

7/25/22

Week 31: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Kel Mitchell

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me. Sheila, I have a question for you. Did your son grow up watching Nickelodeon?

SHEILA: About 25 hours a day.

RANDY: Yeah, my kids too. And some of their favorites, *Kel and Kenan* on Nickelodeon, *All That*, and the different programs off of that. We have Kel Mitchell with us right here on *Life Today*. He has a new book; the book is called *Blessed Mode*. It is available now. I'm excited to welcome Kel to *Life Today*. Great to have you, Kel.

KEL: Oh, thank you for having me. This is awesome. [Laughing]

RANDY: I think maybe we should start with the obvious question. In the book *Blessed Mode*, what does that mean?

KEL: *Blessed Mode*, well, here's the thing. I want to let people to know that they are beautifully and wonderfully made by God, and they were made for a purpose. What *Blessed Mode* is, it reminds you to get into a mode every day before you start your day. You don't forget to put on your clothes, so you need to remember to put on the Spirit of God before you go out into your day.

I also loved playing video games when I was younger, and they have something called God Mode where the designer wants to go into the game and fix whatever bugs is in the game or what's going on and they can skip levels. They call that "God mode." And so

when consumers figured out what that was they started to know what the designer of the game knows. So it is the same thing as believers, when you know that you are designed for a purpose and you know that God designed you to do amazing things, that's staying in *Blessed Mode*.

SHEILA: That's awesome. When I was reading some of your story, Kel because you were a pastor's kid, I believe. I wondered, when did faith become real for you?

KEL: Well, I'm a pastor's grandkid. So my mom --

SHEILA: Pastor grandkid?

KEL: Yeah. So my mom is the kid, the pastor kid. But yeah, love the church, grew up in the church. Had to be there every Sunday, of course. But there is a big difference between knowing God and having a relationship with God. So my faith was there but every day we have to renew our mind daily and learn how to use our faith even more; and that was a real journey for me to figure out. I feel like we're always figuring out how we can even use our faith, even more, to be more like Jesus and that's what I want to do every day.

RANDY: How did that play out for you being on Nickelodeon, being well known at a very early age? The fame, that comes with that, the pressure that comes with that, the expectations, how did that work out for you?

KEL: Yeah, definitely. The thing about it is, being on a television show was definitely a blessing but at the same time you look at you're adulting within the public eye. You're subject to public opinion. You have stress of someone liking me because of the character I'm playing or are they hanging out with me so they can get something from me? And a lot of times it would be, I would discover, it was the negative or I would discover it was the positive. It is just that whole thing in your mindset of figuring that out.

And then you're also growing up so you're figuring out adulthood. You're making

mistakes like any other teen would make but with you, you're in the public eye. So it was definitely stressful doing those things. Yeah.

SHEILA: I think -- I can't think of a better time for a book like this to be released than during a pandemic because you know as well as I know the number of kids that are struggling with anxiety and depression. You're a youth pastor, you work with kids, what have you seen happening in their lives over the last couple of years?

KEL: It's definitely the mindset. We have to get our mind under control. The enemy, that's how he gets to us is through our emotions and making you think oh, I'm so stressed out. People would be better without me even being around. And the sad thing about it is there are a lot of kids that are taking themselves out of here. I'd been through that too. I wanted to not be here anymore because of the frustration that I had and the depression that I had; and it was just keeping it inside and not talking about it.

So with my teens, I get them to talk about it. And with me being a youth pastor as well, I tell my stories to them and I'm very transparent with them to let them know, look, I'm living right here. I've been through that you've been through 15 years ago, 20 years ago. But you're going to get through it and you're going to look back and you're going to go, aah! I know why God put me through that so that I can help others, I can be stronger. That's really what it is all about. It's about getting that mind under control and leading with your heart and having loving kindness and forgiving others and forgiving yourself.

With social media, everyone is judging everyone. I remember when we were kids it was like oh, maybe there are a couple of teens in our class or in our neighborhood but now it is like comparing with the entire world. So sometimes it is just like look, I have to turn that off and I just have to really go I am beautifully and wonderfully made by God. And whatever things that I have done before, God still loves me no matter what, in the good and the bad times.

RANDY: It is interesting because in a sense with the social media in this world, we are,

we tend to at least perform. We set this public appearance, our profile picture. It's all kind of a performance thing. You actually lived that being on television. You were a performer.

What made you decide to be as open and honest as you are about the things like the disappointment that can come with the performance industry, some of the addictions or abuse? Why do you open up on that level?

KEL: Because you have to. The thing about it is that I see, I've been through it, I've seen other actors go through it, I've seen other entertainers go through it. The thing about it is that it is not even just in the entertainment business because people always go, hey, it is the entertainment business, it's corrupted. You're going to be corrupted.

But just with youth and adults in general, we all go through many different things, and we hold it in and don't talk about it. With me, I don't care anymore. It is the whole thing like what you just talked about with performing. I'm not performing anymore. I perform on stage, and I let people know that this is a job.

But that is the thing, that is the key -- it is a job! And it took me a long time to figure that out because it is like smoke and mirrors, when you grow up in the industry as a teen and as a kid, you start to go, oh! This is just how it is. You don't realize that this is a job. Do you know what I mean?

And so when we brought this show back in 2019 for a whole other group of kids, I told them something that I wanted them to hear and something that I wanted to hear when I was a kid coming up in the business. I was producing the kids, producing on the show, but I wanted to tell them something that was important that would go to their hearts into their sphere. I told them this show is not the thing that makes you special. You were born special when you were created in the womb. So this is just one part of your long journey. You might not want to act anymore five years from now or you're still going to act and you're going to have other jobs but just know this is part of the stepping stone to your

other job and another job and another job. So that way, they can really enjoy it and not be jealous of anyone, not getting into fights and all those things.

Another thing that I did too is that I had my parents come too as well because I thought it was beautiful to have my parents talk to the kids' parents because a lot of moms and dads come into it green too when their kids' lives are totally changed and they're trying to figure it out too. It was such a beautiful moment where the parents were crying. It was an emotional moment.

But that's what it is all about. I had to go, oh, I went there all the things I went through so then that way I can testify, have a testimony, be an ambassador for Christ, bring light into whatever atmosphere I'm on or whatever set I'm on knowing that I'm bringing God to whatever I'm going to be doing through this work because he is the one that did it for me. I could never get to the point where it is all about me. It is all about me. No, it is about God. Not Kel mode, bless mode.

SHEILA: I love that, Kel. I think that is really powerful and beautiful. One of the things you talk about in the book and you're kind of alluding to it there is that we're a constant commercial for the lost; that people are watching us. To me, that was a message not just for teens, it is a message for every single person who owns the name of Jesus Christ.

KEL: Yes! We are ambassadors, we are commercial -- they are looking at us. That's the thing. When I changed my life around, they're looking at us. I remember when I was broke, I didn't have a car, I was in-between checks and I was trying to get back on and all this stuff, and then I found -- I was in the church, I found my pastor and I was telling people, God is going to change this around. I know I'm going to make this happen. God is going to change it around. And they're like, hmm! Yeah, okay. [Laughing] Okay! The situation.

But the thing about it is that every step of the way, I kept saying God is going to change this around. God is going to do this for me. When God said, go speak. Go speak to the

juvenile detention home. Okay! I need somebody to speak to me right now, God. But okay, I'll go. And they started to see that through the action then they started to see things change around in your life and God changing things in your life. And you being consistent and you being obedient, it can really change the heart of other people. And that is the point, changing the heart of others and showing them, hey, you can actually do this. It can work.

RANDY: That's great! One of the things you do talk about is prayer and we hear that a lot in the church. I'm curious, for you, what role has prayer played? What does it continue to play in keeping you on this track for I mean what you've been doing in just reaching people for Christ?

KEL: Listen, prayer is so important. It is a conversation. It is a continuing conversation all day. It is never where you have to be just in church and just go and pray and when you walk out all the trouble of the world is going hit you. All the things that are going on in this world are going to hit you. That's the thing as believers, we have to understand. When certain people say okay, I've brought God into my heart, he is the head of my life now. And then they think they're just going to be skipping and it is going to be all super, super fun. But there is going to be some ups and downs, and some roller coasters through your life. And in those crazy times, you've got to know that God is making you stronger. He's having endurance for you.

So for me, prayer is so important because we have to be reminded that he's right there, he's right there in the dark times. And when I used to go through dark times, I used to go through stress, I would be so upset. Do you know what I mean? Why do I have to go through this? And depression and anxiety would really take over. And what the enemy wants is your depression and your anxiety to be so overbearing that you don't trust God anymore. And the thing about it is that when we go through and we say, no, Lord, I love you no matter what is happening. I love you! And we continue to pray throughout the day with that conversation that's the faith as the antidote to that fear, to that anxiety, that's what happens.

So that's another reason I created *Blessed Mode* because I wanted believers and people that are saying, "Let me try this. Let me try this thing that Kel is talking about and see if it works in my life." And faith can work. It is just an open door for people to see how faith works.

And so I start you off with prayer. I tell a story about my life. About how the Word of God worked in my life, and the Bible verse that worked in my life that I have in there. And then I have you apply things to your life in a section called "Go get them blessings" after each devotional. Or I might have you forgive someone. Or I might have you forgive yourself or forgive that coworker that has their nose up all the time, and you have to forgive them and be nice.

It is just a beautiful thing to see people actually going online and putting hashtag #blessed mode and saying, "I haven't prayed in years but I read your book and now I'm praying. Thank you so much. I never knew the guy from *Good Burger* could make me get closer to God." And that's what it's all about. That's what it is about. Yeah!

SHEILA: I love that. One of the things I love about your book, Kel is it is very practical. You do share scripture and you share a story but then you tell us how to apply it to our lives. You talk about something that my husband and I have prayed over our son since he was a little boy and that's wisdom and discernment. Why is that so important in this world that we're living in?

KEL: It is so important! I talked about that a little earlier that wisdom is you being wise. You say okay, I went through this, and now it is a lesson. There are no mistakes, it is just lessons. That's the thing. Sometimes people get so caught up in the mistake that they go, I'm horrible. I did this horrible thing. I can't go on anymore. And they talk about themselves even in conversation. They'll say look at this horrible thing that happened! And look why it is so horrible! Instead of saying, yeah, this horrible thing happened but I know God is teaching me something through this. He's going to get us through this. So

I'm trusting in God that he's going to turn it around.

And that's really the thing that you have to do with having wisdom and then that discernment is so important because now you won't get caught up in certain situations because you went to God in prayer. And you know when you go to someone and they're just a little off. Or a situation might be a little off.

I had business deals that I was going to take, and I remember walking with my wife, we were jogging and I was sharing with her a dream. I saw the guy that we're about to have the deal with and we're going to sign this contract with and it doesn't feel right. I was like it doesn't feel right. I feel like God is talking to me saying it doesn't feel right. And then what we did is we prayed about it and then we followed it up with scripture, that's another way because hearing from God is in the Word of God. God breathed in the Word so us getting in the Word and confirming what we saw and what we're thinking about in our time of prayer, that's that discernment. And when we didn't do it, we found out he was shady. It was just like such a beautiful thing where we didn't go on our emotions but we need this contract, we need to do it! And other beautiful doors were opened because we did not take that contract. So yeah! [Laughing]

RANDY: Just an observation, and I find this interesting. Look at you and the child star, someone who is in Hollywood doing the Show Biz thing. But you've given your life to God and there is this depth where you're talking about prayer and wisdom and discernment, and all these spiritual things. Yet at the same time, you still have your talent, you still have your sense of humor. It is like God's brought all these things together and matured them for his glory. What sort of Kel thinking about every day as you get up and you go about being someone out in Hollywood who is a Christian who is committed to God?

KEL: Yeah. Here's the thing, it is a journey. And the thing about it is we have to know that Jesus spread the gospel everywhere. It is not religion. Do you know what I mean? It is like just all this religious thing. You can't hang out with these type of people. You can't

do that. As long as you're saying to yourself, hey, look. Jesus, I want to do your will. I want to be just like you. I want to make sure wherever I go I bring you with me. And that's what I do. I bring Christ to every situation in my life -- being a father, my career, everything.

And the thing about it is that I've been in meetings, right? Being in meetings with guys in the entertainment business that you would know, and then also to producers and agents. And I'm sitting right there in that room and I'm talking about a business deal we're about to do. Now, this happened. And I'm sitting here and what was so beautiful about this is that they said, "Hey! This is great, Kel. We're going to do that. This is going to be super awesome. But I want to talk about your faith. I see that you do that on social media."

And immediately I'm thinking, they're going to go, "A, you can't talk about that if you start working with us." But then they just started talking about their faith and talking about their family life and things changing around. It was so beautiful. I'm just telling you to let you know that there are a ton of believers that are in the business. And there is a ton of entertainers and actors that need the love of God. And so God put me on this journey and I'm going to do it no matter what.

RANDY: That's great!

SHEILA: You are like a radiant the example of the love of God. I'm just so blown away by just even your countenance, Kel. But let me ask you, this is the book, *Blessed Mode*; who did you write this for?

KEL: You know what? I am a youth pastor and so I love speaking to the youth and our next generation. But it is also for adults as well, because I've had parents that have gotten it, and they're saying, "I got it for my teen but now I'm reading it, Kel."

When I was talking to the publishers, I was like, "God has blessed me to be in this business for a very long time. And a lot of people grew up with me and so I want the

parents and the youth to read it together.” And that's really what has been happening. I'm just super excited about it. You share with the entire family. Yeah.

RANDY: We appreciate you taking the time to share with our audience today. I think, Sheila, if some people want to get their *Blessed Mode* on we can make that available to them today.

SHEILA: Absolutely! We would love to get this book to every single one of you. Because some of you have written to us and you're concerned about your kids, and you're concerned about social media, and you're concerned about everything. What an amazing thing to put in their hands. Because even just the cover, it's so cool. They're going to love it and they already love Kel.

And so I'm going to tell you how you can get your own copy of this but first we would love you to watch something. As you know at *LIFE*, we care very much about children who have no access to clean drinking water. And we're determined, in Jesus' name, to change that. Will you watch this?

On the mission field

TAMMY: This is absolutely horrible to think that this is his only source of water. I've watched child after child come in this little pool of water and dip their precious little cup and drink this water. It is horrific!

My heart aches to know that they struggle every single day to survive! But they have nothing else that they can do. This is it! This is their only source of water. So if they don't even dip in to take a drink of this, they won't survive.

This water brings death. But we are on a mission to bring life. And not just a quick fix but something that will change this community for generations to come. We can change this for them. We can come in here with a drill. We can drill them a water well.

Won't you partner with me today? Together I believe we can make a huge impact into this community. Together we can make a difference.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: That was so beautifully said by Tammy. We love you, Tammy! It's kind of like these children on a daily basis are having to play Russian roulette with their lives. If they don't drink the water, they will die. They have no other water source. If they do drink this water, there is a good chance they will die too.

I cannot tell you the number of moms that I have sat with and listened to their stories through tears. And sometimes, their tears have dried up like the water in their life because it is just -- it's like how long can you cry? And how long can you dig and dig and dig? These hand-dug water wells, they go maybe six feet deep. The water doesn't last very long and the water is filthy, the water is contaminated.

I remember the first time that I saw a child do what Tammy showed you there, of putting a cup in. And honestly, my natural instinct was to knock it out of their hand. And yet I thought, I'm going to alarm a child who is going to have to come back five minutes later because that's all they have. And something was born in me that day. This absolute commitment and passion to say I know about this now and this is not okay. Water is supposed to bring life. Water is never supposed to bring death.

And that's why we call this Water for LIFE. We've made a commitment this year to drill 350 new wells in over 20 nations. And as Tammy said, it will bring life for generations. Randy, if we all do it together we can change this.

RANDY: We can! And we know we can because we've been doing it for years. You know, Sheila, you mention what we hear every time we show images like that. We hear

from people who call or write and say, why don't you tell them not to drink it! Well, yeah, sure. Because that's the natural thing. You shouldn't drink it. But you can't stop a child from drinking water and expect them to live. And so maybe you can stop them for a few minutes but not for a lifetime.

Well, what we're saying today is let's stop them from drinking contaminated water for a lifetime. Now when you look at the 350 wells, our goal this year in 20 nations, the average cost when you break it down for a typical well is \$4800, and that varies from region to region but it averages out to about that. And typically an average well will serve about a thousand people. And it will go on basically for a lifetime. So when you bring the numbers down you can say \$4800 would give 1,000 people Water for LIFE. Many of you can give that and I hope you will. Of course, many of you could perhaps give \$144. What that would do is give 30 people Water for LIFE. \$48 will give ten people clean drinking water. You start to see the picture.

We're asking you to just be a part. Whatever you can do, big, small. In God's eyes, it is just about being a part. It is giving of ourselves in his name to bring others *LIFE*. I'm asking you to go to the phone or go online right now. Make the best gift you can. And together, we can say, stop drinking the contaminated water because here is clean, fresh, drinking water for you in the name of Jesus Christ. Do it right now.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Across the globe, hundreds of thousands of lives are lost each year to waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through Mission: Water for LIFE, you can give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean, life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it is too late.

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 of any amount, we'll send you the *God's Daily Promise* devotional set. These four seasonal devotionals each contain a daily scripture, inspirational message, and room to journal your prayers and insights from God's Word.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the "Faith, Hope, and Love" coaster set. All four beautiful sandstone coasters come in an elegant natural wood holder and artistically display the words of First Corinthians 13:13.

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. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: I do hope you're going online or calling. Make the best gift you can. Know that you will make a difference.

And Sheila, I hope people with their gift today will request Kel's book. I know it will bless them.

SHEILA: That's a great thing! For any gift at all, you can request Kel's book, *Blessed Mode*. And trust me, you will be blessed. Kel, thank you so much for being with us. It was just a joy to have you.

KEL: Oh, thank you so much for having me. I had a great time. Thank you! Thank you so much!

SHEILA: And we will see you all next time on *Life Today*. God guess you all.