

Week 22

5/24/11

James: It's always a joy to share with you. Hey, thank you for letting us have this time. I don't think you're going to be disappointed. I'm James Robison. My wife Betty and I - I'm holding a book by Gabe Lyons and we welcome Gabe. He's been here... as a matter of fact, go ahead and tell Gabe Lyons we're glad to have him back. Gabe, we're really glad you're here. I'm really anxious to read some of your chapter titles in *The Next Christians* here. I really think you hit the nail on the head: provoked but not offended. Great peace have those that love thy word and nothing shall offend them. A lot of church folks stay offended all of the time because they love religion and they love their position and they love their tradition and they're easily offended. Hmm, provoked, that would mean stirred. I'm ready to respond... in love, maybe? I want to find out. "Creators not critics." That doesn't mean you don't notice wrong. When you're not judgmental doesn't mean you don't have good judgment. It just means you're not judgmental. You're redemptive; you don't have a spirit of destruction. I don't even know if this is what he is talking about but I know what that says to me is I'm going to find out. Aren't you curious? Then he says, "Called, not employed." You don't just work for somebody, you're a part of his body under his covering, in his shelter, his shadow, piercing the darkness and serving. Hmm, amazing! "Grounded not distracted." "In community not alone." You know what I try to teach people? The world says you need connections. The Bible says you need connectedness. We need to connect to one another. Does that make sense?

Gabe: Yes!

James: Is that okay for the below 35 year olds?

Gabe: Amen!

James: Then counter-cultural not relevant. Wow! Hmm! Tell me about *The Next Christians*. Great book, it's in the bookstores. I like it. I'm reading it. Tell me about it.

Gabe: Well, I think this generation, and all of us of any age, is just trying to figure out how to engage a world that no longer respects Christians as much and really has a pretty negative view of what a Christian is. What I try to do is tell the stories and illustrate how this generation is engaging their world with the love of Jesus but it looks a little different. It might be a little bit of a different shell than what most people have

experienced of Christians. So I talk about being provoked instead of offended by sin or corruption in our world. Of course, there is going to be sin in our world. Of course there is darkness that's why the world needs light. So to be provoked to engage that, to not worry about our reputations? Too many people are concerned about their reputations; they don't want to go somewhere where they might be seen or go somewhere where their friends might look down on them for going there. They have to have courage instead of just remaining comfortable. We have to be provoked to have courage to go into some places where there is injustice.

James: They wouldn't want to be sitting on a sofa of a Pharisee with a prostitute kneeling at their feet. It can really damage your reputation in a hurry.

[Laughter]

Jesus didn't seem to be too concerned about his reputation because he was concerned about their future and their well-being and he loved them. And this woman, this prostitute is weeping at his feet because she was in the presence of love. And really, if the Christians watching us, if the people who are watching us who say "I'm Christian" and who really I think want to be -- and even the ones going down to church, they're working really hard to go down there, I think they want to be -- if they would actually become what you're talking about, not just members of something but really a part of this family, I think they would move comfortably, not in compromise but would move comfortably in these places where they need to see the light. That's what I hear you saying. I think that's what you're saying.

Gabe: It is what I'm saying. We're called to be salt and light but you know salt doesn't work unless it is attached to meat. You know you've got to rub the salt in the steak to get the taste and the flavor out. We have to be in this world. We can't run from it. We can't try to separate and just hang out with our Christian friends. We've got to be comfortable spending time with people who haven't decided to follow Jesus yet because truly our model of loving them might be the only way that they come to know Jesus. It is no different than as you were saying, Jesus does this with Zacchaeus, I think of that story all of the time where the religious figures of the day are offended by this guy Zacchaeus and can't imagine Jesus would spend time with him. But here Jesus invites himself over for dinner, the Pharisees are back there just judging and can't believe he's doing this and not only does Jesus have dinner with him, but Jesus comes out and we see Zacchaeus absolutely transformed because Jesus was provoked to go engage and have one of the most intimate settings you can have in that culture, which was to have dinner with the sinner among sinners. I think it is a good example of how we have to be provoked to see people differently; to not look down on people who

look different than us, who have piercings or tattoos, or dress different or we don't understand them and our tendency can be just to pick out the thing that is wrong with them, and focus on that. Well, that's judgment. But grace is to look at people and see God's goodness in them and see the image of God trying to break through and knowing how to affirm that. I think this Christian in this age who can do that is going to find themselves in a wealth of friendships and relationships with people around them because they've gotten good at pointing out where God's trying to break through in their life.

James: You talk about the piercings and the tattoos. Brian Welch, who is nothing but a tattoo and all the piercings and he is sitting here and he is just incredible. I'm sure you can see him on the screen there. And I remember Beth Moore, she is at home because she watches the program -- she likes *LIFE Today* -- she said, "I saw this guy sitting there and I'm just going crazy. I can't believe you've got this guy sitting there." And she is sitting there and said, "In a few minutes I'm crying because of the love of God has done so much in his life." She said, "Would you believe the minute *LIFE Today* is off I go to the first bookstore that is open and I buy the book." She said, "I came home, I didn't put it down. I read every bit of it." Brian Welch is one of those kind of guys. I want to tell you, love of God is on him. It is just beautiful to see and how he loved his daughter and the beautiful things. We in the Christian world have really isolated ourselves from the very people God is waiting to love if we would just give him the channel through which his love could flow. Man, I hear you saying *The Next Christians*, we might could just say *The Real Christians* or the people who really understand what a Christian is, they're going to begin to do these things.

Gabe: That's right. And instead of being critics, when we find things wrong in our world, no doubt we are and we're called to stand up for what is right, what is just, what is good, what is true, what is beautiful, those are the things Christians should represent, and our world is not always like that. But instead of condemning the world for that, critiquing people who haven't necessarily signed up to follow Jesus the way we have, I find in *The Next Christians* are the real Christians that they have the ability to create in the midst of that; to create ways that people can work towards fighting that injustice. They don't just critique it and sit back and offer thoughts on it, they do something about it -- the way you do something about it.

Betty: We have to ask God to give us the wisdom to be creative like that because God's not going to run out of ways for us to be effective for his kingdom, and to really be able to express his love. He is very creative. So if we'll just leave our hearts open no matter what age we are. We've got 11 grandchildren and I'm always trying to figure out ways that we can communicate with them because they're teenagers, most of them.

And boy, technology has really gone past us but I find myself texting or communicating the way they would do it because I get a quick response from them if I'm in their world, so to speak. To be able to communicate, that's important to me. I think we should be as determined to be effective when we're trying to be an example for Jesus.

James: I hear you trying to teach us -- I mean you're trying to teach us. We want to be a help to you anywhere we can, but what I see -- and this is what really is great in The Next Christian, let me tell you what he does. He gets back here toward the end of the book and he begins to tell you all the different things people do and what might be considered a very unique and creative way of literally piercing the darkness, bringing light in that that light begins to illuminate maybe the error of somebody's ways without you being accusing. The light exposes that which needs to be adjusted; it also reveals the way in which we need to walk. The problem most church folks walk around with some covering over them. They've got this Catholic covering, this Baptist covering. It is funny how we wear all of these different kind of hats to look more religious or different kind of ways. We even get to where we are looking like each other, like cookie cutters, we all look the same but we don't look much like Christ, this God of diversity. What he is showing you is how people have penetrated the business place, they have penetrated the arts, they've penetrated media. And not condemned it, they've penetrated it by becoming an effective part of it. When I think about let's just say the incredible potential of Hollywood for good -- you take Schindler's List. What kind of a wonderful message did that incredible movie reveal about love for somebody else and wanting to do something? That's the Corrie ten Boom story told over and over, so to speak, that's the love of God. But you tell story after story of young people and individuals literally piercing the darkness and planting themselves in the midst of this situation. They're incredible true life stories.

Gabe: I think of one story, a guy name Jamie Tworkowski who started something called To Write Love On Her Arms. It is a perfect story! Here's a guy who is working in a surf shop down in Orlando, Florida, in that area, and he has friends and one of his friends gets caught up in an addiction. This particular addiction leads to cutting. As you know, some teenagers and people in depression struggle with. So she had carved into her arm a horrible word just to say what she thought about herself. In the midst of that, him and his friends who were Christians just rushed to her side and basically loved her. In the process of loving her and trying to take her to a rehabilitation clinic that wouldn't accept her because she was too bad of a case, they spent three and four days with her just throughout the night just being, as he described, being her church, loving her right where she was at. And over time she gets into a rehabilitation clinic and she gets better. But the real point of the story is he started selling these T-shirts

called To Write Love On Her Arms to make money so she could go through that process. Well, the movement just starts and rock stars start catching on that hey, talking about love is a good thing so they start inviting them to their rock shows and he shows up on stage talking about love. And then on and on, all of the sudden this shirt ends up being the number one selling shirt in the stores called Hot Topic, in the mall; it is a big T-shirt shop where all these teenagers are shopping, and here you go, the love of Christ where he tells the story on the inside of the shirt of the love of Jesus that is showing up in her life. There is story after story of when we just put on like you said, that lens of creativity and say look, my response as a follower of Jesus is to go into this person's life and not only help them but think, who else is struggling from this and how else can I help even more people who might be struggling from this? And push back the evil that would otherwise overwhelm our creation if we don't stand with Christ to do that.

James: What I believe you are really trying to show the younger generation, and us in the older, let's say, part of the population today, you're trying to show us effective ways of let's say making what I call God's imprint on the whole culture, on the media, journalism, academics -- every part of it. I don't see you leaving any stone unturned so speak. And you believe people don't stand back analyze, criticize, and accuse but they get in there in the midst of the pain and the need and reveal him.

Gabe: That's right! They rush in. They see a problem and rush towards it. But they don't always have to leave their jobs to do this. I think that's one of the things I talk about in this chapter called "Called, not employed." It is not that we shouldn't have jobs but we should think about our mission, many times as being the place we already are. We don't have to leave this place that we're spending 40-50 hours of our week and go do ministry somewhere over here. In fact, we just need to have a holy imagination to understand what's the love of Jesus look like in my workplace or in my school? For the teacher, right, who is teaching students and working with families every day, that's a full ministry right there of loving on kids, loving on families, educating, tutoring them. All of that in and of itself is a great ministry of restoration and helping people learn and be educated. All the way to the person in media or in the music business, who is writing music and trying to perform music in a way to a world that isn't just a Christian group of people watching but people who aren't Christian but need to hear truth and they're only going to hear it through music. So they go and write songs and perform music. And they use their gifts, whatever their talents and their gifts are, they take that and combine it with the burden God's put on their heart, and where those two things intersect I think that's where we find calling and I think that's where the body of Christ comes to life. I think what this book does is give language for the grandparents and the parents to know how to talk to their children because their

children, in many cases that are leaving the church are rejecting the church because they don't have a language, they don't have a way of talking to their parents about the sense that they have where they love Jesus, they love God but they just can't function within the religious environment that maybe has been created for them.

James: I can't either. Really and truly, I love something Charles Stanley said years ago. He said -- Andy Stanley, his son is a good friend of yours who is great -- they're great folks. Charles said, "I asked God. Said, 'Why do so many people not like to go to church?' God said, 'I don't like to go much myself.'"

[Laughter]

The thing is because we've left him out so much. It is too bad. We've got a lot of religion, and I mean really and truly, the churches, if they would invite the presence of the Lord in, he will change them. He will restore them to stability. You talk about being creative and not being critics, touch on that a minute.

Gabe: Listen; a personal story from my wife and I. Our son was born back ten years ago and was diagnosed with Down Syndrome. That was a shock to us, a surprise. I'd grown up in an environment where abortion was something I understood to be completely wrong and when I did the research on Down Syndrome, I realized nine out of ten of these children are terminated when the mother and father or one or both know in advance through prenatal testing -- nine out of ten. So I had a couple of options. One was to respond and just go hang a sign around my neck and go stand in front of abortion clinics or vote pro-life. Again, I'm not saying neither one of those are great things -- they are! But I needed to be more creative than that. I needed to get involved. So with our community we worked together and basically decided we need to tell the story of life with a child with Down Syndrome. And the stories of these beautiful children, which many of us know or have some connection to somebody with Down Syndrome but their story is not told on web M.D. People would go Google and they would see that your life is going to be horrible if you have a child like this. It is better for you, it is better for them if they're not in this world. That's the story being told, it was a lie. So we said, "We've got to tell the truth." So we went out, got a great photographer, a lot of families, and we have pictures now in this booklet that we created called "Understanding --." Yeah! It is called "Understanding a Down Syndrome Diagnosis." In this book we show the story of everything from infants reading together, brothers and sisters hanging out together, kids skateboarding in the street with their neighbor friends, all the way to a lady doing ballet and also working out in the medical field. We got these delivered. When we lived in Atlanta, we took them to

every doctor's office, OB/Gyn, geneticists office, and they started using them and giving this out to parents.

James: Absolutely beautiful!

Gabe: And then we just found out this fall, this was amazing, was that the National Association for OB/Gyn had just decided that this booklet is going to be the booklet that they want out there to every doctor's office -- every one of them!

[Applause]

James: Can our viewers get it? How would they go online to get it or can we get it and what do we do? Because it is beautiful.

Gabe: Yes. The web site where these booklets are at is called LetterCase.org. There these books are available for anybody. But that's an example of creating instead of criticizing; right? It was just using my gifts in storytelling and photographers, that's what we're talking about. Christians showing up everywhere we see corruption overflowing in our world and not just talking about how bad this world is, but saying let's be a part of displaying for people what the Kingdom of God might look like when it shows up.

James: Can I tell you that I have -- and I want to thank you for doing that. Because in a way we lost a little grandchild that was stillborn and had a funeral, a little wicker basket around Christmas time years ago, little baby Matthew. But all of our grandchildren are beautifully healthy and our children but I've never seen a Down Syndrome child that I didn't just immediately love. I can tell you this, Gabe. Many times I've looked at Down Syndrome children, I don't know if my discernment is exactly right, but I prayed many times, Lord, I see an innocence there. I see a beauty in their innocence that I pray on me. I've said that. I probably would love to have the discussion more about what you see that is so unique about them. But this is a beautiful thing you've done. I want you to know that you and I are just getting to know each other but I want you to help me know him better. And together, let's help everybody know him. Help people who know him know how to share him in a way that people would want to know him. I just thank you so much. Would you just join us in thanking Gabe? He's been a real blessing to us.

Gabe: Thank you.

James: The Next Christians, it is in the bookstores. There's his web site. They have a group meeting of young people, leaders who want to ask questions called "Q." I told him I would go any time he ever wants me to do anything for him. He will just find a way where he works with what I'm able to do schedule-wise. I plant myself in the middle of confusion, chaos, curiosity, analysis or critique or whatever they want to say. And let me tell you something, I would hope they would go away better because of our exchange. I know I will. I know I'll be shaped by the process. So Gabe, I'm available to you. What we have is available to you. Just thank you for sharing what God's put on your heart -- to all of you who watch. Let me show you something that I'm extremely comfortable doing. I want to show you an incredible need you can meet. It is not wishful thinking. I really request that you not try to find something else to do because you say, I bet James is going to ask me to help somebody. I'm going to ask you to give somebody a chance and I want you to look at these little faces. I'm going to get you to look at them real close. I promise you, God is looking at them. He's looking at some eyes here that will notice them, and somebody will do what he wants to do. Watch.

On the mission field:

Tammy: We need to save these children.

There is a desperate need here.

These children are dying because they have no food. There are children all around here that do not get food every day.

These children are severely malnourished. There is something we have to do or we will lose more children.

There is a solution to their problems and for me it seems really, really simple... food in a little bowl. Mission feeding: this is where life begins. God bless you!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Boy, more than 20 years ago, Betty and I started going where they were dying by the tens of thousands. We started pouring out that -- we like to call it porridge, it is a soup mixture but it is scientifically designed for the nutritional needs in particular areas by really devoted missionaries -- but we poured it. In many places we went in the initial stages of our mission outreach, soup barrels would be empty, we would run out. And it was, it was -- there wasn't a calm, there was panic and little children trying to get down in the barrel and scrape it. You said a very important prayer and you repeated it, what you prayed. "I pray the lines to give the soup, the food, will be longer than the lines to get it." Betty, for so many years God's answered that prayer until millions of lives have been saved -- millions! But right now those children are very needy and we're also trying to establish feeding where the kids are strong enough to go to school where we can feed them on a regular basis to be sure they keep going. We're doing everything we can to stabilize the situation. Those are precious little children! I'm asking you to be an answer to Betty's prayer that the line to feed them and help them will be longer than the line of need. If you'll dial that number -- and we do this twice a year. We ask you to help feed children for several months and a gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will feed three, five, or ten children. This is not total child care, this is stabilizing their diet and in many instances saving their lives and supplying the resources for the malnutrition clinics where they won't make it if they don't get there when they get to the final stages. We're asking you to supply all of the food and the nutrition. If you'll just dial that number, take your bankcard, this is probably the best way you'll ever use it, to give life, and you use it like a check. If you write a check, make it to *LIFE*. But now listen to me, if you want to go online, you can go to LifeToday.org, indicate I want to donate, I want to make a gift and you can make a gift right now. But I'm asking you to do it today because the missionaries literally need to know, we use all that you have enabled us to have in the last several months. Now we're asking you to take care of this next period. Betty and I are continually asking people to help. We'll do it through many other areas where we talk to people but nothing like this. This is a critical need. This is where you say, "I'll take ten." Or maybe you can take 100! Maybe you can make a gift of \$1,000 or more. But you remember, for three children \$30 is the difference, \$50 for five, \$100 for ten. We want to send you God's Kingdom in You, which you're expressing his kingdom right here in this gift, you're sharing life. Would you dial the number? By the way, if you get a busy, be determined! Look, I've got to help them and you get through and you make the gift God puts on your heart. Just do the best you can. We're going to bless you but you're going to be blessed when you give life. Thank you for making that call.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: At this very moment a child is drawing her last breath struggling to stay alive due to a lack of food. Sadly, this impoverished child is not alone and without our help, many like her throughout Africa face death as well. Today you can make a difference. You can save a life! *LIFE's* mission feeding teams are in place right now ready to answer the hunger cries of half a million children throughout remote areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. With previous food reserves gone and Southern Africa facing its worst conditions and food shortage in more than two decades, we desperately need to replenish our supplies for the feeding programs immediately! Your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months. With your gift we'll send you the God's Kingdom in You audio series and companion scripture guide. James and Betty Robison, along with Beth Moore, inspire you to live every day in the power and presence of God. With your gift of \$125 or more to help feed ten children you may request both the video DVD and audio series with scripture guide. As a bonus we will also send you Jim Hylton's new book, the supernatural skyline. Finally, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help save the lives of 100 children and be sure to request the beautiful new "Heart of the Father" bronze sculpture. Please call, write, or make your secure gift online.

End of clip**On the mission field:**

Tammy: These children are severely malnourished. You can see the signs all around you -- visibly see them, you can visibly touch them, tangibly. There is something we can do today to change everything for these children. I believe it! We have a chance -- we're set up, we have a chance to come into this village, into this community and feed thousands of children every single day. *LIFE Outreach* mission feeding program can do just that. Why don't you consider partnering with me today? It is a ministry. It is a program you can trust. Believe me when I say this, I've seen it -- I've seen it with my own eyes so pray about that today. If God is speaking to you right now go to the phone -- go to the phone and make that call that could change the life of a little child today.

End of clip**In the studio:**

James: We really are anxious to send you God's Kingdom in You because I'm telling you, the Lord is -- I've been preaching nearly 50 years but I'm like a kid always

learning, I'm sitting at Jesus' feet, I'm listening. Boy, what I've come to see about the kingdom, it is revolutionary. This is spiritual gravity, keeps things in place according to God. We'll gladly, if you'll help us, if you'd like to have *The Next Christians*, it is in the bookstores. You may want to run out and get it right now, I encourage you to. We will be glad to send it to you if you'll just help us give life to these children. We want to say thanks to Gabe. Would you join us here in thanking Gabe? Thank you, Gabe! Go to our web site LifeToday.org and we'll tell you how to find all of his web sites, find out of where he is going to have the "Q," the meetings. Thank you for watching!

Beth: There is just simply no way to fool God. He is not... I mean He is on to our bull! Anybody? I mean He is on to it!

Announcer: Beth Moore tomorrow!