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Week 49: FMF

Randy Robison & Tammy Trent

Manny Arango #2

Studio discussion:

RANDY: Welcome to *Life Today*. I'm Randy Robison, and this is Tammy.

TAMMY: It's nice to be back. I'm excited to be back!

RANDY: And our guest is back. That's the thing. By the way, if you did not see the first program with our guest, Manny Arango, it is available at *Life Today.org*. I would highly recommend it, but we've got a lot of questions. How many pages of questions do you have?

TAMMY: I have three and I got to one! So many! But he's so amazing to me. Randy, I'm telling you, for a girl that was raised in the church my whole life, when he speaks, hearing the things he has to say about a relationship with Jesus. But not just that, but when he starts to dig into the word for me, it takes me right back to being in my youth group and thinking, oh, I wish he was my youth pastor. I would have understood so much better certain things in my life right now.

RANDY: Well, I tell you what. I'm not in the youth group anymore, but I've been in the church a long time and I'm still getting so much. The book is called *Crushing Chaos*, and we're talking about the idea of order and how important that is to God and how important it is in our lives.

So Manny, welcome back!

MANNY: Hey, hey! It's good to be here!

TAMMY: We started at the beginning of Genesis in the last show. I mean, you talked about that. That was something new to me to hear. So I do have lots of questions. I just think that, you

know, you talked a lot about your story and how there was so much chaos in your story at an early age. You tapped into your dad a little bit. We didn't get to get deeply into that but I think we should start there a little bit; going back to a little bit of your story.

MANNY: Oh, my gosh. I have this one moment with my dad where he was about to go to rehab. My mom had given him an ultimatum. My dad struggled with addiction most of my life, and my mom had stayed married to him for decades. Finally, she said, unless you go to a teen challenge program, then I can't keep doing the rollercoaster with you. My dad would be sober for a couple of years, and then he would go off the rails again. On and off, you know?

So my dad asked a couple of questions. He said number one, he said, "Do I get assigned some roommates or like, do I get to pick who I'm going to room with?" They said, "No, you've got to get roommates." Then he said, "Is there a curfew and a time to wake up and time to go to sleep?" They said, "Yeah." He said, "Is it cafeteria style food or do I pick my own food? Do I go grocery shopping?" They said, "No, it's cafeteria style food." Well, my dad had been incarcerated for 18 years, so my dad said, "That's not rehab, that's prison." My dad missed an opportunity to actually find freedom because of the chaos he had come out of. Because chaos colors how you see everything. Chaos can begin to disciple you and train you and format you if you're not careful.

Okay, so my dad, in that meeting where he denied wanting to go to Teen Challenge, he said these words. I'll never forget it! He said, "No, I'm going to find the right pastor who will lay hands on me and I'll be delivered." I think that a lot of us want deliverance and not discipleship. We want the miracle working power of God, which is real, but really, we want magician Jesus. We don't want real Jesus, right? We want God to bipidi-bobbidi-boo something into existence instead of going through a process.

Genesis one is careful to tell us, no, this was chaotic and God made things orderly. That's important because that's the whole journey that we're all on. I remember my dad was a cautionary tale because the people of Israel, the same thing is happening. They come out of chaos, they come out of Egypt, and God's trying to prepare them for the Promised Land, a place

of order. So God's trying to break them from chaos to order, and they just are not having it. Why? Because it's easy to take the Israelites out of Egypt, hard to take the Egyptians out of Israel.

So I read this interesting article. It's actually in the book *Crushing Chaos*. There's a guy named Steve Blank and he does a study on entrepreneurs. He finds that 80% of entrepreneurs come from a chaotic home. Either parents were alcoholics or drug addicts or incarcerated or orphans, or something crazy. Right? And that tracks, because guess what? Being an entrepreneur is pretty chaotic. You don't know, do we have enough money for payroll? Can we afford to hire people? Whatever! You know, and I can relate. I've started multiple organizations. I've got a pioneering spirit and I can resonate with yeah, I'm not that anxious about the payroll because my dad took me to a crack house when I was five. So my threshold for what makes me nervous is just pretty high. Okay? So it's almost like I've got the stomach to be a pioneer, to be an entrepreneur.

Then Steve Blank gets down to the ending. He thought that was his big discovery; was that the majority of entrepreneurs come from chaos. So they're kind of immune to it. The chaos of running a company doesn't even bother them. It's not even on their radar. Which is kind of like, yeah, the thing that is a setback actually becomes a superpower. But then he realizes it's not just that they have a background that was chaotic, but they're addicted to chaos. That was the curveball of his research. Is that what ends up happening is that that CEO was amazing when the company was launching, when they were in the garage, when they were bootstrapping it they were great. Then what happens is they started to hire people to bring order. They started to hire operations people, logistics people, administrative people. People that bring order. What tends to happen is that most entrepreneurs self-sabotage. They throw a grenade into –

RANDY: They want to break the order.

MANNY: They want to break the order because they don't know how to thrive in order. So I began to realize that God had rescued me from chaos. But then it's almost like order was itchy. Like order didn't feel right, you know? And so I would start arguments with my wife, or I would do things to sabotage my own peace. Because really, it's not just that I was immune to

chaos. It was that I was addicted to chaos. Then God brought me on a journey where I stopped being addicted to chaos. And that's a whole -- Yeah, go ahead, you were about to say something.

RANDY: I can see that. But I also can see, you mentioned the Israelites a minute ago. Well, in Egypt actually that was very ordered but it wasn't God's order.

MANNY: Good! That's good! Yeah.

RANDY: So he's got this Promised Land that is his order, and in between he's got a little bit of chaos to break them from their dependency on the old order and teach them the new order. So when you say people want to -- I think people want to be like, I'm delivered from Egypt and I'm instantly in the Promised Land. God's going, hang on! There's a reordering that's got to take place. It take place in the desert because that's where you need me the most.

MANNY: Oh, yeah. Come on!

RANDY: So is this part of your experience?

MANNY: One thousand percent! One of the things that I define in the book is the difference between comfort and safety. A lot of us, just because things are comfortable, we begin to read it as if it's safe, or we begin to see safety and security as the same. But the reality is that Egypt was very predictable. It's not leading to the abundant life that God actually wants for his people. In order to get them into his order, it's going to look like they're taking a step back. This is exactly what happens. They're out in the wilderness and they're kind of like --

RANDY: Yeah, we had something to eat back there.

MANNY: We miss the fish! Like the onions, the leeks, the garlic. Like they've got a whole menu, you know? They're like, "All we eat now is this manna." And if you're not careful, then you can start to loathe the miracle of manna. I've had so many young adults, we're planting a

church right now, and it means I'm engaging with young adults all the time. I was a youth pastor, so I had a lot of young adults that were leading with me, like in youth ministry. They would say to me, "Oh, I don't know, Pastor Manny. This new dude I'm dating, he's just boring." I always look at them like, so describe boring to me. They would describe boring, and I'd say, Sweetheart, that's not boring. That's normal. You just described normal. The only problem is that you've tasted so much dysfunctional that your palate has gotten set to Egypt's menu and not the actual, the figs and the grapes and the –

RANDY: The sweetness of the Promised Land.

MANNY: Yeah, yeah. The Promised Land has a diet, Egypt's got a diet, and what God has to do in the wilderness is reset your palate. That's what the manna is here for. Manna is not going to last forever, but you need manna in this season to reorder your taste buds. I'll give a funny analogy. I don't know if any of you have ever made this mistake of brushing your teeth before you drink orange juice.

TAMMY: It's the worst!

MANNY: It's the worst, right? Something that is delicious becomes disgusting based on what was in your palate before you had the orange juice. For a lot of us, we don't like God's manna because we've had Egypt's food for so long.

One of the things that I've told a lot of my young adults is, hey, for so long, I hated my wife's order, but it's because I came out of the chaos of my parents' home. My family of origin kind of got my palate set to crazy. I had to get delivered from the chaos so that I could actually function in something that was God's order. So yes, the enemy has order. Jesus says this: Satan's kingdom is not divided against itself. Oh, Satan's kingdom has got an order to it. It's just ordering you for dysfunction. God's got order, and what happens when you come into God's kingdom there can be a whiplash between things that are like, I had to learn this, that like the me that could get business deals done was not the me that my wife needed at home. I had to realize that the things that made me good at certain things made me bad at other things.

TAMMY: Why doesn't God just eradicate chaos then? Is there a reason why?

MANNY: Oh, because it's good for us. This is why –

TAMMY: How can it be good for us? How can it be good?

MANNY: This is why there's a dragon on the cover of this book. In an ancient worldview, most of us think about the snake in the garden as a slithering garden snake. But let's just think about this. The curse on the snake is that it's going to crawl on his belly. Which means if that's the curse that's on the snake, that means that can't be how it started. That means that the original state of this snake had to have legs and limbs.

Next, every single creation story outside of the Israelite creation story. So that would be Babylonian, Canaanite, Mesopotamian, all included a creator figure who conquered a dragon. Every single creation story. Third, the thing is talking. If there's a smoking gun here, Genesis chapter three, it's not like the Bible has talking animals as something that's normal. Talking animals is something that's weird. There's a category for talking animals. In the ancient world, that's called the Chaos dragon. In the ancient world, this is a mythological creature. Now, for a lot of us, anything that feels mythological in the Western world feels not true, feels like fantasy. For an ancient Jewish audience, though, truth is not found in how factual something is but whether or not it communicates capital T truth; does it actually contain truth? So when Jesus tells the parable of the prodigal son, no one would have asked, well, how old's the son? What was his name? You know? We're not asking factual questions. We understand that the story is designed to reflect the truth of God's heart towards us. And that the older brother is designed to reflect the heart of the Pharisees, and that the younger prodigal boy is designed to reflect the pattern that many of us follow, which is we go astray and God has to call us back. So for an ancient audience, they would have read Genesis three, and they would have seen the dragon talking to Adam and Eve. As that -- as a dragon. Now this dragon gets named all throughout the Old Testament. Isaiah calls him Leviathan. The Psalms call him Leviathan. In the Book of Revelation, John puts all of this together. He says the ancient serpent, the dragon, who has

tempted the whole world! So for an ancient audience, they would 100% seen a massive dragon talking to Adam and Eve. The number one symbol that gets attached to the Satan figure is a dragon. Oh, yeah. So I began to realize Satan did not just bring sin into the world by tempting Adam and Eve, he brought chaos into the world by tempting Adam and Eve.

So my job as a pastor had to be equipping God's people to overcome not just sin, but chaos. So if I'm not teaching them how to overcome chaos, then I'm not teaching them how to overcome the enemy. Because what happens is when the enemy, when you don't respond to sin, he just starts to slip chaos in your life. Me and my mom, and you've got to listen to the first episode that we did to get total context, me and my mom's relationship wasn't sinful. It wasn't sinful, it was chaotic. Me and my father's relationship –

TAMMY: We always say this is demonic, this is cursed, this is sin, but we're not calling it really what it really is, and so therefore, you never quite get to the fix, to the solution.

MANNY: I'll say this, when all you got is a hammer, everything becomes a nail. So when all you've got is the sin hammer, then everything has to be a nail. There's some times where we need more tools in our tool belt. My job is just to offer us another word. Hey, is this word *chaos* a biblical word and can we use it to equip God's people?

RANDY: All right. So briefly, because we're out of time. For the person who is realizing that they have chaos in their lives, whether it's brought on from the outside or it's just inside, that's where they're at. What would be -- is there a first step to getting out of the chaos?

MANNY: The first thing that God did to begin to conquer chaos is speak, "Let there be light." So the Word of God. If your life is full of chaos right now, I want you to stop and pray, God, would you speak to me? Lord God, I need to hear your voice. I want to hear your voice through your written word, but I also need you to begin to give me peace. I need you to give me guidance. It's God's voice. It's his still, small whisper. It's the voice of God that speaks to us. And it is the Word of God that speaks to us that begins to order our life. The best thing I could have ever done, I was 21 years old. I went to the middle of nowhere, England, and I read the

Bible five times in nine months. When I tell you the scriptures have a way of ordering your life in a way that nothing else can. Hearing the voice of God and reading the Word of God can do wonders for your life if you are stuck in chaos.

TAMMY: There's a word right there. His goal is never to defeat you. It is always to develop you. I'm just thinking about what Pastor Manny said. There might be somebody that's just like, I want to take that first step. Like, I'm not hearing from God. I'm reading the word, but I'm not really getting what I need out of it. I don't know what that is. Sometimes, I feel like the enemy just blocks you from receiving, from moving forward. So I think there's people that we have right now that can begin to walk that out with you in prayer. Like if we just start there. So can I just say that if that's you today and you're feeling like that, but you're hearing everything that Pastor Manny is saying, and you want to begin to step into this new order in your life because it's needed, please go online or give us a call. There's a number right there. We would love to begin this journey of order in your life. Not our way, not your way, but his way. And give you some practical tools to begin to step into that. Even in Pastor Manny's book, there are so many tools in this *Crushing Chaos* that I know we would love to get into your hands today. You begin to read this, I believe God will open up your eyes today and set you on a new path of discovery and adventure, and of order in your life. Peace sometimes can become an idol in our life. We're just looking for this, this, this. But the truth is, when you begin to put order in your life, all of those things will begin to fall into their proper place; in Jesus' name. He wants an abundant, fulfilled life for you today. So call us right now. Let's begin that journey with you of new life and new order.

There are also people around the world that we have spent so much time with that need that same peace and need great order. They're living in chaos. They're living in question, they're living in doubt. And we get a chance to come and bring that peace and order into their lives. I'm going to show you how we can do that. Take a minute and watch this.

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: Please do go online and go to the phone. Make the best gift you can. You really will make a difference today. If you want to request Manny's book *Crushing Chaos*, we'd love to send it to you because Tammy, it's been such a blessing.

TAMMY: It's been so good! And the thing I take away from me is it's not just about escaping chaos in my life, but it's about embracing the peace and the order that God has designed for my life. So thank you, Pastor Manny. I hope you come back. It's been so great!

MANNY: Any time!

TAMMY: We've loved it. And we hope you come back and join us again right here on *Life Today*. Bye-bye!