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Week 35: Christmas Shoes and Smiles

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Christine Caine #2

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison; Sheila is with me as always.

Sheila, today's guest, my notes say that she is an Australian-born, Greek-blooded lover of Jesus. That was good! It's great to have Christine Caine back!

Welcome, Christine!

CHRISTINE: Hey, Randy. I'm so glad to be back!

RANDY: We did have another program, and you talked about your book, *How Did I Get Here?* If you missed that, I would encourage you to go online at LifeToday.org and check that out. It was so, so good. But we covered a lot of ground, but I think we've got a lot more to cover. So we're excited to hear from you.

CHRISTINE: I'm pumped. I really am.

SHEILA: Honestly, one of the things that -- I mean I've read all your books, and you're a great writer, but this one cracked me up. Your stories, I found myself laughing out loud at the stories of your -- tell us about your Greek culture, your Greek background, the concrete, the spitting.

CHRISTINE: Yes! Okay, you'd love it because it is a European thing. So when you grow up in Australia or another country and your parents have migrated, they're often more Greek than the Greeks in Greece because you've got to preserve the culture. And to be Greek is orthodox; it is

more cultural than religious. So we were that family.

My family would like concrete everything. I still don't know the logic, but my friends would be watering their grass, but my family is watering the concrete. So it was like this big, awesome thing that we get to concrete another section of the grass. And you have to come and put your handprint in because this is a moment. And for some reason, there's a thing called, and I talk about it in the book, the Greek broom, which is -- I know it is not good for conservationists. So please don't send letters! But I'm just saying it is what happens. And so we did that.

Or Greeks would believe that you would get married, you'd be in the church or for when you were even baptized, and they'd put a little evil eye on you, a little blue eye. And then it would be like to sort of keep -- it's very superstitious. Then they would spit! The spitting is like I'm spitting off any bad luck. I'm like, I'm a born-again Christian, I don't believe in this spitting. But my aunts and my mother and all my Greek relatives in Greek villages love to spit. Yes, it is very random; it's traumatized my children.

Yes, the stories are in the book because they're so cute. They're just like so -- to be Greek is just part of the culture.

SHEILA: I started just loving your family, though. It's just like I want to know these people. My question is, how in the midst of all that did you find such a radical relationship with Jesus?

CHRISTINE: Yeah, radical is the word because I was so broken, Sheila. I was so broken. I think I grew up in a staunch Greek orthodox world. When I first became a Jesus follower, and someone gave me a Bible, my parents took it from me because a girl could not read the Bible; it had to be the priest. They brought the Archbishop of Athens and the Archbishop of Sydney to put me through de-brainwashing classes for six weeks because they thought I was in a cult because I started attending a protestant church. Like it was a deal.

So for me, it was never a cool thing to become a Christian. It cost me everything. My family didn't take meals with me for an extended period of time. None of my cousins were allowed to

talk to me. You know, when you're from an immigrant community, that is your whole community. So it was like I was cut off.

My family is awesome. They thought they were doing the best for me. They thought she's part of a cult. It's just 35 years later I'm still here following Jesus. But it was a fad they thought I was going through, and I'm still going through it. So it was radical because it was so costly from the beginning. It wasn't like you could just sort of jump from this church to that church. It cost me everything. I had to leave my community. I had to leave my family. And from the beginning, when I was reading the scripture, and I read that verse, "No one who leaves mother, father, brother, sister," that verse was right there from the beginning for me. I had no concept that I would be doing what I'm doing today.

Australia is a very secular nation. There were not many Jesus followers at all. So there was no Christian subculture. There was no like, you can be a part of anything. I found Jesus, and I encountered him. I remember one vivid night with the priest, my dad, my mom, and they were wanting me to renounce my faith, in effect to sort of say, I'm not going to go down this road. I didn't know anything about theology. I just remember tears streaming down my face, and I just went, "But I met Jesus! I met Jesus." That's all I knew.

I kind of feel like that even to this day. I feel like John and Peter in the book of Acts, where the religious people looked at them and said they knew they were unlearned, uneducated men but knew they'd been with Jesus. That's about all I've still got going for me. I've been with Jesus. That's it!

RANDY: I know what you mean! So we talked about this idea of drifting and how it's actually more of a passive thing in a lot of cases than an active thing. But it's good to check our markers to see that we're still where we should be and where God wants us to be and where the blessing is, in a lot of ways.

One of your chapters got my attention because of just the title of it, but then the content was interesting. I'd love you to talk about it. You know you're drifting when you start wandering and

stop wondering. I thought that's interesting. What does that mean?

CHRISTINE: I think when I was writing that I'd seen so many people kind of deconstructing faith, walking away from the Lord. When you lose that wide-eyed wonder by, W-O-N-D-, of this awe, and I think this is something I haven't lost. I'm in my 50s, and I still have a glint in my eyes. I still have a spring -- there's this thing about this awesome God that still amazes me to this day.

When you lose that wonder, which really comes back to your first love, that sort of wonder and you start wandering, like as in W-A-N-D-. Like we talk so much, there is so much language out there about wandering in the wilderness and come out in the wilderness. I'm like, the wilderness is okay to walk through, and we often cycle in and out of wildernesses. But it's not somewhere where you're going to pitch your tent. You obviously have not spent a lot of time in Qatar or the Middle East if you think that the wilderness is somewhere you want to live. By that, I mean the heat and the sand. It could be in California, where I am -- the heat of Arizona or Vegas. Anyone that's got any sort of desert life knows that you do not want to live in the wilderness forever. You want to be near a water supply; you want to have shade.

And so there's this talk, and perhaps, I'm around the younger generation a lot; I talk of romanticizing the wilderness. I'm like, you know. Let's not over-romanticize it. It ain't that good. I cycle in and out, of course; in our Christian life, we all go through dips and valleys. But I find that you wander away, W-A-, with my accent I think they will be. You start wandering when you lose the wonder of God. You really do because then you start thinking, well, I'm just going to go out down this route.

But when you immerse yourself, and really, the whole book is based on Hebrews chapter two; in Hebrews chapter two, he says, "Therefore let us pay extra attention. We too drift from so great a salvation." But when he says, "therefore," then he spends the whole of Hebrews of chapter one talking about the grandeur of Christ, the supremacy of Christ.

It is time for all of us in the body, no matter how long we've been walking with Jesus, to rediscover -- the writer to the Hebrews is saying, better than the law, better than Moses, better

than all the prophets, better than the angels is the supremacy of Jesus. When you lose that wonder, you're going to start to wander. That's the deal.

SHEILA: You mentioned Qatar. One of the stories you tell in the book that captivated me was about the church that met there. Talk about that, Chris. It was amazing.

CHRISTINE: Life-changing! So it's only foreign immigrant workers that are even allowed to go to a Christian church; up until 15 years ago, you couldn't. But 15 years ago, I think obviously, because they were going to bid for the 2020 World Cup Soccer, they had to be a little more open; religious tolerance. So what they built was what is called a religious compound. So you've got to drive out -- so we're in the desert already. So you've got to drive outside of the city. And then the people that are allowed to go, you park your vehicle, which is, of course, no Qatar citizens, because it is a Muslim nation.

Then you have to go through three checkpoints. Because I was a foreigner, and I was speaking in one of the churches, you have to show your passport, so it shows that you are a foreigner and a Christian. Three different checkpoints that we had to show that. And then there were purpose-built churches within this religious compound, quite small that they had built specifically. So there was a Catholic one, obviously. Then there were different Indian churches; whether there was a Presbyterian, there was an Assemblies of God. Because mostly, it was Bangladesh Indians, workers from that region of the world.

I will never forget watching the people in the boiling hot, we're here in Dallas, and I think this is hot. But you go to another level. And families that were allowed would be walking in and the joy on their faces. They're meeting outside, and you could only go at a designated time, of course. It is only open on Friday mornings when it's religious prayers, and the mosques are meeting on Friday.

So you could only have a certain amount of service, and it is all policed by the religious police. And yet, a thousand reasons why not to go. You're in the desert; you're parking. You've got to walk in the heat. You've got to go through checkpoints. You've got religious police checking

everything. There's a certain way the service has to go, so none of the glamorous services that we have here.

I'm in this tiny room bringing the Word with these people with tears streaming down their faces as they're worshipping with instruments that are not necessarily the best. It was so holy, so sacred. People are weeping. People are so hungry for the Word.

I said, "Why would you come?" It's like, "Why would you come to even do this?"

And I'll never forget tears streaming down their face of just the power they said of being together.

And I thought the juxtaposition that I wrote about is I got on the plane at Dohar and flew straight to Houston, Texas, because I was speaking. I got off. By the time I had left the airport in Houston and driven four blocks, I'd already gone past 500 churches. Like it was so the opposite. I'm like, we're sitting around picking and choosing will I go? Where will I go? Which is my preference? Forget the fact that I don't even get a choice; this is what it's going to be. But when you lose that power.

And I wrote in there one of the signs that we're drifting is when we start isolating and stop gathering. I just saw the power of the writer to the Hebrews when he said, "Do not forsake together the gathering, as is the habit of some." They could have been killed in those days for gathering together. But obviously, it was such a high value that even with the risk of death, something happens when we're together that doesn't happen when we're not together. It's that important. I saw that in Qatar.

RANDY: You said another word I want to ask you about because you said "hunger." I know when I'm hungry, I mean I start thinking about food. If I'm really, really hungry, it's like all other priorities go out the window; I just need some food. I start to, you can get *famished* is the word we use, right? How do you think hunger spiritually plays into preventing us from drifting?

CHRISTINE: I think that's a thing. I wrote a chapter on, "You're drifting when you stop hungering, and you start gorging." And we're like gorging on the currents of this world, and we're just going with the flow of the world. And you stop hungering after righteousness. And hungering, it's like Christine, you wrote a chapter on holiness and sanctification? Yes, I did because I'm like y'all, these are not like, it's not legalism. Obedience is not legalism. It's just obedience. I'm like, when did that become -- when did obeying the scripture become legalistic?

But when you stop hungering and thirsting after righteousness, Jesus said, in Matthew, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." When you start gorging on the things, instead of them being added, you want to start getting the things, and you stop hungering and thirsting after the things that really matter, are hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of God, the holiness of God, and being holy as he is holy.

The fact that I'm saying these, we're sitting here in 2021, and it's almost like for some people, these are like archaic words. Like why are you even -- it is bizarre. This is Christianity 101 is what we're saying. But it's like there is a whole generation that goes what? What do you mean? And the goal of our Christianity is I'm being sanctified through and through to become transformed and conformed to the image of Jesus. I don't know what we've missed, but we've got our markers wrong if the goal of Christianity is that I become the best version of me; that I just become a better version of me. I'm like, honey, the worst advice to this generation is let you do you. I'm like, don't do you! Please don't do you!

SHEILA: We've seen you.

CHRISTINE: Like no! The whole goal is: It's no longer I that lives but Christ that lives in me. I know I'm saying these things, and I feel like I'm an alien saying it. And yet, 30 years ago, this was Christianity 101 to me. This was like the normal Christian life. Now it's like I'm going, y'all, it's not about becoming a better version of me. It's not about I'm awesome. It's about hungering and thirsting after him. Any good that I have is his good anyway. Any righteousness I have is his righteousness anyway.

So to me, I keep saying, man, the goal here is not to go further right or left. It is to dig deeper. Put that anchor in deeper. We have got to go down and go deeper into Christ because that's the only thing that's going to take us forward. That's hard tension to navigate, to be righteous in a very unrighteous world. Or in a self-righteous world, to have Christ's righteousness, that's not easy.

SHEILA: That's why I think this book is so timely. I don't know what period of time you were actually writing this, but 2020 was a time where it was very bizarre. And a lot of believers got used to staying home. I'm going to love Jesus in my jammies. I don't need community. I don't need anything else. But we need the very basic things that you talk about; whether it's prayer, whether it's worship, where it's gathering together, those are the things that will hold us strong. Those are the anchors that we need!

CHRISTINE: Well, that's our thing. And I think, Sheila, all of us, you get here at our stage of life, and you're like, okay, and that's what I thought. I thought, what is it? I've got a 19-year-old daughter, a 15-year-old daughter, you've got grandkids, like so we're going okay. You've got a son that's you know, so we're going, I'm thinking, what is it that I'm going to give to the next generation? What are the markers?

And I've had the privilege, as we all have, of seeing God do amazing things in our generation. We've had the privilege of standing on platforms where the Lord has done the most amazing things that have happened in modern Christendom. Like period!

All around the world, I've been part of amazing movements of God where I have seen God do amazing things. I lead a large anti-trafficking organization. I've seen God do awesome stuff. I thought, when it all comes down to it, what are the markers that I've got to tell a generation?

Well, guys, these are the markers. I'm sorry they're not sexier, but this is from someone that has seen the heights of the high and then seen God do amazing things that are still in the prime of my serving life by the grace of God. Our marriage is strong, our kids are strong, the ministry by God's grace is strong. We're reaching more people than we've ever reached, helping more people

than we've ever helped, seeing more people coming into the kingdom than ever.

So I'm not at the other end of this going, oh but I'm in the midst of still going strong, going I need y'all to know I started 2020 speaking at the Passion Conference of 65,000 kids. It was spectacular. It was the year of 2020-vision, remember? This is the year. That was that year. I went from there to Brazil, spoke to, in one arena, 85,000 young people.

Then I got in a car and then in that car went across the city and spoke to another 55,000. I'd never done that in one day, like from, there is a revival. I flew to Australia, spoke at a really big conference there. I'm saying all of this for a reason. Saw these spectacular things. I'm like, we're on the edge of revival. I could feel it.

And then I fly home from Australia in March; we shut down. It was sort of like the Lord, I feel, was a little bit like, you know when my kids were having an issue when they were young, I would send them to their room and say, "You're in timeout. I want you to think about it." I feel like the Lord said, "I need you to go to your rooms and think about some things." We all came out of our room, and he's like, "No, you haven't thought about it enough. Go back."

[Laughter]

Because I still feel we're on that edge of revival. But I'm saying I've seen a lot of spectacular -- really spectacular things. And it still comes down to the Word, community, fasting, the Bible.

I'm talking about things that I'm going is Christianity 101. There is a generation that thinks a well-curated Instagram post is going to do more than what you being in the prayer closet is going to do. I'm like, no. Actually, the power isn't coming from a marketing campaign on Instagram. It's coming from the prayer closet with the Lord Jesus Christ and understanding that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives on the inside of us.

And when we came out of this, even during the pandemic, I said to my staff around the world, I said, "To a degree, I'm grateful you're having this experience." Of course, nothing to do with

COVID. "But the experience of where everything has shut down because you do not even realize how much of my faith you're riding the slipstream of that."

I said, "The challenge is the saddest scripture in the Bible, Judges chapter two, verse ten where it says, "When Joshua and his generation died another generation arose that did not know God or the work he'd done for Israel." I said, "My challenge with all of you is you've grown up in a ministry that God has blessed, and he's -- and you could just ride on my coattails of faith and have never tasted God yourself. So now, this is your opportunity to pray, to fast," because we've got no other choice here! "You can't make anything happen. We're in a lockdown. So is God still going to move? Oh, I believe he can. But now, let's show you what real faith is all about."

SHEILA: Wow! That's phenomenal. I love that.

RANDY: I love it, and I love the markers. I love the fundamentals because that is really what will change us and change the world. I want to show you one of the fundamentals of the Christian walk. Sheila, I know you know this. That is this outreach that we want you to be a part of. After you watch this, we want to tell you how to get Christine's book because we'd like to get this in your hand as well. But we want to invite you to exercise this fundamental aspect of Christianity as we reach around the world to bless children. Watch this.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Every year, friends of *LIFE Outreach International* have been bringing joy to thousands of children around the world during the Christmas season.

Africa

>> This is like Christmas!

>> Yes!

>> High five! Show me your smile. Let me see. Look at that happy face.

[Children laughing]

Cambodia

Ralph: God bless everybody who provides these shoes because you're putting a big smile on mama's face today.

South Asia

Tammy: This is going to change your life! I'm so happy for you. You ready?

Announcer: The joy goes way beyond just receiving a new pair of shiny shoes. It's knowing their feet are protected from injuries or infestation, such as hookworms that enter their bare feet and can cause severe and sometimes fatal consequences.

Central America

JAMES: And we're asking you to help give as many pairs as you can. Make these kids happy. This is going to be something so special to them.

Announcer: Won't you join us in providing joy to children around the world? Christmas Shoes and Smiles.

End of video

In the studio:

SHEILA: You may be thinking, why are you talking about Christmas at this time of year? But we have to because we want to be able to get these amazing little shoes into the hands of these children before Christmastime.

I'll never forget the first time when I was in Thailand, and I had the privilege of actually going to a village with a whole van full of our shoes and seeing the children line up and realize they have never worn shoes in their life. Do you know that we get these made for \$3.60? That's what it costs. So literally, for \$36, you can provide a pair of shoes for ten children.

So here's my thought. Every Christmas we all spend too much money, we get things that we don't need, that we don't want, that we take back to the store. Why don't we decide this Christmas that part of our Christmas budget, whatever that is, is going to go to this? It's going to go to bless children around the world and their moms and their dads and their grandparents. Because it is not just that they don't have shoes, it is that they walk on these terrible surfaces and their feet are in rivers where there is disease, and they get hookworm, and it causes severe malnutrition. It's huge!

Let's make this Christmas not about what we can get; let's make this Christmas about what we can give and make a difference in the lives of children. And then I think we have the right to tell them that Jesus sent us. We can all do it, Randy.

RANDY: We can! And another aspect of this, the Christmas Shoes and Smiles outreach are those surgeries that we do. Let's not forget that. These children who have the cleft lip and the cleft palate, in the third world countries, that's very, very difficult, and it's damaging to their health. It's not just cosmetically unpleasant, but it is a health risk.

So as we put the shoes on these children's feet, which I love, we can also reach out and correct a very serious situation with these cleft palates and cleft lips. So whatever you're able to do, we just hope that you'll join us. Yes, it is early. But you know what? Christmas will be here before you know it, and we want to be ready. We want to give 150,000 children a pair of shoes because we know the blessing that it will be in their lives.

We also want to correct a very serious situation. We want to change their lives so they can smile, they can eat, they can breathe. This is a part of *LIFE Outreach International*, and that we just

like to give life to people in Jesus' name. We want to give shoes to 150,000 children. It is as simple as \$36 for ten pairs of shoes, \$72 for 20 pairs of shoes, \$180, that's 50 children that will receive a pair of shoes, and those corrective surgeries run on average about \$500. If you can make that gift, we invite you to do it now.

Here's what I ask. Go online or go to the phone, make the best gift you can and let's make this Christmas special. Do it now!

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Poverty is a killer, and because of it, children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we often take for granted -- like a simple pair of shoes. Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk with life-threatening infections and diseases that could lead to crippling consequences and even death.

By responding today, you will help secure and make ready 150,000 Christmas shoes to be shipped and delivered to children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will provide 20 pairs, and a gift of \$180 will help provide 50 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request this beautifully crafted, green crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may also request this keepsake boxed set of all four shoe ornaments celebrating the various outreaches of LIFE.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft lip or palate surgeries. And you may request the beautiful "Divine Servant" bronze scripture.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video

In the studio:

RANDY: I hope you are going to the phone or going online right now. It's just going to be a special Christmas, and we would love for you to be a part of it. We need you to be a part of it. Sheila, we know we can do this, and we'll bless people like Christine has blessed us today.

SHEILA: And yeah, for any gift at all, ask for your copy of *How Did I Get Here?* Finding your way back to God when everything is pulling you away. This is a timely book. Chris, I loved having you here.

CHRISTINE: I loved being with y'all. Thanks for having me.

RANDY: We love having you guys with us. Join us again next time right here on *LIFE Today*. We'll see you.