

**10/29/2026**

*Week 44*

*Randy Robison & Betty Robison*

*Gary Sinise*

*"Graceful Warrior"*

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

**ANNOUNCER:** Coming up, Academy Award nominee Gary Sinise opens up about his son's cancer diagnosis and the strength he showed in his final days.

**GARY SINISE:** And they found an orange-size tumor on his tailbone. Graceful warrior is the way I described Mac. He never gave up.

He had such beauty and grace in the way he dealt with it. You never hear heard him complaining. And describing him as a graceful warrior just felt perfect.

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

**BETTY ROBISON:** I'm doing good.

**RANDY:** You excited about today's guest?

**BETTY:** I am, I so admire him, his acting, but mostly what he's doing to help people everywhere he goes.

**RANDY:** Yeah, absolutely, our guest today is Gary Sinise. He has a new book out called "Graceful Warrior", so in addition to being an actor, he is an author, and also he has the Gary Sinise Foundation where he does a lot of wonderful work, but we're excited to bring him to you today.

He is here by Zoom. Gary, how are you?

**GARY:** I'm doing well today, thank you for having me.

**RANDY:** It's an honor to have you, appreciate you spending the time. Let's jump right in, if we could.

You know, your book, we know a lot about your work with the veterans, and so the warrior connection there, but this was a little bit different angle. Tell us about "Graceful Warrior".

**GARY:** Well, this is my second book that I've written. The first book I wrote came out in 2019. It's called "Grateful American: A Journey from Self to Service", and really, that particular book kind of-- it's a bit of an autobiography, I guess.

You kind of go through the school years and everything, and the journey from self to service, going from starting a theater company in the Chicago area and working well with that, and getting very involved with movies and TV and that kind of thing, and then all of that developing into a service mission after the attack on our country on September 11, 2001. And that book really is the Gary Sinise Foundation veteran support story and how I got into it. "Graceful Warrior" is very, very different.

It's a personal family story of something that we went through, very, very difficult moments in the family, when my son Mac, when he was diagnosed with a very rare cancer in 2018. This cancer is called chordoma, and it's so rare that maybe 300 people per year are diagnosed with this cancer in the US, and that's very rare. Maybe about 70% of the time, they can remove the initial tumor, like some other cancers, and they can cure it, they can clear it up and everything, but about 30% of the time, that cancer comes back, and that's what happened to Mac.

So you're, you know, when you're in the 30%, that's under 100 people that are dealing with this in the US per year, so obviously you don't have pharmaceutical companies that are developing drugs to fight a cancer that only 90 people are battling each year. So you're subject to what might be available out there, and so it's surgeries, radiation, and drugs that they just throw at it. And Mac started the fight in 2018 with the removal of his first tumor, which was on his sacrum, his tailbone.

He was having a lot of pain when he was just sitting. He was an excellent, excellent drummer, and he was touring all over the country and overseas and all that, but he was starting to have a lot of pain when he was playing. And he didn't know why, and his tailbone was hurting, and even to the point where he started carrying this cushion around with him.

He'd go to the movies or a restaurant with friends, and he'd carry a cushion and sit on it. And eventually, it just got so bad that, you know-- and he had had an X-ray and it showed nothing, but eventually, my wife had had several spine surgeries, I called her spine surgeon and said, "Will you take a look at Mac?" And so Mac went down to his office, they put him in a scanner, a CT scanner, and they found an orange-size tumor on his tailbone that could have been-- very likely could have been growing there since birth.

Chordoma is a very slow, slow, slow-growing tumor. And he was 27 when he was diagnosed, and he'd been having tailbone problems for a while, and we thought it was maybe a bicycle accident or a little fracture or something like that. And it was--so,

obviously that summer, 2018, really threw us for a loop, and on top of that, two months before that, my wife had been diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer.

So, I remember the moment I found out that Mac had a tumor, I'm sitting there with my wife. She'd gone through her first chemo treatment, it was very rough. She ended up in the emergency room because the chemo was so powerful and really made her very sick.

And we were sitting outside and we were discussing, "How are we gonna get through the next treatment? You gotta have several treatments, how are we gonna get through it?" And that's when the doctor, the spine surgeon called and said, "Mac has a tumor."

So I'm sitting there with my wife, discussing her chemo treatments, and we find out Mac has this orange-sized tumor on his sacrum. It was a very rough summer. He had the tumor removed in September of 2018, and we really thought, you know, "Okay, we're done with this."

And eight months later, the scans showed that the cancer had come back. And so now we're in a whole new ballgame, now we're in, you know, metastatic disease. It's multiple tumors growing in multiple places.

Chemo, radiation, and surgeries. He had four more surgeries after that. And it was very, very difficult, and sadly, we lost Mac on January 5th, 2024, after about a five and a half year battle, and we've all experienced loss, you know, everybody knows what it feels like to lose somebody who's close to you.

It's hard to lose a child, for sure. And after he died, I started to discover all this music that he'd written and filed away in his laptop, so I went to work on some albums for him to bring that music out of the laptop and produce it. But also, I started to think about the bigger story that I wanted to tell.

And I had written a story about six weeks after Mac died that we posted on the Gary Sinise Foundation website, because he was a staff member at the Gary Sinise Foundation. He loved the mission, supporting our veterans. And we lost him, and nobody knew what we were going through.

We were fighting this cancer very quietly for six years. People in the inner circle knew what we were going through, but it wasn't something I talked about to the media or anything like that. But we have a loyal group of donors, and we had a loyal group of people that were supporting our family through something called the Chordoma Foundation, which thankfully there's a foundation where 24/7 they're just trying to find a cure for this rare cancer, and they were very helpful to us.

And there was a page on their website where people could leave messages for Mac or make donations or whatever. I felt it was important for me to let those people know what

happened to Mac. And so I wrote a little story there, and then I expanded it a little bit, and we posted it on the Gary Sinise Foundation website.

And we got such a tremendous response from people. It was-- it was overwhelming, emotional, helpful, healing. And because of that, a lot of the people that were writing in and sending me these messages were telling me the stories of their own grief and their own loss, and how, by me sharing this story of something that'd been-- you know, a lot of these people are donors to the Gary Sinise Foundation.

We have hundreds of thousands of donors. None of them knew anything about what we were going through, and I decided to share it, and they wanted to write to me to tell me that it had actually been somewhat helpful and healing for them to have me share that story, because they wrote back in turn, "I lost my son. I lost my daughter.

I never talked about it." You know, "I've kept it to myself all this time. And by you sharing your story here, it's just made me want to share mine."

And that was--that started to plant some seeds. It was like God was just pointing me and giving me this direction, that sharing the story could be a valuable thing to do. And that made me determine that my next big thing would be to write "Graceful Warrior".

Graceful warrior is the way I described Mac, and I didn't do it intentionally. I didn't decide, "This is what the book's gonna be called." I happened to be doing an interview like this, somebody read the story on the Foundation website, wanted me to talk about Mac.

They asked me to describe him, and that just came out. I said he was a--he was a graceful warrior. He never gave up.

He had such beauty and grace in the way he dealt with it. You never heard him complaining, unless he was in a lot of pain, and describing him as a graceful warrior just felt perfect, and so I decided that's what this book is about. This book is about the graceful warrior that we had in our family, and the hope that we have the graceful warriors in all of us to be able to face our challenges.

And Mac accepted, I think that was part of what allowed him to be so graceful in his fight, was that he accepted that, you know, that he was not in charge. God was in charge, and he had accepted that, and I think accepting where things were allowed him to live every single day for that day, for that moment. He wasn't thinking too far ahead, he wasn't thinking what happens if the chemo doesn't work, or what happens if the radiation doesn't work, anything like that.

He was just thinking about, "If I feel good today, I'm gonna feel good today, and that's what it's gonna be about." And that was truly impactful for me as a dad, you know, because it helped me.

I was the battle buddy in the trench with him, trying to sort through all the medical issues and just trying to fight the fight for him so that he could have those wonderful days each day, he could not think about cancer every day. And it was helpful for me to watch him, the way he faced it.

**BETTY:** You know, Gary, we have similar stories, similar journeys. We lost our youngest child, Robin, when she was 40. She battled cancer for seven years, but she was a graceful warrior too.

She did not let it rule her life. She had three beautiful children, and she concentrated on loving them and caring for them, and God honored that. But she lost the battle for cancer, but she won the battle in that she lived life to its fullest, every moment of it.

And recently, I lost my husband back in May, and God has so honored his presence in our lives. And like you said, people were just waiting for you to tell your story, and as I've been telling my story since my husband left, the letters, the cards that I have gotten have just been so beautiful, and God is healing people, through just writing and me sharing my story, they're opening up, just like you said. It's part of our healing process.

We have those waves of sadness that come through, I'm sure you're very familiar with that. Different points in your life where those waves of tears and sadness come through, but God lifts us up again, and people are writing their hearts to us and letting us know they're loving us, they're praying for us, but yet they need prayer too. So we all have these hard times, that we need to be able to lift one another up and share with one another the difficulty that life is sometimes.

**GARY:** That's exactly right. We spend a lot of time at the Gary Sinise Foundation dealing with a lot of warriors, you know, people who are going through very serious post-traumatic stress, they're dealing with a lot of mental wellness challenges. Many of them, you know, we have a very-- you know, there's a terrible suicide epidemic with veterans because they contain these things, they self-combust, and we encourage them to tell their stories.

We teach them, we have workshops, where we teach them how to just let these things out. We don't want these things to fester and burn and boil and explode, because bad things happen when you do that. And so if I'm at the Gary Sinise Foundation and I'm telling, you know, our service members not to keep their stories to themselves, but to share them and get them out there, no matter how hard and how rough it is, if I'm doing that for them, then I have to kind of practice what I preach, you know, in a way.

And I knew that there was gonna be a time where I would, for my own health, for our family, for Mac, I would have to share a bit of this journey that we've been on. It's called "Graceful Warrior: The True Story of a Son, a Father, and a Family Who Carried Each Other Through", and really that's what this past two and a half years have been.

**RANDY:** Yeah, you know, an interesting question, I think, for you, Gary. You obviously have had a lot of success in your career as an actor, now as a writer, with the Foundation, you're an accomplished musician. But when you look at life through the lens that you can see it at now, how do you define success?

**GARY:** How do I define success? I'll tell you what makes me feel good, is that I think I've tried my best to be a good dad, you know, to my kids, and that my three kids are--they're good people, and my wife and I have done a good job, I think, in creating an environment where our kids could fail and learn and grow and love each other so much.

The kids were all very, very close. His sisters, Mac, very close with his sisters, and when I look at them, I feel-- I feel success, I guess.

**RANDY:** I love it, yeah.

**GARY:** You know, our kids are--they're good kids. Our daughters are two great mothers. They each have three wonderful kids, and they're just good, good people.

And, you know, there's a lot of people that, you know, they might not be able to say that they've succeeded in that way because they don't have the relationships with their kids that they might want to have, or something went awry, or--I can't say that. I'm so fortunate and blessed, and my wife and I feel so blessed that our kids are okay. And you know, I look at my career and all that, I've had a lot of success in all of that, but if I was successful there and a failure as a dad, or a husband, or just being a good person, all that stuff wouldn't matter, you know?

It wouldn't matter if I was, you know, doing well in acting and not doing well at home. So I look at the, you know, our family life and the fact I've been with my wife for 50 years, we've been married for 45.

**RANDY:** That's success right there, I love that.

**GARY:** There's some success there, yeah.

**RANDY:** Well, you know, we at Life Outreach International, we define success really as, you know, pursuing God's call, expanding his kingdom, being obedient. And so for the viewers, you guys, I would like to show you something that we feel like is something that we want to be successful in, and that is reaching out to those who are trapped in sex trafficking. And we all have our callings, Gary does his ministry to servicemen.

Part of our ministry is to these children who are trapped. Watch this, and we want you to see the story of one. And then we wanna show you how you can be the success for them in getting them out.

**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 have been 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? Because 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:** This is the last week we'll be on the air during this campaign, so we do need to hear from you today. And I wanna thank Gary Sinise, his book "Graceful Warrior" is available for pre-order now, so you go ahead and get that on its way to you. And Gary, we so much appreciate what you do and taking the time to share with us today.

**GARY:** I sure appreciate you having me on, thank you.

**BETTY:** Thank you so much.

**RANDY:** We'll see you again next time here on "Life Today".

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**ANNOUNCER:** Visit [lifetoday.org](http://lifetoday.org). Dive into your favorite "Life Today" programs, explore impactful ministry outreaches, and discover life-changing spiritual resources, all in one place. Plus, it's easier than ever to support our mission with seamless donation options.

Never miss a moment to get connected, get inspired, and get involved, anytime, anywhere. "Life Today" is always on. Visit [lifetoday.org](http://lifetoday.org) and experience the best of Life.

**MALE ANNOUNCER:** Do you want to increase your brain health but don't know where to start? Dr. Daniel Amen helps you change your brain every day, next week.

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**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.