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Week 46: Fall Mission Feeding

Sheila Walsh

Dr. David Jeremiah #2

Sheila: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm so glad that you stopped by and decided to stay with us. Maybe if you have a friend who you think needs a little bit of encouragement, why don't you call them right now or text them and say, "Hey! There is this great show on and maybe you want to watch it." Because one of my favorite people on the planet, and if there is other planets, he'll still be my favorite there, has written this fantastic new book. It is called, *Forward: Discovering God's presence and purpose in your tomorrow*. *Forward*, Dr. David Jeremiah, welcome to our show. I'm so grateful that you took the time to be with us.

David: Well, thank you for having me, Sheila. I'm honored to be with you.

Sheila: I've been studying your book and enjoying it and learning so much but there was one of the chapters that I thought was perhaps particularly relevant for the days we're living in. You talk about risk. And so often as believers we tend to stay in the kind of safe zone. We don't step out in faith. I'm thinking that people at the moment might feel even more that way. Why is it important that we step out?

David: Well, a lot of folks today, they're pulling the moat up and shutting the door and staying inside. You talk about sheltering, I know some people that haven't been out of their house since this started. They're fearful. They don't want to take the risk of going out at all. That's kind of a picture of the way some people live their lives too.

Sheila: True.

David: You can't live the Christian life in the safe zone. That's what I know. Because God has called us to a life of faith. When we walk by faith, that's just another term for risk. Faith and risk are kind of synonyms when you look at it from the biblical perspective. And so if you want to go *Forward*, if you want to see your dream realized in your life there will be times along the way where you will have to take the risk.

In that chapter I talk about Caleb and Joshua and how they were the only two of the spies who were willing to take the risk and say, "We can do this thing God has told us to do. We can go into Canaan; we can settle that land. All of his buddies, all of his contemporaries, all the other spies were unwilling to take the risk. They saw themselves in light of the giants and they said, "We're like grasshoppers in their eyes."

And that whole thing tells you a wonderful story about those who are unwilling to live in the faith zone and those who are. If you're called of God, if you're walking with God you will have to learn something about risk.

Sheila: What do you think it was in the life of Caleb and Joshua that changed the way they saw things? Because ultimately, they're the only two that get to enter into the Promised Land.

David: And they didn't see a different picture. They saw the same picture. I always thought that the problem that the other folks had was they saw the giants in comparison to themselves. Joshua and Caleb saw the giants in comparison to God. Joshua and Caleb had a big God. They believed. And when you get to the end of this chapter that we're talking about in this new book, there is a whole thing about why Caleb was different. And the Bible says Caleb had a different spirit. And six times in those 30 verses that tell us about Caleb we read that he wholly followed the Lord his God. He didn't look to the right or to the left; he kept his eyes on God. And he knew that God would never call them to go into Canaan if he wasn't going to enable them to do it.

Sheila: That chapter is so powerful. I think particularly for these days where it would be easy to cower back in fear, but you are calling us *Forward* to live in faith.

Then you talk about pursuing. A lot of young women, in particular talk to me about how do you know God's will for your life? Does God want us to know? How do you find that? I wondered in your own life, how did you know what God wanted you to do with your life?

David: Well, there is a lot of discussion, has been for a long time about the will of God. Some people believe that the will of God is revealed to you at a point in time. Other people believe that it happens just daily as you walk with the Lord. I've heard people say if you walk in the will of God every day you will never have to worry about the will of God for your life. And there is some truth to that.

In my case, I just went through the doors that God opened for me even before I knew what they meant. I went to preach in a little church in Columbus. I didn't have any reason to believe that had anything to do with my future. My father asked me to do it and I did it, and it ended up being something God used to turn my heart toward him and the ministry.

As I look back over my life, Sheila, it's always been like that. I've never heard any big voice from heaven but I've always known this is the way, this is where you're supposed to go. God has been faithful in showing me that. I'll tell you what is so wonderful is sometimes when that happens he even affirms it for you after you do it. That's even better.

[Laughter]

Sheila: In your chapter on believe, you make a really helpful distinction between, if you go into any big bookstore there is shelf after shelf of self-help books. But you make a distinction between self-help and positive thinking and believing.

David: I was really concerned when I wrote that chapter, Sheila that people would think I'd gone off the deep end and started to become word of faith or something like that, or whatever they say about those people that believe that. I was just saying that the Bible teaches us that if you're a Christian, you have more reason to be positive than anybody on this earth. And I use the Paul illustration because Paul lived a very difficult life. And I personally believe he was the most positive person that you can study in scripture. He was the one who said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." He is the one who described all the things that could come against him. And there were ten things and they were hard things! And at the end he said, "But I am more than a conqueror in all these things."

I love that because I don't know about you, I grew up in a good church but Sheila it was a very negative church. I used to tell people, "I know what we're against, I just haven't been able to figure out what we're for." Because we spend a lot of time in church just talking about...it was very legalistic and judgmental. It wasn't until late in my college career and mostly in my seminary career that I began to realize that when you walk with God you should walk in joy. You should be positive. So I wanted to communicate the idea that it is possible to be a Christian and to be a full-fledged optimist. And that's what that chapter is all about. I had so much fun writing that. I tell the story about my time with Coach Swinney who is the coach at Clemson, and how positive he is with his team. I hope I'm that kind of a person. I know that I strive every day to be that way. There is enough negative people around to take care of that end of it. I want to be a positive optimistic Christian.

Sheila: I love that! If we think of who our God is, and with Paul you're right. Even if you think of Philippians, it is dripping with joy. There is so much joy and positivity and faith.

But I'm thinking of people who deal with really negative thoughts, not even necessarily from outside of their life but who just...negative thoughts all the time. How do you stop that? How do you exchange that for a different way to live?

David: Sheila, I know for a fact as a pastor for all these many years that some of that needs special help that I would not know how to give. There are some people that are so deep in these evil thoughts it is almost like what happens to a military person when they come home from a war.

But I also know that we are in charge of our thoughts. If you fill your mind with negative things you're going to have a negative attitude. That is a very simple thing to say and it involves a great deal of discipline. How hard is it to turn off the television and read a good Christian book? Or turn off the television and watch something that will build you up? But it is very clear to me, especially for those who struggle with their thought life, your mind is like a computer, what you put into it determines what happens inside and how it revolves your life. So I would say that more than anything else, making sure you stay in charge of what you feed your mind is really important.

There is a little poem that I often share. I don't know when I learned this but it was really important to me at the time. It goes like this: "Two natures live within your breast. The one is foul, the one is blessed. The one you love, the one you hate; the one you feed will dominate." If you want your old nature to run your life, you know how to feed it. But if you want your new nature to run your life, you know how to feed that too.

Sheila: It is interesting, my husband Barry said the chapter in *Forward*, your new book that impacted him most was realizing the power of our words, even what we speak over our own life. So often we speak negative things about our life. Words have power.

David: That is not a secular concept. That is a biblical concept; that the words that we say make a difference. I know this so much because I'm around all kinds of people. I know some people that if I'm having a hard day, I just don't want to be around them because I know that what's going to come out of their mouth is not going to help me, not going to encourage me. Some people see everything that's wrong, and especially during this pandemic, it's interesting, isn't it, Sheila, that a pandemic doesn't cause you to

be...anyway, it just reveals what you are. The pandemic has helped us to see who we are. How do we respond during a time like this?

So I know what Barry is talking about. That you can speak words that make a difference. That's not going off the deep end on some craziness that some people teach. That's just saying what the scripture says. In fact, wasn't that what Paul was doing when he said I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me?

Sheila: Absolutely!

David: And that's what David was doing when he encouraged himself in the Lord when everybody else was after him. So the Bible is filled with illustrations of that.

Sheila: There is an interesting phrase in your book. I think it is in the chapter on invest where you talk about outlive your life. What do you mean by that?

David: What I mean by that, Sheila is that we should always be living our lives with the idea that there is something still going on about us when we're not here anymore. One of the stories that's in that book that I love that I think illustrates it the best is when I was 16 years old my parents gave me a copy of the Scofield Reference Bible. Back in those days, that was the only reference Bible there was. It was almost like a mark of your spirituality. If you didn't have a Scofield Bible you shouldn't come to church. It was kind of like that. I remember getting that and being just intrigued by the notes, C.I. Scofield, especially in the areas of prophecy, there weren't anything like the incredible number of notes that we have in our study bibles today. But periodically I would find something I didn't understand, and Dr. Scofield had something to say about it that helped me.

One day I was reading that Bible and I looked in the front page and realized that that Bible was created in 1909. He created a Bible in 1909 and this was 2020 and I was being blessed by it. And then of course I thought, I created a study Bible in 2013 and all I could say was, "Lord, help that Bible continue long after I'm not here to be a blessing to

people." That's what it means to invest.

We point out in that chapter that there are only two things eternal worth investing in. One is the Word of God. And the other are the souls of men. Because those are the only two things that are going to survive--those two eternal things. What a privilege it is for you and for me to get up every day and realize, those are the two things we live our lives for.

Sheila: Absolutely! I love that because I think so many people think, I remember my mom lived on a widow's pension but I watched the way that she invested in the lives of her neighbors and her friends, and that legacy has lived on. You talk about finishing well. I think that's the desire of my heart. I want to finish well. You see a lot of people, particularly maybe at the moment kind of falling away. How do we ensure that we finish well?

David: I don't know if you read that part of the chapter but there is a little story in there about this guy at Fuller Seminary who did a study of all the people in the Bible about whom there were a couple of sentences at least. And he came out with this statistic that kind of shocked me when I read it. That only 30% of the biblical characters finished well. Only 30%! And then he characterized how Sampson and Solomon and some of these others, they dwell almost all the way to the end and in the end they blew it and they didn't finish well. I'm with you, I pray.

One of the great Southern Baptist evangelists wrote a book and the title of the book, he was in his 80s and the title of the book was, *Lord, Get Me Home before Dark*.

Sheila: Oh wow!

David: I remember thinking about that. Lord, I want to get home before dark. So I talk about finishing. In this chapter I talk about some of the important things of finishing. And one that I think is often missed is the idea that we have to be very, very careful about what happens to us after we achieve our victories. We live our lives and sometimes we

get toward the end and maybe we achieve a huge victory. And we are most vulnerable then than we ever are at any other time in our life.

I tell the story about climbing up Mont Blanc with my wife and being there to the base of it, and seeing the sheer face of the north face of that mountain and wondering how anybody could ever scale that! But they do and it is a big deal. Down at the base of that there is a cemetery. And I remember the guy said, "You need to go visit that cemetery." So I did. And I was reading the epitaphs and when I came out he said, "Did you notice anything?"

I said, "Yeah. It seems like most of the epitaphs are about people who died on the way down, not on the way up."

He said, "Oh yes. That's true." He said, "Most of the people in the cemetery died on the way down."

I actually took some pictures of those tombstones and I reproduced them in the book, in a paragraph. What I learned by that is this. Let him who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. And pride goes before a fall, a haughty spirit before destruction. When we have achieved our greatest, we need to be the most careful that we don't become a casualty on the way down.

All through that chapter. And the other thing that's in that chapter that I love, Sheila, is everybody wants you to retire. And of course, the word *retire* is not in the Bible. I've been asked for the last 20 years, "When are you going to retire?" Never! Actually made a list--I had so much fun doing this. One day I made a list of all the things God has allowed me to do since I should have retired. It was an amazing list of incredible things that I've experienced. And to think that I would have missed all of that if I had hung my hat on the hook and walked out. I don't think God is ever finished with us.

There was a little phrase in there that I read. I wanted to make this the byline of the

chapters but my publisher wouldn't let me do it. Here was the byline: "If you're not dead, you're not done."

Sheila: Oh, I love that!

David: That's true, isn't it? God leaves you here for a purpose.

Sheila: There is so, so much more that we could talk about in this book which simply means to all our viewers, you need to get a copy of this book. For any gift at all today, we're going to send you this fantastic new book by Dr. David Jeremiah, *Forward*: "Discovering God's presence and purpose in your tomorrow."

What I'd like to do is ask those of you who are watching to stay tuned for just the next few minutes because I want to take you with me on a trip to Africa and show you what we can do as we move forward to make sure that others move forward as well. When I come back, I will tell you how to get a hold of Dr. Jeremiah's new book, *Forward*. So please stay tuned.

On the mission field:

Open Captions: Who will be next?

Announcer: Almost everyone knows about the world crisis that is being called a pandemic. But there is another crisis in Africa that is going to take more lives than COVID-19--it is a hunger crisis.

Isak: Mother after mother telling us how they are losing their children. Children are dying, they say because they have no food. I say to them, how did your child die? Well, they just died of no food. They had nothing to eat.

Announcer: Mothers throughout this region are still grieving at the loss of their children because they had no food. Yangu buried her four-year old daughter just three days ago. And KK recently buried one of her twins.

Isak: I'm appealing to you from the bottom of my heart to please help us do something for this lady and for the women that she represents all over this area. Women who are desperate for something called food. But it is actually called life because that's what it does, it brings life and it saves life. This lady lost two of her five children in just one month. Who will be next? This story will end with yet another tragedy, another child stolen, maybe all three. You see we can't wind back the clock on the two children she's lost already but we can stop her from losing another one. You and I can do it, but I need you to partner with me. I need you to open your heart today and I need you to give that gift because your gift is the gift of life.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: I can't even imagine what that would be like as a mom to lose two children within one month? I mean the loss of one child is a devastating tragedy. I have a friend who lost a child and it's probably six, six and a half years now and the grief and the pain is still there. But to lose two children within a month? And sometimes we're tempted to think, well, it's over on the other side of the world and that's what happens there, and perhaps they even get used to it. Let me tell you, no mother will ever, ever get used to losing a child. And I can't imagine the agony, the daily ongoing agony of watching your children lie down at night to go to sleep and you hear their little bellies rumbling because they're so hungry. Everything within a mother or a father, all our instincts are to take care of our children's most basic needs, enough food to eat.

And for so many of these mothers, when James and Betty started this ministry so many years ago, we started with a kind of doable number which seemed like a big goal. But you faithfully responded. And so what our commitment is this year to our partners on the

ground who are facing, we think the COVID pandemic affects us here in America and Europe and Australia, but it also affects so many of these places in Africa where we are working.

So we have made a commitment that this year that we want to feed 350,000 children. Now there is an entry level for every one of us in this. Do you know that just \$30 will feed three children for three months? Where else could you do that? Where else could you invest \$30 in the kingdom of God saying God, you have blessed me, and I want to bless others. Three children for three months; \$50 will feed five children; \$100 feeds ten children for three months.

Some of you have been blessed this year, even though it's been a difficult year, somehow God has blessed you. Do you know that if you gave \$1,000 that would feed 100 children for three months! Can you imagine the joy that you would bring to those mothers' lives? We want to get back to our partners, like Isak there on the ground and say, "Listen, our friends have heard your cry and they are responding like never before."

This could be a year when we all back off a bit because it's been difficult or does God's sons and daughters say this is the year when we're going to move forward and make a difference in Jesus' name. So please, will you call now? Call that number on your screen. Give the best gift possible and answer those mothers' prayers. Please call now!

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: We're here in this area of South Sudan. And we've been going from village to village where we're working here, and just hearing story from mother after mother, a pretty consistent story--a heartbreaking one of how mothers have lost children, some of them multiple children. They explain to us how they're basically terrified at the fact that they have no food, absolutely no food. They've lost everything as a result of the flood. Mothers telling us how they're terrified at the thought that they might lose another or all of their children because they have absolutely no food.

But if you'll just open your heart today, if you'll do whatever you can do, if you'll give whatever gift you can give you will be giving the gift of life. I give you a guarantee from me that we will do whatever we can do and we will use your gift. We will stretch that gift

to the maximum to make sure that we save the lives of the precious children in this area who without our help are probably sure to die.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thank you so much for watching that. And please, if the lines are busy, keep calling. We want to be the answer to those women's prayers and make sure they don't have to bury any more children.

For any gift at all, we will be sending you Dr. David Jeremiah's book, *Forward: Discovering God's presence and purpose in your tomorrow*. We covered a little. There is so much more in this book. You need your own copy. I just want to say thank you so much Dr. Jeremiah for your wisdom and your wit and this fantastic new book.

David: Thank you! Thank you very much.

Sheila: What a joy to have you with us. And we will see you next time on *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh. God bless you all!