these communities. And even in those communities that aren't distressed resourcefully, but may be distressed in other ways, that they too will be blessed by this initiative. And that America will be the place that God has called it to be because we are looking out for the least of those. We are looking out for the poor. We are looking out for those who have no voice.

And that's what God calls us to as believers, as men and women of God, as church men and as kingdom people, that's what we're doing. So please pray that God would do this expediently and that it will be a long-term sustainability initiative that God will bless. Thank you so much.

**James:** Those of you in the audience, you want to say thank God and thank you, Scott Turner?

Lord, I just pray for Scott right now. I thank you for the wonderful ability that you've given him. I love him. I've loved the first time I ever heard him start talking about Jesus years ago. I'm so glad you've put him where you have.

We want to thank you for Dr. Ben Carson. He's been so blessed blessing people. And now he just wants to bless everybody that he possibly can with the influence you've given him. I pray he and Scott will be a great team and that the viewers of our program will get involved in any way they can, not only with their prayers but find a personal way to be involved; in Jesus' name I pray.

Scott, is there a website that people could go to to learn about opportunities or to learn in any way they can be a part of? Is there a website yet established?

**Scott:** There's one being worked on right now. It is our hope and our goal that it will be out in about four or five weeks. It is going to be called: OpportunityZones.gov. But right now, individual investors or individual citizens, the states that they live in, some states have already created websites. And they could just go in and type Opportunity Zones and there's a plethora of information out there. They can also type in the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council and learn about the mission that we have.

**James:** And if we get anything any clearer as this is and online, we'll keep it updated where you can find it on *LIFE Today*.

Scott, we're going to be praying for you. I know you're going to be excited about us putting some shoes on some little feet in third world countries. I don't know if you've ever been to any of the mission fields but I tell you what, when you've got... We have people we call poor but our poor people are called rich people. I'm talking about our poorest people are rich people in the majority of the third world countries. And we're going to try to put shoes on little feet; 150,000 little children are going to get a smile because they get shoes. And some of them are going to get the first smile they ever had because they've got cleft palate or some other facial deformity. We're going to do surgeries and give them smiles and you can make that gift.

I want you to watch. Just watch with your eyes and really pray with your heart and see if you don't want to bless some of these children in these Opportunity Zones we're going to point you to right now. Watch closely.

### **On the mission field**

**James:** Betty, all these people have wondered why we're here. How are you? And we have told them through translators that we're here because we love them and because we want to give them a better life. We came in the name of the Lord Jesus but we didn't just come to talk about God's love, we came to share it and demonstrate it.

I'm kneeling here in Central America by a contaminated water source and we love to give water wells. But we found out something else. Because of contaminated water, and even contaminations and problems in the soil, children get little cuts in their feet and they pick up hookworms. And as I understand it that ultimately gets into their intestines and it is a horrible sickness. But it is a disease that not only brings incredible pain and discomfort but in so many instances death.

**Betty:** I'm standing here with these children and they're just a small example of children all over the world. They deserve to be cared for. And we have an opportunity to do that right now, to put some shoes on their feet, to give them a chance in life. And I ask you to help us do that. It's just a simple request but a very urgent and important one. Please join with us. You'll get such great joy out of it. I know you will. God bless you! Thank you!

### **End of video**

### **In the studio:**

**James:** Well, I want to just say thanks. And miss Betty, but I told you we had to rush in here at a time that wasn't where she could come. But you're going to give these shoes even though you don't have her beautiful smile asking you to, and get the beautiful crystal ornaments for your tree. And you're going to be praying for Scott Turner and this revitalization initiative. I'm excited about it. I just thank you so much for watching.

Scott, you're a blessing. Would you join me in saying thanks to Scott Turner? We're with you. You let us know ways we can help. Thank all of you for watching. Thanks for praying for us, for Scott, and for all the mission outreaches. Thanks for your help.