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Week five: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Chip Ingram

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison; Sheila Walsh is with me as always. I've got to tell you, I'm excited. A few months ago, I had the privilege of talking with someone who is a teacher, a discipler of people. His name is Chip Ingram. I talked to him on a zoom call that I do every day at noon. And I'm thrilled to have him in the studio to talk about his latest book, *I Choose Peace*.

Chip Ingram, it is an honor to have you here.

CHIP: Thanks, Randy, thanks, Sheila. It's great to be here.

RANDY: This is such a great topic because you look around and the world, and in our own houses, oftentimes, there is not a lot of peace. You're saying something about, the thing that grabs me about the title is that you say, "I choose peace." Why did you want to write a book about it? And why do you think it is something we have to choose?

CHIP: Well, I wanted to write a book about it because actually, I teach through the Bible, and I was teaching through Philippians four, and I never dreamed it would come out at a time where people were in such need. But Jesus said, his last promise to those disciples was, "My peace I give to you, not as the world gives." So regardless of circumstance, he knew what they'd go through, so he says, "I give you my peace."

This book really is the Apostle Paul explaining to a group going through a difficult time. This is how you appropriate it. You have it. If you have the Spirit of God living in you, all the peace, all the power you ever need, we have. But it's a journey to figure out how to

put that into practice through a lot of different areas.

SHEILA: Why do you think there is such a disconnect? Because I remember jumping on my Facebook page one night, kind of halfway through 2020, and just saying, "Hey guys! How are you doing?" And I probably spent two hours just reading the comments: I'm afraid. I feel alone, and the world seems out of control. Heaven seems silent.

Why do you think there is a disconnect between Christ's promise and what many of us are experiencing?

CHIP: The answer to that I don't think is a very pretty picture. The average believer doesn't read the Bible anymore.

SHEILA: See, that just blows me away!

CHIP: They're not in the scriptures. The Holy Spirit takes the Word of God, makes it the living Word of God, and it is those convictions that manifest the presence and power of Christ. So I think we've gotten to a day, and we're a part of this, I'm glad I get to teach God's Word, and this is a wonderful program, but a person's spiritual diet cannot be watching you all on TV or listening to me on a podcast. You've got to get into the scriptures for yourself. And we're living in a day where I don't think that's happening. So it's a result of it.

The other is, God gives us peace, but there are certain things that rob us of our peace. There are idols that rob us of our peace. There is worry and anxiety where we choose to focus on the future that robs us of our peace. There are ways that we operate in relationships that are wrong. When they're wrong, we don't have peace. In fact, the command is, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, in Colossians. The goal is God's peace actually acts as a red light on the dashboard of your car, and when it starts flashing, it wants to tell you there is something in your soul that needs to be addressed. We're in that relationship.

So a lack of peace isn't always bad. It ought to tell you something. But I think we look for it in all the wrong places.

RANDY: So let's start with how we choose it in that place that is the most intimate to us, and that's those close relationships. Because a lot of times, there can be a lot going on in the world, but if we have peace in our home, that's the starting point. What can we look for to choose peace in that close area, those we love the most?

CHIP: I think I have to be connected and abiding with Christ so I have the resources to love and care for the people around me. The apostle said, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another. If I'm not getting that from Christ, I can't give it to others.

It's interesting that in this first chapter, Paul talks to a group of people, and he says to these very godly women, who we know are on their way to heaven, their names are written in the book of life, but they don't get along. I think, sometimes, we think if we're Christians, even a Christian family, everyone is going to get along all the time. You know what? That's just not true. And sometimes, you need some outside help that has an objective sort of perspective to help you get along with the people that you're struggling with. I certainly have had that in my life.

SHEILA: What would you say to someone who is saying, well, that's great, and I believe that but you've not met my wife, you've not met my husband. When you have somebody -- or my child or my worker -- when you have somebody that is in a totally different place and resistant to that, how do you still experience the peace of Christ when the circumstances don't change?

CHIP: Well, I think first and foremost we say, okay, as far as it depends on you, Romans 12, be at peace with all men. It is not always possible, but you make every effort. I think what you learn from this first section is there are times when really good people don't get

along, and part of it is expectations, part of it is personalities. Paul and Barnabas didn't get along. Part of it is different philosophies about how to do things.

And so first is, ask myself what part is mine? God, I can't change this person, whether it is my husband, wife, child; show me because I can deal with that. That's what I had to do early in my marriage at marriage counseling. I can't change her, and she was making me nuts.

[Laughter]

And I was making her nuts! We'd only been married six months, so it wasn't looking good. But we went to marriage counseling, and I realized finally, I've got to start with me.

I think the second, then, is adjusting our expectations. Sometimes we think it's got to be like, we're going to have this awesome, everything is great all of the time as opposed to, there are seasons.

And then I think the third is, the Apostle Paul, it is interesting, he says, basically, you need outside competent counsel. I think there are a lot of times, whether it is a pastor, a godly friend, or Christian therapist, to say, I tell people, you know what? If you've really worked at it and it's not working, you must need outside help so just go get it.

SHEILA: You know that was huge for my husband and I when we hit a roadblock; I was really mad and very disappointed. We went to see this therapist, and he said, I asked a man one day who his favorite person was, and he said, "My tailor." He says, "Why your tailor?" He said, "Because he always takes fresh measurements." And he looked at me, and he said, "Could you take fresh measurements?" I was like, "Yeah! Absolutely!"

And it was just a simple thing because I remember praying in the car, Holy Spirit, please go in there with me. If I go in by myself, this is going to be will ugly. But God is so faithful to do that. And you're right. Sometimes outside help makes all the difference.

CHIP: And I think a lot of people are very angry and they're very hurt. I think we need to pause and bring those things to the Lord and say, Lord, I can't handle this. But this bitterness and this resentment, you can't keep living that way. It just keeps more and more division. I don't think we can have peace in our hearts or with our Lord when we have bitterness, unforgiveness, or resentment towards someone.

RANDY: Chip, that goes to my experience anyway, which is the times I don't have peace in my life is when I know I'm out of order. It's not the other person; the other person, someone could be, you know, causing me much grief, but if I get myself right in line with God then even the grief that's going on over here, I still have peace, which is inexplicable sometimes, right? How much of choosing peace is choosing to be obedient?

CHIP: I think a lot of it. The Apostle Paul can say, "I have learned" -- it is a process -- "to be content or be at peace, regardless of my circumstances, great or terrible. Then I think, really, abiding in Christ, I think we're looking for answers out here, and when circumstances change out here, and I meet the right person here, and when I can get my job back, or when my health recovers, we're always playing the "when then," I think Jesus would have us say right now, our greatest testimony as believers may be not that now, today, today -- this moment I can experience the supernatural peace that surpasses understanding. I think as we do that, it gives a lot of hope to a lot of other people.

SHEILA: You write on choosing peace in a broken world. I'm certainly more aware of that than I was at any other point in life. When you look at what's happening, your ministry reaches so many people in different circumstances; what does choosing peace in a broken world look like?

CHIP: Well, I think we live in a world right now where there is so much brokenness, even within the body of Christ now. I mean, there are people like masks/no masks, vaccine/no vaccine, open the church/don't open the church. There is such division. Blue state/red state, it goes on and on and on. Our minds 70 years ago, 50 years ago, we lived

in a town, and we knew the problems in our town. You would pray about those things. Well, now, you know the problems of the whole world in a half-hour with visual images, and our brains are made to resolve things. So I think one of the things we have to do, I'm not saying put your head in the sand, but watching the news on a regular basis in big doses, I will guarantee you'll be filled with anxiety.

SHEILA: I agree with that.

CHIP: In the book, there is a little study that's really pretty interesting; it's a longitudinal study of 12 years. They had an experimental group that listened for just five minutes -- not watched anything -- five minutes of a radio program with some negative news. After 12 years, that group thought the world was an unsafe place. They were less likely to help people and were convinced those things would happen to them.

Now imagine when you watch an hour, and it's so polarized now. It doesn't matter what actually happened, this broadcast is going to say it's this, and this broadcast is going to say this, and it just creates this anger in people.

So peace, part of it is, you've got to renew your mind. It says, "Dwell on these things," and then you've got to say no to getting bombarded with a lot of information that you can't control. So why fill your mind with it?

RANDY: On a different level, and this is where a lot of people are at, it's really hard to maintain peace when your body is falling apart, when you're facing a health issue that is completely out of your control, and especially for our audience that they're praying, others are praying for them, and they're still fighting it. I know we all face our health issues, but to me, that's one of the biggest areas that is very difficult to get peace in. What do you experience there?

CHIP: Are you reaching into my inner personal life here with some special information? Three years ago, for those of you that don't know, I had major back surgery. They built

my back up and put a titanium bar in and a screw. And then, about four months ago, I had another one where it ripped below it and above it. So I'm in pain all the time.

So I think I go to that passage to say am I living, in the words of C.S. Lewis, am I living for the line or am I living for the dot? And the dot is time. And the line is eternity. The Apostle Paul would say, "These momentary light afflictions aren't to be compared with the glories that will follow." So I think having an eternal perspective, Sheila, it goes back to -- I don't want to like this drum, like all that guy said was read the Bible! Memorize the Bible!

SHEILA: Go for it. I agree!

CHIP: I am still at this stage of my life, memorizing chapters of the Bible and key passages of the Bible. When I made it a habit like just that gray, you're not quite awake, just those first moments of just pray through whatever, Psalm 23 or Psalm 34 or I'm okay, Lord, today I'm chosen, and I'm deeply loved. So before anything happens, would you grant me the grace to put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, generous, and just pray through Colossians three.

What I find is, when God's in control, it doesn't mean everything is wonderful all the time, but that's where grace comes from. My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. And I'm, I was telling a friend the other day, I'm not to the point where, Second Corinthians, Paul says that's God's response. And then his response is, therefore, I must gladly boast about my weaknesses, my distress, my persecutions because when I'm weak, I'm strong. So I'm not boasting yet. But I'm not whining like I used to, and I'm choosing to be thankful. I know God is going to use this for good. And it is a reminder.

SHEILA: But I love your thing about an eternal perspective. One of my dearest friends on this planet, we've been friends for 40 years, is Joni Eareckson Tada. I was with her last weekend, and she's about to get up and speak at her retreat, and she texts me, and she is

like, would you pray because I'm in -- it's this irony of a quadriplegic who is constantly in pain. But she read that text that you mentioned about light and momentary. So it is nothing for the glory to come, which shifted how I think about it. Because I think what she's experiencing, what you're experiencing, is not light, and it is not momentary from our understanding. So what must the glory be like? If it is like, trust me, you'll forget all that because the glory -- our eternal perspective is mind-blowing.

CHIP: Yes, it is! I don't think we actually, and our consumerism that's crept into the evangelical churches, we actually think heaven is here on earth. And the fact of the matter is this, every good and perfect gift is from God, and I'm glad for all the wonderful things we've had. But the real payoff, the real joy -- heaven is real! And this is not heaven. I've heard a lot of people say things like, this is unprecedented times. Actually, it's not! Read your Bible. This little window we've had in American history for maybe 100-150 years of the culture being aligned with our faith, go to China, that's not true. Go to the Middle East, that's not true. Go to Southeast Asia, that's not true. The great majority of our brothers and sisters throughout history have been swimming upstream.

I think as I share in the book, it's that peace when God is working in us that may be one of the most powerful things we ever share. I didn't grow up in a Christian home. I remember coming back. I thought success is how you would find peace. My dad was Guam, Iwo Jima. His mom signed him to go into the Marines, World War II; a real athletic guy, 50-caliber machine gunner; ended up killing so many people. Lived with amazing guilt. As a result, became an alcoholic. He made it out, and all of his buddies were killed. But he made it out because he got wounded.

We went to a social church that was hypocritical. I don't believe in God, or if there is a God, I don't want anything to do with him. So get a basketball scholarship, date a pretty girl, be successful. And I worked like crazy. I remember just before I went away to college, a coach paid my way to a Fellowship of Christian Athletes camp. And it was when I was in the back here, there was a picture of Tom Landry on the wall. He spoke at that camp. It was the first time ever I opened the Bible to Romans 12, and I always

wondered if God existed, I wonder what he wants. When I read it, I realized he just wanted me. So I prayed to receive Christ, and then I met a bricklayer who was trained by the navigators and taught me how to have a quiet time.

And so, I was in the Bible for about a year. When I came back, it was two days, my dad turned to me and goes, "You're different. You're really different." I said, "What do you mean?" "No! Where did you get it? That peace that you have?" And I said, "Dad, I don't know. I asked Jesus to come into my life. I can't explain it much to you, but I started reading the New Testament."

My dad, as a good marine, got up at five am and read the New Testament for an hour every day. Three months later, he came in, and he goes, "I'm not sure how you get what you've got, but it has something to do with faith." He said, "How do you get it?" I was young. I said, "I don't know." He said, "Okay. Keep reading." So he read another three months. And later, at his bed, he got on his knees and received Christ. Because I wasn't aware of it, but when God changes us, we do have a peace. That's my heart for this book for people to experience what we already have.

RANDY: That's it! And that is what Christ brings. He changes everything. Brings us a peace that the world cannot explain, and we can show that to others. There are people right now who are facing situations where there is no peace. There is anxiety, there is death, in fact, but we can bring that peace to them in a physical way and as an example of Christ. Take a look at this.

On the mission field

Open captions:

>> We get our water from the river. My first child got sick from drinking the water. We took her to the hospital, but she still died. Two of my kids died because of contaminated water. I loved my kids...

Announcer: We do all we can to protect our kids. But beneath the blazing sun, thirst is a powerful force that can drive a child to drink the unthinkable.

Open captions:

>> I'm so afraid... our water is so far and very bad. I'm afraid my remaining family will have a very bad life.

Announcer: What took her children continues to threaten those who remain, as well as the other survivors in this village.

Open captions:

>> I feel so bad... We can't provide clean water for our children and grandchildren. They are really struggling.

End of clip

In the studio

SHEILA: I think we're so used to images on TV that it's almost like life becomes like a spectator sport. We watch. I'll never forget my first trip into Southern Africa to some of these villages. I wanted just for a moment to experience what some of these women were experiencing. They get up at 4:00 in the morning, and this is a very, very remote village. We have to actually camp in tents because that's all there is. They walk for about an hour and a half to get to this hand-dug well. It's only about six feet deep, and the water is filthy! But it is literally all they have.

I remember watching this mother getting this bucket of this horrible water and giving some to her child. It was like everything in me wanted to stop her, and I realized how ridiculous I was being because that's all they have. The thing is, she's just like me. It's just that I was born in Scotland, and she was born in this particular area in Africa. I've never

had to think, with my son, is this water going to give them life, or is it going to introduce death? They face it every single day.

That's why we're coming to you with Water for LIFE! Because literally, that's what it means. You drink this contaminated water, and there's a really good chance, particularly when you're just a wee one, when you're just little. You've got no immunity, no resistance, so anything that's contaminated can take you out in a moment. Every single mother I met on that trip had lost at least one child to drinking contaminated water.

But we have found a way of changing all of that. So, Randy, if we all, if you and I, if we do it together, we can change this.

RANDY: We know this because we've been doing this for many, many years. I want to point out one thing that I think is important to Sheila and I, and to my parents. As we go and bring this water that saves lives physically, we also bring the ultimate water of life, which is Jesus Christ. I think that's a very critical component to what we call "relief work." We need to meet their practical, physical needs, but we also must meet their spiritual needs.

As we go and drill these wells in these countries, 20 nations are our goal this year -- 20 nations, 350 wells. I want you to know that we're not just giving them water to drink temporarily; we're giving them the water from which they will never thirst again. We're giving them Christ. So when we ask you to join us, we're not just asking you to drill wells. We are asking you to drill wells, but we're also asking you to join us in reaching people with the demonstrable love of Christ. This is the message we preach.

Will you go online or go to the phones right now? \$48 will help provide water for ten people for an average of a lifetime. \$4800 is the average cost of one well. Some of you can do that and more. I'm asking you to join us as we give them water so they won't die physically, and we give them the water of life, Jesus Christ, so that they will live eternally. Join us now. Go to the phone, go online, give the best gift you can.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Waterborne illness is a killer that strikes the most vulnerable. For many impoverished families, the death of a child is the tragic result of having no choice but to drink contaminated water. But with your help, they won't have to make this choice ever again. Mission: Water for LIFE provides clean, fresh drinking water for thousands of children and their families, giving them a life free from the fear of death.

With your gift today, you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten. \$72 will provide for 15. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift, we'll send you *Bible Promises For Life*, the ultimate handbook to everything God guarantees you in his word. A powerful resource that will give you the confidence to face life's troubles. With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "I Will Give You Rest" throw. It is a reminder of our Savior's promise of rest to those who trust in His grace and love.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. You may request our new, inspiring bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video**In the studio**

SHEILA: Thank you so much. And for any gift at all, request a copy of Chip's book, *I Choose Peace*; how to quiet your heart in an anxious world. It's just -- thank you for

writing this. It is just a gift. I'm so grateful that you extended that gift to us.

CHIP: My joy, Sheila and Randy. I just have to say, I don't know how you end the program because it's my first time, but I'd love to pray for people for God's peace. Is that okay?

SHEILA: We'd love it!

CHIP: Father, I ask in the Lord Jesus' name and in your great power that you would remind every one of your children that you dwell within them, that you want to speak to them, you want to heal and bring joy and peace. Lord, I pray that you would draw us to yourself. God, that you'd make things clear to our minds and hearts that are bombarding us in ways that are keeping us from you.

Lord, I thank you for Sheila, for Randy, and for James and Betty. And I pray you would -- I just was moved as I saw that video. Would you help us say no to a latte or say no to stuff, to say yes to people that have real needs? I pray that in Jesus' name. Amen.

SHEILA: Amen.

RANDY: Thank you, Chip. Thank you for sharing. Thank you for watching. We'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*.