

7/9/20

Week 28: WFL

James and Betty Robison

Rebekah Lyons

From 10/1/19

James: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. This is Betty. I feel like I'm fortunate to be married to one of the most beautiful women. Most people you tell them, I'll go ahead and tell them, I'm 76, she's 76. I'm just about a month older. She says, "Don't tell everybody." Well, I am telling.

Betty: Maybe six weeks.

James: Right. But here's the thing. You are absolutely beautiful. And so we have a tremendous number of beautiful guests. Sheila Walsh is just a phenomenal co-host -- and so many guests.

This lady here I think is one of the most beautiful people I've ever known. It is Rebekah Lyons. I'm looking at her picture on the back of the book called *Rhythms of Renewal*. It is not pretty good, it is awesome. And Rebekah, listen, she is awesome. She was here one time sharing her testimony, I got so under conviction I just stopped the show and asked her to pray for me. She just really ministered truth. When she came in this time talking about panic attacks that could have destroyed her life, and then to listen to how she had the renewal, *The Rhythms of Renewal*.

She's the mother of four children. Her oldest child Down syndrome, and they adopted a fourth child that was Down syndrome knowing that. And the love that flows through her and her husband Gabe, it's redemptive, it's transforming. I feel like as you listen, if you'll just allow God to pull you up in his arms and set those *Rhythms of Renewal* in motion...

Father, I pray that for everybody watching. As Rebekah shares, pull the viewers up into your arms, let them know your heart and your love and then let them share it.

By the way, let me give you this little thought. When you're hurting and you know the Holy Spirit bears the fruit you need, isn't it wonderful when the spirit comes dressed up in somebody and they show you that love as a person? Pray that what you hear through Rebekah will lead you to be one of those vessels, so full of the spirit that when you walk in it's the presence, the power, and the peace of God. Don't just listen to Rebekah Lyons, listen to the one she is talking about.

Begin video clip

James: Rebekah, glad to see you.

I want you to just take off and share your journey that you really cover so well here. But a lot of things have been happening. It's hard maybe because you have a countenance of peace right now. You say, she doesn't have anxiety! She is probably not even anxious about being on television. But okay. Just take off and tell us about your journey and about some pretty meaningful experiences you had even recently related to what you share.

Rebekah: It is such a joy to be with you. Every time I look forward to it. Thank you for having me again. What a gift and a privilege.

So the back story just to catch everyone up is that I first had my panic attack, my very first one about nine years ago. We had moved to New York City. It happened about four months in. What began that day on an airplane continued on planes, trains, elevators, subways and crowds. Has anyone ever been to New York City? All of the sudden that was my new reality. After about a year and a half the Lord filled me with the peace of Christ and I began to walk out a healing journey. So then, because I'm a chronic

over-share, God gave me a story I couldn't shut up about. So I wound up writing it in two books and I began to teach and talked about the peace that Christ gives the world cannot give.

So I was just transformed by his mercy. The place of panic where it all began was on an airplane then all of the sudden, God's like I'm going to put you on an airplane every Friday and you're going to talk about the rescue of God. So what was a place of panic is now a sanctuary in the sky. That's what God does. He just takes our pain and turns it into purpose.

So nothing happened with me regarding panic disorder for six years. I didn't have my next panic attack for six years and that's how I began this book. And what happened in that moment, out of nowhere, out of nowhere I'm locked in a bathroom in a hundred-year-old home on the cliffs of the Pacific and the house is empty and my cellphone dies and I know I'm going to be alone in this cell, it is like a little toilet area in a bigger bathroom. I couldn't toggle the lock, nothing is opening, and Gabe's gone, our friends are gone. I'm going to sit in this cement cell for the next two hours until someone comes back. And something rose in me unlike any other panic attack I'd ever had. It was like times ten magnified. It was almost as if I knew it was coming on and I felt so powerless to it. And within a few seconds my head is spinning, I'm literally losing all sense of control. And I was more afraid of myself and what the fear was taking over.

Then all of the sudden I look up and above the toilet area there is this antique window that's probably about this big. And I'm thinking, I wonder if that thing will open? And second of all, I wonder if my hips are going to fit through that thing.

[Laughter]

So I climb up on the back of the toilet and I like toggle the lock and lo and behold, the window opens even though the door won't.

So I open the window and I just breathe in the salty air overlooking the cliffs. I was like, Jesus, I don't know if these hips are going to work but we're going for it. So I just pushed myself out and scraped all the way down and landed on the rocks below. I felt just -- my legs were just trembling, and I felt covered in shame.

I said, "I don't understand. Am I a fraud? Why would this be the worst epic panic attack that I've ever had in the history of all nine years?" And I wrestled with the Lord for a few hours. It wasn't until that night where I'm lying in the dark and the tears are pooling from my eyes to ears and I heard just in my spirit, I just heard, "Rebekah, I don't promise that fear won't come knocking but I always promise a way of escape."

It was almost like a revelation for me. Because my life verse had always been, "I don't give you a spirit of fear, Rebecca, I give you power, love, and a sound mind." But that doesn't mean that that spirit of fear doesn't still want to come around the corner and catch you in some bathroom stall six years later. And we all have different versions of fear, anxiety became my fancy word for fear. I think I needed to be reminded in that moment that then gave birth to these rhythms of walking. Because the last book was really about getting free, getting pulled from that pit. But this book is about walking free and living free in communion.

So what he's saying is, if I always promise a way of escape it means I am Immanuel, I am with you. And just when you think all the doors are closing, all the sudden this window opens. I think in our lives what do we do when relapse hits? Or when we think we've kind of had a breakthrough in a moment and all of the sudden we feel plagued or we feel oppressed or we feel like we're kind of spinning out.

And then, all of the sudden, it's a crisis of faith. It can be. The enemy can just say, oh yeah, God didn't really mean it. Your faith isn't strong enough. God's like, no, I just want to remind you that my strength is made perfect in your weakness and apart from me you are nothing. And it is just this reminder to me like God, I'm not even so much afraid of the fear as I am of you not being with me in it. I want you to be my portion, my daily

everything.

So these rhythms just flew, came from that because I was like, God, what is it going look like to walk with you in cadence every day, every morning, every night, every spring, summer, fall, winter, every year?

James: You said something before we walked out here and I want you to break down the four things, but you said something happened related to an event that moved you very, very deeply. Do you mind sharing that what that was? Because you told us about this attack that's in line with you wanting people to have these *Rhythms of Renewal*. And boy, God doesn't want us to trust what happened or that we failed his presence once, he wants us to know if we don't sense his presence it's always there. He will never leave us. We can live in the reality of that and we don't trust mere feelings or the suggestions or the arrows of the deceiver, we trust him. So you found that.

Rebekah: Right!

James: But you said something happened that was a very meaningful encounter and it wouldn't have been one you would expect. I really wish you would share that.

Rebekah: Well, right around the time I'm writing this book and doing a lot of research about it, my dad died, last April. I found myself in May just facing depression. I was familiar with this visitor. It had been about seven years, but I knew what it was. And I remember thinking, I don't want to hemorrhage publically, and I called a friend.

And so I decided like the first rhythm of this book is rest, because it is the rest and restore. It is the inner life, the inner health to get quiet. So that whole summer I took a tech detox. I got off all social media for three months. And I just said, God, I need you to restore my soul. I want my inner life to be healed through you and I know grief isn't something you can race through. You actually have to allow it to happen when it is ready to come. Because if you can't grieve you can't be comforted. And I didn't want to stifle

that wave when it was ready to come because God's like I'm going to meet you here. I'm going to meet you here again.

Right before my dad died my mom gave me his study Bible from when I was two years old. And my dad had been a pastor before I was born, and then he wound up being a teacher with my mom for years and years and years. When I opened the inside of the Bible it said at the top in my dad's penmanship, "Depression Stoppers." And when you looked, he listed out seven verses and seven truths that he would recite over himself. It reminded me...

James: Dealing with depression?

Rebekah: Yes! Dealing with worry, stress, and anxiety. It reminded me, this is a way of escape, right here. This is the daily rescue of God again and again and again and again because sometimes the muscle memory of anxiety or depression can be our default. If something stressful we're like oh, I can't get a deep breath. I physically start to feel the symptoms of that. In fact, the American Institute of Stress says right now in our society 77% of us are showing physical symptoms of stress. And that's where stress starts to amplify into anxiety because the body is now going, I can no longer contain the emotional stuff going on inside.

I believe it is God's creativity to go, okay, I'm going to help your body auto correct possibly the things that you've taken on or shoved down or you didn't allow yourself to fully process or grieve because there is an inner healing that needs to happen. So those rhythms really were my life source in that healing process. Those two input rhythms of rest and restore. The book is broken out into four rhythms. I just wanted to keep it practical and simple.

James: I love it! I love "rest and restore." You've touched that so well. By the way, you break it down point by point. It is absolutely, absolutely beautiful. But then the last two, "connect and create." Expound on that a little bit.

Rebekah: Well, the first two are input rhythms because you can't give what you haven't received. So rest is the inner life and restore is the physical life; so spiritual health and physical health. But then once you have actually taken a lot of time like taken a walk and learning routines for deep sleep again, I wanted there to be data and science in every chapter paired with scripture. I know God made our bodies and he gave us his word. He's like these things need to come together so you understand what I have for you.

Then when you've been filled up, the output rhythms are: Connect and create. So output is your relational health. It is your marriage. I write a chapter on vulnerability or conflict resolution or parenting or apologizing first. Be the friend you wish to have. I wanted it to be practical.

And then the last one is create. It is all about calling and vocation. What are the passions and the gifts that God established in the womb? That he wants to fill you up and inspire you to go out and use those things.

James: Wow!

Rebekah: When my dad died, we had just said yes to adopting a six-year old from China. Our oldest is 18 and he has Down syndrome; then we have two more that's 16 and 14. And just when we think we're going to be empty nesters in five years, God is like, "No, you're going back to kindergarten." So he brought this treasure in our path and we had said "yes" to adopting a little girl named Joy from China and we were in the waiting period. And then my dad passes. And then in this anxious moment I was full of fear. I was like what am I thinking? I'm 40 something. What are we doing going back to kindergarten? And I was just filled with doubt and fear and like, we've made a mistake. That's what will happen is you'll make these bold statements with faith and right before you're ready to actually see the fullness of that obedience, the enemy is like, I'm just going to just throw her an accusation. I'm going to throw something in her way to make her question everything.

And all I heard in my spirit was, "Fight death with life -- fight death with life." Death, yes, your dad is gone for a season, but he is in eternal life. I remember the veil was so thin. So here we are, seven months later, we are going to pick up Joy from China. Our "gotcha day" was in December, my dad had passed in April, and God said, "Just make her middle name your dad's name." So she's Joy Levi, his middle name was Levi, but I pronounce it Levy, Joy Levi She Lyons. Because it was just this full circle moment of like... and I got to tell my dad we were adopting before he passed. I whispered it in his ear.

I just know that it was God's way of saying like, there is going to be mourning and there is going to be a rejoicing and that's part of the cadence of life, the rhythm, right? There is going to be death, there is going to be resurrection. There is going to be grief, there is going to be joy but I'm with you in all of it.

End of video

In the studio:

James: Hey, Rebekah. I hope you're watching. We love you and Gabe! Isn't it beautiful to hear her? And just get that little girl from China. She is just beautiful. Her name is Joy.

And you remember we brought a little girl through me just touching a little girl that had on a little communist jacket in an orphanage. Her name was Hope. We brought her over here. She has now graduated from college. Went back and got her best friend. She has graduated from college. Came into a home up in Detroit that was just a miracle.

And there is another one, Rebekah, you just inspire us to, I think, to move into that source of joy and peace that you exhibit. This book, *Rhythms of Renewal*, we'll send it to you today.

Don't you just love the glory of God you see in her?

Betty: I really do, James. And she was just being heart honest in saying that there are times when you grieve, when you mourn, but boy does joy come in the morning. If you stay holding on to God and his love, he brings such blessings out of tragedy. He can light up your life again. Just don't give up on him. He is never going to give up on you.

James: Let me just say a prayer for you. Father, I don't know what's going on in the viewer that's watching right now that says, woo! I sure could use a load lightener. Lord, what we've been through has put a lot of people under a heavy load. I want you to get in the yoke with them. You say you make the load lighter. Let them sense your presence and your power. Lord, lighten the load; in Jesus' name.

I hope that when you watch *LIFE Today* every day that you experience life and hope and love. I know one thing, I know you express it. The viewers of *LIFE Today*, the missionaries have said they're the greatest Christians in the world because they see people that have a need and they meet it. They see it. They know love works. But they know those of us as missionaries have full hearts. But we would have empty hands were it not for the viewers of *LIFE Today* and people like them.

Right now we're asking God for the miracle of completing 350 wells. And I mean with what we've all been through and the pressure, it's going to take a miracle. But you know if they don't get these water wells, they're going to die. And this is a disease that we don't have to look for the cure for, we've got it. It's a perfect cure. It's just clean water. And we can drill them a well for an average of \$4800. Could you do that for a village? Provide the miracle or give part of it? I want you to watch closely and you ask God, what do you want me to do? And then you joyfully, joyfully do it.

On the mission field

James: I am by a water source that is so typical of water sources all over the world. We know for a fact in this area disease is killing entire families -- and many children. Why?

From drinking contaminated water.

You know it is one thing to say "I'm sorry" and to weep over it but you know when we can be the answer to the need and the prayer, doesn't it seem sometimes just a little bit hypocritical if we could do something and we don't? Well, we can but we need your help.

Announcer: For near 20 years, the viewers of *LIFE Today* have partnered with missionaries all around the world to help save children's lives by providing clean drinking water. *Mission: Water for LIFE* has drilled over 5,000 clean water wells with an assortment of rigs in different shapes and sizes to meet the needs of a particular area. Each new water well is capped with a simple pump that even a child can use. And in areas where a drilling rig can't get into, the *LIFE* mission team is utilizing a new technology and providing thousands of water filter kits that families can use to decontaminate their water source.

With this attitude of doing whatever it takes to save lives, *LIFE Outreach* and its partners have already provided clean water for over five million people. But we still have a big job to do. Around the world, hundreds of millions of people still don't have access to safe drinking water and 800 children die every day from a preventable disease caused by contaminated water.

James: Jesus said, "Give a cup of water in my name, you won't lose your reward." I don't know what that reward will be for us, that's in God's hand but I know what reward is in it for the people we give water to. The reward is a chance, it's hope, it's a future -- the reward is life.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty, hasn't it been as great a joy to know that when we give, just like that water you just saw at the end, that we give those children and their families water we have just witnessed a miracle. Isn't that a tremendous joy?

Betty: It really is. James, I have to say, all those trips we've made over there to see these precious little ones and to see these mothers filled with joy when they see that their babies are going to live a little bit longer because we've drilled water wells. And to see that fresh water come up out of the ground that God made for these precious little ones. And to see the children jump around and play. They're so excited. It is like Christmas day to them. And to see those mothers so happy because their children are getting fresh clean water. And to not have to go down to that old dirty hole again and bring up that dirty water they know eventually will kill their little ones and it breaks their hearts. But to have the joy.

But we couldn't do it without you. You see, you've been right there with us as we've drilled these water wells. You've seen the life come forth with that water of life. And God's word to be expressed through giving and sharing. You've been a big part of that. Well, we're asking again because there needs to be some more water wells drilled. We need you to join with us again and let's please bring the water of life to these people.

James: Betty, as I listen to you, I just watch you, I just thank God that you have such a heart for the Lord and love for your family, but also a love for people that I remember you were really afraid to go to the mission field and it was scary. I mean we had AK47 fights in the street outside our old run-down rooms. I was held hostage three times and we never talked about it.

But Betty was hurt real bad because she got to ride the jump seat in all the four-wheel drive trucks where there was no roads and it herniated two disks to where had you not bought a LIFE Angel, a transport plane for goods, where she could lay down instead of sitting in a seat, the neurosurgeon told us she would likely have been paralyzed but she went back after the surgery -- she went back. But you see, you saved her life and her

health. You saved her from being paralyzed. But she went to the mission field because of the love of God.

And you're the ones right now that enable us to keep giving that water. Would you help us finish the threat on 50 wells right now? We need a miracle. They are \$4800 each. Would you go get your bankcard or your check? Would you drill a well? Would you give part of a well? Could you give like a \$1200 gift and pray somebody joins you? Three people and you've got a well or \$2400 and pray one joins? Most of the gifts that come are \$48. That gives ten people water the rest of their life. There's a level at which you can help.

Would you go get your bankcard right now and dial that number or go online and make the gift God puts on your heart? Would you please? Betty and I were able to join those missionaries seeking to get God's arms of love around the overlooked. But it is the love of God through you that gives all the positive effect. We couldn't drill the water wells without you.

Please make the gift God put on our heart now. Do it now. Thank you.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Dirty, diseased filled water! How desperate would a mother need to be to consider giving this contaminated substance to her child? For many mothers and their families living in extreme poverties, this is their only choice.

With your help, they won't have to make this choice ever again. Mission Water for Life provides clean disease-free water for thousands of children and their families, giving them a life free from the fear of death.

With your gift today, you can help drill and establish the final 150 water wells this year.

Your gift of \$48 will help provide water for ten people. \$72 will provide for 15. \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime. And a gift of \$4,800 will help sponsor a complete well, serving up to 1,000 people.

With your gift we'll send you Today is a Good Day, seasonal devotional sets, broken out into the four seasons of the year. This beautiful set features a daily scripture, inspirational thoughts, and a place for you to journal your own thoughts, prayers and insights from God's word.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the leather-bound life-giving Proverbs Journal, filled with wisdom and daily encouragement from Proverbs, including lined pages for your personal notes.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4,800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request "A Mother's Strength" bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your gift online!

End of video

On the mission field

Betty: This little child is probably between two and three years old – maybe four. But he may not make it past five – four or five if he doesn't have the water he needs. He has water but it's contaminated. But we have to give him a choice. They don't have a choice right now. In so many places all over the world, because they don't have that choice, their bodies are being contaminated with this bad water and their families are dying. Our missionaries have been there and seen them in hospitals. They're there because they haven't had good water. They've had contaminated water and its waterborne diseases that will kill them if we don't reach out and help them in time. Please help us do that! Please! All around the world give these children a chance at life. Thank you so much and God

will bless you richly!

End of clip

In the studio

James: Well, Betty and I just say in behalf of all the people you just gave a miracle to, thank you! We want to send you the seasonal devotions, summer, fall, winter, spring -- and you're going to enjoy it. And the beautiful journal of wisdom that's got the wisdom of Proverbs in it, you are going to love using this.

And if you'd like to have Rebekah Lyons' book, *Rhythms of Renewal* and you could see the glory of God on her. Boy, she'll lift you into that grace presence. So if you say, "James, if we help give some water will you send us her book too?" You better believe it. You just help us give a cup of water, help drill a well.

Thanks so much for watching *LIFE Today*. It's great to share these days and these weeks with you along with Sheila Walsh, our son Randy, and all the guests we're able to have on. And pretty soon we'll be able to have an audience back here again. We're glad you're our audience. Thanks for watching. Thanks for sharing.