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Week 44

Randy Robison & Betty Robison

Doug Wekenman

"God's Will For Your Life"

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

ANNOUNCER: Are you wondering what God has planned next for your life? Doug Wekenman helps answer that question.

DOUG WEKENMAN: We kind of see it that God's this divine breadcrumb leaver, and you'd better find the last breadcrumb or else you will ruin your future and miss all of his plans. And I just don't think God is that cruel, and I don't think we're that powerful that we can mess up God's plans. I think his sovereignty is powerful enough to work through the decisions that we make.

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today", I'm Randy Robison. My mother is here with me, how are you?

BETTY ROBISON: It's good to be here.

RANDY: You know, we have a topic today that is one of those questions I know you have had to ask recently, because we all wonder at various times, you know, what does God want me to do? That's pretty much the title of our guest's book today.

Our guest is Doug Wekenman, he is a teaching pastor at Red Rocks Church in the great state of Texas, Austin, Texas. And let me show them your book, it's "What Does God Have Planned For Me Next?" and man, that's a question we ask.

BETTY: Loaded question.

DOUG: It absolutely is, yeah, and the answer to the question is on the very last page.

BETTY: You gotta read the book.

DOUG: You gotta read the whole thing though, or else it's not gonna make sense.

RANDY: Okay, all right, well, give us a little bit of kind of where you're coming from on this.

DOUG: Yeah, absolutely, you know, I've been pastoring for about 15, 16 years, and one of my favorite things in the world is just pastoral meetings with people, one on one. I tend to think, man, life's a bit too short for small talk, and get straight to the real talk and the real stuff that's going on, it's my favorite thing in the world. And I have found, at least from my vantage point, the number one question everybody seems to be asking is some version of, what does God have planned for me next, and how do I figure out what that is and hear his voice and make big life decisions with him, and step into the future with confidence?

BETTY: Because we naturally make plans for life, you know, and when they don't turn out like we planned them, we want to know what's next.

DOUG: Yeah, especially if you are wired by God to be a planner, you know, I'm one of them, a lot of us are. And then you get nervous because you tend to worry that God's just gonna throw you curveballs all the time and he's this spontaneous, ruins all your plans, and I think God loves it when we make plans.

There's Proverbs-- Proverbs 16:9 says, "We make our plans, the Lord, however, directs our steps." And so it's make your plans, but then hold them in open hands and let God guide you.

BETTY: If he laid out his plans for us, would it not scare us half to death most of the time because it's not in any of our plans, you know. I lost my husband back in May, and so now God's got me in a new place as the main part as far as leading the ministry, you know, here, and I never expected that. I was James's mate that sat beside him and supported him and everything, and I thought, "God, what are you doing? What is the next step," you know?

DOUG: Yeah, and you're in a brand new chapter, and maybe if we knew all the chapters before we said yes to them, we wouldn't say yes to them.

BETTY: I'd have been hiding somewhere.

DOUG: Yeah, I feel the exact same way, I feel the exact same way.

RANDY: So you planned to be a pastor from day one, right?

DOUG: Yeah, ever since I, you know, could talk. My first word was Jesus. No, I went to college, I did biochemistry and pre-med and had dreams of being an orthopedic surgeon

for athletes, and I'm a planner, you know, I had my whole life planned out, to the point where, like, it had to happen that way, you know.

BETTY: Perfect plan.

DOUG: Exactly. And actually, God grabbed me halfway through college, I started following Jesus, and I say it this way now. God ruined all of my plans in the best possible way, and I'm so grateful and glad that he did.

RANDY: What did it look like, like, did you get writing on the wall, or somebody walk up to you and say, "I have a word"?

DOUG: That's such a good question, and it wasn't the audible voice of God, I've never heard that before. I'd like to, maybe one day, but it was through an open door, actually. I think God speaks to us all the time through closed doors and open doors.

I had an opportunity to do a year-long internship right after I graduated, a year-long internship through the college ministry that I got saved in in Boulder, Colorado, this college church right off campus, about 800-1000 students on Tuesday nights, called the Annex, and my life changed in that church. I had an opportunity to do an internship for a year, and so I figured, "This is gonna make me more well-rounded to be a future doctor, it'll look better on med school resumes, and so what the heck, it'll be like a break from school for a little bit too."

And I knew, probably a month into that internship, "I'm supposed to do this for the rest of my life." So I haven't really used the biochem degree too much as a pastor, but you never know.

RANDY: Well, how did you really respond to that? Did you just say, "Okay," and then all of a sudden take that career shift, or did you have to kind of work through some things, because it's not always easy?

DOUG: No, it's not, it was about a year-long process of falling in love with ministry and starting to realize, "God, I think you've wired me for this." And even the reason I wanted to be to be a doctor in the first place was to help people, and then realizing, "Oh man, I can help people with what I believe is the most important thing there is for the rest of eternity, with this new--this piece of information that I now know about Jesus that I need as many people as possible to know."

BETTY: Don't you find that when you finally do see the direction God wants you to go, where he wants to take you in your life, do you find it a fine line to walk, to stay behind him

and to follow him, because we get our own thoughts and our own ideas and we want to get ahead of God sometimes?

DOUG: Yeah, we tend to think he moves way too slow. I feel that way often, I'm in one of those seasons right now, actually, where it's just, I tend to want to sprint out ahead and, "God, why can't we just do this a little faster?" But he, you know, it's even, you think about Jesus, walked everywhere he went.

BETTY: He wants us to depend on him completely. He doesn't want to just turn us loose and say, "Now you go on your way."

DOUG: Yeah, because the whole point of it, after all, is relationship with him, more than it is doing things for him. Or it's about the planner way before it's about the plans the planner has for you, you know?

RANDY: That's an interesting point because I think sometimes we get a little bit kind of frozen because we're afraid, "Oh, what if I do it wrong, what if I make the wrong decision?" But if the relationship's the point, then that shifts the perspective. I mean, do you think God's-- do you think he understands that we sometimes maybe make mistakes?

Is it okay, is he mad at us, you know? Because that could be a debilitating thing.

DOUG: It can be, absolutely. In fact, I think we're getting worse and worse at decision-making, especially Christians, because not only do we have the paradox of choice like everybody else where the options for everything is going up. From, you know, I even think about the app Hinge, the dating app, there's 23 million profiles on that app alone.

It's like, you know, when we do movie night, it's getting harder and harder at the house because it has to start with a 45-minute meeting about how do we even choose the movie we're gonna watch, you know? The paradox of choice, as options go up, opportunities to be anxious about it goes up as well, and then you get worse at making the decisions, and the illusion of perfection on social media, where you go left but then you constantly wonder, would things be different and better had I gone right, and I chose door number two, but maybe I should have waited for door number six. Maybe I got out ahead of God, and we kind of see it sometimes that God's this divine breadcrumb leaver, and you'd better find the last breadcrumb or else you will ruin your future and miss all of his plans, and I just don't think God is that cruel, and I don't think we're that powerful that we can mess up God's plans.

I think his sovereignty is powerful enough to work through the decisions that we make. He's really good at getting us where he wants to get us to go, you know.

RANDY: Well, and you know, if you think about it, again, back to your point, if the relationship is the point, then if I make a decision to take this job or this job or live in this city or this city, the relationship isn't disrupted by that.

DOUG: No, no.

RANDY: So, I mean, there's where I think there's actually more freedom. You know, we're like, "God, what do I do, do I go left or right," and he's like, "I'm with you either way," right?

DOUG: Yeah, so the biggest decision I made in the last decade was which city to move to to plant a church, and we always planned to move to San Diego to start a church.

RANDY: Well, who wouldn't?

DOUG: I know. It's the Promised Land to me, you know? Yeah, we're surfers, we're beach guys, it's always just kind of been calling my name, and we just knew, man, it's location, location, location, as they say in real estate, and that's where we're going to start a church.

But it came down to the point of actually making a decision, and we were living in Denver at the time, and so we went to San Diego for a week to sort of scout the city and pray and think, "What would it be like if we moved here to start a church?" And we got back from that trip, and I felt we should go one-- we should go to one more city, just so we can make sure it's San Diego. And we started praying about it, and Austin, Texas started coming up in conversations, like, every conversation, to the point where it was almost annoying.

I'm like, "We gotta go to Austin, Texas just so I can sleep at night, because I don't know if we're being directed there," and long story short, we visited Austin and prayed and felt like, "Man, we could start a church in this city." And I was having such a hard time choosing, because there was more and more people getting involved and I thought, "God, the stakes are high with this, and I wanna hear you correctly and I don't wanna ruin whatever plans you have." And my pastor, his name's Shawn Johnson, he's one of my best friends, but he told me this story where he said, when his son was little, his son was obsessed with Legos, and he brought his son Ashton to Toys "R" Us, to the Lego aisle, and Ashton was surrounded by so many options he couldn't choose, and Shawn said, "So I got down on one knee next to my son and I said, 'Hey bud, what if you picked this one, would that be cool?'"

And Ashton's like, "Oh, Dad, that one would be so cool." He said, "Okay, what if you picked that one? Would that be fun to build?" "Oh, Dad, that one would be so fun to build."

He said, "Okay, pick one, and let's not look back, and let's go enjoy it." And then he's looking at me and he says, "Do people need Jesus in San Diego?" I said, "Yeah."

He said, "How about Austin, what if you moved to Austin? Would heaven get more crowded maybe if you planted a church in Austin?" "I mean, I think so."

He said, "Okay, make a decision, and God will go with you and God will do something through the decisions you make." I think it's this beautiful dance between his sovereignty and the free will and agency he has given us to do our best to hear his voice, to pray, to get in his presence, to surround ourselves with wise counsel and choose, and his sovereignty will work powerfully through the decisions we make.

RANDY: So you don't look back?

DOUG: I mean, every once in a while I have what I call San Diego syndrome, where things are difficult in Austin and I always imagine what it would have been like had we moved to San Diego, but in that fantasy, everything's perfect. Somehow we all afforded homes in La Jolla and we were given this building, and so there's no mortgage on the building for the church and there's no problems in the church, and so there's so much time to surf, and I make more money there, and--. If you're not careful, you can make a decision, but then once you make the decision, it's like the paradox of choice and the illusion of perfection somewhere else still sticks around to bully you, to get you to doubt the decision that you made to fully be present in Austin.

So I'm not sure what your Austin versus San Diego is, but you can kind of use this archetype for whatever decision it is you're making or about to make, where if you're not careful, you will compare the perfect fantasy of San Diego with the messy, imperfect reality of Austin. And the fantasy will always be better, because it's in your imagination and you're in control of it and it costs you nothing. That's why dreams oftentimes stay dreams.

And it's not fair to the reality that you chose, to the city that you chose, to the person that you chose, to the plan that you chose, to the story that you chose. And so it's--you know, I've been married now for 12 years, and I've found, okay, we made a decision 12 years ago, but we make a decision every day. We own the decision that we made, and I choose this story again.

RANDY: Yeah, that's good.

BETTY: Well, let's turn this around a little bit, and so you ask this question, "What does God have planned for me next?" And God shows you, and you say, "God, I can't do that, I'm not qualified." A lot of people don't feel qualified when God calls them.

DOUG: Oh yeah, yeah, I think we have this sort of Christian imposter syndrome. I think about Moses, where God went to Moses in the burning bush and said, "I'm calling you and I'm sending you back to Egypt, to Pharaoh, to lead my people out of Egypt," and he goes, "Who am I?" That's what he says back, he says, "Who am I?"

Like, "I have a stutter, I can't even talk really well, and you're calling me," but God's saying, that's the wrong question. You should be asking, like, "You're the God who's going with me, tell me more about you." It's the classic, you know, he doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies those that he calls.

BETTY: And we should realize that God's gonna prepare the way. He's gonna prepare us spiritually.

DOUG: And in our weaknesses, his power is made perfect, and it's a chance for him to show off, you know? All the ways that I'm weak, that's where God moves the most.

BETTY: It's not about us anyway.

DOUG: No, it's not, yeah. But I think a lot of Christians do have that sort of imposter syndrome, where we think, even something about God having good plans for you, if you're not careful, you can kind of start to think, "Well, that's for the varsity Christians, and I'm on the JV squad."

And I've been there, a lot of years in my life. I'm a pastor now, and I still from time to time feel that way, and I think that's hyper self-awareness and not enough God awareness, yeah.

RANDY: Well, if someone's dealing with trying to make a decision, trying to make the right decision, figure out what God has planned for you next, I would encourage you to get the book. We'll tell you how you can get it here in just a second. But Doug, there's three things in just a short few seconds, I really want to hit them, because you call them three superpowers.

And so if someone's watching and they're listening and they're like, "Yeah, but what do I do," I want to hit these three practices: gratitude, patience, which you're struggling with right now, you said, and obedience. So, I mean, if we just start with those three things,

gratitude, patience, obedience, practice those every day, how will that empower us to do what God has planned for us next?

DOUG: Yeah, I think those three secret superpowers is what allows you to actually thrive in what God has planned for you now. And if you're not careful, what God has planned for you next will always just kind of stay out there in the future, it's always what he has for me next. But eventually, what's next has to become what's now.

And there's nothing like gratitude as a power to really ground you in the moment, to get you to be grateful for today. And then the patience part, one of the fruits of the Spirit, and I kind of think patience, one of the fruit that's more--it's got like the vegetable vibe to it, you know?

It's like, well, we talk about peace, joy, and love as all the fruit of the Spirit, but patience, it kind of tastes a little bit more bitter. It's like, I'll take peace and joy, you know what I mean?

RANDY: It's good for you!

DOUG: Exactly, yeah, gotta have your vegetables, you know? But I think patience is actually the key to experiencing more of the fruit of the Spirit that we talk about more, like peace, and like joy, and like love. So it's falling in love not with the destination but with the journey itself.

The person who loves the journey will go farther than the person who loves the-- is just trying to get to the destination, because a relationship with God is not a destination, it's a journey. It's today, you know? And then obedience, and I don't know that there's anything God loves more than that.

He's got such good plans for you, I think the question is, can he get a yes from you? And one question I ask in the book is, what if you pre-decided my answer to God is gonna be yes before I hear the plans? I think, like, he can work with that all day long.

RANDY: Absolutely, and you know, the beautiful thing about obedience is that it's not like, "Oh, you have to be obedient or God's gonna be mad at you," it's like, no, God knows how to get you beyond where you'd imagine, more than we can imagine, and then he offers it, and we just do it. And when we don't, we kind of shoot ourselves in the foot, you know? And so I view it more as, less as like a discipline in the way we think of discipline, and more as a path of a loving God who's leading us.

DOUG: I couldn't agree more, almost as a Father. Our obedience is not because God's-- it's not, "Be obedient because I'm telling you to be obedient," it's, "Be obedient because I'm trying to lead you into the maximum life that I have for you."

He's done nothing but try to bless humanity since the very beginning. He's got nothing to take from us, he's trying to lead us into the fullness of life.

RANDY: All right, so I'll ask the question, what does God have planned for you next? And if you wanna walk with Doug through that book to just kind of ground you in that and to help lead you along in a way that will lead to life and beauty, request his book today when you join us in what we know is obedience, and we're grateful that you're a part of it, and we call it Rescue Life. Watch this story, and then be obedient as God leads.

FEMALE: *[speaking foreign language]*

FEMALE: Girls? How old do you want?

MALE: Young.

FEMALE: How old?

MALE: What's the youngest?

FEMALE: Huh?

MALE: The youngest?

ANNOUNCER: Sex trafficking of young women and children is one of the darkest and most depraved activities of humankind on the planet today. There are nearly 5 million victims who have been forced into prostitution, and the majority of those are women and children.

DAVID CROSS: These are kids that are being forced to have sex with people, and they're being abused, and they're being photographed and doing things that no child should ever have to do.

FEMALE: *[speaking foreign language]*

ANNOUNCER: Mission Rescue Life was born over a decade ago, to do our part in helping shine the light of God's love into these dark and depraved areas. We are partnering with missionaries around the world who are rescuing those bound in slavery. Even former trafficking victims like Bella are helping those in need.

BELLA: You know, sometimes I tell them about my story. I said, "Before, I used to do that too, and I know how it feels."

I think if I'm without God, I'm nothing. So every day, I always thank God for this life.

DAVID: So when we look at these big numbers of statistics that are just demotivating, what we choose to do is we just choose to focus on the one. We work alongside law enforcement, and so we rescue one today, we rescue one tomorrow, we rescue one next week, because every single child matters to God, and so then they have to matter to us.

RANDY: You know, as a father of daughters, when I see them breaking down that door, that's what I wanna do, I wanna break down every door to rescue every young girl that's being abused. But together, through Rescue Life, we the church are breaking down the gates of hell. And that's why I'm asking you to join us right now.

The average cost of the programs that reach, rescue, and restore these children is \$128 per child, but what that does mean is that your gift of \$128 today would help to reach, rescue, or restore one child on average. A gift of \$1280 would do that for 10 children. And you know, just one life is worth it, but because of people like you, picking up the phone, going to the web, joining with us, we have been able to reach, rescue, and restore so many, but there are so many more waiting right now for us to do something.

That's why I'm asking you to do something, and to do it right now. This is the last week we'll be on the air during this campaign, but I want you to know that the work continues around the clock, because the evil is great, but God is greater. You know, Mom, I know this was something that was close to Dad's heart, even though it's hard to talk about on television, hard to see, but it's critical that we continue this work.

BETTY: It is, it's very critical, and you know, if you can help one child or ten, please ask God what he would have you to do right now, and give out all the love in your heart to these children. They are desperate, they've been locked up, they're in prison, and then they're beaten and then they're mistreated, and they just use them like a throwaway toy or something. Please help them, my heart goes out to these children.

I'm a mother, a grandmother, and a great-grandmother. It tears my heart up to even think about just a little bit of what they go through. Please join with us, and let's rescue the perishing.

FEMALE ANNOUNCER: Every day, innocent children are being trapped in the wicked web of human trafficking. Instead of dreaming about a future, they are sold into a nightmare of sexual slavery. But you can join the fight against this evil.

Through Mission Rescue Life, you can reach at-risk children before traffickers do, rescue those already enslaved, and restore young lives with hope for the future. A gift today of \$128 will reach, rescue, or restore a precious child and change their life forever. Gifts of \$64 or \$32 will be combined with support from others to help deliver one more child from the shame and pain of sex trafficking.

With a gift of any amount, we will send you James Robison's final book, "A Life Proclaiming Freedom", as a thank-you for your support. Discover James's personal journey from bondage to freedom, share in his calling to bind up the brokenhearted, and learn how to experience your personal freedom so that you can bring healing to the hurting world around you. With your gift of \$128 or more, you will receive the "Life Proclaiming Freedom" bundle, which includes James's book, a special edition collection of the Gospels, and the beautiful Life planner.

Finally, your gift of \$1280 can help save 10 children from the horrors of human trafficking. With this special gift, you may request the inspiring bronze sculpture, "The Good Shepherd".

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

SHEILA WALSH: What I've seen here is the abject poverty that people are living in, and so many young girls are forced into prostitution, they're trafficked because they're desperate. There's no money in the family, so often the father is a drunk, there is debt, and the oldest daughter, sometimes when she's 10, 11, 12, that's the only opportunity because so many of these girls, they've never been to school. I asked one girl, "How old were you when you left school?"

She said, "I've never been to school." So because they're illiterate, they can't get a decent job, and the only job they can get is at the mercy of a sex trafficker. So I just want to ask you, if God has touched your heart, if you want to stand with me and say, "We want to do something now," will you go to your phone, will you go online, will you call that number?

Will you make the best gift possible so that we can reach, we can rescue, we can restore? 'Cause surely that is what Jesus Christ has done for every single one of us. Would you make your best gift possible, would you do it now?

RANDY: We do need to hear from you today. This is the last week we'll be on the air talking about Rescue Life, but the need continues. So please go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can, and if you would like Doug Wekenman's book, "What Does God Have Planned for Me Next?" simply request it, I've enjoyed this.

BETTY: This has been great. Thank you so much for being with us.

DOUG: I've had a great time being here, thank you very much.

RANDY: We appreciate all of you being with us. Please come back for more of "Life Today".

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FAITH EURY CHO: Weakness is something that we are to embrace in order to genuinely know the power of the Holy Spirit.

ANNOUNCER: Becoming stronger through weakness.

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.

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