

BFF388 By Every Word, Part 2

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. Happy Thanksgiving, almost.

Steve: Thank you. Almost, yeah, a couple of days. We got a whole crew coming over. I think we'll have 20. We started setting up tables and shares last night, and we've got another day and a half to get ready. How about you, what are you guys doing?

Scott: We're bouncing houses again. We'll have my father-in-law's on Wednesday, my mother-in-law's on Thursday, and then our house on Friday, I think.

Steve: Three different turkeys?

Scott: We're the grandparents now, but we're still kids, so we're trying to host and everything. It'll be multiple turkeys and hams and all kinds of stuff. Though this year, I put my foot down. Last year, when we did ours, we did a turkey and a ham, and my daughter, for some reason, decided to cook five pies.

We have one oven and a small kitchen and I was trying to keep up with the dishes and keep the place manageable. It was so hot in that kitchen. I walked out at one point to cool off and almost didn't come back. It was a movie-worthy Thanksgiving scene.

Steve: Today, we're going to continue our series on By Every Word, "The Importance of Reading the Bible", but instead of just talking about it, I'm going to be talking about instances and accounts of how the Bible has been felt in my life and in my family's life. Let's pray.

Father, here we are again, and we have this wonderful privilege of living in a country where we not only have one Bible, we have hundreds of Bibles, probably, if we added them all up just in our two homes.

I pray that You'll help us not only to have them on our shelves, have them to be on our hearts. Help us to read them, help us to love the truth as we do read it, and help us to apply what we read. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: When do you start reading the Bible to your kids? When do you start introducing scripture to your children? Paul writes to Timothy, "As for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3:15) Now this passage gives us a lot of insight into the early years of Timothy. It's never too early to read the Bible because not only do the words of God acquaint us with what's in the Bible, but they also make us, as this says, "Wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." The rest of this passage talks about the fact that he learned it from his mom and his grandmother.

I took that to heart. I'm going to tell you a little shocking story first. I had just gone through all of the classes before my firstborn son arrived, the classes for La-Mas maze and La-Pas. :-) We learned how to breathe and all those things. 44 years ago,

this was new stuff. As I'm attending these birthing classes, I'm learning that children hear things when they're in the womb, how they recognize your voice, and how important it is to bond even before the child emerges.

When Isaac was a newborn baby, on Sunday mornings, I would sit on my bed with my legs out straight and my back against the wall. Isaac would lie on my legs, and I read him the Bible. I think I read the whole book of Deuteronomy to him out loud Sunday mornings. What do you think of that?

Scott: That's hardcore, man.

Steve: I know some people are going, "Boy, this guy's off the charts." I was thinking, "This is my firstborn son," and Timothy learned the Bible from childhood. When does childhood start? I don't know, but I'm going to read the book to my son.

I used to think that even though he might not be able to understand and articulate the exact meaning of all the words, scripture also says, "Now, you are clean through the words which I have spoken?" Jesus said that to His disciples. I think there's an impact of reading the inspired Word of God that affects our spirit, whether we can take it in cognitively or not.

I also learned something when Isaac was four and Ethan was two. We had just finished eating dinner, we'd had roast beef, and my wife and I got up and we were walking around cleaning up and doing things because we were usually pretty busy people. We overheard this little discussion between the boys develop some intensity. Instead of just walking in and saying, "Hey, what's up?" We decided to peek around the corner and watch because this is fun.

Isaac had told Ethan to not eat the food on his plate. Ethan, the two-year-old, was innocently looking with his blue eyes and little blonde hair, accompanied by a quizzical expression, and said, "Why?" Isaac said, "Because the fat belongs to Jehovah."

We were aghast because we've never taught that. However our kids went to church with us, they sat in meetings when we had family devotions, etc. Somehow, Isaac not only discerned what was being taught and comprehended it, he was applying it because on Ethan's plate, there was some gravy mixed with some fat.

Apparently Ethan was about to eat some fat mixed with the gravy until Isaac stopped him. Even though it's one of those really funny stories, I never got over that. I thought, "That four-year-old boy took it in. I have to be careful what I tell him because he's a smart little peanut."

Remember, we didn't teach that as doctrine, and I had to have a little talk with them about how God had made all meats clean, but the thing was Isaac got it. I thought, "Children are astute." I don't think you can ever start too soon to read the Bible to your kids. I don't.

If children grow up in a home where you and your wife are taking time to read the Word of God, not only does the impact of the words themselves have value, but the impact of your life. You are carving time out of each day and your life is conveying a

message that is saying, "The Word of God is very important to us in our home, and it's important enough that we're going to make space for it." In fact, we're going to give some of the best choice time of the day to reading His Bible. We used to read the Bible in the morning, usually right after breakfast. You can never start too early.

The other thing that happened with my own kids was the time that my teenager taught me something or observed something before I did. Let me give you another example. I had read the Bible through at this point about 15 times, and I had a struggle believing Numbers 23. If you've ever read through Numbers, this is where Balaam appears. There is a lot more to this guy than a talking donkey.

He seemed to have power with God. When he blessed somebody, they stayed blessed, and when he cursed them, they stayed cursed, and yet he wasn't a child of Israel. In Numbers 23:21, Balaam says, "He," speaking of God, "Has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither has he seen perverseness in Israel." Every time I read this verse, I wondered how it could be true.

I knew it was in the Bible, so it's got to be true. It's the inspired Word of God. But I had just read Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus, and I saw plenty of iniquity and perverseness in Israel.

My approach to scripture is, "There's going to be things that I don't understand, but I just figure that God is a lot smarter than me." It's funny to even say that, but some people read something they don't comprehend and surmise, "Oh, the Bible must be wrong." What they're really saying is, "I'm smarter than God, and God made a mistake."

I don't take that approach. I take the approach that I'm made from dust. I am a man. He's God. Of course, his book is going to have a lot of things I don't understand. In Numbers 23 I put a big question mark in the margin of my Bible. Every time I read through that passage, I would sigh and say, "Someday I'm going to understand this." One day, on the fifteenth time through, the light dawned and I got it. I finally understood how Balaam in the Spirit could declare that he had not beheld iniquity in Jacob, or seen perverseness in Israel. I also knew that our family was about to read this chapter for our family devotions. We had finished Genesis and Exodus, and after a short foray into Leviticus were now moving steadily through Numbers.

After we read the chapter, I calmly asked, "Does anyone know how this statement could possibly be true?" Ethan raised his hand, and said, "Well, they've been offering the sacrifices daily in the Tabernacle." My shoulders sagged. My bubble had been burst. He was right.

Scott: How old was he at this point?

Steve: He was a teenager. The point was he believed the Bible. He didn't have to go through the hoops that adults have to go through. My seminary-trained mind had labored for 15 years to understand what this young fella got in one reading. I was amazed. I want to tell people, "Don't worry about kids reading the Bible." They have

advantages. They believe it. They don't have to go through all these mental hurdles. They can accept it. They can apply it. They have a great chance to be way ahead of us.

Scott: Though there may be some uncomfortable conversations you'll have to have, depending on which sections you let them read.

Steve: Yes.

Steve: Some humbling conversations. For those that want to have family devotions and are afraid of not knowing the answers. Whenever we would come to something that I didn't know the answer to, I would simply say, "Well, let's pray about it. Let's ask God to show it to us," and then just move on. I would say, "I don't know either." I said, "Let's just focus on the things that we do understand."

There's a couple of passages that inspire me to read all the Bible. I've had people say, "Nowhere in the Bible does it say that you're supposed to read the whole thing cover to cover." I'm going to take exception with that, and I'm going to give you three verses to get you warmed up.

One of them is what we've already started with, Matthew 4:4, when Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

If I want to truly live, I need a balanced diet. I need Genesis and Matthew. I need Malachi and Revelation. I need the Psalms and Proverbs, and I need Galatians and Ephesians. That's how I look at it. If you want to have all the benefits and truly live, you've got to read all the words that proceed from the mouth of God.

In John 6:33, Jesus reminds us, "It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." I believe every word of scripture is inspired or in-spirited and has the Spirit and life imbued in it."

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, this is right after he had told Timothy about, "From childhood you've read the sacred writings." Paul says, "All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Not only is every word inspired or breathed out by God, it's profitable for every area of my life and equips me for everything I do. It equips me to run a business. It equips me how to deal with my employees. I thought many times when I was a business owner that I need to treat my employees as I want to be treated.

This is called the second commandment. "Love one another as you want to be loved". Think about these kind of things. It talks about not going into debt. There's a thousand scriptures, according to the money guys, like Larry Burkett and others, that apply to your money.

There's a bunch of stuff in here, and I didn't go into debt because of scripture. I could give you example after example. Then, this is a verse not often spoken of, but is a passage from Acts 20:27, where Paul is reminding the church in Asia, where he'd ministered faithfully for many years, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole council of God."

He didn't just share his favorite passages or the chapters that he liked or preach from what was his most theologically comfortable parts. He shared with them the whole counsel of God. At that time, that would have been from Genesis through Malachi, and perhaps some letters that were running around the churches and being shared amongst themselves.

Paul gave them the whole counsel of God. I don't know how you know the whole counsel of God until you read the whole Word of God, because God chose all these passages to be inspired and to be read, and to be passed on.

Here's another one. I have a pretty sizable library of books. When I moved from Massachusetts down to Pennsylvania, the church met us in our front yard, and the big U-Haul truck backed in. We almost flipped it, actually, because it was on the side of a hill. Anyway, the big U-Haul truck backed in, and the church began to unload our stuff.

Some mattresses, some beds, some boxes of dishes, and the normal kind of stuff. I don't know if you've ever moved people. I've done that so many times that I can almost tell you what's in the truck, but there was also lots of books.

I remember one of the guys looked at all the books we had and he said, "You have more books than the library downtown." At the time, our local library was housed in a mobile trailer. It wasn't a big building. When they saw all the books that we unpacked, they went, "Holy smokes. You guys have more books than that trailer!"

Having all these books is one thing, but think about Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." I think there's an excellent chance that when the whole world is purged and cleansed by fire, what's going to remain are the eternal, complete, life-giving words of God, the "Bible."

Most of my books are going to be burned up, and it's OK, but God's Word will not pass away. That's something I think about. This is one reason I try to stick to two things when I'm doing podcasts, or when I'm writing books, I try to stick to what I know, my testimony, and God's Word.

Those are the only things that I'm convinced of. I could read a whole bunch of quotes from other guys, what they've written and what they've experienced. I do want to build everything we speak about and talk about on God's Word. I want to talk about my testimony because those are two things that I'm convinced of. What's your response to that?

Scott: If you don't want to read at all, OK. Looking, where is this, John 6, when a bunch of the disciples turned away from Jesus? Jesus asks the 12, "You don't want to leave too, do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Steve: Amen.

Scott: Do you want to know Jesus? The best way to do that is through His Word. The other one is the end of John, the last verse of his book says, "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the

whole world would not have room for the books that would be written." This is the cliff notes that He gave us. That, "If you don't want to even read this, I'm not sure I can help you that much."

I started reading the Bible when I figured out that I believed this is the Word of God. I had to get over that hurdle first of believing this is the truth. Then I was like, "I want to find out what I believe," and so, I started reading. I don't know what else to do.

Steve: You're amazing. You think things through and follow hard. No, I'm impressed. I just did it because -- I think I mentioned this -- church peer pressure. I also knew that everybody that I emulated made a practice of reading the Bible. It was just part of their daily rhythm. You have to read the scripture.

I wanted to live well, I wanted to have an impact in the world, I knew that my life has to be built on scripture, and I need to love it. Good response.

Scott: I came up in a tradition where the only people that read the Bible were the people standing in the pulpit. They looked at you kind of weird if you tried to read it any other time. Then I met some people who'd memorized verses of the Bible and I thought they were crazy when I first met them.

I had some hurdles to get over before I realized, "Oh, this is actually a really good thing. It's not a cult thing to memorize scripture. It's a really good thing."

Steve: I hope I mentioned last week, don't assume that even the people that are preaching have read the whole Bible.

Steve: It's becoming one of these things, and that's why we're having all these podcasts about it. I'm writing a book about it right now. I'm hoping to have it ready for convention season next year. I had mistakenly assumed that the average bear is reading their Bibles.

You've got to make a habit of reading some portion of scripture every day, even if it's two verses. Then you need to start getting disciplined and reading significant chunk. Then you need to make a plan to read the whole Bible through. Until you do these things, you can swallow a lot of stuff from the pulpit and from other sources that is not scriptural because you really don't know the book yourself.

I really believe that God wants us to be, as Paul says, fully equipped and equipped for every good work. Let's pray,

Father, thank You for Your book. Thank You for Scott's love for the truth. Thank You for what You've put in my heart for the truth. Thank You for what You put on my kid's hearts, and how they've taught me and inspired me.

We commit each person listening today. Deliver us from beating ourselves up and wishing we'd done this and all that. God, forgive us. God, cleanse us. God, wash us and put a new seed in our heart that we can do this, even if it's only one word of one verse a day. Help us to be soaking in truth on a regular basis. 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 at spdemme@Gmail.com. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.