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Week 49: Fall Mission Feeding

Randy Robison & Tammy Trent

Manny Arango #1

Studio discussion:

RANDY: Welcome to *Life Today*! I'm Randy Robison. Tammy, how are you?

TAMMY: I'm good. Very good today. Thanks for asking.

RANDY: How's the chaos in your life?

TAMMY: Right now it's manageable.

RANDY: It's manageable. Well, you know, and that's what we tend to do. We tend to just kind of manage it. Because, let's face it, this world is a mess. And sometimes that chaos can creep into your life, and that's what we're going to talk about today because if you're feeling things are out of control, we have good news for you. Our guest is Manny Arango. He has a book called *Crushing Chaos*. This one's deep.

TAMMY: It is a deep one but it's so good. And more than good, it's really, really needed. Because I feel like it touches on something that I was kind of like, wow, mind blown. Like, I really didn't think about the chaos or anxiety in my life, maybe being attached to this. It's very good.

RANDY: Well, let's get to it. Manny, welcome to *Life Today*.

MANNY: Hey, it's so good to be back.

RANDY: It's good to see you. Ah, chaos. Is this your observation of the world, or is this your life?

MANNY: Oh, it's my life. I would say I was raised in chaos. My dad was incarcerated for 18 years. My mom had my older sister when she was 12, gave birth at 13. So got pregnant at 12, gave birth at 13. Got pregnant again at 14 with my older brother, gave birth at 15. Five of my uncles are alcoholics. I mean, you talk about a poster child for someone who escaped chaos, you're looking at him. So this is an observation of the world's, yes, but through the lens of what God has done to redeem and restore my family of origin. And, man, I grew up in a lot of chaos, and so, I know a thing or two about chaos.

RANDY: Let's hear a little bit about how God rescued you from that. What's the story there?

MANNY: Well, first of all, I started going to a church. My aunt asked my parents if I could start coming to this Pentecostal church with her, and I got radically saved.

TAMMY: How old were you?

MANNY: I was 13 years old. I'll say this. I think that sometimes what church does is, not every church, but this is definitely my experience, is that church helped me to deal with the sin in my life, but not necessarily the chaos of my life. And so sin is easier to deal with, right? It's like, hey, don't drink, don't smoke, don't have sex before you're married. You know, it's the morals. But it wasn't until the day I got married that I found out there was chaos in my life because I'm marrying the woman of my dreams. She's beautiful. She's awesome. She's my college sweetheart. And, there was one person at my wedding who just had an attitude, you know? Not very happy -- not very happy that I got married. Her name is Mom. Okay? So Mom is just kind of like, I don't know if you ever talked to these people who what they're saying and how they're saying it don't match? So, I go over to my mom in the middle of our reception and I'm like, You okay? You know, is everything all right?" She goes, "I'm just so happy for you." I'm like, doesn't feel like it. And so, I started to unpack all this with a therapist. My therapist began to help me to see that a lot like the woman at the well who had been in five relationships, and the

relationship she was in right now is dysfunctional. Jesus is going to be man number seven in her life to actually finally bring healing and wholeness. But my mother had never met her biological father, and then my mother was actually sexually assaulted by her brother's best friend; that's why she got pregnant so young. Then my mother had my older brother, and then my father, who was the drug addict was incarcerated for 18 years.

My therapist began to teach me that in the soul of every woman, the soul of every man, we're asking two different questions. The soul of every woman, every woman is asking the question, this starts around the age of four, five, or six years old, your soul is asking, am I lovable? And who will love me? And so, of course, my mother's biological father is not able to answer that question. Neither is her brother who allowed someone to sexually assault her. My grandmother then made my mom marry that man who assaulted her and impregnated her. He can't answer the question of if she is lovable, and will he be the person that will love her? My brother couldn't answer that question. Then she marries my dad. My dad's a drug addict. He's been incarcerated for years. My dad can't answer the question, are you lovable? And am I going to be the person that will love you? So the way disappointment works is you don't just sweep it on the rug, it doesn't go away. It accumulates. It's like an avalanche. So disappointed from the first failed relationship, goes in the second, goes in the third, goes in the fourth, goes in the fifth.

And so now, I'm marrying the woman of my dreams. I'm 26 years old. I've hit the jackpot in my mind. But there's an avalanche of failed expectations that my mom is dealing with. And now I'm man number six. She expects that I'm going to be the person that finally answers the question of her soul. I remember being 26 years old and having to make a decision, because I'm not in a covenant with her but there's a covenant expectation. My therapist actually diagnosed us with surrogate spouse syndrome disorder. It's when you have spousal level expectations of someone who's not your spouse.

Well, because my dad was such a force of chaos, right? He was an addict, he's unpredictable. You never knew when he was going to be around or not be around. Well, me and my mom became each other's safe space. I became her refuge, she became mine. I started paying bills at our house when I was 15 years old. I was the spiritual leader of the home when I was 17. All

this to me felt very, very normal but it's out of order. It wasn't exposed to be out of order until there's a wife in the equation. What is God's order? That a man would leave his father and his mother, cleave to his wife, and they'd be one flesh. Well, that word leave in Hebrew means abandon. It means forsake. So I had to go through this long process, really, with the Holy Spirit, and with a lot of wisdom of leading my mom to what I call man number seven. So she's had five failed male relationships, I'm number six. Well, there's a man named Jesus that can tell her that she's lovable, that can be the person that will never leave her or forsake her, that can be the man who knows her identity, that knows her value, that knows her worth. My job as man number six is to like lead my mom to man number seven. Because there's a lot of us if I allowed my mom to pull from the well, that is my finite resource, then my wife would have nothing when she comes to the well. For the first couple of years of our relationship, I mean, I'm praying for there to be peace. Me and my wife are arguing a lot; I'm praying for peace. I was a youth pastor for ten years, and every kid in my youth group was anxious. I used to pray for all of them to have peace. Guess what? The power of God's real. They would leave Wednesday night service, they'd have peace. The only problem is I'd see them on Sunday, they'd have no peace.

TAMMY: Was it sustainable?

MANNY: Yeah, yeah. They come back on the next Wednesday, the peace tank is back to E. I felt like Chick-Fil-A giving out free refills to peace every week. Then the Holy Spirit began to reveal to me they didn't have a peace problem, they had an order problem. God's solution to anxiety is never peace. God's solution to anxiety is order. When we begin to introduce order, albeit uncomfortable, albeit difficult, when we introduce order into our lives, peace takes care of itself.

RANDY: Yeah, a byproduct.

MANNY: It's a byproduct. It's a natural byproduct of peace. So I wrote the book from the perspective of I know what it's like to have chaos in my life, whether that's the chaos of my dad or the chaos of my mom. I was praying the first couple of years of our marriage, praying for

peace. I remember finally, the Lord being like, I'd love to give you peace. If you think I'm saying, no, you're out of your mind. My answer is yes to the peace. The only issue here is whether or not you can sustain peace. Until you begin to -- I don't mean this in a rude way or a mean way, but you have to put your mom in her place. Everything in life has a place. If we say, man, this studio is well ordered, that means everything is in its place, right? If I was sitting on this, we'd say, that's out of order because it's out of place.

So a lot of times God comes into our life and he does fix anxiety, but first he fixes idolatry. He begins to put things in order so that we can sustain the peace that he blesses us with. That's healed me and my wife's marriage.

TAMMY: I love that. Does the Bible give us a roadmap on how to deal with the chaos?

MANNY: You better believe it does! Creation is a roadmap on how to deal with chaos. Now, most of us read the Bible from an American, a modern American Western perspective. So for us, when we read Genesis chapter one, we're essentially reading an account where God makes something out of nothing. Right? And just know, yes, God is the one who creates something out of nothing. But Genesis one isn't telling that story. Genesis one is actually telling a way more fascinating story. Any ancient Jewish person would have understood Genesis one not as a story of God creating something out of nothing but God creating order out of chaos.

Genesis one starts, God created the heavens, and the earth and the earth was formless and void, and the Spirit of God is hovering over the surface of the deep. What's the deep? Well, it's the abyss; it's the chaotic, watery abyss. And then there's darkness, and then there's the waters. His Spirit is over the waters. Okay, so we got the deep, we got darkness, we got waters. This isn't nothing! And so what does God do over the course of seven days? He rolls up his sleeves and he does something that I had to do with my mother. He started to create boundaries. He creates a boundary between the sea and the dry land. He creates a boundary between the night and the day. And then he created a boundary between the garden, which is ordered space, and the wilderness that was around it. He creates order. God creates order by creating boundaries.

So the words that are used all through Genesis is God separated, God organized. God begins to divide. He begins to bring order. So when God comes into your life and brings order, my only question when it came to me and my mom's relationship was, do we have a good one? Not are there boundaries? Not do we have a healthy one? Not have your problems spilled over into my life? Not am I carrying your burdens when I shouldn't be. It's not boundary -- it wasn't boundary language, it was just close. Are we close? How often do we talk?

The characteristic of a healthy relationship is not how often do we talk? I could talk to somebody every day and have a terribly toxic relationship with them. The real question is does the gifts of the Holy Spirit, does the fruit of the Holy Spirit flourish here? God definitely gives us a roadmap. It just doesn't always look the way that we want it to look.

So here's what God does, right? The sea represents chaos; the dry ground represents order. The night represents chaos; the day represents order. The wilderness represents chaos; the garden represents order. So God doesn't eradicate chaos. He doesn't just do away with the sea or do away with the night, or do away with the wilderness. No, no, no. He creates a boundary and he says that order is going to begin to govern chaos. And so, of course, I've got lots of chaos in my life. I've got a toddler. I've got a church plant. Okay? Some of us think one day we're just going to attain some level of peace where there's going to be no chaos in life. It's unrealistic! God doesn't ever -- His ideal is not a lack of chaos. Think about it. This is a mistake that a lot of us make, right? We assume that the Garden of Eden is perfect. That's a massive assumption that we make. We even preach it all the time. It's perfect. It's perfect. It's perfect. But God never called it perfect. Genesis doesn't call it perfect. There's a word that God uses for it. Called it good. Good. Guess what good means? Good means there's a beast in there that's ready to tempt you. God says that's good. Good is work. Good is like there's a job to do. Okay, so if God had created a perfect garden, Adam and Eve wouldn't have nothing to do. Most of our images of Eden is like Paradise sipping on pina coladas. It's a vacation, right? But it's not vacation.

So what is God doing? He puts Adam and Eve in the space to sustain the order that he's created. So there's work to do. Their job, really, was to spread the order so that the garden would overtake the wilderness. But instead of overtaking the wilderness with the garden, they decided

to partner with the beast of the wilderness, and then the wilderness began to overtake the garden. So we all have a decision to make at some point. Am I going to partner with God to spread order, or am I going to partner with the beast to spread chaos? That is actually theologically what's happening. A world with no adversary is not a good world. You actually need a Goliath. You need a wall of Jericho. You need opposition in order to be everything that God wants you to be. There has to be some form of chaos that makes you a better you.

Most of us, though, instead of allowing the chaos to be something that we overcome, the chaos starts to disciple us, and then we don't know how to live in order. So I had to unlearn, I guess the cliché way to say it is like, what got you here won't get you there. There's a lot of us who -- I may have come from chaos, and I'm grateful for the chaos I come from, but at some point, I have to throw off the bondage that comes with chaos and learn how to enjoy order and live in order.

RANDY: When you use the term “order” I think of my wife. Because she is a very ordered person. Like you go in our house, it is ordered, it is clean, it is neat. I could walk in my house and see something and go, okay, something's off because I know the order that she sets things in. If you walked in my house, you wouldn't know it. Okay, so here's my question. I look around and I go, Man, that person's messed up! There's a clear problem. I mean the plank in that guy's eye is so obvious but I don't see the one in my own eye. Are there any red flags at any kind of signs that I should know that say my life is out of order in some regard?

MANNY: Oh, boy! There's lots of them.

RANDY: Would you give me one or two? Big ones.

MANNY: I don't know. I expect people to submit to me, but I don't submit to anybody. I deal with that one with a lot of married guys. They're like, My wife won't submit! I'm like, Well, who do you submit to? Order, you know what I mean? Hey, I have a call of God on my life, and no one will affirm it. Okay, well, are you helping anybody with the call of God on their life? No.

So you start to see it in all kinds of ways. One of the ways that we see it is hyper-individualism. God designed us to be social. He designed us to be communal. And hyper-individualism begins to create chaos when you believe you belong to yourself. You know, I also was a youth pastor for ten years. So not only do they struggle with anxiety, but preferred pronouns started to be a thing by the time I was in youth ministry, right? And I never made it about the pronouns. I helped kids to realize the real issue is the pride; the pride of a created being to tell the creator about you as if God doesn't know more about you than you know.

RANDY: Oh boy, that's out of order.

MANNY: That's out of order. But we can all see how the pronoun thing is wrong, but then not apply it to our life in a different area. So, God, I repent of any time I've told you something about me when that's not what you've said about me. Because the right order of things is that you're the creator, I'm a created being, and that should create humility. So I can't operate in religious pride and think that I'm going to win a world that's operating in secular pride. That's crazy. No, no, no. In order to win a world that's operating in secular pride, I've got to operate in godly humility. That's in order.

RANDY: Do you have all your answers? Do you have all your questions answered?

TAMMY: No! I had a few, and I literally feel like we could do another show with Pastor Manny.

RANDY: I would love to.

TAMMY: Would you stay? Do you have time to stay and do another one? I have lots of questions we didn't get to?

MANNY: This is the thing that was on my schedule for the day.

RANDY: We don't even know what -- the dragon. Right? Well, I wanted to -- Okay, but we'll get to that. But before we do that, Tammy, I want to give people an opportunity to be the order in someone else's life because we can see the chaos that is created. There's some situations that are going on right now, and we want to let you in on it because it's God's work when you join us to set things into his right order. This will make sense.

But watch this. And by the way, if you will help us in this outreach, which is what this is, and request Manny's book today, we'd love to send it to you. You still need to watch the other program with him but watch this right now and see how we can bring God's order into someone's chaos.

Transition roll-in: [Save the Children]

ANNOUNCER: *When the silent killer, malnutrition sets in among the most vulnerable, it produces what you're seeing in these children: Thinning hair, thin and frail bodies. When young children reach these stages, chances of survival are very slim.*

ISAK: We're here with nurse Alice, who's the senior nurse in this malnutrition clinic care in southern Angola. She's just been assessing this little guy. His name is Ignacio. When she measured the arm, the fact the measurement is in red, Alice explained to us, shows that this child is in a critical condition, suffering from malnutrition. As she put it, that's the admitted criteria. This child has to be admitted to a malnutrition clinic. That is the reality for so many of the children in this area for so many mothers like Rosa, who are literally out there in villages. For every one child in these clinics, that represents tens or even hundreds of children out in the villages. Nurse Alice has told us how they've seen an incredible increase in the number of children coming into these malnutrition clinics. When asked why, one of the main reasons is because of the drought. That is what we're seeing at a village level. It's projected that over 114,000 children will suffer of acute malnutrition in the next few months.

But here's the reality. I gave you those statistics. But those are not just numbers. Those are real lives. Those are individual children. Those are mothers whose hearts will be broken because

they can't do what they need to do to save their children's lives. They're doing everything, but they cannot save them. Not without you -- and not with us, and the mission workers here out in the field. That is why I need you to please be an answer to prayer today. I need you to open your heart. I need you to express God's heart and to extend his hands to the children like this, to the malnutrition clinics that so desperately need our assistance. But to the mothers out in the villages, that if they get those resources, can keep their children from ending up here and battling that battle of life and death.

Studio appeal:

RANDY: I know those images are hard to watch. It's hard to be there. Tammy, when I was at that clinic and the mothers there with all their children waiting to get some medical attention because they had reached a really dire situation, what you didn't see was just around the corner where there's another group of mothers with children. The mothers are coming and coming and coming.

Right now there's a very serious situation because the supplies are running low. It's due to a lot of situations around our country, even around the world. They can't always depend on the resources that they have depended on when they hit this emergency situation. That's why your response today is so critical. We have been there. We need to continue being there and we need to expand the outreach. Right now, we feed about 350,000 children every day in the various mission feeding programs, but there are more. And Tammy, it's hard to say, it hurts to say it but if we don't respond, if we don't maintain and in some places increase, those mothers will bury their children.

TAMMY: They will. A couple of things that sit with me real heavy on a day like today when I'm watching a piece like that is the suffering that they're going through. These precious little babies, Randy, it's the hardest thing for me being there, watching these children dying. Their mothers are hanging on to dear life for their children. So that's why we're coming to you. I will never not be moved by a story like this. I will never not be moved by the fact that that I can do something and I must do something. So I'm asking you, please, would you do something along

with me, along with all of us here that are desperately trying to get food to these people right now that need it, or they will die?

It's so simple. For \$30 you will feed three children, for \$50 you will feed five children, for \$100, you will feed ten children, for \$1,000, you will come alongside us and help us feed a hundred children today, right now. So please, this is so serious, and I need you to please come alongside us right now. Go online or make a call right now. But even as Isak said, these are real lives. These are real stories. These are real children that are dying right now because of the lack of food.

RANDY: But I also want to point out one thing, because there was one day in one of the clinics where a little boy didn't make it. His mother made it to the clinic, but it was too late, which is why we like to take the food out into the villages; that's a critical part of mission feeding. But they took the boy around outside the wall of that little compound into a field and buried him. I don't tell you that to manipulate you. I tell you that so you know how serious it is. But also, so that you know when we say \$30 will help feed three children for the next several months, that means something. Yes, if you can give a lot, please do. But if you can give a little, please do, because it all matters. Every life matters and you can do something.

So please go to the phone, go online right now. Make the best gift you can because these children are worth it. But just know that it's a matter of doing something and doing it 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:

RANDY: You really can make a difference, and I hope you'll do it today. The situation is urgent, but we can be the answer. If you want to request Manny's book, *Crushing Chaos*, we'd love to send it to you. And again, we can bring order to chaos.

TAMMY: What a beautiful thing! And a beautiful thought. It's something I had never really thought of. That's why this is so rich and it's so good. You have been amazing to me and for me personally today, Pastor Manny. So I'm so glad you're going to stay. I have lots of questions.

MANNY: Come on! I'm ready!

TAMMY: We're going to get to some of them. I'm so glad you're here. I'm so glad you're here. Thank you for watching. We'll see you next time on my today. Come on back.