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**Week 17: Mission Feeding**

**Sheila Walsh**

**Freedom from Shame**

**SHEILA:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh. I just want to thank you for tuning in. One of the things I love is that some of you will write to us here and let us know what's going on in your life. I get quite a few letters too from prisoners. The interesting thing is the one thing that I'm asked for more than anything else is for a Bible.

I got a letter the other day from a gentleman who is serving a life sentence for a murder he committed while he was high on crack cocaine but somehow at the darkest moment of his life the light of Christ just shot right at him. He now has a relationship with Jesus. And if you are watching, just know that I'm your sister; I'm proud to be your sister. When he asked for a Bible he said, "I'm sorry I can't pay for it but just know that I'll share it with the people in my cell block."

So God is moving all over the world. I thought I'd bring one of the letters I got today when I got here at the studio. It just touched me, and it is from, I won't give you a full name but it is from someone called Flo, and this is what Flo said, "I'm going on 77 years and I know more now in the last two years than of all the 75 years before of the love of God. I thank God for TV ministry with this virus. Oh and I love your accent. Ha! So we may never meet but when we get to heaven, I'll get to see you. I'll be waiting. Keep up the great work, kiddo! Flo."

I just love that. I just want to thank you so much for the way that you encourage us here; whether your notes are to James and Betty or to myself, we're very grateful for you.

But one of the things I've noticed in some of my mail recently is the number of people

who struggle with feeling like they're just not enough. Have you ever felt that? Like somehow, things are never quite right. You're just not enough. I hear it over and over from those who feel as if they don't measure up; that they'll never be enough. And it is one of the reasons I think we're afraid to really be open with one another and tell each other what's going on inside. Because I think sometimes we're just afraid that we're going to be judged. It's why, I think many of us struggle with loneliness because we don't feel safe being fully known. I think it's the greatest desire of every human heart to be fully loved and to be fully known. But I think sometimes we're so afraid, if you knew the real me you wouldn't love me, that we just hold back.

Well, the Lord gave me a powerful illustration one day that spoke to me about how I saw myself and the brokenness that I believed was in me and it kept me lonely, honestly, for a lot of my life. The illustration happened in probably one of the least likely places. If you've ever been to London, England or if you've passed through London airport, you're probably aware of a department store called Harrods. You'll see this signature kind of dark green and gold bags.

Now it is a huge store, but I did a little research and it didn't start that way. Harrods was founded in 1849 as a small London shop with just two employees. Can you imagine that? It began as a vendor of fruit, vegetables, perfume and medicine. Well, more than half a century later, Harrods sells mostly luxury products in over a million square feet of selling space. It continues to top lists of the most famous department stores in the whole world.

They have some unusual rules for those who are entering the store. For example, you can't wear flip flops and go into Harrods. You can't wear torn jeans and get into Harrods. And this is another rule, and I don't know how they possibly enforce this but they say, "If you're only browsing, please come to the store between 11:30 am and noon. We want to reserve the rest of the time for people who know what they're coming for." I'm sure that doesn't work very well. Harrods is all about perfection, not necessarily about people.

Well, if you'd been with me in London when I was a seminary student many years ago

and walked just a few doors down from Harrods you would have come to what's called the Reject China Shop. There is a small glassware seller who used to carry slightly imperfect things. Things that didn't make Harrods; they didn't meet the Harrods standard. So if the people in Harrods saw there was a slight chip in something or there was a tiny crack then it would immediately be sent down to the Reject China Shop.

Well, one day I decided that I was going to find a cup that had slipped through the cracks, so I spent hours looking because I was a cash-strapped student. I was looking for a perfect cup, one that slipped through quality control and finally ta-da, I found one, I thought. I remember holding it up to the light and I couldn't see any flaws at all. So I took it home, and I put the kettle on to christen my cup with a cup of tea.

Well, to my horror, the minute I put the boiling water into the tea cup the china cracked from top to bottom and fell apart. The water's heat had exposed the flaw that I couldn't see with my human eyes. And my cup, along with my pride of having found one perfect cup just cracked under the pressure.

Interesting thing is, years later I felt the same way about my life that I felt about that china cup. On the outside I presented a Harrods standard, everything looked fine, everything looked good but when life got too hot, when pressure around me mounted, I feared I would crack all the way through. I was sure that if you had to put me in one place you would put me in the reject shop not the place for perfect people. That sense of not-good-enough-ness I carried inside of me for so many years and it left me more days than not feeling real despair and shame.

And just from reading some of your letters or some of your comments it made me want to ask, do you ever feel that way? Do you ever feel that you're just not enough? That you don't quite measure up? That you'll never be quite like so-and-so or whoever you compare yourself to? Or maybe someone in your family. Maybe your children think they're just not enough. I want us to look at how the lies we believed of being "not good enough" could actually poison us and paralyze us, and they can make us believe that

that's how God sees us too. We need to build our lives on the truth of God's word, the truth that sets us free.

It's so easy to believe the lies that our culture tells us; that you have to be a certain size; that you have to be a certain kind of income; you have to drive a certain kind of car or live in a certain kind of neighborhood. None of that has anything to do with the kingdom of God. As you are right now, whether you live just above the poverty line, or whether you live in a mansion, the love of God sees us all exactly the same.

And God's not impressed by the things we do. What really pleases the heart of God is who we're becoming because the whole point of my life and the whole point of your life is to become more like Jesus. And knowing the love of God, it's so hard for me to imagine anybody hating Jesus.

But the prophet Isaiah made it absolutely clear however that our Lord was, you remember? *Despised and rejected. A man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!*

That's a painful, powerful truth: It was our weaknesses he carried. It was our sorrows that weighed him down.

One of the things that I think, when we believe that lie of the enemy that we're not good enough, he wants to take away what Christ has said is done. I read an article the other day that said they found some ancient tax records and written across them is exactly the same word that Jesus said on the cross just before he died. When Jesus said it is finished, "Tetelestai" that word has been written over tax documents that they've discovered, and it means bill paid in full. I don't know what you've done or whatever makes you think you don't measure up but when you have come to faith in Jesus written over your life then your story is bill paid in full.

I think sometimes when we study the life of Jesus one of the things you'll notice about Jesus while he ministered here on earth, he modeled the importance of withdrawing from the hustle and bustle of how crazy life can be to be quiet, to be alone with the Father. He encouraged his disciples to do this as well. Clearly being alone and being still were important to Jesus. I really believe he wants these things for you and for me.

Loneliness is something different. Loneliness kind of breeds in the darkness. Loneliness tells us that God will not hold us. That we'd be better off holding on to anything else, somebody else, or something else; that we don't belong. Loneliness, when we listen to it, can lie to us. Even King David prayed, "Turn to me and have mercy, for I am alone and in deep distress."

Well, I did a little digging into the word, I love to do that. The Hebrew word translated as "lonely" or "alone" here in King David's prayer is *yachad*. One Hebrew/English Lexicon notes that this word implies solitary and isolated wanderers who are friendless--solitary and isolated wanderers who are friendless. As far as descriptions of loneliness go that sounds about right. But there is so much more for us here when we dive into the original language.

This is where the study of the Hebrew gets even more fascinating. This word *yachad* also means *sole*, and by implication *beloved*. When you feel most alone in this world you are held by the God who loves you as if you were the sole object of his affections. Some days I think we forget that. We talk about God so loved the world, which is a glorious truth, but do you know that God love loves you as if you were the sole object of his affections? When your children are hurting, when your child feels isolated or friendless, he or she is held by the God who lavishes his affections as if your little one was the only one in the entire universe.

While the enemy lies to us through our loneliness, God's love speaks a stronger truth. What I've discovered in my own life is that loneliness, when offered up to him, can

actually lead us deeper into the heart of God. I found that to be so true in my own life. Because everything else that we hope might fill that void is always going to be disappointing. It's never going to measure up. If you want your husband or your wife to fill any broken place in your life, I'm sure they'll do their best but we're all human. That void that we all feel, God alone is the one that can fill that.

Sometimes loneliness is meant to act like a signal alerting us of like a crack in the china of our life. But this does not have to make us fall apart though. It's like when a little red light comes on on the dashboard of your car that reminds you that you need to get your oil changed. The experience of feeling a kind of soul loneliness, it can actually help us. If you pay attention to the signals of loneliness before the waters in your life heat up to the boiling point; feelings of isolation can actually lead you closer to the heart of God, rather than to some kind of breaking point. When you pour your lonely heart out to God you find rest for your soul. You find help in times of need.

We all go through times of despair and I know it is tempting to let go but pouring your heart out to God helps you find the foothold of your faith once again, and hope that you can let go of everything else and be held by the God who understands your loneliness and is close--very close to your broken heart.

Now like loneliness shame lies to our hearts telling us that God will let us go or that we should let go of hope in him, we should just forget it because there is something so wrong with us. That crushing weight of feeling not good enough, which is one of the chief dynamics of shame, keeps us in hiding. It keeps us isolated. It keeps us afraid. That fear of being exposed, of being found out.

This will sound like a bizarre thing. When I was a young girl, whenever the phone rang my heart would stop. I would never answer the phone. I would get my mom or my sister to answer it. I had this dread of being found out or something terrible going to be told to me. If you'd said, "What have you done?" I hadn't done anything! But I just had this feeling that something terrible was about to happen. It was only when I learned to bring

my shame and my loneliness to Christ that I found this peace. That horrible feeling of not wanting to be found out, it presses us to keep up that Harrods standard image even when we feel like that reject china cup destined to crack from top to bottom.

But here's the deal, our Mighty-to-save God promises to bring us home to him to deal once and forever with our shame. He takes delight in doing this for you. Indeed, your Heavenly Father delights in you. How breathtakingly beautiful is that? I believe that if we in the church could learn how to deal with shame...

It's interesting. If you'd asked me a year ago, "Where's the first time that we read of shame entering our world?" I would have said, "Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden." But do you know you actually have to go back further? We read about in Isaiah where Lucifer who was this stunning angel, who led in worship, beautiful, but he so wanted to be like God that he fell and took a third of the angels with him. I think that's why shame is such a tool in his arsenal because he wants what brought him down.

This is what Isaiah says: *How you have fallen from heaven, o shining star, son of the morning! You have been thrown down to the earth, you who destroyed the in additions of the world. For you said to yourself, "I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. I will climb to the high heavens and be like the Most High."*

That passage symbolically describes the shame God's enemy experienced as his pride, lust, and selfish ambition led to death and destruction. Satan wants to spread his poison. So shame becomes the weapon with which he targets your heart, mind, and soul. The enemy wants you to be stuck in shame. But Jesus wants you to be free.

Let me read you from one of my favorite Psalms. This is David at a really difficult point in his life. But he says this, you can read the whole Psalm later when you've got a minute. Psalm 34 says this, this is verse four and five: *I prayed to the Lord and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy;*

*no shadow of shame will darken their faces.*

Whenever you feel that shame coming upon you, recognize where it's coming from. It is not the Lord. Remember Romans Chapter 8 verse one, "There is now therefore no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus." God loves you as if you were the only one, the only object of his affection. I pray that that resonates deep with you today.

But I also want to share with you something that's very deep in our heart here. I think when you watch this, you'll want to do something about it. There is some people living in a desperate place right now and the great news is you and I can do something about it. Would you watch this?

**On the mission field:**

**Announcer:** Right now the world's newest country is in peril. After suffering through a grim and tragic year, South Sudan's problems have been even more compounded by record breaking rainfall. And over a million of the South Sudanese people are reeling from the effects of the worst flood in recorded history.

**ISAK:** This is truly a crisis of epic proportions. But let me help you understand the real impact on these families because we say, "a million people." That's a lot of people, that's a lot of families. We say "flooding," the worst flooding in recorded history. That sounds incredible. But that's the reality for individual families. These are people living, many of them in grass huts, structures created from whatever they can find. Many of them we found actually just living under trees.

Before this crisis, they were severely food insecure. Well, now this flood has raged through the area and what that means is that there is absolutely no food. Nothing whatsoever. Many areas they'd still have some food. Their crops have been totally destroyed. Their crops have been destroyed for the next harvest as well. And so the truth is that many children are dying of starvation, literal starvation--no food at all!

This has impacted our ability to be able to reach them with food. We've had to use boats. Many of our warehouses are totally flooded. We've had to use helicopters in some cases at huge expense. Our malnutrition clinic, 16 of them have been totally destroyed. These are clinics that play a vital role in saving children's lives each and every day. We have to be able to reach these people. We have to be able to sustain our mission feeding efforts. We have to rebuild these malnutrition clinics and ensure that we are able to save these children's lives.

Without us, families, whole families that are suffering right now are going lose their lives because of the impact of this flood.

**End of video**

**In the studio:**

**SHEILA:** This really is a crisis situation. This is not business as usual. I'm sure if you're someone who watches *LIFE* regularly, you're aware that we have a commitment. We make a commitment to feed 350,000 children every year. We will not back down on that. I've been in these malnutrition clinics and it is like the last hope for mothers. They will travel miles to bring their little one because there's nothing else they can do.

I can't imagine! Can you imagine as a mom what it is like to be holding your child who is dying simply because you've got no food to give them? So that is our commitment. We stand on that and you can help with that. If you're able to give \$30 that will feed three children for three months. Think about that. \$30 is gone so quickly but not when you invest it in the lives of these children. Your \$30 will feed three children for three whole months. \$50 will feed five children. \$100 will feed ten children for three months.

But as you saw there, there is a crisis in certain parts of Africa. The fact that we have lost 16 of these malnutrition clinics is heartbreaking! Sitting in a malnutrition clinic is heartbreaking, let me tell you, as these moms hold these little ones praying that there is hope. What do they do when they walk, and they're gone? When they walked to where

they heard help was available and now it's gone! We have got to rebuild these clinics--16 of them! They're absolutely vital.

So as well as perhaps committing \$30 to feed three children, would you give an extra gift? Would you just this time in this season? We want to see those malnutrition clinics rebuilt. We want to get fresh medication, put back in their beds, a place for mothers to come and sit down and hold their little ones. A place for hope to begin again. It's a desperate situation and I'm asking you, will you help us?

James and Betty have been committed to this for years and I'm so grateful for the privilege that I've got to walk through where the situation is desperate when you have nothing to give your children and no place to take them when they're sick. Here's the deal. They're our sisters and brothers. We are the body of Christ. We are his hands and feet to a broken world. So I'm asking you, even if you've given before, would you, for this season, would you step up and give again? Again, as I say, \$30 will feed three children for three months. But please would you consider giving an extra gift to help rebuild these 16 malnutrition clinics? Please call now! Please give the very best gift that you can.

**On the mission field:**

**Announcer:** Across the continent of Africa, children are suffering facing severe malnutrition and even death. With food reserves gone and many areas experiencing severe famine, we urgently need to replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us.

Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. Also, please consider an extra gift to help immediately rebuild malnutrition clinics destroyed by record flooding in South Sudan.

The urgent need is \$392,000 above our normal feeding budget and is critical to help save the lives of those who are suffering most.

With your gift of any amount we will send you "It is Well" Quiet Time Bundle featuring an instrumental music CD with 12 classic hymns and a 31-day prayer booklet to help renew your soul.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the "No Greater Love" framed print. This portrait is a reminder of our Savior's love and the price that was paid for our salvation.

Finally with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children be sure to request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Divine Servant." Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

**End of video**

### **On the mission field**

**James:** Just remember we are able to feed, the missionaries are able to be here because of the love of God, not just in their hearts but in your heart, those of you who support *LIFE Outreach* and respond to *LIFE Today*.

Why don't you go right now to the phone or go online and make the best gift you can. Help us feed three, five or ten of these children? If you can help feed 100, well, do that. I don't know at what level you're led to participate but for the three children or the five or the ten children, it's important what you do today.

We are feeding kids because of the love of God expressed through people; really, a lot of them -- nothing wrong with you going and doing what you enjoy. We just don't need to forget the others. It's very important that you pray that everyone who can, will respond. Don't just pray, be the answer to a prayer. Respond and make the best gift you can.

**End of clip**

**In the studio**

**SHEILA:** Thank you so much. If the lines are busy, please keep calling. As you give to bless others, we want to bless you. For any gift at all we're going to send you "It is Well" Quiet Time Bundle. Its beautiful acoustic music you can listen to in your quiet time, some prayers. If you're able to give \$100 then we'd love to send you this beautiful print, "No Greater Love"--"No Greater Love!" When you receive the love of God you want to share that with others.

This is a really important time for us here at *LIFE*. We take this calling very, very seriously. So please, give the best gift you can, and we hope to be a blessing to you. So for all of us here at *LIFE Today*, I'm Sheila Walsh. See you next time.