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Week 36: Christmas Shoes and Smiles

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Jentezen Franklin

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is here as well.

SHEILA: Hey, everyone!

RANDY: And we have a wonderful guest, someone who has been with us many times. And you know when we saw his new book *Overcoming When You Feel Overwhelmed*, we're like hey! That describes most of us these days.

So we're excited to have Jentezen Franklin back on the program. Jentezen, great to see you.

JENTEZEN: It is wonderful to be with you, Randy and Sheila. And love watching the program as much as I can. It's just a blessing for all that you're doing around the world.

RANDY: I can imagine being a pastor as you are up at Free Chapel in Gainesville, Georgia. You're dealing, especially the last couple of years, with people that are just dealing with chaos in their lives. And then it seems like we've gone from COVID to sort of this cultural unrest, and now the economics are eating people up. What are you trying to tell us in the midst of all this chaos?

JENTEZEN: Well, I think that a lot of people are genuinely feeling overwhelmed. It's not just one thing, the pandemic wrecked a lot of things for people, but it's multiple situations that sometimes cause us to feel like we're being overwhelmed. Even people in

the Bible, some of the strongest prophets, men and women of God went through down times, tough times, and overwhelming times. I was thinking about it today. Jeremiah said, "I want to retire from the ministry," things got so bad. He got so aggravated with his congregation that scripture says he said, "I'm going to start a hotel out in the wilderness and go into business. I'm done with ministry." Jonah -- Jonah said, "I'm going on a cruise. I'm getting out of here. I'm going fishing." Peter went back to fishing when he got discouraged and overwhelmed with fear and worry and persecution.

I think there's a great description of the times that we're in in Job Chapter 29. When Job talks about it, I wish we could go back to how it was before a crisis hit. It says this in Deuteronomy Chapter 32. It said, "Like a mother eagle stirs up the nest, so the Lord will do to his people."

It feels like every family that I talk to, every person that I talk with, every pastor that I relate to and talk with, their nest has been busted up. We're living in a time when the nest, everything that was cozy, everything that was wonderful -- Job had everything beautiful. Beautiful family, beautiful wealth and health, and security and comfort. And in one day, his nest got busted up. He lost his health, his wealth, his children, and his marriage went into a crisis. It was just insane and it all hit in a day.

I don't know of anyone who hasn't gone through the busted nest syndrome of just, the last few years of things that you thought would stay -- that's what Job said in the 29th chapter. He said, "I thought I would remain." He said these words, "I thought I would die in the nest. I thought that once I reached where I am, these are the easy years, and these are the years I won't face a major crisis."

You know, the thing about God is God never intends for us to settle down in our nest and rest. If God has his hand on your life, there are going to be periodically seasons where he comes by and he allows our nest to be busted up. And we are all different, but we all understand pain, we all understand division in families, and we all understand the agony of divorce. We know someone or have someone in our own family that has gone through

that emotional meat grinder. We all know what it is like to get a bad health report or know someone that has. All of the sudden, your nest gets busted up and you feel overwhelmed, and you feel like I just don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know how I'm going to make it.

But what we need to understand is, God only stirs the nest so that the wings that he's given us can cause us to soar victoriously and overcome everything hell brings against our life.

SHEILA: Wow! One of the things that I get asked probably more than any other question when I'm out speaking are people who say to me, "You said that God is all-powerful. You also said that God is love. You have to pick one." I think of an example of a woman who said to me, "I've buried two children. So either God is powerful, but he is not loving, or he's loving but he is not powerful." How do we trust God when things are going devastatingly wrong?

JENTEZEN: Exactly. It's a great question. And quite honestly, in the last two years we've gone through things that -- I had to ask myself, how did we get here? How did this happen to us? I felt my nest was very secure. And we've gone through seasons, as I'm sure every viewer watching this program has had things happen. Number one, you have to realize that what Job realized, you can trust God when you're submerged in suffering, when you feel like you can't find the bottom and everything's gone wrong, and everything you thought was secure and comfortable and permanent. Suddenly, you find your season when you're falling out of the nest like that little eaglet, squawking and saying help! And it doesn't feel like any help is coming.

Listen to me! Somebody needs to hear this. Your father can fly faster than you can fall. He is not going to let you crash. He is not -- Job learned to trust God when he was submerged in suffering. Job learned to trust God even when he was forsaken by his friends and his own family. There is a verse in Job that says, "Even my own family and friends have forsaken me." That's really when you're low, Sheila.

And all of us will face times when someone in the family betrays, someone in the family hurts, someone in the family divorces, someone in the family does something and there's division. I guarantee you right now some grandparents haven't seen their grandchildren watching this program; division has come and destroyed. You just feel overwhelmed and like you want to give up. But Job learned that there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Job learned that when you are walking through darkness as you've never experienced before, you don't have to be overwhelmed, you can overcome. How? He said, "I go forward, God is not there." He couldn't find God.

Have you ever been in a season like that? Have you ever felt like where is God? How long? That's what David prayed over and over, how long? I know you are good, God. I know you answer prayer. I know your word is true but how long is this going to go on? And Job learned to trust God. This was the ultimate thing God never gave him -- God never gave him an answer. He kept asking why, why? How long? God never gave him an answer, but he always gives promises. The book of Job was written for one purpose, to teach us that faith in God is better than an answer.

SHEILA: Wow!

JENTEZEN: And when you hold on to the promise of God and listen to Job's words, "Though he slay me" -- here it is -- "I will trust him." Trust God, hold on because he is not through blessing you. He is not through using you. He has a long-range plan. And Job had to -- Job had to learn the same thing that Joseph had to learn. Joseph in Genesis 15, verse 20, said to -- we think that God was talking randomly to people through him, that all these people -- but he was in that particular text speaking to his own flesh and blood, his own brothers. He said, "You meant it for evil. Family, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for my good."

SHEILA: Powerful!

RANDY: The Bible is not ignorant of the struggles we go through; and you referenced Psalm 40, a great one for anyone who might be going through a difficult time right now.

You also said that you've faced some things and I certainly don't mean to pry. I'm just curious, whatever the circumstances were, what did they evoke in you that you had to deal with? Was it anxiety? Was it abandonment? Was it fear? What did you have to wrestle with?

JENTEZEN: I think it was situations with family, perhaps, and with fear of what could happen, what might happen, things that you can't control. Really, isn't that it? When it feels like life is -- you can't control other people. You can't control situations. You can't control what some people say or do. And you can't even control your reputation or anything else. All you can do in certain seasons in life and battles that you get thrown into is trust God and say, God, you know. When I don't know. When things feel completely out of control, God is still in control.

I can truly say that there are some things happen that you look at in life and you say things will never be the same again. It's just the reality -- a tragedy, a car wreck, a loss of a child. Something happens, a business deal that goes wrong and alters everything. When things feel like they will never be the same again, but the scripture says: "He makes all things new." And also, I want to remind our audience today that God knows where you are, he knows what you're facing. There is encouragement, there is faith that can overcome today. Even in our society, even in what's going on in our nation and the world, you look at what's happening in Ukraine, and it just seems like it's one thing after another, and people are filled with anxiety, discouragement, depression, and fear.

And we know today that, and I hear people always talking about the book of Revelation as though it is a book of gloom and doom. It is not! It is a book about overcoming power. Jesus says yes, I recognize that bad things are going to happen, ultimately, in this world. But he said don't be troubled, don't give up hope, don't throw in the towel.

The book of Revelation is also the book that shows Jesus overcoming death, hell, and the grave, Jesus overcoming Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet, throwing them in the lake of fire. The book of Revelation is also the promise of heaven where there is no more sorrow, no more pain, no more tears, and no more divided families and homes. No more children growing up without a mom or a dad. The pain, the agony, the abuse that people have suffered. One day there will be no more.

And that's the message. The message of the book of Revelation is not end time hysteria, gloom, and doom. The message of the book of Revelation in the end times is simply Revelation 12: "And they overcame him (speaking of Satan,) the Antichrist." It is when 777 overcomes 666. "And they overcame him and by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony."

SHEILA: When I read through your book, I heard it as a kind of clarion call to wake up because I think something that happened during the pandemic is a lot of people became self-protective, pulled back -- even pulled back from being part of a church community. But it seems to me that you're saying in this book, no, this is time to wake up because the fields are white for harvest.

JENTEZEN: You're exactly right. It is crazy to be in the end times. That's why I wrote this book, it is crazy to be in the end times and never talk about it. I'm not one of these guys. Jesus may come -- I believe we ought to have a vision for the next 100 years. But I believe also that Jesus is coming again. And the church is like Esther, they're in a beauty contest and we need some Mordecai's. The Bible said he tore off his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and cried out and said, "You have come to the kingdom for such as time as this. Wake up! Wake up!" This is our hour. This is not a time for us to be a nice little sweet beauty contest contestant. It is time for the church to take its place and rise up to be what God has called us to be.

RANDY: Yeah. You referenced Revelation and it also says about us, those who have been bought by the blood of Christ that we are a kingdom and priests to our God. That

sounds like an overcomer to me. You talk about in your book, we're not supposed to be just surviving, we're here to be overcoming. How do we do that?

JENTEZEN: Absolutely. In Matthew 24, the big end time chapter of the New Testament, Matthew 24, is when Jesus said --. The disciples came and they wanted to know two things. They said, "What are the signs of your coming that we should be looking for? Tell us! What's the signs and when? We want a time, and we want the signs."

And Jesus, instead of answering their question shifted and did not answer the question that they asked. Instead, he told them the most important things. He gave them five things that they need to do if they were going to be ready for his coming. The first thing he said was "Take heed to yourself." What's important about the end times, more important than what's happening out there, the horses of the apocalypse and this and that and the world stage and what's going on, he said when you see the signs and the times happening go inward and say, how am I doing? How's my thought life? How's my passion for Jesus? How's my devotion? How is my family? How is my marriage? Take heed to yourself.

We need to understand that the whole book and prophecy is not about just us hearing and seeing signs but it is about us drawing closer to the Lord. It is about motivating us to draw closer to the Lord. I'm afraid the church is asleep. I'm afraid many people are just being so overwhelmed with the daily issues that they're drifting and going further and further away. Take heed to yourself. Look within.

And then he said look at him. Look at him. That's why he said in Matthew 24, when you see all this stuff, see that you're not troubled. Isn't that an amazing verse? He lists all -- wars and rumors of wars, and this and that. But then he stops, and he says, "See that you're not trouble." In other words, look to him. Don't be like Simon Peter in the storm and get your eyes on the waves and the wind. Keep looking at him, the author and the finisher of our faith.

And then he said thirdly, he said you're to look out. You're to look for people that are lost. He said when this gospel, Matthew 24, these are the priorities of Jesus in the end times -- this gospel shall be preached. This is what you do on this amazing program all over the world. When this gospel is preached into all the world then the end shall come. So something ought to happen to us that says I've got to reach the people in the world all around me.

And finally, he ends, he says, look, I want you to look not only -- I want you to look out but I also want you to look for your redemption draws nigh. In other words, I don't want a church that's beat up, depressed, looking down, defeated, or discouraged. You know the ark that God gave the design to Noah for had one window in it and it was on the third floor. He wanted to make sure that when Noah was going through the storms he was looking up. There is no way to look but up.

God wants us to have a look-up spirit. Really, I feel that. I sense that. You know, if you will hold on, God will give you a look-up spirit. You can make it. Do you know why he says look up? He goes on to say, "For your redemption draweth nigh." The redemption is coming to your house. Redemption is coming to your son that's on drugs. Redemption is coming. That family that God promised you, redemption is coming to your sons and your daughters and your grandchildren. Don't you give up. Don't let this stuff overwhelm you. Redemption is coming.

God says, "I'm not going to let the Antichrist outdo my Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is going to move across the earth and the nation like never before! And it is time for us to realize that this is our greatest hour.

SHEILA: As you can tell, you're going to want to have this book for yourself. There is so much more! And we're going to tell you how you can get a hold of Jentezen's brand-new book. But before that, part of our looking out, here at LIFE, is we look out at children who are struggling and who are asking for something that's actually pretty simple, and it is something that together we can do. So watch this and then I'll tell you

how you can get a hold of Jentezen's book. Watch this.

On the mission field

Announcer: There is nothing like the sights and sounds of Christmas to bring a smile to one's face, especially to the face of a child. But for tens of thousands of children around the world, there is little to smile about at Christmas time. That all changes when they receive a brand-new pair of shoes -- many for the first time in their lives.

Without shoes these children must face the very real challenge of disease and infection entering their bodies through their feet. A very real danger is being infected with hookworms that can lead to stunted physical and mental development.

The smiles on their faces upon receiving their new shoes reflects the joy of Christmas that comes from giving to those in need. And yet, there are still others that cannot share their gratitude because they simply cannot smile without corrective surgery for cleft lip or palate. Now you can help bring smiles to so many with a gift these children will never forget no matter if they smile for a season or for a lifetime.

Won't you please consider making a lasting difference in the lives of these precious children? There is a child waiting for someone to help them smile this Christmas. You can be that special someone to give them a smile.

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: I have to say, this is one of my favorite mission outreaches that we do every year. And I know it is probably a little early to show you children unwrapping their gifts, but we do that very intentionally because there are so many children around the world who have never had one pair of shoes.

So this year, our goal is to provide 150,000 pairs of shoes for children. Can you imagine that? 150,000 children getting their very first pair of shoes! Isn't it incredible to think that something as little as this could literally in some cases save a child's life? They're not asking for a lot. I remember the first pair of shoes -- I still have the first pair of shoes that I got for my son in his little chest where I keep everything. There is just something wonderful as a mom or a dad about putting a pair of shoes on your child's feet to protect them. And in places like that where there are so many open cuts and wounds, and the water is so badly infected, it literally could save their lives.

So why don't we make this Christmas different than any Christmas that we've had before? Wouldn't it be wonderful if we involve our whole family? Because we can all, if we all take part, wouldn't that bring more joy on Christmas morning to think that as we celebrate the greatest gift ever given that we know that somewhere around the world, we'll bring you photos later, there are children experiencing their very first pair of shoes and they're coming in Jesus' name. This is something we can do, Randy, together.

RANDY: We can! And did you know, Sheila, that your corner drug stores are opened late on Christmas Eve? You probably don't know that, but I do because I've been that guy shopping for Christmas gifts --

SHEILA: In the drugstore on Christmas Eve!

RANDY: On Christmas Eve, yeah! And that's why we're talking about this early this year because it takes time obviously to get the shoes, get them in all the places where we minister, and we need to know from you that we're going to be able to reach that goal. Are we going to be able to put shoes on 150,000 children this year and provide the surgeries?

Let me tell you a little bit about the breakdown because I want you to get this. I want you to be on board with this. It costs an average of \$500 to do one of those corrective surgeries, to put that smile on a child's face where they can actually smile. This is hugely

transformative in this child's life. But just, oftentimes just as impactful is the fact that these children get shoes.

Your gift of \$180 today would provide shoes for 50 children! 50 children will get shoes, many of them for the first time, and they will go on and pass them down to siblings through the years. A gift of \$72 will provide 20 pairs of shoes. Whatever you can do, maybe you've got the means to be able to give \$1,000 and provide 275 pairs of shoes or two surgeries, whatever you can do, we ask that you just do it now. Don't wait! Let's not be the last minute. Let's reach that goal. Let's reach out and make this Christmas special for so many children around the world. Go to the phone, go online, and do it now.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Poverty is a killer and because of it, children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we often take for granted like a simple pair of shoes. Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections and diseases that could lead to crippling consequences -- and even death.

By responding today, you will help secure and make ready 150,000 pairs of Christmas shoes to be shipped and delivered to children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pairs. And a gift of \$180 will help provide 50 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request this beautiful crafted red crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request this keepsake boxed set featuring four of *LIFE's* crystal Christmas shoe ornaments.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more, to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes, or two children with corrective cleft lip or palate surgeries. And you may request a beautiful bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come!" Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video

On the mission field

Tammy: It's a great day when you can give "unto the least of these." I have hung out in this village all afternoon and I could not wait for this moment to be honest with you. But I've had a chance to play with the children. We've hung out and I've played at their playground with them. But you would not imagine what playground they play on. It was filled with broken glass, broken tin cans, all kinds of debris, trash, animals everywhere, fecal matter everywhere. And I'm watching the kids play in this stuff. It was just awful. We would never allow our children to play in an atmosphere like that. But that's all they have in this village, and they were the happiest children I've ever seen.

Yet even in that moment we witnessed before our very own eyes a little boy stepping into something and cutting his foot. The reason why is because you'll look around and you see that most of these kids don't even have shoes -- not hardly one of them. If they do, they're broken apart and falling apart. It's just not a good scene.

So let's do something special this time of year. It's not just about a pretty pair of shoes, it's so much more than that. It is really about the quality of life and something so simple as putting on a brand-new pair of shoes on their feet that will protect their feet whether it is infection, cuts, hook worm, whatever it is, it is going to protect their life. It is so simple. Let's do it. Let's make a difference one child at a time. They're a perfect fit!

End of clip

In the studio

SHEILA: Thank you so much! Please keep going to the phones. Let's not be the body of Christ by accident. Let's be the body of Christ by intentionality, that we're going to stand up and be a part. For any gift at all today, ask for your own copy of Jentezen's book. It's called *Overcoming When You Feel Overwhelmed*. Amazing!

RANDY: I'm feeling pretty fired up after this, Sheila. I don't know about you. Jentezen, thank you for being with us. Thank you for sharing that truth and encouragement. We sure appreciate all that you do.

JENTEZEN: It's such an honor to be with you and love what you're doing all around the world. God bless you! God bless everybody watching.

SHEILA: Thank you.

RANDY: And thank you for being with us. We'll see you again next time here on *Life Today*.