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Week 13

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Benny Tate

“God's Exploits”

MALE ANNOUNCER: The following program is sponsored by Friends of Life Outreach International.

BENNY TATE: I didn't have somebody telling me yes you can. I had somebody telling me that you will never amount to anything.

I had somebody telling me that I was ignorant and I was illegitimate, and for many years I believed that, that I could not, that I would not amount to anything, that I was less than, and I think many people listening today, they believe the same thing, and so I just wanted to come alongside people and say yes you can.

[music]

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today," I'm Randy Robinson, Blynda Lane is with me.

BLYNDA LANE: Yeah, really, really happy to be here, because we have some awesome things to talk about.

RANDY: We do, Benny Tate is back with us, and many of you in the audience will remember Benny, but for those of you who don't know him, he's a pastor of a large church in a small place in Georgia, Rock Springs Church. He has a new book called "Yes You Can," and I will say this-- well, I'm sorry, Welcome back, Benny.

BENNY: It's an honor to be here, I'm so glad.

RANDY: Here's kind of a question I have for the viewing audience, because the book is categorized by, you know, the book people as kind of a leadership book, and that word right there gets a lot of people going, eh, I'm out, I'm not a leader, you know, this is not for me. Let me reframe that for you. Do you have influence with anyone?

Because I think we all do, and that's why I think this is a great message for people, Benny.

BENNY: I believe that, and I believe everybody can influence somebody. You know, as you look at the Bible in the very beginning, the Bible says in Genesis 1:27, it talks about and God made man, male and female, he created them.

And then the next verse he says you're gonna have dominion, you're going to subdue, what was he saying? You're going to lead, you're going to impact, you're going to influence, and I just want people to know that they have an influence, and they have an impact over other people's lives, and they can make a difference.

RANDY: You know what I love about that passage in Genesis that you're talking about? We hear dominion, and we hear subdue, and those terms have been really misused by bad people. The word that that I think really communicates the original meaning is cultivate.

BENNY: It's exactly right.

RANDY: You know this, we are to cultivate faith, truth, the freedom that Christ offers into the lives of others, whether it's a child, because I'm a mom at home, or it's a large corporation, and so let's-- Well, you know what? Before we get into some of the principles, did you always think that that would be you?

BENNY: No, I didn't, I didn't think that would be me. I grew up in a very dysfunctional family. Certainly Christ in church was not a part of our life, and God did some amazing things.

I didn't have somebody telling me yes you can. I had somebody telling me you can't. I had somebody telling me that you will never amount to anything. I had somebody telling me that I was ignorant and I was illegitimate and would really never accomplish anything in my life.

RANDY: Like, literally telling you these things.

BENNY: Literally telling me that, and what I want people to understand, Randy, is Proverbs says death and life is in the power of the tongue. I want people to understand that words really do matter. This beautiful world that we get to live in, the Bible says, and God said. How was it created? It was created through words, and I want our listeners to know that words really do matter.

They mattered in my life, they mattered in my life, and for many years I believed that, that I could not, that I would not amount to anything, that I was less than, and I think many people listening today, they believe the same thing.

They say by the time a child reaches 18 years of age, it's been told 148,000 times no or you can't, no or you can't. And so I just wanted to come alongside people, I just wanted to come alongside people and say yes you can, yes you can. You can do exploits through the Lord, and that's what God's taught me.

BLYNDA: Well, and you've had in your life, I mean, you would be able to single-handedly name miracles that God has done, because you've been a pastor now for 36 years, is that correct?

BENNY: Blynda, I have been at the same church for 36 years. We started out with 25 people. The average age was deceased. I mean, 25 people. I mean, literally, I say to that pastor out there today, this pastor, I don't know what I'm gonna do.

Well, I often say when I started out, to supplement my income, I sold furniture, I sold my living room suite my bedroom suite, my dining room suite. We were small but I thought tall.

I pastored in a place called Milner, Georgia, and I've had the wonderful privilege of being those people's pastor for 36 years. And I've seen God do exploits. I've seen the faithfulness of God, and I tell a story from the very beginning, you know, about my wife and how my wife and I, we dated just a couple of times, Blynda, and I was in love. I mean, just a couple of times, I was in love.

Somebody said that's puppy love. I said it's real to the dogs, amen? I mean, just a couple of times I wanted to get married, and she said, "Benny, if we get married, you're gonna have to ask daddy for my hand in marriage. You're gonna literally have to ask my father for my hand in marriage."

I did just that, and he said, "I don't recommend you get married." He said, "You don't need to marry my daughter." I said, "Mr. Roberts, would you explain why I would not need to marry your daughter?"

He said, "Well, my daughter has seizures. My daughter will have eight or ten seizures a day. My daughter will take 13 or 14 pills a day. My daughter will have a seizure and gush up blood. My daughter will have a seizure and lose 5 pounds. Son, you don't know what you're getting into. Whatever you do, don't do this."

But Randy, I loved her, 42 years later, by the way, I still love her, 42 years later I still love her, and I said I wanna marry her. Blynda, we got married, we were so young we didn't know whether to go on a honeymoon or summer camp.

I mean, we were just kids, but we got married, and you know, he was correct. She had seizures. We'd go to church, she'd have a seizure, we'd go shopping, she'd have a seizure, had to hire people to stay with her, and she was just a very sick girl.

She went to the Mayo Clinic. The Mayo Clinic said that--we were just kids. The Mayo Clinic said she had a scar on her brain. The Mayo Clinic said it's too delicate to touch surgically. She'll always have those seizures, she'll always have those seizures, just just go home, take the medication, it will help to moderate the seizures, but she'll always have them.

But that little girl believed that God could do miracles. I say to our listeners today, God can do a miracle. With men things are impossible, but with God all things are possible. According to your faith, be it unto you.

The only thing that's gonna determine the size of your catch is the size of your net. You believe God for big things because the God we serve is able.

And she said to me, she said, "Benny, God has touched me, and I don't have to take that medication anymore." Me being a man of faith, I said, "You need to keep taking those pills. You need to keep taking those pills."

And that went on for a while, and one day, Randy, I said to that little wife, I said, "Barbara, I've talked to the Lord," and I said this to the Lord. I said, "God, I'll tell you what, she'll take the medication Monday through Friday, but on Saturday and Sunday she don't have to take it. Because I know how to put my hand over her nose and mouth. I know how to get her out of those seizures."

And the Lord spoke to me. And Blynda, he said, "Son, what can you do that I can't do? What can you do that I can't do?" I got in a '79 Ford Fairmont, I left work, I walked home, and I saw that little wife, and I said, "Barbara, you don't ever have to take that medication anymore, I believe."

Randy and Blynda, that's been over 30 years ago, from 8 or 10 seizures a day, she's never had one since.

Let me tell you something. God was showing me Daniel 11:32, the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits. The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.

What I want our listeners to know is we serve a great God. We need to quit saying impossible, and we need to start saying him possible, that all things are possible through him.

So, Pastor in this church of 30 years, 36 years, I've had no problem believing God can do exploits. I've had no problem believing that God could raise up buildings. I've had no problem that God could send the staff. I've had no problem believing that God could send the resources, because I've seen him do it. I've seen him do miracles. And you know, I cannot--he never said I could, he can, he always said he would.

RANDY: Can I ask you the hard question?

BENNY: Yes, you can ask me anything.

RANDY: Because you joked about the average age of your church founders being deceased. Are they all deceased now, by the way?

BENNY: No, no, no, they're--

RANDY: Well, your five your original five.

BENNY: Original five, one of my greatest--one of my things that I take the most pride in, the five men who hired me, Elvis Butler, Jimmy Landers, Don Thomas.

RANDY: You got their names.

BENNY: Yes, Howard Niblett, Sammy Pelt, all five of those men who hired me, when they passed, I preached their funerals. They were still active in the church, they were still serving.

You know, Henry Ford said it best. He said coming together is the beginning, staying together is progress. Staying together is progress, working together success. And so we just worked together.

RANDY: Here's the hard question for you, though.

BENNY: Yes sir.

RANDY: Them or anybody else in your church, did you ever pray for and believe for, and they didn't get the physical healing that that we all ask for or even died?

BENNY: Yes, Randy, we have to trust that God--faith is believing he can and hoping he will, believing he can and hoping he will, and what I mean by that, certainly what I didn't tell you, what I would want our listeners to know, Jesus said there's not a greater among you than John the Baptist, but if you study John the Baptist's life, the Bible says he did no miracles.

Now, wait, Jesus said there's not a greater among you than John, but yet he did no miracles.

Randy, my wife and I prayed that God would touch her of those seizures, he did. Randy, we also prayed that she could have a baby. We prayed, Randy, we fasted. Randy, we wanted to have a baby just like everybody else. Physically, Randy, she was never able to have a baby. It never happened.

You say, well, pastor, how do you handle that? I'll tell you how I handle that. It's God's sovereignty that helps me keep my sanity. It's the fact that God's too loving to be unkind, he's too wise to be mistaken, and when we can't trace his hand, we can trust his heart. We trust the sovereignty of God.

Randy, as the older, and Blynda, the older I get, there's been many times in my life when I've crawled up on top of Romans 8 and 28 and said we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.

You know what? Many times people will say to me when I get to heaven, I'm going to ask the Lord this, I'm going to ask the Lord this and that, and I'm going to ask why didn't this happen? Why did that happen? But you know the Bible says in John 16:23, "In that day they'll ask me nothing. In that day they'll ask me nothing." I believe in that day, Randy, it will all make sense. And I believe till that day four times the Bible says the just shall live by faith, and we just trust the Lord.

RANDY: With all your heart, and you don't lean on your own understanding, because I can't figure it all out, I don't know, but I will acknowledge him in all my ways. And you know what he promises, don't you?

BENNY: He'll direct my paths.

RANDY: That's right.

BENNY: He sure will, and he has. And so he's--there's been so many times, you know, Randy, our church started growing. Our church started growing, it started expanding. We went to multiple services, and--

BLYNDA: Maybe to make it more unbelievable, tell the audience the area that you come from. What's the population of your city?

BENNY: Oh, population, I pastor, as I say, in Milner, Georgia, Blynda, the population is a little over 700 people, I think right now. Our ZIP code's E-I-E-I-O. I mean, those--I mean, we're just kind of out there.

BLYNDA: And the church right now is how big?

BENNY: Well, Sunday they said we had, I think, 6500.

BLYNDA: A city of 700 with a church of 6500, the math is not mathing.

BENNY: So, Blynda when I hear people say location, location, location, I say no, no, no, God can do--again, God can do anything.

BLYNDA: Exceedingly, abundantly.

BENNY: But we, our church started growing, and we decided and felt like we--they came to me on one occasion, and they said, "While you're preaching, would you stay still?" I said, "What do you mean?" They said, "Well, you move, you move from side to side." I said, "Why do you need me to stay still?" They said, "Well, people are sitting on the porch, they can't get in the building."

So, Blynda, we decided that we needed to do something. So I go to our team, and they said, oh, no, we can't build. We can't go in debt. We cannot go in debt.

Now, debt, here's what I try to say, you know, when I came into this world, I owed my mother 9 months room and board, amen? So, I mean, there's an element. I came into this world in debt. I came into this world in debt, and so finally they said we can't go into debt.

And so I called a meeting with my leadership. I said we've got two options. I said number one, we can borrow money and build a new building. Or I said there's option number two, we can go out front and I can put on the marquee out front, go to hell, we're full.

RANDY: Tell me Hell is the next town in Georgia.

BENNY: No, no, no, no, I said we put up go to hell, we're full. And I said so we've gotta-- I said, folks, I'm standing on the porch. I'm seeing people drive away. We can't see people drive away, we gotta do it.

But Randy, I went to try to borrow the money, and banks would say to me you don't have the clientele of people.

RANDY: Right, demographically you didn't.

BENNY: You don't have the clientele. If you built it, you couldn't pay for it. If you built it, you couldn't pay for it, but one bank consented, and we borrowed the money, and they sat down and said, you know, if you make the payments 27 years, hopefully we can get our money back.

Blynda, we paid that building off. The Lord paid that building off in 3 years and 9 months.

BLYNDA: Won't he do it?

BENNY: Won't he do it, Blynda? And that's what--so I have no problem today saying to our listeners our God can do anything. You believe God, you trust God, you just lean into him. D.L. Moody said if God's your partner, make your plans big. I'd say to our listeners, God's our partner, let's make our plans big.

RANDY: I love it. All right, and out of that, you have written, "Yes You Can," which by the way, we would love to send to you if you participate in the mission outreaches, but I gotta tell you, but you know what we do around here. We see great needs around the world, and they're bigger than us.

BENNY: Yes they are.

RANDY: And we got one right now with this expansion/renovation of a hospital in Zimbabwe where children are getting these miraculous surgical procedures and surgeons, godly men partnering with God, acknowledging that they can't do it all, but giving what they can and their skill and changing these kids' lives, and it provides a witness back to the family and back to the communities.

I mean, it's this whole big deal, but it's a little bit bigger than us. I mean, what would you say to our viewers when we say, you know, together we think we can do this. You think we can?

BENNY: Unequivocally, unequivocally, any time, Randy, that God shows you a problem, even our listeners today, you're watching, God has showed you a problem, any time that God shows you a problem, he wants you to be a part of the solution.

He wants us to be--Christ has no hands but our hands to do his work today, has no feet but our feet to lead men in the way, no tongue but our tongue to tell them how he died, no help but our help to bring men to his side. What an opportunity, what an opportunity for us to be involved in something bigger than ourselves.

That's the basis of our book. Our book is basically around Nehemiah rebuilding those walls. I go through five levels of leadership. I go through five levels of leadership that's applicable to every person, and when I take you through those five levels of leadership, it shows you how you can accomplish something substantial. And today with our listeners, with our partners, we can accomplish something that's going to change the world.

RANDY: Absolutely, you've done it, you've proven it, and I appreciate that, but now we want you to be a part of proving it. We'd love to send you Benny's book, "Yes You Can," request it when you participate in this.

JOHN YEATTS: Hi, I'm John Yeatts, director of World Missions for Life Outreach International. Although rare, Blount's Disease is a reality for thousands of children worldwide that causes the knee and the leg to bow outward. It's very painful, and I want you to see a young man named Plasdus, how his life was dramatically changed through corrective surgery.

KAFWA SICHILIMA: I met Plasdus, he was a shy guy, reserved at the time, you know? And I asked him a simple question, how has it been for you?

I just saw tears started rolling down his eyes. And he opened up and started saying, "My friends actually laugh at me. And it's been so difficult for me to just handle this."

ILHO MOHO: It was a bit of a complex operation, but it went well. In 6 months, he has progressed very, very well. So the smile and the encouragement Plasdus gave us, it was so promising.

JOHN: Wow, how amazing it is to see Plasdus running like nothing had ever happened to him. This is a result of the dedication of our God-gifted surgeons who performed the life-changing surgery for Plasdus.

Without this medical mission outreach, he would suffer the rest of his life. I encourage you to partner with us and help provide surgeries not only for Blount's Disease but a whole

range of pediatric disabilities. Because you give, we can keep smiles on the faces of not only Plasdus, but children just like him. God bless you.

[speaking foreign language]

[music]

RANDY: That's just one story, and gosh, what a great story it is, I love that.

BLYNDA: I mean, at the end when he says I feel good now, I mean, how life-changing for him. The trajectory of his life is different.

RANDY: It does, it changes everything.

BLYNDA: It changes everything, and it's so amazing that a gift that we give can have that kind of impact on--that's not just one life, it's hundreds of lives.

RANDY: It is, because here's the thing you need to know. I want you to know this. Every child that comes in there is met first by a chaplain. The families receive prayer right there on the spot, and many, for you know, many of them, they come from miles and miles around, even countries around to this facility in Zimbabwe, and they haven't heard the gospel necessarily, they haven't seen it in action the way that we're showing it to them, they haven't been told you don't have to pay for this life-changing surgery, but that's what we tell them.

They haven't been told that your child can have a different future, that they can have hope, but that's what we tell them. They may not have heard about Jesus, about the one God who loves them and what's good for them, but that's what we tell them, and then we show it to them, the dedication of the doctors there and the nurses, the whole staff, it's beautiful. That's why we are partnering with them.

But that one story was just one of many and even a smaller fraction of those who are waiting right now to receive a surgery that will change their lives, perhaps even save their lives. And so, Blynda, when I look at this one story, I celebrate it, but when I look at the long line of children needing medical attention, I'm both grieved and also excited at the opportunity, because I know people will respond. That story will be repeated again and again and again.

BLYNDA: And I think if we understand that our response actually makes a difference, then I think it does, and I think if we can do something, we should. I think it's that simple.

RANDY: No doubt, let me break it down for you, because right now what we need to do is expand that facility there in Zimbabwe, the operating rooms, the recovery areas, and we need to give those doctors and nurses the ability to take care of all the children that need care.

So what we're looking at is a \$600,000 project to restore, to expand, to renovate so that more people can hear the gospel and see it in action, and we're asking you for that. You know, Blynda and I, my parents, we're not doctors. We need those surgeons there in Zimbabwe to do the actual work, but you know what? They need us to enable them to do the work, and we need you to accomplish this.

We have various gifts for different levels of giving. Maybe you can give \$100 \$1,000, \$10,000, whatever God enables you to give will be sufficient, because he'll multiply it like the loaves and the fishes, and he'll bless it. He'll bless your obedience. Will you partner with us today? Will you help us reach out and say yes, we want to help more children? Pick up the phone, go online, make the best gift you can and know that you will be sharing his love and his life around the world.

ANNOUNCER: Many children in Africa are born with severe deformities or suffer life-altering injuries, conditions like club feet, windswept legs, and untreated fractures force them to live in pain because help is out of reach. But you can offer healing today.

Our mission partner in Zimbabwe runs a children's hospital now at capacity and in urgent need of renovation and expansion. With a \$600,000 goal and only a short period of time to raise the necessary funds, your best gift today helps children receive the surgical care they need at no cost to the families. Together we can heal precious lives and reveal the love of Jesus.

With a gift of any amount, we'll send you the "Global Impact of Life" Journal, featuring inspiring photos from Life's outreaches. This beautiful journal is a reminder that your prayers and partnership are making a global difference.

With your gift of \$126 or more, you may request "A Life of Compassion" coffee table book, capturing Life Outreach's heart for the world. Each page pairs timeless Bible verses with vivid mission field photography, making God's Word visible in action.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,026 to help with the expansion of operating rooms so children are no longer turned away and request Life's beautiful bronze sculpture, The Good Shepherd. Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

RANDY: Together we can do it, but we need to do it together, so please go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can, and request this book by Benny Tate.

BLYNDA: Pastor Benny Tate, "Yes You Can." It's gonna be a great book to dive into. Would you stay around and let us dive in some more in another program?

BENNY: I would be honored to stay.

BLYNDA: Okay, let's do it.

RANDY: Let's do it, and come back. And by the way, if you miss any of the programs, you can always go to LifeToday.org. We'll see you again next time here on "Life Today."

[music]

BENNY: You just start serving, because always remember, if serving is beneath you, leading will always be above you.

ANNOUNCER: Rethinking leadership, tomorrow.

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