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Week 41: Mission: Rescue Life

Tammy Trent

Jada Edwards

Studio discussion:

TAMMY: Hello, everybody. Welcome to *Life Today*. I'm Tammy Trent, and I'm so glad you're here. Let me ask you. Have you ever found yourself saying, I want to love people better? But honestly, when it comes down to friends or family conflict, workplace tension, or even dealing with strangers, love suddenly feels more complicated than you'd like to admit. Maybe you're just tired of the weight of it all. Or maybe you've been on the receiving end of a love that let you down. It left you a little more guarded, maybe hesitant. Well, here's the good news. God never intended love to be something we fake or force. His love is meant to flow through us, shaping the way we treat people, restoring relationships, and even transforming how we see ourselves. When we catch his vision for love, it changes everything. It heals. It forgives. It transforms -- not only the people around us, but us too.

That's exactly what we're talking about today. My guest, Jada Edwards, is an author, speaker, and Bible teacher with deep, rich wisdom for everyday life. In her new book, *A New Way to Love Your Neighbor*, she challenges us to redefine love from God's perspective, not culture's. She shows us how to walk in a redeemed love that brings healing and true connection to every relationship we have. So welcome with me my guest, Jada Edwards. It's so great to have you here.

JADA: I'm excited to be here.

TAMMY: Tell us a little bit about your growing up years and maybe how some of your early life's experience maybe had something to do with the way you love, the way you felt love, or maybe the way you didn't feel love?

JADA: That's a great question, and I think foundational to this whole thing. So I was, I am a firstborn. That's important. I tell people who you were in your family is important. Like did you feel a sense of responsibility where you kind of partnered with your parents, like firstborns are, usually. I think it kind of can stir up an achiever kind of thinking for a lot of us. I'm wired that way, anyway. Just God-given -- I want to give you the best. I want to be first, and then I have to apologize later, is just who I am. But that feeds it too, you know? My dad is that way. I'm more like my dad. So those things really shaped me because he and I kind of saw the world the same way. And he was like, Be the best. I was like, Yes, be the best. And I know that wasn't his intention but however that child is wired is how you begin to interpret love. So he's going to be big on congratulations and acknowledgment when you do well. He was not like -- failure was just -- he's like, No, be great. You can be great. I want to play sports. And was like, Well, you know, you need a C to pass, a 70. He was like, not in this household. You need an 80, you need a B to stay in sports.

TAMMY: Was that love for you?

JADA: Yes, and some of that was just how I loved myself. I felt best when I was doing well. So then as you get older, it shapes how you enter relationships. Things you might do to keep a friendship because you like friends versus wisdom when you know to let something go. So those early years mixed with who I am as a person really did have me kind of centered toward just do well and be liked and achieve. Keep your life together, at least on the outside, and you'll be loved.

TAMMY: That's an interesting definition, sort of, of love. But, you know, I think so many of us can have our definitions way off. So let's start by defining what love is. Can you define like what is love? Even from God's perspective, what is love?

JADA: Well, if you're thinking foundational biblical love, agape, or agapao, which is the verb form of to be loving, God's idea of love, the way he's expressed that is really this divine benevolence. It's a divine charity that says, I am the one who gives the love, and I determine what you're valued at. I determine how I'm going to bestow love on you. I decide to love you with everything. So it already messes up our human sensibilities because it's not earned. And

we typically are saying, I love you. I may start at 100 like that teacher grading that test, but you're knocking down points every time you disappoint me. My love tends to move in proportion to how you respond. You hurt my feelings too many times in a row. You betrayed me. You're not trustworthy. So then our love is so shifting it's really being determined by the person we're loving, not by the one doing the loving. God says it doesn't matter what you do. I am the bestower of the love so my love doesn't change because I don't change. So even though you change, Jada, my love does not. That alone is enough. I think I sit dumbfounded -- and I've been a Christian forever. I was born in church, you know? But doing this study, I was like, really? Like, it never changes? He was like, No. That concept is -- it's relief, it's overwhelming, it's gratitude. But it just messes with our human sensibility. We are not wired that way.

TAMMY: No, we're not. I also wonder if it's true that we only have love to the extent that we understand God's love for us. Like we love other people to the extent that we understand. Can you talk about that a little bit? Like explain that to me, because I think that's true. I only think God loves -- like He loves me here but then here and then --. So I think people only can love here. There's a condition.

JADA: Yes. Yes, there's limits. And so, to the extent that I have received God's love, to that extent I can then offer love. Because if I believe that I am not the source of love, that God is love, that all things that are truly, purely loving come from God, then that means I have to be so inhabited with this source that I'm able to then love freely. Because if I only receive, I'm going to make up a number, 50% of the love God has for me, and then I'm trying to love people with 100% that's not even possible. I can't even love them with 50 because I need some for myself. So that means you might get 20%, 30%, depending on what I've got left to give. But once I've placed myself -- once we do the work of really understanding the things that have kept us from receiving God's love, because that is that's a journey, and then getting to a point where we're never going to be perfect, but to be this kind of pass-through, this vessel that says I can receive God's love, and because his love never runs out, he can fill me and then my overflow is going to people. So I stay full when I love you. It doesn't take anything from me. He keeps giving to me when you hurt my feelings. It's okay, He doesn't.

So it's like I don't need you to heal me, I just keep loving. It's just this strange, divine kind of conduit where you're like, I can receive it and give it. It's a whole thing.

TAMMY: It is a whole thing. I think about the people that have been really hurt, have been betrayed, have felt rejection from people they trusted, where love was supposed to pour into their lives but they have felt all of those things throughout their entire life. How can they see love in a different way?

JADA: So there's a couple of things with that. Psalm 139 is really one of my pivotal passages when I talk about knowing yourself. Because the culture can talk about it from a self-centered way, like, I just need to know myself and love myself. It's not really that. But in Psalm 139, David spends all this time basically to establish the truth that God always knows where he is. He cannot leave God's presence. God, you know the words before they're formed on my lips. You know the thoughts before -- he's saying all these things. It's the fearfully and wonderfully made, you formed me in my mother's womb. You know everything. Wherever I go, you know. Then he concludes that Psalm in verses 23 and 24 and says, "Search me. Search me. If there's anything anxious in me or grievous," depending on the translation, "show me that and then lead me in righteousness."

So David, asking that of God is clearly not so God can know him. He's already spent this whole psalm establishing, you know me. He's not saying, search me so you can get to know me. He's saying, search me so you can show me what you know about me. I think if you're trying to do any kind of internal work without asking God to lead the search, you're just going to hit the wall. God has to lead the search. Search and surrender.

So I can't even articulate what my own childhood was like, or when I felt betrayed by a spouse or a friend because I was in it. I mean, I know how I feel about it, but only God knows what that's meant in my life. And then he can say, Jada, let me tell you about that wound. This is what happened, and let me tell you how I can heal that. That healing journey, you never reach a finish line. But you've got to be in hot pursuit of wholeness. That's what I always say. Are you in hot pursuit of wholeness? Because what I want to give people is my whole, the whole version of

myself. Because then, I'm able to ask God, What does that look like to love Tammy well? Tammy hurt my feelings. She deeply betrayed me as a friend ten years ago, (I'm making things up.) Don't email Tammy!

TAMMY: I did? I'm sorry!

JADA: If that's the case, God can show me how to deal with that hurt, I don't have to ignore it. How to even set a healthy boundary and still be loving. Because otherwise we'll just say I'm cutting Tammy off. But God doesn't cut us off. He sets boundaries for us, but he doesn't cut us off. And so, if we don't let that healing and that wholeness drive the way we love, we will decide what's best. There was a person that hurt my feelings a few years ago, and then they ended up not being in my space anymore, they moved. I was like, Oh, great! And so, I was like, Well, you know what? I've forgiven them. That's what I told myself. I worked through it. I knew what they did, blah, blah, blah. Well, then we had to be in the same space about four years later, and I could not believe the anxiety I was feeling in my heart, knowing we were about to be in the same room together. I was like, you know what? It's because they said this, and dah-da-dah. God was like, No, it's because you haven't forgiven them. You haven't forgiven them, and so that means you're not loving them well. I was like, How do I love this person well? And so, he's like, Ask me. Because I do not want to go have a conversation. And the Lord was like, I'm not going to make you have a conversation. Let's me and you talk about it. Do you wish well for that person? Do you want them to succeed? Do you want them to thrive? Do you care for their soul more than you care for how they hurt you? Like that kind of stuff.

So, that whole process he was like, you have to love well. They may not talk to you, you may not need to talk to them, but first, your heart has to be right. Because what if I put you in a room and I need you to pray for them? The way they hurt you is no excuse. He's like, Can I take you to the garden with my three closest men that failed me? I didn't cut them off. They fell asleep on me three times in my deepest need. I did not unfriend them. I didn't block them. I didn't say, You're not invited. Matter of fact, I called on them to lead the church.

So, you can't just be cutting people off. You've got to ask me. He prepared my heart, and when I got in the same room with that person, I just could not believe how light I felt. And we did some small talk and I was like, man, I survived it. And then the person came up to me before I left, and out of the blue they said, "I know this may not make sense, but I need to apologize to you." I'm going to cry. It was a whole moment. But I believe the Lord was challenging me to say, This apology cannot be the reason why you love well. Some people will never apologize. Some people are in the grave, they can't. You've got to be whole and know how to love the way I've asked you to whether that person ever acknowledges or not. The apology just felt like icing at that time. There was a moment where it would have been necessary for me to even engage. And that love, God was like, huh-uh, that's not how I love you. So, it's not that hurt is not legitimate in pain and betrayal, but we've got to let the Lord drive how we're going to engage with people, because he'll show you how to do it and still represent him well.

TAMMY: And I think even on that same story, it's like, you thought you forgave her.

JADA: I really did.

TAMMY: Right? So did you realize then when you're in that anxiety stuff, like I haven't fully forgiven? Because I think forgiveness plays a massive role in loving well.

JADA: Yes, it does. And you can ask yourself, the Holy Spirit will challenge you. Do you wish well for this person? Do you want the best? Do you pray for their success? Do you pray that they are thriving right now? If you're not praying that, you're just praying to stay awake.

TAMMY: How do I know if it's genuine? Because so many times, if someone has hurt me, too. I'm like, Father, Jesus, I release that. And I'm praying for them and I do wish them well, and then they pop up on a social media and you're like, Mmhmm!

JADA: That's how you know. Really! It's search me. Search me. I'm always asking that question because the longer you walk with Jesus, you'll know lip service. You'll know what to

say. You'll know how to say it, you'll know how to pray it, but your heart -- listen. The Holy Spirit will go, Do you really? And he will tell you, because listen, I patted myself on the back. I was like, Good job, Jada. You're so mature.

TAMMY: You've come a long way, girl!

JADA: Look at you, girl! The Holy Spirit is like, Ehh. Put the brakes on that. And yeah.

TAMMY: Yeah, exactly. So let's talk about a world divided. We are so -- in so many ways, I feel like we're so united, but in so many ways we're so divided. I feel like so much of that like exacerbated in 2020. You know what I mean? Like everything was just crashing down. I don't know that the church did such a great job at uniting us. Talk to me a little bit about the division that we face and how it plays a role.

JADA: It was huge, a huge impetus for even this book because I was -- it just hit me like, oh, Jesus says in John that the mark of being his is that we will love each other well. He's like, they'll know you're mine by the way you love, not by how often you attend church, how big your church is, how many conferences, how many Bible studies, how many devotionals. He was like, That's not the mark. The mark is that when it doesn't make sense, somebody will say, Man, she still loved well -- he still loved well. And so, when I would see things in the comment section, which is hateful, things they wouldn't say to your face. Just anything. Then you go to the person's profile, and they're like, Son of the King. Daughter of the living -- What? What? That's when the Lord was like, Yeah, we've missed this, Jada. We're reducing it to random acts of kindness. We've missed that it is a divine calling to always bestow charity. It is divine benevolence. I'm always giving something to you regardless of what you've done or said. So that division, I think, should have been an opportunity, especially for believers in the church. But we did not show up well. The global church did not show up well. And so how are we expecting the world to hold hands and sing a song when we are not even doing -- you know what I'm saying? So it just became a driver that I needed to open my eyes to.

TAMMY: Is that where the book came from?

JADA: Absolutely. It came from that. It came from things in my own personal life with marriage and kids, where I was frustrated with everybody because clearly it couldn't have been me. everybody needs to get their life together! But I needed to get my life together first.

TAMMY: Everybody speak into our life. So when I think about this book and who it might be for, when you were writing every page and you got to the end of the book, who did you have in mind?

JADA: I had in mind the whole world. And that sounds so crazy but John 316, probably one of the most often-quoted and sometimes misused verses: God so loved the world. So for the unbeliever, that is like, I'm not sure what I think about this God and Jesus thing. He loves you regardless; find your way to him. For the believer who is dealing with hurt, pain, unforgiveness, he loves you. Ask him to bring that healing. And for the one who thinks they might be in a pretty good place, but they have one or two people who kind of rub them the wrong way, He's asking for fullness. He wants that wholeness to show up because he's looking to use you as a representative. So wherever you are on the spectrum, because God so loved the world.

And for the people who are not his yet, just receive his love. If you still haven't fully received and you're his, be there. But if you know you're in this place, he's like, now, love your neighbor the way I've loved you. So wherever you are on the spectrum, there's a place for you to start.

TAMMY: I'm telling you right now, that's a good word. And for anybody that feels maybe distant or disconnected from God, it's a lonely place to be. It's so lonely. And just as Jada said, I mean, you first have to understand God's love for you. Tap into that today. If you're struggling with that or struggling to love others well, go to Jesus. Tap into his love for you. When that begins to anchor your soul, I think it begins to change a lot of things in your life all around you.

So if you're struggling with that today, would you let us pray with you? Would you let us come alongside you? There's a number on your screen. Give us a call. Let us just pray with you. Let

us start there today, understanding God's love for you and the journey you're on right now and how it will affect everything around you.

And also right now, there are some incredible people around the world doing some incredible work, rescuing some precious children. And I'm telling you, they have learned to love well. I've seen it with my eyes, with every reach, with every rescue, with every restore. And I want to show you something right now. Watch this.

Transition roll-in: [Freedom is Possible]

OPEN CAPTIONS: They took my passport and sold me to a brothel in another country. They made me sleep with many men and if I didn't they would beat me and threatened to kill me.

SHOVANNA: The effects of trafficking is horrendous. It's such a black hole, and very few want to go in there and really understand what it can do to another human being.

OPEN CAPTIONS: 50 million people are living in modern slavery. More than half of those are women and girls trafficked, often for sexual exploitation.

SHOVANNA: I've seen women who have been so devastated. They see no life going forward after they have been practically destroyed. They see no value in life.

ANNOUNCER: *In the midst of this despair and depravity, Life Outreach has partners on the ground in several countries who are actively rescuing those lost but not forgotten.*

CLAYTON: We just finished our largest rescue operation to date, resulting in the rescue of 62 victims of human trafficking and the rest of ten traffickers. We're just thanking God for this. So be celebrating with us, because we couldn't have done this without you and your partnership. But also be praying for those that are starting the long road of healing from such a traumatic experience. And so thank you, thank you, thank you.

ANNOUNCER: *You can be part of this story of reaching the vulnerable, rescuing the captive, and restoring every life. It can only be made possible by someone who chooses to care. Join with Life Outreach and our partners, and you will be providing the gift of freedom, the gift of a new life.*

Studio appeal:

TAMMY: My insides scream, Make it stop! Every time I see a story like that. I hate the darkness. I hate this kind of evil. I cannot stand what it's doing to these precious women and children all over the world. But one day -- one day, God will have the final word. Every evil doer will face justice. But in the meantime, God is sending us his people to help wherever and whenever we can. Because it not only changes the lives of these children, it changes us, too. And together we are making a difference, a life-altering difference for as many as we can reach.

What happens to a little girl or boy when they're lured, tricked, or even sold into the horrors of trafficking? I've seen their faces. I've heard their stories. And it's a darkness so deep it's hard to even put into words. Many of these children lose all sense of value, of worth, of dignity, all sense of hope. They feel forgotten and completely lost and alone. They begin to believe there's no life ahead for them -- no way out.

But there is hope. There is rescue. That's what Rescue Life is all about. Our partners on the ground in Southeast Asia are reaching the vulnerable, rescuing the captive, and walking with them toward healing and restoration one child at a time. But here's the reality. Our rescue centers in Southeast Asia are still at full capacity right now. And even though we were able to secure another rescue life center, it still needs significant renovations before it can be a safe haven. So far, we've been able to raise half of our \$1.25 million goal. But until the funds come in and those renovations are complete, the doors cannot fully open. That means children who need to be rescued today have nowhere to go. We cannot, we must not leave them waiting. That's why this new Rescue Life Center is so incredibly urgent, because the need is so incredibly urgent.

So let me tell you about the need today. With a gift of \$128, you can help rescue one child from the nightmare of human trafficking. A gift of \$1,280 will help reach, rescue, and restore ten children. And for those of you who would and can, can you prayerfully and would you prayerfully consider giving something extra above and beyond to help complete this Rescue Life Center?

See, every dollar is a lifeline. Every gift declares these children are not forgotten, but freedom is on the way. Psalms 82:4 says: "Rescue the weak and the needy. Deliver them from the hand of the wicked." That's exactly what your gift will do today. Don't wait. Go online or call right now. Help us rescue another child today and let us finish this rescue center right now so not one more child has to be turned away.

RL Cause Spot – 2025 Fall

ANNOUNCER: *Innocent children, longing to be loved and cared for, are being abducted and sold into the evil industry of human trafficking. Through Mission: Rescue Life, your gift today of only \$128 will help reach, rescue, or restore a child and change their destiny forever. Gifts of \$64 or \$32 will be combined with support from others to help rescue one more child from the shame and pain of sexual slavery.*

Currently, our LIFE rescue centers in Southeast Asia are at maximum capacity. More space is urgently needed, and we must complete and renovate a new rescue home immediately. Please consider a very special extra gift as we urgently need \$1.25 million above our normal budget to complete and renovate this place of hope.

With a gift of any amount, we'll send you Power, Provision and Peace: Bringing together the life-changing truths of Acts, Romans, and First and Second Corinthians in the Passion Translation. These books come alive with fresh revelation and timeless power. With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive the beautiful and soft "Perfect Peace Blanket," bearing the words of Isaiah 26:3 as a meaningful reminder that those who trust in the Lord are never alone.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,280, which will help save ten children, and you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Lion of Judah."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

Studio goodbye:

TAMMY: I hope you're going online and giving the best gift that you possibly can give. You must know it will make an eternal difference in the lives of so many today. And for whatever gift you can give today toward this mission, we're going to send you Jada's new book, *A New Way to Love Your Neighbor*. So just make sure to request it when you call and we'll get it right out to you.

Jada, I have loved this time with you so much. Any last words you have for us?

JADA: God has loved you so fully and so perfectly that only the enemy wants a relationship failure or a human failure to impact the way you receive God's love. If you receive God's love fully, I promise you the overflow will change all of your relationships. So my prayer is that you ask God where there's gaps in how you have been receiving his love, and let him fill those for you. And then I promise you, everything will change because of that.

TAMMY: Amen. Girl, let him step in the gap. Let him step in the gap! God bless you so much and God bless you. Thanks for watching. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*. Bye-bye!