

**4/23/2026**

*Week 17*

*Randy Robison & Blynda Lane*

*Ryan Leak*

*"Who You Want To Be"*

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

**RYAN LEAK:** Make the decision about the kind of person you wanna be before you ever get in the room. "I have made a decision today. I'm gonna have a great day today."

**BLYNDA LANE:** Okay, so what do you do when that's the posture you have, and then you get the really bad phone call from the doctor, you get the unexpected divorce papers? How do you then walk out "I've chosen joy" or "I've chosen--" when life can be really, really hard?

**ANNOUNCER:** Next.

*[music]*

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**RANDY ROBISON:** Welcome to "Life Today." I'm Randy Robison. Blynda Lane is here, and we're back.

**BLYNDA:** Uh-huh, with a second program. The first one was so good.

**RANDY:** It was so good. And by the way, if you missed any of the "Life Today" programs, you can see all of those at [lifetoday.org](http://lifetoday.org). We're back with Ryan.

**BLYNDA:** Ryan Leak.

**RYAN:** I had to come back.

**BLYNDA:** We're so glad that you did, because I had so many questions from the first show.

**RANDY:** Yes, so the book is "How to Work with Complicated People," and that's what Blynda's been trying to learn for a few weeks now.

**BLYNDA:** We really needed you back because, you know, this is newer, and so we're trying to figure it out.

**RYAN:** I'm here for you. We can do a live session right now.

**BLYNDA:** No, we decided in the episode that I'm the complicated one, and I don't think anybody would be surprised to hear that.

**RANDY:** But we all are a little bit. So let's jump in. So we have some unanswered questions that we'd like to get into.

I do wanna ask one thing before we get into the book actually, because you--what size shoe is that over there?

**RYAN:** Size 13. In case anybody's praying about anything out there, it's a size 13.

**RANDY:** So, how tall are you?

**RYAN:** Six-three.

**RANDY:** Six-three. You look like you could play basketball.

**RYAN:** I've played a time or two in my life, yeah.

**RANDY:** How far did you get?

**RYAN:** How far did I get? I played at North Central University, which is--it was D-three-ish when I played. D-three-ish, you know, you've got Division I, Division II, Division III. The Division III status was pending the years that I played.

And so we were in the NCCAA, which stands for National Christian Collegiate Athletics Association, which simply means, amongst Christians, I am really good at basketball. So, church league MVP right here, is who I am.

**RANDY:** But pro experience.

**RYAN:** But some pro experience, yeah.

**RANDY:** All right, tell us what happened there, because I think there's a lesson there.

**RYAN:** There's a massive lesson there. So being all-American at a D-three-ish college, I always had this dream of being in the NBA, but I had never actually done anything about it because I thought I would fail.

But then I thought, what's so bad about failure? Every successful person we know has failed. In fact, it's made them who they are.

And so, what would it look like for us to embrace the thing we've been taught to steer away from, and so I started a documentary called "Chasing Failure" where I asked myself the

question, "What would I do if I knew I couldn't fail?" And my answer to that question was, "I would be in the NBA."

And so I emailed about five NBA teams and said, "Hey, would you let me come work out for your basketball team?" And the Celtics said no and I was discouraged by that, but then I thought that the Boston Celtics just emailed me back, this is incredible.

And so I said, "Well, I'm gonna do a documentary about being told no by all 30 NBA teams, and everyone's gonna feel so bad for me."

And so the Phoenix Suns said yes on a Friday and said, "Come Monday," and I was like, "You mean this Monday?" They were like, "Yeah, bring your camera crew."

And I was like, "Camera crew? Yes, of course I have a camera crew. A man of my magnitude of course has a camera crew." I did not have a camera crew. I had a friend from the church named Chuck.

I said, "Hey, man, we gotta go to Phoenix right now, okay?" He's like, "For what?" I said, "I don't have time to explain to you my email situation, but I think we're gonna have a story to tell."

And I believe something happened in Phoenix that could not have happened in Dallas and that was the fear of failure was broken off of my life. So I'm not afraid to try something, pitch something. I'm not afraid to get ghosted or write something, post something.

**RANDY:** So you didn't make the team.

**RYAN:** I did not make the team. And chasing failure took me further than chasing success ever did. It changed my life.

**BLYNDA:** That's amazing. I used to tell my kids whenever we would face challenging situations like that, I would say "Don't fear the no." If you don't fear the no, you might go for more than you ever thought you could.

So you say that you actually learned more, grew more from failure in your life than success.

**RYAN:** No question.

**RANDY:** And what's interesting is you went into that having made the decision that failure wasn't going to define you, it wasn't gonna make or break you. And that ties into what we're talking about with the complicated people book, which is that idea of making some decisions before we get to that situation. So what are some of the decisions that we need to make to make our relationships work better?

**RYAN:** Yeah, so some people approach relationships, and they are what I like to call "we'll see" people. We'll see. How's it gonna go at Thanksgiving? We'll see. How's the board meeting gonna go? We'll see. How's the lunch gonna go? We'll see.

Well, did you know you can decide beforehand how you are going to show up? Some people surrender their attitude to the circumstance. Some people surrender their attitude to the economy. Some people surrender their attitude to whatever they've scrolled past that particular day.

I encourage people, pre-decide. Make the decision about the kind of person you wanna be before you ever get in the room. "I have made a decision today. I'm gonna have a great day today, with or without you. Like, if you don't wanna have a good day today, I feel bad for you."

Most people are deciding in the moment. They're deciding in the middle of the fight. I have made a decision that I'm going to forgive people before they hurt me. I call it pre-forgiveness.

Most people don't even realize this theologically. Did you know we've all been pre-forgiven? Like, there's something you're going to do over the next year that God has already made up his mind. "I already know how I'm going to handle this. I'm going to forgive them before they ever even do it."

Imagine what your life and relationships would look like if you implemented pre-forgiveness. Hey, I know my spouse is going to forget something, say something, infer something, break my heart some way, hurt my feelings. You know what? I've made a decision that in that moment, I'm already prepared.

But if I wait for the moment to decide who I wanna be then, it's already too late to be who you actually wanna be.

And so, some people believe, "I am a product of my upbringing. If mama said knock you out, well then, I'm coming out swinging." Some people believe they are a product of their ZIP code. You've met these people.

*[gruff voice]*

"I'm from New York." You're like, "Why you gotta say it like that?" God knows there are some very nice people from New York. Why you gotta use the DMX voice? That's very unnecessary.

But some people believe that their ZIP code is what is going to determine their future as if they don't have a say or a choice in the matter.

So when we hear phrases like "choose joy," some people are like, "Ugh, choose joy." I'm like, "Well, what's the alternative?" Choose anger? Choose bitterness? Well, if I do get to make a choice, which I believe people do, yeah, I definitely think you should choose joy.

That doesn't mean life is always perfect. It does mean you have chosen a perspective and you have chosen an attitude that I'm going to bring every single day.

I'll never forget, I was in the Florida, I don't know, Fort Lauderdale Airport, and you know, when you travel, there's not great meal options. And so I got some mediocre chicken tenders and forgot to get barbecue sauce.

So I go to the waiter and I say, "Hey, can I get some barbecue sauce?" He goes, "That'll be 75 cents." I said, "Really? Seventy five cents for some mediocre barbecue sauce with these mediocre chicken tenders?" He's like, "Yeah, 75 cents," and he's trying to make a point.

"So you want me to pull out my credit card so you can swipe it for 75 cents?" He goes, "Yeah." I said, "Okay," hand him my credit card. He swipes it, brings back two slips, merchant copy, customer copy.

Now we got a problem, right, because now there's a space for a tip. I'm like, "I'm not tipping this guy off 75 cents." And then I thought in that moment, "Wait a second, you are becoming him."

So I tipped him \$10 because I'm balling like that. No, no, I tipped him \$10 because I wanted him to know, you don't get to ruin my day. I'm gonna have a great day today. I don't match the energy. I set the standard.

And then all of a sudden he wanted to bring me like these premium chicken tenders, his whole tune's changed, you know what I mean?

And so, I just think that we have the ability to impact other people with our attitude. In fact, in our research, we wanted to figure out what makes somebody complicated to live with, work with, be around, or enjoyable.

We thought politics would be the number-one thing that determined whether or not somebody was complicated or not. It was dead last in our research.

**BLYNDA:** Interesting.

**RANDY:** Really?

**RYAN:** Dead last. Then we thought, oh, it's personality, introvert, extrovert, "I don't really like this person." That was third to last. You wanna know the number one? Attitude.

Attitude was the number-one descriptor of what made somebody complicated or enjoyable to be around.

**RANDY:** What kind of attitude? Because attitude isn't always a good thing.

**RYAN:** No, just--I know, but that's the point. But the ability to choose, like if a person's perspective and the way that they show up of just going, my attitude towards you, my attitude towards this project, is what determines whether or not I actually wanna be around you.

**BLYNDA:** Okay, so the question I have is, I'm thinking about you talking about being predetermined. So, today I'm predetermining nothing's gonna get me down. I'm expecting even possibly for there to be some bumps in the road. But what is the actual tools to use?

What do you do when that's the posture you have, and then you get the really bad phone call from the doctor, you get the unexpected divorce papers at your door? The things that are so earth-crashing.

**RYAN:** Hit you like a ton of bricks.

**BLYNDA:** Yes, how do you then walk out "I've chosen joy" or "I've chosen--" when life can be really, really hard?

**RYAN:** Yeah, life can life really, really fast, and can take a hard turn. You know, whenever you have something that I would consider a catastrophe, something that truly knocks you off your rocker, I think there is something powerful about truly grieving what is lost.

And I don't actually believe that grieving is the opposite of having a positive attitude. I think grieving is being honest about it.

One of my friends just lost his father suddenly from a stroke. Do I think he should choose joy in that moment? No, and this is what I told him. I called him and I said, "Hey, we live in a world that's going to give you rules of how you should feel. No rules here. Just feel."

If you have joy because you remember the great things about your father, then it's okay if you do not cry. Nothing's wrong with you because you didn't cry. If you bawl like a baby for the next three hours because it is so sad, because you lost the most important person in your life, then that's okay too.

What we're giving people now is safety to be themselves. And so I don't think that that is a deterrent from his attitude and outlook on his entire life, but it is a moment to be able to say, "Hey, man, like, feel. Like, just feel. No rules here. I'm not judging your emotional state."

So if somebody gets a gut punch and gets divorce papers, they should not be choosing joy in that moment. I think that they should be reconciling within themselves, "Where did I go wrong? Is this real? Is this--?" Like, there's gonna be a mountain of emotions that a person is experiencing in that.

But am I here to say that your life is over because you got divorce papers? No, it's not. It doesn't mean you make that decision that day, but it does mean like, hey, we know lots of divorced people who moved on and God is still using in a mighty way.

And so no, I don't believe that it's over and it's all sorrow, but I do believe that there is an overarching mindset that a person can have that says, "If God has given me breath in my lungs today, then there's a purpose for that." I may not always be able to see it.

In fact, most of the time we see it in hindsight we often see what God is doing when we look back. But at the same time, I think as Christians, part of our calling isn't just to meet people where they're at, it's to help them move forward.

In fact, the word "encourage" in Greek is the word parakaleo. Parakaleo does not mean I complement your outfit. "Girl, you look good. I like your hair." No, no, no, that's a compliment. Parakaleo means to come alongside somebody and call them forward.

In other words, I refuse to let you shrink back. I refuse to let this divorce define you. I refuse to let this death keep you in your house for the next year and a half sulking and going, "Man, my life is over." No, your life is not over. I am a person that's going to come in, encourage you.

**BLYNDA:** Put courage into you.

**RYAN:** Put courage in you, come alongside you and say, "Let's walk out the door. We got a whole life to live."

**RANDY:** So you've hit a couple of things here, and I think this is just an ongoing human condition struggle, because you talk about acknowledging the feelings, right?

But yet when you talk about like pre-forgiveness, well, you're saying, okay, there is a truth here that I'm not going to allow my feelings, when someone slights me, to dictate my day, my attitude, any of that.

So the balance between emotions, which are very real, if we just say, "Throw them out, they shouldn't exist," you get a real cold person typically, versus the ones who say, you know, "It's all about how I feel, and so your truth is your truth, my truth is my truth," right? That gets squishy and messy just as quick.

So where do you--I don't know, how do you frame the feelings, the emotions, versus sort of the truth kind of argument?

**RYAN:** Yeah, no, great question. I think there's this interesting balance of being able to have a difficult conversation to say, "Hey, you said something earlier. It really bothered me, but guess what? I'm not gonna dwell on it for the rest of our relationship. I'm not gonna hold it against you." That's forgiveness.

I'm honest with you. I told you that you said something that hurt my feelings. But I'm also not every time I see you going, "Okay, now I've painted a picture about you as a person, that you're this mean person and I'm--" That's called bitterness.

So there's a difference. There is a healthy balance of being able to say, "It's a real emotion that I had that, you know, your remark or in that email or that text message or that phone call. I had a story in my head that it came across this way, but I'm not gonna hold it against you for the rest of your life or the rest of my life."

Because a lot of times what people do with bitterness is they rehearse the tapes over and over and over and most of the time without inviting the other person into the conversation.

In fact, if you said something that offended me today, most likely I would probably just leave and just go, "I'm never gonna tell him. No, I'm never gonna tell him." And that's how most people actually operate.

It takes great maturity to be able to look somebody in the eyes and go, "Hey, I love you, and this really bothered me. In fact, I care so much about our relationship that I had to be honest. If I didn't care about our relationship, I would just say nothing."

And so I think what you're doing is you're growing up. We can all still be--there's a little bit of middle school in me and a little bit of middle school in you that just kind of gets nasty and petty.

But part of growing up, I think, is us being willing to move towards messy conversations with grace and truth, to be able to say, "Look, we are not enemies."

And I'll leave you with this line. One of my friends, one time, having a really difficult conversation with me, he said, "Ryan, I don't wanna leave space for the enemy between us."

**RANDY:** Wow.

**RYAN:** "I don't wanna leave space for the enemy between us." Can you imagine what would happen to marriages if couples, before they fought, said, "Hey, before we get into what I did and you said and you did this with the kids and I didn't like that, before we get there, I don't want there to be space for the enemy between us."

I realize that the enemy has something that wants to separate us, even in micro-moments. Can we close that gap and invite God into this conversation?"

Do you know how many fights wouldn't be fights if they started off conversations like that? I think that's what it means to be able to say that we're willing to have a difficult conversation, but we're willing to invite God into that conversation.

**BLYNDA:** It takes such great humility, which is really, when we're Christ followers, really, if we're both coming to each other in relationship as Christ followers, humility is what should lead us.

**RYAN:** Absolutely.

**RANDY:** So good, wow. Okay, I can see how this would benefit me, this book, because this is things we've talked about.

**BLYNDA:** We didn't even get into--I wanted to ask the whole thing on boundaries. There's a lot of great information in this book.

**RANDY:** There really is, and a lot of people are gonna want it. And so, let's get it in their hands.

**BLYNDA:** Let's do it.

**RANDY:** Okay, so obviously you can pick up this book, "How to Work with Complicated People" by Ryan Leak, wherever you get books, but we would love to send it to you today as a reminder of your involvement with an outreach that is very close to our hearts.

In fact, you're gonna see a situation that I have been in with our mission partner in the field, Isak, that changed the way I see things. And I made that pre-decision many years ago at a very similar circumstance, that I was committed to helping other people.

So, watch this, and you'll see real soon how you can make that decision that you're gonna impact other people's lives for the positive as well.

*[music]*

**ISAK PRETORIUS:** So many times I've sat with mothers all over Africa, many times mothers in a malnutrition clinic with a child who's suffering, and I've asked them what is their hope? What is their dream for their child?

Most times that answer is very similar to what you would answer as a mother, "My hope is that my child will be healthy. My dream is that I'll be able to provide for my child, give them what they need."

But the reality is that across our continent right now, those hopes are being dashed, and those dreams are being crushed.

*[speaking foreign language]*

**ISAK:** While we were not able to get here in time, we were too late, but the good news is that we can be there for the next mother. We can be there for the child that right now is lying in a malnutrition clinic fighting for their life.

We can be there for the child that is out in a rural village with no food, but we cannot do it without you, and that's why I need you to open your hearts today, and I need you to be a part of restoring life to communities, of restoring hopes and dreams to mothers, of giving a child the life they deserve by giving them that bowl of food each and every day.

**RANDY:** I don't know if there's anything harder than kneeling down next to a child's grave. Children are hit the hardest, and you know, it's overwhelming a little bit when you're in the field like that. The emotions, obviously, even the problem, because there's a lot of children that are in desperate need.

I wouldn't be able to do it, Blynda, if I didn't know that we have and we can continue to provide the solution.

**BLYNDA:** You know, I think about Matthew 25, and Jesus is saying, "When I was hungry and you fed me, and when I was thirsty you gave me drink." And they say, "When did we do that, Lord? When did--?" and he says, "When you did it to the least of these, you did it to me."

Every time that the generosity that's welling up in you, every time you put action to that, you're doing it to the least of these, you're doing it unto Jesus.

And why that's so important is because we're all, in America especially, you know, we just take it for granted that we can have food every day, that we can have drink every day, yet we want to make a difference in the Kingdom, and we think, "How do we do that? How can we make a difference?"

And here's an opportunity where just you giving out of just the generosity of your heart literally saves a life. It saves a life. And we see, because we just saw the video, lives are ending because of lack of food. It said on that video, "Hunger kills." It really does. And yet we can stop that.

**RANDY:** We can, and it does. And you know, it's interesting because the new gift that we have, it's a book from my dad called "The Father's Heart," and it's so appropriate because this is, I believe, the heart of the Father. It's to right the wrongs. It's to feed the hungry. It's to express his love through his people, because if you look in Scripture, God always partners with his people, as flawed as we are.

And my dad likes to say, "God uses imperfect people to accomplish his perfect will." And we know from the words of Jesus, we know from the Scriptures, old and new, it is his will that we are generous to the poor, that we remember the forgotten.

And mission feeding goes in--yes, we solve that immediate need by solving the hunger problem for today and for tomorrow with your gift, but we also minister to these people. We don't just go in and give them food and leave. We tell them about Jesus. We tell them we're demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ as we do this. So they hear it and they see it. It's sharing the gospel in word and deed.

We're asking you to do that right now, \$30 will help feed 3 children for several months, \$50 will help feed 5, \$100 right now would actually help feed 10 children. That's ten children that won't have to be victims of we were too late.

Some of you can give \$1,000 to help feed 100 children. Some of you can give far more than that. I ask you to do what God puts on your heart, because I know God's heart is to help those in need.

And that's why it's a privilege to come to you right now and say, "Join us." Will you join us today? Will you go online or go to the phone? Make the best gift you can.

I don't like seeing the graves of those young children, and I know that with your gift and your love, we'll see far more experience a hope for a future than to be buried too young. Do something right now.

**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 life-saving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for 3, 5, or 10 children for 3 full months. With your gift we'll send you "The Father's Heart" devotional. Drawing from Scripture and his past, James Robison takes you on a 90-day journey to help you experience a deeper, more personal relationship with God as your loving Father.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you will receive The Father's Heart bundle. This stationary set, paired with the devotional, is a thoughtfully-designed collection created to help you share encouragement, prayer, and the love of our Heavenly Father with those you care about.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more, which will help feed 100 children in desperate need, request Life's beautiful bronze sculpture, The Good Shepherd. So, please call, write, or make your gift online today.

**RANDY:** Please do join us in this beautiful outreach. It is a matter of life and death, but we can give them life. Go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can.

And today, if you would like to request Ryan Leak's book "How to Work with Complicated People," we'd love to send it to you.

**BLYNDA:** Or how to live, or how to pray for. Any of them, you can insert your own verb there, with complicated people.

**RYAN:** You're really good.

**RANDY:** Where can people follow up with you if they wanna follow up with you?

**RYAN:** You know, for people that want inspirational and motivational content, they can go to ryanleak.com.

**RANDY:** Perfect, man. Hey, thanks for stopping by.

**RYAN:** My pleasure. We should do it again.

**RANDY:** And we appreciate you guys all out there stopping by. Come back. You can always check out lifetoday.org for all of our programs. We'll see you again right here on "Life Today."

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*♪ Oh, you can't hear me cry ♪*

*♪ See my dreams all die ♪*

*♪ From where you're standing ♪*

*♪ On your own, it's so quiet here ♪*

*♪ And I feel so cold ♪*

*♪ This house no longer feels like home ♪*

*♪ Ooh-ooh-ooh ♪*

*♪ Ooh-ooh-ooh ♪♪*

**JEN LILLEY:** But somewhere along the line, they got so caught up in the power and the name of Jesus that they missed him.

**ANNOUNCER:** "Wake Up Your Faith," next week.

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**ANNOUNCER:** "Life Today" is made possible by the supporters of Life Outreach International. Your gift will be used exclusively for the exempt purposes of Life. The ministry features specific outreaches as examples of the programs it supports and conducts. Gifts are considered to be without restriction as to use unless explicitly stipulated by the donor. The ministry is a member of the ECFA.