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Week 50: Fall Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Lysa TerKeurst

In the studio

JAMES: Well, I know I tell you every day on *Life Today* we're glad to see you. Thanks for joining us. I'm James Robison. Betty, my sweetheart is here. I'll be telling this for a long time, next year we will have been married 60 years. To God be the glory!

One of our favorite guests, Lysa TerKeurst has been here many times for the last ten years because she's not only one of our favorites, and she really does like *Life Today*, but she's one of your favorites. I want you to look at this one.

By the way, she's been through some stuff -- and people are going through some stuff today. It is almost like the enemy has shifted into high gear and he's putting us through stuff. But remember this, on a national basis, we kind of give him access to the ground. And one of the reasons he gets access is we don't have good boundaries. We don't have protective walls. God calls His Word a hedge of protection. Satan called it a hedge that protected Job. By the way, we don't ever want to get out of that hedge, that boundary of protection.

I have an idea that Lysa, who is gifted by God, is going to help us understand good boundaries and sometimes some sad, painful, but perhaps necessary goodbyes. Now I may be going in a direction she says, whoo, it's going to take me a while to straighten all that out. I don't think so. I'm glad Lysa is here. Lysa, I hope I didn't throw you a curve ball.

LYSA: You did not. That was great! That is so true. And you know one thing that I wanted to dispel in this book was something I had struggled with and that is, is it unkind

to draw boundaries? Is it unChristian to draw boundaries? And I wanted to know, is God okay with relational boundaries? What I discovered as I got into God's Word is right from Genesis one, God established the foundation of the world using boundaries. He separated the light from the darkness, the dry land from the sea. And then as we get into Genesis two, think of all the topics that God surely wanted to talk to Adam about. But the subject matter he chose for the first recorded conversation in Genesis two was a boundary. And the way God established this boundary in this first recorded conversation is important. God told Adam, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from this tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or you will die." What I saw in that is boundaries are for the sake of freedom. God said says, "You are free."

JAMES: You had a life in freedom.

LISA: That's right! And when we have clearly defined boundaries, this is okay all the way to here, and then outside of this, it is not okay. This is acceptable, this is not acceptable. But once we have clearly defined and well-communicated boundaries, then true freedom can exist. Because you can run within those boundary lines with abandon, with excitement, with joy and you're not hesitating, is this okay? Is this okay? Is this okay? So God establishes it in the context of freedom.

JAMES: Does he not make those boundaries relatively clear in his word?

LYSA: He very much does. He very much does. So he not only did it for freedom but also for protection. So there was some restriction, but it was for the sake of the relationship not to the detriment of the relationship.

JAMES: Enhancing and extending life too.

LYSA: Exactly! He wanted to protect Adam from something Adam didn't understand would be so detrimental, and that is the weight of the knowledge of evil. And so, of course, there is a consequence too. We see in the garden one rule given. One boundary --

can you imagine how amazing it would be if we only had one rule to follow, right? But as sin entered in, as we see in Genesis three, where there is sin there is chaos and where there is chaos there is a lack of boundary. So the more sin that happened as we progressed from Genesis three on into the Old Testament we see the more chaos, the more sin, the more boundaries were required.

JAMES: By the way, can I just ask something? This is back in Genesis. Is there any chance we're seeing any of that today?

LYSA: You know, I think we're on to something there. And I think we're seeing it in a corporate sense and a society sense. We're also seeing it in a personal sense. My personal counselor says that the pandemic was like in our homes draining a lake and we were forced to see what was there. I think a lot of relational chaos happened in that year of close quarters and a little bit of isolation and uncertainty.

And so as we progress from Genesis three all the way to the law and the prophets, what started as one boundary, the more sin, and the more chaos there was, by the time we get to the law and the prophets, there are over 600 boundaries. So what I had discovered as I kept studying this --

JAMES: That's because we didn't do very well with the first one, no other gods, and then the nine that followed. It is like Reagan said 40 some odd years ago. He said if we would have just kept the first ten, we wouldn't have the 50,000 laws we got today that we're breaking.

LYSA: Right! Exactly! Because again where there is chaos and where there is sin there is a lack of a boundary. What I discovered as I was going through the theological nuances of this question is, are boundaries okay? Is God okay with boundaries? I discovered that boundaries are not just a good idea, they're actually God's idea.

And probably the most profound lesson that I got is when you get to the establishment of

the temple. And the way God established the temple was three really important words: Access, responsibility, and consequences. The greater access someone had as they got closer and closer to the holy of holies, the more responsibility they had to demonstrate. And certain people had certain access based on the responsibility that was required of them, not based on value -- all people are equally valuable. But as we get to the holy of holies, only the High Priest had full access to the holy of holies once a year to make atonement for the people.

But to have that kind of access he had to carry that level of responsibility and if he didn't then he would pay the highest consequence. He had to be absolutely purified and cleansed before he stepped into the holy of holies or the consequence was death. So as I thought about those three words, I thought, I can learn a valuable, valuable lesson about personal boundaries in my life.

To the level that we give someone access to us, physically, financially, even relationally, intellectually, and spiritually, to the level that we give someone access, they need to bring that same level of responsibility to properly handle that access.

My issue, not putting this on you guys, but my issue too many times I was given level ten access to someone who is only demonstrating level three responsibility. And the distance there is chaos.

JAMES: These are the boundaries, you're saying, are not just necessarily one we read in the Bible but they're boundaries that you put up to protect life, security, sometimes sanity. You can actually say -- in other words, am I right to consider this a boundary because we have three children and now we have 25 grandchildren but I would always show them when they were little and they would ride a tricycle or little bike, whatever, I'd put a line out here where the concrete from the driveway connected with the street and I'd say, "Do you see that line? You don't ever cross that line because if you go out there it shortens life, joy, fun, everything you want." That's a boundary. Would you say that's a boundary I put out? Was it a sensible boundary and it was a meaningful boundary? And it made all

the sense in the world? And very much in line with the boundaries that God gives us.

LYSA: Especially because as a parent you know things your children don't know. And so again, you're not establishing that boundary because you're a killjoy father, because you want to be overly restrictive. You're establishing it because of love.

JAMES: I want to increase their joy, extend it.

LYSA: And love has to be the driving motivation for the boundaries that we establish. We can't let a desire to punish someone be the motivation. We can't have the motivation of control or manipulation. The motivation has to be love for the sake of keeping both people in the relationship safe, sane, and able to be self-controlled.

JAMES: So that would have to do then when you were asking a moment ago, could you have a boundary that would separate from the person, is that right? Or keep your distance, correct?

LYSA: Yeah. Well, it's keeping distance if necessary.

JAMES: Is that acceptable to God, you were asking?

LYSA: It is! It absolutely is. And here's a good way to think about it. The wrong way to establish a boundary and this was the mistake that I made, is when I was giving level ten access and the other person was only bringing level three responsibility, the mistake I made is that I thought I needed to put a boundary on that other person to try to use external pressure to force them to change and that will never work.

JAMES: You're pretty open about your life. Are you in this book too talking about where you had those situations in your marriage, where the boundaries you perhaps allowed the enemy access by you not making clear a boundary? Is that what you're trying to show us?

LYSA: I don't know --

JAMES: That you could have put a boundary up that would have protected some of this?

LYSA: I don't know that I had a lack of boundaries that allowed the enemy access but the enemy gained access and there were certain aspects of our marriage that became unbiblical and unsustainable. It was heartbreaking and it was devastating. I do think I slipped into trying to change this other person using external pressure.

But here's something to think about. If you had a cardiac event today, we could rush to your aid using external compressions. We could sustain your life until the medical professionals came and then they could use external compressions to sustain your life. But at some point, if your heart does not beat and start pursuing life on its own, you can't have a sustained life using external pressure. Never have you seen two friends walking down the street, one doing chest compressions on the other, and thought, wow, that is a sustainable relationship, right?

And so we can't try to force another person to change because it won't work. Unless they have the desire to change, they're not going to change. So we don't put boundaries on other people to try to force them to change. What we do is put a boundary around ourselves in that relationship. And if they're only willing or capable of level three responsibility, it's our responsibility then to reduce their access down to their demonstrative level of responsibility. Level three responsibility, then we reduce the access to level three access.

JAMES: I've got to ask you, does that lead us to goodbyes? Does that mean that if boundaries are ignored, violated, or not respected, sometimes there might have to be a separation that a goodbye is involved in?

LYSA: Yes, and I always encourage people to take steps, not leaps. We don't want to

jump to an extreme because boundaries are never meant to shove another person away. Boundaries are meant to hold ourselves together. One evidence of God's Spirit in us is self-control. So we don't want to control another person, we are responsible to be self-controlled. We want to love others without losing the best of who we are.

And so if someone is consistently bringing level zero responsibility, I don't mean they've made a mistake, there is a big difference between a mistake, which we all make, and patterns of behavior that are consistent violations of things that should not be. If someone is consistently bringing level zero responsibility, we may need to prayerfully consider and get wise counsel, take steps, not leaps; but reduce the access down to zero. That may not be forever, it may be for a season, or it may be for a long time.

One verse that trips people up is didn't Jesus lay down his life for others? Doesn't he call us to lay down our lives for our friends? Yes. Jesus laid down his life to accomplish a high and holy purpose. Jesus did not lay down his life to enable bad behavior to continue.

JAMES: Or to accommodate it or even accept it. He always exposed it. He always exposed it with an avenue out which was a total change of mind and action which is what the Bible teaches clearly as repentance, something too seldom practiced today. So I hear you -- are you covering in this what you've learned in your journey?

LYSA: I have. You know I write my books from my point of struggle not because I have this great strength and I'm just going to teach everybody else from my advantage point of strength. I write my books from my point of struggle. And certainly, this book is no exception.

I have struggled with boundaries. And I can tell you a big reason why I've struggled is that I like to please other people. And I would say, used to say, that I would try to please other people because I wanted to keep them happy.

But here's the honest truth. When I experienced the death of my marriage, which is what I

call a divorce, it was definitely the death of my most significant relationship, I realized I had worked so hard on that relationship and now that that relationship ended, it was time to work on me. And I had to acknowledge some things that I needed to get healthy in, I needed to have the Lord reveal to me so that I could walk forward in my life as a healthier person.

What I realized about my people pleasing is that I wasn't pleasing just to keep the other people happy. I was trying to keep them happy so that they would not take from me what I felt I must have from them or else I wouldn't be okay in the world. We will always desperately want from other people what we fear God will never provide for us.

JAMES: Wow! What are you hearing in this, Betty?

BETTY: Well, am I right in saying that you want people to look at boundaries as something positive that God can instill in us to protect our hearts and to let us grow in our relationship with him and around other people? Not to be a restriction.

LYSA: Right! If you think about it, boundaries are a wonderful way to have healthy conversations. It's our opportunity to express, this is okay, and this is not okay. This is what I have to give, and this is what I do not have to give. This is what is acceptable, and this is what is not acceptable.

I'm convinced more relationships die not because we try to have healthy boundary conversations and they fail, but because we refuse to have the conversations that were so desperately needed but were never had.

JAMES: We're going to have, because of time, and we're going to try to feed some kids, by the way, we'll send this book to any of you who will help us feed starving children, save their lives.

Father, thank you for Lysa. She's been through a lot of challenges, and she has been

persistent in learning from them, not just for her but for others which is the way you are; in Jesus' name.

Lysa, thank you for letting him be who he is in you and using that gift. The book is in the bookstores. You can get it. You can go online and get it. I have an idea this is going to be a treasure.

Lysa, we're going to try to feed 350,000 kids a day and I'm asking you, would you feed three, five, or ten, or could you feed 100? I want you to watch it because I think you're going to want to.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: Meet John Yeatts, *LIFE*'s missions director; and his daughter Ashton. Upon their arrival at this Angolan village, they received a heartwarming greeting from all the elders and their children.

But underneath the excitement of meeting our mission team is a sad reality. The worst drought in 40 years has hit Angola wiping out crops and creating a cycle of death.

JOHN: I'm in this village today with Luciana, this grandmother. And she's lost three of her grandchildren in the last year within weeks of each other. And she has one left. She is afraid for his life.

ANNOUNCER: Unfortunately, no matter which village our mission team visited, the stories John and Ashton heard are all too familiar. Story after story of mothers not having enough food to keep their children alive. The only thing left for a mother to do when her child's life is slipping away is to walk for miles to a malnutrition clinic. There she hopes to find some way of stopping her child's body from completely shutting down.

ASHTON: But through us, they would see you.

ANNOUNCER: John and Ashton's immediate thoughts are to pray for each family. In spite of these mothers doing all they can for their children, far too often they must watch their frail bodies continue to worsen.

JOHN: So today, I'm in Benguela. I've had the privilege to bring my daughter on this trip. My daughter Ashton, she is my baby, my youngest. And I promise you, if it was my little girl sitting there, there is no end to what I would do to make sure she was well. And this mother is no different. She would give her own life for her baby to live well.

And so I'm asking you in Jesus' name, please help us to help them. Don't delay and know that with every gift you make you're helping to save a life.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Dear God, please let everybody watching hear that, that can save a life. I tell you many times you can be somebody's miracle.

Betty, I just love those mothers and those grandmothers, and I just love their babies. And we have saved 18 million little babies that would have died, and little children. Think about that -- 18 million miracles. But you see right there, you saw the loss that's being mourned and shared, and then you see the need. And there we're looking at the perfect cure, we really are.

BETTY: You know, James, I think over and over again, as I look at you -- I wish I could see you but I'm looking right into this camera hoping you can see my heart and know that as much as what James shared, we've been able to do a lot! So many lives have been changed, so many precious lives have been changed! And it doesn't lessen the fact that there are still some out there though, mothers crying out in their hearts saying what about

my baby? Somebody, help my baby! I love my baby. There is no one that can replace my baby. Please, someone, care.

And so many times you have cared. We're asking you to care again. And we'll continue to because there is so much to still be done. So please join with us again.

JAMES: Thank you, honey, for your love. Thank you for the way you loved our children and our grandchildren -- and 14 great-grandchildren. We've had two of our little grandchildren, we had, for the Christmas season, we had 16 little great-grandchildren's stockings on the mantle and two of them were stillborn. I can't tell you how much it hurt our granddaughters to not see that baby.

And look at these grandmothers and mothers with their babies there at the hospital saying, I've had my baby. My baby is maybe months or years old, but this is my baby. God, you are the miracle. I promise you. This is a perfect miracle. And not only do you save their lives, we show them Jesus. You reveal Jesus in love. You put his hands and arms around them. And he says, when you do that to the least of these, you're holding me. You're holding me! You're giving me water and food. And he says you are truly God's sheep, my sheep.

Would you right now make the biggest gift you can? \$30, \$50, \$100 feeds three, five, or ten children for the next months. \$1,000 will feed 100. And I'm just right now praying, God, give us people that will say, "I will feed 500." God, they can do it! Whatever you can do, don't you dare think \$30 is too small; that's three beautiful little children or grandchildren. Would you go get your bank card? Use it like a check, please. Call the number, go online, and make the gift God's putting on your heart right now. Let God lead you.

We have gifts to send you to say we love you and thank you. We always try to send you something that blesses you and gives you an opportunity to remember the blessings of God in your life but also through your life. Thank you. Please, go get that card. If you

write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us what you're putting in the mail.
Thank you for giving life.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Across the continent of Africa, children are suffering and facing severe malnutrition. Lack of rainfall and severe drought has led to one of the deadliest food crises in 40 years.

With food reserves gone and many areas experiencing severe famine, we urgently need to replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us. Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach, your gift of love can be an answer to prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need.

Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months. With your gift of any amount, we'll send you the *LIFE Planner* bound in soft-touch leather. This planner will help you in your daily walk with space for you to record your appointments, goals, inspirational notes, and prayers.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the scripture pen set. Perfect companions to the *LIFE* planner, these beautiful wooden pens are inscribed with scripture references to keep your heart focused on God's plans for you.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our inspiring bronze sculpture, *Let the Children Come*. This beautiful bronze is a reminder to care for children around the world in both word and deed.

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

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: You know from the depth of my heart I want to say thank you. I feel like I'm holding something more important than we realize. I think Lysa has touched a nerve here. Lysa, thank you. I pray you'll just keep doing it. You've been a blessing. I want you to know you can come back here any time God tells you to share something with his family, you know you've got an open door right here.

LYSA: Thank you. I don't take that lightly. And I really, really appreciate it. I've been through a lot, and I'm determined that if I had to walk through it, I'm going to make the devil pay because of it.

JAMES: I've told the devil, and you know I have, devil, you are going to regret every blow you ever took against me or my family. You will regret it because I will crush you with it and your intentions! And that's basically what you're saying.

LYSA: That's right.

JAMES: Do you bear witness to that statement?

LYSA: I do.

JAMES: It confuses the devil. What's he going to do with that? I'm going to beat the you-know-what out of you. The gates of hell are not going to prevail on our watch. Thanks for watching!