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Week 44: Mission: Rescue Life, last week

Randy Robison & Tammy Trent

DawnChéré Wilkerson

Studio discussion:

TAMMY: Hello, everybody. I'm Tammy Trent. Welcome to *Life Today*. I'm so glad you're here. Randy, it's so great to be back with you.

RANDY: It's great to be here. And it's great to be here with you because we have someone on the program that I really think is going to speak to you right where you're at.

TAMMY: Yeah. I'm so excited to have her here. Honestly, I'm thrilled. I should say I'm thrilled. I've known her name for such a long time, but I have never met her until today. So I think today is going to be special for me. And I think it's going to be special for you, too. DawnChéré, do you know that name? I've just learned it for myself, and she co-pastors with her husband. She's a singer, has been a worship leader. She speaks, and she is an author now. She's written a brand-new book, *Slow Burn*: The work and the wonder of the wait. It is truly one of my favorite books right now. Randy, it's so good. It's a book about the beauty and the growth that we can find in the waiting. She will take you through it. It's an inspiring story. You're going to love it. So, DawnChéré, welcome to *Life Today*. I'm so glad you're here.

DAWNCHÉRÉ: Thank you. Thank you both for having me.

TAMMY: I feel like we kind of need to take people back, get to know you a little bit, and figure out how did you get to this place of writing this book, *Slow Burn*? How was it birthed?

DAWNCHÉRÉ: Absolutely. Well, I'm originally from Shreveport, Louisiana. My dad is a football coach and a pastor. So Friday Night Lights, and then the front row every Sunday

morning. I'm one of seven kids. And so, when I got married at 21 years old and started several years later trying to have a family, I never dreamed that we would have any trouble at all. It was like my dad winked at my mom, and she got pregnant. It was like, this is not going to be my story.

The infertility, I'll never forget having my blood tests and my doctor just immediately handing me a business card and saying, "You need to go see a specialist. I can't help you." That started an eight-year journey of infertility for my husband, Rich and I trying to have a family. It was in those eight years that really this book was written. *Slow Burn* just symbolizes the wait, and all of us are in the wait of life.

I discovered that, even during eight years of infertility, when we're waiting on something and we get it, we just begin waiting on something else. The goalposts just move because we have eternity seeded in our hearts. We have this longing that can't be fulfilled. So really, all of life is an invitation to wait on God.

RANDY: Was this during the period that VOUS Church down in Miami, that you and your husband, Rich Wilkerson, Jr., founded the church?

DAWNCHERÉ: Well, we founded the church ten years ago. We were still walking through infertility.

RANDY: Okay. You see, that's my question because you're pastoring, you're leading, you're teaching people. Was there a sense maybe that things weren't working? In other words, you're saying one thing, but yeah, like, why doesn't this work for us? Because I think a lot of people are there.

DAWNCHERÉ: Absolutely. We were married for 12 years before we had our first child, Wyatt.

There were so many seasons where you're wondering, God, where are you? God, what do I do? It's confusing in the wait. So many different crossroads of life. It's lonely in the wait. That's why

I thank God for the local church. That's why I'm so passionate about community, because it's really easy to isolate in the wait. But I'm so grateful that I was planted. I don't just lead a church, I get to participate in the church that I lead from small groups and discipleship and friendship and families. I'm so grateful during those eight years of infertility that I was surrounded by a community of faith.

Also, I was given the privilege of walking through a very private time, one-on-one with God. The Holy Spirit in your wait. He is faithful if you'll wait on God. He is faithful to counsel, to comfort, to lead, and to remind you of the words of Jesus.

TAMMY: Yeah, you talk about waiting, and you're grateful for it. I think there's a lot of people that might be watching to say, I'm not really grateful for the season that I'm in. So how do we do it well? How do we wait well? Is there a way to wait well?

I posted something recently on Instagram, I think it was. Or maybe it was in Facebook about waiting. It was this whole thing on waiting. That even in the darkness, Jesus doesn't like walk away, He draws near. The Bible says he draws near like even in the darkness. That's the answer sometimes that we need. When we don't get the answer we want, His answer is always that his presence is always available.

But how do people wait well? When they're like, I get that. It all sounds great. But I hate the season that I'm in. I've been in it way too long, and I cannot see the promise right now.

DAWNCHERÉ: Well, if I'm honest, I think it's easy to look at my story now with four kids and go, oh yeah, it's really easy for you to write a book now on waiting. It can be -- it can be looked at as well, you're already on the other side. What do you have to say about waiting?

The truth is, is that my book, *Slow Burn*, was written in the wait. It was in the wait that I discovered who God is, who I am in him, and where my satisfaction comes from. I waited for eight years. I'm well aware that there are people today that they've waited for 18 years, and they still haven't seen that specific miracle come to pass.

So the story of this book is really the story of all humanity. That all of us have the invitation in our wait to wait on God, and to make God the center of our story. He does bring satisfaction. It doesn't mean that our heart doesn't long for all the other beautiful things in life. It just means that your wait won't be wasted if you wait on God. Because waiting is not a season. Waiting is life.

So the invitation here now for all of us is, are we going to live in the wait? And to truly live in the wait, we've got to put our trust in Jesus. A lot of times, when I hear a testimony or when God surprises me, I'll say, Look at God. Look at God. But really, that's an invitation for all of us that in every season, when I'm confused, I want to look at God. When I'm rejoicing, I want to look at God. That the baby, in the eight years of infertility, if I made having a baby the center of my life, I would never find fulfillment, peace, satisfaction in the wait. But when we lay the pieces of our life, the broken pieces of our life on the altar before God daily like David did, he said, I lay out the pieces of my life on the altar. Again and again in every season he would say, "For you I wait, O, Lord. I wait on you." That's really the invitation for all of us in every season of life.

RANDY: So when we think of waiting, I think in human terms, we think of something that's very passive. Like I'm just doing nothing, killing time, marking time until the expected thing. But it sounds like from your experience, waiting is not doing nothing.

DAWNCHERÉ: No. I think that there is work and there is wonder in the wait. The work is surrender. The wonder is that God opens up the eyes of your spirit to see beauty all around you that you wouldn't have seen otherwise. I remember a few years ago I was taking a walk with my husband and our first son, Wyatt, and we were just taking a walk in the neighborhood. I saw a neighbor picking some fruit off of the hedges in her front yard. I stopped and talked to her. I said, "What kind of fruit is that?" Because I'd never seen it before. She said, "These are star cherries. They're high in antioxidants. They're awesome."

We just kept walking. Just in my heart, you know how you just continue the conversation with God? I just said a little prayer. I said, God, I would love to have fruit in my yard one day. We just kept walking. The next day, I'm in the backyard with my kids and my kids start yelling, "Mom! Mom, come to the back!" I walked to the back corner of the yard where I wasn't very often there and there by the chain link fence at my feet are the exact star cherries that I had said a little prayer for under my breath, and the day before. They were rotting in the gravel at my feet because no one had picked them. I ran inside. I ran inside, I got a bowl, I got a ladder. I started to bring in my hidden harvest. It was an awakening moment for me of like, Lord, what fruit in my life am I allowing to rot in the soil of my soul, because I don't have the eyes to see what you've already provided.

I don't want to go through life so focused on the one thing I want that I miss out on what God has destined for me. I just think there's beauty, there's community, there's friendship, there's support, there's strength, there's Holy Spirit power waiting for all of us in the wait. And even our tears can be laid on the altar in the wait. *Slow Burn* is not a message of slap a smile on your face, get it together, and you better be happy in the wait. No, the message of *Slow Burn* is the message we read in the Word of God; that he counts our tears, that he holds them in a bottle. That those who sow in tears, they will reap with shouts of joy.

So even when I don't have a powerful prayer to pray and the tears just flow down my face, I know that even those tears are seeds because of our faithful God. He's with us.

TAMMY: You preach a good word. Wow! Girl, that's so good. I love that he's in the hidden, in the hidden places. Which brings that to the wonder. The adventure of don't stay focused on the one thing that you're just, oh, I'm waiting for this, this, and this. It's not happened but you can look outside of that and see the wonder of what God wants to do in that waiting season. He might just give you some new fruit. I love that so much.

In chapter 13, you say, and I love this, you say, "God is not waiting for your strength. He's waiting for you to surrender to his strength." Tell me about that and why that was so important for you.

DAWNCHERÉ: Well, I'm just encouraged when I read the word of God that God doesn't call the bravest to lead. Often, he chooses the people that are the most afraid, and he speaks to them. What does he say again and again? "Do not be afraid." Since I was a little girl, I've dealt with fear. Intimidation, insecurity, not wanting to take one step until I knew the whole story, till I could see the whole picture, wanting to do everything perfect. So never giving it a shot unless I was sure that I could do it right.

When I was a teenager, I just had an encounter with God in church. I just love local church. I just had an encounter in a quiet moment that I realized, God, through your power, I can choose to walk through my fear. I love the Scripture says, "There is no fear in love. Perfect love casts out all fear." So, even in my 40s today, I'm reminded that I don't walk through fear or through just hyping myself up, or trying to look at my Rolodex or my resumé of what I've done or who I know. No, it's his love that gives me the boldness and the courage to embrace whatever season I'm in.

So that surrender for me is not just in one season when I was waiting to have a child. That surrender is now is that I'm seeking God. Lord, how do I raise a seven-year-old, five-year-old, four-year-old, a nine-month-old? Lord, how do I step into this 20th year of marriage more committed than ever? Lord, how do I lead your people the way that you desire me to, God? How do I walk out the relationships in my family, with my friends when things get complicated? I just learned that before I rely on my own strength, if I'll just bring God my surrender, He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I can boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me. *Slow Burn* is just a book boasting of my weakness, and God's faithfulness through it all. He just wants our surrender today.

RANDY: There's this idea in scripture, be perfect as God is perfect. You read that and go, that's impossible. Why would He even say that? But when you look at the language, it's about wholeness, being perfected, right? It's like, behold. When I look at the Israelites and they were delivered from Egypt, and God had this promised land, this place of security and of

overflowing bounty, I feel like that's our destiny in Christ. But there's this desert in between. What's the desert for? Because we get in the desert and we can be like the Israelites being like, Oh, it was better back there. Or, does God really mean what he says he means? Can I really trust him? But that's where we learn. That's that *Slow Burn* where he wants to develop the character in us where we can then possess the land in that full kind of blessing.

I think the difficulty, though, with some of the particulars, whether it's having children or getting married, or getting that job, we sometimes ask, is this really God's will or is this my own idea, or is this what society's pressure has put on me? And so, we don't know whether to just let that go or hold to the promise. How did you deal with that question of does God want us to adopt? How do you know if it's my desire or God's desire that I should hold to in that period? Because that's where a lot of the struggle is I think for some good people.

DAWNCHERÉ: That is it exactly.

TAMMY: And eight years -- and eight years saying, exactly, when do you say is this me? Is it God? I've gone eight years now.

DAWNCHERÉ: I love that you, that you noted the wilderness because the wilderness actually signifies a place of testing. We see it throughout Scripture. That period of testing is often equated to the number 40 throughout Scripture. Yeah, I just turned 40 last year, and so releasing this book, it was significant for me that it would be this year that it was released. But we see throughout scripture 40 representing a period of testing, a period of trials. When I think about the wilderness, I think about the opportunity to trust God right where I am. I think a lot of times, we want to know what the end game is. We know the actual endgame is eternity with Jesus -- no pain, no shame, no tears. No more waiting is what we're all waiting on. Eternity has been seeded here. But for all of our life, we're going to be waiting on him.

You ask important questions. How do you know what you should do? For me, it's been seeking his peace with every step. I love that Scripture tells us that the steps of a righteous man, or the steps of a good man, a good woman are ordered of God. And so, a lot of times I can get the

order out of order because I'm impatient, because I lean on my own understanding instead of acknowledging him in all my ways so that he can actually direct my path. Because when God directs our path, it's not a formula.

TAMMY: It's a design.

DAWNCHÉRÉ: Yes, it's a relationship. So I was talking to a young woman this morning who's been waiting to find the person to marry that she wants to walk alongside. And it comes down to, how do I wait being fully satisfied in you while also holding to faith that God, you can do anything? There's work and there's wonder. What I found in the eight years, and what I'm still finding, because this is just my life message.

I'm still walking out the *Slow Burn* of laying the pieces of my life before God day by day. But what I've discovered is it's that daily surrender that gives us daily direction.

RANDY: Yeah, like the manna in the wilderness. Yeah. A part of that, if you're watching and you feel like you're in that wilderness place, you're in that kind of *Slow Burn*, you don't really know what to do, a part of walking through that is prayer. And prayer, yes, you and God. But also, prayer with someone else. We have people right now who will pray with you. They won't have all the answers necessarily, but what they can do is walk with you for just a few minutes and ask God to encourage you, to give you direction, to help you lean on him daily to get that manna from heaven. So pick up the phone. They're waiting. We want to pray. We want to encourage you because God is taking you on this journey. So don't miss it. Don't miss what he's doing in your life right now.

Then there's another thing we want you to take a look at. Tammy, I know you've been most recently to these areas, but we have a tremendous opportunity to encourage others who are in a very dark place.

TAMMY: Definitely, Randy. I think the message of what you're saying and DawnChéré today is it's so important to find community, people will stand with you and not isolate yourself. The privilege I had going to Southeast Asia was to sit in some spaces with some people that needed

community. They needed our arms wrapped around them. They needed prayer, they needed life. God sent us in these places where I got to sit and hold them and pray over them and speak life into them.

It's incredible stories that we captured. Here's just one that I want you to take a look at right now.

Transition roll-in: [Sopeap]

TAMMY: Here I am in Southeast Asia, where last night, for the first time in my life, I strolled through the streets of what we would call the red-light district. What I saw, I don't think I was prepared for. Girl after girl after girl waiting to be sold for sex. But as I met many of them, God gave me an incredible opportunity to minister to them. A moment of just loving on them right where they were.

I'm so sorry for everything you've had to go through in your young life. You didn't deserve it. It wasn't your fault. You are so beautiful, so valuable, so important and so loved. I'm so glad that you have found a forever family who loves everything about you. Jesus will never let you go. He fights for you. You are his and you've always been. I am your sister in Christ. I'm your forever fam.

The feeling that I got in those moments, talking with those girls that not one of them -- not one of them ever dreamed of being in a place like that. They feel no worth. They feel like somebody else's property. They have no dreams. They have no hope. God sent us in there, in that place, to speak life to them. I kept thinking, what can I do to help set the captives free? But I've seen it. There is a way out. There is a way out.

Studio appeal:

TAMMY: This is real life for them. That's what I just keep thinking. This isn't me sitting behind a camera trying to come up with a story that's a half-truth or a little bit of truth. Like this is 100% their story. This is life for them every day.

That trip changed my life. I wasn't prepared for the things that I saw, the spaces that I was in, the moments that God gave me to just sit with them and hold them and pray with them and speak life into them. I feel like I want to be there again right now when I see a piece like that. I want to go back. I want to check on her to see if she's okay; see if we were able to rescue somebody else today. I'm so thankful for this ministry. I'm thankful for James and Betty. All the years that I've watched this program, and I watched a Rescue Life program, and now I get to go. I get to be sent, and I get to go, and I get to experience it. I get to come back and I get to share their stories. It's what I'm doing today, sharing that story.

There's hundreds of thousands, millions more just like it. So what do we do? What do we do? We cannot just sit back and do nothing. We can't. Their very lives depend on it today. We have to reach them. We have to rescue them. We have to bring restoration to their lives. Randy, we can do it. There are simple ways we will give you right now. I'm going to ask you, Randy, give us some clear instructions on how they can get involved to make this happen.

RANDY: Yeah, well, first of all, you need to know that we want your prayers because this is a spiritual battle that we are engaged in. But if you look in Scripture, God always uses people to carry out his plan. What is his plan? I believe, and we all believe here, that it is to give them that safe place to share with them the love of Christ. We want you to start that process for someone today.

When you look at the overall budget of this outreach, \$128 will begin that process of reaching and rescuing and restoring one child. A gift of \$1,280 will do that for ten children. We really want to complete what we've started with that Life Center there in Southeast Asia, because that is where every single day life is given. So we need a little over half a million dollars to complete that. We want to do that by the end of the year. This is the last week we'll be on the air talking about this. So please, if you are able, be a part of that. It will continue to rescue and

restore these beautiful girls and some boys for many years to come. So how are you a part, do you ask, Tammy? Yes, pray but act and pray. Go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can.

RL Cause Spot – 2025 Fall, Last week

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."

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

Studio goodbye:

RANDY: We really do need to hear from you today. There are so many in need, and you can be that answer. And you know what? If you want DawnCheré's book, *Slow Burn*, just request it

with any gift today. We'd love to put it in your hands. We'd love to encourage you beyond just this program as you encourage so many others with your support.

It's been a real blessing, hasn't it, Tammy?

TAMMY: I've loved it. Get it, get it, get it! It is so good. It's beyond even the waiting. I'm telling you, I learned so much from this book; stuff I didn't know I needed. So, get the book. We want to get it in your hands today.

I am so thrilled that you're here and I love you so much. Thank you for being here.

DAWNCHERÉ: I love you both. Grateful to be in the wait with you.

TAMMY: We appreciate you. And we appreciate you. Thank you so much for being here. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*.