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Week 16: Rescue LIFE

Sheila Walsh and Randy Robison

Jeremy and Adrienne Camp

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me and we're excited. I have to read you just a little bit of this real quick to set up today's guest, because Jeremy Camp, if you don't already know that in his career, over the last two decades, he has sold over five million albums! He has 41 number one radio hits; I think that may be more by now. But a Grammy nomination, three American Music Award nominations, five Dove Awards, four ASCAP Songwriter of the Year. And we're excited to welcome Jeremy and Adrienne Camp to *Life Today*. Great to have you guys!

JEREMY: Thank you! Now I feel embarrassed.

ADRIENNE: I actually was going to say, and add to that list, he is married to an epic South African woman.

[Laughter]

SHEILA: Absolutely! I love, love, love your accent. It is absolutely gorgeous. One of the things I wanted to ask you about was, I remember the day that your movie was released, *I Still Believe*, and we'll talk a little bit about the back story there. But I remember it opened in, I don't know, like 6,000 movie theaters? It was the number one movie and then the pandemic hit. What impact did that have on you guys?

JEREMY: Yeah! It was tough because you think about it, for a few years have put blood, sweat, and tears behind something, and let alone having to relive grief is very

difficult. So, as we were filming the whole thing, I had to relive a lot of the grief, and really, it was difficult, went through some really hard times. But one of the most beautiful things was, during the filming was, I remember breaking down at one point and just -- it was a very difficult scene, and I ran off the set. I was just weeping, and my wife came and just held me and just cried with me. I came back later and I'm standing behind my family, my wife and my three kids, and I'm watching them see the darkest part of my life but realizing that they're seeing God's faithfulness. Because here we are together as a family seeing on the other end how God has come through.

So it is difficult to not have it really reach what we thought it was going to, but I think it actually reached deeper than I thought it was going to, and that's the whole goal anyway. It's like my expectations were definitely taken down and it was difficult. But I think the depth overall and how it reached people's hearts because of the pandemic was so much greater. And that's the heart's goal. (Not sure but I think that's what he just said.)

ADRIENNE: Yeah, I think it was almost for us having to live out really what the movie was, even though I can't see I still believe. So even in it was that whole thank God, we don't understand right now like why you're allowing this to happen, and what's going on around the world. We've poured so much into this. But really having an eternal perspective of seeing God at work in other ways even though it wasn't what we were expecting or what we thought it was going to look like.

RANDY: Now, for those in our audience who did not see the movie, *I Still Believe*, which is available for you guys, you can go watch it, Jeremy, give people a little bit of an overview of what the story is. Because it is a true story, it is your life.

JEREMY: Yeah, so about 23 years ago, I met this woman named Melissa who was incredible. And so we got married knowing she had cancer. Really, I felt like going into it, I was down for whatever. I was like God, I'm going to marry her no matter what, but I really believed that she was going to be healed. And the whole story is just our love story of how God brought us together. And then three and a half months into our marriage, she

went to be with Jesus.

And so really, it's the story of someone coming together, stepping out in faith knowing, okay, we're going to trust the Lord in this no matter what. And then kind of the journey afterward and the struggles I went through and the difficulties. But then watching the release of like this is what God has done in his faithfulness. It was a beautiful kind of picture of his redemption. I'm not going to give it away but this beautiful young lady next to me, doesn't make an appearance, but someone that plays her makes an appearance. It is just a special sign of God's redemption for sure.

SHEILA: One of the things that I thought when A, when the song came out, then the movie, and the book, and also, I've watched interviews you've both given, is how well you have stewarded your suffering. So often we want to avoid suffering. Nobody welcomes it but the way that you have both stewarded that suffering, it's like the fruit. I think only eternity will reveal the fruit that has come from the tears that you have shed.

But I wanted to ask you, Adrienne, when you meet Jeremy and you were a very awesome singer in your own band and you guys come together, when it became clear that you were falling for one another, I wondered what it's like not only to come into a relationship with someone who's grieving, but I would imagine a whole family who is grieving. How did you navigate that?

ADRIENNE: Honestly, there are parts of it that I feel like God gave me the grace to handle, and then some parts that were really hard. But what I tried to do constantly was just to think about, instead of taking it personally, sort of putting myself front and center, I really tried to put myself in other people's shoes.

So for instance, like, with each moment, like okay, like Jeremy is bringing me home for the first time, if I was Jeremy's mom and still grieving Melissa, what would that be like to have this new girl walk in the room and just to try to create space for where their grief might have still been? Jeremy's mom still had wedding pictures of Jeremy and Melissa in

their house really up until, literally, like a few days before our wedding that she finally took them down.

But it was almost in those moments going yeah, of course, it is difficult. But if that were me, imagine if I came in and said, "Everybody take those pictures down right now. Like I'm the new girl." You know what I mean? For one, that's -- that's not going to get grief. Or it's not going to be good for me, it's not going to be good for them. So I always had to put myself in their shoes. What would it be like if I was them?

And then just give each other the grace and the freedom knowing like -- I don't even know, I was 21-22, when I met Jeremy, so I was still really young. I'm not even saying I walked it out perfectly, but I think it was just those things that it was like, God, give me the heart for where they might be, and walk that through with them.

And I think as well, I saw myself, Jeremy and I became friends first before we were interested in each other, and it was really about just being there as friends. How would you walk this through with a friend? Instead of because there is a love interest, all of the sudden be insecure. Because it's got to be about me, and this is where I'm getting my worth. And so I think it really just taught me to go to God, I need to get my words from you, I've got to get my value from you. And that in turn gives me the strength to be able to walk out with Jeremy or his family in any capacity that I need to -- what's the thing I can bring to the table?

JEREMIAH: One thing I want to say just to add to that. The reason why she was such a big supporter is I remember her saying, "Listen, it's not about me, it's not about Melissa, it's not about you, Jeremy, it's about Jesus." I think that was kind of the whole reason why we were able to walk through this is that mindset. It is not about us, we all know that. It literally is about Jesus. So our preferences, or what we want, need to go aside and say God, what do you want? What do you want to do?

ADRIENNE: I think what's interesting even about that is it was Melissa's relationship

with God that gave me the confidence to know that she wouldn't have wanted it to be about her. So because of her beautiful relationship with Jesus, I could say, I know that's not what she wants so I don't have to make it about me. Like we can almost collectively be in sort of a partnership of championing -- championing what Jesus does in our lives; and those hard, hard places that he meets us. So it was actually, I think beautiful, how it all just kind of fed into each other.

RANDY: And that's a wonderful way for both of you to honor her life. And I appreciate that.

Jeremy, I have to ask you, I read all of the accolades at the beginning of this show but isn't it true that you were actually opening for Adrienne's band when y'all met?

[Laughter]

ADRIENNE: You guys are awesome!

[Laughter]

JEREMY: All I have to say is you guys have done your research. I'm very impressed. That doesn't always happen. Very well done! That is true.

RANDY: You guys also, have built a life together. What do you see is sort of the calling of Jeremy and Adrienne being?

JEREMY: I think we recently, well, actually a lot, we've done worship together a ton. Even last night we did a worship night at our church together and just had a time of just saying, all right, guys, we're having a time of worship. Come forward for prayer, whatever it may be. And it was just beautiful. I always say it is a little more anointed when she is with me so I like to have her with me.

RANDY: I believe it. Yeah!

JEREMY: You know what I'm saying. But we also wrote a marriage book and it felt like this could marriage suicide writing a marriage book. And really, it was like, oh no! This is going to be a crumble and fall. But actually, it was beautiful because it really came together in a way because we were very transparent anyway in the book; like we didn't hold back any punches. We weren't just throwing out our dirty laundry to throw out dirty laundry. It was like here's what we've learned during our marriage and what God has taught us. And here's a way that we can point you to Jesus in the midst of these miscommunications or whatever you're upbringing may be that causes different issues. So I think marriage is a part of our calling to minister to those that are hurting in that and to restore. I think even just suffering. In Second Corinthians, it says we are called to comfort others with what we've been comforted. I think that's also what we've been called to do. I think music and worship.

SHEILA: Tell me about speaking louder. What is that all about?

JEREMY: Yeah, so years ago, our heart, we love missions. I love sharing the gospel. I always say I'm a minister of the gospel who just happens to play music. And so that's always been my heart, always been my mindset. And so I really, I feel like God has called me to evangelize. So when I play on stage, I'm always sharing the gospel in one way or another. And so years ago, I felt like God laid on my heart to do a ministry, a nonprofit to go overseas and do missions. And so what we have done, I'll give you an example. So a few years ago, we went to Uganda. What we tried to do is we tried to encourage the community. So we have a conference for all the leaders in the area to get them prepared for the event that we do.

And then we do a helps project. We built a hospital in Tebay, Uganda which has been incredible to see how that has just really brought people to know Christ because it's hey we're going to provide for your needs but we're going to tell you about Jesus. And then encourage the community.

And also, doing a large-scale event. We had 35,000 people in Uganda and 1,000 people responded to the gospel. And so we have follow-up there.

We work with local churches. We make sure it is not a thing where they fall through the cracks. We really try to make sure we're working hand-in-hand with the local people. And so it is our desire.

We've done India, I've done Kyrgyzstan, I've done Ukraine, which that is difficult right now. Just even saying that makes me emotional. Jeesh! So I remember going to Kiev and doing outreach and just the beauty of what God did there. And so my heart breaks. And so that's our desire. We're hoping to go to India again and Georgia. Back to Eastern Europe and Georgia, if things are okay because it is so close to Russia.

Just pray for us in that. We're praying about what to do and wanting to reach out to the people. And so have the heart to go.

RANDY: You guys are busy. You've been on tour this year already, which is great, post-COVID, right? But yet you also have a family. How do you manage all of that?

JEREMY: That's a good question. No, we actually homeschool, for one. And so it's been a thing that we've brought my family, I would say they come about 50 percent of the time. They come about half of the time with me anyway. We make sure, it is very important for us to stick together as a family. And actually, it was very sweet, I'll just tell you this, is that during the pandemic when everything was shut down, I remember my daughter saying, "Dad, we miss the road! Like the bus is our second home." And it makes me happy because it makes me feel that they're not ruined. We're like dragging them along with us to say you're going to be a part of what we do. They actually enjoy it. So that was a comfort to me to be like, oh my goodness, they enjoy this and they feel like it is home.

ADRIENNE: I think when they were younger, instead of it just being always about this is Jeremy's thing, and this is what dad does, we tried to encourage our kids, the sacrifice that you're making has eternal worth and eternal benefits. So it wasn't just, this is Jeremy, but it was like we're a team together and we're in this together, we're doing this together. And even on the road, we would encourage them, the Lord can use you to minister to band people and to minister to the crew. And I promise you, like we've seen so many times where I feel like the Lord used our kids more than he did us. And so we've always tried to make them feel like they're a part of it, and it's not just like Jeremy's thing that he goes out and does this thing.

SHEILA: One of the things I love about both of you is you're very honest, you're very vulnerable. You've spoken, Jeremy, about your battle with anxiety and depression, which used to be, when I was hospitalized years ago for depression, that was a no-no subject; there was so much stigma attached. Talk to us a little about that and your decision to be open about that.

JEREMY: I think that realizing when you start to be transparent, it is like our marriage. When you start to be transparent and share your struggles, you realize that you're not alone. You're not an island. That generally, a lot of people, more than you think, especially in marriage, everyone goes through kind of the same stuff; different but everyone goes through conflicts and hardships.

And so I think with me, four years ago, it was four years ago I went through this time where I was having panic attacks, I was having social anxiety, I couldn't go out. It was really bad. I remember just -- she was waging warfare with me. It was amazing, just her praying for me and listening to worship.

And finally, I was just crying out to God saying, Lord, what is it?

And he spoke to me and said, "You're trying to control too much stuff. You're not trusting me."

I call it the three F's: It was family, finances, and future. I was trying to like, I wasn't trusting him with those things. And also realized I had a relationship with someone close that was very difficult, and I had some bitterness in my heart. So when I confessed those things, he started lifting that.

I remember just -- and I know there are also other things that are not just hey, I need to confess, I need to trust the Lord. There are things, and chemical things, I understand that completely. But for me, it was definitely, I was holding on to things that were causing me to have anxiety and depression in a dark place I was in. But God lifted it when I said, "God, I'm sorry. I trust you. I'm sorry for being bitter. I want to have forgiveness."

And so I realized when I started kind of sharing slowly and slowly, the floodgates opened and everyone wanted to talk about it. I was like yeah! Let's talk about it. I think that more people battled than we realize, and they just want to know that they're not alone, and it helps to kind of get through that.

SHEILA: That's so true.

RANDY: It is. And I appreciate you being open and honest about it. Not just that, with you, but your marriage, your book *In Unison* that people can pick up wherever you get books, that's great.

You guys made a purposeful step during the pandemic to do more worship. Not that your stuff, your music isn't worship because it kind of is but you guys moved toward the worship. Why was that an important thing? And what do you want people to take home from that when they hear your worship music?

ADRIENNE: I think we were so aware, everybody was, of just so many different things going on. There was so much division, so much chaos and we needed our hearts recentered and just focused on the Lord. It was one of those, sort of a cry of our hearts,

God, we need to fix our eyes on you or else we're all going to drown in this. So I think it was just us going we need this. So if we need this, I'm almost sure other people need it as well.

So this is our offering. Just going, God, this is so hard but all we need to do right now is to cling to you. And so it was just one of those moments that we're going, this is what we're actively doing and we're inviting the community or whoever logs on to be a part of that. Just recentering again, going God, you're the thing right now that is going to get us through. Not any right political leader, not any decisions, not any blah, blah, blah, it's just like Jesus this is you and you alone.

So that was us just really crying out to the Lord going, we want to do this. I think, we really try to be intentional about not just doing it to do it. Jeremy and I really, were very prayerful about when we felt led to do it. It wasn't like this kind of formulated thing. We both -- it was really sweet. It actually happened simultaneously for both of us. We were both just so incredibly burdened going, I think we need to have worship, a time of worship together. I'd be like, absolutely. I'm feeling the same thing so let's just go ahead and do that.

SHEILA: And it's so powerful. You are both officially adopted into the *Life Today* family. We just love you!

JEREMY: Oh! We love you guys! Thank you! We're very excited to be on your show.

SHEILA: There is so much, guys, I want you to be able to go on online. You can watch the movie and stream these services, they're going to be on Hulu for a bit, and then it is going to be on Netflix, but watch the movie.

But one of the things I would love for you to do right now is to watch a little movie of our own talking about young girls who are captured, trafficked, and need some freedom. They need to know that there is a reason to still believe. So would you watch this?

On the mission field

Open Captions

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14

SHEILA: God's Word tells us that Jesus cares for and values little children. Well, statistics tell us that human traffickers couldn't care less for them. The only value to them is the money they can make from the traffickers who exploit them for sex and forced labor.

Such was the case of two little girls, Abini and Belli who were five and seven years old when our mission partners in south Asia rescued them. Abini was living in the brothels with her mother who was a sex worker. Her pimp was allowed to molest little Abini.

Belli was found in a remote village with a madame who was selling her off to an old man who was already abusing and using her for himself. His next step would have been to sell her off to the local brothels in a major city. The good news is *LIFE Outreach*, along with our mission partners is rescuing trafficked children through education in their villages, SWAT team raids literally knocking down doors to brothels, and one-on-one ministry outreach efforts.

Both girls are now loved, safe, and cared for in our LIFE Center getting an education, learning about the Lord, praying, and singing as little children should be doing. Stories like these would not have been possible without the help of our viewers! But there are still thousands of children around the world crying out for someone to rescue them.

At *LIFE Outreach*, we have partnered with missionaries on the ground to reach, to rescue, to restore these children of all ages caught in the grip of human trafficking. The

only way we can continue this work is with your help and the time to act is now.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: I will never ever, ever forget the faces of those little girls because that's what they are -- they're just children, little girls, sweet little girls! That little girl that you saw crying on my shoulder, she was just one of the most precious girls that I'd ever met. But her thing was when I asked her, "Who is there for you?"

She said, "Nobody. Nobody."

Can you imagine at nine, ten, eleven, twelve, that you have no one in this world that you can count on to speak up on your behalf? That is why Rescue LIFE is so important to us here at *Life Today*. Honestly, it is burned into my bones. Once you've seen those children and you see the desperation, you can never ever forget.

This is our last week of Rescue LIFE. So it is so important that we do something and that we do something now. Because I've been to both places. I've walked the streets where these young girls are often kidnapped at midnight when they're trying to pick up a few beer cans to sell to be able to give milk to their younger siblings. And I've been to our beautiful home, where we take little girls and boys too, sometimes, to let them know you are not forgotten. You have wondered, does anybody care? The creator of the universe cares about you and he sent us, we're coming in his name to reach you, to rescue you, to restore you. And Randy, when we all do something, we can change the world for these little ones.

RANDY: Absolutely! Sheila, I know it's your heart. You want to be there for them, and we all do. The only way that we can be there is with your help. And Sheila, I don't know if you know this, over the last six months our mission partners have told us, you saw

those two stories right there today, we have reached a thousand children over the last six months. That's a thousand stories like that where your love has made the difference.

I've got to tell you, it's only through your love and support that we're able to do this. We have people in place, but we need you to continue the ongoing support. This is the last week we're talking about this on the air but we're still doing it. This never stops. We also have a matching gift right now; a \$320,000 matching gift where people have stepped up and said, yeah, I want to match every dollar that you give today.

So I just pray you would go online or go to the phones right now. The average cost typically is about \$128 when we distill all the operations down; \$128 for each child. But with the matching grant, your \$128 gift today will actually help reach, rescue, or restore two -- two! Many of you can do much more than that. If you have the means, a gift of \$1280 will do that for 20 children!

We have great gifts for those of you. If you can raise another \$1,000 yourself, I pray you would do it. But when we come together, we know we continue this work that is absolutely the gospel in action. So I'm just asking you to pray about it, go online, go to the phones, make the best gift that you can, and know that we are rescuing children, we are sharing the love and life of Jesus Christ. Join us today.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Innocent children and young people longing to be loved and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, forced into the evil industry of human trafficking.

Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to warn children who are at risk for sex trafficking, rescue those already enslaved, restore young lives and give them a future.

We have a generous \$320,000 matching gift. Now your gift of \$128 to help reach, rescue, or restore one child can be doubled to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to

help save one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

With your gift today, we'll send you the *Prayers For Life* Journal, a perfect book to write down your prayers as you reflect on your relationship with Christ. With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll also receive the N.I.V. Thinline Bible, along with 365 days of *Prayer For Life*, a beautiful devotional filled with scriptures and key thoughts for each day of the year. Keep all three resources close by for your daily prayer time as you meditate on God's Word.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280, which will now help save 20 children. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come."

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

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: This is the last week of Rescue LIFE on the air and I just invite you to be a part of really reaching into the dark places. I hope you're going online, going to the phone, and making the best gift you can.

Jeremy and Adrienne, we sure appreciate you guys sharing. It is just been a joy. Sheila, haven't you enjoyed talking to them?

SHEILA: Absolutely wonderful! Thank you both so, so much for being with us.

JEREMY: Thank you! You guys are amazing. Seriously! We appreciate you.

SHEILA: We'll see you next time on *Life Today*!