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**Week 34: WFL last week**

**Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh**

**Ginny Owens**

**SHEILA:** I'm Sheila Walsh. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm here with my co-host Randy Robison. We're very excited about the guest we have today. I don't know if anybody ever asked you the question, would you rather lose your hearing, your ability to speak, or the ability to see the world around you? I wonder if you've ever thought about that. For me, it always seemed like it would be very hard to have the lights turned off. But our guest today not only understands that she writes about it in this amazing new book called *Singing in the Dark*. Ginny Owens, welcome to *LIFE Today*.

**GINNY:** Thank you. It's so great to be with you guys.

**RANDY:** It's great to have you. I know a lot of people will recognize your name from your music. You have just a wonderful career of writing and singing. But if you don't mind, for those who don't know your personal story, just so we can get a frame of reference, could you tell them your experience with blindness?

**GINNY:** Absolutely. Yes. So I was born with limited eyesight. I had a degenerative eye condition that came down from my dad's side of the family. But I could see a little bit. My parents always knew there was a possibility that that sight could go away. And so I was learning my colors. Apparently, my favorite was purple.

**SHEILA:** Oh, that's mine too! I love purple!

**GINNY:** Yes, purple is so fun. Yes, I still love purple things. Now I know why. So I loved purple, and I loved seeing the faces of people that I knew and loved. And then,

when I was three, I had a surgery that the doctors actually hoped would at least stabilize my vision, and instead, it took it away. But because they were prepared for that, my parents kind of said, "Go out and play. Keep doing what you've always done." So I went and rode my bike and climbed trees and scared the poor neighbors half to death. But just really didn't really know I was different at all until I went to school, and then when you go to school, you realize, oh, I'm different. But other than that, it didn't interfere in my life at all.

**SHEILA:** I found it interesting, though, reading that part of your story, Ginny, that you were very much kind of a tomboy, kind of a daredevil, but when you encountered bullying, it kind of silenced your voice for a while.

**GINNY:** Oh, it absolutely did. Yes! Well, I think middle school silences everyone's voice for a minute. But certainly, not only the awareness that I was different but the awareness that I was different and not liked because of it was really hard. I remember a very significant moment in that very dark season of being bullied all the time by the mean girls was coming home from school one day, and I didn't talk much about it to my mom, but one day I think she could just tell how difficult it had been.

She just said, "You know, Ginny, you've always known that Jesus is always your best friend, but there are going to be days when he's your only friend. And you can trust him because you have to remember, he's been through the worst darkness because he loved you that much. So you can tell him everything."

I think as a middle schooler, you're like, yeah, whatever. I don't care. I just want friends. I want people to like me. But I think that is one of those truths that continues to deeply resonate now, probably even more than ever.

**RANDY:** Well, how did music become such a part of your vision?

**GINNY:** Oh man! Music has been around since I've been around. I don't remember ever

not singing. In fact, we had an old piano that came to live in our house when I was two. It was an out-of-tune old upright but sat in the back corner of our dining room, and I loved playing it. So I figured out when I was two years old that you can play every song that you heard at church and preschool on the piano. So I started playing "Jesus Loves Me" and "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" and "Happy Birthday" and anything else. Finally, my mom was like, "I'm tired of these six songs. You're going to piano lessons." So it was there that musical fun began.

But I also learned pretty early on that I could write songs about my life and sort of work out what was going on at school and even think about who Jesus was in songwriting. And as I did that, I feel like he really spoke to me. But it was also my way of journaling, of voicing those feelings and some of the pain that I was walking through as a youngster.

**SHEILA:** I found it interesting that so often, the thing that is our greatest strength can potentially become our greatest weakness. Reading through your book, it seemed like you lost yourself at some point, like almost burning yourself out in the music.

**GINNY:** Yes, multiple points. Yes! I think when you have, and maybe it's this way for all of us, but when you have a disability, one of the things you want most in life was just to be seen as normal, and you want a space, you want to belong. And I very vividly remember as a high school student being able to sing songs for my youth group. And there were, I don't know, 500 kids in our youth group. The youth leader heard some of my songs and asked me to play them. I just remember I had always been the awkward girl that nobody knew how to relate to, but when I played those songs, they broke down barriers because the other kids heard their own lives, their own stories in the songs that I was playing.

So I enjoyed that feeling. I was like, okay, this is the way to connect with the world, share music, and then you'll belong. But I think there was a point at which that sort of became for me valued above all other things. So it wasn't even music; it was music as the means to the end of belonging. So I would say as I kind of ran after that, I let everything else fall

by the wayside and loved that most of all, which can only lead to disaster.

**RANDY:** In your new book, *Singing in the Dark*, you really talk about how scripture has played a role not just in your music but in your life. Talk us through what you're expressing in this book.

**GINNY:** Yes, well, I think one of the beautiful things the Bible commands us to do is sing. It doesn't say sing if you can carry a tune. It actually says sing! So one of the things, whether we can carry a tune or not, one of the things that we find that's so beautiful about music is that it draws us in in a way nothing else does. And of course, Sheila, I know both of you guys, being musicians feel that deeply. And so when you hear a song, you move to the rhythm, your mind echos with the melody, the words live on in your brain long after the song is done, and you feel something in your heart. So I really believe that's largely the reason we're commanded to sing because singing connects with us in a way that nothing else does.

So again, whether we sing or not, when the words of scripture, when God's words to us in scripture are that thing that's on repeat in our hearts, when those are the melodies reverberating in our minds, then it just changes everything about our lives. It changes how we overcome. It changes our perspective.

So for me, I have been very intentional in recent years about pursuing those songs of scripture and knowing them and discovering them and singing them.

**SHEILA:** You point out something that I found really fascinating. You talk about "Christianity is the only faith that insists there is a rest giver who holds us in the midst of chaos." Talk about that.

**GINNY:** I think so many religions are about earning our way to salvation or earning our way to perfection, to pleasing, either ourselves or someone else, or maybe they're about just sort of stoicism, like the idea of just being so tough nothing moves you. And

Christianity is not that at all.

First of all, it is Jesus who came and was morally perfect for us. It is Jesus that we rest in. It is Jesus that carries all of our pain and our burdens and our worries with him. But it's also Jesus that says, "Cry out in pain as I cried out in pain." So it's not that we never need to be stoics. We always can go before him with our laments, with our songs of pain, with whatever is going on. That's what I love about the Psalms. They kind of lay out before God everything that's going on. Whatever it is, they hold nothing back. So there is no space for polite prayers. And because of that, as long as we're coming before God that way, then there is complete space for rest.

**SHEILA:** I love that! You need to repeat that. There is no place for--

**GINNY:** For polite prayers.

**SHEILA:** Amen! I think the more authentic your faith is, the deeper your relationship grows with the Lord. The thing I thought after reading your book was, it is called *Singing in the Dark*, but it is not about blindness. It is about we all find ourselves in dark places. And I love the fact that you include prayers and Psalms of lament, which is something I think we've lost in the church.

**GINNY:** Oh yes! We don't like "lament." We want to be shiny, happy people all the time. So and yet, laments, to me, laments is the idea of it is sorrow with hope at the center.

**SHEILA:** Oh, that's great! Wow!

**GINNY:** So you're never just--you're not just absolutely morbidly gone forever. You're crying out to God, knowing that you have a God to cry out to. That's what we see in the Psalms. They are real honest tears, and you're not trying to get to positivity immediately, but you're also saying, I know that you hear me, and even if you don't answer me now, I

know you're going to.

**SHEILA:** Wow! That's beautiful!

**RANDY:** That is Psalms. Personal question, what is the song or Psalm that really speaks to Ginny Owens the most?

**GINNY:** Oh, there are so many! I'm a really bad decision-maker. Well, 23rd Psalm is one of those that continues to speak life in all kinds of different ways, I think, especially when you take the perspective or see the perspective that David had gone through a lot of suffering. Sometimes, we think of Psalm 23, nice for kitschy artwork, but it is not that at all. He had been through war and pestilence and enemies and betrayals, and yet, he can come and say, "The Lord is my shepherd, he is my rest giver. I find my complete peace in him."

So if David, who had been through all of these different acts of God and just deep trials, if he can say that, then can't we say that so much more in our day in time?

**SHEILA:** You referenced in, I think, your last chapter, one of my favorite passages. Whenever I feel down or dark or depressed, I read the beginning of Revelation 21, and I remember that there is something greater. Something greater is coming. Why is that so significant for you?

**GINNY:** Because it changes everything about the way we live our lives now. The bigger our view of heaven, the more we can love people here on earth, the more that we can serve people. And the more that things that happen don't seem quite so big and painful when we're thinking about that glorious day of being with Jesus forever.

I love the idea. I like to tell people, "We're all a little bit blind this side of heaven." And I did not even have to say it; Paul said it. He said, "We're all looking through a blurry glass right now." But there will be a day when we see, when we get it, when we are known,

when we know even as we're fully known. I love that idea. So just for me, just like you said, meditating on that passage helps me move so much closer to that truth; it makes that vision so much bigger in my mind.

**RANDY:** What do you think God sees when he sees you?

**GINNY:** Well, I don't know. I don't think about it too much except to know with confidence that he sees his dearly loved daughter who is free, just as he sees all of us that belong to him. So the beautiful thing is, it doesn't have to be about what I think, right? It has to be about what he tells us in scripture and what he sings to us in scripture about who we are, which is very exciting.

**SHEILA:** I want to tell you how you can get a hold of your own copy of her book, *Singing in the Dark*; "Finding hope in the songs of scripture." It is so, so well written. But you can't have Ginny Owens on the show and not ask her to sing. So Ginny is going to sing for us a song and it's called "Greater Still." Listen to this.

♪ There is a fountain, within a kingdom  
Everflowing down to satisfy our hearts  
It is the stillness beneath the chaos  
And the current carries us into His arms  
Our taste of heaven has just begun  
Great is this peace, with greater still to come ♪

♪ And there is a promise born of the Spirit  
It holds a power all the earth could not contain  
His mighty presence, alive within us  
Calls us out into the world to walk in faith  
Our taste of heaven has just begun  
Great is this hope, with greater still to come ♪

♪ Praise the Lord, O my soul  
For the peace, we have yet to know  
Praise the Lord, O my soul  
For the hope, we have yet to know ♪

♪ There is a Father, whose strength surrounds us  
With His gentle hand, He'll wipe away our tears  
His ways are perfect, His mercy endless  
We are strong enough to conquer all our fears ♪

♪ Our taste of heaven has just begun  
Great is this strength, with greater still to come  
Praise the Lord, O my soul  
For the love we have yet to know  
Praise the Lord, O my soul  
For the love we have yet to know ♪

♪ There is a king, who left the kingdom  
Sent to die and rise again our lives to save  
And there'll come a day when our eyes behold him  
We will gaze upon the fullness of His grace  
Our taste of heaven has just begun  
Great is this love, with greater still to come  
Great is this love, with greater still to come  
Great is this love, with greater still to come ♪

**RANDY:** Wow! That's beautiful. You enjoyed that, didn't you?

**SHEILA:** Greater love with greater still to come. That's the hope for all of us.

**GINNY:** Amen! Amen!

**RANDY:** Ginny, when people listen to songs like that, what do you hope that they just really get down deep inside their soul?

**GINNY:** Oh, I just hope that they will desire for Jesus to be the center of their lives; that that matters above all other things. Walking with Jesus can help us overcome anything that we face. Whether it is a physical disability, whether it is anxiety, depression, he is the answer for all of it. And he is our hope. So it's not even just getting through, but Jesus is the difference in us sort of making our way through life and actually having hope, having victory over everything. So I deeply want people to move toward him and to know he is always moving toward us. He is always running after us. He is always pursuing us.

**RANDY:** I see that. I see that when I look at you. I see someone who has said, you know what? I'm going to pursue the Lord. I'm going to live my life. I'm going to shine with what God has given me, regardless of the circumstances. So in that darkness, you are shining. So I just want to say thank you, Ginny. Thank you. But Sheila, I also see another way for people to shine in the darkness.

**SHEILA:** Absolutely! We're going to tell you how you can get a hold of this book because, trust me, you want to read this book. But first of all, I'd love for you to come on a journey with us. We want to show you some of the people right now who are living in a darkness that is a little different, and they need our help, and we can be that light. So watch this.

**On the mission field:**

**RALPH:** We're here in Zambia, and our team was walking along the river bank here. And then we noticed these children that were actually drinking from this very river. It's so full of bacteria and contaminants, which brings disease and death. This is their only source of water.

**Open Captions:**

>> The water hurts me right here; then it hurts my head. It makes me vomit.

>> When I drink the bad water, I feel it in my stomach. When my sister died, I got very sad because I'm scared that my little brother will die too.

>> The only water we have is from the little pond. I'm afraid I might die like my brother and sister.

**RALPH:** You see their source of water. These children don't have time to waste. Their lives are in danger every day that they just try to get water. We can give them a better source. We can drill a well that will give them beautiful, life-giving water. Please help us today.

**End of video**

**In the studio:**

**SHEILA:** Thanks, Ralph. I was with Ralph on that trip to Africa. I can't tell you what it's like as a mom to watch children drink that kind of water, knowing that it's potentially going to take their life, but also knowing they have no choice. It is that water or no water.

And then I remember the next day we got in our Jeep, and we went for miles to this other village where the partners of *LIFE Outreach International* have paid to have a well drilled in that village and to watch that clean, sparkling water coming out, and the children laughing and dancing. And then you don't hear a child say, "I'm so afraid that my little brother is going to die. I'm so afraid that my little sister is going to die." I can't imagine that.

I remember on the first trip, I remember going back to this little hotel we were staying and literally laying on this sticky carpet in my room and thinking, I can't do this. I felt the Lord say to me, Sheila, get up. Dry your face and go home and tell their story. So this is our last week of water. We have made a commitment to drill 350 new wells in 20 nations. We've told these people, we've told our partners who are on the ground right now, right today, they are waiting for our response to tell them, are we able to go ahead and fulfill this commitment? And Randy, if we all do our part, we can do this.

**RANDY:** That's exactly. I will say this. When you go in a lot of these areas, I know you've seen this, Sheila, when we watch videos like what we just saw, you think, why don't they gather the rain? Well, they do when they can, but there are long stretches where there is no rain. Or you think, why don't they boil the water? You'll see them trying to do that. They do what they can, but a lot of them don't have anything to boil water in. Or why don't they drink other water? Well, they do if they can. But we're talking about situations where like Sheila said, there is no other choice. But we have the choice. A gift of \$48 will provide clean drinking water for ten people for a lifetime. For \$144, you can provide that same water for 30 people for a lifetime; \$4800 will drill a well. They do what they can, but they are limited.

I'm asking you to do what you can. Together we can make it, so they don't have to go through so many difficult circumstances just trying to get a clean drink of water. We can give them that clean drink of water in Jesus' name.

**SHEILA:** Can I make a suggestion, Randy? Why don't we all agree to skip one thing? Things have begun to open up again, so people are starting maybe, to go to a movie or maybe to go out for dinner. So why don't we just skip one thing? Like skip one meal out or skip one movie trip or skip one thing. And that one thing, if it was even \$48, would give ten children clean water, not for ten years, for the rest of their *LIFE*! So please, go to your phone, call in, just do what you can, and let's shine some light into the darkness.

**RANDY:** I like it.

**Begin video clip:**

**ANNOUNCER:** Waterborne illness is a killer that strikes the most vulnerable. For many impoverished families, the death of a child is the tragic result of having no choice but to drink contaminated water. But with your help, they won't have to make this choice ever again. Mission: Water for LIFE provides clean, fresh drinking 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 for 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 James Robison's book *Living Amazed* full of inspirational true stories. You'll learn how divine encounters can change your life. In addition you'll also receive Randy Robison's brand-new devotional, *Upgrade: "Seven moves in seven weeks to a better life."*

With your gift of \$100 or more please request the N.I.V. Thinline Bible with easy-to-read large print. 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 inspiring bronze sculpture, "Divine Servant."

This is the last week. Please call, write, or make your gift online.

**End of video****On the mission field:**

**James:** Betty, we've seen the effect of the cholera because we've gotten the reports in this area here, from just these water sources. And then we went and saw a well. Their teacher told us that

they're not sick anymore and the kids can come to school. It's a simple solution but it is only simple if people will help us.

**Betty:** That's right, James. And the water is such a need -- a life and death situation, James. I saw a mother actually drinking the water a while ago and it broke my heart.

But you know, we have to give them a choice. They don't have a choice right now in so many places all over the world. Because they don't have that choice, their bodies are being contaminated with this bad water and their families are dying. We can give them the choice of fresh clean water. I hope you will help us.

**End of video**

**In the studio:**

**RANDY:** I pray you are doing what you can right now. Go to the phone, go online, make the best gift you can. This is the last week that this will be on the air. And Sheila, I would love for them to request Ginny's book, *Singing in the Dark*.

**SHEILA:** For any gift at all, we will send you *Singing in the Dark*. It is a fantastic book. Ginny, thank you so much for being so honest and so vulnerable in this book. It's amazing!

**GINNY:** Oh, thank you. Thank you so much for having me today.

**SHEILA:** Loved it!

**RANDY:** And thank you guys for joining us! Join us again next time here on *LIFE Today*.