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Week 7: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Jennie Allen

Sheila: Hello and welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh here with Randy Robison. We're very excited about our guest. Jennie Allen has written a lot of great books and studies but this book in particular, I think what a timely gift this is for us. It's called *Get Out of Your Head: Stopping the spiral of toxic thoughts*. Please help me welcome Jennie Allen. Welcome!

Jennie: Thanks! Thank you.

Sheila: We're so glad you're back with us again. Any time you have anything out, Jennie, don't even... just show up in the studio and we'll do a show.

Jennie: Just drive over.

Sheila: But the interesting thing in this book is you tell us a personal story that's actually pretty terrifying.

Jennie: Yes! It would be but I have seen God's power over it. But it was -- it was a little bit scary at the time. So the story is that I was speaking at a church in Little Rock, Arkansas, that's my hometown. It was a Baptist church, and it was a large church. After my first session a woman stopped me in the hall and I kind of got cornered one-on-one. And she said, "You need to quit talking about us." And in the first session I had talked about the demons rejoicing when Christ died and then what they had done. So she says, "You need to quit talking about us."

Well, of course, I'm not thinking to myself she is talking about demons! Like nothing occurs to me. I keep asking her, "What are you talking about?" She said, "We're coming for you." She was just a lovely lady. Everything in me was... I could not place what was happening. And every time I would say, "What are you talking about?" She would say, "You know exactly what I'm talking about."

And then finally I was like, "You know what? I think I do." And "Security guard, could you keep an eye on her? Like she's made some threats against me." Again, would have thought nothing of it but I get back on stage and as I'm speaking, hear screaming in the hallway. I think to myself, I think that's that woman. And then sure enough, the electricity in this mega church on a perfectly sunny day went out while she was screaming in the hallway.

After that I was like, you know what? Minus the electricity going out in a mega church that that's never happened before, I would have just walked away and been like that woman was crazy. But after that I told my husband the story and we immediately... And he is the most low keel, easy-going guy. He is not rattled easily. I rattle easily, he does not. And I called him and he was like, "Let's go through every part of our lives and make sure there is not a place where the enemy could attack us." We took it seriously that that was...

Randy: You're saying it wasn't just some woman who was maybe not quite right but you think it was spiritual.

Jennie: I think it was spiritual. At that time I felt like the devil overplayed his hand. And I remember walking out of there on fire. It was not fearful. It was oh, my gosh! This is all real.

Sheila: It stoked your faith; didn't it?

Jennie: It stoked my faith. That night I was with my mom and my sisters; they had seen it happen. I'm like evangelizing the waiter and like telling everybody because it awoke all of the reality that we know is true. If we believe in Jesus, we read our bibles, we know that there is a war and we know that we're a part of it and we know that these spiritual things are happening around us all the time. But in reality, we're not constantly thinking about it. And I think it kind of shook me and made me more serious about the work that God called me to do.

Randy: You were in a Baptist church; right? I grew up in a Southern Baptist church. It's not common.

Jennie: No. Not common.

Sheila: What's interesting, though, Jennie even though that really stoked your faith and made you like, okay I remember. I'm in a battle. What followed in the months to come was very difficult. Talk about that.

Jennie: Yeah. So this is actually why I decided to give two years of my life to create this book because following that season for months -- like 18 months, I walked through a season of doubt. What that looked like for me was in the middle of the night I would just start questioning things. I would say to myself, is this true? Like you're giving your whole life to God. You're missing kid's games. You are obsessed with the gospel. You are giving your whole life to this. Is this true? Because if it fades to black, it wasn't some other god, but it was just doubt that God existed and that there was a heaven and a hell, and all of this, which is, looking back it is so obviously not true.

But I didn't ever tell anybody. It wasn't something -- I like to say that evil loves to not be noticed because what had happened for me was that it just snuck in and was whispering these things to me and I just received it. And I began to question it. And I don't think I mentioned it. I don't think there was a big sense of shame. I just don't think I took it seriously. And I didn't realize that over months, as I would sit and stew and just allow

these thoughts to be in my mind that there would be a toll. And there was a toll over time.

Sheila: So how did that impact your family life? Were you still speaking?

Jennie: Yeah. It is interesting. My editor after she read the book, she was like, "Jennie, this is real and are you sure that you can go public when this is something that it could look like you were hypocritical?" Because my faith, it really did... I mean I was constantly thinking in the back of my mind, even as I was preaching, is this true? And so it did take a toll.

But I told her that day and I knew it, I was not scared to share it because I knew that I was standing on the same faith that I was given at salvation, that I will stand on on the day before Jesus; that it was from God. Like he gifted me that faith and that faith wasn't shaken. Because my faith, my mustard seed of a faith that I still fought for, that I still prayed was true, the evidence of things hoped for, I still had that. It was just that it definitely was shaken, and yet it never was held in place by me. Like God holds us in place; right? Yes, there is that moment where we trust him as Lord and Savior, but he promises to hold us and that he will persevere us.

Randy: Here's an interesting question for you because sometimes we'll have guests, we'll talk about the idea of questioning God. We say it's okay. God can handle your questions. And sometimes I think it is good to ask, do I really believe? You go through tragedy and it forces you to go, "Do I really believe what I say I do?" When you walk through that your roots grow deeper.

How do you know the difference between sort of that healthy questioning and knocking on the door and getting an answer versus an attack that's designed to undermine you?

Jennie: So I never in those months said it out loud to my husband. I never said what was happening. Again, it wasn't shame, it was just I wasn't taking it seriously. When I finally

said it out loud to some friends because it had gotten where it was just constant, like it was just gnawing me in the day. Because sometimes you're just thinking about something in the night and then when it bleeds into the day and it's always there you go, okay, this has become a bigger problem.

And I said it out loud and my first thought was, this is the stupidest thing I've ever heard. Like I don't believe this. Like I do believe God. I do believe God. And then the next thing I said was, "I think I've been under spiritual attack!" Which is so obvious but until I said it out loud it never occurred to me. I think that's why I wrote the book. Because he is a liar and Jesus is pretty clear that he is the father of lies and that he doesn't have another language. It is what the enemy does, is he lies. He says that in John eight. So we've got this liar that is constantly lying to us. And I remember being in middle school and my youth pastor said, "We don't need to talk about the devil too much." I remember that. It stuck with me.

And then I'm thinking later as I read my Bible, I'm like, wait a minute. Like there are dark cosmic forces that are coming for us. Let's talk about him enough that we can fight well.

I think that's what I had not done. I want to just be that person from the church that says, hey! Our thoughts matter. Like those little random things that you think nothing of, those are lies from the enemy because when I realized I was being attacked I fought it completely differently.

Randy: "Fiery darts" the Bible says.

Jennie: Yeah! I didn't receive it. I think if we think it is just our random thoughts, which I thought that's what it was for months then we don't fight it.

Sheila: What was the breaking point? Was there something that your friend said to you that shifted things? And suddenly, you realized oh no! This is a battle.

Jennie: Not at that point. At that point it was powerful to say it out loud and I definitely took note of that, but I still felt under it. At this point I had been questioning for 18 months and it was, I felt the weight of that running rampant in your mind. When I wrote the book, I really looked at science because what science will tell us is that 80 percent of our thoughts are negative; 95 percent of our thoughts are repetitive, day after day after day.

So we don't even have to... the devil doesn't have to work that hard. He just has to whisper a lie and let it run its course by the way our brains are made. So I think this is a passive situation when we need to be fighting. Second Corinthians talks about that there are divine weapons that have the power to demolish strongholds. The verse or two after that is, "Take every thought captive."

So this idea of war is how God, through his word, and through the writers of scripture, they're pretty clear, like we've got to treat this like war. So what eventually really began to shift things was I mentioned it to a dear friend. We were in Uganda, and I was just tired. I think so many people are this way. That they've just been... They want to believe they can change, they want to believe that they don't have to have those negative thoughts over and over again, but they don't know how. And I was just... I felt beat up. I felt like I'd been alone in the dark with the devil and he had just had his way. Like just beat me up.

I was with Ann Voskamp who is your friend and I told her everything. She went to war for me. She was like, "Not on my watch!" And we fasted and we prayed.

Randy: Okay yeah. That's what warfare looks like.

Jennie: The seriousness with which my friend, Esther Havens and Ann Voskamp took it, they went to war. And other friends prayed and fought for me. I really think it took community, it took prayer, and the spiritual weapons that the Bible talks about is... and I

want to talk about mental illness because that definitely is a different side of a similar coin here because our mind can fall into that category.

But for me in this scenario, at this time, now I've struggled at different times with anxiety, certainly with paralyzing fear that could have perhaps moved to a clinical stage but at this moment, what I needed was to view this as spiritual and we needed to fight it in that way.

Sheila: Absolutely! What would you say to somebody, Jennie, who is watching saying, "That's just the way I am. I'm always anxious. I'm always this..." How do they begin to fight this battle?

Jennie: That is my hope and prayer is that people would first believe that they can fight it. That we have authority. It doesn't scare me when that happened to me, because at the end of the day, I'm praying myself to sleep and saying, God, who can be against me? I read this verse this morning: Who can be against me if you are for me? And if God, it's Romans eight, if God would send his only Son then what good gift would he withhold? He is so good. Like he will fight for us. I believe he was fighting for me. I believe he let me taste the darkness so I could help set other people free. I absolutely believe that. And I will be dangerous for it.

Sheila: That's what I thought when I read your book. I thought, you've messed with the wrong girl.

Jennie: Yeah! I'm like I will. Okay, let's go! And now, in the middle of the night, I'm like, when I wake up, I'm like, God! We were praying for like missionaries. I'm like, if he is going to wake me up, I'm like we're... people are going to get saved with me in the dark. Because now I feel this authority over it.

So I think the first thing is just realizing we do have God-given authority over the darkness and over the lies. Like we don't have to listen. We can say, "No more!" So

those thoughts will enter my mind, but I fight them. I discipline my mind. I train my mind. Scripture is clear about that. Like we can shift our mind.

However, I want to address mental illness really clearly because there is an epidemic of that and there certainly is, as we all know, chemical imbalances that need medicine. And the church has not done a great job with that and so that's got to be said. But counselling and medicine are gifts from God and can help you get up to where you can breathe and begin the fight.

But it's also not just physical, it's spiritual, it's emotional. And it is physical. So we've got to fight on all the fronts. So I really would just say, if you have been stuck in a pattern for a long time, chemically your brain has changed. That happens. And in science it is like you might need a doctor to help you get to a place where you can process the spiritual and process the emotional.

Randy: Our souls do affect our cells. That's scientifically proven, and it is scriptural as well. A question, the idea of demons and Satan and all that scares a lot of people. Did it frighten you when you realized this is a spiritual war?

Jennie: I have some great stories. So yeah. I remember writing, well, I really... I really believe the Bible. Like I really do.

Randy: That's the right direction to go for this.

Jennie: I like that we win. I know what he's capable of, you guys. I have seen spiritual timed attack against my family in ways that is unthinkable and unspeakable. I literally cannot share how dark and horrible some of the things are that have come our way. So I'm not naive when I say what I'm about to say.

But when I was writing the book, one of the chapters, I don't know if we kept it in, but I ended the chapter that day, I was writing by myself all day, and I ended it with, "Bring it,

devil!" And I stepped back and I was like, so what's about to happen? Like you just don't throw out a line like that.

And y'all, in the next hour, I had a friend text me and said, "Jennie, your website is a porn site. When you put in your name, it was a porn site." I was like, oh, my gosh! It was just nobody knew I wrote that. Like it was wild. It took the entire day to get it down. It was just... but I love it because the enemy has overplayed his hand. So it's kind of that feeling for me of I don't doubt that bad things could come because I picked this fight.

I told my team that this morning. I was like you guys, I won't be surprised but I know that God will not allow anything to happen to us that we don't have the power in him to fight.

Randy: The scripture describes Satan as a defeated enemy. We need not fear an enemy that's already been defeated. We just have to stand up, claim the authority, and fight the fight. That's what you're doing.

Sheila: I'm just thinking, I wish every college student would read this book. Because I know one of your children, but my son is at A&M and do you know the waiting to go and see a counselor at A&M is four months long? Because of students struggling. But I think of the number of them who are believers that don't take spiritual warfare seriously. And don't take suiting up in the armor of God seriously. Particularly in these days, it's like heightened. We need to know we can do battle, in Jesus' name.

Jennie: So that's what we approached in the book is what are the enemies of the mind in our generation? And some of those enemies that I feel... I remember just praying, God, what is it? And I was walking one day, and I just pulled over with my phone and I wrote the seven enemies that are in this book. Because I see them and they're causing sickness and I don't even know that we hate them. They're kind of subtle. But they're causing sickness in us. So one of them is cynicism.

Sheila: That was an interesting one, cynicism.

Jennie: Yeah. Because I think its defeatist; right? So if we are cynical then we don't believe what's possible. We don't believe the good in people. We always see the negative. And we almost feel proud of that because it is kind of a badge of I'm not naive. But we've turned ungrateful.

And then another one is victimhood. And again, it is not that there are not real victims. It is that we all are in a victimhood crisis. Rather than going, you know what? And that's the main thing I hope people take away from this today and I hope people take away from the book is I have a choice. I'm not speaking to chemical imbalance, I'm not talking about that. But outside of that, I have a choice. And even within that on a given day, it will help us to retrain our mind. It is not that that chemical imbalance isn't real, but training our minds is going to still help.

So my hope is that everybody would read it and almost just suit up of going hey, I'm not a victim. Like I can fight this.

Randy: I think what you've got in here is important, it's valuable, and when it's overlooked we start to lose that fight. So I hope you'll get this book.

In fact, there is a great way for you to get this today. We will send it to you if you ask for it when you help us fight another battle. And it has a spiritual element to it as well, believe me. But Sheila, you know we're giving people water, giving people life, meeting the physical needs so that we can discuss the spiritual need.

Sheila: Yeah. I just got back a few weeks ago from Africa. And God is moving there. But as long as we're on the planet there is so much that we can do in Jesus' name. Watch this.

On the mission field:

Open Captions:

>> My name is Eness and I have six children.

[Song]

It never goes away

Always in my veins

I want to lay it all down

It's getting heavy for me now

I want to lay it all, lay it all down

Can't breathe

Can't breathe

I can't breathe

Open Captions:

>> One of my children got very sick and died. He had a high fever and diarrhea. I took him to the clinic and got some medicine, but he was too sick and kept vomiting the medicine. He was only nine months old.

[Song]

They want to take it from me

They want to take it from me

They want to take it from me

Open Captions:

>> My children still drink the dirty water that killed my baby. It is the only water source we have and the water is full of germs. I worry all the time that my other children will get sick. If we had clean water life would be good for us.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: The waterhole in that village was horrendous! We looked down into it and the water was filthy -- absolutely filthy! There are snakes that get into the pit. It is just -- and animal waste that gets washed in there from the rain. It is terrible! But it is all she has. Most of these moms that I met, they get up at 4-4:30 every morning to walk to the nearest waterhole because if they don't get there in time then it dries up and they have to wait until the afternoon.

But they know that what they're giving their children has the potential to kill them. The very thing that should give them life is giving them death. But we can change this. That's the thing. This is not something that there is nothing we can do. We can go there. We can drill a well in Ennis's village and for the first time in their life, they will drink fresh clean water. If we all do something, Randy, we can change this.

Randy: That well that you speak of, it was hand dug?

Sheila: Yeah. It takes a week to do it. It's about six-foot deep and it is filthy.

Randy: We can do better than that. You and I can join together as we've been doing for so many years. An average well costs \$4800. We do these 20 countries all over the world; 350 wells is the goal for this year.

I'm just asking you to be a part of it. Those stories are heartbreaking. It's hard to watch. We don't like bringing you those stories. But only you can turn it around when you join with us today.

Will you give fresh clean drinking water to, I don't know, ten people for a lifetime? \$48, that's all it is. Some of you can give water to 30 people, \$144. That's what it comes out to when we boil the numbers down. If you can give an entire well, \$4800, please do it! You will make a huge difference in someone's life. You'll not just change lives, you'll save lives, or maybe you'll just do the best that you can and partner with others. If we all chip

in, if we all do something we can achieve our goal for this year and we can save lives.

I don't want Sheila to have to walk with another mother to the grave of her child. Will you go online or pick up the phone and give the best gift you can? Give life!

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:

Ralph: I travel all over the world as the director of Missions for *LIFE Today*. I continue to hear some of the same stories -- death. Why? Simply because they don't have clean drinking water.

These mothers who wanted to give life to her children, she wanted to bring health to her family by bringing water home, but she ends up bringing contaminated water -- if she can find any! And it brings death to her children. None of us would ever want to bring death into our living room but that's what these mothers did. They didn't want to do that. They didn't mean to do that. But either they can't find water or the water they do have is so contaminated it just brings disease, and even to the point of death.

So please help us bring clean water. Let's drill some wells that will give these villages and these people water for the rest of their lives. Clean, life-giving water! Please help us today.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thank you so much. If the line's busy, please keep calling. Let's do this, let's change this in Jesus' name. For any gift at all you can request Jennie's book, *Get Out of Your Head*. Also, I have a brand-new book just coming out called *Praying Women*. I know you don't do it for the gifts but we just want to say thank you and we want to

bless you.

So please let's do this. Let's decide that as the body of Christ, we're going to be the body moving in action in answer to people's prayers.

Randy: I hope you'll do it! I hope you'll do it today.

Would you also thank Ms. Jennie Allen for being with us? Thank you so much!

Sheila: Awesome, Jennie! Thank you! You'll want to get this book for all your people -- everybody!

Randy: Thank you for watching. Don't miss *LIFE Today* every day!