11/19/2026

Week 47

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Ryan Wekenman

“Less Is More”

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

RYAN WEKENMAN: And we live in a day and age that's shouting, "Put self at the center," and it sounds like the right idea until you actually do it, and then when you actually put yourself at the center, you inherit all of the pressure, the unrelenting, neverending pressure that comes with it. This prayer, "Lord, free me from me," really has been a gift for me. It's helped me sleep way better at night, and experience so much more freedom and hopefully show up to every room that I show up in ready to encourage and inspire.

♪♪♪

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today", I'm Randy Robison. This is--.

BLYNDA LANE: Blynda Lane.

RANDY: Blynda Lane.

BLYNDA: I do find it funny when you pause.

RANDY: Because you know something's coming. I was just wondering, Blynda, can we talk about me on this program, would that be a good show?

BLYNDA: Randy, I feel like that's all we ever do.

RANDY: That's not fair, that's not fair. No, so our guest has a book, and we're laughing because the title of the book is great. It is "Free Me from Me", written by Ryan Wekenman, and he joins us, by the way, welcome, Ryan.

RYAN: Thank you all for having me. Randy, I wrote this book just for you.

RANDY: Finally, someone wrote a book for me, about me, right? But you know what, we're laughing, but yet, man, we all tend to do this, don't we?

RYAN: Yeah, it is the world that we are living in, and so it's not anybody's fault, but as soon as you wake up, when you walk out your front door, when you get on your phone and start scrolling, you're inundated with the message, "Start with self. Make it all about me." So the self-help, the self-care, the self-discovery, all the self assessments, those are all good things, but they have a horrible starting point, because if self is the starting point, it's always going to end in exhaustion and frustration, and you're not actually going to find the rest for your soul that Jesus promises us in the Bible.

RANDY: So is it okay to start there, sort of the "know thyself", because I think sometimes, I couldn't free myself from myself until I saw myself, and once I did, I thought, "I need freeing."

RYAN: Absolutely, that's a really great framework for it, is so much of this is understanding who we are, but as we understand who we are, you begin to realize that ultimately, we are human beings created in the image of God, not the other way around, and so as image bearers, it's our job to know ourselves, to know our weaknesses, to know our strengths, but ultimately to remember that God created us, that God's in the center of all this, so let's put God back at the center of all this, and then let's take our place as image bearers who are doing our best to reflect God's glory to the world. So the book is not at all about thinking less of yourself, it's actually about thinking more of yourself. It's realizing that God loves you so much that he created you and put you here on this planet with a calling and a purpose, but when we get the order right, when we put God back at the center, I have just found, in my life, it brings so much freedom and so much rest for the weary soul.

BLYNDA: I never quite could put my finger on-- I would read a lot of self-help books, you know, like somebody would recommend one, and I could never put my finger on why I can make it to maybe chapter two, and I think I was like, "I'm so exhausted by all the things I need to do to improve myself," but I think what I hear you saying that is so insightful is I probably was exhausted because I'm not the answer to my problems. I'm not the answer to any of-- and you even talk about this me maze that we navigate through, trying to find us as the answer, is that what that is?

RYAN: Yeah, so "me maze" is just a made-up phrase that I came up with to describe this phenomenon, but it's what happens when you start obsessing over self-help, and then you need the next self-help book and you need to go to the next self-help conference and webinar and podcast and thing. And a little self-help can help, it's just that it can't save.

And that's an important distinction for people to realize is, I'm not saying that a lot of those self-help tips, a lot of them are super helpful, but they can't save you.

RANDY: So why is that a maze?

RYAN: So, "me maze" is the language that I came up with to help describe when I wake up and put self at the center, I feel like I'm in a maze all day long. And even, like, I would be talking to you two but I'm actually thinking about, like, how well am I doing talking to you two, and do they like me, and does the audience like me? And it's so easy to get caught up in what starts to feel like this labyrinth, this maze, that you can't even love the people that you're with or be present with the people that you're with because you're in what I describe as the me maze.

BLYNDA: I mean, but don't you--I feel like our culture, like, we have a self-centered culture. The messaging that we get all day long is, "Take care of yourself first, think about yourself first," and you know, I mean, of course, I have a family, and there's ways you have to think about others, but the dying to self is not a message that's--. It's not a real popular message.

RYAN: Not at all, yeah, you know, what's funny is I started this book in 2020, and so the story, what happened was I started a church with two of my best friends in 2019, and we spent all of 2019 building the church up, and then, you know, we got from 200 to 225 to 250 people, and then finally, March 1st of 2020, 800 people showed up, and it was amazing and we were so excited. March 8th was amazing, and then the entire world shut down for COVID. And so we went from having 800 people showing up to then, you know, we had to do these like YouTube services, and I'm sitting at my kitchen table on a Sunday afternoon watching the YouTube service we spent all week working on, and 25 people were watching, which is-- you guys know, YouTube has that lovely feature where it tells you exactly how bad you're doing, you know?

And I have that moment where I start to panic, I start to feel like this thing that we've been working so hard on for so long isn't going to work, and at the time, to your point, everything online was all of the self-help tips and tricks, and so I went for it, and I tried every single self-help trick that I could find. I had built a gym in my garage, I had the cold plunge, I was doing the breath work.

And so that afternoon, I just kept going through all the different self-help tips that I could. And don't do this, it's not a good thing to do, but after like the third round of breath work I decided I wanted to, as I was holding my breath, get out to my backyard to get some

sunlight, to get my feet in the grass, and so I go outside while holding my breath, I open the slider, I put my chair in the grass, and that's the last thing that I remember, I passed out.

BLYNDA: How long had you been holding your breath?

RYAN: It was two minutes, and I passed out. Such an embarrassing story. Don't tell anyone about this, right?

So I'm--and the funny thing is, we're on lockdown, and so all my neighbors are home, so they probably saw me, so they had to be thinking, like, "Is Ryan--like, did he overdose on something?" And what's funny about it is I overdosed on self-help.

Like, I took self-help to its extreme, and I realized that it didn't actually work. And so I came to, I'm not sure if it was 30 seconds later or what, but I came to and realized, "Okay, I probably need to write about this, because I just tried every self-help tip I could find and took it to its extreme, and I ended up passed out in my own backyard. There's gotta be a better solution."

BLYNDA: Okay, so in the book though, you talk about, there's four types to kind of identify, are you, you know, are you one of these more self-reliant types, kind of? I have to say, when I read them, I'll say them, they're the performer, the comparer, the avoider, and the controller.

BLYNDA: I'm all four.

RYAN: Same!

RANDY: Don't pass out on the set, please, okay?

RYAN: Yes, so I call them the four layers of the me maze, and by the way, I wrote the book because I'm all four of those too.

BLYNDA: Okay, good company.

RYAN: It's a helpful jumping off point to think, like, which one of these do you resonate with the most, but usually what comes up is as we're talking they're like, "Oh, but that's kind of the comparer too, and that's kind of the avoider," but no, I get that from Genesis 3. In the Bible, God creates Adam and Eve, and they're living in perfect harmony with each other and with their Creator, and then there's one tree they're not supposed to eat from, and when they do, we see the fallout of what it is like to live in a broken world, and the first thing they do is they sew fig leaves together and they create a costume for themselves to hide

behind, so the top layer is the performer. You go to the costume closet and you sew fig leaves together, and they weren't that impressive back then.

Now we have much more impressive fig leaves to try to hide behind, whether that's "can I be funny enough," "can I be smart enough," "can I be rich enough," "can I be famous enough," whatever it is, all the different ways that we try to cover ourselves up, instead of just being who we are with people, the performer. And then below that you see Adam and Eve start to blame each other. Adam goes, "Well, it was Eve's fault."

In other words, "I'm doing pretty good, she's the one who's struggling," you know, and then Eve's blaming the serpent. It's like there's this comparison that's baked into the Fall, which is why, like, for us sometimes as imperfect humans, we almost get threatened when other people have something good happen, or, God help us, we almost celebrate at some level when we see somebody fall, and it's this really broken part of us that still feels like God is grading on a curve, and so we're in competition with each other and we have to compare ourselves to each other. And comparison is the thief of joy.

But then you see him run and hide, and so that's where the avoider comes into play, and ultimately all of that happened because it was wanting to control. God was saying, "I know the best way to live," and they said, "Or we could try to do this our way," and so I get that from Genesis 3, but it's the framework of the book and the layers of the me maze.

RANDY: How--now that we can all resonate with at least part of that, right, how do we get out?

RYAN: Yeah, that's the big question. I'll tell you, for me, the easiest way to get out of the me maze, the most powerful way to get out of the me maze, is praying for other people. So, years ago, a mentor of mine, I was getting coffee with a mentor of mine, and he was asking me about my prayer life, and I thought I was crushing it, you know?

And he goes, "So let me ask you a question. If you had a transcript of your prayers from the last 24 hours," and I beat him to the punch, I was like, "Oh, my transcript would be so long. I pray a lot," you know? He goes, "Fine, great," he goes, "How many of those prayers were for other people?" And it got me, I'd never even thought about it before, but I had to be honest, and I told him, like, "I don't--pretty much none of them."

It was all, like, prayers for myself and "Lord, would you do this for me?" And there's nothing wrong with praying for yourself. There's something very powerful about stopping and praying and asking the Lord to bless somebody else.

And so especially when it comes to comparison, one of the big things I've learned is when I feel myself in the me maze, comparing myself to somebody else, I'll stop and I'll just spend a couple of minutes asking the Lord to bless them, or I'll just start praying for my brother and my sister-in-law and their three kids, or for my parents or for people at the church, or whoever it is. When you stop and pray for other people, it's amazing how quickly it gets us out of the me maze.

RANDY: Yeah, well, it shifts your focus, and you know, as long as it's not avoidance, to never deal with your own issues, right, but once we deal with that, then I think that's sort of God's pattern is he changes us, and then he puts us in a position to help others change, whether it's by prayer or by interaction. I mean, that's a pretty consistent biblical pattern.

Have you gotten into, I mean, you're a pastor down in Austin, Red Rocks Church, but serving others, not just praying for them, but actually taking action? To me, I've seen that is really powerful.

RYAN: I think the freest I've ever felt is at the end of a mission trip. It's like, I'll be flying home being like, "Why do I feel so good," and I'm just like not worried about anything, and then I'll stop and realize, like, I just spent the last however long not thinking about myself at all. Like, we would just wake up and go try to help, and try to serve.

And it's almost like God knew what he was doing, you know, when he created it this way, because when you find other people to serve. And in the modern world that we live in, it's just set up to not have to do that.

And it's very easy to isolate and make the whole day about yourself, and so it's more important than ever to-- whatever, it doesn't have to be a big thing, just go write an encouraging note for a friend and bake them some cookies and go drop it off at their house and spend a few days-- or spend a few minutes encouraging them and praying for them, and letting them know that you are in their corner. Something as small as that can break you out of the me maze in a hurry.

BLYNDA: You talk about a mission trip, and so I'm thinking about, because recently I was able to go to Angola, and it was an amazing trip, and I remember this interesting thought when I came back, because everything you said is true, you're spending the whole time there and you also start seeing another side of how people live, and how much in abundance that we have. So I had this interesting feeling when I came back that I almost just-- it just sat wrong with me how self-reliant we are, how self-indulgent we are, like, as a culture, it felt that way.

And I remember thinking, "Oh, I don't wanna come back and go back into the old ways of the-- I've seen something different, I wanna live differently," but it's ingrained in our society, I feel like, it's ingrained to every message we get, every place we go, there's that culture of just self-reliance. But you talk about surrender, and the difference, really, the antithesis of self-reliance is a surrender, and like you said, it's not thinking about yourself less, it's not thinking about yourself too highly, it's thinking, really, it's what-- how do you even say it?

RYAN: Thinking more about other people, thinking about yourself less and thinking about other people more. There's the C.S. Lewis quote, but then Rick Warren paraphrases it, "Humility isn't thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less." And so the phrasing that helps me is, "I want you to like you."

And so we live in a day and age where it's like, "I want you to like me, and I sure hope everybody likes me," and so I try to flip that when I'm going into a meeting or I'm going into a dinner party or I'm going anywhere, is what would it look like to walk into the room and truly believe, like, I want this person to like them, like themselves? And so what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna ask them some good questions, I'm gonna show up, I'm gonna be present. I'm not gonna be formulating my response as they're talking.

I'm actually gonna try to do my best-- I don't do this perfectly, but I'm gonna do my best to be present with them, and I'm going to look for ways to encourage them. And if I can walk out at the end of the night knowing that they feel better about who they are, then I feel like I would have done my job. And so I've found that that helps tremendously, or else I just feel like life is one big audition, and every room I walk into I'm trying to put on this grand performance.

RANDY: Yeah, that also helps build relationship, and I've found, just asking someone about themselves, it can open up all sorts of possibilities, and so, yeah, very good. All right, there's one thing I do wanna hit before we let you go, and that's a little bit of-- take this with the way it's intended, but you took Psalm 23 and you rewrote it for a purpose, not to, you know, anything negative towards the Word of God, yeah, not to be sacrilegious by any means, but to kind of wake us up to say, you know, maybe you are trapped in a bit of a me maze. Who wants to read that, you want to read that one, Blynda?

BLYNDA: Sure, it does, it shines a light on, especially if you understand that the first words of Psalm 23 are just so beautiful. "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing in him," nothing. In the first line here of--what do you call it?

RYAN: Me 23.

BLYNDA: Me 23. "I am my own shepherd, I better figure this out. I never lie down in green pastures, because I always feel like I'm running out of time." I mean, I read that and I'm like--.

Well, then I just kept going, and what's so amazing about this, the next line was, "I hope I'm on the right path, for my name's sake. I try to avoid the darkest valley because I'm terrified of what I may find." I mean, it just goes through every part of Psalm 23 and it highlights a way that I've actually thought.

RYAN: Totally, 100%, and three thousand years ago David writes this beautiful psalm out in the field late one night, is how I picture it, that is the opposite, is putting God at the center. And we live in a day and age that's shouting, "Put self at the center," and it sounds like the right idea until you actually do it, and then when you actually put yourself at the center, you inherit all of the pressure, the unrelenting, neverending pressure that comes with it. And so, yeah, I wanted to rewrite Psalm 23 as Me 23 to show you how truly uninspiring it is to live with self at the center, to highlight the beauty of the actual psalm in God's Word.

BLYNDA: It's very effective.

RANDY: What freedom have you found as you've moved out of the me maze and put God at the center?

RYAN: You know what is a fun story that I haven't talked about much? The book follows a journey of a day that I had in New York City about four years ago, where I really started to realize how much pressure I was putting on myself. And I go to some different stops in New York City, and right before the book came out, I went and relived that day.

The first stop is, I go into this beautiful cathedral, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and I'm sitting there like, "Okay, Lord, speak to me." And then what I realized, as I was looking around, is there's just a whole bunch of people in this room who are crying and going through things and having difficult conversations and praying, and trying so hard to find some answers. And I just sat back, and nobody would have known I was there, I just sat back and started praying for them, not out loud, just to myself, and I had this really sweet moment where I realized, the big, like, transformation is not that big.

It's this little shift of, "Oh, I'm not thinking about myself right now. I'm not stuck in my own me maze. I just feel--my heart's broken for these people and so I'm gonna pray for them, and then I'm gonna go get some lunch, and we're gonna keep living life." And so this prayer, "Lord, free me from me," really has been a gift for me. It's helped me sleep way better at

night, and experience so much more freedom and hopefully show up to every room that I show up in ready to encourage and inspire.

RANDY: I love it, I love it, well, you know what, we'd like to make it a gift today for you. If you would like Ryan Wekenman's book, "Free Me from Me", we would love to send it to you as a thank-you of doing something he's talking about, which is thinking about someone else and then serving someone else. And it's really simple as well.

We simply give people who are malnourished a simple bowl of food. We call it our Christmas Meals Blessing. Watch this, please join us, and again, you can request Ryan's book.

[children crying]

♪♪♪ ♪♪♪

ANNOUNCER: There is an alarming food crisis affecting almost 13 million children in southern and eastern Africa, according to UNICEF. Because of the prolonged drought, these regions have experienced massive crop failures, which in turn means hunger that turns into malnutrition, and malnutrition, if not treated, means certain death, particularly among young children.

ISAK PRETORIUS: I mean, this little life is fighting a battle of life and death, and we're doing everything we can to try and save this child's life, but this child is not one, this child is many. This child actually represents so many that are not in the clinic, many that die in villages without us ever even hearing or knowing about it, they just become another statistic, another child that died of malnutrition. We've got to be out in the villages, we've got to be where malnutrition starts.

This is where malnutrition ends. It either ends with us saving their life, or it ends with a child losing its life.

ANNOUNCER: The tragedy of children losing their lives because of the lack of food is what drives our commitment to our Mission Feeding program. A simple bowl of vitamin-enriched soup made available to children on a daily basis will save lives.

BLYNDA: This brings me so much joy, Isak, that I get to sit here today and be a part of feeding this village. But we need to continue to feed more villages. There's more children that go to bed hungry every night in these villages, and we've talked a lot about the need for it to be constant and consistent, and we won't stop until every child has a warm meal.

Please, will you continue to give? We need your help, God bless.

RANDY: Well, you know, I know that's hard to watch, and Blynda, it's hard to be there. But yet, you know that we can do something about it, we have the solution.

BLYNDA: We have the solution, I mean, when you--I got to actually hold the bowl and give it to a child, and there's nothing like seeing the look on their face when they get this warm bowl of soup. And we cannot save everyone, I've heard you say that before, we can't.

But we can save the one, and we can do, if we all work together, we can make such a difference. And we might not be able to ease all the suffering in the world, but we sure can ease the suffering of some.

RANDY: We can, and you know, I think that's all God asks of us, is to do what you can. And the beauty is that we know we can do so much. And the statistics, you know, Isak talked about a child becoming a statistic, and that's a terrible way to have to look at it, but the numbers are great when you talk about malnutrition, and then somewhat starvation.

And the numbers are great when we talk about our goal, 20 million meals. But what that represents is that one child in need, that one child who, without intervention, will not eat anything today, or will possibly eat something that has no nutritional value to it, and so the cycle just continues. But Blynda, you've also seen the positive side of that, because we know when we go in, with the support of our viewers, and we provide those meals, it turns things around rapidly.

BLYNDA: Because you say yes, because you partner with us, because you become a friend of Life Outreach, it changes lives, I have seen it. I have seen a village that had none of our help, none, and it is destructive and devastating and so sad.

And I got to see villages that had our Mission Feeding program, it's transformed. I'm telling you, Randy, it's the most transforming thing to see.

RANDY: It really is, and you know what, people are there right now. They're in the field, ready to serve food to children in need. We just need you to provide some of those meals.

Four hundred meals could be provided with a gift of $44. If you're able to give $77 today, that would help provide 700 meals, and the hope that that represents. $110 right now will provide 1000 meals.

A gift of $1100 would help provide 10,000 meals. That's the power of us just saying, "Yes, Lord, we'll follow your example. Yes, I'll give what I have." It may not seem like much, but man, when we give in obedience, God can multiply it.

Will you go online or go to the phone, make the best gift that you can? I can promise you, it will be life-changing, it will be life-saving, so please do it, and do it right now.

ANNOUNCER: This holiday season, many families will gather around tables filled with food. But for mothers in impoverished communities, simply finding enough food to feed their children can be a daily struggle. Through Life's Christmas Meals Blessing, your generosity can help provide 20 million nutritious meals for hungry children.

One meal, one child, and one precious life at a time. Eleven cents, that's all it takes to provide a life-saving, nourishing meal. Your gift of $44 today can help provide 400 meals.

$77 will provide 700 meals. And $110 will help provide 1000 meals for children in desperate need. And with any gift, you may request James Robison's final book, "A Life Proclaiming Freedom", as a thank-you for your support.

Discover the freedom James found in Jesus and how you can experience it too. With your gift of $110 or more, request the "Fruitful and Flourishing" bundle, a beautiful collection of daily encouragement to remind you of God's faithful care and his promise of guidance from Isaiah chapter 58, verse 11.

Finally, with your gift of $1100 or more, you will help provide 10,000 meals for children in need, and can request Life's beautiful bronze sculpture, "The Good Shepherd". So please call, write, or make your gift online today.

RANDY: I do hope you go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can. You can be such a blessing, a life-saving blessing in someone's life today. And again, today you can request "Free Me from Me", a good book.

BLYNDA: I don't want any more of me, I want all of him, none of me, Ryan, thank you for joining us.

RYAN: Thank you so much for having me, and thank you for the space you all are creating.

RANDY: Thank you guys for being a part of our space. Please come back next time. We'll see you here on "Life Today".

♪See my dreams all die ♪

♪From where you're standing ♪

♪On your own ♪

♪It's so quiet here ♪

♪And I feel so cold ♪

♪This house no longer ♪

♪Feels like home ♪

♪♪♪

FEMALE ANNOUNCER: You can chart a purposeful path, creating a legacy of love and hope for future generations. Visit Life Planning Services today.

MALE 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.