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Week 19

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Max Lucado

"Better Thinking"

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

MAX LUCADO: An untruth leads to a false narrative, leads to an overreaction. We wanna deal with the overreaction, but somewhere along the line there's an untruth that's going on in there, and we can help disentangle it.

ANNOUNCER: Max Lucado offers a fresh perspective on renewing your mind.

ANNOUNCER: Just as untruth leads to false narrative leads to overreaction, the right truth leads to a healthy narrative that can lead to a positive reaction.

ANNOUNCER: Next.

[music]

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today." I'm Randy Robison, and Blynda Lane is with me. How you doing, Blynda?

BLYNDA: I'm doing really good today.

RANDY: I'm excited because Max Lucado is one of my favorite guests.

BLYNDA: Is there just really--I mean, you say that name and it's like, you know it's going to be a great show.

RANDY: It's going to be insightful, encouraging, and fun.

BLYNDA: Of course.

RANDY: And so I'm excited to have him here today. So "Tame Your Thoughts" is the book that we're talking about today.

RANDY: I wanna start, if I could, with a quote, and I wanna see what you think about this. This is a quote from Max's book "Tame Your Thoughts," okay? "We manage our lives by managing our thoughts."

BLYNDA: I mean, look at that.

RANDY: Did you write that down?

BLYNDA: "We manage our lives by--" We had the thing. I loved it because it was like, 70,000 thoughts a day. How do I manage that? How am I going to manage 70,000 thoughts a day?

RANDY: We'll find out.

BLYNDA: We're gonna find out, and I'm so excited.

RANDY: Welcome to the program.

MAX: It's great to see you both. It really is.

BLYNDA: Thank you for joining us. What we love about you, Max, is there is probably many people around the world who would say you have been a father or a grandfather to them.

BLYNDA: Yeah, you've helped so many in the body of Christ. We're so thankful.

MAX: Thank you.

RANDY: Let's jump into this topic.

MAX: Okay.

RANDY: You know, we hear this Scripture, we know we're supposed to take every thought captive. I'm sure you've heard that one. But I don't know that we know that we can actually do it.

RANDY: I mean, sometimes it just--my brain just runs and I'm like, what am I--you know, I'm not even aware of it half the time.

MAX: Isn't that the truth?

RANDY: Where's the beginning point for managing our thoughts?

MAX: Well, Blynda mentioned that quote of 70,000 thoughts. That comes from the Cleveland Clinic, a reputable source. I don't know how in the world they count that we have 70,000 thoughts a day.

MAX: Most of them are benign, you know, "Boy, what a pretty picture," you know, they don't-- But there are enough of them that are significant that, well, Scripture teaches us, "Be careful how you think because your thoughts run your life," Proverbs 4:23.

MAX: Our thoughts really do, and learning to manage our lives begins by corralling, or directing, redirecting, these thoughts in a direction that is not self-destructive and not self-critical. And that's not an easy thing to do.

BLYNDA: It's not, because I think about times in my life where the biggest obstacle in my way was myself, how I thought about something or how I saw something, that I couldn't get past that thing.

BLYNDA: And you actually talk about in the book, like, you kind of give us three different tools of thought, of ways that we're supposed to be maybe managing our thoughts. And one of them really was good for me. And it was the picky--it was like--

MAX: Practice picky thinking.

BLYNDA: Yes, picky thinking, because I don't think I'm picky enough. The thoughts that I let in my mind, there's a lot of them, and some of them kind of sabotage maybe how I'm gonna move forward in something that God's asking me to do. Can you talk about that?

MAX: You know, the big idea is that just because you have a thought, you don't have to think it, you know? Just because an idea comes into your mind, that idea does not have to be processed or pondered.

MAX: And that's that 2 Corinthians passage you referred to, Randy. We take every thought captive. We do not fight with the weapons that the world uses, but we take every thought captive, causing it to submit to the authority of Christ.

MAX: I was, for some reason I got anxious about a decision my wife and I were making. It's a very small decision. Aren't they all? But it was a small decision, but I was getting anxious about it, and I thought, no, Jesus said, "Don't worry about tomorrow. Today has enough worries for itself."

MAX: I thought, okay, I'm not gonna think about that anymore. Now, I don't always do that, but that's the skill set that I'm promoting or encouraging, and that is this idea of just because you have a thought, you don't have to go down that path with it.

RANDY: I've experienced that, and I think that's where the idea of taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ started to make sense to me. Mine, and maybe it's a byproduct of my dad traveling so much when I was growing up, you know?

RANDY: But I would have this thought of, "Uh-oh, what if something happens, and they don't come home?" Carried it over into my marriage if my wife would go on a trip. She's from Florida, so she would occasionally drive to Florida or something.

RANDY: And then you have kids and God forbid, you know, they're driving I-35 going to college, which all mine did. You start to have--and what happens is that I would have that thought of, what if something happens, worst-case scenario, you know, injury or death.

RANDY: And then I would go down that path, instead of stopping it where you're talking about, go down that, and just fantasize about all the terrible things that could happen. "Because it happens to other people, it could happen to me." And pretty soon, I mean, it just throws you into a really bad mindset.

MAX: Tailspin.

RANDY: It's not healthy. And when I go, okay, now wait a minute, it's that awareness of what I'm doing. I'm going down this path of negative thoughts of something that has not happened, right?

RANDY: And I go, oh, wait, I'm gonna take those thoughts and make them obey Christ, who says what you just quoted, right? Why worry about--

MAX: Exactly.

BLYNDA: And even I love the "captive." It makes me think of putting something in captivity. It's like I'm putting them in jail.

MAX: Like handcuffing them. Yeah, I think that's deliberate.

RANDY: So your idea of picky thinking, I mean, I don't know, how do--is self-awareness not the first step?

MAX: It is, and forgive me for trying to sound like I'm smarter than I am, but neuroplasticity is a kind of a buzzword these days, of how we've learned that the brain really does create habits, you know?

MAX: They do call them ruts, you know, my brain is in a rut or I've got a rut, literally is, what I'm told, a physical rut that the neurons create, firing back and forth and back and forth. What that is, that's a habit. That's a habit.

MAX: And a lot of these are things we pick up from our parents. My mom really was a worrier, and I think I've learned a lot of good things from her, but I picked up her worst-case scenarios and began to practice it. So most of us have a tendency to get in a rut or two. And so, learning what those are and breaking them is essential.

BLYNDA: That's what I was gonna ask. You have to create a new pathway of thinking. What would you say is the first step in doing that?

BLYNDA: I mean, if it's--because sometimes if it's just the default, that you don't even necessarily know, it's just the default, so you're now creating a new pathway in your thinking or in the way you do things. How do you do that?

MAX: You treat these lies with truth. That's what it is. So everything gets back to who's the authority in our life, right?

MAX: And Jesus said, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth, been given to me." He has ultimate authority. So the Scripture says, "Do not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow has enough worries in and of itself, or of its own," then he has authority.

MAX: Christ said, "Don't worry. I'm gonna do my very best today." And by the way, it gets easier. It gets easier. Just as you create negative thought habits, you can create positive thought habits.

MAX: That's when we talk about wonderful people we love who are people of faith, because over the decades they've developed this ability. And what we're doing is we're creating a new rut in our brain. Literally, it's refiring. "Do not be transformed by the world but be--do not be conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." I don't know if Paul was a neurologist, but I think the Holy Spirit--

RANDY: Okay, so that's one of these things I love about science, modern science, and a lot of people try to pit faith and science as competing things, but science just confirmed what Paul said.

RANDY: And the plasticity part of neuroplasticity is literally new ways of thinking. Like, you can create these new ways of thinking. So science caught up, great for them.

MAX: That's encouraging, isn't it, Randy?

RANDY: It is.

MAX: To think that I don't have to think this way the rest of my life.

RANDY: Absolutely, absolutely. All right, so the second step that you talk about is not what I thought it was when I first saw it.

BLYNDA: I know, I was gonna say, is this the time to ask, do you really think there's UFOs out there? I'm just kidding.

RANDY: Right, yeah. So you say, "Identify UFOs," and I'm like, "Oh, fine." But what does that mean to you in your context?

MAX: It's just a little tricky thing that I developed in my mind, in my mind, as a pastor. I've been a pastor all these years.

BLYNDA: I like the way your mind's working.

MAX: I have to have little memory devices. So this one is UFO. An untruth leads to a false narrative, leads to an overreaction.

MAX: Early in my ministry I found myself talking, as all pastors--as all people do, but we pastors help people deal with overreactions. They come into my office, they're just angry. I'll see them in the hallway, they're distraught. It's an overreaction.

MAX: What I've learned is there's a reason for that overreaction, and it can usually be traced back to this untruth. Ah, here's an untruth. "Nobody loves me anymore." Well, that's not true, but that is a common thought. That's a true thought that--a thought that people think is true. That then leads to a false narrative. "I'm not lovable."

BLYNDA: Which probably affects how you act, because if you don't think you're lovable, you're going to act that way.

MAX: Exactly. That then leads to an overreaction, which could be a variety of things. Alcohol abuse, angry outbursts, absolute insecurity. Just doing things that are--we're acting out of that untruth.

MAX: So UFO means identify the untruth that leads to the false narrative that leads to the overreaction. This is a great tool for we parents, because when our teenagers have this overreaction, we wanna deal with the overreaction, but somewhere along the line there's an untruth that's going on in there, and we can help disentangle it.

BLYNDA: So interesting. I feel like so much of the Christian walk that, you know, the older I get is finding out that over time, we've tried to always touch on the symptoms, and there's always a root you have to get to. There's just always something that needs to be uprooted.

BLYNDA: And really I feel like if you can get to that, it doesn't just change your life but generationally it can make an impact.

MAX: I hear you.

BLYNDA: I think it's so interesting.

RANDY: The obvious go-to is "Why did you say that?" or "Why did you do that?" But what Max is telling us is that, like the quote I read at the beginning of the show, it goes back to your thinking. Your words and your actions are a direct result of your thoughts.

RANDY: And so by going back where you're talking about, learning to tame your thoughts, to make them obedient to what God says, then the words and the actions start to fall into line.

MAX: Absolutely, and that's what we're talking about here, dismantling the untruth, because just as untruth leads to false narrative leads to overreaction, the right truth leads to a healthy narrative that can lead to a positive reaction.

RANDY: Okay, so I find that untruth, and then what I do? Just rip it out and get rid of it and now I got a hole?

MAX: Here comes the third tool, exactly. Uproot and replant. You talked about roots. We do, we uproot them, we get serious about them. We take the thought captive. We demand that the Lord Jesus be sovereign.

MAX: By the way, the devil knows how to sow seeds in our minds. There's an interesting little phrase in John 13:2 about Judas, who, before he betrayed Christ, Satan planted the idea in his mind. It's a scary little idea, but we now we're protected by Christ, we're overseen by him. But he still wants to come and sow negative thoughts.

MAX: And so when they come, we uproot them, but then we replant. You don't just leave a hole in your head or a hole in the ground. You uproot them, but then you plant them, replant, and you plant them with truth, truth.

MAX: We were talking before the show started. I'll tell everybody. I got to spend half the day today with my hero, Chuck Swindoll, 91 years old, and he's down to about 10% of his vision. But his mind is as sharp as ever, and I just listened to him quote Scripture after Scripture after Scripture. Scripture, it just leaks.

MAX: Well, and he's happy, he's content. It's not easy. It's a hard time in a lot of ways. But you wouldn't know it because he is so immersed his mind in Scripture.

MAX: And I left there thinking, now, I need to do better at that. I need to--I need to be quick. I need to load my quiver with truth, so that when I have these untruthful thoughts, I can reach in my quiver and pull them out and have God's Word there.

BLYNDA: I love that. I actually just--I feel like somebody out there who's watching, I just wanna tell you, you have been discouraged and you haven't felt like you've been seen, that the Lord knows the struggle that you've had.

BLYNDA: I wanna encourage you today, get into his Word. It is alive and active to come alongside you, to encourage every part of your heart and your mind that is struggling.

BLYNDA: And also I wanna remind you that we do have prayer partners right now waiting by the phones. There's a number at the bottom of the screen, and you can call that number, and somebody will come alongside you and pray with you and encourage you, because that's why we do what we do.

BLYNDA: We are all humans walking in this earth together, with the struggles, with the pain, but we also have the victory. And we don't wanna forget that the Word of God gives us the lifeline, gives us the truth to the victory.

MAX: Amen, yeah.

RANDY: And one of the things, Max, that you do say in the book is that it's not just up to us. Like, what you're talking about doing, these are steps that I can take, but when we take these steps, it's not us alone doing the hard work. Stuff that we can't even do on our own, that's where God goes, "I'm gonna partner with you."

MAX: Exactly. His Holy Spirit is gonna speak to us, prompt us, lead us, direct us. We have his Word. We have friends, too. We have godly counsel to which we can turn. We have encouraging friends who can help us.

MAX: So we're not--Satan loves to get us isolated, you know? He's the lion who prowls around looking for one whom he can devour. He likes to get that one, that one person off to the side, wrapped up in a world of isolation.

BLYNDA: So for the person who is saying, "Okay, but you know, Pastor Max, there's just no way to tell you all the the things that I've suffered in my life or the pain that I've gone through there's, you know, there's just not a few little tools here and there, I can't just start thinking positive thoughts and my life is gonna change, necessarily."

BLYNDA: What would you say to them about, though the journey may be long before, you know, they feel like they're fully in that new pathway, but how would you encourage them as they're starting?

MAX: Let me just talk to that person, because the the fact of the matter is maybe today is a tough day for you. I would encourage you to just take a few moments and find a quiet place. Go off in a corner, go out in the backyard, go someplace where you can be uninterrupted, and just tell Jesus exactly what it is you're facing today.

MAX: Doesn't have to be eloquent. Don't worry about mis-praying. Just go talk to him. And talk as long as you want, and he will listen. He'll treat you like he has all the time in the world, because he does.

MAX: Just tell him, and say, "Lord, today is a tough day. I'm still struggling with--" what comes to my mind is grief. Maybe I'm talking to somebody who's, you miss your loved ones so much. You did not want to outlive him or her. And you just feel like you can't move forward.

MAX: Well, that's okay. You can talk to God about that and just say, "Lord, my heart is so heavy today. I wanna have more joy, but I can't do it without you." Be honest. Honesty is important here. Don't cover it up, don't pretend. Don't try to be perfect.

MAX: It's a tough season you're in, but just tell him, and say, "Lord, today, would you please go ahead of me, and would you begin preparing me today for what I'm gonna face today?"

MAX: And then the next time you find yourself, and it could just be in five minutes, but the next time you find that wave of grief coming, then you can say, "Okay, Lord, I know we talked about this earlier. I know you're helping me," and you'll realize you're not facing it alone.

MAX: The devil does not want you to talk to God, but God loves for you to talk to him. So start right there. Just start right there. And if necessary, contact a friend, contact a pastor. Maybe it's time for a counselor. It might be time to go in for some therapy. That's okay.

MAX: It's a challenging world in which we live. And so, cut yourself some slack, be kind to yourself, and just start right there. Start with honest, heartfelt prayer, and see where that takes you.

RANDY: That's great, I love it. You know, the book, "Tame Your Thoughts," is available wherever you get books. We'd love to send it to you today if you'd like to join us in being, actually, the answer to someone else's prayer.

RANDY: And you know, the faithfulness of our mission outreach has paid off. We're seeing, you know, wonderful dividends being reaped in the mission field, but it is an ongoing thing. And so we'd like to show you something where you can be a part of being a blessing to someone else today.

RANDY: And again, if you would like to request Max Lucado's book, "Tame Your Thoughts," with your gift towards Mission Feeding, be sure to do that. But watch this and see what God would have you do.

JOHN YEATTS: I'm John Yeatts, the director of world missions for Life Outreach International. I'm here in Angola this week with our team as we have been documenting the cases of crisis throughout the region.

JOHN YEATTS: We, at times, hire interpreters to go with our video team. Today I have with me Emilio, who is a professional language teacher. He's here in the red. And then I have Ermelinda who is also a teacher here in Angola.

JOHN YEATTS: So, as we were traveling together, there was kind of a "wow" moment. Both of you kind of had the same experience, but I wanted you to hear it from someone firsthand who's experienced the benefit of Mission Feeding.

JOHN: So let me say on behalf of all of the friends of Life Outreach, it was a great honor to be a blessing to your family. It's easy to start something. It's a completely different thing to go the distance. And as you continue to provide, we will continue to serve.

JOHN: Our mission teams are in place to minister to these that are in the most remote areas. There is still a desperate need in this country and many countries across the continent of Africa.

JOHN: We have been working to see the light of Jesus shine in people's lives, not only in word but also in deed. So thank you for being a part of what we do with Mission Feeding.

RANDY: I love seeing that. You know, Blynda, what's great for those of us who have kind of been, you know, doing this a long time, is I'm old enough to see the generational impact. We're strategically trying to give them the opportunity to have an education so that they can go into a profession and they can be self-sustaining, help their village, provide for their own family, you know? And it does take generations, but we're seeing it pay off.

BLYNDA: You see Emilio and Ermelinda sitting there.

RANDY: Well, and that's it. And so we know some that are doctors, that are nurses, that are teachers, policemen, even lawyers, and then we see some who have come back and said, "I want to help the children the way that I was helped." I just--

BLYNDA: And you see Ermelinda helping a younger generation, you know? It's so beautiful.

RANDY: This is how we work to get people out of poverty, out of abject poverty. And it does take time, but it is working. And that's what we want you to see in that particular piece. We want to see, yes, it's helping to give people a hope and a future, but also, it's still necessary.

RANDY: And in fact, in many of the areas where we're working, the situation right now is very urgent. And so, Blynda, it's tough sometimes to see the great need, but I think there's hope in knowing that we can be the solution.

BLYNDA: It is so much hope. When I think about Emilio saying he was 1 of 11, and the idea that there were so many chances that in his family there would be loss, and yet he got to stand--or sit there today and he got to say, "I am a case of I made it."

BLYNDA: And not only did I get the food I needed, but I am now giving back, and I'm thriving and I'm educated." This is--it's such a success story, and what it should do in each of us is it should say, I really do know that every dollar I give, that could be the story. That could be the story.

RANDY: Absolutely. And so while we celebrate the success stories, I have a simple question for you. Will you step in and give another child that hope for success, that opportunity for education, by giving them that bowl of food that they desperately need today and tomorrow, and until they get to a position where their health is stable and they can focus not on where the next meal will come from, but focus on, what can I learn?

RANDY: How can I get to that point where I have a hope and a future beyond the desperate need in front of me today? Well, here's how we do that. It's called Mission Feeding, and we're inviting you into that right now.

RANDY: Your gift of \$30, \$50, \$100, or \$1,000 perhaps, will help feed 3, 5, 10, or 100 children, just like those two that you saw, for several months. And it's urgent that we hear from you today.

RANDY: There are situations that are completely out of the control of those people, failed crops, droughts, you know, there's over 350,000 children that we're feeding right now every day. We need to continue to feed so that we see more success stories. That depends on you.

RANDY: So please, go online, go to the phone, and make the best gift that you can. You will be giving a hope and a future to countless children.

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.

ANNOUNCER: 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.

ANNOUNCER: 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.

ANNOUNCER: 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.

ANNOUNCER: 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 do hope you'll go online or go to the phone, make the best gift you can. Know that you will be helping to save lives. We can do it, but we can do it only when we work together, so.

RANDY: And be sure you request "Tame Your Thoughts" by Max Lucado today. Blynda, I just loved this conversation. To me it's core, it's so helpful.

BLYNDA: It is--it is truly like a core Christian conversation, like, if you're a believer. It's like, okay, you've got to get your thought life in order, and we're so thankful for this book, that you are helping us do that.

MAX: Thank you, thank you, thank you. It's a great joy to be with you. Y'all are a lot of fun. It's a great honor.

BLYNDA: Well, we love having you. We would love for you to come back any time.

MAX: Well, you're so kind. You're so kind.

RANDY: And we hope that you will come back every time here on "Life Today." We'll see you again next time.

♪ 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 ♪

KATHIE LEE GIFFORD: So let's ask ourselves, what are we zealous about that really has nothing to do with Jesus?

ANNOUNCER: Kathie Lee Gifford, tomorrow.

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