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Week 37

James and Betty Robison

John Wayne Walding and Johnny Wilson

Weston and Jodi Clark

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! Thank you so much for joining us. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: Betty, we are honoring our first responders as we think back over the time we watched people trying to rush out of danger. We actually saw incredible views of people rushing into danger for the sole purpose of trying to rescue people even after the buildings collapsed. You and I, actually, were watching when the second plane hit the building. The first we were thinking maybe it was somebody got off course, just didn't see it. Didn't even know if it was a large plane, a small plane. Me being a pilot, when I saw the second one, I knew it was basically an airliner. When the buildings collapsed, this is what you've got to understand, first responders were still going in.

We've got some of them here in the audience. We said we want to honor you. We want to honor all of them. I wish every American would pray that God would show us how to honor the first responders, how to honor our military and everyone that serves in the armed services, everybody in their family. Would you just join in saying thank you first responders? We love you. We love you. We thank God for you.

We have with us on the set two Green Berets. We had a Marine out here who said these are the greatest military representatives in history, right now today talking about the armed forces today and the sacrifices they make. These men are here and we're going to

let you tell their story. But I want you to realize that we need to let everybody know how much we appreciate law enforcement because all of these people who are fighting to protect us, here at home, all of the military, all of the armed service members and their families are the greatest heroes on the planet. I really do believe that. We've got to show them that.

We have two of these veterans who have served and are Green Berets. We have John Wayne Walding. Hold your hand up John Wayne. Now he said that name was not a mistake. His parents had respect for John Wayne. Betty and I did too. We liked him. We really did.

And then we have Johnny Wilson. I don't know why you didn't get the John Wayne deal too, John.

Johnny: Me too, right?

James: Would you welcome Johnny here with us -- John Wayne and Johnny. I want you to tell us what you want all of our viewers to hear related to the scenes that you have witnessed with your friends because a lot of the people you served with, they didn't come back. It's got to be one of the heaviest loads.

And then you watch them come back and they have such a load on them that a lot of them don't seem to be able to walk it out. I know very well, John Wayne that you're doing your best to see every way possible you can alleviate. Both of you guys have created some process of healing others. I want you to feel free to tell us your story but also about what God's put on your heart so we can pray with you; not only express appreciation for you but express love with you for the people who so desperately need to know they are appreciated and loved. So you take off, John Wayne. We'll start with you.

John: First of all, sorry I'm not taller. John Wayne, born on the fourth of July. You'd think I'd be seven-foot. But no. Thank y'all for having us. That's what I want you to

know. To never underestimate the magnitude of what the two words, "thank you" mean to a veteran. Because if you don't believe me ask a Vietnam soldier, sailor, airman, marine what it was like when they got back.

Johnny and I are proud of what we have done for our service to this country and it's because of great Americans like you and those in this audience today that we are validated for that sacrifice because you validate that with a thank you. That's why when you say "Thank you" to me, I don't say you're welcome, I say, "You're worth it." You're worth me losing a leg in 2008.

James: And you did.

John: Absolutely. You should see the other guy.

[Laughter]

Johnny: It was a bunch of them.

[Laughter]

John: But because of that and why we're here today, I've got in a very bad place after losing my leg. You don't want to tell a 27-year old Green Beret that he can no longer walk. That's a very debilitating mental challenge that he's got to come over. So I had the "why me's?" Very normal thing. Why me, God? I'm a good guy. I pay my bills. I don't beat my family. Why me? Why did this happen to me?

And because of God, I'm alive. There were 15 Americans that were on my Green Beret team when we went up against 200-250, maybe in five years it will be 300, and 10 years it will be 400.

Johnny: It's an average.

John: But there is no tactical handbook that we should be alive. But with God's you are. I had my leg literally folded up into my groin; for four hours only hanging by an inch of flesh. There is no medical handbook that says I should be alive but with God's there is. And whenever I truly put him at the center and realize that he's the reason I'm still alive today, the "why me's" went away. And now when I have a trying time, I don't say, "Why me?" I say, "What are you trying to tell me?" Right?

What am I trying to tell you today is because there are 30 names that are embroidered on the center console of my truck and that's Green Berets and Navy Seals that are dead. Not deployed but dead. The military, they teach you how to deal death but not deal with it. I didn't know how to deal with their loss, especially not being in the military anymore. I can't go back and honor that.

So I did what you were supposed to do. You drink because that's what you're supposed to do in our minds. And it became a problem to where six years ago after a buddy of mine was killed, I made a solemn vow the next morning that I owe it to him and everyone before him to live well. And that's why we're here today to live well. So whenever I have a fallen soldier, sailor, airman and marine that I knew that when I get that phone call, I take my family that's out in the audience today to a movie. I take my wife to dinner. We do something good to live well. That's why I'm so happy to have Johnny here because I knew him before I lost my leg. I knew him before I had to overcome so much. His story is even better than mine, what he did.

Johnny: I've had to deal with that problem before and after. So that's a different conversation.

John: Me being the problem.

Johnny: John kind of hit the nail on the head. We were friends before. What he mentioned a second ago was we were part of the reaction force to help these guys out. To

hear it, see it, not be able to do anything about it kind of plays a toll on you. But over time, if you look at it now, I was one of the guys who joined -- you mentioned 9/11. I was one of the guys who was in there pre- 9/11 so we understood what that looked like and the immediate life change that happened after, and the career change that came with it. I wanted to be surrounded by professionals.

Fast forward to 2019, the community we come from is 18 or 19 years deep into fighting an operational tempo globally that they're not used to; they weren't bred for that. They were trained for it but you're never mentally set for that. The transition out of that is you lose count of how many guys you've lost. The injured, who are still alive is a huge number.

So how do we take all that loss and turn it into a positive? Not just for them, that's a big deal. There's some selfish motivation in there too. You want to have some fun with it, they're your friends, they're your brothers, but they've got families, they've got kids, kids are watching. "More is caught than taught" so we wanted to show them what a team actually looks like, how that feels long-term and how to collectively wrap your arms around somebody even though understanding the environment that they go back to work in is pretty complex and it is not going to get any easier. So how do we turn some of that loss into productivity for the long haul? It's very intrinsically motivating. It is therapeutic. I don't believe in chance. There's divine intervention. Coincidence is a myth. So I'm alive for friends of mine that I've been surrounded with for years and I plan on just keeping on doing the same.

James: You saw something that really tore at your heart. You watched one of your friends try to save someone that had been shot several times; right?

Johnny: Yes. A good friend of mine, Ryan Savard was killed in October 2012. Kind of a long story that comes with that. Northeastern Afghanistan and some friends of mine were involved, and Ryan is reason they're still alive. Ryan was a mutual friends of ours from that same deployment that John got injured on.

John: And Ryan was, you want to talk all about a man's man, a great guy. Always had a smile no matter -- in special forces there is a term called, "embrace the suck." He embraced it better than anybody. He always had a smile.

Johnny: It actually made me a little mad.

John: It did! Why is it so easy for you, Ryan?

Johnny: So again, to kind of be in that situation, to see it visually, know what's going on, understand the full context of the overall operation and not be able to do anything is mentally limiting. But to stop in your tracks is kind of a hard thing to do. There's some friends of mine that are alive today because of Ryan's actions. And the positive that's come out of that has been -- I can't explain it to you. We started a foundation...

James: He was trying to save them, and it actually cost him his life.

Johnny: It cost him his life. Yeah, a friend of mine was shot seven times from me to that chair. A little bit tricky on how that worked out. He lived through it and we've just been trying for years to not only again, surround ourselves with positive energy but redirect funds into treatment for guys who have been going through this for years. It is not a one-time thing for a lot of people.

James: You two, and I want our audience to hear this, you started something related to water. Tell us what it is.

John: It is Live to Give. We're in the Tom shoes of water. Every bottle of water you buy from us we're giving half the profits to veteran and first responder charities.

James: Isn't that great? Did you hear that? How do they find the water? Is it in the stores?

John: We're going to be on Amazon. Get ready!

James: Say what it is again, the name.

John: Live to Give.

James: All right and you've started something.

Johnny: So we started the Coast to Coast Foundation in 2014. We do a 4300 mile motorcycle ride in two weeks. We're the only ones that they allow in Arlington National Cemetery. We built a route from left to right around families of guys who were killed or guys that were killed. It was a mentally regenerating thing. It was a spiritual event. It was a sense of rebellion. It was kind of all the different size of that. And Dallas is kind of the halfway point of that. We started generating money and we've been paying for guys to go through medical treatment for about four years now. Still kind of in its infancy.

James: But the last time you raised a pretty good sum; didn't you?

Johnny: The first four years was funded out of pocket. We were going to do it whether there was two guys and \$2 or two million. Last year in two weeks we generated \$125,000. And as of the beginning of this year, we had seven bucks of that left.

James: So you're giving it all to help. Every bit of that goes to help the veterans and their families.

Johnny: Yes, sir, it is on purpose; that's kids' scholarships, that's to medical regeneration treatment. That's to -- if you look at the suicide rates in first responder and military realms right now it's in the 100's of percentage of increase. That 2200 a day is not the actual number. It is a lot more than that. So that's our goal and mission now besides our day jobs and family life.

James: Well, you're sitting here with a smile on your face and with a leg that's not yours, it's just one that's just been plugged up there.

John: It's got an upgrade. It's got Bluetooth.

James: It's working pretty good. That's great!

Are you seeing the effect of love toward these who are struggling so much and feel like maybe they've been overlooked and they need somebody to care about them now and walk them through it? Are you beginning to see anything positive?

John: Yes. And here's the deal. We don't know how to deal with death and that's what I keep going back to because that's not what we've ever been taught. I'm not saying the military needs to know that. Americans -- look America is not awesome because of the Grand Canyon. America is awesome because of Americans. It is not because of Republicans, it's not because of Democrats. I've been in the oval office with Obama, I've been on stage with Trump, and whenever I go and do a speech I tell everybody, I'm not red, white, or -- I'm American! I'm half Mexican.

James: You didn't give your leg for the Grand Canyon. You gave your leg for the people that appreciate the fact that they've got a beautiful place God gave us.

John: For this experiment of America.

James: You love people. Greater love has no man than this, your friend that you watched die, basically, because you could see and not get there, but you watched him doing his best to save a guy that had been shot all to pieces and he dies right there trying to help. Well, that's what all of you were doing. You were doing it for the all the people sitting here and all the people watching us: "We are laying down our life."

And in many instances, you were not only laying your lives down for the families here, but you're actually dying for the enemy's because you end up doing good for them trying to help them. That's what's happened all over the Middle East. Our military has done more trying to help children doing things that was totally outside of what they were trained to do because they just had love. I just thank God for you.

John: Well, speaking of love. There's something that I'd like to do to love on Johnny. He is a guy I look up to very much. I've got a couple of friends that are going to come out, Weston and Jodi Clark and they're going to tell him about their experience and we're about to have some fun.

Johnny: Okay. Am I blushing? Am I messing up my pre-stage makeup?

[Laughter]

James: All right, tell us what you do. They have a reality show and they do a lot of things but they're doing things for veterans. What are you going to do and what do you do?

Jodi: Surprise!

Johnny: [Incoherent]

Jodi: As you may know, we travel this nation in search of America's heroes. We believe that heroes are to be celebrated. It is men like you that we want to celebrate. We have a mutual dear friend, John Wayne Walding who has nominated you as his hero.

Johnny: Well, thank you! He kind of messed that up a little bit. He's a much better man than me, but thank you.

Jodi: So...

Weston: And he has nominated you as his hero for you guys being in combat together, with the fire fights that you went through together. We heard back when we were having dinner that when you were flying in on the helicopter to come, and actually, in the battle that you lost your leg in, that you got turned around knowing or unknown that your buddy is either wounded or deceased.

Johnny: We flew in knowing what was going on. We were not in any surprise. We knew exactly that was happening and what we were about to assume.

Weston: And you got turned around. And we also know that in 2008, in Afghanistan, that you were awarded the bronze star. What we're doing here today is we want to celebrate you. We want to honor you, we want to thank you.

I was praying before this event. A lot times we don't get a chance to talk intimately like this when we surprise heroes on stage with different country stars and celebrities but I really felt that the Lord put on my spirit that he says, "I see you. I see what you've done. You've protected the country that I have ordained." That's a big thing because this nation...

Johnny: You don't think of it like that.

Weston: The country that he has ordained. This nation for our children and for our children's children, it is because of men like you. And because of men like you that have went out there, that have fought for our freedom right now as we're talking, there are sons and daughters of America in harm's way and we need never to forget that. We need never to forget that.

[Applause]

Johnny: Today's the anniversary of the largest special operations loss, in history. It

happened in 2011 but we had some friends on there. So we live on purpose now.

Weston: Well, on purpose we want to do this. So we're going to take you on a trip. We're going to take you on an extreme fishing trip with John Wayne and myself. And on behalf of some of our sponsors, they're going to fully outfit you from head to toe in all the latest fishing equipment and gear. We're going to take you; it's going to be all expenses paid. But then Jodi has something a little special as well.

Jodi: So we know that back at home there is an unsung, often unseen hero, being your wife.

Johnny: She's rock solid -- rock solid according to me.

Jodi: So I want to celebrate her as well. From Weston and I, we will be taking her on a \$1,000 shopping spree at the Buckle just to let her know our appreciation for her and what she does in the strength that she carries while you've been...

Johnny: I appreciate that! That will go a long way. You know this, my wife, with everything I've done, in an adult career, we have two special needs children. She's lost in the mix a lot. So that's a very impactful thing.

Weston: We felt very strongly because that was on God's heart, knowing that you had the two special needs children, she doesn't get that time away. That's Jodi's heart to be able to go and give her time, give that break.

But also, as those wives that are stateside here, as you guys are deployed, they don't get the recognition, they don't get the honor as they should. We want to do that in honor of. But we also want to do this trip in honor of your brother Ryan. We want to do this in honor of the fallen because we shall never forget in this nation the reason why we're able to do what we do is because of men like you and those of that given their life. So God bless you.

Johnny: Thank you!

[Standing ovation]

James: God bless all of you! God bless you. We love you. Let me, if I can just transition to you, please pray for these two men and the vision God's given them. It's not small. It's big because it's his heart. The websites will be there. The websites will be on *LIFE Today* to find out what they're doing. So just really be praying for them.

Then I want you all to know that we're all going to kind of turn and look in at something that means a whole lot to a lot of little children. We're going to give them some shoes and we're going to give some little children with cleft palate, surgery to give them a beautiful smile. Special needs children, referred to, they're fighting autism, that is a challenge but they can be just beautiful witnesses and beautiful pictures of God's love. And I want you to really pray for them.

Would you look in right now on Peter Pretorius's son, Isak Pretorius. Peter went to be with the Lord a year ago but he poured 40 years of his life into these children. We spent over 30 years of it with him and we continue. I want you to look and see if you don't want to join putting God's arms around these precious children and give them something special for Christmas. Watch closely.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Can you believe we're already in the last half of the year? With a worldwide opportunity to share God's love through mission outreach our teams have been hard at work offering hope and healing to those in need. Whether it is providing a hungry child with a daily bowl of food or drilling a clean water well for a thirsty village, we simply could not go into all the world if it weren't for the compassion of *LIFE Today* viewers.

Well, today presents an extra special opportunity for ministry and it is just in time for a special holiday.

Isak: We all celebrate different holidays around the world but a holiday that is pretty common to most of us is Christmas. That's what it feels like here today, it feels like Christmas for us because we're getting to do one of the most incredible things and that is to bless these children with a pair of shoes.

I want to ask you to join me right now as we give thanks for the fact that we can put these shoes onto his feet; that we can change his life. You say, wow, that sounds a little dramatic. Change his life with a pair of shoes? It is life-changing because what we're doing here is protecting this little child's feet from damage and disease that can even cost him his life.

So I want to ask you from the bottom of my heart, please help us to be able to continue allowing children like this to walk away with smiles on their faces with a new pair of shoes.

Announcer: This coming Christmas, please help us give a gift that children will treasure and it will protect their precious lives. Help us give the gift of Christmas shoes.

End of video

In the studio:

James: Don't y'all like to see that? Is that beautiful? Honey, what does that do to you when you watch that?

Betty: It just means so much to me. I see those little children and I think, it is so much more than offering them a pair of shoes to put on their feet. Most of them probably never had a pair of shoes but it means so much more because it is going protect them from the

diseases of all the different trash and everything on the ground that they walk through because they can't avoid it, there's so much of it. But just to see the smiles on their faces.

We do a lot of wonderful things, giving water, feeding hungry children, helping those that need medical needs and all kinds of things to help them. But this brings such great joy to my heart and it must yours too because there is nothing like the smile of a child.

James: I want to thank you because you know, Betty, when we show the needs, our viewers don't look away. You don't immediately change channels. You kind of channel in. I feel like you see the heart of God. I just wish I could embrace you and give you a hug for all the little children and all the people you embrace with the loving arms of God. That's what we're doing.

Betty, you referenced the medical things that we do. In this particular time of the year we talk about shoes and smiles for Christmas. We do cleft palate surgery and little facial surgery where children have never been able, some of them to not even eat right or to even speak right and we give them a smile. Those surgeries because of the doctors working with us are \$500 each. We're asking people to consider giving, would you consider giving a couple of smiles for Christmas? And those \$1,000 gifts will do that or a \$500 gift. We want you to know what it does.

But the shoes, now think about this, \$36 will give ten children a pair of shoes; \$180 will give 50 kids a pair of shoes. Now if you watch me very often I will never help you think small. I'm always -- I think we can think small pretty well on our own. I'm always going to try to get you to think maybe beyond anything you ever did. \$180 for 50 kids, boy, that's going to mean so much. The missionaries know exactly where the need is.

Would you help us? Could you do that? Or could you give the \$36? There's no gift too small. What's it going to mean to those children to get those? Those ten kids? It will mean a whole lot. Please can you help? Will you do it?

I always get a smile when I pick these up. These little Christmas shoes. Here's one for this year and we're giving one for any gift. You hang them on the tree. Our tree is covered with shoes. Here's a gift of three of the shoes; and you make a gift of \$100 or more, I'm asking for the \$180 for the 50 kids shoes, we're sending this to say thanks. And also the beautiful bronze, "The Arms of the Shepherd."

You do what God leads you to do. You're going to put a smile on a child's face and gratitude in their heart and we're going to tell them about the Christ of Christmas. We need to raise the funds now way ahead of time so we can deliver all those shoes and those smiles during the Christmas season. Thank you. Go to the phone, use your bankcard like a check, or you can go online.

Father, I pray everyone who can help will do so with joy; in Jesus' name.

Thank you so much for doing it. Please do it now.

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

In the studio:

James: You know as you watch the beautiful pictures of love, Betty and I are just sitting here, and you know, our hearts are touched because when you see people loving people the way God loves them it just moves me. And when you see little children that didn't know anybody ever really cared and then people getting involved it's a beautiful thing. Isn't it? So we're just thanking God for you.

We're thanking God for these incredible guests. Would you join us in thanking God for our guests and for all the love that sits here? It's great! Thank you. God bless you. Thanks for watching.