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Week 17: Spring Mission Feeding

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Bob Goff

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison; Sheila Walsh is with me. And Sheila, I know we love having today's guest on the program. We're very excited because we have a special guest today that will bless you. He's been on *Life Today* many times and it's always fun and insightful to talk to our guest. So Bob Goff, welcome to *LIFE Today*!

BOB: Thanks so much, Randy, Sheila! So good to be with you. Gosh, that's worth spreading a little joy in the world. I think we need that. There are a lot of things to be concerned about that but there is more to be hopeful for. I think you guys are helping us continue to refocus on that.

RANDY: You're one of the best at it. We appreciate you being here with us.

SHEILA: It is interesting, Bob, when I got your book and I looked at the title, *Undistracted* I thought, I can't think of a time where I've felt more distracted. It just seems like life is crazy. What was the kind of Genesis for you writing this book?

BOB: It was the book that I needed. I'm kind of at a time where I'm easily distracted. I'm prone to that. I'm like the enthusiast that's always like, you know the movie, *Up*; like the dog that is like, squirrel! I'm that guy. So it was the book that reminded me to not be distracted about everything going on around me, but instead say, what is God doing within me? Because sometimes it is easy to get so distracted by either people's opinions or some of the crazy things that are happening in the world or the crazy things happening under your own roof. And just say, I want to get back to why I'm doing what I'm doing. It

was a book to help me probably like as you're writing your words down to refocus and to ask the important questions.

RANDY: Speaking of crazy things, you have some stories in your book, in all your books, we just laugh, a lot of times at them, but you draw some really important lessons from stories that are a little different than what most of us go through. What are some of the things that happened to you that played into this book?

BOB: I think what I do is I gather, I'm mindful that -- it said that Jesus never spoke to anybody without telling them a story. I think the idea is that stories are more portable. I want to write a book that would resonate with somebody to who faith is important, and somebody who, I call them church-adjacent. They're not in the church, they're adjacent to the church. They're not mad at the church. It is bricks, it is a steeple. What is there to be mad about? But they somehow got sideways with the people inside the church. They got distracted.

So what I want to do is to say, draw from some stories that have happened. I'm thinking during this attack on Mosul that ISIS had done, that there was like a bunch of like courageous Peshmerga fighters. This wasn't their battle; it was the Iraqi army's battle. But the Peshmerga said we're going to liberate this entire city of a million people.

So I just went to meet these people. I just wanted to meet the people that were confronting this kind of evil in the world. And I just, I would tell a story about some of the things I learned from them. There was the guy that was in charge of the whole thing. I don't blend in and so -- [Laughing] "Who are you?"

I'm like, "I'm Bob!"

And he said, "Do you want to see our battle plan?"

I'm like, "Yes!"

And so we went into this tent. I thought there would be like satellite images and flat screens and all that. It was a sandbox; it was six feet by eight feet. There were little green army men. This was the plan to liberate a million people! And I thought there would be more to it.

And sometimes, we think with all the distractions around us that God's plan is really complicated. And his plan is this, keep your eyes fixed on me; making this idea to return to yourself. If you lose your keys -- has that happened often to you, Randy?

RANDY: Not too bad. No, not too bad.

BOB: I lose my keys all the time. So I always ask myself, where was the last place I saw it? So think about that during this tremendous distraction, if you feel like you've lost your hope. Think to yourself, where was the last place I saw that hope? And go there. And sometimes, if you've lost your faith, Revelation two that my criticism is this, you've lost your first love -- if you feel like you've lost touch with your first love with Jesus, say where was it that I last felt really, really close? Like I really do? Who were the people that were around that that brought that in? I want to return to those people, return to those places.

SHEILA: It's interesting, Bob, I was talking to my son last night, who is 25, about your book. He said that one of the things he feels like a lot of his friends are experiencing is this lack of purpose in these days. Or feeling as if they've been cut adrift. How do you begin again to A, identify distractions, and B, find that sense of why we want to get up in the morning?

BOB: For me, what I'm trying to do is look closely at one thing rather than look broadly at everything.

I have a collection of magnifying glasses. I've got these things everywhere. This is not a

prop, this is always within a foot or two of me. It is not just because I'm getting to be an old guy and need to see the words bigger but what I want to do is look closely at something. What happens is we have so much information coming at us, we're trying to look at everything at the same time. It's not working. You're just thoroughly distracted.

What ends up happening, you end up, it's the difference between somebody snorkeling in the top foot or two of the water, and somebody shipwreck diving, who really wants to go down because that's where the gold is. And so if you're trying to look at everything, you're in the top four inches of your life. And then our conversations, me and you, Sheila, you and Randy, we're staying in the shallow end. What I want to do is to say, let's get down to the deeper end of things.

That's what you're doing on your show, to say, can we just put aside for a second, like the things that are distracting you, take a hard look at your faith, your family, if finances are distracting you and it is for many, it is a difficult time, but understand what it is because then we can do something about it.

I love the definition of faith. Hebrews 11:1 says: Faith is confidence in what you're hoping for and assurance of what you haven't seen. So I would say to your son at 25, and I would say to me at 63, what are you hoping for? Right? Just figure out what you're hoping for. And then if you have hope without a plan, it is just a wish. So I'd say figure out what you're hoping for, vet it a little bit, like if it is a convertible, don't get one! [Laughing] It's just going to cost you a bunch of money. You're going to get skin cancer; it's just a bummer. Say what are you hoping for? Why are you hoping for it? And then decide what you're going to do about it. If you did that, we'd be less distracted.

RANDY: You've been one to push down to those deeper waters throughout your life and encourage us to do that. What have you found? What is at that level when we really push down?

BOB: Yeah, it's kind of like one of these nesting dolls. When you take it apart you find

the thing underneath the thing and the thing underneath the thing. For many of us, and I'm included, what is at the base of this, is real insecurity. I don't come across to many people as an insecure guy but I'm actually insecure. Little Bobby Goff at eight years old was super insecure about the world around him.

So what we all do is we make up a story. It may not be true but we make up a story. You might have made up the story that everybody is going to leave you. You may have made up a story that people aren't safe. Maybe you made up a story about the way relationships work. But if you made up a story that everybody is going to leave me then what we do is we make rules around the story because you don't have the emotional tools at eight years old to figure out stuff. So the rule is if everybody is going to leave me, here's the rule, I'm not going deep with anybody. In other words, I'm going to be a snorkeler. And then you're 25 years old and you don't have any deep friendships. And you say why? Because you made up a rule not to go deep because you had a story that isn't true that everybody leaves.

So what I want us to do to get undistracted is to take a little closer look and say what was the story you made up? And is it true? Was it true then? Maybe it wasn't ever true. Or it might have been true at one point, maybe it is not true now. And then what are the stories I make? Because that was scaffolding for your fragile life before but we're new creations. I want to say can we write a new rule? Can we say maybe if faith guides your steps to say Jesus has got this? I don't need to play afraid anymore.

SHEILA: You made an interesting statement in the book. You said that boundaries are good but barriers are not. What did you mean by that?

BOB: Yeah, sometimes what we do is we create these fortresses. Again, what's the rule? I'm under attack. What's the manifestation? What are you doing about that? I build a castle. And then I go inside the castle and I pull up the drawbridge; that would be a barrier. Putting a moat around this, Proverbs 4:23, "Above all else guard your heart." Right? But guarding your heart doesn't mean isolating your soul. There will be people

that are truly kind of toxic to us, but everybody that disagrees with you, doesn't mean they're toxic, it means you're insecure. Me too! I'm like right in there with you. But I'm going to do this, I'm letting the drawbridge down. I'm going to try to understand what it is. So I invite some people so I can understand a little bit more about me.

Here's the deal, people don't like to be controlled. We did this trip on a bus to visit some people that were having some setbacks during that time where the earth was. And we pull into this place with a big collection of people and after the speaking event was done, there was a person that really wanted to talk about something. And so, I went over to talk to him and the person hosting this, I could tell they wanted me to be somewhere else. And they were polite for a couple of minutes, and then they came over; they grabbed me by the shoulders, and they started physically moving me. I'm thinking, in my thought bubble, what hospital do you want to go to? [Laughing] I'd take a little baby step.

But here's the deal, people don't want to be controlled, they want to be influenced. So control is a distraction. Had this person said, "Bob, I think I know why you came here, and you could do 20 times more of that if you moved 40 feet to your left." I would be like, "Send me in!" But that idea of like controlling somebody, all of us, dig in and that becomes a distraction. And it gets in the way of God's bigger purposes in our lives.

RANDY: It does. One thing that you're known for in your book is being very transparent and we do appreciate that. I think it helps all of us come out. But there is one thing you admit in this book that I need to ask you about. I discovered that you've been to prison many times. I'm curious why you went to prison and what you learned there.

BOB: Yes! Every three weeks -- I teach a class at San Quentin. I also teach a class at Pepperdine Law School. So I told the students, "Don't do bad things or you'll be in my other class." [Laughing] The thing about San Quentin, nobody graduates. They're in it for life. This is year five, same guys.

But Jesus talked about that, if you want to meet me, you have to meet them. Matthew 25,

I was hungry, I was thirsty, I was sick, I was strange, I was naked, I was in jail. And I think the whole idea wasn't like do a solid for Jesus by visiting somebody that's had some setbacks. I think to get less distracted by what's going on he said, "If you want to meet me, you've got to meet them because I'm them."

I don't understand the theology behind it. You don't need to. I'm trying to obey things. I'm not trying to reason them all out. If he said, "Meet them and meet me" and I've spent my whole life avoiding the people Jesus spent his whole life engaging. And why? I got distracted. I got insecure. And so what I want to do is not beat myself up about that, I want to get busy. But here's the crazy thing about scripture, Jesus doesn't need your help. I asked him right before we started. I ask him every morning, "Do you need my help?"

He's like, "No! I need your heart! I don't want you to get distracted by trying to get applause. If you want applause join the circus. But if you want me find hungry people, thirsty people, sick people, strange people, naked people, and people in jail."

And if following Jesus doesn't lead you to them, then you're not following Jesus. There is no shame in that, there is an awakening like wow! I can actually do the things he asked me to do. Because it wasn't just like a nudge, it was actually one of these things. Like, if you want to meet me, you literally have to change a couple of things. That means I need to change my comfortable lifestyle.

SHEILA: So I decided to do one of your little suggestions in the book *Undistracted*. And so I started literally writing down everything I did from when I got up in the morning. And it was honestly a little -- eye-opening because I would write: Poured a cup of coffee, let the dogs out, came back to get the coffee, the coffee is no longer warm so I put the coffee in the microwave. And then I realized I hadn't let -- it was just like, all this stuff that -- and actually what I was supposed to be doing that morning, what I assigned myself was to sit down and prepare a message for the weekend. But it got to like 4:00 in the afternoon and I'd done nothing. How do we begin to identify the distractions that are eating away at every single one of us that make days feel a little worthless?

BOB: Yeah, the best way to fix a problem is to first realize you've got a problem.

[Laughing] That's a great way to deal with this constantly conflicted nature that Paul talked about in Romans seven, "I keep doing what I don't want to do. And I don't do what I want to do." That's just Tuesday for me, followed by Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday. It is like no! That guy!

We need to do a little internal audit and just say, hey, what's really going on? You can even take a paper plate and have that represent 24 hours and say how much time am I spending sleeping? And if you need eight hours of sleep get nine. There is no pride in saying four. Just get real about it and then just say how much time am I away at work? Or in your home office? Or doing whatever. And if it is eight hours that's great but don't you dare write down eight if it is really ten and then you get home and just start spending all this time on this. Right? It wouldn't be the first time an apple did us in. Right?

And so to say, okay, once you figured out how you're spending your time, really focus on the people you love, undistracted by all this other stuff, show your work to the person you love the most; give them your paper plate. To say, do you think my paper plate looks the way I think my paper plate looks? Well, there is something beautiful about sharing. It lets people know, I'm interested in rebooting. And once you see, just say, do I want my life to look like that?

A great encouragement from Simon Peter to some of his friends, Second Peter 1:2 says, God has already given us everything that we need to lead beautiful godly lives. So what I want to do is get your head on a swivel and say, what is available to me? And what am I doing with the time that I've got? And there is no shame in this.

This isn't to beat yourself up, it is to understand yourself so we can see that we have a problem here, and then we can bring it to Jesus to fix: Be anxious for nothing but make your request known. But this is a God who says, "I know it before you ask for it." I think it's making the problem known to yourself so you can say I'm actually in need of a savior.

I need help with this big time. And it is not so we'll be a better version of us, it would be so we would be a more accurate reflection of him.

RANDY: That's good! You know we've only got about one minute left but I want to ask you about something because you talk about the importance of five minutes, which doesn't seem like much time but the way you phrase it, I think it could be life-changing if we understood it.

BOB: Yeah. Think about kind of chunking up your life a little bit. I've sailed back and forth to Hawaii a couple of times. You don't just say here's where I'm going to go 2700 miles from now. I'm just saying, here is where I'm going for the next day, about 200 miles. So pick that X, aim for something, start moving towards this. Maybe break up, chunk up your day a little bit into smaller increments. Keep track of it. Sweet Maria Goff does that; it works out terrific for her. You'll find what's working for the people around you. Don't be distracted by it because God never compares what he creates. But come up with a couple of life acts, a couple of tools that will keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. Return to yourself, understand what's going on inside of me that's affecting what I'm doing around me.

SHEILA: That's brilliant. As you can probably see, you're going to want to get a copy of Bob's book, *Undistracted*. We'll be happy to send that to you. First of all, I want you to help us with something. When our eyes have been opened, then we see Jesus in unlikely places and we get to go and be a part of that.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: Each day we're bombarded with troubling headlines about different tragedies around the world. And unfortunately, events ranging from natural disasters to pandemics claim too many innocent lives each month. But beyond the headlines lurks one of

the world's deadliest killers. It has become so common and proficient that it is no longer considered front page news.

Each day thousands of children under the age of five die from the effects of malnutrition. These children weren't victims of an act of war or just in the wrong place at the wrong time. They simply didn't have enough food to eat.

The early effects of malnutrition can be seen in the children's hair and skin condition. Later their bellies will become painfully bloated. And if they still don't get enough food, a child will end up in a malnutrition clinic or even worse.

This doesn't have to be. There is a simple solution. *LIFE Outreach* and its mission partners are providing life-saving food to hundreds of thousands of children. This daily bowl of nutritious porridge is the different between life and death for these precious children.

Be a part of the good news and help save a life today because without your help, this overlooked tragedy will continue to spread pain and devastation around the world.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: Can you believe that today, with all the technology, with all the advances we've made in the world we're still having to bring you this story that there are so many children around the world who are dying of malnutrition? I will never ever forget my first visit to a malnutrition clinic in Africa. It was one of the most heartbreaking things I've ever seen.

And the noises were not what I expected when you think of going into a place where children are in distress. So many of these little ones had to use every single bit of energy they had just to take the next breath. It was looking at the despair in the eyes of the mothers. And as a mom myself, I can't imagine what that is like to know that your child

is disappearing a little bit more every single day.

But then a few days later I was able to go to one of the villages where Mission Feeding has already been set up and it was exactly the noises you would expect. It was children laughing and playing and running around. So little had made such a huge change. That orange-red bowl you saw there, the special nutritious food that's made for children in those particular areas of the world literally turns a corner between death and life. And we are committed to it, Randy and if you will help us, it's our commitment this year to feed 350,000 children.

RANDY: And that's a big number, Sheila. But it's important, I think, for you to understand that it is not necessarily the same 350,000 children that we're just feeding month after month after month. We go into these areas where there is an emergency need right now and it's sort of a stopgap to get them back on their feet, to get through a time of famine or other disasters that struck. So we move; we go where the need is. I know 350,000 sounds like a huge number, it is a big number, I wish it was more. But when you stop for a moment and you look at the one, Sheila and I both have been there, we've knelt by the one sick child. We've prayed for that one to get well and some we can bring back but some we lose and it is heartbreaking. Our heart is for that one child, and then the next child, and then the next child. I think that's where it gets real.

So you need to know that your gift of \$30 today will actually help feed three children for three months, to get them through that period of time where malnutrition is knocking at the door. We want to say no. We want to say life to these children. Your gift of \$50 will help feed five children for three months, a gift of \$100 will feed ten, a gift of \$1,000 if you can do that will help feed 100 children for three months.

We're committed to this but we can only do it with your support. So I'm asking you right now to go to the phone or go online, make the best gift you can, and know that when you do when you partner with us, we can save children's lives. And every life is precious. I hope you'll do it right now.

Begin video clip

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

Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach your gift of love can be an answer to prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need. Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months.

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you *The Chosen*: 40 days with Jesus. From the creators of the widely popular television drama, *The Chosen*, this devotional invites you to discover Jesus through the eyes of those who knew him best. With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "Amazing Grace" sheet music framed wall art. This timeless and well-beloved hymn can be displayed as a reminder of God's grace to you. Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come." This beautiful bronze is a reminder to care for children around the world in both word and deed.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video**On the mission field**

ISAK: My prayer is that we haven't reached this child too late. My prayer is that the therapeutic food that we're bringing this child will save its life. But my other prayer is that we're able to reach the many mothers in villages all over this area just like Marta; mothers who are so desperate for food that we can reach them before their children end

up in malnutrition clinics.

You can be an answer to that prayer. You can provide the resources today to enable our mission teams to bring that food to these villages, to bring food to mothers like Marta. So please, I'm asking you today to go to the phone or get online and give the very best gift that you can give. Give the gift of food, give the gift of life.

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: I hope you are going online or going to the phone right now. Make the best gift you can. Together, we really can make a difference in the lives of these children. And Sheila, we have something very special for people that request it today.

SHEILA: Yeah! For any gift at all, we would love to send you Bob's book, *Undistracted*. It really is a book for this moment in time. I think it will make a huge difference. So Bob, thank you so much for being with us again. We just love having you.

BOB: Oh what a delight for me. Frankly, for everybody listening in, just take one courageous step toward a less distracted life and move it in the direction of Jesus.

RANDY: That's great! We appreciate you guys joining us here on *Life Today*. Join us every day right here. We'll see you next time!