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Week 35

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Ed Newton

"Stop Limiting Yourself"

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

ED NEWTON: I'm navigating through this hearing world, but I'm also in a deaf world. And I'm wrestling with my identity, wrestling with my worth, wrestling with who I really am. There's this thorn that I'm carrying of I'm just not good enough. Very uncomfortable in my own skin. Somebody just tell me I'm valuable. Tell me I have worth.

ANNOUNCER: How God showed Ed Newton his worth and reminded him of his true identity, next on "Life Today."

[music]

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

BLYNDA LANE: I'm good.

RANDY: Do you feel like you're qualified for this job? Because sometimes I question whether I should be here.

BLYNDA: See, this is the thing. There's sometimes that I'm like, "I can't believe I'm doing this," and then I go, "Hey, somebody gets to do it. Why not me?"

RANDY: Why not you? Why not you?

BLYNDA: Why not me, you know? This is a good question to ask, especially if your heart's pure, you're doing what God's asked you to do, why not you?

RANDY: Sometimes you're called for things, and you just gotta step out. We're gonna talk about that.

BLYNDA: I was gonna say, this might seem like an interesting intro, what we're talking about, but we're gonna show you why it's important.

RANDY: Let's show the book. This is the book, "Why Not You?" It is written by Pastor Ed Newton, who joins us today from Community Bible Church in San Antonio, Texas, and he's gonna explain why not, right? How you doing, man?

ED: Thank you all so much for allowing me to be on the show.

BLYNDA: Truly, I love that concept because I've actually had this thought before, maybe more in the negative, of, "God, is there anything you can do with me? Can you use me in any way?" Like, is there anything? And so I love this concept of changing that narrative in my mind of, okay, God believes a lot about you, he created you, why not you to do the big thing that is in your heart to do? So what was the reason behind writing a book called "Why Not You?"

ED: I think ultimately we believe the very best about everybody else except for us.

RANDY: It's true.

ED: And I think for so many of us, and you alluded to this, so many times when things don't go our way we go, "Why me?" But if we really believe in the sovereignty of God, that all things work together for his greater good, then what he brings to us is for us, and so maybe we should flip the question and go, "Why not me?" So that's the premise. Could we believe what God believes about us?

RANDY: I think that what you're talking about, in essence, is sort of perspective, how do you look at things. How do we know the right place to set our perspective, because, you know, the world says one thing, Scripture not always lining up with the world. How do we figure out what's true?

ED: That's a great question. I think ultimately the world that we live in wants to define your worth and value by the things that we do, the things that we accomplish. And when we think about truly imago dei, being made in the image of God, our worth and value comes from a God that's formed and fashioned us in our mother's womb, Psalm 139 teaches that. But so many of us know that, and I think our audience today goes, "Yeah, I've heard that one before, but why do I wrestle with my insecurities, insufficiencies, and inadequacies?" And this is what's so beautiful about the Scripture. It does not parade perfect people, it parades a perfect God that uses imperfect people.

And it is a perspective shift to go, "God, you don't have to use me, but you want to." But there's guys like me, and I'm just gonna go ahead and jump into this if that's okay. I think for me I wrestled with my insecurity, insufficiency, inadequacy, my whole life. Matter of fact, I think so many times people think of people much like you, or maybe somebody like me, that stands on stages and speaks to thousands of people, like, "He just exudes confidence," but inside I'm wrestling with worth and value. Such a people-pleaser by nature. Really wrestle with the fact of, if somebody doesn't like me, I just crumble.

And Lecrae, who's a great hip-hop artist, says that we live for everyone's acceptance and die from their rejection. But if I'm not enough without it, then I'll never be enough with it. And what that means for all of us is that my worth and value, as you mentioned, has to come from a biblical worldview, that God sees me for me. He really is Yahweh that walks with us and has great plans and purposes. Even when it doesn't feel good, there's a God that's working for our good.

RANDY: Do you think that some of your--the things you struggle with as an adult, is it your personality, is it your nature, was it something in your childhood? Where do these insecurities come from? Are they just lies?

ED: Well, the fact that you even asked that question just lets me know that the Spirit of God is already in this convo, because I think for me personally, I grew up with two deaf parents, so both my parents were deaf. My mom had cerebral palsy. My mom died in 2020, and my dad died in 2022, and I get my mother's journal entry, my grandmother's journal entry about my mom. So long story short, just to abbreviate this, I did not realize fully that my mom was unable to have children, based upon her diagnosis. And my grandmother takes my mom to a tent revival service in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Once more, my mom's deaf, cerebral palsy, and my mom wants to be healed of deafness. So she comes forward at a tent revival service, the evangelist prophesies over my mom who's deaf, and she can't understand him, leans over to my grandmother, and this is the sign for, "What did he say?" And my grandmother goes, "You are pregnant." And my mom was married, unable to have children, and I didn't find that out until my mom died, that that was me. My whole life I've been wrestling with my worth and value. It led me to a place of counseling. My counselor began to help me understand some language.

He said, "When you grow up in a family much like what you grew up in," and there was so much discrimination, so much misunderstanding, so much of like, okay, why are your parents this way? And I'm the bridge, I'm the communicator. I'm by definition a CODA, a child of a deaf adult, and I'm having to interpret for them, and all I'm hearing, in a very ill-equipped world that understands how to navigate with deaf people, I'm hearing some of the most mean, critical statements. And so I'm absorbing this at 9, 10, 11 years old. But when I was 10 years old at a McDonald's, a woman spoke. I didn't know this was prophecy. I didn't come to know Jesus till I was in high school.

But a sweet African-American woman spoke over my life when I was 10 years old. She said, "One day God's gonna greatly use you." And when I came to know Jesus, I began to realize all these things that I grew up in, government-subsidized housing, understanding that my parents were deaf, I was the communicator for them, absorbing all of what they would consider rejection, and then, I'm not a good student, I can't pass the SAT. I'm struggling, I can't bring homework-- my mom and dad never finished the 7th and 8th grade, so I can't bring stuff home, and I'm navigating through this hearing world, but I'm also in a deaf world. And I'm wrestling with my identity, wrestling with my worth, wrestling with who I really am.

Come to know Jesus, you're gonna take this away, oh no. There's this thorn that I'm carrying of I'm just not good enough. Very uncomfortable in my own skin. I get married, my wife Stephanie, we've been married almost 28 years. I've become a youth pastor, college pastor, I'm speaking worth and value into all people. I'm a traveling evangelist for 13 years. I see it, I spot it, I'm calling people up, "God's made you," all the while not believing the same thing I'm telling everybody else. And then there was a moment for me that my world fell apart, and I became a pastor at a church that you've mentioned, Community Bible Church, who is my--they're my family. And I began as a pastor in 2016. Four thousand people leave the church when I become a pastor.

BLYNDA: Not exactly the way you wanna start.

ED: No, with a reminder of like, you're not the guy that you took the place of. And Pastor Robert Emmitt, I will always honor, always honor, who gave me a shot that I didn't deserve. I'd never pastored before. Now I have to pastor a staff of 379 employees. I'm a youth evangelist that's now called to pastor. Like, on the road, you got middle school and high school kids that love you, you're signing bibles, taking pictures, people are like, "You're amazing," and then all of a sudden I come into San Antonio, not from San Antonio, and people are like, "You're not that guy."

But that pastor was like, "Hey, Ed, be you." But I didn't know who I was. And what happens in the midst of what I'll call criticism, and people going, "Why are you not this?" and you can see where this is now building, you're like, "Well, who am I really?" So imposter syndrome really begins to step in. I've always heard this statement, "Fake it till you make it," but what if you feel like you're faking and you're never gonna make it? And so literally my world inside is like, "Who am I really?" because once more, you start believing, like, somebody just tell me I'm valuable, tell me I have worth.

And in the midst of all of this there was a phrase of "Why not you?" that's not original. A man in our church spoke this over me. He kept saying, "Why not you? Why not you?" His name's Chuck Yates, and Chuck Yates just kept speaking that over me.

And then there was a season in 2023 that my world collapsed, and things at the church have bounced back, people came back, the church is exploding in growth, and my daughter at 18 runs away. She left, 2018. I chased her four miles down a road to an H-E-B, and my wife and I say goodbye. She ended up in a relationship she shouldn't have been in, gets married at 19, 30 days into this relationship, but this is an 18-month process. "Hey, Mom and Dad, can I come home?"

She ends up getting divorced. God uses a breakthrough moment in her. But in that 18 months, I've never felt rejection-- it's one thing for people not to like you on television or not to like you on social media or not like you for various reasons, but when you have a family member go, "I don't want you," I'd never-- I'd felt rejection, but I'd never felt that rejection. I didn't wanna live anymore, and that's the first time I'd ever said that out loud to my wife was the day after Christmas. My daughter was gone.

She comes back, I check into counseling. I tell our church, I stand in front of our church and I'm like, "Hey, listen, I'm battling anxiety. I'm battling depression," and I go, "I gotta get help." So I check into a counseling, therapy place, and my counselor just walks with me in an intensive.

And he takes this piece of pottery that he gave me as a homework assignment. He goes, "Go get a piece of pottery," so I go to Hobby Lobby, because that's what good Christians do, right? And so, and I get this piece of pottery. And it's the last day, and he goes, "Break it." So I'm like, "Okay, cool," so I slam it. He turns the lights off, hands me a roll of duct tape, and he goes, "Put it back together."

So I'm like, "Maybe I shouldn't have slammed it that hard." So I'm putting it back together, and then he hands me this small little candle and tells me to put it on the inside, and now it's in a dark room, and he goes, "Light the candle," and I put it inside and he goes, "What do you see?" As a preacher, I know what I'm supposed to say. "The light shines in the darkest places, and the light shines through the broken places." But I look at him and I go, "I see a clearance tag." See, I bought this piece of pottery from Hobby Lobby on clearance.

And he goes, "So you see the clearance tag?" I go, "That's how I feel. That I'm just discounted goods." And what happened in that moment, I cannot explain. A supernatural encounter with the Holy Spirit in my life took place. While I was in Kalamazoo, Michigan, there is a franchise of a Jiffy Lube, it's called Uncle Ed's Oil Shop and just for our audience, my name's Ed. And God speaks in mysterious ways, and while I'm in counseling, and I'm just thinking through this, I see this sign, and it's the beginning of the year. And it says, "New Year, New Oil." Are you with me? Come on, somebody.

BLYNDA: I receive that right now.

ED: So I pull in and I'm like, "God, the old has to go away and the new has to come." And I grew up Baptist, so this is not language I was familiar with. I was like, I really felt like it was a baptismal of the Holy Spirit for me, of understanding new beginnings and this principle of "Why not you?" began to emerge out of counseling, where my counselor took my life and says, "Your whole life has been marked by rejection. Your whole life, all the way up to your daughter. And I gotta ask you a question. What are you gonna do with that rejection?" He said, "There's two types of people that handle rejection.

They just resign to the fact that I will always be under the label of rejection. And then there's other people like you." And I was like, "What do you mean?" He goes, "You try to prove everybody wrong." And I was like, "Whoa." He goes, "Is that not you?" I go, "Every day I wake up trying to prove all the critics wrong." And then he said something to me, and this is for our audience today, he goes, "Stop living your life to prove your critics wrong.

Start living your life to prove your Creator was right, when he picked you, chose you, called you, anointed you." So I come out of counseling with this "Why not you?" phrase on my mirror, every day with a call-up moment. I'm doing this four-minute pregame motivational

talk for a basketball team, a high school Christian basketball team that's lost four games in a row, and my friend's like, "Hey, can you just motivate the kids?" So I walk into this locker room, and I go, "Hey, somebody's gotta get a rebound, why not you? Somebody's gotta make a basket, why not you? This game's not gonna end in a tie, why not you? And somebody's gonna walk away victorious, so why not you?" Think nothing of it, five-minute talk, team wins the game. I go back to my regular life, phone call. Esther Fedd is a literary agent, you know Esther Fedd?

Incredible woman of God. She goes, literally, that's what she says to me. She goes, "Hey, Ed, my name's Esther Fedd. I represent a lot of people. I don't know who you are. I have no idea who you are. But my son--"

RANDY: Oh, wow.

ED: Are you with me?

BLYNDA: Oh my goodness.

ED: "Was in a locker room, and gets back in the car after the game and goes, 'Mom, you represent Brock Purdy from the San Francisco 49ers, Mark Batterson, and all,'" I mean, like, every name you could ever mention, and a lot of people on this show. And she goes, "And my son said, 'You represent a lot of famous people. You ought to represent this guy named Ed that gave us a five-minute talk on "Why not you?"'" So she comes down.

BLYNDA: Really glad they won the game, really happy about that. You might not have gotten the phone call otherwise.

ED: I wouldn't have gotten the phone call. So she comes down and she was like, "I don't know who you are, I have no idea who you are, but your story is fascinating to me." And she goes, "And if you could write one book, what would it be?" And I walk her to the mirror that I look into every day and I go, "Why not you?" So this book is the journal entry of my heart is really what it is.

BLYNDA: Talking about the part that I really wanna dig into more is, I know in the book you say that everything that is in us, that God put in us, we have everything we need to do all that God has for us to do. And it's understanding the power of the Holy Spirit working in us to do it.

So how did you go from this feeling of rejection, "I'm no good," to, "Everything is in me that I need, God has put everything in me to walk this out with the power of the Holy Spirit."? How do you actually shift that? What are the actions you took to make that real in your life?

ED: It's a perspective change, and it really begins to understand, this isn't-- because somebody could listen to me today and go, "Wow, this feels like more of a pep talk of self-confidence." This isn't self-confidence, this is God-confidence. And this is like-- there's so

many stories in the Bible that we could look at, and Moses is one of the stories that I really delve into.

But I think there's something that people miss about Moses, and I missed, because we get Exodus 3, burning bush, "What's your name?" "I am who I am," and then the list of excuses of, "You can't use me." But Moses doesn't start out that way. When you actually look at Acts chapter 7 verses 23 through 25, it says that Moses actually believed that God would use him to deliver the nation of Israel when he was trying to break up the fight between the Israeli and the Egyptian, that God--like, he really believed that God was using him, so much so that he knew that, "I was drawn out of water, that's my name," a very prophetic name, that you're gonna draw out the nation of Israel.

He interrupts a fight between a Jewish man and an Egyptian and basically was like, "Hey, not cool," and then kills that guy, and then confronts two Jewish guys and they're like, "Who are you?" He does all of this because he believes that God put him there. He runs from God 40 years, and God meets him and goes, "I want you to go back and do what you originally had in your heart." Does that make sense?

RANDY: It does, and you know, that leads to a lot of things that are in the book that we don't have time to discuss, unfortunately. When you're anointed, like King David, I've been watching "House of David," like David was anointed, but he wasn't appointed yet. There was a time, right?

ED: That's the chapter.

RANDY: You're right, that's your chapter. Also the idea of always being battle-ready, breaking a lot of patterns in your life. So there's so much, and in fact, I would just say to you guys watching, I hope you will request "Why Not You?"

BLYNDA: It's such a good book.

RANDY: It really is, and it's not just a pep talk, and that's why I want to point that out.

BLYNDA: Because it deals with identity. It actually helps you--

RANDY: It gets you to the Scripture to break those disqualifying lies that we tend to believe. But just quickly, if there's one thing I can ask you to do, for the person who's watching and they've still got that insecurity that they're dealing with, and they're relating to you on kind of the before part but not the after part yet, was there anything you would say to them just to point them in the right direction to start going down the path that you've been down?

ED: Yeah, I just wanna look at somebody today and say that this is not even an accident. The fact that you've even turned on the television set is proof of the reality that God has ordained this moment and to speak into who you are, and I think my prayer is that you would look to the hills in which your help comes from, the Lord who has made heaven and earth. And when we hear the vastness of that, he made you, and you're not a mistake, and

you've been appointed and anointed for great reason. Think about this, the fact that you've given your life to Jesus, and you're still on this earth communicates a destiny that God's given to you. But here's what you have to recognize.

The enemy, Satan himself, seeks to steal every bit of confidence and worth and value. And when we see Jesus in Matthew chapter 4, what does he do? He uses the Word of God to confront the enemy. And my prayer for each and every one of you is that you would saturate your heart with Scripture. 2 Corinthians chapter 10, that you and I would take every thought captive in the name of Jesus, and recognize that our weapons are not of this world, but have power to demolish strongholds. So may the enemy no longer have a foothold and a stronghold in the way you think. Romans chapter 12 says this, "He can renew your mind," but how does he renew our mind?

It's through saturating yourself in the Word of God. Don't just underline verses. I mean, do that, but let these verses underline you. That would be my message. Know who you are, whose you are, and why you are.

RANDY: I love it, and you know, I love that passage. "Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ," and I hit that one point and then you're like, "I've heard that. What does that mean?" And you know what, I believe it's what you're saying. Believe what God says about you. Not what the world says, not what you're telling yourself, what God says about you.

All right, thank you for that. I have a question for you watching, because you're about to see a situation that is difficult, that is insurmountable for any one person, and that is the issue of clean drinking water. I want you to join us, because when you see what you're about to see, you're gonna think, "Boy, I wish somebody would do something about that. I wish God would do more." And I think God looks at us as this is the church, his hands and his feet, and he says, "Why not you?" So as you watch this, you see a need, I hope you hear that question, "Why not you?" because you can be the answer that so many hurting people need. Watch this now.

FEMALE ANNOUNCER: Millions of children around the world do not have access to safe, clean drinking water. As a result, they have no choice but to collect contaminated water from sources like this. Many times, water from these sources is full of disease and bacteria that can cause serious sickness or even death, especially in younger children.

[speaking foreign language]

ANNOUNCER: These children represent millions of others around the world whose lives are in danger every day they drink contaminated water. We can give them a better choice. Working together, we can drill new water wells that provide safe, clean drinking water to thousands of people who live nearby. Please, help us today.

RANDY: As you can see, the lack of clean drinking water is sort of a-- it's a global problem. They tell us there's approximately 2 billion people, and it's the children that are hit the hardest.

BLYNDA: Sometimes we get paralyzed and don't do anything because we know we can't solve the whole problem, but we can solve one of the problems. We can help, and give them a better choice, and it made me start thinking, how many choices do we have in a day of what we wanna drink?

Not just water, but sodas and all these kind of things. And they don't have-- the choice they have right now is one choice, and that's to drink contaminated water. And what we do, the work that we do, gives them another, better choice.

RANDY: All of us together. You see, an average cost of a well when we look across the 20 nations where we hope to drill 350 wells this year, that's our goal, and I believe we'll reach it with your help. The average cost of the well is \$4800, and that means drilling all the way down to where we can get the pure water. It means encasing it, covering it so nothing blows in, no animals get in, and then putting a pump on top of that well where a man, a woman, a child can come get clean drinking water. You make that possible.

If you say, "You know what? I could provide \$4800 for a well." We had a friend recently provide 10 wells. God bless you for what you can do. Maybe you can come and say, "I would like to give water for life to 30 people." That's what \$144 will do.

That well will last an average of 70 years, so whatever you give, you will be giving essentially water for life. This is the last week this campaign is on the air, so we do need to hear from you today. Please go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can, and know. Know this: you will be impacting someone with God's love. You will likely be giving that child a chance at a better life, and together we do it in the name of Jesus, so do it today.

MALE 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." This is the last week. Please call, write, or make your gift online.

RANDY: This is the last week we'll be on the air with this. We need to hear from you, and I hope you will request Pastor Ed Newton's book "Why Not You?" I know it will bless people.

BLYNDA: It will bless you, I believe that. Thank you so much, Pastor Ed, for being with us. It's such a great message, believing what God believes about us, great message.

ED: Thank you.

RANDY: Thank you for being with us. We'll see you again next time here on "Life Today."

[music]

ASHLEY WILLIS: When it comes to treating anxiety, it's something that we need to treat on a spiritual level, on the chemical level, but also emotionally. I mean, it really hits on all of those sides.

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.