

Scott Moore: 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 recovered. How are you?

Scott: Recovered? What happened?

Steve: Saturday morning, I left my home at about quarter to 9:00, and I drove over 200 miles to Pittsburgh for my high school class reunion picnic. It was raining, and the temperature was in the '50s.

I was bundled up with four layers of clothes on. It was a rich experience. We visited, and shared a meal, and played corn hole under the pavilion from 1:00 till 6:30, then 18 people stayed after and met together in a corner of the pavilion. We sat in a circle and each person that wanted to speak had five uninterrupted minutes and then we asked them questions for an additional three minutes, and it was wonderful.

We heard testimony after testimony about how people had come to Christ after high school and which most of us didn't know. Very few people have five uninterrupted minutes to share their story, and we were all edified and encouraged. You've done with me in St Louis with a roomful of men. It is meaningful and bonding.

Steve: When you have two days just to get to know people and let them tell their stories, it's fascinating. It's edifying, it's encouraging. One after another talked about how they came to Christ, and we got to hear it. This was the high point of the reunion for me.

Then I slept at a Motel 6 late that night. I got up early the next morning, visited a really good friend of mine who's pretty much housebound because of health issues, and visited with him. on his front porch so he wouldn't take any of my germs and then I drove home. In 28 hours, I drove over 500 miles and had special times with people, and listened to their testimonies.

Scott: Sounds awesome.

Steve: Let's pray and then we'll talk about some thoughts that I got while I was on this trip, praying and waiting on God.

Father, thank you for that incredible event that was only a couple of days ago. I'm still basking in it, and I'm still worshiping you for what you have done for my friends and my classmates, and that you're continuing to work because we know that there's going to come a time when every knee is going to bow and you're doing things way below the surface, way behind the scenes, not reported on the social media outlets of the day.

You're at work because you're God, and you love us and you're pursuing us. Thank you for pursuing these folks. I pray for each member of our high school class that all will come to know you from the least to the greatest. Bless us today as we seek you and your word. Give us ears to hear what your spirit is saying. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Scott: Amen.

Steve: I was pondering and praying about how children learn. I was thinking about how children learn to speak. We don't give them a curriculum when they're one and start working on the short vowel sounds and then the long vowel sounds.

We don't teach them phonics when they're two. Nor do we have a curriculum for how to make a complete sentence and diagram and all that when they're three. Children learn to speak by being in a language-rich environment.

If children grow up by themselves in a quiet home, they're not going to learn how to speak. However if they grow up with adults who are having intelligent conversations and they're listeners, it turns out that after a year or two, they start talking, and then that talking turns into complete sentences.

I remarked to Ethan the other day about one of his newly adopted sons, "Wow, what a vocabulary this boy has and he doesn't say it haltingly. He put some really appropriate big words right where they're supposed to be in a sentence or a comment." Ethan says, "Yes, people that stay with us have a tendency for their vocabulary to improve." I thought, "What a wonderful statement." Then I considered that what's even more important than being literate, being able to speak, knowing a language, and learning a language is to be Biblically literate.

How do children develop a level of biblical literacy? How do they learn to be familiar with scripture? I think it's the same principle. They need to grow up in a home where the parents are Biblically literate, where the parents not only teach scripture but quote scripture and are familiar with scripture. They need to go to a church that is teaching them God's word. Does this make sense?

Scott: Amen, brother. Preach it.

Steve: It's not rocket science, but when God brought it to me I understood. I remembered my youth group that I taught in Gloucester, Massachusetts. I was visiting these young people because two of them were in my Sunday school class, and their teams were playing each other in baseball.

I thought this would be a wonderful opportunity to see them in their home and in their own environment instead of when they come to Sunday school class. I went over to the game, then after the game, we went to their home.

It was the Noble family. I discovered their home was the neighborhood hangout. Everybody spent after school hours at the Noble's house. They had a small driveway with, a basketball hoop. Children were walking in and out of the house, and the parents just loved it. Their door was open.

The mom used to shop and buy these huge boxes of cereal. This is pre-Costco days. I think she got them at the Navy PX. Those kids wouldn't just eat small bowls of cereal, they would eat serving bowls of cereal with serving spoons. I've never seen anybody eat like their boys.

I suggested "Hey, what if we were to get together next week, same day, same time and I'll teach you a little Bible class and we'll have some songs and some fun?" They

said, "Yes, let's go for it." The next Thursday, I was there, as I was for the next two years.

The first week, a couple of things shook me. The first one was, I had assumed that somebody would be coming with me to play guitar. I wanted to teach them a song and there was no one there that knew the song, except me. There's no one to play the guitar or the piano so I got to sing my first solo, but I taught these kids some songs. I taught them "He's Everything to me" I taught them "Seek First the Kingdom," "The Wise Man built his house on the rock."

Over the next two years, I taught them different songs that we could sing together. Then I started my first lesson which I think it had something to do with David and Goliath because I just assumed they would know that.

The only people in that whole room that had ever heard about David and Goliath were the two kids in my Sunday school class. Nobody was familiar with David and Goliath, and you could have knocked me over with a feather. I said, "Really?" I realized they were Biblically illiterate. Moving forward I couldn't assume anything.

For the next two years, I taught them basic Bible truths. I taught them from Scripture. I encouraged them to read it themselves, I don't know how many did but I taught the Bible. I laid a foundation for two years. At the end of those two years, a whole bunch of the kiddos came to Christ. One of them is still in ministry to this day.

A friend of mine was a public school teacher in Maine around the same time. One day he asked his 30 students in class, "How many of you have ever been to a church for a service, wedding, or funeral?" What do you think the answer was?

Scott: This is a public school class?

Steve: Yes

Scott: I probably would guess, probably half the class would have at least been to church at once.

Steve: Two.

Scott: Wow!

Steve: I thought of that when in 1980s as I was teaching in public school and I asked that question, to do my own research. One had not been in a church. All the other 29, not only had gone to church, most of them were still active in their youth groups. The difference between the Bible Belt in Georgia and New England was night and day.

I've heard people say, "I want to be Peter who can preach and 3,000 and see people come to Christ in one day." Do you know who Peter was talking to? He was talking to Jewish people that were there for the feast of Pentecost. These people already knew about God and creation. They were keeping a feast.

Scott: They knew David and Goliath.

Steve: They knew who David and Goliath were. Exactly. A little rabbit trail. I think it was my second trip to Israel and I was flying home on El Al, that's Israel Airlines and I'm talking to people. I'm looking for opportunities to share my faith and I met this fellow who was Jewish.

We were standing up towards the back where they had some refreshments. He said he was Jewish, and had grown up going to Jewish High School. I thought, "Well, maybe I'll start with a reference to Solomon and he said, "Who's that?"

Where do you start with people anymore? Because you assume a certain level of biblical literacy and then you work off of that. Philip, in the book of Acts, saw a man in his chariot, and he was studying the scripture. He said, "What are you reading?" The man responded, "I'm reading in Isaiah."

Philip started right there in Isaiah and he preached the gospel. The man was converted, they stopped the chariot, and he was baptized. This Ethiopian had a level of scriptural literacy.

We live in a culture today where more and more people don't even know where our nation's capital is, I'm sure you've seen studies on that, let alone the scripture. One of the greatest opportunities, and responsibilities, that we have as parents is to help our children to be Biblically literate.

When our children were younger, before they could read, we read the word of God to them. When they were older, we acquired Bibles of the same translation, large print, and we read the Bible with them. We read almost the entire scriptures as a family out loud except for a few minor prophets. Even the Old Testament. When they were young, young, we didn't read everything in the Old Testament.

There's certain portions of Judges that you have to have some discernment and not bring them up yet, but it's very important that we teach children the whole word of God. This is what Paul said in the book of Acts, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God."

Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, quoting Deuteronomy 8, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Paul builds on that later when he says, "All scripture is inspired by God." That's probably one of the main passages that people read when you think about the inspiration or the inspired nature of scripture, but I'd like to back up one verse.

Let me read 2 Timothy 3: 15, and then go into the beginning of verse 16. "...from childhood, you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

Then he goes on to say, "All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for correction...." From childhood, Timothy was acquainted with the sacred writings, which he learned them his mother and his grandmother. We don't even know if his father was a believer, but this dear woman and her mom, the two of them taught Timothy the word of God from childhood.

Those passages that he was able to take in as a child, were able to make him wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Sometimes parenting is like me with my youth group in Gloucester.

Sometimes we teach the word of God year after year after year and it's OK if we don't see fruit right away because it will bear fruit eventually because scripture is God breathed. It's inspired.

John 5: 39 says, "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is they that bear witness about Me." All scripture points to Jesus. The more scripture that you read, the more of Jesus you see. It's a fact. Let me go a little further, and then we'll wrap this up.

Scripture also gives us faith. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." I have people that say, "I don't have enough faith," and I say, "How much time do you spend in the Bible?"

The more time you spend in Scripture, the more faith you're going to have, the more you get God's perspective. The more you watch social media or the evening news or any kind of stuff like that, the more you will be discouraged.

It's a ratio. The more you invest in, the more you take out of it. We reap what we sow. Are we sowing to the spirit or are we sowing to the flesh? Are we sowing to the truth or are we sowing to the world of flesh? The more we spend time in scripture, the better chance that we're going to bear really good fruit.

If you're a parent that is teaching your kids the word of God, keep at it. Just keep at it and don't stop. Don't be discouraged. God does not command us to be successful parents, however He does command us to be faithful. Part of being a faithful parent is helping your children to be Biblically literate, but you can't teach your children to be Biblically literate unless you're Biblically literate.

I'm going to read two passages here that are very helpful to me. I started reading my Bible daily in September 20th, 1976, and God's helped me to maintain this habit of reading Scripture every day. I have Bible reading charts on my website. I'm going to put them in the notes for this podcast. I started reading in Joel, and I have continued that habit for 46 years.

I remember as I was reading one day, coming across passages that David had written, in Psalm 119:97, "Oh, how I love your law. It is my meditation all day." I had also been reading missionary biographies, and these wonderful, devoted Christians, counted on their quiet time, their personal devotion time.

They did not skip that. They felt like the most important part of their day was reading God's Word and spending time with their Heavenly Father. I noticed this, and then remembered that David said, "Oh, how I love your law."

I remember thinking, "I'm not sure I love the law as much as David or these missionaries. One day I was reading 2 Thessalonians 2:10, in my daily Bible reading, "They refused to love the truth and so be saved." Another translation says, "They received not the love of the truth." The way that the words were put together, I said, "Wait, it looks like the love of the truth is something that I could ask for," and so I did. I remember stopping and praying, "Father, help me to love your word. Help me to love the truth," and God did. He turned something in me and I began to love the Bible. I

spend so much time in scripture nowadays, I can't get enough of it. It's a significant part of who I am.

This morning, when I was looking up that verse in preparation for this, I read the two verses preceding this. This is 2 Thessalonians 2:8–9. As far as I'm concerned, we're a lot closer to the end times than Paul was when he wrote that. In fact, I think we're right on the precipice, maybe we're in it right now.

The eighth verse says, "The lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing because they refused to love the truth, and so be saved."

The bigger picture is, these people were being deceived, it's because they didn't love the Bible. They didn't love the truth. If they had, they'd be saved. It's important that we ask God, number one, to help us to love the word of God, help us to love the law, help us to have a love for the truth because if the heart's right, we'll find ways to work it into our schedule.

If we don't love it in the first place, we're probably not going to be very successful in reading it. Psalm 119:165 says, "Great peace of those who love your law. Nothing can make them stumble." The people that refused to love the law, stumbled. They were deceived, but the people who loved the law, nothing can make them stumble.

What do you think? I know I'm talking to the choir, but go ahead, choirmaster.

Scott: Joshua 1:8 is the verse that's coming to my mind, "Do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth, meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it, then you'll be prosperous and successful." Amen.

Steve: It can't be much clearer than this, live by the word or you won't be prosperous and successful.

Scott: Amen. That's a good one. I'm stunned when I bump into Christians who are Biblically illiterate. I find that sadder than most things. For someone who is not a Christian you don't really expect them to know the Bible at all but when you meet somebody who's been a Christian all their life and they haven't read the whole Bible it's like, "Dude get on the stick. What are you waiting for? Don't you want to know what you're supposed to believe?"

Steve: Another sad one to me is people that read the New Testament without reading the Old Testament. The New Testament does not make sense until you read the Old Testament. The Old Testament is the foundation for the New Testament.

We just observed that. If you've been listening to our podcast, then you know that what we've learned in the tabernacle has informed our understanding of Hebrews and the book of Revelation. I understand Hebrews and Revelation so much better now because I understand the tabernacle than I ever have.

Steve: Yes. I agree wholeheartedly.

Scott: I can't tell you how many times the tabernacle has come up in conversation with my kids and my family. Lately, it's like, "Oh yeah, Steve was talking about that and this means a whole lot more to me now. We've been talking more about the rock. It's just the other day, we were talking about the rock that the water came out of and that they took that with them and all that. It definitely opens up the New Testament quite a bit.

When you look at the Old Testament and you see what the background was. Plus, when you realize that the Old Testament was the scriptures that Jesus was talking about and what He was quoting. Every once in a while, I get tempted to think the Old Testament isn't that important, and then I remember, "Oh yeah, Jesus quoted from the Old Testament an awful lot," and so did Paul, and the others.

Steve: Keep going. You read my notes for me. This is good. When Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word," He was talking about the Old Testament. When David said, "Oh, how I love the law," he was talking about the Pentateuch.

I'm finding that when I try to discuss certain topics with people, I almost have to ask them, "Have you read the Old Testament? Have you read the New Testament all the way through?" because I need to know where I am starting when I'm speaking with them.

I don't take anything for granted anymore because it's very important that we have a foundation. I remember talking about one topic to a fellow and he said, "What do you mean the captivity?" I said, "When Judah -- not the 10 tribes, the 2 tribes -- went up in Babylon 70 years." "Really?" I said, "Yeah. That's what Ezra and Nehemiah were about. They brought them back."

The more you understand the big picture, the more you get it, but you have to read the book to understand the book.

Scott: Now, that was a sublime comment.

Steve: You have to read the book before you can understand the book. The spirit of God will help you. Don't just lean on your own understanding, but pray. Ask God, help me to love the Bible. Father, help me to read the Bible, help me to listen to it on the way to work. We have so many resources nowadays. There's really no excuse for not reading the scripture.

Scott: It's really helpful too when you when it starts to click in, it feels awesome. I remember one time I was driving in the car and thinking about the entirety of the Bible. I know I've told my kids this little summation, once or twice, but I might have been just by myself the first time when I realized this.

I went through the Bible in my head trying to name, who are the major characters in the Bible and what are the major events. I actually got all the way through and I was like, "I could do a 10-minute summation of the whole Bible if I needed to," and hit on Abraham and Moses and David and even all the main players of the Old Testament.

It was really cool to be able to look through because I remember the first time I read through the entire Bible, I saw overarching themes for the whole thing.

Some people talk about the Bible with God being different in the Old Testament and the New Testament, but God says He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God creates us, we rebel against Him', and then He spends the rest of the Bible chasing after us trying to bring us back to Him. Finally, He gives us His Son to save us and give us life." Eventually, He's going to put it all right. That's the very quick overview, but I was like, "Oh, that's not different God. This is same God the whole time."

Steve: Amen. Man, this is good. I should just let you go. I'll add one thing because there was a really smart guy in the Bible who did the same thing you just did. His name was Steven. He gave a whole overview of scripture right before they stoned him. There's several times in the Bible who taught a whole overview of how the nation of Israel got to where they were. People that were listening were familiar with scripture. People that know God know God's word. They go hand in hand.

I don't know where to help people begin, but I hope that folks will just take some confidence that they will be able to read the word of God themselves because no time invested in God's word is not profitable.

The second thing is to help your kids to be Biblically literate. Just keep reading it to them, have them read it themselves, have prizes, put scriptures up on your wall, whatever you want to do. When your children grow up to be Biblically literate, you've given them one of the greatest gifts that you can give to somebody in our day and age, as the love of the many is waxing cold.

Scott: Can I add one more thing? You're also arming them for battle. The sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. It's the one offensive weapon, the one offensive piece of armor that we have in the armor of God. If you've got the more of the word of God you've got in you, the bigger your sword.

Steve: Amen. Sharper sword.

Steve: "Father, thank you for your word. Here we are in a country, I've got whole shelves of Bibles and there's other places that they don't even have one verse translated into their language. First of all, thank you and thank you for enlightening us. Thank you for helping Scott and I to love the truth. Thank you for helping us to read it and then to teach it to our children, and I pray that this will spread.

"I pray that those who are doing it now will receive fresh encouragement today to keep at it. I pray for those who are just thinking about it, that you'll plant in their hearts a love for the truth. Because we know that if our hearts are right, our actions will follow. Give us that aptitude and that thing in us that hungers and thirsts for truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: Amen. That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email [steve@spdemme@gmail.com](mailto:steve@spdemme@gmail.com). If you have a question for me, you can reach me at [scott@unsocializedmedia.com](mailto:scott@unsocializedmedia.com).