

Week 9

2/24/11

James: It is a joy to be able to share this time with you. I wish we could be sitting right there wherever you are. You say, "Oh, you don't want to see me! You don't know where I am." Hey, it is okay. I really wish we could be that close. It is impossible. I want to be with people, I want to encourage people and so thank you for giving us this opportunity. You're going to be blessed when you hear the story of our guest Lisa Harper, who will really talk to you about the challenges that some people would say, "No way you'd get through it." I'm James Robison, my wife Betty and I welcome Lisa Harper. Let me just hold up this book that's titled-- I think about this "Untamed: How the Wild Side of Jesus Frees Us to Live and Love with Abandon." She wrote a book also called, "The Perfect Mess." I have an idea she was pretty well convinced that she was the perfect mess, but there is no challenge too big for God. Would you welcome Lisa Harper to *LIFE Today*? Lisa, good to see you.

Lisa: Thank you, James. It is good to see you!

James: How is everything with the Women of Faith?

Lisa: Oh, everything is awesome. I got tickled when you said that book, "A Perfect Mess." A woman came up to me last week at Women of Faith and said, "I love your book, 'One Hot Mess.'"

[Laughter]

I actually like that's title better! But I love being with the Women of Faith and it is just an incredible group.

James: And we love all the Women of Faith. We love all the speakers. I know they've divided it now into east coast/west coast so they're covering more territory but give them all our regards. I want to ask you about the book. You really talk about -- can I read one thing that really jumped out at me? It is something you've done, in addition to what you've shared. She actually starts each chapter with a quote, a significant quote from someone else. All of her book is filled with significant quotes, which she is sharing out of her heart, very significant. How to help you find meaning in your own life and really find a freedom that some people have never imagined possible when you really have a lot of weight and heaviness pushing on you from all the circumstances and challenges in life. But listen to this quote: "God loves us, not

because we're lovable but because he is love. Not because he needs to receive but because he delights to give." It's real important for us to grasp that. Who said it? -- C.S. Lewis. You really introduce each chapter with a meaningful quote. But can I ask you -- Betty, you told me you wanted to ask her something that I thought was very important.

Betty: Give us a definition of what you mean by "Untamed."

Lisa: Well, I'll give you the definition by giving you another quote. Toward the end of the book I quote a guy named Steve Brown. I love all the old dead theologians but he's actually still alive and kicking. Steve Brown says that we... so many Christians experience freedom the way a dog experiences freedom from a taxidermist, they're stiff. Jesus wants us to experience freedom the way a dog would experience from a veterinarian; they may be barking and slobbering but they're free. That is really the untamed side of Jesus that I've experienced. I used to be much more comfortable with Jesus as kind of the warm fuzzy gentle Jesus. I needed him to be smaller to be safe to me. And the more I've grown as a woman, especially in the areas of dealing with the shame that came from childhood molestation; I needed the warrior Jesus because the dragon of shame in my heart was so ferocious that only warrior Jesus could kill that dragon. So I started exploring the Jesus in the gospels that doesn't always make it to the flannel graph board, the bigger Jesus, the one with the sword. It's really changed the last few years of my life.

Betty: When I heard that title the thought that came to me was not out of control, but in control of him but if God wants to take you on the edge a little bit, not being afraid to rest in him and let him go where he wants to.

Lisa: That's right! Because I meet so many people who know Jesus that are still really bound. I feel like that's the way I was for so many years. I met Jesus when I was a little girl; I was five or six years old. And I knew that I needed God, what I did not understand is how much God delights in me, I thought he just tolerated me, but to really get God's delight and to actually be released from shame. You know that woman in scripture who was bent over? I feel like I was just bent over by shame. I looked okay on the outside; I'd memorized a lot of verses but inside I felt like part of me was really crippled. So I identify with that woman in scripture that when she finally has that dramatic encounter with Jesus she can stand up and that's what the last couple of years have been like for me, I feel like I've stood up.

James: While you're talking I'm getting all kind of images. I'm seeing, in these thoughts coming to me, I'm seeing caged Christians. It is like church people living in a

cage. They don't live like they're free and walking in liberty with responsibility but they're just held captive by... a friend of mine referred to something as sin management rather than being lifted above that. Now you talked about shame. Am I wrong to share that I sense and I've observed that the church is part of the practice of putting shame on people who have failed in some way and putting you down? Did they contribute -- did anybody contribute to you feeling like dirt or unworthy or shamed?

Lisa: I don't think anybody in the church intentionally put that bondage on me but I think because I heard so many messages about being clean and being pure, even though I had been molested as a little kid and it was out of my control, I thought I'm dirty. If anybody really knew those chapters of my story, I wouldn't fit in the circle of clean Christian people. Again, I don't think it was intentional but I definitely heard the message that you better keep that part hidden because that will make you look messy and really unworthy. That was -- I think that was the feeling that came along with the shame for me was I felt so incredibly unworthy.

James: You know you share in the book that when your parents separated you had some neighbors and some other people that called you a name. I think that would have hurt.

Lisa: It did. I was playing on a jungle gym, we don't play on those much anymore because of litigation but we used to play on these, basically a big piece of scaffolding in the backyard. And I was playing with my back door neighbor and her mother always scared me a little bit because her mother was really loud and wore these very loud Bermuda shorts. She even whispered loud. But her mother came to the back fence and called my friend down, I was probably seven years old, and she called my friend, I'll just say her name was Becky. She said, "Becky, come down here." I could hear. The whole time we had been pretending like we were princesses and our princes were below us. So I'm still up at the top pretending I'm a princess. And Becky's mom called her to the fence and she said, "You can't play with Lisa anymore because her parents divorced. That little girl is trash." I can just remember being so stunned because I didn't know I was trash. But that -- that name really kind of underscored what I had begun to sense from the way some men had treated me, from my parents divorcing and then to have this loud neighbor in Bermuda shorts, just definitely sealed the deal that I was trash and unworthy. I believed that for a long time. I tell people the dragon of shame sometimes would sleep in my heart. When he woke up and roared, man he said some ugly things and I believed him.

Betty: The enemy does tell us and he'll make us think we're alone, and we're the only -
- nobody is as bad as we have been.

Lisa: And if anybody really knew my story there was no way they would accept me. The coolest thing happened recently, just a couple of weeks ago that I wanted to tell you. I was at a women's conference, a real small event, just about a 100 women. At the very end -- I never do this and especially, I wouldn't do it in a big crowd but I felt compelled to have women who had been sexually or physically abused to stand up, and for us to kind of have an Ebenezer time where we prayed to really be free. So women started standing up. I realized halfway through this, oh, yikers! Might not should have done that; that could be kind of shaming. But these women stood up, about half the hundred women stood up and I just felt compelled to start speaking to each woman. I grew up Baptist so we don't boogie and we're not that demonstrative so I don't usually do things like that. But I stood up and I started speaking to each woman and to one woman, I knew her name and I called her name. I just said, "You are not dirty." She just immediately began to weep. I went on, talked to a few other women, and then we prayed a prayer from the New Testament. The prayer in Romans that said, no longer -- no that's from Isaiah 42. Isaiah 42 we prayed that no longer are you deserted or your name desolate, but you are Hephzibah, that God delights in us. Then from Romans, that there is now therefore no condemnation for those of us who are in Christ Jesus. So we talked about those two definitions now that we're in Christ. Then we had just a real sweet time of prayer. I didn't think much else about it until that woman came up to me the next day and she said, "When I stood up last night, I really almost regretted it." Because she is a leader in the church, her husband is a leader; and she said, "You know we have a really strong marriage and I thought, I might not have stood up because people might have thought something had gone on in our marriage." But she said, "I really felt the Holy Spirit prompting me." She said, "When you began to talk to women, I said, 'Oh, Jesus, please, please, please, have her say that I'm not dirty.'" Of course, I had said to other people, "You are worthy." "You are not fat." She said, "When you turned and you called my name, and she said, 'You're the only person that you called my name -- I'm the only person you called by name. And you said, 'You are not dirty.'" She said, "That's exactly what I'd asked God to have you say." She said, "Nobody -- even my husband -- nobody knows I've felt dirty all these years," because she had an adult man molest her when she was a little girl. She said, "I've been to Christian counseling, my husband and I have a great marriage," but she said, "There is a little part of me that is still affected by that." She said, "When you spoke that," she said, "it is as if the Lord said, you aren't -- honey, you are not dirty any longer. You don't have to wear that." I thought, man, if every woman could hear those kind of words directly from the Lord and be freed from the "I'm not good enough" or "I'm not smart enough" or "I'm not pretty enough," "I'm dirty," if they could really hear God's

voice saying, "You are so much more beautiful and so much more worthy than you've ever dreamed possible," we'd have a totally different culture.

James: Did anyone ever confront you in a way or say something to you that helped you understand here is an area where God wants to do a work and where you can see this other side of Jesus that perhaps, just this wild side so to speak, this conquering Christ rather than just nice little quiet Jesus? You saw him as a conqueror. Did something happen to help you?

Lisa: I did! I was speaking with Women of Faith and I got to do this -- this sounds so crazy but they had me do -- do you remember the Beyonce song, "Single ladies"? And here I am, 47 and single, so I did kind of the Christian riff on single ladies and did a little dance on stage. Which I was mortified --

James: A Baptist doing a dance?

Lisa: I know! I've gotten freer! I've gotten free! But I actually was so nervous about it. I met with a choreographer in Nashville to get these little moves and they weren't trashy, they were sanitized Christian moves. But the first time I went to do this dance I ran up on stage and you know I've been teaching for years and years, that doesn't mean it's always good but I am used to running up on stage with a microphone. I ran up to the camera and I looked in the camera and there is 12,000 women and I just froze. I thought, oh, yikes! I couldn't remember the first move. So I just thought, well, I'll just start gyrating because I couldn't remember my little dance. Well, that started the season of real anxiety. The next couple of months I felt like I was all the time vibrating and I got dry mouth, I got nervous on the way to the airport. I thought, Lord, what is happening? All the sudden this anxiety has started welling up in me. And that's when I realized, I've got some dragons, kind of like Mary from Magdala, that I have not dealt with and this is probably God's way of poking me and saying, "You need to deal with this stuff." So I went basically to a Christian therapeutic program for nine days. It was like rehab but for the heart. The president of that program got in my face in probably the second or third day and he just said, "You are hypocrite." He said by not really walking in the freedom that Jesus had given me over even the hard things that had happened when I was younger, that I was really not living the grace that I taught. In that moment I thought, he is exactly right. I could have fussed and said, "But I was just a little girl and I never really got closure because those men never said they were sorry for what they did." But I thought, he's exactly right. I have not said, "Jesus help me, I'm stuck." That's why I think all that stuff was bubbling up. And so for nine days, I basically really worked through some stuff. I tell people I'm not fixed but I'm freer than I ever dreamt I could be and just have the sweetest relationship

with this much bigger Jesus than I had imagined him to be.

James: I wish that our guests could tell their whole story, the whole journey, that's why they write books. This is -- Lisa is a wonderful communicator and she has had challenges. A lot of you might say, "Well, here she is, she is not married. She is still single and she is pretty and she's got talent. How does she handle all of that?"

Lisa: Carbohydrates! Carbohydrates! There are days that are really hard. I had a woman come up recently and ask me, "How did you get victory here?" I said, "Well, not all days are victorious. Some days are sad." So Valentines, when you're eating a Lean Cuisine watching the television in your print pants, that's not a good day! But most days should really begin to walk in the fact that he promises that he is a husband to the husbandless, and the father to the fatherless. That's what he promises in Psalms. There is an intimacy with Jesus that I probably wouldn't know had I married younger. And quite frankly, I was so broken when I was younger I was drawn to abusers. So I always say God protected me from them and a few really good men I dated, God protected them from me because my heart was so damaged. So I trust God's timing. Now I wish gravity hadn't taken hold. I would have liked to married younger but I still believe if that's his will, I'll have a husband in the flesh. I think years ago I was on your show and I said, "1-800-588, please call Lisa for a date."

[Laughter]

But more importantly than that, the kind of intimacy and contentment you can find with Jesus if you really run to him with everything, even the broken places in your heart, is better than what I would have imagined in my 20s and 30s.

Betty: And we all need that -- that completeness in him. Absolutely!

James: I encourage you to get the book. Let me just add this to what she said to try to apply the feeling of aloneness or loneliness that you can feel. I'm married to an absolutely awesome precious wife and we just have an incredible relationship. It is not just something that we talk about, it is great. But let me tell you what I experience sometimes, and I think Lisa, you can identify. If we see this together, all of you see it, I think it will be helpful to you. God has allowed me to identify with the heart of the Father and the heart of Jesus. And the Lord's made it real clear to me that some of those most challenging moments in his life -- well, when you realize how alone he was as it related to people. Remember when he saw that the disciples had fallen asleep in his greatest hour of needing friends? "Could you just wait? Could you just pray for an

hour?" The whole bunch is asleep. He looked at them one day and said, "Will you also go away?" The very people he had poured his life in? That lonely feeling? Well, I feel that. But let me tell you what I take from that, I'm identifying with him. And therefore I identify with his heart because what he is wanting for all of us, Lisa he is wanting us to come into a fellowship first with the father and then to see a family that learns how to fellowship and how with the comfort we've received we comfort one another. That's what you're trying to do here. You're not through being comforted. You're not through needing comfort and you aren't either. But let me just tell you where Betty and I find incredible joy and I'm just saying this to you, I like to comfort others and help others but I also take comfort in identifying with his sorrows -- in identifying with his sorrows! Paul did that; it was important to him to know his sufferings and the fellowship of his sufferings. There is fellowship in identifying with the heart of God and the heart of Jesus. Father, I pray we'll all learn that and that we will be an expression of your heart, for your glory in Jesus' name. Let me tell you something I found, when you begin to release the river of God's love, you'll be amazed at how rapidly and how, in a very meaningful fashion, that river flows in. You say, "Lord, I'm going to release everything you pour in, I'm letting out..." and you release that love. One of the greatest expressions that we found, and boy, Jesus knew what he was talking about when he said, "You just give a cup of water in my name you won't lose your reward." You say, "What reward is that?" Heaven's reward -- the blessing of the father. You bless others with the father's blessing and you watch what happens in your life. I'm going to show you where you can bless someone right now and join with us in giving life. Look at this.

Announcer: Life's mission teams have traveled the world over and discovered firsthand the hardships and heartaches poverty stricken families suffer because they have no other choice but to collect water from unsafe sources. The tragic result of having to drink diseased water is the massive number of children who die every day from waterborne illness and this killer knows no boundaries. In a rural Central American village, Maria grieves at the loss of her baby who died at six months of age from a high fever caused by drinking diseased water. On a windswept hill in Madagascar Laylol takes our team to the unmarked grave of her seven-month-old baby girl Fanuan who died because Laylol had no other choice but to provide water from a contaminated river. In this rural Cambodian village lives the Fouh family who lost their little one Yoi after drinking water from a diseased-infested river that has taken the lives of other children in their village. Stories like these are all too familiar to the poor living in destitute conditions all around the world.

James: It's filthy! This is where people come to get water. It just makes me want to lay my head down and just start crying because it is all people have. I'm asking you please, let's replace this with fresh clean water.

James: I hope you saw that little fella's face pretty close there on your screen. He's just looking like "anybody notice?" I don't know what goes on in their little minds when they see somebody maybe strange that's come, as a missionary and caring, but I know what that child needs, love and an opportunity to have a life. And that child is precious to God. Betty, we can give little areas and villages a fresh source of water. We can drill water wells. We can provide it. It is not wishful thinking, it is reality. We're committed this year to drill only with the help of people like you, only someone like you saying, "I'll give a cup of water." Or "I'll help with a well of water and provide many cups of water." It's the only way we can do it. But we have committed to drill, with your help, 415 more water wells in 15 countries and we're asking you to help. Betty, I'm praying that there wouldn't be a viewer watching that wouldn't say I'll at least do something. \$48 will give ten people water the rest of their life. The wells are \$4800. And we join together and we can do it. It's the only way we can do it is by joining together.

Betty: It is, James! I hope you will join with us. When you watch something like that and you see how filthy -- just with the visible eye how filthy that water is, well, it is much worse than what you're seeing when it gets into their little bodies. You say, "How can that mother give that baby that water?" That's all they have! They have to have water so she is giving him that she has, what she can find for them. So please join with us and let's not only help the children to survive but help that mother because she loves that child with her whole heart.

James: I'm praying that you will simply go to the telephone and really offer, as Jesus said, a cup of water. Here's what I encourage you to do. I know you're sitting and thinking, oh, this is terrible! Is there something we can do about it? Yes, there is something you can do about it. If you could help provide water for ten people for the rest of their life, and so many of these little children in such tremendous need, many of them die before they're just a few years of age; many die before they're five and most of the deaths come from contaminated water sources. If you will dial the number and take a bankcard and you use it so often. Thank God you have it. Use it like it is cash, that's how you should use it. But you take that card and make a gift of \$48 or if you could, and I always am going to challenge you, help as many as you can, and I think you want to, \$144 will give 30 people water for the rest of their life. This is a single gift

that just keeps giving. If you could drill a well, we have many friends who tell us as individuals and as couples, we love to give a well. It's been one of the great highlights of our life to do it. Perhaps you never have -- perhaps you have before, would you join us again? \$4800 will do that. Or perhaps you said, "James, I'm not able to do that but I can give half a well with a gift of \$2400" and pray someone joins you or \$1200 and pray three people join you. We have some special gifts for you, the book that Betty and I wrote, "Living in Love" about the marriage journey to encourage you in your journey; "Praying God's Word" by Beth Moore, incredible book, helping you to literally break spiritual strongholds and the power of prayer and God's word, we'll send that to you for any gift. And in a journal, like our daughter when she won the battle with cancer, brought it to me and said, "God told me to give you this, daddy." What a blessing it's been. We want that for you. We have "The Father's Heart" bronze for those of you who will give a portion of a well and pray others will join or give a well. We want to bless you and we thank you for making that call or going online LifeToday.org. If you write a check, please call us and tell us what you're putting in the mail. And from the bottom of our heart we thank you in behalf of those you're helping.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Water, without it life as you know it cannot exist. But for millions of children and families, their own available water is filled with disease and once ingested can lead to death. But one new water well can turn the most barren desert into an oasis of life! With your donation today Mission: Water For Life can drill 415 water wells this year in 15 nations! Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten people. \$72 will provide for 15 people. And \$144 will help provide fresh clean uncontaminated water for 30 people for a lifetime. With your gift of any size we'll send you "Living in Love," James and Betty's new book that shares keys to an exciting and fulfilling marriage. You'll also receive Beth Moore's bestselling book, "Praying God's Word." With your gift of \$100 or more, you may also request this beautiful leather journal to record and reflect on your own personal times with God. And finally, with your gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well, be sure to request "Heart of the Father," our beautiful new bronze sculpture representing God's fatherly love for us as his children. Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Well, we do thank you for calling for giving a cup of water, helping us drill those over 400 wells this year. "Living in Love," I'm anxious to send it to you because God wants us to live in love and we can; "Praying God's Word," what an incredible

study this is; and the other gifts that we have to bless you. I want to mention again in the bookstores, "Untamed," Lisa Harper; what a journey she's been on. Will you join Betty and me in saying thanks for Lisa? Thank you for being with us. God bless you and bless through you. Thank all of you for watching and we really thank you for your help.

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