

New Robertson Film Reveals God's Saving Grace Isn't 'Blind' to Anyone

More than a decade ago, Duck Dynasty hit the airwaves and became a household name, one of the most popular reality shows on television between 2012 and 2017.

But what many don't know, family member Willie Robertson says, is that the show almost didn't happen and that the Robertson family became very close to imploding years before that series ever came to the small screen.

The new movie, "The Blind," which details the chaotic story of Phil and Kay Robertson's early married life and how Phil, the "Duck Commander," took on a so-called lifestyle of "sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll," which was exacerbated by a drinking problem when he would get in trouble with the law and had to hide in the woods to evade authorities.

But then Jesus turned Phil's life around, and he and Kay have now been married for more than 57 years. The family unit, which includes Willie and his brothers Alan, Jase and Jep, is stronger than ever, as the new film reveals.

"In Christianity, we like to forget the past and move on; sins are forgiven," Willie Robertson told Charisma News' John Matarazzo during a recent interview. "I think it was tough for Mom and Dad to show that time of their life. I think it's tough when you go back to make a movie about the darkest time of your life, but they were willing to do that to make sure that if anybody else is in that position, they have a chance to realize that there is hope and redemption, and there can be change when you change your life for the gospel."

Much of the Duck Dynasty television program focused in on Phil

Robertson, the patriarch of the family, but with "The Blind," Willie Robertson says, the story hones in more on his mother, Kay, and "the resiliency to turn something really bad into good." Though the bad times, Kay Robertson was able to forgive her husband for the wild times and she realized how God could fix any situation. Including one that seemed to be utterly hopeless at times.

Although she had yet to become a Christian, she was able to show Phil the unconditional love Jesus shows sinful believers, waiting for them to simply repent. Willie Robertson says his sense of humor came from his mother, who maintained joy through some very challenging times.

"Mom was always fun, even during the worst [of] times when they weren't believers. The movie shows that," Willie says. "Myself, I don't have any memories of the bad times because most of my memories were when they were believers and the marriage was good. But with mom, I'm sure her sense of humor was a mechanism she had to develop to deal with; not just because of what they came out of in their marriage, but also because we were poor. She always tried to manage everything and pay the bills and raise four boys, which was difficult in a two-bedroom house down there on the river. We were pretty rough-and-tumble boys, but she was great."

Korie Robertson, Willie's wife, has developed a great admiration for her mother-in-law over the years that she's been married to Willie.

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Korie calls Kay Robertson a hero, and she's grateful that the filmmakers were able to show that side of her.

"She learned how to cook from Phil's mom and her grandmother, whom she called Nanny, and that's a big part of who she is,"

Korie says. "She cooks for the family and takes care of everybody. When I first came into the family, I definitely saw her heroic nature. At one time, she was a single mom taking care of three boys, and she had to get out there and get a job and take care of the family.

"When I first came into the family, she single-handedly ran the Duck Commander business off the end of the couch. She became a part of every single aspect of the business, but more than that, she held the family together in the good times and the bad. I'm glad we got to show that tremendous love of hers in the movie."

Kay's demeanor had a big affect on Phil's life, Willie says, and it all began with a huge family gesture he made one day to shun his wild friends to take his sons hunting.

"It's a great scene in the movie, and that's where you can see Phil's whole mentality and spirit changing," Willie says. "He came to the point where now he had to realize that it wasn't all about him and the had to think about this family."

✖ That's when Phil started working on his duck calls, and Willie says that's when Phil's hobby became a business. It eventually led to the television show, and it's how the Robertson's became a worldwide phenomenon.

"It's so amazing how God worked through all that and caught us just at the right time to put all of this together," Willie says.

"The Blind" releases to theaters nationwide on Sept. 28. Willie says he hopes everyone will come out to see the film and discover that nobody is "too far gone" that can't be reeled in by Jesus.

"I think it (the movie) has real power through the gospel to change people's lives," Willie says.

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