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Week 35: Christmas Shoes and Smiles

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Mission Special #1

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! A very special *Life Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me.

SHEILA: Hey!

RANDY: I know it is early but we're going to talk to you about Christmas. Because if you've seen our *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*, you know what is going on and you'll be excited. But if this is your first time, I want you to hear about an exciting opportunity to give a little bit this Christmas and impact the life of a child. Sheila, I love this outreach.

SHEILA: I do too, Randy. I think of this kind of as like our "All-Skate." There is an entry level for every single person to be able to do something. Don't you think it would be amazing this Christmas if instead of thinking about what we might want to give our family and what our kids might want because they see it on television, wouldn't it be amazing if every single family who loves Jesus said, you know what? This Christmas we're going to look beyond ourselves. And *Christmas Shoes and Smiles* let us do that and feel part of something.

RANDY: It absolutely does. And here is sort of the simple outline of what we're talking about. Many people in this world don't have a simple pair of shoes. And so what we like to do is we go and give them shoes. We distribute them around the world in the places of the greatest need. We've been doing this for many, many years. I think it's like approximate two and a half million pairs of shoes that we've given, and it is all because of people just like you. So what we're inviting you to do is take a look at this and just say maybe this is something I can do. Because it

is not -- it is very economical. It is a big deal in the sense of the impact it has but it is not a big deal when you compare it to other types of Christmas shopping.

I know, Sheila, we, I'm the hard guy to buy for in my family because I'm the dad. I've got everything I need. A lot of times at Christmas, I think we kind of get over into areas where it's just kind of going through the motions. I think this puts a little something special into it.

SHEILA: I totally, I totally agree. That's why we love this so much. I know you're thinking: you're talking about Christmas already? Well, the thing is we have to have everything in place so we can get everything delivered on time and make this probably the best Christmas for so many families.

You might not think that a pair of shoes makes a difference, but do you know that in so many of the countries where we work it can literally save a life? Children are running around on stones, they get cuts on their feet, they get hookworm, all sorts of things, and simply giving a gift of a pair of shoes can change the life of a child.

RANDY: Yeah, I think we should show them something. Take a look at this and then we'll tell you how you can be involved in this very special outreach this Christmas. Let's start thinking about it now, Christmas is coming quickly, and we want to be ready. Watch this.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: As the world celebrates the birth of Jesus this Christmas, *LIFE Outreach International* is also celebrating nearly two decades of spreading this good news in a very special way with shoes! Yes! Shoes! We, along with our mission partners located throughout the world, have provided two and a half million children with a gift of shoes. Children who in many instances have never had a new pair of shoes.

ISAK: We all celebrate different holidays around the world. The holiday that is pretty common to most of us is Christmas. That's what it feels like here today. It feels like Christmas for us

because we're getting to do one of the most incredible things and that is to bless these children with a pair of shoes.

ANNOUNCER: It is because of friends like you that we have been able to reach remote areas every year providing the gift of shoes and sharing the good news of Jesus.

This year we want to, once again, see children's faces light up with smiles as they receive a new pair of shoes. Unfortunately, there are children who can't smile because they suffer from a condition known as cleft lip or cleft palate. The good news is our annual Christmas Smiles outreach allows us the opportunity to minister to some of the world's poorest children who have no hope of correcting their condition with surgery.

>> But thanks to James and Betty, and the friends of *LIFE Outreach International*, we're able to make lasting changes in children's lives through corrective surgery.

ANNOUNCER: *LIFE Outreach* has partners who work with some of the world's most skilled surgeons who have performed thousands of corrective surgeries for children. These surgeries not only protect them from health-threatening issues but provides the gift that lasts a lifetime -- the gift of a smile!

So this Christmas season, as you gather with loved ones and friends to celebrate the birth of Jesus, demonstrate his love for others by providing *Shoes and Smiles* to children in need.

In the studio

SHEILA: A pivotal point in human history was the birth of Jesus. It changed everything! I think it is amazing that he didn't come to be born in a palace or some fancy place that might have made it seem as if salvation was only available to those who were of a certain social standing. No! He came to the most despised of all, shepherds who were spat on if they tried to go through the town, weren't allowed to ever speak up in a trial. That's the gift that we have been given.

So because of that, what a wonderful privilege we have to make this Christmas not about us, not about consumerism, not about buying everything they advertise on television, but something as simple as a little shoe. We managed to get these made for \$3.60, which means Randy that for \$36 we can give ten children the very first pair of shoes they've ever had in their life.

RANDY: Yeah, and not just manufactured but distributed. We have people in place right now in various parts of the world who are ready to go and give the shoes to the children that need them most. You know, there is a health aspect to this, but I think it is just the act of giving. Sheila, when we just go to someone and we give them something that they need but they also enjoy, we see these kids out there running and jumping the first time they put their shoes on. They get so excited. It is the joy of giving! And it is the joy of giving around Christmas because we give in the name of Jesus Christ.

And so yeah, like you said \$36 for shoes for ten children, I think that's a level we can all just say yeah, I can do that. Some of you can give 20 children shoes. You can provide 20 children with shoes for only \$72; \$180 will give 50 children a pair of shoes. Oftentimes, the first pair of shoes they've ever had, and the joy, sometimes even the dignity, but also the protection from some of the diseases. I did not know, Sheila until we started doing this, that hookworm was a thing.

SHEILA: Four hundred million children!

RANDY: There are so many children that are impacted by hookworm! And it does terrible things to you. It can actually lead to death. It can disfigure the feet and it is horrible. It is ugly. That's why I love the beauty of us coming in and saying, here's something. A simple gift that will possibly change your life, could even save your life, but most of all, bless you this Christmas time. I love it!

SHEILA: I do, too. And there is one other thing that will radically change the life of a child. If a child is born with cleft lip, cleft palate, in so many of the nations where we work it is almost looked on as a curse from God. They are shunned, they are kept away from normal society. Can you imagine as a mom or as a dad, the first time you pick up your darling little baby and you see

this thing that's going to -- they can't eat properly, they can't sleep properly? But we work with so many amazing doctors like the gentleman you just saw, and do you know that for \$500 we can do a whole surgery on a child and give them a smile that they've never been able to do in their lives? What a gift to the whole family. It suddenly says to this little one, you belong, you have dignity, you have hope, you have a future. And that's what it means to be a follower of Christ. When we've taken care of their needs, we've earned the right to tell them whose name we came in. We came in the name of the Lord. Watch this and see what a difference that will make.

On the mission field

OPEN CAPTIONS

>> My name is Dr. Joseph Theuri. I'm a surgeon who does many operations that include the repair of cleft lip and palate deformities. Okay, let's pray. We pray that You're going to guide us through this procedure to enable us to get a good correction.

Cleft lip and palate deformities are very common in Kenya. For the cleft lip, the child has a split lip, usually the upper lip. For the cleft palate, usually there is a hole in the palate. Once they are born, there are quite a lot of effects. Usually, when someone sees a person with a deformity of the face, it is very conspicuous. And that kind of brings a lot of shame to the family. And a lot of children tend to be hidden as a result of that.

A cleft palate has a more challenging, functional problem because children with a cleft palate have problems; difficulties feeding when they are young. Because of that, children usually have malnutrition when they are young. Repair of both of these deformities is able to forestall all these types of problems. So a child that has a cleft lip that is repaired is able to lead a normal life. When someone has a cleft palate, the function of that child and the social interaction, and also opportunities are better when all these are repaired at a young age.

We'd like to thank James and Betty and their friends of *LIFE Outreach International*. We believe that their support will help us to reach more children and be able to treat children with cleft lip and cleft palate. But we know that there are very many children that are not treated, and they are

out there in our country. This type of intervention is going to help treating these children. And these children will be able to grow normal lives and be able to access opportunities of life just like any other child in our country.

Thank you. May God bless you!

End of video

In the studio

SHEILA: I know, James and Betty, that just warms your heart to see the difference. We have so many godly doctors like that gentleman who is on the ground willing to do these surgeries. They just need our help. I often think on Christmas morning when you've unwrapped all the gifts and you've eaten more than you could possibly need, sometimes there is a sense of wow! Why did we do all of that? Wouldn't it be amazing this year if every single family decided we were going to make this a project of ours? To teach your children the joy, the simple joy of giving and knowing that then they can pray for these children?

So whether it is shoes that you long to put on little feet, or whether you want to say you know what? I would like to radically transform a child's life, and transform the life of the family as well, then you could do that. \$500 -- that sounds like quite a lot of money but think of how much we waste at Christmas time. And the fact that that could change a child's life and give them a future that's not available to them. These amazing doctors are our boots on the ground in Jesus' name. They're not only performing the surgery. I remember being able to be part of a different kind of surgery. But before we went into it, there was a worship service. The doctors held this worship service. Let's make this Christmas what it's supposed to be, rejoicing at the gift we've been given and then giving back to those who need it.

RANDY: I absolutely love it. You know that doctor you heard, he thanked the friends of *LIFE Outreach International*. That's you -- that's the viewers, all the people that have made it possible for us to perform over 2500 surgeries over the years. That's 2,500 children who can now smile. On top of that, all the shoes put a smile on the faces of these children.

And Sheila, we've had all these different groups, whether it is the families, groups of family, maybe Sunday School groups, clubs, private schools, women's groups, Bible studies, I love it when people come together and say, hey! Let's do something. It creates this community spirit of Christmas, of giving that's beautiful. And then it gives something that's not just appreciated but needed.

I want you to think about what you can do this Christmas. And we're early because we have to plan. We've got the people in place, but we have to put all the things in motion. Maybe you can provide shoes for 50 children, that's \$180. I know many of you can even do more than that. Did you know that for \$1,000 that will provide 275 pairs of shoes for children -- that's 275 children that will get shoes? Or it will provide two surgeries which will enable a smile.

What can you do? We've got some wonderful gifts we'd like to send you to commemorate your participation in this. But the important thing is that we participate. There is something we can do that will be very meaningful, perhaps even life-changing this Christmas. Will you be a part of *Shoes and Smiles* this year? Will you put shoes on a child's feet and a smile on a child's face? I pray you'll do it. Go to the phone or go online and you can start now. You can make a gift, or you can start planning to get a group participation going. Whatever you can do, reach out, and let's start to give those shoes and those smiles now so we can make this Christmas very special.

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

Janice: Is he saying something?

Open Captions

>> He says, "It's paining."

JANICE: Oh my gosh. I'm in a village in Angola and I came upon this child. This little boy is Augusto, and this breaks my heart. His little feet are in some of the worst shape I've ever seen and there were many in this village with horrible conditions on their feet. But this little guy is just scratching. They itch so bad. They're completely infected. He said there is insects that have gotten into his feet. I'd be surprised if he doesn't lose his toe. And then the disease comes in through their feet and just goes throughout their body. It can actually kill them; all from going barefoot in conditions that we're in right here.

I know Shoes and Smiles is a campaign that we get really excited about and it's fun. But this is why it is fun -- because it saves lives. You would think just a pair of shoes is not lifesaving but in

areas like this, in conditions like this, it is; and we can change it for Augusto. We can help him. We're going to clean these up and get him a pair of shoes and help him.

Please, do what you can. Help bring shoes to little children like Augusto all over the world. You can be a part of something big and something even fun. But this is the reason we do it. Please!

End of clip

In the studio

SHEILA: What a precious little boy! For a little one like that to be "paining" simply because he doesn't have a pair of shoes to protect his feet. And that's why we're asking you this year, let's do something. We've made a commitment as a ministry to be able to send out 150,000 pairs of shoes. And that's why we're starting early because we want to get them sent out so that they're there for this child's most memorable Christmas ever.

And for any gift at all, we're going to send you this. This is our little shoe this year. So you put this on your tree and every time you put the lights on the tree you have the privilege and the reminder to pray for these little ones. We have been given so much by God and that's why we want to give back. As long as you and I are on this earth, it is no accident that you're on the earth at this moment in human history. And because we love Jesus, we want to do the things that Jesus would do. So we're just asking everyone to do what they can. What a difference that will make in the world.

RANDY: Yeah, Christmas is that time where we commemorate God giving his Son, that perfect gift -- the gift that made a way for all of us. And Sheila, I can't imagine being that parent in a place where I can't even provide shoes for my child who is suffering the pain that we saw Augusto going through. It breaks my heart.

So yes, while we celebrate the joy of giving and it is a joy, there also is a very real need that we are fulfilling -- that you are fulfilling when you become a part of the *Christmas Shoes* and

Smiles. And the simple shoe can provide the protection that that child needs, and protect their health.

And then, of course, the surgeries. It is amazing. You look at some of the before and after pictures of that child who has had the cleft lip or cleft palate corrected by those doctors. We love them so much. We appreciate their skill and their dedication. But they can only do it because you and I are saying I want to put a smile on that child's face. That's what we do with these surgeries, as well as with the shoes.

So think about it what can you do? What can your Sunday School group do, homeschool group, or whatever group you're involved in? What can we do to come together and let's make this Christmas special for us as we give, the givers, but also for those who are in need, who receive something this Christmas that is so special and life-changing that they will remember it for the rest of their lives.

Go to the phone or go online right now and be a part of *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*. Sheila, we can have a huge impact this year.

SHEILA: We can! And I actually would like to ask you to do two things if you be willing. I want to ask you to call right now and give the very best gift you can or go online. Do that now. But then we want to commission you. It is like our *Life Today* boots on the ground in Jesus' name. So talk to your Sunday School class, talk to your Bible study, to your women's group, talk to your kids' class at school and see what you can do as a project. Maybe we'll have an opportunity somewhere to tell your story of what you did and how you rallied people together.

So would you do those two things? Call right now and give the best you can. And then become like one of God's secret agents on the ground and do something. It will change the lives of children every single day. Watch this.

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.

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End of video**On the mission field**

TAMMY: It's a great day when you can give unto the least of these. I've 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, and 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 it's all they have in this village and they were the happiest children I've ever seen.

And yet, even at that moment, we witnessed before our very own eyes a little boy stepping into something and cutting his foot. And the reason why is because you'll look around you'll see that most of these kids don't even have shoes -- not hardly one of them. And if they do, they've broken apart and fallen apart. It is just not a good scene.

So let's do something special this time of year. It is not just about a pretty pair of shoes. It is so much more than that. It's really about the quality of life. And something so simple as putting on a brand-new pair of shoes on their feet will protect their feet, whether it is from infection, cuts, or hookworm. Whatever it is, it's going to protect their life. It is so simple. Let's do it. Let's make a difference one child at a time.

End of video

In the studio

RANDY: You can provide shoes for ten children for just \$36; 20 children for a gift of \$72 today; 50 children, for a gift of \$180. Whatever you can do, we ask you to do it today. And we will be ready for a beautiful Christmas. And if you can get your group together and participate and make this a sort of group project, an outreach, we would welcome that and love it. And please tell us your stories. Sheila, I just love it when God's people come together and bless others.

SHEILA: I know! I do, too. And for any gift at all, you'll get this lovely little shoe, especially designed -- not designed to match my shirt but it does. But for a gift of \$100, then we will send you these four little Christmas shoes so you can be praying for these children.

This is not well, we've got to do this. This is we get to do this! We get to do this in Jesus' name. What a joy that is! So from Randy and I, James and Betty, and the whole staff here at *Life Today*, thank you so much. Let's make this Christmas a Christmas to remember. We'll see you next time.