

2/1/21

Week 6: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Amy and Jess Ford

SHEILA: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh here with Randy Robison. I have been here a much shorter amount of time than Randy, obviously, but every now and again I'll get to watch an old show. And I saw a clip of a show where there was a woman on talking about a child that she almost aborted, and then did not. She talked about what a remarkable man he is. I found myself thinking, I wish I could meet him. Well, watch this clip and I'll tell you the rest of the story.

Begin video clip

AMY: We got married and now our son is almost 15. He's just amazing. We have four kids now. And I really feel like all our kids are called to an amazing destiny in life. But there is something...

JAMES: Does he know how close he came to not being here?

AMY: We just told him because with the book coming out...

JAMES: How did he handle it?

AMY: He was very mature about it. I tried to explain to him that Satan had a plan for his life to not even be here. And now that we resisted those lies and we decided to keep and look at what his life has impacted now...

JAMES: Let him know if it will be any interest to him at all, that that same thing happened to me. My mother went to the doctor to abort me and he just simply wouldn't do it. So there was an angel there too or I wouldn't be here.

AMY: That's what I feel like. That he has some sort of... Like I feel like he might be the next James Robison. So just get ready!

[LAUGHTER]

JAMES: I'm ready to go sit on the porch. Come on! What's his name?

AMY: Jess.

JAMES: Come on, Jess, let's go buddy!

End of video

In the studio:

SHEILA: Well, James, we don't want you to go sit on the porch but we're very, very happy today to welcome Amy and Jess to the show. Welcome to *LIFE Today*!

AMY: Yeah! Thanks for having us.

RANDY: It's great to have you guys. And for those who maybe missed that program, Amy, set us up a little bit with what you went through. And then that will even bring more, I think interest into Jess's view of things.

AMY: Yeah. So I had an unplanned pregnancy when I was 19. Grew up in church. Had an amazing family but I didn't have a relationship with the Lord. Found myself with an unexpected pregnancy. And even though I knew abortion was wrong my whole entire life, in that moment, abortion became a real option to me because fear... Fear makes you

think crazy things, do crazy things.

So I was like, we're going to be homeless, my parents are going to hate me. Every terrible thing you can think of went through my mind. And so we thought, you know what? If we have an abortion, we'll deal with the consequences of a broken heart later. Let's just... A quick fix, which we all know is a lie.

And so we went to the abortion clinic, paid for it. They started explaining to me how they do it and I ended up hyperventilating and passing out in the abortion room. When I came to the nurses were fanning me trying to give me a drink of water. And they said, "You're too emotionally distraught to make this decision today. You can come back another day. But today you're not getting an abortion."

And so I went back out into the waiting room and my baby-daddy/now-husband-of-22 years, I said, "We're still pregnant." We just kind of looked at each other and we were like okay, let's figure this out. Like if we are going to be homeless and all of those things that we thought. And of course, it wasn't as bad as what we thought it was going to be. Our parents were disappointed in the timing, but they loved us, and they supported us. So I ended up having a son named Jess and ta-da! Here he is.

SHEILA: Jess, let me ask you about that though because that's quite a bit of information to take in. How old were you when you found this out?

JESS: I think I was 14; 13 to 14. Yeah.

SHEILA: How did it hit you initially?

JESS: You know, initially, it kind of just felt normal, superficial. I guess just a little bit of context about me. Like I grew up being somebody that I thought was popular and all of my conversations with my friends were extremely superficial. We talked about football and the Cowboys all the time but nothing really deep. So whenever something like that

hit me, I couldn't really accept it for what it was because maybe I just didn't understand how to process those deep things.

But you know, over time my mind just started to grasp what actually almost happened. That's kind of when I really felt like I was a mistake. And so just from that transitional period of the enemy really changing my perspective and perception of reality, I believed that I was a mistake, that I was unwanted. That my parents, they didn't want me then and they don't want me now. Even though my entire life they were amazing parents. They were the best parents, always there for me. Came to all my sports games, they were just there. But that's just the deception of the enemy. Like he attacks us through deception. So even though my parents were there for me throughout my entire childhood, basically, the enemy took that entire childhood and made me feel like they weren't there for me anymore, made me feel like I was still a mistake.

So as a result of that, I believed those lies and really just fell into this anxious depression because I felt like I lost my purpose, I felt like I lost my reason for being here. As I continued to just wallow in these thoughts, I became really suicidal just because I felt like I didn't have a purpose.

It was a really difficult time for me because like I said I had so many friends, but we never really knew how to discuss emotions with one another. We really never understood how to process deep emotional things. So I felt like I had no one. And of course, I didn't want to tell my parents because I didn't want to disappoint them. I didn't want them to feel guilty.

SHEILA: That's a lot to carry.

JESS: It was.

RANDY: How did that change? I'm assuming there was a turning point here.

JESS: There was absolutely a turning point, and this is just the grace of God, the goodness of God. I remember there was one day I was sitting on the edge of my bed and I remember I was just praying and praying out of despair because I felt like it was over. I felt like there was no way I could live another day. Because whenever I say the enemy was attacking me, whenever I say the enemy was attacking me, I mean there was nothing else that I thought about. The only thing that I ever thought about was that I wasn't supposed to be here. And that's just the deception, that's the deception of the enemy.

So I was sitting on the edge of my bed praying, just crying out to God, "God, I don't want to be here." And really telling him, "God, I'm going to end it. I'm going to pop a bunch of pills and see what happens."

I remember as I said that or as I thought that and I really believed that I was going to do it, what I know now is the voice of the Holy Spirit stopped me. And the Holy Spirit said simply just one sentence, "Jess, your parents may have said no to you, but I said yes. You have a plan and a purpose." And my whole life I was searching for this one thing called *purpose* and finally the Holy Spirit revealed it to me that I was predestined before the foundation of the world to be a son of God and to serve him with everything. My life has absolutely changed since then and I'm on fire for him.

SHEILA: Wow! What the enemy intended for evil God intended for good. Amy, were you aware of what was going on in Jess's life?

AMY: No. He didn't ever tell us. Like I had no idea that he was struggling with this. I love to like, whenever me and my husband were getting married when I was 16 weeks pregnant the pastor wouldn't marry us. He said that he couldn't bless the marriage. So a couple years later though, he called my husband and he asked for forgiveness, and he felt like it was the worst mistake in pastoring history.

SHEILA: It must have hurt.

AMY: Yes, it did. But then when Jess was 16, he asked me to come and speak at his church about just pro love and even his story, was very open with the congregation of what he had done years before. So after I spoke, he asked me to come back on stage and he said, "Amy, I want to ask you for forgiveness. I asked your husband a long time ago, but I want to ask you for forgiveness." And then he had my son Jess come on stage. And in front of the whole congregation and he said, "Jess, will you please forgive me for planting seeds of rejection in your heart before you were ever even born. And while you were in your mother's womb, I rejected you." And Jess, in front of the whole church says, "I forgive you." And it was such a powerful moment.

And so I think, and that was when he was 16. I think there were just steps and healing moments that happened. Even now, I don't regret telling him his story because that's where freedom is, is what we put in the light, is what God can heal. And now God uses this. He has led so many kids to the Lord. He is on fire for God. Just got a theology degree. Wants to be a pastor. And this is just fuel for his life because his story has brought him purpose.

RANDY: All right. I didn't know that. I knew obviously, your mother has been on and we've heard her story. I didn't know that about... I don't know if you know this. I was an unplanned pregnancy. I was an unwanted child. I was the product of two people who were married to other people at the time and I was given up for adoption, adopted by James and Betty Robison.

JESS: Wow.

RANDY: So I get a lot of that. Here's what I want to say to you, and I know you know this now, I'm glad, but to anyone out there who is feeling maybe the way Jess did, or if you're an adoptee or dealing with rejection, wondering what your purpose is, I look at that, I look at Jess, I look at me and I go, man, God went through a lot of trouble to make sure I got here. Let me tell you, God has such a purpose for those of us who are conceived in sin or unwanted or unplanned. God's planned every single one of us. And

when you look at these two right here, especially Jess, you can see God working all things together for good for his purpose when we just submit to him.

So Jess, I just want to encourage you right now. He's got his hand on you. He had to go through a little extra effort to make sure you and I got here, buddy. And thank you.

SHEILA: Okay, Amy. You have a brand-new book out called, *Help Her Be Brave*. Tell me about this phenomenal work that you're doing.

AMY: Well, going through what I went through I have really recognized that if I would have felt like I could have gone to the church to say I'm in this situation, I'm pregnant, I don't know what to do, but in that situation, it was the last place I wanted to go to. So we feel like the church can play a powerful role in helping women save lives. So there are over 300,000 churches in America, and we feel like every church should be able to welcome these women in and really help them with their journey, not only through pregnancy but their whole life.

I know I met one time a woman that came up to me and she said, "I'm a pro-life atheist. I don't believe in your God, but I believe in the power of your people. If you could get your people to do something, then this issue wouldn't be an issue anymore."

And I was like blown away that an atheist could even recognize the power that we have. So *Help Her Be Brave* is about all of the amazing ways that people can get involved in the pro-life movement. I remember when I, it wasn't until my mid to late 30s that I even there was a pro-life movement. I thought it was like people that stand outside abortion clinics and scream. Because that's what the media wants to make it look like. But that's not the pro-life movement at all. There is amazing resources and help. There's just so much support that's out there they just need to highlight it.

So I really feel like God has put something in each of us, a strength, a gift, a talent, something that is like, what do you pound your fist on the table and say, someone needs

to do something about this! A lot of times, that's us. That's why God is fired up about it. So it has tons of ideas, tons of stories of how ordinary people like me and you, and all of us here use our strengths and gifts to help a woman be brave and be able to choose life. Because every abortion decision, fear is the root--fear of being alone, fear of my parents hating me, fear of dropping out of school. Fear. So how can we help or be brave and eliminate those fears? And then help support her and get her plugged into a spiritual family, be discipled, be loved on, be empowered to be the mother God created her to be. Whether she chooses to place her baby for adoption or whether she chooses to parent, how can we help her through this journey and get her plugged into a spiritual family to love on her for the rest of her life if she'll allow it?

SHEILA: I love that!

RANDY: You touched on one of the biggest lies in our culture today and that is that Christians or whatever, they're pro-life meaning they're just pro-birth. They don't really care about kids after they're born, which is one of the dumbest lies. But it is one. What would you say to a young woman who is in a tough situation, has the unplanned pregnancy and wonders, is there really support out there for me?

AMY: Yeah! I would just tell her, get plugged into a church family. Let us help you. *Embrace Grace* is a ministry that we started where its support groups for girls with unplanned pregnancies in churches all over the nation. We're in over 700 churches, 47 states and ten countries. So we want to help her get plugged in. If she can get her foot in a door into a church, the church has unlimited resources because of all the gifts and all the strengths we have inside of us. So that's the first step. Getting her a part of a spiritual family.

And like you were saying, pro-life is a stance. Some people vote for life, but pro-love is an action. And it is God's kindness that leads us to repentance. It is the action and the love that is actually what changes hearts. We can talk about pro-life until we are blue in the face but without love we're a clanging cymbal. So we want to be the love. And it's not

about behavior modification, it is not trying to fix people. It is about loving people. It is about a heart transformation. And that's what we want to do with these women that are experiencing this pregnancy of feeling alone, we want to help her get back on her feet and be brave.

SHEILA: Wow! Jess, I just want to ask you with everything that you have gone through up until this stage, what would you say to somebody who thinks, well, I am a mistake. I'm not supposed to be here.

I was told to abort my son who is now 23. They said there was something seriously wrong with him. And I said, "Absolutely not." I look at him now and he is just an amazing guy. But I think, what about other people who think, you know what? I'm not supposed to be here. What would you say to them?

JESS: For me, the Holy Spirit changed my life. Whenever I truly understood that God, the creator of the universe, he predestined me, and literally there are millions of opportunities for, I love--Todd White talks about, he gives this illustration of how there are so many different opportunities to reach the egg but only one does. And it's so funny the way that he talks about it. But like he chose me and just that sheer reality is it defies all statistics.

But for somebody going through that season, if they were to just take a step back and really examine their thought process, really examine, are their thoughts from the Lord? Are their thoughts self-seeking? Are their thoughts rational?

Think about the sacrifices that their parents have made or whoever else they feel betrayed by, think about the true actions. Because like I was saying, for me, deception by the enemy was so huge. And the moment that I really understood whenever the Holy Spirit spoke to me, the moment that I really understood that I was supposed to be here, the big thing that happened in my mind was that I saw my parents rightly again. Whenever I was in that season of depression, I saw them as enemies, opponents.

And it was subconscious; I never ever told them that. I never wanted to treat them that way, but I saw them as somebody that was out to get me. But whenever the Holy Spirit came in, he renewed my mind and I saw them for who they really were which were loving parents. They were by my side. And that they made a mistake a long time ago but really, they truly were for me.

RANDY: I think that's wonderful. Thank you for saying that. We've just got a few seconds left, Amy but I really want to address one more thing. And that's the woman who is watching right now who had an abortion, whose son is not sitting next to her. What do they really need to hear?

AMY: Well, I just think that God, we need to tell your story. Revelation 12:11 says, "We overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony." You are not disqualified for ministry. You are qualified. And God wants to use you to help save lives. Be the person that you wish you had years ago in your life when you made your abortion decision. Because God wants to use you to help save lives. You are qualified. Get involved in the movement. Tell your story because God will heal every single time you tell your story.

SHEILA: Randy, I'm so glad you asked that question. That is absolutely huge. You need this book, *Help Her Be Brave*. I'm going to tell you how to get hold of it. But first of all I want to take you to an area of the world where people are dying simply because they don't have a cup of clean water. But you and I can change that. Watch this.

SHEILA: Does the water ever make the children sick? 1/16/17

SHEILA: That was my very first trip to Africa and I'll never forget following those moms and going to the only water source they had. And that's where it was! While I was standing there I was looking slightly further up this kind of little muddy river and there is animals in the water. I was just absolutely horrified. Part of me wanted to step in and stop

one of the children from drinking. And I thought, this is all they've got.

And that's why Water for LIFE right now is so important because this is happening. We're sitting here in a nice studio in America but at this very moment these mothers are walking down those paths and the only water they can get is the water that has already taken the life of some of their other children.

They are not asking for a lot. They just want to be able to give their children clean water. And maybe you think, well, why don't they walk further to where their... They can't! They're hundreds of miles away. This is the only water they have. So we have committed here at *LIFE* that we're going to continue putting wells in villages and saving lives, Randy and we can do it.

RANDY: We have! And the good news is we've been doing this for many, many years. And I say we, I mean you. I mean people just like you, many of you actually watching. Here's the breakdown. In order to change people's lives, to save lives, to actually, I've been back to some of these places and it becomes a focal point for villages. It's this community well, this pump with clean water coming out and it changes the complexion of an entire region.

And to do that in one area, the average cost is \$4800 for a well that lasts for most people's lifetime. That one well typically, it varies, but typically, will service about 1,000 people. So hear what I'm saying. \$4800 drills one well that will change the lives and save many lives of 1,000 people. Some of you can do that. You can drill a well today. You can provide the funds, we've got the people in place, we've been doing this, we're ready to go, you can provide the funds to do that right now. And if you can do that, I pray you would.

Others of you, partner with other viewers who are watching right now. \$48 will provide clean water for a lifetime for ten people. \$144 for 30 people. But give what you can. If God's put it on your heart right now and he's touching you and you're hearing from him, do what he tells you to do. That's the most important thing. Hear God and obey. We're

ready. We're ready to reach out. We're ready to change people's lives. We're ready to give them Water for LIFE. We're waiting on you. Go to the phone. Go online. Give the best gift you can.

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:

RALPH: Randy, Sheila, I travel all over the world as the director of missions for *LIFE Today*. I continue to hear some of the same stories. Death. Why? Simply because they don't have clean drinking water. These mothers who wanted to give life to her children, she wanted to bring health to her family by bringing water home. But she ends up bringing contaminated water--if she can find any. And it brings death to her children.

I beg you as parents, I'm a parent myself, help our viewers understand none of us want to bring death into our home. None of us want to bring contaminated water to our children. We want to bring water that is going to bring them life. Please help our viewers know that they can give and be an answer to a mother's cry. I need your help today.

In the studio:

RANDY: You really can make the difference today. I pray you'll go to the phone, go online, help us give Water for LIFE. We've got a great gift for you. Sheila, tell people what to ask for today.

SHEILA: I love--I love Amy's description of the "Pro-love moment." Boy! If every believer got a little flame in their heart for the "Pro-love Movement." So the book, *Help Her Be Brave*, for any gift at all, ask for Amy's book. And Amy, Jess, thank you both so much for being on the program.

AMY: Thank you for having us!

JESS: Thank you.

RANDY: And thank all of you for watching. We'll see you next time here on *LIFE Today*.

SHEILA: Bye!