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Week 1: Fall Mission Feeding, last week

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Mark Batterson

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me as always. We're excited to have you because today we have a wonderful interview with a good friend of the ministry. His name is Mark Batterson. You may know him from so many books. He's got a new one called *Win the Day*. Mark, it is great to have you with us, remotely, but still with us here on *LIFE Today*.

Mark: Absolutely. It is so good to see you both. If I came to you, I'd have to quarantine for two weeks so we've got to rely on good old-fashioned zoom.

Randy: Yeah, that will work. This year has been that kind of year; 2020, we're ready to just kind of waltz on out of that year and start with 2021. I have a question for you because this is a time when we all look forward and go, what are my New Year's resolutions? Is it really a good idea to go, what am I going to try to accomplish for the whole year of 2021? What do you think?

Mark: Well, I'll say this upfront. On one level you won't accomplish 100% of the goals you don't set. So I'm a big believer in goal setting in fact, God-size goals. Faith is being sure of what we hope for, certain of what we do not see.

That said, Randy, 75% of New Year's resolutions fail before the end of January. So my advice would be stop setting New Year's resolutions, start focusing on daily habits. What are those habits? What are inputs that are going to produce the kind of outcomes that you want at the end of the year? So I think that really is the key. That really is what the day is all about.

Sheila: Mark, when I was reading your book, one of the things that has personally helped me a lot just since reading it, is this idea of 24 hours--the power of 24 hours. Because like many people during COVID I discovered that my jeans gained ten pounds. I have no idea how but they did. So if you have this big goal of this year I'm going to lose whatever by whatever but somehow this concept of a single day, can you do it for today? I found that so helpful.

Mark: It really is. Sheila, if we think about doing something for a week or a month or a year, it can get a little overwhelming. In fact, I think the longer timeframe your odds go down. But what a gift that God created this 24-hour cycle. We don't think about it much because it is all we've ever known but there was morning and there was evening, the first day, the second day, the third day. There is a genius to the Jewish rhythm of life, which by the way doesn't start with sunrise, it starts with sundown the night before which I think is absolutely fascinating.

But isn't it interesting how many verses have to do with this daily rhythm? "His mercies are new every morning." "This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it." And even Jesus, he said, "Give us this day our daily bread." Now if we're keeping it honest, I kind of wish it said give us the month or monthly bread because we would have to trust less. But God designed us in a way to live in these day-type compartments.

Randy: Your book is about these seven habits, these daily habits that help us stress less and achieve more. Talk to us about some of those that struck you that maybe you learned from some personal experience, maybe even the hard way, the things that we can do every day that will actually lead to greater success to achieving our God-given goals.

Mark: Randy, maybe I can throw these out really quick just to kind of tease them, and mention a couple of them. But habit number one is "Flip the Script" which is so apropos going into a new year, coming out of a year that has really been challenging on so many different levels. So you have to "Flip the Script."

"Kiss the Wave" is I'm tipping the cap to Charles Spurgeon. He said you have to kiss the wave that throws you against the rock of ages. And maybe we can double back to that one because I think it is a profound truth.

Habit number three is "Eat the Frog" which is a fun one. If you want God to do the super, you have to do the natural.

Habit number four is "Fly the Kite." If you do little things like they're big things God is going to do big things like they're little things. Habit five is "Cut the Rope." Habit six is "Wind the Clock." And habit seven is "See the Clouds."

So there are these seven habits that I think can help us bury dead yesterdays which you have to do and even imagine unborn tomorrows. Why? So that you can be fully present in the present and actually win the day one day at a time.

Sheila: Let's go back to that great Spurgeon quote which I absolutely love. I was moved by the story of your wife, of Lora. Tell us about what happened and how that became very real to her.

Mark: Yeah, Sheila, I'm sure so many people listening right now can identify with getting a diagnosis that knocks the wind out of you. I'll never forget the phone call with the doctor telling Lora that she had breast cancer. And at that point, you don't know what stage, you don't know what the prognosis is because you've got to figure out what you're dealing with.

Wow! It will get you on your knees in a hurry. But Sheila it was during that season that Lora read a poem, and in particular a question that that poem asked. It was a game changer. The question was this: "What have you come to teach me?" Now that's a hard question to ask of cancer. Listen, that's a hard question to ask of the challenges that we face.

But I don't know any way around it. You have to learn the lessons that life is teaching you and you have to cultivate the character that God is working in you. And I think often, Sheila, God comes to us disguised as our lives. In fact, I would even say this, that sometimes we ask God to change the circumstances, but God is using those circumstances to actually change us.

So can I just share a testimony and say that Lora is doing so well. She is won that battle with cancer and I'm so grateful. But I would also say wow, she made some changes to her diet, to meditation on scripture. We even hit comedy clubs more frequently because "Laughter doeth good like a medicine." So there was this process of what can we do that's within our control and then trust God to do the supernatural?

Randy: You have a great quote that sums that up. You say, "You may not be responsible but you're response-able." How important was it that you learned that the way we respond to these difficult things may be in some ways the most important thing?

Mark: Isn't it true, Randy, that it is much easier to *act* like a Christian than it is to *react* like one. But it's our reactions that really reveal who we are. And so I would just remind those who are here, by the way, not by accident but by divine appointment. The Lord has a word for you today. I think part of it is this, that two people can go through the same circumstances and become very different people. Someone gets bitter, someone gets better; right? Why? Because you've got to learn to "Kiss that wave." You don't have to like it. You don't...

Listen, and I promise you, you don't have to sabotage yourself. You don't have to do anything. Jesus himself said, "In this world you will have trouble." It just comes with the territory because we live in a broken, fallen world and we are broken, fallen people. But I'm grateful that it doesn't end there. Jesus said, "Take heart." Take heart today because Jesus said, "I have overcome the world." And because of that we live with a faith that the obstacle is not the enemy anymore. The obstacle is the way to becoming the person that

God's called us to be.

Sheila: One of the things that you wrote that I underlined and actually took notes, I always have a notebook with me and took notes is when you referenced Deuteronomy 29:29 about the secret things belonging to the Lord. There is something about that that was really important to me. Because we think we're supposed to understand everything and there is no way we can.

Mark: No. Sheila, I would start with the fact that the Trinity itself doesn't make sense within four dimensions of space time. How can there be one God in three persons? Well, here's a very simple answer. Our faith is not logical, but it is not illogical either; it's theological. By definition God doesn't fit within the logical constraints of our left brain. And so that's kind of my starting point; that his ways are higher than my ways, his thoughts are higher than my thoughts. And that's what we have to do that is so hard for us as humans--trust! We have to trust. And we have to trust the one who by the way, sometimes works in strange and mysterious ways.

But I would also remind us, sometimes I just need to stand on Romans 8:28 that all things work together. It doesn't say all things are good. Not all things are good. Again, we live in a fallen world and evil is present and accounted for. But God is able to work all things together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose. So I hope that that gives us a little bit of that inner strength to face some of the challenges that maybe we find ourselves in right now.

Randy: In that section where you talk about supernatural things, you have this weird phrase. You say, "Eat the Frog." What in the world does that mean?

Mark: Yeah. I had a little bit of fun with that. It's a Mark Twainism, if you will. He said, "If you ever have to eat a live frog, Randy, do it first thing in the morning because then the hardest thing is behind you."

[Laughter]

It's this idea that I think we've got to hit the ground running spiritually. What I mean by that is this. A lot of us don't really evaluate our morning routine or the way that we kind of begin the day. And part of winning the day is really establishing some of those daily habits to allow us to set the tone and set the pace. I think this is true on so many levels. Physically, it might be doing sit-ups or push-ups or even a walk around the block. But spiritually, I think it is getting into God's word. More importantly, getting God's word into us.

In fact, can I just exhort you? This is the pastor in me coming out right now that the only ceiling on your intimacy with God and your impact on the world is daily spiritual disciplines. And if you don't have a Bible reading plan going into 2021, this would be a great moment for you to think about downloading a plan. And not just getting into God's word but getting God's word into you to cultivate that faith that you're going to need to face some of those challenges this coming year.

Sheila: So Mark, the thing that I thought after reading your book is you don't just write great books, and you write great books, but you lead by example. How on earth did you go from somebody who struggled with asthma for so many years to running a marathon? That's crazy!

Mark: [Laughing] Sheila, I love the question because the answer is a miracle! After 40 years of severe asthma my earliest memory was an asthma attack. So that's all I'd ever known. I slept with an inhaler under my pillow. I played basketball with an inhaler in my sock.

Then one day, July 2nd, 2016, I just felt like I needed to pray a brave prayer. And by definition I think a brave prayer is one, something that seems impossible, and two, is often something that you've prayed many times before and it hasn't been answered when or where or how you've asked it, but you don't feel released from it. In other words,

you've got to keep believing God for that miracle.

So long story short, I have not touched an inhaler from that day to this day. And I just felt like I need to go out and celebrate this miracle that God has done in my lungs. So I'm going to do what I could have never thought possible. So I went out and I did run the Chicago marathon. And Sheila, I didn't win- I didn't win but I did finish.

Randy: That's a win right there.

Mark: My lungs were great. I just praise God for it. So really, it's one of the testimonies in the book. Here's the thing, we overcome the enemy by the blood of the lamb and by the word of our testimony. Testimony to me is this: If God did it before, he can do it again. And if God did it for me, he can do it for you. And so I hope that that story is an inspiration, is an exhortation to keep believing God for that miracle.

Sheila: So great!

Randy: If we buy your book, Mark, *Win the Day*, we're not going to have to run a marathon, are we?

Mark: [Laughing] Randy, the answer is no. But listen. You know what's funny? I think some people are going to get inspired to do some things that maybe they hadn't thought possible. So I hope it does have that affect, whether it is a 5K, 10K, half marathon or Iron Man! Whatever! Whatever!

Randy: Maybe writing a book like you do. Because a lot of people want to write books and most people never do. And they don't write themselves. What would you--? Just kind of close us out here and sum this up, if we want to make 2021 a winning year and we start by winning each day, give us in a nutshell just a little inspiration as to how that can be done.

Mark: Yeah, I'm going to ask a very simple question and it is a question I first heard from Matthew Barnett from the L.A. Dream Center. We were rafting a Colorado river together a few years ago and I loved this question: Can you do it for a day? There are people right now watching, they're wondering, can this addiction ever be broken? Or can this goal ever be achieved? Or could this dream ever become a reality?

Well, here's my question, can you do it for a day? I've never had anybody say no. Everybody always says, "Yeah. I can do it for a day." Now if I said, "Can you do it for a week or a month or a year?" Likelihood goes down. But that's not what we're talking about.

Listen. "Let tomorrow worry about itself," Jesus said. Let's focus on today. I don't care what goal you're going after, maybe it's writing that book or what problem you're trying to solve, what habit you're trying to break or build, I know exactly how it is going to happen--one day at a time. So when I got that inspiration to run that marathon, I didn't go out and run 26.2 miles. I would have pulled a hamstring in a New York minute. I downloaded a training plan, 72 runs, 475 miles. There are no shortcuts. I don't know if that makes me the bearer of bad news, but I want to speak truth. There are no shortcuts. But the good news is this. You may over estimate what you can do in a day other a week or a month or a year but you underestimate what God can do in a year or two or 20. Why? Because he is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine.

Sheila: That's amazing! This book is so good. I have learned so much from it.

But I want to draw your attention now to the fact that one of the things that I believe perhaps, 2021 will be marked with is that we become a giving people. That we're more responsible for our finances then we can give and help others. That's something that we're very committed to here at *LIFE Outreach*. So I would like you all to just watch this short video. We're getting to the end of our mission feeding for this year and it is not too late for you to make a difference. Please watch this.

On the mission field:

Isak: You might have heard me refer before to malnutrition as "the silent killer." That's because it comes like a thief in the night and it steals a child's life away silently, many times an unknown and nameless child. Another small little grave but a life--a life that is lost because of something that we can so simply solve. A life stolen away simply because there wasn't enough food.

The desperation you can see written all over this child because this little body is fighting a fight that chances are, they'll probably lose--a fight of life and death.

It is a tragedy of epic proportion because one in 200,000 of these children die each and every month on the continent of Africa. And it can actually be changed pretty simply. If we can get to these villages where this child comes from and we can get mission feeding into those villages, what we're able to ensure is that we wind that clock back. We retell that story. Instead of going to bed without a meal that day that child goes to bed having received an orange bowl filled with the most nutritious food, nourishing its body and saving its life.

That's why we say mission feeding saves lives because it does! But mission feeding doesn't happen just by us being here. Saving this child's life doesn't happen because of us. It happens because of you. Please do whatever you can do and give the very best gift that you can give today. Give the gift of life.

End of video**In the studio:**

Sheila: How do you even look at that and not want to do something about it? Here's what I know. If that family, that precious little one you saw there literally fighting for every breath, if that family lived next door to you, you would be over there in a heartbeat and say, "What can I do?" That's the amazing privilege that we have here at *LIFE*

because we have these wonderful partners like Isak on the ground in Africa.

The food that you saw being given to these children, it's specifically made to give them all the nutrients and the protein they need for their particular diet in that particular region in the world. The amazing thing is you and I can do this together.

Can you imagine \$30--think about that--\$30 feeds not one child, it feeds three children for three months. That's like you give the \$30 and for all of January, February, March you fed three children! If we all do our part then they're not going to be all these mothers showing up with desperate, desperate children in these clinics. They have asked us for our help and we've promised them, we've promised them that we will come home and not forget about them.

Randy, I just feel like as this year comes to an end, which was such a tough year, let's end it by becoming a blessing to other people.

Randy: Yeah. It's interesting because Mark talked about setting goals. And sometimes we see a year and we think, oh that's so big! But if we focus on one day at a time, we can have success. And it is true with the outreaches, the mission feeding outreach, you look at the situation and you see all these children and you go, how in the world can we really do anything about it? Well, it is one child at a time. It is you saying I'm going to feed three children or I'm going to feed five children or ten, maybe 100, whatever you can do. But it's one life at a time. It is winning that battle and every single life that we come across. We have the people in place. We've been doing this for like 30 years now. We know how to effectively reach the most people, but we can only do as much as you enable us to do.

Remember, this is the last week of mission feeding. With any gift just request Mark Batterson's book, *Win the Day*. We'll send it to you. I'm asking you to partner with us today, right now. Do it! Go to the phones, go online, and give the best gift you can. And maybe it's a lot because God has blessed you a lot. Let's bless so many children with life. Will you do what you can? Will you join us in mission feeding and as Isak said, save

lives? Do it 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." This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio:

Sheila: Thanks so much for watching. And remember, year-end giving is a wonderful opportunity to give. And this is our last week of mission feeding. And for any gift at all we will send you Mark's fantastic new book. It will really, really--it will shift your perspective.

Randy: Mark, we sure appreciate you sharing some great insight with us. Is there anything else we need to know before we go out and *Win the Day*?

Mark: It's just always a joy to be with you both. Thank you for radiating the love and faith of Christ. He who began a good work is going to carry it to completion.

Randy: Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank all of you for watching. Join us again next time right here on *LIFE Today*.