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Week 40: Christmas Shoes and Smiles, last week

James and Betty Robison

Ginger Curtis

JAMES: Well, we're so glad to welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I have a guest that is absolutely amazing. Listen to this closely. This is *Beauty By Design*. This beautiful lady, Ginger Curtis, is a designer, but her life was a wreck.

Do you know how God can take broken pieces; he can take scrambled puzzles and create a beautiful picture? He can take broken pieces and make a masterpiece out of the pieces. He can take any clay in his hand that is yielded and shape it into a beautiful vessel of honor. Ginger really did have a terrible life. Most of you know I didn't have much of a life; I was a product of rape, I never lived in a house that faced the street, didn't have a father -- a lot of pain. I marvel at the miraculous power of God in a little kid's life growing up that I'd be strong enough to go through it. But it was because people were praying for me.

I don't know if people were praying for Ginger, I don't know what was going on there, but she will tell you her story. Betty, I think you've already been captivated by pictures in here, which we will show you some of them. Ginger, we're just really, really glad to have you. I want you to take us on a real quick journey because you really are gifted. I don't think you ever dreamed you were going to end up in this.

GINGER: Never!

JAMES: Actually, you'll be able to tell the people that you began to put things in place. It was like you were surrounding yourself in the midst of misery where you had to do something. Tell us the pain that was in your life as a child and growing up. Tell us what

you faced.

GINGER: Well, you're correct, it starts in my childhood very, very early on. I'm the second to the oldest of seven kids. My mom and dad had four girls and three boys, in that order. They were absolutely overwhelmed and struggling at every point. And hurt people hurt people. They were trying to do the best they could, but through that, there was a lot of trauma, abuse, neglect.

My siblings and I bonded together to really get through some of those super tough times. Shortly after my elementary school years, actually, during elementary school years, I was diagnosed with dyslexia. Just the sort of --

JAMES: Did you even know what that meant?

GINGER: As a little third-grade girl who went through third grade three times because I could not learn how to read, it meant to me that I was stupid. It meant that I believed a lie at a precious young age that I was not qualified and stupid.

And it wasn't until fast-forward years later, I married my wonderful husband, start my design firm, and it's the first year in business, and God says, "Ginger, if you're going to walk in the calling I have for you, you have got to quit believing this lie."

It was one of my first projects, and a contractor pulled up on the scene. And out of the blue -- out of the blue, he starts telling me his testimony that he has dyslexia. I didn't inquire, I didn't ask, and he shares this story about how it is the greatest gift that God has ever given him. I literally couldn't ask a question; I was speechless.

The next day, because I'm stubborn, God sends a second contractor. And out of the blue, without any request, he starts sharing his testimony and his story of how he's discovered that his dyslexia diagnosis was the absolute gift of creativity from God. It forced him to solve problems and look at things from a new perspective. And he saw it as a

super-strength. In an instant, the lie fell off.

JAMES: Before this happened, the hellish experiences you went through, many people would say, had to have hit harder than dyslexia, but you've made it very clear the impact that had. Tell us some of those experiences you went through that really helped lead to the fact that you had to create some kind of beauty in the midst of the pain. What were some of them?

GINGER: Gosh! Wow! A lot. There's been a lot of trauma. My little brother and older sister both passed away a year apart from each other. My brother was killed tragically in a car accident at 19. And at 26, my sister took her own life. She struggled with depression as a small child. I saw the struggle, and she would talk to me about it, and I couldn't even... That was an unimaginable pain to go through. So I had to ask myself in that season of my life, where do I stand? And that starts, like some of these massive traumas really start posing this question of where do I stand? Not just when life is good but like when everything goes up in smoke? Am I believing that God's word is actually true? Is God actually faithful, and is he good and his promises true? And the answer was a resounding yes.

So I worked my way through tremendous sorrow. I adopted my sister's little boy; he was six years old. He is now my oldest son. He is almost 22. An incredible, incredible young man! When I adopted him, I was actually a single mom of two little girls, just struggling to make it. Then I get this precious little boy. And it's the four of us, and we are working our way through. It was about five years of walking through singleness and raising these children, and God just lifting my arms where I could not lift them on my own. The precious treasures of truth that he fortified in that season will always be with me.

I meet my incredible husband Eric, and we start this chapter of life that, like words can't describe the beauty and the blessing and redeeming for ashes. We get married. He is adopted into an instant family. We get pregnant with our first daughter together, Avery, and she's diagnosed at five months old with leukemia. I remember thinking, what is

leukemia? I was so overwhelmed. And then when the doctor over the phone said, "Ginger, I set an appointment for an oncologist," my heart just broke in a million pieces. I just thought, how is a five-month-old baby born with cancer? And we faced this monumental battle together. Eric and I sat on the back porch together, and we prayed, and we said, "God, can you tell us what is going to happen? Can we prepare ourselves?" And he just said, "Will you trust me?" And it went back to God is good, and he is faithful no matter what. No matter what! And we knew it. And it just took the trump card right out of the devil's hand. He couldn't -- when she had hard days and started going downhill, and her temperature was 110, he couldn't wave that card of fear in front of us and say, "Ah!" And so, despite our circumstances, that truth just had to be what we stood on. Avery, just an absolute miracle. She survives insane treatment, has a transplant, St. Jude, and shortly after that, I am diagnosed with very aggressive breast cancer.

JAMES: Are you piecing all this together? By the way, the story is in the book, the journey of just horrible, unbearable experiences and events in their life. Okay, breast cancer.

GINGER: Yep, we were in shock. We had fought so hard through Avery's diagnosis to get a little sense of normal. Standing in my kitchen doing the dishes just felt like the greatest joy because I wasn't at the hospital. And we were just humbled, grateful -- we could not believe God brought us through this. Our family was even bonded together. What the enemy meant to rip us to shreds, God took it, and he just bonded us. Eric and I were newlyweds at that point. It could have been devastating. We get this diagnosis, and I go through a season of extreme vulnerability and pain. When Avery was sick, I could take care of her. I could go to the hospital. When I was sick, chemo wiped me out so bad I was down for 18 months. I couldn't take care of myself. We had to hire somebody, couldn't even afford it, to take care of my children and make me meals while Eric was away at work. It was so extreme.

It was during this season that God showed me a picture of a skipping stone. And that skipping stone didn't start off as a skipping stone. It was rough; it was a jagged pebble. It

had sharp edges, and it was sitting on the shoreline. And the waves of life, the tumultuous crashes picked that stone up and threw it to and fro. And over time, and over the seasons of this life, this beating, this thrashing, this surviving, it smoothed those edges, and it smoothed the jaggedness of the stone till one day the stone becomes an incredible, beautiful, skipping stone. And it doesn't avoid -- it doesn't avoid the pains of life, but now, the grace and the humility to walk through the storms are there. And that is beauty.

JAMES: So you got through the battle. How are you now, that battle? How are you?

GINGER: Amazing, healthy.

BETTY: You've talked about how God's carried you through all these different tragedies and circumstances; when did you recognize God in your life? When was that moment? Was it when you were younger?

GINGER: It was. So if you remember Vacation Bible School and Good News Club, and so we had a little Good News Club right next door to where we live. And my mom and dad really, even with all their flaws and faults, they knew God, and they exposed Him to their kids at a very young age. But I accepted Him into my life when I was about six years old at a next-door neighbor's house, and she had the little felt Joseph with his coat of many colors on the little sticker board. And at the youngest of ages, I knew that God was with me. Undeniably he was with me.

JAMES: Okay, so what about the cancer situation? You're past that. Now here's what I want you to hear because she's just let enough-- if it was just one thing that would devastate most lives, and some of you are saying, James -- I know you're touched. Some of you identify very directly. Some of you are saying, "Boy, I've been fighting through the whole thing. You ought to hear my story!"

Listen to me. Father, you want to take every person that has all these broken pieces and let them know, I'm going to create something beautiful in the midst of this mess and in

the life of everyone here that feels burdened, in Jesus' name.

Now I want you to stay right here with us. I want you to know He is bigger than all the challenges you face. He's going to take all the broken pieces and parts and create a masterpiece. Okay. I want you to tell us how you got into *Beauty By Design*, and then, it actually became a business where you could help people. I'm really hoping, if you care about rearranging things and just making things beautiful in the midst of whatever is going on, well, you'll want this. We're asking you to give children smiles and shoes for Christmas. Now -- right now, this far ahead so we can get it to them and get surgeries on their little faces and give them a smile. But I want you to get this. We'll offer it with the other things we send you to say we love you and thank you.

Tell us what happened and how you got into this. We're going to have to move this pretty quickly because I want them to hear how this was birthed and what it does for others.

GINGER: When I was going through this extreme season of illness, I had this light bulb moment that went off. I realized how incredibly impactful my environment was to my wellness journey and the light that filtered through the windows and things being placed and being intentional. And I had permission to lean into that. Instead of just completely doing nothing, which is what I felt like, I took my clipboard and my phone and made a list, and I started hiring contractors to renovate my house during this season where you would think, forget it! And it was quite powerful. And what was birthed out of that was the very beginning of me launching my design firm about six years ago.

And this is the area of my story where fear just -- I faced some battles, and God was preparing me. But I faced this fear, and I said, "God, I'm not qualified."

He said, "Ginger, what if I have qualified you?"

And I just trembled thinking, I felt him calling me to business, a firm, talented women designers like this. There was this massive vision for it. One day, in the very beginning, I

found this print, and it said, "Oh, but what if I stumble?" And it said, "Oh, but my darling, what if you fly?" And it was the conversation I was having with God. And he said, "No, my darling, what if you fly? If I have given you permission and if I've qualified you, it's time to go."

JAMES: That's really, really great. All right. It started by happening right around you. God was directing the design around you. He was showing you the beautiful design for your life in the midst of all these broken pieces potentially. So you birthed the company.

What would this book do for those who get it and those who buy it or get it online or with us? What do you think it will do? Will it show them how God carries them through their broken parts, but also show them how they might have a lot of fun surrounding themselves with beauty?

GINGER: Yes! The answer is both. And it also lies in the title of the book, *Beauty By Design*. There is a chapter called "You are Worthy of Beauty." That is powerful! Can we just stop and think about that for a minute? If we're created in God's image, and He is the author and perfecter of beauty and creativity, what does that mean for us? It means a lot. That's why I titled the chapter "You are Worthy of Beauty." We are created in His image. And in the beginning, I just struggled thinking, God, like are you sure -- interior design? Like I could be your warrior out there. It doesn't quite seem spiritual enough. He said, "Ginger, look at the garden. I could have put Adam and Eve in the desert, but I put them in an oasis, in a place of beauty." We're longing, constantly gravitating towards the beauty that's already inside of us.

BETTY: You don't have to have a lot of money to have this *Beauty By Design* because it starts with you and your relationship with God. And then it starts with your surroundings and what God would like for you, not necessarily for everybody else. What brings you joy, what brings you peace, what brings you calmness, and that can be in your own home, can't it?

GINGER: Absolutely! It's so personal. But isn't it just like our Father? Just such a deep and uniquely personal relationship with each of us. I think what you just said is absolutely key. Stopping yourself, just silencing the noise of trends or popular or who's doing what or who's doing this and say, "God, what have you put in my heart for my life? And can I pursue that?" Yes! Yes, you can pursue that!

JAMES: Wow! I want to say another prayer for you. Father, I just see so many broken hearts and broken relationships, and man, the pressure of all that's going on around us. Lord, I want you to flood everyone watching right now with the reality of how much you love them and how you can take all the pain and make something beautiful. Lord, I want you to comfort them. I want you to give them the ability to comfort others. Show them that if they'll receive your love that you so freely offer in Christ who is raised, you not only died for them but raised to live in them that they can begin to see people's lives changed. So give them comfort, peace, and let them have the joy of putting your arms around the overlooked. Lord, help them get it and discover that beauty. In Jesus' name.

Ginger, I thank God for what He is doing in your life. I want you to know the book is in the bookstores. You can go online and get it. But we always ask you if you watch *LIFE Today*; the reason we're here all over the world is to expose you to His life every day. And pray that you will release that life and that love that He freely offers and pours out on you, you allow Him to release it through you with a yielded vessel.

So right now, we're asking you to help us give children for Christmas shoes, little shoes that we can get ten pairs for \$36. And it's just as nice as any of those expensive shoes you buy. We're asking God to let us give away 150,000 shoes, isn't that right?

But we've had many of our missionaries say, "Is there any way you could get another \$50,000? We can tell you specifically where we need them."

I'm saying, God, this is the last week! We've got a few days for a miracle! My goodness! That's what, \$180,000! Dear God, you know what? It could be one person -- there could

be 180 people say, I've got a thousand. I want you to look at one of our staff, that's the photographer all over the world on the mission field. She's also a floor director here. She directs while we're taping. But just look at this and see if you wouldn't like to be a blessing to someone right now.

On the mission field:

Announcer: The sounds of children running and playing and having a good time often give way to sounds of pain and suffering because they have never had a pair of shoes to protect their feet.

Janice: Is he saying something? It's pain -- it's paining. Oh my gosh!

I'm in a village in Angola and came upon this child. This little boy is Augusto, and this breaks my heart. His little feet are in some of the worse shape I've ever seen. There were many in this village with horrible conditions on their feet.

Announcer: As our mission teams travel throughout the world, they see the unsanitary conditions that children like Augusto must cope with. Conditions that can lead to a lifetime of misery simply because their feet are not protected.

Janice: They're completely infected. He said there are insects that have gotten into his feet. I'll be surprised if he doesn't lose his toe. Disease comes in through their feet and just goes throughout their body. It can actually kill them.

Announcer: Augusto's condition is not unique. Thousands of children suffer every day from painful injuries or infestations such as hookworms that enter their bare feet. This can lead to diseases that cause chronic blood loss that leads to anemia, malnutrition, and

sometimes, even death.

Janice: Please! Do what you can. Help bring shoes to little children like Augusto all over the world. You can be a part of something big and something even fun. But this is the reason we do it.

End of video

In the studio:

JAMES: You know, I showed you this little shoe. I think probably that precious boy needs this size shoe. But we've got them. And 150,000 shoes, and I think we're real close to meeting that, but we've been asked for another 50,000. I want you to know that \$36 will give ten children a pair of shoes. \$180 will give 50 pairs of shoes. And \$1,000 will help provide 275 pairs.

Also, we're trying to give children a smile who have cleft palate or some facial deformity. We can do a surgery for \$500, which means \$1,000 gives two surgeries. I even suggested a while ago, Betty, maybe 180 people, one at a time, say count me as one of them. We're going to give that extra 50,000 pairs of shoes for Christmas. And we're going to give the smiles.

I just believe that you're sensitive enough to God that you're going to do it. So I want you to get your bank card; I want you to go online or dial that number that is always there as a prayer line. And many have called today because they identify with a broken heart, the pain that you've heard, and they need prayer; they need God's arms around them. But you can dial that number and make it a lifeline today. Let's put some smiles on children's faces, a miracle, and we're able to do it at that price because the doctors, the surgeons who will go and do it. And that just covers basic costs. So you could give two smile surgeries for \$1,000.

This is the last week, and now, we're in response to missionaries' request; we're asking God to miraculously give us another 50,000 pairs of shoes. And if each one of us does what we can, and I believe we're going to have them. We're going to send you some gifts that will bless you. Some beautiful little shoes to put on your tree to remind you of how important it is. I can tell you if you'd like to have the book, this is a magnificent book, but we're going to send it to you for loving somebody else and giving them shoes and smiles.

So right now, make that call, go online, make the gift God put on your heart.

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.

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

End of video

On the mission field:

DR. HODGES: Many people don't realize the impact that a cleft lip and cleft palate can have on a young child in the family. With the cleft palate, they will not be able to breastfeed, and that can cause real problems for nutrition. And it can also cause them to have, more commonly, chest infections that can even lead to death. But if the child survives, as they grow, they will then start to realize that they have this cleft palate, and they will really suffer psychologically.

Combining the appearance and also the speech, will have a huge impact on how that child feels about themselves as they grow up. But thanks to James and Betty, and friends of *LIFE* Outreach International, we're able to make lasting changes in children's lives through corrective surgery. Several children that we have operated on their lips and their palates, very young, and the children are healthy, they look normal. and I know that they will now be able to speak normally as well.

There is so much more work to be done. Literally, thousands of families are waiting for help, but we can only do it with your continuing support. God bless you!

End of video

In the studio:

JAMES: I can't help but believe all our viewers' hearts were touched. This beautiful little shoe, and this box with four of the different colored shoes, we send that for gifts of over \$100. But today, if you'd like to have the incredible book that she's written that we're

offering, *Beauty By Design*, I think this will be a blessing to you. Father, bless everybody watching.

Ginger, we pray God blesses your business, and they can see there how you can find out about her business. If you do later call, let people call in right now to help, you may say, "Tell me how I can find this designer. I might want some help from her." Ginger, thank you so much for really being a beautiful expression of God's love.

GINGER: Thank you.

JAMES: Thank you so much. Thank all of you. We, through another opportunity to bless 50,000 more precious children, the missionaries asked us to help them love. I think you're going to do it. You're so special! Thank you.