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Week 40: Christmas Shoes and Smiles, last week

James and Betty Robison

Anthony Evans and Stacy Kaiser

JAMES: Well, this is just quite a shock to me to know that I'm going to be talking to Tony Evans' son, Anthony Evans. He is quite the singer and communicator, and just an amazing person. He's been here so many times.

But I didn't know he needed therapy. Now Sheila Walsh tells people that she had to have therapy, and a lot of you are probably thinking you just know you need therapy, boy. You're talking about me. Every counselor we have on here, they always counsel me.

BETTY: They want to help you?

JAMES: They do! Every one of them focuses on me like you're not even here. They say, "We need to talk to you."

BETTY: I promise I didn't say anything to them.

[Laughter]

JAMES: But here is Anthony Evans and he's written a book *When Faith Meets Therapy*. And he found a therapist. And Dallas Theological people don't normally go get a woman therapist. I've got to know Anthony, you ended up with a woman therapist. Okay, I need you to tell me—

ANTHONY: You're so comfortable with it.

JAMES: Dr. Evans and family, keep your seatbelt buckled. Okay. You had some needs.

Just tell us what in the world was going on for you to think I need therapy.

ANTHONY: Well, I was in a place, just to be honest, where I'm doing this, what y'all know me for and what a lot of people know me for, but I, on the inside, was falling apart. I liken it to having a sprained ankle and trying to walk without a limp; that's what I felt like I was doing. Because I had this ministry and this family, and it was injuring me worse to try to walk without a limp.

And I had tried to go see Christian therapists. You know my family is all Bible teachers. I had that down. And I tried to go see a therapist out of a church here and at the end of our first session they asked about meeting up with my dad and connecting their ministries. I was like I can't—that's not going work for me. That messed me up so I kind of had given up therapy.

JAMES: People using you to get to dad. My kids told me they spent their whole life with that.

ANTHONY: Yeah, that was a damaging moment. I never said anything. I just kind of inside shut down. So I went years without doing therapy, but I was like this is not going to work. I've got to figure this out. And it just so happened that I was watching regular TV because this lady next to me is on a bunch of stuff all the time and I saw her and I was like okay, there is a therapist. I love the way she handled that scenario. Let me look at these credits as they roll by and see who that was. That's how desperate I was. Found out Stacy Kaiser, saw her name, looked her up, and emailed her staff. They made sure I wasn't nuts; who looks at the credits at the end of a show and tries to reach out? And she thankfully figured out I wasn't nuts and decided I will see this guy.

And we met in Los Angeles, California, far away from the Bible belt. She didn't know who my family was when I walked in, which immediately was the most refreshing thing. And that was six years ago. And Stacy has given me tools that I didn't want to keep to myself. That's the bottom line—that's why this book exists and why I've told the world

who my therapist is, which when you're a licensed psychotherapist you can't do that. We're supposed to act like we don't know each other in public. But I was like—

STACY: In total confidentiality, right? I can't even say who I speak to every day.

ANTHONY: Now you can. Do you want to write a book because these tools have helped me so much come out of that place and heal?

JAMES: You wrote it together.

ANTHONY: Yeah, we wrote it together. This is a conversation with practical...

JAMES: Why would you do that? Why would you go with a preacher's family and son, and join with them after you give therapy, and shared with him, why would you write a book with him? I'm curious.

STACY: So first of all, Anthony has been a blessing in my life also because he—one of the things that anyone who is a teacher wants is a good student who is growth-oriented and all that, and he's been all that. But when he came to me and he said, "I want to break confidentiality because there is such a stigma about therapy, and it's made such a difference for me that I want to work on breaking the stigma."

And part of what y'all have to know is when he came to me, we were in the middle of the pandemic. What I was discovering is people were more stressed out than ever. It was affecting everyone's mental health. It didn't matter if you were comfortable staying home and wearing a mask or not, or what was going on, we were all impacted. So it just felt like the timing was really good too, that there's such a need and so many people dealing with mental health issues.

Side note which he didn't mention, sometimes you need to go to therapy to deal with the people who don't go to therapy. [Laughing] And so not everybody is dealing with

personal issues but all of us know people who are in our lives that we struggle to deal with. So that's what a lot of this book is about. There are lots of chapters on individual issues like forgiveness and finding your inner power and dealing with grief and loss. But we have three chapters in the book exclusively on relationships because lots of times relationships send people to me. They also send people to him.

JAMES: Getting along in any situation from marriage to business, to church, to family, brother/sister, the whole—

ANTHONY: To a relationship with yourself. My issue was—you didn't ask for that. [Laughing] Once I talk about therapy and issues, I'm like here we go.

JAMES: No. Go ahead.

ANTHONY: I did not have a great relationship with myself when I came to Stacy. That was six years ago. I came to her about the book during the pandemic but for six years I've been talking to Stacy. I didn't realize that I had major value issues and I didn't have a good relationship with me.

JAMES: Were you finding yourself comparing yourself to other family members—to your dad's position, Priscilla's success, or whatever?

ANTHONY: I think I compare myself to what's expected of me. Not what they're doing, but what the pressure that my last name puts on me. My mom used to make sure that that was not happening. My dad would joke and be like, "Are you going to seminary?" And she would be like, "Tony, stop!" He'd be playing but she was very careful.

But that doesn't matter, when you're 12 years old and standing in a stadium at Promise Keepers and watching your dad, the crowd is going—60,000 dudes are going—nobody has to say anything. The roar of the crowd says, "Are you going to measure up?" And that is a narrative that was in my head even though I've been singing and doing all this

stuff. And I think it is very important for people not to just see the polished side of whoever. That creates—that's like what social media creates in people is I'm not enough because you're not seeing reality a lot of times. I wanted this reality to be seen and shown to people who are like me, who are wishing they had somebody who said, you know what? Hey, I'm broken too, let's figure this out.

STACY: Can I have your permission to add something?

ANTHONY: Yeah! Like what are you adding though?

STACY: No, you'll be okay with it. I just want to say that out loud because I always say Anthony tells his story. But I think this doesn't just apply to you, I think it probably applies to you all and everybody else, and me as well. Those of us who are the givers and the healers and the ones who are serving others oftentimes lose sight of ourselves, so I do think that that is part of it. Because we see life through the lens of what can I do for you? And sometimes we lose that what can I do for me or what do I need?

BETTY: Do you think—I feel like a lot of people deal with exactly what he said, what's expected of you? I grew up that way in the Baptist church. Dot all the i's, cross all—do everything right and maybe God won't get you. [Laughing] That's the way I felt. And just do what is expected of you and it damaged me to a point. I had to deal with that when I got older. It is such a freedom that comes from knowing that you don't have to live under those expectations. You just live walking where God has you and wants you.

STACY: And nobody expects you to be perfect.

BETTY: No! And that's the key too.

JAMES: What did you see in him when he came? Did you see desperation? Did you see helplessness? Were you puzzled that he came? What made this work? You came desperate for help. Was it obvious he wanted help and needed it when he came to you?

STACY: That's what he said. But I mean he seems together. [Laughing] So, what I saw was a person who was open to being the best person that he could be. And I think you're still like that. You're ever evolving and changing and trying to do better and be better. That's what I saw.

JAMES: Did he help you? You helped him. Did she help you?

ANTHONY: Yeah! Yeah!

JAMES: Did he end up helping you before it was over? Did he help you in some way?

STACY: Well, when you're working with somebody who is so willing to grow, it helps you see what you're doing that works. And so I was like okay if it works on Anthony [Laughing] It will work on people. But he's also done a pretty incredible job of filling my dance card. I'm very busy now. [Laughing] Everybody is like trying to get an appointment and I don't have any left because a lot of people I know came because of Anthony.

BETTY: Anthony, you talk about she gave you some tools, some lasting tools. Could you talk about some of those tools she gave you with relationships?

ANTHONY: There have been times when I'm dealing with work relationships or personal relationships, and I cannot let go. Stacy will tell me to write down—and as simple as this sounds it's not for me. She would be like write down the good things you're getting out of this relationship and the bad things. And sometimes the list is 40 on the bad side and ten on the good side and I wasn't even thinking about that.

And when you feel drawn back, because you're such an emotional person, and I get that, that's a big part of me, and it's not like don't try to change that but you get drawn in by your emotions, look back down at that piece of paper when you want to go back and look

at the bad side. And if you need to see it on paper to not go back, look at it on paper and don't go back. And I understand all that—that's so small but it is not when you stop and look and go, I'm not going to pick up the phone because that's where it is going lead. The probability of it going bad is high so I'm not going to go back.

That's so small. With her sitting right here she gives me so many tools in so many different ways. But that's one that—

JAMES: She helped you make better choices? Like—who you do relate to?

ANTHONY: Yes.

JAMES: Who you do go back to?

ANTHONY: Yeah.

JAMES: Who you avoid.

ANTHONY: We liken it to a theater. She likened it to a theater. She said Anthony, if you were—at that point, I was doing something for Disney on the stage. She said, "Anthony, if you were on Broadway and there was somebody on the front row in the audience disturbing you, like pulling you out of character on Broadway, what would happen to that person sitting on the front row?"

I was like, "Well, they would be told to be quiet."

"What if they weren't quiet? What would happen?"

"They probably would move them back a little bit."

"And what would happen if they moved them back and they still weren't quiet?"

"They'd get put out."

She said, "Exactly. You have people on the front row of your life who are pulling you out of character. Ask them to be quiet, if they're not, move them back. If not, put them out of the room."

And what will happen, I was afraid to move people because I thought, who else is going to sit there? And what I've realized is that as soon as that seat was empty, somebody came and filled it that wanted nothing more than to see me in character, in the character God's called me to be, and that's what's happened. She's helped me rearrange, relationally, rearrange people in the room so that I can stay in character.

I feel like that's one of the many things that she's helped me do because I'm Tony Evans' kid. Like I shouldn't—sometimes I feel like I shouldn't need all this. I told my dad it's almost like having Thomas Edison or Einstein as a dad, but your kid has a learning disability but I'm in your class, so I need help. Like it's—that's where the pressure comes from is having that man as a father and feeling like I have a learning disability as it relates to the truth of God's Word implementing it into my life.

But there's no shame in needing tutoring. There is no shame in getting tutoring the past. So that's what this has done. It has given me tutoring as it relates to this book of truths we have, these formulas we have we know work but sometimes it is not that simple, and you need tutoring.

JAMES: Tony, let me just say you and all the Evans family, thank you for being so truly great like God in trusting your son with his decisions and his journey; and trusting God with him in the journey. And Stacy, thank you.

Let me just ask you, do you feel like the trust factor is critical that people have someone they can go to that they can trust with who they are? And most people don't have that. Do

you understand what I'm saying?

STACY: Absolutely! Most people don't have it.

JAMES: They already feel shame over their weakness or their brokenness or their failure, and then people put shame on them, especially church people. They tend to put shame on them. That is the last thing they need, right?

STACY: Absolutely! And first of all, it is a rare occasion that you get a confidential relationship where you know they are not going to share anything, which is one of the things you get with a therapist. But the other thing if I'm doing my job right is I'm not creating any judgment and I'm not running an agenda. So I'm not walking around thinking, this is what Anthony should or should not do. I'm thinking, I'm getting to know Anthony and saying what is best for him. And what is best for him in the context of his family, his church, his community, his friendships, all of that? Oftentimes, when you go to someone else for guidance, they have their own opinions and agendas, and they push for that. So I feel like that makes this a safer relationship also.

ANTHONY: And when somebody has their own opinions it can create shame if you're not doing what they think it creates shame. And as Stacy said to me a long time ago, shame sabotages grace. She said that and I was like there you go.

JAMES: Are you a Christian therapist?

STACY: I don't call myself a Christian therapist. I am, what do you call me? A secular—

ANTHONY: I call her a general market psychotherapist.

STACY: But I do have a lot of believers in my practice. I hold space for all of that and I think that anyone who is a believer does need to be in a relationship with a therapist who doesn't necessarily go to church the same amount of times as they do or anything like that

but understands the importance of their faith.

You should tell the story. We had a incredible divine moment together that had never happened to me before in 20 years of being a therapist.

ANTHONY: Well, I'll tell you really quick. First, I just want to say as it relates to the Christian therapist thing, she wants to leave it open—first of all, she is in Hollywood. So once you say "Christian therapist" it alleviates 90 percent of the people who would come to you because they're like wait a minute. Do you know what I mean?

JAMES: The last person they want to be around is a Christian. Because they don't know what Christians really are because we haven't shown them a very good picture.

ANTHONY: So anyway, there just have been moments where the psychotherapy is happening and the textbook kind of things are happening but then Stacy will stop and go—there was a moment where I was speaking to her, and felt so far from God, and she was saw something in the room over me and was like, "Stop."

STACY: A light came on over his head and there were no lights in the room. There wasn't a window. And I stopped talking, and I had goosebumps all over. And I said, "He's here. I feel like I'm supposed to be speaking to you right now."

ANTHONY: Not from psychotherapy and all that. So she said, "Stop. He is here. You are more covered than you think." And hearing that from a general market psychotherapist is way different than hearing it from the guy at church who I would already have a thing with because of all the things that come along with it. So God has spoken through Stacy in just as much or more—in just as much or more powerful ways than me sitting here or sitting in my dad's office or sitting with Priscilla because it is just the most unexpected time. He would stop the psychotherapy to say, "I am with you in this hurt."

JAMES: And he is on you, Anthony. He is all over you. Nobody can say that better than the person you least likely thought you would hear it from, and she saw it. And everybody can see him in you. And she did.

STACY: That's beautiful.

JAMES: That love is in you. Somehow that love moved in the room and that love spilled over. It's going to be on her more and more and more and more. I don't know anything about her background, I don't need to know.

You guys shared, I just looked at all the subject matter, you shared what she's seen people need and she's seen people get help. You all wrote it together because you've seen the effect of it. You wrote it wanting to help people who feel like nobody would understand me. You can't talk to everybody, but you wrote something that everybody can access.

Do you believe they can hear something of wisdom, meaningful counsel, from the wisdom that comes from the wisest one, from God, and from two people who care? Because I think you wrote it because you care, and you believe she cares, and you believe you got help and you want others to get help. Am I right about that?

ANTHONY: That's the bottom line.

STACY: Yes.

JAMES: So what we're going to do, look here, if you'll just put some Christmas shoes on children, we're going to send you a little Christmas ornament. But we're also going to give cleft palate surgery, we're going to do some serious surgery, give a child a smile. Make a baby where the baby can nurse; with a cleft palate, they can't nurse so you start with malnutrition right up front. You can be a miracle in somebody's life, and I want you to watch this in a moment. But we'll also send you this book.

There is no way we can cover all of the bases. You've tried your best to do it. Thank you for helping him. Evans family, thank you for sharing your brother with the world. Thank you for your courage to go and for you all to come together and be a team for the kingdom purpose of God to love people the way he loves them; so they can see how much he loves them, and they can see the truth that sets them free. I want you to watch this and then I want you to be somebody's miracle. And you can be. And boy, when you become a miracle, you begin to experience miracles. I promise you, you do. Watch.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: Every year in developing countries around the world, more than 170,000 children are born with a cleft lip or cleft palate. Without surgical repair, a cleft lip or palate could be deadly for a child.

DR. HODGES: As a child grows with a cleft palate, they will not be able to breastfeed and that can cause real problems for nutrition. And it can also cause them to have more commonly, chest infections, and that could even lead to death.

ANNOUNCER: Beyond just the physical dangers, the cleft lip or palate can cause lasting emotional and psychological damage to a child.

DR. HODGES: Then, as they start to talk, they will not be able to be understood. Cleft palate makes their speech very, very difficult to understand. And so combining the appearance and also the speech will have a huge impact on how that child feels about themselves as they grow up.

ANNOUNCER: Fortunately, a cleft lip or a cleft palate can be repaired fairly easily with corrective surgery. But a child living in poverty has very little hope and even fewer options for this type of surgery.

That's why *LIFE Outreach* and its partners have already provided more than 2,000

life-changing surgeries at no cost to the families. And this year, we will continue to do as many surgical cleft repairs as possible around the world.

DR. HODGES: Thanks to partners like *LIFE Outreach International*, we're able to make lasting changes in children's lives through corrective surgery. Just to give an example from the clinic this week, I saw several children that we've operated on their lips and their palates, very young, and the children are healthy, they look normal, and I know that they will now be able to speak normally as well.

But there is so much more work to be done. Literally, thousands of families are waiting for help, but we can only do it with your continuing support. God bless you.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: I love all those little children. We have 25 grandchildren, about to have 26. Our little great-grandchildren are eight and down to several months, and several less than a year, and none of them have that. But I would fix it. You would. You would say to Betty and to James, we'll fix your grandbaby. Let's fix their baby, please! Please! Let's see a miracle.

\$1,000 will give two cleft palate surgeries because the doctors give their time and their skill. But there are costs that go with it. Would you please go get your bank card and use it like a check? Would you go online? You may want to give more money for these miracles than we ever could imagine. You may say, we want to leave a medical doctor over there doing it all the time. Wherever it is, all over, we just want to send them. I don't know what visions can spring up in you but just do what God tells you to do.

And if you'd help give shoes, \$36 will give ten children a pair of shoes. We're committed to giving 150,000 children shoes. And we do it ahead of time because it is shoes and smiles for Christmas, and this is our last week. So Betty, we just need everybody to help.

BETTY: We do. Thank you so much for all that you do to help us continue with the beautiful things that God has put in this ministry to be able to help change the lives of precious children in so many of them. But I look at these children and I think, there is such a need there. These precious little ones don't even know or have the experience of being able to smile and the mothers just love them anyway. Mothers don't care. I mean they care in that they would love to see their corrected smiles, but they love them just as much anyway. Just think what the heart of that mother feels like when that baby comes out of surgery, and they can smile! Can you imagine what a difference that makes? Thank you for joining us. Let's put smiles on these babies.

JAMES: You know I was so shy I couldn't talk. And boy, God gave me a gift. Do you know what I heard right here from the Lord while I was praying? They'll be some of those children that can't talk well, and they're going to be able to preach. They're going to be able to sing. They're going to be able to be a witness. You gave them that. God gave me a gift, you can give them a gift—not just a smile but communication.

Father, I just pray we'll have the greatest outpouring of love today. Say, boy, we'll give far more than *Shoes and Smiles*, we're going to give people an opportunity to be a witness, to be a light because we're light and we're full of love and we're going to let it flow in Jesus' name.

Would you right now call that number that people call to be prayed for every day by the thousands? Would you call and say I'm going to give smiles, I'm going to give shoes? And use your bank card. And during this last week, this is the last week now for us to get all the resources to get the shoes and smiles for Christmas. Would you right now make the gift? Or you can go online. If you put it in the mail, make it to LIFE but call us and tell us you're mailing it. We've got to know it is coming.

We've got gifts to bless you and we'll be glad to send you this book; might prove to be therapy for you and somebody you love very much, might build a relationship, a miracle.

Thank you so much for responding.

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!"

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Well, I just want to thank you. Look, if you tried to get through to call and make a gift, boy, you call until you get through, and let's give some smiles, let's give some shoes. And we'll get this. Some of you mentioned I hope this therapist helps you! As soon as we go off the air, maybe she'll help you. Betty, she will. [Laughing] Hey! We sure love you. And we love Anthony. Stacy, we're glad to meet you.

STACY: I feel the same way.

JAMES: We hope we've been a blessing to you, and you bless a lot of people. And Anthony, you bless a lot of people. Thank all of you for being such a blessing to so many. We love you. Thank you. This is the last week! *Shoes and Smiles*. Thank you!