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Week 46: Fall Mission Feeding

Tammy Trent/Blynda Lane

Julie Busler

Studio discussion:

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

BLYNDA: What a privilege for me to get to be on the show again. So thanks for having me back.

TAMMY: I love it, I love having you here. You add so much to my life. You add so much to this space. I'm so glad you're with me again.

BLYNDA: Well, I love I love *Life Today*. I love what James and Betty have done over the years; their heart for the Great Commission, for meeting the needs of people all around the world. It's really a privilege to be here.

TAMMY: They're amazing. It is a privilege to be a part of it, for sure. I'm glad you're here, too. There are moments in life when the pain feels too heavy to name. Maybe childhood wounds we've carried for years finally rise to the surface, and we don't know how to survive what we've kept hidden. Maybe you've been there. Smiling on the outside while silently breaking on the inside. Our guest today understands that kind of sorrow more than most. But it was at her breaking point that God began writing a new story, one that turned despair into healing and sorrow into hope. Julie Busler's brand new book, *Hopeful Sorrow*: "Turning to God and hope when childhood wounds have you turning away" is a powerful invitation to face the pain we've carried and discover how lament, honest, biblical lament can lead to lasting freedom.

So, if you've ever wondered, can God really heal what's happened to me? Or if you've felt too broken to begin again, well, I think today's conversation is just for you. So please welcome author, speaker, Bible teacher, Julie Busler. It's great to have you here!

JULIE: Thank you so much.

TAMMY: Oh, my goodness. I told you ahead of time that I have loved getting to know you. But for those that don't know you, can you take us back to tell us a little bit about your story and where it began, kind of even where it picked up, and how you got to this part of hopeful sorrow?

JULIE: Yeah, sure. So I grew up in a home -- I have to start at childhood. I grew up in a home where my mom took us to church, I have two siblings, but we would just go and come back home, and there wasn't discipleship. So, I basically believed that there was a God, but I wasn't a believer yet until college.

So, when I was eight years old, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. And at eight years old, you're old enough to recognize that there's something wrong. You see your mom getting more and more sick, but when no one takes you aside and says, honey, this is what grief is, this is what emotion is, even this is what death is, you don't really know what to do with what you're watching, your mom getting sicker and sicker. So I just did what I assumed was right, and I just shoved everything deep down and pretended like I was okay.

So then, my childhood was this. I just tried to be a really good kid. I was really successful in ballet; just trying to find my identity in something that would validate me. After my freshman year at college, I went home and my mom died from cancer. It was shocking and it was traumatic because I didn't understand how sick she was, because we really didn't talk about that growing up. It was normal for me, her being so sick. So when she died, it was very traumatic again, but I didn't know what else to do so I just shoved it deep down and went back to college and pretended like I was okay.

That's when really the darkness set in. I didn't have vocabulary for depression or PTSD or anxiety, so I didn't know what was happening, so I just pushed it away. We can do that pretty well for a long time, but that's when these thoughts also started. They were very passive suicidal thoughts like, I would be okay just not waking up in the morning or I would be okay getting sick too and dying. But I didn't tell anyone. So those just kind of ran wild in my mind. I ended up becoming a believer in college. It's a whole different story, but the Lord saved me in my senior year of college, and I met my husband, Ryan. We've been married almost 20 years, and he's this wonderful, godly man.

But the poor guy has no idea the baggage that I bring into this marriage, because I don't really understand. I don't know what's happened to me. So we get married out of college, and then a few years later, I have a three-year-old, a one-year-old, and I'm pregnant with my third. We had children quickly, and I wake up one day to news that my dad has just died by suicide. The grief of losing someone to suicide is just a whole different type of grief because people do get sick and they die so I had this box to put my mom's death in. I could wrap my head around that. But with suicide, it's so shocking and it's unnatural and it is straight from the enemy. So I didn't know what to do with that. I was very ill-equipped in navigating grief, so I just shoved it deep down. I could do that for a long time. But God is a god of redemption, and there's nothing that he can't redeem. So when my husband and I are grieving my dad's death the best that we know how, we recognize that there's a whole world of people living and dying without hope. Many of them don't know the name of Jesus. So God used this death of despair, my dad's death to really wake us up to go share life overseas.

So we did. We sold everything, got rid of everything, and took our little bitty kids overseas and we moved to Turkey to share the hope of Christ. So we're overseas for about six years and I am just sharing hope. Meanwhile, I'm losing sight of my hope. I still have hope in Christ, my eternity is secure, but I'm losing sight of that and I'm just giving in to this despair.

TAMMY: Does anybody know? Are you carrying this by yourself this whole time?

JULIE: I'm carrying it by myself. A few friends know that I struggle, and my husband is a wonderful, godly man who is very attentive but even he didn't know because that's how well I could hide it. Women, we could do this, unfortunately. So eventually in 2018, I had this breakdown because you can only pretend for so long. The only way through the grief is to feel the grief, and I'd pushed it away, and the trauma. So I decided I can't do this anymore. I was going to end my life and I ended up in a psychiatric hospital as a missionary in Turkey, which suicide and missionary, those words don't seem to go together. But they do, in a sense, because we're human; even in ministry, we are human beings, who need help.

So, I get help. It was pretty traumatic to be in a foreign hospital, but we ended up coming home, and eventually, I started to tell that story of how I finally got help, how I came to a place where I recognized it's good to get professional help. God gives us things like therapy or even nutrition or taking a walk, all of these things, medicine, are good gifts, but Jesus alone is our hope.

So my first book, *Joyful Sorrow*, is as a broad overview of mental health struggles. Like how do I get help? I tell that story. Now, I started really working on getting the help. After several years of working with a therapist, that's how *Hopeful Sorrow*, my new book came to be. So it's really the fruit of all the help I've gotten.

TAMMY: Totally! What do you have a heart for through writing this book?

JULIE: So this book, I really have a heart for people who have been emotionally neglected in childhood. Because this type of abuse, some experts say that it can have more lasting effects

than like physical abuse. I don't mean to minimize that, abuse is abuse and it's awful, but something like physical abuse is oftentimes found and validated. And so a child is taken from their home, they know this is not okay, what happened to you. But someone like myself and like many believers, whenever you are emotionally neglected, no one sees it. It's never validated. So you're left feeling alone and neglected and lonely, and that can lead someone to get to a place where you don't see any point in living.

BLYNDA: Okay, so for you, I feel like the alarm bells for you and your husband went off when you began having some of these suicidal thoughts. Then all of a sudden, it's like, okay, this is the alarm bell that something's not right, and it took you back to your childhood. What would you say to someone watching of maybe ways or signs that something isn't right before it gets to suicidal thoughts? How could you help someone who maybe doesn't even realize they also have wounds from their childhood, and they need practical steps to take to see that maybe they need some help?

JULIE: Well, I started to recognize, like, I just I felt so empty, and I just felt alone and lonely. I was starting to sleep more. So there were some lifestyle changes. But honestly, I couldn't personally fully recognize how dark my world was. So it took my husband saying, Hey, her behavior is changing, and him really educating himself and saying, Okay, she needs help. So, he became my advocate in many ways in the early days of me getting help.

But what really brought me to a place of getting help for my childhood wounds was my therapist is the one who was saying, Hey, have you ever heard of attachment trauma? Or like all these therapy-type words. And I'm like, no, I have no idea what you're talking about.

TAMMY: But do I have it?

JULIE: I know! Have I been traumatized, blah-blah-blah. So as she was uncovering what's happened to me, then I'm flooded with grief. That's when I recognize, I don't know what to do with this grief. That's when I learned about what lament is, which I would love to talk about. The progression was I learn about what lament is, but I don't know how to do that. Something's

hindering me, and that's when I kind of tied it all together. It's my childhood relational wounds that is hindering me from going to God as my Father.

BLYNDA: So unpack that. When you say “lament” and someone's listening in, I think in the book it said something like, “It's crying out in grief,” but it's so much more than that. How would you describe to someone what really, true lamenting is.

JULIE: So lamenting is like lament a churchy word we don't hear that often. We're hearing it more and more but I think if people have read the Bible, they've seen it. So, Jesus lamented ,and Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Naomi, all these –

BLYNDA: Lamentations! We have a whole book.

JULIE: I think one of the best places to see it is in the book of Psalms. There are individual laments where, like David, for instance, is pouring out his grief, his struggles, his essentially trauma in many ways to God. And then there's communal lament where people are coming together and going to God.

But lament is so much more than just telling God, this is how I feel. These are all my problems. These are my complaints. Because lament comes back to a place of hope and trust in the character of God. So lament is the opposite of stuffing our emotions, but it's doing something. It has a purpose of renewing our hope in him. So there's these basic steps, which you can see clearly.

Psalm 13 is a really great place to start if someone doesn't know what lament is or where to start. So you see David, he's turning to God. So there is faith, even though some of what he's saying is kind of irrational. He's saying, God, how long will you forget me? We know God doesn't forget us. But David felt forgotten. But the fact that he's turning to the Lord instead of away from the Lord is showing true faith. So he turns to God in faith. He tells him exactly how he feels. He's saying things in Psalm 13 like, how long will I store up these anxious concerns within me, this agony in my mind every day? How long will the enemy dominate me? Like,

that's pretty heavy, and I think that a lot of us have felt that way or do now. But then he moves into this section where he's asking God for help. Because lament is saying, I cannot do this. I'm 100% helpless in fixing my situation. I can't do it. But then he goes into this section of hope, which is where *Hopeful Sorrow*, my title comes from. There's this transition word, he uses *but*, sometimes he'll use *yet*. So then he says, But I have trusted in your faithful love. And he says a few more things, and that is where we see him transition to a declaration of hope and trust in God. He might still feel anxiety.

BLYNDA: And the situation might not have actually changed for him yet.

JULIE: Exactly. But he's saying, I'm going to trust in you because I know you are good. So I think Psalm 88 is a treasure in Scripture. Because Psalm 88 does not end in hope, actually, it ends with darkness is my closest friend. I think that that is such a gift to us, because sometimes there have been times in my journey where I really can't even muster up that hopeful ending. But the fact that the psalmist who wrote Psalm 88 is talking to God shows that there is still faith there.

I find that very comforting, actually, because it's not about doing it just right. Sometimes, I'm just like, I don't even have words. All I have is groanings, and that is still worshipful and right. We see it in Scripture. But lament is so beautiful because it is the language of endurance. It is the language of perseverance. Because I can get help all day long, and that's so good, and that helps me, but there's still this life of endurance. We're called to endure as Christians. So that element gives me an outlet to daily say, Okay, Lord! I'm doing all these right things for my mental health but I still have to keep going. So lament keeps me connected to God during these seasons of just simply doing the next right thing.

TAMMY: What role did it play in your life as you walked out a healing journey?

JULIE: Well, I didn't always lament, I'll tell you that. I learned about it for a few years and I wasn't practicing it. I'll tell you how I finally started practicing it. So, you know, I'm this mental health advocate in many ways, and I want to write to people to get help and show them that

there is hope. So at this point in my life, I'm a speaker and author about this topic. Then one day I'm driving on the road, I tell the story in my book, and I stumble upon this -- it's a public suicide. This man has just taken his life. The first responders are not there yet. And it's traumatizing, and I get really mad. I'm like, okay, Lord, I'm already telling my heart story. I'm already doing this. Why on earth was that necessary? So I was really angry. I was actually on my way to therapy that day. I was so mad.

I went home from therapy and I go in my closet and slam the door. I grab a journal and just start writing everything I'm feeling. After that, I kind of hold it up and I was like, oh my goodness, would anyone think a Christian wrote this? Because it was stuff like, God hates me. God, you've abandoned me. I should just die. I mean, it was that -- I'm just going to be very honest, that is what I wrote. As I held it up, I started to recognize these unhealthy thought patterns that I have been learning in therapy. They're called "cognitive distortions." But it's just these distorted thought patterns that all of us think but they had become habitual. Just to do a side note, like, for instance, catastrophizing is one of those distorted thoughts. It's like, I have a headache, I must have a tumor. It's jumping to the extreme. In my book, I have a whole chart of these different distorted thoughts. So I recognize them in my journal. As soon as I recognized them, it's like the Lord spoke directly to me, Now lament it. So I, line by line, would write, like God, you hate me. I would circle it and I would write what distorted thought that is, and then I would reframe it. Oh Lord, it feels like you hate me. I know you don't. Help me to feel your love. So I reframed my journal entry. That was the practical way that God took me from just learning about lament to actually practicing it.

BLYNDA: In some ways, don't you think it's that First Thessalonians four, it's we grieve, but we never grieve without hope. It's here you were, you were grieving something that you had seen and it had triggered something in you, but it always comes back to hope. That is the gift that Jesus gave us. It's always interesting because that Psalm 88, someone had pointed out to me before that that is in the very middle of the Bible, and it's where he ends on this destructive note. Yet the hope there is we're just in the middle of the story and we have all the redemption ahead because Jesus is introduced to us in the New Testament. So it's just a beautiful example

that you might be in the middle of it where it feels really dark, but there's hope and redemption ahead.

TAMMY: Can I ask you a personal question?

JULIE: Absolutely.

TAMMY: How are you doing today? Do you still struggle with suicidal thoughts, with the enemy telling you lies? Or are you able and have you learned the tools to sort of push back that darkness?

JULIE: That's a great question. I've gotten more and more actually bold, because I'm hearing from believers all the time who are even missionaries or pastors' wives who are struggling to live. So I want to be real about this. If Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, we have an enemy who's going to tell us lies and try and capture our attention on death. He's been a murderer from the beginning. He is the father of all lies. And so, I have equipped myself. God has helped me with coping skills through therapy. I have to stay in the word and renew my mind and transform my thinking; that's what the spirit does. But yes, I'm human. So when something happens, I am programmed from childhood just to pull away from intimacy with others. We have to have connection with believers. And so I'm learning even today, I'm still learning that connection is good, that I am safe. I don't have to pull away from people.

So as I have utilized these tools from therapy, I mean, the spirit brings the word back to mind. So if I do feel tempted to just, you know, what? Is this even worth it anymore? Like, am I a burden on everyone? Then I've put things in place to where it protects me, and I will write a friend or whatever. So yes, I'm human and we have an enemy who is powerful. But I am also filled with the resurrection power of Christ. So even with those struggles, there is absolute victory.

TAMMY: There is so much light in you, Julie. From the moment you walked in here, we just hung out for a second, we did feel connected. I think there's something powerful about connection. Isolation is very dangerous. I'm proud of you, sister, that you lean into that. If you are watching today and you are struggling with the same kinds of things that want to take from your mind, from your thoughts, from your being right now, call us. We're going to come alongside you. We're going to pray against that in Jesus' name. We're going to stand with you, and we're going to believe with you today that that will be broken in Jesus' name. Then we will get you some tools that you can put and implement into your life daily, so that when the enemy does come to attack you, you will know exactly what to do, exactly what to say, exactly what scripture to pull up to say not today. Not today! You can fight me again tomorrow, but not today. And I'll show up tomorrow again with the same tools to tell you. You do not get the final word.

If that's you, call us right now so we can pray with you. And also, if you want Julie's book, we all want to get this in your hands today, *Hopeful Sorrow*. It will be a tool for you to walk out seasons of your life that just seem hard to find hope. Right now, there are people I've spent so much time with, and so has Isak, our missionary partner that need hope today. Watch this and we'll come out on the other side, and we'll wrap it up with Julie.

Transition roll-in: [Joanna Dreams]

ISAK: We've come up here to a place called Camellia Village. I'm here with a mother, Joanna is her name, and her little daughter, Angelina. She shares the story with the composure of a mother that has experienced so much. She speaks of her fears, her fear of losing her children. A fear rooted in what happened just a year ago when she lost her youngest child. A fear rooted in a life where a meal a day is an absolute luxury. She explained how one of the hardest things is hearing her children cry and ask her for food.

When we asked Joanna what her biggest dream is –

OPEN CAPTIONS: I hope Angelina can get a good education, and maybe someday she can provide for herself and for me.

ISAK: Isn't it amazing that mission feeding does both of those things? Through mission feeding, many times, we use school feeding because that way we can provide the nutrition that precious little children like Angelina need, while also giving the education. That means they'll be able to provide for their own families in the future.

Mission feeding provides the answer yes to Mom, I'm hungry. I need food. But how do we get there? How do we ensure that Angelina has the food that she needs? That she doesn't end up in the same fate as her younger sister? Yes, in some ways it seems almost impossible. But it's possible. But it starts with you opening your hearts today and doing what you can do.

We're here. We're committed. Trust me, I'm going nowhere. We're in it for the long haul until the job is done. But the job can't start without you.

Studio appeal:

TAMMY: "We are in it for the long haul." I couldn't have said it any better than Isak does. When I'm sent to these places, like Africa, and I'm with these families and I'm hearing their stories, it can't help but change your life and your perspective. These are real people. These are real stories. This is real life. This is a real struggle every single day. And to think that she said that even one meal is a luxury?

BLYNDA: A luxury! She's already experienced so much loss. She's already lost a child. And for her to say her dream would be food and education, I mean, it's like these should be -- these should be things that every human should have the ability to have. And yet for her, it's a luxury.

TAMMY: Exactly. Like if I've ever had my list of what I dream for, food was never even on my list. But it is on their list and it is dire. The food sources are depleted, and in many places have

run out. Which means that we need you more than we've ever needed you before. If you are in a position to come alongside us to help these children, to help that family, and to help so many more that I have seen and sat with personally, and I can tell you beyond a shadow of a doubt, they need you, they need me. So if you can do something today, would you give? Would you pick up the phone? Would you make a call? Would you give? If you've given before, would you give again? If God has blessed you, would you just give a little bit more today because it is truly urgent.

This is what feeding would look like for you and I today. Right now we're feeding 350,000 children every day in Africa. Is that not amazing?

BLYNDA: It's amazing.

TAMMY: So we're trying to reach even more, but we've got to at least be committed to the 350,000 right now. So \$30 will feed three children. \$50 will feed five children. \$100 will feed ten children. For \$1,000 you will be able right now today feed 100 children that maybe without your call today will not get fed. That's the seriousness of the situation right now.

BLYNDA: It's serious, but there is no amount that's too small. So if you can give anything, give. Don't feel like if you can't give the biggest one, give.

TAMMY: There'll be somebody else that'll come alongside you, and that's the thing about doing it as a family. So go online, make a call and give the best gift you can give today.

FMF Cause spot 2025:

ANNOUNCER: *Right now, across the continent of Africa, children are suffering, facing severe malnutrition and even death. With food reserves critically depleted and many areas experiencing devastating famine, we urgently need to replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us every single day.*

Through Life's mission feeding outreach, your gift of love can be an answer to a prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need. Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five or ten children for three full months. With your gift, we'll send you "Happy, Healthy and Free." A powerful 31-day journey to help you embrace God's promises for healing, wholeness, restoration, peace, and joy. Step into the abundant life God has prepared for you.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request 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, this is the last opportunity to request our 2025 majestic bronze sculpture, "Lion of Judah" with your gift of \$1,000 or more, which will help feed 100 children in desperate need. So please call, write, or make your gift online today.

Studio goodbye:

TAMMY: I hope you're going online and giving the best gift that you can possibly give today. Please know it makes such a difference. And for whatever gift you can give today, we want to send you Julie Busler's book, *Hopeful Sorrow*. I know it will bless you today, just as you have blessed us.

Julie, thank you for being here. I love you so much. Where can people find you?

JULIE: So on Instagram and on Facebook, I share regularly just what the Lord is doing and teaching me. It's just at Julie Busler. Then my website is Julie Busler.com.

TAMMY: We're going to find you. We're going to find you. We love you. Love you. Thank you for being here. It's been so great.

We love you. Thank you for being here. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*. Bye-bye.

