

**7/4/23 from 2/23/23**

**Week nine: WFL**

**Randy Robison**

**John Bevere #2**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Randy Robison. My parents are off this week and Tammy is out. She will be back with us soon. But I'm excited because I have one of our favorite guests here at *Life Today*, John Bevere. We're very excited because he is back. If you missed the first program with John, you can always go to LifeToday.org and see all the programs. I would encourage you to if you missed this one because it was good. John, it's great to have you back.

**JOHN:** It's so good to be back.

**RANDY:** This topic, man, *The Awe of God*, it's a challenge. It's been a challenge for me, and I grew up in the church and I study these things. I think a lot of people, they don't quite understand this whole fear of God, the healthy fear and the unhealthy. Give us a little recap of what you're talking about.

**JOHN:** So the fear of the Lord has nothing to do with being scared of God—absolutely nothing. The fear of the Lord has a drawing effect; it makes us want to draw closer to him. It is something that we stand in awe and reverence and honor of him above everything and anything—everyone or anything else. So what it produces in us is a heart that is passionate and joyful.

Psalm 1:12 says, "How joyful are those who fear God and delight in obeying his commandments." So whenever you have somebody truly fearing God, they're joyful and have a lot of delight. When you see somebody that is grumpy, that doesn't like people, that person says they fear God, they don't. They don't. They're religious, they're legalistic because they despise who God loves.

God loves every human being on this planet. We are so valuable to him that he said his thoughts about us outnumber every grain of sand that's on this planet. And God can't exaggerate! Do you know what one cubic foot of beach has? Do you know what scientists tell us? One cubic foot of the beach, 500 million to one billion grains of sand. God cannot exaggerate.

So do you understand? You don't think a lot about somebody you're not passionate for. All right? I have stuff that I don't think about all year long. Do you want to know what it is? It is stuff in our storage locker. It is called Christmas stuff. And sometimes, I go to the locker and go, "Oh yeah! I forgot we had that." I didn't think about it once the whole year. But do you know I think about Lisa about every ten seconds because I love that girl so much.

Now think about God. God is not going to not think about somebody that much that he doesn't want to be close to. So God's passion is to be close to us. But you can't be close to God unless you fear him.

Psalm 25, verse 14 says this in the N.L.T., "Friendship with the Lord is reserved for those who fear him." So what he's saying is God is not everybody's friend. Now, what does it mean to fear God? What's the manifestation? What's the outward evidence of truly fearing God? Our love to obey. It means we'll obey him immediately because we delight in it. It means it creates a desire—

**RANDY:** Not because we're afraid he's going to get us if we don't?

**JOHN:** No! So if you look at—it creates a desire in you to say I want to obey God. If you look at what Paul said in Philippians, he said, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling"—not love and kindness, "fear and trembling." Why does he say to do that? "For it is God who works in you to both will and to do of his good pleasure." So fear and trembling creates a will to joyfully obey God.

So what appears to be mundane, what appears to be dreadful, what appears to be boring to someone else, to the person who fears God it is delightful because it works on your inside. Now

your whole paradigm shifts. Do you see that? So if you look at what it truly means to fear God, the evidence is, we'll obey him instantly. We'll obey him when it doesn't make sense. Does it make sense to forgive somebody who has hurt you?

**RANDY:** No, not at all.

**JOHN:** Okay. It means we'll obey him even if it hurts. Like Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourself with the same mind. Does that mean God wants us to suffer? No! We live in a hostile world against the kingdom of God. So when we obey God, we're going to run into hostility. Religion says to suffer to please your God. That's not Christianity. God says just obey me but you're going to run into suffering. So obey him instantly, when it doesn't make sense, even if it hurts, we'll obey him if we don't see a benefit.

Esther, okay, she is queen to the Persian king, who is the number one king in the whole world at the time, right? They make a pact to annihilate all the Jews. Mordecai is the only one who knows she is a Jew. Nobody else knows she is a Jew. He says, "Go before the king." She says, "If I go before the king my head comes off if he hasn't pointed his scepter, I don't care if I am his wife." He said, "Esther, you've been brought into the kingdom for such a time." She said, "Tell the women to fast. I'm going before the king. If I die, I die." She had nothing to gain, everything to lose, including her head but her fear of God says I want to obey God.

Then fifth, we obey to completion. Now, let's look at Abraham, he is called "the friend of God." Why is he called "the friend of God"? Because God comes to him one night and says, "What is most important in your life, there is nothing more important, I want you to go and sacrifice it." Can you imagine? He doesn't say if you do that, I'll send my son and sacrifice my son. He just says, "Go sacrifice him. Take a three-day journey and sacrifice your son." Can you imagine that night? Do you know what the Bible says? Early the next morning, Abraham is on his way. Early the next morning.

**RANDY:** I would hesitate, give God time to change his mind.

**JOHN:** So now God gives him a three-day journey. Now it may be easier when you heard the booming voice of God the night before, but what about two and a half days later? You're looking at the moment, and you're going to put the most important person or thing to death in your life just because God said do it and didn't give you a reason. Abraham goes up, builds the altar, lifts the knife, ready to put through Isaac, and the angel of the Lord appears and says, "Stop! Because now I know you fear God." How did the angel know Abraham feared God? Because he obeyed instantly. He obeyed when it didn't make sense. He obeyed when it hurt. He obeyed when he didn't see a benefit. He obeyed to completion.

Now Abraham unties Isaac, lifts his eyes, and sees a ram in the thicket. And out of the spirit comes, "Jehovah-Jireh!" God just revealed a facet of his personality to Abraham that nobody had ever known because he is my friend.

Okay, now some people might not be getting this. Everybody knows me as John Bevere, the communicator right now. You know me as John Bevere, friend. There are some of you out there that know me as John Bevere, the author. But there is a lady, and wow, she is a lady. Her name is Lisa. We've been married 40 years. She knows me as John Bevere, husband, best friend, G-daddy, daddy. She knows me as athlete, she knows me as John Bevere, lover. Do you know nobody will ever know me as John Bevere, lover except Lisa?

**RANDY:** Good!

**JOHN:** Why? Because—yeah, that's good! Because she's the closest person to me. Right? God just revealed a facet of his personality to Abraham nobody had ever known before. Now, look at the relationship between Abraham and God. It's amazing.

One day God says, should we do to Sodom and Gomorrah what we're thinking about doing without talking to our friend Abraham? So God comes down and he and Abraham go on the cliff and God says, "Abe, we're thinking about blowing up those two cities over there, what do you think?"

Abe goes, "Sodom?"

And the Lord goes, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Gomorrah too, what do you think?" And he goes, think, think.

Abraham is like think, Lot's over there. My nephew's over there. Oh my gosh! Think, think! Okay, God, you wouldn't blow it up if there were 50 righteous people.

The Lord goes, excellent idea! Okay. We'll not blow up the cities if there are 50 righteous.

Abraham thinks, what if there aren't 50? Okay, how about 45? He talks him down to ten. Lot's one, all he needs is nine others. But there isn't.

Now here's what's interesting. The Bible says Sodom and Gomorrah are buying, selling, planting, harvesting, marrying, and giving in marriage. What is that in today's vernacular? Life's great! If there is a God, he doesn't mind our lifestyle. The economy is booming, everything is great! They are 24 hours from being obliterated and they're clueless. That's not what's scary. This is what's scary. Lot, whom the Bible calls righteous, is 24 hours from being obliterated and he's as clueless as Sodom and Gomorrah. It takes two angels to come in and get him out because Abraham prayed. Thank God Abraham prayed.

So now here are two righteous men. Two, I'm going to say it in today's terms, two saved, born-again men. One righteous man knows what God is going to do before he does it. The other righteous man has no clue. Why? This righteous man fears God, this righteous man doesn't fear God. Obedience isn't a priority to this guy. Right? Therefore, this righteous man knows the secrets of God, but this one doesn't, because this one is the friend of God. Even though this one is righteous, he's not a close friend of God.

So Psalm 25, verse 14 in the New King James says, the secret of the Lord, it means secrets, the secrets of the Lord are with those who fear him. Who do we share our secrets with? Not acquaintances, intimate close friends.

There are things that I share with Lisa that I wouldn't share with anybody else. There are things I share with my boys on another level I wouldn't share with anyone else. There are things I share with my close friends that I wouldn't share with acquaintances. God says if you want to be my intimate close friend, the fear of the Lord is where you start. And remember, it doesn't mean to be scared of God because you can't be intimate with somebody you're scared of.

**RANDY:** Wow! Man! I've got a lot of questions. Let me start here. Do you remember in 2004 the song comes out, I am a friend of God? We're all singing this in our contemporary—there were some who felt, that just feels too casual. Is that reverent to say, to strive for that?

**JOHN:** Okay, let's talk about Jesus. John 15:14, "You are my friends." Remember that statement? John 15, "You are my friends." So we preach about it, we write songs about it, we sing it, but let's quote the verse. "You are my friends if..." If is a condition.

Okay, Randy, if I say, if you work for me for 40 hours next year, I'll pay you \$2,000."

You don't work for me, you come and say, "Where is my \$2,000?"

I said, "Hey, that was a condition."

I said, "'If you work for me.' You didn't work so I'm not going to give you the \$2,000 pay."

Okay.

"You are my friends if..." What's the if? "If you do whatever I command you."

**RANDY:** Obedience.

**JOHN:** Obedience! The manifestation of the holy fear of God. So in other words, what Jesus is saying is not everybody in the church is my intimate close friend.

You will notice that God said about Moses, "There is no one I trust in my house more than him." Now that's something for God to say, "I trust you." Why did Moses get God's trust? Because he feared God, whereas Israel didn't. So to Israel, God's voice sounded like thunder, to Moses it was clear and crisp.

So now, if you go to John chapter one or two, you'll find out that the Bible says that many people trusted in Jesus, but he didn't trust them. Why? Because he knew what was in the heart of men.

So then you go three and a half years later, and he looks at the disciples and says, "You're the ones that have continued with me through my trials. A lot of my disciples left..." John chapter six, many of his disciples walked away. Right? "You stayed with me."

Now Judas is already gone, this is the 11. And he said, "No longer do I call you servants." Now, this is John 15:15, "No longer do I call you servants because a servant doesn't know what his master is doing, doesn't know the secret wisdom or the plans of his master." He said, "But now, I call you friends."

Now, why would God do this for us? Why would God, even though we're an heir—remember, Galatians four, "As long as the heir is a child, he differs nothing from the servant?" Okay? Why would God, even though we're heirs of God, keep us at a servant level instead of an intimate friend level? I'll tell you why. To protect us. Because Ananias and Sapphira got too familiar with God. They thought they could cover a little lie up in his glorious presence. They both fell over dead. That did not make God happy.

Did God just burn against them and kill them? No! Listen, if you sunbathe on the beach, it's delightful. But you go 10,000 miles from the sun because the sun is 93 million miles away from the earth. If you're 10,000 miles sunbathing from the sun, you're burned up. They put themselves in harm's way. This is why God withheld his glory from the church because he doesn't delight in Ananias and Sapphira situations.

But he's maturing the character of the church through the holy fear of God which matures our character so that he can manifest his glory so that we don't have Ananias and Sapphira situations. Because remember, when Ananias and Sapphira fell over dead, Peter walks out of that meeting and he walks down the streets and they had lined the streets with the sick and the crippled, and he just walks down the streets, and they get up. The presence and the authority of God were on him so strong that it healed the people.

If you go back and you look at Aaron's sons, they were authorized to come into the presence of God in the tabernacle. But Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus chapter ten, they go in with irreverence and they're dead. Hundreds of years later, there is another head priest, Eli. He has two sons that are so corrupt they are committing adultery with the women that gather at the tabernacle, 90 feet away from where Nadab and Abihu were struck dead, and they're not being struck dead. Why? Because the lamp of God was going out, the Word of the Lord was rare in those days. When God's presence is glorious, His Word is strong, his revelation is strong. Correct? So in other words, the presence of the Lord, it was ichabod, he'd departed. So they're committing sin right there where Nadab and Abihu were struck dead, literally 90 feet away.

Why have pastors been lied to in the beginning of the 21st century and people haven't fallen over dead? Why do Ananias and Sapphira lie about their offering? They're church members, they're bringing their offering. Why do they fall over dead? Because the glory was so strong. The glory of God has not been made strong but God is bringing us there. And that's why he's working on our character, and that's why the holy fear of God is so important.

So this flippant, "Well, I'm a friend of Jesus. He is my Bro! He is my buddy!" I'm like, okay. You are not knowing who you serve. I mean Isaiah was a preacher of righteousness. He said, "Woe to the wicked! Woe to those who call evil good and good evil. Woe to the proud." Right? That's Isaiah five. Isaiah six, he has one glimpse of God in his glory; it is no longer woe is the sinner. It is, "Woe is me!" Because for the first time in his life, he realized who it is he is serving.

John, the apostle was so close to Jesus but yet he sees him on the island of Patmos, and he falls down like a dead man because his face shines like the sun. The Bible says when Jesus returns, he

is going to darken the noonday sun. Think about it! It's still going to be shining. Just like when the sun comes up in the morning and it darkens the stars? Jesus is going to darken the noonday sun. That's why men are going to say rocks fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is coming. Listen. He came as the lamb, he's coming back as the warring, conquering glorious king.

**RANDY:** We're running a little short on time so you're going to have to get the book!

**JOHN:** I'm sorry! You got me excited. You wound me up and got me going.

**RANDY:** Here's the one thing I'm hearing, and I think I'm wrong in what I'm hearing. If I would just be obedient enough, I could prove to God that I'm good enough—

**JOHN:** Totally wrong!

**RANDY:** Right? And I think we approach it that way. How do we get to that place you're talking about?

**JOHN:** We start with the holy awe and the holy awe is what produces in us the will and the desire to do his will. So in other words, when we stand in awe of him—do you know what I've learned, Randy? I just go into my prayer closet in the morning many times and I just think of the awesomeness of God. You put your stars in the heavens with your fingers. You weighed every drop of water on this planet in the palm of your hands. You weighed the mountains on your scales. God, even the universe can't even contain you! "You measure the whole universe from your thumb to your pinky," that's what Isaiah said. And I just, the presence of God comes.

Now, what does that do? That makes me want to obey all day. I mean I have a passionate desire to obey now because I've been in the presence, that awe has brought me into his presence. That's what Jesus meant when he said, "This is the way you pray: Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." Kept holy is your name. He was saying, come into the presence of God with holy awe.

**RANDY:** And you've also experienced the benefits of that healthy kind of fear.

**JOHN:** There are over 40 benefits: Security, safety, confidence, freedom from all fear. I mean there are people—they are going to psychologists trying to figure out how to get free from fear. The fear of the Lord eradicates all other fears. There is long life, productivity, wisdom, knowledge, understanding. Do you know the Bible says that the fear of the Lord is a fountain? It is a continual flowing source of wisdom that protects us from the traps of death.

Here's a man who had no relationship with God, but he feared God, Abimelech. Sarah is presented as his sister. He takes her into the harem. God comes to him in a dream and says, "You're a dead man because you have another man's wife."

He goes, "Lord," meaning my Lord, "I didn't know. I was told she was his sister."

God said, "I know and that's why I kept you from sinning against me." So the continual source of wisdom kept him from the trap that was laid for him to sin.

So now, this is my question, how can a man attend church for 20 years, hear the Word of God and end up in bed with another man's wife? There is only one reason, a lack of the holy fear of God. It is not rocket science.

**RANDY:** Whoo! Man! This is going to be my copy. You're going to have to ask for your own. Ask for John's book today if you help support Water for LIFE. Do something that is an act of obedience and that is one of the keys we're talking about here. And do you understand what John's talking about? You'll want to do this. You'll want to reach out and bless the poor. Watch this and we'll tell you how you can, I think, take a step towards that intimacy with God through obedience and it's pretty simple. Watch this and we'll be right back.

**On the mission field**

**ANNOUNCER:** Just imagine having to bring back something your body has to have to stay alive, but it could possibly kill you.

**ISAK:** I'm here with this young girl. She is probably a similar age to my daughter, maybe 12-13 years old. She's just come down to this dry riverbed where they've dug a hole out and they've let the water just seep up. She's collecting water for her family. A girl this age, I don't know if you've got children this age, but I can't imagine my daughter having to walk for miles to come down to a riverbed like this. It is not that safe to start with. But then to have to actually come and dish up the water and then carry this heavy container of water all the way back to her village. Carrying what's many times is not life—it's water. It will quench her thirst, but it might steal her life.

**ANNOUNCER:** This is the reality for tens of thousands of young children throughout the continent of Africa who continue to make the journey day after day to bring back diseased-filled water for themselves and their families.

**ISAK:** And that's why Mission: Water for LIFE is so critically important. It is why we have to be able to get to this village and other villages like this, bring that water well, drill the water well, put a pump in there so that this young girl can get fresh, clean, life-giving water, not diseased-filled water, right in her village, not having to carry it for miles to get it back there.

Please, partner with us today. Join your hands and your hearts with me. Make it possible for us to bring our drilling rigs here to drill a water well and to give life in the form of water. And let's see this village, this young girl who is dishing up water here, let's see her join others as she celebrates and welcomes that new well into their village.

Please, make that joy and celebration possible. Make the gift of water possible because in doing so you're going to be giving the gift of life.

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** I know every time we air pictures like that, we get all sorts of questions. You get the question of why does God allow that? I think the answer is he has sent us to do something about it. We are his hands and his feet. You don't go anywhere without feet. You don't reach out and touch someone without hands. And God says you and I are his hands and his feet.

The scripture that says Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, we understand that that means that we need to be connected to him to draw life. But did you know that it is the branch that produces the fruit, not the vine? We are to produce that fruit. We are the ones who are sent to give them an option I honestly believe because I've experienced it and I've seen it in others and many of you have experienced it, that when we reach out to the poor in the name of Jesus God does something miraculous, something supernatural in our lives. John, I know you've seen this too. You've been there.

**JOHN:** I've been to Africa with you guys and it's heart-wrenching but it rejoices your heart at the same time to see that we get the privilege of being able to help these beautiful people. I kept thinking, when I was there, I've got four boys and I'd watch these mothers with their children just desperate for water and food, and I was there with Isak and his dad Peter, who is now with the Lord, and it changed me forever. I'm so grateful.

This is the reason why Lisa and I have supported *Life Today*. We love *Life Today* because of the way you're helping them one person at a time, but it is groups at a time the way you guys do it. You're so smart and innovative in the way you're helping people.

**RANDY:** Well, it's only because people watching right now reach out and say, I'm going to give. Let me give you a quick breakdown. Our goal this year is 350 wells across 20 nations. We've been doing this for decades now and we have the privilege of giving to the poor, being generous to the poor because of your generosity.

But when we go in and we drill a well for clean water in one of these villages, it provides

typically water for about 70 years, we call it Water for LIFE for a thousand people, and that's because villages come from all over. The average cost of a well is \$4800 which means your gift of \$48 today will provide Water for LIFE on average for ten people. That's ten lives changed. Many of you can do more than that. A gift of \$144 will provide water for 30 people. Some of you can come together with others, drill half a well, a whole well, multiple, whatever you can do. I'm suggesting we be generous to the poor and let God repay us how he sees fit.

Will you go online or go to the phone right now? Make the best gift you can. And then expect good things from the Lord.

### **Begin video clip**

**ANNOUNCER:** *Every day thousands of lives are lost to waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through Mission: Water for LIFE you can give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean, life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it is too late.*

*With your gift today, you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten. \$72 will provide for 15. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.*

*With your gift of any amount, we'll send you the Life Prayer Journal complete with customized art, scripture verses, and inspirational quotes from Life Today hosts and co-hosts. You'll find plenty of room to write down prayer requests, answered prayers, and your own personal reflections as you spend time with God.*

*With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the Blessed cutting board, a beautiful addition to your kitchen and preparation area. This pine wood cutting board is custom engraved with the word Blessed as a reminder of the daily provision of God in your life.*

*Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request our colorful bronze sculpture "Consider the Birds." Please call, write, or make your gift online.*

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** The water behind me has already taken the lives of two children that we know of. I know because I just left their parents and their younger remaining sister in the graveyard. It is not right that children should die. It is not right that they should die with a waterborne disease that we can so easily stop. Let's give them fresh water. Let's give them water that will not kill them. Let's give them water that will bring them life. Let's give these children a hope and a future by giving them clean drinking water.

Go to the phone, go online, do it right now. Make the best gift you can. Help us bring this village and so many other villages like it a source of fresh clean water. Let's give them Water for LIFE. Let's give them a hope and a future. We can do it with your help.

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** I know you'll want this book. It will change your life. So ask for it when you support Water for LIFE. I pray you'll do that. It's life-changing. John, you know it. I know, and I appreciate your support. You guys have been great. Thank you for coming.

**JOHN:** It's an honor. We love your family so much. And James, I'm so grateful because he is a dad to my wife. My wife lost her dad and he's been a dad to Lisa for years. I deeply love and respect him for that.

**RANDY:** You guys are like family. And you guys are like family. So please come back for more

*Life Today.* We'll see you again next time.