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Week 16: Rescue LIFE: Last week

Sheila Walsh and Randy Robison

Kevin and Stephanie Mason

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me. You know, we all face hard times but can we get through them? Can we get through them with a smile? Well, today's guests are going to tell you their story and it's quite amazing. Kevin and Stephanie, it began when they met at a certain place that we'll discuss.

SHEILA: Maybe.

RANDY: Maybe! The book is called *You Met Her Where?! And though it is a lighthearted approach, it is a very serious story. So we're excited that you're with us. Kevin and Stephanie Mason, great to have you on Life Today!*

STEPHANIE: Thank you for having us!

KEVIN: Thank you. We're excited to be here.

SHEILA: We're just going to let that you met her where thing hang out there for a little bit.

[Laughter]

One of the things I thought was hilarious about your book is I've never read another author who spent six and a half pages saying, "I didn't want to write this book." Was this a tough assignment for you?

KEVIN: Oh my gosh! Very tough. And so of course I'm a C.P.A., I'm a finance guy. I've never done this. I don't like writing long emails let alone a book! And so it came to the point where everyone is like, hey, you know what you should do? Do you know what you should do? I was like, Steph, why is everyone giving me their advice all of the sudden? Then it turned into people introducing us as, "Hey, this is Kevin and Steph. They should write a book. You should hear their story." And I fought it and fought it.

It was like every time we went to church it was like the Holy Spirit just yelling at me, you need to write this book. And then it turned into, this isn't our story, this is God's story of healing and hope and we need to shout this from the rooftops. So we end up finally writing the book and it was a learning curve for both of us -- even new stuff.

STEPHANIE: It was. We always said, if no one needs it, at least it's a testament to our children. Because they'll know how hard we fought to have them.

SHEILA: When I was watching some videos online, some YouTube stuff, your story is almost unbelievable because it's one thing after another. When I read about what happened to you in an operating theater, I thought, how on earth, A, did that happen and, B, did they send her home that day? Tell us what happened.

STEPHANIE: So I was a surgical nurse, and I was, unfortunately, electrocuted in the O.R. and for a lack of better words, it fried the whole front and left part of my brain. And from that point on, I just had severe health issues post that.

SHEILA: So you're electrocuted in the O.R. and they send you home?

STEPHANIE: They sent me home. They're like, oh! It was interesting because once it happened and I left the O.R. it was the weirdest thing, Miss Sheila, it just felt like my brain was staticky. It is the best way I could describe it. When people started approaching me they could start smelling me. Like from me to you, the permeation of this burnt stench

was coming from my body. And then when they looked at the O.R. they were like you have to come back to the O.R. There was ash residue 10-15 feet covering the floor, covering the walls. There are these two pieces of metal, they're called metal sleds and you hook a patient's arms together so the surgeon can walk around the O.R. table. And that was where I was standing, where these metal sleds were, and three holes blasted through two sheets of metal. So it just showed the voltage that happened in my body.

RANDY: What was the fallout of that?

STEPHANIE: Meaning?

RANDY: What all, you mentioned some problems, the issues?

STEPHANIE: So if you were to look at me my abdomen just quivered for a while from the amounts of voltage. And then every month a new symptom would happen. So I had severe cognitive thinking issues, severe short-term memory loss, hallucinations, terrible headaches where I was in and out of the ER because I could not manage the pain of those. And the very last thing that happened was my cycle had stopped.

KEVIN: I'm sorry!

SHEILA: No, go ahead, Kevin.

KEVIN: I remember you would look at stuff, you couldn't tell there was anything wrong just by looking at her. But then once you started talking to her, she would be like, "Hey Randy, how is your family doing?" And then 30 seconds later, "Hey Randy, how is your family doing?" And another minute, "Hey, how is your kids, Randy?" Then you realize, okay, there is something wrong here. And so that was almost seven years of side effects.

SHEILA: You say your cycle stopped. Obviously, you wanted to have children.

STEPHANIE: Oh, we wanted to have kids so bad! It was just like, it was in my heart to have children. I just ached to have children. And then when my cycle stopped, what do you think? You think you're pregnant. Right? So I was so excited and over the moon. Like finally something good has happened. And when I took a test and it kept showing negative, negative, negative, I just realized it was one more side effect of the electrocution.

RANDY: Where were you guys spiritually? Where was God in all of this for you?

KEVIN: Well, we came to the point where it's like, God, you're going to have to take control here because it doesn't matter my education, my background, who we knew, what hospital we went to...

STEPHANIE: What doctors we went to.

KEVIN: Because they're just guessing. They're practicing medicine.

SHEILA: Because probably nobody has stayed alive after what you went through.

STEPHANIE: You're exactly right! That was the issue. The doctors were just guessing what I was going through because there was no entry wound, there was no exit wound from where this electrical current was. So they'd literally guess from what I was telling them. And I was so frustrated. I finally contacted the National Institute of Health in New York because like they handle the most rare cases. And they finally got back to me and they're like, "Stephanie, we're so sorry. We can't even help you because the people we can associate you with are dead."

RANDY: Oh yeah. So what are you praying?

SHEILA: How do you pray?

KEVIN: We're just praying, God, show us the next steps here. Do what only you can do. Because I'm in these doctor's appointments, I can't even understand half the stuff they're telling me. It's over my head. And so I remember, we went to family and friends. I wrote an email like, "This year we're going to believe we're speaking healing over my wife. I don't know how it is going to happen, it's going to have to be supernatural because some of the best doctors in the world can't figure out what's going on. So, God, we need you to align everything so my wife can be healed and we can have a family someday."

STEPHANIE: So we went to Florida, actually. He graduated with his M.B.A. We wanted to celebrate. At that trip, I'm like I'm done! I'm done being sick. I'm done with these doctors guessing what to do.

So I brought a book with me and it was called Jackie Mize, *Supernatural Childbirth*. And in this book, she details all these rare cases of women getting pregnant with extreme odds stacked against them. I read that book and we're on the beach or at the pool and I said, "Oh my gosh, Kevin, I'm pregnant!"

He's like, "Wait! What do you mean you're pregnant? When did this happen? Oh, my gosh!"

I'm like, "No, no, no! I am so filled that I know that I know that I know that I am pregnant."

It is when you have that much faith, I just knew I was pregnant.

So the whole rest of the trip we were just believing we were pregnant. We had baby names picked out. We knew how we're going to tell my family. And at the end of the week, I suffered another severe headache that would put me in the hospital. At that point, the doctors gave me morphine injections that I could take to keep me out of the hospital. Kevin is like, "Just take one."

I'm like, "No, because I have a baby inside of me."

And he's like, "Stephanie, please take this injection."

And I said, "God, I am believing I'm pregnant and because of that I know you'll protect this baby." And I injected myself.

And we got home and I took a test and it was negative. I was like, "No, no, no! I know I'm pregnant. I know I feel it. I feel it in my spirit, I'm pregnant."

And the doctor wanted to try to put me on another medicine and she was like, but you need to take another pregnancy test before we do it."

So I had to wait a few days. I took the test and that test said positive and it was amazing! And long story short, we went to the doctor, and I brought my positive pregnancy test because I was so excited. They were hoping -- they didn't know how far along I was because I hadn't had a cycle for six or seven months. When they did the ultrasound, our baby had arms and legs. And when I said I was pregnant in Florida, I was pregnant in Florida. Isn't that awesome!

SHEILA: I love that! Woman of faith!

STEPHANIE: God is so good! God is so good!

SHEILA: You would think having survived something like that, it would be like, well, gosh that was unbelievable! But now we're home free. Not so. Tell us about the next thing that hit you.

STEPHANIE: Well, during the pregnancy I was supernaturally healed from all my electrocution side effects, which was amazing! And then we wanted to have another baby, right? Let's have another baby.

KEVIN: This is so much fun!

STEPHANIE: This is amazing! Let's do it again! So we were trying. And we tried and we tried, and finally, long story short, went to the doctor and they diagnosed me with a brain tumor. I was devastated. And I was like, okay. They, unfortunately, told me the tumor was so large they could barely put a piece of paper between the tumor and my optic nerve. They said if that tumor touched my optic nerve I would be blind permanently and I would never get my sight back.

So I was like okay, I'm believing that once this tumor is out, I'm going to be pregnant. I'm going to start my cycle because eventually, they told me the reason I didn't have a cycle was because of this tumor. So I was like, well, who needs a cycle? I got pregnant without the cycle, who needs a cycle? So they did the surgery and I remember coming out. I'm like, "Oh, my gosh! Did my cycle start?"

And they said, "Ma'am, you just got out of the operating room."

I'm like, "I know, but I'm just believing that my cycle is going to start."

So two weeks later my cycle started and two weeks after that I was pregnant. Isn't it so amazing?

KEVIN: With that, I remember before the surgery, the surgeons were pulling me aside and saying, "Hey, Mr. Mason, just wanted to let you know of the side effects, the risk involved with this." And it was "Your wife that you know today, when she gets out of surgery, you may have a completely different wife. She may have a completely different personality. She might remember you, might remember you're married but may have a completely different personality."

And so I remember being at the hospital and I just went in the waiting room in the corner

and I was done! Like, God, I'm done trying to fix this. As a husband, as a father, I'm trying to solve problems and there is nothing I can do. There is absolutely nothing I could do when it comes to this health stuff. I remember in that waiting room like God, she's yours. I'm done! I'm done! You take control of my wife. Do what only you can do.

And so like she said, she came out of the surgery just amazing. And one, she still had her memory, she knew who I was, she still was in love with me, and her personality was still awesome.

RANDY: It is interesting that you mention that because a lot of times with a loved one who is having these health issues, we feel very helpless. And you guys are both talking about this great faith that you had through all of this. Does that just come naturally? Did you have to work at that? How do you maintain that?

KEVIN: Well, one thing is, when I was up, let me say this again, when I was down, Steph was my biggest cheerleader. When Steph was having a rough day, I was her biggest cheerleader. Right? And so, we just literally trusted God for the next step. There were definitely, absolutely some rough moments, and a lot of moments I didn't understand. Like why am I going through this? I don't even understand what these doctors are telling me. But I just had to trust God.

God, I know you can heal anything. There is nothing incurable, there is nothing impossible, and I'm trusting you that you're going to take care of my wife. And this family that we wanted to have, God, I'm trusting you. I don't know how you're going to do it but I'm trusting you that we're going to have a family someday.

SHEILA: And you have two beautiful girls and a boy!

STEPHANIE: We do! We have a little man too!

SHEILA: You know when I was reading through all of your stuff and I came to your

own particular struggle, I was like, Lord, really? That's too much. How did you even discover it? You talk about a trip to Disneyland and you, as a nurse, saw there was something a little off. What was going on with you?

KEVIN: Well, we had this great idea. We've got two little kids, let's go to Disney World. That sounds like a fantastic idea!

STEPHANIE: With a five-month-old and a four-year-old.

KEVIN: That sounds fantastic!

[Laughter]

That was red flag number one. But we were packing, getting ready for this trip and I turned and was like, Steph, should I be concerned about this? And it was a golf ball on the side of my jaw. And Steph just thought I'd been gaining weight, didn't want to say anything, which is very kind of you by the way.

STEPHANIE: I thought so. Yeah! You're welcome.

KEVIN: But when I turned my head and she saw the golf ball, instantly the nurse side of her was like, I know what that is.

STEPHANIE: I know what that is, but the Christian brain is, I don't want to speak the words. I don't want to put life into that.

KEVIN: So then we went to Disney World and they're taking pictures of you all day every day and they're the most crystal-clear picture you've ever seen. And so you see these pictures and it's popping out. You see it now like, okay, this is different.

And so got back, got to a specialist and they diagnosed me at the time, I was age 36, and

they said, "Your diagnosis, sir, is non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, which is a type of blood cancer." Same exact cancer that my grandmother passed away from when I was in eighth grade. And so, called me at work, told me this over the phone. And I remember just constantly, "Are you sure? Are you sure this is it?"

And of course, I end up having surgery. And they give you, they tell you the worst possible thing in the hospital and all these doctor's appointments. The good news they told me is, "Hey, there is a 65 percent chance that you will see age 40." Okay, that's the good news! So you're telling me the good news is there is a 35 percent chance I'm not going to see age 40. Yes, that's what we're telling you. And they're like, okay, you need to prep yourself for 16 weeks of chemotherapy. Talk to your employer, I know you're in management, all this stuff. You're going to have to get them to work this out. You're going to start it right before Christmas.

So I ask them, "What are the odds the cancer cells were only in my jaw? And you went and pulled the lymph nodes out. What's the chance?"

They're like, "Sir, this is a blood cancer. We're expecting it to be all through your body."

I'm like, "Just tell me. What are the odds?"

They're like, "Less than ten percent."

I'm like okay. So you're telling me there is a chance. So I know what I'm praying for. And so we got to that appointment. We were walking in there expecting chemotherapy and they were like, let's do some more testing. So they did some full-body scans, some other stuff. And come to find out, it was only in my jaw. No chemotherapy, but 13 treatments of radiation.

SHEILA: Which is brutal!

KEVIN: Which was brutal. They fried my jaw, fried my throat. I couldn't talk. I had a nice ten-day stay at the cancer hospital in Columbus. But six months later, you're getting that call, "You're cancer-free."

SHEILA: Did you get to ring that bell?

KEVIN: Oh my gosh! Sheila, every day I walked into that cancer hospital, of course, I'm just focused on the next step. I didn't know what that bell meant. Every day I'm like, almost wanting to ring it, ding it -- and thankfully I didn't. But then the last cancer treatment they're like, "We're going to do a ceremony, you're going to ring this bell." I didn't realize that.

So we go out there, they do this ceremony in front of all these cancer patients. And this is the only second time in my life where something happened and I immediately -- I lost it, my emotions. The first time was when I saw Steph walking down the aisle, and the second moment was ringing the bell. When I rang that bell and all these cancer patients and their families who had a terminal diagnosis, they give you a standing ovation.

SHEILA: It gives me chills.

KEVIN: They're applauding you. And then they're coming up to you telling you, "Hey, congratulations! We're going to be praying for you. We're praying for you. Congratulations for getting through it." And then I couldn't speak. And so such an overwhelming moment. And so, today we live a life completely healthy, completely healed. But after the book we had another situation occur.

STEPHANIE: Yeah! So we did get pregnant with our son after Kevin's cancer situation. And when our son was born he was born with two holes in his heart. So, yep! And so I remember going to the children's hospital a few days after he was born and they said, "Ma'am, we're so sorry, he has two holes in his heart. We're going to monitor him closely."

I remember calling Kevin just weeping. I'm already hormonal, we're already gone through so much and I'm just sobbing because he had to go to work.

He was like, "Why are you crying?" He's like, "We've done this before. You know what to do!"

And I'm like, I remember putting my big girl panties on and I stopped crying. I'm like, "You're right! We know what to do!"

So every day we spoke life to his heart. We knew he would be healed, spoke the Word of God over him. And then every time we went to the pediatrician like, "Do you hear anything? Do you hear anything?"

He's like, "Steph, I still hear stuff."

I'm like, "Okay! But you're not going to much longer."

And at the end of the year, he was a year old, and we went to the pediatrician and he started looking and he started listening and I got the biggest -- I'm like, "You don't hear anything!"

He's like, "He's healed!" He was healed.

RANDY: You guys sitting here, you're smiling, you're laughing, you're very light-hearted but you've been through some heavy things. How do you maintain that? What do you say to others who may be going through those difficult times?

STEPHANIE: So I would say well, what we always talked about was just the next steps. Don't look at the big picture because it is overwhelming. But there is always just one step. God will make a way for you to see the next step, and he's going to get you there.

And once you get to that next step, follow the next step because you can do that. If you look at the big picture it's overwhelming. But if you can just get to the next step, you can handle that.

KEVIN: Yeah. The Bible talks about how the words, "A lamp unto my feet and a light to my path" and so if you're walking with a lamp or flashlight you only see what's in front of you. So we really focused on this during the cancer treatments where I initially did the worst thing possible. And I Googled non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. And it's you see all these things of what could happen, what might happen. And here are ten things, well, I'm on number two. So this fear starts coming over you about what could happen. That's when we're like, no, no, no! We're going to trust God. We're just going to focus on the next step.

Of course, with the book, we talk about the plan that we went through of getting through some of these catastrophic things. Yeah, I would just encourage people, trust God for that next step. I know the doctors tell you, hey, this is incurable. It is not incurable for God. Doctors tell you, hey, this is impossible. It's not impossible for God. And in the natural, it looks really bad. Friends have said, hey, if you're in Vegas, what are the odds that we lived through all of these? What are the odds that they would place on us getting through seven of these? It's not good. Only God. I know they're probably going to put up a picture of our family and you look at our family --

SHEILA: Beautiful!

KEVIN: Thank you. But only God got us there. Without God and trusting God to walk this out, there is nobody to take a picture of. It's just the woods.

RANDY: We never told you where they met so you're going to have to pick up the book to find out *that* part of the story. But what a testimony of miracles. Sheila, some people need a miracle and we can be that miracle. Take a look at this and I want you to pray about how you can be that answer to someone's prayer.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: These are the faces of those who once were. Once were happy. Once were safe... loved... cared for. Now they are vanishing at the hands of predators... abducted... misled. To distant cities they are taken. In foreign lands they are held captive. Their childlike innocence is erased, freedom forgotten; their spirit and will broken under abuse -- under torture.

Open captions

>> If the girls won't sleep with our clients, we beat them with a bat or electrocute them until they obey.

ANNOUNCER: Not only do these girls vanish, all that they were disappears too. Nowhere is there a darker evil than that perpetrated so viciously on the victims of sex trafficking. It may be the greatest evidence of Satan at work on this earth and it isn't going away without a fight.

Our Rescue Life partners are in place and ready to reach those who are most vulnerable, rescue those who have already been taken and restore the precious lives of those who have survived the wickedness of human trafficking.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: When I was watching that piece, watching those little girls one by one disappearing, it reminded me of when I was a teenager in Scotland. In our neighborhood, a little girl went missing and every single one of us was out on the streets. We worked all through the night. We had flashlights because we were determined that we were going to find that little girl and we were going to bring her home. It was a story with a happy ending. She had just got lost and wasn't sure where she was, and eventually fell asleep. I'll never forget the look in her mother and father's eyes when we were able to say, here she is and she is fine!

That should be the case for every little girl who goes missing. But in so many countries around the world, that is not true. These barbaric traffickers take them and it is as if they never existed. But every single one of these children was made in the image of God. And you and I are on the earth at this point to be God's boots on the ground to reach these children, to rescue them, and to restore them. But we need your help. This is our last week of Rescue LIFE. If you haven't done anything, Randy and I are just asking you, will you please, please do something today?

RANDY: Absolutely. And we're so thankful because we have some people that have graciously given a \$320,000 matching gift. What that means for you is normally the average cost to reach, rescue, or restore one of these precious children is \$128. But your gift today of \$64 will help us do just that. This is one of the greatest evils -- possibly, the greatest on the face of the earth. But that's just an opportunity for us to show them our good and gracious God.

We are His hands, his feet, as Sheila says, "His boots on the ground." So I'm asking you to put your boots on the ground right now. Go to the phone or go online, make the best gift you can. If you can make the gift of \$128, we'll send you some great reminders of your faithfulness to this. And you will help reach, rescue, or restore two children. If you have the means, a gift of \$1280 will do that for 20 children.

Whatever you can do, we just pray you will join us and join the others who have said we want to make a difference. We want to shine that light into the darkness. We want you to be a part of that. It is such an honor to be able to represent our Lord in this world. That's what we're called to do.

So please, go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can and know that you will be sharing the love of Jesus and rescuing a child from this awful evil. Do it now.

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: Remember this is the last week! So I do hope you are going to the phone or going online right now. Make the best gift you can. You will make a difference.

Kevin and Stephanie, we appreciate you being here. Where can they pick up this book?

KEVIN: They can go to our website KevinAndSteph.com or they can get it on Amazon as well.

SHEILA: Yeah, you're going to want to read it and you're going to want to know where they met!

[Laughter]

I just want to thank you. I felt all of our faith rising as you shared. So God bless you. Thanks for being with us.

KEVIN: Thank you. This was fantastic.

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