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Week six: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Kyle Idleman

SHEILA: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Sheila Walsh here with Randy Robison. I'm excited about this book, Randy, and excited about the concept. If you were to ask me, okay, Sheila, what is your least favorite word in the English language? It would be this: Mingle. I don't like mingling. And our guest today has written an incredible book about how to actually live and be the way Jesus was. It is called *One At a Time*. So welcome Kyle Idleman. We're so glad you're here.

KYLE: It's great to be here. Thanks for having me on.

RANDY: I think you touched a nerve with both of us in this idea of not knowing necessarily how to relate to crowds, to large groups of people. But man, for a pastor, that could be a little bit of a setback.

KYLE: Yeah. I wasn't quite prepared for it as a pastor, frankly. I did not always know how to respond in large crowds with mingling. I wasn't natural with it. And then, as I started to study through the gospels, I began to recognize that Jesus would have influence and impact one person at a time. So now, he was often surrounded by crowds, but he would see the one within the crowd.

For me, I think this is true for us culturally right now. The tendency is to measure impact and influence by how many people you have -- like how many viewers, how many Instagram followers, how many views on YouTube. And yet, the gospel advanced when

one person at a time received the love of God through someone God put in their path. So that reminder of here's why we do what we do, here's how the world gets changed, it's when as followers of Christ, we embrace that call to love and see people *One At a Time*.

SHEILA: I really think it is a very timely book. Because I think with everything that happened in 2020 and 2021, it's like we almost lost ourselves; people got lonely and disconnected. But you start your book with a very -- when I read the first story I was like, oh, my gosh! As a parent, I can't imagine. So tell us what happened when you went in to wake Morgan.

KYLE: When my daughter was two years old, I came home from work, and one of my favorite things to do is wake up a child from a nap; it's just a sweet time. I went up to her room to wake her up. I didn't see her in her bed, and then I noticed, which is weird that I didn't notice it immediately, but I noticed the chest of drawers had fallen over and it was on the floor. It just hit me that she's under there. I lifted it up, and she was nonresponsive. She was black and blue, swollen.

I tried to call 911, but no one answered. We tried three or four times, and no one answered, so we rushed to the hospital. We got to the hospital, and when we arrived, they said, "Only one parent can go back there with her." My wife, we did not discuss this; she was going.

I sat out in that hospital hallway. I remember sitting up against the wall and never feeling more lonely than at that moment. I cried out to God and said, God, this is my daughter! This is my daughter. Knowing at that moment that God's response was she's my daughter too. That he saw her as a Heavenly Father, the way I saw her as a father.

And in John -- actually, in Luke chapter 8, there is a story where the woman with the issue of blood reaches out, and she touches the cloak of Jesus. There is a large crowd, right, in that scenario that is all around Jesus. She tries to withdraw from the crowd. And there's this really beautiful verse that says, "Seeing that she could not go unnoticed."

Jesus was looking for her, and she realized, oh, he's not going to let me go unseen.

And that verse changed me as a pastor of what my job is as a follower of Jesus is to make sure that one person in the crowd doesn't go unnoticed. But when Jesus speaks to her, he calls her "daughter." He says, "daughter." And especially, in that time, that word would have been incredibly personal and intimate. And Jesus calls her "daughter." And to know how he felt about that woman is how I felt about my little girl as I was sitting in that hospital hallway. Whenever I'm with a crowd of people, I'm really with his sons and daughters -- these are his sons and daughters. And as much as it means to me to have someone take care of my daughter in a moment like that, that that's how God feels when we take care of his sons and daughters.

After about six weeks, she got all of her feeling back. She had some nerve damage but recovered from it. So it was a journey of dependence on God, just learning to trust him, to care for my girl. And then hearing that as a calling for me to care for his sons and daughters.

SHEILA: The thing I love about that story is that Jesus is actually on his way to a very influential person's house, and yet he stops. You know that Jairus has got to be like, come on, come on, come on! But sometimes we're more impacted in the church by the people with the big reputation. We want to make sure they're happy and miss the one person who actually needs us.

KYLE: I think that's a great example of you've got a crowd of unidentified people, you have Jairus who is a very influential person, and then you have this woman who would have been considered unclean and would not have been welcome. And Jesus stops for that one; that's who he sees and gives his attention to.

RANDY: Most of our viewers want God to work in their lives, for God to work through them, we would say. How does this kind of paradigm shift where you focus on someone *One At a Time* change our impact, do you think?

KYLE: I think the prayer to God, do something through me that will have a great impact in this world, that's a beautiful prayer. That's a great prayer. One of the things I see, and maybe this is just true of every young generation, is there is a tendency to say, God, do something through me without first saying, God, what do you want to do in me? If I've learned anything over the years, it is that what God does in me, he'll do through me. So if I can give my attention to, God, what do you want to do in me, he'll give me opportunities to impact people through me.

Sheila, you're a great example of this, of how your journey, what God has done in you has impacted people through you. That's the way of the kingdom. But most of us want to skip to the end and go straight to the through.

And so, when I look at my day, I know at the beginning of the day I want God to use me to impact people. So my focus is often on, okay, what do you want to do through me here and here and here? But I need to start with God; what do you want to do in me?

And then, what I discovered is when I start there, the other things begin to happen. Mark chapter one is such a great example of this where the crowds are surrounding Jesus; he goes off early in the morning to a quiet place to pray. The disciples come to him, saying, hey, there are all kinds of people with all kinds of needs. Come on, what are you doing?

Jesus says, "We're going to go to some other towns to preach because that's why I've come." And by spending some time alone, and if he needs to do it, we need to do it, he knew what God wanted to do through him. And it was different than what the crowds wanted him to do. So learning, as a person who wants to make a difference, to begin with the prayer of what do you want to do in me? And then trust God to do that through you.

SHEILA: I'm thinking of people watching at home thinking; I totally get it. Because God has entrusted you with so much, Kyle. I mean, your church, your congregation, your writing, everything has really impacted a nation. But I'm thinking of somebody who

thinks, well, how does this principle impact my life? What do you I do?

KYLE: So to answer that, let me go to 1956. I wasn't born yet, but my dad was ten years old. He grew up in a home where his parents didn't know Jesus at all. His dad was struggling with alcoholism. Two people came and knocked on the door one morning. My dad was playing with some trucks on the floor, and these two men had met my grandparents in a hospital, kind of randomly, and they just came to check on them. They sat down on that couch. They reached out to them and invited them to come to church with them. They changed the trajectory of not just my grandparents' life but my dad's life and my life.

So here's how to answer your question. Their willingness to walk across the street and knock on that door and introduce my grandparents to Jesus changed everything about me. What you don't know, and you don't know, and I don't know is how God will use those *One At a Time* moments over the course of history to impact all kinds of people. They didn't know when they went and knocked on my grandparents' door that they would somehow be impacting me as a person to write a book in 2022. But for sure, that's all connected.

So I want to be a good steward of trusting that God will use the *One At a Time* opportunities I have in front of me today to do whatever he wants to do, but we can't predict that. The way of the kingdom is that it advances one person at a time, but then it's explosive in that.

RANDY: Several of the things you say in your book are very simple yet very profound. Such as seeing someone *One At a Time*. But to make a sort of practical guide for people, I think, you say, you see someone, and then you do something. You have to have that compassion and to have that impact. Explain that to us a little bit.

KYLE: Yeah. So there is a rhythm in the gospels where we read Jesus saw, Jesus had compassion, and Jesus did something. So for us, it begins with a prayer, God, help me see

what you see. And then it involves our hearts; God, help me to feel how you feel for people. In fact, if you look at the gospels, the number one emotion that Jesus felt in the gospels was compassion, which is interesting. Because most of us, if we identified our primary emotion, it would be very much about what we're going through in our circumstances. The primary emotion that Jesus felt was what other people were going through. It's really interesting.

Then when you read compassion, if you do a word study on this in the gospels, there is almost always an “and” attached to his compassion. So it wasn't Jesus had compassion, period. It was Jesus had compassion and. He did something with it. And so, for me, the test of compassion, and I think this is true for anyone who is a follower of Christ, is can you tell a story? Is there a story? If you say you have compassion, then tell me the name of someone. Tell me the story of something. Who are you praying for? Who are you supporting? How are you helping with some of the opportunities that you all give people to care for people who are hungry, for people who can't get clean water? It's one thing to see those opportunities and feel something, but really, the test of gospel compassion is, are you doing something about it? That's really the *One At a Time* test is action.

SHEILA: I found it interesting, too; we've been praying for the people of Haiti recently because so much is going on there that's just devastating. But you were actually in the Dominican Republic when the earthquake in Haiti hit. Tell us what your experience was during that time.

KYLE: So we were doing some mission work in the Dominican, and on the other side of the island, the earthquake hit. We felt it physically, but we were not really aware of its significance at the moment. It took a while for the news of what had happened to get to us. So that radically changed our plans, and we began going over to Haiti. We would spend a number of months there in the upcoming years.

But I talk about this a little bit in the book. What changed my heart for Haiti was that I happened to be there to meet families, to see people, to hold a little girl. And if I had been

in the U.S. during that, I know I would have helped; I know as a church, we would have been a part of it. But because I was there, it just changed our approach and our passion.

One of the things I talk about in the book is that there's no substitute for proximity. For people who feel discouraged because I don't feel like I'm making a difference with my life, one of the things I would say is, well, you've got to get out of your house. You've got to get out of your routine. You've got to get out of the office. You've got to be around people.

Now you don't have to go to the Dominican, you don't have to go to Haiti, but you have to be around. Again and again, in the gospels, we read that Jesus was on his way somewhere. Like he didn't hang out much in the Temple. He was going to different places. Or he had to go to Samaria. So he's in Samaria, and he meets the woman at the well. And so, if you can be in proximity to where people are hurting, and you have a prayer, God, help me see people the way you see people, you will have *One At a Time* stories to share.

SHEILA: I love that.

RANDY: It is beautiful. I'm going to go off track just a little bit. I have had a tendency, and I see this a lot in the church, and that is when I get around people, I see their sin. And I think that's hard for a lot of people. God has to do that work in you so that you can even have that compassion so that you can even want to be close to people. How much does the church need to learn, hey, this really is how God sees them. He sees them as daughters, even the ones that are as far from God as you can imagine. God sees them as sons and daughters. He wants them to come home, and we're supposed to be the agents to bring them home.

KYLE: For me, I relate to that. I know what that's like. When I feel that way, it is a reminder to me that I need to better understand how God sees me because when I understand how he sees me, it changes the way I see people. Because when he sees me,

he doesn't see the sin. He could, but the Bible says because of Jesus, it is removed from me as far as the east is from the west. It is buried in the deepest part of the sea.

And so when I'm reminded of how he sees me, and I take the time to live in His grace towards me, then I have it for other people. If I don't do that or if I step out of that discipline of living in His grace, then it becomes much more difficult, and I become more frustrated, and if I'm honest, irritable with people; more easily annoyed, like why are you still doing this? Right? And so, seeing people with that *One At a Time* lens means that I've got to make sure that I'm spending time understanding God's grace towards me as he sees me.

RANDY: That's a good reminder. Very good!

SHEILA: The thing I love about this book, and we're going to tell you in a minute how you can get hold of your own copy, it is a fantastic book. We get the privilege of reading all sorts of books, but I felt like this could be a massive shift in each one of us if we understood that we're all on a mission 24/7. It's just something that each one of us, not that we have to do, but we have this incredible privilege. So that's my daily prayer, Lord, give me eyes what I'm going to miss and give me ears behind what somebody is saying to what's actually going on. What's your prayer for this book, Kyle?

KYLE: Well, you captured it really well. I know the tendency to think, oh hey, I want the kingdom of God to advance and grow. I want God's will to be done in this world. I'm sure glad there are people like Randy and Sheila. I'm glad that there are people out there doing that work. But the kingdom of God advances when followers of Jesus each individually embrace this *One At a Time* way of living.

In fact, if you look at the first 300 years of Christian history, this is how the kingdom of God advanced. It was a small, very, relatively small group of Jesus followers. But they loved and cared for people in a way that the rest of the first-century world had no interest in. Over time it became more and more compelling.

And to understand that the kingdom of God is going to advance not because of power and position, it is not because we're going to have the right people with the right kind of influence, and this many followers and this much authority. It's because people who are servants of Jesus, followers of Jesus choose to love people *One At a Time* in their daily lives. If we get that, I think the impact is exponential.

RANDY: Absolutely. We're going to show you somebody, and we're going to give you that opportunity. We hope that it stirs God's compassion in you. And then, as Kyle said, you'll do something. When you do something today, we would love to send you Kyle's book *One At a Time* if you'll request it. But take just a moment and see this.

On the mission field

Announcer: Everyone on earth depends on water to live. Where access to clean water is lacking, people either die from thirst or they resort to desperate measures often with tragic results.

Open Captions

>> My name is Virginia. These three are my children. My other children are dead. Their disease was caused by the unclean water. It's the reason my children died. Glorios, she was my daughter. She was six months old when she died. Shadrach was a very strong boy. He was always playing, always catching things, but the day he got sick he couldn't do anything. He was suffering... He was suffering from diarrhea. When I remember Shadrach all I can do is cry.

Announcer: Every child's death is a tragedy. The deaths of Virginia's children are especially painful in that they could have been prevented simply by drilling a clean water well in their village.

Open Captions

>> I fear for this one; now he's sick.

Announcer: We cannot change the past but there are children still alive whose futures hang in the balance and can still be saved if we only choose to act.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: It's so easy to watch the news or listen to statistics. It's almost kind of mind-numbing; it washes over us. But one of the things that have always been the heart of James and Betty is to see each child one child at a time. Because if you think of the thousands, millions of children who need help, sometimes you do nothing. But when you see that there is one child that you can help.

I'll never forget walking with a mom the first time that I was in Angola, to the place where she went to get water every morning. At first start, it was a long walk; she got up at 4:00 in the morning. The water was filthy. I watched her fill her buckets and give two to her children. Just downstream, there were animals. You could tell that the water was -- disease, obviously, comes from the water but also filth. That's all she had to give.

When I asked our interpreter a question, he said, "Here's her choice. She's already buried two. So it's this, or it's nothing." I'll never forget that because we can change that, and we can do it easily.

Randy, maybe you can break it down for us. There is an entry-level for every single one of us to do something.

RANDY: And the great thing about it, Sheila, is that it is so doable. We've been doing this for many years. Our goal during this campaign is to drill 350 wells in 20 nations where they are desperately in need of uncontaminated, clean drinking water. And you can be a part of bringing that to them.

When we break it down, in some places, it is more expensive than others, but when we look at the campaign as a whole, the average cost of one well is \$4,800. That well -- just one well -- will impact villages in the surrounding area. On average, about 1,000 people

will now have clean drinking water for, it's about 70 years, most of the wells last for a lifetime for many people. You can have that impact. A \$4800 gift today will give clean drinking water to a thousand people for a lifetime. Not all of you can do that; I understand. \$144 would give that same clean drinking water to an average of 30 people. Or a gift of \$48 would reach ten people with clean drinking water.

I know that's a lot of numbers, but as we've talked about today just seeing that one. When you look into the eyes of that one child, just know that it may not be that particular child, but it's a child just like that; that you will be saving their life. We can do this. But we can't do this alone. We rely on viewers like you to reach out and be a part of Water for LIFE.

Will you go to the phone or go online right now? Make the best gift you can. And know that you will be seeing someone as God sees them, as that child of God that he loves so much that he sent his Son for. And you can reach out with the arms and love of Jesus Christ and show them that we are his hands and feet.

Let's do it right now together. Go online, go to the phones, make the best gift you can. You will be giving Water for LIFE.

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

On the mission field:

RALPH: Randy, Sheila, I travel all over the world as the director of missions for *LIFE Today*. I continue to hear some of the same stories. Death. Why? Simply because they don't have clean drinking water. These mothers who wanted to give life to her children, she wanted to bring health to her family by bringing water home. But she ends up bringing contaminated water--if she can find any. And it brings death to her children.

I beg you as parents, I'm a parent myself, help our viewers understand none of us want to bring death into our home. None of us want to bring contaminated water to our children. We want to bring water that is going to bring them life. Please help our viewers know that they can give and be an answer to a mother's cry. I need your help today.

In the studio

RANDY: I hope you are going online or going to the phone right now and making the best gift you can. You can have such an impact. When you do it today, I really wish you

would request Kyle's book. It will bless you.

SHEILA: Yeah, it's called *One At a Time*. It is phenomenal. You'll want one for yourself, and you'll want one for your kids, and you'll want one for your neighbor. I really believe, Kyle, this is a book that could shift the paradigm of how we're living as God's children. Thank you for writing this. It's awesome!

KYLE: Thank you.

RANDY: And thank you for watching. We'll see you next time on *LIFE Today*!