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Week 37: Christmas Shoes and Smiles

Sheila Walsh

Joyce Meyer #2

SHEILA: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh. I'm so glad that you have tuned in. Remember, no matter what we're doing here, no matter what we're talking about, or no matter what we're showing you as something we'd love you to help with, we're also here for you. So if you find yourself in a hard place, if you're finding it difficult to believe that God loves you, please call us. We have some amazing prayer people who show up here day after day with one desire, and that's to reach out to you and let you know you're not alone.

I also have something that's going to help you a lot, and that's a wonderful new book from Joyce Meyer, *Authentically, Uniquely You*. This is a great book!

JOYCE: Thank you, Sheila.

SHEILA: I felt--part of it was that I didn't know all of your personal story before, and honestly, it broke my heart reading some of it. But it made me realize what a redeemer God is because if you hadn't gone through what you went through, you wouldn't have been able to speak to that in other people. So how has your own life, not just Joyce Meyer Ministries, but just you as a person, as a woman of God, how have you seen God use that to set people free?

JOYCE: Well, I think that people, no matter who they are, if they're going through something, if somebody has been abused, I can talk to them as someone that's been sexually abused, and I'm sane and got a family and a ministry, and for all intents and purposes, God has redeemed my life and put it back together. I'm not going to say it was easy because it wasn't. You have to really want to get well from something like that to do it. But if they know that one person made it, then they know they can make it. It's different listening to somebody who's been through it than

somebody who's just talking about it.

So when I first started sharing about sexual abuse, nobody was doing that. It was like a brand-new thing. People just came out of the woodwork; people in their 80s and 90s that had been abused and had never ever told anybody because of the shame of it. I'll be honest and tell you I was a pretty good-sized mess. I had so many problems. I was controlling and bitter and angry.

SHEILA: Well, no wonder!

JOYCE: All I knew to do was what I had seen growing up. You talk about not having the ability to be authentic and to realize that I could be uniquely me. I was a class case of a -- I would either be trying to control other people, or if they happened to be stronger than me, I'd be letting them control me; and I'd be a people pleaser. So I was somebody who desperately, desperately needed freedom.

You can only find that through learning the word and being truthful. You can't -- you've got to be truthful with God and truthful with yourself. I wanted everybody else to change so that I could be happy, but I had to come to the point where I realized I had a problem. I remember when God told me, stop making Dave responsible for your joy.

How many women do that? Well, you're not making me happy. You're not making me happy. You're not making me happy. It's not somebody else's job to make us happy. We find that in God. Yes, God has healed me. I'm not going to say that I have no leftover bumps from my childhood because I do.

I think when you went through what I went through, there are things that I just -- I never had a dad that I could go sit on their lap and love. My mom was fearful, so she wouldn't deal with my dad. And so I'm missing that. I don't know what I'm missing because I never had it. But I do know, and I've seen this in my life. The Bible says in Isaiah 61 that God will give you a two-fold, a double recompense for your former trouble. I love that.

And God, he gives me favor. He's given me honor now among men where all I had was abuse from men. God has blessed me so much. But it only happens if you're willing, and I want people to hear this, if you're really willing to do things God's way. And the first step to that is forgiving the people who hurt you. You can't get well until you forgive the people who hurt you. And one of the things that helped me do that was to realize that hurting people hurt people. My father did what he did to me because he had things in his past that had been done to him.

Whoever is watching today, if you're hurting, if you're confused, you don't understand life, you don't understand why you do the things you do, invite God into every area of your life -- every area -- into those places that are hurting you. Invite him to get involved and let him take over your healing. It's fine to go get counseling, but the Holy Spirit is our best counselor. Even before you go and get counseling, make sure that you pray and ask God who you should go to. You need to be with the right people that are going to lead you in the right direction and learn the Word of God. God's word is so precious to me because it's true, and it's changed my life.

SHEILA: Was it harder for you to forgive your father or your mother?

JOYCE: In some ways, it was almost harder for me to forgive my mother because I still don't understand how a mother could know that her husband was doing that to her child and let him do it.

My mother told me, it was 30 years after it happened -- 30 years! And she said, "I'm sorry that I let your dad do what he did to you." But she said, "I just, I didn't think that I could face the scandal. And I didn't think that I could take care of you and your brother."

That shows you the power of the mind. She didn't think she could do anything about it, so she didn't even try to. And she was frightened of my dad. My dad was mean. He would come home drunk and beat her up. She was just really frightened of him. See, back then, nobody, sexual abuse, incest was something you never heard of. So she didn't know how to face the scandal. She didn't think that she could face it.

I remember my mother asking me one time, "How do you feel about me?"

I didn't lie to her. I said, "Well, I don't love you like a girl should love her mother."

But I said, "I do love you because God loves you. And I will always make sure that you are taken care of because I know that's what God wants me to do." And so I did take care of my parents in their elderly years, and it was probably one of the hardest things I ever did. But I think it was also one of the most powerful things that I ever did.

I just beg people, don't have unforgiveness in your heart because it's not affecting your enemies; it's only hurting you. It doesn't change them.

SHEILA: Gosh, if you hear nothing else but that, that's life-changing. *Authentically, Uniquely You*, what does it mean to be authentic? I can think of people thinking, okay, I'm just going to run around and tell everybody everything. I don't think that's what you're saying.

JOYCE: No. Like I was thinking a while ago during the break, I'm just really comfortable sitting here talking to you and knowing that there are millions of people watching. I don't feel the least bit of stress. I don't feel the least bit of pressure because I'm just being who I am. I'm not sitting here concerned about whether or not people like me. It's not my job to make them like me. That's God's job to take care of my reputation. He says, "Cast your care on me." So if we do what God's asking us to do, he'll take care of all that other stuff. And ten percent of people they've proven will never like you no matter what you do. So you're not ever going to get liked by 100 percent of people.

But I remember when I first started this. I was so stressed out when I was on that platform because I was so concerned, do I have the right message? Do people like me? Do I look right? And I would just be exhausted. I finally thought, this is my life, Sheila, this is what I do. I'm either teaching, preaching, or writing. I have to enjoy it. Otherwise, I have no joy. And how wonderful it is to just be able to do something like this and know that many people are looking at

me and be relaxed. That's what it means to be authentic, just to be who you really are and not feel like you have to put on airs and be something that you're not, and to be truthful, to be honest.

Like I saw your book laying in the back, *It's Okay to not be Okay*. I'm just getting ready to put together a message called, "It's Okay to not be Okay." And here I thought I had something nobody had.

[Laughter]

But see, we don't think it's okay to not be okay. So, therefore, we pretend. How many times are you hurting so bad you feel like you're just going to die? And somebody says, "How are you?" And you say, "I'm just fine. Just fine!" I doubt very much that Jonah was fine when he was in the belly of that whale. We're not always fine. You don't have to be negative. We don't have to have a bad confession, but we can say to somebody, you don't have to say it to everybody because some people don't need to know it.

But if a good friend says to you, "How are you?" And you're not fine; you should just say, "I'm kind of going through a rough time right now, but you know what? I know God's in control. I'd appreciate your prayers, but I'm really not fine today." And if they persist and wanting to dig and find out, just say, "I really don't want to talk about it. Just pray for me. Everything is going to be okay."

The Bible says to confess your faults to one another that you may be healed and restored -- healed and restored. So how many people are never healed and restored because they pretend everything is okay when it's not okay? So it's okay to not be okay.

SHEILA: Yes, amen! You write that to live authentically, you have to understand the difference between soul and Spirit. Why is that so important?

JOYCE: Well, when you're born again, God, through the Holy Spirit, comes to live in your Spirit. But he's not living in your soul yet. Your soul is still the same stinking soul it always was.

And he fills us full of his love; the fruit of the Spirit is in us, but it all comes in us as seed. The Bible says in the Amplified Bible that when you receive Christ, you receive this incorruptible seed. He's called "The Seed of God."

So seed, he plants this seed. I like to say we become pregnant with everything God is. Literally, you become pregnant with everything that God is. So you have this new hope that something is happening, and you can sense it, you can feel it, that you're not the same. But what you now feel inside gives you a desire to want to be better, and initially, you have a hard time doing that because you don't know anything yet.

SHEILA: Yes.

JOYCE: In Philippians two, it says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, with self-distrust, not in your own strength, for it is God who is all the while at work in you."

So we don't work for our salvation, but our salvation has to be worked out. And what that means is once you're born again, now you have the Holy Spirit who is the counselor, the helper, the teacher, the intercessor, the strengthener, and if you open your life up to him, he will then begin to take those things that are in you as seeds and develop them in your life, so they grow and begin to overtake your soul. And then eventually, God can be seen through your body. And then people can say this is really real.

But as long as it is just in our Spirit, we can talk about being born again until we're blue in the face. It doesn't mean anything to people if they don't see us change. That's why it is so important that we mature spiritually and not remain baby Christians.

SHEILA: As you can imagine, there are so many things I'd like to ask Joyce. But and I'm going to tell you in a minute how you can get your very own copy of the book. But you talk about when Christ did the Sermon on the Mount, and the beatitudes, he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God." You write to be pure in heart is just another way of saying be authentic.

JOYCE: Be authentic -- and motives. Now, if you want to hear a room get quiet, you start talking to them about why are you doing what you're doing? See, God is not impressed with what I'm doing. He's only impressed with *why* I'm doing it. Am I in this ministry because I just want to be on TV and be well-known and have people recognize me and be famous? Or do I really want to help people? Why am I doing this?

Well, I can put on all kinds of airs and convince everybody else, but God really knows why I'm doing it. So people need to look at their motives. And so often, why are you stressed out? Let's take stress. People should not be stressed out. The only reason they're stressed out is because they're doing things, a lot of things, for the wrong reasons. Not because God wants them to do it but because someone else wants them to do it, and they're doing it to please those people.

And so, if we ask ourselves if you write down everything you're doing and ask yourself, why am I doing this? You'll find that half of it, you're not doing it because God wants you to do it. You're doing it because you want to be accepted by this group, or you don't want this person to get mad. And if you cut out all that stuff that you're doing for the wrong reasons, you may make a few people unhappy, but you'll get rid of the stress in your life.

SHEILA: That's a great exercise, people. It took me years to understand that no is a complete sentence. I talk to a lot of women, and I know you do too, that feel like how can God use me now because I've messed up so badly? Can failure overtake your destiny?

JOYCE: No. We can fail forward. As a matter of fact, I don't think you can succeed without failing because I've learned so much by the things I've done wrong. As a matter of fact, I've been in churches for years and later realized the only reason God had me there was to teach me what not to do by watching them do the wrong things.

We've got to get this right. God doesn't want a bunch of phonies. He doesn't need a bunch of wounded healers that won't let them into their own life telling everybody else what to do but still got a mess in their own lives. We need to come clean with God, so to speak, and throw your life

wide open to him and say, okay, if I'm going to do this, I want to do it right. I want to be real; I want to be genuine. If I have impure motives, I want to know what they are. You better buckle your seatbelt because --

SHEILA: If you ask that question, you're going to get an answer.

JOYCE: I mean, I remember asking God years ago why I was so unhappy. Because I was in ministry, my ministry was successful, I had a good husband, two cars in the garage, no money problems, four great kids; why am I so unhappy? It just came to me so strong, "Because you're selfish."

SHEILA: Yikes!

JOYCE: Yeah, yikes! But God will tell you what's wrong in your life if you really want to know. But we always want to think it is somebody else. God can't deal with you about somebody else. We need to pray for all the other people that we think have got problems but open our lives up to God and let him come and deal with us. And so when you're pure in heart, to see God doesn't mean you're going to see him with your eyes. But you'll begin to hear from God. You'll begin to sense his presence, and you'll begin to know what he wants you to do when you start being authentic and real.

SHEILA: That's about 100th of all the wisdom that is in this book. I want you to get your very own copy of *Authentically, Uniquely You*.

But I want to ask you if you would help us with something that we really care about. We have this awesome privilege, as Christmas time gets closer, of being able to answer the prayers of some people who have never even been able to put a pair of tiny shoes onto the feet of their children. But you and I can change that. Would you watch this?

On the mission field:

Announcer: Sharing God's love is both our privilege and responsibility at *LIFE Outreach*.

Those of you who make the decision to support our mission work have empowered us to put words into action. In areas where precious children have already perished, many lives are now being saved because you chose to do something about crisis situations like contaminated water sources and a lack of food.

With all that's been done this year, at Christmastime we like to go even further by providing corrective surgeries for children with cleft palates. And there's something else that brings a smile to children's faces.

Sheila: You've helped us change the lives of children all around the world but we thought in this season, wouldn't it be cool to do something really special? If you look at this darling little one here in Angola, he is like every other little boy or girl I've seen. He has no shoes.

Announcer: This coming Christmas, we want to give children all over the world a pair of their very own shoes.

Sheila: Look at this face! Don't you just think it's the most beautiful thing in the world to be able not to just put shoes on her feet but to be able to protect her from diseases, from all sorts of things as she steps on the ground? It's just -- we want to keep these big brown eyes as big and brown as possible.

Announcer: Help us make this Christmas one these children will never forget by giving them a gift that protects their very lives. Help us provide Christmas Shoes & Smiles.

Sheila: Thank you so much! Thank you for putting shoes on the feet of such a beautiful little girl. Thank you!

In the studio:

SHEILA: I remember that little one so clearly. You might think, well, why are you talking about Christmas now? Well, we're talking about Christmas now because we want to get 150,000 pairs of shoes out to all the different places where we work before Christmas comes. So that's why we have to start early and gather everything in.

You wouldn't believe that something like this that we manage to get manufactured for \$3.60 could literally save the life of a child. Because they don't wear any shoes, their feet get cut, they're in the water where there are all sorts of diseases. So it can cost a child their life.

So don't you think this Christmas it would be great if instead of just looking at what we want or what our kids want, we determine to look outside? And we can be the hands and feet of Jesus. So for \$36, what can you do with 36 bucks these days? You can send shoes to ten children. If you do a little bit more, \$72 will send shoes for 20 children. \$180 will send shoes for 50 children.

And the other thing we do is Operation Shoes and Smiles. When children are born in certain countries where they have cleft lip or cleft palate, there's so much superstition around that where it's looked on as they're cursed by God, and they're not included in school, and they're not included in life.

I've been in surgery with some of the doctors that we work with on the ground and watched the difference they make when you see a smile on a child who has never been able to smile; when you see a child being able to enjoy a meal which they've not been able to do before. So these amazing surgeons that we've just fallen in love with, they'll do each surgery for \$500.

So if you are able to give \$1,000, that will give two children a life-saving surgery. Or you can say, you know what? I'd rather it go to shoes, and that would give 275 children a pair of shoes. I often think at Christmas, we lose the whole plot. We forget that it was about the greatest gift given, and we run our credit cards up, and we drive ourselves nuts going around the mall.

Wouldn't it be great to make this a family project this year? Maybe sit down and talk with your

kids and say, what do you want to do? And we all give up a little bit. I promise you when you sit around your table on Christmas day, and you know that somewhere across the world, there is a child that got their very first pair of shoes, that turkey is going to taste way, way better!

So please, would you go to your phone? Would you call that number on the screen? Would you just make the best gift you can? And remember, for any gift at all, please request Joyce's new book, *Authentically, Uniquely You*. Because if you do what you can do, and I do what we can do, we can change the world one child at a time.

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:

SHEILA: Thanks so much for helping us. And remember, please request your copy of Joyce's book, *Authentically, Uniquely You*. As people finish this book, what do you want them to take from it?

JOYCE: I want them to learn how to like themselves and to know that God likes them and loves them just the way they are. Even though they have faults, and he's going to be working in them and making changes, that you can enjoy yourself while God is changing you. And you can enjoy where you're at on the way to where you're going.

SHEILA: Wow! And if that's not good news, I don't know what is. Thank you so much for being with us. It was wonderful!

JOYCE: Thank you for having me.

SHEILA: We will see you next time on *LIFE Today*!