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Week five: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Todd Lollar

Randy: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Sheila is with me as always. Today's guest is very interesting. One thing he says in his book is imagine being publicly defined by your greatest weakness. Well, that's the struggle that he has faced and that is what he has overcome in so many ways. I think you're really going to be blessed. Todd Lollar, welcome to *LIFE Today*! It's a privilege to have you.

Todd: I'm very happy to be here.

Sheila: One of the things I wanted to ask you off the top, Todd is that a lot of people don't understand what cerebral palsy is. There is a lot of misconceptions. Some people think well, is it a disease? Do you mind just giving us the kind of CliffsNotes version so people can understand?

Todd: Sure! This might shock you, but I haven't known what C.P. is too. I have always wanted to focus more about what I can do rather than what I cannot do. But to sum it up, most of the time it is something you're born with and it's a disorder that affects your fine motor skills. So it slows everything down, like my speech, yeah. But it does not digress. In fact, I praise the Lord, he has healed parts of my speech. If you see pictures of me where I was younger and now, you would see how he has gradually healed me some over time.

Randy: You compare it in your book, and this is in fact, one of the most profound pictures I've ever seen of Jesus incarnate but you compare it a little bit to being a prisoner to a body that can't do everything your mind wants to do. And the comparison there is that when Jesus came, he stepped into a limited body as well. That's very deep. But here's

my question for you because mentally, you're probably quicker than the two of us combined up here.

Sheila: That's not a great challenge.

[Laughter]

Randy: But you have the prison, you describe it, of a body that has limitations, yet you have not been limited in your life. How have you gotten there? It's an amazing thing to see.

Todd: The Word talks about how Jesus has stepped into our weakness. He can sympathize. God came down to earth and he can sympathize with everything that we struggle with, with everything that we go through. We can do all things through Christ who gives us strength. So a very simple answer that is really deep is Jesus. He has set me free from being imprisoned in a weakness to using this weakness for his glory.

Sheila: That's why I love the title of your book, *Weak is the New Strong*. It reminded me, when I read your book cover to cover and I loved it, but it reminded me of something that my friend Joni Eareckson Tada once said to me. We had been spending a weekend together and she said to me, "Sheila, in some ways you're in a more challenging position than me."

I said, "What do you mean?"

She said, "Well, you can forget that you have a handicap. I never get to forget."

I thought that was so profound because as I read through your book, I see the ways that Christ's strength shines through your life. I wondered, like take us back a little bit. When you were going through school, what was that like? Did people understand what was going on? Because sometimes kids can be pretty cruel.

Todd: It's so interesting because in school, grade school, middle school, high school, and college, people were drawn to me. I never could understand why. It was before I started working with Jesus, as a Christian. I did not grow up in a church setting. But you were seeing in the book how when I was young, I had a dream and now I look back and I know now it was a trance and not a dream. But it was an angel, and the angel exchanged my cane that I walked on with a growing cane. This represented, I believe, the cane of comfort. And people are longing for comfort in their weaknesses. I really think that that's why the Lord was drawing people to me at a very early age.

So I did not experience that with kids make fun. I just did not experience that because more people long for that comfort.

Sheila: Wow! That's profound.

Randy: One of the things I did enjoy very much about the book is there are so many stories, just great stories that you tell. You're actually a phenomenal story teller. Which one of those do you just want to share with our audience to illustrate God's strength even in your weakness and how it's directly impacted some people?

Todd: Well, I will always remember being in an inner-city ministry for one summer in St. Louis. We worked with a family of 18 people living in a two-bedroom home. And they met me, and I was weak. I met them and they were weak in their situation. We connected on that. We both loved Christ, get our strength and hope from him.

But that summer like I was in my mid 20s and I was just bombarded by my weakness. That's when I had these special moments with the Lord, quiet time with the Lord. Lord, I need help. He led me to a passage that I'd never read before about Paul's thorn in his flesh, when he was the weakest.

The Lord said to Paul, he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you. I mean to be all you

need, for my power is made perfect in your weakness." Right there I had tears of joy. I'm like Jesus, thank you for your power. Thank you for how you can use my cerebral palsy and for my speech. Every weakness I have everyone deals with. Lord, if you can use it for your glory then praise your holy name.

Ever since then my life has not been in spite or despite of my weakness, but it's been because of God's power that flows through my life.

Sheila: I think too, because you do speak slower, it makes people lean in and listen. Because sometimes the rest of us just yack on and on and on and it's like whew! But there is something about the beauty of brokenness that causes us to lean in and listen.

Todd: Right! Every time I speak somewhere, I remember I spoke in front of a few thousand people and afterwards someone said, "Todd, you can hear a pin drop when you speak." I said, "I'm always dropping stuff!"

[Laughter]

Sheila: That's awesome!

Randy: You know hearing your depth, reading the stories in the book, we might forget that you've actually faced some very difficult times. Because you were abused as a child. Which I think, given the cerebral palsy, the last thing you would want to do is abuse a child with cerebral palsy. That just seems excessively cruel.

Yet here you are, you have a beautiful family, you have children, you have hope. You're sharing hope. What did God do in your life to take you from the abuse, the weakness you call it to this place of strength? Because it's almost too big for us to wrap our minds around.

Todd: Well, I remember being four years old and my biological father would lock me in

the bathroom. At times I could not stand very well. I tried to reach the doorknob. I could not reach it. Well, this doorknob, this unreachable doorknob became a scar that led to things I wanted most in life later. Like I wanted a full-time ministry career. I tried to give a message, but it took so long to reach that goal. I wanted a wife but every time I felt close to getting a mate I would run away. Or I wanted to be a dad, but everything is so unobtainable.

But then the Lord spoke to me through a great teacher and I learned that Jesus, on the cross, his weakness healed my wounds. He healed what was done to me like in a restroom. And then after the healing I have a wife now, a beautiful, lovely wife. I have three beautiful children. And we started a ministry in Dallas called Mobilize Ministries. We mobilize missional living and we just expanded a year and a half ago to Hollywood. We do that among Christ followers who are in the entertainment industry. If we can mobilize them to share Christ on set and off set, then we can impact the world because entertainment impacts culture.

Sheila: So true. You tell a story about a friend of yours called John. If we were to just look at, we would think this is a strong dude. But he looked to you. Tell us about that relationship.

Todd: Yes, so I met this guy named John and everyone looks up to him for his strength. And he was a leader. And so I went to St. Louis to minister and there was someone that I was faced with my witnesses head on. I met this strong man named John. Here I am weak Todd and he said, "Todd, I want you to disciple me. I want you to show me the ways of Jesus." And that was a starting point where I just learned that God uses the weak things of the world.

Sheila: That's beautiful. And you became quite a hero in a young woman's life too. You saw something happening on a college campus, which happens more and more these days and a lot of people would walk past or think I don't want to get involved. Not you! You got involved. Tell us about that.

Todd: Yeah. Back at L.S.U. where my first booked ministry job was at, it was named the number one party school for a while, I would go down to the party strip and share Christ with everyone I could meet. I heard a lady's voice in an alley, and she was in distress. And so a man was trying to get her to go in his car and she was in distress.

So I just rolled up there. I said, "Stop!" And he stopped. I was saying, "Hey, she is not going with you."

And after he left, she said, "How did you do that?"

In my earthly mind he had muscles on muscles, but the power of the Holy Spirit, I said, "Hey, it is just because of Christ in me."

It is interesting, years later through social media she sent me a letter and she's going on her first mission trip.

Sheila: Isn't that amazing?

Randy: You know what, Todd? I think a lot of people are watching right now and they have used their own personal weakness or their past, really as an excuse to not reach up and grab that doorknob and turn it and go where God wants them to go. Would you take just a second to look at that camera right there and just tell people what they need to hear?

Todd: You have the power of Jesus flowing through everything that you consider your weakness. And you can have life by his power, not despite of your weaknesses but you can live a life praising the Lord and letting his power flow through your life.

Sheila: I have to tell you, this book really challenged me. It is called, *Weak is the New Strong*: "God's perfect power in you." We're going to tell you how to get a hold of Todd's

book because I really think no matter what your life story is this story will speak into your life. First of all, here at *LIFE* we're very concerned about those in the world who do not have access to any kind of clean water. So would you watch this with us and then we'll come back and tell you how you can get your own copy of *Weak is the New Strong*. Watch this.

On the mission field:

Sheila: It's been absolutely devastating to see how hard these people work to get water and it's not a clean source of water. To talk to so many mothers who have had to bury their children. It's something that should never happen. So sorry.

Open Captions:

>> My son asked, "Mom, can you carry me on your back?" My legs hurt. My stomach hurts. My body hurts."

Then he vomited, walked out of the house and collapsed. He died right there.

Randy: This is water that will kill you. This is death water.

Open Captions:

>> When my brother and sister died, I didn't know, and I looked for them everywhere. When my mother told me they died, I didn't believe her. I kept crying and looking for them. The only water we have is from the pond. I'm afraid I might die like my brother and sister.

Randy: This is not water you can live from. We have to do as much as we can. Help us take the gospel, help us demonstrate the gospel as we bring them Water for LIFE.

End of video

In the studio:

Randy: I know, it is as hard for you as it is for us to watch those children in pain. Frankly, I couldn't go to places like that if I didn't have the hope and the knowledge that when we come back here and we tell you these stories and we show you those pictures that you will join us in giving clean water to those precious people.

Sheila, I know you've been there. You've seen the pain firsthand. How critical is it that we step up and we make 2021 a big year for clean water in this world?

Sheila: It is so, so important, Randy. When you talk to some of these moms, I look into their eyes and I see myself. Moms want one thing, they want to be able to take care of their children. They want to make sure that their children have clothes on their back, that they have a meal in their tummy. But the thought that you cannot even give your child a glass of clean water, of something that won't potentially kill them is devastating. It's hard to imagine unless you've been there.

But when we get there, we drive for hours in these vans to get to these villages where these families desperately need our help. And every time we leave, we pray a blessing over the women. We pray over them. We pray a blessing over the village. But we tell them this, "We're coming home and we're going to tell our people exactly what's going on and we will not forget you."

So I'm asking, will you join with us and help bring such a simple thing, a gift of clean water to all those places where they so desperately need it right now, Randy?

Randy: It's really not that difficult because we've been doing this for many years. We've got the people in place, we've got the crews on the ground ready to go and drill these wells.

What does it take? On average it takes \$4800 to drill a well. That's an average based on the many countries where we do this. That means that your gift of \$4800 today will

enable us to put a well in. That one well will typically provide clean water for 1,000 people for their entire lives. That's how radically you can change people's lives.

You will save lives when you are a part of Water for LIFE. Maybe you want to join with some other people. A gift of \$144 will provide an average of 30 people water for a lifetime; maybe a \$48 gift to provide ten people water for a lifetime. You start to see how this adds up when we come together, when we all do something. And that's what I'm asking you to do right now. Do what you can. Make the best gift you can--go online, go to the phones. You can save lives when you join us in Water for LIFE. Do it right now.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Dirty disease-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 poverty, this is their only choice.

But 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 350 water wells this year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide ten. \$72 will provide for 15. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift, we'll send you *Speak Your Name* devotions and declarations on the reality of Jesus. Filled with stunning imagery, these 40 encouraging devotions by Laney Rene serve as a reminder of the power of Jesus' name.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "Be Refreshed" pitcher. This beautiful ceramic pitcher is decorated with Proverbs 11:25 and is sure to make a lovely addition to your table or home.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request our brand-new, inspiring bronze sculpture, "Divine Servant."

Please call, write or make your gift online.

End of video

On the mission field

Tammy: There are nearly 700 million people around the world who lack clean water. I can't even fathom. It is overwhelming to me. In fact, many in this very village are dying because of it. I would love to do something to change this for them every single day. I would love to be able to come in here with your help and drill them a water well.

Won't you consider joining me today in helping be that source of life for these precious children? Go online, call the number at the bottom of the screen and give the very best gift you could give. It's not really life or death to us but it is life or death for them today.

End of clip

In the studio

Randy: Do go to the phone, do go online and make the best gift you can. And do it today! It really will change lives and save lives. You know, Sheila, we have a wonderful gift for people that will do it today.

Sheila: Yeah! We'd love to send you Todd's book, *Weak is the New Strong*. But also, if you want to stay in touch with him, and why would you not? You can do that at MobilizeMinistries.com. Todd, thank you so much for being with us on *LIFE Today*.

Todd: It was such a blessing to be with you.

Sheila: Thank you! We'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*.