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Week 17

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Matt Chandler

“Our First Love”

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

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Like, I can get work done. I mean, I'm a grinder, and the reason I'm a grinder is that if I don't feel useful, I don't feel like there's anything in me that that's worthy of love.

ANNOUNCER: Matt Chandler, next.

[music]

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today," I'm Randy Robison. Blynda Lane joins me, great to see you.

BLYNDA LANE: Great to see you, Randy.

RANDY: I don't know where you're at right now, but our faith is, it's a journey, I believe, and we can always build our faith, revive our faith if it needs to be, and we're gonna talk about that a little bit today.

Our guest is Matt Chandler. He has a book out now called "Awake and Alive," and I think people are gonna just be encouraged no matter where you're at.

BLYNDA: Absolutely, I mean, it's a 30-day challenge to revive your faith, and I love that, because I like that I can think of myself in 30 days I could be a different person. How did this come about for you?

MATT: Well, I think there were several things that I was experiencing, not just at the church I pastor here, but I'm a part of a large church planning network, and as I've been traveling

around and ministering in different locations, I think we're in what I hope will turn into a significant outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our day.

And so if you're looking at the data of what's going on with Gen Z and Gen Alpha, like I just read that they're--Gen Z is now the most church-ed generation. Now, it's still like 1.8 times a month, so we still got work to do, but if you'd have told any of us in 2020 that Gen Z would be the most church-ed generation attending our churches in 5 years, you could have made a lot of money with naysayers.

And so there's this--it's like the wind's blowing, and you know the wind blows when and where it wants, that's what Jesus said. And so I was watching the--I don't know what to call them, but spot fires in all these places I was going, and then I found my heart before the Lord going, hey, I don't wanna watch this thing you're about to do on YouTube. How can I avail my heart to you? How do I avail the village church to you? How do I just go you're the treasure, you're the goal, you're where I want?

And then, you know, I'm praying around that, and that's all stirring up in me, and then I'm looking at these people that I'm pastoring, and I'm looking, I think I've got a good bead on evangelicalism with as much as I get to be around the different streams and tribes, kind of a theological mutt, so everybody, you know, like he can preach on that, or he can preach on that. Don't let him talk about that, but give him that, and I love that, I'm in.

My experience with kind of big C evangelicalism is it's sleepy. That that's the way I describe it, it's just sleepy. You know, Jesus is gonna be in their, you know, their bio, and on their LinkedIn page they're gonna have a verse more than likely ripped out of context, slapped onto their public-facing, you know, curated life, and I just thought what a shame it will be if God does what I think he's gonna do and is already beginning to do, and so many of us miss it because we were sound asleep.

And so, then that led to this, what can I do? How can I leverage the influence God's given me, the platform God's given me to just wake up saints to go you can be a part of this? You don't have to be a spectator here. Whether you're a stay-at-home mom, or a, you know, CEO of a Fortune 500 company, you don't have to watch this online. you can be in the middle of it, and so then it was more of a conversation around is that a book, or is that, like, is that a more digestible approach?

And so I love the 30-day thing, because anybody can go, man, I can do that for 30 days. And so the book has been designed to just kind of remind you of the glory of Christ, the power of the Spirit, and the will of God to move among us for his good pleasure, and that's how I'm trying to provoke you to wake up.

RANDY: So, okay, I'm glad you're seeing some good things, and, frankly I have to, you know, we get to interview people like you, and I hear things, and I go, wow, okay, yeah, there are some people, awakening, right? But I also see the apathy, it seems like. How do we know where we're at?

And if we feel like we're in an area, whether, you know, geographically or just personally, an area of apathy, how do we get out of it?

MATT: The way I try to kind of frame things is that God doesn't want distance from you. Like anything, he closes the distance. This is what God does. He just perpetually moves towards his people.

We look at Adam and Eve, they sin and he moves towards. Then you have the tabernacle given to--I'm sure people watching this right now, they're early on in the annual Bible reading plan, they're back in Exodus and back in Numbers and Leviticus, and just watch how stiff-necked, stubborn these people are, and God just keeps moving towards, gives them the tabernacle, then David gives them the temple. This is all about his presence, and then you get the fullness of it in the incarnation, and then you get the sending of the Holy Spirit, and then you get--like, I think you could boil the Bible down to God with us.

RANDY: Yes.

MATT: God with us, that's it, so he closes the gap. So when there's apathy or indifference, most of the time what's happened is you become distracted, and this is my pastoral experience of being in one location for 23 years, you got lulled to sleep by something.

Maybe it was Netflix, maybe it was you stopped living in a way that required any faith. Like, people who actively share the gospel with friends and coworkers, they never fall asleep. They never fall asleep. They are always aware of their limitations, they're always aware of their need for God, they're always aware of, right? People who are warring in the heavens for lost friends and family members, they don't tend to get sleepy.

Now, the devil's--the devil, he's such a loser, but he's good at what he kind of pulls off. So even somebody who might be really angsty about that could be taken to a, like, a more hardened position before the Lord versus a--but I think you wake up by acknowledging first and foremost, it's just repentance.

I know I'm sleepy right now, I know there's distance from the Lord, I know the Lord hasn't created that distance, I know I have, and so where am I, where have I allowed myself to be put to sleep? So in Jesus's parable, that could be the cares of this world, that could be riches, and I would--I'd draw riches out to be more comfort.

Like, if you so believed that what Jesus came to bring you is a life of ease and comfort that you are in no way living in a way that requires faith, that requires presence, that requires power, and then if I can repent of I've had the binky of Netflix, I've had the blanket of doom scrolling on my phone, like a lullaby making me fall asleep, I wanna repent of those things. I wanna move back towards the Lord, and I wanna begin to set aside more time to be with him.

And then I wanna live a life of obedience, which requires faith, faith is courage. And so now that I'm walking in faith and courage, I'm wide awake, because I'm aware the enemy's--I'm gonna face opposition for this, and I'm asking God. God has put things in my heart that I cannot pull off that God will need to pull off for me, and now I'm wide awake.

BLYNDA: So, when I think about it, it's like kind of this--it becomes a mirror, right? You know, a tool like this kind of helps reflect those kind of things, and so I'm thinking--because some of the things you were saying I'm really not appreciative, because they were stepping on my toes a little bit there.

MATT: I'm sorry, I'm sorry, Blynda. I don't wanna--I've seen your husband, he's a large man. I'm not trying to start any fights.

BLYNDA: Yeah, but it's good. I think that reflection, looking in that mirror is good, because I think what you were saying about the younger generation, though they do have that tendency maybe to lull themselves to sleep, they also actually authentically want to do something for God, and I feel like the older we are, the longer we've been walking with the Lord, we might not feel as much purpose or passion to do some things for the Lord, and so something like this is a good reflection.

So what would you say, though, to maybe somebody who's walked with the Lord longer but feels that sleepwalking happening? What are tools, or what are things that they can do to wake themselves up?

MATT: Yeah, I love the question. I think you've got to discern now has the Lord led me into a desert season, or am I asleep? The desert's used to refine and hone in and call out and, you know, and then I don't want you to leave the desert until the Lord leads you out of the desert.

Sleepiness is a little bit more different than the desert season. If we look to the letter to Ephesus in Revelation 3, 2 or 3, he starts to name, hey, you've got great doctrine, you can spot what's false, you don't tolerate false teaching, so when you're on social media making sure people know that's a lie, that's heresy, that's--but you don't love me like you used to.

You know, you're--I am not uppermost in your affection. You have loved maybe even my stuff more than you've loved me. You've loved doctrine more than you've loved me, where doctrine should fuel our love for the Lord but never replace it. Which means you find somebody who's so diligent about doctrine they're attacking everybody. I'm saying you got misplaced affection there.

And I know I'll get some pushback on that about defending the gospel. It's funny that thing about defending the gospel, always seems to be playing out in secondary and tertiary issues. It's rarely really around orthodox gospel teaching. It's that, you know, you wanna argue about the role of women or the, you know, gifts of the Holy Spirit or you're so fervent

about that, but you're saying you're defending the gospel, but that--this isn't the gospel, anyway.

RANDY: Clanging cymbals.

MATT: Yeah, and there's something to that. There's something to that. I've been following Christ for almost 34 years now, and the number of times I've had to repent of my affections aren't where they're supposed to be, they're not where they need to be, I don't wanna whip myself into an emotional frenzy.

I don't think that's what the Lord wants, but he wants my heart, and so a good little exercise if you're watching this is probably two or three times a year, I just do an affections audit. Like, what stirs my affections for Jesus Christ? What robs me of those affections?

What I've learned is that what stirs my affections is oftentimes deeply, like, personalized to me. They're not like a Bible verse, so I'll give you one. When I make--I'm an early guy, early morning guy, love good coffee, and I mean there's 1,000 machines that I could set or push the button, but there's something about doing it the old way where I weigh the beans, weigh the water, French press it that slows my heart down in the morning. I'm kind of frenetic, I don't know if that's coming off, but I kinda hum, and that simple act in the morning of waking up, groggily weighing the beans, weighing the water, starting the kettle, grinding the beans, and then waiting for the coffee to steep, like, slows my heart down so that now that I'm gonna open my Bible and invite the Holy Spirit to come and show me, like it sets me up.

So that's on my list, like making coffee like that stirs my affections for Jesus. And then what's interesting about what robs me of affection is they're all morally neutral. You know, I'm not like that heroin, is that--that's not on my list, right? It's morally-neutral lesser loves. It's like the chips and hot sauce at your favorite Mexican food restaurant that will steal from you the joy of the main meal.

So, what are those things? I don't need to get rid of them, but I need to limit their influence in my life. And so that's a game you can play. I don't know if it's a game or a discipline, but it's an exercise I do frequently, because my heart's prone to wander, and I don't want it to. I wanna love him with--I want that Psalm David--David in Psalm 27:4, "One thing I ask, all that I seek, my gaze upon the beauty of the Lord to seek him in his temple." I want that, I want my whole life to be shaped by that.

RANDY: It's interesting, I appreciate you opening up like that, because it does get very personal, but I think there's a little bit of a fear, almost an Adam and Eve, let's cover up fear, because we know when we've gone astray, when we've made a mistake, our love has been misplaced, that sense of shame comes in as you have repented and, you know, it just means change your mind, change your direction, right?

What do you find when you approach God with that, with, ah, Lord, I think I've done this. What's the attitude of the father towards Matt?

MATT: Oh, goodness, probably because of my family of origin and things that I endured growing up, I kind of bought into this lie, this deep lie, like not prefrontal cortex stuff, like stuff under the surface stuff. And if I can name the lie, it would be that I'm useful but not necessarily lovable.

And that lie, what's scary about that lie is it's a lie that the enemy would use to destroy me but human beings celebrate. Like, I can get work done. I mean, there's no end to my bandwidth or plate. I mean, I know there is theologically. In the physical we haven't found it.

I mean, I'm a grinder, and the reason I'm a grinder, you know, the shadow mixed with the gold in my work ethic is that if I don't feel useful, I don't feel like there's anything in me that's worthy of love. And so I have had to do some significantly deep work over the years to kind of unwind that and to receive from the Lord, because I just put that on the Lord, you know? If the Lord's gonna love me, I better be useful.

And so how do I build his kingdom? How do I win in this? How do I grow this church? How do I build this network? How do I fix this broken piece? How do I become an expert? How do I walk in-- But you see, that's the very thing the enemy will use to burn me out and destroy me, because the fuel of my life should be coming from an overflow of Christ's affections experienced in me, not just known in me.

RANDY: So, here would be my question. You take away Matt Chandler, the author Matt Chandler, the builder Matt Chandler, the pastor, the church planner, who does God say Matt Chandler is?

MATT: Yeah, so I am a beloved son, that's in the text, but I have been able to experience that. The Lord in his grace on multiple occasions, through multiple layers, got deep to that little boy in there and loved on him, and that involved a couple of times on the floor yell sobbing, getting things out of me before the Lord and then being ministered to by his presence and mercy.

And so, yeah, that's, if we're not careful, the lie that we don't even know we're believing, which I think my good friend Jennie Allen just wrote a book called that, because I didn't know. I just thought I was a grinder, and I'm in a, I mean, ministry is a place where grinding celebrated.

Gosh, I think it was 2003 when I first read any book about slow Sabbath. I'm sure they were out there. I'm saying they weren't the books I was reading, you know? I was about efficiency and effectiveness and the, you know, good leadership, and then now it's all we're healthy and--

RANDY: So, do you--could you say part of revival is rest?

MATT: Oh, I think replenishment. I would use the word replenishment, not rest. I think rest is overrated, and I don't think you actually ever burn out, I think you run out of gas, and so I think the key to longevity, I've been in this 30 years now, is replenishment, not necessarily rest.

Because everybody watching this went on vacation and came home exhausted, right? So what is that? What did we do? Well, we might have rested, but we didn't replenish. And so creating a replenishment cycle, these are things that put wind in my sail, that put logs on the fire of my soul, that when I'm done, when I'm done, I feel replenished, and then rest becomes what rest is meant to be.

But I don't think you always get to replenishment from rest. I do think you always get to rest from replenishment.

BLYNDA: And it requires a level of faith. I mean, we don't think of it in that way, but if you are a grinder, if you're used to doing, the faith that God will still make you useful by holding back, by being still, by stilling that part of you, that takes faith on your part.

MATT: It certainly does. You have to believe that what he says about you is true even when you don't feel it, and then you've gotta be able to combat the lie and--well, the first thing you have to do is be able to spot it, because nobody was spotting that one for me.

I was like, hey, do you think maybe you have got a bad motive in all this work you're producing? No one ever says that. And yet I think longevity and ministry for me will be because eventually in my late thirties, early forties, I started running out of gas, I just broke, and it wasn't working anymore, and the Lord was super-kind to pluck me out, send me the right shepherds.

BLYNDA: He's good.

RANDY: He is.

MATT: Amen, he's good, because I had no idea. I just thought this was what it was, you know?

RANDY: That's awesome.

MATT: So, he was good.

RANDY: All right, I got some people out here watching that I want to invite into a 30-day journey with Matt. We'd love to send you this book, "Awake and Alive," and we're going to ask you to partner with us in a ministry that is really literally helping keep people alive. Watch this, and you'll see how.

[music]

ANNOUNCER: Across Africa, millions of families wake up each morning unsure if there will be anything to eat today.

[speaking foreign language]

ANNOUNCER: When food is scarce, children are the first to suffer, and for a mother, there is no greater pain than watching her child waste away, knowing that what they need most is simply food.

[speaking foreign language]

ANNOUNCER: Without timely intervention, malnutrition will remain the silent killer, taking the lives of young children. But if we can provide mission feeding to villages in crisis, mothers like Tereza and Rosa will never again worry about losing another child because of the lack of food.

[speaking foreign language]

RANDY: I know that's hard to watch. Blynda, I mean, you're a mother. What do you think when you see those mothers?

BLYNDA: The heartbreak is--it's just unspeakable. I can't even, like, fathom how a mother--the biggest fear a mom has is that they would lose a child, and this--these moms have experienced losing multiple children, and it's so avoidable.

I think that's the thing that when I watch it I think oh my goodness, if we could just get there to help. The urgency that is there, that if we can just help them, we can bring the aid that they need.

RANDY: Yeah, and she expressed, one of the mothers, you know, if no help comes, if there's no help.

BLYNDA: And I think of it, and I think the desperation. You could hear it in her voice, the desperation was there, saying I don't--I cannot lose another child. It's just--it's so painful to sit in that space and think that she's had to experience the most pain a mother could ever endure.

RANDY: Yeah, and you know, they've--the desperation is there because they've done everything they can do, they've worked, and they've worked the fields, their children often usually work as well. They've exhausted every ability they have in these situations where we go into it, and oftentimes it's drought a lot of times, you know?

It's just the weather has turned against them. It's crops that have failed for various reasons. They've worked hard to plant, and they expect that harvest. They go--and it doesn't come.

And when they say if no help comes, we're afraid that we won't be here, we won't exist, that's the reality that they live in.

But here's the good news, help is coming. We feed over 350,000 children across Africa every day. How do we do it? I say we. I don't mean just Blynda and I and my parents, those of us in the ministry, I say we as in you, the viewer.

So many of you have helped feed these children over years, and it's not necessarily the same thing over and over and over. The mission feeding program is designed to get children out of the desperate situation, to give them an education, to give them a future, but right now they're in a situation that they have to hear from us. If no one comes, they are in serious trouble.

We're asking you today to come alongside of us and give them hope by giving them a simple bowl of food, and it breaks down like this. If you wanna help feed a child for the next several months, \$30 will help feed 3 children, \$50 will help feed 5 children, \$100, 10 children, you see the pattern.

A \$1,000 gift today would help feed 100 children for several months, and that's how we get them out of this cycle of desperation and poverty to give them a hope and a future. So, yes, I'm asking you to give them a bowl of food today, but I'm also asking you to give them hope for tomorrow, a future for next week, next year, and I've seen that come to fruition. I know it works, I want you to be a part of it.

Go online, go to the phone, make the absolute best gift that you can.

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: I really do hope you will jump in and help. You can make such a difference if you'll partner with us. Go online, go on the phone, make the best gift you can, and when you do today, feel free to request Matt Chandler's book, "Awake and Alive."

And Blynda, this has been a really good conversation for us.

BLYNDA: So good, Matt, thank you for your vulnerability. Like, I appreciate--I think it's gonna be really good for people to hear a pastor really be that vulnerable.

And I think it's gonna be awesome for them to have 30 days to really focus in on their own.

MATT: Little caffeine, spiritual caffeine for the soul.

BLYNDA: Yeah, well, thank you, it's been awesome having you.

MATT: My pleasure, it's good to be here.

RANDY: Appreciate you guys being with us. Join us again next time here on "Life Today."

[music]

♪ Oh, you can't hear me cry. ♪

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

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

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