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Week four: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Louie Giglio #2

Sheila: Hello! Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh here with Randy Robison. I have to say we have a lot of the audience. You've all been very upbeat and very... Well, now you've all gone really quiet.

[Laughter]

But anyway, we're very excited because Louie Giglio is here with his book, *Not Forsaken*: Finding freedom as sons and daughters of a perfect Father. Please, would you welcome Louie? We're so glad you're here.

Louie: Thank you so much!

Sheila: I was looking at some of my Facebook quotes the other night and I'd talked about the way that God invites us to come as we are. A girl wrote, "If God's like my dad, I'm not going anywhere near him." I wondered, how many people are wounded or skewed in their picture of who God is because of their own experience with their father.

And I know in your book you talk about forgiveness but I have a feeling she would say, "I don't want to forgive him. He doesn't want to be forgiven."

Louie: Yeah. I think in the book it's interesting, a lot of people... and I've preached these messages for 20 years of my life so it is not just a new thing that came out a few months ago. All across the decades as I've been sharing this message of seeing God as a perfect

Father people love the wow, I'm not forsaken. I'm accepted. I'm chosen. I'm adopted. I'm loved and valued and prized by God. I see myself in a new way. And they're coming on board with the story all the way to the point where I say, "And probably the most important step in this journey is for you to forgive your dad." And man, so many people are like -- and I understand, they're just like hey, I was with you up until now but there is no way on earth I am ever forgiving my dad for what he did to me. And when you hear the stories of what kids have been through, you understand why.

But I think the power of forgiveness is the key that unlocks the prison door. And it doesn't let the other person out, it lets us out. Forgiveness opens the door from our past and lets us out of our past into our future. It's not letting the other person out of whatever they did, it is letting us out of whatever they did to us. And that's the power of forgiveness.

Randy: So what are the objections that you hear? Is it he hurt me too much?

Louie: He doesn't deserve to be forgiven. He never even admitted he did anything. He doesn't even know the damage that he's done. He walked out on our family. He lives with another family in Phoenix. He's going to another kid's baseball practice right now and doesn't even know what is happening over here. Why would I forgive him? Or I reached out to my dad, he never even responded to my email, never replied to my letter, never returned my phone call. And for all those reasons, I think people are like, there's no way. And what they're really saying, I believe, there is no way I'm letting him off the hook.

Randy: But those are good reasons. Someone who does that to their kids needs some punishment! Right?

Louie: Yeah! Well, they're great and valid reasons until we take one huge step back -- and this is for all of us -- and we realize that God forgave us. It's a powerful thing that we celebrate. That with a shovel God gave forgiveness to us. But it's so amazing how I want it in the shovelful but I dish it out in the teaspoonful. And I say, "If you earn it, I'll give it

to you. If you really are sorry I'll give it to you."

Randy: Or at least ask.

Louie: Or at least if you ask for it or admit that you need it.

Randy: But what about the justice side of it? Because this is the other one I hear: Yeah, I'm ready to forgive. I get that God forgave me but God's also a just god. And so the things that that person has done to me, God wants some justice and that requires them to at least ask for forgiveness. How does that play out?

Louie: The thing about the gospel is that it's very powerful and it is the center of our story. God is a god of justice but he didn't put Jesus on the cross because I told him I needed forgiveness. He put Jesus on the cross before I was even born. Christ died before I even knew I needed a savior. So God's justice moved into action before any of us deserved to be forgiven, admitted that we were sinners, or even confessed that we needed a savior.

So it's embracing this full gospel and saying, wow, this is what true forgiveness and true grace looks like. And then out of that now I'm operating. So out of my own strength, my own ability, my own resource, I can't forgive. No way I'm going to forgive someone who wrongs me but out of the well of the forgiveness that I'm drinking from, that's being poured out on me from God I have a resource bigger than myself from which I can draw.

I think to say to a dad "I forgive you" is not the same as saying, "You don't need to be punished." You can forgive your dad and turn your dad into the authorities in the same phone call. You could forgive your dad and say, "I can't be in a home alone with you." You could forgive your dad and say, "There has to be a boundary in our life from this point forward." You can forgive your dad and still have justice.

But justice and forgiveness are not the same thing. Forgiveness is releasing. It's saying

you know what? God forgave me, therefore out of that sense of forgiveness I'm going to release you. Not that we sweep everything under the rug.

You hear this all the time. People say, "I'm just not going to sweep things under the rug. I like to keep it real."

I'm like, "Let's keep it real." We're not sweeping anything under the rug. And you're not letting your dad off the hook.

When someone is sitting across from me telling me what they're father did to them, I'm not going to say to them, "Oh let's just let that be bygone." We're not letting anyone off the hook. We're just putting them on God's hook and letting God be God. And when we do that it frees us. You'd be amazed. Even if you never hear back from them, your father may be dead and gone, or maybe you never knew who he was.

I had someone tell me the other day, "I don't know my dad. I've never known him. I didn't know his name. He was never in the story. He never showed up. And it's wounded me my whole life. And I came to the place where I felt God giving me the power to forgive him and I forgave a man and I don't even know his name. But when I did, I felt something lift off of me." I don't know if the dad is somewhere, wherever he is in the world, felt anything lift off of him. He said, "I felt something lift off of me." That's the power of forgiveness in our lives.

Sheila: I read something, and I think it was by R.T. Kendall where it said perhaps the church is crippled by unforgiveness. What does unforgiveness do to us?

Louie: It simply keeps the door locked because again, I'm just talking conversationally with so many people and this person said, "I don't care what my dad thinks. Thanks for your book. It's awesome. I don't give a rip what my dad thinks about me. In fact, I don't care if I ever talk to my dad again. I couldn't care less where he is right now or what he is doing because my dad is dead to me. I don't care to see him again."

And I just kindly, because there is a lot packed into every one of these moments, I just very gently said, "Why are you telling me all this?" I said, "You just told me eight times that you don't care about your dad." And every time we say that I'll never be like my dad, I'll never treat mom like my dad, my wife like my dad treated our mom. I'll never treat my kids like my dad treated me. I'll never be an alcoholic. I'll never be a workaholic. I'll never, never, never, never...

What are we doing? We're rehearsing the negative story. We're just ingraining in our minds the thing that we are not going to do versus saying, "I have a perfect heavenly Father. I'm coming to know him through Jesus Christ. I have his D.N.A. spiritually in me because I have been born again. And on my spiritual birth certificate it just simply says Father, Son, Holy Spirit and Louie. That's my new spiritual birth."

So out of that I want to start saying I want to be like my dad. I want to treat people like my dad treats people. I want to talk to people like my heavenly Father talks to people. What am I doing now? I am creating a positive picture of who I am and who I can be versus rehearsing the negative picture.

So it's simply poison that keeps us locked in the prison of our past. And the only way out of that prison, I believe, is through the power of the name of Jesus to forgive and to open that door. Again, not so our father can step out of the door or some other person in our life but so that I can step out of that door and I can walk free.

Sheila: I found that passage of the book really compelling because I have a very dear friend who is struggling with alcoholism, and sometimes she'll call me in the middle of the night and she said, "I've blown it. I never want to drink again. I never want to do this. I never want to..."

When I read what you said about okay, she said just reinforced five times not drinking again as opposed to finding the grace to kind of shift where you're standing and look in a

different direction. I think that's a very powerful, powerful concept.

Louie: When we're driving on the freeway, this happens all the time, right? We look over at the car next to us and what do we do? We find ourselves drifting that way. Our eyes guide us. I think for the scripture, so many times it says to set our gaze on him. That's a choice that we have. We can either look back at the past, back at the broken relationship, back at the abuse or back at the abandonment, and if we do, there goes our life again, and our course goes that way.

Or we can set our gaze towards this Father who is on record -- he is on record as saying, "That's my son and my daughter and here's how much I love them."

And we say it in the book, and it sounds like a spiritual cliché and a spiritual bumper sticker theme but it is so much more than that. To say to somebody, you are worth Jesus to God. That's your value. That's how much you mean to him. And to set your gaze there, all of the sudden you find your life drifting that way. I'm not abandoned. I'm chosen. I'm not forsaken, I'm sought after! I am not just somebody, I'm a daughter of the King of the universe. I'm a son of Almighty God.

Randy: When you understand further that God is first and foremost a father, and a father loves a son and daughter, then you even realize how much more that means that he would give up his son for you and me.

Louie: Amazing! I got to speak to the United States Olympic swimming team before they went to Rio, a few days before they flew out of America. I thought, what am I going to say to them except, "Go win gold medals!" That's what I wanted to say. But I said, "I want to encourage you" because a lot of them it was sort of a devotional time, and many of the people in the room had faith in Jesus, some were interested in Jesus.

I said, "You know when Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended and a voice came out of heaven and said, 'This is my worker.'" No.

"This is my servant." No.

"This is my *son*."

And then God went on to say, "My beloved son in whom I'm well pleased."

I asked the question, had Jesus walked on water? No. Raised the dead, healed the sick, turned water into wine, died on the cross, been raised from the dead? He hadn't done anything except come from heaven to earth. But yet he already had the blessing.

So here he is moving out into his ministry, into these challenging years, into the wilderness to be tempted by the enemy with the blessing not for the blessing. I said to this swim team, "When you look down on that platform and you're waiting for that beep and you're waiting to dive into that water, I hope you'll see on the platform, loved and accepted by God. And you will leave the platform swimming with acceptance not swimming for acceptance. Because you don't get acceptance in the color of a medal that you get at the end of a pool. You get acceptance by what's spoken over your life.

And I... Yes! God wants us to walk out in truth. Yes, he wants us to mature and grow up in our faith, but he wants us to wake up in the morning and go, I'm walking into this day with the blessing not hoping that if I do good today I'll get the blessing.

Sheila: When my son was little, I used to say to him every night, "Which boy does mommy love?" And he would put his little hand on his cheek and he would say, "This boy." And I started doing that. I've done it like when I catch my reflection in a puddle or a mirror, to just say, which girl does Jesus love? This girl! That's why I love John. He always refers to himself as "the one Jesus loves." He kind of got it at a level that's so...

But honestly, I really believe the message of this book, Louie is simple and radical. It's simple but it's like if we grasped hold of it and really understood it, I think it would make

such a huge impact on all of our lives.

Louie: I think one of the most powerful things we can do is agree with God. Pride is disagreeing with God. Humility is agreeing with God. The seven words I think will change our lives are the words: I am who you say I am. I'm not who my earthly dad said I am, even if he said I was great. I'm more than that. I'm not abandoned. I'm not divorced. I'm not abused. I'm not forsaken. I'm not disinterest. I am who you say I am. And it sounds prideful to step into that moment but it is really just humility to say I agree with God. I am prized and loved and valued and I'm believed in by the King of the universe.

Randy: What I appreciate possibly most, there's a lot of great things to appreciate about what you're sharing and what you share in the book but when I became a father, I have four children, it changed the way I saw God entirely because suddenly I had a father's heart. And you love your kids -- they're different but you love them all as much as I can possibly love. And they'll joke, which one is your favorite? It just doesn't work that way. Yes, I love them differently but I love them fully.

You know what? They may not always do what I want them to do or achieve a certain thing that I think they possibly could. Do I love them any less? Not for a second. I'd do anything for them. I love these kids like nobody on earth other than my wife, right? By positioning God as father, rightly so, you open up a whole dynamic to understanding the heart of that Father and the relationship that he wants with us as his children. I just want to say thank you for that wonderful gift of a message of the heart of God.

Sheila: Is this what you see through Passion, Louie? Because I know your heart is for this younger generation to know their purpose and to go out and make a difference in the world. What do you see happening through Passion?

Louie: Well, A, it's a miracle what's happening through Passion. We're 23 years in and our message is it's not about you. Who would have thought that would have lasted 23 minutes much less 23 years? But the reason it's lasted is because deep down inside all

of us we all want something bigger than ourselves. And even though they say the millennial generation they're all selfish and the generation before that was all selfish and we're all selfish and everybody's selfish, deep down inside we are still made in the image of almighty God.

So don't count out the fact that there is a God stamp inside every one of us. The Imago Dei is in every one of us. And in that stamp is a desire to be a part of something that lasts forever, a part of something epic. We all know we're not epic and that our stories don't last forever.

And so we're inviting students to say there is a story that lasts forever. There is a name above all names. There is a glory that lights up eternity and you can be a part of that story with your gifts as a sculptor or a teacher or a financier or a mother or a missionary or a pastor or an artist or a chef. You can be part of that great God story that never ends.

Somehow that has resonated, and students have leaned into it and it is miraculous and supernatural. It's bigger than us, it is bigger than me, it's bigger than Passion. It is a God event, in the fact that there are 65,000 college students headed to Passion in just a few days from now in a football stadium, to lift up the name of Jesus and to lean into his mission for life, it defies all the headlines, amen? It defies every statistic that we're reading. And I'm here to tell you, all of them haven't left the faith and all of them haven't left the church.

Randy: I'll tell you why that message resonates because that is the message of the Father God to all of his children no matter what age we are, and kids get that. Sheila, there's a message that we want to give people that says, God has a purpose for you. God has a role for you in sharing his love and his life. You can have a great impact and share God's heart, God's father heart for his children all around the world just by joining with us.

Would you take a moment, Sheila, I think when they see where you went they're going to be touched and going to want to be a part of this.

Sheila: Yeah. Meet some really special moms.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Nothing draws nature and mankind together as swiftly or as contentiously as a water source in a barren wilderness, all clamoring to have their most basic needs met.

Open Captions:

>> I sent my daughters to draw water with two other friends. But before her friends were able to help her, she was dragged away by a crocodile. After searching for three days, we found only half her body floating in the water.

[Weeping]

Announcer: Every living creature in the area shares the water source for this village. Its banks are ground zero for all the drinking and bathing and waste. And although they avoid the river during the most dangerous hours, this is not the first time the village has experienced such a tragedy. They can't escape the waters danger. Either meeting it at the river or taking it home in buckets laced with bacteria that threatens every life. But what choice do they have?

Open Captions:

>> Going to the river is so painful. It reminds me of my daughter. But I have to go. Now I'm so afraid to send my other children to go get water. But if we had a well, we would be so grateful. We would have no more diarrhea and our children would be safe.

Announcer: Ida has no options. Nothing she can do to ensure the safety of her family. Her hands are tied but ours are not. There is a way to rescue Ida and her family and we can do it together.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: I will never forget that morning when I walked with Ida from her village all the way to the only water source, which is that river, and it was quite low while we were there a few weeks ago. When I asked her about her family and she told me this devastating story of her daughter being taken by a crocodile, I can't even -- I mean as a mother, I didn't even know how to wrap my head around that kind of pain.

And the thing that... That trip has impacted me forever. I will never forget these women or the way that you and I can do so much with so little to help them. All they want is clean water. When I walked with them, some of the other moms, to other villages the well was just like six feet deep, they dug it themselves and there are snakes in it and the water is filthy. And mothers have lost their children falling in or dying from drinking the water.

And Ida, there is nothing she can do. She gets up at 4:30 every morning to walk to the river because she doesn't want her other children to go. There is nothing else she can do. But what I was able to tell her and wanted to share with you, there is so much you and I can do. We can put a well in her village and it takes so little. This is doable, Randy. If we all do our bit, we can change Ida's world and the world of so many.

Randy: And we've drilled thousands of wells around the world. The average cost for one well is \$4800. That's an average across all the ones we do. If you have that gift and that desire in your heart to bless so many people with fresh clean drinking water, I just ask you to go online or pick up the phone and do it right now.

We can also do a lot together. Every one of us. \$48 will provide water for virtually a lifetime for ten people. \$144 for 30 people. There is so much you can do and there is so much we can do when we come together and all just do something. So I ask again, go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can and know that we are making a real

difference in the lives of these people that will appreciate the love that you demonstrate so much.

And I want to mention because I know Sheila won't do it, with any gift, if you'll request this book right here, *Praying Women*, it will bless you! It will bless others in your life. So we want to bless you as you bless others. So give the best gift you can. It's going to work. I think we can do this.

Sheila: It makes a huge difference! A huge difference! As long as the body of Christ is on this planet we need to be doing something in Jesus' name. So please, call 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:

Sheila: This is only our second day here in Zambia and already I've heard so many heartbreaking stories like this mom's, Alice. She has lost two children.

And honestly, the circumstances she describes are horrifying. I've always known that these wells, those hand-dug wells that the water is not clean. They dig these wells and it takes a week. They're doing everything they can. There is nothing more they can do and that's where you and I come in. When we can drill a well because down deep we can access this fresh water. We seal it; no contaminants get in. And the new normal is that for the first time in their life these children drink fresh clean water. Will you help us?

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thank you so much. Keep calling. We're going to make a difference. And you

can request Louie's book. It's called *Not Forsaken*. This really -- this is a book that will really make a lasting eternal impact on your soul.

Randy: Yep. It's great. It's blessed me. It will bless you as you bless others. So keep calling, go online, whatever, and would you say thank you to Mr. Louie Giglio for spending some time on *LIFE Today*? Appreciate all of you for watching. Don't miss an episode. Go online and check us out, LifeToday.org and all the places and come back for more. We're here to bless you.