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Week 36

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Susie Larson

"Faith To Endure"

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

ANNOUNCER: Coming up, what do you do when God won't answer your desperate prayer?

SUSIE LARSON: I was like the woman who loved her husband, was never gonna leave him, but was privately hurt by him, do you know what I mean? That's how I felt with the Lord. I was still showing up with my time with the Lord, worshipping him.

I love him, where am I gonna go? But I was deeply hurt, like, "Where are you in this? I see you answering prayers over here, but it's crickets here, and I'm dying here. What are you doing?"

ANNOUNCER: Trusting God when all seems hopeless.

[music]

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today." I'm Randy Robison. Who are you?

BLYNDA LANE: Hi, hello, I'm Blynda Lane.

RANDY: Blynda Lane. I always say it, I'm like, maybe she should say her own name.

BLYNDA: No, I appreciate you letting me introduce myself.

RANDY: And we've been having a great time here on the program, because we're rolling straight from the first program with Susie Larson, our guest today.

And by the way, if you missed that program, all the programs are at lifetoday.org. Please go there.

BLYNDA: You will want-- you will want to hear that.

RANDY: I wanna watch it again, honestly, because there were so many things that Susie said that I was like, "That's deep."

BLYNDA: You know, a person who has so much in-- they'll spew all of this truth, and it's like drinking from a fire hydrant, and I'm like, "Okay, pause, I need to listen to it." It's so rich and it's so good. And so we're so thankful you came back.

SUSIE: Honored, thank you for having me back, and that whole fire hydrant thing, I've heard a few times.

BLYNDA: You have a living testimony that every word that you say is rich because you've lived, you've lived it. And so you wrote this book, "More Than You Can Imagine: What God Does When You Trust Him," not just because you thought it would be good for readers, but because you've lived it.

SUSIE: Absolutely, because I'm actually walking through a season, and have been in the last few years, where I have felt the charge by God, in the midst of battles and hardships and heartbreaks, "Build a more resilient trust," you know, "Build a more resilient trust." Like, you know, Jesus says, "Why do you call me Lord and you don't do what I say? If you're doing what I say, you listen, you follow, you build." That's what it says in the Gospels. "You listen, you follow my lead, and you build your life on the rock."

And we, you know, we have a right theology around eternity, but we have practical atheism in the way that we live, as far as where we let our default thoughts and perspectives go to, we let lies linger unchallenged, perspectives that are skewed away from God, we just sort of leave them there.

And so I've really had to apply myself to resilient trust by building a case for the faithfulness of God.

RANDY: Even that phrase right there, resilient trust, because I know some of your story, I know some of the physical things you've battled, and they're horrendous. I'd have quit years ago, right?

Most people probably would have. When you say resilient trust, that right there is loaded, because it says, "I'm gonna trust you, God, no matter what."

BLYNDA: There's like a holding on.

RANDY: "I'm gonna hold on whether my prayer for healing is answered or not. Whatever happens, God, wherever this goes, I'm gonna trust you that you are good, that you have the best for me." Those are hard things when you're facing some of the things that you still deal with.

SUSIE: That's very true, and yet, I have to say, he's an ever-present help in times of trouble. That is not cliché for the person who finds that to be a lifeline. And I remember, one time

after my show, one of my guests was on talking about wavering in unbelief regarding the promises of God, and he was referencing a story where Paul went before Agrippa. And Paul, you know, he's like the best evangelist of all time, gets his chance, he's unjustly imprisoned, and he uses it as an opportunity to preach the gospel.

And in so many words he said, Agrippa said, "You almost persuaded me to become a Christian." And he said-- and this was during COVID, so he's like, "I'm wondering, are there things that I'm only almost persuaded about now that I used to be so sure of back then," since the shaking was happening in those years. And if you heard me on the air, you'd hear my voice crack.

It took all of my restraint not to break down and cry, because I realized in that moment, I was so disappointed in God, and I was so hurt that he was allowing that relapse to happen. I had a relapse from Lyme disease that also included mold toxicity, and had an MRI in my brain, I had seven areas of brain damage. They said it's a horrible-looking MRI. And so, cognitive decline, and it was-- I was having stroke-like symptoms in the middle of the night, and there literally was one morning, after pacing the floor trying to get my irregular heartbeat to settle down and all the numbing to calm down, I begged God, "Either kill me or heal me, because I can't-- I don't have the bandwidth.

I can't keep doing this." And so that was in that space and time where I was like the woman who loved her husband, was never gonna leave him, but was privately hurt by him, do you know what I mean?

That's how I felt with the Lord. I was still showing up with my time with the Lord, worshiping him. I love him, where am I gonna go? But I was deeply hurt, like, "Where are you in this? I see you answering prayers over here, but it's crickets here, and I'm dying here. What are you doing?"

And so after he said that, I thought, I knew that he was good before, and I'm wondering if that's true now, because this has been seven years, and I don't know where you are. And people have their opinions, because I'm public, on why I'm still suffering, and so I went face-down in the carpet and guttural sobbed, and just said, "I don't know what to do with this pain and this heartbreak, but I don't wanna go anywhere but with you."

And he brought me to John the Baptist, and he said, you know, "No greater man born to woman than John," you know? He baptized Jesus, the heavens opened, and yet he's away from the action, in obscurity. He's in prison, and he has his own doubts about the reality of the kingdom story. And he sends his friends to ask, "Are you the Christ, or should we be looking for someone else?" And Jesus in his conviction says, you know, "You go tell John that the blind see," you know, "the lame leap, the deaf recover their hearing, and blessed are those who are not offended with me."

In other words, "I'm still the same God, and just because you're in a season where there's no action and you're not getting what you want, your work here is to not be offended with

my ways." And I had to surrender. It was so painful for me to even admit that, because I fear God. I'm not like an adolescent who flippantly says, "I'm mad at God," you know?

I'm a seasoned follower, but it's been a long journey, and so that hurt, he knew it was there. And that's why I always say he'll always bring a prophet, he'll bring a truth-teller. If you really wanna follow God and you really wanna upgrade your trust and your deeper sense of identity, he'll put someone in your path, and he did on that day.

And so as I just surrendered and cried out to him and showed him, you know, "I'm hurt, I'm disappointed. My friends have their health, they have their wealth, and I feel like a have-not sometimes. I don't know what you're doing," he just said, "Let it out." And I wept and cried it out and I said, "Now, not mine but yours. If you never heal me, I will hate it, but I'm gonna keep serving you. And I know that your peace and your power are on my life." And he whispered, "You don't have to feel well to be powerful in the kingdom." And I'm like, "I would still like to feel well, but I receive that," you know what I'm saying? Because you can move mountains with faith even on your weakest day. And he gave me a glimpse of-- on your weakest day, you shake the heavens, if you've got an ounce of faith and a willingness to trust. So I, really, I recommitted my trust and my love to him, and that was my work. I'm not gonna be offended by the blessings you're bestowing on others while I'm waiting for my own.

BLYNDA: But it's so real what she's saying. It's so real.

RANDY: It is, and you know what? Here's what's healing, because I've had these conversations with a lot of my friends.

The idea that we can measure our faith by our health or our bank account

SUSIE: And all of our outcomes in the present moment.

RANDY: Or getting--right? The prayer of a righteous man avails much, right? You didn't get what you prayed for, you must not be righteous, right? That's sort of the twisting of the Scripture that the enemy can use, and they tried it on Jesus. Susie, every person that's watching right now who has had an unanswered prayer, they're in a physical battle.

Maybe they lost a loved one, or they have a loved one who is far from God, and they've been praying and praying and praying, and that person's still far from God. You can choose to trust, and God can do amazing things with that, and there's no-- you're not wrong, right?

SUSIE: Oh, and there's so much of God, so much more to know and to have in him. I don't understand why he allows what he does, but whatever he allows, he redeems. And I will just tell you, while I'm holding that sorrow and that tension and the frustration of most days not feeling well, I would step up to speak or get on the air and we would see God do the most amazing things. And honestly, I'll just say, I shudder to think of who I would be if I would have gotten everything I wanted, you know? I'm a task person, I'm disciplined, I'm

focused. I think if I felt well all the time, honestly, I would be probably a formulaic Christian. But I can't be, because that's been broken in me. But I also refuse to live in any kind of victim or affliction mentality, I've seen too much. And I will even tell you now physically, I probably feel better than I have in 30 years.

Like, overall, I'm physically doing well, and my doctors have said on more than one occasion, "You should be dead. You should be dead." And so, I am a sign and a wonder, and I say that giving the glory to God. But I'll tell you, if you're not getting what you want right now, it's because there's something in this season that you need from the Lord, and if you can remember that your story is just never about you, and life on Earth is short and eternity is long. And I'll just wrap with this, C.S. Lewis, this is my paraphrase, but he had a quote that once said, "If you look to this world for your story to tie up in a tidy bow, you will live in perpetual disappointment. But if you believe what Jesus says, that you will have trouble, but you'll also see his goodness in the land of the living, you will be perpetually surprised by his goodness." I am in awe of his goodness, and I've spent whole prayer times thanking God for things that haven't happened to me, you know?

There was one day the Lord thundered in my spirit, "You don't even know what I've prevented in your life. You can't even imagine what I have provided." And so I've spent whole prayer times going, "Yeah, these things happen, but that hasn't happened, and that hasn't happened, and even what has happened, you've turned around for some kind of good. That's who you are." And I've just got my eyes on eternity, and I know that every blessing, every season of favor, every season of hardship is packed with eternal potential, and if you steward it that way, it will reverberate into heaven. If you make it all about you, it's a squandered opportunity for sure.

BLYNDA: It's so sweet even just to think about the idea of being able to utter grateful words in the midst of pain, and I think that is a practice that we should have more often, to-- we can always find something to be grateful for. You talk in your book about that God speaks a better word, so this conversation even makes me think about how important, when you are suffering, when there is something, an obstacle in your life, how important what you speak about that thing, what you speak over yourself, and how you allow the Lord to speak to your heart, how important that is, and how I think a lot of times, maybe the words that we choose to listen to, maybe the voices we choose to listen to, maybe are not that of heaven.

And how important is that, when you're walking through a struggle or an obstacle, that you allow God to speak his better word over you, and how you drown out the other voices?

SUSIE: You know, you have to know what he sounds like. What you're saying is of critical importance. In fact, we could do a whole show on that, and I'm super-passionate about it, because not only do the words you speak over your life matter, and the enemy is a legalist. If you give him legal right, he will take it. But again, this is not name it, claim it, but there's something to be said about this. I remember one day we were praying about our medical bills. As young marrieds, we had more medical debt than income. And you know, I'm like, "Lord, you're gonna supply all our needs, we're gonna be okay." And then I got up and I

said, "I don't see how this is ever gonna work out." And I could literally picture God rubbing his temples going, "Okay, which phrase should I act on? The prayer that says I will or the statement that says I won't?"

And I'm just saying that aligning our perspective with Scripture is extremely important. But when you suffer, you will have people who try to tie that up in a bow or make a formula, and I think it's often to distance themselves from it, to say, "I don't want that to happen to me, so I'm gonna be like Job's friends and tell you what your problem is." And I think it's so important to be able to discern God's voice so that you can decide what to accept and what to reject. And there's a story in that book where a young married-- a friend of mine, she was young married, and she felt led by the Lord, she and her husband, to tithe.

And God brought her to Malachi, and there was a line in Malachi that says, "Your fruit will not fall from the vine before its time," and she put her hand on her growing abdomen, and she just-- it quickened in her, like the Lord's like, "I'm gonna promise you to carry this baby to term." And there was a self-appointed prophet in church that Sunday who marched over to her and said, "God told me to tell you that baby's coming early, that baby's coming six weeks early," and she's like, "Why would you say that? God gave me a promise." She goes, "This is what God is saying."

And each Sunday, that woman bee-lined to her, and over the weeks, her faith and her trust resolved, because in a moment of peace she'd gotten a word from the Lord. But this woman is coming at her saying, "The Lord told me." And at ten weeks early she started to have early signs of labor and was devastated, and came out of the doctor going, "I thought I'd heard this, but my body is doing this," and a friend called that she hadn't seen in a while, and she said, "Melissa, you're on my heart. What's going on?" And she told her the whole story, and she said, "That woman spoke a curse over you. She's not speaking on behalf of God, and you have to take authority over that and come back into agreement with the promise God made. He gave you that promise knowing what was going to happen. You've got to break up your agreement and come into alignment with God." And so she's like, "I never knew I could do that, but what she was saying had life on it, had peace in it, and it coincided with my internal mother instinct to protect my child." And that's the thing is what's one of the ways you know the Lord's speaking, if there's life and there's peace on it, right?

And so she came into agreement with the promise that God gave her. Remember in the darkness what he tells you in the light. She not only delivered that son on his due date, she delivered all five of her children on their due dates, every single one. That doctor said, "I've never seen anything like it," and I feel like it was God just showing off, you know, just saying, "Just letting you know I can do this." But I think he was reinforcing to her, "When I give you a word, you hold on to it." And you and I, we were talking, you know, in-between shows here, we're living in a day where the love of most is growing cold, where everybody has a platform, and many are saying they speak for God. And if you're not in the Word and you don't know the peace of God, the wisdom and the Word of God, people are gonna say

things to you that aren't from the Lord and will get you off-track. And so, it is of utmost importance that you're constantly knowing God, building a case for the goodness of God, and knowing that life and peace are on his words for you always.

RANDY: And on that, and you gotta be careful, I mean, the Internet, I love it and I hate it, right? But there are some people who are absolutely using God's name for their vain purposes, which I think is--

SUSIE: Right, they're building an empire.

RANDY: They're building their empire, they're deceiving, and a lot of those have been exposed lately, you know? And I think that's great, because they need to be. There are also a lot of just genuinely immature people, and so I think we have to have discernment and grace, but above all, and here's the beauty of it, and I don't know what you were raised in, but if you were raised in an environment where you think you can't hear God's voice, go read the Scripture, learn his voice.

SUSIE: My sheep know my voice.

RANDY: My sheep know my voice, right? You don't have to have someone on television or, you know.

SUSIE: That's right, I mean, you have access because the veil's been torn in two, and it's also important to note that you could get a word from the Lord that's not always, "Everything's gonna go your way." I mean, at the beginning of the illness for me, I was so scared, terrified, to be in my young thirties with these neuro symptoms, and a friend sat down and held my hand, and she said, "I've been asking the Lord about this," and she said, "Susie, I get the sense this is gonna be a long journey for you, but he's gonna be with you," and it resonated, I knew it was true. I remember also a time, I read this story of a man that was dying, and this pastor, speaker, author, friend was called in to come and minister to him, and there was a prayer meeting, you know, in his honor, and he said, "I walked around the sanctuary and this person's like, 'I claim his healing.

He's not gonna die,' and someone else said, 'Take him quick, Lord,'" and he's got all these, you know, prayers happening, and again you're picturing God going, "Okay, which--" you know? And then he gets into the hospital room, and the family are all like begging and praying for his healing. But he'd sought the Lord on his own, and so he went and sat by his friend, he held his hand and he said, "Have a good death," and his friend goes, "Thank you." Like, he was feeling like he had to keep fighting for everybody, but he's like, "I've finished the work. I've run the-- It's my time." And so, you know, I remember another time that I was driving through a car wash, and we were waiting for something to break through for my husband's work, and the Lord whispered, "It's not gonna turn out like you thought, but you're gonna be okay." And there was peace and there was life on it, and he is--"My sheep know me, they hear me, they listen for my voice." And how do you trust someone who never talks to you, you know?

And one of the greatest gifts is that we get to hear God's voice, but you will be deceived if you're not in the Word and you're not cultivating intimacy with God.

BLYNDA: That's actually one way that I started tuning my ear to the Lord is I started-- I asked the Lord, "Is everything I always hear from you in the-- end in the way I want?" And it made me start actually digging deeper, saying, there's no way that everything I want, I'm always going to get, so why am I never hearing a challenging or opposing view to the thing I'm asking? And I actually feel like that helped me tune my ear more when I started not hearing the way I wanted it to go, but the way that felt peaceful.

SUSIE: That's a heart that wants to know God. I hardly hear anybody asking that question these days. We wanna create a Jesus in our image, we wanna manipulate our faith to match our life, and we wanna get what we want when we always want it, but what good father does that?

And you know, I think the way that God is calling his saints home, it makes no sense on one hand, but it makes perfect sense on the other. God is working, and if we can trust that he's good and his ways are higher, we can build a case for trusting him.

RANDY: Yeah, we can. Have you ever had this one where you're praying about something, and all you hear God say is, "Just remember what I've already told you"? I got that recently.

I was like, "Oh, I need a new plan." It's like, he's like, "Just remember what I told you." Like, his Word is good, it stands. You can stand on it, and you know.

SUSIE: That to me is building your life and building resilient trust, and that's why I think journaling is good, to remember in the darkness what he tells you in the light, you know, to go back and go, "This is what he's said." You know, there's one of-- I've read a lot of books on healing. The most biblical book I've ever read, it's 100 years old, still in print, called "Christ the Healer" by F.F. Bosworth. But one of the things he says in that book is, "Walking with God is like a chess game.

God makes a move, and then you make a move. He will never take your turn, and he will never move out of turn, so it's yours to discern whose move it is." And I think that's so powerful, that if maybe you feel like he's holding out on you, you're holding out on him. He's like, "I already talked to you about that. Remember two months ago? I'm still waiting, do the thing."

BLYNDA: "Come on, I'm waiting on you."

RANDY: Wow, and the beauty is when we get out of the way, we build that resilient trust, God does even more than--

SUSIE: Beyond than what we could imagine.

RANDY: That is the title of the book, by the way. If you would like this book, "More Than You Can Imagine," by Susie Larson, we would love to send it to you as a gift when you give a wonderful gift to a child in need this year.

We are hitting our Christmas Shoes and Smiles outreach, and it's always-- it's one of the fun ones. This is your first time doing it.

BLYNDA: This is my first one with Shoes and Smiles.

RANDY: It's so much fun, because what's more exciting around Christmas than to see a child receive a gift they probably have never had, right, and that just makes them happy?

Okay, well, come and join us. Watch this, and you can be a part of this beautiful outreach.

ANNOUNCER: If there's one thing mothers around the world pray for above all else, it's the health of their children. And with everything these children are exposed to, that can be a tall order. This year, you may have partnered with Life Outreach out of compassion, to take care of some basic needs like clean drinking water and a daily bowl of food. But have you ever thought about the dangers children face every day simply from being children?

With poverty as the deciding factor in what these mothers can provide for their children, a pair of shoes is a necessity that many children will never have. This coming Christmas season, we'd like to do something special for these children, and give them a pair of shoes of their very own. These shoes will not only protect their feet from injury and disease, but will be a treasured possession that will remind them of God's love.

BETTY ROBISON: And this is a real need, shoes for the children. Please join with us. You'll get such a great joy out of it, I know you will.

God bless you, and thank you.

[music]

RANDY: Blynda, this is the first time that you've been able to talk about this on the air.

BLYNDA: This is the first one.

RANDY: It is so fun.

BLYNDA: And it's just the idea that they would get something so tangible, immediate-- their life would immediately be better. Like, that's awesome.

RANDY: That is the thing. So when you saw this, you probably didn't think there are health ramifications of going barefoot.

BLYNDA: Yes, you think about the no water and the no food, but I'm like, wow, to not have shoes, and all the things, I'm sure there's actual-- maybe you tell me, what are the biggest dangers?

RANDY: So obviously when you're barefoot and you're out in the wild, you can get cuts on your feet. And when you get cuts on your feet, you can get infection from the contaminated water that we deal with, or there's hookworms. Here's the crazy thing, yeah, it's not something you naturally think about, but I've been places where I've seen children's feet and thought, "What happened?"

What went wrong there?" And it actually can be deadly. And so, yes, it's wonderful to go, "Oh, okay, a new pair of shoes for a child," and you know, we've given away hundreds of thousands now, and we've got 150,000 children that we wanna provide shoes for this year. But you also go, "No, this could actually save a child's life."

BLYNDA: And I think what's hard, what I paid attention to in the video, is they're already having to try to find water and food. This is almost considered a luxury in some way, to provide shoes.

And you don't want to make that choice for a mom, where they're having to choose all of these different things because poverty is really what's choosing for them.

RANDY: And that's why we do it around Christmas, and I know it's a little bit early, but it does take time to get the shoes there, to get them distributed. So yeah, we're talking Christmas already, and it really is a gift, a special gift, and you see them passed down, because kids outgrow shoes pretty quick, but they pass them around to their siblings, to others in the village. And I don't want you to forget the smiles, because there are children who need--desperately need a surgery this year for a cleft palate, a cleft lip. It will enable them to smile.

So we hope you will give shoes and smiles this year. Just to give you an idea, \$36 will give shoes to 10 children. A gift of \$180 will give shoes to 50 children. The surgeries are about \$500 each on average. Maybe you could give \$1,000, provide two surgeries, or 275 pairs of shoes. Whatever you can do, let's give. We always give in the name of Jesus. What better time than Christmas? I hope you today will go online, go to the phone, give a pair of shoes, maybe give a smile to a child. Let's make this Christmas special.

ANNOUNCER: Poverty is a killer, and because of it, children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack of food and clean water, but also from things we often take for granted, such as a healthy smile or a simple pair of shoes. Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a new pair of shoes, and while that may seem minor, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of painful infections, injury, and life-threatening diseases. But this Christmas, you can bring hope and healing.

Your gift today will help provide new shoes for 150,000 children in time for the holidays, and for some children, a beautiful new smile. Your gift of \$36 will help provide shoes for 10 children, \$72 will help provide for 20, \$180 will help provide shoes for 50, and a gift of \$500 will help provide a cleft surgery, restoring a child's smile for a lifetime. As a thank you for your gift, please request the first-time-ever duo-color crystal shoe ornament, with beautiful green and red accents.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request this keepsake box set, featuring five of Life's colorful crystal shoe ornaments. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes, or corrective smile surgeries for two children, and you may request the beautiful bronze sculpture, "The Good Shepherd." Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

RANDY: Let's bless these children. We can only do it with your support, so I hope you will be a part of Christmas Shoes and Smiles. You will be bringing a great Christmas to a lot of children. And if you would like it, I would highly recommend requesting "More Than You Can Imagine" by Susie Larson.

We would love to send it to you. You just need the book, because there's so much there.

BLYNDA: You're gonna want the book, because there's so much we couldn't cover in our shows, and it's so good. But also, if they want to find you, if they want to hear more from you, you have a podcast.

SUSIE: Yes, "Susie Larson Live," you can find it anywhere, and my website is susielarson.com.

RANDY: Great, we appreciate you so much for being here so much.

SUSIE: Thank you so much.

RANDY: We appreciate you guys watching. Come back, we'd love to see you again here on "Life Today."

[music]

BETTY: It takes all of us together, God's children together, to accomplish what God wants to do in this world.

ANNOUNCER: Working in harmony with God's heart, tomorrow.

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