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WAITING ON GOD

Interview

Robyn: *Oh certainly there have been times when I felt utterly crushed. I remember at the time thinking I'll never smile again! But there is hope even when it appears that there isn't.*

Celia: I'm Celia Fielke and this is messages of hope. Are there times when you've felt down and despondent, where you were desperate for encouragement?

There are times in life where you feel like there's one thing after another going wrong. We think if we're stronger we'd be able to cope with it better. Our guest today, Robyn, has had some pretty traumatic times. Caring for a mother with Dementia while her father was dying from bone cancer and on top of that caring for her son with a drug addiction. What kind of person do you need to be to cope with that?

Robyn you must have been a pretty together person, knowing where you were heading. I wonder what were you like as a teenager?

Robyn: I think as a schoolgirl I was really just focused on school. I can't say I really contemplated too much because when I finished year 12 I had no idea what I wanted to do. I was quite attracted to the idea of speech pathology but at that time you could only do it in Western Australia and there was no way I was going to leave home! That was very typical of me as a person, very home based, needing the security of home and the familiarity. So the sense of going to another state, living on my own, didn't even factor into my thinking. I couldn't do it. I was quite shy, introverted. The things that were important to me then, some of them still are, you know things like family, being kind to people, not being pushy. Being accepted.

Celia: Now during high school something happened that really challenged you as a person didn't it? Can you tell us about that?

Robyn: I can remember in year 9 there was a simulation exercise that one of the teachers had where some of the class were chosen as people stranded on a desert island. The whole idea was that you had different roles. The last person to be chosen was me and I was chosen to be the insurance salesman. Then you had to stand in front of the class and express why you should survive. Why should you be one of the survivors? I could think of absolutely no reason why an insurance salesman would be chosen ahead of a mother with a child or a doctor or something like this. That really was incredibly distressing. I remember sort of losing it. Being in tears and highly embarrassed and full of shame and wanting to put forward some reason why I should survive. But I couldn't think of anything. That was

really a very low point at school. I felt quite humiliated. So there's that sense that no one likes to be thought worthless.

Celia: Was there something that helped you to get past that humiliation, that feeling?

Robyn: Yes I think there is a sense of having a solid secure base which is home. Mum and Dad were so supportive that you knew you were valued at home. You knew you were loved. So it wasn't about receiving that kind of worth from a simulation game or from your peers.

Celia: That's really interesting that you were so shy and fragile and yet you've been able to handle some really difficult times. How do you compare those two people?

Robyn: Yes, completely different and yet at the same time there is still that sense of they aren't two different people. It's still the one person but who the Lord has been growing through all these ups and downs of life. Learning not to rely on myself, depend on myself and stepping out into situations that mostly I wouldn't choose.

Celia: Robyn, you've been through some pretty tough and traumatic times and situations. What would you say has been the hardest?

Robyn: I think the hardest is always going to be about your children.

Celia: So what is it about your children?

Robyn: I think as a parent you have that great love for your kids. They are part of you. And you raise them with the kind of expectations that they'll follow in your footsteps. And when that doesn't happen it's big grief.

Celia: Can you tell us a little bit about the situation you've had with your son? He had an addiction didn't he?

Robyn: Yes he had an addiction to quite heavy drugs.

Celia: And what was your reaction to that?

Robyn: I guess initially there was a real sense of shock. How could this possibly be? How could raising a child in a family that has been involved in the church, and had talked about the effects of drugs and why you shouldn't do these things make this possible? And then suddenly you find yourself right in the middle of it and it's like this can't be. But of course the evidence is overwhelming. Then suddenly you have to face reality and it's not pretty. Yes you can still see the original child in there but on top of that is all this mess and ways of living that, well, I was pretty naive. I knew nothing about it and that it would involve lying and that it would involve stealing from the family. And so much anger. I remember at the time thinking I'll never smile again!

Celia: I don't know how you coped especially having such a shy nature, you know, not liking conflict or anything. Are there any specific incidents that stand out in your mind?

Robyn: There were certainly some incidents that were a bit scary. We had people coming to the door demanding money and when they weren't getting any satisfaction that way they ripped the front, wire door off. Police were called and Ah! I'm just not used to living

this kind of life. I guess I didn't really know how to cope and I'm not one to really confront in an aggressive sort of way. So I would try to find ways of looking for situations when things were a lot calmer to try and feed in truth. It was definitely a sense of this child is crying out for help and whilst I can help in certain ways I can't deal with the underlying problem. Only the Lord can do that and in the end I have to wait on the Lord's timing. He's the only one who has any sort of ability to do anything about it. So for me that is enormously comforting that there is hope. What I am dealing with is not the end of the story.

Celia: So Robyn where are things at now with your son's addiction?

Robyn: It was a miracle. He'd been missing for about 10 days. I had no idea where he was. I fully expected to have a phone call from the police at some stage. You know, something like they found him in a gutter murdered or whatever. And in the end you're sort of like well I can't do anything about this. The Lord knows where he is. Can I trust the Lord with him? Well if I can't trust him who can I trust? Lo and behold he arrived home and he slept probably for a day and a half. When he woke up he came and said "I'm sick of living like this." And from that point he went off drugs went off smoking, got rid of all his piercings, deleted from his phone all the people that were supplying him. It's just a miracle. So eventually it got to the point he would accept counselling and that certainly has band-aided in some ways. He's finding different ways to be addicted. Yeah. Not to drugs which I'm thankful for but that whole personality that has been damaged is still trying to find ways to make itself feel better. Without the Lord, it can't be done.

Celia: It's pretty clear that Jesus is really important in how you handle this and what you hope for your son.

Robyn: It's this relationship with Jesus Christ. Without him, without his spirit persevering with me and being my strength, I really don't think I could've coped with life. Well I know I couldn't have because to be that shy, introverted, anxious little teenager I'm different than I would have been I think. I think I would have stayed very inward looking, very self-centred, trying to control everything. Whereas now I realize I don't actually control anything. So that's very freeing in a way you know that I can trust the Lord to deal with all these things.

Now it's not going to be instant answers and it's not going to perhaps be even answers that I would have expected. If it had been me I would have been really happy for everything to be worked out really lovely, in say the first week. But here I am, I don't know how many years later, 20 plus years later. To have gone through these things and while they break you, nevertheless may I feel broken, but I'm not because Jesus is the one who keeps me going.

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