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Week 48

Betty Robison & Blynda Lane

April Osteen Simons

“Better Days”

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

ANNOUNCER: April Osteen Simons shares how putting God first in our lives impacts generations.

APRIL OSTEEN SIMONS: When you run to God and not away from him when life is crumbling, you're teaching your children to run to God. When you get back up after falling down, you're teaching your kids to be get-back-uppers, and you know, you're affecting and impacting your bloodline by what you believe. And if we can just put God first in our lives, everything in your life is just gonna be better.

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BETTY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today". Thank you for joining us. I'm so glad that you did, I think you're going to really be blessed.

We have a really special guest today. But I'm Betty Robinson, and this is Blynda Lane.

BLYNDA LANE: Hi Betty, so good to see you, and we do, we have--.

BETTY: Would you like to introduce her?

BLYNDA: Well, we have a beautiful guest today, and one that has just released an amazing book. So we have April Osteen Simons with us. We're so glad you're here.

APRIL: I'm honored to be here, thank you for having me. Love y'all, love what you do, y'all are amazing.

BETTY: Well, our families have been friends for a long time.

APRIL: Yes, so thanks for having me.

BLYNDA: What's exciting though is you're here because you have just released the book "Jumpstart Your Day", and so it's a devotional book. So what I love about it, I actually read a few of them, actually a lot of them, I read a lot of them, actually, and they're by days, and they're really, like, short and easy to read.

So any busy mom, anybody can grab it and do it. So what was the heart behind the--?

APRIL: The heart behind it was, we get so busy with life. We're all busy, whether we have kids, whether we don't have kids, just life. And I think one of the number one things that I get in email, "How do I make time for God every single day? My heart wants to, but I got all these kids," you know, I know, I've got five kids, and so I just thought, you know, I want something where people don't feel, you know, like if they miss something, that they condemn themselves, you know, because sometimes I think we think "I have to have a 45-minute Bible study. Well, I can't always do that," and so I just wanted to make something easy for people to say, "Hey, I can get alone with God for five minutes, ten minutes. I'll get in the closet, I'll get in the bathroom, I'll get in the car, wherever I need to go." And it's just step by step to help you start your morning off right.

And I did it 90 days to kind of get you in that rhythm of starting your day off with God, because when you start it off with God, the day doesn't go perfect, but it goes so much better, you're able to handle things. It's based on not my word, but on God's Word, and that's what we can bank on every time.

BETTY: I love that because, you know, it is easy to get busy, and you start the minute you walk into your home from your bedroom, life starts moving, you know, it seems like. Now, it's a lot calmer for me now, all my children are grown and gone. I'm a great-grandmother of soon to be 24 grandchildren, so what a blessing, you know?

But I had those days as a young mother, you know. You do find it difficult to find just a few minutes. But I found it to be very important to me.

I'm an early riser, so just, especially since I've just recently lost my husband, to find those moments, and I liked what you called it, the jumpstart to your day. I thought, for me, it's the first thoughts of the day, I want them to be on him. And so I get up and read his Word, and it doesn't take very long because I've never been one to get so involved with a book or anything, you know, a lengthy time, you know?

So it starts my day better, and like you said, it may not be a perfect day. There's challenges, but boy, does that help.

APRIL: Oh, it does, and you know, you've heard the saying, "Either you decide the day or the day decides you." Either you run your day or your day runs you. So if you just get up in the morning and say, "God, I thank you for this day, I'm gonna spend this first few minutes with you, and I'm just counting on you today," and it's putting God in charge of your day instead of your circumstances, and it just makes life better, that's what I think.

BETTY: And a lot of times he just wants to talk to us.

BLYNDA: It's true, and it's actually what I do love about your devotional is because you have these activation points. So a lot of times you might read something and you're like, "What did I just read? I'm not even sure, I mean, the Scripture, it didn't really apply to my life," but you kind of make it into this, it's "Believe it, say it, pray it, live it," so you make the person, after reading it, kind of activate it so it's getting not just into their head but into their heart and into their life.

APRIL: I'm very simple, and so I write like I want to read, and so I've just read this bit of encouragement, and that's what I wrote at the beginning is just a little bit of encouragement, because we have enough bad news in this world. We need something to give us life in the morning. And then we do "Believe It", you know, what's the Scripture?

Again, it's not on my word, it's on God's Word. Well, today's Scripture is, "This is the day you've made, I'm gonna rejoice, I'm gonna rejoice in this day," and then it's a "Pray It", a short little prayer. "God, thank you for this wonderful day." Then it's a "Say It", because you know, there's power in our words.

I'm gonna declare over my day, and you know, I've found that some people, if they didn't grow up in faith, they don't really know, "What do you mean, say it out loud? That's embarrassing," and it's not some mantra, it's, you're speaking God's Word. So I always tell people, just get alone in your closet. I talk out loud to myself all the time in my car, I just do it.

People don't know if you're on the phone, and I'm just saying, "God, I thank you for today, I thank you that your favor surrounds me." We're declaring God's Word because we know that words that we speak become the house that we live in, so we're making a godly house. And then the last thing is "Live It", because it's one thing to read about patience at 6 a.m, it's another thing to apply it at 9 a.m. traffic, so we're gonna put it into action. We're not

gonna be reacting, and we're gonna respond with grace and mercy and it's just, you know, again, I just write how I like to read, and how I like to live my life.

BETTY: And I have also-- I'm finding recently that if I will personalize God's Scripture to me, in other words, where it says "we", I put "I", "me", to apply to me personally for that day. And we just talked about "Rise and Shine", that's your first one.

What about "Be Done"? What do you mean by that?

APRIL: Oh, be done, you know, I think, some things we just need to be done with, like, for example, we need to be done with that thing that offended us last week. We need to be done with that thing that offended us in 1921. We need to forgive.

Unforgiveness has this way of, we can remember what those people wore when they, you know, they said something wrong to us, we remember they didn't look so cute. We have all these memories, and really that's stifling our relationship with God. So some things in life, you know, we just gotta be done with.

So that unforgiveness, to put it in an example: "God, today I'm done with that aught that I have against my brother, my sister, that person at church that took my seat. I'm done with that, you know, I'm forgiving," and it's not always a one and done. Sometimes we have to say that many times a day, at least I do, you know, maybe I'm not as spiritual as y'all, but you know, I have to forgive and keep on forgiving. And eventually it's gonna go away, but some things in life, we just gotta be done with.

We've got to be done with calling ourselves a bad mother. We've got to be done with criticizing what we see in the mirror. We've just got to be done with it, and you know, start saying what God says about us.

We're his masterpiece, we're one of a kind. I like to say it like this: If God had a refrigerator, our picture would be up on it, you know, think of yourself like that. Some people didn't grow up with a good father, and their concept of God is just this tainted concept, "God's in heaven waiting to strike me down, waiting for me to mess up." No, you know what, God's a loving God, he's a loving Father, he's my very own Father.

So I'm done with the old and I'm bringing in the new. I'm gonna live my life according to God's Word. I'm not gonna always get it right, but I'm gonna try my best.

BLYNDA: So you talk about making space for what's holy. What happens in someone's life when they make space for what's holy, and what does that look like?

APRIL: Oh, to me what that looks like is just starting-- or having God in your life, making God the center of your life. The Scripture in Deuteronomy says, "Talk about God," I'm gonna paraphrase it. You know, when you're going on a walk, when you're, you know, living life, when you're at your kitchen table, and I can reflect on my parents, you know, they lived it, like y'all did, they lived it.

They didn't just pastor, talk about God, and then come home and say, "Oh, God, man, you've failed us." No, they lived God, and so I think that's one thing that kept me in serving God all my life, and I just-- I know there's something when your life is set apart to serve God in the good times, the bad times, the rough times, the challenges, because I've discovered this, that when you run to God and not away from him when life is crumbling, you're teaching your children to run to God. When you get back up after falling down, you're teaching your kids to be get-back-uppers. And, you know, you're affecting and impacting your bloodline by what you believe, and if we can just put God first in our lives, that's what I mean in that chapter, everything in your life is, again, not gonna go perfect, but it's just gonna be better.

BETTY: Okay, there's another one you have in here titled "Built for Pressure", oh my, you know. We try to escape any kind of pressure in our lives, but sometimes God teaches us through that pressure.

APRIL: Well, I know that you know that, built for pressure, after what you've been through, but you know, I think about my middle daughter. I was going to the hospital for a checkup, and I was nine months, I was to term, but, you know, I knew, I knew. I was a professional, this was baby number three.

So the doctor said go home, you know, it was a 45-minute drive home. And then something on the inside of me said, "Go back in," and I thought, "This is ridiculous, he just checked me." I went back in, I was embarrassed, he said, "You are in labor, go check into the hospital." So, I'm not much of a professional, I guess, so anyway, I went to the hospital, nothing happening. All of a sudden my water broke, everything, you know.

I believe in supernatural childbirth, and that to me is an epidural, and I did not have time. I didn't have time for that epidural because my daughter Savannah came so fast, so I'm sitting there on the table and the nurse said something to me, "Don't push." I thought, "Is she kidding," you know, because this baby is coming. And I was in so much pain, and if you're pregnant, you know, it's all okay, it's all gonna be good, but I was in so much pain, and I remember laying on that table thinking, "I don't wanna do this right now. I just wanna go home, I wanna get in the bathtub, and I'm gonna do this later."

BETTY: Changed your mind.

APRIL: It was so much pressure. And I thought later after I had her, "That's ridiculous." My point in all that, especially if you're a woman, and a man, you're built for pressure. We can handle more than we give ourselves credit for.

There's a Scripture, I think, in the Message Bible, and it says, "If you fall to pieces in a crisis, there wasn't much to you in the first place." And so I just thought, "I'm not gonna fall to pieces in a crisis, I'm not gonna fall to pieces." And one thing that I did, y'all, is I changed what I was saying about it. I used to say this, "But I don't want my parents to get old because I don't wanna see them, you know, go down in any way," and I just changed it, I changed what I was saying.

You know, "My parents are gonna live long, I'm gonna go see my mom, they're gonna have a good, healthy life." So instead of dreading things, you know, I just thought, "No, I'm built for this, I can handle hard situations, I can handle challenges." I don't like them, but God's with me, he's for me, he's in me, he's around me, so I just think we need to give ourselves a little bit more credit. If we have God on the inside of us, man, we've got greatness on the inside of us.

BLYNDA: 2 Corinthians even says, "We are hard pressed on every side, but we are not crushed." And so, but I think it's so good to acknowledge that life can be hard, I mean, that real trials come, and I think sometimes we can imagine, "Gosh, I felt like I was doing everything right, so why am I having to experience pain?" But God says he's with us in the trouble, but there will be some trouble.

APRIL: And some things we're just not gonna understand. We're just not gonna get it, and I think I wrote that somewhere in the book, I don't know the title of it, but we gotta not get stuck on questioning God, you know, the questions.

BETTY: And when you're hurting and when you're lost-feeling, it's hard not to question.

APRIL: It is, that's why we've got to be aware, be alert.

BETTY: Our first question is why.

BLYNDA: But I find, even if I go down that line of thinking and God gave me the answer, it wouldn't be good enough. I would want my loved one back, it wouldn't--.

BETTY: There is no answer.

BLYNDA: There is no answer that's gonna satisfy.

APRIL: I think we have to get comfortable not having answers, and still trust God, still believe in him. We just move on, put feet to our faith.

BLYNDA: It's like one foot in front of the other, and that's what I've seen in you, Betty, is you haven't eaten this elephant all at one time, you've just put one foot in front of the other, and you're doing things, people like myself look on the outside and go, "I don't understand the strength that she's walking in, I don't understand the grace," but you are walking in such grace and such strength, and it's a testament that that's what God can do. That's what God can do, and really at your lowest point, God is-- he's the strongest in our weakness.

APRIL: Exactly, man, such an example you are to all of us, thank you for being you.

BETTY: This next topic is perfect: Nothing is impossible.

APRIL: Well, man, amen to that, you know, I think we got it. My mom ruined me for believing that God can't do the impossible. I saw her go from death to life, basically, you know, with cancer, and she was healed.

I witnessed the miracle as a kid, so, you can't talk me out of miracles. I just try to, in that chapter, try to encourage you to stop looking at the impossibilities and to look at God who can do anything. God can change any situation, he can turn any relationship around.

He can bring you a breakthrough when you least expect it. Oftentimes, and I don't know if y'all agree with this, you probably do, but our prayers don't get answered the way that we thought they should get answered.

BETTY: We already have it figured out.

APRIL: We do, we do, but God always has a better way. Sometimes it's a roundabout way, and we wish he would come faster, but in the process, we become stronger, hopefully we become wiser, and so, you know.

BLYNDA: I always say God writes the best stories, but if he had had me co-author, I would have taken him a different way.

APRIL: Exactly, so much so, I mean.

BETTY: He's not any less God if he doesn't answer it the way we ask him to, because you can imagine, I asked him to heal my husband many, many times. Well, he did, he's with

him now, he's perfect. Yes, I miss him, but I will see him again, and we'll both rejoice together, our children together with us.

Everyone that accepts him and knows him will be there. We'll have a big party of rejoicing in Jesus, and I hope you're part of that, because you have let Jesus into your heart. Is there anything else specific in your book that you wanted to bring up?

APRIL: Well, I think I wrote one about God's timing, and it's just, you gotta trust his timing, you know? So often we're waiting, we're waiting for our kids to turn around, and any mama or daddy out there who's almost given up, I hope you hang on because, you know, God has a way of doing things that we can't understand, and just keep praying, keep believing, keep faith in it, and keep holding on, because he will come through, he's faithful.

BLYNDA: I've heard it said, "I have to be willing to forgive my kids for the way that they find their own relationship with the Lord," because sometimes it's not the way that I wish they would go to find their way to Jesus, but you know, at the end of the day, we want them to know and love him as their personal Savior. And sometimes they choose their way to do that.

APRIL: And you can't control them when they're 55 years old.

BLYNDA: That's true, that's true.

BETTY: And then there was the final one that I wanted to talk about, "Even When". That can be a tough one, can't it?

APRIL: It can, because even when my prayers don't get answered the way that I wanted them to, "God, I love you." Even when, you know, things didn't turn out exactly how I wanted, even when my mom or dad went to heaven, or my spouse went to heaven, "God, I still love you, I still trust you." So that is encouragement to someone who, all of us who experience those difficulties in life, and we've got to come back to the point that God is still good, God is still faithful. We either love him or we don't love him, we can't just love him in the good times. We gotta love him in the difficult times, because again, I'm all about legacy.

We're training and impacting a generation to come. What we believe defines who we are, and who we are affects and impacts our bloodline.

So if you don't do it for yourself, do it for your kids, do it for the generations to come. Believe God, trust God, run to God, and just keep going, he's faithful.

BETTY: God is good all the time, you know, even in those times that are so difficult, and you may ask, "Where is he?" He's right there, holding you, loving you, caring for you, waiting for you to pour your heart out to him, because when you do that, he comes in and he pours his love, which is indescribable. It's wide, it's deep, it's long, it's lasting, it's forever. We have no way of properly describing the love that God has for us.

We saw an example of his love through the blood of Jesus Christ, yes, but his love grows for us all the time, and our love needs to grow for him and his will in our lives. I hope and pray you've been really blessed today, simple steps to help you move forward.

Nothing to bog you down with, but to lift you up, in Jesus's name. Don't you feel that way, Blynda?

BLYNDA: I'm so encouraged by this episode, thank you, April.

BETTY: Thank you so much. We're gonna show you something that you're gonna be blessed by so much.

I hope you'll stay with us and watch it, because as God gives to you, you can learn how to give to others. Watch this.

TAMMY TRENT: In my travels to the mission field, I'm always torn between happiness and sorrow. Happy when I get to be a part of our Mission Feeding program that is saving children's lives and providing hope for their mothers. And then there is sorrow, sorrow when I'm with mothers in total despair because they have no food for their families.

Sorrow as I watch children fighting for their lives because of severe malnutrition. For me, at times like these, I must speak up for the voiceless and say, providing them with life-saving food can be the difference between life and death.

TAMMY: I do believe in hope, I do believe that God will provide, and I do believe that that provision will come from God's people, because truly, at the end of the day, we are all family. We are all family, and I believe that God asks us to step up when we see a need, and do whatever we can to stand in the gap for these families, for these children, to save their very lives. We cannot wait another day.

We cannot wait for tomorrow. They may not have tomorrow. Tomorrow may never come for them.

But we have today, and today, today I will speak for them. Please send help.

BETTY: Just as Tammy said in her heart cry, we can make a difference. We can help these children right now. Do you understand that for $44, you can give 400 meals, and for $77, you can give 700 meals?

For $110, 1000 meals, and for $1100, 10,000 meals. Blynda, can you imagine what a difference that would make if our friends would do that right now?

BLYNDA: 10,000 meals would change a village, and our goal is 20 million meals, because what you may not understand is we need to feed them a meal every day. We can't just give them one meal for one day, we want to ongoingly feed these children. And I just got back from Angola, and I relate to what Tammy is talking about because she mentioned in there this joy and the sorrow.

On this trip that I went on, Betty, the trip, I'm actually really thankful that it was in two parts, because I don't know if I could have handled just the sorrow part. I did get to see, and this is what I want our friends to know, when I went to the village where we do have a Mission Feeding program, this is a program that is proven, it is working, and one thing I love, Betty, about Life Outreach is when we say we're going to do something, we do it. And that was evidenced when I saw it in the village.

I saw this village that was transformed, and the children are joyful, but we also saw some very sorrowful things because we went to a village that did not have a Mission Feeding program, and they were malnourished, they're desperate, and Betty, I hate to say it, but they're dying. And so our Mission Feeding program, though it exists in some villages, it has to exist in this village, because children are in desperate need.

BETTY: Thank you, Blynda, I hope you will join with us, and let's help feed these children, they need it desperately. And when you do help us, we'll send you James's book, "A Life Proclaiming Freedom". I promise you you will be blessed.

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.

ISAK PRETORIUS: The little boy, Paolo, his mother Rosalina explained to us that he is two years old. And as I look at this little boy and I can literally see how his ribs are protruding and his little legs are so thin, little arms. We haven't done a circumference measurement on him yet, but I can tell you that it would be in the red.

And imagine what it must be like to be a father or a mother where your child says, "Food," says, "I'm hungry," and you can't respond. You don't have anything to give them. Not because you don't love them enough, not because you don't desperately want to give them what they're asking for and what you know that they need, but because you don't have it, you don't have the food that your child needs to be sustained, to be alive, and that's how little boys like Paolo end up here.

It's not one missed meal, it's day after day of not having sufficient nutrition. So please, don't try and forget what you've heard. Don't try and forget what you've seen.

But rather, open your heart and act, because your action today is literally an answer to a child's cry for food. So if you can be that answer today, then I want you to get online or to dial that number on your screen and to please give that gift today.

Give the gift that is the answer to a child's cry. Give the gift that is life, the gift that is food.

BETTY: Thank you so much for joining us today, April. Thank you for joining us, what a blessing. And if you'll call and say you wanna help us with the children, we're gonna send you April's book, "Jumpstart Your Day".

It will bless you immensely. We've already started going through it, sharp words of God's truth that will walk you through the day.

Thank you so much. See you next time.

♪♪♪ ♪♪♪ ♪♪♪ ♪♪♪

♪ You can't hear me cry ♪

ANNOUNCER: For over 60 years, Life Outreach International has shared the transforming truth of God's love in both word and deed. We are forever grateful to everyone who has joined us in our mission of providing water to the thirsty, food to the hungry, shelter to the orphaned, and meeting the various needs of those who are struggling. Our ministry to the lost and hurting is only made possible because of the prayers and generous gifts of our friends and partners who provide consistent, faithful support.

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Your monthly support will help us continue to bring God's love, hope, and healing to a world in need, one life at a time. Please, call now.

ANNOUNCER: Stay connected with "Life Today" through your favorite social media. Get access to exclusive content and news with the "Life Today" social media experience.

ANNE GRAHAM LOTZ: So the primary purpose of the book of Revelation is not primarily prophecy. It's to reveal Jesus.

ANNOUNCER: Anne Graham Lotz, tomorrow.

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