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Week 39: CS&S Last Week

Tammy Trent

Cristina Baker

Studio discussion:

TAMMY: Hello, everybody. Welcome to *Life Today!* I'm Tammy Trent, and I'm always so glad you're here with us.

Have you ever felt like life is just too much and you don't even know what to pray anymore? The chaos is loud, your heart is tired, your mind is busy, and even the thought of prayer can feel overwhelming for many of us. But here's the good news. God isn't waiting for you to find the perfect words or the perfect moment. He meets you right where you are, even in the simplest prayer whispered in faith can open the door for his presence to flood your life. And if you've ever thought, I don't even know where to start. Or I don't even know how to pray effective prayers. Or maybe you just want to grow in your prayer life, then I believe today's conversation is just for you.

My guest, Cristina Baker, has experienced that firsthand. Once an atheist and battling a ten-year addiction, she had a radical encounter with the love and power of Jesus that changed everything. Now, in her new book, *A minute of Hope: 100 Prayers of Staying Steadfast Through Challenges and Change*, she offers short, one-minute, powerful, spirit-led prayers to help you find hope, healing, strength, and renewal in any season of your life.

Welcome Cristina Baker. I'm so glad you're here. It's so great to meet you.

CRISTINA: Thank you, Tammy. I'm excited to be here.

TAMMY: Yeah, girl, you have an incredible story -- incredible story! So I think we would do people a disservice if we didn't touch on that a little bit. Like go back and kind of give us a little

backstory because I think it will give context to the powerful platform that God has given you today.

CRISTINA: Like many, you said earlier, it's we all have a story, and mine started with my mom was a non-practicing Catholic, my dad an atheist most of his life. And so, I didn't hear the name or know the name of Jesus until probably 12. And so he was successful, worked in the oil field, and lots of parties. And so, my earliest memories were of my parents just having businessmen and just different people that he worked with, and everybody dancing. It was like life was a party until the music was gone. That's when it was like what real life was would set in. My dad was quite, like many people with a cocaine addiction, which cocaine is a very different side to a person that isn't who they are. And so, a lot of screaming, fighting, and all the things that go with that.

TAMMY: Wow! That was your household?

CRISTINA: Every day, every day. So my parents divorced and we moved to Bolivia, which is in the heart of South America, when my mom remarried.

TAMMY: Si, si. You speak Espanol.

CRISTINA: It's my first language. Yeah.

TAMMY: Isn't it beautiful?

CRISTINA: And so, Tammy, that's where I believe everything began to come to the surface because -- in a bad way, I believe so, yeah, like, everything that I was hiding inside, everything that I was protecting myself from, I started cutting myself, cutting my legs, cutting my arms, just to see if I was -- A lot of people ask, why would you do that if you've already gone through so much? And without using any vulgarity, the reality of it is that it would remind me that I was still alive and that I still felt.

And so, I started -- I found other kids like myself that listen to -- if you remember Marilyn Manson, and so got into the goth phase. I'm like, you guys remind me of me. We all feel dead inside so we're --

TAMMY: So you drawn to each other.

CRISTINA: Exactly. That's right, exactly. We're like, oh, you're like me.

TAMMY: Exactly. I found my people.

CRISTINA: And that brought me life. So I quit cutting, and now I'm like the lead singer of a punk metal band playing guitar. And now I'm introduced to alcohol which that thing led to one thing after the other.

TAMMY: And no Jesus in the picture at all during this time. How old were you when you said, like, you kind of hit that place, right? You say here, It was almost rock bottom for so many of us. When we think of rock bottom like you were carrying pain, and then alcohol and drugs were introduced into your life. How old were you then?

CRISTINA: I would say the hard drugs, because when the hard drugs came out I was 19 years old.

TAMMY: What are the hard drugs?

CRISTINA: Cocaine. Ecstasy. Once I was introduced to that, that was like -- because what I found in those drugs was this, what I know to be, in retrospect, was what I experienced walking with the Lord. So it was like when I was introduced, I was like, I've been looking for you all my life. And I found you in a substance that I just have to pay a little bit of money for, or a lot.

TAMMY: Ten years you were in that addiction. Did it get pretty bad?

CRISTINA: Well, between alcohol and drugs together, it was about ten years. So bad enough to where I was coming home from work, I was working as a counselor some years later. So I was living a life during the day telling people, Do this with your life and do that with your life. And then at nighttime, drugging all night and carrying an addiction that nobody knew about.

TAMMY: Tell me, Cristina, then, this was a life you were living but God was about to have an incredible moment with you. Tell me what that was like. I know you were in a bad place. We've established that. You were just in this place of existing. You weren't really living, you were existing. But God was about to change everything. Tell me what happened.

CRISTINA: So I actually got arrested. A lot of times people think like getting arrested or people doing time in jail is the worst thing that could have ever happened to them but God knows how to harvest souls, and sometimes, he'll use jail or getting arrested or prison to do that. And for me, it was getting apprehended that evening. The worst thing that could have happened to me, I'm like, I'm going to jail. But that was probably one of the greatest gifts that God gave to me was time's up. I'm apprehending you before you kill yourself or the devil takes your life, because it's coming, and it's coming fast.

And so, I'm in the back of the cop car and I'm like -- I look up and I'm like, why are you doing this to me? And then I'm like, I hate you. And then I used probably some profanity. But God can handle those moments. And I believe that God, even though that doesn't sound polished and very nice, I believe the Lord was like, I've been waiting all this time for you to talk to me.

TAMMY: I was just going to say it wasn't polished and nice, but at least you were talking -- in the state of your life at that moment, you began to talk to him. Because I was going to say, did you even know who you were talking to? You were like, ah! Ah! But that to me was the first open door.

CRISTINA: And then I'm like, wait, I'm an atheist! Like, yes, I mean -- And so, when I came out on bond, I was back at work and I had a baby so he was -- that's another --

But I was sitting at my desk and I would say this, Tammy, it's so important what we partner with because if I partner with -- the enemy speaks to us at the speed of thought and tries to parallel that with God. God, when Adam was in the garden in perfection, he walked in the cool of the day with the voice of God. So I think, how was that? If we have the mind of Christ, he speaks to us with the speed of thought. But at this point, I mean, I don't know any of these things, and I have this voice in my head saying, Evan will be better off without you. Evan is my son. And I'm like, this is true.

And I get a tap on the shoulder, and it's a man from work, which I knew was like a pastor. And he says, "I have a word from the Lord for you." I'm like the Lord? Who's the Lord? And they have prayer meetings every day at noon in this small breakroom. And so I walk into this breakroom and I'd never seen people do this; it was a little strange because I'm like, what are they doing? This is very weird. And I remember having this thought, if there is a God, they've come face to face with him because they're talking to him like you and I are talking here. And I'm just looking around and this gentleman walks up to me and reads out of Jeremiah 29:11, which is many, many, many of our favorite scripture. But the context of that was that, Israel, God was speaking to Israel of like, turn now! Because it was a time of judgment.

And then I have this thought in my mind of me dying in a car accident, which I know now was the Lord. And I knew the proximity was so close. I was like, I'm going to die. I felt like I was going to die that night or tomorrow. Like it was just so close. And he's like, "Do you want to accept Jesus into your heart?" And I'm like, I don't know who you are. Save my life. Save me, save my baby. Help! It was just my cry for help. I know a lot of people don't experience that but for me, that peace that I had sought all my life, here I am sober, comes into me and I'm like, I'm not on drugs. I'm sober and there's peace.

And so, I walked out of that breakroom seeing brighter colors. Like everything -- really, when we come -- you know, Nicodemus said to the Lord, "What must I do to be saved?" And when we give our lives to Jesus, it is -- the Lord doesn't just say to be born again using random phrases or you're born again, you come -- you're coming into a new life you've never been or

seen before. So the sky is blue, more blue, the grass is greener. I've never been here before. What is this?

TAMMY: And you felt that?

CRISTINA: I felt it! I saw it! And I read Paul falling off of the horse. I can mmmh, like there must have been something in that.

TAMMY: Absolutely incredible. I love -- I love how God will use whatever he has to use to get to his people. And that day, he used that man in a breakroom to tap on your shoulder and say, I've got a word for you. And it changed the trajectory of your whole life. You had to turn it around at that point. You had to bury the old in order to step into the new. And you did that. And you've done it with grace. You've done it with fire. You have been spirit-led. You go on -- I'm not on TikTok, but I know you go on there and it's you begin to speak into people's lives with these one-minute or two-minute, or whatever you've done, but you speak into the lives of people with such honesty, sincerity, and truth, which I find so amazing, coming to Jesus. And then your walk with him, your knowledge of the word, how the spirit has directed you to speak into people's lives, especially young people, it's absolutely incredible!

And so you've written this incredible book, I love this. It's a little devotional, but it's jam-packed. There's nothing little about this. "A minute of hope." And I'm telling you, this is an absolute incredible gift to the body of Christ that might just be in a place of feeling like they've hit rock bottom. And I don't know what to pray anymore. I don't know what to say. I don't even know if I could pray effective prayers. Do I get on the ground? Do I get on my knees? Do I close my eyes? All the things! But it's so much simpler than that.

So can I ask you, do you think that the Bible teaches us how to pray?

CRISTINA: Yeah. And I love how the disciples, as I look through the Gospels, they only asked him one thing. He didn't say teach us to prophesy. Teach us to cast out demons. All that is wonderful, teach us to pastor. They said one thing, Teach us to pray. Because there was

something about -- they would watch him go away with the Lord and be with the Father, and he would come back. And what was it in that interaction that they're like, whatever's going on over there is bringing all this over here. The love, the peace, the joy, all the things that you do is coming from that. Teach us to pray.

TAMMY: Yes, that's right. That's where the Lord's Prayer comes from. Right? Like, here's the framework. Here's where we start. We honor God. We align with his will. We learn how to forgive. We learn how to extend forgiveness and receive forgiveness. Like all the things were right there. This is what you need to do. Here's your framework. Our father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. So your will, not my will as it is in heaven. You know all the things that Jesus has taught us. It's all there also in the Word of God. It's so there. So why is it so important that we pray?

CRISTINA: Prayer is our lifeline. And I found that. I didn't go to church, Tammy, until months after I gave my life to the Lord. They're like, well, it's time for you to congregate. I'm like, what?

TAMMY: What does congregate mean?

CRISTINA: I'm like, what is congregate? We've got everything we need here. And so all I knew was that sometimes I would walk into that breakroom and nobody was there. But I knew that when I would get on my knees or I would stand there and I would just look up, and when I would look at the Lord, I'm like, I'm empty without you. I have nothing without you. If you don't come, nothing happens. If you're not here. Like it's just this hard cry where it was like, I can't breathe without you, I can't live without you. I need you in every moment of my day. And that began to develop this, what Adam had with the Lord of walking in the cool of the day with the voice of God. So he went from the garden, so that got messed up, and then they go to the tabernacles, to the temple. Then he's like, okay, I'm going to give my life. I'm going to come live inside of you and we'll be together forever. And now we're headed towards the New Jerusalem where we'll be face to face with him.

But it's this continual conversation that doesn't have to have -- I mean, it's like sitting with a friend. You have to say something when you're with a close friend? Sometimes it's just silence.

TAMMY: Absolutely. What's your heart's desire and your hope for this powerfully little packed book of prayers? When you wrote it, who did you write it for? What did you hope people would get from it?

CRISTINA: I began praying a prayer. It was a dangerous prayer because I'm like God, can we take back prayer? Nope. Because I put it in your heart. I asked the Lord, I want to live interruptible life because I could see that when he was at the well, he was being interrupted. The Father was like, Go and wait. So, I want -- when I begin to -- so I begin praying this prayer, Help me to live an interruptible life.

TAMMY: Yeah, that's really good.

CRISTINA: So I wanted, as my husband and I traveled the country, we started seeing that -- we would say, Look at Jesus. And people had a hard time looking at him. They'd close their eyes and, I can't see him. Oh, what do you mean by that? And maybe they would see their father or their mother or someone that was supposed to take care of them and misrepresented the Lord, and abused them or hurt them and they couldn't look at him. So my prayer was that when people read these prayers was that they could close their eyes and look at Jesus.

TAMMY: I feel like that's what people will feel when they read it. It's really got so much depth. It really is spirit-led. And you've broken it down into sections in this. Like "Prayers of Hope for Your Soul." "Prayers of Hope for Your Heart." I resonated with this. Many prayers that say like when you have a broken heart, what could you pray over yourself when you feel alone? When you have a heavy heart? When you've been betrayed? When you need protection? When you need hope? When you are suffering? When you are grieving? That's just a few of them. It goes on to "Prayers of Hope for Your Physical Body." So many people are facing so many physical challenges within their body, and they need prayers for a miracle. They need to know how to pray when they feel weak. They need to know how to pray when they need rest, when they need

courage. "Prayers of Hope for Peace over Your Thoughts." The enemy wants to steal our thoughts every minute of the day. So how can we pray prayers when you need peace for your mind? When you need freedom from guilt and shame?

Girl, you've covered everything, and that's what I love about this book. I can't even go over all of it because there's so much here -- When You Need Hope for Your Spirit. You've covered everything that I believe touches every season for every life. And I'm so grateful for that in the way God continues to use you.

I just want to say to you today that if you are struggling to know how to pray over your circumstances, to know how to pray over your situation, I believe God is giving us a tool today to know how to do that, to activate that, to get that going. If you feel like you're at a loss for words or you just don't know how to pray effectively, here is a sister that is walking with Jesus every day and he has downloaded, Holy Spirit has downloaded some very specific intentional prayers that are not wasted and will not fall short. So if this might be something you think, gosh, I need that, I think I need that to just begin to grow in my prayer language, to take authority over things in my life, to take my life back, I want to send you this book that I know could change a lot of things for your life. And I'm going to tell you how I can do that.

But first, I want you to take a look at this. You're going to love this. I took a trip to Central America and had the time of my life and you are going to see why. So take a look at this. When we come back on the other side, I'll wrap it up with you. Cristina. And then, we'll have a chance to talk about your book just a little bit more. Watch this first.

Transition Roll-in: [Still Spreading Joy]

ANNOUNCER: *This season, Life Outreach wants to continue spreading joy and smiles around the world. We do this in very special ways. We provide shoes for children's feet and corrective surgery for those who suffer from a cleft palate or cleft lip condition. Not only is receiving shoes fun for the children, but it is a blessing for the mission team.*

TAMMY: We have had an incredible year at Life Outreach. We have done mission feeding, we have drilled water wells, and today, we are putting shoes on little children's feet. I'm so excited about it, John.

JOHN: I am so excited, too, and it's been a special day. What is wonderful is for those children that have a little bit of trouble with their smile, we have a very special gift, too.

TAMMY: Yes, we do.

ANNOUNCER: *Did you ever think a trip to the hospital would bring a smile to a child's face? It has for these children because each of them has received corrective surgery for a cleft lip or cleft palate condition. This surgery will allow Seni the chance to smile like his twin brother. Ferdy, the youngest of four, has endured school bullies making fun of her condition, but now looks forward to showing off her new smile.*

As this Christmas season approaches, we want to continue to bless children around the world by providing them with a new pair of shoes and corrective surgeries that give them a chance for healthy and fulfilling lives.

Studio appeal:

TAMMY: Oh, I absolutely love it! I'm sitting here watching that appeal. Like yes! It's so amazing! This is truly one of my very favorite times of the year here at Life Today, Christmas Shoes and Smiles. There's just nothing like it. And as you can see, it's always one of our favorite trips because there's so much joy wrapped around it.

You saw those beautiful faces getting shoes and maybe, like me, you were smiling right along with them. I'll never forget being in Central America with our team, slipping little shoes on children's feet. The joy on their faces, it's pure, contagious happiness. They stand taller, they run faster, and they play without fear because their feet are finally protected from glass, nails, sharp

rocks, hookworm, and from dangerous infections that could literally take their lives. That's why the gift of shoes is such an act of love.

For many, it's their first pair of brand-new shoes. Shoes that didn't belong to someone else first. Their very own! And in some places I've been, many have never owned a pair of shoes at all. Could you even imagine that? It's significant. It's simple and it makes them feel loved, seen, and valued. Being there in those moments with those children is something I'll always remember.

And then there's the miracle of a new smile. You saw the difference it makes. And for only \$500, many children who have been teased, bullied, even told they were cursed for life because of a cleft lip or cleft palate are now receiving surgeries that changed everything physically and emotionally. Suddenly, they can smile with confidence, they can eat without pain, and dream about a brighter future. What an incredible gift!

Friends, this is it. This is our last week of this campaign. We've set a goal to give away 150,000 pairs of shoes and provide as many life-changing corrective surgeries as possible. But we cannot do this without you. And here's how you can help. \$36 will give shoes to ten children. \$72 provides for 20 children. And \$180 blesses 50 children with shoes. And \$1,000 will put shoes on 275 children, or provide two life-changing surgeries.

So please go online or give us a call right now and let us know you're able to partner with us. Because when you do, you'll help protect the little feet and restore beautiful smiles and remind children all around the world that they are deeply loved. And what a better time than right now, when the need is real and when the joy is waiting on the other side of that gift. And please know that every gift matters because every child matters.

Let's finish strong. Let's meet the goal together. Let's make this the best Christmas these children have ever had!

CS&S last week Cause 2025:

Poverty is a killer, and because of it, children needlessly suffer not only from lack of food and clean water, but also from a lack of things we take for granted, such as a healthy smile or a protective pair of shoes.

Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of painful infections, injury, and life-threatening diseases.

But this Christmas, you can bring hope and healing. Your gift today will help provide new shoes for 150,000 children in time for the holidays. And for some children, a beautiful new smile. Your gift of \$36 will help provide shoes for ten children, \$72 will help provide for 20, \$180 will help provide shoes for 50, and a gift of \$500 will help provide a cleft surgery, restoring a child's smile forever.

As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request the beautifully crafted yellow crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request this keepsake set featuring four of LIFE's colorful crystal shoe ornaments. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective smile surgeries, and you may request the beautiful bronze sculpture, "Lion of Judah."

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

Studio goodbye:

TAMMY: Hope you're going online and giving the best gift that you possibly could give. You must know it'll make such a big difference, especially this time of year. Remember, this is the last week of the campaign so give us a call right now. We could sure use your help. And I want to get you this book. Don't forget it! So request it when you call.

But oh, I love you. I love your spirit. I love what God is doing in your life. I love the platform he's given you. You have such a great platform of prayer. So I'm going to ask you, would you pray for us today? Yeah, let's do it.

CRISTINA: Father, we thank you for every person that's listening to the words of this prayer. We pray that you would, just even through the screen, Father, we pray that you would lift every burden. We pray that the things that your people have been calling out for breakthrough, prodigals coming home, Fathers, husbands, wives, children. I thank you that they are carrying your heart for them to return to you. So we pray that you would answer prayers that have gone -
- Lord, what they may feel is unseen is seen by you.

Father, we pray that wherever they find themselves, whatever dark place that they find themselves at this point in their life, would you break off every chain? Would you lift every burden and reveal yourself as Father, as King, as Friend and Lord. We thank you; in Jesus' mighty name, amen.

TAMMY: Amen, amen, amen! Hallelujah! Praise God! I'm so glad you were here and I'm so glad you were here. I pray it was a huge blessing in your life. God bless you. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*.