

8/12/2026

Week 33

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Danny Gokey

"Bad Thoughts"

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

ANNOUNCER: Coming up, Grammy-nominated artist Danny Gokey opens up about his struggles with religious OCD.

DANNY GOKEY: So the term is called scrupulosity. Scrupulosity is focused on religious and belief systems, and so, my type of scrupulosity, I had a deep fear on the inside of me. I thought I had committed the unpardonable sin as a young kid and carried that mostly through the majority of my life, and it debilitated me.

[music]

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today," I'm Randy Robison. That's Blynda Lane, how are you?

BLYNDA LANE: I'm good, how are you, Randy?

RANDY: I'm doing okay, you know, making it through. And you know, the interesting thing about when you see people on television or on stage, it's easy as a viewer, I've done it, at home and thinking, "Oh, man, they've got it made, they've got it all together. They don't struggle with anything."

BLYNDA: "They don't struggle with anything, life's never hard."

RANDY: And it's just not true. We're real people like you. We have a guest today that you will probably know. His name is Danny Gokey, wonderful singer, what was it, "American Idol"?

BLYNDA: I can't tell you how many times I voted for him.

RANDY: Oh, you did?

BLYNDA: I voted and voted and voted and voted.

RANDY: That's great. Well, it worked.

BLYNDA: I think, yes, top three, right?

DANNY: Top three.

BLYNDA: Welcome, Danny!

DANNY: I could have used a couple more votes, but you know, I'll let that go.

RANDY: In my book, top one.

BLYNDA: That's right, absolutely.

RANDY: Anyway, welcome to the program. It's great to see you again, man.

DANNY: Well, thank you, glad to be here. Glad to be here. Thanks for having me on.

RANDY: So I learned a new term that I'd never heard, and sometimes I roll my eyes at, you know, medical doctors making up terms and diagnoses and things like that. This one fascinated me.

Take us a little bit back to where we can understand just what you've been through, some of the struggles that you've been really open about, which I can just say thank you for that, thank you for that. But walk us through some of that.

DANNY: So the term is called scrupulosity. It is a form of OCD, but it's--so OCD comes in many different forms. OCD is a fear-based-- it's rooted in fear, right? Obsessive-compulsive, because you feel like you lose control.

Mine happened to be scrupulosity, it's focused on religious and belief systems. And so, my type of scrupulosity, I had a deep fear on the inside of me. Could have been a mix of doctrine, but also could have been how I received things, and so how I received them, how I read and interpreted the Word of God as a kid. And so, anyways, I thought I had committed the unpardonable sin as a young kid and carried that mostly through the majority of my life, and it debilitated me.

And here's what happened. I would have uncontrollable thoughts in my mind, and I didn't know where these thoughts would come from, but since they were in my mind, I thought they were mine. And so, and I always knew that verse, because as a kid, you know, when you read the Scriptures, if you have a fear lens, you'll read everything as, "Oh my gosh, I don't wanna go to hell," right?

BLYNDA: It's all about that.

DANNY: Yeah, and it's all about that. "I don't wanna make God mad, don't wanna go to hell." Now, some people, that doesn't bother them. "Well, I guess if I'm going to hell, I'm gonna have a good time." That was not me. I cannot live a good life thinking I was going to hell. That would stop me from that. And so, for a long time as I carried this, I remember, like, I think I was in fifth grade.

I stayed home for a couple of days from school because I mean, I made myself physically sick because of it. You know, wrong beliefs and wrong ideas have consequences, and it was a private battle. I would never tell my parents, wouldn't tell anyone, because it was so shameful and so secretive. And so, anyways, I wrestled through this a long time, and you know, and it stirs up emotions. What is emotions? It's energy in motion, and so, when you have this energy in motion going through your body thinking that you're condemned, you're going to hell, you're absolutely no good, it's gonna have an effect on you.

And so, through the years, I mean, God was there, don't get me wrong. Even with the wrong beliefs, he was still there. But you have to accept the truth to become free. And I couldn't just--I couldn't figure out how to get free with this thought hanging over me. And so yes, I carried this for a long time.

RANDY: So, but just--you're being very sensitive to our audience, and I appreciate that. But essentially those thoughts which were repetitive, like rapid fire, were cursing God, essentially.

DANNY: Yeah, yeah, if you wanna go there, I mean, it was everything that was holy and in heaven, you know what I'm saying? So let's just put it that way, and just bad words, and it just freaked me out. And it would just like debilitate me, and into my twenties, and like I said, I had wrong theology and wrong doctrine about it, and I grew up in a very charismatic church, and so, you know, a lot of the belief systems that I carried, I don't think--they were rooted in experiences and not into the Word of God. And so, yeah, I mean, there's so many ways I can go with this, but I'll tell you this, there's a saying that, you know, feelings buried alive never die. These feelings were buried so deep inside of me that they would just fester, and it started coming out in my physical body. And every day wasn't hell.

There were days that were hell, and then there were days that were good, days that I could just kind of get that behind me, and days that I could just kind of process it in my own--because remember, at 20 years old, I wanted to tell--I told a youth pastor, and that youth pastor, it was the first time I opened my mouth to mention this. And this youth pastor, he didn't--he looked up Scriptures, he's like, "Well, the Bible says that no one by the Spirit of God can say Jesus isn't Lord." And so, and I didn't know how to interpret that, and he was doing his best. I'm still friends with this youth pastor. But at that time I said, "He don't have an answer," I thought I could get an answer sharing it. Remember this, "Confess your sins to one another and you'll be healed"? I confessed it, and I didn't get healed.

And so anyways, I kept it as a vault, and then 33 years old, what it started doing was it started making me just malfunction as a human and have high emotional problems. I

would hide it very well. Some of the unhealthy things I did was pray more, fast more, read more, making deals with God, like, "Okay, if--" You know, it just gets really crazy when--the devil's been fighting battles with humans in the secret place for a long time. He's way better at it than you and I are. And so, I fought there for a long time, and it wasn't until I started talking more and more, looking for answers, being open about it, not hiding it, is when I started getting help.

BLYNDA: Okay, so I'm curious, because I'm really fascinated by it, because how did you know--like, as a young child, we're all so vulnerable, and we hear a Bible story and we interpret it a certain way, and that can kind of put us on a train of thinking. But you're saying you absorbed those stories or things that you heard as so deep into your soul that when you matured and grew up, was there any looking back and going "No, no, that couldn't be right, it must be this way," or was it just that your brain gets in a way of thinking? I'm really curious about how this was something that went from childhood to adulthood.

DANNY: Yeah, I think people don't--you know, the Bible says, "It's the little foxes that spoil the vine." I don't think people realize how important your decisions are, even when you don't think you're--you're responding at all times, and I think it starts--they say that many people can be born with a fear kind of basis or a love basis, and it all starts with just small decisions, even in the womb, and you know, things like that. So anyways, from a young kid, how I interpreted things, I took very personal. How I saw things, it always became a reflection of me. And so I think over time, this wasn't just something that just, boom, it hit me, it was small decisions over time, not knowing, being ignorant of the truth, that just got me to where I was.

And so everything, remember, it was, me because I went to a church that was--my grandfather got saved, radical testimony, but a lot of hell and brimstone, from what I remember. Or am I wrong, because was it my interpretation? So I think, because humans, we're not these straight arrows that are just perfect at everything. We are skewed, and we have sin in our lives.

And so I think for me, I had this bent, and then over time, it became something that became macro. And so these little micro-decisions along the way became this very macro thing that oppressed me for a very long time. Does that make sense?

BLYNDA: It does, so did it make you a little bit more like, "I'm gonna keep doing good works to please God," or did it make you, "I don't wanna live, I can't do anything"? Like, how does it--

DANNY: So God was there the whole time, and when I cried out, he would answer. But when you're dealing with scrupulosity, if you look at, is it John Bunyan who wrote "Pilgrim's Progress"? He dealt with this as well. You can actually dig into it and he talks-- when you read his book, you will be like, "This man went through hell," because you wanna believe the truth, but you have this ever-pervading thought that is so powerful, that it's almost like,

for me it's like, "I need an encounter with Jesus himself or I'm not gonna believe this." You can't operate like that, right? And so, anyways, a lot of people struggle with this.

But one thing that was very helpful was listening to Joseph Prince, because he struggled with--if you look at this, he struggled with he thought he blasphemed the Holy Spirit as well. There's a lot--this is a tool that enemy uses a lot, because I was just talking with a friend recently who was at our house for Easter, and she was talking about when she started to come back to the Lord, she started having these bad thoughts about the Holy Spirit, and she was like--and it freaked her out, she was like, "That's an unpardonable sin."

And I think there's a lot of, the enemy will just use your ignorance against you to put you in a jail cell, and this is why we must get to know the truth. And for me, I'll kind of maybe park the car right here is, all that years of wrong beliefs, and I got my mind right, but my body was suffering then. I put such intense pressure, because I was in this works mode, trying to make deals with God. When I was a kid, I'd make deals with God, like, "I don't wanna go to hell, I'll just be good so you don't send me to a bad part of hell," you know, like there's any good part, right?

It's just weird thinking, but this is what humans do. This is why we need the Scriptures. This is why we need Jesus.

RANDY: You know, when you talk about just uncontrollable thoughts in general, and I think that most people struggle with them at some level. If you were to say, "Well, that's not normal," I'd say, "Mm, I think it's normal to have uncontrollable thoughts and not know where they come from." Sometimes my dad--my dad struggled with them, and he used to say that not all of your thoughts are your own.

And I don't, you know, put everything on the devil, we have to have some kind of responsibility, but I do think, you look at those fiery darts that Paul wrote about. When did you realize that maybe those blasphemous thoughts that you didn't want, that you didn't believe, maybe they weren't your own?

DANNY: See, I wanted to believe that they weren't mine, but remember, it's all about these choices along the way, "I'm skewed, I'm broken, I'm bad," that sometimes you just start thinking, "Well, I'm just a mess," like, I'm worse than everyone else. This journey that got me here was, and I have to say this again and again, small decisions, small decisions, small beliefs, small things that compounded through the years that got me to the mess I was in. But God was there the whole time. I remember at 33 years old, the Lord waking me up with Romans 4, and reading Romans 4, talking about, "My righteousness is based on Christ's finished work on the cross." And this is why, you know, you referenced the wiles of the enemy because what does the wiles mean? It means seduction, manipulation, tricks, these things.

He's trying to seduce you into this place so you become ineffective in the kingdom of God. But what's the very first thing that, when Paul says, "Put on the armor of God," what does

he say? "Put on the belt of truth." That's the very first item he tells you to put on, you know, because the truth is so powerful. The truth has power to set you free. It's funny, because when I started exposing this, I found out my dad went through it.

We didn't talk about this. When I found out, I started taking authority over this, I noticed my kid when he was like 6 years old, my oldest, he's 13 now. I heard him say, "Shut up, Gabriel." And I thought that's what he said. I said, "Danny, did you tell Gabriel to shut up?" I was putting him in the bed.

RANDY: Who's Gabriel?

DANNY: He's our younger son.

RANDY: He was like, what, three years old?

DANNY: Yeah, he must have been like three years old. But I said, "Danny, why'd you tell Gabriel to shut up," you know, because I'd just prayed for them and everything. He goes, "I didn't." He got real quiet, he goes, "I said, 'Shut up, devil.'" I go, "Wait, why did you tell the devil to shut up?" He goes, "I have these thoughts in my head, It's 'dumb God, dumb God, dumb God,' over and over." And that's what I used to go through. And I said, "Danny," this is the first time I could tell people, there's nothing wrong with you.

And I deal with my kids' thoughts, right, because not every thought is yours. And even if it is yours, right, even if you do have a bad thought, you can take authority over that thought and you can subject it to the light of truth. But with my kids, because we talk about it, we don't keep it a secret, I've been able to address it. And my kids, I'll ask them all the time, "Tell me what your thoughts.

What are you thinking? What's going on in your brain? Are there thoughts that you can't get rid of?" We're doing checkups at the Gokey home because I was too scared to tell people to check on me. And I would wake my dad in the middle of the night and tell him I was struggling with my thoughts, and he would just give me verses, but we would never talk about the thing.

BLYNDA: There wasn't this kind of language back then to even grasp onto.

DANNY: And my dad probably, even though he dealt with it in his twenties, he probably thought, "He's too young to be dealing with that."

BLYNDA: But isn't it so great though that you recognize that it can be a generational thing, that you're really kind of drawing the line in the sand and saying, "My kids aren't going to have the experience with it that I had. I'm stopping it at a young age"?

DANNY: Oh, for sure, stopping it completely, giving them the truth, and trying to let my kids know like, "Hey, every decision counts," like I know, maybe, like for instance, my kid talks about, like, "I just can't get this song out of my head." I know that, when you're younger, it's

hard. You have your mind, and then you have your brain. It's hard to control that brain, but use your mind to control your brain.

And just keep, you just keep--you don't sit there and fight it, like, 'cause I used to just fight these thoughts. "I'm not gonna think these thoughts," and it would just make it worse. But just know this, there's nothing wrong with you, and just keep switching your focus.

These small micro-moves, everyone's looking for a macro, "I need an encounter with the Lord, I need an angel to come to me, I need a prophetic word, 'You have not blasphemed the Holy Spirit.'" No, no, no, get in your Word, pray, watch how this, over time, will begin to change you, begin to--don't look for the macro. That's with the kids, let me plant this here with them, you know?

BLYNDA: It's like the renewing of your mind that the Word talks about, daily.

RANDY: My favorite thing about bad thoughts--

DANNY: Is there a favourite thing about bad thoughts?

RANDY: Yeah, this is my favorite thing about bad thoughts and wrong ideas. You can leave them behind, but what I think where the real damage and the real lie comes in is not when you think, "Okay, I've had a bad thought, a thought I don't want, or a hold a wrong idea," it's when the enemy comes in and says, "You're a bad person." It's that level of condemnation that you feel like you can't get out from under.

I think just separating and saying, "Okay, that is a wrong idea, that is a bad thought. I don't want anything to do with it," allows you to move forward and get rid of it, right?

DANNY: My wife would say that, when I got married and I finally revealed it, because, you know, my first wife passed away. I remember, just think what's so deep. I remember at 24 years old marrying my first wife. She ended up passing away from a heart condition. It's part of my story, people know it.

Some do, some don't. But I remember sitting there at the wedding dinner and saying, "She doesn't know I'm a blasphemer." I remember thinking that in my suit, because still this day I was like, "I wonder if I ever told her, what would she think of me?" And then she passed away, and I married to my new wife, and it's something I just kept deep inside of me. And finally when I got it out, my wife, first of all, I just told her I had this secret, so she thought it was--when I told her what it was, she just started laughing at me. And I'm like, "This is not funny." I'm crying, 33 years old, a crying man, and she said, "Danny, people get thoughts--I get bad thoughts, too, I just don't think about them." But there's something about religion that will make you so self-focused, and this is the opposite of the gospel. The gospel is focused on Jesus.

My right--even when I have a bad thought, my right standing before the Father is that I'm righteous. The good--it's the goodest news ever. That's a song, "Goodest News." I'm gonna

write a song called "Goodest News," because it's better than good, right? But now that I've taken all the pressure off of me, do you understand how this is just--it just gets deeper and darker, because I thought I had to fix myself as a kid. I just had wrong theology, wrong doctrine, and getting to the truth, understanding who Jesus is, taking the pressure off yourself, it's set me free.

RANDY: I realize, I mean, I'm a thief on a cross, hanging there, I can't do anything except say, "Jesus, remember me," and you know what he says? "You're with me, I'm with you," that's it.

What would you say to someone who's watching right now that's struggling with this kind of thing, that is thinking, "I have condemned myself, I can't get out, I'm a bad person"? What would you say to liberate them from just that core idea so they can get on a path to healing?

DANNY: That's a false gospel, and a little leaven will leaven the whole lump, if it's about you and your performance and about what you think you should be doing, what you're not doing. The very--listen, when we came to Christ, because many people who have this thing, they don't know--they know Christ, but when you came to Christ and knew you couldn't save yourself, you have to come back to that place. I remember that, "Lord, I surrender. But even in this battle, I surrender.

I can't fight this thing." And then go find, read the Bible, and ask the Holy Spirit to open up the truth. Start in Romans, start in Galatians, go into 1 John. I mean, these are the gospel messages that will set you free. I would say listen to Joseph Prince, listen to Andrew Wommack, listen to Keith Moore.

These are people who will get you on track, because they're teachers. It's the gifts that God gave us, teachers, apostles, evangelists, preachers, so that they can edify and build up the saints. So find--I recommend those three preachers, I'll start right there. There's probably a lot more, but that's who I know have good doctrine.

RANDY: You can recommend "Life Today," it'd be okay.

DANNY: "Life Today," well, yeah.

BLYNDA: In fact, if you're watching right now, as you are, there's a prayer line. If Danny has spoken something to your heart and you know that you need prayer, call the number on the screen right now. They're there to help you, they're there to listen to you and to encourage you, so don't hesitate to call.

RANDY: Yeah, absolutely, and you know, right now there are other people, just the mission of Life Outreach International and the purpose of "Life Today" is to encourage, to edify, to point to Christ as the solution, and there are people right now who need to see God in

action. And you know, if you look through Scripture, you'll find a pattern. God speaks through his people.

He calls us his hands and his feet. So we're gonna shift a little bit, because I want you to see an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ, to show God's love to someone who desperately needs to hear it and to see it, watch this.

DON: My name is Don and I am a cameraman, producer, and editor for LOI.

RACHEL: Hello, my name is Rachel, and I work in the missions department. I've had the privilege to travel on a few trips now.

ARIKA: My name is Arika and I'm one of the videographers on the missions team.

MANAL: Hi, my name is Manal, and this is my second trip. Part of my job is to come take photos and document and capture stories of people, go on these adventurous trips, see different parts of the world. But what you can't imagine is some of the suffering that we get to encounter.

DON: This is my third trip with LOI, and when I started, I did not know what to expect.

ARIKA: And I've seen a lot of dirty water sources, from rivers to hand-dug wells, to this pond you see behind me. It is heartbreaking to see these mothers and these grandmothers and these children going to collect water to drink, and it's always dirty.

DON: In Angola, we went to a river where I saw families dipping water where cattle were up the river just a short way. Down the river were mothers and other children getting water to drink.

RACHEL: It's still shocking just to see how much people are suffering every single day, and they're thinking about their children who are getting sick, they're vomiting, they have diarrhea, they have fever, and they're helpless.

ARIKA: To hear those stories is really painful when it's their only choice. You know they're doing all they can, and their kids are still dying.

MANAL: As we sit with people and hear their stories, we're not just professionals who are documenting and capturing moments, but we get to sit with them, we get to be in their pain with them.

DON: We go back to the same villages that we go to to hear the stories and the need of it, and we go right back and give those villages those wells that we said we would try to do. And we stand behind our word, we actually do that.

ARIKA: And Life Outreach partners with people all over the world that digs them a clean water well. They last for a lifetime.

ALL: A cup of clean water!

MANAL: Jesus said to love the least of these, and I think it's our responsibility to take care of that and to help as best as we can.

RANDY: You know, Blynda, I enjoy seeing that because I've been out in the field with so many of these people, and there are so many others, and for you as a viewer to get to see these people that, if you saw them, you know, at your church or in a restaurant, you would have no idea what they do literally helps to save lives. But the reality is it takes all of us.

BLYNDA: They're using their gifts.

RANDY: They're using their gifts, they're using their resources.

BLYNDA: What God gave them, and it's the same, it's the same for each of you. You might not be sent to photograph on the mission field, but you have resources that you can send to make sure that these wells are being drilled.

RANDY: And you know, I will say this. So many of you as viewers, I mean, you've just stood behind us so wonderfully all these years. You give us your prayers, and I wanna say, never, ever underestimate the power of prayer. So we would ask you right now to just say, "Lord, what would you have me give?" And if the Lord says, "Pray, pray for those who are hurting. Pray for those who are in the field, pray for those doing the work," then please, we want your prayers.

And if God says to you, "Hey, a \$48 gift right now," we know that would serve 10 people water for life based on the numbers, then I would just encourage obedience. It is a sacrifice, to a level, but God, he wants obedience over sacrifice. So if it's a prayer, if it's an action, whatever God tells you to do, let's step out and do it. We are asking that you would help us reach our goal, 350 wells across 20 nations. Perhaps you could drill a well yourself. \$4800 is the average for that.

Whatever it is, we just ask that you be obedient. That's what we want. We want people who hear God's voice and act on it. And Blynda, I don't know the dynamics of all that goes on with prayer and with action and the problems so big I can't solve it all, you can't solve it all, but what I do know is when we bring what we've got to Jesus, miraculous things happen.

BLYNDA: When we just make our sacrifice of praise, whatever that is, whatever God tells us to do, it does something internally to us to know that we're partnering with Jesus to change lives.

RANDY: Absolutely, we do have some wonderful gifts that we would love to send you, a prayer journal for your spiritual health, your physical health, just reminders. But most of all, we ask that you will join us in your heart, in your prayers, and your actions, because you and I are called to be God's representatives to those who are hurting. Please go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can.

ANNOUNCER: Every day, far too many lives are lost to waterborne disease, and tragically, children under the age of five are the most vulnerable. Through Mission Water for Life, you can give desperate mothers hope and precious children a future by helping provide clean, life-giving water before it's too late. Our goal this year is to drill 350 water wells in areas where the need is greatest, but it won't be possible without you.

Today, your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for 5 children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10, and \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime. In thanks for your gift of any amount, we'll send you "Prayers for My Spiritual Health." This beautifully-crafted prayer book will meet you in the places where anxiety, grief, and spiritual weariness run deep, guiding you through prayers for inner peace, emotional healing, and intimacy with God.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "Your Life of Prayer" bundle. This collection includes "Prayers for My Spiritual Health," along with "Prayers for My Physical Health" and the "Life Prayer" journal, three companions to help strengthen your walk with Christ. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people, or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well, and request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "The Good Shepherd." Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

RANDY: We really would love to hear from you today. Please go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can. You can make a huge impact in someone's life. You can help save lives, so I hope to hear from you. I would also like to hope to hear from Danny Gokey a little more.

BLYNDA: I feel like we just barely scratched the surface.

RANDY: Can you hang around and we can talk some more?

DANNY: Yes, I can.

BLYNDA: Thank you.

RANDY: Very cool, well, we look forward to seeing you, and we look forward to seeing you next time here on "Life Today." If you miss any of the programs, lifetoday.org. We'll see you again next time.

[music]

ANNOUNCER: "Stay" connected with Life Today through your favorite social media. Get access to exclusive content and news from all of the outreaches of Life.

Just search "Life Today," and you'll be connected to exciting shows featuring your favorite guests. Never miss a moment to get inspired, get involved, and get the best of Life anytime, anywhere.

"Life Today" is always on. Subscribe, follow, like, and get the "Life Today" social media experience.

DANNY: And if that's the one message I could tell the younger Danny, it's that Jesus is the one who can save you, and you don't have to fight this battle alone.

ANNOUNCER: Tomorrow.

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.