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Week 45: Fall Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

"Praying Girls"

Sheila: Hi! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm so glad you're with us. I was thinking it might be interesting sometime for you perhaps write in to me of some issues that you would like me to address or maybe a scripture that you kind of struggle with that we could unpack together. You can always leave me messages on our *LIFE Today* Facebook page or my own personal page; it is "Sheila Walsh Connects." So if it's something you think, you know Sheila, I'd love your input on this. Or would you talk about this? Would you teach on this? I would be really honored to.

One of the things that has been so much on my heart for at least the last two years, probably longer, is just the whole call to pray. Obviously, I've known that since I was a young girl. I was brought up in a small Baptist church on the West Coast of Scotland. And back then, my life was pretty much the church. We would have Sunday morning service, Sunday evening service, and then in the evening on Sunday I had Sunday School. Monday night was the women's meeting, and my mom would take me to that as well. Tuesday night was the prayer meeting. Thursday night was Junior Christian Endeavor and Saturday night was our youth group. So I spent so much of my time in the church with my friends and family and growing up under that beautiful umbrella.

But in recent years I felt myself...I had a fresh desire to ask the Holy Spirit, are there areas of my life that just need tuned up? And it became really clear to me that what he was revealing to me was that prayer--that prayer is so important! When you think about it, other than the Holy Spirit it is the most powerful weapon we have as believers. But often it is the one that we kind of turn to, sometimes even as a last resort. Well, I'll do

what I can. If I can't do anything then I'll pray about it. And the Lord has been showing me how important, particularly in these days, perhaps never more so than in the days we are living than to pray. To realize the power when we join on us hearts and our souls and our spirits and pray with God for things to shift in our families, in our communities, and even in our nation.

So last year I wrote a book called *Praying Women*. And honestly, I never intended to publish that book. It was notes that I was taking for myself as I was reading through scripture or as I was reading commentaries. I was remembering a piece of advice that Ruth Graham, Billy Graham's wife who is now home with the Lord, I remember one time when I was staying with Ruth when Billy was off doing a crusade and she said, "Sheila, when you are researching a subject don't just read what current writers are saying, go as far back as you can."

And so I did that. I looked as far back in church history and read what other people said about prayer. But I'll never forget when I went into the studio to record the audio book of *Praying Women*, I found myself as I was reading passages thinking, wow, I wish I'd known this when I was a young girl. I wish I'd understood this when I was 10, 11, 12, moving into teenage years, because there was so much I struggled with as a young girl not understanding the value that Christ placed on my life.

In fact, I was remembering a story after my father's death. I was five, my sister was seven and my brother was two and it was a big shift in our family. Obviously, losing a father who we loved but we also lost our home, we lost our car and we moved into housing that was provided by the local government. And my mom lived on what was called "a widow's pension" which wasn't very much money at all. So there wasn't a lot of extra money for extra things.

In Scotland, we don't have elementary, middle school and high school. There is only two. There is primary school from when you're five 'til about 12, and then secondary school from 12 until 18 when you graduate and go to college. But when you're finished with

primary school there is a big dance. I mean you're 12 years old so how big a dance can it be? But it was always looked on as being something really important. And the fashion at that particular time was these very straight kinds of knit dresses. I knew that my mom could not afford to buy me a specific dress for that occasion. So I thought, well, I just won't go to the dance.

But one day I came home, and my mom said, "Sheila! You're never going to believe it, but I was able to buy you a dress for the dance."

You may have heard me tell the story, but I ran upstairs so excited and when I looked at the dress...it was all wrong. It wasn't straight. It tied in the middle with a big bow and lots of kind of fluffy layers. But I did not have the heart to tell my sweet mom, "Mom, I can't wear this dress."

So on that particular day of the dance I put the dress on, came down and said I was going to the dance and hid in the field behind the school just so full of shame. I'll never forget the feeling. Obviously, it was a long time ago but what I felt was I wasn't enough, I didn't fit in. But I couldn't talk to my mom about it because I would make her feel so, so bad.

When I was thinking about that while I was recording the book, *Praying Women* I thought, I want to write something for that age. And so this is what I wrote: it's called *Praying Girls Devotional*. And it is "60 days to shape your heart and grow your faith through prayer." I'm really, really excited about this. It is for ages about 10 to 14.

Because if you think of the world that we're living in at the moment there is so much uncertainty. And if you look at what's being thrown at our young girls from television. I was talking to a mom the other day. She said, "My daughter came home from school and said, 'Mom, am I fat?'" And she said, "My daughter is so slender, but some other girl had told her that she looked fat." And that was the image that this girl had taken on.

I do not want that for our daughters, for our granddaughters, for our little sisters. So I just

wanted to tell you a little bit about this book today. It is divided into four sections. Part one; there is 15 devotions for "When Life Feels Hard." 2020 has been a year when life feels hard. I can only imagine what it is like for some of our younger girls who maybe can't go to school. Maybe they're not allowed to go back to school. Perhaps they're doing school from home and feel cut off from their friends.

There was a terrible story locally this year and it was a young boy, actually, who felt so isolated during the whole pandemic and ultimately felt like he couldn't really talk to his family about it. Felt like he couldn't talk to his sister and couldn't talk to his mom and dad, and that precious young boy took his own life. Things that we think are unthinkable.

But I think if you're 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, these days it is so much harder than when I was a little girl. So many more things are being thrown at our daughters. And what I want them to know is who God sees them as.

So the second section, part two deals with "Not My Best Self." What do you do on the days when you feel you've let God down? That you feel you don't measure up? I want to talk to them about that. I want young girls to know...in fact, it was something I used to tell my son when he was just a little boy. I remember it was back in the days when I used to travel with a group called *Women of Faith*. You might remember that. We did it for 20 years. We would do about 30 events a year, speaking in different arenas around the country.

And when Christian was really little, he would travel with me. I remember on one particular occasion when I think it was our lighting director's birthday and we had a huge big cake back stage and everyone had had some, but Christian had got frosting all over his face and over his hands and on his clothes. So my mother-in-law, Eleanor, she was with us that weekend and she said, "Listen. I'll take Christian back to the hotel and I'll give him a bath and get him ready for bed."

I was speaking that night and I had on a cream suit. I remember it clearly; I never wore it

again. Because as they were about to introduce me to go up and speak, I suddenly heard this little voice behind me saying, "Mom!" And Christian, he was probably about five or six. He just wanted one more hug before he went to bed. So I knelt down, and I opened my arms up and gave him a big hug. And I knew--I knew I was going to get frosting on my jacket and in my hair. I guess that's why I like speaking to women because I know they totally get the frosting in the hair thing.

But the message was very intentional because what I was saying to Christian was this: You do not clean yourself up to come to your mom because you don't clean yourself up to come to your heavenly Father either.

So that's what this part of the devotional deals with: 50 devotions when your little girls feel like they're not their best self.

The third section is called, "Telling the Truth." It's a strange time that we're living in when I feel there is so much twisting of what's really the truth. Even on programs you feel comfortable with your younger sons and daughters watching, there is so much that is not telling the truth from a godly biblical perspective. That's why there are 15 devotions on what it means to tell the truth.

And then the final section is called, "So Much Joy." I think telling the truth leads to so much joy. What I wanted young girls to know is you know what? You don't have to pretend to be okay. You don't have to have all your ducks in a row. You get to come to God as you really are. So I thought I might read you one. This is called, it's on day 53 and it is called, "The Power of the Word of God." I have a quote at the beginning, and it says this: "Don't fall into the trap of reading the Bible without doing what it says."

So this is what I wrote: "During my senior year of high school a teacher had me enter a contest in which I had to recite a speech from any Shakespearean play. 'You have a gift for drama,' she explained, which I'm not sure was high praise or not. Well, I decided to go for it anyway.

I first thought about doing something from Romeo and Juliet but since Juliet was either hopelessly in love or about to die, I decided to take a pass on her. I picked Catherine instead from a play called "The Taming of the Shrew."

On the day of the competition I realized I was in over my head. The other contestants were amazing. I mean amazing! I swallowed hard thinking, I don't have a chance here! Well, as it turns out I was right. But things were even worse than that. During my performance I delivered the lines I'd memorized but because I thought they needed to be jazzed up a little I added some lines that weren't even in "The Taming of the Shrew." I threw in a couple of Juliet's better lines. I made stuff up, whatever it takes, I figured before finishing, taking a bow and sweeping off the stage.

Well, after everyone who was competing had taking their turn the judge took center stage. 'Before I announce the winner,' he said, 'I'd like to invite one of our contestants back onto the stage.' Yes, it was me! When I reached his side, he looked at me and said, 'What on earth were you thinking? You can't just make up your own lines.' I fumbled around for an explanation but there was none to be found. He then said something to me I have never forgotten, 'The authority is in the text. When you decide to come up with your own lines you have lost all authority.'

And Second Timothy chapter three, verses 16 through 17 we read this, '*All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*'

God has given us his Holy Word so that we can be taught what is true and change our lives to align with that truth. When we look to other books, other words, other lines for our source of truth, we lose all authority. The Bible is the believer's ultimate source of authority and truth. By reading its words and applying them to our lives we will have the spiritual authority to stay faithful to Christ, to stand up for what's right, to be salt and

light in our world, and to tell others where hope is truly found."

I wanted you to know that I wrote this for your daughters, for your little sisters, for your granddaughters, to put something into their hands that every single day they can read this devotion. And I've included a prayer at the end to help them know how to pray if perhaps they're just starting. And then I include a scripture verse and a few lines where they can write down their own thoughts.

I love the fact that the authority is in the Word of God. I was reading from Psalm 119 today and this is what verse nine, verse eleven, and verses 15 and 16 say: *How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. I've hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

And then verses 15 and 16: *I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.*

So here's what I'm thinking. Wouldn't it be great if you could go through this devotional with your daughters or your granddaughters? I've already had so much feedback from moms saying, "I actually got two copies because I'm going to read it and my daughter is going to read it. And then we're going to talk it through together."

One of my dearest friends, Lisa Harper, you may be well aware of Lisa. She and her daughter Missy have copies of the book and that's what they've been doing. They've been doing this together. So I want every single one of you to have a copy of *Praying Girls*, "60 days to shape your heart and grow your faith through prayer."

2020 could be a year where we all feel as if we've lost some ground. I don't know what situations are like in your part of the country. Some churches are able to meet together socially distanced, some are not able to, and it is all online. But if you feel a little disconnected this is a great tool for you to stay connected with your daughters and to raise up godly prayer warriors.

I just want you to know that you can get your copy of this book today. I'm going to tell you how to do that. We have such a commitment here at *LIFE*. It's been on James and Betty's heart for years to make sure that little girls and little boys in other areas of the country who go to bed at night with nothing in their tummies, that they would be given physical food. And then our partners on the ground who love Jesus will be able to share spiritual food that will bring them life through our bowls of food, and life through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

So I'm going to let you know how to get a hold of this book but first of all, would you watch this story with me? And then we'll talk again.

On the mission field:

Announcer: The birth of a child is one of the most transcendent moments in time. The miracle of life! Tiny hands and feet. We instinctively see they're created in the image of God. And over time they grow into the young men and women they were designed to be. At least that's every parent's hope and prayer.

Sheila: I don't know if you can see... Darling, I don't want to touch it. I don't want to hurt you. But can you see her skin? Her skin has begun to literally peel off her body.

Announcer: Throughout Africa terrible events like famine and drought have decimated entire communities and left many with little or no food. The devastating effects of severe food shortages are most visible in the children.

Sheila: With severe malnutrition the first organ to shut down is the skin. It is as if all the reserves go to try and protect what's left inside.

James and Betty, you have sat here over and over and over through the years faithfully serving and feeding millions, but I know you see this. This mom who is desperate, like

any mom would be, to save the life of her precious child had to travel 30 kilometers to get here. But it is why mission feeding matters so much. We talk about life where it is needed most. Where it is needed most is in the villages where these darling children live. Because this mom shouldn't have to travel 30 kilometers with a desperately sick little lamb. They need our help, and they need it now.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Those pictures and those faces and those little ones never ever leave me. I find myself, like every morning when I get up, I like to go out onto the little balcony where my husband and I live in our townhouse. And I like to raise my arms up just in an act of absolute dependence on the Lord.

But then I move to praying and I pray for these moms that I have met. They share their stories. They don't have to share their stories with us. But they're so desperate. The first time I walked into a malnutrition clinic do you know what struck me the most, apart from the devastation that you see of the bodies of these precious little ones, was the silence in some areas. You would think, I used to volunteer in a children's hospital when I was growing up in Scotland and it was always noisy either with crying or laughing. In some of these malnutrition clinics the children, they have no energy left. They can't laugh, they can't cry. You can watch their little bodies and it is like every single ounce of strength they have left is just to take the next breath.

I've watched the hopelessness in the eyes of these moms who love their children every bit as much as you love your children and I love my son. To get 30 kilometers with a sick child, so often the child does not survive the journey. But the thing is you and I can change that. Our commitment here this year at *LIFE* through mission feeding is to get food to 350,000 children.

One of the great ironies of life is as we've talked about the pandemic of 2020, how

everybody has gained weight. There is a place where nobody has gained weight and that's in those villages where our faithful partners are on the ground providing food and help and hope.

So please, can you and I determine together that we're not going to let that happen on our watch? I want to send you my book, *Praying Girls* to build up your little girls spiritually. But will you help us build up these little one physically? Honestly, from the time that they get the first bowl of nutritious food they turn from death to life. \$30 feeds three children for three months. \$100 feeds ten children for three months. This could be a year where we all determine that we're not going to reach out because life's hard. I believe as the body of Christ, 2020 can be marked out as the year that we rose up and said, "No! Not on our watch. We're going to make a difference."

Please call that number. Give the very best gift possible. Give it in the name of Jesus.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Today on top of the daily fight for life and food, families and children across Africa are now forced to deal with the challenges of a global health crisis. Because of COVID-19 food scarcity has increased drastically and the fear of dying from lack of food is far greater than the virus itself.

Even in these unprecedented times, mission feeding won't stop. With your help, mission feeding will continue to be a daily source of food, encouragement, and health for the 350,000 children counting on us.

Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 that will help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. With your gift we'll send you *40 Days of Healing Promises*. This beautiful hardcover devotional will encourage you in your faith as you dive deep into the healing promises that are yours in Jesus' name.

With your gift of \$100 or more please request the "Blessings for your Home" bowls and tea towel set. This set of bowls and two beautifully designed tea towels will make a wonderful addition to your home and serve as a reminder of your help in blessing others as a friend of *LIFE*.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children be sure to request our commemorative bronze sculpture, "A Mother's Strength." Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video

On the mission field:

Isak: There is a mother here in Africa who is desperately crying out to God to say, "Please help me. Help me save my child! I would do it if I could, but I don't have the resources."

So on behalf of that mother, on behalf of that child I am crying out to you today because I don't have the resources to meet that child's need. I cannot save that child's life. We're in place. We've got the ability to do it, but we don't have the resources.

And that's why today I'm asking you please -- please just dial that number on the screen or get online. You give however you need to give but please today, right now, this is a crisis. It is an emergency and I need you to act immediately! Please! Do it right now. Give that gift. Give the gift of life. Give the gift of food. Save that child and save that mother from the suffering and pain that she'll go through if we don't reach her child today.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thanks for watching. I know it is tempting sometimes to just change the channel, but you didn't! You stayed. And I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

For any gift at all, we will send you *Praying Girls Devotional*. We have beautiful gifts available. I love for \$100 you get the towels and the bowls. Every time you have soup or cereal, it will remind you to pray for these little ones.

And remember too, we're here to pray for you. If you need us, we are here for you. We don't take you for granted. We're so, so grateful. We'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*.