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Week 46: FMF

Tammy Trent/Blynda Lane

Lysa TerKeurst

Studio discussion:

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

BLYNDA: Thank you. Thank you for having me back. Yeah. So fun. I loved doing the shows with you before, and it's going to be a great day. I love Life Outreach. I love James and Betty. It's just really a joy to be back.

TAMMY: It's so good to have you back, and we have a great guest today. You're going to love it. You are going to love it. But if you've ever had a dream die, maybe not all at once, but piece by piece, then you know the ache of watching something you prayed for, fought for, and believed would last come to an end. Maybe that something was your marriage. And now, you find yourself standing in the wreckage asking questions you never thought you'd ask. How do I hold myself together when everything I built is falling apart? Does God still love me? Can I even heal?

Well, today we're sitting with a woman who has walked through that very pain and somehow, found her footing again in God's faithfulness. New York Times bestselling author, Lysa TerKeurst knows the heartbreak of an unwanted divorce. But out of her own season of loss, she's created a powerful roadmap for others walking that same road.

Her new book, *Surviving an Unwanted Divorce: "A Biblical Practical Guide to Letting Go While Holding Yourself Together,"* is filled with grace, therapy-based tools and biblical wisdom to help others heal from betrayal, release shame, and begin to rebuild their lives piece by piece

with hope. Please welcome with me my new friend, Lysa Terkeurst. It is so good to have you back!

And listen, I just want to say, if you have missed the other show that we did with Lysa, it was so good. You can go to *Life Today.org* any time and catch it. But we get to be with you again today. This is so exciting. And I think about this book, *Surviving an Unwanted Divorce* and I think, is this the book you really wanted to write?

LYSA: No, I always say this is a book I didn't ever want to write because it's a message I never wanted to have to live. I never -- as I looked into my future, I never thought divorce would be part of my future. I remember when my kids were little and they would hear about their friends' parents getting a divorce, and I remember with the best of intentions and meaning it with all of my heart, I would say, "You're never going to have to worry about that with Mommy and Daddy." And I really meant it, and I really thought it.

One of my fears with writing this book is I don't want people to think that I'm pro divorce. I'm not. I'm pro marriage. If I was the one writing this story and I was the one who could have made all the choices and determined where we would go, then we would still be married. But there's always two people making choices. And if one person is choosing the marriage and one person isn't, then you may also suffer the death of your marriage.

But what was so important to me is I was so lost when this first happened to me. I remember telling my friends I felt like I had been in the equivalent of a serious head-on collision and that like, my arm had gotten severed. And if physically that happened, everybody would know what to do. Dial 911, get a tourniquet, take me to the emergency room. They have medicine for the pain there. They know how to wheel you into surgery. They know a protocol of exactly what this will look like. So when you're in the equivalent of that, though, and it's an emotional trauma, it's an emotional collision, it's an emotional severing, it's just like, what do you do? There's no 911. There's no hospital. There's no protocol.

And so, this is the book that I wish I would have had in my hands at that moment, because this could have served as my emergency room.

TAMMY: If you could say something to the church and wish it was something that they knew, what would it be?

LYSA: You know, some churches have amazing programs for people who have walked through the devastation of a divorce; other churches don't. But I remember one of my greatest moments in ministry, a pastor invited me in to do an all-staff, it was a very large church. He invited me in to do this all-staff meeting. He asked me a question no pastor had ever asked me before. He said, "Lysa, what do you wish the church knew about walking through a divorce?" I just started weeping because there was so much that I wanted to say tenderly and lovingly. But mostly, I just wanted them to know that church is full of hurting women, hurting men that have the same story as me. And if someone comes to church then that should be their safest place.

If all they hear is Malachi 2:16, God hates divorce, then that's going to be a really hard thing because they're already devastated. Now, we're going to add shame on top of their devastation. For someone who's walking through an unwanted divorce, to have a scripture like that weaponized against them, it's just almost too painful to bear.

But in the book, I wrote it alongside Jim Cress, my personal counselor, as well as Dr. Joel Muddamalle, who is the theologian that works for me at Proverbs 31 ministry. So speaking of that verse, Malachi 2:16, Joel and I did a lot of work to really unpack what the Bible does and does not say about divorce. If you go back past the King James Version, that's not the original Bible. Sometimes, people mistakenly think the King James is where it all started. It's not. You go all the way back to the Septuagint, which is the Hebrew Bible, translated into Greek. What that verse actually says is: "When a man hates and divorces his wife, he does violence against the one he should protect," thus says the Lord. So in my NIV Bible now, and in several other translations of the Bible, that's what the verse says with a little asterisk, God hates divorce. But I think those two things are really important. And so we do a lot of hard work to go back through all the verses where divorce is mentioned or pictured, and we help provide solid

theological understanding so that we don't inadvertently weaponize the truth or misuse the truth.

BLYNDA: I know that divorce in the church, that kind of idea always gave you a feeling that it would disqualify you in some way. If you're a woman of divorce, you might not be able to walk out the full calling God had for you. How would you speak to someone who might feel that way?

LYSA: Yeah, well, I would say look at your environment, and if there are people that are speaking that over you, then maybe that's not the right environment for you to be in to heal. Because there's so much of this that I just want to encourage people, don't go at it alone. Now, certainly if God says take time off, which I certainly did for the sake of healing, then that is appropriate, and that does need to happen. But for someone who has suffered an unwanted divorce because of the choices of another person. And look, we know that in a marriage, we both contribute to marriage difficulties. So I never want to negate that because that is part of pretty much most people's story. Right?

But my good friend, Leslie Burnett helped me understand there's a big difference between marriage difficulties and a destructive marriage. Because when you're in a destructive marriage, this other person is no longer seeking your highest good. As a matter of fact, typically those behaviors like abuse, abandonment, addictions, affairs, all of those things come into play. So why would somebody want to disqualify me when those were not the choices that I made? Take time off for healing, yes, but to be totally disqualified from ministry, I don't know. That's a real tough pill for me to swallow.

TAMMY: Definitely for me, too. I've watched people that I love have to swallow that pill, and it was really hard for me to watch that and to feel like they didn't have any tools. Think about holding yourself together, you talk about that. "A guide to letting go while holding yourself together." To me, that tension can almost feel impossible. How did you hang on? I mean there could be someone watching right now that says I don't know how to hold on anymore.

BLYNDA: What does that even mean to hold yourself together? That's so hard.

LYSA: I think part of what sometimes makes people feel that feeling of being stuck, if you feel stuck, that's a trauma indication. There's unhealed trauma there. A lot of times it's because they want answers. And I understand this. I felt like having answers would possibly give me the closure that I needed. But having answers isn't always possible because you could spend your whole life never getting those answers.

I think about Mark, chapter 14, when Jesus was about to go to the cross, and starting in verse 32, going all the way down, he's in the Garden of Gethsemane. He's crying out to God and he says two really powerful things. First, he says, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." This is Jesus saying this. And second, he said, "God, anything is possible for you. Take this cup from me." Jesus had all the answers to all the questions. And if having the answers would have eased the ache of his sorrow, he would have never said, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." It wasn't having the answers that eased that ache. It was the very last part of what he says, "Yet not what I will, but what you will."

See, a huge part of holding yourself together, learning to move forward is accepting what is and what isn't. That doesn't mean that we accept bad behavior. That doesn't mean we accept him still or her still treating us very, very poorly. No, we accept what is reality because mental health is a commitment to reality at all costs. And acceptance is going to be a big, big part of this.

BLYNDA: We talked a little bit when the cameras weren't rolling, but you said sometimes what is hardest about accepting what's happened is that you might not ever get that I'm sorry from the person who hurt you, or you might not ever -- You have to kind of move on. And it may even seemingly seem like they're free from consequences of what they did.

You talked about having somebody in your life that can just validate the feeling by saying, I believe you. Can you can you talk more about that?

LYSA: Yeah. So this is what my counselor did for me. But honestly, it doesn't have to be in a counselor's office. It could be a trusted friend. But here's what my counselor did for me. I walked into his office, I was just so overwhelmed with the pain. It was hurting me so much. He said, "Lysa, I think today is a good day to start working on forgiveness." And I said, "Absolutely not. Forgiveness feels like a very unfair gift I have to give to this person who hurt me."

And so he said, "Okay, let's don't start with forgiveness. Let's start with the pain." He gave me a stack of three-by-five cards, and I wrote one thing on each card of like how I'd been hurt, things that had been said to me, things that have been done to me by this person. Jim took a step back and he read all of the cards. He looked at me and he said, "Lysa, I believe you. And this was wrong. What happened to you should never have happened. And if no one else in this world ever dares to say they're sorry, I'll say it. I'll say it. Lysa, I'm so sorry for what you've been through."

I realized in that moment I didn't necessarily need that epic conversation with the person who hurt me because they may never, ever be willing to own what they did, say they're sorry, or make any kind of restitution at all. But having another human just bear witness to my pain, to say it happened, it was wrong, and it is a part of my life, but it will not be the consuming force of my life; to have another person just say those words, I'm so sorry, it had such a profound impact on me.

BLYNDA: What would you say to the person who feels they're alone in whatever trauma or pain they're walking through, maybe a divorce or something else like that?

LYSA: Yeah. Well, there's a practical side to this. The practical side is you may need some other people to step in and help you with your finances. You may feel intensely alone because you don't know what to do. But another thing that fed my intense loneliness was I felt like the person who hurt me was just getting away scott free. Yeah, but here's what I want to say. If that person sinned against you, sin always comes as a packaged deal. It's part pleasure, and it is part

consequence. You may never, ever see the consequence that they're going through, but God will not be mocked. You see, when we sin, we unleash both of those things, the pleasure and the consequence. So there will be consequences. Let God deal with that person.

So let's operate in the truth. The truth is, my job is to be obedient to God. God's job is everything else. He will take care of the consequences that the other person – it will happen. I mean, it will happen because of their sin.

TAMMY: What is the greatest peace you think you offer to somebody today when they get to the end of this book?

LYSA: Well, I just want to speak so tenderly to someone right now because I have a feeling you're leaning in, and maybe you have tears running down your face right now. Maybe you have asked that question, why was I not enough? And, you're probably recounting all the things that the person who hurt you. So maybe it was your wife that hurt you, or maybe it was your husband that hurt you, but you're probably recounting all the things that they said. I did that. I recounted so many things that he had said to me that made me feel not good enough. But why would you let someone who has lied to you over and over suddenly be a voice of truth in your life? You are more than enough. As a matter of fact, I might even dare say if I could go back and speak to myself when I was sitting in that chair right after I discovered what I discovered, and I was terrified, I wish I could go back and just say to myself, Lysa, it's not that you weren't good enough, it's that your love became more than what his choices deserved. Please don't take this as a sign of your identity at all. Yes, maybe you will have to now on any intake form, you will have to check divorced, and boy, does that rip your heart wide open. I understand that because I've been there, I've been there. But that's not who you are. Who you are is a holy and dearly loved child of the Almighty God. God does not hate you. God is not disappointed in you. God does not think less of you. God's heart breaks alongside of you and God wants you to know he offers you hope and healing and a future -- a future that will be good.

BLYNDA: Amen. You know, you speak about that we are made in the image of God.

When you allow that kind of destruction, when you allow yourself to live under that, it undermines the truth of how you were made in his image.

LYSA: That's right. That's right! And we have to be really careful as Christians not to elevate the institution of marriage and make it so much like we've got to save the marriage, we've got to save the marriage. We can't elevate that over the image bearer of Christ who is possibly getting destroyed in a destructive marriage. There's just so many, especially in my situation, I was just a woman who was desperate to keep it all together, and I couldn't. I couldn't because I can only control my choices. I can only control what I invest into the marriage. Man, if I could have saved it, I would. So let's please, never, ever minimize the massive effects that an image bearer of Christ might be suffering. And yes, let's hold marriage to high, high, high esteem, but not to the risk of another person being destroyed.

TAMMY: Your words mean everything to somebody right now that needed to hear them. I don't know what more I could even add to that except for to say if you need someone to pray with you, you want to take it a step further, pick up the phone and call the number on your screen. Please, please let us pray with you today.

Lysa, you have lived through it, you've walked through it, but you share it with such life and with such hope from a place that life was literally ripped from you. I believe every word you say, therefore, I believe everything that God has done in your life. So I believe it for you today, too. It is possible. Call us. Let us stand with you. Let us pray with you. Let it be our honor to do that.

There are people in the world right now that are hanging on for dear life, barely surviving because of the lack of food. I had the privilege of going over to Africa and spending time with these incredible families, and yet it was so heartbreaking that the simple truth of bringing them life was food. Well, I had a solution for them and I have a solution for you today. Watch this and we'll talk about what that will look like to help them thrive.

Transition roll-in: (Be an Answer to Prayer)

Open Captions

>> "If you want your prayers answered, be an answer to someone else's prayer."—

James Robison

TAMMY: When I'm on a mission trip I can't help but feel the pain a mother has when she sees her child suffering because there's no food for her.

Open Captions

>> As a mother, I feel like a failure because two of my children died. It starts with a lack of food. Then malnutrition leads to other terrible diseases. It's really hard for me to think back to the times when they passed away.

TAMMY: This is Armita. Can you begin to imagine the crushing impact of losing your children because you couldn't feed them? It was devastating for Armita but she knows she must carry on for her other children. How does she manage it? Through fervent prayer.

Open Captions

>> Jesus is the only hope we have. When we go to sleep, we pray, Jesus, thank you for sustaining us for another day.

TAMMY: I would love to tell you Armita's story of losing her children because the lack of food is rare—but it is not! These women by show of hands shared how many children they each had lost. They well know the same heartache as Armita. Mandelena lost five children. Yngo, two children. Margarita, one child. Julia, three children.

One thing all these precious mothers have in common through prayer is they put their hope for tomorrow in the hands of Jesus. My heart is always moved by all the precious mothers I meet here in Africa. And I'm especially moved because I know we share the same hope in Jesus and the way he provides. Today, you and I have the opportunity to

be his hands and a direct answer to these mothers' prayers. God is truly on the move in Africa and I invite you to be a part of it.

Open Captions

>> "If you want your prayers answered, be an answer to someone else's prayer."—

James Robison

Studio appeal:

TAMMY: It gets me every time I see that piece, and I see them holding up their hands like four and three; lost two, lost five. I think the thing that I think about is, I've lost one, and how it made me feel being widowed, losing the love of my life and having to bury him. And yes, I have hope. And yes, God has brought healing in my life. But I know what that kind of deep loss feels like. And then you put yourself in the shoes of a mother who's lost not one child, but two, three, four and five, and I just I honestly can't even imagine the pain that she must carry every day.

It's because of the lack of food. I honestly, almost cannot wrap my head around it. Every time I go on one of these trips, I'm telling you, I am overpacking my luggage with every bit of food I can take. Every time I'm pulling up in a car to these villages, I'm opening up my backpack and those little children come running to me and I'm putting almonds in their hand and little crackers in their hand, just trying to feed them as much as I can, and I'm not even their mom. So I can't imagine the pain that a mom must feel every day, wishing she could open up a backpack and just give them a meal or a treat or a snack. And she can't!

But here's the part of the story that changes. We can! God has made a way to send me, to send the rest of the team, many of us, over to these places where many people can never go. They don't have a chance to go but we get to go in these places. We have been sent. We get to assess the land. We get to figure out what they need, and then we get to come back and tell you their story and the need and say, would you, please? Now, here it is. Would you come alongside us?

Would you help us feed these children and these families so not one more of these mothers has to lose another child. It is so simple. We're already set up. But I'm telling you right now, there are some villages and places we've gone into that have absolutely zero food because everything has been depleted. Can you even imagine? So we know how to get it to them, but we just can't, and we need you right now, please, to consider coming alongside us. We need the funds right now, today to make this happen.

I'm going to tell you what that will look like. We are feeding 350,000 children right now, and Blynda, for just \$30 right now, it's this simple, it'll feed three children. For \$50, it'll feed five children. \$100 will feed ten children. For \$1,000, that will feed 100 children today, right now, that otherwise might not get it.

BLYNDA: And James, the quote at the beginning said this is a way you can be the answer to someone's prayer. You are the answer to someone's prayer. So when you can see these women holding up their fingers of the children they've lost, and you saw the moms saying, My prayer, my hope is still in Jesus. After all the loss, their hope is still in Jesus. But we can be the ones that make the difference. We can be the change makers.

TAMMY: You get to be the change makers. So go online right now. Give us a call, pick up the phone. There are people waiting for you right now. And if it's busy, keep calling, keep trying, we need you today! Let's do this together to make a change for these families, these children, right now.

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: For whatever gift you can give today, gosh, just request this book. We're so grateful for you. We want to get this in your hands, Lysa Terkeurst's new book, *Surviving an Unwanted Divorce*. I think every one of us has been touched by that or knows somebody who has. So it's an invaluable book that we want to get in your hands today.

Lysa, thank you for being here. I'm almost without words. It was so good just to be in this space, to grow, and to learn from you. Thank you for your wisdom. God bless you so much. We love you. Thank you for being here.

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