

Week 17

4/19/11

Betty: Thank you so much for joining us on *LIFE Today*. I'm Betty Robison and this is James.

James: And we've got the author of a book called, "Weird." In my opinion, he is anything but weird. His wife is certainly anything but weird and yet that is the way they were introduced to one another. "You're weird, Craig. You need to meet this girl Amy, she is weird like you." And they met and they're still weird and getting weirder by the day.

[Laughter]

In the last program they said they want to get more weird. Now they're weird because they're in love with God. Well, Craig Groeschel and his wife, Amy are really the leaders and he is the pastor of LifeChurch.TV, which is at least the second largest church in the country if not on its way to being the largest as far as attendance. And when you take in the Internet connection every week where people tune in to their services, they go up in the 100,000 range, and that's where they know they've tuned in and shown an interest enough, that they're not just bypassing. So it is amazing what they're doing. And in this program we're not only going to tell you about the book and the insight to make you different in a really very appropriate way, but what can you do in the social network world? Well, this is a couple at a church that knows how to use the social network and they're going to tell you and your church how you can get in on what they've seen. As a matter of fact, you're going to find out how every single person on the planet who has access to a computer can have access to the Bible with a version called "You Version" and we're going to tell you about that. Welcome Craig and Amy Groeschel to *LIFE Today*. We're thrilled to have you.

Craig: Thanks so much!

James: Craig, it is a real challenge to me to turn on the computer. I now have an iPad. I actually brought it up here with Beth Moore and actually used it. You see me, I'm on there every day. I can actually hit the little -- what do you call them?

Betty: Icons.

James: Icons -- I can hit an icon. I don't know what they are but I can -- it's got a picture for dummies like me. I've got a picture of what I'm looking for and I just click on it. It's really, really cool. But I remember when I first tried to go online, I didn't know how to shut the thing down, I just unplugged it. Betty said, "That's the worst thing you can do! Don't mess with the computer." She's learned so much. This is a very new age and you all have really found some things out and I know you want to share. So I want you to tell us, the book, "Weird" tells about relationship with God and being real serious about it. It is a fabulous book! As a matter of fact, everyone who would like to have it, you can go to the bookstores and get it. Go online and get it. You can go to LifeChurch.TV, they're web site, I'm sure and get it. But we'll actually give it to you today, we'll mail it to you if you'll simply help us touch someone else with love, really realistically because we want to bless you but we want you to get the blessing of blessing others. Now tell me about this interest in the social network outreach and your interest in churches and what you all have done as it relates to churches all over the world. Just tell our viewers what's going on with Life Church.

Craig: Well, we do like to be weird in every way we can. One of the things we like to say at our church is that to reach people no one is reaching, you have to do things that no one is doing. So we're really aggressive in our church at taking the message of Christ that never changes but presenting it in a way the culture is changing. So we like to leverage and redeem technology to communicate the message of Christ. And we really -- we've been honored to try some things that are like you mentioned, church online was an idea that we were able to pioneer several years ago. Instead of trying to get people that will maybe never go into a church building, we said, "Let's take church to them and do basically a whole church service on the Internet." What we found is there are a lot of people that can't go to church, a lot of people that won't go to church. We've actually been really aggressive at reaching out to people who aren't Christians with the use of Google ads and such. We found that the country most represented now out of a 180 churches, well over 100,000 people every week, the country most represented actually is not the United States but it is India. So we're able to go to people that may not hear about Christ in a normal fashion and they can come in and hear a message about Jesus. We're seeing literally hundreds and hundreds of lives each week, thousands of lives a year impacted with the gospel.

James: Go ahead, Betty.

Betty: That's great! I just think it is wonderful for the church to be able to adapt to where people, like you said, the culture is today, to find ways to really communicate whereas they might not go for the traditional church.

James: I was talking to the... really the manager/owner of Mardels, Mark Green and he is, of course, with the Hobby Lobby family and all of that. They've done some pretty special things to help many ministries. Mark was here several years ago with the "End of the Spear" movie, which is the Elizabeth Elliot story and what happened in South America with the missionaries, a fabulous story. I don't think I've ever heard Mark more excited. He is excited about getting the word out. But he was really excited about the version of the Bible on the Internet called "You Version." That's what I happen to have on my iPad. We go there immediately and he was telling me -- I said, "Well, Mark, you're so excited." He was telling me about the hundreds of thousands of people who are signing up and the millions of people now, they've got the Bible. They can go to the Word of God immediately. They can go to any verse; they can go to various versions and he was just pumped. I said, "Well, is this something you got, you're just promoting with Mardels? You want to come on because I love you. You are a wonderful family business and Hobby Lobby is great! Y'all have done a lot to help people in need. You want to come on here and talk?" He said, "No! I want you to get somebody in Craig Groeschel's church. I want you to get this guy. He knows more about it than I do." And he's excited; he was talking about one of your staff, Bobby Gruenewald. He's sitting out here! Bobby is just sitting out here. I don't think I've ever seen the owner of a store and a company more excited about what you're doing, just the "You Version." Tell us about it and we'll tell everybody all over the world how they can get it because I would love them to get it.

Bobby: Well, I appreciate it. We're passionate about leveraging every bit of technology we possibly can to spread the gospel around the world. What we found is actually some good news and some bad news when we were doing some research. The good news is that the majority of people -- there is a majority of people that express they want to have a deeper understanding of the Bible, want to read the Bible more. But the bad news is that in practice they actually read it once a month or never at all and so the gap between those two things are pretty significant. So we said what if we could use today's technology to spark a revolution in Bible engagement? Could we leverage the things that are happening today? So a couple of trends that we have happen is one, we see smart phones everywhere that are growing by hundreds of millions around the world, and the other social networks. And so what if we could take those two technologies and add the Bible to it and create something that would possibly spark a revolution? So that's what we did. We created an online Bible and a Bible that you can access through smart phones, and aps on smart phones. I try not to

use the word "revolution" without meaning something and what we've seen is really just that, a revolution take place. We've seen over 16 million people install it on their phone. It's about one every one and a half seconds right now that people are installing the Bible. But more importantly than just installing it is they're actually reading it. You don't really realize it but our phone is never more than three to five feet away from us at any given time any more, and just to have the Bible next to us at all times is a pretty significant thing and it is completely free. We've made 50 different Bible translations available, all the popular ones you'd have in English and actually in 23 different languages. It is all free, partnering with the publishers to make it available. But people are reading it. They're spending over five billion minutes reading the Bible so far using these phones and we're really believing that this may not just be a turn in the trend of people being less engaged in the Bible but we think we might be able to see the most engaged Bible generation in history and we're excited to be a part of it.

James: This will be the Face of God book and when they go to see him in his word, they're going to see it. Here's the real important thing for you to understand. The real face of God, the real body of Christ is to be his people. The sad thing is, we become members of churches and we've built churches without building the Kingdom of God. And this isn't heaven on earth like no more sin or temptation or challenge, this is the power of heaven, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth in us right now through us for your glory as your people, and in order to have the food and the water and the nourishment we need, that is the Word of God. This is fabulous. For me to talk to a marketing man and a man with a business and all he can talk about is what a church and a group is doing and your church, Craig, this church, not your church, his church and Life Church, which is part of his kingdom outreach, it is all of what we're supposed to be part of, you're so excited about helping others access. You want to train people in how they can use the Internet for their church services effectively, you've got a way to go online and you'll be able to show people some things, tell us how we do that.

Craig: We're excited to give away as much as we can and so we make all the resources we have from videos, messages, transcripts, teaching for kids, teaching for students, all that available for free to churches around the world and it is our great honor. We found that using the church online to reach out as an evangelistic tool is really, really valuable. And so we had some of our church friends contribute financially so we could build a template to give away. And so in the near future we're going to say to every church in the world you can do this as well and we're going to give this to them to help them take the message of Jesus. We really believe that the church doesn't exist for us, people live in this consumer mindset. We believe that we are the church and we exist for the world. And we're passionate about unifying the body of Christ to work

together; you can do your part, we can do our part, other churches can do their part and when we're unified and work together with a spirit of generosity, we really do believe we can reach -- we can take the message all over the world to see God do more than we can ever imagine.

James: Don't you appreciate what you've heard, those of you here in the studio audience?

[Cheers & Applause]

This is kingdom life. We call it "The Basics of Life" and really fulfilling the God's kingdom agenda and that's what you're about. Amy, you have anything you want to add to what is on your heart as a couple when you look out at how you want to assist others? Craig has said how much you have a heart to help. And thank you. We're trying to help rescue kids from the sex trafficking where they're being sold, the things that we're doing, it is just beautiful when we can connect and really work together. It is like Craig is talking about, giving away what we know but how important it is for people to live with that kind of a spirit that I actually see in both of you as a couple.

Amy: Just listening to Bobby and Craig and you talk about "You Version" and the Bible and being radically generous in every way, what's amazing about the Word of God is that it is living and active. When people are reading it, hopefully they're not going to it because they want to win some Bible trivia game or something. They're not just going to find an answer to a question but they're going because they are seeking God. Really, it just comes down to knowing him. If we can get the basics right of just knowing and seeking the Lord that's my heart, is that I'd love to see the world become a great place where people are changed and different and that there's hope in everyone's eyes no matter what trial they're going through but the only hope we can have in the world is through knowing God. So the Word of God is so exciting to me as we're listening to wow, there is a Bible that people are reading is because you're going to get to know the God of the Bible. He is the word and so I'm just thrilled that people will -- I mean, Craig was saved through the Word of God. Not even a ministry or a minister or a man's words but through the living Word of God and just reading it and it coming alive and it transformed him. So I am passionate to see people know God through the word and seek his face because that's what is going to transform this world, he is the hope -- he is our only hope. He is my only source and your only source. And I'm also so passionate about the Kingdom of God just holding hands together because I'm telling you, we can read the Bible and all get a little different interpretation of some things but to me, if we can stand together and say Jesus Christ is the Lord, the risen savior then we can be unified in love together. And that's our

heart in building the Kingdom of God is not building the kingdom of our church or a kingdom online, it is about surrendering everything to Jesus and letting him lead us in every way. That means reaching out and loving other believers even though we don't agree every time that we speak to them that we can be unified in love. I just think that's the beauty of Christ is that he can do that if we're willing. If we're willing not to puff up in knowledge but to let the love of Christ, knowing him, build us up into the kingdom that we're supposed to be.

James: Craig, you were in the meeting that I called a summit, a leadership summit, where we came together in the presence of the Lord to pray. And it was a very diverse group, it was an impossible group to put in the same room and yet the love of God prevailed. Here's the thing, I will not compromise. One thing I know, I will not -- I will not move. But let me tell you something, nor will I compromise the love of God and that is to love the people that I may think are missing it somewhere. But the only way I could ever help correct, the only way iron can sharpen iron is for it to come together with necessary friction but with common purpose. You know that's what we had in that room with all this diversity. We didn't come together like this. We came together this way and we were sharpening, with friction, even the friction of disagreement and healthy, even heated discussions, we can sharpen the edge. And I'm committed that I'm not going to waver. I sense you are. Can I ask you as a young pastor and looking at this, an older couple here and you see, you've been in some of these circles with all of these leaders that wouldn't have ever been in a room together and let anybody know about it, that they were in there together but they were and they don't mind everybody knowing, do you believe that I'm on the right track where I'm headed right now? I guess I need sometimes to know that someone that is touching people looks in, am I walking in the right direction?

Craig: First of all, I think I don't know anybody else that could have brought together that diverse group of leaders and that's a compliment to your ministry and something that can only be done after 50 years of ministry with integrity, so I think that's a huge thing. Secondly, I think to bring that diverse of a group with a heart centered around Christ, I believe what you're doing is one of the most important things on planet earth. I believe you're hearing from God. I believe you're calling together amazing leaders and I'm humbled to have been in the room when we got to seek God together because I think what happened in prayer that day was big and I think the foundation that was built to move forward together with leaders from all different groups of Christianity, I think it was a profoundly special meeting.

James: Affirmation is important to any of us, you know that. I know you affirm what God has called me to do. The reason I appreciate you saying it and would even give

you an opportunity to say that is because it is affirming these people who watch us. Craig, we couldn't do any of the things we do if it weren't for the people out here. That's why when I say to our viewers, you know the missionaries, the greatest Christians I've ever seen, the missionaries always correct me. The missionaries say, "No! You go back and tell those people that enable us to do what we do, they're the greatest people -- the greatest Christians." You know when people can look in and see the glory -- remember what Paul said? "You are the only ones that sent to me..." he said that to the Philippian Christians. Think about this, the greatest Christian, the greatest missionary that ever lived and he said, "You're the only ones." You know, it was women, out of their meager means, that undergirded Jesus and got one of the greatest tributes in the gospels and it is there. So Craig, thank you. What he said to say thanks for us trying. This is the heart of God to bring his family together and to understand a unity beyond anything we've ever seen. And those of you who are watching, and those of you who pray for the outreaches of Life, and those of you who enable us to be on television and to do the outreaches, thank you! Thank you! Would you join Betty and me even now in thanking this beautiful couple for their interest? And Bobby out here in the audience -- Bobby, thank you! Thank you for what you're doing. There's the web site. I'm going to put it up again where you can go to Life Church. There is "you version," where you can get the version of the Bible. By the way, all the different -- I love to look at all the different translations because a lot of times if you don't have the Greek education, you don't know how to translate all of those things, you can see the different versions to get more out of the scriptures and it is absolutely fabulous. I want to thank you for helping us. Amy, thank you for helping us a long time just because you saw what we are doing. And to those of you right now who are watching, listen, this is the last week that we're asking you to help us. It is not the last time we'll ever ask you to help us rescue people trapped in the sex traffic but we take a time during the year to emphasize this outreach. And I want you to watch with your heart but I'm asking you to help. Watch closely.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Human traffickers target innocent children who then become enslaved in a multibillion dollar a year industry called the sex slave trade.

>> Imagine this, one girl taken from her family, whether she is kidnapped or tricked. She is sexually abused over and over again, maybe eight to ten customers that she may have to service in one day.

>> We're fighting for children that can't fight for themselves, children that would be otherwise used in the sex trade or be bought and sold like animals for monetary gain. It is not right!

>> It is kids just like these that right now they're begging but they are also bait for predators. If we don't get them off the street they will be the next trafficked victims.

Announcer: And when these children become enslaved and don't comply, horrible things are done to them by the human traffickers.

>> It is tragic what is happening to children, innocent children and it is not right. Our hearts are burdened by all the children that are crying out for help today, this moment, that need intervention, that need help, that are waiting for someone to hear their cries and we can only do it with your help.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Boy, you talk about -- I don't know if a sense of helplessness is the right word but when I see how great the need is, I feel -- I have a feeling of inadequacy of making it clear enough, the need and what can be done. You saw Carol Hart there with those beautiful little girls. This lady left everything. They had an incredible business serving Hollywood by giving them generators to run on the sets to keep power wherever they were on location. And they left it all. To me, these are the greatest people on the planet. But not everybody is called to do that. But surely we're called to enable the ones who will do it, to be able to do it effectively. Betty, that's what our viewers have shown us. As a matter of fact, when we showed them the problem of sex trafficking, our viewers' hearts leaped and we've been able to build the most incredible -- "we" being the viewers, *LIFE* Center in Thailand, which is the sex capital of the world and rescued thousands and thousands of children. It is a beautiful place and it is all provided by love.

Betty: It really is. Thank you so much if you've already been a part of helping us. I hope you won't stop now. Just as the missionaries said, I believe also, they're hoping that we hear their cries, they don't see a future for them. They are helpless, they're children. They don't know what to do. This is the only lives they've ever known. I hope that you will allow God to put it on your heart to help these children. And if you'll go to the phone, you can be right now a part of that. And if you get a busy

signal, please don't give up! These children are depending on us not to give up but to give hope to them. So please join with us.

James: I'm asking you to do exactly what Betty just said and that's go to the phone and call. If you got a busy, be persistent because you can save a life. The average cost to rescue a child or a woman or a person out of the sex trafficking and be able to take care of them is \$128, that's what it takes. And it is amazing that we can do so much with so little but we've got to have the help to do it because we're trying to rescue thousands and thousands of children. And we can do that in several different countries, in India, in Thailand, in Cambodia and several other Asian communities we cannot mention; it would jeopardize the safety of the workers and what we're doing in those areas. But we're asking you please, go to the phone and just take your bankcard and make the best gift you can. If you can help us rescue a child, rescue one of those girls, that \$128 will do it. If you could help us rescue ten, \$1280. There are some people who can do more than that and you know if you can, and I think you'll do it joyfully and gratefully. But it takes every one of us doing what we can. By the way, every gift goes with others to add up to fulfill this mission outreach. Please make the call today. We have some gifts to send you to bless you because we want to encourage you in your life and help you grow as you help rescue precious lives. This is the last week in this emphasis. If you can help, please go to the phone or go online and make the gift God put on your heart.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Human trafficking... it's hard to believe it is happening! But at this very moment innocent children, many very young are being sold and forced into sexual slavery and exploited in every way imaginable and someone must save them! With your support of mission rescue life you can help rescue more than 5,000 children from the horrors of the sex trade in parts of Thailand, India, Cambodia and other targeted nations. Together we can reach vulnerable families and children by providing much needed food and relief. We can rescue those already ensnared by offering them a way out and we can restore their hearts, minds and bodies to enable them to enjoy life as God intended. Your gift today of only \$128 will help rescue a child and change their life forever. And with gifts of \$64 or \$32 we will combine your gifts with others to help rescue one more child from the shame and pain of this lifestyle. As our way of saying thank you, please request "The Butterfly Effect," how your life matters. The story of this book reveals how you were specially created by God to make a difference and have the power to change the world. As a special challenge, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1280 to help rescue ten children. With your gift be sure to request

our beautiful new bronze sculpture, "Heart of the Father." This is the last week so please call, write, or make your gift online!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: I do want to remind you, "The Butterfly Effect" is a scientific fact that a butterfly's wings, as delicate as they are, can set in motion the wind to create a hurricane. You have no idea how important you really are. The beautiful bronze for those of you who can help us rescue ten of these precious children, these girls, please do it! Today, if you'll help, you can ask for Craig Groeschel's book, "Weird." I want to tell you, this is the right kind of weird. This is really becoming a kingdom person for the glory of God. I want to say thanks to Craig and Amy. Would you join us in saying thanks? Appreciate you a whole lot! Thank you! Thank y'all so much for watching! Remember last week -- we need your help. Thanks for your help!

Beth: You talk about Satan going to plan B, how are we going to explain a missing body?

[Laughter]

Announcer: Beth Moore tomorrow on *LIFE Today*!