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Week 14: Rescue Life

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Jack Graham #2

SHEILA: Hi! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh here with Randy, as always. I'm excited about today's show. If you tuned in earlier this week you would hear that my pastor, Dr. Jack Graham has a brand-new book that was just released a couple of days ago. I have it right here. It is called *Reignite: Fresh focus for an enduring faith*. So thank you so much for coming back.

JACK: Great to be back!

SHEILA: In case anybody missed our first program, would you just kind of give a little CliffsNotes of what led to it?

JACK: When the lights went out in a very real way for me after a cancer surgery in 2009 and fought a very tough battle with anxiety and depression and we talk in the book, I just tell that story. I've written a number of books but I've never been quite this, let's call it testimonial or transparent with just a personal struggle in my life.

But I did it because I know so many people; I am a pastor and I know so many people who struggle with anxiety, depression, loneliness, all these help issues that we have. And they are health issues as well. Here in the middle of COVID we have a mental health crisis going. Hopefully, maybe the end of COVID, if we can see the end.

But I wrote this from my heart to just tell my story. And with it, is full of scripture and how I found renewed faith and enduring faith. I talk in this book a lot about perseverance. In fact, when I first started out to kind of write it, I said let's do a book on persevering and pressing on. That's

really the story of pressing through pain and enduring with your faith in spite of the struggle that you are facing.

So I kind of poured it all out there. When you're a pastor and you're supposed to have all the answers, and we do have the answer in God's word, but you know what I mean. When people look at pastors they think well, they've got it all together, they never have a problem, they don't struggle. Well, many pastors do and I can personally say that I went through a struggle and I learned a lot and I wanted to share it with others.

SHEILA: I think that's amazing because I think of--so often you will bring in these young pastors and you pour into their lives; that's part of what you do. I think the very fact that you were willing to be this transparent, it will set so many of them free. Because I think, who does a pastor talk to? Who do you confide in when things are rough?

But I've often wondered, when you actually finish it and you send it off and it is out of your hands, was that ever scary? Thinking, gosh, you're going to know a whole lot about me.

JACK: I actually did have those thoughts. And to say, do I really want to say all of this? And just trying to... I don't know why but maybe it is pride. I don't know what it is but we tend to want to protect ourselves against whether it is criticism or, well, he's a pastor. Why would he go through something? I share in there how I went to a counselor and I needed to talk to someone. I was a pastor. Who does the pastor talk to? So I went to a wonderful Christian man who walked me through a lot of this.

So yeah. But I tell you this, once it was done and sent off I have no regrets. I'm really thankful. Because here's the thing. This is not just a sad story. There is victory on the other side. And I can tell you even in the midst of my darkest and lowest times, the faithfulness of God and the presence of Christ in my life was so very real. I know Jesus more. And I love Jesus now more than ever, and part of that was this experience.

RANDY: One thing that I like about the title, is if you put a book out on perseverance people are

going to be like ah man! Because that's a hard thing to do. Having done all to stand you just stand. And then sometimes that's all you can do.

But in *Reignite*, when I think of ignition, I think of fuel, I think of flame, I think of power, I think of moving forward and you're saying *Reignite*. What are some of the things that brought back your go?

JACK: Yeah, the strength. Because one of the things that depression and mental crisis of any kind can do to you is it just zaps you of your strength. On days I felt like the walking dead. In fact, it's crazy. I'd written a book in 2009 called *Powering Up*. It was on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And my life was powering down. Not that the spirit wasn't present and real but just on an emotional level I was powering down, I wasn't powering up. So I had to learn how to put those principles into practice.

I do love the title, the idea of reigniting. We've just been through this storm here in Dallas with all the ice. When the power came back on, if you lost your power, and the house started warming again that was a great experience. So when the power came back on for me, when we were reignited, I experienced...

Those men on the road to Emmaus, we're doing a television special with PowerPoint, our radio and television ministry for this Easter coming right up called "Living Hope." We did it at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC. And because we're at this tremendous museum, a tribute, a testimonial to the Word of God, it's a fantastic experience.

But I thought, okay, where do we put the Bible in with the message of the resurrection? I remembered those men who were walking so hopeless, so sad on the road to Emmaus. They thought Jesus was the one. Now everything is blown up. They were despairing really. It was so dark. And then Jesus joins them on the road and begins to converse with them. They don't realize they're with Jesus yet but he begins with Moses and the prophets and shows them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Can you imagine that? A Bible study, a walk in the word, the living word of Jesus. And all the scriptures, those things concerning himself. Not all the things, they'd still be there but in all the scriptures are the things concerning him.

So from Genesis, and of course, they just had the Old Testament at that point; so in all the Old Testament portraits and pictures of Jesus. And so they're walking and then Jesus reveals himself and they realize that Jesus is alive. And then they said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us when we walked with him in the way?"

So this move for me from a kind of barren experience, if you will, to a believing and burning, a reigniting of my life, and when you do have to endure something there is probably not hardly any victories without endurance whether you talk about sports or anything else, battles in war.

When you do endure something, nobody likes endurance, nobody likes the discipline; even the discipline of the Lord is tough. But when you endure something and you go through something, and then you come on the other side and you're winning, and you win--and we do win. We know that. We have victory in Jesus. So when you come out on the other side when you see how God is faithful in the midst of the heat.

And then you make these transfers, and we talk about this in the book where you trade in your anxiety for peace, the peace that passes understanding. I talk a lot about that. You trade in the lies. But one of the things that depression does to you, it lies to you. And Satan would step in and say things to me in that year of that struggle like you're finished. You're never going to get better. You're going to be stuck like this.

I kept asking my wife Deb and others who knew what I was going through, I said, "Am I going to be okay?" I understand maybe others have asked the same question through experiences like that, am I going to be okay? I just needed somebody to say, "Yes, you're going to be okay. You're going to get through this. You're going to be back. God will renew your faith and your ministry."

Not to be overly dramatic but there were times when I'm thinking, maybe I'm done, maybe I'm finished, maybe it's over. Maybe I'm never going to be the same. And I'm not, I'm better.

SHEILA: I can say amen to that.

RANDY: I'm curious though, did you have to make a conscious choice to believe that?

JACK: Yes. It's always the way we think, of course, the way we process what we think. I talk in there a lot about prayer and how I prayed and the kinds of prayers I've prayed. I talk about how the Bible, God's word heals our minds because the only way to defeat a lie is with truth. So I just kept pouring God's promises into my life and thinking and dreaming of a better day. And it came.

SHEILA: I love the divine swaps. You've got exchange doubt for faith, discontentment for gratitude, distress for peace. But I'm thinking of our audience at the moment. I'm thinking, is it ever too late to start again?

JACK: It's never too late for a new beginning. There is an old saying, it's never too late for a new beginning but also, that the Christian life is a series of new beginnings. A Christian life is a series of new beginnings. So absolutely. Certainly, if a person is not a believer in Jesus or you don't know if your faith is there, if you don't know if you have Christ in your life, then you can be born again.

And Jesus was saying that this experience of new birth is so radical, so revolutionary that it's like being born all over again, and it is a new life in Christ. So it is never too late for Christ to work in your life and no one is ever too far gone, it's never too dark, there is no problem God can't solve, and no predicament he can't resolve in our lives.

RANDY: So I understand how you have the choice, you see your circumstance, you maybe hear the enemy or just the question marks, the unknown, and you can choose to believe that. Or as you did, you went to God's word, you asked people who are godly people if you were going to be

okay. You stood on his promises. So that was a choice that I can grab onto. I can say, okay, if I'm in that situation I can do that too. Walk us through some of the practical steps to some of these swaps.

JACK: On gratitude for example. There is a whole chapter on your discontent, trade that for gratitude. Swap it. So gratitude, I'd always preached it and I always believed it is the healthiest, Hans Selye said this, who is the author of the stress studies way back. He said that gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions.

When you think about it, every toxic thought we have, every emotion that we have that is negative or disruptive in our lives is counteracted by gratitude. Every one. We don't have time to go through them all. But if you're worrying, for example, and you're dealing with some worry in your life and you transfer the worries, the anxieties to gratitude and you start thinking of the ways that God has blessed your life, "As a man thinks in his heart so is he."

Paul in that passage in Philippians chapter four said, "Pray always with thanksgiving and the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds through Jesus." And then he went on to say, "So think on these things" and he talked about the good things, the good thoughts, whatever things are true and honorable and virtuous and of good report, think on these things."

Because we really can only--I taught myself through the years and I really practiced it during this time; that you can only really think one thought at a time. Now you can get kind of a monkey mind going and your head is going in all directions but you can begin to train your brain to think and meditate on the Word of God. I talk about that.

Meditation is so very important. Back when I was a young Christian I think I can remember all these, the navigators had a thing using your hand to describe how we respond to God's word. Let me see if I can do it. We are to hear God's word, that's the thumb. We are to read God's word. We're to study God's word; that's a different level. And then we're to memorize God's word; and I've done that through the years. And so many of the scriptures that I'd memorized when I couldn't even think straight in the middle of this deal, when I couldn't concentrate very well,

those scriptures that I had memorized they came out and they were strong.

I even preached a series of messages on the promises of God during the middle of this thing. And that's a whole other story. But the pinky, helps you hold everything in that navigator explanation of God's word, in getting a grip on God's word, that's meditation. Now we're not talking about, when we talk about meditation upon the Word of God, we're not taking your mind to zero or thinking nothing like Eastern mysticism or meditation; just sitting and gazing at your navel trying to think nothing. That's destructive. You empty your brain then bad things happen. No, you fill your mind with God's word.

And so I would say that was one of the most important things. I know it sounds like a spiritual answer but it is a very, very real thing. When you meditate upon God and his word because that destroys, it pulls down strongholds in your life.

RANDY: You're not just a pastor preaching it, you're a pastor who's living it.

JACK: No doubt about it. I know it more now than ever before. But I would say meditating on the Word of God.

So back to that, gratitude gives me the response to if God, why am I sick? What's wrong? God, why do we not have enough money? All the whys. When we recognize with gratitude and it heals the soul when you give thanks to God. Look, read your Bible. It is just full of praise and adoration and worship and gratitude. It's all through God's word.

SHEILA: One of the things I started doing during 2020 when life was so weird was, and I still do it every day, I go outside, and I read two or three Psalms out loud. There is something great about my ears hearing what my eyes are reading and proclaiming what's true.

JACK: And there's something so great when you do it in that Scottish accent too. I mean it even sounds more spiritual. If I went out and did that it would just be eh but when you read those scriptures. We've had Sheila during special events at the church come and just quote scripture or

read something and we say yeah, that's sounds like heaven there!

[LAUGHTER]

SHEILA: But I love the fact that you kind of end the book with "Gazing on things unseen. Our future and our hope."

JACK: Because the bottom line is I had cancer and cancer kills. It kills people. It could have killed me. I'm grateful for his healing and I'm all good now, 11 years later, cancer free and grateful. But something else will take me if Christ doesn't return. We're all going to die. We're all mortal. You have to get to the place where you are anticipating seeing Christ.

And I talk in there about the hope of heaven and the promise. I don't think we talk enough about heaven. We're so worldly and earthly minded. I was afraid with the cancer thing that okay, maybe I'm going to die, maybe I'm going to die. I was afraid of the cancer. And it put me in a bad place. I believe I've learned if it happened again, the next time, if things do happen, I'm in a place now where I don't want to die but I'm certainly willing and even to the place where I'm wanting more and more to see Jesus.

We just came across, Billy Graham died three years ago. We just passed that mark back in February and I was reading a Billy quote. When people say are you afraid to die? He said, "No, I'm looking forward to it." You get to the place in your life, and we all should get there eventually where we're looking forward to being with Jesus. So that's the way I close the book.

And I've said, look, cancer can't destroy you because Jesus is the resurrection and the life. We're celebrating the resurrection these days coming up. Jesus is alive. He lives in us. He believes we will never die. We have eternal life in Christ. So there is nothing. What does the scripture say? Not height nor depth nor death or life or any created thing, angels, principalities, nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ. And I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I know that now more than ever and believe it more than ever!

RANDY: When you understand, and I can see it in your life, when you understand that truth that even death has been defeated in Christ it gives you a freedom, an incredible freedom.

JACK: It breaks the bondage of death and the Bible talks about that. That we lived in bondage and fear of death, and that bondage needs to be broken.

RANDY: There is another kind of bondage that needs to be broken.

SHEILA: There is, and I think one thing is clear. You're going to want to read this book. You're going to want to read *Reignite*. And I'm going to tell you that we'll be happy to send it to you.

But we want you to help us. As Randy said, there are some girls right now in bondage and you and I have this amazing privilege of doing something about it. So watch this.

On the mission field:

ANNOUNCER: Streets like these create an illusion of pleasure and good times. But as you delve into the back alleys and rooms hidden away you discover another world, one where children and young girls are being abused and sexually exploited by human traffickers. Anjali knows this all too well.

Open Captions:

>> She would hit me with a big stick on my head and arms. I still have the scars today even though it happened many years ago. The lady would abuse me and force me to make it with men. I would scream and cry and didn't want to sleep with them.

ANNOUNCER: Breaking down their victims emotionally and physically are just some of the horrendous techniques the traffickers use to keep the girls under their control.

Open Captions:

>> There was a girl whose breasts were cut off and another girl I saw that had her throat slit. Seeing all of that torture terrified me so that I was scared and would do the work I had to do.

ANNOUNCER: It is easy to understand why young girls like Anjali cannot escape such extreme situations. As for Anjali, it would have been easy for her to simply give up had it not been for a kind word from an unlikely source.

Open Captions:

>> A girl my age named Rada was very encouraging, she told me don't worry, God will take care of us and get us out of there. I was encouraged to have someone in there who was a friend to me.

ANNOUNCER: It was not long after that encounter with Rada that *LIFE's* mission partners in South Asia were able to free both of them.

Open Captions:

>> I pray before more girls die, we get them out so they can have a hope and a new life like me.

End of video

In the studio:

SHEILA: So often when we think of sex trafficking, if we ever do, we think of a certain type of person who may be involved with that. But I've had the privilege of actually walking those streets. That little darling girl with a green shirt looking out the window, I held her and prayed with her. She wanted to receive Jesus Christ as her Savior.

And I want you to know, these are little girls like your daughters, like your sister. They didn't come into this world thinking that's the life they would live. So many of them, their parents are gone. That little girl in particular, her dad left, and her mother is in prison. She's the head of the family, just 12 years old. She has three younger siblings.

If we don't come in Jesus' name, who will? The traffickers are organized. It is a multibillion-dollar industry, but we are the church of Jesus Christ. We know that there is redemption, that there is hope, that there is healing but we need you to take our hand and join with us. I can't wait until all travel restrictions are off and I can finally be back in Southeast Asia and bring good news, but they need it right now. And Randy, each one of us can do something to help.

RANDY: We can. And have you ever heard any of those children say a prayer or see them pray to a statue or to a candle? They don't even, oftentimes, they don't know who they are praying to. They're just saying some sort of desperate prayer for help. I want Christians to be the answer to that prayer. I want you to be the answer to that prayer.

Here's how it works. We go in, we reach into these areas, we rescue these girls whether it is pulling them out or stopping them at the border where they'll be going into a country where they're going to be trafficked and we restore, we give them hope, we give them training, we give them skills, we give them a safe place and we give them the love of Christ. That's what we do. But we only do it with your support.

We have friends right now that have pledged \$320,000 towards Rescue Life. They've set that aside to match whatever you give today. So instead of \$128 being the average cost for rescuing a child it's \$64 because yours is being doubled. We are really appreciative towards those donors that have said they would do that, but we just pray, we ask for your support.

I ask you to go online, go to the phones, make the best gift that you can because this is the gospel. This is living out the gospel. This is going in in Jesus' name just like that girl, Sheila, that you saw and saying, I don't know who you've been praying to, maybe you don't know who you've been praying to, but we know the answer. Will you be that answer today? I pray you will.

SHEILA: The great thing is, Randy, this book by Pastor Graham is going to light a fresh flame in your heart, your faith is going to be ignited. Let's take the light of Christ into the darkest corners of this earth in Jesus' name. So for any gift you give at all today we'll be happy to send you Pastor Graham's book. Please, go to the phone now. Make a difference in Jesus' name.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Human trafficking is one of the world's darkest sources of criminal activity and money. As a result, children and young people are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators into a never-ending nightmare.

Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to warn children who are at the risk of being trafficked, rescue those already enslaved and restore young lives giving them a future. With a generous \$320,000 matching gift now your gift of \$128 to help reach, rescue, or restore one child can be doubled to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help save one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

With your gift today, we'll send you *Natural Remedies*. This beautifully illustrated and essential book explores ancient nutrition and the health benefits found in God's creation. A valuable reference with biblical insight to help you live your best life.

With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive the *Jesus My Refuge* journal and pen set filled with scriptures reminding you of God's covering in times of need. You'll also be reminded to pray for those seeking refuge from the horrors of human trafficking.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280, which will now help rescue 20 children! And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Divine Servant."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video**In the studio:**

SHEILA: Thank you so much! If the lines are busy keep calling. Let's determine as long as we,

as the body of Christ are on this earth we're going to make a difference. We're going to shine light into the darkness.

RANDY: And when you make your gift today request Jack Graham's book *Reignite* and it will reignite a passion in you for life, for freedom, for Christ and just doing whatever we're supposed to do here.

Thank you, Jack for being with us. We appreciate you sharing.

JACK: Always good to be with you. Thank you.

RANDY: We appreciate you guys being with us. Don't miss a single episode. We'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*.