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Week one: Fall Mission Feeding: Last week

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Anne Graham Lotz and Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright

SHEILA: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh here with Randy Robison. We're excited about our guests today. I have known and loved Anne Graham Lotz for many years and learned so much from her writing. But this is a brand-new book with one of her daughters, Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright, and it is called *Jesus Followers: "Real life lessons for igniting faith in the next generation."* Welcome to both of you.

ANNE: Thank you so much!

SHEILA: When I read the subtitle, I cannot think of a more timely book because we get so much in the way of mail and comments from people saying they're concerned about their children. What led to writing this book, Anne?

ANNE: It was pretty much Rachel-Ruth's burden and vision. I think I felt like the Lord had called me to speak to whoever he puts in front of me. It can be men, women, old, young, Americans, Africans, Russians, it doesn't matter. But then when I had grandchildren, and you see them coming along and then, Rachel-Ruth was teaching a chapel in a Christian school, and so many of the children raised in Christian homes, going to a Christian school, going to church, and yet, they had no relationship with Jesus. So I don't know if Rachel, you want to share some of your burden and your vision because I just came alongside to help her.

RACHEL: That was where it started, taking my kids to school or birthday parties or wherever, and seeing their parents who may be in church and may love the Lord, but I could tell they weren't passing it to their kids. It just broke my heart.

So by God's grace, he placed us in this family. So I thought, I've had that example from both sets of my grandparents and my parents. Not everybody has had that in their home. Maybe they don't know how. So I thought, well, if I write stories down of what it looked like in our home growing up, what I saw in my grandparents, what I saw in my parents, that maybe I could help someone realize how they could maybe pass it on to their kids. So that's really where the burden came from.

RANDY: Well, we are fortunate, Rachel, having grown up in those families that have really walked the walk, that has had that witness. What are some of the big highlights of what you got from the legacy that is the Graham family?

RACHEL: Their love for Jesus. It wasn't something that we just talked about at dinner, or we opened up our Bible; it was all the time. They loved the Lord.

I would wake up in the mornings; my mom was the same way where she saw her mom doing this, but I would wake up in the early mornings before school and come down the stairs. Mom would be on her knees with her Bible open, studying her Bible or praying. I would go at night, my dad was a night owl, and a lot of times, I couldn't sleep, and I'd go downstairs, and I would find my dad who was 6'6" on his knees with his Bible open, in this tiny little room that he would go in and just praying.

So it was a part of their lives. They loved the Lord. We talked about the Lord all the time. They had people in the home that loved the Lord and would share their testimonies at dinner. So it was just a part of everything we did, and it was for real. It wasn't anything put on or fake or phony. They just loved Jesus -- and that was contagious to me.

ANNE: I feel like a lot of people today, and Randy, you may have seen this too, but people almost add Jesus to their lives. Like he's an add-on or like they sort of cross-stitch him into their lives, but it's not authentic. And Jesus is not something to add on or to cross-stitch in. He is your life, and that is 24/7.

So there's an issue if you sort of just involve your children on a Sunday morning or Wednesday night or whenever you have a Bible study or something. But if you're not living it out and teaching them by the way you set the example in the home, then they may not catch it. They may not put their faith in Jesus.

RANDY: I do think we see that. The term scripturally is a disintegration. We don't have the integrity of living Sunday the same as Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and that sort of disintegrated view of God; I think we see it a lot in the second and third generations where they walk away.

But you talk about that walk, that very real walk. Tell us some of the points out of your book that you want viewers to know.

RACHEL: Well, through these different stories, there were just some examples of what I saw, and different ones, whether it was how they lived it out and their love for the Word. I saw that with both sets of my grandparents. My grandfather had scripture blown up on big poster boards. When he couldn't see, it was in these big block letters in the hallway, in his bathroom, everywhere so that he could be reading it all the time.

SHEILA: Let me prompt you on a story that I found very touching where grace became so real. Because you and your sister, I think, were having a little moment. Tell us about that.

RACHEL: We were fighting over something, and it ended up with my sister chasing me through the house, and I was running for my life. And I went out the back door and just slammed it before she could get there, and it shattered. I heard the glass shatter. So I ran to my mom's car and hid in the floorboards. I'm like, oh! And then I heard her calling my name. And so I got out of the car, and she sent me to my room. I just knew I was going to get it.

So I was just sitting there waiting, waiting, and then I heard my dad come up the stairs. He sat down, and he was like, "Rach" because my dad called me Rach. He said, "Today, I'm going to teach you about grace." He said, "You deserve to be punished, but I'm going to take you to get ice cream."

I was like, I couldn't believe it. So then he went on to just reiterate what I'd been taught forever was what Jesus did on the cross, that he went to the cross to take away our sins. We deserve to be punished, we deserve to die in our sins, but he went on the cross to shed his blood so that we could be forgiven. It just was like one of those moments I'll never forget. It just made sense. It was so sweet. So just stories like that.

RANDY: I think my parents missed that chapter in Dobson's book. I don't have a story like that. That's a good one. But I will say this: the things that we grow up with that are rooted in scripture and centering around Christ, those things pay off down the road. I know with you and the struggle you went through, Anne, with your cancer, this became a time where it wasn't just a discussion; this was real life. Tell us about some of the difficulties and also the beauty of going through that together.

ANNE: Well, so I don't hide from my children. Six years ago, of course, I found my husband unresponsive in our pool, and it was just such a shock. We put him on life support, but three days later, we released him, and he went to glory. And so they saw how I handled that, and they were handling it at the same time. But three years later, my father went to heaven, and that was a shock for all of us. He was 99; we expected him to go, but not that day, not that moment. He was just getting ready for breakfast when all of the sudden, he was gone. And then they saw, we all handled it together.

Then six months after my father went to heaven, I was diagnosed with cancer, which was out of the blue. People in my family, I have a big family, we don't have cancer. So I went through surgery and chemo, and radiation. But I will tell you this, I waited three days before I told anybody that I'd been diagnosed. So when I told my family, we'd gathered, and it was dad's, the day that their dad and my husband had gone to heaven, and it was

three years later to the day. And I was diagnosed with cancer, actually three years to the day when I found my husband. It was really bizarre. But I – anyway, so I told them, and they gathered around me, they put her hands on me, they prayed. And so we shared that together; I wasn't going to hide it from them.

And then Rachel-Ruth and her sister Morrow went with me to every chemo treatment, every radiation treatment. The doctors and the professional people would see us coming, and they were, "Here they come!" [Laughter] But we had opportunities to share our faith in the hospital. Because when you're waiting for chemo or something, you're waiting with people who are dying. And God in His grace has given me so far, I'm three years out, and given me a good checkup.

But I think God lets us go through hard things, Sheila. Don't be surprised by those fiery trials because it is then when people see Jesus revealed in us. So our children see the reality and the authenticity of our faith when things are falling apart. And then they know if I can hang in -- not just hang in there, but triumph. I don't want to just hang in there. I want to do it with triumph and joy. And I love the Lord. I never lost my joy, never lost my peace. I had tears for all those events, but still, the Lord was so faithful, and the children could see that. And Rachel-Ruth has been through some really hard things, and she's not hidden it from her girls. They've seen it.

But if your faith isn't authentic when you're going through disasters and death and divorce or whatever else it might be and we've not gone through a divorce, praise God, but at that time your children see it, then they know that this is for real and it's much more contagious, much more attractive to them.

SHEILA: And your maternal grandmother was just -- one of my favorite people on the planet. Poured so much kindness into my life. But I found that one of the stories that you shared, I found it so helpful. You talk about the fact that your husband was involved in sports, a coach, so on the road a lot. And that was true, of course, for your maternal grandmother when, do you call him Daddy Bill?

RACHEL: Daddy Bill, yes!

SHEILA: Would be on the road in crusades. How did that help you navigate that challenge?

RACHEL: It was huge because Taitai, we called her Taitai, which means "old lady" in Chinese, [Laughter]

ANNE: She requested it.

RACHEL: She did. She told us to call her that. But she was born and raised on the mission field in China. But Taitai was such an example because here, Daddy Bill, there were times he was gone for nine months at a time. And so all these years go by where he's traveling, traveling, traveling, and she's been home raising five crazy kids. And then all of her health issues and everything.

And then she comes towards the end of her life, and Daddy Bill comes back home for longer; he's not gone as much. And I watch. I was looking, I was watching her, and she would turn to him with just the sweetest face, loved him. They would hold hands and stare at each other and watch movies together. It was precious.

It was really, really a testimony to me because she wasn't bitter. She wasn't like, "Where have you been?" I've seen people that become bitter after years. It's so hard. And there was none of that with Taitai -- not an ounce of that. She just loved him. She accepted God's call on his life, and she knew it was a call for her, too, to let him go.

And I remember her talking to me about that. She said, "Rachel, just let your husband go. Let him do what God's called him to do." And he's a football coach where he is gone for a lot of the year, just game planning and being with the team and everything. And so it's so important for me to remember that example, not to be bitter.

SHEILA: That's beautiful! Wow!

RANDY: Here's my question. We grew up with these beautiful examples of a godly home. Not perfect, going through difficult times but going through them together. My parents, as you know, did not grow up with that, and I know a lot of people watching right now, they're like, I didn't have that, I don't know what it looks like, but they want it desperately. So how do people create that sort of environment so they can have that kind of legacy?

ANNE: That's actually why we wrote the book, Randy. Because we know that there are people out there that don't have a heritage like ours or like yours. But in the Bible, it says all scripture is given for our inspiration edification. And so Bible characters like Abraham is like our father and David is like our brother and Peter is like a crazy uncle. [Laughter] But you know how you adopt the characters in scripture; they're your family now. So we want to invite people into our family, so we want our heritage to be theirs. But we want them to see these stories, and it gives them an idea of how to live it out.

But the most important thing is that they establish a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ; come to the cross, confess their sin, tell God they're sorry for all the wrong things they have done, ask him to forgive them, come into their heart and surrender their lives to him. When they establish that personal relationship, they receive the Holy Spirit who comes to live within them. And then he will give them ideas, he will give them insight, and there is an authenticity about your faith that I think kids will pick up on. So I think it is very important.

I introduce the book with Genesis chapter five, in which there are ten men in a genealogy in Genesis chapter five, and they lived in Cain's civilization which was so wicked it ended up provoking the judgment of God in the flood. But each one of those men passed the truth on to the next generation. Then it is the next generation that has the decision whether they're going to receive or embrace the truth for themselves. But they did for ten

generations; it ended in Noah. And if they had not passed it from generation to generation, we wouldn't be here.

So it is possible, I'm wondering, for the truth to be lost in one generation. So I feel like it is very imperative on Christian parents that if nobody is passing on truth to the next generation except me, I want to be that person to pass it on to my children, my grandchildren, great-grandchildren, if God will give me grace so that at least there is a remnant of truth in people who put their faith in it. Or I think we're in big trouble.

SHEILA: You talk of an image you use of a relay race. That is a very important strategy; talk about that.

ANNE: My kids, my husband used to take them to the University of North Carolina where he went to school, and they'd go to the track meet over there. And one of their favorite events, and it is still in the Olympics, is the 4 x 100-meter relay race. You've got, I don't know how many teams, but each team has four runners. And the first runner is grabbing, grasping the baton. He runs his lap as fast as he can; he passes it to the next runner as that runner is taking off. And that runner runs his lap, and they pass it third and fourth. And the team that wins not only passes it, not only runs the fastest but passes the baton the smoothest.

And so the passing our faith, in Genesis chapter five, they were passing the truth on to the next generation. Each generation has to grasp the truth like grasping a baton, and they pass it to the next generation and the next generation. So we divided the book into four. I didn't go through all ten men, but we divided the book into four parts, and I pulled out four men from that Genesis five: One who witnessed, one who worshipped, one who walked with God, one who worked. And I think all four of them give you a picture of what it means to be running that race effectively and passing that baton of truth.

And if it is somebody whose children are grown, somebody whose grandchildren are not allowed to talk about Jesus, then look for somebody else's grandchildren, look for

somebody else's children, look for grown children. Look for somebody; look where your neighbor is. And God the Holy Spirit, we pray, will draw children to the Lord that may be for some reason weren't raised -- because there's something else I learned about the relay race at the last Olympics in 2016.

Our American men thought they had won the bronze medal and were celebrating with the flag wrapped around their shoulders. And then they looked up. It showed on the screen they had been disqualified because they hadn't passed the baton in the passing zone.

And so I think the passing zone is when your children are in your home. But if you didn't pass it in the passing zone, it doesn't mean they won't receive the truth; it is just harder to pass it to them. And then you pray someone else will pass it to them, or they just see the authenticity of your life. But don't drop the baton and don't bobble it. We're responsible to pass it. Maybe it is not our children, maybe it is somebody else's children, maybe it is not our grandchildren, maybe it is somebody else's grandchildren, but we need to make sure we've grasped that baton through faith in Jesus Christ, and then we pass it to somebody else before the race is over.

RANDY: Yeah, when we do that, when we go all-in with Christ, it actually leads to some pretty wild things sometimes. I know I see it with my parents. There are a couple of things you talk about, and take the one that stands out to you the most, but because of this type of attitude, whether it is celebrities or world leaders, you've seen God work some pretty amazing things to reach people for Christ. What stands out in your mind?

RACHEL: Well, I wrote in the book a story about my mom. My mom and my sister and I were flying back from Mexico. We were going to get on a plane and realized right in front of us on the plane was the President of Pakistan, President Musharraf. And so mom, I just knew, I just looked at mom, she was going to share the gospel. And so we get off the plane, and who knew that he actually goes to baggage claim too.

ANNE: I couldn't believe that he was standing there at the carousel waiting for his bag.

RACHEL: And so mom said, "I'm going to go share the gospel."

I'm like, "Mom, let's think about this first."

Because I thought she was just going to get laid out, and they're going to have the police on her.

ANNE: He had a security team around him.

RACHEL: So she walked right up to him, and they allowed her to approach him. She looked right at him and shared the gospel just so sweetly and boldly. That's just one example. I mean, she is so bold. And because I've seen my mom be fearless and my grandparents, my dad, whatever, I've tried to do the same so that my girls see that. And they've led people to Christ. My youngest led a boy to Christ the first three weeks of high school. And so we have these opportunities, but we just need to show our kids.

SHEILA: On mission 24/7, that's the calling. And if you think, where do I start? This book is a great place to start. You'll get so much wisdom, insight, and direction. And we'd love to put it in your hands. But first of all, we would love it if you would watch something that's going on right now in nations around the world where children literally are going to bed starving. But you and I have this glorious privilege of doing something about that. Please watch this.

On the mission field

Announcer: Some see suffering like this and say it proves God is not real; or worse, that he exists but he is indifferent to the suffering of the people he made. But the truth is it's in these very situations that the hand of God is most present, and you can see him if you look with the right eyes.

Announcer: God is here in the hands of a mother doing all she can to sustain a sick child. He's here in the hands of doctors and nurses holding back the onslaught of death in their countries. And he's here in the hands of the missionaries who give all just to see one more life saved.

But we can't do it alone. To touch those areas of greatest need requires help from people like you because, in the end, the extent to which we can be the hands of God, is in yours.

End of clip

In the studio

SHEILA: Jesus died for each one of these little ones. But it is very hard to hear the gospel, the good news, when you're literally starving to death. I was so blown away on my first trip to Angola walking into a malnutrition clinic, which I'd probably seen on television before, but that didn't spare me from the sights of the mothers literally weeping over their children. Some of them had walked for miles to bring their child to a malnutrition clinic, and in many cases, it was simply too late.

But then we were able to go to some of the other villages where James and Betty, with our partners on the ground, have established Mission Feeding in a village. And the wonderful thing about that is the children come to school to get their hope in a bowl, to get their meal. That breaks that cycle of poverty. The children are able to get an education, they're able to grow up. And then we can sit down with them and tell them about this Jesus who came to die for them so that they could live.

This is our last week of Mission Feeding. We've made a commitment to our people, who are literally on the ground right now, that we would be able to feed 350,000 children this year. And we can do it with your help if we all do it together, Randy. This is very doable.

RANDY: Absolutely. And to borrow from the title of the book, we are *Jesus Followers*, and therefore, we are his hands and feet. Well, the hands are what reach out to someone

in need. The feet are the ones that go; they take you places. So we are prepared with people on the ground right now to reach out more and more. We've committed, Sheila, to 350,000 children, feeding them every month. But we want to just reach out as much as we can, and it is determined by how many of you will reach out today and say, "Yeah, I'll go there with you. I'll be a part of that."

Your gift of \$30 will help feed three children for three entire months! We can stretch a dollar that far because we've been doing it this long. We have people in place. We have clinics in place. We have a place where we mix up the soup mix and take it. We have these things on the ground. So we just need you to reach out. \$50 will help feed five children for three whole months. \$100 will feed ten. And a \$1,000, you can feed 100 children for the next three months.

Don't forget this is the last week! It's the end of the year. If you're looking for a great place to make that great year-end gift, the malnutrition clinics that we're rebuilding, the mobile ones, as well as the fixed ones in some of the worst desperate areas, \$24,500 on average. Whatever you can do, I pray that you will. Let's finish the year right. Let's reach out and say, "Yes! I'll be that hand. I'll be those feet that go there to those in need, and I will put my arms around them with the love of Jesus and give them food for life to live by."

Go to the phones, go online, make the best gift you can. You will be saving a life today.

Begin video clip

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

Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three,

five, or ten children for three full months. Also, please consider an extra gift to help immediately rebuild malnutrition clinics destroyed by record flooding in South Sudan. This urgent need is \$392,000 above our normal feeding budget and is critical to help save the lives of those suffering most.

With your gift of any amount, we will send you *Christmas Grace*. This eye-opening, new 31-day devotional will give you a fresh perspective on the greatest gift ever given and the life-transforming hope found in Christ's birth.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the "Love and Thanks" tumbler set with scriptures reminding us that "God's love never fails" and to always "Give thanks." These tumblers will keep drinks hot or cold wherever you go.

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

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

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: Don't forget, this is the last week we're on the air with Mission Feeding. We're counting on your support. Go to the phones, go online, give the best gift you can. And Sheila, when people do that today, we have something we want them to request.

SHEILA: Yeah, please request this book. For any gift at all, you can request *Jesus Followers*. A lifetime of wisdom and grace and lessons learned in this book. I just want to thank you, Rachel-Ruth and Anne. Thank you so much for being with us. Thank you for this word.

ANNE: Love being with you all.

RANDY: And thank all of you guys for watching *LIFE Today*. We'll see you again next time.