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Week 45: Fall Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Ginger Sprouse and Victor Hubbard

James: It is really a joy to come into... I'm smiling because I asked one of our guests, "Did somebody just get you off of the street?" You know what? The fact is they did. Love got him off. Listen! Love moves mountains and it performs miracles.

I'm James Robison and this is my wife Betty, and it is a miracle I'm sitting by this beautiful girl. Nobody believes that she is just about the same age as me and I'm 76. She says, "Why do you have to tell them that in a month or so I'll be the same... "

Betty: You're not supposed to tell a woman's age!

James: You don't do that?

Betty: No.

James: Well, nobody believes me anyway. But I'm going to tell you something. It is a joy to be, wherever you are, to be with you. Because wherever you are there's someone that loves you more than we can describe. But if you'll give us a chance, we're going to show you how God's love can notice somebody on the street, and all of the sudden the whole world change.

You're going to hear it from someone that wrote a book called, *Kinda Like Grace*. You may have seen her on television where some of the major news shows are talking to her because they say, "You're like an angel. Ginger, you're like an angel because you talked to somebody on the street. And then all of the sudden they ended up in your home. This is crazy!" She says, "I wasn't an

angel." But you need to hear the story.

Would you welcome Ginger Sprouse and her friend Victor to *LIFE Today*? Would you welcome them?

Ginger, you've got a big smile on your face.

Victor: Thank you!

James: You've got a smile, but you had a smile on your face when you were sitting on the street corner.

Ginger: He did!

James: I want to really cut to the chase here, Ginger because I feel like what we're talking about is *Kinda Like Grace*, is what it is. And you needed grace because people called you an "angel" but you said you were anything but. But somehow grace did something in your life and that grace spilled out on the street.

So however you want to start but just tell us, I don't know how you came to see this guy, notice him, and then all the sudden he ends up in your home with your husband's approval and people thinking you are wonderful. And he's saying let's backtrack. Tell people what you want them to know in kind of a capsule form because you're going to want to read it.

Ginger: Well, I would definitely say it is one of those things. I grew up in church. I went every Sunday. I was the quintessential, the bus driver came to my house, picked me up, and carried me out there. I heard them talk in church about you know, bad things are going to happen, you're going to hell. You need to know Jesus.

I thought, well, gosh, I want that. That sounds like a good thing. I remember as a child thinking, well, I definitely want to make sure that I do that. So I was baptized and my parents came to

church. My daddy taught Sunday school for 30 years, Sunday night church training, Tuesday visitation, Wednesday, *Ambassadors* and all that.

I was married and I had what I thought was the picture perfect what it's supposed to look like to be a Christian family faith. Went to church every Sunday. Didn't spend any time in the word. Every once in a while I'd say, "Oh I need to read through this this year!" I'd last about two days. But I was faithful to go.

And really, I became so discontent in my own heart. I had a husband that loved me, I had beautiful children. I homeschooled, I had everything in the world I could ever want and still not happy. Didn't want to be obedient to what I knew was the right thing to do.

I started looking outside of my home for happiness because I was selfish. It was all about me. That's what I kept hearing. That's what everybody always said, "Well, it's all about you. You deserve to be happy." And "You need something in your life that makes you feel good." So I was unfaithful to my husband, and I left my children; abandoned everything that I had. Devastated my parents, my church family, my friends, his family and really just turned away from what I knew in my head to be the right thing because there had never been a connection from here (head) to my heart. It was evident in the way that I was behaving and the things that I did.

So it was difficult for my husband now, many years later to look back and say, "Well, are you sure you want to write all that and tell people?" I wanted to say I did because we all fall short of the glory of God. I think a word that is little used today is the need to repent, to turn from your sin, to live a life that is pleasing to God.

And so when I did that, it was... I love to tell people, it wasn't a sermon, it wasn't a story, it wasn't a song, it wasn't someone coming in and getting a hold of me, it was just the Holy Spirit late in the night when it was dark saying to me, "The way you're living is wrong." I remember one day I got up and I said, "Okay, Lord, I know that the answer is in your word." I said, "I will meet you at the table every morning. I will commit to that." And so I set my Bible on the table

and I said, "I've never been able to stick with it. I've never understood it. It's always been hard. Help me understand it and I will be faithful to meet you here." And he keeps his promises. It is just God's word that changed my heart that wrought repentance in my life that made me a new person that took away my heart of stone and gave me a heart of flesh.

James: So did your whole world then change? And did that have anything to do with noticing a guy on the street corner?

Ginger: Well, it didn't change overnight. I still had to live with all the consequences of my sin, broken relationships with my children and divorce and all of those kind of things. But I really started asking the Lord, because I had been such an incredibly selfish person, help me learn to love people like you do. I don't know how to do that. I know it says it but I don't have it in me.

So I continued to study my Bible and I kept coming across all these verses about love your neighbor as yourself and all this. So on the way to work every day, I would see this guy standing on the corner in the community where we lived outside of Houston and he was the happiest person I ever saw. But not in a good situation; obviously didn't have anywhere to stay. But always smiling, singing, not asking for money or anything like that but always there.

And the Lord started putting it on my heart. So I started... I thought I was doing a good thing. And so I started saying, Lord, please send someone to help him! It would just be so wonderful, Lord, if you would send someone. That was at that time where that song was really popular. It said, "I did, I created someone and that's you."

And I was like, oh! Well, that's so not what I had in mind. And so I couldn't get away from the verses that kept saying, "Love your neighbor." And I kept going, this is obviously, not a good idea, Lord. This is not safe. It is not wise. My husband is not going to be on board with me talking to someone on the street."

And just finally one day, I hit the steering wheel and I said, if you want me to stop Lord, I'm going to stop. And you're going to have to make it okay. So I always tell people. I pulled up and

he turned around and looked at me. I rolled down my window going I don't know what's going to happen. He walks up to me with his hand outstretched and says, "Hi! I'm Victor. How are you?" Just... The Holy Spirit was like, it's going to be okay. It's going to be okay.

James: So what did you think, Victor when she first showed you a little attention at least?

Victor: Well, I feel like God just dropped a blessing on me, you know? Came out of nowhere and it just hit me. I was with it. I'm a friendly person. I just accepted it all as God's moving in my life and being a force. I just agreed to be her friend and we just conversated and chatted and hung out and everything was fine.

Betty: What did you say to him to get the conversation? Because you said you didn't know what you were doing.

Ginger: I had no idea. Yeah. People always say, "Well, how? I said, "I had no idea that we were going to end up being friends forever and he'd come and live with me." That was not in my mind. I just thought I was going to maybe buy him a burger.

[Laughter]

I was like... And so I offered him money and I offered him food and he said, "No thanks. I'm good."

And I was like, well, I don't know what to do now!

But the one thing he did. I kind of chatted with him a few minutes, "Can I get you anything?"

He said, "No, I'm fine!"

I was like, "Okay."

And he said, "So when are you coming back?"

I said, "Oh! I hadn't really intended that."

So yeah. He did. So I started visiting with him. I would get a cup of coffee and I would go sit with him right where he was for a good six months. That's what I always tell people, it wasn't overnight.

James: So where does he end up? He comes home with you?

Ginger: No. He didn't. We got to be really good friends and the weather started getting not so great and I remember one Saturday morning I woke my husband up and I was like, and I said, "It's raining."

He said, "Thank you."

I said, "My friend Victor is in the rain."

He said, "Okay?"

And my husband is such a saint. He said, "Well, what do you want me to do about that?"

I said, "Well, I don't know. What do you think the Lord wants us to do?"

[Laughter]

Yeah. And he said, "I'll make breakfast. You go get him."

So yeah, I went and picked him up. And it was right before Christmas.

James: In the rain? You were standing out there in the rain? Did you have a little cover of

any kind?

Victor: Well, I mean, I just feel like the Lord is on me.

Ginger: He always says that. Yeah!

James: When did you start thinking about God? What made that happen? Did somebody share...

Victor: I was always inspired by God since I was young or at a young age. But I mean like it's even matured in your Christianity, that's the way that it was. I just went with the force that I felt.

James: Did you feel like Jesus and God loved you even when you were out there by yourself?

Victor: Yes. And I feel like he was going to come eventually because I know faith is usually God testing your patience and I thought that was a big part of what he was trying to do with me. I felt it in my heart. You see things around you and you don't let that define what's inside you. You know what I'm saying? So I let God paint my picture from my heart. I just talked to people and we be friends and we get along pretty good, you know the people that I knew. I met her in the same... it is a privilege to serve but I don't think anything evil can exist with anything godly. So I was like, he'll escort the demons out of my life.

James: He'll kick them out pretty good! So he sent you an angel.

Victor: She's close to it.

James: You got right with God. That's what you talk about this *Kinda of Grace* -- this is a big *Kinda of Grace*. So he ends up, did you take him the day in the rain home for breakfast?

Ginger: We did. We took him home and he spent the night and it was great and he slept. And the next morning was Sunday and so we woke up and I said... I hadn't really thought beyond

that and I was like, well, what are we going to do now?

James: You had at least dried his clothes in the driver? Right?

Ginger: We washed his clothes and then we took him back to the corner because I didn't know what to do.

James: Thata girl! Way to go!

Ginger: I know, exactly! We drove away and my husband was like, "The Lord is not pleased with this. This is not good. This is not good!" Yeah, it was terrible! And so you know...

James: You do talk about this husband a lot; right?

Ginger: Oh yeah! He's a good man. He's a blessing. But you know, our community rallied around us. I created a page online and our community rallied around us and donated money. So we actually rented him a hotel room for about three months and he stayed there. And then...

James: So the church kind of helped you do this?

Ginger: It was the community as a whole. And really, it was such a blessing. People would come up to me and say you're amazing and I'd get to share my testimony with them. So that to me, I was like, O Lord! You gave me an opportunity to tell! I'm in!

James: Now you're telling everybody all over the world! Just noticing somebody.

Ginger: So we put him up in the hotel and finally we just kind of came to the point. He is such a people person and he is so joyful. And finally, we just said one day, you know this is silly. We're running back and forth, just come on. So he came and lived with us. But he's...

James: You had children in the home still?

Ginger: I did. My son was a senior in high school.

James: Do y'all get along good? Did you get along with the boy okay? Did he like you?

Victor: Yeah! We get along pretty good.

James: Still having to teach him some stuff?

Victor: Yeah! Brotherly stuff.

Ginger: Yeah! And they do. My son, he considers Victor his family. We all do, for sure.

James: Well, this is beautiful. What do you want people to hear, Ginger more than anything about this whole thing?

Ginger: I want people to know that repentance is such a release, and the grace of God is so real and if you will just listen to what he wants to do for you that it is not rules that he wants us to follow, that it is the best for us. And just his willing to redeem anything if we will allow him to do it. He draws and gives us an opportunity to respond.

And I will tell people, "Please, please listen to his voice calling. He wants his children with him and he want us to serve him and love him. And he is so good and gracious and kind." And even when you continue to fall down, he still is right there saying, "I'm with you always."

James: He always has the Father's heart.

Betty: We always say, "God, I want to be a blessing to others" but I feel like through your story God was saying, "I'm going to give you a blessing by letting you meet him."

Victor: I'd like to add on. I was just going to say that I think God can take any situation, as

long as it's a little bit of light of God in you, it can transform into something real bright and radiate off of you. God can change your atmosphere and the people around you and your whole situation and your circle will be better and everything will be positive and you'll have good feelings.

James: You go to work. You worked at Chic-fil-a now you're working at Burger King. On the cover of this book there are two shoes here.

Victor: That's my favorite color blue.

James: Okay. Now I want to hear the story about these shoes.

Ginger: Look at his feet!

Victor: I wear the color blue a lot. I like to wear the blue shoes because this is my favorite color.

Ginger: That was the first gift I bought him.

Victor: And she got it by the beach because that's probably a place I would be.

James: How did he tell you when you brought up shoes? What did he say?

Victor: He told me exactly what... he had an exact order. That they needed to be this brand, this color, this size. So I went to the store and shopped and brought them back. Oh yeah! It was awesome.

James: He says he'll shod you with the gospel of peace on your feet. You've got peace on your feet. We all need to live with peace on our feet and we need to spread that peace. What's happening here is Holy Spirit life. And I don't know where you are but you're as noticed. I don't even know what's going on in your life but I guarantee you, if Betty and I were in your home, "O

God, I wouldn't want you here now. I'm not really dressed up for you." Okay, I understand. It may be early in the morning or you might be in a bar. I don't care where you are. If Betty and I came in we would love you.

I'd love to send you a book that's a simple introduction to the Father and some simple Bible studies. It's called *Knowing God as Father*. Call and ask for it.

Then I want to say to both of you, our viewers joined us years ago when I found starving children in third world countries, mostly in Africa. But we saw the need and we started meeting it. I came to you and I said -- Betty and I did, we have found a need and a legitimate way to meet it with love. Would you join us in doing it?

Boy, did you do it. You talk about putting God's arms around the suffering. I want you to listen to our missionary who went to be in heaven with the Lord but here's his son with our mission team sharing the heart of God and the needs that love, through you, has freely met. You can be the miracle that so many people need. You can be somebody's miracle. Watch closely and prayerfully.

On the mission field:

Isak: We had heard about how bad the conditions are in this village. We started the next morning to just talk to mothers. Almost every mother we spoke to told a similar story of at least losing one child but some had lost two or three children. We asked one of the mothers, "Where do you get food from?"

She said, "We have no food. We literally have no food."

Announcer: One of the mothers we spoke to was Maria, a young woman who had beautiful twin daughters, both babies recently became ill with the unmistakable signs of malnutrition. But one of them deteriorated far too rapidly to react.

Open Captions:

>> My baby was crying and crying. She was very sick. She dies beside me while I held her sister. My heart was broken.

Announcer: Maria can't allow herself to mourn. The sorrow makes her physically ill. So she pushes away the thoughts and tries to focus on her remaining daughter. She is doing all she can to survive but without food, Maria fears she will live the same nightmare again.

Open Captions:

>> I pray for her health. She's always sick, and I can't find food. I pray God will take away the suffering from our bodies... and provide for us.

Isak: Please! Help us today to bring mission feeding to this area because we can't do it without you. If you'll knit your hands and your hearts with us, and if you'll do what you can do, you'll enable us to do what we have to do and that's establish mission feeding here and save these children's lives.

End of video

In the studio:

James: Well, we've lost a daughter to cancer and people like you put arms of love around us with your prayers. As I was looking at that precious mother and the little sister, the little baby on her back, I think these women are the most beautiful women in the world who just love their children so much. And they're their greatest source of joy because they are poor. And when we found out that we could save their lives and give them a future, we started doing it. But we sold things here at the ministry and we started supporting and we didn't know if anybody would join us. So we started telling and Betty and I started going to the ends of the earth to show you a need that love can meet. And with amazement, you stepped up.

We have saved somewhere between 13 and 15 million lives. Did you hear what I just said? Like that -- little ones, 13 to 15 million! That's the reports from the nations where we saved

them. When I say we? Who is that? That's us. So we give people a future and a hope and we show them how to get on their feet. And we teach them responsibility, accountability, and even how to work.

You saw a lot of children lined up there in that area where we're feeding and they had clothes given and donated and a lot of them came from all the different parts of the world. It made them look nice even though they're poor. And then we're feeding them food that you give.

Betty, it's been the most amazing thing. Right now we have 400,000 children in need, situations just like that. Now think about what I'm saying. This is a miracle. For \$30, \$50, \$100 we can feed three, five or ten children for the next months. Would you please help us feed ten? Could you do that? Surely you could help three or five, \$30, \$50, \$100. There are many of you that have been so blessed you could help us feed 100, you could give \$1,000. I really believe that.

All I'm asking you to do is be an answer to that mother's heart cry. She's already lost a child. She doesn't want to lose another one. She's working, she's trying to find a little grain and it's so meager but we not only feed them and stabilize then we encourage schools and we do the feeding there so they get an education. And everywhere we feed, girls who are taught to work, the attendance of girls goes up 70%! Because only about 10 to 20% attend until we feed. Listen to me. It is a miracle.

We have some beautiful gifts. Anthony Evan's CD, his songs, "Altared" became number one right off. We're sending this incredibly gifted beautiful music from Anthony Evans, Tony Evan's son; you know Priscilla Shirer, this is the Evans family. Beautiful -- we love them. We're sending that to say thank you. We've got the beautiful mugs, "Filled with Joy," "Filled with Faith" for those of you who will receive the CD but also both mugs if you just say, "James, I can give \$100." You can! You give \$1,000, we've got a beautiful bronze "In the Arms of the Shepherd," that's what you're doing.

Would you right now go get your checkbook and write a check to LIFE? But call us and tell us what you're mailing. Or will you go online, go get your bankcard, use it like a check or dial that

number? People have been calling and saying, "I want to know God as father." Would you please call right now and say I'm going to help you feed ten kids, five kids or three. There is some level you can be an answer to somebody's prayer. Please do it right now. If you put it off, chances are it will be put off. Go do it right now. Thank you for doing it.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Mission feeding began with a promise to be there in times of crisis for thousands of hurting and hungry children in their time of need.

Now more than ever we need your help to save lives by feeding and caring for children across the continent of Africa. With food reserves gone and many areas experiencing severe famine, we urgently need to replenish our supplies to reach the 400,000 children who are counting on us. Your gift of love can be the miracle answer to a desperate mother's prayer.

Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50 or \$100 that will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. With your gift, we'll send you the authored worship CD by Anthony Evans. This powerful full-length album includes unique versions of some of today's most cherished worship songs that are sure to uplift and inspire you.

With your gift of \$100 or more please request the "Filled with Faith" and "...Joy" travel mug set. These 12-ounce mugs are crafted with large handles, double-layered insulation and vacuum sealed lids to prevent spills. Each mug includes a message to remind you of God's blessings and faithfulness.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our commemorative bronze sculpture, "Safe in the Shepherd's Arms."

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video

In the studio:

James: I am believing that if you can help, you will. If you'd like to have this book, it's *Kinda Like Grace*, because that's just what you're dumping out. If you say, "James, if I help you feed those kids, would you mind sending me that?" We'll send it to say thank you. It's online, you can get it in the bookstores. I think it will bless you.

Would all of you join me and say thanks to Victor? And thanks to Ginger for being a blessing? Thank you for showing us grace. We love you, Victor. I'm telling you, you keep making those burgers, buddy. Thank all of you for watching. Thank you for loving people and putting God's arms around them. Thank you!