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Week four: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Louie Giglio #1

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh here.

Sheila: Greetings, people!

Randy: Yes. My parents are not here but they will be back very soon. They're just taking a little time off. But we're going to stay with the parental theme that will impact you in a special way as we talk about Father God. And with one of my favorite people, the author of a new book called, *Not Forsaken*. And the founder, I guess you would say of "The Passion" conferences. Would you welcome Louie Giglio?

Louie: Thanks guys!

Randy: Good to have you back, man!

Sheila: It's good to have you here.

Louie: Thank you.

Randy: I've had the privilege of talking to you several times. Is this the first time you and Sheila?

Sheila: First time I've met. All my friends just love Louie.

Louie: No! All your friends love Shelly, that's what you told me.

[Laughter]

Sheila: Well, yes, they do love Shelly, but you're kind of a legend, even with just my own son. My son Christian is 22 and I cannot tell you how Passion conferences have impacted his life. Each year he will go with like five or six of his friends and their just changed. Their vision is clearer when they leave. So thank you.

Louie: Wow! It's been an amazing journey.

Randy: We've got a lot to talk about because this is a lot in this book, and a lot in the lives of people. So let's start just with the one point that you start with, which has to do with the most important question in our relationship with God. Explain that a little bit.

Louie: So one of my mentors growing up, I learned later that he was stealing this from A.W. Tozer, but he taught us when we were in high school, the most important thing about any of us is what we think about when we think about God. So when you say the word *God*, whatever pops into your mind, that's the most important thing about you. And people say, "Well, why do you say that?"

Well, Tozer went on to say the reason why. He said, "We all move by secret law of the soul toward our mental image of God." Because we were created by and for God. So we're moving toward our creator whether we know it or not. And if we get a flawed view of God then we end up with a flawed life. So it is important that we get it right. And God is, thankfully, in the equation revealing himself to us so that we can come up with the right answer to the question.

Randy: How difficult is that when we tend to place on God our image of our earthly father, which runs the gamut from wonderful to really awful.

Louie: Well, Jesus comes into our story, thankfully and he is the full revelation of who God is. He teaches us something. A lot of people don't think about it this way, but Jesus teaches us a lot about God and he teaches us one thing about God above everything else. He teaches he's creator, sovereign, king, Lord. But 189 times in the four gospels alone, Jesus teaches us that God is a father. So he is putting all of the attributes of God into a person that we can relate to and know. Like, how do you put your arms around justice or how do you have a relationship with grace? Well, you have a just father or a gracious father.

So fatherhood is at the heart of who God is and the relationship that he wants us to have with him. If that's the case, then the enemy is going to put a bull's-eye on fatherhood. And he does that. None of us have a perfect father and a lot of us have fathers that were far from that, which actually did not bless us, but they cursed us and abandoned us. A lot of kids have said to me, "Hey! If God's a father, I'm not interested." They're just projecting their view of their dad on God.

But what we say in the book and the beauty of it to me is, is that God is not the reflection of our earthly dad, he is not just a bigger version of my dad, he is the perfection of our earthly dad. He is everything we wanted our dad to be and more.

Randy: I underlined that one because that statement, that is really important that we not view God as the reflection. Even if we have great fathers, I've got a great dad, right? But I can't put that on God. I have to understand that God is better than the best dad that could be there or the worst dad or the absent dad or whatever you've got. The perfection, the perfection...

Sheila: Everything you always hoped for and more.

Louie: Yeah, and a lot of people will say to me and I get it... my dad grew up his whole life without a father. And I saw at the end of his life the domino of all of that into my life. And my dad was a great dad, but he wasn't the son that God wanted him to be. So he

never knew a father's blessing and it's hard to give a father's blessing when you don't have a father's blessing.

But the beauty of our relationship with God is that when you come to know Jesus you don't join something, you don't sign up for something, you don't become a member of something, you become a son or a daughter. The very nature of the gospel is spiritual birth.

And so all of a sudden, every one of us who puts our faith in Jesus, we're now in a new family tree. And yes, we have an old family tree and that tree may be broken down, it may be stressed, it may be nice, it may be simple, it may be so complicated you have to have four poster boards to get everybody into it.

Randy: I've drawn charts. My Ancestry.com account is full.

Louie: Yeah! And people, are we still counting grandpa's girlfriend, is she in the family tree? Who all is in this tree? But our spiritual tree is very simple: Father, son, and Holy Spirit, and then me, born of God. And we have this ancestry test called "23 and Me" and I think the beauty of our spiritual life is it's just three in me. My family tree...

Sheila: I love that! That's great!

Louie: Very simple. My family tree is I was born of God the Father, born of God the Son, born of God the Spirit, and so I now have a new lineage, if you will. And I know with my dad, my dad did not get any blessing down his tree from his dad. When I discovered that, he only lived three more years from the moment I really got in touch with how little came down his family tree. But I'm thinking, wow! I'm in another tree. And I've got all kinds of blessing coming down my tree. I can send blessing back up my dad's family tree that he never got from his dad.

And for the last three years of my dad's life I was able to be the blessing giver because I

had a waterfall pouring down on my life.

Randy: I think that hope is so important. Because you know my dad's story. He didn't have that either but yet he was able to break that cycle. How important is understanding that significant to breaking a bad pattern?

Louie: Well, the power of the word is so strong. Power of words are strong. So when a father walks out the door those are words. It is you're not worth sticking around for. You can say, "It doesn't matter." You can say, "I don't care. Look at me, I've grown up and I've moved past that."

It's interesting in the book we talk about Peggy Drexler; she does a study. It is not a spiritual study: 75 high achieving women who are crushing it in their lives. And she said she was surprised to discover all 75 of them still viewed their success through the lens of what does my father think? Way down the road when they should have passed all that by. But it is real for us. We all intrinsically long for our daddy's blessing in our life. So those words spoken or not spoken, they make a mark on us.

But God is speaking. He is a speaking God. And he is telling us that he loves us, that he values us, that he seeks us. And think about this. Jesus, what did he say when he died? "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" So he knew forsaken. Why? So that we never would know forsaken. He was forsaken by God in our place that we would never be forsaken by God. And so he tells us, even if my mother, the Psalmist says, and my father forsake me, that was my dad, the Lord will take me up.

So God's writing a new story for every one of us and it's a story of prized, sought after, valued, loved, cared for, and believed in.

Sheila: You start the book with a really beautiful picture that actually help. You talk about like kids in a swimming pool and when the father shows up it is like, "Daddy, watch me!" And I thought back to when my son was a little boy. If I was there, he would

expect me to have a towel and a snack but the minute Barry showed up it was, "Daddy, watch me!" Why is that such a primal need in us?

Louie: I think it is because we were created by God and for God and he is a father. He is not just a father to those who come to know him as sons and daughters of God. He is God the Father who is the creator of every human being. So there's something intrinsic in our heart.

You know, bless moms' hearts! If it weren't for moms, we wouldn't be here! They fixed the snack, got us to the pool, brought the floaties, taught us how to swim. But Dad shows up for 30 minutes and the kid loses his mind. And what do they say? "Daddy, watch me, watch me! Watch me."

I do my one little jump into the pool, I survive and come out of the water and all I care about is one thing, "Daddy, did you see me?"

And the dad says, "Way to go, Ace! Way to go, baby girl!" And that becomes the foundational stone that we stand on to become the man or woman God want us to be. And when that isn't there, there is a gap. But praise God, he repairs the gap.

Sheila: I was thinking about my own childhood because my father committed suicide when I was five and he tried to kill me before he took his own life. And I spent so much of my early Christian life trying to be perfect so God wouldn't stop loving me. But when I finally came to the place of realizing how different God is... because you ask a question at one point in the book, and I can't remember where it is. Maybe you ask like, what do you picture when you see God? When I thought about it, I saw arms opened wide. Like, "You know what? Come on! Come, run into my arms. I've always been there. I've always loved you."

What do you see, when you work with...? Because primarily you work with college-age students, is there a huge father-hole in their lives?

Louie: They're called, I don't call them this, but some say it is the fatherless generation. We passed no fault divorce ten years ago in New York state; they became the 50th state to pass a no-fault divorce law. So with a few hundred bucks and you can go online, there is no court, there is no process, there is no resolution anymore. I think the fall-out of that now is that one in four kids in America grow up in a house without a father present in that home. That's not to say the other three fathers out of four are amazing, and really speaking a blessing into the lives of their kids.

And so kids are growing up in a high-anxiety environment without the covering of a father, and it's actually maybe the second generation, the third generation of broken-down fatherhood that's now dominoing in. So a kid may not have a blessing of a dad. Their dad might actually be competing with them in life. You see this all the time now. The dad is pushing the kid out of the way so the dad can get what the dad needs out of the situation.

I think it is a very lonely, isolated generation of the product of abandonment and divorce and disinterest and dysfunction. It is a huge crisis. You see kids getting married a lot later, you see kids starting families a lot later, you see kids moving back home with their parents in record numbers. I think a lot of it, not all of it, can be traced back to did dad show up? Did he sober up? And did he speak up? And tell me, "I love you, I'm for you, and I'm going to show you how to live life as a son or daughter loved by God."

Randy: You talk about some of the warped images we get about God, oftentimes because of our earthly father. These really resonated with me because I feel like I've talked to somebody who had a problem with God, and they fall into one of these categories. And it is like, wow! You got that one. Can we talk about some of these what you call "a motley crew of gods"? Because I think it will resonate. And so a couple of them and you tell me which one you think are the most important ones. We've got "Grandpa god." We've got...

Louie: Yeah! He's got hard candy in his pocket and a little wink in his eye. He is a nice

guy.

Randy: Yeah, yeah. But he's really not that relevant.

Louie: No, he doesn't know anything about how to operate a cellphone, telephone, electronic devices.

Randy: He's good at Christmas maybe and that's it.

Louie: What did you say again? Huh? Huh?

Randy: Really. You have to yell at him to get his attention; right? You've got "Score Keeper god."

Louie: Yeah. This is most people's.

Sheila: That was more of mine.

Louie: He is up in heaven and he is making sure that everything gets kept in the ledger. And at the end of the day if there are more pluses than minuses in the book then it might work out for you in the end. And a lot of people's dad was like that. I'll give you a blessing but you have to earn it. If you jump through the hoops, you get the blessing.

Randy: What's the problem with that one?

Louie: The problem with that is it puts us into a relationship with God that is all about works and about our effort, which is contrary to the nature of the story of God which is a story of grace. Because we are broken, flawed human beings and we could never jump through the hoops right to get into the arms of God. We could never do enough. And how do you know if you're doing enough?

I think what every child wants and what we want from our heavenly Father is to know that things aren't going to get brushed under the rug. You don't get free passes on things when you disobey, and we don't get that with God, but when you do fall short you get an arm around you as the conversation goes on. And you get grace extended to you to walk again into a new direction. And this is our God. He doesn't crush...

Sheila: You talk about Ruth Graham at Billy's funeral. I remember, I was there too. And it had an impact on you, didn't it?

Louie: Man! She tells a story and we talk about it in the book about she gets divorced and then has a rebound marriage. And her dad, Billy Graham says, "Don't do it." She does it anyway. And within 24 hours she knows she's made a mistake. Within three or 4 days she annuls the marriage and goes home. She drives all the way up the mountain. And I've been to Billy Graham's house at the top of that mountain, it is a long way up there to the bottom of his driveway. When she gets there, she doesn't know what's going to happen and Billy Graham is standing at the bottom of the driveway with his arms open wide. And he embraces his daughter and hugs her and welcomes her home.

In that moment, you're already a mess. You don't need someone to tell you you're a mess. There are already consequences. You don't need more consequences. You need to know we're going to put this thing back together again and we're going to do it in the arms of a dad who loves me and is standing here believing in me. And I think it is the most powerful thing in the whole story of our faith.

Randy: I do too. I'm going to hit a couple of these real quick because we're about out of time. We could just keep talking. You've got the "Cosmic Force god" which I think is most non-Christians idea of God. This weird kind of...

Louie: Some transcendent thing up there.

Randy: You have "The angry god" and that's the other one that I hear a lot about in the

church.

Louie: Of course, he's angry because look around. Most of the churches are angry and so people assume God's against everything and against everybody when Jesus stretched out his arms on a cross because there was a Father who was wanting to reconnect with everyone and everybody, and to take us all in even at our very worst state. This is the perfect Father and he is the one waiting for all of us with open arms.

Sheila: How would that change our nation, Louie if instead of us being the ones that are known as what we stand against, that we stood there with our arms open the way the Father's arms are open. If we got that message ourselves, that would revolutionize this whole country.

Louie: I think if we could become love sons and daughters, then we walk different. And it doesn't mean we don't stand on truth, we don't have values, we don't have a moral compass because of course, we do, it just means that we let God be God and we walk as the sons and daughters of God. I think there is a difference in that. And we let God take care of judging things and rectifying things and fixing things. And we seek to give people the same grace and extend the same mercy to other people that God has extended to us.

I think this church is a winsome church. It's Paul saying, "I want to become all things to all people so that by all means I might win *some*." And I think a loved son, a loved daughter who is living under a waterfall of God's blessing has the best scenario for walking through life extending love and kindness and grace to people and letting God take care of all the rest.

Randy: I think you've got it. I think it is important that we learned to show the heart of that Father to people; not just tell them, I do want to tell them, but to show it, to demonstrate it because that's when it really becomes powerful when they see it in action.

Louie: Absolutely!

Randy: There is something we can do, Sheila.

Sheila: I just got back a few weeks ago from a trip, my latest trip in Africa and I'm always impacted wherever I go in our missions, whether it is Phnom Penh, Cambodia, wherever we are. This trip, for some reason, I just really connected with this one mom, but she had a really painful story. And I asked her permission if I could share it with you and she said yes. So would you take a look at this?

On the mission field:

Announcer: It has been said that water is life and the reality is, without water no one can survive. But when water is contaminated, the risk of a person becoming sick or even worse, dying from a waterborne disease increases dramatically.

Sheila: Just over my shoulder in that clump of trees several children are buried. I can't even imagine what that's like to have a grove of trees that contains the bodies of little ones who have died. They are lying now so close to their killer.

The reason these children died is because of the water. This is the only water source for this village. But the water that's in here is filthy and contaminated, and it has become what should be a source of life, water has become the source of death.

Announcer: The mothers in these villages have no other choice but to let their children drink from unsafe water sources.

Open Captions:

>> [Alice] My son's last words were, "Mom, can you carry me on your back? My legs and back hurt." When I put him down, he started vomiting and walked out and collapsed and died.

Sheila: So sorry! I just have one son and I can't imagine how painful it would be to say good-bye to my boy. It's just not something that we think oh, what a tragedy! But there is nothing we can do. We can do something. What this village needs, what this mom needs is fresh clean water. Will you help us? You're a good mom. You're a good, good mom!

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: You notice how stoic she was? It was almost as if she had just put her soul and her emotions on hold because it is too painful. Maybe because it was her boy the thought of your son coming to you saying, "Mom, could you carry me home? I'm too tired. I'm hurting too much." And by the time you get him home, he walks outside the little hut where you live and drops dead.

And the only reason is because... I mean at that well, I looked into that well and it was horrible! But it is the only thing they've got for hundreds of miles. This is the only water. So it's not like she has any other choice. So every day she looks into the eyes of the children she still has and thinks, what do I do? If I don't give you this water you'll die of thirst, which is one of the most painful ways in the world to die. And if I do give it to you, I know there's a chance it will kill you too.

And there was just something that rose up in me and I thought, Lord, as long as we, your children... think about it! It's so nuts. Half of us are on diets because we eat too much. And all this mom wants is clean water for her children. That's all she's asking. And the thing is that you and I can do it. I told her, we're going to back again soon. I told her, I will come home, and I will tell your story and I want to promise you, there's a lot of people out there who care about you as a mom. We want to do something. But I want you to help us. Would you help us make a difference?

Randy: They have no choice, Sheila. It's hard sometimes for that to communicate on

television. You think, can they boil it or something? They don't have anything to boil it in.

Sheila: By the way, when they boil the water in Zambia, there is arsenic in the water. If they boil the water, it becomes poisonous.

Randy: You're kidding me!

Sheila: No!

Randy: So their choices are little to none. They may have no choice at all. But we have a choice. You have a choice right now. We make the choice to come on television and say, will you join us? Will you give \$48 to provide clean drinking water for ten people for basically their lifetime or \$144 for 30 people?

If God has blessed you with the means to provide an entire well, \$4,800, give one! Maybe two, maybe three if you're that person. If not, join with the rest of us because when we come together, we can change this situation for so many people. We save lives through Mission: Water for LIFE, you can save a life just by partnering with us.

Go online, go to the phones, give the best gift you can and know that you are making that difference. You are saving a life, you are sharing the gospel in word and deed with someone right now. Do it now.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Today, a mother living in extreme poverty will do the unthinkable, give her children dirty, diseased-filled water that she knows could kill them. With no other choice what's a mother to do?

With your help clean water is on the way. Mission Water for LIFE is the answer to a mother's prayer to save the lives of her children, to offer them a bright future free from the fear of death. With your gift today you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year.

Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten people. \$72 will provide for 15. \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift we'll send you *Praying Women*: "How to pray when you don't know what to say." In her new book, Sheila Walsh shows you how to reignite your conversation with God to become a strong praying woman.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "*Power of Prayer*" bundle. This bundle includes a cozy throw blanket adorned with words of The Lord's Prayer, a decorative pillow cover, as well as Sheila's book. All three are encouraging reminders of how there's power in your faith-filled prayers!

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request our brand-new commemorative bronze sculpture, "A Mother's Strength."

Please call, write or make your gift online!

End of video

On the Mission Field:

James: Let me just say this about the well. Here we are in an area where over 2,000 children have just been fed but the whole thing started not only with a need for food but also providing water which became the center of life. Now there is a school here. So you've got school feeding, you've got fresh water. They're not only drinking it and the whole village here are using it as a water source but they're washing -- their desperate to clean up their dishes with clean water.

I'm telling you, the wells like this that you can have a part in of either giving the well or giving a portion of it, it changes everything in the entire area. If you can help give other wells here in Africa please do it because it is going to take all of us working together, and it takes people just like you providing as love provided here. Do what you can to help us drill more wells, please.

End of clip

In the studio:

Sheila: Thank you so much. And for any gift at all, we're going to send you Louie's book. I honestly wish every single believer would read this book. If we got how much we are loved by our Father, it would change everything.

Randy: There's more. In fact, there is so much more we need him to come back.

Sheila: Will you stay?

Randy: Can you come back for another program? Y'all want to hear Louie Giglio on another program talking about this? Thanks for being here today! Thank you for sharing. Thank you, guys, for watching. Don't miss any episodes of *LIFE Today*. Thank you for giving!

Sheila: See you next time!