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Week 33: WFL last week

Randy Robison Sheila Walsh

Dennis Quaid

**Sheila:** Hi! I'm Sheila Walsh. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm here with Randy Robison. And we have a very special guest. You are probably a fan of lots of his movies. One of my favorites was *The Day After Tomorrow*, and *The Parent Trap*. So please will you help me welcome, we're so excited to have Dennis Quaid with us? Thanks for being with us!

**Dennis:** How are you?

**Sheila:** Great! Yeah, great! You've made so many movies in your career. I was wondering first of all, is there any one in particular that has really stuck with you? Maybe a role that kind of shifted your own perspective in life?

**Dennis:** Well, my answer always, when people ask me what was my favorite movie and my judgment on that is the experience that I had when I was shooting it rather than, as well as being a great story and that all that too. But *The Right Stuff*, which was a film I did about the original seven astronauts really sticks out more than anything else because it was my dream as a kid to be a Gordo Cooper who I wound up playing.

I come from Houston which was space city. I got my pilot's license in that movie and it's just still stays with me. It resonates. Of course, there are others but that one in particular.

**Randy:** Well, a lot of our audience will know you definitely from *I Can Only Imagine* where you played Arthur Millard, the father of Bart Millard. What did that character, did that say anything to you?

**Dennis:** That's one of those films that are definitely in my top five of the films that I have done. The story is such an incredible story of faith, hope, and redemption. That character of Bart's dad was a very difficult part to play but it really... Bart was there on the set, in fact, the entire time, Bart Millard. If anybody is familiar with his story, he wrote the song, *I Can Only Imagine* and he wrote it for his father who he had a very difficult relationship with as a kid. And I'm talking about an abusive relationship. Through faith, they came together and had an incredible relationship in the last years of his father's life.

It's an incredible story for anybody out there to see this story, just to know what God can do for us in life in impossible situations -- that nothing is impossible with God as far as healing.

**Sheila:** Yeah! It's such a story of grace and redemption. That there is a way home for everybody. But I was reading an article in the Houston paper about the passing of your mom. Your mom sounded to me like a pretty amazing woman. I wanted to, because I got a letter from one of our viewers last week and she said, "I raised my son in the church and now, I'm in my 80s and my son, I don't know how much of the legacy has remained." I want you to speak to the legacy of a godly mother.

**Dennis:** Well. My mom has always been my rock, really, in my life. I was raised as Southern Baptist in church and baptized back when I was 11, I think. I became disenchanted with religion as a teenager and really kind of moved away. My mother was always there. She would always tell me things like... not that I even wanted to hear about it at the time, she would say things like, "Man's law may change but God's law never changes." There were certain things that she would talk to me about. And she persevered. She didn't bang me over the head with it. She and I would have debates over this. As it came around, I even explored other religions just to go out and find out about other religions. I read the Dhammapada. I read the Bhagavad Gita. I read the Qur'an. I was a seeker.

It just kept coming around that the red words of Jesus really resonated with me. And it was my mom who really, like I said, was my rock. So I finally came to really truly understand what a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is. And I think she's really played such a big part. She was God's instrument in that, that's for sure.

**Sheila:** That's beautiful!

**Randy:** Scripture says, "Seek and you will find" and so when I hear somebody say, "I am a seeker, I was a seeker," I think good! Keep looking! Where do you think you are now with what you found?

**Dennis:** Well, now I've really come up with Jesus is my Lord and savior and have a personal relationship with him. And I want to pass that on to my kids as well. My mother passed almost a year ago now; was lucky enough to really have her around so long. She lived to be 92 years old. I thank God for that.

**Sheila:** I love the fact that you're a true Renaissance man: Movies, reading, writing, music. I mean your band, is it The Sharks?

**Dennis:** Yeah!

**Sheila:** But you wrote this very special song for your mom. I wonder did she get to hear it before she passed?

**Dennis:** Yeah, I wrote it for her. It's called, "On My Way to Heaven." I wrote it for her like 30 years ago. So I played it for her back then. She always loved it.

But I got the movie, *I Can Always Imagine*, which is about a son who writes a song for his father. So I never got to finish the song really, there was always something missing from it. But while I was doing that movie, within 15 minutes the bridge came to me. And

just like that, it was finished. So it took me 30 years and 15 minutes to write the song. But then I went in and recorded it with The Sharks and then Tanya Tucker called me up because she heard it. And I recorded it with Tanya Tucker and Kris Kristofferson and Brandi Carlile. We're going to put it out as a single this year.

**Sheila:** That's awesome!

**Dennis:** Yeah, we completed that. It was last year, and I was able to give it to my mom, the completed version, for her birthday.

**Sheila:** Oh that's beautiful!

**Randy:** What was her reaction?

**Dennis:** Well, she just loved it. She really, really loved it.

**Sheila:** So you have this new podcast called, is it called The Dennaissance?

**Dennis:** The Dennaissance, sort of like the Renaissance.

**Sheila:** I love that! Tell us what's the heart behind that?

**Dennis:** It is sort of a tongue in cheek thing because I've been into so many things. You know I'm a pilot and I like to think I'm a golfer.

[Laughter]

I've had so many interests in life. Let's put it that way. That's the reason it is called that. But when I get a role as an actor whether it is a real person or a fictional character my favorite part of movie making is really the research of that character to figure out what makes them tick. So I've brought that same process to The Dennaissance. So I treat my

guests as if I'm going to play them in a movie and I want to kind of figure out their point of view.

**Sheila:** Do you have, is it just kind of a wide-open thing? Is it friends of yours from the...

**Dennis:** Well, some have been friends, the guests that have been on there. And some of them I've just met, like Billy Ray Cyrus who was my first guest. We've known each other for about just a couple of... we were acquaintances really. It was really great to spend time with him. Because you're given sort of carte blanche, an opportunity to really just ask any question that you want to get in there. And I give my guests full editorial control in case they say something they don't want. To give everybody a feeling of... to relax and let their hair down.

**Randy:** The thing that caught our eye about that, that's interesting, obviously, I've listened to a couple of podcasts and you're right, it is interesting to really get into someone's life story and the way they think. But you say you want to connect on a personal and spiritual level. Of course, we're like, what does that mean? So I'm curious. What does it mean to connect, when you talk about these people we see in the celebrity world, what does it mean to connect on a spiritual level?

**Dennis:** Well, again there are... it's the most important part of who we are is our -- it's our spirit, our souls. It's not just what we do in life. I like to find out, what do people believe and what were the influences they had growing up and what were they told? That's interesting to me. It is something that people rarely talk about or sometimes don't even know how to talk about to tell you the truth because they're afraid they're going to offend somebody or they're embarrassed about it or whatever it is -- that hesitancy. I try to create an atmosphere where people feel free to talk about who they are.

**Sheila:** That's great! One of the things, I spend so much of my, the formative years of my life trying to be the perfect Christian so that God would love me. It took me a long,

long time and actually a month in a psych hospital to understand that it was actually his idea in the beginning, it was never mine and that I didn't have to try so hard. I wrote in a book...

**Dennis:** That's why they call it redemption because it is free; right?

**Sheila:** Exactly! But I wondered if you could talk to your 21-year old self, what would you tell them?

**Dennis:** Boy, I would really tell him to take it easy. I figured out like you that I had to turn over every rock. That's where I was. I don't think it was about proof. I think it was about I just couldn't put together things that I was told and what was the fact between the spirit and the faith. It's about learning how to live your life by faith. It took me a long time to get there. But I guess that's what my mom said. God is not through working on you yet, I guess.

**Randy:** And that's the beauty of redemption is because God can take whatever we think is wasted or whatever and make something beautiful.

**Dennis:** What I found is you had better be really careful about what you ask God for because he just might give it to you.

[Laughter]

And it is never in the way that you thought it would be.

**Randy:** I do have a question and I hope this works but I'm going to off script just a touch. You spent most of your life in Hollywood in production and the spotlight, but you had that church background. Now you're doing interviews like this and where you're in movies like *I Can Only Imagine*. When you look at the church and at the Christian culture at large, what you see, maybe is there anything we could do better to bridge the

gap between the secular and the sacred?

**Dennis:** I don't think so. I think it's... I tell you what's really great is what they call faith-based movies now. They have all different types of terms for them. But there is, I think Hollywood is coming towards the spiritual, actually. There's a market out there for these people who love to see inspiring films, films that really speak to something real in people's lives. I haven't seen a lot of really good movies lately. They're mostly video games. But there is this market like when *I Can Only Imagine* came out, there were so many in Hollywood they were writing, I remember they were writing like the marketplace columns that it wasn't going to do very well, maybe two million, it might make in a weekend. It wound up making \$17 million that weekend. I think it is really waking a lot of Hollywood up to the kind of stories really that people want to see. I think I see that happening more and more around me.

**Sheila:** We'll all remember 2020 is the year when this strange virus hit, and everything shifted. One of the actual greatest things for me has been being home with my husband. I'm usually on the road speaking, traveling. How has it been for you and your family? Has it been a difficult transition? What does it look like for you?

**Dennis:** Well, it's like a spiritual awakening, I think. It has made us all closer. These crises and everything that we go through which are tests, basically, they bring up the issues that are really in our lives that we don't have the time to get to or we put off or we deny or whatever. They come bubbling up to the surface and they're right in our face and we all have to face them, for better or worse. That has come into this house as well. It's really made us a lot closer in the end. There are days that you go through that you go oh wow! This is like too much for me! But you get those and it's like learning new skills.

There is, I know I'm not going to look back and I never regret any time I get to spend with my kids. This is going to be a time we're going to look back and sort of, in a way, cherish this time that we all had together.

**Randy:** Yeah. If we do it right. What's in store for Dennis Quaid? What should we expect in the next month, years?

**Dennis:** Well, I'm ready for everything to open up and get back to work here. I'm supposed to play Ronald Reagan here, starting in September. I was supposed to start in May, but I would really like to get down to doing that now. It's been sort of like a couple of years in the making. And it is time to do that story.

**Randy:** Interesting parallels between you and Ron Reagan now that you bring him up in that...

**Dennis:** We were both kind of actors.

**Randy:** I think you beat him in that category.

**Dennis:** No, we both kind of have a sunny disposition, I think. He was my favorite president.

**Randy:** And influential mother and a faith that not everybody knew about but was real.

**Dennis:** Mm-hmm. He was the real deal himself. I think as a country, we were very lucky to have him as a president.

**Sheila:** I agree. There's nobody been like him since. One of the things that we care about here at *LIFE Today* is that rather than just talk about our faith we want to give it feet. So we are very committed to going to areas of the world where there is a tremendous need and being the answer. So I'm going to ask our viewers to take a look at this and then we'll have a chance to come back and say good-bye.

**On the mission field:**

**Announcer:** These mothers are on a mission to collect drinking water for their families. The irony is their water sources are contaminated and a threat to their very lives. When asked, "Why do you go back each day?"

They will sometimes say to you, "What choice do I have?"

**Isak:** Here's the reality. This woman has two choices. The one choice is she takes this disease-filled contaminated water back to her children and that's what she gives them to drink knowing well, she's not confused, she knows that this water could give her children a waterborne disease and could steal their lives. But her choice is either to do that or take no water at all. And she knows that no water at all means a sure death.

**Announcer:** These women have learned to live with the consequences of collecting contaminated water. It is something they must do to avoid dehydration and certain death. No mother should ever have to live this way.

**Isak:** That's why I need your help today. I need you to help us to bring a water well to this village so that through Mission: Water for LIFE we're able to reach out to this mother, to the children of this village and give them a water well, give them fresh clean water. Give them life in the form of water!

**End of video**

**In the studio:**

**Sheila:** It really is no choice at all, is it? Can you imagine that that's your choice every single day for your children? You either give them water that you know potentially could end their life or you give them no water which you know will end their life eventually.

These mothers are just like you and me. That's the thing that has really stayed with me every time I'm on one of these trips. That we sit down with these moms and we talk about the same kind of stories, how much we love our children, what we hope for our children.

But the conversations there always take a devastating turn. Because if I was just sitting talking with you and we're talking about our kids going to school and what our hopes and dreams for the future might be, these moms can't do that because they don't know if any of their children have a hope or have a future.

But what we've discovered here at *LIFE*, and it's one of the things I love so much about what James and Betty began so many years ago, is they see a problem and then they see the people that are providing an answer to that problem and then they want to undergird them and you have helped us do that. But we want, there are so many more wells that need to be drilled. So these mothers have a choice of saying, "I'm not sure what I'm going to make for dinner tonight, we don't have much food, but I know I can give my children clean water." But we need you to help us. And it's so doable, Randy.

**Randy:** Yeah. Sheila, I know you've been there, I've been there. When we touch the water, when we smell the water, but the beautiful thing about it is the contrast between that polluted water, that death and the clean water that we bring. When that water comes out of the ground and it is clean, it is drinkable, it is life! And that's really what we're asking you to give today. Join us in Water for LIFE! Let's give life around the world. I'll tell you how easy it is. \$48 is all it takes to give ten people clean, life-filled water for a lifetime!

This is the last week of Water for LIFE, so we really need your help right now. Maybe you can give an entire well, \$4800. If you can do that, my goodness, do that today. Maybe you can provide \$144 for 30 people to have that clean drinking water, that life. Whatever you can do, the invitation is this, will you join with us? Will you reach out with the love of Christ around the world and give them life through Water for LIFE? I pray you'll do it now. Give the best gift you can. Go online, go to phones, do it today!

**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.

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

**End of video**

**On the mission field:**

**Tammy:** This is one of those very exciting days for me when I get to be in the presence of...

[Laughter]

...happy children! And fresh clean water! It wasn't that long ago where we came into this village and they had no clean water at all. Nothing! Children were dying. I talked to some moms that have lost husbands, lost children. I mean, it was really, really heartbreaking.

What an exciting day for me to travel back here today and to see the fruit of what we have given together. When you partner with *LIFE Outreach*, it is wells like this that make it possible to give them fresh clean water. Will you please consider partnering with us today? Go online or call the number on the bottom of your screen and give the best gift that you can give. I know that together we can make a difference. Not just in this village but hundreds of villages all around the world. Let's make a difference and let's change it today!

**End of video**

**In the studio:**

**Randy:** We appreciate all that we do and hope you will do what you can. What you do today will make a difference forever. Sheila, I've just been honored to speak to be able to talk to our guest, Dennis Quaid today. This has been a lot of fun!

**Sheila:** It's been lovely! We just want to thank you so much. We look forward to the movie of Ronald Reagan coming out. We hope it gets moving soon. But thank you for sharing so much of yourself and your life! We're just grateful for you.

**Dennis:** Thank you as well. Thanks for having me on the show and God bless you!

**Sheila:** Thanks for being with us, folks! And we will see you next time on *LIFE Today*.  
We love you!

**Randy:** Bye-bye!