

12/26/22

**Week one: Fall Mission Feeding**  
**Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh**  
**Manny Arango**

**RANDY:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. Sheila Walsh is with me, and we're excited to have you. How are you doing? How is your brain? How are your thoughts? Is your mind okay? We're going to have an interesting conversation. Our guest is a fascinating individual, a great example of what God can do in our lives. And he has a book! Manny Arango has a book called *Brain Washed* or more accurately, *Brain Washed*. Manny, great to have you on *Life Today*!

**MANNY:** It is super! Super excited to be here with you guys today.

**RANDY:** So you should probably explain the title since I may have confused some people out there.

**MANNY:** Yeah, yeah, me and the publisher were clear to make it two words, *Brain Washed*. We believe that society wants to brainwash people in a negative way; sometimes families of origin want to brainwash us with generational strongholds, patterns of thinking that are toxic or negative. But God doesn't want to control your mind, actually, he wants to cleanse your mind so that then you can surrender it to him. God does not want to possess. Right? God wants us to yield control to him willingly of our own accord.

So the title of the book is *Brain*, pause, *Wash* because I believe that God can renew your thoughts, he can give you a new mind, and he can clean your thoughts.

**SHEILA:** Randy and I had a chance to chat with you before we started taping today and your back story is fascinating. I want the movie. I want the ten-part television series. Tell

us a little bit of your back story.

**MANNY:** I'll actually start at the moment that I knew I needed to go to a therapist.

**SHEILA:** Okay, because that's great and that was hard for you to do.

**MANNY:** Oh yeah, very, very difficult. So my dad took me to a crack house for the first time when I was five years old. So my dad was incarcerated for 18 years; my dad was incarcerated in Cuba, and miraculously gets free. Fidel Castro decided we're going to let all the prisoners go. And my dad wound up in Miami; eventually got up to Boston, Massachusetts.

But he had an uncle that was selling cocaine, was selling drugs. My dad at one point was just an errand boy and then my dad got caught up. My dad started abusing drugs, using drugs. And my mother was pregnant with my oldest sister by the time she was 12 years old. So my mom didn't just drop out of high school, she dropped out of middle school.

The fact that I'm even a Christian, the fact that I'm a pastor, and the fact that I'm functional is a testament to the grace and the power of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. I am the gospel on display that God can use someone from any family, from any background, from the worst of scenarios. All of my cousins are incarcerated, and all of my uncles are alcoholics or addicts. Two of my aunts are prostitutes. My family is littered. And I think when the enemy was no longer paying attention to the Arango family, God began to pluck me out of that family.

I'll say quite frankly, generational curses have power if you believe in them. They have power if you give them credence. They have as much power as you give them. And there's been so many phenomenal sermons and courses on generational curses or strongholds or patterns. I think a lot of Christians use that Christian teaching as an excuse to stay stuck, and not as an empowerment to actually get free.

The moment that was a defining moment for me, I'm sitting in the waiting room to talk to this therapist because I knew, I've got baggage. I would say that my childhood was traumatizing. Crack house at five is -- I would say that hits the trauma quota. And so I knew I was numb, I knew that I was depressed, I knew that I just had this inability to feel or emote or to access my emotions. I knew there was something off; just didn't know what it was.

I'd gone to the altar, I'd prayed, and I'd done all the things that I knew I was supposed to do as a Christian. And so I knew I needed something, I just didn't know what. Somebody had recommended a Christian therapist. Well, I'm sitting there with this therapist and I'm going on and on about how my dad has hurt me, how he abused me, how he neglected me. And then for whatever reason, I just start saying, "Well, my dad had this way with words. It is almost like my dad could weave this web of lies and you'd get caught in them." Not only was my dad an addict but my dad was a professional contractor. I'd watch my dad get \$20,000 \$30,000, and \$40,000 as a down payment for a job and never show up.

My dad could talk his way into anything. Talk his way out of anything. My dad was manipulative with his words. My dad was hypnotizing. My dad would be saying something, and you'd know like rationally, I think this man is lying. But for whatever reason, he would just like rope you in. He could sell water to a well. My dad was that kind of guy.

Well, I'm venting to this therapist that I'm assuming is supposed to hand me the Kleenex, rub my back, and comfort me. This therapist has the audacity to say, "Well, it sounds like your father left you with a powerful set of gifts." And I'm going, what? I don't think you're hearing me. What I go on in the book to talk about is that I wanted pity from that therapist, but the therapist wanted to give me power.

A lot of times, we can't accept pity and power simultaneously. We have to make a decision. Do I want people to RSVP for my pity party or do I want people to actually

empower me to take control of my life? So the therapist says this. Okay? The therapist says, "Can you repeat this description of your father to me one more time?"

I said, I wasn't joking in the moment but now that I look back I'm like, it is kind of funny. I said to the therapist, "How about you put your little notebook down and listen to what I'm about to say because he didn't hear me clearly the first time. You know, the therapist puts his notebook down.

He's like, "Yep, go ahead."

I said, "My dad could talk his way into anything, talk his way out of anything. My dad was deceptive with his words, and manipulative with his words. My dad had a superpower. It was his words! My dad had this larger-than-life, charismatic personality, and could light up a room. My dad could sell water to a well. My dad did more damage to me and my mom with his words than his actions."

The therapist said, "Yeah! I got it right. Your father left you a powerful set of gifts."

I'm like, "Man, I didn't even want to be here. I'm not interested in you challenging me, confronting me, or offending me. What are you talking about?"

The therapist asked me one question that changed my life forever. The therapist said, "What do you do for a living?"

I said, "I'm a preacher."

[Laughter]

The therapist said, "Then it sounds like you can talk people out of anything, talk people into anything. It sounds like what the enemy meant for evil, God has orchestrated it for your good. It sounds like your father gave you all the ingredients that you would need to

achieve the purpose that God has for you. It sounds like you can talk people out of hell and into heaven. Sounds like you can talk people out of depression and into joy, out of anxiety, and into peace. It sounds like you were blessed by your dad. But because you're so bitter at your father, because you're so angry at what he did or didn't do, you're not able to see the source of blessing that your father was."

I remember that was the day I called my dad -- I hadn't spoken to my dad in years -- it was the day I called my dad and said, "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for everything! Because you blessed me."

And later on in life, I became a youth pastor and I realized that so many of the young guys that were in our youth group hated themselves because they hated their fathers. It is very difficult to love yourself when the source of the person who kind of created you or made you is someone you can't stand or that you hate.

**SHEILA:** How did your father respond to that phone call?

**MANNY:** He was so confused!

[Laughter]

My dad was like, "Thanks for what?"

And I remember just going down -- listing it like, "Thank you. I remember the weekend that you left me and mom in the house with no food." Well, my mom got a disability check. My dad was the only provider or breadwinner for the home, and I remember my mom saying to me, "I haven't seen your father in weeks. We have no groceries. And this is my disability check." She said, "Son, I tithe off of this disability check and I would rather give God what he's due than to rob the Lord. So I'm going to tithe off of this disability check and it is God's job to provide for our needs."

I remember Catholic charities ringing the doorbell and saying, "We have no -- you're not on any of our lists but the Lord just told me to ring this doorbell and offer you guys groceries."

**SHEILA:** Honoring your mother's faith.

**MANNY:** Oh yeah. Ring my mother's doorbell. I remember saying, "Thank you! Thanks for leaving us in a house with no groceries because I learned that God is my provider." I just remember running down all these moments. "Thank you for bringing me to that crack house when I was five because God sent angels to protect me that day. Thank you! You in your sin and your foolishness, I can say to you the same thing that Joseph says to his brothers, "What you intended for evil," God didn't intend it for evil. God is not the author of evil, but man, God knows how to use the worst things that happen for redemption.

**RANDY:** So this gets to a major point of your book, and I want to read a quote. But the way you reacted with bitterness toward your father reflects what you call the mind of Adam, in other words, the natural mind. The things where you go, hey, what you did was wrong. I've had to live with that offense. And these are very natural thoughts, we all have them. But you say that the mind of Adam is marked by independence, insecurity, and isolation, which is kind of what you're feeling in therapy. But then you go to talk about that transformation that has to happen in all of us that happened in you that completely changes our perspective and our thoughts. Explain some of that transition.

**MANNY:** Absolutely! I'll give it an analogy. I love talking and stories and metaphors.

**RANDY:** Jesus did too.

**MANNY:** Yeah! I had this Mac Book. I had this thing in college. Loved this Mac Book. And it was the first time Apple had kind of come out with a black Mac book. I thought it was so cool. The thing to do was like invite all your friends to your dorm room and take pictures in photoshop. I know I'm dating myself, okay? So anyway, any time there was an

I.O.S. update I made sure I updated my laptop. And finally, there was an I.O.S. update that the computer wouldn't update. So I go to the mall, I go to the Apple store, I talk to this Mac genius. I'm like, "Hey! Fix it. I'm trying to get snow leopard."

**SHEILA:** I remember snow leopard!

**MANNY:** I'm trying to get snow leopard and I can't. What's going on? The Mac genius says, "Well, your hardware is going to have to be upgraded if it is going to be compatible with this software. There is nothing wrong with your hardware. However, for new software to be available, you are not going to just update this computer, you have to get a whole new one."

I think sometimes in church we offer people new thoughts, but we don't offer them a new mind because the mind of Adam will always produce bitterness, anger, strife, insecurity, and condemnation. These are the things that the mind of Adam will produce. And what does Jesus say? He says, "Hey, you want new wine? You've got to get new wineskins." That if you want the software, you've got to get an upgrade in your hardware. So there is a journey from the mind of Adam to the mind of Christ. The mind of Adam is full of independence. Well, independence from who? Independence from God. If I entertain negative thoughts about God, then the next domino that is going to automatically fall is that I'm always going to have the wrong thoughts about myself. I cannot form a healthy identity if I reject the truth about who God is. So that is insecurity.

And then lastly, if I have wrong thoughts about God and wrong thoughts about myself, then I'm inevitably going to have wrong thoughts about other people which means I'm going to isolate. I'm either going to idolize people, I'm either going to be jealous of people, or I'm going to compare myself to people. But if I get the right thoughts about God, and I get the right thoughts about self, and I get the right thoughts about others that is the foundation of the mind of Christ.

And I think that what that therapist helped me to do was to reject the victim mentality, to

reject the narrative that I was a victim. It helped me to go, wait, first of all, if God chose this person as my father, God was not wrong. First, I have to entertain the right thought about God. That God intentionally, if he knit me together in my mother's womb, then that means he wanted the D.N.A. from this dude who was incarcerated and who was an addict, and the D.N.A. from this woman because he is playing chess. He is orchestrating things on the chess board, and it is not my job to say that I wish I was a P.K. I wish I had someone else because I started preaching at 13. So at 13, I wanted to be a P.K.! That sounded awesome! Then I grew up and I got some friends.

**RANDY:** It's overrated! It's overrated. Yeah.

**MANNY:** Next, I can now be confident in who I am. I can say, if I have the right thoughts about God, then I don't have to battle with insecurity.

**RANDY:** You're who he created you to be.

**MANNY:** I'm who he created me to be. Yeah! I can now have the flip side of confidence in humility because those are the flip side of the same coin. And now, I can celebrate other people. I can root for other people. I don't have to feel like I'm comparing myself. And I think that journey, that therapist kick-started me on the journey of taking back control of my mind and realizing that I don't just need to come to church on Sunday to get better thoughts. That it's just a thought game then I'll just keep having to come to church every Sunday. By Wednesday, my thoughts are negative again. That is the goal of repentance, which is metanoia, the Greek word to change your mind is not just to change your thoughts, it is to get down to the root level. It is to get into your mindset and declare I'm going to have a mindset that is godly. I'm going to have a mindset that is Christ-like.

**SHEILA:** One of the things I think is so important and that came through your book is that when you believe in the absolute sovereignty of God, you can let everybody else off the hook. It's not your fault or your fault. It is like God is in control and God is good. I love that you wrote, "My thorn became my crown." It is so powerful. The very thing that

you thought, Lord, if you just take that away, that became the very thing that God uses in your life.

**MANNY:** Yeah, yeah! And it is what God does with Paul! He's like, "God, please take this thorn away!" I thought my thorn was my father, and the very thing I was insecure about. God gave me a crown of thorns and he says, "No! The very thing that you thought was this agitation or irritation is going to become the thing that helps you to get other people free and help other people and to minister to people.

**SHEILA:** Tell me a little bit about ARMA because I'm a Bible geek nerd and I'm fascinated by this.

**MANNY:** So we're in the middle of the pandemic and I was a traveling evangelist. I had quit my job at my church and followed the prompting of the Holy Spirit. And I jumped into a doctoral program because I'm a nerd. I remember saying to the Lord like, what am I going to do? And the Lord says as he says to most Bible characters, "What's in your hand?" The same thing he says to Moses, the same thing he says to the widow, what do you got? A couple of pots? You got a stick? What do you got? You've got two fish and five loaves? Give me something to work with. What do you got?

I was like, Lord, I got this garage. And a camera that's laying around and this degree. And God goes, alright, set up that camera, get the car out of the garage, turn it into a studio and start producing Bible courses. And I did that in the middle of the pandemic. Fast-forward to today, we have 1200-monthly subscribers who pay anywhere from \$20 to \$25 a month to learn Bible courses, and we produce multiple courses a month. And I just started with like the gospel of John, and I helped people understand it. And then people were like, "Well, we want Deuteronomy." So I did a course on Deuteronomy. And I had a bunch of parents like, "Can you do a homosexuality course?" I did a homosexuality course. And then I just did dealer's choice. Like you guys tell me what you want me to teach, I'll teach it. And I put this doctorate to use in a way that is palatable.

**SHEILA:** Yeah, I signed up!

**MANNY:** Are you serious?

**SHEILA:** Seriously, this morning I signed up.

**MANNY:** I hope you love it! Yeah, I hope you love it.

**RANDY:** I have lots more questions but you're just going to have to get *Brain Washed* to hear the answers to my really brilliant questions. And where can they sign up by the way --

**MANNY:** For ARMA? ARMACourses.com. ARMAcourses.com. It's about an average \$20 a month. And you get -- it's like Netflix. You get free access to every single course. You can binge-watch them. And there is a course on *Brain Washed*.

**RANDY:** All right. We will send you this book today if you want to get it if you will help us in this last week of our Mission Feeding emphasis. Take a look at this. I hope you'll do something and when you do, ask for Manny's book, and we'll send it to you.

### **On the mission field**

**JOHN:** So I'm sitting here in Vesa, Angola. It is a very rural countryside area. And I just listened to Rosa here share her story of the loss of her children. It's so tragic. She's lost three of her children to hunger. And she was sharing the story of her oldest child that died from malnutrition, he was four years old.

**Open Captions:** Because of the drought our seeds will not grow, and it is a struggle to get any food. Three of my children have died because of hunger. The night my son died he said, "Mama, I'm going, I'm going."

**JOHN:** "Mama, I'm going!" She said it caused her to literally faint. And when she woke up he was gone. Can you imagine, "Mama, I'm going?"

I know that you love Rosa and Clementin. Without Mission Feeding we cannot guarantee that Clementin is not going to follow her brothers and sisters in that same path of "Mama, I'm going."

Do all that you can to make sure that villages like this don't have to lose any more children. That no mother ever has to listen to her child say, "Mama, I'm going." Please help!

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**SHEILA:** That breaks my heart. I'll never forget the first time I was in Angola and the situation there is so much worse today. The severe drought that's been going on for the last six or seven years has meant that there's nothing -- the ground is producing nothing. And I've walked with some of these moms as they literally dig in the dirt trying to find anything that they could give their child.

Being the mom of a boy, I can't imagine what it is like at nighttime to try and help your son get to sleep but that child is so hungry that he can't sleep. And I've watched these moms. If they do get a little bit of food, they give it to their children and they have nothing.

But you know another thing that I have found that just blew me away and brought me to my knees? Is the faith that exists in some of these mothers. That even though they have nothing, they have nothing physical that would make them think well, God's favor is on me, but there is something inside of them where they continue to pray, and they continue to ask God to help them.

And that's why we're asking you to join us today. The situation, Randy at the moment in Angola is desperate. We can do something.

**RANDY:** It is. And the global situation with the economies and stuff has not helped, in fact, it's made it much worse. But we can do something. That's the good news. We know this. It's hard, Sheila. You know, you've been over there. It will break your heart. You come home just depressed and like God, do something! Do something! And God is going, I am. I've got you.

Sheila and I, the ministry here, the missionaries on the ground, but most importantly, the people just like you who respond and say, yeah, I'll give \$30 to help feed three children for three months or \$50 to help feed five children. Some of you can give \$100 to help feed ten children for three whole months. Some of you can do more than that. I hope that you'll take this time to go, Lord, what would you have me do? Because it's just about -- I think God wants to create an obedience response in all of us.

So if you feel like God is tugging at your heart going, I feel like I should be a part of that, pick up the phone, go online. This is the last week we'll be on the air with this particular emphasis, but we're doing it year-round, give the best gift you can.

When you do we have the systems in place for decades now, literally, to go into these villages like the one you just saw and give them food. It is a specially formulated what we call soup mix. It is thicker like oatmeal, but it's enriched with vitamins. It's designed to take children who are on the verge and get them back on their feet again.

But we have to have you. Will you do it? I pray you will go right now and make the best gift you can. And I can promise you, we will get it to those in desperate need. Join us as we save lives.

**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.

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

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** I hope you are going online and going to the phone and making the best gift you can. And keep in mind as we're here at the end of the year, if you've got those year-end gifts, now is the time to do it. And Sheila, I hope they'll get Manny's book too.

**SHEILA:** And for any gift at all, you can ask for Manny's book. Manny, thank you for being with us and I can't wait to start my first course!

**MANNY:** I can't wait for you to start your first course either! Thank you so much for having me on. I believe that God can do anything.

**RANDY:** I appreciate you.

**SHEILA:** You're living proof!

**RANDY:** I appreciate the encouragement. You're not just talking about it but you're showing us through your whole life. It's beautiful!

**SHEILA:** So thanks for being with us, and we'll see you next time on *Life Today*!