

## Podcast 292 Two Adventures and More about Knowing God

**Scott:** Welcome to the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme! I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today! Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

**Steve:** I am really well, but we have lots of adventures to talk about.

**Scott:** Cool! Oh, and the puppy!

**Steve:** Yeah, he followed me downstairs.

**Scott:** We've never had a puppy on the show before, I don't think.

**Steve:** We'll see what we can do.

**Scott:** All right! So I know what my adventure was. What's yours?

**Steve:** Well, why don't you start with your adventure, because yours was more earth-shaking.

**Scott:** All right, well, I'll try to leave all my opinions out of this, because I told all that on my other show with Todd. I got Covid, finally. I thought maybe I had had it early on and maybe this was the new variant or whatever. But most of my family got it, but I got it the worst, and I ended up in the hospital, or the emergency room, anyway, for about seven hours, mostly just sitting there while they monitored me to see how bad I would get. But eventually, I got an infusion of antibodies, and that seemed to help. I managed to go home, and the next morning really turned the corner and have been feeling much better since. I've been taking all kinds of stuff, but I had full-blown pneumonia with it, so that was a new adventure for me. Breathing really shallow, quick breaths because I didn't want to cough or whatever. And that was not fun. But thank God for all the folks that worked on me and all the people that prayed for me and my family, and we're back in the saddle again. So that was my adventure.

**Steve:** Wow!

**Scott:** Hopefully, that's the last time I deal with that thing.

**Steve:** Well, thank the Lord that you're here.

**Scott:** Yeah, me too. That's what I'm saying, man.

**Steve:** Well, mine was not as earth-shattering. But it's still going as of today. That's why I was a little bit late for going down for this podcast. I'll go back. Today is Tuesday, and it's the 24<sup>th</sup> we're recording this, but on the 11<sup>th</sup>, I was taking Johnny to our local diner for his special birthday breakfast. So he always gets a waffle with whipped cream, and then they shoot whipped cream into his mouth, and everybody

sings to him, and he hams it up, and this is how we start his birthday. And then for lunch, they had a Demme Learning birthday party for Johnny, because he's one of the favorites over there. So he had a big sign made, which he made himself, and he planned it, got balloons, the whole thing. While lunch was going on, I got a text. Your flight's canceled for the next day. Because the next day, I was to leave for Cincinnati to speak at the homeschool conference. And by the time I got around to trying to call the airline, and it was a 56-minute wait, and I watched the flights that I was hoping to talk to them to get rebooked on, get filled. So Thursday morning, I get up at 5:30, and I took Johnny to work, and then I headed 500 miles for Cincinnati.

**Scott:** Whew, that's a long drive, man!

**Scott:** Yep, and I picked up Dr. Karen Holinga, who wrote our Spelling You See, on the way in Columbus, so that took about 20-30 minutes, and I still made it by 4:11, pulled into Cincinnati. I had a 5:30 workshop. I spoke till 6:30, worked the booth till 8. Pretty much the same schedule on Friday. I spoke twice, worked the booth all day. Saturday morning, I spoke twice, finished at 5:30, got on the road, drove back to Wheeling. So I was 240 miles. Then I got up Sunday morning, I had to go through Lancaster, pick up Johnny and the dog, and take them to the lake, because we had this wonderful week planned out with Ethan and his foster children and Anna, and it was going to be wonderful. So I'm already tired. And I'm driving up there, and I get a text. "Meet me at the Scranton hospital." So I get to the hospital, and my dear wife had fallen in the garage and had broken her shoulder in three places. So we finished out the week, but she was in pain, God bless her. And the pain meds weren't covering it. Oh, by the way, the next day then I did a 250-mile round trip back to Lancaster to meet with an orthopedic surgeon, and then yesterday we had the CAT scan. So it's been a full week. We had a wonderful time with the kids, but then it rained all week. So between the rain and my wife's pain, God still blessed it, and we had a wonderful experience. And then I get home, and the air conditioning is gone. The worker was here yesterday. And then last night, it stopped again, so he just came again this morning. And I finally got around to writing in Johnny's birthday card. So we were upstairs this morning after I made him breakfast - of waffles, by the way, because he requested waffles, so I made some keto waffles - and then he said, "Sit down." So Sandy and I had to sit on the couch while he made a big production of reading his birthday card. As you know, I spend a good bit of time praying and writing in my sons' birthday cards. This is something I've been doing for decades, and I think it's very important for kids to get something from their dad. They expect gushy stuff from their mom, but it's nice when they get something from their dad as well. So we sat down, and I put a \$20 in there, and he was so excited, and he said, "Yes! Pizza! Isaac and Erica!" Because he's going to their house tonight, and he's going to buy them a pizza. So there's a little picture into our last ten or twelve days. What do you think?

**Scott:** I'm not sure whose last couple weeks I'd rather have, yours or mine! Or, rather, not have, I suppose I should say! That's rough.

**Steve:** Well, it's been an adventure, and now, for the last week, I've been the chief cook and bottle washer, taking care of the kids. And yesterday, I had to drive my wife to the CAT scan in the morning. Oh, then I got a dental implant after that! And then I drove my wife to another doctor's appointment in the afternoon, and then Wednesday we're going to another doctor, and I'm taking her to someone today. So now I'm the chauffeur for she and Johnny, and taking care of puppies, and it's okay. God designed us to serve, and thankfully, I have the freedom in my schedule that I can work around it. So I got up kind of early and was working on the podcast, and went out for a walk, and everybody else starts waking up, so here we are. What do you think of that?

**Scott:** Somebody ought to rise up and call you blessed, man. I'm still not sure which one I'd rather not have!

**Steve:** Fortunately, the dental implant wasn't too bad. I took two Advil last night, and I was good.

**Scott:** All right.

**Steve:** Sometimes, those things can be really painful. But I had a good time sharing my testimony in the dental office! He gave me a couple shots of Novocain, and we were sitting there waiting for it to kick in, and I'm usually the kind that they just hold up the needle and I start going numb. And this time, he started going in there, and he was probing, and I said, "Hey, I can still feel that!" So he shot me up some more. I'm not a martyr, you know. I don't have this huge pain threshold, so I don't want to feel anything in a dentist office.

**Scott:** If I had my way, I'd go to one of those places where they knock you out for a cleaning.

**Steve:** Let me tell you a couple highlights from Cincinnati were, I met people who listen to our podcasts!

**Scott:** Yay!

**Steve:** Yeah! In fact, I got a letter just yesterday from a man in North Dakota, and he said, "I don't know if anybody else writes to you or if anybody else is listening, but I listen and it's my lifeline, so keep up the good work!"

**Scott:** Awesome!

**Steve:** Yeah, that was very encouraging. And another man showed up at the convention, and he said, “I just came down here because my wife and I listen to your podcast, and we want to hear what you have to say.”

**Scott:** Cool!

**Steve:** But here’s a cool story. This was one of my biggest highlights in Cincinnati. Friday, after I had spoken by that point three times, the team, the Demme Learning team, was going out to eat. And generally, I don’t go on those because by the time we get out at 8:30, and then you eat till whatever, I don’t know, it just gets late, and I’m tired. But I thought, “Okay, I’ll go out with the team.” So I’m going out the exit door. You can visualize this. It was on the corner, aiming toward the hotels. And I could see the man behind me was pushing a stroller. So I thought, “There’s two sets of doors. I’m going to open one for him.” So I opened a door, but just as I did, his son had pushed the automatic button, you know, the handicapped button. So the door threw me, almost pinned me against the wall! And I jumped back and threw my arms up and tried to make a big, funny thing of it because I didn’t want the kid to get freaked, you know, thinking that he’d pinned this man to the wall. And his mother goes, “Be careful! Don’t hurt your math teacher!” Okay, so there’s a family. Now I look at the family. There’s a mom and a dad, a kid in the stroller, and two other boys and a little girl, who I found out later is seven years old. So the kids went, “Really?” So then I had to stop and bend over and do my math thing and explain to them why I don’t have a mustache, why I don’t have hair, things like that. Because the videos they watch, they don’t – in fact, the little girl goes, “Is it really you?” And I said, “Yeah, it’s really me.” And I sang a skip counting song, and her eyes lit up and she realized it is me! So I’m talking to them and we go out on the curb, and I tell them a joke, and we just have a nice little time. So then I’m walking with the family. Our team has already departed, but I’m walking with the family and talking to the dad, and the little girl goes, “Where are you staying? Are you staying in town?” And I said, “I am.” And she said, “Where?” And I said, “At the Hilton.” And she said, “So are we!” And then I said, “Well, what floor are you on?” And she said, “Number nine!” And I said, “I’m on number nine!” And we kept talking, and guess what? She says, “What room?” Oh, I asked her, and I said, “What room are you in on floor number nine?” And she says, “948.” And I looked at her, and I said, “I’m not kidding. I’m in 946.”

**Scott:** That’s awesome.

**Steve:** So here we’re in adjoining rooms. So then I hustle down the street, found the team, had dinner, and I even left early, because I was tired. I just ordered my food, and I said, “Please take my order. I don’t want drinks. I don’t want appetizers. Just give me some food. I need to go to bed.” So I hustle back to the hotel, I opened the door, and underneath my door, here’s a letter written from Ruthie: “Dear Mr. Steve, it

was nice meeting you. You're a pretty good math teacher." I like that, pretty good math teacher. "I hope you like mints." And on it are two little individually wrapped mints. And my heart just melted. I almost stood there crying. I thought, "Wow! What a thoughtful thing!" How many seven-year-olds would do that? And they pushed it under my door! So I thought, "Wow!" I get up in the morning, and I thought, "What do I have?" And I found a green piece of construction paper that I use to separate my notes, and I looked around at my snacks, and I found I had three boxes of raisins, which I had providentially just thrown into my suitcase as I was walking out the door. So I put these three boxes of raisins, and I wrote, "Dear Ruthie, thank you so much for the mints. You're very kind and generous, and I hope you and your brothers like raisins." And then I signed my name and shoved it under their door. So this is early the next morning, because the conference had added a talk that wasn't communicated to me ahead of time. So I had to go down to the desk and have them print out notes and stuff. So I was up kind of early, and I was walking around the lobby, and I see their mother. Hey, this is a Hilton! There's hundreds and hundreds of people there, and here's their mom, standing right there. And I walked over to her and I said, "I have to tell you, that note from Ruth last night just blessed my socks off!" And she proceeded to say, "Ruthie loves people, and what she wanted to do was bring mints so that when she met somebody, she could give them a mint. And today, she gave somebody a mint, and they didn't take it. I guess they, I don't know. And she was so sad. But then when she got your note, that you thanked her for the mints and you liked the mints," she said, "It just brightened her up." And she looked at me, and she goes, "She's going to keep that letter for a long time." Now, you see how God orchestrated this whole thing. And I just stood there in amazement of how God could put us in the next room, have the kid almost run me over with the door, and then the mints. So guess who's keeping the mints and the letter? I kept those mints in my pocket for the rest of the conference, and I kept that letter in my briefcase, because I was so impacted by a little seven-year-old. Wow! Isn't that something?

**Scott:** That's awesome, man. What a story.

**Steve:** Yeah! And I had a wonderful time. I have to tell you, probably the highlight was not even the mints. The highlight was driving for several hours with just time to talk to God and listen and pray. And there were several times when I was weeping and I was happy. I don't know how often I've gotten six hours alone with God, but that was one of them. So I really enjoyed the drive. It wasn't arduous, and it turned out to be wonderful.

**Scott:** Awesome.

**Steve:** Yeah! All right, let's pray and have some biblical content for the remaining couple minutes. This will be an intro. Father, thank You for helping Scott and his

family. Thank You that here he is now and he's able to breathe. And we know that everything good comes from above. Thank You for the people that You used, and the antibodies and the hospital staff, the whole package. But ultimately, we know that all good things come from above, so we worship You. And thank You for my experiences. Bless Sandi. Help her to continue to heal well, and I thank You, though, that You provided a way for me to get to the conference and have the meetings and meet people, and especially I thank You for that special little letter pushed under my door. Just a reflection of Your care for each one of us, because You're pushing little letters under all of our doors every day. And I thank You for that. And help us now as we consider You and Your ways, and bless us today in all the walks of life. Regardless of whether we have A/C or whether we're sick or whether we're hurting, You remain the same, and Your love remains the same, and so help us to revel in the truths of that. In Jesus' name, amen.

**Steve:** This morning, I was studying Colossians, because I think it is one of the most all-inclusive – Paul is helped by the Holy Spirit to be incredible in his adulation of Christ. I don't know how else to say it. I'll just read it. Colossians 1:15–20: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.”

That statement there, I don't think that there's anything like in Scripture, in my opinion. He magnifies Christ, and he reveals Christ, not just saying, “He's the best,” but he articulates it. His role in creation, His role in redemption, His role in leading the church, His role primarily in revealing God. He's the “image of the invisible God.” But if you go up a couple verses, Paul was praying for these Colossian people, and he says, “From the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him” – and here's what caught my attention, these next two phrases – “bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

I was convicted as I was reading this, going, “Boy, when I pray for people, I pretty much just ask God to encourage them and fill them and help them and be near them or something like that.” Paul is pretty articulate, and he prays that they would bear fruit in every good work and increase in the knowledge of God. So I thought about that. I said, “Boy, they almost seem distinct.” Like, bearing fruit and understanding or

increasing in our knowledge of God. Because there's times now when I – like when I was driving to Cincinnati – I'm not interested in bearing fruit. I would just like to spend all day talking to God. That's what I'm going to do in heaven! I'm going to increase in the knowledge of God. I'm going to worship – I'm going to increase in the worship of God. And it's only been in the last couple years I've so enjoyed being in God's presence and learning more about Him and increasing in the knowledge of God, just like Paul puts it there.

At the same time, we glorify God by bearing fruit. That's what it says in John 15:8: "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit." How do these two go together? Think about Paul in Philippians 3, when he says, "This is why I'm here. I want to know God. This is my primary purpose." And yet who bore more fruit in the early church than Paul? Thank the Lord for all that the apostles and disciples and prophets and everybody was able to do in the early church. Peter, James, John, Philip, Stephen – and you go on and on. Titus, Timothy, and all these folks. But I'm going to have to say, if I was to pick one guy in the early church that planted the most churches and his letters have continued to be used by God for thousands of years, it would be Paul. Yet, this was a man whose primary ambition was to know God.

I'm going to read a passage in Daniel 11, and I don't know if you've ever thought much about this, but Daniel has a lot to say to us in the last days. One of the things that he says is, and I'm going to read it in the American Standard Version – in the last days, "the people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits." Modern translations say, "People that know their God shall be strong and take action." And the next verse says, "And they that are wise among the people shall instruct many."

In the last days, this is going to be a wonderful time of harvest. This is not a time to hunker down and do food storage and just go hide up on a mountain. This is a time when we can know God and we can do exploits. And this is where my heart is right now. I want to know God so that I can bear fruit for Him. I want to be an answer to Paul's prayer. I want my knowledge of God to increase, but I also want to bear fruit to glorify God. And these are the two things that – I think they really go together. I don't think they're opposites. I think these pursuits are a tandem.

**Scott:** Sounds great. I was just going to add when you were talking about Colossians that you could pretty much spend a year just praying through that one chapter. If you want your prayers to have some power and some teeth, man, that's some good stuff.

**Steve:** Absolutely! I almost thought about that. I thought, "You know, we could just take a verse at a time here." And Paul's prayer for the church that blessed me a lot was in Ephesians, when he says, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from Whom" – that's Ephesians 3:14–20, and that's a very meaningful prayer to me, because I used to take verses from that prayer and pray. Yeah, I think it's important to

use Scripture to pray. And we know that Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, so it's just not Paul, so to speak. It's Paul in the Spirit, just like Revelation is John in the Spirit, and the Psalms are David in the Spirit. So it's the Spirit of God working through these men, but He inspired them and gave them some good stuff, and we need to link onto it.

**Steve:** Father, thank You for all the ways You have helped us, and thank You for Paul's prayer. And I pray that You will help us to know You. Let our knowledge of You increase so that our ability to bear fruit for You will also increase. Give us insight into these concepts. In Jesus' name, amen.