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Week 18

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Jen Lilley

"Encountering Jesus"

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

ANNOUNCER: Coming up, film and TV actress Jen Lilley.

JEN LILLEY: Jesus says, "Many will come to me in that day, and they will say, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not do many mighty works in your name?'"

And he says, "And I will look at them, and I will say, 'Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. I never knew you.'"

Obviously they had some walk of faith, but somewhere along the line, they got so caught up in the power in the name of Jesus that they missed him.

[music]

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today." I'm Randy Robison. This is Blynda Lane.

BLYNDA LANE: Hello, Randy, I'm kind of laughing because I'm thinking about when I have-- Todd, my husband, when I tell him I'm gonna watch a Hallmark movie, he says, "You go do that."

And in some way I feel like, because we have Jen Lilley with us from Hallmark, I do feel like it's like, "Randy, you can come along in this conversation."

JEN: Yeah, you're invited.

BLYNDA: You're invited. But also, we might talk about some Hallmark things. No, we're not gonna talk about that too much. Not too much.

JEN: We'll talk about better than Hallmark, Jesus.

BLYNDA: I'm so glad that you're here today. When I found out you were coming, I'm like, "This is gonna be so fun," because not only are we gonna connect about just your fun life, you have an amazing devotional that you've released called "Wake Up Your Faith."

JEN: Thank you.

BLYNDA: Tell me, how did you even come up with wanting to give the message that we need to wake up our faith?

JEN: Sure, well, it's a funny story because BroadStreet, my publishers, they're amazing, and Suzanne Niles, I met her at the Movie Guide Awards, which is kind of like the Christian Oscars, I guess.

And she said she saw me and the Holy Spirit said, "Book," and so she beelined it to me. And Suzanne is one of those people, I hope I grow up to be like her.

She's so filled with the Holy Spirit and she's also beautiful that it's almost like, I imagine this is what Moses's face must have looked like. Like, she glows. Like, you can feel the Holy Spirit on her.

But she was like, "You know, I work for BroadStreet Publishing and I think that you're supposed to write a devotional. The Holy Spirit told me that," and I'm thinking, "Well, I hear a lot from the Holy Spirit and I don't think so," but I just kind of smiled and nodded and thought, you know, "I don't know who you think I am that I should be writing a devotional."

And I prayed about it, and right before I was going into the meeting with BroadStreet, fully planning on saying no, I did some research and I was like, "Oh, they've published books with John Bevere, who I love, and Heidi Baker, who I love. So I guess they like the Holy Spirit, because I love the Holy Spirit."

I get on the Zoom meeting and I said, "Hey, guys. Gosh, I don't know where to go here because I was fully prepared to say to you, 'I don't like devotionals. I don't read devotionals. Frankly, I think devotionals are often a crutch for people not reading the Word of God, and I do not want any part of that, because I can't do more for you than the Word of God. And lastly, I will not not talk about the Holy Spirit, because he's my best friend.'"

And BroadStreet was so wonderful. They said--well, they started laughing and they said, "Well, that's why we think you should write a devotional." And so I said, "Well, tell me how it works."

I fasted and prayed about it three more days. And in that time I was like, "Well, Holy Spirit, like, what do you--like, what am I supposed to say? What do you want me to write about? I don't even read devotionals. I don't know how to do this."

And so he really brought me into the passion of wanting to wake up his bride.

I mean, my favorite verse in the whole Bible, and I will laugh if anyone ever says it's their same passage, it's not one you're gonna ever see on a pillow or a poster, is Matthew 7:21-23, technically 22 through 23.

It's the Judgment Day, and it says, Jesus says, "Many will come to me in that day, and they will say, 'Lord, Lord, do we not prophesy in your name? Do we not heal the sick in your name? Do we not do many mighty works in your name?'"

And he says, "And I will look at them, and I will say, 'Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. I never knew you.'"

That verse, the reason I love it so much is because it keeps you so focused on Jesus, because obviously they had some walk of faith.

They invoked the name of Jesus, which is the highest name above all names. It has power. But somewhere along the line, they got so caught up in the power in the name of Jesus that they missed him.

And that's why I think in 1 Corinthians, you know, the love chapter, we've heard it at every single wedding, whether they're a believer or not, it seems that people know that, you know, Scripture.

But 1 Corinthians 13, it's like, "I can know all things. I can fathom all mysteries," you know, and on and on and on, "but if I don't have love, I have nothing."

And so this book is hopefully to wake up people's faith, you know, I think of it as like Ezekiel in the desert with the dry bones. It's like, God wants to breathe life back into us. He wants to revive us.

Like, it is time as a church to rise up and be the bride of Christ, know what the Word of God says. Like, ask the Holy Spirit, "What are you saying? What are you doing, Lord? How can I be part of it?"

Like, Jesus is alive and well, and we don't--I just don't want us to miss the mark. And, you know, all of us have been through dry spells before, but like, this is a book that I really feel the Holy Spirit wrote through me.

When I read it, I weep, because I'm like, I don't--I don't have this knowledge. This is from the Holy Spirit. And it moves my heart, because it is so much Scripture. I mean, it's just--it's like an espresso shot of Scripture.

But I hope that people use it either as an appetizer to reading the Word of God, I hope it centers them into the Holy Spirit, so that the Holy Spirit can guide them through the Word of God, or they read it after they read the Bible, for like a takeaway. Appetizer or dessert, like, that's it.

BLYNDA: And I love that you're saying, still stay in the Word of God, but use this as a help.

JEN: Oh my gosh, yes.

BLYNDA: So we talked earlier, we kind of joked in the introduction that you've been on Hallmark movies and you're an actress in Hollywood and you've--this is your profession, yet some might be surprised, as they're watching, that you have such a profound walk with the Lord. What was your journey to be where you are today, and how does that combine with the profession that you chose?

JEN: I have a distinct memory of being seven years old, riding my bike and saying to the Lord in my mind, like, "I don't know if I believe in you," and hearing Holy Spirit say, "That's okay," because God's like so in control. It's like I heard it back and just kept going.

Two years later, we were awkwardly church shopping, as many people have done, and we ended up going to this Episcopalian church, and it was called Church of the Holy Spirit. It's still there, it's amazing.

And I remember going in, and it was like, they had live musicians and they had worship, and I think that it felt very lively as a nine year old, and I was like, "This is kind of cool."

And so I loved the worship, and then we got dismissed to Sunday school, and I think this is so amazing because for parents, and I am one, kids absorb so much more than we realize. For Sunday schools teachers, like, you're not missing it by being in the back.

And I was nine years old, and they told the story of Elijah and the widow with the oil and the flour.

And I remember being nine years old, and I had grown up with religion class every day, you know, I was Catholic. And I was like, "Wait a second, hold the phone."

Like, I thought, like, Jesus and his twelve disciples, and then Moses, as like the bookends of the Biblical faith. Like, I thought they operated in miracles. Who is this guy in 1 and 2 Kings that suddenly has the Holy Spirit and is like--you know, how is he multiplying food like the fishes and loaves?

So I ended up going home, getting out my First Communion Bible with a yellow Crayola crayon, and I read the entire Bible cover to cover, as a nine year old. And I would use the crayon like as my highlighter, you know, to mark where I had read.

So I've been passionate about the Lord since I was nine, but I mean, I've had struggles. You know, I had an eating disorder for 15 years, even though I knew Jesus.

But when I was in college, I discovered acting, especially acting for film, because I'm stage fright, which is weird, but I'm not afraid of the camera. And I really felt the Holy Spirit call me into acting, so that's how I got into it.

And then being a Christian in Hollywood is really amazing, because, you know, when other actors, or like aspiring young actors, especially Christians, are like, "I want to be an actress. How do you do it?" I'm always like, "Hang on. Why do you want to be an actor?"

Like, do you wanna be famous? Because if you want to be famous, you're gonna get eaten alive. Like, this is a dark space. Like, you will get rejected for a living. You're gonna get no 99.9% of the time. You're gonna get a personal rejection of, "No, you're not good enough for this role." So you'd better know whose you are before you go in there.

And--but I have a heart for artists and, like, telling stories. I have a heart for the audience, but I also have a heart, such a deep heart, for the artists and the actors who have been told, like, their worth is in storytelling. And they have all this hidden sin, that they think they're too deep, they're too far gone. They've been sold a lie that they can never get out.

RANDY: "The people of lawlessness," that's a reference to the the Jewish people who rejected Christ because they had the truth of the Old Covenant, right? They had the promises, but they didn't have the relationship, because they didn't recognize Christ as the Messiah. And I think we do that.

And again, Catholic, Protestant, or just "spiritual," which you see a lot of in Hollywood. Was there a moment, or was there a process, maybe, where you realized, okay, this is not about a church necessarily, or not about--even about a book. It's about a living faith, it's a relationship, through the Holy Spirit with God. Is that like a realization you had, or is that just over time, sort of a growth?

JEN: I always knew that faith was about having a personal relationship with God, because the Holy Spirit did speak to me as I read my Bible, you know?

And it's like, if somebody says like they read the Bible and they don't understand it, it's like, always learn to pray to the Holy Spirit and say, like, "Would you help me understand what I'm reading here?"

RANDY: That's what he is, a helper. "He will lead you into all truth," the Scripture says.

JEN: And then it's like--so I do think that the Bible, you know, it's like a--it's the sword, right? I mean, it can cut, it can wound. I mean, and that's what the devil does, right? Like, he always tricks us by using Scripture and masquerading it.

Like, when we're believers, he uses Scripture against us. He did that to Jesus in the desert. He did it to Peter, you know? Like, "Lord, let it not be so that you would be crucified," and Jesus turns to him, right? "Get behind me, Satan."

But then Jesus goes on and he says, "For you have set your mind on the things of man and not on the things of God." Like, we do that as Christians. So I always knew it was about relationship.

But with my, I mean, with getting set free from my eating disorder, it was a realization that my pastor--gosh, it's so amazing. My pastor in LA, Jake Sweetman, he's like, that wasn't even the message, but you know, when the Word of God hits you, it rightly divides, and it hits you so deep, no matter what his message was actually on.

He said, "The best definition I can come up with for sin is trusting in anything more than I trust God."

BLYNDA: Wow, that's good.

JEN: Oh, it's so good. And you know what? Romans 14:23 actually says that, "Anything that is not preceded by trust is sin."

When you, as a Christian, be--you know, come to the understanding that anything that you trust more than God is sin, it's like it opens up the can of worms in your heart for all the hidden things that, like, you believe these lies.

I believed the lie, that's half-truth, and this is what Satan does to every believer. I believed this lie. "I got myself into this eating disorder, so I deserve the consequences of it."

That's true. I do deserve the consequences of it. You deserve the consequences of your sin. You deserve the consequences of my sin. I deserve the consequences of my sin. Like, we deserve death, but Jesus paid our debt.

So Satan always comes in shame cycles, and he often uses the Word of God to keep us bound.

RANDY: And also that, "I got myself in it. I gotta get myself out of it."

JEN: And you think you can get yourself, like, cleaned up, and it's like, I knew God knew. I'd have believed he would heal everybody except me, because I deserved it. So I mean it's like--

BLYNDA: Like your sin was worse than somebody else's.

JEN: Yeah, because, like, I know better and I know my worth, and yet I still choose this, and it's just like, it's the same trick.

Addiction is addiction is addiction is addiction. Hidden sin is hidden sin, and why do people not come clean? It's the same thing with Adam and Eve in the garden.

God never came down and condemned them. He actually said, "Where are you? Why are you hiding?" He didn't say, "I know what you did," but he knew what they did. He gave them an opportunity, like, do you wanna--

BLYNDA: "Who told you you were naked?"

JEN: "Who told you you were naked?" He was giving them an opportunity to say, "Would you confess? Would you come? Would you--let's take a walk in the garden."

Who knows what would have happened if they had chosen faith and trust in their relationship with the Lord? But instead they chose their shame and fear, and hid themselves. And we do that.

BLYNDA: Don't you find--I was reading, and I'm gonna say this quote because I thought it was so good, that so much of why we do that, though, is because the enemy, I mean, there is a warfare going on.

JEN: Constant warfare.

BLYNDA: Constant. You even say this, "In spiritual warfare, it's not just the big attacks that we need to watch out for, but the subtle hidden influences that can infiltrate our lives. Satan often gains access through seemingly insignificant compromises."

JEN: He also comes with "I" statements. So we have three voices that speak to us. We have our own self. We have the Holy Spirit. And we have, you know, elemental spirits of the world, the demonic. And they come in "I" statements.

I was going to do deliverance, actually, if I'm being transparent, and I felt called by the Lord to do it. And as I was driving down the road to go do this assignment that the Lord had clearly laid on my heart, because I was obeying the law of love, I heard what presented as the Holy Spirit say, "I don't need you to do this."

But it was kind of like--it was a little bit aggressive, like, "I don't need you to do this." Like, "I've got this, stop trying to control it." And I thought, "Well, that's weird. I'm not trying to control it. I'm trying to listen to the law of love." So I kept driving.

But I want to be so obedient, and the devil knows that about me, right? Like, my biggest fear would be not being obedient to the voice of the Lord. And I'm driving down the road and I hear Holy Spirit say, "I have not authorized you to do this," and the tone was just enough off that I was like, "It could be Holy Spirit, doesn't really sound like Holy Spirit, presenting as Holy Spirit."

And when I got there, I realized, like, a demon answered the door, and I had thwarted the plans of a suicide. This person was going to commit suicide. And I stopped it.

Had I listened to what was presenting as Holy Spirit, but the reason I knew it wasn't Holy Spirit was because when you know enough Scripture, you can discern the fruits of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. Against such there is no law.

RANDY: If you called me up and you tried to tell me to do something and I said, "Who's this?" and you said, "It's your wife," I'd be like, "No, I know my wife."

BLYNDA: "I know her voice."

RANDY: Yeah, I know her voice, yeah. And that's where the relationship makes the difference.

JEN: And Jesus says that, right? "My people know my voice." But there's also a tone.

RANDY: Absolutely.

BLYNDA: So in the idea of waking up your faith, and matching that or kind of looking at spiritual warfare, though, and how the enemy can come and he can start distorting truth, and he can. What would you say to those watching, those who are like, "I have a little bit of apathy in my walk with the Lord. I don't know how to wake up my faith, and I do feel like the enemy is in my ear with those lies all the time"?

JEN: Well, the first thing I'll tell you is that I have been there. There were many times that I laid in bed and felt nothing.

And I think in those moments, you need to let the Holy Spirit know, like, "God, I feel this way. Would you give me your Holy Spirit, because I feel like death right now? I feel like a sack of dry bones. I feel like I'm never going to get revived. Would you help me see myself the way you see me, Lord? Would you help me get it from head knowledge to heart knowledge? Because there's such a difference."

And then just like, honestly, I think sometimes you just have to push through. I think sometimes you just need to like get into the Word of God, even when you feel dry. But ask Holy Spirit, like, "Holy Spirit, would you help me understand this?"

And eventually, it's like--have you ever, you know, not drank water for a long time, right? And then you start drinking water, you get in a habit of drinking water, and all of a sudden you realize that when you don't have your water, you're thirsty, even though now you're hydrating? Do you know what I'm talking about?

It's like, you can go so long not feeling thirsty and you're not hydrating well, but the minute you start getting in a cycle of hydration, you're like, "Whoo, I'm thirsty," if you haven't had a sip of water in like ten minutes. And I think spiritually it's the same thing.

It's like, just keep going, because the Bible is the Word of God. Like, Jesus is the Word of God. Like, he is the bread of life. He is the living water, and the Word of God is Jesus.

We are so--we're at such an unfair advantage to live in this time period. I was telling you that earlier, Randy, like--like, we don't actually need to be fearful. We have to put--like, Revelation is not a fearful book. It's a book of victory. It's about setting our eyes on Jesus.

When you set your eyes on Jesus, everything else kind of fades away. It's like, who are you trusting? What are you trusting right now?

BLYNDA: It's so good.

RANDY: All right, Jen, I love your passion for the Word and your love of the Holy Spirit, and I appreciate you sharing that. I want other people to join you on this journey. If you'd like to join Jen on "Wake Up Your Faith: 365-Day Journey," we'd love to send this devotional to you.

We would ask that you would join us on a journey, many of you already have, of helping other people who are in dire situations. There's some people right now who are hurting, and you can be that agent of God's love and of change in their lives, and to give them hope for the future. Watch this, and I just pray that you would consider joining us today in this beautiful outreach of love.

[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: We really do need to hear from you today, so please go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can. Let's keep the hope, the life, and the love going. We can only do it with you. And today, if you would like to request Jen Lilley's devotional, we would love to send it to you. There's some great things going on.

BLYNDA: There is. "Wake Up Your Faith," and it sounds like you have something new kind of waking up as well in your life.

JEN: Yeah, well, it's all Holy Spirit. He gave me a campaign called "Wake Up Your Campus," and it's to spread revival across college campuses across this nation. It's a 501(c)(3), so it's a nonprofit, and if they wanna help me spread revival across college campuses in the United States they can go to wakeupyourcampus.com.

BLYNDA: wakeupyourcampus.com. It's very exciting. Jen, thank you for joining us and for sharing your faith. We love your passion. Thank you for coming. And thank you for joining us today on "Life Today." We can't wait to see you back next time.

RANDY: Goodbye.

[music]

FEMALE ANNOUNCER: At Life Outreach, we believe in making a lasting impact on your life and the lives of others. Through Life Planning Services, we offer estate planning and giving solutions that provide tax advantages, income, and the satisfaction of supporting a cause close to your heart. With options like bequests, charitable gift annuities, and IRA rollovers, you can chart a purposeful path, creating a legacy of love and hope for future generations. Call or visit Life Planning Services today.

JENNIE ALLEN: The things we believe about ourselves, all of them can be boiled down to these three: I'm helpless, I'm unlovable, I'm worthless.

MALE ANNOUNCER: Jennie Allen, tomorrow.

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